

CHAPTER NINE

British Policy towards Illegal Immigration

A. THE PERIOD TO AUGUST 1945

Great Britain had undertaken a double obligation concerning the immigration of Jews to Palestine. The first stemmed from the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, which said that "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people . . .".¹ The other obligation originated in the Mandate over Palestine granted to Great Britain by the Mandates Committee of the League of Nations, at the San Remo Conference of 1922. The wording of the decision, whilst referring to the Balfour Declaration, also mentions a promise to develop a Jewish entity in Palestine, while also guaranteeing the rights of the Arab inhabitants.² The text of the documents shows that His Majesty's Government took upon itself the responsibility of enlarging the Jewish community in Palestine. This meant permitting Jewish immigration.

Throughout the period of the Mandate until the publication of the May 1939 White Paper, the British did not deny that they had promised in principle to help the Jewish people establish their own political entity in Palestine. The turning point came, ironically, on the eve of World War Two, six years after Hitler's rise to power in Germany.

The dispute between Britain and the Jews centred on two main issues: the size of the territory on which the Jewish political entity would be based and the volume of Jewish immigration to Palestine.

It was taken for granted that these two points were interconnected. The greater the immigration and the number of settlements, the greater the chances of establishing an independent political entity, in other words a State.

The three parties involved in the Palestinian problem – the Jewish people (in particular the community in Palestine), the Arab countries (including the Arab community in Palestine) and the British, all realised that the focus of the problem was immigration and settlement. Thus the first open clash between Arabs and Jews during British rule

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took place in May 1921, when Arab rioters in Jaffa attacked the homes of newly arrived immigrants.

On the territorial issue, the British Government took a significant and unilateral action in 1921. At the initiative of Winston Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, it was decided at a conference of British representatives in Cairo to detach the land on the eastern bank of the Jordan – approximately two thirds of the territory of Palestine (*Eretz Israel*, in Hebrew, *Falastin* in Arabic) – from the area of the Mandate, and designate it the Hashemite Emirate of Transjordan (later the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan).³ The territory available to the Jewish entity in Palestine would have been reduced even further by the partition proposal of the Peel Commission in 1937.⁴

Ten years later, in November 1947, in the aftermath of World War Two and the Holocaust, the General Assembly of the UN voted to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab States linked in economic union.⁵ The UN proposal was accepted by the Jewish community and the Zionist movement, and rejected by the Arabs.⁶

Even before the capture of Palestine from the Turks, in 1917 and 1918, Great Britain was in a dilemma over its future, thanks to the promises of her representatives to Jews and Arabs.⁷ This dilemma led to the growing tension between Britain and the Jews over the vital issue of immigration.

The conflict of British and Jewish interests was starkly portrayed three days after Hitler's rape of Austria on 12 March 1938, when the Mandatory Government published an order reducing the immigration quota to 3,000 certificates over the next six months.

Upon becoming Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald began to pay considerable attention to the Palestinian question. One of his documents on British policy in Palestine expressed a view that the country would not become a Jewish state, nor an exclusively Arab state; there would be no partition but autonomous institutions would develop and the country would become an independent state with an Arab majority.

On immigration, MacDonald developed the idea that he had raised with Dr. Weizmann a few months earlier,⁸ for a ceiling on immigration keeping the Jews to an agreed percentage of the population. At the end of 1938 the Jews constituted 29 per cent of the Palestine population. MacDonald therefore proposed that the Jews should be allowed to reach no more than 35 to 40 per cent of the total population, within ten years. Although this implied further growth it also meant they would be a perpetual minority in Palestine. A 40 per cent limit in ten years would be met by the admission of 29,840 new immigrants a year.

MacDonald proposed that immigration should stop in ten years and thereafter it would only be permitted with the consent of the Arab population.

Thus in 1939 Britain openly abandoned the possibility of Jewish independence implicit in the Mandate. Notwithstanding the plight of the Jewish refugees in Europe, whose numbers had increased after the Nazi annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia, Britain declared a restrictive new policy. The White Paper, published on 17 May 1939 and approved by Parliament on 24 May, became official British policy. It called for the cessation of immigration, apart from the "final quota" of 75,000 immigrants over five years that were subject to economic factors. Any further immigration would depend on the agreement of the Arabs.

In Parliament, the policy was opposed by the Labour Party and by various Conservative MPs. President Roosevelt of the USA wrote to the British Foreign Secretary that he had studied the proposals with interest and a great degree of displeasure.

For and Against the White Paper

The complexities of British politics can be illustrated by the fact that Winston Churchill opposed the White Paper from the Conservative back benches. Yet when he became Prime Minister, shortly after the outbreak of the war, nothing was done to alter the White Paper's harsh decrees on immigration.

Churchill was unable to overcome the advice, emanating from the Foreign Office, the War Office and the Colonial Office, to appease the Arabs. As a result, the gates of Erez Israel remained closed to the Jews trapped in Europe.

The Labour Party also disappointed the Jews. Support for the Zionist movement had been one of the main planks in Labour's political platform. In opposition, it pressed for a policy which would enable the Jews to establish a National Home in Palestine. Even when it was a partner in the War Coalition, Labour officially opposed the Government's ban on immigration. But when it came to power in July 1945, it firmly adopted the line of the previous Government for a phased ending of immigration.

During the war against Hitler, Britain's armed forces had the additional task of dealing with illegal Jewish immigrants to Palestine. Official British documents show that the debate on the Palestine question continued during the war. Discussion papers produced by the Foreign Office on the post-war world reveal continued support for the

line adopted in the 1939 White Paper.⁹ A document prepared in March 1944, and marked secret, gives clear evidence of British intentions:

So far as we can judge of the attitude of the United States Government towards this tendency of our side (and we have pretty definite indications at least of the President's state of mind) it is decidedly unfavourable. That this unfavourable American reaction has not been more clearly brought home to us is due to the following considerations:

... (b) the U.S. Government feel obliged to keep an eye on the Jewish vote in the forthcoming elections.

But the Americans, who are not supposed to know much about the Middle East compared with us, are showing themselves much quicker than we are to discern the connexion between the Jews and oil.

It would seem therefore that the American Government may at any moment make the two not very difficult discoveries - that a successful oil policy in the Middle East must involve the cultivation of the Arabs - and that from the point of view of vote-catching there may be as much or more to be got from oil as from any truckling to the Zionist extremists.

Yet it is in the light of this situation that H.M. Government have seen fit to pick a quarrel with the Americans over oil.

We ought to go into reverse on one side or the other as soon as may be. If we are going to quarrel with the Americans, let us make sure of the Arabs; if we intend to outrage the Arabs, let us at least be on terms with the Americans.¹⁰

The Palestine question re-emerged as a public issue during the final stages of the war. Churchill had no illusions about the Arabs' contribution to the war effort. In a personal letter to his deputy, Clement Attlee, leader of the Labour Party, and to Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, he noted sarcastically that the Arabs had done nothing at all apart from the pro-German revolt in Iraq.¹¹

Churchill had continued to appear sympathetic to the Zionists. He did not, however, show any readiness to impose his views on the rest of his Government, his party or the Army. On 4 November 1944, he told Weizmann that he would not be able to obtain a Government decision on Palestine before the General Election that was to be held after the war.¹² Two days later, his support for Zionism suffered a further blow in Cairo when two young Palestinian Jews shot his close friend, Lord Moyne, the highest British official in the Middle East. But by then he

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had only a few months left in office. Throughout his Prime Ministership, the few Jewish refugees who, despite everything, had managed to escape from Europe, found the gates to Eretz Israel closed in their faces.

At the end of 1944, British Intelligence judged that as soon as the war was over there would be civil disturbances in Palestine because of tension about the future.¹³ The Cabinet was decidedly opposed to Churchill's position. At the request of Anthony Eden, the Foreign Office prepared a memorandum for the War Office. This paper, dated 10 April 1945, includes the following:

Palestine policy cannot be considered as an isolated problem. It is part of the whole British policy in the Middle East... British interests in the Middle East are vitally important, and any sound British Middle Eastern policy must be based primarily on the need for preserving and safeguarding them... The special interests which must more particularly be borne in mind must be grouped under the headings (1) communications, (2) oil and (3) strategic bases...

British policy has in the past recognised the fact that British interests can best be secured by winning Arab goodwill. It has not been easy, in the face of the strong feelings of the Arabs regarding Palestine, to win their goodwill... H. M. Government have been able to build up for themselves throughout the Middle East a reputation for fair dealing and for good intentions... Taken as a whole, the attitude of the local Arab populations may have been a decisive factor in our ability to hold off the threatened German invasion.

There will no doubt be many changes in the Middle East after the war and not all of them to our advantage... Both the Americans and the Russians are now beginning to take a new interest in the area... If we lose Arab goodwill, the Americans and the Russians will be at hand and will profit by our mistakes. It is unpleasant, and but for possible differences regarding Palestine it would probably be needless, to contemplate a future period of crisis in the Middle East, during which the Arab countries would be turning to Russia.¹⁴

The underlying fact, according to Eden, was that partition or any other pro-Zionist idea would upset the Arabs and lead to Britain losing control of this sensitive and important area.

In June 1944 the Foreign Office circulated a questionnaire to British Middle East experts, diplomats, army officers and administrators.¹⁵

They were asked for their opinions on five possible solutions to the Palestine problem:

1. partition;
2. transferring the country to an international "Trusteeship" under British control;
3. maintaining the policy of the White Paper, and granting the Jews 1,500 entry certificates per month;
4. maintaining the same policy, but with additional entry permits, as agreed by the Arab League (Great Britain would endeavour to get this agreement);
5. maintaining the policy of the White Paper.

All the respondents felt that the White Paper should not be implemented, but no one supported the immediate establishment of a Jewish State. In fact, most made various proposals for a new order in the Middle East, while supporting the Arabs at the expense of the Jews.

Solutions of the Palestine problem included the setting up of national cantons, regional autonomy and a treaty with Abdullah. The one solution omitted by all was the establishment of a Jewish State.

The decision-makers at the ministerial and official level in London were guided in the formulation of policy by assessments they received from the field, and in the case of Palestine, from British embassies in the Arab countries.¹⁶ In one such paper it was reported that any kind of partition of Palestine that would permit unlimited Jewish immigration would produce a deep, cruel and lasting reaction in the Arab world.

With the end of the war in Europe, on 8 May 1945, two of the principal actors in this drama departed. President Roosevelt had died on 12 April, three weeks before the German surrender, and was replaced by Vice-President Harry Truman. In Great Britain, a general election was held on 5 July 1945. Winston Churchill, the hero of the victory over Hitler, was routed by Clement Attlee, leader of the Labour Party.

In May 1945, Weizmann wrote to Churchill, telling him that his situation, like that of the Jews, was becoming intolerable. He urged him to rescind the White Paper, open the gates of Israel and declare a Jewish State.¹⁷ The appeal was not heeded and the White Paper policy continued.

B. AUGUST 1945-MAY 1948

In August 1945, a Labour Government was formed in Great Britain with Clement Attlee as Prime Minister and Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary.

The new Government carried out a review of imperial policy, including that connected with Palestine. Like its predecessor, it found that the partition proposal was liable severely to damage the fabric of its relations with the Arab world. Britain, which had just witnessed the establishment of the Arab League, was afraid that an immediate Zionist solution would make the whole Arab and Moslem world rise up against her. Despite the pro-Zionist views of many of its members, in September 1945 the Labour Government came up with a proposal aimed at satisfying, if only in part, the national demands of both sides through the long-term continuation of the Mandate. The plan was drawn up on the principle of regional autonomy, whereby each of the peoples, Arabs and Jews, would be given autonomy in a part of Palestine and would be subject to a central British administration. Labour clung to various versions of this plan until it despaired of holding on to the Mandate in Palestine.

The new Government faced a "second front" on the Palestine question caused by the issue of the Displaced Persons and the activities of Bricha and illegal immigration. The British stepped up efforts in Europe to stop this Jewish activity, which was being carried out by units of the Hagana. On 5 December 1945 the British military authorities in Western Europe issued an order prohibiting additional Jewish refugees from entering the British zone of occupation in Germany and Austria.

The American authorities, on the other hand, announced their willingness to shelter Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe in their areas of occupation. At the same time, Britain requested eight countries, France, Italy, Romania, USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium and Holland, to stop illegals sailing from their ports. In London, the Panamanian and Mexican Legations were asked to tighten their control over the granting of entry permits to Jewish refugees, since it appeared that many illegal immigrants to Palestine had permits to these countries. Britain invested considerable diplomatic efforts in such activities.

A leading article in the *London Times* of 5 October 1945 agreed that in the post-war world the Jews were right to want a shelter in Palestine from war and anti-semitism. It was possible for the British to build a modern and progressive Jewish state in this strategic area but it would not be fair to turn Palestine into a country where the Arabs would become a minority. The paper regretted that there were only a few Jews and Arabs who understood the need to compromise, and proposed that Britain should try to solve the problem through coordination with the other major powers.¹⁸ In a further article on 14

November, *The Times* again pressed for a just solution and a compromise between the Jewish demands to bring their refugees to Palestine and the Arabs' fears of becoming a minority in Palestine.¹⁹

In the U.S.A., President Truman echoed American public opinion when he urged the British Prime Minister to allocate 100,000 entry permits to Palestine. Mr. Attlee replied, in a letter marked "Top Secret", by claiming that the Jews were not using the numbers of certificates available to them and had not so far taken up the 1,500 certificates offered for the month. "It appears that they are insisting upon the complete repudiation of the White Paper and the immediate granting of 100,000 certificates regardless of the effect on the situation in the Middle East", he wrote.²⁰

Ernest Bevin was in control of British foreign policy. When he adopted a policy which spelled all-out war against illegal immigration, he was able to harness the support of the whole British Government machine. The Foreign Office initiated a long series of consultations and officials from different branches of the Civil Service, the Army and the intelligence services helped to formulate ways of countering Jewish immigration. The quantities of documents to be found in various archives attest to thorough staff work. All good staff headquarters have contingency plans for times of trouble and the British officials were aware that illegal immigration had not begun only at the end of the war.

In September 1945, Sir Alan Brooke, the Chief of General Staff, sent a telegram with instructions for dealing with illegal immigration to the Foreign Office, the War Office and the First Lord of the Admiralty.

1. When the war is over, illegal immigration to Palestine can be expected to increase; almost certainly it will be carried out at sea.
2. First and foremost ships must be stopped from sailing from various ports. At the same time the coast of Palestine must be guarded more vigilantly.
3. For this purpose it is desirable to use small craft (instead of the big ships of the fleet).

Attached to the telegram was the wording of the Chief of Staff's message to the "Committee for Illegal Immigration" to the effect that all information on this subject had to be given to the War Office, which would also coordinate all related activities.²¹ Also attached was the opinion of the High Commissioner in Palestine, that the best way to combat illegal immigration was to prevent the ships from sailing from their ports of origin. The High Commissioner was experienced in these matters and, since this method had so far been unsuccessful, he

suggested deducting the number of illegals who had managed to reach the country from the legal quota. This indicates that at the time in question, immigrant ships were succeeding in getting through the British blockade.

An Admiralty official named Waldoock prepared a detailed report,²² in the introduction to which he pointed out that even before the war broke out illegal immigration by sea had been a subject for inter-departmental discussions. Referring to an Admiralty note sent to the Foreign Office on 24 August 1939, Waldoock summarised its view as follows:

1. Seizing the illegal ships outside the three mile limit could not be justified in law without dealing with the States which had given the ships the protection of their flags.
2. These ships were sailing under the flags of Greece, Romania and Panama.
3. It was not desirable to approach these countries on this subject, since it was counter to the British tradition of dealing with ships outside territorial waters. Furthermore, the ship owners could easily find other countries to offer them protection.
4. The most effective way was control at the port of origin.
5. After the outbreak of the war, the Foreign Office agreed that the Royal Navy could also seize ships with illegal immigrants on the high seas. In such cases it was customary to bring the ship to Palestine and the number of illegals would be deducted from the quota.
6. Now that the war had recently ended, they could not stop ships carrying illegals unless they were flying the flag of a country that had been hostile during the war. Such countries were still under the control of the Allies, since peace treaties had not yet been signed. This referred in particular to Romania, Bulgaria and Italy. However it was known that the ships were flying the flags of Greece, Turkey, Egypt and South American States.
7. The most effective method, as in 1939, was to stop the ships in their port of departure. Thus, diplomatic action was the most desirable.

In conclusion, Waldoock asked for the opinion of the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office as to the possibility of seizing the ships at sea.²³

Those dealing with this subject from the British viewpoint were aware of the difficulty arising from direct action against immigrants. In this same paper, Waldoock wrote that the main difficulty in acting against illegal immigration to Palestine over the last ten years had been the reaction of public opinion, which knew that if the Jews were returned to their countries of origin, they would be doomed. The

situation was completely different, he wrote, now that the war was ended, and the Jews were no longer in danger of destruction or persecution. He emphasised that it was essential both in Britain and Palestine to withstand the demands of public opinion for immigration.

Top Secret

The British Government did not overlook the operational side of dealing with immigration. On Friday, 12 October 1945, a meeting - classified top secret - was held at the Colonial Office with the participation of senior representatives of its Eastern Affairs Department, the Foreign Office, the Admiralty and the War Office.

The minutes say:

- Mr. Martin said that the meeting had been called to discuss steps to stop illegal immigration into Palestine from the Mediterranean. At the moment the influx of illegal immigrants was on a small scale but it was likely to increase. Certain information on the subject was available to us but the use of this gave rise to difficult questions. There were three methods which could be employed to attempt to stop the traffic.
1. At the ports of embarkation,
 2. on the high seas,
 3. in Palestinian Territorial waters.

It is therefore clear that the participants at the meeting, like their political masters, proposed taking legal steps against the immigrants.²⁴ A further problem that arose then and later can be seen in the following letter written by a Mr. Mason at the Foreign Office:

...I do not believe that it will be the slightest use to make representations to the governments of the countries from which these people come. When I was in Bulgaria, I was constantly trying to get the Bulgarians to prevent the departure of illegal immigrants, but few governments in Europe, particularly in the Balkans, have sufficient administrative control or efficiency effectively to prevent the departure of these people. Ships are taken in to obscure ports, and the immigrants embarked at night, often with the connivance of local authorities, and in spite of the professed wishes of the government. I am convinced that no representations at headquarters will stop this traffic, particularly when one remembers the very strong financial backing it can obtain from Zionist sources in America and elsewhere.²⁵

On 14 November 1945 a note was sent from the Cabinet Office to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Mediterranean and to the Acting Commander in the Middle East, from which it can be seen that the formulation of policy, decision-making and issuing of operational orders emanate from the Cabinet:

Attached signal sent by Colonial Office to Palestine Government on 10 November 1945. Your comments are requested.

Re: Illegal Immigration.

1. Question of action to be taken has been carefully considered here in consultation with Foreign Office, Admiralty and War Office. Following tentative conclusions.

2. Preventive measures at ports of embarkation. It is generally agreed that from Palestine point of view these are greatly to be preferred to interception later. Unfortunately there are grave practical difficulties. In the case of Italy, control of ports is in process of being handed over to Italian Government. Representation in general terms to Italian or other Mediterranean Governments would not be likely to produce material result. For control by them to be effective it would be necessary to give them detailed information of movements of ships engaged in the traffic. Such information would be bound to become widely known and organisers of traffic would take steps to circumvent any measure of control... The most that can be done is that Military Field Security Officers... should keep a careful watch at ports...

3. Interception on high seas. Legally action could only be taken in respect of ships flying ex-enemy flag, i.e. Italy, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria... only until peace treaties are signed (this is not likely to be for some months). Ships of Allied or neutral flag could not be intercepted on high seas... It is proposed that any ships intercepted on the high seas should be taken into Cyprus for examination. Governor of Cyprus would be asked to take the necessary powers, arrange for deportation of illegal immigrants back to country of embarkation and if possible to confiscate ships....

4. Interception in territorial waters and in Palestine. F.O.I.E.M.* has already instituted patrols inside territorial waters where circumstances allow. Ships and immigrants intercepted would be dealt with under Palestine law, under which ships can be confiscated, master and owner become liable to fine and imprisonment and immigrants can be detained... [the ships

*Flag Officer, Levant and Eastern Mediterranean

would be sent] to Cyprus whence the immigrants could be deported. This suggestion is under consideration....

5. I fear measures in paragraph 2 and 3 are not likely to be wholly effective and that some illegal immigrants will still reach Palestine or its territorial waters....

I also suggest that so long as there is any quota of authorised immigration, any illegal immigrants reaching Palestine... [should be] deducted from the authorised quota. This believed not to exceed 500 a month at present.²⁶

In November of that year, the *Berl Katznelson* (formerly *Dimitrios*) reached the Palestine coast at Shefayim after sailing from Greece with 211 immigrants. The immigrants were landed safely ashore but the ship was caught by a British patrol. Sir Alan Cunningham, the High Commissioner, sent a signal to the Colonial Office to the effect that the only way to stop illegal immigration was to intercept the ships in the territorial waters of Palestine.²⁷

In 1945, most of the immigrant ships sailed from Italy, and Britain began to put pressure on the Italian Government to stop them. British intelligence operated both with the permission of the Italian authorities and in other ways. A signal from British Intelligence to the Cabinet Office reads: "I agree that preventative measures taken at embarkation ports and in Italian territorial waters is most efficacious method of prevention. This appears most sensitive point of organisation. To this end I have alerted British and Italian port and security authorities at ports in the heel of Italy."²⁸ The author of the signal also recommends planting agents in the Italian security services to block the sailing of immigrant ships to Palestine, and refers to similar activity being carried out in Greece.

News of this activity appeared in the press. *The Times* carried a report on 6 April 1946 headlined "Jewish Immigrants in Allied Vehicles". It described the arrest of officers, apparently from the Jewish Brigade, by the British after the Italian police had discovered some 1,200 illegal immigrants being transported at night in 37 army trucks to the port of La Spezia. The paper added that the *Fede*, 1,000 tons, was waiting to take aboard illegal immigrants.²⁹

The British Government's firmness over immigration to Palestine was opposed inside the Labour Party by Harold Laski, the political economist who was in Florence to attend a conference of Italian socialists. He told journalists that Labour should support the entry of Holocaust survivors to Palestine.³⁰

Laski consistently backed the call to let 100,000 refugees into

Palestine. On his return to England, in a letter to *The Times*, he wrote that a British politician who let down Holocaust survivors did not understand the meaning of socialism.¹ Despite such criticism, the Labour Government stuck to the White Paper policy.

Britain's diplomatic efforts to stem the flow of Jewish refugees from the DP camps to the coasts of Italy, France, Yugoslavia and Romania were unsuccessful, as were their attempts to block the exit routes from Europe. But, as we shall see, Britain did impose an effective blockade on the coast of Palestine.

The year 1946 saw an upsurge in the activities of the Mossad Le'Aliyah Beth. During that year 22 immigrant ships sailed from Europe; 11 from Italy, three from Yugoslavia, four from France and additional ships from Greece, Romania and Belgium. In this respect, the Mossad achieved one of its goals – to bring into Eretz Israel a greater number of immigrants than the official quota allocated by the British.

An Insoluble Problem

The British Government was faced with a problem which, over the years, proved to be insoluble. As illegal immigration increased and its true nature was revealed to the public in the free world, the pressure mounted on Great Britain to grant immigration permits to the Holocaust survivors. While the Arab States were demanding cessation of all immigration, in Palestine there was an increase in the underground Jewish actions against the British. The Hagana, under the guidance of the authorised and elected organs of the Yishuv and the Zionist movement, used illegal immigration as one of its weapons in the fight for "Free Immigration" and "A Hebrew State" (slogans used in the public campaign). The Palmach's military operations, such as attacks on radar stations, patrol boats, and deportation vessels, were often connected with immigration.

The struggle for immigration and settlement sparked demonstrations, hunger strikes and protest meetings. The British decided to step up the pressure and, on 29 July, tried to deal a death blow to the Hagana and its subsidiary branches by seizing its arms caches and its files and rounding up most of the Zionist leadership. This became known as Black Saturday. It proved to be ineffectual; the Yishuv and the Hagana stood firm and the struggle continued.

On the propaganda front, the British claimed to be confronted by a huge organisation, supported by heartless individuals, exploiting immigration to force the Government to take decisions on the status of

Palestine against its will. A Foreign Office document reads:

The organisers maintain a closely knit network of agents in the countries of eastern and southern Europe, by whom considerable numbers of displaced Jews are moved from points of departure as far distant as Poland down to the Mediterranean seaboard. Thence herded into overcrowded and unseaworthy ships with insufficient food and in conditions of the utmost privation and squalor they are brought across the Mediterranean, inspired by a conviction carefully instilled into them that this is their only road to safety. In this process, the laws and regulations of the countries concerned are ignored; identity and ration cards, travel documents, etc. . . . are forged on a large scale; food, clothing, medical supplies and transport, provided by UNRRA and their agencies for the relief of suffering in Europe are diverted to the maintenance of what is openly described as the Underground Railway to Palestine.³²

A leading article in *The Times* reminded its readers that in 1937 the Peel Commission's proposals had been rejected by both the Jews and Arabs, and as a result, further proposals should be viewed with great reservations.³³ The proposals to which it referred were those of the Anglo-American Committee, which the Prime Minister said he would discuss after consultation with the U.S.A. *The Times* claimed that the proposals regarding immigration to Palestine were the most important. The granting of immigration rights to 100,000 Jews should be conditional on the disarming of certain terrorist groups in Palestine and the Jewish Agency should be asked to help in this matter, since the U.S.A. would not be able to do anything. The article added that the Arabs would feel betrayed if Britain abandoned the 1939 White Paper policy.

The scale of Britain's attempts to stifle immigration is spelled out in the following telegram from Middle East command to the Cabinet Office with a copy to the Chief of Staff. It speaks of a large number of boats for sale in the Mediterranean and the efforts being made to buy them for the purposes of illegal immigration and carrying arms: "It is both legally and practically impossible to prevent resale of craft by private buyers. The only method of preventing craft from reaching wrong hands and thus leading to further loss of British lives is to prohibit sale of these types except to certain approved authorities such as governments or oil companies on condition of no resale . . . (4) authority be given for removal where possible of these craft from Mediterranean area, or for them to be destroyed." On 23 February

1946, the Cabinet Office replied: "Before proposal in your paragraph 4 is considered, approximate estimate is required of number and value of craft which it might be necessary to destroy."³⁴

The Admiralty reported on the effectiveness of using the RAF and "daily routine searches for shipping suspected of carrying illegal immigrants . . . carried out by Warwick aircraft which carry radio equipment for guiding H.M. ships to intercept."³⁵ The Foreign Office received a stream of suggestions on preventing immigration. The Commander of British Forces in the Middle East recommended stopping UNRRA and Jewish personnel in military units from assisting in illegal immigration.³⁶ In the spring of 1946 the authorities intended to examine the possibility of expelling the illegals to Cyprus and thence back to their European countries of origin. But first the island's administration had to have the means of carrying out this task. The War Office opened discussions with representatives of all the branches of the armed services including the intelligence service.³⁷ On 27 April 1946 a conference was held at the War Office "to consider preventive action which could be taken to counter illegal immigration to Palestine". The chairman, from the War Office, consulted with people from the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, the Air Ministry and other Government departments.³⁸ After a long discussion, the conference concluded that "by far the most important steps being taken to deter illegal immigration were the effort by the Palestine Government to confiscate the ships which carry the traffic and they hoped that every possible step would be taken to achieve confiscation". Suggestions were made to exploit contacts with the Government of Yugoslavia to claim that some of the immigrants were Chetniks, Nazi collaborators opposed to Tito's partisans; to fingerprint all the people in the DP camps; to expose the sources of funds and the forgers of documents working for the organisers of illegal immigration and to carry out an "investigation and interrogation of members of the Jewish Brigade and Jewish Units".

The Government in London received regular reports direct from the High Commissioner in Palestine. One of these messages, referring to the rise of violence in the country, and dispatched on 25 July 1946 said:

I consider it imperative to prevent further arrivals of Jewish illegal immigrants. The Arabs are now in an ugly mood following the numerous Arab casualties . . . Further arrivals . . . may well result in Arab outbreaks and create an extremely serious situation. It is quite out of the question that existing forces can handle simultaneously both Arab and Jewish violence.

The inevitable Jewish reaction to the diversion of illegal immigrant ships must be faced some time and certainly it would be less inopportune to do so now than later. It will at least be easier to handle than outbreaks by both sides . . . I therefore urge that illegal immigrant ships should be forced to return to the port of departure except in the case of ships from the Balkans under Russian control. In the latter case, they could be diverted to Tripoli or Cyprus . . .³⁹

On 5 August, the Colonial Secretary cabled the High Commissioner advising him that at the next Cabinet meeting he would propose stopping illegal immigration. If the Cabinet approved, the High Commissioner would have the authority, following consultations with the military commanders, to divert immigrant ships to camps in Cyprus. He was told to coordinate with the Army and the Mediterranean Fleet.⁴⁰

The Secretary of State reminded the High Commissioner that the five-year quota of 75,000 immigrants had already been filled, but that the Government was still permitting a further 1,500 to enter each month. However, despite this, it was known that a flotilla of vessels was about to swamp the coast with illegals, whose arrival, it was claimed, would lead to more violence.

The Cabinet repeatedly discussed ways of preventing illegal immigration. A report commissioned by the Foreign Secretary for Cabinet discussion backed the High Commissioner's view that continued immigration could provoke Arab riots but that immigrants could not be sent back to ports in the Communist Balkan States.⁴¹ The Cabinet decided to set up a high level committee to tackle illegal immigration. It included senior members of the Chiefs of Staff Committee: Lord Tedder, Chief of the Air Staff; Field Marshal Montgomery, Chief of the Imperial General Staff; Vice Admiral Sir Roderick R. McGregor, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff; and Sir Hastings Ismay, as well as senior representatives of the War Office and the Foreign and Colonial Offices.⁴²

The committee decided to nip the problem in the bud by preventing the ships from sailing by diplomatic means. At the same time the General Staff would have to take additional steps in ports such as Genoa and Piraeus. Its military members realised that using force against the immigrants would alert the US Government and would first have to be cleared with the Cabinet.

The First Lord of the Admiralty proposed a policy of intercepting the immigrant ships on the high seas and diverting them to Cyprus.⁴³

By breaking international law Britain risked world-wide unpopularity and censure.

Almost throughout this lengthy struggle, the British Government and the administration in Jerusalem maintained direct contact with the leaders of Palestine Jewry and the Zionist movement. This was in spite of reports to the Cabinet that the Jewish Agency organised the illegal immigration. The Colonial Secretary mentioned at one of the meetings that he would be discussing the matter on the same day with Dr Chaim Weizmann, President of the Zionist Organisation.⁴⁴ The documents also show that the British were aware of the arguments and power struggles within the Zionist movement. One of the reports observed that Dr Weizmann had little power over the activists.

In 1947, the Mossad brought 22 immigrant ships to the country. The British hit back on a broad front. They asked European countries to stop the ships leaving their shores and urged oil companies to deny them fuel. They asked UNRRA not to provide food for refugees moving from Germany to the ports of Italy, Romania and Yugoslavia. But Romania and Yugoslavia proved unreliable. The ambassador in Belgrade, in a cable to the Foreign Office on 6 January 1947, reported that he had handed the Yugoslav Foreign Minister a letter for Marshal Tito, complaining that his verbal promises to stop illegals coming to Yugoslavia had not been kept.

The High Commissioner for Palestine, in a letter to the Colonial Office, pointed out that a bigger immigration quota could reduce the incidence of terrorism in the country. However, the recommendations of the man on the spot were not accepted in London. In a letter of 9 March 1947, the High Commissioner replied to a Colonial Office telegram, classified "urgent" and "secret", reporting that 25,000 refugees were assembled in camps along the coast of Europe, ready to embark in the waiting Mossad ships. The High Commissioner called for a review of the policy of deporting illegal immigrants. He continued:

With present resources, search [for Mossad ships] can be carried out by the R.A.F. for half the days in the month. The requirement is daily search. The A.O.C. informs me that this would entail major increase in key personnel and 100 per cent increase in flying of aircraft.
... there is now accommodation in Cyprus for 7,000 immigrants. This might mean only four or five shiploads and we already know of one ship and two more on the way. If therefore the deportation scheme is continued, it is a matter of extreme urgency that I

should be informed where any immigrants after the present Cyprus accommodation is full shall be sent... When this deportation scheme was instituted, it was never contemplated that it would have lasted more than six months.⁴⁵

The High Commissioner emphasised that deportation would entail additional security work for which provision would have to be made in his budget.

If the entry quota were raised, he added, the Palestine Government must be able to resist pressure to admit immigrants above the new quota.

If this should happen, government would be quite impossible in the country. The military measures taken up to the present have not resulted in a cessation of terrorist activities (...). If no increase in the quota is given, H.M.G. will have to accept a position where outrages will alternate with military action becoming successively severer in character, without any guarantee that success will eventually be obtained in the establishment of law and order by measures short of open [war on] the Jews.

Legal Facade

Britain deployed enormous efforts in the war against illegal immigration. Secret agents were engaged in tracking down the movement of ships and immigrants. Duff Cooper, the British Ambassador in Paris, reported to London when an additional Mossad ship was at anchor in one of the French ports.

The British Government needed legal justification for its fight against illegal immigration. For the policy-makers, legal right had also to embrace moral right and the officials sought a legal definition that would enable them to deal with the illegal immigrants. The 1939 White Paper had stated that the Jews should not constitute more than one third of the population of Palestine. From this it was inferred that within five years from the publication of the paper (in other words, by the end of 1944) the immigration of Jews would be allowed only by agreement and any Jew entering the country not in accordance with this criterion would be considered an illegal. This was the definition used by the British in their diplomatic contacts with other nations.

Britain also tried to make legal capital out of the condition of the ships used by the Mossad. The British diplomats referred, *inter alia*, to the international convention signed in London on 31 May 1925, concerning human safety at sea. It laid down that every ship licensed to

sail should be inspected by the port authorities as to the safety of the crew and its sanitary conditions (article 54).

Article 21 stated that passenger ships must obtain certificates saying that they met these conditions. Port authorities must also be satisfied as to the destination of the passengers and their travel documents. If these conditions were not met, the maritime authorities of the ship's country of registration must be asked to intervene.

The British constantly urged European countries to prevent immigrant ships sailing from their ports. They also studied relevant laws in several countries, including the USA, France and Italy and international law covering the return of people to their countries of origin. This was important because the Mossad had furnished immigrants with forged certificates of destination. The Foreign Office also distinguished between deportation of people and turning them away.

In April 1947, Ernest Bevin explained to a conference of Foreign Ministers in Moscow that he had asked all countries to help stop illegal immigration to Palestine, but that immigration was still continuing. The British Foreign Office, through the Ambassador in Paris, later reminded M. Bidault, the French Foreign Minister, that although he had promised to help Britain, the *President Warfield*, soon to gain fame as the *Exodus*, was preparing to take aboard 5,000 immigrants in Marseilles. A Foreign Office official suggested ways of preventing her from sailing - by administrative delays, refusing it fuel, and by safety inspections.

In its representations with the Americans, the British Government explained that immigration would be impossible if they banned fund-raising for immigration; stopped the purchase of ships; exerted pressure on countries like Panama, Honduras, Colombia to withdraw their flags from immigrant ships and to denounce false entry permits; and prevented American citizens from serving as crew members on these ships.

At 5.30 pm on 9 July 1947 the ministerial committee on illegal immigration gathered at the Foreign Office. The participants were Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, A. V. Alexander, Minister of Defence, Viscount Hall, First Lord of the Admiralty, A. Barnes, Minister of Transport, A. Creech Jones, Secretary of State for the Colonies, P. J. Bellenger, Secretary of State for War. Also present were Sir Thomas Lloyd and J. M. Martin from the Colonial Office, J. G. S. Beith from the Foreign Office and Sir Frank Newsam from the Home Office. According to the notes taken at this meeting, it was decided not to get involved in making a new law forbidding the entry into British

ports of ships connected with immigration. It was agreed to continue pressing other countries not to permit immigrants to sail from their ports. The First Lord of the Admiralty was given the task of trying to return "illegals" to their ports of embarkation.

Admiralty attempts to prevent vessels from sailing were frequently unsuccessful. The Ambassador in France, Duff Cooper, complained to the French Foreign Minister about the French authorities' firm refusal to stop sailings from southern France.⁴⁶ In parallel with Britain's diplomatic efforts, a complex network of British intelligence agents was set up to penetrate the shipping world in France.⁴⁷ The diplomatic negotiations between Great Britain and France came close to breaking point over the *Exodus* incident (see Chapter 15).

The Arab world also maintained pressure against Jewish immigration, as part of its struggle to prevent the establishment of a Jewish State. The Arabs contended that most of the immigrants were not old and helpless refugees, but youths handicapped to join the armed Jewish organisations.⁴⁸

A feeling of despair began to grip the British authorities. On 26 September 1947 Arthur Creech Jones, the Colonial Secretary, announced that the British Government intended to withdraw its forces from Palestine and to wind up all its interests there.

Despite this statement, the British fight against immigration continued, as did the work of the Mossad. Some British officials foresaw that the situation could deteriorate further. The Deputy Foreign Secretary reported that the Colonial Office had "suggested that it might be possible to tell the United Nations or the Arab Governments that once Cyprus was full, we could do no more to control illegal immigration".⁴⁹ At a meeting with the Foreign Secretary, the following proposal was made:

It is axiomatic that so long as H.M. Government exercise authority in Palestine, they must enforce the immigration laws of the country. They will only be absolved from this responsibility when H.M.G. formally terminate their responsibility for the administration of the country upon the withdrawal of the Administration.

During this period the enforcement of the Palestine immigration laws will, at the present pace of arrival, land us with many thousands more Jewish illegal immigrants. The illegal immigrants in the Cyprus camps are at present paid for by the Palestine Government at a cost of about £2½ million a year.

The only alternative to the policy of interning illegal immigrants

is to repel them by naval action such as the laying of minefields, or by shooting at, and possibly sinking, illegal immigrant ships . . . in view of the determined temper of the Jews [this] would involve serious loss of life. I doubt whether this would be worth accepting at the present stage in the Mandate.⁵⁰

The only practical policy appears to be, therefore, to expedite arrangements for withdrawal in order to cut down as far as possible the period during which we continue to be responsible for interning illegal immigrants.

British counter-measures escalated in step with the increase in immigration. On 17 October 1947, the British delegation to the United Nations sent the Foreign Office an analysis of the proposed solution to the Palestine problem. It explained that many countries had sympathy for the Jews and their problems and that Yugoslavia and Uruguay, for example, had proposed the immediate immigration to Palestine of 30,000 refugee children and their parents. The document considered that the problem of immigration should be linked to the British evacuation of the country and that the withdrawal should take place in stages, with the first stage including the coastal area from Caesarea to Tel Aviv. This would facilitate the landing of immigrant ships on this stretch of coast.

Among the documents now available in the Public Record Office is one prepared by the British intelligence services on "The Organisation of Jewish Illegal Immigration to Palestine". It reviews illegal immigration and concludes that since the end of World War Two, 49 ships brought 45,000 illegal immigrants to the country. "All except one of these were despatched by Bricha, the immigration branch of the Hagana, the illegal Jewish militia in Palestine." This report made the connection between the Hagana and the Jewish Agency, which was directing its activities by means of several hundred emissaries operating in branches throughout Europe. According to the British, the headquarters of the Hagana's illegal immigration was located in Palestine; the main branches in Europe were in Paris and Milan and there were additional branches in Prague, Bratislava, Budapest and Vienna. One of the functions of this organisation was to select suitable candidates for immigration from among the refugees. The British believed that humanitarian reasons played only a small part in this process; it was for political reasons that the Hagana lured innocent civilians to leave their homes for Palestine. The Revisionists complained that they did not have a quota for their members wishing to sail on immigrant ships, but the Hagana, which had publicly declared its opposition to the Irgun

Zvai Leumi, did not object to taking IZL members on their ships, since "large quantities of Irgun Zvai Leumi propaganda material and membership leaflets were found on board the S.S. *Farida* - a Hagana ship which arrived in Palestine waters on 27 September 1947".

The intelligence report tells in detail of the illegals streaming from all over Europe to ports where they could find an illegal ship. It emphasises that this traffic would be impossible without massive support from bodies such as the Joint, and from individual Jews in the "Palestine Underground".

In the ports of those countries which supported illegal immigration, embarkation was carried out openly, often even under the supervision of the authorities. Passengers were furnished with visas for such places as Ethiopia, Bolivia, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Colombia and Mexico and these were not even checked to discover whether they were genuine. Towards the end there was a change and the illegals were taken aboard at night. The port officials generally were advised of the sailing after the ship had already left. In one case in Algiers, 600 immigrants were prevented from sailing because the authorities had been informed in advance about the purpose of the voyage.

A lot of money was required for such large-scale activities and the intelligence services knew where it came from: the 22nd Zionist Congress held in Basle in December 1946 had allocated £14 million for the next two years, double the amount allocated from 1939-46. "Although naturally no mention is made of funds for illegal immigration, the [Jewish Agency] budget is of course the source of the funds of the Jewish Agency".

The report concludes on an elegiac note:

Despite its complex organisation and ample funds, the Hagana could not succeed in despatching ships to Palestine if the maritime countries concerned and the countries through which the Jews must pass . . . were prepared to cooperate [with Britain] . . . H.M. Government, in calling on Governments and peoples to refrain from acts calculated to disturb the peace in Palestine, expect full cooperation . . . Such cooperation would not in most cases entail more than the proper enforcement of existing legislation, closer control of frontiers, a stricter scrutiny of passports and visas and the application to the unseaworthy and overcrowded vessels employed in this traffic [of international safety and health standards] . . . and as all are presumably anxious to maintain the prestige of their national flags, these requests are hardly unreasonable.

The Foreign Secretary commented that this report was "well done."

but that it would "tend to advertise this movement and those doing it will be looked upon as heroes defeating a great power. We are getting to the end. We had better forget it."

This remark is dated 28 November 1947.⁵¹ On the following day, 29 November 1947, the General Assembly of the UN voted in favour of the partition of Palestine, providing for an independent Jewish State.

A few months earlier, Ernest Bevin had said at a conference of the British Labour Party that he had nothing against what the Jews had done in Palestine, but that the Mandate under which Britain ruled Palestine did not mean the denial of Arabs' rights, prospects and land. He did not believe that any other nation would have been as tolerant as Great Britain had been over the last few years.

At the same meeting, a representative of British Poale Zion, the Labour Zionist party affiliated to the Labour Party, said that 40,000 British troops could be brought home from Palestine if the Government were to stop the war against the so-called illegal immigration. He appealed to the Foreign Secretary, "Let these people go!"

In a debate in the House of Lords, Viscount Samuel, the first British High Commissioner for Palestine, claimed that all the Jews in Palestine supported immigration and did not accept that it was illegal. In fact, they believed that it was illegal to stop it. In the debate, Lord Altrincham compared the transportation in the illegal ships to the shipping of slaves in the previous century.⁵²

In the months leading up to Britain's final withdrawal from Palestine, one might have expected a weakening in the efforts to prevent illegal Jewish immigration. But in this period British military and political strength was used to the full.

CHAPTER TEN

The British Government Takes Action

In 1945, the year in which the war ended, most people in the free world were busy rebuilding their own lives and were not bothered about the plight of others. The British Government took advantage of this mood to develop ways of stopping illegal immigration at its source. It pressed other countries to prevent Holocaust survivors from crossing their territory and deployed a network of agents to expose and undermine the activities of the Mossad. However, Britain's greatest efforts were aimed, by force if necessary, at preventing immigrant ships reaching Palestine.

The coastline was guarded by the Palestine Government's coast guard but there were only a few patrol boats and they were not very effective. Most of the immigrant ships in 1945 were able to discharge their passengers at places where the Hagana was waiting for them.

On 5 December 1945, the British military authorities promulgated an order forbidding further Jewish refugees from entering their zones of occupation in Germany and Austria. The American authorities, on the other hand, announced their willingness to provide shelter for refugees reaching their zone from Eastern Europe.

The commander of the U.S. zone, General McNary, agreed to shelter 100,000 additional Jewish refugees in the DP camps in the area of his jurisdiction in Germany and Austria. Meanwhile, the British Government also asked eight European nations - France, Italy, Rumania, USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium and Holland - to hinder the movement of refugees. It also asked the Panama and Mexican legations in London to tighten their control over issuing of visas to Jewish refugees, since many Jews illegally entering Palestine had been found in possession of such visas. These initiatives were not successful.

Recently discovered documents show that various branches of the British armed services were frustrated at the lack of resources available for the anti-immigration operations. The following letter from Group Captain A. Foord-Kelcey is a good example.

... I write with regard to your letter of 26th March to Trafford-Smith, in which you point out at para. 4 that the available naval forces in the Levant could be more profitably employed if greater use could be made of air patrols ...

We are confident that the local naval and air commanders are working in close cooperation in their search for illegal immigrants at sea. There can be no question of reinforcing the R.A.F. squadrons in Palestine at the present time ... but we consider that the air support which the available squadrons can give and which is always at the disposal of the Naval Commander should be sufficient to meet his requirements.¹

In a discussion on ways of stopping immigration, in April 1946, a Foreign Office official blamed soldiers of the Jewish Brigade and urged the immediate demobilisation of these units.² Another paper proposed that steps be taken to curb the activities of these Jewish soldiers before the Brigade was disbanded.³ It also made similar accusations against members of UNRRA.

The British authorities sought out every individual or group who, in their opinion, was giving direct or indirect help to the Mossad. At the same meeting it was suggested that ships carrying immigrants should be confiscated and that tear gas be used against illegals resisting the capture of their ships by British troops.

In April 1946, it was announced that measures to be taken against illegal immigrant ships were similar to those used in the early years of World War Two to intercept German and Italian reinforcements to North Africa.⁴

The Government held a series of meetings with the Chiefs of Staff on 7, 9 and 10 August 1946 to formulate its strategy and tactics as a result of which the Royal Navy was deployed to block the immigration ships. On 11 August, it was announced that HMS *Ajax* had joined other ships at Haifa, which now looked like a wartime naval base. The task force was reported to be larger than the Mediterranean Fleet when World War Two broke out. *Ajax*, famous for her exploits in the South Atlantic only a few years earlier, was berthed alongside the cruiser *Mauritius*. Close to the Palestinian coast were five destroyers as well as corvettes and radar boats.

Three more ships brought to Haifa at this time for deporting immigrants to Cyprus were the *Empire Heywood*, *Empire Rival* and *Ocean Vigour*. In all, 39 ships of the Royal Navy and the police took part in the operation between 1945 and 1948.⁵

The land forces were also reinforced by 1st Infantry Division with

10,000 men, supported by an armoured group with Sherman tanks and A.A. guns.

The journalist and historian, Jon Kimche, noted that this force, including the army and air force units already based in Palestine, was controlled by a new headquarters set up within the Imperial General Staff, with the function of fighting illegal immigration. Brigadier General McNeil Graham, commander of 1st Infantry Division, was put in overall command of this force.⁶

The Cabinet discussed the issue in a series of meetings during July and August 1946.⁷ At one of the meetings, the Colonial Secretary reported that 2,500 illegals were already detained in Palestine, mostly at the detention camp at Athlit and some in a camp that had been opened at Kiriat Shmuel, near Kiriat Motzkin. He said that more illegals who had sailed from the Romanian port of Constanza might be diverted to Cyprus. The shift in the British Government's strategy occurred on 12 August 1946, when the expulsions to Cyprus, code-named "Operation Igloo", were put into effect.⁸

Senior army and naval officers, like their civil service counterparts, devoted much time to consultations concerning the operations being carried out against immigrant ships, following the successful military blockade of the Palestine coast. A Ministry of War official wrote to a colleague in the Admiralty:

It must be clearly realised that arrest at sea and thereafter the escorting of these ships into Haifa is the only method which gives a reasonable assurance that the illegal immigrants will, in fact, be arrested. There might of course be occasions when the arrest on shore of the illegal immigrants, after they had disembarked, was [a] comparatively simple operation. If for example the navy could guarantee shepherding the ship to a prearranged spot, the operation might be carried out expeditiously. More often however I feel that it would not be practicable at all for the following reasons:-

- (a) It may not be possible to give the Army accurate and timely warning where along the coast of Palestine ships are to attempt a landing.
- (b) This lack of warning would mean that insufficient troops would be assembled in the required area in time to be effective in rounding up the disembarking Jews. It will be realised that a shipload of even half the size of the *President Warfield* would require a large number of troops to deal with it.

(c) Certain areas of the Palestinian sea board are difficult to get at by road - particularly in the South. Hagana is well aware of this and will certainly steer the ships for the best spot tactically from their point of view.

(d) If the Jewish illegal immigrants chose a populated area of the coast on which to land, such as Tel Aviv, there will be a great danger of our troops becoming embroiled not only with the would-be immigrants but with the inhabitants. This would inevitably lead to confusion during which many of the illegal immigrants would escape and might also lead to serious casualties amongst the Jews.

(e) Wherever the ships land we would have to accept the likelihood of a brush with the Palmach.

... we must accept the fact that a high proportion of illegal immigrants may succeed in their object, which is to enter Palestine outside the legal quota.⁹

The Cabinet also discussed and approved operational policy, as can be seen from the following extracts of a memorandum entitled "Illegal Immigration, Arrest and Diversion of Ships on the High Seas", prepared by the First Lord of the Admiralty for consideration by the Cabinet:

When the Navy receives intelligence of a ship suspected of carrying illegal immigrants to Palestine, the present practice is to make contact with her on the high seas, check her bona fides, shadow her until she reaches Palestine territorial waters, and then arrest her before she reaches port.

Recently this procedure has become more difficult for the following reasons:-

1. faster and heavier ships, such as ex-Canadian corvettes, are being used for the traffic.
2. the Jews are becoming more determined and hysterical.
3. the number of ships engaged in the traffic is increasing, no doubt because the Jews hope to make the task of the patrol more difficult, and to saturate the accommodation at Cyprus which is known by all to be limited.

The boarding and arrest of a ship capable of 15 knots and manned by a resolute crew, always an extremely hazardous operation, is particularly so within the limits imposed by territorial waters; it is a most difficult feat of seamanship on the

part of the captain of the boarding ship to range his ship alongside a fast moving opponent without damage to both ships and probable loss of life. If the intercepting ship cannot range alongside, she has no alternative but to open fire on the bridge of the immigrant carrier, since shots across the bows have no effect on the Jews in their present mood; it cannot be hoped that this will not lead to casualties. If a number of ships arrive together, more sea-room for interception than is available in territorial waters may be essential.

I therefore feel that the time has come to give authority to the Commanding Officers of H.M. ships to arrest on the high seas should they consider this to be expedient:-

1. ships of unrecognised flag.
2. ships with no identifiable master and crew.
3. ships of Bulgarian, Italian and Roumanian flag until peace treaties with those countries are ratified.

... I realise that to interfere with foreign ships on the high seas is not ordinarily permitted by international usage, and that in doing so H.M. Government expose themselves to criticism and even retaliation. But as the traffic is itself illegal, and as arrest on the high seas may on occasion avoid the danger to life and property involved in interception in territorial waters, I consider that all ships engaged in it could with every moral justification be so arrested ... If permission can be given for arrest on the high seas, and if the Commanding Officer's certificate is valid in such cases, it immediately becomes possible to consider a further step, namely, the diversion of the illegal carrier direct to Cyprus without entering Palestine waters. In view of the increasing difficulties attendant upon transshipping the immigrants at Haifa, anything which could obviate this would obviously be advantageous.

... I therefore seek the approval of the Cabinet to the policy described ... above.¹⁰

Great Britain was fighting a combined war, using politics, diplomacy, intelligence, the police and the armed forces, and decisions affecting it were taken at the highest level. The records confirm what was common knowledge amongst the Yishuv and Jews of the Diaspora - that the British Empire set its face against survivors of the Nazi Holocaust and closed the gates of the only country that could give them shelter. Great Britain employed all its strength and devoted vastly more resources to this war than to the development of the country with which it had been entrusted.

But none of this helped. It was Great Britain that left the field, by passing the 'Palestine problem' to the UN. The refugee-immigrants were to prevail.

PART TWO

Mossad Activities Throughout the World

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Immigrant Ships versus the Royal Navy

Of the 70,000 people who illegally sailed for Palestine between 1945 and 1948 few have spoken about their experiences. One of them has said, "We have remained as silent as the sea." But theirs is the real story.

With the war over, the seas were suddenly free from the danger of mines. But the problems of organising sailings to Palestine differed from port to port. From Eastern European ports, ships could leave by daylight. In Western Europe, the pervasive influence of the British Government usually meant that the Jews had to embark under cover of darkness. The duration of the voyage depended on the size and speed of the vessels. It could take a fortnight or more in a small craft.

Such factors were important in deciding who should take part in each voyage. The biggest ships could accommodate some individuals making their own arrangements. As well as lone survivors of the camps, including unaccompanied children, there were families and organised youth groups. On board, all had to observe discipline and follow the routines for eating, washing and other activities. They were, literally and metaphorically all in the same boat, and aware of taking part in a venture of historic importance.

The holds of the ships were furnished with tiers of tightly arranged bunks, on which the passengers could lie but not sit down. When ventilated, the berths could be quite comfortable. Otherwise, with the toilets frequently out of order, they could be oppressive.

The Mossad insisted on having at least one doctor on board and several on larger ships. Some people, including children, died before reaching Palestine and their bodies were committed to the waves. But in spite of the overcrowding, people would assemble for prayers, and the Sabbath evening services were held.

The survivors of the Holocaust reacted emotionally on first meeting Jews from Palestine and readily obeyed their orders. The immigrants were encouraged to conduct their own affairs and to set up committees for cultural activities, entertainments, discipline and other matters. Occasionally, though, the crew initiated group activities.

The immigrants readily underwent training for the coming clash

with the British, realising this was each person's struggle to enter their own land. Leaders of each group were assigned specific tasks in the event of a battle for control of the ship.

The people rose to the occasion. They fought and suffered. Despite their recent sufferings in Europe, they closed ranks and achieved heroism in this new chapter of their lives. Even those afraid of the sea, of sea-sickness and the British warships, were infected by this spirit of defiance during their journey.

Facing the Royal Navy

The Jewish leaders in Palestine, however, seemed unable to decide how firmly the immigrants and their commanders should defy the British fleet. Sometimes they called for maximum efforts to prevent a ship from being intercepted or boarded. At other times, they counselled meek surrender. As the commanders frequently pointed out, this inconsistency tended to undermine the immigrants' resolve. Despite the difficulties and the dangers, the immigrants were usually willing to resist the British. But they also wondered why they should take risks which were not-demanded of other groups.

The Palmach, in its campaign against the British blockade, had damaged or destroyed coastal radar installations, ships and patrol boats. But it lacked confidence in the political leadership's readiness for mass protests in the towns and villages of Jewish Palestine.

Until September 1946, people at sea caught by the British were brought to Palestinian detention camps and released when their names appeared on the monthly quota of 1,500 authorised immigrants. The situation changed when the British began deporting immigrants straight to Cyprus. There were times when people reached Haifa after a nightmare journey, too exhausted and down-hearted to put up a fight. At other times, they fought hard against the ranks of soldiers who greeted them in full battle dress on the quayside.

Yigal Allon, commander of the Palmach, on his visit to the Mossad base in Marseilles, ordered that the escorts must organise the immigrants on every ship to engage in passive resistance if the British tried to direct them away from Palestine. He insisted that they should hold out as long as possible, using every means of self-defence short of firearms. Allon was widely criticised on the grounds that it was for the political leadership to determine the degree of resistance in each individual incident.

These arrivals at Haifa were always a tense moment. The effect on the men of the Sixth Airborne Division, who carried out these duties,

was recorded by the Division's official historian, Major Wilson, in his book *Cordon and Search*:

Although the behaviour of the immigrants from each ship varied, there were several constant factors which were noticeable on all these occasions. One of these was the fanatical, and, at times, almost pathetic attitude of the immigrants towards Palestine - 'their land'. That this may have been strengthened and developed by artificial means is not to be denied, but even allowing for the effects of organised propaganda, it was still apparent that one and all they valued their admission into the Holy Land more than anything else in the world.

The realisation of this vital concept by all who witnessed it made the tragic situation of these would-be immigrants the more real and vivid. Perhaps this was why even the bitterest and most unjust accusations, and the determined physical resistance, were so soon forgiven and forgotten by the troops against whom they were directed.¹

The Royal Navy officers who intercepted the immigrants at sea and deported them from Haifa to Cyprus usually sent accurate reports of the encounters. Transcripts of the radio messages show that the officers addressed the immigrants with sensitivity in an effort to control them peacefully. A British Admiral reported that the British sailors were deeply depressed by the hatred which they aroused. It was not pleasant for them to have to use force against refugees, including women and children.

These reports are further testimony of the refugees' determination to reach Palestine and remain there. Most of the British officers acknowledged this strength of feeling. They realised, too, that it was the Hagana headquarters that decided whether a ship would be surrendered peacefully or whether there would be a struggle. Here one must also acknowledge how the Navy rescued ships in danger of sinking or in difficulties on the rocky coast of Palestine.

The 'Knesset Israel' versus the Royal Marines

"After the routine aboard ship had been established", wrote Yossi Harel, "the immigrants began to prepare themselves for what might happen to them when they reached the coast of Erez Israel. A detailed plan of resistance was drawn up. The refugees believed in their ability to fight, emboldened by their desire for their homeland and the knowledge that thousands of people were waiting on the shore to help them.

"When the [*Knesset Israel*] was taken in they would be taken off there. A small group had been allowed on board to steer her into port. The immigrants put on their best clothes and sang the songs they had been taught, 'Song of the Palmach', 'The Partisans' and 'The Immigrants'." 22

On 25 November 1946, after the *Hammer Ha'Yotzi* (renamed *Knesset Israel*) had been detected and joined by British destroyers, a dialogue took place, by signal, between the Jewish ship and the officer in charge of the operation. Yossi's report continues:

"In the morning I told the people that the commander of the destroyer wanted to ask them to sail directly to Cyprus. I added, 'If you agree with his proposal, we'll go to Cyprus, and if not, shout *Palestine! Eretz Israel!*' We had 3,000 people on the deck - I've never seen a deck so crowded. We, the escorts, stood at the back, so as not to be seen, together with the band leader and accordionist, who were to control the tempo of the shouting.

"The destroyer approached us and the commander spoke to the passengers by loudhailer. He told them how good it would be in the camps in Cyprus. When he finished, his remarks were translated into the languages understood by the immigrants, Yiddish, Hungarian and Romanian. When this was done, we asked him if he wanted to hear our answer and began to shout '*Palestine! Eretz Israel!*' and then burst into song - '*Hatikva*', '*Song of the Palmach*' and others. They stood and sang like that for hours on end. We felt as though we were sailing to *Eretz Israel* and that the destroyer sailing alongside did not matter.

"In the meantime, three more destroyers had appeared. The immigrants remained at their positions; one section from each platoon stayed on watch while the other two sections rested and even slept with their sticks in their hands. The whole day passed in this way. In the evening the destroyer signalled to us and asked for the name of the skipper, his registration number, etc. We replied 'We do not have a skipper or any foreign sailors. We are travelling by ourselves!'

"After a little while, I signalled to the destroyer and asked where they considered the Palestinian territorial waters to be, but we received no answer. We were afraid that we might have to begin our resistance at night, in which case the destroyers would be able to dazzle us completely with their huge searchlights. When we did not get a reply to our question about territorial limits, we removed to a distance of 20 miles from the coast. This was our third night without sleep. We were constantly on the alert and no longer held staff meetings.

"November 26, 1946. All our self-defence preparations assumed there would be a long naval engagement. It was difficult to board us

because the destroyers were lower than us, but we had instructions to let them aboard and proceed to Haifa. We followed instructions. In the meantime, six more police launches approached us. I said to the captain of the destroyer, 'In order to avoid bloodshed at this stage, I suggest that we continue like this until we enter territorial waters, when you can put a small group of soldiers on board and we promise not to touch them'. He replied that he agreed to this. The destroyer came close and 25 soldiers came aboard and immediately took up strategic positions. Our people hid their sticks.

"When we entered port and the passengers saw the buildings of Haifa, they burst into song. But this singing was nothing compared with the way they had sung when the destroyer first approached us. I could see that they were steering us to a pier where three deportation vessels were moored. When I saw their names and the barbed wire, I realised that we were lost. We tied up at the pier. The whole port was full of troops and there was not a civilian to be seen. As soon as we had tied up, they put boarding platforms in place and soldiers came on to the ship with machine guns, rifles and sub-machine guns. We could not offer any resistance because they had not attempted to take any of us away. The sailors went ashore and only the soldiers remained. I heard them being given orders to take positions. They looked tense and pale. We told the naval commander that there would be bloodshed and that nothing would be done without speaking first to the people.

"He went ashore and spoke to the army officer who told him to sit down and wait. Meanwhile, more and more soldiers kept coming aboard, including a major, who asked to speak to the people. We told him there was too much activity and that he should call the colonel, since nothing was going to happen before speaking to the immigrants. He replied that he was going to speak to the colonel in charge of the operation, and promised that nothing would be done before speaking to the passengers. More troops came aboard, and then a captain turned to the people and told them to disembark and transfer to the other ships.

"No one moved. I mingled with the immigrants and told them that these were deportation ships and that the sign to start our resistance would be when they tried to remove the first person. They took up their sticks and the reserves waited below, 24 or 26 platoons. One unit went down to sabotage the engines.

"The soldiers went up to a small boy of about eight and told him to leave the ship. He said that he did not want to. The very moment they removed the child, cans of food began to fly. The soldiers suddenly vanished. Two of them opened fire and killed two immigrants. They were fired six or seven bursts and some people were wounded. They were

aiming straight at the people. A boy named Hashomer Harzair were killed. This youngster managed to kill an English soldier before dying. After this, war broke out. 'Nazis! Fascists!' they shouted at the English. The soldiers ran away - after the two victims we began to attack and smash heads. The soldiers on board simply tried to escape as we threw cans at them, and then small tins of corned beef and then we started throwing the soldiers themselves straight into the sea. They gave up. The immigrants were astonished to see the English soldiers running away. Among our people there were about 800 who had served in the Red Army and the sight of fleeing soldiers made them feel good. Some soldiers still remained on the bridge - about 200 of them - and the people rushed to kill them...

'The soldiers on the bridge jumped into the sea and we had still not mobilised our reserves. We hid the radio transmitter in the bunker. Three ladders were dropped into the water but one we had to keep. We put out an announcement in English, 'For every Jewish life that you take, you will pay in English blood'. We put this sign up after they had opened fire and killed two people. The sign made a tremendous impression: we carried it along the whole length of the ship. For a whole hour they were unable to get back on board. They changed the troops, changed the weapons, took long poles with metal tips, but the soldiers were unable to mount more than five steps. We threw a thousand cans and thousands of bottles. Just like a wave of the sea breaking against a cliff, they charged us five times and were beaten back each time. The officers tried to get them to charge once again but no one wanted to move out. There were many casualties. Whoever came near to us was greeted with a three kilo can, whilst those a little further off were pelted with tins of sardines and the others were struck by small tins of corned beef and lumps of coal. We were not using the sticks - we were saving them for when the soldiers came aboard.

'Suddenly, a squad of soldiers appeared in gasmasks. Before this, they had tried using jets of water but had not succeeded because our people had sabotaged one of the engines. I was frightened to let our people off the ship because the English soldiers would open fire on them. They began firing gas canisters at us. The first round consisted of 12 canisters of tear gas. People began to cry and choke and our skin was burning. But the soldiers had still not come any closer. The whole ship was covered in a white vapour. Unfortunately 12 more canisters fell into the hold, where there were 2,400 passengers. They began to emerge, shouting and choking. The English troops had still not boarded us. They gave us 25 minutes to writhe about in the gas. It was terrible - I cannot even describe it. We could not see anything, could

not breathe and began to pass the children from hand to hand. Their heads were down, their eyes were bulging and their hands hanging loosely. They were screaming dreadfully. People who could not swim were jumping into the sea and the whole deck was covered with men, women and children twisting and turning in agony.

'I was sure that the children would be killed, because they could not see and were on top of each other... On shore, the English soldiers were standing by smartly whilst here we were suffering. I also saw some wonderful things. Young men and women taking off their shirts, tearing them into strips and handing them out for people to dip them into water and cover their eyes. I saw a boy of eight take a bucket and run to fill it with water. When he returned, he fainted. We threw back 40 gas canisters. I myself threw back seven, one of which fell among a group of sailors and scattered them in every direction. After 25 minutes, they began to drop the canisters into the hold. The radio operator passed out. They even dropped three gas canisters into the stern, where we had put the mothers with babies from one to 14 days old. At this point, one of the women began to give birth... I was sure that the 11 babies would suffocate and I still do not understand how they survived.

'They were still frightened and it took another half hour before they came aboard. When they came, they began to attack the men with great brutality, but they did not go ashore. They did not defend themselves, because they could not see anything, but they did not run away. With us, 2,500 people simply do not surrender. More gas shells were thrown and then, but only then, the passengers began leaving the ship. Resistance was over. The English troops had to drag most of the men away. The effects of the gas lasted more than an hour and a half. This, together with the deep depression that had come over us, was almost unbearable. When the gas had cleared away, they fired more canisters at us, but despite all this, our people continued to fight until they were no longer able. I want to state that even if the Palmach had been there, they would not have done any better, because it is impossible to fight when you are choking, and especially not when you have pregnant women, babies and old people.

'The boys who jumped into the sea could not swim, and when the English soldiers fished them out, they beat them with clubs.

'When the people had left the ship, they turned to us and asked, 'Where was the Haganah?' I answered that the whole country was on strike, but I felt terrible. One of the refugees came up to me and said that it was I who had let the English soldiers come aboard the *Knesset Israel* and had handed them over. He said that it was a fact that I had

I brought the soldiers aboard. I had not thought that one day an immigrant would accuse me of handing him over to the British.

"In the middle of the struggle, I suddenly saw a small boy holding a Sten gun. When I asked what it was, he replied that he had taken it from the soldiers. I also saw a young man walking about with a rifle with fixed bayonet and others with gasmasks. It was all taken from the British and we threw it into the sea.

"We had lied to them. This was terrible not only for them but also for us. I knew that our comrades on the shore would have fought at least as well as we had. It was difficult to accept. When I returned, I saw a newspaper story about a 'dramatic duel' and thought it referred to our struggle with the British over the ship, but it was about a legal battle in court between the Hagana and the Government . . .

"I would not have given the order to fight if I had known that they were not going to fight on shore . . . They could not forgive themselves for breaking after only an hour and a half and not three days, as we had agreed. When we left the ship, I did not want the immigrants to see us and made sure that the three of us would be the last to go off. No one saw us leave, which was perhaps the cause of the rumour that Matti and I had been killed. We came ashore at half past nine. The soldiers were hurrying us; they were probably sick of the work and wanted to go back to camp.

"The *HaMeri HaTori* was lit up by the searchlights and was completely empty. Various items were spread over the deck: bags, broken bottles, cans of food, all the signs of battle, even blood stains. This is how we left our ship. All the national flags that we had taken aboard and flown had been taken down, apart from one, the children's silk flag, which was still flying at the masthead. It was torn and ragged and bore the scars of battle. This precious flag, the children's flag, with which we had covered the dead baby, our first victim, was the last remnant of our struggle. It was so painful to see the lights of Haifa and the harbour witnessing our deportation. We had been in all the ports of Europe, Piraeus, Marseilles, Genoa, Naples, with forged papers and had never been deported from anywhere. We had been welcome everywhere except here, our own port, Haifa, where we were being thrown out like criminals. At that moment I hated Haifa, which stood there, saw what was happening and did not lift a finger to help."

Resistance on board the "Theodor Herzl"

The *Theodor Herzl* sailed from Sète, on the French Mediterranean coast, on 2 April 1947, with Mordechai "Mokka" Limon in command. The passengers were organised into resistance groups and issued with

rubber clubs and gas masks. Training in defence against boarders was provided during the voyage.

The report written by one of the escorts describes what happened to the ship:

"Monday, 7 April:

"The radio has been repaired but is still not functioning properly. We could not pick up anything. Strong north wind, list increasing, rest of rafts thrown into the sea. To keep up boiler pressure, steam provided for galley only for half an hour in the morning and in the evening, but we cannot improve speed.

"Tuesday, 8 April:

"Still no communication. Speed $5\frac{1}{2}$ knots. 15 degree list. Weather clear and warm. After checking the tanks, the engineer informed us that we had about 80 tons of fuel left. We immediately began to increase pressure by using sea water.

"Wednesday, 9 April:

"We are passing Crete. We have begun to bring people up on deck in turn. We ought to reduce the number of passengers on deck - this will make it easier to clear all the people away.

"At 2030, two aircraft flew over us. At 2230, we could see the lights of a vessel, which started to signal to us. We were asked our destination, where we had come from and what kind of ship we were. We answered that we were a merchant ship headed for Port Said from Italy and asked who they were. They replied 'warship' and disappeared.

"Thursday, 10 April:

"Still no communication. The wooden huts on deck were dismantled early in the morning. In the evening, the warship returned, circled us a few times and disappeared again.

"Friday, 11 April:

"Preparing to resist. Handing out the rubber clubs, masks and knuckle dusters. Held practice alert and every group went to hide in allotted place. Exercise successful and people tense and nervous.

"We transferred the drinking water in the bows to the stern tank and filled the bows tank with sea water. This righted the ship for the first time on the voyage. In the evening there was a light on the horizon but it was impossible to identify which kind of vessel. We are 200 miles from Wadi Rubin [mouth of the Sorek river in Israel].

"The two babies have a temperature of 40 degrees and there is fear for their lives.

"Saturday, 12 April:

"Finally managed to contact Artzi [Mossad section in Palestine]. Told us not to approach coast without orders.

"Sunday, 13 April:

"Can no longer remain in open sea, after, and condition of babies very serious. Received order to be at point off coast at 2200. At dusk we could see the lights of Tel Aviv and Jaffa. Very difficult to maintain boiler pressure. Very poor quality coal.

"At approximately ten o'clock in the evening, the beam of a searchlight was directed at us from a destroyer. We were warned that we were about to enter Palestine territorial waters and told to change course. We continued to sail in the same direction. There was a message from the destroyer that they wanted to speak to our captain. We replied by singing 'Hatikvah' at the top of our voices.

"At 2020, they began to spray us with water and fire tear gas at us. After circling us a few times, groups of soldiers jumped on board from the life boats and began firing with sub-machine guns and revolvers. Our people backed away a little, but soon recovered and then counter-attacked. We kept up our resistance for over two hours.

"The rubber clubs that we had been given were insufficient and ineffective; wooden ones are much better. Foxy gas masks are also not enough."⁴

The other escort, Yash, finishes the story:

"Suddenly they attacked us. We could hardly make out what was happening. The destroyer struck us on the port side and simultaneously fired a volley of 20 tear gas canisters at us which went off one after another. The people on deck began screaming and then threw hundreds of bottles, cans of food and whatever else they could lay their hands on at the destroyer. The deck was covered with a cloud of dark grey gas. The screams were deafening. Our eyes and throats were burning and our lungs were painfully constricted. Everywhere people were coughing and vomiting and trying to escape the bombs... After a few more canisters and grenades, our 500 fighters turned into a crowd of beaten, tortured people desperately looking for a place to hide.

"We had already told the doctors to shut themselves up in the same room as the babies and pregnant women, and they now hurried to provide medical attention. Our defence was crumbling and needed to be re-organised....

"The destroyer struck us a few more times and shook the ship violently. More soldiers jumped on to the upper deck, armed with sub-machine guns and wearing steel helmets. We ran across the decks like madmen, shouting encouragement at our people and trying to stop them from running away. 'Come back! More bottles! Hit them! Throw the bombs into the sea!' We were picking up gas bombs and throwing them back before they exploded.

"The soldiers opened fire on the bridge, which was full of people. We heard a few bursts of gunfire and shrieks of fear. A young man fell and did not get up... the Royal Navy managed to capture the bridge, fired through the ventilation shafts at the engine and put it out of action. The ship stopped. The wind dropped for a moment and it seemed as though it was all over, that there was no more point... But when you looked at the lights of Tel Aviv shining at you from so close at hand, your blood boiled and your fists clenched with anger... once again our people stormed the bridge, shouting wildly and hurling bottles and cans. A rough English voice was heard from the bridge: 'You have lost. We do not want to hurt you any more. Please go down into the hold.' But the fight continued.

"A second and third destroyer approached us - they too were lit up by the searchlights. On both sides of us, destroyers were pelting us with gas bombs and spraying us with jets of bitter, stinging gas from special hoses. It was unbearable. The bombs were fired like rockets and fell among the immigrants. They also sprayed us with water, but this had a good effect, since it cleared away some of the gas and refreshed the wounded. Slowly, the soldiers pushed the defenders into the bows and the stern of the ship by using their sub-machine guns, heavy clubs and fists. Our people defended themselves with their bare hands. One of them was struck in the face by a gas bomb flying at full force; his screams of pain were terrible....

"The battle ended two hours later. The victors stood proudly on the bare decks, grinning and laughing....

"In a corner of the deck a young man lay with a bullet through his shoulder, his head wrapped in bloody bandages. His wife sat next to him, red eyed, wiping his forehead with a rag. She turned to the men standing around her and said: 'This evening will not be forgotten.'"⁵

By the same author
*Voyage to Freedom: An Episode in the
Illegal Immigration to Palestine*
(with Ze'ev Tsahor)

SECOND EXODUS

The Full Story of Jewish Illegal
Immigration to Palestine, 1945-1948

Ze'ev Venia Hadari
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev



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