

## Aliya Bet Voyages Involving Multiple Vessels

The confiscation of vessels transporting Ma'apilim by the British was a serious financial blow to the Aliya Bet operation. Besides the financial burden, the fear of being arrested and detained made it difficult to enroll foreign crews on board these vessels (foreign sailors continued to receive their wages if they were detained, until returning to their homes). The system of "two are better than one" was one method of overcoming this problem. This method was adopted to minimize the number of vessels that were liable to be caught, without limiting the number of Ma'apilim.

It worked as follows: two vessels would set out at about the same time and rendezvous not far from the coast of Palestine. The Ma'apilim would transfer to one of these vessels and the foreign crew would go to the other, which would return the crew back to Europe. The Palyamniks and some of the Ma'apilim, who had been trained for the work, would replace the foreign sailors, so that the vessel with all of the Ma'apilim would be able to continue on the last leg of the voyage to Palestine. This meant, of course, that the Ma'apilim who had been travelling under crowded conditions until then, would be travelling under even worse conditions for the short remainder of the voyage. In other words, the Ma'apilim suffered more than usual for a relatively short period of time, so that Ha'Mossad Le'Aliya Bet could save money, not having to buy more vessels, and so that the foreign crews would be able to man the vessels on their following voyages.

This method was used in the case of the vessel "[Haviva Reich](#)", which collaborated with the auxiliary vessel "Rafi". The "Rafi" also combined with the "[Henrietta Szold](#)" in August 1946. In June 1946 the vessel "Akbel", in the voyage named "[Biria](#)", took the Ma'apilim of the "Balboa" and brought them to Palestine, allowing the "Balboa" - renamed "[Hagana](#)" on her next voyage - to go back to Yugoslavia and bring another load of Ma'apilim to Palestine. The auxiliary vessel "Albertina", which had in the past carried Ma'apilim to Palestine as "[Peter I](#)" and "[Peter II](#)", transferred her Ma'apilim at sea to the "[Palmach](#)" (September 1946), to the "[Bracha Fuld](#)" (October 1946), to the "[Shabtai Luzinski](#)" (March 1947), and to the "[She'ar Yashuv](#)" (April 1947). In November 1946, "Abba Berdichev" accompanied "[Knesset Israel](#)". When she was thrown onto the rocks and sank off the Yugoslav coast, her Ma'apilim joined those who were on the "Knesset Israel".

A number of planned encounters between vessels never materialized, because of various problems that arose, such as: stormy weather, a mechanical or communications breakdown, or simply because the number of Ma'apilim that would end up on one vessel continuing to Palestine, would be way beyond what that vessel could carry safely.

In March 1946 the "[Tel Hai](#)" was to have taken the Ma'apilim of "[Wingate](#)". The "Barak" was to have met "[Chaim Arlosoroff](#)" in early 1947. The "[Theodor Herzl](#)" was to have taken the Ma'apilim of "[She'ar Yashuv](#)" in April 1947. "[Yod Dalet Halalei Gesher Aziv](#)" was to take on the Ma'apilim of "[Shivat Zion](#)" in July 1947 and "[Medinat HaYehudim](#)" was to take the Ma'apilim of "[Geula](#)" in September 1947. In November 1947, the "Albertina" was to give her Ma'apilim to "[Kadima](#)", but due to communications problems, they did not make contact and the "Albertina" continued on to Palestine, renamed "[Aliya](#)" and broke through the British blockade. In all these latter cases all the vessels continued and reached Palestine, except in the case of "Barak", whose engine broke down and the vessel did not leave port.

Note: the "Albertina" was also used to deliver a good number of Ma'apilim from the Italian shore to the vessel "[Yod Dalet Halalei Gesher Aziv](#)".