Sharqiyya

From the Knight on the White Horse to the Lawns of the White House

Barak Rubinstein*

Foreword: A Hollywood Script and its Hidden Meanings

It was an afternoon in Los Angeles. A van containing five young men was parked next to the freeway. In less than an hour, the young men believed, they would be on the road to heaven because of the deadly cargo lying in the back of the vehicle. With them, they hoped, dozens of infidels, children of the sinful American nation, would die. The leader of the group, a former Saudi Arabian, bade farewell to the other men as they left the vehicle to take up their positions. Smiling, he said goodbye: "Try and take as many Crusaders as you can with you…"

Fortunately, this incident never actually occurred. It took place in the television suspense series *Sleeper Cell*, which aired in the US in 2005. The series dealt with the establishment of terror cells for the Global Jihad, affiliated with *Al-Qaeda*, on United States soil. In order to enhance the show's credibility, the *Sleeper Cell* script writers consulted experts on radical Islam, which *Al-Qaeda* represents.

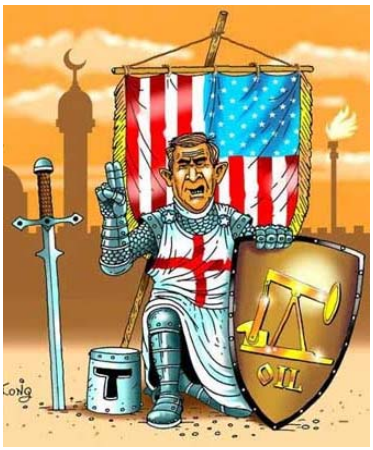

Figure 1

The Crusader in the White House: George W. Bush and the war in Iraq in a 2003 cartoon.

Even so, most of the series viewers, in the US and abroad, did not need academic assistance to understand the comparison the Moslem terrorist's character made between modern-day Americans and medieval Crusaders. Most of them were made aware of this parallel after the president of the United States, George W. Bush (2001-2009), spoke to reporters on the White House lawns on September 16, 2001. During the conversation, Bush compared the western nations' upcoming struggle against global Islamic terrorism to a Crusade.[1] Despite the

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* Barak Rubinstein (barakru@hotmail.com) is a first-year PhD student at the Graduate School of History, Tel Aviv University. His article on the modern historiography of the Islamic aspects of the Crusades was published in the 17th issue of *Jama'a* (2009).

fact that this comparison was later excused as a "slip of tongue," it was heavily criticized all over the world by opponents of the Bush regime. The comparison had provided them with proof that it was imperialistic and warmongering, motivated by greed, Messianic-Christian values, and a hatred of Islam (figure 1). Most likely, at least some of the *Sleeper Cell* viewers were already introduced to the American-Crusader parallel in the late 1990s, after being exposed to the militant declarations of the heads of Al-Qaeda and other Islamic terrorist movements. Spokesmen for these groups, such as Usāma bin Lāden, had back then begun to warn of the existential "Neo-Crusader" threat that Israel and the Western Christian countries posed to the Islamic nation. They called upon all Moslems to join the "Jihad against the Crusaders and the Zionists."[2]

It is worth noting that the Israelis – the apparent partners of the Americans in these new "Crusades" – have already for a long time been exposed to such comparisons. It started long before the current struggle between the radical Islamic movements and the western societies. This started when the state of Israel was established. Israelis have become accustomed to Arab statesmen, terrorists, religious figures and secular intellectuals using terms containing "Crusader" connotations to describe the struggle between Israel and its neighbors. These figures have spoken about the almost perfect territorial overlap between the modern "Zionist entity" and the "Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem." They have compared the causes which led to the establishment of the two countries (messianic revival, massive immigration, support of western powers and dissension on the Muslim-Arab side). Finally, they hoped for the rise of local leaders to reconstruct the victories of the sultan Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Al-Ayyūbi (1169-1193) and the Mamluk sultan Baybars (1260-1277) over the kingdom of Jerusalem.

These facts lead to two conclusions. The first is that the European-Christian presence in the Mediterranean's eastern basin as part of the Crusades' framework during the years 1098-1291 left a deep scar on the consciousness of the Islamic nations – a scar that has yet to heal. The second is that the Muslims' fear in recent generations of Crusades' attacks is not just the result of Persecution Paranoia, but actually pretty justified. The responsibility for this fear lies on the shoulders of western statesmen and military leaders. It appears as though they have not stopped driving towards reconquering the Crusader territories, which used to be part of the Levant. Bush's statement in 2001 is an example of this. Another similar utterance is the declaration attributed to the British general Edmund Allenby that the British conquest of Jerusalem in November 1917 is the "completion of the wars of the Crusades."

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1 The transcript of the speech can be found at: http://www.lossless-audio.com/usa/index0.php?page=1438852368.htm.

2 "Naṣ Bayān Al-Jabha Al-Islāmīyya Al-'Ālamīyya Li-Jihād Al-Yahūd W'al Ṣalībīyyin," *Al-Quds Al-'Arabi*, February 23, 1998, p. 3.

Despite the fact that there is plenty of historical evidence to support these conclusions, both of them rely on a faulty and inaccurate premise. The assumption is that the current Crusader imagery has not changed in any meaningful way over the past thousand years – both on the Western-Christian side and on the Muslim side.

This article presents an alternative view – a view which was already introduced in the last decade by a number of western historians focusing on the period between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. It was during this period that all of the current imagery on the Crusades and Crusading was redesigned and even reinvented. In addition, I will argue that the process of giving modern meanings to the Crusades' vocabulary started in the Christian European countries hundreds of years before it began in the Middle East. However, surprisingly, despite the time gap, the discourse surrounding the Crusades in both areas draws on similar roots.

The Crusades: When, Where, Why and How Many?

Before analyzing the development of the modern discourse on the Crusades, it is necessary to deal with the debate surrounding the definition of that movement. This dispute has existed for a long time in academic circles and reflects the wider world surrounding it.[3] One group of modern historians provides a minimalist definition to the Crusades: the Crusades were a series of Christian Western European military campaigns conducted between 1095 (Pope Urban II speech at Clermont) and 1291 (the conquest of Crusader controlled Acre by the Mamluks). The Crusades' declared purpose was to liberate Jerusalem from the Muslims and to fortify the Christian hold on the city. Those who champion this definition count six to eight primary crusades as well as a few secondary ones. This number is currently universally accepted.[4]

On the opposite side stand historians who belong to a "pluralist" school of thought. According to them the Crusades were initiatives directed by the Holy See or sadly by those who received his blessing. They were directed against anyone the pope defined as an enemy of the faith. Therefore, the Crusades were not limited to the Muslim kingdoms in Egypt, Syria and Anatolia during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The crusades were also

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[3] For further information see: Giles Constable, "Introduction: The Historiography of the Crusades," in: Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, eds., ***The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*** (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), pp. 12-14. Christopher Tyerman, ***The Invention of the Crusades*** (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp.99-103.

[4] This "traditional" method of counting is even accepted in Arab states, as can be seen from studying the history textbooks, which are used by the state educational systems. These books are described in: Matthias Determann, "The Crusades in Arab School Textbooks," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 19, № 2 (2008), pp. 204-205.

directed against Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa from the eleventh century to the sixteenth century, pagan nations in the Baltic sea from the eleventh century to the thirteenth century, Ottomans in South Eastern Europe from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century and against a variety of Christian cults who refused to accept the authority of Rome. Jonathan Riley-Smith, one of the leading pluralistic historians today, states that "The last Crusade league was the Holy League, which began the recovery of the Balkans from the Turks between 1684 and 1699." According to him, after 1699 there were no more "real" crusades (i.e. sponsored by the pope).[5]

The "Birth" of the Crusader on the White Horse: Critical Romanticism and Imperialistic Admiration

Riley-Smith's choice to position the end of the Crusades at the date the lengthy war between the Ottomans and their Christian neighbors was concluded in 1699 is not coincidental. According to him, the weakening of the Ottoman military threat against central Europe allowed leaders and intellectuals across the continent to doff the Crusader armor that they had been wearing for centuries. This allowed them to transform the Crusades from a role model in the struggle of life and death against the Islamic world into a historical issue, which belonged to the distant past. The fading attraction of the Crusades in the eighteenth century was also due to the cultural climate which was developing in the western half of Europe during the Age of Enlightenment. The noteworthy authors of this age, David Hume (1711-1776), Denis Diderot (1713-1784) and Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) proudly carried the standards of scientific rationalism and free thought. Consequently, these thinkers viewed the Crusades as an unpleasant reminder of the religious zealotry and the brutality that the church and society demonstrated during the "dark" middle ages (as they phrased it). They viewed the movement as a factor that "checked rather than forwarded the maturity of Europe."[6]

The "long" nineteenth century (usually defined as the period of 1789-1914) was the turn of the counter movement to the negative views held by the Age of Enlightenment's intellectuals on the Crusades. This response was backed by some of the central ideas for the history of that century in Europe: Romanticism, nationalism and imperialism. Starting from the end of the eighteenth century, the Romantic wave had washed over the literature, poetry, painting, sculpting and architecture in Western Europe. This movement carried within it a deep longing for the apparently simple pre-

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[5] Jonathan Riley-Smith, ***The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*** (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 1.

[6] Tyerman, pp. 111-113.

industrial past and a preference of the emotion and inclination over dry rationalism. A marked component of Romanticism was Medievalism – the tendency to idealize and mythologize the medieval European society. The community was portrayed as guided by ideals, such as courage, loyalty, honor and religious obedience. For many artists, these ideals were manifested in their purest form in the images of the valiant knight on the white horse and the gentle god-fearing monk. The merging of these two characters in the eleventh century, it was claimed, led to the creation of the most medieval hero of all – the Crusader who fought in the name of god.

This Romantic fashion of writing about the holy warriors and their journeys to Jerusalem is identified to this day with the works of the Scottish author Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). Scott featured the Crusaders prominently in four of his popular historical novels, describing them as brave, fierce warriors. Yet, as someone who was born during the height of the Age of Enlightenment Scott did not hesitate to judge the Crusaders harshly – he would portray them as ignorant, aggressive, arrogant and greedy. He heavily criticized their behavior also by contrasting it with the noble actions of their Muslim enemies, whose leader was the noble Ṣalāḥ ad-DīnAl- Ayyūbi. For example, in his best selling novel, *The Talisman*, the Sultan is portrayed as a gentleman and even as the perfect knight.[7] This Romantic-critical approach towards the crusaders left a deep impression on generations of popular western writers and academics, including the Scottish orientalists Stanley Lane-Poole and Sir Hamilton A. R. Gibb.[8] This writing, as will be described later on, contributed much towards the development of the methods of thought surrounding the period of the Crusades in the Middle East.

At the same time, political and social elites across Europe attempted to utilize the renewed nostalgic embracing of the Crusader past to design founding national myths and to enhance existing ones. This is how with the encouragement of royalty, educators (both religious and secular) and artists, cultural rituals began to grow around local Crusader heroes who were "nationalized," such as Richard the Lionheart (1189-1199) in Britain, King

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7 Robert Irwin, "Saladin and the Third Crusade: A Case Study in Historiography and the Historical Novel," in Michael Bentley, ed., ***Companion to Historiography*** (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 139-152; Riley Smith, pp. 65-66; Tyerman p. 114; Elizabeth Siberry, ***The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusades in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*** (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 10-13.

8 Stanley Lane-Poole, ***Saladin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*** (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1898), p. 397. It is said about Gibb that he would recommend to his students to read Scott's writings, because according to him they were important tools for understanding Islamic history. Albert Hourani, "Hamilton Alexander Roskeen Gibb," in C. Edmund Bosworth, ed., ***A Century of British Orientalists, 1902-2001*** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 157.

Louis IX "The Saint" (1226-1270) in France, Emperor Frederick I "Barbarosa" (1152-1190) in Germany etc.[9]

There were certain groups who "discovered," and to a certain extent invented, the glorious Crusades' past of the European nations. These groups also made an effort to connect that past to the present, which they viewed as even grander. Joseph François Michaud (1767-1839) played a central role in these efforts. Michaud was a devout Catholic and ardent supporter of the post-Napoleonic French royalty. His multi-volumed work on the Crusades was first published in 1822. As opposed to Scott, Michaud, like many other orientalists in his generation, thought that medieval Islam was an inferior backward civilization. Therefore, instead of blaming the Crusaders for not imitating their tolerant peace-loving Muslim rivals, he praised them for striving to bring the "light" of civilization to the "dark" Islamic expanse. In addition, Michaud repressed the fact that the Frank settlement in the Levant during 1098-1291 failed. He rather chose to emphasize the fact that this was the first significant attempt by Europeans to found settlements in "primitive" countries across the sea. In Michaud's view, this attempt was a harbinger of the modern Colonialist enterprises and the continued justified rise of Western civilization to a position of world hegemony.[10]

During the "long" nineteenth century, Michaud's research was published many times and translated into different languages. His teachings were copied and refined by an endless amount of writers, both academics and non-academics. These entrenched in the Western European public the understanding that the Crusaders played a vital role in laying the groundwork for the rise of the white man – they were "guides" and role models for the modern western empire builders. These assumptions were quickly included in the animated political discourse on imperialism and the "exotic" and "backward" natures of the lands targeted as imperial enterprises. It was for this reason that politicians, soldiers, academics, journalists and clergymen defined Britain and France's military and state campaigns of in Africa and Asia as a continuation of the Crusades. Those that participated in these endeavors were heirs to the national Crusader heroes. Examples of this can be found from the conquest of Algiers (1830), to the crisis in Mt. Lebanon (1860), and finally with the capture of Jerusalem (1917).[11] These actual campaign descriptions were followed up by a series of unrealized initiatives for the holy land's liberation from the claws of the "Turks" (i.e. Muslims) and

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[9] For a detailed list containing the names of local Crusader heroes, who were heavily praised in Scandinavia, the Iberian peninsula and Central Europe see: Riley-Smith, p. 54

[10] Tyerman, pp. 116-117. For further emphasis, see: Joseph-François Michaud, ***Histoire des Croisades*** / (Paris: Furne, 1857), Vol. 4, pp. 198-203.

[11] Adam Knobler, "Holy Wars, Empires, and the Portability of the Past: The Modern Uses of Medieval Crusades," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 48, № 2 (2006), pp. 296-297; Siberry, pp. 26, 74, 82-86, 313-315.

its restoration to Christian hands. These initiatives were raised by a variety of British and French public figures – including high ranking political and economic functionaries.[12]

The efforts to apply the "Crusader legacy" and the "chivalrous values" to modern western intellectual environment were not limited to "marketing" state and military initiatives. From the end of the eighteenth century in North America and Western Europe, demands were beginning to be made that metaphorical Crusades should be conducted. These were intended to redeem the Christians' souls and improve the society in which they lived. Church organizations (of different denominations), social unions and political parties attached the "Crusade" label to the struggles for the elimination of prostitution, alcoholism, slavery and illiteracy; the label was added to suffrage efforts and public relations campaigns to increase the support towards military endeavors, which were being conducted for a "higher purpose."[13]

The "Return" of the Crusader to the Middle East: from Cultural Curiosity to Political Utilitarianism

Evidence of the influence of these trends can be found in the travel journals of western tourists who visited the shores of the Levant in growing numbers towards the end of the nineteenth century. These tourists are often mentioned in academic research on the "orientalist paradigm" because of their prejudices and twisted viewpoints regarding the physical and human vistas of the "lands of the east." In the historiographic research of the Crusades, these tourists receive focus also because of the literature they read in preparation for their visits or during them. These materials almost always included both the Bible (viewed by them as an updatedtour guide for the Christian traveler in the Holy Land), as well as the works of Scott, Michaud and their successors.[14]

The German Kaiser Wilhelm II (reigned 1888-1918), was one of the more famous tourists in the Levant towards the end of the nineteenth century. In his youth he was exposed to the novels of Scott, and he viewed himself as heir to the Crusader German emperors Frederick I and Frederick II, as evident in October 1898, when Wilhelm staged his official entry into Old Jerusalem dressed as a knight of the Crusader Teutonic order (most of the members of this order were ethnically German). A month later he conducted

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[12] Siberry, pp. 66-67, 76-82.

[13] For a variety of examples of such representations of the Crusades and Crusading in Western Europe in the nineteenth century in Britain see: Siberry pp. 104-111.

[14] Among the tourists who reported on the Holy Land through the use of Crusader images were the Prince of Wales (later King) Edward VII, and the two sons of the American author Mark Twain. Siberry pp. 64-70

a similar publicized event in Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn's burial compound in Damascus, who he referred to as "one of the most chivalrous rulers in history." He even donated from his own pocket towards the compound's renovation.

It is worth noting that Wilhelm's visit in the Levant was more than just an innocent act of pilgrimage. The visit was intended to symbolize the cementing of the bonds between the German Reich and Ottoman Empire, which was ruled by the Sultan Abdülhamit II (1876-1909). This Sultan, the members of his court and quite a few of his educated subjects were capable of understanding the meanings lying behind the Kaiser's pompous gestures in Jerusalem and Damascus. However their understanding was not only fed from vague collective memories of the Crusades passed down throughout the generations, but also from exposure to Romantic-critical literature in the style of Scott and Romantic-imperialistic literature in the style of Michaud.

In order to explain where this knowledge came from we need to focus again on the period of time from the end of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century. As previously mentioned, during most of this period the Crusades were considered a central component (both positive and negative) in the political and intellectual discourse of Christian Europe. In Islamic countries the picture was quite different. While fears occasionally arose on the Mediterranean's Eastern Coast that the "Franks" would return,[15] the ruling elites of the Middle East devoted most of their attention towards handling the infidels from the east – the Mongols. And only later did they turn their attention towards internal Islamic conflicts (e.g. between the Ottomans and the Safavids) and conflicts with the neighboring Christian powers.

Researchers such as Emmanuel Sivan and Carol Hillenbrand associate the beginning of the penetration of the topic of the Crusades into Middle Eastern dialogue, or its renewed entrance with the growing exposure of local writers to the literary products of European discourse. Namık Kemal (1840-1888), for example, was a prominent thinker for the *Young Turks* movement who spent a number of years in Western Europe. In 1882 he became the first Muslim of the modern era to publish a biography of the sultan Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn. One of the reasons he wrote the biography was to criticize the Anti-Muslim messages found in Michaud's research, which had been translated into Ottoman Turkish. Also, in the final decade of the nineteenth century, some plays about Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn were performed in Egypt, and many essays written by Georgie Zaydān, the Lebanese born Christian author and publicist, were printed. It is possible to detect in all of them influences from novels, such as Scott's *The Talisman*.[16]

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[15] Haim Gerber, *Remembering and Imagining Palestine: Identity and Nationalism from the Crusades to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 64-66.

[16] Carole Hillenbrand, ***The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*** (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 592-593; Albert Hourani, ***Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939*** (London: Oxford

The focus on the Crusades, which had started due to the efforts of "mediators" from the fields of historiography, art and journalism, soon became towards the turn of the century an integral part of the general discourse on the current political and state affairs. The main reasons for this focus were the increasing defeats of Middle Eastern societies by European imperialist forces and the expressions of pride in the heritage of the Crusades made by some of the supporters of imperialistic expansion, which were described previously. An early manifestation of the politicization of the local discussion on the Crusades can be found in the original Arab history book on their origins, published in 1899 by the Egyptian 'Ali Al-Ḥarīri. In the introduction, Al-Ḥarīri states that "the sovereigns of Europe nowadays attack our Sublime Empire in a manner bearing a great resemblance to the deeds of these people in bygone times," and "Europe is now carrying out a Crusade against us in the form of a political campaign." Alongside identifying the imperialistic enemy as "modern Crusaders," Arab writers were quick to "recruit" the local hero, Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn, to their side. This was because the sultan had already been crowned in the Romantic literature as the one who was most suited to ward off the imperialistic threat.[17]

The growing number of different ways on viewing the Crusades during the long nineteenth century can be seen in Britain's participation in the closing event of this era – World War I (1914-1918). During the war and after it, the British authorities made an effort to compare the war to a metaphorical crusade intended to save the Western democracies from the dangers of German militarism. For example, the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd-George, referred to his collection of speeches from the war period as the Great Crusade (figure 2). On the same token, the physical conquest of Jerusalem towards the end of the war enhanced the sense of connection of many British people to the medieval Crusaders, and their Romantic, national and imperialistic legacy. One of these people was Mark Sykes, who shaped British policy in the Middle East, and after he died was commemorated with a Crusader statue. Nevertheless, this achievement encouraged many high-ranking military commanders, among them general Allenby, to attempt to conceal the connection to the Crusades in order to calm Muslim hostility. Ironically, Allenby was not the one who said that conquering Jerusalem

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University Press, 1962), pp. 246, 277. For examples of Zaydān's treatment of the Crusader movement, and its heroes see the historical articles and the "editor's response" to readers letters, which were printed in his newspaper *Al-Hilāl*: "As-Sultān Salāh Ad-Dīn Al-Ayyūbi," *Al-Hilāl,* February 15, 1894, p. 372; "Rikārdūs Kalb Al-Asad, Malik Inklatera," *Al-Hilāl*, March 3, 1897, pp. 481-488; "As-Sultān Salāh Ad-Dīn Wa-Mamālīkuhu," *Al-Hilāl,* February 1, 1910, pp. 300-301; "Salāh Ad-Dīn Al-Ayyūbi Wa-Rikārdūs Kalb Al-Asad: Ma Tushābihā Bihi Wa-Ma Ikẖtalafā Fihi," *Al-Hilāl*, June 1, 1914, pp. 643-652.

[17] For example, in 1911 a caricature appeared in the Beirut newspaper, *Al-Himara*, in which Salah Ad-Din is seen expelling Jewish land purchasers from the Jezreel valley. Emanuel Sivan, *Arab Political myths* (Tel Aviv: Am-Oved, 1988), pp. 16-20; Knobler, pp. 320-321.

marks "the completion of the Crusades" (a quote mentioned at the beginning of this article). This saying was attributed to him, most likely after the fact, by Arab writers, who were recently made aware of the enormous impact the Crusader imagery has on the awareness.[18]

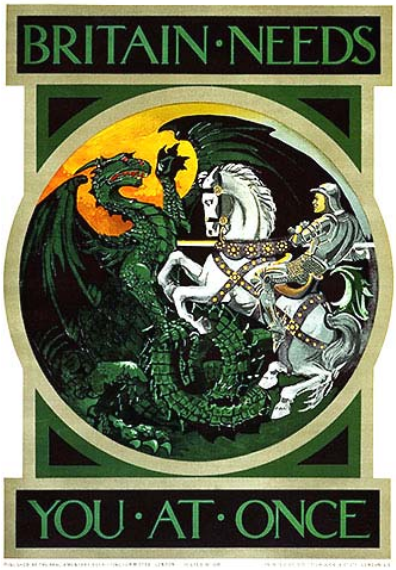

Figure 2

The knight on the white horse: St. George, as a medieval Crusader is going to fight in World War I, in a British propaganda flyer from 1915.
Source: http://www.world-war-pictures.com/british-war-picture/wargb004.html

The Twentieth Century: the Penitent Crusader and the Muslim and Arab Counterattack

This is what led up to the period between the end of World War I and the middle of the twentieth century. It is a period that marks the beginning of the

[18] For more examples of the West treating World War I as some type of "Crusade" see: Siberry, pp. 87-103. One of the cases of this is the way Thomas E. Lawrence's (Lawrence of Arabia) actions were treated as "the final Crusade." On the one hand, Lawrence fought on the side of Christian Britain and France against the rulership of the Ottomans and Muslim, in what appeared as a modern reenacting of the ancient Crusades. On the other hand, his joining the Arab Revolt movement and his call for Arab independence were portrayed as his conducting a metaphorical Crusade in favor of the principle of freedom of expression and against tyranny. Regarding the likelihood of Allenby's statement about "the end of the Crusades" being a forgery, see: Knobler, p. 316, 322.

latest phase in the development of the modern approach towards the Crusades. The main attribute of this phase in Western discourse is the removal of the positive Romantic aura which had encompassed the Crusaders in the previous phase. It is worth noting that early signs of this trend already appeared in the nineteenth century,[19] but it was truly in vogue after World War I. This is demonstrated in the writings of historians who under the influence of the Annales school of thought emptied the Crusades of all ideological content, and analyzed it according to social and economic parameters – and later according to demographic and ecological ones. On the one hand, these historians presented the movement as a proto-colonial enterprise, and in that respect were similar to the pro-imperialist writers of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, they showed that the movement's true purpose was a violent takeover by the residents of Northern Europe over the rich developed Mediterranean expanse – and thus brought back into the spotlight the critical tone of the Age of Enlightenment thinkers.[20]

This form of interpretation became the dominant one in Western discourse during the twentieth century. It left its mark on a new breed of Arab intellectuals and politicians who championed Pan-Arab Nationalism (*Qawmīyya*) or state particularism (*Watanīyya*). As one article from the mid-1920s demonstrates, these figures enthusiastically accepted the western historians' claims that "from the outset it was not religious thinking that guided the Crusades, but rather the desire for conquests and political control."[21] They also warmly adopted the description that the "West" possesses an almost eternal desire to steal areas from the "Arab East," plunder its treasures and copy its innovations. According to them the West did this once by falsely representing Jesus, and now by partitioning the area into artificial countries, supporting the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine and aiding it.[22] This description appealed to the Arab nationalists for two reasons: it flattered their positive self-image as being culturally and materialistically superior to the West in the past, and it revealed that the Crusades' aggression is the reason for the change of roles in the new age.

In the second half of the twentieth century, after the Colonial powers left the area, the propaganda continued and the court historians of the Pan-Arab regimes began to create analogies between their old (Britain and France) and new (Israel and the US) enemies and the medieval Crusaders. In addition, they frequently compared between the ruling leaders (particularly Gamāl

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[19] For examples of nineteenth century nineteenth century criticisms of the attempts to magnify and glorify the Crusaders, see: Siberry, pp. 85, 165-166.

[20] Riley-Smith p. 67

[21] See for example: "Fikrat Al-Ḥurūb Al-Ṣalībīyya: Bayna Ash-Sharq Wa-l Gharb," *Al-Hilāl*, April 1, 1926, pp. 709-714.

[22] See for example: Ḥabīb Jāmāti, "Al-Ḥurūb Al-Ṣalībīyya: Hal Kānat Dīnīyya Aw Siāsīyya?," *Al-Hilāl*, January 1, 1935, pp. 337-340.

'Abd an-Nāṣer in Egypt, Ṣaddām Ḥusayn in Iraq and Ḥāfeẓ al-Asad in Syria) and Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn, who became established as a universal, Arab and Muslim of the first order. This showed itself as a tendency to focus on the rulers' biographies (for example, emphasizing the fact that the Ṣaddām Ḥusayn's birthplace, Tikrīt, was also Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn's birthplace, and the similarity between 'Abd an-Nāṣer's initiative to unify Egypt and Syria in 1958 to their unification in the Sultan's time) and on changes in the public arena (placing a statue of Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīnin the center of Damascus, and naming one of the governorates in Iraq after him).[23] The authorities' message behind these analogies was clear: To beat the "Franks" again at the "second round," which had just begun, it was necessary for the population to stand behind the current regime. It is worth noting that this is very similar to the Pro-Crusader rhetoric which the European powers employed up to the beginning of the twentieth century to increase the grassroots support for the governments and their Colonialist policy.

In the past three decades with the rise of radical Islam and the gradual fading of the national movements in the Arab world, the ideological-religious content of the discourse on the Crusades and the "New Crusading" has been reemphasized. The harbinger of this change was none other than the Egyptian, Sayyid Quṭb (1906-1966), a spiritual father of the current radical wave. Quṭb identified the "Crusader spirit," fundamentally religious and camouflaged by Geo-strategic and economic considerations, in every attack on Muslims by non- Muslims throughout history. Despite this change, the radical Muslim's formula for foiling the new Crusader invasions was overall the same as what was suggested by the previous national and anti-imperialistic writers and speakers before them.[24]

While the use of Crusader imagery as a tool for attacking the West had significantly increased in the Middle East since World War II, a similar process was also going on at the same time in the Western countries. The horrors that accompanied the traumatic World War, along with the liberalism, Fascism, Communism and decolonization, which the European powers experienced following it, awakened in the public and Western academia a deep distaste for imperialistic wars in the name of ideology. The Crusades, whose name was connected during the two previous centuries with imperialism and ideological violence, were increasingly criticized, sometimes to the point of utter disgrace. As a result, it was not uncommon to

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[23] Sivan, pp. 32-33, 37-38, 126-127; Ofra Bengio, ***Iraq shel Saddam*** (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University/Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1996, in Hebrew), pp. 105, 136, 208; Moshe Ma'oz, ***Assad, Ha-Sfinx Shel Damesek*** (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1988, in Hebrew), pp. 34, 55-56.

[24] Hillenbrand, pp. 600-602. An example of the prominence of the religious-Islamic rhetoric at the expense of the national-Arab rhetoric can be found in the responses to the American invasion of Iraq in 2003; See also: Danny Rubinstein, "Fatwa Neged 'Masa Hatslav' Shel Hanassi Bush," *Ha'aretz*, 23.3.2003 (in Hebrew), p. B3

encounter in recent decades researchers who viewed the Crusades as "superiority movement of violent white supremacist colonialism," and newspaper articles that opened with the words: "If there is one thing that everybody knows about the Crusades, it is that they were a Bad Thing."[25]

However, certain communities continued to view the term "Crusade" in a positive light even as they conducted a severe examination of the embarrassing, bloody Crusading past. This occurred every time the word "Crusade" was removed from its historical context and was vaguely defined as a "struggle for a higher cause." The result is that most of the dictionaries of the English language published in the last century contain two definitions for the term "Crusade": one historical (negative), and the other metaphorical (positive).[26]

The historical process which has been described up to this point covered the evolution of certain views about the Crusades in Western countries. It also reviewed the partial integration of these views in the existing Arab-Muslim discourse while adapting them to the local political and cultural needs. The beginnings of a reverse process can be detected from the end of the twentieth century, which has intensified ever since the 9/11 attacks in the US. It seems as though the frequent verbal attacks by radical Muslims again the "Neo-Crusader" West have recently stirred some western writers in turning this expletive against their accusers. These writers now choose to view the "Anti-Crusades" Jihad campaign of Bin-laden and his ilk as comparable to the original Crusades conducted by the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. Of course, this comparison is based on the current consensus that these historical campaigns are worthy of being condemned.[27]

Conclusion

Examining the changes in interpretation over the last two hundred years of the term "Crusade" and associated words can contribute much towards understanding the true intentions of those who currently employ "Crusader" and "Anti-Crusader" rhetoric. On the one hand, when the American president, George W. Bush compared in 2001 the "global war on terror" to a Crusade, he was speaking, most likely, as an Evangelist and a "Reborn Christian," and was referring to a campaign to correct the wrongs of the

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[25] John Ward, "The First Crusade as Disaster," in *Medieval Studies in Honour of Avrom Saltman* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1995), p. 255, as quoted in Constable, p. 3; Daniel Johnson, "How to Think About the Crusades," *Commentary*, Vol. 120, № 1 (2005), pp. 46-51.

[26] For example see: "Crusade," in William A. Neilson (Ed.), *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language* (Springfield, Mass.: G. and C. Merriam, 1944), p. 636.

[27] See for example: Martin Kramer, "Islam's Coming Crusade," *The Jerusalem Report*, Vol. 16, № 24 (March 20, 2006), p. 47; Loretta Napoleoni, "Modern Jihad: the Islamist Crusade," *SAIS Review*, Vol. 23, № 2 (2003), pp. 53-69.

world. On the other hand, Bush's opponents in the West and Arab countries were shocked by his words because they had gotten used to associating "Crusade" with imperialistic initiatives based on material greed. On the other hand, the man to whom Bush's words were intended, Usāma bin Lāden, had declared in 1998 a "Jihad against the Zionists and Crusaders" out of a religious perspective that the Crusades are a component of an ongoing Christian-Islamic confrontation (a view that is not fundamentally different from that of the Arab regimes against which bin Lāden originally struggled). Finally, there are some intellectuals in the west who recently pointed out that bin Lāden and his ilk are the executors of an "Islamic Crusade" similar in style to the original Crusades.

What is common to all four types of speakers is the presentation of a certain interpretation of the medieval Crusades as the "correct" interpretation, and the attempt to understand through it the global reality of the past two hundred years. The irony is that these interpretations were themselves born from the events and trends that shaped this time period, and they were applied anachronistically to the Middle Ages. Therefore the multi-faceted image of the Crusader knight, who climbed onto his horse at the beginning of the nineteenth century with the help of writers, such as Scott and Michaud, continues to ride today in the pages of the speeches given at the White House and in the pages of the speeches of those who seek to harm it.

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