



The Concept of Crusader Extremism in the Modern Period in the Lands of Maghreb (Spanish Presence in Algeria as a Model)

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Abstract:

The Spanish presence in Algeria is considered a movement of extremist ideologies in the modern era, as it originated from a religious bias to achieve its goals in Algeria. Consequently, it planned to eradicate everything Arab and Islamic in the Maghreb region, replacing it with Spanish Crusader thought and beliefs. This became evident in the elimination of the Islamic resistance movement in the Maghreb region, the imposition of treaties on some rulers of emirates and tribes, as well as the conversion of mosques into churches, the construction of bishoprics, and the raising of crosses in the areas under its control. This makes it one of the prominent extremist ideological movements that Algeria witnessed in the early modern era. This study is included within the scope of historical studies on the most prominent extremist ideological movements in the Maghreb region in the modern era.

Keywords: Extremist ideological movement, Crusader bias, Algerian resistance, Spanish belief, treaties.

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Introduction:

Ideological extremism is a timeless human phenomenon. It specifically refers to the attachment and fanaticism towards certain self-centered ideas, while disregarding the ideas and opinions of others, often seeking to combat and eradicate them. In this study, I aim to examine a model of ideological extremism in a specific historical context, in order to provide a clear understanding of ideological extremism and its resulting consequences.

Our study is specifically focused on the Crusader extremist ideology in the lands of the Maghreb during the modern period, with

a particular emphasis on the Spanish presence in the central Maghreb (Algeria).

The Spanish presence in Algeria is considered one of the extremist ideological movements that emerged in the early modern era. This is evident in their plans to eradicate Islamic thought and beliefs, replacing them with their own Christian Crusader ideology. This is the clear concept of extremism. However, this raises the question:

"What are the manifestations of Spanish Crusader ideological extremism in Algeria?"

To address this question, the study is structured around three main points:



- a. A study of the religious reasons behind the Spanish occupation of Algeria in the early modern era.
- b. Significant milestones of Spanish occupation in the central Maghreb (Algeria).
- c. The extremist Crusader inclination through the Spanish policies adopted against the people of Algeria.

1. Study on the Religious Reasons for the Spanish Occupation of Algeria at the Beginning of the Modern Era:

Most of the historical writings, especially those of Islamic origin, when they delve into the study of the religious motives behind the Spanish occupation of the coasts of central Maghreb at the beginning of the modern era, must address two prominent events that are considered of significant value in the study of history, whether for Muslims or Christians. These two events are the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the Fall of Granada, the last stronghold of Muslims in Andalusia, in 1492.

The news of the fall of Constantinople and its conversion to an Islamic city struck the Christians, especially in Western Europe (Catholicism), like a thunderbolt. As a result, they resorted to a policy of compensation, at the expense of the neighboring region, which includes the central part of Maghreb. This turns the war into a religious crusade carrying the banner of intellectual extremism and religious fanaticism, with the Maghreb, especially the central part (2), serving as its stage.

When we closely examine this conflict between extremist Islam and Christianity, namely between the Ottoman Empire and the Crusader kingdoms led by Spain, we find each side attempting to counterbalance the other. The Ottoman Empire started its expansion into Eastern European territories, aiming to reach Rome, the stronghold of Christianity in Western Europe (1). On the other hand, Spain embarked on its campaign from the western Mediterranean basin to establish control over the Mediterranean Sea, which occupies a

strategic area among the three continents, including the Arab region.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 is considered one of the religious motives that drove Spain to seek revenge (1) against Muslims in North Africa (the central part of Maghreb). However, some historians may consider the fall of Constantinople as a minor reason in justifying the Spanish attack on the coasts of central Maghreb and their implementation of brutal policies against its inhabitants. Instead, they attribute the main and deeper reason to the second event, namely the fall of Granada in 1492 (4,3).

One may ask how the fall of Granada can be considered a reason for the Spanish occupation of North Africa or the Crusader presence in Algeria specifically at the beginning of the modern era, even though it favored the extremist Crusaders. With confidence, we state that the eradication of the last stronghold of Muslims in Andalusia provided a significant outlet for the Crusaders' revenge against Muslims and fueled their enthusiasm to shift the conflict from the realm of war to the realm of peace.

Furthermore, there is a deeply rooted idea in the minds of the Crusaders, including religious leaders, kings, and extremists in Europe, that the Islamic conquests of Europe during the medieval period had their origins in the Islamic Maghreb, particularly the central part (3,4). Therefore, they perceive this region as a threat to their existence, leading them to either eliminate it or see it perish.

And on the other hand, there is another religious reason for the presence of extremist Crusaders in Algeria at the beginning of the modern era, which is the issue of Muslims in Al-Andalus (5). Their ordeal began after the fall of Granada. After the political marriage between King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile in 1469 (6), with the blessing of Pope Alexander VI, they aimed to overcome the dispute between them. They turned their attention to the third party, which was the Emirate of the Banu al-Ahmar. Both of them planned to eliminate it, and they

were successful in doing so when they managed to ignite conflict between the kings of the Banu al-Ahmar. This ultimately led to the actual disappearance of this Emirate after Abu Abdullah al-Saghir concluded a surrender treaty with the Christian kings (7). This marked the disappearance of the last stronghold of Muslims in Al-Andalus, which happened on 02/01/1492.

After this tragedy that befell the Muslims, both fanatic Christian kings violated all covenants and agreements related to the Muslims (2). Ferdinand issued a decree addressing the Muslims of Al-Andalus, demanding that they either abandon the Islamic faith or be expelled (8).

Prior to that, what is known as the Inquisition Courts were established in 1470 (2), which were further strengthened by his wife, Isabella, who was more zealous. Their task was to pursue Arab and Morisco Muslims (2).

As soon as the extremist Crusaders escalated their criminal acts against the Muslims of Al-Andalus, fueled by hatred and religious fanaticism, and the activities of the inspection courts increased, the Muslims decided to save themselves and chose to migrate to nearby countries, including Maghreb (9), including Algeria, especially after the fall of their emirate in 1492. This is why the fanatical Spaniards were determined to pursue them.

From this, we can deduce another justification for the religious motives that led to the Spanish Crusader penetration into the countries of central Maghreb.

Most fair Islamic and Orientalist studies have pointed out that the Spanish attacks on central Maghreb were with the approval of the Pope (10,2) and with the support of the most extremist figure of the Crusader spirit during this period, which is the figure of Cardinal Ximénez (10,2).

A. The role of the Church in strengthening the spread of the Crusade to the countries of central Maghreb:

One of the manifestations of the Pope's blessing for the Spanish campaigns on the coasts of central Maghreb is his involvement in the signing of several treaties between Spain and Portugal to divide areas of influence in the countries of central Maghreb (9). Among these treaties was the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, which stipulated that the area of HajarBadis, located in the northernmost part of Maghreb, would be the dividing line between Portuguese influence, which had taken control of the western part of the region, and Spain, which would have the eastern part of HajarBadis. This was to avoid any potential conflict between the two Crusader kingdoms (9). Additionally, the Pope played a role in imposing the Crusader tax on the kings of Spain to support the Crusades (11).

B. The role of Cardinal Ximénez in the presence of extremist Crusader ideology in Algeria:

As for the role played by Cardinal Ximénez of Cisneros, he worked on inciting Queen Isabella and convincing her to pursue the Muslims of Al-Andalus because they would gather their forces and return to Spain to regain what they had lost. He also supervised the sending of spies like the spy Lorenzo Padilla to Tlemcen and his servant Vinali. Furthermore, he made sure to implement Queen Isabella's will after her death in 1504, in which she left a testament saying, "I have advised my son not to cease his hand over the countries of central Maghreb." The most important evidence of Cardinal Ximénez's commitment to the will was his personal financial support for the campaigns, such as his support for the Spanish campaign on Al-Marsa Al-Kabir in 1505 and his direct involvement in the occupation of the city of Oran in 1509. This man was considered one of the last great Crusaders (2).

C. The role of Queen Isabella in the presence of extremist Crusader ideology in the countries of central Maghreb (Algeria):

It is said that this queen was more zealous for Christianity than her husband, Ferdinand (2). She played a significant role in eliminating the

Kingdom of Granada after her political marriage to the King of Aragon. She also played a role in the modernization of the inspection courts established by her husband in 1470.

In addition to that, she supervised the spies in the process of sending them to the countries of central Maghreb (11). The most important role she played was leaving the aforementioned will.

From this, we can say that this queen had clear religious zeal and ideological extremism against Islam and Muslims, which specifically resulted in the establishment of a number of Spanish Crusades on the coasts of the countries of central Maghreb (Algeria), which we will now discuss.

2. Stations of Spanish Occupation in Central Maghreb (Algeria):

I included this element in the intervention to highlight the beginning of the presence of Crusader intellectual bias in Algeria. However, before addressing the Spanish occupation of the central Moroccan coast, I will give a brief overview of the prevailing situation in Algeria prior to the Spanish attacks.

Algeria was divided into several parties, sects, and small kingdoms. Tlemcen was under the rule of Abu Hamu Al-Zayani, and the city of Ténès had a king named Abdullah. The city of Algiers was ruled by a king named Salem Al-Toumi from the Tha'labah tribe. Béjaïa and Constantine were under the authority of the Hafsid dynasty in Tunis. As for the rest of the central and southern regions, they belonged to various emirates and tribes. For example, the Kingdom of Kuku, governed by Ibn Al-Qadi, was located in the western part of the Great Kabylie region (4,5). In the southeast, we find the Emirate of Touggourt, ruled by the BaniJellab dynasty (9). Most of these emirates governed themselves, except for the Zayyanid state in central Maghreb, which only had effective authority over Tlemcen and parts of Oran (5).

The central region of Maghreb still relied on simple means and weapons in its wars. In the

eyes of Europeans and Spaniards, in particular, these were considered primitive weapons. Modern firearms and cannons were not known in Algeria until the arrival of the Turks to the region. Even if we assume that the Andalusians had rifles (9), it was in a limited and very insufficient way to counter the threat of external occupation, such as the Spaniards. This is what made Central Maghreb fail to repel the Spanish attacks until the arrival of the Barbary brothers.

Regarding the Spanish attacks on the coasts of Central Maghreb, we say that in the year 1493 AD, Queen Isabella, who was fanatically biased towards Christianity, sent spies to the Islamic lands of Maghreb. Among them were spies like Lorenzo de Zafra, the governor of the Sardinia region, and Lorenzo de Padia, along with the Italian expert spy Vinali. The queen sent them to carry out reconnaissance and espionage operations to prepare for the occupation. For example, Lorenzo de Padia was tasked by this extremist, intellectually, to spy on Tlemcen. He disguised himself as an Arab merchant and stayed there for a whole year, gathering information to present it to Her Majesty (11).

When Lorenzo de Zafra completed the reconnaissance and study of the country's conditions, he famously said, "The state of the country seems as if God wants to give it to its Majesty." However, the queen died in 1504, and her descendants did not see what they had achieved after her (11).

This is an overview of the conditions in Central Maghreb, particularly. We will now move on to the first station of the Spanish occupation on the coasts of Central Maghreb (Algeria).

A. The Occupation of Al-Marsa Al-Kabir, 1505 CE:

Occupation is considered a form of ideological extremism because its purpose is to erase a certain ideology and impose the ideology adopted by the colonizer. This is exactly what the Spanish wanted to apply to the region of Central Maghreb. Their attack targeted



several fronts along the coast of Central Maghreb, and the first place they set foot in Algeria was through the occupation of Al-Marsa Al-Kabir, located in western Algeria in the year 1505 CE.

After the process of reconnaissance was completed, Fernando resorted to implementing and embodying the idea of occupation. After deliberating on the choice of the first victimized region, he decided that it should be Al-Marsa Al-Kabir due to its strategic importance (9).

The French historian, Blissi, mentions in his book "Historical Memoirs" that the Spanish fleet, entrusted with the task of occupying Al-Marsa Al-Kabir, was led by Don Rimon, the owner of Cordoba. According to what is mentioned, they set sail from Malaga on 29/06/1505 with around 5,000 men. However, they stopped at Al-Maria due to strong winds in the Mediterranean. This delayed their arrival at Al-Marsa Al-Kabir, which occurred on 13/09/1505. This delay played a significant role in shifting the tide of war in favor of the Spanish. Why? According to numerous studies, the people of Algeria were aware of the arrival of the Spanish campaign, so they prepared for it and waited for their arrival. However, the delay of the mentioned campaign, along with the prolonged wait by the locals, made them lose hope and disperse, believing that the campaign took a different direction.

When the Spanish troops arrived at Al-Marsa, they found only a few awaiting them. This made it easy for the Spanish to subdue the region, despite the difference in numbers. Additionally, there was a clear difference in the type of weapons. The defensive army fought with simple weapons consisting of swords, daggers, arrows, stones, and others, relying on the element of surprise and hit-and-run tactics. On the other hand, the Spanish relied on firearms and cannons. Furthermore, their key advantage in subjugating the region and the subsequent areas was fortification (building defensive

fortresses and equipping them with cannons) (9).

B. Occupation of Oran in 1509:

After the occupation of Al-Mersa Al-Kabir and its submission to Spanish control, it was the turn of the neighboring region, the city of Oran, to be occupied. Some historical writings explain the reason for the delay in the occupation of Oran, which came almost four years after the occupation of Al-Mersa. They state that in 1507, the great Battle of Mers El-Kebir took place between the defending Arab Islamic army and the invading extremist Crusaders. This battle was in favor of the Algerian locals and thus played a prominent role in delaying the occupation of Oran (35).

The occupation of the city of Oran clearly illustrates the intellectual extremism that characterized the Spanish Crusaders in the Maghreb region. According to many sources that documented this event, the Spanish attack on Oran was sponsored and encouraged by an absolute Crusader, Cardinal Talleyrand de Hohenlohe. He was leading the army alongside the military commander Pedro Navarro (36).

The campaign began on 17/05/1509 from Spain and consisted of 15,000 soldiers. The most notable aspect of this campaign, unlike previous ones, was the presence of monks carrying crosses. It was an exceptional Crusade (12, 13, 14).

According to the account of Al-Agha 'Udah Al-Mazari in his book "Talu' Sa'd Al-Sa'ud," the fall of the city of Oran was facilitated by a Spanish Jewish conspirator and local Arab betrayal. Unfortunately, the Jewish conspirator, AshthurahibnKebisa, who worked as a merchant in the markets, conspired with the Spaniards to plot the opening of the fortress gates surrounding the city of Oran. The Jewish conspirator convinced both guards, IbnQans and Issa Al-Arini, and they played their part as desired (12, 13, 14).

In the night, the treacherous guards opened the city gate, allowing the Spaniards to secretly enter the city and surprise its inhabitants, leading to a massive massacre.

At that time, the Spanish committed the largest crime against the people of Oran, unparalleled in history. With this painful

tragedy, the city of Oran fell, and the Spanish expanded their control, marking another phase of rule by fanatic Spaniards.

C. Occupation of Béjaïa in 1510:

After the occupation of Al-Mersa Al-Kabir in 1505, the region became a center for the Spanish, from where they launched their campaigns in other areas. When it was time for Béjaïa, Pedro Navarro set off from Al-Mersa Al-Kabir on 30/11/1509, heading towards the Balearic Islands and then Béjaïa to occupy it and impose their dominance. This maneuver aimed to surprise the people of Béjaïa.

In January 1510, the fleet set sail from the place where it had anchored (the Balearic Islands), directing its gaze towards Béjaïa. The campaign consisted of 8,000 to 15,000 Spanish soldiers, according to some accounts. Some sources acknowledge that the Spanish occupied the area without notable resistance from the locals, who fled to the mountains (5,9). However, the prevailing account suggests that its ruler, Abdul Aziz, was not in Béjaïa at the time. He was in Constantine to settle a dispute with Abu Bakr(5,9). Despite the differing narratives, the outcome remains the same.

Regarding the occupation of the city of Béjaïa, it is said that the Spanish climbed Mount Gouraya. When the people of the city noticed that the Spanish had taken control of the mountain peak, they abandoned it. Consequently, the area was easily subdued and fell into the hands of the Spanish, despite its height and rugged paths.

Furthermore, the Spanish occupation in the central regions of Maghreb continued to expand, encompassing several cities and areas such as Tlemcen, Cherchell, Dellys, Mostaganem, and others (5). There were also other cities that entered into agreements with the Spanish to protect their interests, such as Algiers and Tlemcen (1). In this study, we will focus only on significant milestones of the Spanish occupation in Algeria during the modern period, as a starting point for the manifestation of Christianity by the Spanish in this region. After that, we will move on to the last element that highlights the extent of

ideological extremism demonstrated by the Spanish in Algeria and its grave consequences on the Algerian people through the Spanish extremist crusading tendency, embodied in the policy pursued by Spain against the people of Algeria.

3- The extremist crusading trend through the Spanish policy pursued against the people of Algeria:

Before delving into this aspect, it is necessary to mention what was stated by Sheikh Ahmed Tawfik Al-Madani in his book "The Three Hundred Years War between Algeria and Spain." He referred to the crusading aggression inherent in the spirit of the Spaniards and the extent of their ideological extremism, aiming to Christianize North Africa, including Algeria, or deny its right to exist.

Al-Madani cited several Western writings in this regard to clarify the objective that the Spaniards pursued forcefully. Historians such as Broudil, Professor Catt, and Barberuger affirmed the strong crusading nature that motivated the Spanish campaigns against Algeria. They also emphasized the roles played by the Pope, Fernando, Azbeila, and Khmenis. Al-Madani concluded his words with a remarkable statement: "I must mention on this occasion that our conquest of Spain, before the Spanish aggression on our lands by nearly eight centuries, was undoubtedly a jihad in the path of Allah. It was an Islamic religious campaign, and its practical result was the establishment of Islamic rule in those lands through various Islamic states. Millions of Spanish Christians embraced the religion of Allah as a result" (3).

Furthermore, Al-Madani adds: "The difference between us and them, in this ebb and flow of religious wars, is that our Islamic conquest formed a city and civilization... and we did not force anyone to embrace the Islamic religion through pressure, inspection courts, or humiliation by burning at the stake" (3).

The Spanish crusading ideological extremism manifested clearly in Algeria through the practices committed by the Spaniards during and after their occupation of the regions they conquered.

One example of the Spanish policy in the central Maghreb is the atrocities committed by the Spaniards against the Algerian people in Al-Marsa Al-Kabir. After gaining control over the inhabitants of Al-Marsa Al-Kabir, they completely evacuated the city, giving the locals only three days to leave. They allowed them to take only what they could carry (9).

Here, the extremism is evident in the appropriation of land, in addition to that, they forced the liberation of their Christian slaves.

The Spaniards also organized the administration of the city and converted its mosques into churches. Furthermore, they created what is known as collaborators, providing them with provisions (3).

As for Oran, after it was occupied by the Spaniards, the Christians satisfied their resentment and vengeance against the Muslims. They killed over 4,000 Muslims and captured more than twice that number. They destroyed its mosques, used their stones to build their churches, and replaced the minarets with bells (12).

The Spaniards also worked on humiliating the rulers of the regions by making treaties with them and sending them to King Fernando to surrender and submit, while releasing Christian prisoners, paying fines, and allowing the Spaniards to build military fortresses in their areas. The same thing happened with Sultan TensamAbi Abdullah, who eventually converted to Christianity along with his wife, daughter, and stayed in Spain. The same fate awaited Sultan Bijaya and Sultan Tha'labah Salem Al-Toumi, gradually losing their sovereignty with the arrival of the Barbarossas and their appeal to the central Maghreb (9).

Among the manifestations of Crusader extremism in Algeria, Spain launched several campaigns on the Algerian coasts after the arrival of the Barbarossas to the region. Examples of these campaigns include:

- The 1516 campaign on the city of Algiers, led by Hocasdominchada.
- The 1518 campaign that followed the death of Arouj.

- The major campaign in 1541, led by Charles V himself, on the city of Algiers (5).

After mentioning the manifestations of Spanish Crusader intellectual extremism in Algeria, we can briefly say that their presence in our country was based on looting, piracy, revenge against Islam and Muslims, and a terrible violation of their sanctities. This made the people of the country seek help from the Barbarossas after hearing about their fame and the news of their victories, thus ending an era and ushering in a new era in the central Maghreb, as they submitted to the authority of the Ottoman Turks.

Conclusion:

Based on the above, we can say:

- Despite the existence of reasons that prompted the Spanish attacks on the coasts of the central Maghreb, it was the Crusader intellectual extremism that dominated these motives and reasons. That is why we chose to make it the title of this study.
- One of the most important conclusions we draw from this study is that Europeans, due to their extreme fanaticism and bias towards Christianity, compromised their self-interests in the modern era, despite the declining role of the Church and the advent of the Renaissance and geographical discoveries. However, the Pope succeeded in resolving the conflict between the parties to the dispute, as we have seen in the union between the Kingdom of Castile and the Kingdom of Aragon, as well as the agreement between Spain and Portugal regarding areas of influence.
- On the other hand, we have seen that despite Spain going through crises and financial difficulties due to its involvement in the Italian and French wars, their Crusader inclination was a motivation to open another front, namely North Africa, especially the lands of the central Maghreb, with notable support from the Church, as

we have seen with Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros, especially since the occupation of the city of Oran.

- The most important thing we can infer from the comparison between Islamic presence in the Iberian Peninsula and Christian presence in the central Maghreb (Algeria) is that the former created civilization, human progress, and tolerance due to its flexibility and benevolence in dealing with others, while the latter caused destruction, killings, and torture due to its intellectual extremism. This highlights the drawbacks of intellectual extremism and its impact on humanity.
- In a final summary, we can conclude that the phenomenon of terrorism in the world has historical roots originating from pure Crusader intellectual extremism. This is what we refer to, in historical terms, as the phenomenon of colonialism in the modern era.

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