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### Crusaders in Khaki: Britain, the Crusades, and the First World War

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*Crusaders in Khaki: Britain, the Crusades, and the First World War*

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November 29, 2015

Honors Scholar Thesis

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## Introduction

Crusade. The term is a loaded one that brings forth much baggage whenever it is invoked. Likely absent in the images or thoughts is any reference to the conflict between Britain and Ottoman Turkey in 1916 to 1918. To the general public, this conflict would seem a distant relation at best, if it factored in at all. In the eyes of the average layman, the era of the Crusades in the Middle East ended after the fall of Acre in 1291, the last Crusader bastion in the Holy Land. Just because the Crusades died as a religious-political movement does not mean that the imagery and discourse behind the Crusades fell out of active use. I will propose here that crusading iconography and vocabularies did not die, and that beyond lasting well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, are still with us today in our discourses and national consciousness's. As an example, the influence of this imagery and discourse was still quite strong on December 9, 1917. It was on this day, when General Edmund Allenby led his British and Dominion troops of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force into Jerusalem, following the surrender of the local Ottoman forces. Ten days after the city's capitulation, *Punch Magazine* published a memorable illustration, showing the famous King and Crusader, Richard the Lionheart, overlooking a shining Jerusalem. The image is followed by the caption "My dream comes true!" emblazoned on the bottom of the page (see Fig 2).<sup>1</sup> *Punch* was hardly the only outlet to equate the capture of Jerusalem by British and Empire forces with some sort of new or "Last Crusade".

British attitudes towards and motivations for the Palestine Campaign during the First World War were influenced by both a crusading mentality, in which they imbued the current conflict with religio-political significance on par with the Crusades, as well as religious imagery.

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<sup>1</sup> Bar-Yosef, E. "The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-18." *Journal of Contemporary History* 36, no. 1 (2001): 87-109. ; *Punch*, 19 December 1917, 415.

I also propose that these images and the discourse around the term crusade and the many names for Jerusalem, including the “Holy City”, were resilient. For they remained in full view despite orders from Whitehall to end the overt use of religious and crusading imagery in the press.

Whether or not these orders were serious and where in fact the government stood in terms of the imagery will be explored in detail later. At face value, this was done due to the various notes and memorandums from the bureaus in Britain’s colonies arguing vehemently against just this type of rhetoric, so fearful were they of the affects that the messages that Britain was sending would have if they wound their way down to the empire’s Muslim subjects. This would in their minds, incite at best disobedience against and anger at imperial authorities, and at worst fervor and eventual religious based rebellion. These messages tapped into something in 20<sup>th</sup> century British society that went beyond the surface, and could not have been the work of a few dedicated individuals, but instead, the symptom of a larger societal sentiment or idea. The question now becomes, what exactly this idea was, and what its implications were for wider British policy in the region? Before going into the specifics of British imagery and narratives around this “Last Crusade” an overview of the original Crusades and the mythology surrounding them is necessary. If one is to understand any allusions and rhetoric that reference the Crusades, then the original circumstances behind the Crusades must themselves be understood. Without this understanding, any modern reframing of the Crusades present in the First World War likely would not be possible or accurate.

## Chapter 1

### Historiography and background of the Crusades

### *Background on the Crusades*

The Crusades as a political and religious phenomenon began as a response to a call given by Urban II at the Council of Clermont. Ostensibly this was done to answer the call of the Byzantine Empire. Prior to the Council, The Byzantine Emperor had sent emissaries to Pope Urban II, seeking aid against the Seljuk Turks. The Turks had driven the Empire entirely from its heartland in Anatolia following the disastrous defeat at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of the objectives of the Byzantines, it was the recovery of the Holy Land, lost centuries earlier, that most enthralled the Western Crusaders.<sup>3</sup> The first Crusade, launched in 1095 following Urban's proclamation, set out originally to help their Eastern Orthodox brethren, ended in 1099 with the capture of Jerusalem and the establishment of several "Crusader States" in the region.<sup>4</sup> The rest of the Crusades were either launched to defend these states or to retake territory lost, the most significant of which was to recapture Jerusalem following its fall in 1187 after the disastrous defeat of the Crusader armies at the Battle of Hattin.<sup>5</sup> It was as a response to this defeat and Jerusalem's subsequent fall that launched the most famous of the crusades, the Third Crusade, best remembered for figures like Richard the Lionheart and Saladin. Although remembered well, this crusade failed its overall goal of recapturing Jerusalem, although it did succeed in enhancing the rights of Christian pilgrims traveling to the various shrines in

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<sup>2</sup> Norwich, John Julius. *Byzantium: The Decline and Fall*. New York: Knopf, 1996, 30.

<sup>3</sup> Peters, Edward. 1998. *The First Crusade : The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*. 2nd ed. Middle Ages series; Middle Ages series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 25-26.

<sup>4</sup> Frankopan, Peter. *First Crusade : The Call from the East*. Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press, 2012. Accessed December 16, 2015. ProQuest ebrary, 180-181.

<sup>5</sup> *Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*. Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press, USA, 1995. Accessed April 11, 2016. ProQuest ebrary, 37.



Jerusalem, eventually ending in treaties between the various crusading lords and Saladin.<sup>6</sup> Later crusades would often get sidetracked, with the most notorious example being the Fourth, which declined to invade the Holy Land, and instead attacked the Byzantines and took Constantinople, establishing a short lived state centered on Constantinople, the “Latin Empire”.<sup>7</sup> After the fall of Acre, the focus of the Crusades shifted. There was a series of Northern Crusades wherein the German knights of the Teutonic Order fought and subjugated large areas of Eastern Europe in the Baltic. There was the Crusade of Varna, where a coalition of Christian powers were defeated by the then ascendant Ottoman Empire.<sup>8</sup> The era of Crusading really began to enter terminal decline with the Pope’s loss of authority during the lead-up to the Protestant Reformation. The various Protestants groups, begun under reformers like Calvin and Luther, had little use for the Crusades, which they called “cynical ploys by the papacy to grab power from secular lords”.<sup>9</sup> If this was so, why then would staunchly Protestant England adapt such imagery during its campaigns in Palestine in 1914 to 1918? That this imagery occurred in the face of resistance makes it even more significant that it did so in what will be shown was quite a thorough manner. Before we can really address why this was so, we need to examine just how the Crusades were viewed in Britain before the lead up to the First World War.

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<sup>6</sup> "Third Crusade (1189-1192)." University of Michigan. Accessed February 10, 2016.  
[http://www.umich.edu/~eng415/timeline/summaries/third\\_crusade.htm](http://www.umich.edu/~eng415/timeline/summaries/third_crusade.htm).

<sup>7</sup> "Crusades." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Accessed December 10, 2015.  
<http://www.britannica.com/event/Crusades>.

<sup>8</sup> Tuleja, Thaddeus V.. 1949. "Eugenius IV and the Crusade of Varna". *The Catholic Historical Review* 35 (3). Catholic University of America Press: 257–75. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25015029>, 259-261.

<sup>9</sup> "Crusades." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Accessed December 10, 2015.  
<http://www.britannica.com/event/Crusades>.

*Crusading Historiography before the Great War*

Before analyzing the types of historiography written in the decades prior to the First World War, we need to state just what sources were available to study during this period. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “the three most familiar accounts of the crusades available to the English speaking reader were probably those by David Hume, William Robertson and Edward Gibbon”.<sup>10</sup> What the opinions of these three men were on the Crusades is of great importance. Their thoughts on the Crusades and crusading in general, will allow us to see whether or not the Crusading imagery and vocabulary present in the First World War and its aftermath were simply outgrowths of previous thoughts, or whether there was a gap between Crusade historiography present before the war and the thoughts, ideas, and imagery present during and after it.

In Hume’s *History of England from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*, Hume notes the “tumult of the crusades which now engrossed the attention of Europe, and have ever since engaged the curiosity of mankind, as the most signal and durable monument to human folly that has yet appeared in any age or nation”.<sup>11</sup> Hume did not limit his criticism for the movement itself. Describing a Crusading figure like Peter the Hermit as a man “folly was well calculated to coincide with the prevailing principles of the time”.<sup>12</sup> King Louis IX of France, according to Hume, was a great prince whose only weakness was his “imprudent passion for the crusades”.<sup>13</sup> An associate of Hume, William Robertson of Edinburgh University, had similar thoughts. Describing the Crusades as “the only common enterprise in which the European

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<sup>10</sup> Siberry, Elizabeth. *The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusades in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000, 1-3.

<sup>11</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 2.

nations ever engaged, and which they all undertook with equal ardour, remains a singular monument of human folly”.<sup>14</sup>

Gibbon, in the sixth volume of his multi-volume magnum opus *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, focuses much of his attention on the Byzantine Empire and the Crusades.<sup>15</sup> Like those before him, Gibbon also focuses mostly on the folly of the experience saying, that

“The enthusiasm of the First Crusade is a natural and simple event, while hope was fresh, danger untried and enterprise congenial to the spirit of the times. But the obstinate perseverance of Europe may indeed excite our pity and admiration; that no instruction should have been drawn from constant and adverse experiences; that the same confidence should have repeatedly grown from the same failures; that six succeeding generations should have rushed headlong down the precipice that was open before them; and that men of every condition should have staked their public and private fortunes on the desperate adventure of possessing or recovering a tombstone two thousand miles away from their country”.<sup>16</sup>

All three of them came to the same conclusion, that the Crusades and many of the men who participated in the movements, were foolish and irresponsible, and that the Crusades themselves were acts of utmost folly which deserve the pity or dismissal of those from more modern or enlightened times. This signals that there was indeed a shift in attitudes prior to the First World

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<sup>14</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 3.

War, one that shifted attitudes towards the Crusades in a more romantic and less critical direction.

That movement can indeed be seen in subsequent histories on the subject of the Crusades and the movement that surrounded it. One historian, Sharon Turner, the “godfather of future Prime minister Benjamin Disraeli”, praised the Crusaders and had much criticism for past historians like Hume and Gibbon stating that in his mind,

“now that the dangers have passed with which they were menaced and that the scenes have changed in which they were acting, we may with sarcastic complacency deride their credulity, or disclaim against their zeal... [but] we must ever rank the crusades amongst the instances of the sublime exertions and capabilities to which the human character can raise itself, especially in those periods when men feel rather than calculate – before knowledge has chilled the sensibility or selfish interest hardened the heart”.<sup>17</sup>

Turner, who worked only “fifty years after Hume”, represents a major shift away from all three of the earlier historians discussed before.<sup>18</sup> He has a markedly more sympathetic and approving tone than his three predecessors. Another historian, Charles Mills, in his work, *History of the Crusades*, praises the Crusaders for their “contempt of a perilous march, and his heroic ardour in the Syrian fields, awe and command our imagination; while his sacrifice of country and kindred throws an air of sublime devotion to his exploits”.<sup>19</sup> He also however, does not discount the cruelties and fanaticism of the Crusaders, saying that the crusades had “retarded the march of

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<sup>17</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 11.

civilization, thickened the clouds of ignorance and superstition, and encouraged intolerance, cruelty and fierceness”.<sup>20</sup> Although unlike Gibbons, Robertson, and Hume, he states that “so visionary was the object, so apparently removed from selfish relations, that their fanaticism wears the character of gentle virtue”.<sup>21</sup> Some of what Mills says seems very similar to the thoughts thrown around by Gibbon on and Hume. Even so, there is a shift, one in which at least in part, the Crusades and crusaders are now viewed as more than a fanatical disorganized mob. It is here where we see a more romantic less critical view of the Crusades and the crusaders emerge. While this view emerged prior to the First World War, it did not exist in a vacuum. The situation in 1916 is also of great importance in understanding the use of and need for Crusading language and imagery.

#### *Section on the Background of the Palestine Campaign*

Without a proper understanding of the military and political realities of the British war effort in 1916 to 1918, the imagery and language used by the British establishment cannot be properly understood. The Palestinian Campaign ostensibly began when Ottoman forces led and supported by German advisors invaded the Sinai Peninsula ostensibly to seize control of the Suez Canal, an area vital to British shipping and Britain’s continued maritime dominance in the Mediterranean.<sup>22</sup> Following the disaster at Gallipoli, where an Anglo-French invasion force failed to make any headway in an assault on the Gallipoli Peninsula, a campaign whose ultimate aim was the capture of the Ottoman Empire’s capital, Constantinople, and the removal of the Empire from the war entirely.<sup>23</sup> Following this embarrassing failure, various divisions from the

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<sup>20</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Cruttwell, C.R.M.F.. *History of the Great War : 1914-1918*. Chicago, IL, USA: Academy Chicago Publishers, 2007. Accessed April 5, 2016. ProQuest ebrary, 204-205.

<sup>23</sup> Cruttwell, *History of the Great War*, 207-210.

invasion were reassigned and used in the formation of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force.<sup>24</sup> This force was to begin a new campaign to invade Ottoman ruled Palestine. At the beginning of the campaign, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force was led by General Archibald Murray. Once it became clear that the Ottomans were no longer able to pose a serious threat to British control of Egypt, Murray was told by his superiors that while “his primary mission”, “the defense of Egypt”, remained unchanged, “he was to make his maximum possible effort during the winters”.<sup>25</sup> Without the necessary manpower or artillery support, Murray’s goal, and a disastrous attack on Gaza, the gateway to Palestine, the recall of Murray and the dispatch of Allenby was “just and wise”.<sup>26</sup> While Murray began the campaign, and was in charge of the campaign throughout 1916 and part of 1917, it was his successor, General Edmund Allenby, on whom much of the crusader imagery was to be focused.<sup>27</sup>

The Palestine campaign although important for its symbolic meaning and its effect on the morale of the British people, was really nearly irrelevant from a strategic perspective. The actions taken in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Palestine were a “sideshow”, a series of small time campaigns in comparison to the titanic struggles on the Western, Italian, and Eastern Fronts.<sup>28</sup> This was fully understood by the British leadership, who wanted a victory in the Holy Land that “would look well in the Gazzete” and serve as an answer to “the arrogant peace offer of the Central Powers” following “the German strategic reserve” having “overthrown the Rumanians”, another somewhat minor action in the larger context of the war.<sup>29</sup> It was also supposed to be an answer to the embarrassing failure that was the British action at the Somme, where “enormous

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<sup>24</sup> Cruttwell, *History of the Great War*, 385-386.

<sup>25</sup> Cruttwell, *History of the Great War*, 355.

<sup>26</sup> Cruttwell, *History of the Great War*, 358.

<sup>27</sup> Cruttwell, *History of the Great War*, 356.

<sup>28</sup> Cruttwell, *History of the Great War*, 372-373.

<sup>29</sup> Cruttwell, *History of the Great War*, 355.

sacrifices at the Somme had apparently been brought to no effect by the winter mud”.<sup>30</sup> All in all, the Palestine Campaign was supposed to be an easy campaign light both in terms of the massive casualty lists that characterized other fronts as well as in real strategic significance. While light in those areas, it was of great significance in other more intangible areas like morale and the international standing of the various warring nations. It is in light of these actions that we must view the Palestine campaign. The campaign, a strategic afterthought and a sideshow, was done more for the international prestige and the domestic propaganda value provided than any real ability for British control of Palestine to influence the outcome of the wider war. This was the case when General Allenby was assigned to command the military forces involved in the Palestine Campaign. Allenby had been told by Prime Minister Lloyd George that “he was expected to bring Jerusalem as a Christmas present to the British nation”.<sup>31</sup>

Following his instatement as commander, Allenby began preparations to take Gaza, the “fortified gateway to Palestine”, and therefore, an area that would have to be taken to open the road both to Jerusalem and to further Ottoman possessions in Syria.<sup>32</sup> Allenby, unlike his predecessor Murray, wisely worked to cut off Gaza instead of resorting to a frontal assault on a city well-fortified and defended both with natural rows of “sandy ridges” along the city’s outskirts as well as “every conceivable human device”.<sup>33</sup> With the situation in the city hopeless, the Turkish commander evacuated nearly “all the defenses of Gaza, with the exception of those at the Atawina ridge” from where they were able to protect the rear of the army “from the victorious troops advancing from the east”.<sup>34</sup> With Gaza in British hands, the road to Jerusalem

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<sup>30</sup> Cruttwell, *History of the Great War*, 388.

<sup>31</sup> Cruttwell, 611.

<sup>32</sup> Cruttwell, 610.

<sup>33</sup> Bluett, Antony. *With Our Army in Palestine*. London: A. Melrose, 1919, 111.

<sup>34</sup> Bluett, *With Our Army in Palestine*, 111.

was now open. Following a series of battles, during most of which British forces maintained the upper hand, Jerusalem fell on December 9<sup>th</sup> 1917 to “British and Dominion” forces.<sup>35</sup> This was the situation with which the British public was presented with in 1917, and it was the recapture of Jerusalem that really set off the “crusading mania”, which was a force which was to maintain a firm grip on at least a part of British national consciousness well into the 1920s.<sup>36</sup>

*Department of Information and the Crusading “Mania”*

Before analyzing pieces that came from this British “crusading mania”, it must be noted that only a handful of weeks before Jerusalem fell, the British Department of Information issued the following statement to “Fleet Street editors” regarding the recent military activities in the Middle East.<sup>37</sup>

15 November 1917. 1.45 pm.  
 NOTICE TO THE PRESS. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.  
 (NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR COMMUNICATION)  
 The attention of the Press is again drawn to the undesirability of publishing any article paragraph or picture suggesting that military operations against Turkey are in any sense a Holy War, a modern Crusade, or have anything whatever to do with religious questions. The British Empire is said to contain a hundred million Mohammedan subjects of the King and it is obviously mischievous to suggest that our quarrel with Turkey is one between Christianity and Islam.<sup>3</sup>

Fig. 1. Public Record Office [PRO], Kew, Notice D.607 (15 December 1917), FO/395/152, no. 218223; Bar Yosef, 87.

With this statement in mind, the significance must not be lost, that just months after the memo, in February 1918, the Department of Information aided in the publishing of several articles that fly in the face of the memo, and that would in all likelihood, be labeled as “obviously

<sup>35</sup> Bar-Yosef, *The Last Crusade?*, 87.

<sup>36</sup> Bar-Yosef, *The Last Crusade?*, 87.

<sup>37</sup> “Clash of the Worlds.” In *Clash of Worlds Palestine*. BBC One. January 22, 2008.; Bar-Yosef, 87.



mischievous”.<sup>38</sup> This was not to mention that journalists and editors of periodicals like *Punch*, were in no way fined or silenced when they published material that obviously suggested, in some of the most blatant ways possible, that “our quarrel with Turkey is one between Christianity and Islam”.<sup>39</sup> In fact, one case which involved “a protesting telegram from the Egyptian HQ about a reference in *The Times* to ‘the new crusade’” produced this response from a censor, where the censor supposedly remarked that “the Censors in this Room have long had instructions to be very chary about passing the word “Crusade””.<sup>40</sup> What then does the very apparent divide between the words and the actions of the British establishment and the press say about the attitudes held and the discourse around the mantra of a “last” or “new” Crusade? We can tell from the official pronouncement that there was at least in some quarters, a realization that it was imperative that they appear to curtail comparisons between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century Crusades with Britain’s contemporary and ongoing military actions in the Middle East. Regardless of this, the comparison between the two periods, and the Crusading theme that accompanied it, completely overcame any attempt at its suppression. None of the measures undertaken by different parts of the British government seem to have had any effect. Now, was this merely the result of bureaucratic misstep in the Byzantine communication system back in London, or was it symptomatic of something much deeper? To answer this, we need to dig further, analyzing individual pieces to try and see just what kinds of messages were dominant, and at whom they were directed.

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<sup>38</sup> Bar-Yosef, *The Last Crusade?*, 87.

<sup>39</sup> Bar-Yosef, *The Last Crusade?*, 87.

<sup>40</sup> Bar-Yosef, *The Last Crusade?*, 88.

*Crusades in the British Protestant Mind*

Before we can really understand just what the Crusading metaphor and imagery meant to the British in the First World War, we must first understand how Crusades as a concept developed in the British mindset. The Crusades found an unlikely home in the British mindset, especially for a people who “had to refashion thoroughly a medieval heritage that they had, in large part, rejected as outmoded Catholic barbarism less than a century before”.<sup>41</sup> Even with this hurdle to overcome, “there can be no question that the British popular imagination of the nineteenth century still looked upon the notion of medieval chivalry and gentlemanly honor with great fondness and fascination”.<sup>42</sup> Regardless of their attachment to the Catholic faith, which many Britons looked upon with scorn or derision, a romantic view of the Crusades flourished. The Crusades, one could say, were “de-Catholicized, and gradually blended into ‘the cult of Christian militarism’”.<sup>43</sup> While this view of the Crusades was mostly evident in the British elite classes and the aristocracy, its influence could be felt throughout British society.

For the men in the church hierarchy and leadership, the crusading metaphor and really, militant Christianity as a concept addressed one concern that had been plaguing church officials since the Victorian era right up to the First World War. This problem was that in “the common view” at the time, “devoutly religious men and male missionaries” were “in the words of Charles Dickens, akin to “weird old women” or, as others put it, “not quite men”.<sup>44</sup> It was in the best interest of the various church’s to attempt to counter the idea that their doctrine was

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<sup>41</sup> Knobler, Adam. 2006. “Holy Wars, Empires, and the Portability of the Past: The Modern Uses of Medieval Crusades”. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48 (2). Cambridge University Press: 293–325. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3879353>.

<sup>42</sup> Knobler, *Holy Wars, Empires, and the Portability of the Past*, 309-310.

<sup>43</sup> Knoebler, *Holy Wars, Empires, and the Portability of the Past*, 310.

<sup>44</sup> Knoebler, *Holy Wars, Empires, and the Portability of the Past*, 311.

somehow antithetical to the British view of what made a man masculine. This concern was put simply by Congregationalist pastor C. H. Spurgeon, that “There has got abroad a notion, somehow, that if you become a Christian, you sink your manliness”.<sup>45</sup> It was this view, that religion and devout belief was an emasculating force which incentivized the militarization and masculinization of Christianity into the British mindset. This is most interesting in an era where Britain was nearly constantly engaged in war somewhere across its vast colonial empire. The crusading metaphor and its use in the militarization of Christianity was only one form that this militarization took. In fact,

“The solution to the disconnection between religion and masculinity came in a variety of forms: hellfire preaching replete with images of battle and warfare in the form of revivalism, education and socialization techniques for boys which combined Christian teachings with sport and other "masculine" pursuits, and the search for iconic heroes (both fictional and in life) who combined strong manly actions in war with deep and devoted piety, without contradiction between them.”<sup>46</sup>

While it might appear strange today, this union of Christianity with a certain spirit of marital prowess helped to lay the foundation for the total embrace of the crusading metaphor during the lead up to as well as following the First World War. With this total embrace of the military ethos as well as its union with the Christianity of the period, the embrace of the Crusades in their imagery and language was the next logical step. Before analyzing the imagery and language used by items and images explicitly advocating for a “Last Crusade”, I will analyze the language contained in an item specifically against the crusading theme, and therefore show that even when

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<sup>45</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *A Good Start: A Book for Young Men and Women* (London, 1898), 16, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Knoebbler, *Holy Wars, Empires, and the Portability of the Past*, 312.

the British were supposedly against the mantra of a “Last Crusade”, language of approval or at least contentedness or acceptance does in fact appear.

## Chapter 2

### *Analyzing the Imagery and Language in Question*

### *Official Language*

The language regarding the Crusades and their reference to World War I can be divided into three distinct categories. Official language, meaning language used by the British establishment and likely meant for consumption by other members of that same establishment, and popular language, meaning the language found within pieces likely written or designed by the establishment for the consumption of the common people. A third example, that serves as a slight offshoot of official language, is the language of the religious establishment, language produced by the religious establishment but likely meant for consumption by men and women of all classes. A notable example of official language, and an example that supposedly on the surface is set against Crusading language and imagery, is the telegram that Whitehall sent out regarding references to the Crusades in the print media. The language and ideas contained within the memorandum to the Fleet Street editors have two distinct meanings, in that they can be read in two different ways.

The surface level meaning assumes one thing. It assumes that the war being waged by Britain against the Muslim Ottoman Empire in the Middle East is in no way religious in nature, and that any interpretation to the contrary is not only wrong, but a threat to British imperial interests and the stability and happiness of its many Muslim subjects. With this idea in mind, any reference to Britain's actions as "a holy war" or a "modern crusade" is something to be avoided at all costs. This is, however, only the meaning that would likely be gleaned with a surface level reading of the text. A deeper reading reveals much that the surface level reading misses.

To begin with, nowhere in the memo does the language used ever explicitly deny that the Palestine Campaign, and the wider war against the Turks, is a "New Crusade". All the writers of the memorandum are willing to say, is that "the suggestion" that the British are waging such a

war, is “obviously mischievous”.<sup>47</sup> What this deeper view shows us, is that even when the specific goal of the message is to decry and deny the Crusading metaphor, the language used is weak and the meaning is quite flimsy. When this reading of the text is combined with the relative inaction of the Department of Information to curb any of the Crusading media, not to mention its hypocritical espousing of the very messages that it was supposed to clamp down on, it becomes obvious that the British establishment did not view the Crusading metaphor and its accompanying language as a real threat, or at least viewed it’s morale boosting effects on the home front, as a net positive when matched up against the problems and troubles that the language and metaphor might incur on Britain’s affairs, both domestic and foreign. Thus, the memorandum, when read closely, communicates the exact opposite message from what it was likely intended to send. If this was the message that could be read from an article expressly condemning the Crusading metaphor, then what messages, both intended and unintended, would be sent by those articles and images that were explicit in their support for such an idea? Logically, they would likely be even stronger in their appeal to Crusading language and vocabulary.

For this, transcripts from speeches in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, speeches whose audience was most assuredly members of the British establishment, are best used. Many of them make reference many times to the term “crusade”. In the year 1918 alone, Hansard has references to the term Crusade more than one hundred and thirty times in its records.<sup>48</sup> Now not all of these were references to militaristic activities, one reference actually makes note of the “Christian Peace Crusade”, a group who apparently had its offices raided

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<sup>47</sup> Bar-Yosef, *The Last Crusade?*, 87.

<sup>48</sup> Hansard Parliamentary Debates, 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 103 (1918).

during late 1918.<sup>49</sup> Regardless of this, what this many references show is that in the mindset of the British establishment, the term “Crusade” and “Crusader” had gained both widespread usage and appeal. It was a term that was apparently had a strong pull on the British consciousness of the time. One other notable instance of this was made by the Under Secretary of State for War, one Sir James Macpherson. In this instance, Macpherson noted that, “The imagination of the country has been fired by the dashing success of Sir Edmund Allen by in Palestine, and the student of history and of Christianity has thrown open to him again the struggles and mighty endeavours of a remote past”.<sup>50</sup> This was then followed by the minister quoting an officer who was present in the campaign, stating that,

“Now as I write I see Ekron, whence the Ark was sent from Esdud. On my rear and above me a magnificently wild and impressive mountain gorge with olives and fig trees in terraces along its precipitous slopes, leading up to the wilderness of Judea. Below me the rich, red soil of the flourishing town of the plains, all golden with the luscious orange crops bordering the glossy given trees. Ahead of me, Zorah, the birthplace of Samson, and the fields where he let loose the foxes, with tails alight, into the harvests of the Philstines. And bygone are the glories even of the Crusaders— of their strongholds only open yellow ruins remain— now the signal station of a British desert mounted corps.”<sup>51</sup>

In this case, the references are clear. While not only a reference to the Crusades, the number of biblical references and allusions are followed by a direct comparison of a “British desert mounted corps”, to the Crusaders of old, who occupied various “strongholds” throughout

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<sup>49</sup> Hansard Parliamentary Debates, 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 103 (1918) cols. 1134.

<sup>50</sup> Hansard Parliamentary Debates, 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 103 (1918) cols. 767-882.

<sup>51</sup> Hansard, 5<sup>th</sup> ser. Vol. 103 (1918) cols. 767-882.



Palestine.<sup>52</sup> While not specifically naming the British mounted corps as “crusaders”, comparing modern day British cavalry units to the crusading knights of old and British signal stations to the castles or “strongholds” of the Crusaders strikes a clear enough message. A message that would likely have resonated with a British upper class who probably held chivalric and knightly virtues much closer than a modern day audience might. The implication though, even to a modern audience, is clear. In the eyes of the officer in Palestine, and to the minister who chose to quote him, the British are returning to Palestine bearing the weight of Biblical tradition and more notably, Crusading memories, with them.

Another example, from a debate over a military service bill in 1916 again embraced Crusading language when it described the number of British volunteers for the army in favorable terms, saying that,

“there were only about 1,000,000 men engaged in the Crusades for the freeing of the Holy Land, but what about this little country of ours. Here we raised 3,000,000 men in the course of eighteen months, not to defend their homes—  
[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh, oh!"]—no, not to defend their homes—[HON. MEMBERS: "Yes!"]—but they went out to fight for the distressed and to free Belgium”.<sup>53</sup>

This comparison, equivocating the British actions in Belgium with the Crusader’s actions in the Holy Land not only suggests that the British are as noble and righteous as the Crusaders, but that their actions are somehow more important and better, due to the larger number of men

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<sup>52</sup> Hansard, 5<sup>th</sup> ser. Vol. 103 (1918) cols. 767-882.

<sup>53</sup> Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, 5<sup>th</sup> Ser, Vol.82 (1916) cos. 142-267.

participating in this new crusade. As referenced earlier, this also serves as yet another example of the militarization of religion and the attempt to frame the First World War in a religious context.

Of all the people in the British establishment, there is one whose language does the most to show just how high up in the British establishment this language and discourse were embedded. That man is David Lloyd George, who was the leader of the Liberal Party as well as British Prime minister during the First World War. To begin with, he named a collection of his speeches from 1915 to 1919 “*The Great Crusade*”.<sup>54</sup> What this suggests is that to Lloyd George, the head of the British government, the war was indeed a Crusade, one that he considered himself the leader of, and one that due to its epitaph, he considered to be the equal to or perhaps superior to its past incarnations. Even with language as stark and obvious as this, if it were the only instance, it could perhaps be chalked up as a one off coincidence. This, however, is not the case. In many different cases, some of which will be explained further, his references to and uses of Crusading language go beyond simple occurrences and form a trend, one whose conclusion is hard to deny, that the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the British Empire, was in on and supportive of this rhetoric and imagery.

In a speech to his constituents in 1916, Lloyd George stated that “We are the first nation in the history of the world that has raised over three millions of men for any great military enterprise purely by voluntary means. Young men from every quarter of the country flocked to the standard of international right as to a great crusade. It is a glorious achievement and well may Britain be proud of it”.<sup>55</sup> What this language suggests is that before the Palestine Campaign had really even gotten off the ground, language referencing the Crusades, and directly comparing the

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<sup>54</sup> Siberry, Elizabeth. *The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusades in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000, 90.

<sup>55</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 90.

current struggle to a Crusade, was already in full force among the political establishment. Even before the war had moved to the geographical location that most belied the Crusading comparisons, the language was already in use. Although when the war in Palestine and the Middle East began in earnest, the focus did shift accordingly. This then makes the language's use in the Palestine Campaign and the lead up to and aftermath of the capture of Jerusalem seem much more a part of a natural course. This was not merely a set of anachronistic references to a bygone era and a historical occurrence, but the logical outcome of rhetoric and language that goes back when the war was in its infancy. In order to further understand this, we must move beyond the language of officials and the British establishment, on to another group who had a vested interest in the use and spread of this type of language. The British religious establishment, and most importantly the Church of England.

### Religious Language

Another type of language that might be said to accompany the language used by the establishment leading up to and during the Great War is religious language. According to Elizabeth Siberry, in *The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusaders in the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, the popularization of Crusader imagery in the First World War can be attributed to “the sermons preached by Anglican clergymen such as Bishop Winnington-Ingram of London, the so-called Bishop of the battlefields”.<sup>56</sup> This language can be seen in many different speeches and sermons from the period. Another notable excerpt comes from the writings and speeches of Basil Bouchier, a vicar of St. Jude's Hampstead and an army chaplain.<sup>57</sup> In this instance, Bouchier states that not only is the Great War a holy war, but it “is the holiest that has ever been

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<sup>56</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 87.

<sup>57</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 87.

waged.... It is the honour of the most high God which is imperiled... This truly is a war of ideals. Odin is ranged against Christ. Berlin is seeking to prove its supremacy over Bethlehem. Every shot that is fired, every bayonet thrust that gets home, every life that is sacrificed is in very truth for his name's sake".<sup>58</sup> Although even here, the chaplain reserves the majority of his passion for the campaign in the Middle East, specifically the Dardanelle's Campaign and the infamous Battle of Gallipoli stating that

"it is in a very real sense, the latest of the crusades. Should Constantinople fall it will be the greatest Christian victory that has occurred for hundreds of years. Surely this is something to captivate the imagination and to make us see that perhaps even greater things are at stake than the future of England... A vision arises before the mind of Byzantium once again a Christian city; St Sophia once again the home of Christian worship, and who knows, once again the Holy Land rescued from the defiling grip of the infidel".<sup>59</sup>

Regardless of the outcome of the campaign, in this case a total failure on the part of the Anglo-French expedition, the quotation's language and its intent and meaning can easily be applied to the later campaign in Palestine and the fall of Jerusalem that was to occur in late 1917. In many ways, the speeches and especially the sermons given around the First World War resemble "a crusade sermon of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries" and "drew on the same corpus of biblical texts".<sup>60</sup> Instead of the Saracens being "identified with the devil", it was Berlin and Germany that took that illustrious spot in the British mindset.<sup>61</sup> In turn, it was the ordinary British soldiers or

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<sup>58</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 88.

<sup>59</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 88.

<sup>60</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 88.

<sup>61</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 88.

“Tommies” that were recast into crusading knights or soldiers who instead of dying for the recapture of the Holy Land, they were instead sent “To die for England” knowing that with his death “he protects English homes from destruction, English fields from havoc, English woman and children from the inexpressible devil’s work of a most savage and iniquitous barbarism”.<sup>62</sup> Like their medieval equivalents, the soldiers of England were told often of the purity and nobility of their sacrifices. This was communicated quite clearly in the sermon titled “The Soldier’s Sacrifice” published in 1917.<sup>63</sup> In that sermon, Reverend Paul Bertie Bull addressed his congregation, saying that “In this supreme hour of England’s destiny when she stands before the world as the champion of liberty we must place no limit to our spirit of self sacrifice. The war began with the proclamation of the loftiest spiritual principles of righteousness and justice, liberty and truth- a note which awakened the soul of England and made this war a holy war, a real crusade”.<sup>64</sup> This direct comparison to a “real crusade” only grew as the Palestine Campaign grew larger in the public eye, until it reached its zenith with the capture of Jerusalem by Allenby. It is this period in particular that caused the parallels and allusions to the Crusades to be strengthened, as the holiest city in the Christian faith had fallen to the British Empire, unquestionably a Christian power, even if many of its subjects were not.

### *Popular Language*

In general, language used in the popular press and in other forms of popular media, had its own distinct appearance especially when compared to the kind of language used by the British establishment between themselves or from the religious establishment. For example, in the Welsh newspaper, *The Cambria Daily Leader*, the writer compares the Welshmen fighting in

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<sup>62</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 89.

<sup>63</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 88.

<sup>64</sup> Siberry, *The New Crusaders*, 89-90.

Palestine now to the Crusaders of old, saying that “Many from Wales went on the crusades, and, as t-o-day, many from Swansea pressed in a British army towards the great prize”.<sup>65</sup> Another paper, this time *The Spectator*, a conservative magazine from London, took a much more nationalistic view of the capture of Jerusalem, directly comparing it to the German Kaiser’s visit to the city in 1908, saying

“FROM every point of view—the historical, the moral, and the military—the fall of Jerusalem is an event to stir • the emotions of the world. General Allenby might have arrived sooner at Jerusalem had he not forborne to use a single military manœuvre which might have brought into peril the hallowed buildings and approaches of the city. The pompous and theatrical visit of the German Emperor to Jerusalem in 1898, when he inflicted his patronage upon a curious and bewildered population, must have remained sufficiently clear in the memories of Jerusalem for the people to compare the British way with the German way, greatly to the advantage of the British. General Allenby entered the city in a quiet and gentlemanlike manner ; no part of the walls was thrown down for him as was done for the Kaiser when the Imperial procession, by an appropriate act of vandalism, was saved from the inconvenience of having to go a few yards out of its way and enter by one of the ancient gates”.

The main purpose here, is to show the superiority, both morally as well as militarily, over the Germans and their Turkish allies. The crusading metaphor while still present, is present in much less an obvious way than previous items. In fact, *The Spectator*, of all the items and articles

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<sup>65</sup> The Cambria Daily Leader, December 11, 1917. Accessed January 1, 2016. <http://newspapers.library.wales/>.

examined, is probably the one that follows the Fleet Street memo most directly. This is especially true when the author mentions that, “The capture of Jerusalem by the Allies means that the Moslems, Jews, and Christians will receive impartial justice in a land that is revered by them all. Although to both Christians and Jews Jerusalem is the most holy city in the world, the rulers of the future will tolerate no religious animus. There will be freedom and fairness for all”.<sup>66</sup> Like the official memo, however, the messages of fairness to all and religious toleration are lessened by the context and surrounding language. That this occurs after long stretches describing the Muslim Ottoman Turks being driven from their “holy cities”, the lines describing how fair the treatment will be in newly British Jerusalem, fall somewhat flat. *The Spectator*, follows the orders in word if not quite in spirit. Like the memo itself, *The Spectator* says one thing but seems to mean another. The Crusading rhetoric and metaphor rings true, even if it attempts to hide itself behind more moderate and accepting language.

Another form of popular media where Crusading language was quite prevalent was in the various written accounts as well as fictional novels written during and after Allenby’s capture of Jerusalem. These included works with titles like “*Khaki Crusaders* (1918), *The Last Crusade* (1920), *With Allenby’s Crusaders* (1923), or *The Romance of the Last Crusade* (1923)”.<sup>67</sup> This again points to the widespread diffusion of the term into the popular consciousness. They also point to the acceptance by the general public of the nature of the war, that the Palestine Campaign was indeed a holy war, and that its soldiers and generals were indeed Crusaders of a new era.

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<sup>66</sup> "THE FALL OF JERUSALEM, » 15 Dec 1917 » The Spectator Archive." Accessed February 27, 2016. <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/15th-december-1917/6/the-fall-of-jerusalem>.

<sup>67</sup> Welch, David, and Jo Fox. *Justifying War: Propaganda, Politics and the Modern Age*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 21.

This all points out an interesting dynamic in the idea of Crusading rhetoric and metaphor. While the language does appear in areas seen or read by the common people, if language is the only judge used, it is the British upper class and the British political establishment who have embraced this idea wholeheartedly. Language, however, is not the only way in which these messages were communicated. Crusading imagery might matter just as much as the language used, and it probably conveys a stronger message than the words and phrases chosen.

### *Crusading Imagery in Popular Media*

Like the language used, the imagery can also be divided into what might be considered class based categories. This division is, however, not nearly as easily established or as strong as the divisions in the language, with certain examples giving themselves more easily to categorization than others. Some, like the *Punch* cartoons mentioned near the beginning, are, by their very format, imagery for the lower and middle classes.

The *Punch* cartoon, titled, *The Last Crusade*, depicts Richard the Lionheart in full knightly gear, overlooking Jerusalem saying, “My Dream Comes True!”<sup>68</sup> In referencing Richard, probably the most famous of the various Crusaders, and then showing Jerusalem, “the Holy City” bathed in light, the image unsubtly suggests that it is the return of Christian Britain, in the form of Allenby and his army in the “Last Crusade” that gives the city its luster.<sup>69</sup> Beyond this, dressing Richard as a Crusader, armed with a sword and shield, affirms the Crusading imagery, by depicting an armed Christian King overlooking the city of Jerusalem. Allenby and

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<sup>68</sup> *Punch*, 19 December 1917, 415.

<sup>69</sup> *Punch*, 19 December 1917, 415.



the British soldiers under his command are analogous to Richard the Lionheart and his Crusading knights. Therefore, the British campaign in Palestine is to be seen as a new or as the cartoon says, a “Last Crusade”.<sup>70</sup> That a magazine of the common people like *Punch* would reference the event, says a lot about the reach and depth of the Crusading metaphor in British society. Further proof of this as well as the directness of the comparisons is shown in another of *Punch*’s cartoons from the same period.

On September 17, 1919, more than a year and a half following the capture of Jerusalem, *Punch* published another cartoon, this one titled *The Return from the Crusade*.<sup>71</sup> This cartoon is much more explicit and direct in its comparison of the Palestine Campaign to the Crusades. In the cartoon, a Crusading knight on horseback rides into town and turns to face Britannia, Britain personified as a goddess armed with a trident and shield (see Fig 5).<sup>72</sup> The caption reveals that the knight is in fact “Field-Marshal Allenby” and that “Singing from Palestine hither I come”.<sup>73</sup> No longer is the idea of the “Last Crusade” merely a historical allusion. With this cartoon, *Punch* has declared in no uncertain terms that the British expedition to Palestine was a Crusade and that now the victorious crusaders led by their leader Allenby are now returning home from their Crusading expedition, welcomed home as heroes. With Britannia noting that she does indeed welcome them home “with all my heart”.<sup>74</sup> In this instance, Allenby serves as a probable stand in, not just for himself, but for all the “heroes” returning from the “Last Crusade”. Beyond this, the image says that it is the entire British nation, personified by the goddess Britannia that welcomes the Crusading knights back from their epic and righteous quest in the Holy Land. If

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<sup>70</sup> *Punch*, 19 December 1917, 415.

<sup>71</sup> *Punch* 17 September 1919, 251.

<sup>72</sup> *Punch* 17 September 1919, 251.

<sup>73</sup> *Punch* 17 September 1919, 251.

<sup>74</sup> *Punch* 17 September 1919, 251.

this was the imagery primarily consumed by the lower and working class, what then did the imagery of the upper class and the British establishment look like? What messages did the images contain?

### Imagery of the Establishment

Of all the images that one could link with the British establishment and government, there are two that stand out in particular and set up motifs that others would follow. One, a war memorial in Yorkshire at Sledmere, and the other, a series of bronze figures at a Church in the same area. These monuments, one inspired by and the other honoring the deeds of Sir Mark Sykes, of Sykes-Picot fame, feature much in the way of Crusader imagery. Although he died in 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference of pneumonia, he managed to create two memorials to honor the dead and fallen from the war.<sup>75</sup> The first monument, honoring the deeds of the “Wolds Wagoners Reserve”, a formation of soldiers organized by Sykes himself to take part in the First World War. The column depicts the nearly “800 of them” who “swapped the peace and tranquillity of the Yorkshire Wolds for the blood and thunder of Flanders fields”.<sup>76</sup> The monument depicts both scenes of battle as well as other actions taken by the wagoners.<sup>77</sup> The scenes are depicted in such a way that calls back on medieval carvings in many churches in both England and the rest of Europe as well as more general medieval art and imagery (see Fig. 9, 10, and 11).<sup>78</sup> The imagery suggests that when remembering these individuals and the detachment in which they fought, the observer is meant to look backwards in time. Attempting to link the

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<sup>75</sup> "The Yorkshire Regiment, Local War Memorials." The Yorkshire Regiment, Local War Memorials. Accessed February 11, 2016. <http://www.ww1-yorkshires.org.uk/html-files/sledmere-cross-2.htm>.

<sup>76</sup> "The 'Wolds Wagoners' Who Left Farms for War." The Homefront. September 29, 2014. Accessed February 01, 2016.

<sup>77</sup> Finch, Jonathan, and Katherine Giles. *Estate Landscapes: Design, Improvement and Power in the Post-medieval Landscape*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2007, 164.

<sup>78</sup> Finch and Giles, *Estate Landscapes*, 164.

veterans and casualties of the war to something bigger. In this case the link established is between the Knights and soldiers of the medieval period with the soldiers who fought and died in Flanders and France. The other memorial is much less ambiguous in its message.

The second monument, an Eleanor Cross across from one of the churches in the area, was modified by Mark Sykes “in its conversion to the role of memorial”.<sup>79</sup> After modification, the monument featured a series of bronzes which depicted men who died in the First World War, and later would include Sir Mark himself after his death from influenza in 1919.<sup>80</sup> What makes this monument significant is the context in which it honors the fallen soldiers. They are dressed as Crusading knights, and have many descriptions written above them to push this metaphor; the most direct of which is the inscription above Sir Mark himself, an inscription which reads “Laetare Jerusalem” or Rejoice Jerusalem (see Fig 4).<sup>81</sup> In addition to this, Sir Mark in crusader garb stands astride the body of a defeated Muslim while the background of this scene is “an outline of the city of Jerusalem” (see Fig 6 and 8).<sup>82</sup> Another of the bronzes, depicting “Lieutenant Kendall of the Norfolk Regiment, had ‘Died of wounds near Jerusalem’” inscribed above his head, was “commemorated with an image of Richard I”, the Lionheart.<sup>83</sup> The major differences between this imagery and the imagery that depicted the Wagoners, is that these images allude to specific individuals, nearly all of them officers and some, like Sykes, were deeply influenced by and adhered to the Crusading metaphor and its various implications.

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<sup>79</sup> Finch and Giles, *Estate Landscapes*, 162.

<sup>80</sup> Finch and Giles, *Estate Landscapes*, 164 ;

Goebel, Stefan. *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 123.

<sup>81</sup> Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 123-124.

<sup>82</sup> Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 123.

<sup>83</sup> Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 123.

Quite a few monuments to the First World War, both for veterans and for the men who died, embrace the same kinds of imagery. One monument “in the Scottish town of Paisley embraces aspects of both while once again embracing the Crusader imagery that link them all together. The monument, which imposes the sight of a medieval Knight in the middle of a group of British “Tommies”. The meaning of the monument is clear from its given title, “The Spirit of the Crusaders”, given to it by its sculptor, Alice Meredith Williams. (see Fig 12).<sup>84</sup> In this case, the sculpture combines the messages of the previous two examples. The image of the average British infantryman is presented alongside that of the mounted Crusading knight, combining the imagery of the two previous monuments. Combining the imagery of the knight with the modern day British soldier, conflating the two and presenting the British “Tommy” as a new form of crusader, or at least a modern day soldier possessed by the “Spirit of the Crusaders”.

### Memorials and Crusading Imagery and Vocabulary

Out of all the instances of Crusading language and imagery present in Britain, memorials to the First World War are the most visually obvious. They are also probably the most common in the public and private sphere. What then were the reasons for the abundance of Crusading language and imagery in producing memorials to the first “total war”? What was it about the First World War that made it attractive and well suited for that imagery and language in its remembrance? Romanticizing a war that was so bloody and so entirely different from the wars of the past seems almost irreverent or dishonorable to the memories of the men who died. That reaction, however, cannot have been the case for the majority of Britons in the wake of the First

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<sup>84</sup> Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 159.

World War. As an example, the Sledmere Cross and the bronzes on the Sykes property were met with no real opposition by either the “families of the bereaved nor the wider community”. Neither group “considered them inappropriate at the time”.<sup>85</sup> What then did this kind of commemoration give to the families of the fallen soldiers and to British society as a whole? How did the adaption of Crusading imagery and vocabulary ingratiate itself into the memorialization of the First World War, itself known in the 1920s as “The Great Crusade”.<sup>86</sup> There are two national monuments that shine light on the matter: “The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior” and the “Cross of Sacrifice”.<sup>87</sup> The idea for the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior was brought to King George V by the Dean of Westminster Abby. It was “a scheme” that George V “became enthusiastic about” after a time.<sup>88</sup> So much so, that he donated an antique sword from his own personal collection, a sword that was “almost immediately” dubbed by the press as a “Crusader sword”.<sup>89</sup> In this instance, the real purpose behind the term is clear. The romanticizing of the vocabulary and the imagery likely served as a coping mechanism for a society dealing with death and loss on a scale that had not been seen before. Thinking of the men as Crusaders and the war as a crusade allowed the British to view the struggle and all its death and destruction as having had a higher or nobler purpose. Without this, the sacrifices made by the British would be too high. Giving the war a holy purpose served to justify the pain, suffering, and death that the war brought. The imagery and vocabulary of the crusading knight and of holy war gave the war legitimacy that it desperately needed. In contrast to previous wars, the costs of the First World War, both material and human, suffered by the country and the people were on an entirely

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<sup>85</sup> Finch and Giles, *Estate Landscapes*, 163.

<sup>86</sup> Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 160-161.

<sup>87</sup> Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 161.

<sup>88</sup> Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 161.

<sup>89</sup> Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 162.

different scale from anything they had previously encountered. With this in mind, the religious crusading terminology and its impact are likely the most important outcome of the entire experience that the British public and establishment had in the entire realm of Crusading imagery and rhetoric.

## Chapter 3

Aftermath and Implications of British crusading imagery, vocabulary, and rhetoric

### Implications of Crusading Language and Imagery on British Policy

With all of this now examined, we now turn to the question of what does this all mean in the wider context of the First World War. Did this language and its accompanying imagery affect British policy in any significant way? In fact, I will assert that the answer was yes. The presence and the widespread nature of the Crusading metaphor and its imagery was known to the British establishment and regardless of their opinion on it, its mere presence meant that British policy had quite a tightrope to walk. One incident that showed just how far this went, was the act of political and symbolic theater that the British played in Jerusalem following its capture by General Allenby. In Britain, the portrayal of Allenby as a Crusading hero was instinctual. Beyond the various *Punch* cartoons referenced before, one of which portrayed Allenby as a Crusading knight returning home, various books about the campaign were published with titles such as “*Khaki Crusaders, Temporary Crusaders, The Modern Crusaders, The Last Crusade, and The Romance of the Last Crusade*”.<sup>90</sup> Beyond the cultural impact that these works and others like them surely had, there was another area in which this portrayal gives greater insight into the British mindset at the time. This area was the way in which Allenby was presented to the residents of Jerusalem, particularly the Muslim residents, formerly ruled by the Ottoman Turks.

Allenby’s portrayal to the audience in Jerusalem was not as a conquering crusader or war hero, but as a humble pilgrim and a prophet sent by Allah to drive out the Turks. Making use of an Arabic prophecy that stated that, “when the Nile flows into Palestine, then shall the prophet from the west drive the Turks from Jerusalem”, the British portrayed General Allenby combined

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<sup>90</sup> Bar-Yosef, *The Last Crusade?*, 87.



with their pipelines into Palestine as the fulfillment of ancient prophecy.<sup>91</sup> Portrayed at home as a Crusading knight and a Christian hero, Allenby was presented to the Muslim inhabitants of Palestine as fulfillment of the fulfillment of Arabic prophecy. Coincidentally, a close translation of Allenby's name, and what he was known by the local population, "Al Nebi", translates as "the prophet".<sup>92</sup> Known as a Crusading knight to those at home, yet presented as a prophet and a savior to the Empire's new imperial subjects and to the Islamic world in general. This tightrope was one which the British government, and therefore British policy, had to walk, and one that was almost destined to eventually fail. The consequences of this rhetoric would be long and far reaching. While British fears of an Islamic uprising in India and its other colonies were widely overblown, no such actions took place, even when the Ottoman Sultan in his role as Caliph called the faithful to Jihad against Britain, France, and Russia, Britain's crusading language and rhetoric would in the future be used as evidence of a real "Clash of Civilizations", a real religious war, a new Crusade, where the Cross and the Crescent would once again clash over the Middle East and over the Holy City of Jerusalem.<sup>93</sup>

#### Long-term Consequences of British Crusading Rhetoric

Of all the areas in which this language had a wide affect, the reaction and use of the Crusading language by Islamic extremists is the largest and most troubling result. Probably the most notable example of this kind of thought comes from a speech written by Osama Bin Laden in 2001 in Afghanistan and sent to a press bureau in Kabul,

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<sup>91</sup> Mortlock, Michael J. *The Egyptian Expeditionary Force in World War I: A History of the British-led Campaigns in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Publishers, 2010.

<sup>92</sup> Mortlock, *The Egyptian Expeditionary Force in World War I*, 153.

<sup>93</sup> Strachan, Hew, writer. "The First World War." In *Jihad*, directed by Emma Wallace. BBC Channel 4. October 11, 2003.

“There is no power but in God. Let us investigate whether this war against Afghanistan that broke out a few days ago is a single and unique one or if it is a link to a long series of crusader wars against the Islamic world. Following World War I, which ended more than 83 years ago, the whole Islamic world fell under the crusader banner - under the British, French, and Italian governments. They divided the whole world, and Palestine was occupied by the British.”<sup>94</sup>

What is notable about this, is that Bin Laden makes use of the same kinds of rhetoric and language used by the British in 1917 and 1918. In referencing the war in Afghanistan as a continuation of the Crusades, Bin Laden’s language puts forth the same sentiments that the British language and imagery did in regards to the First World War. Both looked back to a previous conflict for inspiration and used the link between the two as a motivating factor for their supporters both domestically and internationally, as well as painting the entire conflict in epic or monumental terms. Another excerpt from an interview following the September 11, 2001 attacks puts into place the key place that the actions taken by the British and backed by their Crusading mentality had upon the rhetoric taken up by Islamic extremists. In the interview, Bin Laden states that “we aren’t really terrorists in the way they want to define the term, but rather because we are being violated in Palestine, in Iraq, in Lebanon, in Sudan, in Somalia, in Kashmir, in the Philippines, and throughout the world, and that this is a reaction from the young men of our umma against the violations of the British Government”.<sup>95</sup> In essence, what has occurred here is that groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS have taken the discourse around the term Crusade and begun to adopt it to their own ends. They are also, as is shown by the reference to the “violations of the

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<sup>94</sup> Laden, Osama Bin, Bruce B. Lawrence, and James Howarth. *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*. London: Verso, 2005, 135-136.

<sup>95</sup> Laden, *Messages to the World*, 112-113.

British Government”, not shy about explaining just what they feel they are responding to. In their minds and in their rhetoric, they are responding to what they see as a continuation of the Crusades, with a recent incarnation being British meddling in Palestine following the First World War. Other references make it even clearer that Bin Laden views these actions taken by the British as a continuation of the Crusades, in a way almost exactly like the British promoted before, during, and after the First World War.

Following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, Bin Laden gave an interview in an undisclosed location on October 20, 2001. When asked by an interviewer, if he had any statements to say to his audience, Bin Laden stated that,

“I say: Concerning this ordeal and this battle between Islam and the Crusaders, I want to reiterate that we will continue this jihad and the incitement of our umma to it, until we bring it about, while blessing us, and the war, as we have been promised, that is going on between us and the Jews. So any nation that joins the Jewish trenches has only itself to blame, as Sheikh Sulaiman Abu-Ghaith<sup>4</sup> " has declared in some of his previous statements concerning America and Britain; he did not set this in stone, but indeed gave some of other nations a chance to review their calculations. What is Japan's concern? What is making Japan join this hard, strong, and ferocious war? It is a blatant violation of our children in Palestine, and Japan didn't predict that it would be at war with us, so it should review its position. What is the concern of Australia in the farthest south with the case of these weak Afghans? And these weak Palestinians? What is Germany's concern with this war? Besides disbelief, this is a war which, like previous wars, is reviving the Crusades. Richard the Lionheart, Barbarossa from Germany, and

Louis from France—the case is similar today, when they all immediately went forward the day Bush lifted the cross. The Crusader nations went forward. What is the concern of the Arab nations in this Crusaders' War? They involved themselves with it openly, without disguise, in broad daylight. They have accepted the rule of the cross”.<sup>96</sup>

This, even more than the previously referenced statements, shows just how similar the viewpoints are between modern day Islamic extremists and the British government and establishment during and after the First World War. Both reference the Crusades and interpret their current conflicts as continuations of these past conflicts. With the callbacks to the Crusading lords of “Richard the Lionheart, Barbarossa from German, and Louis from France”, he cements the idea of the current conflict being just a part of a larger epic struggle between the Cross and the Crescent.

When looked at with hindsight, the Crusading rhetoric and imagery that the British made use of during the First World War can be seen as dangerous and shortsighted. With that same hindsight, one can see that the fears and trepidations present in some corners of the British colonial administrators were quite prescient. Unlike the rest of the British establishment, these men saw the problems inherent in presenting the war against the Germans and Turks as a modern day incarnation or a continuation of the Crusades of old. Regardless of how the British portrayed the war to Arab and Islamic audiences, the imagery and vocabulary used at home would not stay hidden forever. The tightrope between the two messages became harder to walk the further Britain was drawn into the Middle East and the Holy Land. The celebratory taking of Jerusalem,

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<sup>96</sup> Laden, *Messages to the World*, 127-128.

regardless of how considerate and even handed British statements were on the city's importance, was hard to portray as anything other than a Christian military victory over what had been for centuries, a city of multiple cultures and many faiths all under Muslim Ottoman rule. The further their involvement, the wider the gap between their activities and the vocabulary and imagery grew, and the wider the gap became, the easier for other actors and groups to portray British actions as a new or returning Crusade. What then should a modern interpretation of Britain's "Last Crusade" and the imagery and vocabulary that surrounded it? Put simply, the British knew the probable consequences of this use of terminology and imagery and yet continued its use anyway. This was due to a sense of arrogance among the British establishment. So convinced were they of their own intellectual and material superiority, that the goals, aspirations, emotions, and actions of the Islamic world were trampled underfoot almost as an afterthought.

### Legacy of Crusade in a Modern Context

The British in 1917 were not however the last modern Western nation to use Crusading terminology in such a political fashion. The involvement of the United States in both Iraq and Afghanistan were not followed by references to the term Crusade and Crusading. When being interviewed about the recently begun war in Afghanistan, President George W Bush stated that "This crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take a while".<sup>97</sup> Like Britain's use of the terminology and imagery, many seized upon this use as evidence of a continued Crusade waged by Christendom against the Muslim or Islamic world. Also, like the British example, statements were released retracting the statement, or in this instance, stating that "Mr. Bush meant crusade

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<sup>97</sup> Waldman, Peter, and Hugh Pope. "'Crusade' Reference Reinforces Fears War on Terrorism Is Against Muslims." *WSJ*. Accessed April 11, 2016. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1001020294332922160>.

only in "the traditional English sense of the word, a broad cause." And, in an address to a joint session of Congress Thursday night, Mr. Bush said, "The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists and every government that supports them."".<sup>98</sup>

While it would seem different, this explanation is really quite similar to the explanation given to the British press in regards to the Crusading language and imagery. It shows that the language and the basic idea of the Crusade has remained into the present day. These statements, like the British government's memo to its papers, are, in the eyes of many, statements that belie the intent that other actions taken seem to express. Both attempts accept the significance of the term yet deny the appropriateness of the term when used to describe their own action. It does not matter which meaning President Bush meant when he referred to the war in Afghanistan as a crusade. Whichever the meaning, simply the use of the term in a region where that term has historical significance and historical baggage would likely have been enough to cause consternation and trepidation among many of the region's peoples. Just like the eventual reaction to the British Crusading vocabulary and imagery, the actions of the United States are viewed through the lens of its own Crusader vocabulary and imagery, however wrong that imagery and language may be in regards to the goals and ideas supported by the United States.

These problems show that the legacy of Britain's use and acceptance of Crusading language and imagery is still with us today. Such cavalier use of terminology and words that are so weighty and loaded can have undesirable and unforeseen affects. Would many in Britain in 1918 realize that their use of Crusading imagery and language could be turned against them? Did

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<sup>98</sup> Waldman and Pope, *Crusade Reference Reinforces Fears*.

they know that they were reviving a discourse that would eventually be used by the very people they were attempting to overtake? The answer to that, is probably not. The few attempts we saw of warning about the effects of these actions were ignored. In this context, actions speak louder than words. Language has a certain power, especially when linked to historic memories and emotionally loaded imagery.

Images and Illustrations



THE LAST CRUSADE.

CŒUR-DE-LION (looking down on the Holy City). "MY DREAM COMES TRUE!"

Fig. 2. *Punch*, 19 December 1917, 415.



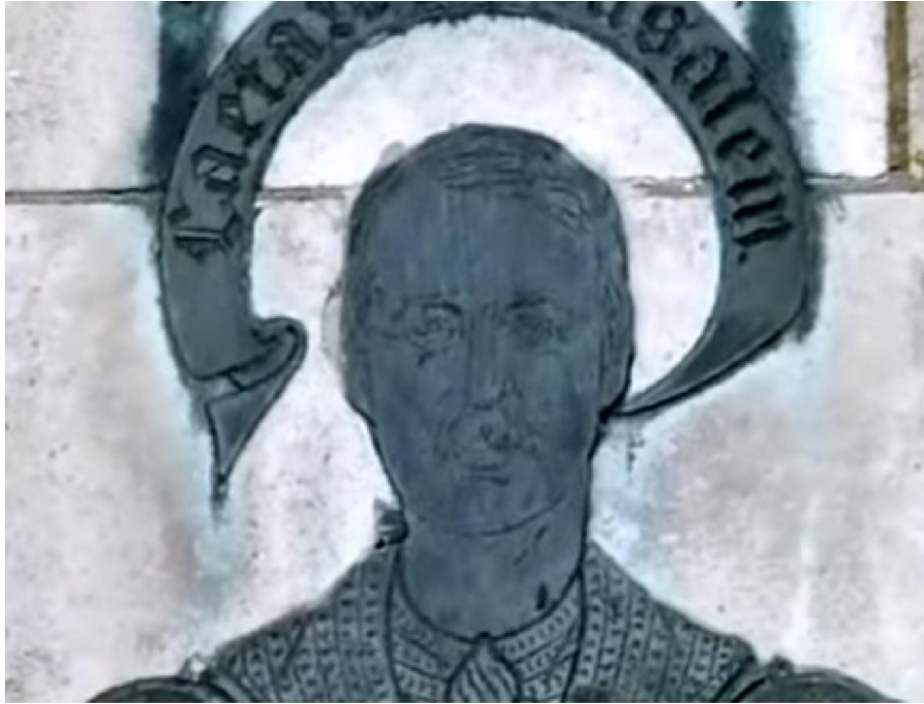


Fig. 3. "Clash of the Worlds." In Clash of Worlds Palestine. BBC One. January 22, 2008

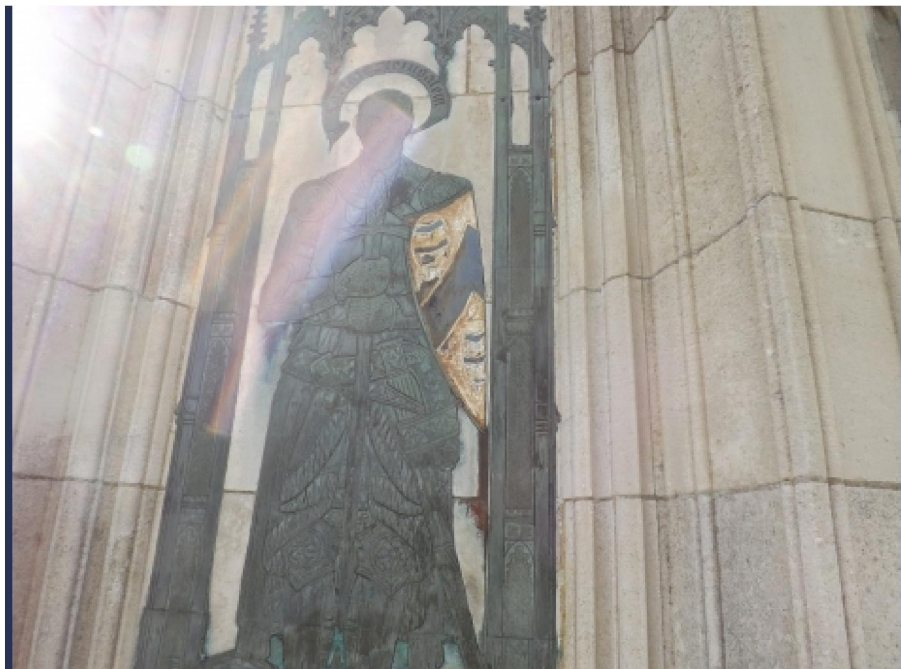


Fig. 4. "5th. Batt. Yorkshire Rgt. Sledmere WW1 Cross." War Memorials Online. Accessed April 11, 2016. <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/node/187444>.



### THE RETURN FROM THE CRUSADE.

FIELD-MARSHAL ALLENBY. "'SINGING FROM PALESTINE HITHER I COME;  
LADY-LOVE, LADY-LOVE, WELCOME ME HOME.'"  
BRITANNIA. "I DO INDEED—WITH ALL MY HEART!"

Fig. 5. *Punch*, 17 December 1919, 251.



Fig. 6. "5th. Batt. Yorkshire Rgt. Sledmere WW1 Cross." War Memorials Online. Accessed April 11, 2016. <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/node/187444>.





Fig. 7. "5th. Batt. Yorkshire Rgt. Sledmere WW1 Cross." War Memorials Online. Accessed April 11, 2016. <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/node/187444>.





Fig. 8. "5th. Batt. Yorkshire Rgt. Sledmere WW1 Cross." War Memorials Online. Accessed April 11, 2016. <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/node/187444>.



Fig 9. "Waggoners Memorial, Sledmere." York Stories. Accessed February 12, 2016. <http://yorkstories.co.uk/yorkshire-memorials/waggoners-memorial-sledmere/>.



Fig. 10. "Waggoners Memorial, Sledmere." York Stories. Accessed February 12, 2016.  
<http://yorkstories.co.uk/yorkshire-memorials/waggoners-memorial-sledmere/>.



Fig. 11. Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades. Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press, USA, 1995. Accessed April 11, 2016. ProQuest ebrary, 30.



Fig. 12. Williams, Alice. *The Spirit of the Crusaders*. 1922. Bronze. 108.6 cm. National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

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