

# THE CONTINUATION OF THE COLONIALIST PROJECT FROM THE CRUSADES TO ZIONISM

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## **Abstract**

*The zeal for the Crusader started in Europe at the end of the eleventh century, a spirit that continued for centuries to mobilise millions of Europeans to take the Holy Land from Muslim hands. Over thirty crusades were launched with the aim of capturing Bayt al-Maqdis and “liberating” its churches and Christians, however mostly failing to achieve their said aims. The first crusade was successful in creating the first European colonial society, being brought to an end within a century by Salah al-Din and the complete eradication of their presence by the Mamluk a century later. The last attempt of a crusade was that of Christopher Columbus, who with the gold from the America wanted to launch a new crusade from Spain. Following the first success of the idea of the crusade, the idea was expanded beyond the Holy Land and was used for campaigns blessed by the Pope. Later the concept was to lose ground, and zeal for the crusade was dying out by the sixteenth century. With the threat of the Ottomans into Europe, no longer were crusading to take Jerusalem feasible. Apocalyptic scenarios and the idea of restoring the Jews to Palestine marked a major shift for the prospects of the Holy Land. Napoleon issued the first official call to establish a Jewish colony, although never materialising, the British took it upon themselves to see this project through. Over a century of failed schemes, the British managed to occupy Palestine and proclaim the “End of the Crusades”. Yet, plans for a new colonial settler state were already in motion and after thirty years of British occupation, the reigns were handed over to Zionist as the heirs of the Crusades.*

**Keywords:** *Crusades, Colonialism, Zionism.*

# HAÇLI SEFERLERİNDEN SİYONİZM'E SÖMÜRGEÇİ PROJELERİN DEVAM ETTİRİLMESİ

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## Öz

*Avrupa'da on birinci yüzyılın sonlarında başlayan Haçlı coşkusu, yüzyıllar boyunca milyonlarca Avrupalıyı Kutsal Toprakları Müslümanların elinden almak için seferber etmeye devam eden bir ruhtu. Beytü'l-Makdis'i ele geçirmek ve kiliselerini ve Hristiyanları "özgürleştirmek" amacıyla otuzun üzerinde haçlı seferi başlatıldı, ancak çoğu zaman bunlar amaçlarına ulaşamadı. İlk Haçlı seferi, bir asır içinde Selahaddin tarafından sona erdirilen ve bir asır sonra Memlükler tarafından varlıklarının tamamen ortadan kaldırıldığı ilk Avrupa sömürge toplumunun yaratılmasında başarılı oldu. Bir haçlı seferinin son girişimi, Amerika'dan gelen altınla İspanya'dan yeni bir haçlı seferi başlatmak isteyen Kristof Kolomb'unkeydi. Haçlı seferi fikrinin ilk başarısının ardından, fikir Kutsal Toprakların ötesine genişletildi ve Papa tarafından kutlanan kampanyalar için kullanıldı. Daha sonra kavram zeminini kaybetmek oldu ve haçlı seferi coşkusu on altıncı yüzyılda öldü. Osmanlıların Avrupa'yı tehdit etmesiyle, artık Kudüs'ü mümkün kılmak için haçlı seferi yapmıyorlardı. Kıyamet senaryoları ve Yahudileri Filistin'e geri getirme fikri, Kutsal Toprakların beklentileri için büyük bir değişime işaret ediyordu. Napolyon, bir Yahudi kolonisi kurmak için ilk resmi çağırışı yaptı, ancak hiçbir zaman gerçekleşme de, İngilizler bu projeyi gerçekleştirmeyi üstlendiler. Yüzyılı aşkın süredir başarısız olan planlar, İngilizler Filistin'i işgal etmesi ile "Haçlı Seferlerinin Sonu"nu ilan etmeyi başardılar. Ancak, yeni bir sömürge de yerleşimci devleti için planlar çoktan harekete geçmişti ve otuz yıllık İngiliz işgalinden sonra saltanat, Haçlı Seferlerinin mirasçıları olarak Siyonistlere devredildi.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Haçlı Seferleri, Sömürgecilik, Siyonizm.

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## **Introduction**

Both the Crusades and the Zionist projects although with numerous centuries apart resemble one another in more than one aspect with remarkable historical resonances. It may even be argued that Zionism is the continuation of the crusades or a new form of it and that Zionism is the heir of the Crusade. Many authors have looked at the parallels between these two historical movements, both foreign invaders coming from the west committing heinous crimes, establishing a colony in the heart of the Muslim World surviving for a period of time before their inevitable fall. This article will not set out to compare and contrast the Crusader and Zionists movements; rather it will deal with the continuation of the crusading legacy and campaigns through to the establishment of the Zionist state.

Since the liberation of Bayt al-Maqdis by Sultan Salah al-Din in 1187, numerous campaigns to reoccupy the Holy Land were initiated. These campaigns seem to have persisted throughout the centuries although mostly failing, with numerous attempts or suggestions in every century continuing until a shift took place with the introduction of Jews into the equation. Napoleon's official call to the Jews to come under his command so that he would establish a state for them in Palestine in 1799, created a radical shift in the schemes of occupying the Holy Land. Although Napoleon failed in his campaign and in mobilising the Jews, he ignited this idea in western thought and eventually leading to the occupation of the Holy Land by Britain and proclaiming the end of the Crusades as General Allenby declared in his victory address in December 1917 from inside the Holy City. This ceremony symbolised the change of command or the handing over of the reigns to the newly formed Zionist Movement. Britain to consolidate this matter announced that the post of the first High Commissioner for Palestine be given to Herbert Samuel, a British Jewish Zionist. Over the thirty years of its occupation or so-called mandate over Palestine, Britain laid the foundations for the establishment of the Zionist state. A state that would serve western interests in the region and as many Zionists proclaimed that Israel is an outpost of Western influence in Southwest Asia. Indeed, in the last war on Gaza in May 2021, Netanyahu

addressing ambassadors and diplomats said if Hamas gains victory, then “that is the defeat for all of us”, reiterating that this state does not represent only its interests but that of other powers. This paper would thus deal with the idea of occupying the Holy Land from the crusades until the establishment of the Zionist state and its implication as well as future prospects.

### **The Initial Crusades**

The crusader movement set out to occupy the Holy Land from the Muslim in 1095 with the first crusade reaching and occupying the Holy Land in July 1099. The idea of the Crusade dominated western European thought from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, with most contemporary authors making reference to it. Although loosing appeal over time, they continued to have some appeal into the late nineteenth century with a new dimension. While in modern times the French saw themselves as the first of their nation’s colonial enterprises, the British and Zionist in Palestine “felt themselves to be the inheritors of their traditions” (Riley-Smith, 2009: 1). Not all the crusades were large in numbers, well organised or achieved their goals, many even falling short of their set-out objectives, also the idea of the crusade evolved beyond Muslims in the Holy Land to include crusades against Muslims and others in Europe and beyond. In addition, there is an established numbering of major crusades to take Jerusalem from Muslims; however, there are many that have been included in these sequences due to their small numbers or impact.

The First Crusade set out for the ‘liberation’ of the Holy Land, its holy sites and its Christians from the tyranny of the “infidel” Muslims. Due to the fragmentation of the Muslim World between two Caliphates in Baghdad and Cairo and the further disintegration into city states made it easier for the first crusade to take large parts of the Bilad al-Sham (Historical Syria). Indeed, the alleged support of the Shiite Fatimids in trying to forge an alliance with the crusades against the Sunni Seljuks accelerated the process of the occupation of the Holy City (Abu-Munshar, 2010; Runciman, 1995, vol.1: 229). As the Fatimids attacked the Holy City one year before the arrival of the Crusades in 1098 and forced the Artuqids/ Seljuk

forces out of the city. The Fatimids were then forced to defend the city, as their supposed alliance with the crusades did not materialise. The Crusades succeeded in occupying the Holy Land and took the holy city on 15 July 1099, through massacring tens of thousands of Muslims in the holy site of al-Aqsa Mosque, and the burning of Jews in their synagogue, with the Fatimid garrison being spared as they were fortified in the citadel and were allowed to leave the city unharmed (Runciman, 1995, vol.1: 286-287). After the carnage caused and the clearing of the corpses and burning them, and the declaration of the *liberation of the Holy Sepulchre from the Domination of Islam*, the appointment of a king for the newly established Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was taken and further expansion of territory was to follow. This kingdom lasting for nearly 200 years until 1291 continued even after the holy city was recaptured by Salah al-Din in 1187.

After the success of the first crusade in taking the holy city and land, many of the participants put down their arms and returned to Europe carrying palm branches signifying the completion of their mission and pilgrimage (Riley-Smith, 2009: 7). This created a problem for the newly established kingdom and their appeal for further reinforcements resonated with the new pope who called for a new crusade to consolidate the newly formed kingdom. Although the enthusiasm the First Crusade aroused had started quietened down, large reinforcements were ready to set out (Runciman, 1995, vol.2: 248-249). Four separate expeditions left Europe at the turn of the century, in what became known as the *Crusade of 1101*. It is not generally recognised as a fully-fledged crusade, rather as a reinforcement to the first crusade. On reaching Anatolia, they were defeated by the Seljuks, and this brought the crusade of 1101 to a disastrous finish. Some of those who survived managed to regroup and reach Jerusalem the following year together with those who travelled by sea (Mulinder, 2006: 304-307). Moreover, the newly formed crusader state had to resort to relying on the local population, mainly Christian Arabs to repopulate the city and region, as crusaders and pilgrims were coming in dribbles and for short times before heading back home. Those who settled in the region amongst the crusaders started adapting to the regions' culture and learning the native way; *“Frankish colonists had inevitably to try to fit into their new*

*environment, and they could not escape contact with their subjects and their neighbours”* (Runciman, 1995, vol.2: 318).

The colonisation project of Europeans had thus started outside the boundaries of Europe and “*only since the Crusades is there continuity and filiation between colonial movements. Ever since, colonialism has remained a major factor in European and non-European history. In this sense it is justified to regard the Crusader kingdom as the first European colonial society.*” (Praver, 1972: ix). Expansionist policies of the crusaders and the creations of new colonies meant the need for more territorial expansions to consolidate their gains in the region together with external support. Indeed, the crusaders in their early years could not establish themselves in the region without continuous reinforcements from the west. Bohemund I of Antioch, who was a leader in the first crusade and was captured in 1100 and upon his release for a ransom he fought the Muslims again and was defeated by Balak Gazi near Harran in 1104. Upon which he went to Europe for reinforcement and to raise a new Crusade, he travelled to Rome, France and Normandy. Due to a conflict with Byzantium over his Principality of Antioch, he sought to attack them in Constantinople and led his army against the Byzantine city of Dyrrachion in 1107 and eventually had to surrender in 1108 (Edgington, 2006: 175-176). Thus, this crusade had diverted its aim from fighting the Muslims in Bilad al-Sham to fighting the Byzantine who were aiming to occupy Antioch. Yet another crusade came all the way from northern Europe and aided the Kingdom of Jerusalem against the Muslims. The *Crusade of Sigurd Jorsalfar*, King of Norway, consisted of around sixty ships and reached the Holy Land by 1110. They assisted the King of Jerusalem in taking more Muslim cities in the region as well as providing a naval blockade during the besiegement of Saydal Sidon (Murray, 2006: 1112).

Following the Artuqid victory at the Field of Blood Battle (Sahat al-Dam) in 1119, the King of Jerusalem sent an urgent appeal to the Pope for help who managed to mobilise a *Venetian major naval crusade* that set of 1122 that was successful in taking the city of Tyre in 1124 (Madden, 2006: 308). Another campaign was launched known as *the Crusade of 1129* to take the stronghold of Damascus, but it was not to be successful

without further help from Europe, thus attempts to secure papal endorsement and the support of other nobles was sought. Large numbers similar to that of the first crusade came from Western Europe, encamped a few miles from Damascus, however weather conditions; mud, dense fog and a massive thunderstorm led to the retreat of the crusades (Runciman, 1995, vol.2: 178-180; Phillips, 2006: 308-309).

The second crusade was initiated fifty years after the first crusade (1147-50), particularly after the fall of al-Ruha/ Edessa (Urfa) in 1144 to Imad al-Din Zengi, who halted their expansion to the eastern Muslim hinterlands. Soon after the news of the fall of one of four crusading states, al-Ruha, reached other crusader they sought help from Western Europe, provoking the largest expedition since the first crusade. With the west being rouse again, preparations were underway, although slow but they were well planned. The Pope issued a call-in order to consolidate what had been achieved by the first crusade. Kings of France and Germany adhered to the call and started preparing for the long overland journey, at the same time a smaller number of Englishmen set forth via sea in 1147 (Runciman, 1995, vol.2: 258). The second crusade although initiated to recapture al-Ruha, had to divert course. The English fleet was invited to take part in the siege of Lisbon in al-Andalus and after its capitulation, some decided to stay there while some continued to the Holy Land. As for the French and German, they suffered many defeats en route by the Seljuks to their armies and headed to Antioch. Suggestions to attack Nur al-Din in Aleppo were abandoned as the armies continued south to Jerusalem, where a new destination was selected, Damascus, the stronghold of Muslims. If this city was to be acquired, it would cut off the Muslims of Egypt and Africa from Muslims in northern Syria and the East. Their siege of Damascus in 1148 concluded the failure of the second crusade. This was due to the resistance of the city and the continuous reinforcement that were pouring into the city, besides news of the army of Nur al-Din Zengi approaching and the disputes that broke out amongst the crusader for who will control Damascus after it's taken (Runciman, 1995, vol.2: 281-284). Thus, the demoralised crusading army was forced to retreat and saw the return of what was left from the German and French armies back to Europe (Phillips, 2006: 1084-1090), without any glory to recount. The fall of al-Ruha and

the retreat at Damascus was a turning point in the history of the Crusade in the region, the tides were to change with the rise of Nur al-Din and his efforts bearing fruits a few decades later.

Following these failed crusades, the spirit of the crusade faded out for around thirty years and no new large crusades were launched until Muslims were able to liberate Jerusalem and the Holy Land. As the spirit of the Crusade was deflating after the failure of the second crusade, one more campaign was to take place with no remarkable outcome on the ground. The *Crusade of Rognvald Kali Kolsson*, Earl of Orkney (northern Scotland) in 1150, was launched as part of an effort to halt the advances of Nur al-Din Zengi in the region. Crusaders from Orkney and Norway set sail in 1151 and reached the Holy Land in 1152 and capturing en route a Muslim ship. After visiting Jerusalem and holy sites they returned home (Murray, 2006: 1047), turning this crusade into a pilgrimage rather than an actual confrontation with Muslims.

As the spirit of the Crusade was diminishing, the spirit of Jihad was on the rise. Although the Muslim's initial response to the crusade was rather weak, this started to gain momentum following the endeavours of scholars/ulama to revive the spirit of Bayt al-Maqdis and Jihad amongst the Muslims. What was started by Imad al-Din and his son Nur al-Din in their strategy to unite the Muslims on the road to liberate the Holy Land was crowned by the victory of Salah al-Din. On the other hand, before Salah al-Din's decisive assault on the crusaders at the horns of Hittin numerous appeals had come over the years from the Kingdom of Jerusalem to Europe, no one in the west realised the urgency of the danger the kingdom was to face, with the exception of the Papal Court. This was to change after hearing that the Christian army had been destroyed, the Holy Cross had been captured and Jerusalem had been lost. Survivors would try to regroup in Tyre, but knew without assistance from the West, their chance of holding their last stronghold or recovering lost land was null; thus, timely assistance from the King of Sicily aided in keeping the city in crusader hand. Appealing to their brethren in Europe, they sent envoys and letters to the Pope and Kings of Europe pleading for help (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 3-4). As the news of the defeat of the crusades in the Holy Land



resonated through Europe, the spirit of the crusade that had died out was revived once more with the Pope calling for a new crusade, exclaiming all Christians to take arms and “liberate” the Holy Land.

### **Crusades for recapturing the Holy Land**

*The Third Crusade or the Kings' Crusade* was thus directly prompted by the triumph of Salah al-Din at Hittin and the liberation of much of the Holy Land and Bayt al-Maqdis in 1187. Salah al-Din with the King of Jerusalem his prisoner managed to secure the fall of most of the crusader strongholds with the exception of Sur/Tyre, thus in effect ending the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, at least briefly. Salah al-Din released the King of Jerusalem, Guy of Lusignan, after giving an oath to never take arms against Muslims and he would return to Europe (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 19). The King not keeping to his oath, regrouped with other crusaders in Antioch and prepared an army to regain what he had lost. A siege on the port city of Acre was laid in the autumn of 1189 awaiting much needed reinforcement coming the west. It took three years for the armies of the third crusade to arrive and change the tide in favour of the crusades.

This crusade was led by the monarchs of Europe, namely King of England Richard the Lionheart, King of France Philip Augustus, and Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. Frederick's army was the largest in numbers with some estimates putting the numbers in their hundreds of thousands' and was expected to be meticulously planned and organised. The army crossed by land through Anatolia with a number of victories against the Seljuk en route and captured the capital of the Seljuk Sultanate. However, in June 1190 the German king drowned in the Göksu/ Saleph River near Silifke/Mersin while bathing causing the disbursement of his army with a small remnant reaching the Holy Land later with his bones (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 14-16). Both Kings Philip II and Richard I set out in July 1190 sailing through the Mediterranean Sea reaching Acre a year later in April and June 1191 respectively.

The city of Acre was finally captured in July 1191 after a 3-year long siege by the crusaders and Richard beheaded 2700 Muslims in full view

of Salah al-Din's army. Following which some dispute between the French and English King led to the departure of the French King back to France on the ground of poor health, though leaving much of his army behind (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 50-53). Richard was in sole command of the army and with his eyes on Jerusalem; he managed to defeat Salah al-Din in Arsuf and to bring Ascalon under his control. Negotiations between Salah al-Din and Richard continued for some time, as Richard marched towards Jerusalem and reached Bayt Nuba (20 Km from the holy city). However, this crusade did not succeed in taking the city due to Salah al-Din's strategy in cutting water supplies, for this, Richard wished to retreat and attack Egypt instead and eventually retreated to Ascalon (Nicholson, 2006: 1174-1181). With this the army disintegrated with many returning home and Richard desperate to return home, pleading to Salah al-Din for any symbolic concession; "were you to give me a very small village, I would accept it", this comes after the initial stance of returning all lands taken by the Muslims to the crusades (Abu-Munshar, 2005: 93-94). The third crusade which lasted for five years ended with the signing of al-Ramlah peace treaty in September 1192 between Sultan Salah al-Din and King Richard stipulating a truce for three years and eight months. It also successfully re-established the Kingdom of Jerusalem with its capital being Acre, although small it managed to survive for another century. Never again, would Europe be able to assemble the same number of monarchs and princes for another crusade and little western knights would willingly come to the Holy Land (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 76, 104).

Following the passing of Salah al-Din and the end of the truce period, another crusade was to be launched, *the Crusade of Emperor Henry VI*, also known as *the German Crusade of 1197-1198*. Although there was no direct reason for this crusade in terms of the situation in the Holy Land, it came to strengthen the re-establish the reduced Kingdom of Jerusalem and securing the coast of Palestine as well for the personal stature of Holy Roman Emperor and king of Sicily, Henry VI. The bulk of the army set out on their journey in May 1197 after many delays reaching the Holy Land and heading towards Beirut and Sayda/ Sidon and capturing them. The forces of al-Adil, Salah al-Din's brother, halted further gains and together with news of the death of the emperor reaching, and rivalry break-

ing out between the crusaders much of the army headed back to Europe. A new truce in June 1198 was endorsed for a period of five years and eight months (Murray, 2006: 315-317).

*The Fourth Crusade* launched after the call of the Pope Innocent III in 1198 to recapture Jerusalem from the Muslims, was initially aimed at taking Egypt, the strong hold of the Ayyubids, this shift was an important shift in the crusade, as Egypt became the focus of much subsequent crusades. This idea of shifting the route of the crusade to the Holy Land first through Egypt was the brainchild of Richard the lion heart, who on leaving the Holy Land gave the opinion that “Egypt was the vulnerable point in the Saracen Empire”. It was thus decided eventually that it would be the crusaders’ objective as if they would drive the Muslims out of the Nile valley; they would lose their richest province and be unable to hold Jerusalem and would be unable to have a fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 76, 110-111, 150).

However, the Fourth Crusade diverted course and failed to reach the Holy Land or Egypt, due to large debts owned to the Venetians, the crusaders agreed to help recapture the Latin Christian port city of Zara/ Zadar for Venice. Upon hearing of the sack of the city (1202), the Pope excommunicated the participants and ordered them to head for the Holy Land and return to their vows and swear never to attack Christians again. He rescinded the excommunications of the crusader in 1203, yet due to power struggles in the Constantinople and the offer to pay all the debts of the fourth crusade in return for aiding Prince Alexios gain the throne. They succeeded in overthrowing the Byzantine Empire and culminated with sack Constantinople and the establishment of the Latin Empire in its place for a few decades. Only a small number defected and continued to the Holy Land (Andrea and Madden, 2006: 449-456). The crusaders in the Holy Land lost hope of the arrival of this crusade and in 1204 they signed a truce with Salah al-Din’s brother al-Adil. Rather than reinforcement arriving, the opposite happened with many of the crusader knights in the Holy Land leaving for Constantinople to claim territory and fiefs and further it deprived the Kingdom of Jerusalem of potential helpers (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 129-130).

Amidst these failures, a popular movement amongst the poor started in Europe in what became known as the *Children's Crusade*, which presumably set out in summer of 1212 from France and Germany with the aim of returning the Holy Cross lost at the battle of Hittin. This disputed crusade failed; however, it seems to have continued the spirit of the crusade amongst the public with the failure of the elites. It is suggested that it may have helped in initiating the Fifth Crusade a few years later, as Pope Innocent III would have seen that enthusiasm amongst the public for crusading was still alive (Dickson, 2006: 242-244). With no prospect of western reinforcement to the crusaders in the Holy Land, a new truce was signed with al-Adil in July 1212 for five years. At the same time asking for the preparation of a new crusade, once the truce had expired (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 133).

Pope Innocent III after the Fourth Crusade went out of his hands started in 1213 discussions of another crusade with reforms to the church and raising sufficient funds for this endeavour. He died in 1216 and his successor Honorius III continued the preparation for the *Fifth Crusade*. Following long and slow preparations the first group arrived in Acre in September 1217 and others arriving six months later. Their objective was to take back Jerusalem through attacking Egypt and correct the failings of the fourth crusade. After small gains in the Holy Land, they indeed preceded to Egypt and landed in Damietta in May 1218 and with the passing of Sultan al-Adil, his son al-Kamil of Egypt offered the crusaders Jerusalem in return for their withdrawal from Damietta, an offer they refused, and they managed to occupy the port city in November 1219. Excepting arrival of reinforcement as promised by the Pope they proceeded to Cairo in July 1221; however, the flooding of the Nile and the resistance of the Ayyubid forced them to negotiate for a safe withdrawal and the surrendering of Damietta together with an eight-year truce. The armies of the fifth Crusades sailed back to their countries without anything to show for (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 132-1170; Powell, 2006: 427-431).

## Crusades through diplomacy

*The sixth crusade*, or the Crusade of Emperor Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor and king of Sicily, went through numerous difficulties and delays. However, he succeeded in taking Jerusalem through diplomatic routes and signed a ten-year deal with Sultan al-Kamil in 1229. He was the first Christian monarch to re-establish Christian rule in the holy city after Salah al-Din liberated. He initially was to set sail in 1220 and after being postponed to 1221 and then 1225 and 1227 was facing the threat of being excommunicated. He set out on the crusade in 1227 but fell ill and was excommunicated by the new Pope, yet he continued on his crusade and reached Acre in September 1228. This was after communications with Sultan al-Kamil in 1226 who sought his help against his brother al-Mu‘azzam Isa of Damascus in return for giving him parts of the Holy Land in Muslim control. Yet the death of al-Mu‘azzam in November 1227 meant that this deal was no longer on the table. Through diplomacy and threat of war, al-Kamil agreed to a ten-year truce in February 1229, giving up Jerusalem and other sites in the Holy Land to the crusades, however allowing the retaining of al-Aqsa Mosque in Muslim hands and the aiding of Frederick to al-Kamil against all his enemies including Christians. Frederick entered the holy city in March 1229 and crowned himself King of Jerusalem (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 184-190; Weiler, 2006: 313-315). The Pope condemned this agreement and wrote in 1234 encouraging the launch of a new crusade once the truce expires. French and English nobles heeded to his call, yet their departure was delayed, as the truce had not passed.

Crusader set sail to the Holy Land and arrived in Acre in September 1239 in what became known as the *Barons' Crusade, or the Crusade of 1239–1241*. This came after the death of al-Kamil in 1238 and quarrels amongst his heirs over the Ayyubid throne. Crusaders deliberated on whether to attack Egypt or Damascus and decided to first attack Ascalon and Gaza and then turn to Damascus. Taking the chance of Muslim division, they mounted an attack in November 1239 and were defeated in Gaza, with their leaders either captured or killed, while some managed to escape. Al-Nasir Dawud son of al-Mu‘azzam marched from Kerek and

took back Jerusalem in November/December 1239 without much difficulty as the city was largely undefended. Internal struggles over the Ayyubid throne brought the crusaders back in the picture to make a bargain for themselves. They managed to regain most of the land they lost to Salah al-Din including Jerusalem through diplomacy and playing between Ayyubid factions in 1241 (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 211-219; Burgtorf, 2006: 309-311). Al-Aqsa Mosque enclave was back in Christian hands unlike the earlier arrangement with Fredrick II, and the holy city stayed in crusader hands for another few years before being taken back by al-Salih Ayyub of Egypt with the help of the Khawarizmis in July/ August 1244 (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 223-225). This time it was to stay and continued to be in Muslim hands for another seven centuries to come until European forces led by the British occupied the holy city in December 1917.

The Crusaders were soon gathering in Acre for another assault on Egypt, this time with the support of the Ayyubid of Damascus. They fought the Ayyubid of Egypt outside Gaza and were completely destroyed by the army of al-Salih Ayyub and the Khawarizmies with most of them killed or captured in the greatest loss of the crusaders since Hittin (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 225-227). With matters in the house of Ayyub resolved more land was to be regained from the crusades. Help was sought from the west warning them if reinforcements were not sent the whole kingdom would perish.

### **Further Crusades**

The defeat of the crusade and the loss of Jerusalem meant that the situation was ripe for a new crusade and the Pope calling for it in July 1245. King Louise IX was already planning for it taking three years from 1245 to prepare setting sail in August 1248, he became the sole leader of the *Seventh Crusade* as other European rulers failed to join preoccupied with internal conflicts and by another crusade into al-Andalus. Discussing the objective of this crusade, it was agreed that Egypt should be the target, as the richest and most venerable province of the Ayyubid. Louise arrived on the shores of Egypt in June 1249 and managed to capture the unde-

fended city of Damietta soon after. Again, Jerusalem was to be traded for Damietta, an offer the crusaders refused. With reinforcements arriving, Louise advanced to Cairo, and with the death of the Sultan things were going in favour of the crusades. The wife of the Sultan, Shajarat al-Durr, took matters into her hand and held the defences against the crusades until the arrival of Turanshah the son of al-Salih. Louise offered to give back Damietta in return for Jerusalem, but Turanshah, now the Sultan, refused. Then King Louise IX was defeated outside Mansurah and captured by the Ayyubids. With Damietta back to the Muslims and after paying a ransom, Louise was released and retreated to Acre. Although he had problems at home with an imminent English invasion, he decided to stay and begged for reinforcement for his crusade in a letter to the baroness of France (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 256-274; Goldsmith, 2006: 321-324). However, no help was imminent as Louise's brothers refused to send any help from France, although King Henry III of England was preparing with his subjects a crusade in 1250, he asked the Pope to postpone his expedition. As no official reinforcements were set out to leave from Europe, the public particularly in France in hearing of their king's capture and predicaments launched what become known as *the Shepherds' Crusade*. It was an unofficial crusade of poor shepherds and peasants with the aim of aiding their king. Commencing in spring 1251, armed shepherds travelling in bands gathering recruits, led by their charismatic leader "Master of Hungary" met with the king's mother to express their intent to come to the aid of her son. They held meetings across the country denouncing the Pope and clergy for not doing enough and preaching a crusade against other Christians, namely against King Conrad in 1251. Thus, they became involved in anticlerical violence, killing priests turning the crusade into a rebellious mob, before being clamped down with their leader and many of his followers executed or hanged (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 279; Dickson, 2006: 1093-1094).

Louise with no support coming from the west turned to the east, and with the power struggle between the new emerging power in Cairo, the Mamluks, and the Ayyubids in Damascus, he tried to gain Jerusalem back through aligning himself with one against the other. However, the interception of the Caliph in Baghdad brought an end to such plans. Thus,

Louise turned to the Assassins, struck an alliance with them, and tried to do the same with the Mongols where he was unsuccessful. His mother's death and unrest in France forced him to return home in 1254 after concluding a truce with the Ayyubid for two years and a half (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 275-281).

With the rise of the Mamluks in the region, a small crusade set forth from Europe, known as the *Crusade of Odo of Burgundy*. The count of Nevers in France took a group of fifty knights to the Holy Land in the autumn of 1265. He assisted in defending the city of Acre against the Mamluk Sultan Baybars in June 1266 and died soon after (Paviot, 2006: 897). Again, to aid against the Mamluk Sultanate, the *Crusade of 1267* was launched upon the appeals of the Pope to support the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Response to this crusade was poor across Germany, however in the Upper Rhine region of France it had considerable success with hundreds heeding to the call and departing in spring 1267 and reaching Acre soon after. However, they mostly returned within the course of a couple of years (1269–1270). This was followed by the *Crusade of James I of Aragon*, King of Aragon, Mallorca, Valencia and count of Barcelona, in 1269. Although he attempted to launch a crusade in 1245/1246 and in 1260 but only in September 1269 his campaign was undertaken. He had close to a thousand knights and thousands of soldiers and mercenaries to travel in a large fleet. Only part of the campaign was able to reach Acre, as bad weather was to blame for the return of the king. Those who reached the Holy Land on hearing of the king's return went back home, while others stayed to defend Acre against the Mamluk before returning home in early 1270 (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 330-331; Jaspert, 2006: 651).

With the Mamluk Sultanate growing stronger and attempting to eradicate crusader presence in the East, as Sultan Baybars was capturing crusader towns and fortification, and threatening the capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Acre, a new crusade was launched through North Africa. *The Crusade of Louis IX of France to Tunis* in 1270 was his second crusade following the failure of his previous crusade; he continued his connection with the Holy Land through sending money to support a small number of troops he left behind (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 290). This crusade came after the plea of



the Pope Clement IV for a new crusade in 1266; Louise informed the Pope secretly that he would undertake the crusade. Nearly 10,000 people would take this expedition, and with financial support of the church, the ships set sail in July 1270. To the surprise of most, they sailed to North Africa, landed unopposed, seized the city of Carthage within a week, and waited to attack the city of Tunis. However due to illnesses that struck the army and the death of the king, this episode was doomed to fail. It is said that the last words of Louise on his deathbed were “Jerusalem, Jerusalem”, the city he never saw (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 290-292). Even after the arrival of the king’s brother, who took the reins of this crusade, there were little chance that the crusade can continue through North Africa to the Holy Land. He was forced to withdraw as his army was weakened by the diseases and reached an agreement with the Muslims in October 1270. Ten day later Lord Edward of England, who was to join this crusade arrived in Tunisia late and left together to Sicily where plans to take the fleet to Syria in the coming spring. However, a storm destroyed the fleet and killed a thousand men. Only Lord Edward was able to continue to the Holy Land (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 290-292; Goldsmith, 2006: 318-321).

The *Crusade of the Lord Edward*, later King Edward I, continued after wintering in Sicily following the failure of the expedition into North Africa. He reached Acre in May 1271, followed by reinforced led by a few French lords, and also his brother Edmond joined him a few months later. Edwards stayed in the Holy Land for a year with around 1000 of his men, attempting to coordinate with the Mongols action against the Mamluks. He participated in repelling an attack by Sultan Baybars on Acre in December 1271 and following an assassination attempt against him, he returned to England in September 1272 as his father was also ill (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 335-338; Tyerman, 2006: 317-318). This was the last crusade to reach the Holy Land and ended with a ten-year treaty with the Mamluks in May 1272. The new Pope Gregory X, who had accompanied Edward to the Holy Land, attempted to revive the crusading spirit amongst Europeans. His appeal to everyone across Europe was circulated as far as Finland and Iceland and possibly Greenland but fell on deaf ears. No response to the plea of the Pope showed that the public saw the crusade itself to have become debased. In addition, the papacy was giving the same rewards for

crusades closer to home besides corruptions that created a distrust between them and the people. It seemed clear to the crusaders in the east, that no new campaigns were going to come from Europe anytime soon but were hoping instead that the Mongols would destroy the Muslims. The crusaders in Acre wrote to King Edward in 1273 asking him when his next crusade would take place as he had promised to prepare a larger crusade, he responded that neither he nor the Pope have deceived plans on this. The Pope however summoned a council in 1274 and the pressing invitations sent to the monarch of Europe were largely ignored or declined. Thus, only discussions about a new crusade took place, two years later King Philip III of France and Rudolph of Hapsburg prepared for a crusade, however it did not materialise and with the death of the Pope in 1276, no crusade was likely to leave (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 338-341, 346).

The Mamluk Sultanate now with the aggressions of the crusaders and with no western intervention were able to pursue their goal to clear out the crusader's outposts from the region and regain much of Muslim lands and have been successful in that. Alone in the reign of Sultan Baybars, before which the crusader dominion extended along the Syrian coastline from Gaza to Cilicia, was now reduced only to a few cities, upon his death in 1277 the crusaders rejoiced. The Frankish colonies in the Holy Land and Syria however were falling one by one (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 347-348, 351, 387). There were attempts in early 1280 to ally with the Mongols who promised to send an army of 100,000 the following year to Syria and plea to King Edward to send his crusade. With no response and no imminent arrival of the Mongols, a new ten-year truce was signed with Sultan Qalawun in May/July 1281. This gave Qalawun the chance to continue his campaigns against the Mongols. With the conversion of the Mongol leader Tekuder first to Christianity and then to Islam in 1282 and signing a treaty with the Sultan, the Mongol threat was at bay, at least for the moment. Changes in the Mongol leadership and through Christian lobbying, the idea of urging a new crusade was brought back to the forefront. The Ilkhan sent an embassy in 1285 and 1287 to the west and although well received there was no solid promise or definite date given by the Pope or the monarchs, as the spirit of the crusade was clearly declining. Another attempt in 1289 with an envoy carrying letters to the Pope and kings of

France and England urging joint action, and suggesting the arrival of the Europeans in early 1291 to Damascus and if so Jerusalem will be captured by the Mongols and given to them. The Pope recommended and encouraged this venture, while the kings congratulating the Ilkhanate on their Christian enterprise but without making any solid promises. Another envoy was sent again in early 1291 with two Christian Mongols and met the Pope and the King of England, and with the king immersed in internal affairs, they returned discontent. Only in northern Italy, the appeal of the Pope met with any response, from a group of peasants arriving in Acre in August 1290 upon their arrival causing havoc and riots massacring Muslim merchants in the city (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 390, 398-402, 409-410).

Following the massacre of Muslim at the hands of the *Italian Crusade*, several embassies were exchanged with the Sultan requesting the handing over the culprits for justice. With the crusaders refusing, Sultan Qalawun took this opportunity to work on eradicating the crusaders once and for all, yet during the preparations he passed away. However, on his deathbed he entrusted his son, Al-Ashraf Khalil, to continue his campaigns. Having to delay the campaign initially as there were plots to overthrow him, he set out in March 1291 for Acre arriving a month later with a well-equipped army to lay the siege on the port city. The crusaders had sent numerous appeals to Europe that went unnoticed, with only a small number of knights arriving sent by the King of England, King of Cyprus amongst others. A month into the siege King Henry of Cyprus arrived with his army via sea to assist against the Muslims in defending the city. The Muslim however managed to break the defences of the city and the king with others fled back to Cyprus. Most of the city was in Muslim hands by 18 May 1291. With the capital of the kingdom falling, the remaining cities of Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, Haifa and Tartus followed suit and fell with its defenders abandoning them to Cyprus (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 411-423). The Mamluk Sultanate thus brought an end to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and conquered their bases, ending their presence in the region completely. Now any new invasions would not have a base in the Holy Land, they can operate from.

## **Desperation for new Crusades**

The spirit of the crusades was nearly “extinct” in Europe and no more crusades were successful in reaching the Holy Land. Many authors have tried to arouse western feeling for a new crusade; Thaddeus of Naples published an account of the fall of Acre in 1292, pleading to the Pope and monarchs to rescue the Holy Land. Another preacher, Raymond Lull, presented the pope in 1295 with a memorandum of how to combat Islam and published a book in 1305 of his strategy; suggesting that the crusade should first expel Muslims from al-Andalus, then cross to North Africa and move along the coastal area to Tunis and then Egypt. Although King Philip of France had announced that he would launch a crusade, it was never to materialise, as his true motives were other than that. This is besides other preparations by the Templers for a crusade and King of Cyprus, all of which never materialised (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 431-433).

It took another twenty years after the fall of Acre for a new crusade to actually commence. The *Crusade of 1309*, or the Crusade of the Poor, was a popular movement that kindled the crusading spirit in France and Germany. Pope Clement V, wanted to start a crusade with the Hospitaller Order in 1308, however masses of people came to combine their forces with the Hospitallers to regain the Holy Land, some even setting forth to the Holy Land. They could not proceed due to lack of ships and funds, and many had to return home. In 1310, the Hospitaller fleet sailed however only reaching Rhodes and consolidating their power over the Island (Dickson, 2006: 311-313). As an official crusade was being planned in 1318 was still being discussed in 1320, *The Second Shepherds' Crusade*, in 1320 commenced. People of all ages participated in what became the latest episode of an unofficial crusade, unauthorised by the Pope. They wanted to fight the “infidels” and regaining the Holy Land from them. Starting from France, the masses headed to Paris hoping that the King Philip V would lead them. They continued without official support over a period of four months, involved in anticlerical violence and civic disorder. As it turned to be the most violent of the shepherds' crusade, the Pope ordered their dispersal in June 1320 before their arrival in Avignon in southern France (Dickson, 2006: 1094-1095). With no base in the Holy Land,

the following crusader destinations were to cripple rising Muslim powers. Two crusades were sent to Smyrna, Izmir, the Smyrna Crusade in 1344 and the Crusade of Humbert II of Viennois to aid Smyrna in 1346. Both were preached by the Pope Clement VI, against the Turcoman ruler of the Aydin emirate. (Savvides, 2006: 1116-1118; Paviot, 2006: 612).

The crusaders seemed to have lost focus of the initial meaning of the crusade and no longer had the Holy Land as their direct objective; this was the case with many crusades within Europe, and also against Muslims in al-Andalus. The crusade thus became a wide concept beyond the “liberation” of the Holy Land. Although many discussions of a new crusade to take the Holy Land continued in European circles, such as Philip VI of France who rekindled the idea of the crusade around 1330 with encouragement of the Pope. A memorandum was submitted to the Papal and royal courts that detailed strategies for the new crusade; however, the initiation of a war with England meant the idea of the crusade was put on hold.

However, the titular king of Jerusalem, King of Cyprus, Peter I, took the issue to a practical level. Since young age, he has been urging a war for the Holy Land, and after being crowned he occupied Anatolian ports to safeguard shipping lanes linking Cyprus to the West from the Turks and set off for the West to instigate a crusade. One of his objectives was to raise sufficient support for the new crusade, he was successful in swaying King John II of France to his campaign. While at the same time, the Pope preached for Holy War. Peter was able also to secure financial support from King Edward III of England. The death of the French King left Peter as the leader of the expedition. Although the destination was kept secret, at the risk of tipping off the Muslims, preparations were underway with 165 ships setting sail in October 1365. Since the Third Crusade, a fleet like this had not been raised, once en route the destination was announced Alexandria in Egypt. Within days, they had occupied, sacked the city and massacred its inhabitants. The crusaders gathering the booty returned to ship ready to depart and were unwilling to face the army coming from Cairo. With only a few Cypriote troops left to defend the looted city, Peter ordered for evacuation. He was hoping once back to Cyprus they would regroup and set forth again on this quest, however, most of the crusaders

had other plans to return home. With disappointment the Pope received the news, while the King of France promising to send him an army. Peter raided the Syrian coast later and entered into negotiations with the Mamluk for the cession of the Holy Land. Travelling to the west again in 1368, on his return he was killed by his own men in early 1369. Peace was concluded with the Mamluk in 1370. This campaign concluded the last of the crusades directed for the recovery of the Holy Land (Runciman, 1995, vol.3: 441-448; Edbury, 2006: 942-943). Another crusade was born out of this same crusade, *The Crusade of Amadeus VI of Savoy* in 1366 was led against the Ottoman Turks who were threatening Eastern Europe.

Direct crusades into the Holy Land and Egypt were no longer viable, as the threat of the Ottomans further to the north had to be faced (Runciman, 1995 vol.3: 449, 452). While towards the south, threats of Muslims from North Africa to Christian maritime saw the launch of the *Mahdia or Barbary Crusade* in 1390. The Franco-Genoese crusade attacked and besieged the port city of al-Mahdia in Tunisia for nine weeks, it was abandoned after a siege of some nine weeks. This campaign managed to revive the spirit of crusade amongst the French but did not do much for advancing the crusader movement. Many of those who participated in the Mahdia crusade were known to have fought in the Nikopolis Crusade in 1396. Philippe de Mézières, an ex-chancellor of King Peter of Cyprus living in Paris, had made the driving ambition of his life to be the launch of a new crusade and sent a plea to Richard II of England for an Anglo-French crusade in 1395. He reminded the king of his ancestor's legacy and the current situation of Jerusalem and the east as well as the need to make peace with France to confront the Ottoman armies coming into Europe. His efforts failed with the King of England with only forces from France heading to join the Battle of Nicopolis (Saul, 1997).

### **Crusades changing course**

The following crusades were aimed at the Ottomans who were gaining more land across Eastern Europe. One of the last large-scale Crusades with recruits from Western Europe and Hungary the *Nikopolis Crusade*

was defeated by the Ottoman Turks near Nikopolis in Bulgaria in 1396. In 1439 during the Council of Florence the pope received booklets on the Ottomans and the recovery of the Holy Land (Tyerman, 2019: 422-423). The *Varna Crusade* followed in 1444, to confront Ottoman expansion into Central Europe. The victory of the Ottomans ensued more victories and the eventual fall of Constantinople in 1453, with Pope Nicholas V immediately calling for a new crusade to recapture Istanbul Europeans were not that enthusiastic even with realisation now they would first need to conquer Constantinople if they were to ever take back Jerusalem. Europeans were already exhausted from internal fighting and although the situation existentially threatened them, with Pope Pius II describing the situation as “the loss of one of the two eyes of the church” (Delaney, 2011: 1, 9). Lack of enthusiasm for a new crusade showed the futility of the Christian World at the time as such calls never materialised into action.

This does not mean that the spirit or the idea had died out completely, rather nothing practicable was done, and they turned into nostalgic fancies of recovering the Holy Land (Tyerman, 2019: 424). When the Pope’s representative came to Portugal in 1457 to preach for the crusade, Affonso V. promised to maintain a twelve thousand men army for war against the Ottomans and was constantly launching crusades into North Africa and eager to send his men and spend his treasure in a crusade to the Holy Land. However, Portugal on its own could not take back Jerusalem or Istanbul, as other western powers refused to move, he was content with his crusades in Africa (Beazley, 1911: 299-300). Indeed, Prince Henry the Navigator partially financed Portuguese sailors through the funds for the Order of Christ. Eager to take back Jerusalem into Christian hands and being motivated by his “zeal for God, by the desire for alliance with the Eastern Christians, by an eagerness to know how far the power of the ‘infidel’ existed, by the wish to convert people to Christianity, and by the desire to fight the Moors.” (Delaney, 2011: 34).

Within the centuries after Salah al-Din liberated the Holy Land, close to thirty crusades were launched with some achieving their goal partially, while others failing completely. The focus clearly shifted from directly taking the Holy Land to Egypt and North Africa and even closer to home,

al-Andalus and Eastern Europe. In 1482 Pope Sixtus IV explicitly equated the Granada campaign in al-Andalus with the crusades in the Holy Land (Tyerman, 2019: 430). The spirit of the crusade might have seemed to have become extinct but its flame was being reignited at a slower pace in later centuries.

### **Columbus's Crusade through the Americas**

The idea of crusading and taking the Holy land was still somewhat alive in western imagination particularly following the success of the Reconquista in al-Andalus and the ending of Muslim presence there with the fall of Granada in 1492 (Hamdani, 1979: 39). This crusade was to be promoted by Christopher Columbus, who set out to the Americas to gather gold to sponsor a new crusade for taking the Holy Land. This might seem bizarre at first as it is known that Columbus discovered America by coincidence, however his personal memoirs show that his expeditions were to finance a new crusade to Jerusalem. He was determined to “save” and deliver Jerusalem from the Muslims, as a precondition to the “Second Coming” of Christ after the conversion of all peoples to Christianity and the re-conquest of Jerusalem. He was aware of Prince Henry's endeavours and about the desire to conquer the Holy Land, and this became entwined with his personal life (Delaney, 2011: 34). He had a strategy for his endeavours: 1) contacting the pro-Christian Mongol Grand Khan in the East to bring Christians of the east and west for the common goal of recovering Jerusalem. 2) Using resources from the discovered lands to finance the expedition. 3) Capitalising on the force of his messianic personality as prophesied by St. Jerome and Abbot Joachim. Through which Jerusalem will be liberated and opening the region again to the crusades and colonisation (Hamdani, 1979: 40). Through finding a new route to the East, and to join forces with the pro-Christian Grand Khan against the Muslims was the purpose of the journey westwards. He arrived in another continent where the Khan was not present, thus he could not forge the joint strategy for taking back Jerusalem, now it could be taken through direct attacks with the resources and gold from the new lands (Hamdani, 1979: 43).



Columbus was rather clear on the subject, he wrote in his journal entry on December 1492, during his first voyage whilst in the Caribbean, that his men “*would have found the gold mine and the spicery, and those things in such quantity that the sovereigns, before three years [are over], will undertake and prepare to go conquer the Holy Sepulchre; for thus I urged Your Highnesses to spend all the profits of this my enterprise on the conquest of Jerusalem*” (Delaney, 2006: 261; Delaney, 2011: 109). It seems to him initially that he needed three years to achieve his goal, however, in a later letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabela dated 4 March 1493 he modified the time needed: “*within seven years I shall give Your Highnesses enough money to pay for 5,000 knights and 50,000-foot soldiers for the conquest of Jerusalem—the ultimate goal behind your decision to undertake this enterprise.*” (Delaney, 2011: 115). This leaves no doubt that as he clearly states that his main objective from these expeditions was to find enough gold for a crusade to the Holy Land, with evidence that the Catholic Sovereigns sharing the same aim. There are proofs that this was the objective prior to the departure of Columbus on his expedition and also afterwards (Hamdani, 1979: 44).

Columbus never stopped trying to persuade European actors to take action, ten years later, capitalising on the Papacy who had kept on promoting a crusade for the Holy Land. Pope Alexander VI had asked European countries to unite for a new crusade in March 1500, Columbus wrote to him in February 1502. In his letter, he reiterated that his voyage was undertaken to obtain gold to restore the Holy Sepulchre to the Holy Church. He adds that he had already sent 120 quintals (about 100 pounds) of gold to the sovereigns and was certain that he would find at least that much in the next five years. With this gold an army amounting of “100,000-foot soldiers and 10,000 cavalries” would be assembled (Delaney, 2011: 197). This, if it were to materialise would constitute a large army, similar or superseding early crusades, and would be able to threaten the declining Mamluk Sultanate in the Holy Land. In another letter, written on 7 July 1503 addressed to the Sovereigns, Columbus mentions the reconquest of Jerusalem: “Jerusalem and Mount Sion are to be rebuilt by the hand of a Christian.” (Delaney, 2006: 266).

Columbus wrote a “Book of Prophecies”, which was a collection of earlier prophecies about the coming of a Spanish Messianic figure who would

accomplish the conquest of Jerusalem and the conversion of the world to Christianity (Hamdani, 1979: 44). In the *Libro*, “Prophecies of the Future, The Last Days”, he tells of prophecies on the restoration of God’s Holy city and Mount Zion, in it are the most explicit expression of quest of Columbus to liberate the Holy Land. In its last chapter he starts with a letter from Genoese ambassadors to Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, in which it was written “we did read that Joachim the Abbot of Southern Italy has foretold that he is to come from Spain who is to recover again the fortunes of Zion” (Delaney, 2011: 190, 199). He sees himself fulfilling this prophecy. He prefaced his book with a letter to the Spanish sovereigns stating, “the reason which I have for the restitution of the Holy Sepulchre to the Holy Church militant”, explaining why this project was of utmost importance and this was a “calling” from God. With his tone becoming urgent, he warns the Spanish sovereigns about the end of the world approaching in only 155 years before which Jerusalem needs to be in Christian control, the temple be rebuilt before Jesus Christ would come back with the “restorer of the House of Mt. Zion would come out of Spain”. At that time there was belief that this would be King Ferdinand, who inherited the title “King of Jerusalem” (Delaney, 2011: 199-201). King Ferdinand did not seem to share the same zeal for Jerusalem as Columbus and Queen Isabella and rather than commencing a crusade, he sent an envoy to the Mamluk Sultan to lobby him to protect the holy places.

Columbus felling despair and cheated after all he had done. He then amended his will in 1506 for his inheritors specifying a fund for the Jerusalem crusade. His passion for the conquest of Jerusalem never left him; the trust he established in the bank of St. George in Genoa he hoped would inspire future sovereigns, to undertake the crusade. Even without royal support, and once the money had multiplied and was sufficient for the purpose, he instructed his son and inheritors to gather a great force and go forth in the crusade (Delaney, 2011: 180, 230, 234; Delaney, 2006: 266).

Columbus and Isabella died before this was to ever take place and as Ferdinand was approaching the end of his reign, he supposedly submitted numerous schemes to the Cortes (parliament), for the conquest of Jerusalem, but without being executed (Delaney, 2011: 248).

## **Decline of the Crusading spirit**

The crusading desire declined after Columbus despite a few subsequent attempts. The world was indeed changing with the Ottomans continuing their successful advance into Europe on one side, they had taken Jerusalem from the Mamluk in 1517. The crusades in a sense become a more defensive crusade against the Ottomans. With Emperor Charles V invoking the crusading spirit once again during the siege of Vienna by the Ottomans in 1529. This shift in the discourse of the crusade had to shift to the threats closer to home; the crusade had already been preached against fellow Christians. The crusade for some centuries had now transformed many times with it being defined as a holy war preached against Christendom's enemies by the pope, and those enemies being both internal and external. This was particularly the case as the aim of recovering the Holy Land was becoming less possible and impractical.

## **Christian-Jewish Crusade**

A joint Christian-Jewish initiative for the occupation of the Holy Land was presented by David Reubeni to Pope Clement VII in the early sixteenth century in March 1524 (Mustafa, 2021). The Pope who saw this as an opportunity to mobilise Jews who were in need for arms to occupy the Holy Land under European auspices wrote letters to some European monarchs to support such an endeavour, such as the King of Portugal (Mustafa, 2021: 105-106). This maybe the first time such an initiative was put forward for a colonialist settler Jewish state through relocating Jews to settle with European support. Although this did not materialise, it was the template that was followed a few centuries later by Theodore Herzl and succeeded with European support (Mustafa, 2021).

## **Crusades changing tides**

It was becoming more obvious that the idea of crusading had practically run its course, people were growing more distrustful of the church and calls for crusades were viewed as both being manipulative and a method

for raising crusade taxes for the church and state. Crusading also being associated with Catholicism, and with challenges to the Catholic establishment and the rise of Protestantism, crusading lost its appeal, yet another colonialist project was on the rise. With the English association in endorsing the crusades ending during the reign of Henry VIII. The crusading spirit survived only as part of the ideals of the elites and some monarchs (Saul, 1997).

Reformist Christian rejected the ideology of the crusade and its practices, yet they condoned it to fight the Ottomans, celebrating the crusading victory at Lepanto in 1571. Protestant had succeeded in diminishing the wide acceptance of the religious structures of traditional crusading, but not the emotional attachment (Tyerman, 2019: 422, 433, 440). Crusading ethos transferred into national holy war, meant the nationalisation of crusading. New holy landscapes within Europe were created so was a New Jerusalem (Tyerman, 2019: 436-438). Puritans on the other hand, who had crossed the ocean to the new world, to establish a “new Jerusalem” in New England to serve as a godly city. With that “Jerusalem” turn into a metaphor. With New Jerusalem, no longer was it necessary to capture the holy Jerusalem nor to launch a new crusade. Rather building a better and a New Jerusalem for Christ’s return (Delaney, 2011: 240). Yet, these religionists were to give later the issue another dimension and shift the idea into new spheres. The Holy land previously considered as the Christian Holy Land lost to the Muslims, now deemed the land where the Jews need to return to, based on prophecies of the Old Testament, and inevitable for the second coming of Christ. This had become widely accepted in England by the mid-seventeenth century particularly propagated by the Puritans, even calls and pleas to the government were presented for the shipping of Jews to the Promised Land (Sharif, 1985: 54-55).

The dynamics of the crusade faded away in Christian societies at different paces with it being retained only through literature, preaching, communal memory and visible iconography. No longer did the discourse of the crusade dominate wars with the Ottoman or intra-Christian conflict. Yet remnants of the crusaders, the Hospitallers, maintained a presence and continued to control Malta in the Mediterranean until the late eighteenth

century and individual crusaders fought under this banner for some time to come. However, generally by the seventeenth century crusading became a matter of historical curiosity and became on the margin of the European experience (Tyerman, 2019: 439-441). What it seems to have been slowly replaced by is the calls for Jews to be taken to the Holy Land.

With the retreat of the Ottomans by the end of the seventeenth century, European imperialist colonial activities on the other hand were at the rise with different powers competing to make more territorial gains further afield. The French Revolution followed by Napoleon Bonaparte's campaign into Egypt and the Holy Land in 1798–1799 led to enthusiasm of reviving the crusade and renewing interest in the crusading past (Tyerman, 2019: 447). As Napoleon was secular in his endeavours, he expelled the last remnants of the Hospitaller crusaders from Malta in 1798, but his campaign was to ignite matters into a new direction for the Holy Land.

### **Napoleon's Jewish colony**

Napoleon was the first European monarch to occupy Egypt and reach the Holy Land after many centuries of attempts to do so. The idea of making Egypt a colony for France had been under discussion for a few decades before Napoleon occupied it, where François Baron de Tott went in 1777 on a secret mission to Syria to determine the feasibility of this endeavour (James, 2003: 151). Keeping the destination, a secret, Napoleon sailed with a large fleet with tens of thousands of soldiers. The proclaimed aim was defending French interests and establish scientific enterprise in the east and end British monopoly in the Indian subcontinent. After capturing Malta, he set forth to Egypt and arrived in Alexandria in 1 July 1798. He wanted that his capture of Egypt to be different from the crusades and proclaimed that he had not come to destroy Islam, rather he came to liberate them from the Mamluk tyrants, he emphasised that he respects Islam, the Quran, and the prophet besides being a friend with the Ottoman Sultan (Zouberi, 2015: 47-49). A proclamation published in Arabic on 7 July 1798, detailed the reasons for the invasion and what is expected from the Egyptians was circulated, within the text it claims that the French were

actually “Muslims” and unlike Christians, the French believe in only one God rather than in a Trinity! (Cole, 2007: 30-31). After taking Alexandria he marched to Cairo immediately and managed to defeat the Egyptian armies at a number of battles before taking Cairo within the month of July and taking control of Egypt. Napoleon, played the role of a Muslim sultan, order a parade for the Mawlid (Birthday of the Prophet), at which “The French artillery saluted Muhammad”, he dressed in Arab clothing and declared himself the protector of all the religions. He was granted the title “Ali-Bonaparte”, after the fourth Caliph of Islam, Ali ibn Abi Talib (Cole, 2007: 125-126). However, Napoleon was afraid that the general feeling amongst the people, that his campaign was another crusade and was adamant to distance himself from this and not to fall into the same mistake of the ninth crusade. Thus, he tried to persuade Imams to mention his name in the Friday Khutbah (sermon) to grant him legitimacy as their “*Muslim*” ruler and requesting the imams instruct people to obey the state. However, Napoleon had not announced his Islam outright, he claimed that what he and his soldiers believed was close to Islam and cannot become fully Muslim due to circumcision and wine (Cole, 2007: 127-128). He continued to use as part of his strategy Islamic rhetoric for his propaganda, and in search for legitimacy wrote to the Sharif of Makkah of the measures taken to preserve the mosques of Makkah and Madinah and parading the Hajj caravans (Cole, 2007: 130-132). However, this deception did not last long, with the Egyptians mounting their first revolt in October which was violently crushed.

Napoleon then organised an offensive against the Ottomans in the Holy Land, although no crusader rhetoric was used, he brought about a new dimension to exploit the Jewish minority for his own gains. As he set off, he was hoping for quick victory that by the time his letter had reached France he would have already conquered Jerusalem; an hour before setting off on 10 February 1799 he wrote: “*When you read this letter, it is possible that I might be on the ruins of the city of Solomon*” (Hertz, 2018: 8). On route from Egypt, he occupied El-Arish then laid siege onto Jaffa in early March 1799 which fell only days later after heavy bombardment, where besides the thousands killed, the French executed of prisoners and much of the inhabitants, including Palestinian Muslims, Christians and Jews.

Moving further north, he laid siege onto Acre for two months from March 1799 before his planned march onto Jerusalem.

The idea of bringing the Jews to the Holy Land and establishing an entity for them emerged officially in the form of a call while Napoleon was encamped at the shores of Acre. He called Jews to come and reclaim Palestine to re-establish ancient Jerusalem, as the “*Rightful heirs of Palestine*” (Ould-Mey, 2003: 597, 601; Dowty, 2014: 4; Strathern, 2009: 353). This proclamation was clearly part of Napoleon’s propaganda to win over Jews on his side, particularly those defending the city with the Ottomans. Moreover, the idea of a pro-French Jewish “colony” in “Jerusalem” was published in spring 1799 by Laus de Boissy in the *Decade Philosophique* (Philosophical Weekly), stating:

*“...to receive and welcome the Jews at Jerusalem would perhaps be a means to make them more useful and happier. The Jews, dispersed in three parts of the world, could, in forming a flourishing colony there, also powerfully aid the colonization of Egypt by the French... Rich in capital, they can offer it to those who restore to them their original territory... The conqueror of Egypt knows so well how to evaluate men that he will never mistake the advantage that he can draw from this people, in the execution of his vast designs” (Cole, 2007: 220).*

On the other hand, the declaration of Napoleon was published in some newspapers such as the *Paris Montour Universel*, on 22 May 1799, asserting:

*“Bonaparte has published a proclamation in which he invites all the Jews of Asia and Africa to gather under his flag in order to re-establish the ancient Jerusalem. He has already given arms to a great number, and their battalions threaten Aleppo.”*

A year earlier, an article was published in *Ami des Lois*, a leading French pro-government newspaper in Paris, on 8 June 1798 covering the entire front page of the newspaper, it urged Jews of the world to cooperate with the French government to “re-establish the empire of Jerusalem”. It suggested that the French state would assist in reinstating the Jews as a nation.

It is argued that this was likely part of the French propaganda linked to the expedition into Egypt which sailed only a couple of weeks earlier. However earlier articles published in France carry most of the elements of this article, in a sense the idea of creating a Jewish client state in Palestine under French auspices (Popkin, 1981: 113-116).

Some researchers cast doubt on the authenticity or the seriousness of these assertions, however a few letters were found about such discussion; some being dated to February 1799 before Napoleon set forth on his military of the Holy Land. One letter was written by Thomas Corbet, an Irishman and a devout protestant who was serving in the French army. The letter was addressed to Napoleon's patron Paul Barras and the leader of the French Directory (government). The letter proposed calling a few Jewish delegates who are respected within the Jewish community and address them: *"You are scattered over all the surface of die earth, nowhere as a nation, vilified, degraded by bigoted governments and insulted by die populaces ..."*. Coupled with their interest in being a nation again, they would show interest to *"see their land freed from the Turks, just as Egypt had been liberated from the Turks"* and invite them to join the French army (Schwarzfuchs, 1979: 24-25). The letter now housed in the National Library in Jerusalem, makes a clear recommendation to Napoleon on the matter; *"I recommend you, Napoleon, to call on the Jewish people to join your conquest in the East, to your mission to conquer the land of Israel"*. A subsequent letter, although contested, from Napoleon to the Jews dating 20 April 1799 proclaiming that the Jews: *"Israelites, France offers you at this very time, and contrary to all expectations, Israel's patrimony... to take over that which has been conquered, and with that nation's [France's] warranty and support, to remain master of it to maintain it against all comers... Hasten!, Now is the moment"* (Schwarzfuchs, 1979: 24-25; Kobler, 1976: 55-57). Although this letter already makes the assumption that Jerusalem was taken and the French army would march to Damascus, it could have been part of the propaganda that Napoleon was infamous for.

With all that is said about the genuineness of such a promise, the idea of it was in circulation around the time Napoleon invaded the Holy Land. This information seems to have already been acquired by the Ottomans



even before Napoleon had set foot in Palestine. Ahmet Cevdet Pasha in his History mentions the matter; that during the year 1212AH/1798 it was heard “from the mouth of a Jew, it was understood from printed and published official declaration that Jews from all over had been invited to agree on establishing a Jewish government in Kudüs-ü Şerif/ Jerusalem.” (Cevdet Paşa, 1892, vol.6: 282; Hertz, 2018).<sup>1</sup> This is confirmed from the Russian Archive, where the Russian Emperor Paul I. writes a letter after receiving news from his Ambassador in Istanbul of the French occupation of Alexandria. The letter written dated 18 August 1798 is rather fascinating as it clearly mentions Napoleon intending to create a “Jewish Republic” in the Holy Land.

*“I have today received news of the conquest of Alexandria by the French and the intentions of their commander Bonaparte to expand his actions in the regions subordinate to the Sublime Porte, including Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. In this last place, he intends to restore the Jewish Republic.” (Hertz, 2021).*

Many newspapers across Europe covered this news, and such propaganda of endorsing the establishment of a Jewish state by non-Jews would have instigated, one would assume, Jewish nationalism at a large scale, but it took another century before this was to materialise. There was no substantial response from the Jewish community to his call. Napoleon was unable to rally Jews nor Muslim support for his schemes against the Ottomans. However, the idea of “restoring” the Jews into Palestine, was much better rallied around only a few decades later, as the situation became much more viable for such a vision to become a reality (Dowty, 2014:4; El-Awaisi, 2019: 13). The reason for Napoleon being unable to rally sufficient Jewish support, maybe either due to their satisfaction of their situation under the Ottomans or fear of a backlash if Napoleon fails. Anyhow, Jews were seen as a pawn that the French imperialist can control

1 “Fransız İhtilali'nin âsar-ı garibesinden biri dahi budur ki, bu esnada bir Yahudi ağzından bir beyanname kaleme alınarak tabı ve neşir ile Kudüs-ü Şerifte bir Yahudi hükümeti teşkil olunmak üzere her tarafta olan Yahudiler, ittifaka devlet olunmuştur. (Zehiy tasavvur-u bâtil, zehiy hayal-i muhal)”.  
بو ائتاده بر یهودی آغزندن بر بیاننامه قالمه الله رق طبع و نشر ایله هر طرفده اولان یهودیلر قدس شریفده بر یهود حکومتی تشکیل (اولنمق اوزره هر طرفده اولات یهودیلر اتقاقه دعوت اولنمشدر. (زهی تصور باطل زهی خیال محال)

and be useful for their project as well as consolidating the French in Egypt and when they go beyond. The same can be said for the way he perceived Muslims whom he tried to win over by pretending to Muslim, or his attitude towards the Druze whom he made a similar proclamation to that of the Jews, that he would make them into an independent nation. Napoleon's failure in stirring up anti-Ottoman sentiments maybe as the ideas of nationalism were still not ripe in these communities in the East (El-Awaisi and Yiğit, 2020: 14).

### **Seeds of Zionism fused with Colonialism**

Napoleon's call constituted the first seed of modern Jewish nationalism that constructed Jews to be useful to European imperialism which was to bear fruit a century later as the situation was to become more viable for such reality. Napoleon would never give up this dream and on his return during the Council of State convened 16 August 1800 he is famously quoted to have said: *"by declaring myself to be Muslim that I established myself in Egypt.... If I governed a nation of Jews, I would re-establish the Temple of Solomon"* (Caiani, 2021: 14), he does not stop there, the idea would be repeated again during his reign but without any practicable outcome. In 1806 he gathered 96 Jewish Deputies at Paris, at his international Jewish conference and Grand Sanhedrin, to discuss solutions to the Jewish question in Europe. The idea of the creation of Jewish state was reported from the meeting in the Scots Magazine; *"It is rumoured that he proposes to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem and re-establish the Jewish Hierarchy and Government in all their ancient splendour in the Holy Land, to which he will invite that people from all the nations of the earth"* (The Scots Magazine, 1806: 942-943; El-Awaisi, 2019: 15).

Yet, what the expedition of Napoleon had attained was renewing interest in the crusading past and reigniting memories of the crusades reflected in the growth of orientalism in Europe (Tyerman, 2019: 447; Hillenbrand, 2004: 202), this is besides arousing British official interest in Palestine (Kayyali, 1990: 22). This was to take a new form in the era of colonisation, as it instigated in the European mind the idea of bringing the Holy Land

under their control once again, Napoleon was so close to achieving this. Britain which was instrumental in reducing French influence by allying with the Ottomans then championed this cause both religiously and politically for the next century. Just as Napoleon wanted to exploit the Jews for his own ends, the Jews were seen as a tool for Britain to gain a foothold in the region.

British penetration started with evangelical protestant groups, who had no or little representation in the region. They were advocating the idea of “restoring” Jews in Palestine embedded with the apocalyptic belief in the “Second Coming” of Christ, which was gaining prominence in the west. British institutions were established, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the idea of converting Jews to Christianity and taking them to Palestine, such as the London Jews Society (the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews) in 1809 which established a Palestine Fund in 1825 to encourage its activity. This was followed by practicable steps during the reign of Muhammad Ali Pasha where they were successful in lobbying for the establishment of a British Consulate in Jerusalem in 1838, which was a milestone in the creation of a British presence and opening the door for more foreign consulates in the Holy City. The consulate allowed Britain to exercise its influence both politically and giving cover to their religious, educational and colonialist initiatives and activities. Other western powers would emulate Britain, causing rivalry between them, particularly over control of Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, leading to the Crimean War (1853-1856) (El-Awaisi and Yiğit, 2020).

The British wished to extend their sphere of influence, thus through its consulate it extends protection to the Jews to create a stronger foothold in the Holy Land. Numerous schemes were put forward in Europe for establishing a European protectorate or a small autonomous Christian state or a separate province in Palestine from the late 1830's. The British had their own scheme, they even tried to lobby the Ottomans to allow Jewish migration, although not successful, it consolidated the foundation for the idea of a client-state. The idea was ripe in British circles and across sections of British society filtered to the masses on numerous grounds, appealing to the colonial interests as well as theological apocalyptic prospects. With

the occupation of Egypt in 1882, this reality was becoming more feasible (El-Awaisi, 2019: 23-24).

Also, when nationalism penetrated Jewish consciousness and through Jewish nationalist movements that culminated in the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897 was it possible to gather the Jews around the idea of a nation and a homeland. Championed by Theodore Herzl, advocating that Jews should establish their own national home, preferably in Palestine, was a necessity. Thus, by placing the Jews as the driving force, this idea was to progress amidst Jewish communities. Trying to persuade the Ottomans to relinquish Palestine to the Jews, Herzl failed, and the project was to advance in Britain. Aligning Zionist endeavours with British strategic war interest meant that both would benefit from such an alliance. The British played on numerous fronts, manipulating Arab nationalism for its gains against the Ottomans, dividing spheres of influence with the French, through the Sykes-Picot agreement. The British had already implicitly promised Palestine to the Arabs through the Hussein-McMahon agreement, on the other hand, through their agreement with the French Palestine would be internationalised. In fact, the British double crossed the Arabs and the French before promising Palestine to the Jews (Habeeb and Stefanini, 2017).

The alliance between the Jewish Zionist movement and Britain was indeed culminated with the Balfour Declaration. Moreover, many Jews were against the idea of Zionism from the outset and opposed it. British Government minister at the time Edwin Samuel Montagu considered it an anti-Semitic policy and opposed it together with 45 prominent British Jews (Habeeb and Stefanini, 2017: 8, 34). In reality the British wanted Palestine for themselves and clearly the Zionists were a useful tool in its endeavour; indeed *“had there been no Zionists in those days the British would have had to invent them”* (Vereté, 1970: 50).

The Balfour declaration was the last step in a long line of continuous work and initiatives from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the time the declaration was granted. This included numerous British Christian-Zionist Restorationist Projects, from the consular of Jerusalem, to the scheme of Laurence Oliphant and the work of the Palestine Explo-

ration Fund. Besides other western initiatives and schemes that made it eventually possible with the occupation of Jerusalem in December 1917. The declaration itself cannot be regarded as solely a British scheme, rather a western one, as it was endorsed by most western powers of the time and even proceeded five months earlier by a French declaration of sympathy for the development of Jewish colonization in Palestine. The Balfour declaration's text although contested by the only Jew in the British cabinet, was approved and endorsed before it issues by the American, French and Italian governments, as well as expression sympathy for it from the Catholic Pope (El-Awaisi, 2019).

### **The Last Crusades**

The British imperialists succeeded where others failed. Following centuries of western attempts to reoccupy the Holy Land, Britain succeeded on take advantage of the situation when it was ripe. Exploiting both Jewish and Arab nationalism as well as other imperialist powers in achieving its goal. The British establishment although influenced by the idea of the 'restoration of Jews' as a prelude to the coming of the Messiah, tried to keep a distance from such propaganda and officially focus on its imperialist goals. To Britain, the Jews were seen as a useful tool in the hands of imperialist powers, both for trade and military support in the region, as well as fulfilling the biblical prophecies (El-Awaisi and Yiğit, 2020: 15).

The British entered Jerusalem after the Ottomans surrender in fear of the destruction of the holy city. Allenby was accompanied by the commanders of the French and Italian detachments, the heads of the political missions, and the Military Attachés of France, Italy, and America. Entering the city on 11 December 1917, through Jaffa gate, he was received by guards representing England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Australia, New Zealand, India, France, and Italy (Horne and Austin, 1923: 416). Officially Britain implemented Napoleon's tactics of deception to achieve its goals; it stressed in official dispatches that the Crusading theme should be suppressed, at least explicitly. Yet a slip of the tongue by General Allenby, not reported by western sources, angered the Mufti of Jerusalem, who walked

out of the ceremony. Allenby proclaimed, according to Arabic sources, “*Today the wars of the Crusades have ended*” (Salih, 1997: 22). Yet in trying to contain a Muslim backlash, it was announced that they will safeguard Muslim holy sites and that al-Aqsa Mosque (Mosque of Umar) and will be placed under exclusive Muslim administration with Indian Muslim soldiers guarding the Mosque (Bar-Yosef, 2001: 98, 102). This propaganda was aimed for Muslim audience, while at home the propaganda of the crusading ethos was rather strong (Bar-Yosef, 2001: 103-105).

Historiography of World War I into the East clearly evokes that British soldier motivated themselves by seeing their campaign against the Ottomans a crusade against Islam. With the idea of a crusade resonating deep with many of General Allenby’s men, many contemporary accounts refer to the British campaign into Palestine as a crusade (Kitchen, 2010). Arriving in the holy city in December 1917 the British did not shy away from evoking the crusading past although officially they were told not to engage in crusading rhetoric out of fear of a Muslim backlash (Bar-Yosef, 2001). The neo-crusading ethos was reflected in British media coverage of Allenby’s entry to the holy city; *the Times* newspaper on 11 December 1917 talked about the liberation of the city from oppressive Turkish rule. While the *New York Herald* went with a headline “*Jerusalem is rescued by British after 673 years of Moslem rule*”. This occupation was portrayed more vividly in powerful imagery in *Punch* magazine, depicting King Richard, the Lion Heart, looking onto Jerusalem, caption, “*the Last Crusade*” and “*My Dream Comes True!*”. Another depiction showed Allenby returning in 1919 dressed as a crusading knight and being welcomed by Britannia (Kitchen, 2010: 144-146). Even before taking the Holy Land publications of cartoon invoking the crusading spirit was evident; The Northampton Independent published a cartoon in April 1917, portraying a British soldier extending to shake the hands of a crusader in the Holy Land, captioned “*History Repeated after Eight Centuries*” (Kitchen, 2010: 146-147). This rhetoric illustrates the connection between the crusade and the British “liberation” of Jerusalem in its imperialist mind.

## **Zionism the heir of the Crusades**

As crusader spirit for the regaining the Holy Land for Christians dwindled away, it was replaced by Christian and much later Jewish Zionism. Both were born out of Crusader residue in Western societies, combining the reconquest of the Holy Land with apocalyptic belief in restoring the Jews to Palestine as a prelude to Jesus's "Second Coming". It would also bring about a solution to the Jewish problem in Europe, in actual fact many of those prompting the "restoration" of the Jews were anti-Semitic (El-Awaisi, 2019).

Britain during its thirty years of occupying the Holy Land had set up the ground for the establishment of the Zionist state. The mandate system was tailored to suit the needs of the Zionist project contrary to British pledges to the Palestinians. Allowing mass Jewish migration changing the demographics of Palestine, allocating fertile lands for the establishment of colonies to allow domination and ultimately the conquest of the land (Khalidi, 2020: 39). As the British were preparing to leave in 1948, the Zionist did not need to start from scratch, already an apparatus had been functioning under the British guidance for decades. All that remained was to obtain sovereignty over the land and officially announce the establishment of the state. In actual fact this happened on the same day the British forces withdrew from Palestine on 15 May 1948, with the ethnic cleansing of Palestine beginning while the British were still there. By the end of the war, Zionists expelled 720,000 Palestinians from their homes and controlled 78% of mandatory Palestine by force (Khalidi, 2020: 58, 72).

Since its establishment, the Zionist state, similar to that of the crusader state, enjoyed the support of the west. In actual fact Israel presents itself as a western outpost in the region. Emphasising the special relationship between Israel and the West, through adapting their cultural practices (such as democracy). As well as emphasising its military role in protecting western interests in the region. The Zionist state also capitalises on the historical conflict between Western and Muslim civilisations (Asali, 1992: 57-58). Thus, in a sense, "*Zionism is the heir - albeit illegitimate - of the Crusader movement*" (Asali, 1992: 57).

Zionist scholars have in turn paid much attention to crusader studies and have conducted much research on the topic, in order to avoid its mistakes and thus escape its fate (Asali, 1992: 48, 58). One of the downfalls of the Crusader state was its reliance on Arab farmers, something Zionists insisting on relaying only on Jewish farmers from before the establishment of their state (Asali, 1992: 51). With shortage in cheap labour, they have in recent years turned to Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa to fill the gap and not to rely on Palestinians (Ellman and Laacher, 2003). Another cause of the downfall of the crusade was internal political divisions, intellectual stagnation and scientific backwardness. The Zionist state has been successful in the last two, but recent years have shown more and more divisions growing amongst its communities and political factions, with minimal cohesion amongst its groups (Asali, 1992: 52, 55), as seen in the latest elections.

The Zionist state has also learnt from the experience of the crusade that one of its downfalls was the unification of Muslims in Egypt, Greater Syria and beyond. Thus, much studied into the development of military and political unity under Nur al-Din and Salah al-Din have been done (Asali, 1992: 50). In order to avoid the same fate, Israel with the west has played neighbouring countries and struck deals with them individually, so such unity never materialises. In recent years it had gone beyond its close neighbours to the Gulf and North Africa, signing normalisation agreements with them, so that they are not a threat to "Israel". However, the fragility of these states, particularly following the "Arab Spring", shows that their demise would be the end of Israel itself. This is since Israel's regional hegemony rest on the up keeping of undemocratic Arab regimes that suppress any action for the liberation of Palestine (Khalidi, 2020: 247, 254).

All in all, Israel as a settler colonialist state in the region, is trying its best to learn from a previous example so it does not fall into the same mistakes. However, fear of this prompted ex-prime mister Netanyahu in 2017 to express his worry that "Israel" may not live beyond a century; as the Hasmonean kingdom only survived for 80 years. He added that he is "*working to ensure that modern Israel will surpass that mark and reach its 100th birthday*" but it must cope with future security threats. This is



a theme reoccurring by many Zionist writers, one fearing the demise of friendly neighbouring Arab governments would bring an end to Israel (al-Khateeb, 2020: 22-25). Western governmental support for “Israel” is still strong and it is not surprising that they continue to support Israel politically, financially and militarily. American support for the Zionist state took a new leap with the moving of their Embassy to Jerusalem at the centenary of Balfour’s declaration, and the announcement of the “Deal of the Century”, showing continuity in the Western imperialist mind over the colonisation of the Holy Land (El-Awaisi and Yiğit, 2020: 16).

### **Conclusion**

The history of Bayt al-Maqdis took a new course from the time the first crusader set foot in the Holy Land that still impacts it today. The creation of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem maybe regarded as the first colonial European society. However, like the Zionist state today, it could not survive in the heart of the Muslim World without continuous reinforcement and enormous support from the west. Although trying to fit in the new environment and establishing itself and creating alliances with other powers, and in spite of all the assistance it received, the Latin Kingdom could not survive a century in Jerusalem.

Between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries around thirty crusades have been launched with the ultimate aim of capturing the holy city from Muslims or consolidating the crusader kingdom. With the exception of the first and sixth crusade, all have failed to achieve their said objective. The spirit of the crusade was diminishing as the spirit of Jihad was growing and numerous appeals to Europe for reinforcement against Salah al-Din went unnoticed led to the fall of the Kingdom. The fall of Jerusalem put Christians to shame and stained the hearts of European Christians. Consequently, numerous crusades were launched, and during the thirteenth century alone fifteen crusades were initiated, none of which were effective. They succeeded in extending the crusader presence with the continuous reinforcements until the Mamluk annihilated the crusader kingdom from Acre and coastal areas in 1292.

There was a strategic shift in the initial target of the crusades and the idea of crusading was expanded to the enemies of the Pope, whether Muslim or other. Although major crusades direct into the Holy Land by the end of the fourteenth century were no longer viable and the rise of the Ottomans, yet the idea of retrieving the Holy Land never left western imagination and would be revived over and over again. The persistence of the crusading spirit had been evident through to the sixteenth century and the final attempt to raise a crusade for the Holy Land by Columbus.

With the crusading ethos losing appeal particularly after reformist Christians rejected its ideological base, Jews were to become part of the new equation. Commencing with a call for a joint Christian-Jewish crusade that then transformed into the idea of the “restoration of the Jews” to Palestine as a prelude to the Second Coming of Christ. This became the trend for the coming centuries, with the exception of Napoleon who saw the Jews as a useful tool to control the region, calling them to join forces with him to re-establish ancient Jerusalem and its temple. The seeds planted by the French were capitalised on by the British at the turn of the century with numerous attempts to create a foothold in the region, Britain became the protector of the Jews. Its organisations and consecutive governments aimed to further the matter and with the birth of Jewish Zionism, prospects were becoming more attainable.

Indeed, the ideas of Zionism did not steam from Jewish circles, rather it was an influence of a long tradition of Christian Zionism, that together with the rise of nationalism led to the birth of the Jewish Zionist movement. After which a formal alliance was to be forged with the Zionist movement and soon after these dreams were brought into reality. With the establishment of the state of Israel, Zionism thus became the heir of the Crusader movement.

The prophecies that created the Zionist state are still not fulfilled, although Jews were brought to Palestine, a state was established for them over 78% of Palestine, after a few decades occupying the rest of Palestine and even beyond. Yet, the Messiah has not yet returned, and the Christian apocalyptic scenario has not been fulfilled. What is left within this grand project is the destruction of al-Aqsa Mosque compound and the building

of a Jewish Temple over its site, something both Christian Zionist and Jewish radicals want to push forward in forcing God's hand to Armageddon. For both groups the Messiah cannot return until this happens, placing al-Aqsa Mosque at centre stage as the focus of their apocalyptic desire. Indeed, the similarities between both the crusader state and the Zionist state are too many to recount. But will the Zionist state cease to exist, like the former, before World War III breaks out?

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## **Genişletilmiş Özet**

Avrupa'da on birinci yüzyılın sonlarında başlayan Haçlı coşkusu, yüzyıllar boyunca milyonlarca Avrupalıyı Kutsal Toprakları Müslümanların elinden almak için seferber etmeye devam eden bir ruhtu.

Mescid-i Aksa'yı ele geçirmek ve kiliselerini ve Hristiyanları "özgürleştirmek" amacıyla otuzun üzerinde haçlı seferi başlatıldı, ancak çoğu zaman bunlar amaçlarına ulaşamadı. İlk Haçlı seferi, bir asır içinde Selahaddin tarafından sona erdirilen ve bir asır sonra da Memlükler tarafından varlıklarının tamamen ortadan kaldırıldığı ilk Avrupa sömürge toplumunun yaratılmasında başarılı oldu. Başka bir haçlı seferi ise Kristof Kolomb'un Amerika'dan gelen altınlarıyla İspanya'nın başlattığı haçlı seferiydi. Ancak bu da başarılı olamadı ve haçlı seferi coşkusu on altıncı yüzyılda öldü. Osmanlıların Avrupa'yı tehdit etmesiyle, artık Kudüs'ü ele geçirmek için haçlı seferi yapmıyorlardı. Ancak kıyamet senaryoları ve Yahudileri Filistin'e geri getirme fikri, Kutsal Toprakların beklentileri için büyük bir değişime işaret ediyordu.

Napolyon, kendi çıkarları için hizmet edecek bir Yahudi kolonisi kurmak için ilk resmi çağrışı yaptı, ancak hiçbir zaman gerçekleşmese de İngilizler bu projeyi gerçekleştirme için üstlendiler. Yüzyılı aşkın süredir başarısız olan planlar, İngilizler Filistin'i işgal etmesi ile "Haçlı Seferlerinin Sonu"nu ilan etmeyi başardılar. Ancak, yeni bir sömürge de yerleşimci devlet için planlar çoktan harekete geçmişti ve otuz yıllık İngiliz işgalinden sonra saltanat, Haçlı Seferlerinin mirasçıları olarak Siyonistlere devredildi.

Hem Haçlı Seferleri hem de Siyonist projeler, birbirinden farklı yüzyıllara sahip olmalarına rağmen, dikkate değer tarihsel rezonanslarla birden fazla açıdan birbirine benzemektedir. Hatta Siyonizm'in haçlı seferlerinin devamı veya yeni bir biçimi olduğu ve Siyonizm'in Haçlı seferlerinin mirasçısı olduğu bile iddia edilebilir. Pek çok yazar, her ikisi de batıdan gelen yabancı işgalcilerin korkunç suçlar işleyerek ve Müslüman Dünyasının kalbinde bir koloni kurarak, kaçınılmaz düşüşlerinden önce bir süre hayatta kalan bu iki tarihsel hareket arasındaki paralelliklere ortaya koydu.

Mescid-i Aksa'nın 1187'de Sultan Selahaddin tarafından kurtarılmasından bu yana, Kutsal Toprakları yeniden işgal etmek için sayısız sefer başlatıldı. Bu kampanyalar, çoğunlukla başarısız olmasına rağmen yüz-

yıllar boyunca devam etmiş gibi görünüyor ve her yüzyılda Yahudilerin denkleme dahil edilmesiyle bir değişim gerçekleşene kadar sayısız girişim veya öneri hala devam ediyor. Napolyon'un Yahudilere 1799'da Filistin'de bir devlet kurmaları için kendi komutası altına girmeleri için yaptığı resmi çağrı, Kutsal Toprakları işgal etme planlarında köklü bir değişim yarattı. Napolyon, kampanyasında ve Yahudileri seferber etmede başarısız olmasına rağmen, Batı düşüncesinde bu fikir yeniden ateşlendi ve sonunda Kutsal Toprakların İngiltere tarafından işgal edilmesine ve General Allenby'nin Aralık 1917'de kutsal şehrin içinde yaptığı zafer konuşmasında ilan ettiği gibi Haçlı Seferlerinin sonunu ilan etmesine yol açtı. Bu tören, komuta değişikliğini veya saltanatların yeni kurulan Siyonist Harekete devredilmesini simgeliyordu. İngiltere bu konuyu pekiştirmek için ilk Filistin Yüksek Komiserliği görevinin İngiliz Yahudi Siyonist Herbert Samuel'e verildiğini duyurdu. Filistin üzerindeki otuz yıllık işgali veya sözde mandası boyunca İngiltere, Siyonist devletin kurulmasının temellerini attı. Bölgedeki Batı çıkarlarına hizmet edecek bir devlet ve birçok Siyonist, İsrail'in Güneybatı Asya'da Batı etkisinin bir ileri karakolu olduğunu ilan etti. Nitekim Mayıs 2021'de Gazze'ye yapılan son savaşta büyükelçilere ve diplomatlara hitaben yaptığı konuşmada Netanyahu, Hamas zafer kazanırsa "bu hepimizin yenilgisidir" dedi ve bu devletin sadece kendi çıkarlarını değil, diğer güçlerin çıkarlarını da temsil ettiğini yineledi.

Beytül-Makdis'in tarihi, ilk Haçlı'nın Kutsal Topraklara ayak bastığı andan itibaren yeni bir seyir izlemiştir ve bugün hala olayları etkilemektedir. Latin Kudüs Krallığı'nın yaratılması belki de ilk sömürge Avrupa toplumu olarak kabul edilebilir. Ancak bugünkü Siyonist devlet gibi, Batı'dan sürekli takviye ve muazzam destek olmasa Müslüman Dünyasının kalbinde varlığını sürdüremezdi. Nitekim Latin Krallığı, yeni ortama uyum sağlamaya çalışmasına, diğer güçlerle ittifaklar kurmasına ve aldığı tüm yardımlara rağmen Kudüs'te bir asır ayakta kalamadı.

On birinci ve on beşinci yüzyıllar arasında, nihai amacı kutsal şehri Müslümanlardan almak veya Haçlı krallığını sağlamlaştırmak amacıyla yaklaşık otuz haçlı seferi başlatıldı. Birinci ve altıncı haçlı seferleri dışında hepsi söz konusu amaçlarına ulaşamadı. Ancak buraları kontrol etme fikri de Batının aklından hiçbir dönemde çıkmadı.

Özellikle reformist Hristiyanlar onun ideolojik temelini reddettikten sonra Haçlı inancının cazibesini kaybetmesiyle birlikte, Yahudiler yeni denklemin bir parçası haline gelecekti. Mesih'in İkinci Gelişine bir giriş olarak, daha sonra Filistin'e "Yahudilerin restorasyonu" fikrine dönüşen ortak bir Hristiyan-Yahudi haçlı seferi çağrısı ile başlıyor. Bu, Yahudileri bölgeyi kontrol etmek için yararlı bir araç olarak gören ve eski Kudüs'ü ve tapınağını yeniden kurmak için onunla güçlerini birleştirmeye çağıran Napolyon dışında, önümüzdeki yüzyıllar için bir trend haline geldi. Bu noktadan sonra da Fransızlar tarafından ekilen tohumlar, yüzyılın başında İngilizler tarafından sürdürülerek, bölgede bir dayanak oluşturmak için sayısız girişimde bulunarak, Yahudilerin koruyucusu haline geldi. Örgütleri ve ardışık hükümetler konuyu ilerletmeyi amaçladı ve Yahudi Siyonizm'inin doğuşuyla birlikte beklentiler daha ulaşılabilir hale geldi. Bundan sonra ise bir Hristiyan Siyonizm geleneği gelişti ve Siyonizm, Haçlı hareketinin mirasçısı oldu.

Yahudiler Filistin'e getirilse de Siyonist devleti yaratan kehanetler hala yerine getirilmedi. Filistinliler aşama aşama kendi topraklarından çıkarılarak bir devlet kuruldu ancak onlara göre Hristiyan kıyamet senaryosu gerçekleşmedi. Bu büyük projeden geriye kalan, Mescid-i Aksa'nın yerleşkesinin yıkılması ve yerine bir Yahudi Tapınağının inşa edilmesidir ki bu hem Hristiyan Siyonistlerin hem de Yahudi radikallerin Tanrı'nın elini Armagedon'a zorlamak için yerine getirmek istediği bir şeydir. Her iki grup için de Mesih, bu gerçekleşene kadar geri dönemez ve bu yüzden Mescid-i Aksa'yı kıyamet arzularının odak noktası olarak merkeze yerleştirirler. Gerçekten de hem Haçlı devleti hem de Siyonist devlet arasındaki benzerlikler sayılamayacak kadar çoktur ve bu makale buna dair bilgileri ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.