# PREFACE

Between 1945 and 1948 more than a quarter of a million Jews fled from countries in Eastern Europe and the Balkans to the West, where they were given temporary shelter in the Displaced Persons (DP) camps hastily erected by the Allies in Germany and Austria. Sailing clandestinely from both sides of the Iron Curtain, the Zionists tried to bring as many Jewish refugees as they could to the shores of Palestine. These efforts helped establish the State of Israel, not so much because of the numbers involved as because of the dramatic way in which they publicized the plight of the Jewish refugees and enabled the Jewish community in the United States to influence White House policy by linking its vote to a solution to the DP problem.

Britain was not only one of the four powers that occupied Germany and Austria after the war, it also held the Mandate in Palestine. Hence the question of what to do with the vast majority of Jewish DPs who refused repatriation became paramount for London. The Middle East was pivotal to Britain both economically—because of its huge oil resources—and strategically—because it helped to secure the land route to India and also formed a buffer against the expansionist ambitions of the Soviet Union. As the cooperation of the Arab countries was essential to safeguarding these interests, Britain quickly moved to frustrate Zionist attempts to transfer Jews from Europe to Palestine. Insistence on strictly separating the Palestine question from the DP problem became a mainstay of British policy.

With the end of World War II, relations between Arabs and Jews in Mandatory Palestine deteriorated rapidly. As Whitehall saw it, Jewish immigration was a crucial problem for the Arab countries and the indigenous Arabs in Palestine. Because Britain's interests in the Arab world carried more weight than helping the Zionists build their homeland, the government decided not to allow Jewish influx into the country to increase. Thus after having significantly contributed to defeating the Axis powers and thereby helping save the lives of many Jews, Britain became the main barrier for Jewish refugees wanting to reach the haven the Zionists were setting up in Palestine. This policy also resulted in increased resistance against Britain on the part of the Zionists, both the moderate majority of the Yishuv (Hebrew: settlement; the prestate Jewish community in Palestine) and the more militant factions. A memo submitted to Foreign Min-

ister Ernest Bevin in late 1946 succinctly diagnosed Britain's difficulties: "So a vicious circle is set up. The more refugees arrive in the west, the greater the activity of Zionists in organizing illegal immigration; the greater the number of illegal immigrants making their way to the coast of Palestine, the greater the need for His Majesty's Government to take measures to prevent such influx from destroying the chance of an agreed solution to the problem. The stricter these measures, the larger the number of Jewish refugees piling up in camps in Europe."[1]

This book deals with Britain's policy toward the survivors of the Holocaust and attempts to explain why Britain proved unable to prevent the Jewish DP problem from becoming the most effective political weapon for the Zionists in their struggle against the British in Palestine. This is a history neither of the Palestine problem nor of the Jewish-Arab conflict, nor, for that matter, of the suffering of the Jewish refugees. Rather, my focus is the diplomatic and operative campaign on which Britain embarked to prevent the Jews from leaving Europe and reaching Palestine. Waged on both sides of the Iron Curtain, this battle should be seen against the background of the struggle over the formation of world power relations after World War II in which Britain had such an important stake. The countries Britain confronted fall into three categories, each of which called for discrete tactics and diplomatic methods: the United States, the Soviet Union and its satellites, and Italy and France.

Of these, the United States was the most important. U.S. policy toward the Jewish DPs played a crucial role in Britain's failure to separate the Palestine question from the Jewish DP problem. Differences over how Jewish DPs ought to be treated and where they should be resettled caused continuing confrontations between Whitehall and the White House and, on a personal level, created tension between President Harry S. Truman and Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. The American occupation zones in Germany and Austria served as the main temporary haven for Jewish refugees fleeing Eastern Europe. Although the United States was not without its own internal differences, U.S. policy on the issue manifested a close interaction between domestic politics and foreign policy. Because of the pervasive political influence the British ascribed to American Jewry, they saw it as the main reason why the White House would not support a British solution for the Jewish DP problem.

Washington's policy also influenced the attitudes of governments on both sides of the Iron Curtain toward British efforts to halt illegal Jewish migration. The overwhelming majority of the Jewish refugees who were gathering



in the DP camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy and joining the illegal sailings to Palestine had been citizens of East European countries. Britain exerted pressure on the governments of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria to stop this Jewish exodus, whether by land or by sea, but was largely unsuccessful. The reasons for this failure, of course, have to be analyzed against the backdrop of the escalating Cold War. As Moscow played an indirect, and at times overtly direct, role in enabling the Jews to flee, I examine Soviet motives—as understood by the British—together with the situation the Jews encountered in these countries during the Communist takeovers. Important aspects here are the attitudes of the local regimes and populations and the role played by anti-Semitism.

Since both Italy and France served as temporary refuges for tens of thousands of clandestine Jewish refugees and as important embarkation points for the illegal sailings to Palestine, Britain also came into conflict with their governments. Admittedly, Italy was a former enemy country subject to certain restrictions imposed by the Allies, but Paris and Rome reacted similarly to Britain's approaches. The British learned to their dismay that even though Italy and France were on the western side of the Iron Curtain, they were not necessarily more responsive to London's entreaties, as disputes over geopolitical issues spilled over into the negotiations over the Jewish DPs.

At the same time, the British had to find a solution for the Jewish DP problem in their own occupation zones in Germany and Austria. Here Whitehall geared its efforts to turning its political principles into an operative policy that hinged on the denial that the Jews formed a "nation" and that Jewish DPs were any different from other DPs. In addition to the DPs themselves, British Jewry and Zionist organizations in both Britain and the United States were quick to reject this policy. Moreover, together with measures to halt illegal Jewish immigration into Palestine, London started a propaganda campaign intended to minimize the humane aspect of the Jewish DP problem.

Non-Jewish DPs formed the great majority of the people who had been displaced by World War II. From the moment during the later stages of the war when the Allies began formulating guidelines on how to handle the problem until the end of the 1940s, their policies toward the DPs underwent several changes. Here the main focus is on the policy toward Polish DPs, who not only—after the repatriation of Soviet citizens—constituted the largest national group among the DPs in both the British and American occupation zones but also enjoyed the political support of the large Polish community in the United States and had been given a moral commitment by Britain. The analysis of the policy the British and the Americans evolved toward the non-Jewish DPs helps

bring to the fore the differences in the policies they adopted toward the Jewish DPs,

Until the summer of 1946, the Jewish DPs constituted only a minor proportion of the total DP population and even at their peak, toward the end of 1947, formed only about 25 percent of all DPs in Germany. In view of these figures, the amount of time the two Western leaderships devoted to the Jewish DP problem appears disproportionally high, especially when one considers the domestic and international challenges they were facing after the war. The intensive contacts on the subject between London and Washington and, in particular, the disputes that arose over the policy to be adopted, offer a unique perspective on what was clearly a complicated relationship. Similarly, Whitehall's negotiations with governments on either side of the Iron Curtain over the Jewish refugees serve as a case study for an analysis of the international arena after the war, especially the way Britain's relations with different countries grew more difficult as its status declined in the postwar world. In this respect, too, the reports relayed by British diplomats throw significant new light on the situation of the Jews in the United States and countries within the Soviet sphere of influence.

The main thesis of this book is that it was Whitehall's efforts to secure Britain's interests in the Middle East that largely dictated British policy toward the Jewish DPs. The development of the Jewish DP problem into an effective political weapon for the Zionists in their battle over Palestine stemmed from the transformation of this problem into an electoral issue in the American political arena together with the attempts on the part of the Soviets to undermine Britain's influence in the Middle East. In other words, when governments on both sides of the Atlantic and the Iron Curtain were preoccupied with the reconstruction of their countries and the future shape of postwar power relations, the determination of the Zionists to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, the refusal of East European Jews to rehabilitate their lives in their home countries, and the illegal sailings intended to bring them to Palestine prevented the tragedy of the Holocaust from sinking into oblivion. In the policies the Great Powers evolved in response, considerations of a political, not a humane, nature played a decisive role. Unfortunately for Britain, both the White House and the Kremlin supported the goals of the Zionists, albeit for entirely different reasons.

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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| AAC | Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry Regarding the Problems of European Jewry and Palestine |
| BDBJ | Board of Deputies of British Jews |
| CFM | Council of Foreign Ministers |
| DP(s) | Displaced Person(s) |
| IGCR | Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees |
| Irgun | National Military Organization |
| IRO | International Refugee Organization |
| JDC | American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee |
| JRU | Jewish Relief Unit |
| LHI | Israeli Freedom Fighters |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| MRP | Mouvement Républicain Populaire |
| NKVD | People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs |
| PAC | Polish-American Congress |
| SHAEF | Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNRRA | United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration |
| UNSCOP | United Nations Special Committee on Palestine |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| WJC | World Jewish Congress |

# INTRODUCTION

Ostensibly Britain came out of World War II with its empire and its political prominence in the international arena intact. But the war had exacted a heavy toll from the country's population and left its economy much weakened. More than 265,000 British soldiers had fallen in battle and about 90,000 civilians had been killed, two-thirds in German air raids. The war had cost Britain about one-quarter of its national wealth, and one-third of its merchant fleet had gone down. From £476 million in August 1939 London's foreign debt increased sevenfold to £3,300 million in June 1945. When the Conservative Party lost the general elections in July, the task of coping with this difficult economic situation fell to Labour.[1] For the next three years, until the implementation of the Marshall Plan in mid-1948, government policies were dictated to a large extent by the harsh reality the war had bequeathed to the country. That is, while London remained determined to play a significant role in shaping the postwar world, Whitehall gradually came to recognize that Great Power pretensions were a thing of the past, and the government began seeking ways of reducing overseas spending by, among other things, withdrawing British troops from abroad. Still, during the fiscal year 1946–47 Britain spent 18.8 percent of its national income on defense—overseas defense commitments more or less equaled the budgetary deficit for that year, as 457 million people in different parts of the globe were under British rule in 1945.[2]

In the postwar years, Britain also bore the brunt of checking Soviet expansionist ambitions. Not only had Russia taken over Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and parts of Germany and Austria, but it was also striving to dominate events in Greece and Turkey, and Soviet soldiers were stationed in northern Iran. Assessing the new international situation this created, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin concluded that Moscow sought the decline of the British Empire and was bent on replacing Britain in the areas it might evacuate. American cooperation was crucial for the British; without the support of the Americans, Britain's impact on the foundation of the postwar world would be critically reduced. But already a chill lay over its relations with Washington, which made disagreements during the first few months after the war over a policy toward the Soviet Union inevitable.[3]

For the Americans, this attitude stemmed to a large extent from their long-

standing misgivings vis-à-vis Britain's imperialist ambitions and their aversion to the Labour Party's socialist tendencies. The British ambassador to the United States, Lord Halifax, highlighted the warnings U.S. financial and business circles were sounding to the effect that "America should beware of countenancing any proposal to grant extensive credits to Britain, which would be likely to employ them to underwrite state Socialism," and added:

> Whenever they find reason to complain of our actions, Americans do not fail to apply to us a number of ugly catchwords that owe much of their origin to the traditional mistrust of British policies and to the above-mentioned sense of rivalry, e.g., *balance of power, sphere of influence, reactionary imperialist trends, colonial oppression, old-world guile, diplomatic double-talk, Uncle Sam the Santa Claus* and *sucker,* and the like. Anti-British outbursts are as a rule the result of the propensity of Americans to oversimplify vexatious issues which lie beyond their immediate ken.[4]

Washington's priorities and objectives right after the war differed greatly from those of London. The Americans regarded the Pacific Ocean and East Asia, especially China, Japan, and Korea, as their sphere of influence, while they wanted to cut back their involvement in Europe as quickly as possible. Already at the Yalta Conference (4–11 February 1945), President Franklin D. Roosevelt had declared that Congress would not support the stationing of American forces in Europe for more than another two years. The Americans placed great hopes in the new United Nations Organization (UNO), set up especially to help resolve international disputes, and, to ensure its participation in the new body, were ready to accommodate the Soviet Union on a variety of points, including giving the USSR three votes instead of one.

President Harry S. Truman at first continued the policies of his predecessor. Thus in mid-June 1945 he refused, as Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill was urging, to keep Anglo-American forces about one hundred miles inside the Russian zone in Germany so long as Joseph Stalin had not acceded to various Western requests. Neither did Truman consult with Churchill before he informed Moscow that the United States had no territorial ambitions or ulterior motives in countries in East Europe, the Baltic republics, and the Balkans. Washington, furthermore, allowed the Soviets a free hand in Poland in exchange for their acceptance of a plan the Americans had introduced for voting procedures in the UN Security Council. Truman was aware of Stalin's fears that Anglo-American cooperation could be directed against the Soviets and wanted to dispel Russian suspicions. For example, only a few weeks after the war, the president dismantled the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) and declined an invitation from Churchill to stop over in London on the way to the Potsdam Conference. In many respects, the Americans played the role of mediator between Britain and the Soviet Union, a position first adopted by Roosevelt when he met with Stalin in Teheran (28 November–1 December 1943).



America continued to play down the import of London's views at the Potsdam Conference (17 July–2 August 1945). Here Truman's main objective was to get Stalin to reconfirm Soviet agreement to join the war against Japan. Wanting to terminate their military and economic obligations in Europe, the Americans did not regard territorial disagreements there as impinging on U.S. security, let alone justifying the repercussions of a rift with the Russians. This explains Washington's flexibility and readiness to comply with Russian demands and why Truman did not adopt Churchill's firm stand against Soviet intentions vis-à-vis East Europe.[5]

Nothing, however, could have prepared the British for Truman's abrupt announcement, on 21 August, of the immediate termination of the Lend-Lease Agreement. This effectively ended American economic assistance and was a severe blow for Britain. For three months (13 September–6 December 1945), the British and the Americans engaged in a series of tough negotiations about the terms of a new loan. London's hopes of receiving an interest-free loan of $5 billion quickly evaporated—Britain was to receive $3.75 billion at 2 percent annual interest, to be repaid over fifty years, beginning on 31 December 1951. The loan was made conditional on Britain meeting a variety of demands, which included a comprehensive agreement on protective and commercial tariffs, disbanding the sterling bloc, and allowing the free exchange of the pound sterling vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar within one year following approval of the agreement. After a fierce debate in Parliament that brought to the surface much bitterness toward the United States, the agreement was approved by a vote of 345 to 98 with 169 abstentions. Most Conservative members, including Churchill, abstained. On 10 May 1946, the Senate approved the agreement by 46 to 34; the House voted 219 in favor and 155 against on 13 July. Britain came in for sharp criticism in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. The main argument in favor of the agreement was the need to stand by Britain in view of the escalating tension with the USSR. Almost a year, however, passed between Washington's sudden scuttling of the Lend-Lease Agreement and Truman's signing of the law approving the loan to Britain on 15 July 1946.[6]

Another snub at Britain's international standing came with the initiative of U.S. secretary of state James F. Byrnes to convene the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in Moscow (12–31 December 1945). Byrnes first approached the

Soviet commissar for foreign affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov, and only afterward asked Bevin for his opinion. When Bevin appeared to hedge, Byrnes made it clear that he intended to go to Moscow even if the British foreign secretary decided not to participate.[7]

One of the issues the Allies failed to resolve at the CFM meeting was Iran. When crisis erupted there a short time later, it served as a catalyst for Anglo-American rapprochement on a policy toward the Soviet Union. The Americans adopted an unyielding stance toward the Soviets during the months of March–May 1946, and close cooperation between Washington and London compelled the Soviets to withdraw their troops from Iran. Cooperation between the two Western powers continued through discussions of the CFM in Paris in the spring of 1946, when Byrnes and Bevin rejected out of hand Russian demands concerning the peace agreement with Italy. This time it was the Americans who stood firm against Soviet expansionist aims. The result was a one-month interruption in the CFM discussions; during the second stage (15 June–12 July 1946), East-West disagreements were resolved, each side accepting the idea that it would not interfere in regions falling within the other's sphere of influence.[8]

Another sign of Washington's renewed commitment to Europe was the anti-Soviet speech Byrnes gave in Stuttgart on 6 September in which he emphasized that American soldiers would remain in Germany as long as the other powers kept their armies there. When, on 12 March 1947, in a joint session of the two houses of Congress President Truman introduced what was to become known as the Truman Doctrine, it signaled a turning point in relations between the United States and Britain. The president highlighted the need to "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures" and asked Congress to authorize economic assistance to Greece and Turkey as well as to send military and civilian personnel there.[9] This came after the Foreign Office had informed the State Department that, as of 31 March 1947, Britain would have to halt all aid to both these countries because of its own economic difficulties. Significantly, the Truman Doctrine owed much to Bevin's efforts from the moment he became foreign secretary.

The failure of the second CFM meeting in Moscow (10 March–25 April 1947) further deepened Anglo-American cooperation. On 5 June, Secretary of State George C. Marshall, who had replaced Byrnes in January, gave his famous speech at Harvard University giving his vision of the rehabilitation of all of Europe through American financial assistance. The initiative for a joint plan, he said, needed to come from Europe, and it was Britain, under Bevin's leadership, that organized the European response to the American challenge that eventually brought about the Marshall Plan. Cooperation between Britain and America, which expanded as tension increased between East and West, could not, however, obscure the fact that relations were unequal. Whenever Washington's interests and priorities contradicted those of London, the Americans took unilateral action. As we will see, this became evident in the way the White House dealt with the Jewish DP problem and the Palestine question. When in the course of 1947 Britain's economic situation worsened, partly because of U.S. conditions for repayment of the loan, London became even more dependent on Washington, which further limited its ability to influence U.S. policies.[10]

Washington's interest in the Middle East increased after World War II because of the region's significant oil reserves. This was, however, very much "British territory." Britain viewed the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the adjacent regions as its "natural dominion," for Egypt, Cyprus, and the Sudan had been under British rule ever since the end of the nineteenth century. When the Ottoman Empire was dismembered following World War I, Britain obtained a mandate over Iraq, Transjordan, and Palestine. During World War II, London accorded top priority to the defense of Egypt and the Suez Canal. By the end of the war, the Middle East was still vital for Britain's strategic interests, while its rich oil reserves would prove essential for Britain's economic rehabilitation. There were British soldiers in almost every Middle Eastern country, from Iran in the east to Libya in the west and Eritrea and Ethiopia in the south. British military installations could be found throughout the area, while the largest of Britain's overseas bases was the one near the Suez Canal, where about two hundred thousand soldiers were stationed.

Consequently, Bevin and the chiefs of staff were eager to bolster Britain's hold over the Middle East. One way of doing so was by creating new military alliances between Britain and the Arab countries, particularly Egypt, Transjordan, and Iraq, and by directing regional economic and social development. For example, on 22 March 1946, Britain recognized the official independence of Transjordan but immediately concluded a "Treaty of Alliance" with it that gave Britain certain military prerogatives. Egypt proved less amenable. The Anglo-Egyptian agreement of 1936 had allowed Britain to station troops in the region of the Suez Canal and in the Sinai and to reoccupy Egypt in case of war, but the Egyptians now wanted Britain to evacuate all its forces from the country.[11]

Whitehall's Middle Eastern policy had its detractors at home, too. In the winter of 1946, Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Dalton began to express doubts about the advantages of keeping military control of the Middle East. In late March, Attlee suggested disengaging from areas where there was a risk of confrontation with the Soviets. For Attlee, the growing nationalist movements in the Arab world signaled that Britain would

not be able to maintain land, sea, and air bases in the region forever. Britain could withdraw from the Middle East and establish a line of defense that would cross Africa from Lagos to Kenya, where a large proportion of the British forces could be stationed. With Commonwealth defense concentrated in Australia, Kenya would constitute Britain's hub in the eastern half of the planet. The Arab countries and the Arabian desert were useful as a buffer zone between Britain and the Soviet Union. But the Cabinet Committee on Defence, led by Bevin, rejected Attlee's plan in early April 1946.[12]

In October 1946, Bevin and Egypt's prime minister Sidqi Pasha reached agreement on a draft treaty according to which the British agreed to depart from Cairo, Alexandria, and the Nile Delta by 31 March 1947 and from the rest of Egypt by 1 September 1949. For their part, the Egyptians agreed that in case of aggression by any of the country's neighbors, the British could be allowed back to their former bases in Suez and the Egyptians would cooperate with them as they had done in the course of World War II. The Egyptian Parliament, however, rejected the draft agreement reached in London, and at the end of January 1947, Sidqi's successor, Nokrashi Pasha, broke off talks with Britain and announced that Egypt would bring the matter before the United Nations.[13]

These developments prompted Attlee to repeat his argument in favor of Britain evacuating the Middle East. The chiefs of staff, however, remained adamant that the empire's overall strategic considerations required continued British rule over the Middle East while Bevin thought that the prime minister exaggerated the price Britain would be paying for insisting on retaining its status in the region. Nor did Bevin believe in the chances of an agreement with the Russians to convert the Middle East into a neutral zone. If a vacuum were created in the area, he maintained, the Russians would be quick to fill it, which meant that any British withdrawal would have serious consequences for its position worldwide. Once more Attlee came around to the position taken up by Bevin and the chiefs of staff. In general, the prime minister left his foreign secretary to steer Britain's foreign policy and usually backed his decisions in the cabinet.

London's decision to maintain dominance over the region, however, was beset by difficulties.[14] Not only had the talks with the Egyptians reached an impasse, but efforts to set up bases in Cyrenaica also proved unsuccessful. Unable to win Arab support for its solution to the Palestine question, Britain announced in February 1947 that it would transfer the issue to the UN. That same month the cabinet made two further momentous decisions. On 20 February, Attlee announced in Parliament his government's intention to transfer authority in India by June 1948, and the following day Britain informed the United States that budgetary constraints forced it to halt all economic and military



support to Greece and Turkey. In the summer the UN Security Council failed to reach a decision on Egypt's protest against the British occupation, leaving Britain for the time being in control of its bases near the Suez Canal.[15]

In Palestine Britain was less successful. Britain's policy in the late 1930s had revolved around safeguarding its interests in the Arab world. Jewish immigration to Palestine was considered a highly sensitive issue. During the first three years after Hitler had come to power in Germany, more than 130,000 Jews had arrived in Palestine, resulting in an 80 percent increase of the Jewish community there. (In 1935 alone 62,000 Jews entered Palestine.) In April 1936, alarmed by the scope and nature of the immigration, the indigenous Arab population called a general strike directed against the Mandatory government, which intensified into a revolt that lasted until 1939. In mid-1937, the Peel Commission, set up by Whitehall to look into the causes of the revolt, recommended partitioning Palestine into two independent states, one Jewish and one Arab, and limiting the scope of Jewish immigration for the next five years to twelve thousand persons annually. Though these recommendations were not adopted, the British did restrict Jewish immigration to Palestine. Thus during 1937 and 1938, just as the situation of the Jews in Central Europe worsened, fewer than twenty-four thousand Jewish immigrants were able to make it into Palestine.[16]

The need to secure the goodwill of the Arab states also dictated London's position at the Evian Conference in July 1938, which had been convened at the invitation of President Roosevelt to find a solution for the increasing number of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria. Lord Winterton, the British representative at the conference, ignored Palestine as a possible haven for part of the Jewish refugees. Before the conference, the Americans and the British had already reached an understanding, which would hold until the end of the war, to the effect that Britain would not ask the United States to change its immigration laws and the United States would refrain from insisting that the British allow Jewish immigration into Palestine. Wishing to forestall the clamor the Jewish community in Palestine was sure to make, as well as pacify American public opinion on the latter issue, the British were relatively generous in the Jewish immigration they allowed into Britain until the outbreak of the war. As a result, from Hitler's rise to power until London declared war on Germany, Britain absorbed approximately fifty thousand Jewish refugees, while during this same period, the United States took in fifty-seven thousand Jewish refugees.[17]

The White Paper of May 1939, which was intended to help enlist the support of the Arabs on the eve of the looming conflict in Europe to the side of Britain, envisioned the establishment, within ten years, of an independent Palestinian state with an Arab majority. It provided for the immigration of seventy-five

# COUNTERING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

## Debating a Policy

Jewish illegal immigration to Palestine had begun already before World War II. Between 1938 and the outbreak of the war more than 17,000 *ma'apilim* (Hebrew term for Jewish immigrants) had arrived in Palestine. The last *ma'apilim* ships to reach Palestine for the entire war period were the *Pacific*, the *Milos*, and the *Atlantic* that had sailed from Rumania in November 1940.[1] Only after the Russian victories in southeastern Europe in the autumn of 1944 and Rumania's switch to the Allied side could illegal immigration from the Balkans resume. Reports from British diplomats in Rumania at the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945 spoke of 150,000 impoverished and homeless Jews gathered there and of more than 100,000 Jews who were registered with the Jewish Agency for immigration to Palestine. The year before, the Colonial Office had given its commitment to the Jewish Agency that it would allow Jews who had somehow made it to Turkey to continue their journey to Palestine. This was canceled in October 1944, and in December, Britain also withdrew a guarantee it had given the Turkish government to ensure shelter for Jewish refugees reaching Turkey.[2]

At the end of the war, the Mandatory government still retained 10,938 immigration certificates of the 75,000 that had been allotted by the White Paper of May 1939. A British offer to give out of 1,500 visas per month to be charged against the remaining White Paper certificates was rejected by the Jewish Agency, which demanded that 100,000 Jews be allowed to enter Palestine.[3] This demand, in turn, was firmly opposed by London. The Cabinet Committee on Palestine recommended continuing the immigration policy of the White Paper for the interim period, that is, between the end of the quota and publication of the long-term policy then under preparation, while trying to bring the Arab governments to agree to continued Jewish immigration at the rate of 1,500 persons per month.[4] The latter was important because British representatives in Arab countries were warning London that a continuing Jewish immigration without Arab consent was likely "to result in a wave of hostility throughout the Arab countries, spreading to the Moslems of India and threatening Great Britain's whole position in the Middle East."[5] Lawrence B. Grafftey-Smith, the British minister in Jedda, for example, warned Bevin that asking King Ibn Saud to acquiesce in further immigration would immediately prompt a meeting of the Arab League (founded in March 1945 and consisting of most Arab heads of state) "with the risk of taking mass temperature and some patriotic out-bidding of one country by another."[6] Reports from India, too, told the Foreign Office of the great interest there in the future of Palestine and that lead articles in both Muslim and Hindu papers opposed Zionism and supported the Arab cause.[7] Abd al-Rahman Azzam, secretary general of the Arab League, suggested during his visit to London in October 1945 that the Arab countries might be willing to admit Jewish refugees if Britain and the United States followed a similar course.[8] Azzam, of course, wanted to prevent Jewish refugees from reaching Palestine.

Meanwhile, the commanders in chief in the Middle East and the Mandatory government in Palestine were deliberating what countermeasures they ought to take against the expected renewal of illegal sailings. They envisaged moving on two levels: one, operative actions dependent on the capabilities of Britain itself; and the other, diplomatic efforts to enlist the cooperation and assistance of other governments.[9] Naturally there were differences of opinion. The commanders in chief in the Middle East were in favor of taking preventive measures in the ports of embarkation because once illegal immigrant boats had set sail it would be much more difficult to stop them and prevent them from landing on the shores of Palestine.[10] For his part, the commander of the British fleet, Admiral Andrew Cunningham, believed that this was impossible and that it was better to let the boats go but then to subtract the number of illegal immigrants from the monthly quota of certificates.[11] Each side, not surprisingly, tried to place the burden on the other. In early October, the commander in chief of the British forces in the Middle East, General Bernard C. Paget, suggested allowing small boats that had managed to evade the navy and had reached the shores of Palestine to unload their passengers under British supervision at one of the Palestinian ports while deducting the number of immigrants from the certificate quota but, at the same time, deporting passengers of large ships that had

been intercepted to Cyprus (where he thought it would be possible to detain up to twelve hundred people).[12] Cyprus at the time was under British rule.

At the Foreign Office it was again George Rendel who came up with the bleak forecast that illegal immigrant sailings would "increase the risk of trouble and bloodshed in Palestine" and would throw the "whole system of regular immigration out of gear." He did not think it was a good idea to rely on the governments of the countries from which the illegal immigrants would be coming. From his experience in Bulgaria, where he had served at the beginning of the war, he argued that few European governments were capable of preventing the embarkation of people from inside their borders. Forcing the boats back to their ports of embarkation was more effective. The way Rendel saw it, if two or three were sent back, this would serve as a deterrent for the movement's organizers. As Jewish DPs were mere pawns in the hands of the Zionists in their struggle against Britain in Palestine, there was little reason to hesitate in taking extreme measures since, in any case, Britain would be severely criticized by the Zionists, who were encouraging immigration to Palestine of European Jews by all possible means.[13]

At first the Colonial Office also favored taking extreme measures against the illegal sailings. Well aware of the negative significance the Arabs attached to Jewish immigration, senior officials were disturbed by the possibility that the illegal immigration could develop into a mass movement, with the Zionists taunting the Mandatory government by publicizing their successes. General Alan Gordon Cunningham, then British high commissioner in Palestine, did not share the fears of the Colonial Office. He thought the measures proposed for combating the immigration were exaggerated because the number of persons involved was small and could easily be deducted from the certificate quota. In effect, until that time—mid-November 1945—all told only 569 *ma'apilim* in six sailings had reached Palestinian shores. Nor did British officials in Palestine think much of the Colonial Office's plan to stop all "suspicious" boats in open sea and force them to sail to Cyprus if they had illegal immigrants on board who would then be deported back to their point of embarkation. The reaction of the Yishuv to the deportation of Jews from Cyprus, they argued, would be no less extreme than if they had been deported from Palestine. Moreover, there was always the fear of more calamities, as in the case of the *Patria* and the *Struma*. It would be better to confiscate the vessels and punish the captains and owners.[14]

The Mandatory government's opposition to taking severe steps against illegal immigrants stemmed largely from fears of reprisals by the Yishuv. The Palestine government had already more than once felt the sting of operations carried



out by the Haganah, the Irgun (Hebrew: Irgun Zvai Leumi, "National Military Organization," headed by Menahem Begin), and LHI, which between October 1945 and July 1946 cooperated under a common command, the Hebrew Resistance Movement. During the "Night of the Trains" at the end of October 1945, for example, railroad tracks throughout the country as well as the central railroad station in Lod had been sabotaged together with three boats of the Coast Guard in the ports of Haifa and Jaffa. British officials in Palestine wanted to prevent the situation from escalating, especially since until that time illegal immigration had been very limited.[15] That they had a point is shown by the attack on two British police stations in Givat Olga and Sidna-'Ali by Palmach units in reprisal for the detention on 22 November 1945 of twenty *ma'apilim*.[16]

When the Colonial Office ultimately adopted the position of the Palestine government, that is, to deduct illegal immigrants from the immigration quota, this policy presupposed the existence of such an immigration quota. Toward the end of 1945, only four hundred certificates remained in the White Paper quota, but no decision was in sight on policy regarding further Jewish immigration to Palestine.[17] Whitehall had asked the Arab countries to agree to continued Jewish immigration into Palestine until the report of the Anglo-American Committee (AAC) was published.[18] Since none of the Arab countries had responded with explicit agreement, the cabinet decided to approach them once again, now pointing out that immigration would be limited to first-degree relatives of Jews already in Palestine.[19] Meanwhile, nine hundred illegal immigrants who had sailed from Italy on the *Enzio Sereni* had been intercepted and were being held in the detention camp in Atlit because of the certificate quota problem. Because the Jewish underground might try to free the illegal immigrants by force (there had been one such successful attempt in October 1945), Arthur Creech Jones, then under secretary at the Colonial Office and not unsympathetic to the Zionist cause, urged Bevin not to wait for a reply from the Arab countries but to implement Whitehall's decision of 1 January 1946 to grant a monthly quota of fifteen hundred certificates. In summarizing the Arab stand, Creech Jones maintained that although no state individually nor the Arab League collectively had officially rejected the immigration proposal, no one was prepared to take responsibility for giving a definite reply. If the League was approached again, he warned, it was likely "that an evasive reply will again be received." Knowing that Bevin had set his hopes on the AAC, Creech Jones warned him that a Zionist attack on the detention camp in Atlit could result in casualties, in which case the committee might cancel its plans to visit Palestine. As a way out of the impasse, Whitehall decided to continue a monthly quota of fifteen

hundred certificates for three months beginning on 15 December 1945, the day the White Paper quota allocation had come to an end. Meanwhile, the AAC was to complete its inquiry and submit its recommendations.[20]

The Arab press in Palestine increasingly mocked the British for their inability to prevent Jewish immigration. Editorials argued that "ships could not approach Palestine through the screen of aircraft and naval vessels without the consent of the British, and that there is a deep-laid plot to give the Jews their head, while all the outward appearances of opposing them are maintained."[21] According to Lord Killearn, British ambassador to Egypt, the Egyptian prime minister had the clear impression that illegal Jewish immigration was proceeding on a considerable scale, as shown by his estimation by the end of January 1946 that a total of six thousand Jewish immigrants had arrived illegally.[21] Actually, fewer than two thousand illegal immigrants had by then arrived in Palestine.[23]

By this time it was clear that Italy and Greece would provide little assistance in the struggle against illegal embarkation. Together with Arab complaints of British impotence, this led the British commanders in chief in the Middle East at the end of February 1946 to recommend reassessing the tactics against illegal immigration. They argued that current measures were not sufficient deterrent: every illegal immigrant knew that from the moment he or she boarded a boat for Palestine, eventual entry into the country was assured, either illegally or as part of the certificate quota; moreover, because of the financial inducements they were offered, ship captains and owners were ready to ignore the risks involved. The commanders suggested a two-pronged policy: first, as much as possible to act in concert with the Italian, Greek, and Turkish governments to cut off embarkation at the source; and second, to deport back to their ports of departure all illegal immigrants, who would be apprehended. The latter action, it was hoped, would encourage countries from which illegal immigrants had been sailing to increase their vigilance against the unlawful movements of people within their jurisdiction. The recommendation called for deportation of the illegal immigrants first to detention camps outside Palestine, for example Cyprus, and from there to the ports of embarkation.[24]

The Colonial Office, well aware of how the Yishuv would react, vigorously opposed this proposal. Moreover, acting decisively against organizers of the illegal immigration to Palestine required a policy decision in principle vis-à-vis the Jewish Agency and directed at disarming the Jews. Colonial Office official Trafford Smith suggested that as long as the report of the AAC had not been published and assessed, it was best to avoid a serious crisis in Palestine that was likely to bring riots and bloodshed. If in the future it were decided to take



vigorous action against the Jewish Agency and the illegal Jewish organizations affiliated with it, that would be the right time to weigh taking steps against the illegal Jewish activity in Europe. In most cases, the Colonial Office official added, the sea voyage was the last stage in a long and arduous process that for most had begun somewhere in Central Europe and involved illegal border crossings from one country into another. The countries from which the illegal immigrants sailed would object to taking them back because these were not their own citizens but people who had illegally crossed their borders. Similarly, the suggestion to return the illegal immigrants to their countries of origin was dismissed as impractical: no one knew where these Jews, who had wandered across more than half of Europe before managing to set sail for Palestine, had originally came from. Neither would the situation in Cyprus allow moving the illegal immigrants to the island as an intermediate step before deporting them to their port of embarkation.[25]

To a large extent, as long as negotiations with the Americans on a comprehensive solution of the Palestine question were in progress, London preferred not to take extreme action against the illegal immigration. But doing so required that the number of illegal immigrants detained by the Palestinian government not surpass the monthly quota of certificates. In May, however, the number of *ma'apilim* already exceeded the quota following the arrival of two ships that had sailed from Italy (the *Eliahu Golumb* and the *Dov Hoz*) and one from Rumania (the *Max Nordau*).[26] The Colonial Office advised detaining the illegal immigrants in camps in Palestine and releasing them against the quotas allotted in the following months. Cunningham remained apprehensive of the possible reaction of the Yishuv and of attempts to free the illegal immigrants by force. Still, the Colonial Office insisted that because of the temporary uncertainty regarding future policy, every effort should be made to persist in the present policy.[27] At the same time, the British and the Americans were trying to overcome their differences about the AAC's recommendations.[28]

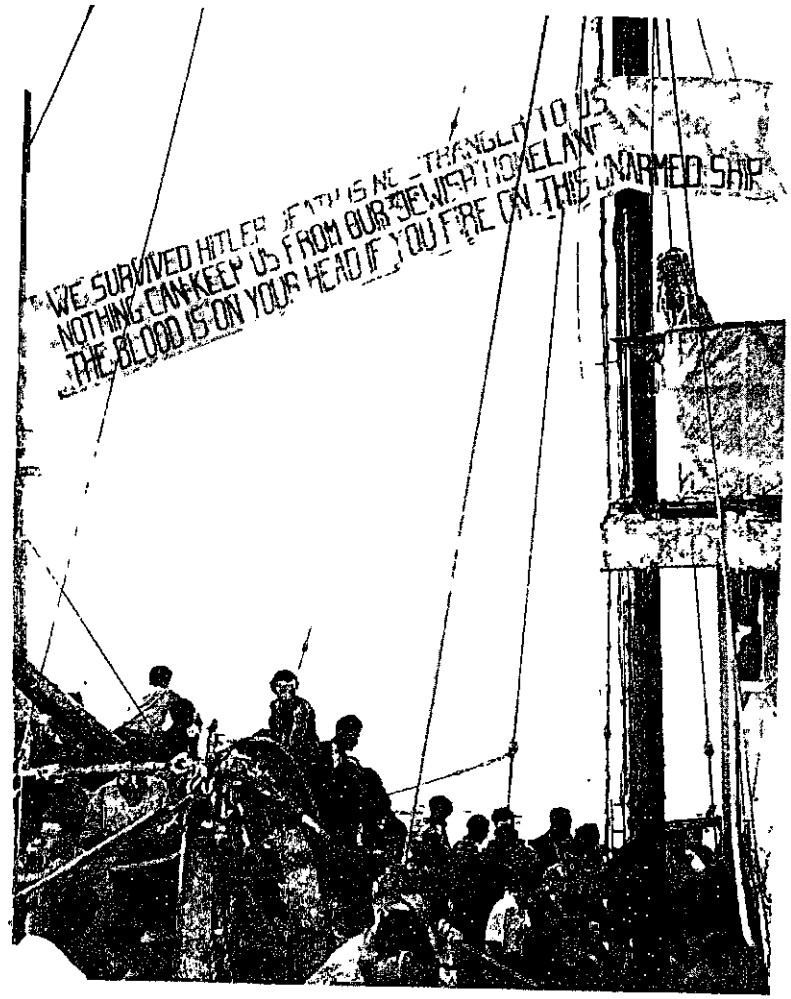
The chiefs of staff, concerned about the extra burden the military would have to carry as a result of the escalation of the illegal immigration and the need to hold the illegal immigrants in detention camps (at a time when the Palestine police force was understaffed by about 50 percent), urged the Colonial Office to reconsider its opposition to deportation of the illegal immigrants to a British occupation zone.[29] The Colonial Office, supported by the high commissioner, opposed the idea because of the reaction it was expected to provoke in the Yishuv. It was argued, furthermore, that the burden that would fall on the army if the illegal immigrants were deported would much extend beyond the task of guarding the detention camps. George Gater, permanent under sec-

retary in the Colonial Office, warned of the probable political consequences in the United States if the illegal immigrants were deported to Tobruk, for example. Britain, he stressed, would be accused of transferring the Jews from one concentration camp, in Europe, to another, in North Africa. Gater mentioned Tobruk as a deportation site since Cyprus, on the advice of the governor of the island, would probably have to be ruled out as an option.[30]

## Deportations to Cyprus

In the course of the summer of 1946 the British were confronted with a complicated situation. The pace of *Ha'apala* arrivals significantly increased while the security situation in Palestine was deteriorating, and on the diplomatic front discussions with the Americans on a solution to the Palestine question reached a critical stage. As it attached great importance to the formulation of a joint American-British policy for a solution of the Palestine question, the cabinet preferred to avoid taking more severe measures against the illegal immigrants so as not to jeopardize the discussions with the Americans. Military elements, however, warned of the dangers Britain could expect in Palestine, possibly in the entire Middle East, if no vigorous action was taken against the illegal immigration. For its part, the Mandatory government was having serious difficulties coping with the waves of illegal immigrants that were now arriving. The Atlit solution was no longer effective because the significant increase in the number of illegal immigrants forced the authorities to fill quotas several months ahead. In early July, the high commissioner called the attention of the Colonial Office to the severe lack of certificates as a result of the detention of three vessels within less than a month (the *Haviva Reik*, the *Josiah Wedgewood*, and the *Biriya*). Moreover, in the course of the sweeping arrests the British had made on "Black Saturday" (29 June 1946), approximately twenty-seven hundred Jews had been detained.[31]

On 11 July 1946, on the recommendation of Colonial Secretary George Hall, who mentioned the difficulties likely to arise on the island and his fears of another incident like the *Patria*, the cabinet decided not to deport illegal immigrants to Cyprus.[32] Almost certainly the arrival of Henry F. Grady at the head of an American delegation for discussions on the AAC's report also influenced the decision. Meanwhile, tension in Palestine further increased following the bombing of the King David Hotel (22 July 1946) for which Irgun claimed responsibility and in which, among others, forty-one Arabs had been killed.[33] Fearing Arab reaction, High Commissioner Cunningham advised stopping the immigration to Palestine altogether, proposing that vessels carrying illegal immigrants that had set out from areas under Western control be returned to their points of embarkation and that ships arriving from Balkan ports, under Russian control, be sent to Tripoli or to Cyprus. As he saw it, confrontation with the Yishuv following deportation of illegal immigrants was inevitable, and the clash might as well occur sooner rather than later. Cunningham pointed out that subsequent to their arrival a large portion of the illegal immigrants joined underground organizations, especially Irgun and LHI, and added that there was




*Ma'apilim at Haifa port following capture by the British, June 1946 (Courtesy Yad Vashem, Jerusalem)*

good reason to believe that when allotting places on illegal immigrant vessels preference went to past "guerrilla fighters."[34]

At its meeting on 25 July, Sir Norman Brook, head of the British delegation negotiating with the Americans on the report of the AAC, was able to tell the cabinet that the American delegation had agreed to adopt the provincial autonomy plan for Palestine (the so-called Morrison-Grady Plan), which the British favored. The ministers did not wish to jeopardize this important achievement by taking anti-immigration measures that might irritate Washington and arouse American public opinion. Moreover, the problem of illegal immigration was expected to come to an end with the implementation of the Morrison-Grady Plan, which provided for the entry of one hundred thousand Jewish displaced persons. Thus cabinet members rejected the high commissioner's advice to halt immigration to Palestine and did not even discuss the idea of deporting the illegal immigrants.[35]

Within days, however, the cabinet was forced to review its position when the *Haganah*, which had sailed from Yugoslavia with almost twenty-seven hundred illegal immigrants on board, was detained. There were also reports that five hundred illegal immigrants were scheduled to arrive on another ship soon afterward. The cabinet was inclined to accept the advice of Attlee, then at the Peace Conference in Paris, to let the women and children go free and detain the men for an unlimited period of time, provided he was first told of the warning the chiefs of staff were sounding of the dangers Britain could expect if it became involved in incidents with Arabs and Jews simultaneously. The military stressed that confrontation with both sides would require reinforcing troops in Palestine, which ran counter to the plan to demobilize military personnel.[36] But Attlee persisted in his position even after being informed of Cunningham's warning that it would be impossible to hold additional illegal immigrants in Palestine and that, if more ships arrived, the situation would become intolerable.[37] The prime minister preferred to avoid taking any drastic action before Truman had made up his mind about the Morrison-Grady Plan.

Attlee was absent at the next cabinet meeting, on 30 July, when heavy pressure by both the military and civilian authorities in Palestine tipped the scales in favor of a decision to deport illegal immigrants to Cyprus before they landed in Palestine. Ministers heard a report by Sir John Shaw, first secretary of the Palestine government, on expected Arab reactions if illegal immigration continued. The chiefs of staff vigorously supported the deportation of all illegal immigrants to Cyprus, and the colonial secretary indicated that it would be possible to hold them there. Only because the prime minister was not present did the cabinet postpone a final decision.[38] At a cabinet meeting two days later, Attlee



explained that deportation of illegal immigrants might cause further incidents that could only embarrass the British government. Still, he did not categorically rule out deportation, probably because on 30 July the American cabinet had put off its decision about the Morrison-Grady Plan.[39] The colonial secretary told the cabinet of the arrival of yet another vessel (the *Hehayal Ha'ivri*, "The Hebrew Soldier") with five hundred illegal immigrants on board and that another two thousand illegal immigrants were estimated to be en route to Palestine. He also mentioned that it would be possible to detain some eight to nine thousand Jews on Cyprus. Though, again, it did not come to a definite decision, the cabinet this time instructed the commander in chief in the Middle East to prepare plans for the deportation of illegal immigrants to Cyprus and the colonial secretary to complete preparations for their reception there.[40]

The formal decision to deport illegal immigrants to Cyprus was taken on 7 August, under pressure from military elements and government authorities in Palestine. The ministers were told that the only way to prevent an Arab uprising and a war with both Arabs and Jews was to deport all illegal immigrants. Furthermore, British military authorities in Palestine were ready to implement the deportation and prepared for the expected adverse reaction of the Yishuv. Foreign Office officials put forth another argument. To obtain Arab approval of the Morrison-Grady Plan, it was necessary to convince them that Britain was willing and able to carry out its obligations. "How can they have any faith in us," they asked rhetorically, "if we show that we are unable to control illegal immigration?"[41] The cabinet, still hoping that Truman would decide to implement the Morrison-Grady Plan, delayed announcing and implementing the deportation policy until the president had made a final decision. By that time, there were 2,252 illegal immigrant detainees in the camp at Atlit, another 2,232 were being held on the deck of a boat in the port of Haifa, and yet another 2,500 were already on their way to Palestine.[42]

Whitehall's hopes quickly vanished. On 12 August, Truman explained that "in view of opposition in this country" to the Morrison-Grady Plan, he was unable to support it.[43] The following day, London published its new policy of deporting illegal immigrants to Cyprus. The announcement sharply criticized the illegal immigration, stating that it was not a spontaneous manifestation on the part of Jews who saw Palestine as their only hope but a highly organized movement financed largely by Zionist sources and led by "unscrupulous people" who were disobeying the laws of many countries and exploiting the distress of Jewish refugees to further their own political aims in Palestine. Because some illegal immigrants were joining terrorist organizations in Palestine, the statement also blamed them for exacerbating the tension between Jews and Arabs

in the country. The announcement clearly specified that the illegal immigrants would be held in detention camps in Cyprus while their future was being decided.[44] The very next day, 754 illegal immigrants who had arrived from France on the *Yagur* and another 536 who had arrived from Greece on the *Henrietta Szold* were deported to Cyprus.[45]

On the same day that Whitehall decided on deportation, Abd al-Rahman Azzam told the British ambassador in Cairo, Ronald I. Campbell, of the concern of the Arab League at the growing traffic of Jewish illegal immigrants. The majority of the illegal immigrants on these ships, he contended, "are not aged and helpless refugees but picked young men obviously chosen to provide recruits for the Jewish armed forces." There was no doubt in his mind that the British government could stop this traffic or at least reduce it to insignificant proportions. Although it might be difficult to prevent illegal immigrants from departing Europe for Palestine, Azzam maintained, "it is neither necessary nor just to allow ships intercepted en route to Palestine to complete their journey into Palestinian territorial waters and land their passengers." It was the British government's responsibility "to take all steps in their power to prevent the illegal immigrants from landing in Palestine and to arrange that such immigrants be given asylum elsewhere."[46] Britain's pronouncement on deportations to Cyprus was received with satisfaction, albeit cautiously, in the Arab countries. Palestinian Arabs, however, were more suspicious: if the British government was sincere in its intentions, it should have decided to deport the Jews somewhere much farther than Cyprus, particularly back to the countries from which they had embarked. Cyprus, as Palestinian Arabs correctly saw it, was but another springboard for Jewish immigration to Palestine.[47]

In many respects Britain's decision on deportation to Cyprus marked a watershed. Had it not been for the government's concern, before Truman's decision on the Morrison-Grady Plan, to keep Anglo-American contacts focused on a common solution to the Palestine question, the decision to deport the Jews to Cyprus would have been taken even sooner. There had also been the dramatic increase during the summer of 1946 of *Ha'apala* activities and Whitehall's apprehension of the Arab reaction these would provoke. "Black Saturday" may also have been a factor for it revealed the weakness of the Jewish community and for the British broke down a psychological barrier that stopped them from adopting severe measures against the Yishuv and its leadership. By the end of summer 1946, the two main factors that help explain British restraint vis-à-vis illegal Jewish immigration—apprehension of the reaction of Truman and of American public opinion and fear of possible reprisal on the part of the Yishuv—had lost their deterrent effect. The bombing of the King David Hotel in



July had also made it easier for the military to convince the cabinet that harsher measures against the illegal immigration were necessary if Britain did not want the situation to become more dangerous.

Deportation of the illegal immigrants to Cyprus did nothing, however, to limit the scope of the illegal immigration, while the shortage of internment facilities quickly became a troublesome burden. In its discussions on deportation to Cyprus, the cabinet never actually dwelled on the question of how to cope with detaining tens of thousands of illegal immigrants outside Palestine.[48] Perhaps the explanation of why this increasingly vexatious problem was initially ignored can partly be found in Cunningham's statement, several months later, that when the decision was taken, no one expected that deportation would continue for more than six months.[49]

Soon it became clear that the original plan, which foresaw the detention of ten thousand persons, was inadequate. Asked to look into the possibility of enlarging the capacity of the detention camps to twenty thousand, Sir Charles Wooly, the governor of Cyprus, warned of the negative reaction that could be expected from the local population and added that he did not want to see the island transformed into a detention camp for unlimited numbers of illegal immigrants. He set the maximum number of detainees who could be kept on the island at fifteen thousand.[50] Cyrenaica and Tripoli were suggested as alternative locations. The main disadvantage, of course, was that the distance between Haifa and Benghazi (in Cyrenaica) was five times that between Haifa and Cyprus and the distance to Tripoli was seven times greater. Royal Navy vessels were needed to accompany the deportations to Benghazi, so fewer ships would be patrolling the shores of Palestine, enabling many more illegal immigrants to land in Palestine, which in turn would increase Arab anxieties.[51] After a detailed survey, the chiefs of staff concluded that for both administrative and safety purposes it would be preferable to increase the capacity of the camps in Cyprus to twenty thousand rather than diverting illegal immigrants to other destinations.[52]

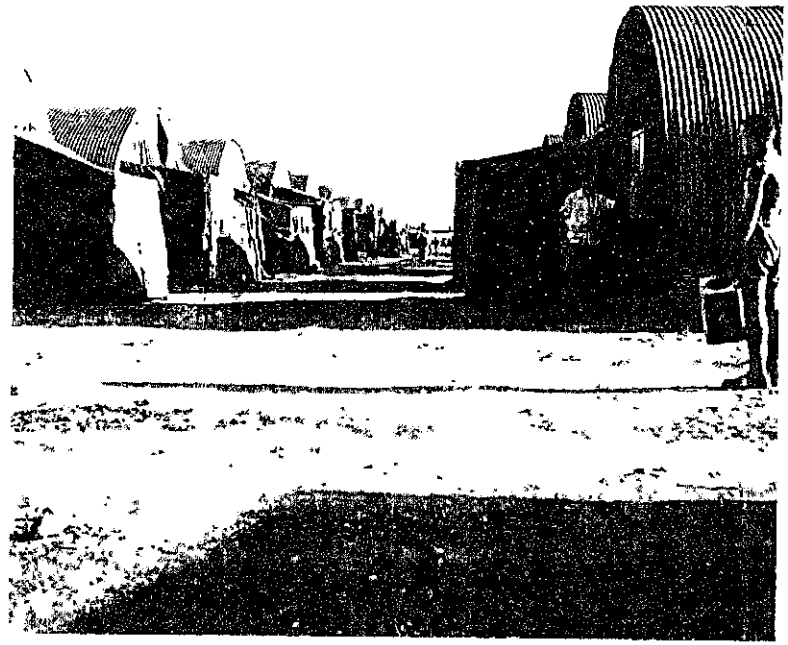
Detaining Jewish immigrants in Libya was firmly opposed by the Foreign Office. Recalling the anti-Jewish eruption that had occurred in November 1945 in Tripoli, Charles W. Baxter, head of the Eastern Department, Foreign Office, argued that sending illegal immigrants there would sabotage the attempts of the British military authorities in Libya (previously an Italian colony and at the time under British administration) to persuade the Arabs to agree to continued British control. Baxter believed that since British rule in Libya was temporary and the future of the country was to be decided in international negotiations, a concentration of Jewish illegal immigrants there might provoke criticism of

the British on the part of various governments, especially the USSR, which was increasingly interested in weakening the British position in the region and in gaining favor in the Arab countries.[53] Cunningham also rejected the idea, maintaining that the reaction of the Jews to deportation of the illegal immigrants to Arab Tripoli would be more extreme than if they were deported to a British colony. He advocated deportation to a colony in Kenya, even though he was aware of the expected opposition to this site because of its distance from Palestine (it took a month to sail to Kenya and back as compared with one day and a half for Cyprus).[54]

One month after deportations to Cyprus had begun, no alternative internment location had been agreed on, and the governor of Cyprus was forced to agree to increase the capacity of the camps on the island to twenty thousand. Wooly made his agreement conditional on a commitment that when immigration to Palestine was renewed, illegal immigrants detained in Cyprus would receive top priority.[55] At the beginning of October 1946, Philip Mitchell, governor of Kenya, was asked by the Colonial Office to arrange for illegal immigrants to be held in Kenya as soon as the camps in Cyprus were full. Mitchell strongly opposed the idea, arguing that Kenya's economic situation precluded such activity while also maintaining a large military base in the country. In view of Britain's strategic plans in Africa, he continued, the introduction of a Jewish problem into East Africa would be an act lacking in political wisdom. Furthermore, it might well cause a confrontation between Britain and the powerful and influential Jewish community in South Africa. Mitchell, however, also injected a racial element into the argument by saying that in light of the difficult social and agrarian problems existing between the races, it would be unjustified and immoral to bring to the area many thousands of "the dregs of the European population." The solution, the governor of Kenya suggested, was to remove the illegal immigrants to islands somewhere in the Pacific, like the Fijis.[56]

While deportation of illegal immigrants to Cyprus could only exacerbate relations with the Yishuv, contacts with representatives of Arab countries made the British even more keenly aware of the extent of Arab opposition to Jewish immigration into Palestine. Between 9 September and 2 October 1946, British officials met with Arab delegates in London to discuss the Palestine problem. Both the Zionists and the Palestinian Arabs were conspicuously absent; they refused to discuss the provincial autonomy plan and boycotted the conference. The Arab delegation not only rejected the Morrison-Grady Plan but also demanded the termination of the Mandate, the establishment of a unitary state in Palestine with an assured Arab majority, and the immediate end of Jewish immigration. The Egyptian representative, Abdel Razzak Ahmad Sanhuri Pasha,





Ma'apilim *detention camp in Cyprus*
*(Courtesy Israel Ministry of Defense, Museums Unit)*

for example, clearly stated the Arab countries' opposition to further Jewish immigration into Palestine, "which was already saturated with Jews." Instead, he suggested transferring to Palestine some two hundred thousand Muslim DPs from the Balkans, the Crimea, and other parts of Russia. The Arabs, the Egyptian stressed, could not be asked to sacrifice their country because the Jews were being persecuted. A similar stand was taken by Dr. Fadhel Jamali of Iraq. The objective of the Jews in Palestine was political, and every Jew who entered the country was a potential terrorist or usurper. Playing down the tragedy of the Jews during World War II, Jamali demanded that the refugee problem be divorced from the question of Palestine. He accused Zionist propaganda of magnifying the extent of Jewish suffering. The Transjordan representative, Samir

Pasha Rifai, emphasized the damage the Jewish immigration issue was causing to relations between the Arab countries and Britain, and Azzam suggested moving the Jewish DPs to eastern Siberia, where the Soviet Union had created an autonomous Jewish republic, because the Jews were not anti-Russian and the Soviet government was opposed to the Zionist policy in Palestine.[57]

The London conference illustrated once again the importance the Arabs ascribed to the problem of Jewish immigration into Palestine. All Zionist efforts to influence the British to alter or at least moderate their immigration policy came to nothing. Zionist leaders made it clear that a change in the immigration policy would help reduce tension in Palestine and advance negotiations on the participation of a Zionist delegation at another conference on Palestine, which the British wanted to convene. Creech Jones, now colonial secretary, explained to the Zionists that immigration to Palestine would be one of the main topics at the proposed conference and that it was not possible to introduce a change at this stage because of the probable firm reaction by the Arabs.[58] The only compromise that the Colonial Office was willing to make was to allocate half of the monthly quota of immigration certificates to illegal immigrants detained in Cyprus.[59] Doing so did not constitute a departure from the existing immigration policy, but it could ease the shortage of internment space. This gesture by the Colonial Office was received with indifference by most of the Jewish public in Palestine because the deportations to Cyprus continued.[60] London remained adamant, even though it was aware that the cessation of the deportations and transfer of the detained illegal immigrants from Cyprus to detention camps in Palestine would improve relations with the Yishuv and was likely to help Britain's struggle against the terrorist operations of the Irgun and the LHI (between 1 October and 18 November 1946, ninety-nine British soldiers and policemen had been killed).[61]

The Arabs continued to apply pressure on London not to make any concessions on Jewish immigration. The Council of the Arab League decided on 28 November 1946 that continuation of Jewish immigration to Palestine constituted a violation of the commitment the British government had made in 1939 and therefore endangered the peace in the Middle East. "In fact," the Arab League statement read, "the Arabs see in all kinds of Jewish immigration into Palestine an illegal action. They do not approve of what the British Government calls legal immigration quotas. Consequently, they consider all Jews entering Palestine as illegal immigrants who should be sent back to where they came from."[62] The high commissioner reported to the Colonial Office that even forcing the illegal vessels to Cyprus did not satisfy the Palestinian Arabs, who accused the Mandatory government of aiding the illegal embarkations and threatened to put an end to the prevailing calm in the region.[63]



Britain's last major effort to reach a compromise between the conflicting aims of the Jews and the Arabs took place at a second conference held in London (27 January–13 February 1947). The British conducted parallel negotiations with delegations from Arab countries and the Zionists. The gap between the parties proved unbridgeable, the controversy over Jewish immigration forming one of the main obstacles. In a final endeavor to break the impasse, the British suggested what became known as the Bevin Plan. It called for a five-year trusteeship at the end of which an independent state would be established with an assured Arab majority. The Bevin Plan was an attempt more or less to combine the idea of provincial autonomy, preferred by the British, with the Arab demand for an unitary state. To placate the Jews and, more important, Truman, the plan spoke of the immigration of ninety-six thousand Jews to Palestine over a two-year period. Until the end of the trusteeship, the high commissioner, together with an advisory council, would continue to determine the extent of immigration in keeping with the economic absorption capacity of the country.[64]

Both the Arabs and the Zionists rejected the plan. The Arabs rejected it because they feared it would lead to partition and the establishment of a Jewish state in a part of Palestine. They were also firmly set against bringing ninety-six thousand Jewish immigrants to Palestine. The Zionists rejected the plan because it would perpetuate the Jews as a minority in an Arab country, and they wanted a sovereign Jewish state of their own. As a way out of the impasse, the cabinet meeting on 14 February accepted the recommendations of the foreign and colonial secretaries to transfer the Palestine question to the United Nations.[65] By taking this far-reaching decision, they did not, however, mean to imply that Britain was relinquishing its mandate. Apparently, Bevin regarded it as a merely tactical move, designed to instill fear in the opposing sides, and he told the ministers that he did not think the Jews and the Arabs wanted the matter transferred to the United Nations, adding that the Palestine question could always again be removed from the agenda of the General Assembly session due to convene in September. He also wanted to see whether he could resolve the problem by appealing directly to the leaders of the Arab countries. But that step entailed a considerable risk, and one may assume that Bevin would not have taken this course if he was still convinced, as were the chiefs of staff, that it was essential for Britain to continue maintaining a presence in Palestine. At this time, Attlee already believed that a British withdrawal was inevitable.

Protocols from the cabinet meetings leave little doubt that the *Ha'apala* ac-

tivities and the actions of the Irgun and the LHI, which so bothered the British, played no part in this decision. It seems that the cabinet at this stage lacked the willpower to deal with the impasse in Palestine. It should, of course, also be seen in the context of two other far-reaching decisions that were to have wide ramifications for Britain's status in the international arena. The first was the momentous decision to transfer authority in India by June 1948, and the second ended Britain's economic and military support to Greece and Turkey.

Bevin and Creech Jones had no illusions that the cabinet decision would lead to an intensification of Zionist activity. The period between mid-February and September 1947, when the Palestine question was scheduled to come up in the United Nations, would prove critical. Both the foreign and colonial secretaries realized that improved weather conditions would bring an increase in illegal immigration, and continued deportation to Cyprus would cause an intensification of incidents and terrorist activity on the part of the Zionists. Despite these fears, the cabinet was persuaded by Bevin and Attlee to reject the recommendations and appeals of the Americans, in particular those of the new secretary of state, George C. Marshall, to increase the monthly immigration quota.[66] Whitehall held to its position although the ministers recognized that the illegal immigration was the only subject on which the entire Jewish community in Palestine was united and that the deportation of the illegal immigrants made it more difficult for the Jewish Agency to act against Irgun and LHI terror. "Every time an illegal immigrant ship enters Haifa," the high commissioner told London, the "whole of [the] Yishuv is immediately plunged into an intense state of hysterical emotional tension."[67]

British representatives in Arab countries tried to counter Zionist pressure. They warned London of the dangers inherent in increasing the quota to four thousand a month. Any concession on immigration, British diplomats pointed out, would be interpreted that "we were being blackmailed by threats of increased terrorism" and would encourage terrorist attacks against British lives and property in several Arab countries.[68] The high commissioner in Palestine had his doubts about these assessments. He thought that there would be no firm reaction by the Palestinian Arabs to a modest increase and wondered "why it should be stronger among Arabs outside Palestine." Disturbed by the intensifying Jewish terrorist attacks, Cunningham maintained that "without an increase [of the quota], there is little prospect of stopping terrorism by any military or other action short of war with the Jews."[69] The Cabinet Defence Committee preferred not to provoke the Arabs. The minister of defense, Albert V. Alexander, warned that any increase in immigration would result in active resistance by the Arabs and that the present British force in Palestine, if not heavily reinforced, would be unable to deal with active opposition by both Jews and Arabs.[70]



Bevin and Creech Jones's assessment of the expected increase in illegal sailings was well founded. In February 1947, three vessels with close to twenty-eight hundred illegal immigrants were caught along the coast. The belief was that thousands of illegal immigrants would soon set sail for Palestine. As the attempts to find an alternative to Cyprus were unsuccessful, the cabinet decided to increase the capacity of the camps there to thirty thousand.[71] The intelligence estimated in mid-April that already thirty-five thousand Jews were strategically situated for ready embarkation throughout Europe and nineteen ships were immediately available with an estimated carrying capacity of over twenty thousand. In addition, a further fourteen ships were undergoing repairs or refitting, and these had an estimated eventual carrying capacity of over seventeen thousand.[72] The colonial secretary, already having difficulty finding other sites for the internment of an expected twenty thousand additional persons, suggested allocating the entire monthly quota to illegal immigrants on Cyprus and renovating the camp in Rafiah to house about four thousand people. The Defence Committee rejected these proposals, arguing that the first would mean that only illegal immigrants could enter Palestine, and the War Office expressed doubts about the feasibility of the second proposal. But even if the two proposals had been adopted, there still was a gap of eight thousand places between the estimated scope of the illegal immigration and the number of places of detention thus made available. As it appeared obvious that there was no way that the number of expected illegal immigrants could be held to a satisfactory level on territory that was under British control, the suggestion was made to see whether it might be possible to borrow an island from the Italians for the purpose.[73] Though perhaps more realistic than transferring illegal immigrants to the Fiji Islands, the proposal seems to reflect a growing feeling among the British that they were caught between a rock and a hard place: strict implementation of their deportation policy was sure to provoke increasing hostility from the Yishuv, while enlarging the legal immigration quota for Jews was guaranteed to run into strong opposition from the Arabs.

With no alternative sites for detention, the Cabinet Committee for Illegal Immigration turned once again to the governor of Cyprus, now Lord Winster, and asked him to increase the capacity of the camps on the island.[74] Lord Winster made it clear that there was no possibility whatsoever of expanding the two existing camps and that setting up a third camp would entail the relocation of Cypriot farmers and no doubt provoke bitterness and enmity on the part of the local population. He expressed his concern over the adverse

economic and political consequences that could be expected, not to mention the harm the decision would cause to British interests on the island. Holding more immigrants under arrest, he added, would necessitate reinforcement of the military units on the island, with all that entailed.[75] Lord Winster eventually agreed to add four thousand places in the existing camps, bringing their total capacity to thirty-four thousand. Crowding beyond this number, he warned the Colonial Office, would evoke angry and justified complaints about camp living conditions.[76] This situation partly explains why the high commissioner and the colonial secretary accepted a Jewish Agency proposal to have two thousand children aged six to seventeen moved from Cyprus to Palestine outside the immigration quota.[77]

## Deportations Back to Ports of Embarkation?

The failure of deportation to Cyprus to deter the organizers or the illegal immigrants themselves, the estimates of large numbers of illegal immigrants expected, difficulties in finding an alternative to Cyprus, and the desire to deter governments from allowing illegal immigration vessels to sail from their ports all led various officials in Britain to conclude that there was no choice but to deport the illegal immigrants back to their ports of embarkation. This idea had been mooted a number of times since the end of the war, but it had so far been rejected. At the beginning of March 1947, word reached the authorities in Palestine that an illegal ship organized by Peter Bergson's people in the United States (the *Ben Hecht*) had set sail from France. The Bergson group supported the Zionist Revisionist movement that favored militant anti-British propaganda. The British therefore assumed that among these immigrants there might be militant revisionists who would join and reinforce the Irgun. Fearing the havoc these illegal immigrants might create on Cyprus, the high commissioner suggested deporting them to their port of embarkation in France, but this proposal the Colonial Office had to reject, albeit reluctantly, because Britain had no legal authority to force countries from which the vessels had sailed to take back people who were not their citizens but only had passed through there.[78]

Nevertheless, the idea of deportations to ports of embarkation was never dropped. On instruction of the Foreign Office, on 1 April 1947, Sir Noel Charles, British ambassador to Italy, informed Carlo Sforza, the Italian foreign minister, that the British government would in the future demand that Italy take back illegal immigrants who had set sail from Italian ports.[79] A similar announcement was made to the French Foreign Ministry in mid-May. The French countered, as anticipated, that France was only a country of transit and that people



should be returned to the country from which they had set out.[80] The British Foreign Office preferred to deport illegal immigrants back to Italy since that was the site of the most intensive illegal activity and Italy held the largest number of Jewish refugees of any country along the Mediterranean. Moreover, Rome's ability to stand up to British pressure was thought to be more limited than that of Paris.[81] Charles, however, argued that the lack of Italian reaction to British warnings did not signify a willingness to cooperate but stemmed from their hope that Britain would not carry out its threat. The ambassador warned that the relations between the two countries were liable to suffer if the Italians were forced to take in illegal immigrants deported from or intercepted on their way to Palestine.[82]

In the spring of 1947, the British began monitoring the movements of a ship called the *President Warfield*, which in mid-June 1947 had entered French territorial waters from an Italian anchorage. Bevin regarded this ship as a test case for Britain's determination to put a halt to illegal sailings.[83] On 11 July 1947, the *President Warfield*, soon renamed the *Exodus 1947*, set sail from Sète in France with 4,530 illegal immigrants aboard. This was a bitter setback for the British, who had invested great effort in attempting to prevent its departure. On the following day, Bevin vigorously complained to Georges Bidault, the French foreign minister, for allowing the *Exodus* to leave France, and, apparently without first consulting with London, Bevin informed Bidault of British intentions "to make an example of this ship by obliging it to return to a French port with all its passengers."[84] Toward the end of the incident, Bevin wrote to MP Maurice Edelman explaining the reasons for the decision to return the vessel to its port of embarkation: "In view of the exceptional size of the *President Warfield*'s contingent and of the illicit manner in which they left France, His Majesty's government had no alternative but to arrange for the return of the illegal immigrants to their country of embarkation, France. It had become evident that the policy of sending illegal immigrants to camps in Cyprus, where they qualify for inclusion in the legal immigration quotas to Palestine, had only served to encourage the stream of illegal immigrants which has for months been flowing from Eastern Europe via countries with a Mediterranean seaboard."[85]

Some two weeks after the *Exodus* passengers had been forced back to Germany and disembarked there, on 20 September 1947, the cabinet decided to evacuate Palestine. The proximity of these events raises the question of what role, if any, the illegal sailings in general and the *Exodus* in particular may have played in that far-reaching decision. During the weeks preceding the cabinet decision on withdrawal, there seemed to be no sense of powerlessness or doubt among British officials regarding Britain's ability to cope with the illegal sail-

ings, however much they may have been disturbed by them. Neither was there any intention of giving up the policy of deporting illegal immigrants back to their ports of embarkation.

What primarily caused the cabinet to take this historic decision was the majority recommendation of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP, 31 August 1947) to partition Palestine between the Jews and the Arabs. The setting up of a UN committee to study the Palestine problem had been decided on in mid-May at a special session of the General Assembly. UNSCOP, consisting of delegates of eleven neutral states, in large measure had been Whitehall's last remaining hope to help extricate Britain from the stalemate in which it found itself after it had failed to find a solution for the Palestine question acceptable both to the Arab countries and the Americans and the Zionists. The UNSCOP recommendation to establish a Jewish state now put an end to those hopes.[86]

Leading up to the decision were the events of the winter of 1946–47, when it had become clear that Britain's American orientation for a solution to the Palestine question had failed. The breakdown in the negotiations with the Arab countries and the Zionists in January–February 1947, together with the severe economic crisis that hit Britain during the winter, further persuaded several cabinet members, with the prime minister at their head, that the time had come to terminate the Mandate. This decision fell in with their overall belief that Britain ought to adjust its geopolitical policies to the country's postwar economic reality. Foreign Secretary Bevin, however, was less easily convinced, and further setbacks were needed before he would arrive at the same conclusion. Among these the UNSCOP report was perhaps the most decisive. Furthermore, after India gained independence on 15 August 1947, the cabinet showed growing unwillingness to continue to bear the risks involved in ruling strife-torn Palestine, especially since Britain still had its military bases in Egypt following the latter's failure at the end of August to bring the Security Council to compel Britain to evacuate Egypt. Finally, when the financial crisis in the summer of 1947 (following the free exchange between the pound sterling and the U.S. dollar) grew into a political one, it further impaired the government's strength and capability to enforce unpopular policies. Members of Parliament, public opinion, and the press were increasingly disturbed by the economic and political price Britain was paying for staying in Palestine, not to mention the lost lives of young soldiers.[87]

The failure of the British in their first attempt to deport illegal immigrants to their port of embarkation and the serious damage it had caused London's image and prestige in world opinion necessitated a reevaluation of the methods being used in that struggle. At the end of September, the Committee for Illegal Immigration recommended that the policy of deportation to the country of embarkation be implemented only in the case of illegal immigrants sailing from Italy or from the two countries that now constituted the main danger, Rumania and Bulgaria. In view of the French position in the *Exodus* episode, returning illegal immigrants to that country was no longer a possibility. Based on the experience of the *Exodus* affair, the committee recommended that illegal immigrants not be deported from the coast of Palestine before ensuring the cooperation of the government of the country to which the deportees were to be returned and its agreement to the use of force by the British soldiers on the boats and the local authorities on shore. If the attempt to deport the illegal immigrants to the country of embarkation failed, it was suggested that they be removed to Cyprus and not to Germany. Germany was eliminated as a possible destination for deporting illegal immigrants, mainly because of the sharp criticism leveled against Britain from all parts of the world for callously having returned German Jewish concentration camp survivors to Germany.[88]

The Colonial Office entertained a certain degree of optimism concerning the willingness of the Rumanian and Bulgarian governments to cooperate in the returning of the illegal immigrants.[89] British representatives in Rumania and Bulgaria, however, thought differently. According to the former, no goodwill should be expected on the part of the Rumanian government in anything connected with illegal immigration, and "it would be most unwise and even dangerous to suggest the return to Rumania and disembarkation here by force of any illegal immigrants who may have embarked at Rumanian ports." Furthermore, the two ports of Constanta and Sulina, from which illegal vessels could embark, were main transit points for Soviet commerce. The Soviet high command would object to the entry of British warships into these ports and removal by force of the illegal immigrants by British and Rumanian soldiers. The British consulate in Rumania warned of severe incidents if this were attempted. The British legation in Bulgaria also made it clear that there was no chance that the Bulgarian government would agree to accept back illegal immigrants who had sailed from its ports.[90] Under the circumstances, on 2 October 1947, about four thousand Rumanian Jews who had sailed from Bulgaria aboard the *Geula* and *Medinat Hayehudim* were deported to Cyprus.[91]

## Ending the Mandate

After the cabinet had decided to evacuate Palestine, there were increasing voices among government circles in favor of putting an end to fighting illegal

immigration because the struggle proved futile. The events surrounding the *Exodus* affair had largely ended the government's hopes of ceasing or at least considerably reducing the illegal sailings from countries in the West. In addition, the failure to find alternatives to Cyprus, together with the renewal of sailings from Communist bloc countries, made it clear that the difficulties that beset the campaign against illegal immigrants could only increase in the future. The problem of where to house the illegal immigrants became acute when word reached London that two large vessels, the *Pan York* and the *Pan Crescent*, each with a capacity of eight thousand passengers, were anchored in Rumania.

About seventeen thousand illegal immigrants were being held in October in Cyprus while the maximum capacity of the detention camps in the island was put at thirty-four thousand. The Colonial Office insisted that it was not possible to prepare more detention places, even temporary ones, within a short time, either in Cyprus or elsewhere. Thus it proposed announcing to the United Nations or to the Arab countries that after the detention camps in Cyprus were full, Britain would no longer be able to halt the illegal immigration.[92] The Colonial Office, however, was not the only one that was skeptical about continuing the struggle against the illegal sailings. A memorandum prepared for Bevin in the Foreign Office in mid-October, as background for his discussion with the prime minister on the subject of the illegal immigration, stated that "the only alternative to the policy of interning illegal immigrants is to repel them by naval action such as the laying of mine fields or by shooting at and possibly sinking illegal immigrant ships. Apart from the expense and delay involved in laying mine fields, mining, in the same way as shooting by naval units, would almost inevitably, in view of the determined temper of the Jews, involve serious loss of life." The author of the memorandum was also doubtful of the effectiveness of such an act given the late stage of the Mandate. In his opinion, "the only practicable 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."[93]

Bevin, however, strongly objected to the Colonial Office proposal that the entire immigration quota be allocated to illegal immigrants in Cyprus and that Britain give up its struggle against the illegal immigration as soon as possible. As long as Britain was responsible for the administration of Palestine, Bevin insisted, this struggle ought to continue, and he expected the Colonial Office to make arrangements to absorb additional detainees in Cyprus, even if this meant crowding in the camps, or else to suggest alternative locations.[94] The Cabinet Defence Committee accepted Bevin's position at its meeting on 1 November. Still, the foreign secretary recognized that all those detained in Cyprus ought to



be transferred to Palestine before Britain completed the evacuation of its forces. He, therefore, expressed a willingness to allot the entire immigration quota to the illegal immigrants detained on Cyprus during the final stages of the withdrawal and even to incur the consequences of increasing the quota.[95] For their part, the commanders in chief in the Middle East wanted to shed their responsibility for stopping illegal immigration as soon as possible in order to meet the evacuation schedule. They declared that they could not prevent illegal immigration after the Cyprus camps had been filled to their capacity of thirty-four thousand or after 1 February 1948. For the interim period, between 1 February and 1 August 1948 (the intended date of evacuation), they stated that they would direct the immigrant ships to Tel Aviv unless the conditions of the vessels or the weather made this impossible, also so as not to interfere with the planned evacuation through the port of Haifa.[96]

Whitehall, however, was divided as to the policy that should be pursued after 1 February 1948. The Colonial Office believed that ongoing preventive measures, including deportation of the illegal immigrants to Cyprus, would signal Britain's intention to ignore the recommendation of the United Nations to increase the scope of Jewish immigration; the result would be a significant increase in illegal immigration and an inundation of the camps in Cyprus within a very short time. Under such circumstances, the Colonial Office argued, it would be very difficult to move the detained illegal immigrants in Cyprus to Palestine before the evacuation of British. Furthermore, the detention of illegal immigrants in the Cyprus camps was costing the Mandatory government about £250,000 per month, an expense that threatened to empty its coffers. But if the Jewish Agency were permitted to transfer up to sixty-five hundred persons a month—as the UN had recommended—illegal immigration would probably come to an end, making the evacuation of the Cyprus camps possible. The high commissioner maintained that increasing the immigration quota to Palestine would be seen as compensation for Britain's failure to adopt the UN recommendation that, no later than 1 February 1948, the Jews be assigned a port through which they would be allowed unlimited immigration. The Foreign and War Offices feared that a change in policy "would lead to trouble with the Arabs which might have more serious consequences for our withdrawal than a continued application of the policy of controlling immigration."[97] Accordingly, the Foreign Office also rejected a suggestion by the State Department that the illegal immigrants held in Cyprus be allowed to enter Palestine before the end of the Mandate in exchange for a Zionist promise to stop the illegal sailings.[98] The Foreign Office had its doubts about the value of Jewish Agency promises after the latter's failure to prevent the sailing of the *Pan* boats.[99]

Nevertheless, because they did want to start evacuating the camps on Cyprus, the Defence Committee and the colonial secretary ordered the commanders in chief in the Middle East and the high commissioner to increase the quota of Jews allowed to enter Palestine each month by several hundred, all without any official announcement and without the knowledge of the Arabs.[100] After the arrival in Cyprus of the two *Pan* ships (1 January 1948) there were 31,117 illegal immigrants being detained on the island. From that time until the end of the Mandate, eight more boats, carrying a total of 5,530 persons, were diverted to Cyprus. As late as 11 May 1948, the colonial secretary reported that 24,000 illegal immigrants were still on Cyprus.[101] Ironically, quickening the pace of removing detainees from Cyprus to Palestine by making them part of the unofficially increased quotas was also necessary because, if only for the sake of appearances, Britain persisted in keeping up its efforts against illegal Jewish immigration into the country until the final days of the Mandate. Acceleration of the removal of the illegal immigrants from Cyprus was intended, among other things, to make room for additional detainees. Whitehall's diplomatic campaign against the countries from whose ports the illegal immigrants sailed and against the flag states of the transport vessels involved also continued unabated. During the half year that elapsed between the UN General Assembly's decision at the end of November 1947 to partition Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948, 22,384 illegal immigrants on twelve carriers were deported to Cyprus. As late as April 1948, another three ships' passengers (*Tirat Zvi, Mishmar Ha'emek,* and *Nahshon*) were diverted to Cyprus.

Although the illegal immigration caused Britain considerable difficulties, especially from the summer of 1946, the pressure generated by the *Ha'apala* could not match the pressure exerted by the Arabs, who succeeded in making the question of Jewish immigration, and that of the illegal immigrants in particular, a test case for Anglo-Arab relations. Britain's desire to win the Arabs' support for its plan for a solution to the Palestine question and the concern for British interests in the Arab countries overrode any possible benefits that could be derived from acceding to Zionist immigration demands. Fear of disturbances by Palestinian Arabs, which were likely to erupt and receive the support of various Arab countries, neutralized any possible countermeasures by the Zionists. Whitehall's refusal to increase immigration quotas or to halt deportations to Cyprus as well as the continued struggle against the illegal sailings even after the UN partition decision reflected the government's order of priorities. The only concession made by London concerning immigration was the allocation of half of the monthly quota to illegal immigrants from Cyprus.



Britain did indeed succeed in apprehending most of the illegal immigrants who embarked for Palestine. Approximately fifty-one thousand *ma'apilim* of the about seventy thousand who had sailed for Palestine were intercepted and deported to detention camps in Cyprus and, in the case of the *Exodus,* Germany.[102] Very quickly, however, London recognized that deportation to Cyprus was not in itself sufficient to end or even limit the scope of the illegal sailings; moreover, the shortage of places of detention became more and more critical as time passed. The decision to send the illegal immigrants back to the ports from which they had embarked was, to a great extent, an admission of the failure of the Cyprus deterrent. Still, the deportations almost certainly obviated harsher reaction by the Arabs. From the Zionist perspective, the *Ha'apala* constituted the concrete expression of the link between the problem of the Jewish DPs in Europe and the question of Palestine that the British refused to make. The fact that tens of thousands of refugees succeeded in setting sail for Palestine was in itself a considerable achievement, especially since all the detainees eventually reached Palestine/Israel. Moreover, the very possibility of getting closer to Palestine constituted a source of encouragement for the Jews in the DP camps and those remaining in countries under Soviet influence. British actions against the illegal immigrants at times received wide media coverage, thereby helping the Zionists prevent the Jewish DP problem from sinking into oblivion, especially when, as early as 1947, international interest in the subject showed signs of waning.

Both the British and the Zionists were out to try to win world public opinion to their side, particularly in the United States. Britain's propaganda campaign had to contend not only with the fact that the illegal immigrants were survivors of the Holocaust seeking to leave the DP camps and the countries that had become the graveyards of their families but also with newspaper photographs and newsreels showing armed British soldiers on board destroyers transferring helpless refugees, including children and women, from wrecked boats to deportation ships that looked like floating jails. The British tried to deflect attention away from the agony of the illegal immigrants and to portray the Zionist activists as shrewd, unscrupulous people who were willing to adopt any means, including the exploitation of the suffering DPs, to achieve their nationalist goals. British officials kept reiterating that the illegal Jewish immigration was not a spontaneous exodus of desperate refugees but a carefully organized Zionist campaign to force the hand of His Majesty's government and increase the proportion of the Jewish population of Palestine.

In the winter of 1947–48, the British were closer than ever to admitting failure

in dealing with the illegal immigration, but even then, apprehension of Arab reactions shifted the balance in favor of continuing the struggle. Success against the *Ha'apala* was largely dependent not on the measures taken in the Mediterranean and in Palestine but rather on the success of the campaign against the countries that allowed the illegal immigrants to sail from their ports.[103]



# AMERICAN OPPOSITION

# CONCLUSION

When following World War II thousands of Jewish refugees began streaming into DP camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy and from there tried to reach the shores of Palestine, the British explained their efforts as an integral part of the Zionist endeavor to establish a Jewish state. Of geopolitical importance in Britain's overall imperial policy, Palestine had been under British Mandatory rule since 1922. Now, after the war, the British Labour government was convinced that, if Britain was to retain its position in the Middle East, it was vital to secure the cooperation of the Arab countries in the region. As the latter had made Jewish immigration into Palestine a test case of Anglo-Arab relations, Whitehall decided to limit Jewish immigration until it had formulated a comprehensive policy to solve the Palestine question.

The Zionists counteracted by, among other things, dispatching tens of thousands of illegal immigrants from various European ports to Palestine—the *Ha'apala* movement—while directing larger numbers of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe to DP camps in Germany and Austria—the *Brichah* movement. To halt these movements effectively the British needed the cooperation of the East and West European governments and particularly the backing and collaboration of the Americans. Neither the *Brichah* nor the *Ha'apala* movements would have reached the proportions they did without the active or even passive assistance they received from American and European officials.

For Britain the international constellation proved awkward. Relations with the United States had cooled considerably during the first months after the war, as London became economically and politically more dependent on Washington, while relations with the USSR and its satellites were marked by tension and confrontation over the shape of the postwar world. There were significant differences with Italy and France over geopolitical issues. Moreover, Britain had come out of the war in a severe economic crisis that reached its peak in 1947 and inevitably harmed its international standing and impaired its deterrent capability.

A mainstay of its policy became Whitehall's decision to keep the problem of the Jewish DPs separate from the Palestine question. From this then followed London's refusal to acknowledge that the Jewish DP problem could not be dealt with as part of the general DP problem resulting from the war. Cabinet ministers and, in particular, the prime minister and the foreign secretary were against according the Jewish DPs preferential treatment and special consideration, claiming that the suffering of the Jews was no different from that of other peoples. That is, the Jewish DP problem was to be solved as part of the overall refugee issue, which included the return of the Jews to their countries of origin or resettlement overseas. The Holocaust, in which about six million Jews had perished, played only a marginal role when officials began formulating their policy toward Jewish survivors. In Whitehall's official stand the Jews were a religious community, not a nation—recognizing them as a nation would have been tantamount to accepting the Nazi theory that the Jews were a separate race. Much of this attitude, which was shared by Attlee and Bevin, can be explained by Whitehall's efforts to safeguard British interests in the Middle East. As it contradicted the position Labour had taken up toward the Zionist movement during World War II, the shift was overwhelmingly inspired by similar geopolitical considerations that, in 1938, had led the Conservatives, then in power, to retreat from their support of the plan to partition Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state and from their support for Zionism.

Britain's main obstacle proved to be the American attitude. When Truman demanded that one hundred thousand Jewish DPs be allowed to enter Palestine and publicly expressed his interest in the plight of the Jewish DPs, the cabinet, under Bevin's lead, decided to involve the Americans in trying to find a solution for the Palestine problem, assuming that they would eventually come around to supporting British proposals. Whitehall expected the problem of the Jewish DPs to be resolved as part of such a joint policy. London may also have wanted to reduce the criticism to which Britain was being subjected by prominent American political figures and by the press concerning its policies toward Jewish DPs. Moreover, many Americans, the British knew, believed they were motivated by reasons of empire. Whitehall was apprehensive of damage to British standing in the United States and of the harm to Anglo-American relations at a time when Britain was negotiating for American economic assistance. Britain also needed U.S. support to further its objectives in the international arena, especially in blocking the expansionist ambitions of the USSR. When, in October 1945, they invited the United States to participate in setting a Palestine policy, the British were aware that during the first months after the war the Americans had often ignored British opinions and needs and Bevin recognized that the president was exploiting the Jewish DP problem for electoral purposes. Last but not least, Bevin's initiative coincided with his desire to prevent an American return to isolationism, as had happened after World War I, and to involve the United States actively in molding the postwar world.

Bevin's strategy eventually failed, even though the U.S. State and War Departments supported Britain's policy in Palestine. Truman himself was at first amenable to the provincial autonomy plan that would have ensured the continuation of the British Mandate over Palestine, but the American Zionist lobby put pressure on the president to reject the plan. By August 1946 the Jewish DP problem, which had prompted Truman's intervention, had become much more severe than it had been one year earlier. At the time Harrison submitted his report, there were fewer than sixty thousand Jews in Germany and Austria, a number that could have been resettled had Britain given priority to the problem during the first months after the war. Truman made his public commitment to securing the transfer of one hundred thousand Jewish DPs to Palestine during the campaign for the New York municipal election in November 1945. In other words, the critical stage was reached during the summer and autumn of 1945. By the summer of 1946 it was no longer possible to resolve the problem of the Jewish DPs without transferring the large majority of them to Palestine. The U.S. midterm elections of November 1946 assured that the president would not renege on his commitment. Moreover, the Democratic Party needed the financial contributions and votes of the Jewish community and this led Truman, in his Yom Kippur statement, to take a stand on the wider question of a solution to the political problem of Palestine. From the point of view of the White House, Palestine remained the most convenient destination for Jewish DPs, especially as Truman recognized the strong opposition in Congress to any change in U.S. immigration policy.

American policy toward the Jewish DPs significantly undermined Britain's campaign against the *Brichah* movement and, to a lesser extent, also against the *Ha'apala*. That London failed in its insistence on keeping the Jewish DP problem and the Palestine question separate and on treating all Jewish DPs the same regardless of their country of origin had much to do with the American attitude. Following Truman's demand that one hundred thousand Jewish DPs be allowed to enter Palestine, the Americans began assembling the Jews in separate camps, opened the gates in the American occupation zones to Jews fleeing from countries under Soviet influence, and accorded them DP status with all the preferential treatment this entailed. American military authorities in Germany and Austria, furthermore, indirectly encouraged and assisted DPs in the American zones in reaching ports of embarkation in Italy and France. At the same time, Washington refrained from censuring the illegal Jewish immigration into Palestine and refused to prohibit fund-raising in the United States for the *Ha'apala*. Washington's policy helped the Zionists to situate the problem of the Jewish DPs and the *Ha'apala* at the center of their struggle. Equally important, the American policy encouraged the Soviets and East European and Balkan countries to allow Jews to leave and fleeing Jews to pass through because they could be certain that the refugees would be accepted in the DP camps in the American zones and thus would not become "stuck" en route. Similarly, that they could count on at least temporary asylum in the American occupation zones made it easier for Jews in Eastern European and the Balkan countries to decide to leave their countries of origin.



Open disagreements between the United States and Britain concerning policy toward the Jewish DPs undermined the efficacy of the pressure the British tried to exert on Soviet bloc countries to prevent the exodus of Jews and their embarkation for Palestine. Whenever the Soviet Union found itself confronted with a united and determined Anglo-American front on questions that did not touch on the future of the Communist governments in its satellite countries, it generally took Western demands seriously and sometimes would retract or change its plans. Furthermore, the sensitivity the White House and members of Congress demonstrated on the subject of the Jewish DPs was seen in Europe, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, as an expression of the political power the Jewish community in the United States commanded. Accordingly, some European governments sought to avoid confrontation with the Jewish DPs so as not to harm their own interests in the United States, or even helped them in the hope of facilitating economic support from the United States either directly or indirectly through, for example, UNRRA.

That about 280,000 Jews were able to leave by land and sea from countries under Soviet influence could only have happened with the knowledge and agreement of the governments of these countries and of Moscow. Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary were generally not averse to seeing part of their Jews go, especially as many of them refused to adjust to the Communist system. Britain's main diplomatic ammunition against the USSR and its satellites was to delay recognition of the new governments which Moscow had set up in Rumania and Bulgaria and to stall the peace treaty discussions with former enemy countries that now were subject to Soviet influence. The British did not hesitate to threaten Rumania and Bulgaria with retaliatory measures for assisting the illegal sailings in part because they did not have any significant interests there; more substantially, of course, there were the immediate political repercussions the influx of Jewish immigrants was having on the situation in Palestine, if not in the entire Middle East. (No action, however, was ever taken.) Wishing to retain a certain degree of influence in Poland and Czechoslovakia, however, London was careful not to aggravate its relations with them by unduly emphasizing the problem of the emigration of the Jews. In the final analysis,

the problem of the Jewish DPs was secondary in London's overall policy in this region.

Until the summer of 1946, the British effort in countries under Soviet influence focused on preventing embarkations of Jews from Rumania, which London regarded as having the largest potential for illegal sailings. When the Anglo-American contacts on a solution for the Palestine question—and thereby of the Jewish DP problem—reached a deadlock, London undertook a comprehensive diplomatic campaign against the *Brichah* movement that after a lull during the winter of 1945–46 had significantly stepped up its activities. But the effort began too late; by the summer of 1946 tens of thousands of Jews had already gathered in the DP camps, and the Soviets had by then entrenched their control over Eastern and Central European countries.

London, meanwhile, was convinced that by prodding the Jews to head for the DP camps the Soviets were trying to exacerbate the problem of the Jewish DPs and thus widen differences of opinion between Britain and the United States about an acceptable solution and ultimately harm Britain's standing in the United States. London saw these moves as part of an overall effort by the Soviets to undermine Britain's position in the Middle East by having it ousted from Palestine and to obtain for themselves a foothold in the region. The Soviets did allow Polish Jews who had fled to the USSR during the war to return to Poland and Jews from other countries under the USSR's influence to move to Germany and Austria (the mass exodus from Poland via Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1946 could not have taken place without Soviet concurrence), but the Soviets did not push the Jews to leave—most Jews did not need encouragement in this direction, either by local authorities or by the Zionists.

In Poland as well as Czechoslovakia the Communists held most of the ministerial posts, including that of prime minister, and they also controlled the army and the security forces. The movement via Hungary to the Soviet zone of Austria necessitated the agreement of the Soviet military authorities who controlled the Austro-Hungarian border. It is possible that during the first months after the war, Moscow was unaware of the scope of the Jewish exodus and of its political potential. Yet it may be assumed that the Harrison report, the Anglo-American differences over Truman's demand to permit one hundred thousand Jewish DPs to enter Palestine, and the criticism of British policy toward the Jewish DPs voiced in the United States alerted Moscow to the advantage it could gain from aggravating the Jewish DP problem. This assumption is confirmed by the tactics the Soviets adopted in the joint control bodies in Germany and Austria, where they clearly exploited the Anglo-American differences about policy toward Jews arriving from Eastern Europe.



Before the peace agreements of February 1947, the British were able to persuade the Soviets and the Rumanian authorities to stop the sailings from Rumanian ports and, during 1947, succeeded in bringing about the cessation of illegal sailings from Yugoslavia. The departures from Bulgaria of Rumanian Jews during the winter of 1947–48 almost surely had the consent of the Soviets because Moscow wished to increase pressure on the British at a critical juncture in the Palestine conflict. Since the difficulties the illegal sailings created for the British were well known (for example, the *Exodus* episode), it was eminently reasonable for Russia to let the sailings continue. It also fell in line with Soviet support, since mid-1947, for the establishment of a Jewish state. The deterioration in relations between the two blocs during the second half of 1947 sharply reduced Britain's ability to exert pressure on the Soviet satellites, particularly Bulgaria, which allowed *Ha'apala* ships to sail from Black Sea ports.

As it happened, the interests of the various parties promoting the exodus of the Jews coincided in these sailings. The Rumanian authorities did not mind being rid of another several thousand Jews and could use the foreign currency they received from the Zionists. Rumania's Jews, many of them Zionists, were confronting a desperate economic situation and increasing anti-Semitism and were glad to leave a country in which Communist control had become total. The Bulgarian authorities were primarily motivated by financial gain, and the Zionists wanted to bring out as many Jews as possible before the Iron Curtain came down completely and to continue to apply *Ha'apala* pressure on the British. Transferring the departure base from Rumania to Yugoslavia, from there to Bulgaria, and then back to Yugoslavia (as dictated by international circumstances) enabled these states to outmaneuver the British during discussions on the peace agreements and to disrupt British efforts to prevent Jews from embarking in countries under Soviet influence.

Last but not least, the British came to realize that there was not much difference between the response of the Italian and French authorities and those in the Communist bloc, at least until the Cold War began escalating during the second half of 1947. In its attempts to prevent Jewish DPs from entering Italy and France and from there departing for Palestine, London was no more successful than in Eastern Europe. In fact, until February 1947, several of the former enemy countries that were now under Communist control were more responsive to British pressure. Britain came up against Italian and French government officials aiding and abetting the Jews in their efforts to reach Palestine. London attributed this willingness to aid the Jewish refugees to the sympathy government officials and wide circles of the general public in both these countries felt toward the Jewish survivors, on the one hand, and the resentment many enter-

tained toward Britain because of its stand on geopolitical issues, on the other. The difficulties the British encountered in the Middle East as a result of the illegal sailings can hardly have been a source of regret in Rome and Paris. Furthermore, that the American military authorities allowed and even helped Jewish DPs to move on from U.S. zones to France and Italy made it easier for both countries to claim that they could not be held responsible for Jewish infiltration across their frontiers.

When relations with Britain improved during 1947, France and Italy were more willing to act against the infiltration of the Jewish DPs. No decisive change occurred in Italian and French policies toward illegal sailings, however, because these helped empty the countries of Jewish refugees. Furthermore, dependent as they were on American economic assistance, both countries wished to avoid a confrontation with the American Jewish community, a consideration that the British believed carried weight, especially with the Italians. The La Spezia affair, furthermore, alerted the Italians to the risk involved in confronting the organizers of the illegal sailings and the illegal immigrants.

In the course of 1947, when relations between Britain and the Soviet Union and its satellites deteriorated and there was genuine concern that France and Italy could come under Communist threat—especially after the Communist Party was ousted from the coalitions in both countries in May 1947—Britain decided to act with caution and restraint. In Britain's scheme for closer cooperation among the countries of Western Europe, France, together with Britain, was to constitute the nucleus of the West European bloc. The illegal sailings were not regarded as important enough to warrant creating a severe crisis, and although French and Italian authorities did take sporadic steps to limit the Jewish infiltration and the illegal sailings, all told, more than thirty-seven thousand Jewish refugees sailed from French and Italian ports between 1945 and 1948.

Finally, there was the problem of the Jewish DPs in Britain's own occupation zones. As part of its policy of keeping the problem of the DPs separate from the Palestine question, Britain continually placed obstacles before Zionist leaders and organizations who wished to help the Jewish survivors in the British occupation zones; refused to single out the Jewish DPs from the other DPs in separate camps; withheld recognition from a united representative body of all Jewish DPs and German Jews; opposed the appointment of Jewish liaison officers; and was in favor of reintegrating the Jews in their respective countries of origin, even if that country was Germany. But the British found it difficult to implement this policy as a whole and were forced to compromise. Apart from inducing Whitehall to be more flexible, British Jewry had little influence on the policy the government decided to follow. Even though publicly the British refused to acknowledge that the Jewish DPs constituted a special category, they did separate them from other DPs, appointed an adviser for Jewish DP affairs, including those of German Jews, and in effect arrived at a special policy vis-à-vis the Jewish DPs. London was also ready to allow one hundred thousand Jewish refugees to immigrate to Palestine if its comprehensive plan for a solution of the Palestine question were accepted. Still, until the UN partition resolution of 29 November 1947, London maintained that the Jewish DP problem should be resolved as part of the general DP issue, for example, through repatriation or resettlement overseas. Whitehall, in fact, entertained cautious hopes that a change in the American immigration policy would solve the problem of the majority of the Jewish DPs.



In this struggle over the illegal sailings there were no clear winners. The Zionists succeeded in having tens of thousands of illegal immigrants set sail for Palestine, but more than 70 percent of them were intercepted before they could get there and deported to Cyprus. Although the deportations failed to discourage the *Ha'apala* activities, the latter were never able to induce a change in Whitehall's immigration policy. Britain continued to try to stifle the movement until the end of the Mandate, even though the Mandate government realized that this policy stopped the moderate majority of the Yishuv from containing Jewish terrorist activities, thus impairing the ability of the British army in Palestine to deal with the Irgun and LHI. The British were also aware that deportation to Cyprus was not in itself sufficient to end or even limit the scope of the illegal sailings and that in the confrontation over the illegal immigration the Zionists were gaining support in world public opinion, especially in the United States. For the British, however, not aggravating relations with the Arab states and avoiding predictably disruptive reactions on the part not only of the Palestinian Arabs but of all Arab countries was of greater importance than the advantages that could be derived from acceding to Zionist demands. Whitehall remained adamant in its refusal to increase the immigration quota or to halt the deportations to Cyprus because these almost certainly served the purpose of obviating any retaliatory reaction by the Arabs in Palestine.

While the illegal sailings did have some impact on those who determined the Palestine policy in London, there were other factors that in the course of 1947 led the British cabinet to make two far-reaching decisions—one, to transfer the Palestine question to the UN, and the second, to evacuate Palestine. The first decision was taken in mid-February 1947, following the failure of the second stage of the London conference with the Arabs and the Zionists. Given the dominance the electoral factor played in shaping President Truman's Palestine policy, Bevin was compelled to include in his proposed solution for the Pales-

tine question a provision for the entry into Palestine of about one hundred thousand Jewish DPs (the "Bevin Plan"). The Arabs rejected the plan, fearing that it would lead to the establishment of a Jewish state in part of Palestine and to further Jewish immigration. The difficulties entailed in the struggle against the illegal sailings did not feature in the cabinet discussions that preceded this decision. The cabinet's decision of 20 September to withdraw from Palestine was prompted by the UNSCOP majority recommendation that Palestine be partitioned into an Arab and a Jewish state. The UNSCOP report ended British hopes of tabling a plan for the solution of the Palestine question that would be acceptable to both the Arab countries and the Americans. The cabinet realized, furthermore, that to postpone a decision much longer would mean a continuation of both the illegal sailings and Jewish terrorist attacks. The *Exodus* episode and the terrorist acts of LHI and the Irgun (especially the hanging of two British sergeants) influenced members of Parliament, public opinion, and the press in Britain, all of whom increased their pressure on the cabinet to evacuate Palestine. Already facing a severe political and economic crisis at home, the cabinet could not muster the will and the motivation to persist in the face of the difficulties and dangers it could expect if Britain continued to hold on to Palestine. In fact, the decisions to leave India and to halt the aid to Greece and Turkey already reflected a different, more realistic attitude and demonstrated Britain's recognition of the need to adapt itself to the realities of the postwar situation.

Zionist efforts, in the form of the *Ha'apala*, to bring to Palestine as many Jewish DPs as possible not only helped the Zionist movement to attract world opinion to its cause at a time when Washington and European governments were preoccupied with rehabilitating their countries and their battle over the shape of the postwar world, but in the eyes of many in the West, also imbued their efforts with a considerable degree of moral and political legitimacy. Although genuine sympathy toward the survivors of the Holocaust prevailed among officials in the different countries, in the end it was political not humane considerations that played a decisive role when the Great Powers enabled the Zionists to establish a Jewish state in Palestine.



# NOTES

## ABBREVIATIONS

In addition to the abbreviations found in the text, the following are used in the notes:

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| ABC | American-British Conversations |
| ADM | Admiralty |
| ASW | Assistant Secretary of War |
| BGA | Ben Gurion Archives |
| BMM | British Military Mission |
| CAB | Cabinet |
| CCAC | Combined Civil Affairs Committee |
| CGC | Classified General Correspondence |
| CIGS | Chief of the Imperial General Staff |
| CO | Colonial Office |
| ETO | European Theatre of Operations |
| FO | Foreign Office |
| *FRUS* | U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers* |
| FSCC | Formerly Security-Classified Correspondence |
| GFHA | Ghetto Fighters House Archive |
| GRDS | General Records of the Department of State |
| HA | Archive of the Haganah |
| HIA | Hoover Institution Archives |
| HP | Information Center of the Ha'apala Project |
| JA | Archive of the Joint Distribution Committee |
| JTA | Jewish Telegraphic Agency |
| LA | Labour Movement (Histadrut) |
| LPA | Labour Party Archive |
| LSE | London School of Economics |
| NACP | National Archives, College Park |
| OF | Official File |
| OSS | Office of Strategic Services |
| P&O | Plans & Operations |
| PREM | Prime Minister |
| PRO | Public Record Office |
| PSF | President's Secretary's Files |
| RG | Record Group |
| RL | Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y. |
| SACMEC | St. Antony's College, Oxford, Middle East Center |

# POST-HOLOCAUST POLITICS

## BRITAIN, THE UNITED STATES & JEWISH REFUGEES, 1945–1948

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