

עצרנו שלוש אוניות בפבר' 1947

דו"ח מפקד הצי הבריטי בים התיכון

Merica - Renamed by 'Hagana': 'Lanegev'

San-Miguel - Renamed by 'Hagana': 'Hama'pil Ha'almoni

Ulua - Renamed by 'Hagana': 'Haim Arlosoroff'

Excerpt from report of proceedings Feb' 1947, by Commander-in-Chief
Mediterranean station, H.M.S 'Liverpool', 6th March 1947.

To: Secretary of the Admiralty.

Illegal Immigration.

10. Three illegal immigrant ships, MERICA, SAN MIGUEL and ULUA were intercepted during the month by ships of the Palestine patrol.

11. MERICA, an 800 tons Italian schooner had been at Marseilles undergoing conversion for illegal immigrant purposes since November, 1946, sailed on 17th January, 1947 to Sete where she embarked the Jews and then sailed ostensibly for Cuba. She was intercepted after a three weeks passage on 9th February by H.M. Ships "CHIEFTAIN" and "WELFARE" and taken to Haifa, where her 657 passengers were transferred to Empire Heywood for passage to Famagusta.

12. SAN MIGUEL is the first arrival of 4 Swedish owned ships which have been under observation since they were sold to a suspect Panamanian company in the Autumn of 1946. Built in 1876 she is a 500 tons packet steamer designed to carry 800 passengers. Leaving Copenhagen on 7th December, 1946 for Ymiden, she reached Marseilles on 19th January and sailed again on 1st February, cleared for Oran in ballast, but proceeded to SETE where she embarked Jews, nominally bound for Cuba. On 10th February, she was intercepted by H.M. Ships "WELFARE" and "ST. AUSTELL BAY" and her 804 passengers transferred to Empire Rival for passage to Famagusta.

13. ULUA, an 800 ton ex U.S. Corvette, was reported as long ago as 6th December, 1946 converting for this traffic at Marseilles. She then visited Stockholm and Copenhagen and on 22nd January, arrived at TRELLEBORG where she embarked 600 Jews with visas for CUBA and was searched for suspected arms without result. She then sailed via LE HAVRE, ALGIERS and SOUSSE to the Palestine coast.

14. Acting on reports from an R.A.F. air search, H.M.S. "CHIEFTAIN" intercepted "ULUA" in position 31° 45' North, 32° 45' East at 1750G on 27th February. This interception was further to the south and west than any previous one. H.M.S. "CHIEFTAIN" was joined by H.M. Ships "CHEVRON", "WELFARE", "ROWENA" and "ST. AUSTELL BAY". The vessel signalled using Naval procedure that she was the ULUA, port of registry LACERBA in HONDURAS, with 600 passengers for ALEXANDRIA but had rescued some survivors from a Jewish refugee ship en route whom she intended to land at TEL AVIV.

15. As the vessel entered territorial waters off HAIFA, on the morning of 28th, H.M. Ships "WELFARE" and "ROWENA" boarded simultaneously, but the illegal took violent avoiding action and increased speed to over 15 knots so that only 13 of the boarding parties got onboard. Some of these were soon overpowered and thrown overboard to be rescued by the destroyers. H.M.S. "ROWENA" succeeded in getting a further party onboard as the vessel grounded herself on RAS EL KRIBI at HAIFA.

16. Some Jews swam ashore and were rounded up by the army. The boarding parties soon gained control but not without casualties on both sides.

17. Efforts to tow the ship off the beach failed as she was holed in the engine room and 1398 immigrants were transferred to the waiting transports in Z craft.