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The Last Crusade: British Crusading Rhetoric During the Great War

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A thesis  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of History  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts in History

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by  
Seth Walker  
May 2020

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Dr. Brian Maxson, Chair  
Dr. John Rankin  
Dr. Stephen Fritz

Keywords: Crusade, Britain, The Great War, Richard the Lionheart

## ABSTRACT

The Last Crusade: British Crusading Rhetoric During the Great War

by

Seth Walker

During the Great War many in British society started to utilize Crusading language and rhetoric to describe their experiences during the war. Those utilizing the rhetoric ranged from soldiers, journalists, politicians, to clergymen. The use of Crusading rhetoric tended to involve British nationalism, the region of Palestine, anti-Germanism, and more. Adding to the complexity, the soldiers' and civilians' rhetoric differed greatly between the two groups. While the soldiers focused on their personal experiences during the war, and often compared themselves to the British crusaders of old serving under Richard the Lionheart. The civilians had a less personal approach, and a far greater tendency to use the rhetoric against the German Empire. The focus of this study will be to examine who utilized crusading rhetoric, why they used it, and the contrast between the soldiers and civilians who used it.

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## DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this thesis to my friends and family who gave me the encouragement to push onward. To name all of those who have helped me would be a thesis in of itself, but I wish to make note of at least a few. My fellow students, friends, at East Tennessee State University come to the top of the list. Jarred Begley, Keri Blair, and Kristen Wiggins have been a constant source of encouragement and companionship since starting the program together. Ryan Barker helped me develop my skills as a researcher, and beyond that provided me with inspiration to continue along my academic career. While I cannot name them all additional thanks must go to my friends in and outside the program. Josh Swanson, Kieffer Yearout, Dakota Mullins, Cavender Sutton, Briggs Evans, Luke Peace, Erika Barker, Barbara Collins, and Emily Lu are but a few that I owe thanks. Finally, I would like to thank my family, without whom I would not have been able to complete this program. My sister, Mariah Walker, in particular has put up with my many historical ramblings with an exemplary amount of patience.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

During the Great War, many within British society began to use crusading rhetoric for various means and ends. These stretched from propaganda against the Central Powers, to rally the populace's morale, and to conceptualize wartime experiences in lands far away from the British Isles. Those who used this rhetoric ranged from politicians, soldiers, clergymen, and journalists. These various groups employed the rhetoric even though the actual crusades ended centuries before, and the fact the British involvement was mostly contained to the Third and Ninth Crusades. Questions naturally arise then about why and who specifically decided to use this rhetoric. Britain was already progressing towards a secular society, and most of its enemies, except for the Ottoman Empire, were, in fact, other predominately Christian nations. Yet, despite these numerous potential issues tied to the use of crusading rhetoric, a significant number of men used the rhetoric both about Britain itself and relation to its foes abroad, including against the German empire.

The historiography on crusading rhetoric stretches back several decades, but several opportunities for expansion still exist. While historians have examined some of the rhetoric, much of it has been ignored in favor of broad generalizations. Whilst many historians have analyzed the clergy's use of the rhetoric, the soldiers and politicians used have seen far less attention. The soldiers, in particular, need a new evaluation, as many who have examined their works primarily do so only through the lens of a select few soldiers, and even then with little depth surrounding how exactly the soldiers used the rhetoric. Journalists have likewise received scarce attention in their utilization of crusading rhetoric. Though newspapers have proven a boon to many historians work on the topic, papers have widely only been used as an additional source

for the clergy's use of the rhetoric, in contrast to how it could be used to examine another segment of British society directly.

The research on crusading rhetoric by the British in the Great War stems back chiefly to Albert Marrin. Marrin's *The Last Crusade: The Church of England in the First World War* analyzed topics such as the Church of England's role in the war. Published in 1974, the book was one of the first major books to examine the crusading rhetoric from clergymen during the Great War. Clergyman in England engaged in ideas inspired by the crusades of old. For example, Marrin noted how sermons "dealt with the wholesome attitudes and the spiritual benefits to be derived from lending money to the nation."<sup>1</sup> This strikes a similar idea built upon when the Catholic Clergy began trying to fund the crusades. Another direct comparison is how some clergy argued that to die for England on the battlefield was to earn martyrdom.<sup>2</sup> For an even more direct connection, Marrin stated that many Anglicans, including layman such as Lord Halifax, called for a crusade or holy war against Germany. This type of rhetoric goes beyond Palestine and shows how, for at least some British crusading rhetoric remained alive and well. Marrin's focus on the clergy established a precedent on focusing on the clergy's use of the rhetoric during the Great War. His work extensively analyzed the apocalyptic crusading rhetoric of the war that was quite prevalent at the time. Sadly, Marrin's focus on the clergy had two apparent drawbacks for the establishment of historiography on crusading rhetoric. First, while Marrin did examine the crusading rhetoric of the clergy, it was far from his primary concern. Marrin fundamentally wanted to show how the Church of England handled the war and how it changed in response to it. Second, the focus on clergy also meant that historians ignored the

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<sup>1</sup>. Albert Marrin, *The Last Crusade the Church of England in the First World War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1974), 199.

<sup>2</sup>. *Ibid.*, 213.

other social groups who utilized crusading rhetoric in favor of a more thorough examination of the Church of England.

Alan Wilkinson's *The Church of England and the First World War* was one of the first works to interact with the work of Albert Marrin. In fact, Wilkinson, in his introduction to his book, stated that "Inevitably both Professor Marrin and I have traversed some of the same ground, though naturally our assessments and selection of material sometimes differ."<sup>3</sup> In contrast to Marrin, and despite the book's title, Wilkinson took a far broader look at Christianity during the war. Wilkinson analyzed not just the Anglican clergy of the Church of England, but also commonly examined the other branches of Christianity in England and Germany. This broader scope comes at the cost of Marrin's focus, but the book still offers valuable insight into the minds of the clergy, and occasionally the soldiers, during the war. Wilkinson also chose to spend more time examining the Church of England after the war, whereas Marrin spent more time laying the backdrop of the Church of England going into the Great War. While Wilkinson's work does not offer as much on the crusading rhetoric as Marrin, it does examine a good deal of the opposition to the utilization of crusading rhetoric. With two historians now focused on clergy's use of crusading rhetoric, subsequent studies began to try and expand to cover more broadly crusading rhetoric as a whole, rather than just the clergy's role in the Great War.

Historian Elizabeth Siberry's work *The New Crusaders Images of the Crusades in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* examined directly the crusading rhetoric employed by the British during World War One. Siberry argued in her book that "The most marked use of the crusade image in relation to contemporary warfare was, however, to be found during the First

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<sup>3</sup>. Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War*, (Cambridge, England: The Lutterworth Press, 2014),

World War.”<sup>4</sup> The most significant source of this crusading image Siberry referred to “were inevitably strengthened by the capture of Jerusalem and Allenby’s triumphant entry to the Holy City on 11 December 1917.”<sup>5</sup> This central idea of Palestine’s direct connection strengthening the connotations to the crusades has served as much of the basis for subsequent works in the historiography. Siberry focused a good deal of time on Anglican Church leaders, following in the footsteps of Albert Marrin, and some of the soldiers’ personal accounts. Siberry noted that many within Britain were critical of the crusading image, but contended that “the crusade image had a widespread and international currency, not only amongst those who could romanticize in safety from afar but also with participants in some of the bloodiest theaters of war.”<sup>6</sup> This allowed the clergy to reach soldiers at the front lines, who could relate to the crusaders who also fought in Palestine. Siberry’s work deserves much credit for laying the foundation for a proper focus on crusading rhetoric during the Great War, however it too left a good deal out of the narrative. The book’s macro approach to the topic of crusading rhetoric meant that the Great War could only receive so much detail. While the attention to detail with the clergy was admirable, more time spent on the other groups would have helped broaden the scope of the research on the rhetoric concerning the whole of British society.

The article “The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917–18” by Eitan Bar-Yosef, followed up on Siberry’s work and analyzed the crusading propaganda surrounding the Palestinian Campaign of World War One. Published in 2001, Bar-Yosef’s work focused specifically on the rhetoric surrounding Palestine. Bar-Yosef argued that the capture of

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<sup>4</sup>. Elizabeth Siberry, *The New Crusaders Images of the Crusades in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 87.

<sup>5</sup>. *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>6</sup>. *Ibid.*, 103.

Palestine was unordinary as “Palestine, after all, was unlike any other imperial catch. It was the Holy Land, steeped in religious and historical memories: few seemed more germane than Richard Coeur de Lion’s failure to win Jerusalem.”<sup>7</sup> While Bar-Yosef did acknowledge the importance of Jerusalem and Palestine, the propaganda received a far less positive response. Bar-Yosef, in effect, argued that Palestine itself was too distant to capture the attention of the British public at large. Bar-Yosef summed up his view stating that “the Holy War in Palestine was never more than a side-show of the Holy War in Europe, and the real Promised Land remained Blighty.”<sup>8</sup> In this view, the propaganda was a failed attempt that was hopeless due to the proximity and importance of the Western Front in comparison to the British Isles in World War One. However, Bar-Yosef mostly ignored in his account how crusading rhetoric was applied to the western front as well. While this is quite understandable, given Bar-Yosef’s focus on Palestine, the article at times makes it seem as though the region was the only source of crusading rhetoric. In reality, it was employed far more liberally as both a support for British nationalism and a critique of the German Empire’s foreign policies, handling of the war, and at the most extreme, the German culture itself.

Bar-Yosef published another article relevant to a specific part of the crusading rhetoric titled “Theatre, Masculinity, and Class in the First World War Vivian Gilbert Performs the Last Crusade.” Bar-Yosef’s article focuses far more on analyzing Major Vivian Gilbert, a Broadway actor turned soldier whose autobiography, *The Romance of the Last Crusade: With Allenby to Jerusalem*, used far more crusading rhetoric than most soldiers. Bar-Yosef argued that “Gilbert’s wartime memoir goes further than any other narrative in enhancing the affinity between the

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<sup>7</sup>. Eitan Bar-Yosef, "The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-1918" (*Journal of Contemporary History*, 2001), 88-89.

<sup>8</sup>. *Ibid.*, 109.

Palestine campaign and the Crusades.”<sup>9</sup> Given Bar-Yosef’s impressively tight focus in this article, there is little crossover with the rest of the historiography on crusading rhetoric. That said, given its focus on one of the foremost proponents of crusading rhetoric, it would be hard to ignore the importance of this article to the understanding of British crusading rhetoric. Given the articles’ focus on analyzing the life of Major Vivian Gilbert, it does, however, lack some of the details surrounding the rhetoric itself. By focusing on Gilbert’s experience overall, it is clear what influenced Gilbert in his writings, but the circumstances surrounding the rhetoric itself need expanding upon.

“The Imagined Crusade: The Church of England and the Mythology of Nationalism and Christianity during the Great War” by Shannon Ty Bontrager, published in 2002, sought similar goals to that of Marrin in examining the role of the Church of England World War I, and for this study its role in creating the crusading rhetoric. Bontrager overall argued that the “the Great War and the accompanying nationalistic impulse allowed Anglicans to reclaim English cultural authority and social power through media images and texts of mythology.”<sup>10</sup> Primarily analyzing Anglican journals, Bontrager analyzed documents to prove this idea. While promoting a chivalric holy war may have been the goal, Bontrager claimed it ultimately failed as following the war “Instead of religious revival, the pre-war controversies regained their strength and the Church of England lost more authority with each secular victor.”<sup>11</sup> For Bontrager, while the Anglican clergy may have been interested in utilizing crusading rhetoric, the English public at large was drifting away from it. While this argument is not without merit, it does leave out many

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<sup>9</sup>. Eitan Bar-Yosef. “Theatre, Masculinity, and Class in the First World War: Vivian Gilbert Performs the Last Crusade.” (TDR: The Drama Review: A Journal of Performance Studies 58, no. 2 [T222] (2014)), 51.

<sup>10</sup>. Shannon Bontrager, "The Imagined Crusade: The Church of England and the Mythology of Nationalism and Christianity during the Great War", (*Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, December 2002), 775.

<sup>11</sup>. *Ibid.*, 767.

journalists who still employed crusading rhetoric during the Great War. While British society was progressing along secular lines, the crusades still had resonance amongst many within the empire.

Michael Snape's *God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars* argues against much of Bontrager's assumptions about the faith of the average of English soldier and public. Snape argued that while British society was beginning to drift away from organized religion as determined by the Anglican clergy, that overall, the average British soldier was still Christian, or at least very familiar with Christian ethics and values. Central to the idea of crusading rhetoric is Snape's argument that "Given the far-reaching influence of the Romantic movement in diffusing neo-chivalric values in nineteenth-century British society, many educated Britons proved highly susceptible to viewing the First World War in terms of a crusade."<sup>12</sup> This separates Snape from Bontrager, and Bar-Yosef as well, who more often than not took to critiquing the appeal of crusading rhetoric to the British public. That said, while the book does take time to analyze some of the crusading rhetoric, it suffers from much of the same problem as Marrin's work. Snape sought to investigate Christianity's influence on British soldiers across both World Wars, and while it very much succeeded, this meant that crusading rhetoric once again took a back seat to the rest of the research. A more narrow focus on the rhetoric itself is needed, so that it can be properly understood.

James E. Kitchen's "'Khaki crusaders': crusading rhetoric and the British Imperial soldier during the Egypt and Palestine campaigns, 1916–18" is one of the more recent articles to cover crusading rhetoric. Kitchen predominantly focused on both political and military sources.

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<sup>12</sup>. Michael Snape, *God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars*, (London; Routledge, 2005), 182.

Kitchen argued that the rhetoric was aimed to draw the public's attention to the Palestinian front, and away from the comparatively less successful Western front. Kitchen's central argument revolves around the idea that soldiers perceived of themselves as crusaders to be ahistorical. Kitchen claimed that while a minority of soldiers did look towards the crusades, that the majority "focused on the Islamic culture that they encountered in the Middle East, demonstrating that a strong vernacular orientalism was present in early twentieth-century British culture."<sup>13</sup> Kitchen came to this conclusion by analyzing primary documents of soldiers who served on the campaign. For Kitchen given the lack of interest in the crusades by the soldiers themselves "It is evident that the home front construction and the post-war reconstruction of the campaign as a crusade were in opposition to the experiences and attitudes of the majority of soldiers who served in Egypt and Palestine, many of whom by mid-1918 were Muslim Indians."<sup>14</sup> Within this context, the crusading propaganda was a failed attempt to enlist support from a populace largely too disinterested to begin with. This is to a degree a counter to Snape's argument. Still, the two do not wholeheartedly disagree, as Snape was keen to point out the upper-class society was more receptive to crusading rhetoric than the overall public. With his interest in attacking the notion that crusading rhetoric appealed to the British; however, he mostly ignored the soldiers who did employ the rhetoric.

*Faith under Fire Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War* by Edward Madigan examines the experiences of the Anglican clergy during World War One. Madigan argues that the clergy perceived the war as an opportunity to turn the tide of religious decline that had begun during the Edwardian era. For crusading rhetoric, this is particularly important as Madigan

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<sup>13</sup>. James Kitchen, "'Khaki Crusaders': Crusading Rhetoric and the British Imperial Soldier During the Egypt and Palestine Campaigns, 1916-18." (*First World War Studies*, October 9, 2010), 141.

<sup>14</sup>. *Ibid.*, 157.

claims, “In their role as clergy-in-uniform, army chaplains were identified as the group who could most effectively spearhead this revival.”<sup>15</sup> This argument is quite similar to the one presented from Bontrager and opposed to the idea of Snape that refuted it. What is clear is that the argument for why the chaplains employed the rhetoric that they used remains highly debated amongst the field. This leaves room for subsequent studies to expand upon precisely what the clergy was hoping to accomplish.

*The Great and Holy War How World War I Became a Religious Crusade* by Philip Jenkins analyzed how the Christian world attempted to turn the conflict into a crusade. Jenkins took a broader focus, he examined the major powers rather just Britain, than writers like Marrin and Wilkinson, but had a sharper focus on crusading themes and rhetoric than other historians. This broader focus is much to the benefit of Jenkins’s work as he can show the interactions between the various nations, and compare how they used their religions for propaganda. Jenkins’s most significant argument surrounding crusading rhetoric draws from how he argues “pastors from all combatant nations implemented something like takfir as they zealously denounced enemy nations as ungodly, unchristian, even as Satan or the Antichrist.”<sup>16</sup> This argument echoes much from Marrin and how he showed the Anglican clergy painting the war. Jenkins also examined the ramifications of the war and the rhetoric employed on the nations after the war. In doing so, Jenkins extended the scope of the research beyond the scope of historians such as Bar-Yosef, who focused on analyzing the immediate consequences of crusading rhetoric.

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<sup>15</sup>. Edward Madigan, *Faith Under Fire Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 27.

<sup>16</sup>. Philip Jenkins, *The Great and Holy War How World War I Became a Religious Crusade*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2014), 97

To the credit of Jenkins, had his focus been solely on Britain, this study would likely have little to offer the field of historiography on crusading rhetoric.

Edward Madigan and Michael Snape also co-edited a collection of essays titled *The Clergy in Khaki: New Perspectives on British Army Chaplaincy in the First World War*. As one of the more recent works on the clergy's involvement, done with two leading experts in the field at the helm, it offers unique insights into the field of why some of the clergy employed the rhetoric. The two editors argue that "the interpretation of the war as a moral crusade, which was actively disseminated by the churches, meant that many pious and respectable British men who would never have enlisted in the regular army felt that volunteering to fight was now a moral imperative."<sup>17</sup> This line of thought leads to the view that the clergy were trying to rally the British public to war utilizing crusading rhetoric. Indeed, this argument follows along with the more recent scholarship of Jenkins, but its foundations go back as far back as Marrin. Given that in the early days of the war Britain relied upon volunteers rather than conscription, which was continuing to be more common, this argument holds merit.

Additionally, Linda Barker, in her essay, makes the case the chaplains were trying to restore their place in society. Barker argued that "As early as 1916 it had been recognized that chaplains were in a unique position to comment on the position of the church at home and at the front."<sup>18</sup> This argument is, in effect, the same one put forth Bontrager, that the clergy were trying to reach the soldiers to reverse secularization, and crusading rhetoric was merely another tool at their disposal.

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<sup>17</sup>. Michael Snape and Edward Madigan, *The Clergy in Khaki: New Perspectives on British Army Chaplaincy in the First World War*, (London, Routledge, 2016), 5.

<sup>18</sup>. *Ibid.*, 184.

The historiography of crusading rhetoric is small but impressive. Sadly, due to its small size, some topics remain mostly unexplored. While historians such as Marrin and Bontrager discussed in detail the clergy's role, the other groups have not received the same attention. While scholars such as Siberry did cover some aspects, her work's focus on two centuries limited the scope of her work on the Great War substantially. While Bar-Yosef and Kitchen did focus on Palestine, they mostly ignored a proper analysis of the individual sources, which they both believed had undue importance placed upon them. This assumption proved most detrimental to an actual study of the crusading rhetoric.

Regarding the clergy's use of crusading language, Bontrager's argument, that the crusading rhetoric was used to restore the role of the church in the secular society, is the dominant viewpoint. However, the argument leaves out the perspective of many of the clergymen. While it is entirely within the realm of possibility that the crusading rhetoric was some sort of Machiavellian plot designed by the leaders of the Anglican Church leaders to restore their lost influence, such a bold claim would need far more support from sources to become definitive. It is equally possible that the clergy merely drew upon crusading rhetoric for some of the same reasons as their past counterparts, to rally their nation against a foreign power. This seems just as reasonable, given that at least some church figures at the time were arguing for how the World War dictated that "Ministers must feel the movements of the age and evaluate the changes that are taking place in the world around them. This is the common obligation that rests upon them, whether they go into distinct national and Christian service abroad or decide that they can make an equally important contribution to the highest welfare of the nation while remaining at home."<sup>19</sup> From this viewpoint, the Clergy may have been merely trying to adapt to

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<sup>19</sup>. Ozora S. Davis, "Preaching in a World at War: I. The Task and the Opportunity.", (The Biblical World, July 1918), 9.

the challenges presented by preaching in the Great War. If so, it would make sense that those in the Church of England would draw some level of inspiration from those who preached in support of a war across the globe in the bygone past of the crusades in the medieval ages. The crusades, after all, required a good deal of selling on the home front to find support but also had a good deal of monks and clergy accompany the crusaders across the holy land. From this perspective, the clergy's use of rhetoric requires further analysis to understand why and how they employed crusading rhetoric and how the soldiers responded to it.

Most historians ignored the soldiers who used the crusading rhetoric entirely within their scholarship. While Vivian Gilbert has received attention from Bar-Yosef, most of the rest have received only a passing mention. Even when historians discussed the soldiers, it is usually only within the context of a modern viewpoint, stating that soldiers simply hoped to sell books to the British public, or that they tailored their works to fit the narrative brought forth by the public after the conclusion of the war. This overlooks the possibility that soldiers were actively receptive of the rhetoric, and were eagerly employing it. When analyzing the soldiers who used the rhetoric, patterns begin to emerge. Most often, the soldiers had a strong familiarity with the Bible and Crusades and were fighting against the Ottoman Empire. Combine this with the sharp rise of British Nationalism in the war, and it seems unfair to label them as mere peddlers of books. Instead, there is an argument to be made that the soldiers were simply drawing upon their faith, culture, and national history to conceptualize their involvement in one of the deadliest conflicts in human history.

More than the soldiers, however, is lack of proper study on the many journalists who contributed to crusading rhetoric throughout the war. While some historians did analyze the press, it is often glossed over quickly throughout many of the works. Rather than analyzing the

rhetoric, many of the scholars who addressed it did so only to relate it to their chosen group. For example, while Kitchen quite proudly stated that crusading rhetoric at the home front contributed to the soldiers utilizing post-war, his work barely addresses any of the sources that employed the rhetoric.

While the work of the many great scholars who have analyzed crusading rhetoric is impressive, the topic could stand to be examined in a new light and add in a more specific focus on the previously neglected groups. Many historians have analyzed the clergy and their motivations, but more work is needed to investigate their crusading rhetoric specifically. Additionally, rather than coming at the topic from a modern secular perspective, an examination of crusading must occur from the lens in which it transpired within. Then historians can shed a new light upon the subject. This new perspective could provide insight into British society during the war and show how the medieval world still had resonance during the twentieth century.

The goals outlined above form the basis of this study. First, a proper examination of crusading rhetoric itself is needed. This involves analyzing some of the themes that emerged amongst the various groups' usage of crusading rhetoric. Chapter one will examine the soldiers who used crusading rhetoric and examine how British nationalism, the Bible, and their unique wartime experiences shaped their rhetoric. While not looking to overstate the rhetoric's importance among the soldiers, those who did, have been ignored for too long. The second chapter will then move to describe the civilian proponents of crusading rhetoric. Specific attention is paid to the journalists, who, within relation to the historiography, has been by far the most ignored of all the groups. Additionally, some focus is placed upon the politicians and clergy. While these two groups, especially the clergy, have already received a good deal of

attention, much can be gained by bringing them into the larger narrative surrounding crusading rhetoric.

## CHAPTER 2. THE NEW CRUSADERS

One of the main groups to utilize crusading rhetoric during the Great War was the British soldiers, whose rhetoric employed several themes throughout their writings. While not exclusive to these themes, three significant themes take the forefront. The first was a strong connection to British nationalism and history of the English involvement in the crusades. Within this theme emerges a specific subset related to Richard the Lionheart, the most famous of the English crusaders who fought in Palestine. Palestine, and to a lesser extent the Middle East, grants itself as the second major area of focus surrounding crusading rhetoric. The soldiers who fought in the Holy Land seem to both be more prone to utilizing crusading rhetoric, and also tend to develop a particular form of crusading rhetoric tied to allusions and references to the past of the crusades. Finally, the Bible and religious connections help submit the full form of British crusading rhetoric. The soldiers who implemented this rhetoric displayed either their religious beliefs or, at the very least, a familiarity with the Bible. Tied to this theme is the Armageddon rhetoric that emerged during the Great War. The calamity that the British experienced during the war left a profound impact on those involved and, while more prevalent to civilians and priests, some soldiers felt a deep sense of dread and finality that influenced their utilization of Crusading rhetoric. While far from ubiquitous, many soldiers who served in the British army used these sources of crusading rhetoric for a variety of purposes, ranging from literary creativity, connecting to their ancestors, and to conceptualize their experiences in the World War.

Arguably the most pronounced theme with regards to crusading rhetoric by British soldiers is the link between crusaders and British nationalism. Within this theme, the most palpable connection ties into Richard I of England, more commonly referred to as Richard the

Lionheart. The references to the crusader king number beyond counting, and shows how the soldiers valued their British identity. Major Vivian Gilbert, in particular, stands out as one of the soldiers who idolized Richard as a near mythological figure. Gilbert's *The Romance of the Last Crusade With Allenby to Jerusalem* was written based on his experiences during World War One and the Palestinian campaign. The book is one of the most persuasive examples of a soldier utilizing crusading rhetoric to describe their experiences during the Great War. The book begins with a fictional portrayal of a character named Brian Gurnay. Gurnay maintained a fascination with Richard the Lionheart and the Third Crusade and said early on, "What wonderful times to live in, those days of chivalry and romance, when gallant knights of old adventured forth to free the Holy Land with great swords by their sides and great faith in their hearts!"<sup>20</sup> Yet another more personal example comes when Gilbert says while in Palestine that "I was standing where Richard the Lionhearted must have stood during the third crusade, seven centuries before."<sup>21</sup> Gilbert concludes his book describing how looking from a tower built by Richard the Lionheart's men. He thought to himself, "We had finished our crusade, peace and freedom were in the Holy Land for the first time for five hundred years—and it all seemed worthwhile."<sup>22</sup> This idea of finishing the work of their ancestors is explored more soon, as it ties into the broader theme of British Nationalism.

Another proponent of referencing Richard the Lionheart is Anthony Bluett. Bluett's *With Our Army in Palestine* includes several crusading references, with some tied to Richard in crucial ways. One such example springs forth when Bluett reached a village and said the walls

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<sup>20</sup>. Vivian Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade; with Allenby to Jerusalem*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1923), 2.

<sup>21</sup>. *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>22</sup>. *Ibid.*, 235.

were “built by Saladin, Prince of Saracen fighters and conqueror of our own Richard the Lionhearted.”<sup>23</sup> Bluett likely intended this to show that the English had restored the honor lost to Richard by taking over a monument to his rival Saladin, similar to how Gilbert claimed peace and freedom was restored to the Holy Land. The references to Richard did not end here, and Bluett made another reference when he passed Beth-Horon and noted that Richard had to abandon the place on his crusade.<sup>24</sup> Bluett’s observation of Richard’s failure, in contrast to his success, is worth noting. This observation reinforces the idea that Richard, while worthy of veneration, needed to be avenged for the sake of English national pride.

Cecil Sommers is another soldier set upon establishing a connection between himself and Richard the Lionheart. Sommers’s autobiographical account, *Temporary Crusaders*, offers a biographical account of the Great War. Sommers wrote his book utilizing the diary he wrote throughout his service in the Great War. Sommers wasted no time in his push to reference Richard. In the book’s dedication, Sommers writes to his daughter that “Your grandmother, who is apt to sentimentalize, will tell you that Daddy was a Crusader. Fresh from reading the exploits of Richard Coeur de Lion, you will try to picture him in shining armour with a large red cross somewhere about him.”<sup>25</sup> This again shows the trend of Richard and British nationalism’s ties to the crusading rhetoric. Just like Gilbert and Bluett, Sommers establishes a connection to himself and Richard the Lionheart. Sommers, who fought on multiple fronts of the war, often contemplated on what Richard the Lionheart would have thought if he took part in this crusade. One example is while being transported across the Mediterranean Sommers wonders, “it’s hardly

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<sup>23</sup>. Anthony Bluett, *With Our Army in Palestine*, (London: Andrew Melrose Ltd., 1919), 91.

<sup>24</sup>. *Ibid.*, 212

<sup>25</sup>. Cecil Sommers, *Temporary Crusaders*, (London: John Lane Company, 1919), V.

the sort of send-off one would expect for Crusaders. Would Richard Coeur de Lion have been satisfied with it, for instance? I wonder if he had to wear a life-belt.”<sup>26</sup> In contrast to the avenging of England’s loss, soldiers like Sommers, who was farther away from Jerusalem, simply questioned how the former king would have done with the lack of glory they earned in comparison.

Donald Maxwell was another soldier who also examined Richard in his work, *The Last Crusade*. Maxwell served the British admiralty and spent a good deal of time in the Middle East surveying the area of Palestine and interacting with the local populace of the region. Maxwell explained his job there in the introduction saying, “The Admiralty thought it wise to keep me under the Egypt command for a time, on my way out to the Persian Gulf, in order to make some records of naval work in progress along the shores of the Holy Land.”<sup>27</sup> Maxwell’s time serving in Palestine produced a similar effect it provided in the other soldiers, such as Gilbert. Maxwell argued that “There is an interesting parallel between Richard the First’s campaign in the third crusade and Allenby’s taking of Palestine.”<sup>28</sup> This comparison between the two British generals is something that other soldiers would further expand upon.

The theme of nationalism was a prominent theme with multiple sub-themes within it. One prominent sub-theme is drawing comparisons between General Edmund Allenby and Richard the Lionheart. Specifically, this comparison was made the most by the soldiers that served under the general, with Vivian Gilbert’s work being the best exemplifying work. Gilbert, more so than most, was intent on establishing a direct comparison between Allenby and Richard. At the start

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<sup>26</sup>. Ibid., 13.

<sup>27</sup>. Donald Maxwell, *The Last Crusade*, (London: John Lane, 1920), vii.

<sup>28</sup>. Ibid., 107.

of the war, Gilbert was sent to France and later Macedonia, where he fought on the Balkan front of the war. While there, Gilbert noted how his fellow soldiers sustained heavy casualties fighting the Bulgarians, but Gilbert claimed nevertheless that “The spirit that was in those early Crusaders was just as much alive today as it was centuries ago.”<sup>29</sup> The difference between Gilbert and his fellow soldiers compared to the crusaders was that “it was a great leader we lacked; or was it that there seemed no definite goal before us, no great prize to fight for?”<sup>30</sup> Gilbert found both a leader and goal when the army transferred him to serve with General Edmund Allenby, who would eventually take the city of Jerusalem.<sup>31</sup> Considering the use of propaganda surrounding Allenby and his capture of Jerusalem, with the city’s unique historical and religious significance, it seems likely that Gilbert was predisposed to utilize the crusading rhetoric by military service. Building upon this idea further is how Gilbert wrote of the capture of Jerusalem. After describing in detail the surrender of Jerusalem, Gilbert claims, “At last Jerusalem was in our hands! In all the ten crusades organized and equipped to free the Holy City, only two were successful,— the first led by Godfrey de Bouillon and the last under Allenby.”<sup>32</sup> Gilbert, at this point, cemented the idea that not only were he and his men crusaders, but they were also unlike so many others successful as it freed the Holy Land forever as far as he was concerned.<sup>33</sup> In this sense, Allenby was not just a peer of Richard, but rather the leader of the crusaders who succeeded in his goal.

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<sup>29</sup>. Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade; with Allenby to Jerusalem*, 63-64.

<sup>30</sup>. Ibid., 64.

<sup>31</sup>. Ibid., 66.

<sup>32</sup>. Ibid., 171.

<sup>33</sup>. Ibid., 177.

While Allenby may have severed a symbolic role as the Richard of this war, the soldiers who fought under different leaders more commonly established a connection between themselves and the more comparatively modest crusaders. Sommers, in particular, was concerned with developing this connection between the crusaders and his fellow soldiers. Sommers explained that “The butcher, the baker, the man who comes about the drains, and the rest of them, are all Temporary Crusaders now, whether they are in Palestine or France.”<sup>34</sup> This connection furthers the idea of British nationalism. It helps to broaden the scope of crusading rhetoric, as the soldiers often tied their rhetoric directly to Palestine and the Holy Land. Sommers uses crusading rhetoric to describe his interactions with the locals of Palestine. Sommers argued that the population lived mostly improvised before the war but claimed that “At least they did before unlimited possibilities of acquiring wealth became theirs with the advent of the brave new Crusaders.”<sup>35</sup> This creates a benevolent image of British soldiers as crusaders aiding the local population, regardless of the reality of the situation. Maxwell created a similarly benevolent image of the crusaders by arguing that “The crusades and the crusaders contributed much to the development of western civilization. They left their traces upon art, upon literature, upon the usages of war and upon that consensus that has become known as international law.”<sup>36</sup> Maxwell’s fascination with the crusades undoubtedly played a role in his choice to use crusading rhetoric.

While Gilbert did focus on Allenby’s connection to Richard, he likewise was intent upon making the connection between the crusaders of old and himself. Gilbert, for example, spoke of

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<sup>34</sup>. Sommers, *Temporary Crusaders*, VI.

<sup>35</sup>. *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>36</sup>. *Ibid.*, 5.

particularly troubling times during the war and how “the Crusaders had experienced just such privations and hardships similar to those we were going through now and were we not descendants of those same Crusaders.”<sup>37</sup> In addition to establishing the soldiers as descendants, Gilbert was equally intent on driving home how the soldiers had the same spirit of the crusaders. Speaking of his time in training, Gilbert noted that among those soldiers, “The spirit of the Crusaders was in all these men of mine who worked so cheerfully to prepare for great adventure!”<sup>38</sup> While perhaps overzealous with the depiction of his comrades, it shows how Gilbert viewed his men as having set upon an endeavor comparable to the crusaders of old. This spirit was first established through the conduit of Gilbert’s fictional character of Brian Gurnay. Gilbert’s Gurnay character, before hearing of the outbreak of the War, said, “To fight in thy cause, to take part in that Last Crusade, I would willingly leave my bones in the Holy Land! Oh, for the chance to do as one of these knights of old, to accomplish one thing in life really worthwhile!”<sup>39</sup> This quote of wanting to fight as the crusaders before is preceded by a passage on Richard the Third, as such the connection between the crusades is attaches itself to English nationalism in multiple ways.<sup>40</sup> This comment is even made in opposition to reality, as the Ottoman Empire did not immediately join on the side of The Central Powers. Despite these issues, Gilbert felt the need to articulate what he saw as the focal point of the war with regards to Palestine.

The chance to follow in the footsteps of the British crusaders is highly indicative of how some soldiers perceived themselves as modern crusaders. While a fictional representation of a

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<sup>37</sup>. Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade; with Allenby to Jerusalem*, 116.

<sup>38</sup>. *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>39</sup>. *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>40</sup>. *Ibid.*, 1.

soldier, Gilbert himself before the war was a Broadway actor in New York. Upon hearing the news from England about the declaration of war left his production, returned to England, and applied to the War Office, where he enlisted as an officer.<sup>41</sup> Considering the similarities between the character and Gilbert, it is clear that at least to an extent, the nature of Gurnay is comparative to how Gilbert truly felt in some ways as a crusader.

Ralph Adams, a captain in the British army, too, was apt to compare himself to the crusaders of old. Adams's memoir's title alone makes this clear as it is titled *The Modern Crusaders*, which he wrote using his diaries about his experiences fighting in Palestine. In his book, Adams utilizes crusading rhetoric but does so in a more reserved manner than those soldiers previously mentioned. One of his explicit uses of the rhetoric involves his comparison to the British trying to take Gaza from the Ottomans, and how against how "the Crusaders took it in a couple of days and lived there happily ever after" in contrast to Adams's and his fellow soldiers struggle.<sup>42</sup> Adams is sure to point out the successes of the crusaders, such as when he went to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and noted how "Round the court are the hospices of the Crusaders."<sup>43</sup> Adams may have been more restrained in his use of crusading rhetoric, but it is clear he still wanted to establish a connection to the crusaders of the past and their accomplishments. This comparison, in some ways, contrasts with previous mentions of the crusaders, as we have often seen them honored, but not as producing lasting success worth note as the crusaders of the Great War did.

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<sup>41</sup>. Ibid., 14-15.

<sup>42</sup>. Ralph Edward Cadwallader Adams, *The Modern Crusaders*, (London: G. Routledge & Sons, ltd, 1920), 22.

<sup>43</sup>. Ibid., 132.

These comparisons to the crusaders are often made within the context of either completing the crusaders to restore British honor and pride for the sake of British nationalism. Maxwell laid the foundation for this viewpoint exceptionally early on in his work noting how that “As I worked upon my diary and explanatory notes I found that I was unconsciously piercing together a story, the story of the Last Crusade.”<sup>44</sup> This sense of finality and completion of the crusades is shared amongst many of the other soldiers. Bluett, for example, explained the whole war as a crusade and made the argument that “As far as people at home are concerned, the Great Crusade began with the taking of Jerusalem and ended when the Turks finally surrendered in the autumn of 1918.”<sup>45</sup> By defeating the Ottoman Empire, the soldiers avenged Ricard’s loss to Saladin centuries earlier. F.H. Cooper offered a similar take to this in *Khaki Crusaders With the South African Artillery in Egypt and Palestine*. Similar to Bluett’s account, Cooper wrote that he contemplated to himself while traveling through the Sinai peninsula “may we dream, unscorned, the dream that we are striking our puny blows in the world’s last great struggle for conquest and temporal power and lust of blood; on the last and holiest and greatest of all Crusades?”<sup>46</sup> Cooper again reinforced this sense of finality when he concluded his book noting how he and his men sought battle outside Palestine after the successful capture of Jerusalem, but ultimately was fine with being the end “if it is decreed that the last crusade has been fought in Palestine.”<sup>47</sup> While they wished to continue fighting, Cooper has used crusading rhetoric to establish that the successful capture of Jerusalem was a worthy enough of an end in itself.

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<sup>44</sup>. Maxwell, *The Last Crusade*, viii-xi.

<sup>45</sup>. Bluett, *With Our Army in Palestine*, 2.

<sup>46</sup>. F.H. Cooper, *Khaki Crusaders With the South African Artillery in Egypt and Palestine*, (Cape Town: Central News Agency Ltd., 1919), 15.

<sup>47</sup>. *Ibid.*, 92.

Gilbert set up the idea of this being the final crusade once again using his fictional character of Gurnay. Gilbert established Gurnay as wanting to finish the work of the crusaders as Gilbert wrote, “crusade after crusade had been organised, equipped and sent out to overcome almost unheard-of difficulties, to go through adventures that made one’s blood race through one’s veins only to read about---but all these crusades had failed in their object!”<sup>48</sup> This fictional character represents Gilbert’s views and, by extension, those soldiers like him, who wished to finish what they saw as their ancestors’ work during the crusades. Gilbert made this even more explicit as to when Gurnay reads about the start of the war he says that “Brian had prayed for a Last Crusade, to take his place in some present-day band of warriors fighting for a great cause.”<sup>49</sup> It is clear from Gilbert’s biography that this cause was fighting for the Holy Land just as the crusaders of old.

Gilbert, in particular, was intent upon connecting to the finality of the war, and by extension, the crusades as his book drew closer to Jerusalem’s capture. Gilbert described the battles leading to Jerusalem in an increasingly heroic manner as he moved closer to the goal of his crusade. Gilbert noted how one night before the official taking of the city, “All around me lay the soldiers of the last crusade, resting, waiting for tomorrow’s dawn.”<sup>50</sup> This both reinforces the idea of soldiers as crusaders and the sense that they were eagerly awaiting to complete their forefathers’ work. After describing in detail the surrender of Jerusalem, Gilbert claims, “At last Jerusalem was in our hands! In all the ten crusades organized and equipped to free the Holy City, only two were really successful,-- the first led by Godfrey de Bouillon, and the last under

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<sup>48</sup>. Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade; with Allenby to Jerusalem*, 5.

<sup>49</sup>. *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>50</sup>. *Ibid.*, 152.

Allenby.”<sup>51</sup> Gilbert, at this point, cemented the idea that not only were he and his men crusaders, but they were also unlike so many others successful as it freed the Holy Land forever as far as he was concerned.<sup>52</sup> This completes the broader English nationalistic rhetoric that permeates Gilbert’s book. With the capture of Jerusalem, the crusades were, in a sense, finally over, and English pride and honor were restored.

From analyzing several different sources, a common theme of nationalism is evident in the soldiers’ use of crusading rhetoric. Richard, the Lionheart’s pivotal role in several of the texts, shows how important he was to the use of crusading rhetoric. Gilbert most notably included several allusions to Richard and made sure to place Allenby in the role of a modern-day Richard. Maxwell did much of the same and was keen to make comparisons between Allenby and Richard. Likewise, Bluett presented the case at times for the need to avenge Richard and restore his prestige. Sommers often contemplated what Richard would have thought of the modern-day campaign to take Palestine. Even Cooper, all be it less directly, established this sense of continuity between his crusade and Richard’s. What separated the soldiers was their involvement in the war. Gilbert, serving under Allenby, was best suited to make comparisons between the two leaders. Maxwell’s service in surveying the area allowed him to paint a broader, but less personal, picture than Gilbert. The unique circumstances faced by each shaped their use of the rhetoric, but the common theme of Richard and nationalism remained a constant. Beyond just Richard, though, the soldiers often compared themselves to the everyday crusaders. Looking at the titles of the autobiographies alone shows how important this connection was to the writers. Likewise, they often commented on taking similar paths, landmarks, and compared

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<sup>51</sup>. Ibid., 171.

<sup>52</sup>. Ibid., 177.

their campaigns to the crusaders. Adams, in particular, noted how easy it was for the crusaders to take Gaza. While the reality was more complicated, it shows that the soldiers were prone to romanticize their forbears. Indeed, Gilbert tended to romanticize crusaders' accomplishments. His focus on being one of the last crusaders shines throughout his biography. This romanticism, while prone to hyperbole, certainly illustrates the nationalistic continuity present throughout their use of crusading rhetoric.

While nationalism seems to be the main inspiration for soldiers' use of crusading rhetoric, the religious backdrop plays a role as well. The significance of the Holy Land and Palestine is undeniable in the eyes of the soldiers who used the rhetoric. Gilbert's war memoirs make this explicit from the beginning. When Gilbert's fictional character, Gurnay, hears about the beginning of the war, he does not say he would be happy to die in Germany, but rather that he would be glad to die in a fight for the Holy Land.<sup>53</sup> This establishes several points that relate to Gilbert's life. First, the importance of the Holy Land to Gilbert. The Great War was fought on several fronts, most notably from the British perspective, the western front against Germany. Despite this, Gilbert places far greater importance upon the Palestinian front against the Ottoman Empire. Regardless of the strategic importance of defeating Germany, the symbolic and cultural significance of the Holy Land resonated far stronger with Gilbert.

When Gilbert began to write about his time in the Palestinian campaign, the references to the Bible and crusades began to take a new shape. When speaking of the Sinai, Gilbert quickly brings biblical language to the forefront describing how "Joseph and Mary and the Infant Christ came back this way on their journey into Egypt to escape Herod."<sup>54</sup> Such biblical connections to

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<sup>53</sup>. Gilbert, *The Romance of the Last Crusade; with Allenby to Jerusalem*,

<sup>54</sup>. *Ibid.*, 73.

specific locations dominate Gilbert's descriptions of sites. This infusion of religious aspects into crusading rhetoric adds greater complexity to the previously more nationalistic use of the rhetoric that Gilbert had already been employing. Gilbert described how he learned that Allenby was trying to avoid any damage to the city of Jerusalem itself, so Allenby worked on an encirclement movement to capture it.<sup>55</sup> While Gilbert does not directly address this point, avoiding damaging Jerusalem was of primary concern for the British government. Its capture period of particular import to Prime Minister David Lloyd George, who wanted Jerusalem taken for its significant propaganda potential.<sup>56</sup> Cooper was aware of this fact, as he wrote of how Jerusalem, "had meant much to the prestige of the Allies, and our front lay with a comfortable margin to the north of the Holy City."<sup>57</sup> This prestige derives from the significance of Jerusalem to both Christianity and the previously discussed British nationalism. By capturing Jerusalem, Cooper was arguing that the soldiers were completing what their forefathers dreamed of during the original crusades so long ago, but also were taking over the highly valuable religious site amongst the Abrahamic religions.

The significance of the capture of Jerusalem to the soldiers is shown through not only Gilbert, who took part in its capture, but also in those that could not. Sommers wrote about his thoughts after receiving the news of the city's capture that "The news that Jerusalem has fallen reached us at breakfast to-day. I think most of us felt a little disappointed, as we had all hoped to take part in its capture. To be able to say "I was first into Jerusalem" would be a proud boast."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>. Ibid., 150.

<sup>56</sup>. Stanley Weintraub, *The Recovery of Palestine, 1917: Jerusalem for Christmas*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 120.

<sup>57</sup>. Cooper, *Khaki Crusaders*, 85.

<sup>58</sup>. Sommers, *Temporary Crusaders*, 16.

While Gilbert actively was involved in Jerusalem's capture, Sommers could only feel disappointed that he was not able to take part in it. The significance of Jerusalem certainly enticed Gilbert to write about the crusades, but it was far from the only place to inspire soldiers, such as Sommers to use crusading rhetoric.

While Sommers and some of the other soldiers mentioned did not take part in the capture of Jerusalem, they still took part in campaigns in the Levant that drew them to utilize crusading rhetoric. While Sommers may not have gotten a chance to take Jerusalem, he was able to take part in the campaigns for the Middle East. Sommers utilizes a good deal of biblical rhetoric while writing of his travels. For example, Sommers writes about his travels through Palestine that "down in the plain we are marching through the pages of the Bible."<sup>59</sup> Even without capturing Jerusalem, the Holy Land itself proved a powerful motivator. Adams, for example, described a road on which he traveled and explained that "As far as durability goes it is a good road, though not designed for comfort, winding deviously from Biddu—from which point the Crusaders first beheld Jerusalem—to Beitunia."<sup>60</sup> This use of crusading rhetoric, once again, shows how soldiers like Adams sought to connect themselves to the crusaders. Adams could have simply described the road with a start and endpoint, but the added aside about Jerusalem and crusaders to give it more symbolic importance.

Perhaps the soldier who understood most the symbolic importance of the Levant and its connections to the rhetoric and the Bible was Maxwell. Maxwell drew heavily upon the Bible in comparison to the other soldiers. Maxwell contended that "It is surprising how very slight is the average man's knowledge of classic Old Testament stories. One would suppose he had gathered

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<sup>59</sup>. Ibid., 27.

<sup>60</sup>. Adams, *The Modern Crusaders*, 114.

them entirely from hearsay and never had any opportunity of seeing the Bible in print”.<sup>61</sup>

Maxwell is prone to giving his opinion on these biblical accounts at times as he passes through the regions mentioned in the Bible. The most interesting of which is by far his views on the use of the term Armageddon.

As the war dragged on, many members of the clergy who used crusading rhetoric tended to paint the war as an apocalyptic struggle against a militaristic Germany. While Maxwell uses crusading rhetoric, it is clear that he did not approve of using it in this Armageddon method. Maxwell elucidated that “poor Armageddon has been trotted out and used wrongly on every occasion where something in modern war unusually terrible or incredibly diabolical has roused the popular imagination.”<sup>62</sup> If it was not clear enough who was using the term wrong, Maxwell laid it out, saying how some have interpreted the beast and false prophet mentioned in revelations. Maxwell claimed that “Popular current interpretation no doubt fixes on the beast as the Kaiser, if not on Mahomet as the false prophet.”<sup>63</sup> Certainly, at least some of the Anglican clergy did this during the Great War as means of propaganda.

While Maxwell was keen to critique the use of Armageddon in crusading rhetoric, he was nevertheless willing to present his comparison to the event. Maxwell explained his views of the biblical event as Armageddon being a location. Maxwell, though admitting he cannot be sure due to the nature of when and where he wrote the book, argued that “I believe I am right in saying that Armageddon comes from two Hebrew words and means the hill of Megiddo, Megiddo being a city that overlooked the plain of Esdraelon.”<sup>64</sup> Esdraelon happened to the sight

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<sup>61</sup>. Maxwell, *The Last Crusade*, 124.

<sup>62</sup>. *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>63</sup>. *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>64</sup>. *Ibid.*, 125.

of a significant victory for Allenby, and Maxwell questioned “What of the place—the plain of Esdraelon and how it figured in the last great battle at the end of the Palestine campaign, where the power of the Turk was finally and utterly broken.”<sup>65</sup> Given what Maxwell saw as an apparent connection between the de facto defeat of the Ottoman Empire, he was surprised more people at the time did not make a connection between the battle and Armageddon. The problem was that while Maxwell and the other soldiers discussed were near Palestine, those back home were far more focused on the Western Front against Germany, which they deemed far more critical to the war effort.

Many of the soldiers displayed had, at least, a familiarity with the Bible. Biblical references are on display throughout their books. Maxwell, in particular, demonstrated his knowledge of the Bible and went on to have a debate about the merits, or lack thereof, with regards to the crusading rhetoric surrounding Armageddon. Maxwell diverted from his traditional format of writing just to discuss a debate he had with someone regarding the Old Testament. Maxwell concluded that the man did not understand the Bible, and ultimately found that “I think the man thought I was an atheist and perverter of Holy Scripture.”<sup>66</sup> Likewise, Sommers displayed a tendency to comment on the nature of biblical locations he passed. This level of biblical familiarity and knowledge likely predisposed these soldiers to be promoters of the crusading ideology.

The soldier’s knowledge of the Bible, combined with their proximity to Palestine and Jerusalem, naturally motivated their use of crusading rhetoric. All of the soldiers mentioned actively participated in the Middle Eastern front near during the Great War. The closer they got

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<sup>65</sup>. Ibid., 126.

<sup>66</sup>. Maxwell, *The Last Crusade*, 125.

to Jerusalem, the more they embraced crusading rhetoric. Gilbert, who by far used the most crusading language and references, fought under Allenby. For instance, his connection to the crusaders was now stronger than everyday soldiers who fought on the western front. While Sommers may have argued that all soldiers who fought in the war were modern-day crusaders, it is clear that they may not have felt the same judging by their responses to the rhetoric.

The three factors of English nationalism, Biblical familiarity, and proximity to Palestine, are present throughout the authors who use the rhetoric. Without these influences, it seems probable that they would have looked for a different lens through which to compare themselves and understand their experiences during the war. Combined with the media's, government, and clergy's use of the rhetoric at the time, and it's easy to understand why the soldiers utilized the rhetoric in their writings. That said, the same reasons that these soldiers used this rhetoric goes a long way to explain why other soldiers did not.

Having examined why some soldiers used crusading rhetoric, it is equally important to analyze why so many soldiers did not. Perhaps the most obvious reason would be that the soldiers did not meet the three main requirements that the previous soldiers did. One of the main complications for the spread of the rhetoric was that as the campaign was drawing to an end in 1918, most of the soldiers serving in Palestine were Muslim Indians.<sup>67</sup> This fact influenced the British government, which at times actively sought to suppress the rhetoric for fear of alienating its imperial subjects.<sup>68</sup> Simply put, the crusaders were hardly going to resonate or appeal as

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<sup>67</sup>. James Kitchen, "'Khaki crusaders': crusading rhetoric and the British Imperial soldier during the Egypt and Palestine campaigns, 1916-18." (*First World War Studies*, October 9, 2010), 141.

<sup>68</sup>. Eitan Bar-Yosef, "The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-1918" (*Journal of Contemporary History*, 2001), 87-88.

strongly with the Muslim Indian soldiers serving in Palestine in comparison to British, and at times Christian, soldiers.

If Palestine can be put aside for a moment, then perhaps it is worth examining the crusaders that Sommers claimed were fighting on other fronts. Concisely, many of them did not view the war in the same terms as the previously mentioned biographers. Bishop Neville Talbot once said of the soldiers at the front lines that “The soldier has got religion, I am not sure that he has got Christianity.”<sup>69</sup> Without a Christian background, or at the very least a lack of particular zealotry, crusading rhetoric quickly loses its best appeal for action. Even for the Christian soldiers, there were additional complications to overcome for the rhetoric to have its intended effect. Some of the English soldiers went as far as outright sympathizing with the Germans, such as one who told his officer “You can’t blame them, you see, sir, as they are only doing their duty same as we are, and they are suffering as much as we suffer.”<sup>70</sup> Even those that did not sympathize would still have to overcome the challenge that they were fighting other Christian nations, which was a far harder sell for crusading rhetoric than the Ottoman Empire, which was ruled by the Caliph of the Sunni branch of the Islamic faith. While some at the homefront might have wanted to paint the war as a crusade, the soldiers without the commonalities shared by men like Maxwell, Gilbert, and Sommers were presented with too many obstacles for the rhetoric to become widespread.

Crusading rhetoric amongst the British soldiers was built upon several vital factors. A strong sense of British nationalism, history, Biblical familiarity, and proximity to Palestine all played a role in causing soldiers to use it. Without these factors, soldiers simply were not

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<sup>69</sup>. Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War*, (Cambridge, England: The Lutterworth Press, 2014), 161.

<sup>70</sup>. *Ibid.*, 212.

predisposed to using crusading terminology to describe their personal experiences during the war. When these factors combined, however, a clear and consistent theme emerges. This theme of crusading appears in the writings of the soldiers who wrote of their experiences during the Great War.

## CHAPTER 4. TURNING THE GREAT WAR INTO THE LAST CRUSADE

While soldiers were some of the strongest proponents of crusading rhetoric amongst British society, they were far from the only ones. The British used the word “crusade” before the war to denote a personal cause. Shortly before the outbreak of the war, a correspondent argued, “In the Middle Ages he would have been drawn into a Crusade because that was the one predominant cause that drew every one, whether great or small minded; but now he finds, or makes his own crusade for himself.”<sup>71</sup> The Great War created that predominant cause for the British. Countless correspondents, politicians, and clergymen were more than eager to use the rhetoric. Most often, they used the word crusade and its surrounding rhetoric as a rallying cry for the populace to boost morale, or more cynically as propaganda. Drawing upon British nationalism, much of the rhetoric focused on the moral superiority of the British and allied cause in contrast to the German Empire. Likewise, it was employed often in connotation with Palestine, and with direct implication to men such as Richard the Lionheart and General Edmund Allenby. However, in a unique feature compared to the soldiers, it also often took the form of a robust anti-German focus. Whereas the soldiers who employed crusading rhetoric focused on their struggles and tribulations in Palestine, the proponents at home were far more concerned with the Western Front and the German Empire. This variance in the types of crusading rhetoric shows that while similarities exist between soldiers and society at large, there are several apparent differences in the two groups.

One goal of those using crusading rhetoric was to boost morale through British nationalism. The foundations of this British nationalistic crusading rhetoric can be seen as soon

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<sup>71</sup>. *The Times*, May 1, 1914, 9. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32764400>

as the first month of the war. For example, an article published in *The Guardian* was titled “The Kingdom and The War. A New Crusade.”<sup>72</sup> The article itself, mostly devoid of actual crusading rhetoric, did establish the sense of unity that the country was hoping to bring into the Great War. This new British crusade was invoked most often as a crusade for democracy and virtue. The person who best exemplified this early in the war was The Bishop of Salford, who argued that the British “can feel the conscientious satisfaction that we have been drawn into the great struggle through no desire of our own, through no lust for conquest or dominion, but by a strict sense of duty, in the cause of truth, justice and loyalty to our sworn obligations and the defence of the weak and oppressed. To us, therefore, the war presents itself as a real crusade for the right.”<sup>73</sup> This crusade for British values and obligations was latched onto by many in British society. The bishop again reinforced this ideal saying on a separate occasion that the war was a “great crusade for the rights of humanity and the principles of Christianity and divine law.”<sup>74</sup> Whereas Germany declared the war for unjust reasons in the British view, they intended to make clear that they were defending the world’s virtues. The Bishop of Salford was far from alone in arguing the war was a crusade for the right and virtues of Britain, and many would latch onto this theme in the press as the war continued.

Another major proponent of crusading rhetoric was the Bishop of Carlisle. A correspondent from *The Times Newspaper* wrote of how the Bishop of Carlisle claimed, “the war was for truth, justice, and righteousness, and he regarded it as a crusade. He felt that there was nothing inconsistent with the highest vocation in becoming a combatant. In this war there was

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<sup>72</sup>. *The Guardian*, August 29, 1914, 6. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/259138548>

<sup>73</sup>. *The Guardian*, November 30, 1914, 12. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/259156232>

<sup>74</sup>. *The Guardian*, August 5, 1915, 9. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258434164>

something spiritual in the highest sense amounting to holiness in taking a combatant part in this war.”<sup>75</sup> The bishop not only sold the war as being for great and moral causes fought by pious men but also took it a step further, adding religious conations as “he regarded our soldiers of every rank engaged in the war as divinely ordained.”<sup>76</sup> Taking this argument a step further, Father Vaughn, a Jesuit, said, “We must begin to make the whole world realise that every British subject has his teeth set and his weapon gripped to smite and beat the foe. I feel like fighting in this most sacred crusade myself.... Henceforth there must be no standing-room in our vast Empire for slackers, loafers, and pacifists.”<sup>77</sup> Fighting in the crusade meant to be fighting for justice, virtue, and for the clergy God, and with such noble causes, everyone must do their part.

The clergyman’s devotion to selling the war as crusade might seem simply inspired by zealotry, but in reality, there was immense pressure on them to do so. Prime Minister David Lloyd George, who created a book titled *The Great Crusade* covering his speeches during the war, made this abundantly clear several times. The Prime Minister addressed a letter to National Free Church Council writing to them, “Pastors and teachers have a unique opportunity of rendering national service now. We have to combat in every corner of the land the enemy of waste, we have to see that we are using our spare hours and spare bits of land that lie around us in the national service.”<sup>78</sup> This argument that everyone must do their part indeed echoed Father Vaughn’s. George not only called upon the clergy and adults though, as he also wrote to them “In this work old and young alike can do their bit, and how proud the young children of England today will be when they look back in after years to this time and think how they too helped their

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<sup>75</sup>. *The Times*, May 3, 1918, 3. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/33276085>

<sup>76</sup>. Ibid

<sup>77</sup>. *The Observer*, December 10, 1916, 5. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/257831109>

<sup>78</sup>. *The Guardian*, February 22, 1917, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258428877>

country to win the greatest of crusades in history.”<sup>79</sup> In the greatest of the crusades for British values, even the young must take part.

As children could not take part in a combative role, much of the crusading rhetoric instead targeted the youth of Britain who could fight. David Lloyd George once again helped lead the push to this. Speaking with regards to Britain’s initial policy of a volunteer army, Lloyd said, “we are the first nation in the history of the world that raised over three millions of men for any great military purely by voluntary means. Young men from every quarter of this country flocked to the standard of international right as to a great crusade. It was a glorious achievement, and well may Britain be proud of it.”<sup>80</sup> This look back by Lloyd allowed him to retroactively apply crusading rhetoric to the early days of British recruitment.

Additionally, it helped to cement the idea that the British who volunteered for their country were not mere soldiers, but rather moral crusaders upholding and defending British honor and values through their service. Lloyd was not alone in extolling the virtue of the youth as crusaders, as a correspondent for *The Times* wrote of how “The youth of this land would never have taken the sword as they did if it had not been for them a crusade. They saw a dragon across the path, and they had to go. Once more they have registered in letters of blood upon the tablets of history their protest against tyranny.”<sup>81</sup> From this perspective of needing young recruits, it is clear that selling the war as a righteous crusade was required to ensure Britain could combat German conscription. Be it the necessity of driving up recruitment or simply how they perceived

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<sup>79</sup>. Ibid

<sup>80</sup>. *The Times*, May 8 1916, 6. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32914618>

<sup>81</sup>. *The Times*, April 23 1918, 9. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32942765>

the war; it is clear that many wanted the British public to buy the idea that the soldiers were crusaders.

Regardless of the exact reason for the crusading rhetoric surrounding the young men of Britain, extolling the virtues of the youth to the public was a top priority. An Oxford correspondent wrote with regards to the young that “All crusades belong to eager youth, and this war is a crusade of the youth. They march under banners none the less real because they are invisible; they march against the lust of force and the infidel pride of armaments.”<sup>82</sup> This crusade, of course, had a cost in countless youth’s lives, and even in death, the crusading rhetoric persisted. An obituary for British soldier George Calderon wrote of how “‘No one to my mind,’ wrote a friend who knew him well, ‘has embodied more entirely and more attractively the spirit of self-sacrifice in which the great crusade is being fought.’”<sup>83</sup> If the Great War was a crusade, then the youths of Britain were the crusaders who were in charge of defending Britain’s virtuousness and righteousness for God, King, and Country even to death. They alone, though, were not the sole target of crusading rhetoric.

British high society was not just interested in selling the crusading rhetoric to the youth of Britain, however, as they often incorporated the rhetoric when speaking of the Entente as a whole. One correspondent from *The Times* wrote of the war that “No human cause, not even the great Crusades, ever drew to its banners hosts so mighty or commanded allegiance so entire as the cause which the Allies serve with their whole strength.”<sup>84</sup> The selling of this allegiance to alleged crusading states was quite common, and in a speech given in honor of David Lloyd

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<sup>82</sup>. *The Times*, March 24, 1915, 11. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32921408>

<sup>83</sup>. *The Times*, May 5, 1919, 19. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/33269642>

<sup>84</sup>. *The Times*, July 14 1917, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/33264163>

George himself it was argued: “The peoples taking part in the huge crusade of 1914 will not forget for many generations that they were companions in arms, and that together they saved civilisation and liberty.”<sup>85</sup> This commitment to selling the allied powers as a coalition for virtue was shown again when *The Times* published an article that contented “It has often been said that this war is in truth a crusade for human liberties, and France and Italy of all countries were the lands of the old Crusaders.”<sup>86</sup> This idea of the unified crusade reiterated itself several times through journalists, such as when another correspondent wrote of Italian contributions to the war effort. The correspondent noted that “Italian soldiers were freeing parts of the sacred soil of Frances, of Albania, and of the Balkans, while others were fighting in every land in which the crusade of the Allies was accomplishing the work of liberation.”<sup>87</sup> This historical connection on the part of France and Italy the crusades may have been helpful to sell the public the propaganda. Still, the absence of said historical connections did not mean the rhetoric would not be applied to the other countries who fought beside the British.

While the western European part of the Entente had a connection to the crusades of old, British writers proved skilled at applying it to the rest of their allies as well. Serbia, for instance, saw much of the same rhetoric used to it that France and Italy did. An article published in *The Times* addressing the needs of Serbia argued that “They have given the flower of their manhood in the crusade for liberty, and now all that is left of the Serbs--old folks, children, sick and wounded—look to our benevolence for their proper preservation.”<sup>88</sup> If the Serbs were willing to take part in the crusade, the British virtue demanded they support Serbia. Serbia’s great Slavic

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<sup>85</sup>. *The Guardian*, September 13, 1916, 4. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258369839>

<sup>86</sup>. *The Times*, December 11, 1917, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32944287>

<sup>87</sup>. *The Times*, November 12, 1918, 5. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32841054>

<sup>88</sup>. *The Times*, February 13, 1918, 4. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/33276853>

protector in Russia received similar treatment before the communist revolution saw their withdrawal from the war. Shortly before Bulgaria's official entrance into the Great War, *The Observer* published an article that argued the immorality of said entrance based upon that "Russian soldiers fought with the religious enthusiasm of a crusade and perished in multitudes to deliver from Turkish slavery a race whom they regarded as their 'little brothers' in the South."<sup>89</sup> This argument not only painted the Russians as honorable crusaders but also served to condemn Bulgaria, who entered the war less than a month later against the Entente. The two orthodox and Slavic nations of Serbia and Russia may not have taken part in the original crusades. Still, British creativity made sure they had a place in the crusading rhetoric.

While some level of work was required on the part of the British to incorporate Serbia and Russia into the crusading rhetoric, The United States, in contrast, provided much of the leg work. *The Times* published a letter written by Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, chairman of the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defence of America, to the Queen of England. In this letter, Dr. Shaw wrote that "Now that the United States has joined hands with Britain, France, and Italy in this last and greatest of all crusades, we, the true daughters of American democracy, feel that a New Year should not open without a word of cheer, of trust and of complete and thorough cooperation to those who have suffered and nobly endured trials and sorrows."<sup>90</sup> While Shaw certainly had a way with words, the British press assuredly enjoyed her choice to argue that the Entente was on the last and greatest of all the crusades. Dr. Shaw was not alone though, Dr. Fort Newton, an American Clergyman, was quoted in *The Observer* as saying, "That is why I say that the Allies are like the knights of old, linked in a crusade. This holy war, a

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<sup>89</sup>. *The Observer*, September 26, 1915, 11. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258903674>

<sup>90</sup>. *The Times*, January 2, 1918, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32895793/>

war for the preservation of expansion of those opportunities for which mankind has striven, through which the human being may develop, blossom and bear fruit of altruism.”<sup>91</sup> Not only did Newton make American soldiers crusaders, he tactfully included the whole of the allies. Newton’s instance on defining the war in religious tones also helped to aid the press in supporting the claims made by some of the British clergymen that the Great War was a holy war. After all, even if British society was secularizing, religion can be used as a powerful tool to bring a nation together in times of crisis.

In a similar vein to Newtown, Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labour, gave a speech where he said, “I say that it has ceased to be a war and is now a crusade. We are giving our manpower and we will give all that we can spare, from the view-point of sacrifice of our wealth to help win this wonderful struggle.”<sup>92</sup> If Britain was ready to sacrifice its youth and resources in this crusade, then Gompers was willing to offer the same of the Americans. This commitment to the crusade on the part of the Americans was likely intended to show the British public they were not alone in their crusade for preserving virtue and righteousness. Whereas Russia and Serbia may have needed a push towards crusading rhetoric, British writers simply had to quote Americans who were all too eager to tie themselves to the crusading rhetoric.

Having painted both themselves and their allies as honorable crusaders, Britain, after the war, was eager to cement this into history. For its part, *The Observer* published an article that argued: “This has been the most successful, indeed the only successful—Crusade.”<sup>93</sup> With years

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<sup>91</sup>. *The Observer*, May 19, 1918, 2. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/257845298>

<sup>92</sup>. *The Guardian*, August 31, 1918, 4. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258204204>

<sup>93</sup>. *The Observer*, September 29, 1918, 5. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/257847838/>

of utilizing the crusading rhetoric, the idea that this was the last crusade was assuredly not that far-fetched in the eyes of the public. Adding legitimacy of the war being a crusade was that George V likewise called it as such after the end of the war. After the war, George wrote a message to the army saying “I desire to thank every officer, soldier, and woman of our Army, for services rendered, for sacrifices cheerfully given; and I pray that God, Who has been pleased to grant a victorious end to this great crusade for justice and right, will prosper and bless our efforts... to secure for generations to come the hard-won blessings of freedom and peace.”<sup>94</sup> With George taking part in the rhetoric after the war, it is safe to say that the Great War was firmly established as a righteous crusade.

While many of the British were happy to paint themselves as morally upright crusaders, others were committed to framing the crusading rhetoric in opposition to Germany. The foundations of the specific rhetoric come from, in large part, the German invasion of Belgium. In an article published in *The Times*, this was rather candidly explained that the Entente “could not promise repayment of the heaviest debt which they owe to Belgium—that of having given to the Allied cause the supreme moral sanction which has made of this war a crusade, and of the defeat of Germany a necessary expiation.”<sup>95</sup> By invading Belgium, Germany had, in effect, gave the British the best casus belli they could hope for. The British could now sell the war to the public as a defense of a morally upright and weaker Belgium. An article for *The Observer* even took it a step further. It argued, “When Belgium went down for a time under the foot of a giant infamy we rose in clean wrath and human pity, and we revolutionized our peaceful society in the spirit of the

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<sup>94</sup>. *The Times*, November 12, 1918, 9. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32841132>

<sup>95</sup>. *The Times*, February 18, 1916, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32828622>

earlier crusades.”<sup>96</sup> From this standpoint, not only did Belgium give the British a just cause for war, they further awakened within British society a desire to fight a war on foreign lands against a tyrannical German nation.

The character of the invasion and occupation of Belgium by Germany, while arguably no harsher than others, was a constant source for inspiring the use of crusading rhetoric. It was detestable enough in British eyes that the Germans invaded the neutral country, but far worse was how the German military treated the Belgians during the occupation. David Barron, a Baptist Minister, specifically referenced the treatment of non-combatants when he wrote that “It is a symbol of the most sacred character of the crusade against the violation of Belgium and the murderers of non-combatants on the seas that ministers of our order are relinquishing their charges and engaging to serve a righteous cause at home and abroad with a solemn earnestness and self-sacrifice.”<sup>97</sup> Not only did this set up the idea that the clergy were actively taking part in this alleged crusade, but it also made clear that Germany was not engaging in the war from a morally acceptable standpoint. In contrast to militaristic Germany, British society was rallying to defend and sacrifice their well-being in defense of those weaker than them. This idea of a brutal regime in Germany would prove to be the main focal point of crusading rhetoric.

The idea that German culture was infused with militaristic doctrine proved a constant source of propaganda for the British, and those using crusading rhetoric a bold call to action. After interviewing with General Maunoury, a correspondent from *The Times* said: “in the conversation it was clear that the General regarded the extermination of Prussian militarism as the great cause of a great crusade.”<sup>98</sup> Lord Hughes, a member of the British Parliament, clearly

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<sup>96</sup>. *The Observer*, August 4, 1918, 5. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/257846852>

<sup>97</sup>. *The Guardian*, June 3, 1915, 12. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258419374>

agreed with General Maunoury when he opposed a negotiated peace with Germany, “Since the German ‘world-view’ revealed itself by its deeds, the struggle has become a crusade for the overthrow of a code of morals fatal to the welfare and the civilization of mankind. That creed is ‘militarism’—the supremacy of brute force.”<sup>99</sup> If the Germans were a warlike people, then only through a completed crusade could the British hope to contain their threat in Hughes’s view. Luckily for Hughes, he was far from the only person on the side of the allies to hold such beliefs.

In a similar manner to how the British utilized American sources to supplement and support their moral crusade, they were equally happy to pull their allies into the anti-German crusading rhetoric. In an article for *The Guardian*, a British correspondent was more than happy to present the views of a relatively obscure American businessman W.C. Edgar. Edgar spoke of Americans with regards to the war, stating they “believed it was a crusade and that the definite object to be attained was the smashing of German militarism and autocracy, so that there should be no more wars.”<sup>100</sup> This strategy of using Americans continued when another article focused on a talk by Mr. Samuel Gompers, the president of the American Federation of Labour. The article’s author pointed out that the labor movement “found themselves in the position as to whether the labour movement—the spirit of it—could live if it were possible for Kaiserism and militarism to dominate” before later mentioning that the war itself “is now a crusade” as the spirit of labour couldn’t live on if Germany was allowed to achieve mastery in Europe.<sup>101</sup>

German militarism was in the eyes of the British a threat to democracy and civilization, and showing that their allies agreed added further legitimacy. Dr. Fort Newton again proved helpful

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<sup>98</sup>. *The Times*, April 22, 1915, 9. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32853944>

<sup>99</sup>. *The Times*, August 26, 1918, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32942213>

<sup>100</sup>. *The Guardian*, September 6, 1918, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258205976>

<sup>101</sup>. *The Guardian*, August 31, 1918, 4. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258204235>

in aiding the British crusading rhetoric when Edward Marshall interviewed him. Newton argued that with regards to an American soldier that “he is a knight of the old chivalry; a warrior in the noblest humanitarian crusade in the annals of history. Not even the malignant ingenuity of our enemies can invent a selfish reason, or a sordid motive, why the American soldier takes his place in the democratic armies of the world.”<sup>102</sup> This linked the Americans to the British to crusade, something that many within British society had a vested interest in. Furthermore, it reinforced both the immorality of the Germans as being malignant, but also incapable of saying the same as the British.

While the Americans were arguably the most useful in aiding the British in setting up this anti-German crusading rhetoric, they were far from the only source that the British used. Even a neutral country such as Sweden could prove a valuable tool in the British articulation of crusading rhetoric. In a report on the visit of M. Branting, a socialist leader in Sweden who would go on to be a Prime Minister, the correspondent noted how Branting observed the allies “went to battle as to a crusade, bent on the destruction of militarism. To one and all fighting on the side of the Entente Powers this war was a struggle for the victory of right and the supremacy of the idea of liberty.”<sup>103</sup> This crusade against militarism certainly is not just how Branting perceived the war, but also how many of the British understood it. Even when their allies did not actively take part in the rhetoric, the British were more than willing to draw them in personally. For example, Lord Northcliffe wrote with regards to New Zealand that none “are as anxious to quell Prussianism.... I doubt whether any other people would have sent so great a proportion of its manhood 13,000 miles to fight for a crusade.”<sup>104</sup> The original crusades involved a multitude

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<sup>102</sup>. *The Observer*, May 19, 1918, 2. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/257845298>

<sup>103</sup>. *The Times*, August 16, 1918, 6. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32941272>

of nations aligned together, and the British were intent to make sure their crusade was perceived along similar lines. The threat of the Prussian influence on German culture was equally important, as it once again reinforces the longstanding militaristic society that formed the basis for the German Empire. While the argument lacks any merit in painting a whole culture as a warlike people, the British were not opposed to making false claims surrounding Germans.

While the British were eager to paint themselves as on a crusade against militarism, they also at times took this a step further by directly arguing that Germany was in effect following a pagan faith devoted to war. The clergy, in particular, was prone to making these claims, such as the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow, who said, “It is to throw ourselves with heart and soul into the new crusade of Christianity against Paganism. For it is Paganism we have to fight, with its characteristic disregard of human life and property, of law and justice, of honesty and truth, of ...with its resolve to trample on the rights of all opposed to its tyranny”.<sup>105</sup> By painting Germans as godless pagans, the nature of a holy crusade targeting a Christian nation was, in effect, bypassed entirely. This would allow the British to move the crusade from a purely moral standpoint to one just as religious as the originals. Studdert Kennedy was undoubtedly happy to paint the Germans as pagans as when speaking to his congregation of soldiers on the western front by stating, “the god the German leaders worship is an idol of the earth—a crude and cruel monster who lives on human blood. He is the enemy that God has fought for ages”.<sup>106</sup> For some of the clergy, this crusade was not just a moral cause, but rather in lines of those called initially a

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<sup>104</sup>. *The Times*, January 29, 1917, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32592990>

<sup>105</sup>. *The Times*, November 3, 1915, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/33249243>

<sup>106</sup>. Studdert Kennedy. *Rough Talks by a Padre Delivered to Officers and Men of the B. E. F.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916), 195.

religious one targeting an enemy of Christendom. The so-called pagans had their crusades, though, which the British were undoubtedly happy to point out the morally corrupt nature of.

While they often perceived themselves as crusaders, the British were not opposed to applying a darker version of crusading rhetoric to the Germans. With many in British society painting the Germans as militaristic pagans, the next step was to articulate the German goals. It is here that the rhetoric of a crusade is applied. *The Guardian*, for example, published an article saying, “It is [Germany’s] aim to make this war a crusade against Western democracy; it is their ambition, openly declared, to impose their will upon the world by naked violence, the will of brutal national egotism unqualified by a spark of international sentiment or generosity.”<sup>107</sup> This worked for the British on two levels. First, it reiterated the idea that Germany was a militaristic society that the crusading rhetoric was working towards painting them as. Second, it showed the clashing crusades between the two nations. Where the British were fighting for democracy, the oppressed, and God, the Germans were struggling against Western values.

This painting of Germans as autocratic pagans did have some detractors. One of the clearest examples of this comes from *The Times* and an interview one of its correspondents conducted with Jacob Schiff. In the interview, Schiff argued that due to dehumanizing the Germans that British goals would end up being questioned by German propagandists such as “how much reliance can be placed on British protestations that Prussian militarism is the only enemy? Does it not rather seem that Great Britain is embarked on a jealous crusade to crush utterly its dangerous rivals in the race for world supremacy?”<sup>108</sup> This certainly is a fair point to raise. After all, leading into the war, it is clear that the British and Germans were becoming each

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<sup>107</sup>. *The Guardian*, July 12, 1918, 4. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258187919>

<sup>108</sup>. *The Times*, November 23, 1914, 8. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/33269278>

other's greatest rivals. Blaming the German's allegedly warlike nature certainly would be an easier sell to why Britain had to fight the war than say to preserve their global hegemony. Likewise, if the Germans were able to reverse the tide of British crusading rhetoric against them, then the extensive work done to sell the public on the moral supremacy of Britain could be undone. While the British may have wanted to paint this as a crusade for democracy, the geopolitical reality of the situation was that Germany, at the start of the war, was arguably the most significant power not directly aligned to British interests. In the eyes of critics like Schiff, rather than a crusade for virtuousness and righteousness, this was a crusade to eliminate a threat to British hegemony on the world stage regardless of attempts to justify their actions. With this in mind, it is fortunate that there were not more men like Schiff, who pointed out the obvious flaws surrounding British propaganda.

Not all of the crusading rhetoric surrounded directly either the British or Germans, rather good of it focused on the region of Palestine and its connection to the crusades. A good deal of effort went into painting the campaign against the Ottomans as finishing the crusades. For example, in *The Observer*, it was spoken of how Allenby and the army “was less than thirty miles from Jerusalem. It is the last Crusade, but made this time in equal regard to the old and the new dispensations.”<sup>109</sup> Put within the context of the success of the campaign in Palestine, this line of thought appealed to many. For this first time in centuries, a Christian power controlled the Holy Land, and the British were eager to the point that out. One such example surrounded Philp d' Aubigny, tutor of Henry III and English crusader, who “joined an expedition of the Fifth Crusade, and remained in Palestine fourteen years, dying there. He lived to see the Christians in undisturbed possession of Bethlehem and Nazareth.... Since he died, in 1236, no Christian

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<sup>109</sup>. *The Observer*, November 11, 1917, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258807863>

conquerors of the Holy City have trodden over his ashes until today”.<sup>110</sup> With such English connections to the past of the region, it is of little surprise that the press was enthusiastic about making clear the significance of the campaign’s success. However, a crusade needs more than a region, and it required crusaders to fight the last crusade not just against Germany, but against the Ottoman Empire as well.

Establishing the campaign in Palestine as the last crusade took many forms, and required that the campaign had its own crusading heroes. One such crusader was Richard Smith, an Englishman who died fighting in Palestine during the Great War. Smith’s obituary noted that “Dick did not mean to die for anybody when he set out on his last crusade. That was reserved for Richard Smith.”<sup>111</sup> This idea of dying for the last crusade put the British firmly in the light of noble crusaders. The role of soldiers as crusaders was equally crucial to the British parliament as it was to the British press. One such example involves one member of parliament, Mr. Macpherson, quoting of a soldier who stated, “And so to the hill country of Judea— en foot when we could no longer ride— past Beth Huron the lower to the upper, on to Gideon where Joshua slew the five kings of the Amorites, till we saw the church of the Holy sepulcher gleaming white in the subtropical sun— a real crusade, if you will!”<sup>112</sup> This incorporation of soldiers by both the government and media into their rhetoric crusading rhetoric shows how they wanted to add a personal connection to the crusades. The hills and countryside alone, though, were not the only sources of crusading references that the British made with regards to the Middle East.

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<sup>110</sup>. *The Guardian*, December 15, 1917, 5. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258483266>

<sup>111</sup>. *The Guardian*, April 19, 1918, 8. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258162363>

<sup>112</sup>. House of Commons. February 1918 vol 103 cc767-882. Retrieved From <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1918/feb/20/mr-macphersons-statement>

Concerning crusading rhetoric involving Palestine, a substantial portion included establishing connections between the principal cities captured from the Ottoman Empire and their place in the old crusades. When British forces captured Aleppo, a journalist wrote with regards to the city's history that "Down to the time of the Crusades the town shared with Mosul the honour, or dishonour, of being the headquarters of the Hamdanids, and the devastating wars which continually raged between the rulers of Syria/made them unable to resist the invasion of their country by the Franks, who in this period founded the kingdom of Antioch."<sup>113</sup> This statement allowed the British to paint themselves as the new crusaders, but also highlight the success of the old. Another such city to receive this attention was Jaffa, whose connection to Richard the Lionheart was made clear in *the Guardian* when one of its journalists wrote: "During the Crusades it was first captured in 1126, then retaken by Saladin in 1187, then retaken by Richard Coeur de Lion in 1191, and finally lost in 1196."<sup>114</sup> Establishing the connection to both the city and Richard the Lionheart allowed the correspondent to sell the historical importance of the city, and establish its significance with regards to restoring British pride upon its recapture. Likewise, after forces captured Ashkelon under the command of Allenby, its history was explained that the city that "is almost lost sight of by the historians down to the time of the Crusades, when it acquired very great importance. For over a century it withstood the menace of the Crusaders and was a continual danger to the newly-formed kingdom of Jerusalem."<sup>115</sup> While the city did pose a threat to the crusading states, the author was sure to point out that Saladin,

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<sup>113</sup>. *The Guardian*, October 29, 1918, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258221563>

<sup>114</sup>. *The Guardian*, November 17, 1917, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258477759>

<sup>115</sup>. *The Guardian*, November 12, 1917, 4. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258476674>

“unable to protect it from the menace of Richard Coeur-de-Lion, destroyed it.”<sup>116</sup> While all cities of Palestine received connections to the Crusades, none did quite as much so as Jerusalem itself.

After the British captured Jerusalem *Punch*, a British weekly magazine included a picture of Richard the Lionheart looking down on Jerusalem captioned “My Dream Comes True,” showing how the press was eager to make the connection to the crusades and British history.<sup>117</sup> However, judging by the writings of several within British society, the picture could have just as easily been titled Britain’s dreams come true. After all, by the time Allenby captured Jerusalem, the British press had already spent years selling the importance of its capture. Not only did this cement the importance of the city, though, but it also reinforced the restored British pride in completing the work of England’s greatest crusader again. In *The Times* following the capture of Jerusalem, a correspondent made this point even more evident as in contrast to Richard the Lionheart, “The lot of General Allenby has been more happy. He has undone the fatal mistake of the Third Crusade.”<sup>118</sup> Whereas Richard failed to capture the city, Allenby was victorious. *Punch* themselves got back in on the rhetoric again when they created a new picture titled “The Return From The Crusade,” which depicted a returning General Edmund Allenby leaving Palestine on a horse in full knightly crusading armor.<sup>119</sup> Much in the vein of the soldiers,

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<sup>116</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>. Bernard Partridge, “The Last Crusade”, *Punch*, December 19, 1917. Retrieved from [https://punch.photoshelter.com/gallery-image/Bernard-Partridge-Cartoons/G0000\\_xSMzDQG4iQ/I0000VoyuTK97ZN0](https://punch.photoshelter.com/gallery-image/Bernard-Partridge-Cartoons/G0000_xSMzDQG4iQ/I0000VoyuTK97ZN0)

<sup>118</sup>. *The Times*, September 26, 1918, 5. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32861643>

<sup>119</sup>. Bernard Partridge, “The Return From the Crusade”, *Punch*, September 17, 1919. Retrieved from [https://punch.photoshelter.com/image?&\\_bqG=0&\\_bqH=eJxtkMtqwzAQRb8m3piCvTAtBi1kSXGnjaWih8HZDGLi50HrguOQfn4IE1rTdhajc.\\_oSkiJKpb0rltf0.tj7\\_ChPq5TKMdP1e3z.zxLkixNfOWA3DBiD22s2\\_Ey9HE3fLzHo9dsuJw3uzYCNJxasciKqIpknMwMzoPB.cxqfAUzrN4Wv6Pib1T8H2Vgm.ky68cBmHLS6gbBqCCVBiH9DJQMEgxsRLUCH6TL3NtlLZEU\\_kcTS9GKjkZPTsjNAInLvzG6el0zPRr\\_wZ7P6pBW0dXSEshWRM2RcgKBH.wj97QfaNe\\_mAVkDJLzu1m2B6iekqXU2ehfwF92XjA&GI\\_ID=](https://punch.photoshelter.com/image?&_bqG=0&_bqH=eJxtkMtqwzAQRb8m3piCvTAtBi1kSXGnjaWih8HZDGLi50HrguOQfn4IE1rTdhajc._oSkiJKpb0rltf0.tj7_ChPq5TKMdP1e3z.zxLkixNfOWA3DBiD22s2_Ey9HE3fLzHo9dsuJw3uzYCNJxasciKqIpknMwMzoPB.cxqfAUzrN4Wv6Pib1T8H2Vgm.ky68cBmHLS6gbBqCCVBiH9DJQMEgxsRLUCH6TL3NtlLZEU_kcTS9GKjkZPTsjNAInLvzG6el0zPRr_wZ7P6pBW0dXSEshWRM2RcgKBH.wj97QfaNe_mAVkDJLzu1m2B6iekqXU2ehfwF92XjA&GI_ID=)

the press was equally eager to paint Allenby as a modern and more successful Richard the Third, who finally completed their ancestors' work.

Continuing the trend of comparing the two great leaders, *The Guardian* noted after the capture of Jerusalem by Allenby that “Only once before, at the First Crusade has Jerusalem been taken by men of the West and only once before did an English commander essay the feat, and he failed.”<sup>120</sup> Allenby was rewarded with much praise as the victor of the last crusade, especially after his return to England. Reporting on his return, *The Times* wrote of how “The victor in the last great crusade, the conqueror of Palestine, was in England again for the first time since his triumph, and it was not surprising that his fellow-countrymen should have given him an equally enthusiastic and grateful welcome.”<sup>121</sup> Even when glorifying the return of the equally impressive General Lawrence, *The Guardian* made sure to note how he “shared with Allenby the glories of the Last Crusade.”<sup>122</sup> If the Great War was the last crusade, then Allenby was its greatest hero who finished Richard’s work.

With all the crusading rhetoric surrounding Allenby, the Palestinian campaign, and the countries involved, it is interesting to consider the idea that the British government was theoretically opposed to it. In an official public notice given by the British Department of Information provided to the press explicitly stated that “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 to do with religious questions.”<sup>123</sup> Undoubtedly, despite this notice, the press continued pushing the

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<sup>120</sup>. *The Guardian*, December 11, 1917, 4. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258482458>

<sup>121</sup>. *The Times*, October 8, 1919, 10. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32852631>

<sup>122</sup>. *The Guardian*, November 24, 1919, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258434832>

rhetoric. Indeed, members of the government such as David Lloyd George and Mr. Macpherson themselves made references to the crusades too. Likely, this use of crusading rhetoric was ignored to sell the importance of Jerusalem's capture. Bar-Yosef's argument that "the Palestine campaign was consciously staged by the British government as an exercise in propaganda, shaped, filtered and capitalized on in order to enhance the nation's morale" certainly could explain the government's lack of enforcement of the notice.<sup>124</sup> After all, if the government wanted to sell the public on the significance of Palestine, then the press's many articles would be a useful tool.

When comparing all of the civilian sources' uses of crusading rhetoric, it is clear that they did so with contrasting ideals, such as was the case with the religious aspect of this crusade. With the clergy, there were clear religious connotations. Unlike other groups, who primarily conceived of their crusade in moral and nationalistic terms, the clergyman consistently sold the war in terms of an actual holy war waged against a morally bankrupt, and sometimes pagan, German empire. In contrast, the press was, at times, less inclined to draw the religious connections. A most striking example of this came from *The Guardian* when a journalist argued that "the spirit in which General Allenby comes to Jerusalem is not that of Godfrey of Bouillon or of Richard The Lionhearted. They represented, on the spiritual side, a Church in an age when religion was an intolerant sword, and on the material side the ambition of hungry barons."<sup>125</sup> That said, the Clergy were not alone in giving the war religious connotations, as members of the British government did so as well. Writing to the editor of *The Times*, Lord Grey argued that the war

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<sup>123</sup>. Public Record Office [PRO], Kew, Notice D.607 (15 December 1917), FO/395/152, no. 218223. Quoted in Bar-Yosef, "The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-18".

<sup>124</sup>. Eitan Bar-Yosef, "The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-1918" (*Journal of Contemporary History*, 2001), 88.

<sup>125</sup>. *The Guardian*, December 11, 1917, 4. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/258482458>

was “a holy war, a war in which our 3,000,000 volunteers have joined the Army in the spirit of crusaders”.<sup>126</sup> Given Grey’s high standing within the British government, it is fair to say that the clergy had their supporters with regards to crusading rhetoric. While the Clergy may have used their crusading rhetoric full of religious meaning, the press tempered their usage to focus on the pro-British and anti-German methods.

The press, in general, focused on establishing the secular moral superiority of the British empire in contrast to Germany. Time and time again, the press made clear that the British were more virtuous than the Germans, who drug Britain into the war by invading the neutral country of Belgium. Even if they mostly opted out of the paganistic connections, the press was more than eager to latch onto the idea that German culture was by nature militaristic. Tied to a strong sense of British nationalism, these two forms of rhetoric naturally dominated the civilian usage of crusading rhetoric. If the argument is valid that the British were far too secular for the war to indeed be a holy war, then the press was more than able to make up for this difference by selling it to the public of an empire whose domains never saw the sunset.

Rounding out the crusading rhetoric on the civilian’s part, many groups focused on selling the importance of Palestine. Virtually every major city the British captured in the Levant saw a mention of its connection to the crusades. Indeed, Jerusalem saw the strongest crusading references, but it was far from alone in receiving them. The most likely explanation of this involves the propaganda value alongside the neo chivalric values that surrounded Britain at the time. Simply put, the Middle Eastern front lacked the importance of the German front. The Sick man of Europe in the Ottoman Empire was unable to defend its borders against either the Italians or the Balkans states in the lead up to the Great War. Germany, on the other hand, arguably

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<sup>126</sup>. *The Times*, August 10, 1915, 7. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32831991>

carried the Central Powers on its back by consistently winning the most victories for their alliance, and knocking Russia out of the war. Yet, the Western front was unable to produce the quick victories that the Middle Eastern front did. In the absence of strategic significance, the connections to the crusades could still provide a meaning for the changes in territory.

## CHAPTER 4.CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the two separate groups to use the crusading rhetoric, the military, and civilian. While they are in many ways distinct, they share many similarities as well. Both groups utilized crusading rhetoric when speaking of Palestine and General Edmund Allenby. Both also had strong overtures of British Nationalism. However, equally important are the distinctions between the groups. Whereas the soldiers often ignored Germany, the other groups certainly did not. Likewise, while the soldiers serving in Palestine often made biblical connections, with some exceptions such as the clergy, the Bible was often ignored amongst the civilian population. The question then remains as to why the groups, theoretically with a similar cultural and religious background, differed in their usage of crusading rhetoric.

The sources of crusading rhetoric both focused a good deal of energy on the region of Palestine itself. When the soldiers passed a crusading monument or city, they made a note of it. Often this involved significant battles, and was infused with details about their experiences during the Great War. The press, however, the most vocal proponent of the other groups, often tied it into their articles surrounding the capture of a city. Without the personal connection to the region, their rhetoric often devolved into the specific history of a city within the context of the old crusades. Likely, this stems from the motivations to sell the importance of the Palestinian front to the British public. To say that the Palestinian front was meaningless to the outcome of the war would be unfair. Still, compared to the Western front against Germany, it was often, and understandably, undervalued. By attaching meaning to the region of Palestine, meaning to or not, the press was set up the idea that it was an important theater of the war at a time when that front was seeing the only real progress made in terms of territorial changes on the maps of the world.

The soldiers, on the other hand, were already naturally inclined to view the front as personally important as they were waging what many of them considered to be the last crusade. Without having to explain the historical backdrop of a city to the public, the soldiers

Both the soldiers and civilians idealized General Edmund Allenby. Major Vivian Gilbert, in particular, made many references to his greatest successes throughout the war. David Lloyd George and the press likewise celebrated him as the leader of the last crusade. Even years later, when Allenby passed away, the crusading rhetoric followed him. Writing of Allenby's life, *The Guardian* noted that "his conduct when he entered Jerusalem as the first Christian conqueror since the Crusades, and later as High Commissioner in Egypt, showed that he had a wise understanding of the feelings and prejudices of others."<sup>127</sup> The near-universal acclaim of Allenby as the last crusader rarely differs between the two groups, and it is clear that both sides who utilized the rhetoric had a vested interest in creating through him a modern-day Richard the Lionheart.

Another similarity between the groups goes back to Richard the Lionheart himself. Both groups drew upon him for the historical background surrounding the Palestinian campaign. However, a critical difference between the two exists in how they utilized Richard. The soldiers themselves, for the most part, wrote positively of the crusader king, but the press often produced less flattering images. Whereas the soldiers saw themselves as a continuation of the crusading legacy that Richard left England, the press took a far greater interest in showing how Allenby had succeeded in contrast to Richard's failed campaigns.

The most visible form of shared rhetoric is within British nationalism itself. The soldiers often wrote along the lines of restoring British honor lost at the end of the Third Crusade. The

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<sup>127</sup>. *The Guardian*, May 15 1936, 5. Retrieved from <https://www.newspapers.com/image/259446802>

press did much of the same; all be it in a more critical form, often targeting Richard the Lionheart. Both groups often incorporated passages praising British virtues and righteousness—the difference between the two ties into their goals. The soldiers praised past British crusaders as ideal chivalric warriors. The civilians, on the other hand, often tied the virtuousness of their crusade to British society itself. Certainly, there was a crossover, such as when Sommers claimed that British soldiers brought prosperity to Palestine. Still, overall the soldiers were far more concerned with promoting themselves as crusaders than the others.<sup>128</sup> Rather than conceptualizing their wartime experiences, groups such as journalists, clergy, and politicians were far more concerned with boosting morale on the home front.

A sharp divide between the groups first emerges with regards to Germany. The civilian aspects of British society used crusading rhetoric to establish a case for the way Germany was either pagan, militaristic, or opposed to democracy. The soldiers meanwhile hardly ever mentioned Germany. This again goes back to why the two groups were utilizing crusading rhetoric in the first place. The civilian groups were often either directly disseminating propaganda to the British public or trying to express their views on the war as a whole. In contrast, the soldiers wrote of their experiences in the war, which was primarily confined to the Middle East. Even when the soldiers did serve in other areas, such as Gilbert, they did not use the negative German variation of the rhetoric that the civilian groups did.

Something that the soldiers employed that the civilian groups tended to not were biblical references. This connection likely again stems back to their service in Palestine. While some within the British press did use the Bible, they did not experience the region first-hand. By walking through the pages of the Bible effectively, the soldiers were naturally predisposed to

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<sup>128</sup>. Cecil Sommers, *Temporary Crusaders*, (London: John Lane Company, 1919), VI.

make the biblical connections that the writers back home simply were not in a position to do so. Another interpretation put forth about the soldiers' use of biblical references was that it reminded them of home. Bar-Yosef is one of the strongest proponents of this view and wrote in his work on the topic that "The new Crusaders are actually wanderers in distant lands; and they are homesick."<sup>129</sup> This seems to be oversimplified, Bar-Yosef mainly came to this conclusion based upon a few sources, as many of the soldiers who wrote rarely mentioned home in their writings. That said, it does add further complexity as to why some soldiers employed the Bible when making crusading references.

Concerning crusading rhetoric as a whole by the British, it is clear that a variety of people employed the rhetoric for various ends. The soldiers primarily used the rhetoric to help conceptualize their wartime experiences and to link themselves to their ancestors who traveled across the globe to fight in the original crusades. The clergy often employed it to rally the faithful to England's cause, and paint a picture of why God was on the side of Britain. Many within the press and government likely did so to boost the morale of the nation at one of the most catastrophic moments in British history. While the civilians lacked the personal connections to the crusades that the soldiers had, they still felt compelled to make the comparisons for a variety of reasons that, in turn, shaped their specific forms of crusading rhetoric.

Ultimately this study has sought to add further complexity to the topic of British crusading rhetoric that has received comparatively less attention than it deserves. What little attention it has received over the decades often ignored or dismissed the sources of the rhetoric. Even when it was covered, it usually was from the mindset the soldiers were simply hoping to sell books, while ignoring other motivations that seem foreign in the comparatively more secular

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<sup>129</sup>. Eitan Bar-Yosef, "The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917-1918" (*Journal of Contemporary History*, 2001), 104.

perspective that continued to develop across the twentieth century. By examining this past use of crusading rhetoric, it is clear that the medieval world still held resonance with the British public at large during the Great War. Additionally, by better understanding the motivations and forms the public used, a more in-depth understanding can be gained about the past and why even still crusading rhetoric has been employed until today.

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