

## סיפור התינוקת מרים סיטון

ערך: צבי בן-צור

התינוקת מרים נולדה ע"ג הספינה 'הנרייטה סולד' והייתה בין התינוקות הראשונים שגורשו לקפריסין. היא ואמה ניצולת השואה קיבלו פרסום נדיר בעיתון PICTURE POST (עיתון בריטי שהופיע בשנים 1938-1957 והידוע בהשפעתו הרבה על הפוטו-ג'ורנאליזם במאה ה-20) באמצעות התצלום המרשים של שתיהן הרצ"ב, מהרציף בנמל פאמגוסטה. יוצא הפלי"ם פיני אשוח ז"ל הצליח לאתר את מרים אחרי שנים רבות ולהשלים את הסיפור האישי והמשפחתי הנוגע ללב שלה – [הקש כאן לכתבה שכתב בנושא](#).

להלן הפרסום מהעיתון:



*The Woman Who Wonders if Her Wanderings will Ever End: An 'Illegal' Jewish Immigrant Arrives in Cyprus. Is she from Germany, Austria, Poland? Did she hitch-hike to the Mediterranean or did she walk all the way? How did she get a passage to Palestine? It matters to her is that she is harassed and miserable, and has failed to reach her destination. Sick and bewildered, she lies on the quay at Famagusta, Cyprus. Around her are British soldiers. They treat her gently. But before her stretches something with which she is no doubt familiar—the barbed wire of a camp.*

# HOW THE JEWS CAME TO CYPRUS

Picture Post journalist Fyfe Robertson and photographer Charles Hewitt were in Cyprus when the first boatloads of illegal Jewish immigrants arrived. With scant help from authorities on the spot, they give a picture of what happened.

**T**HIS story is not a pretty one. The whole episode of the forcible trans-shipment at Haifa of thousands of men, women and children of the world's most persecuted people, their shipment to Cyprus under armed guard, and their imprisonment there, with all the inescapable and intimidating precautions of any concentration camp, adds no glory to Britain. Whatever its justification, it was bound to be distasteful to humane and civilised men. In consequence, care should have been taken to avoid unfortunate incidents, and above all to ensure that facts were adequately reported.

This clearly called for quick, commonsense decisions at every adequate level, yet the whole operation was left, as far as I could discover, to local Army officers and Colonial Office officials; and there can be few organisations with a more rigid hierarchy or more wholly circumscribed authority than the Army and the Colonial Office. The result was an ostrich-like and meaningless secrecy, the issuing of orders almost calculated to cause friction, based on Heaven-knows-what dim red-taped mental process, and obstruction of the

Press carried to unbelievable lengths. There can be no doubt—and no Army officer or Colonial official I have questioned denies it—that the rioting at Karaolos Camp would not have happened if prisoners had been allowed to talk freely to journalists. The Karaolos rioting was, I think, wholly avoidable, and though the young K.S.L.I. guards, who stopped the break-out, fired over the heads of the prisoners, it is unforgivable that a situation should have been allowed to arise where Britain's good name was left in the hands of inexperienced youngsters with guns. In fact, in the end it was reasoning and not rifles that quietened and dispersed the rioters.

I was on a boat in Famagusta Bay when the first refugee ships arrived. For a week Cyprus had been waiting for them, and the wildest rumours had been going around that these were the first of many thousands that Britain would settle in the island for political purposes. In countries abroad where there is a Jewish population and where people are suspicious of Britain, there were stories of bad conditions and brutal treatment on British ships. These

stories were not true, and here on the murrumbidgee beach stood four pressmen anxious to see for themselves and tell the world. But the authorities said no. No photographs, no facilities, no information. With difficulty we persuaded a fisherman to take us out to the anchored ships.

Thirty soldiers were bathing under the stern of the *Empire Rival*. Above them a crowd of fellow-soldiers shouted and joked, but amid a general laughter and happy larking there was one thing—the tight, bitter faces of the prisoners. Young men and women, who were looking on from a cage on the foredeck. Most of the men were stripped to the waist, and looked very fit—even tough and powerful. The majority seem to be in their twenties. Most of the girls, many still in their teens, were dressed in bathing costumes, but they seemed scarcely to talk to one another, but looked down with those blank faces full of bewilderment and hate.

On the *Empire Heywood*, some of the women and children, who had taken care not to notice us, began to chant louder and louder in unison. I