

## The Voyage of “Le’Komemiut”<sup>1</sup> [To Independence]

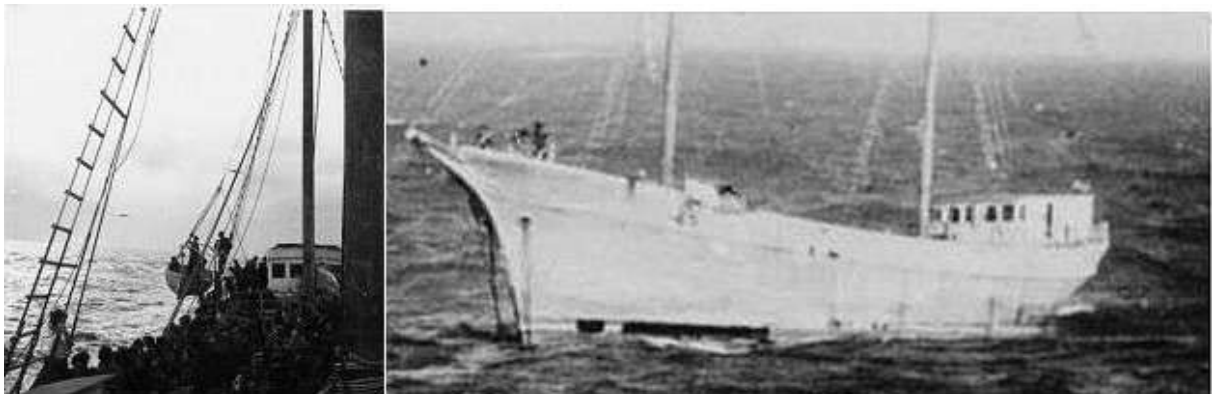
On February 7<sup>th</sup> 1948, 699 Ma’apilim from Europe and from North Africa boarded the vessel near St. Tropez, France. The vessel set out on its voyage the following day, commanded by Avner Gilhad (Scandi, pictured here), accompanied by Yaakov Ben Zion (the “King”) and the Gideoni - Aharon Michaeli. They hit several storms and their voyage was a very rough one, shaking the trust of the Ma’apilim.



Originally this vessel had been a three-mast yacht. During the voyage the Palyamnikim cut down one of the masts in order to disguise the vessel, in an attempt to fool the British. Despite this the vessel was discovered on February 19<sup>th</sup> by a British scout plane, not far from Palestine. The following day, three British destroyers showed up to keep her company. Since there were more than 140 children on this vessel, it was decided not to resist a British takeover. It was agreed with the British that the vessel would continue under its own power to within three miles of the port of Haifa. A British crew boarded the vessel at that point and steered her into the port. The Ma’apilim were soon deported to Cyprus.

This vessel had originally been the “Sette Fratelli”, nicknamed “Zibale”, commanded by Yehuda Ben-Tzur. On December 1947 she had carried Ma’apilim from France to the island of Corsica, where the vessel “Kaf Tet BeNovember” waited to receive them.

(Compiled by Tzvi Ben-Tzur)



---

<sup>1</sup>. The name “Le’Komemiut” was given before Israel’s Declaration of Independence of 15 May 1948. The vessel Pan York was named “Kibbutz Galuiot” [Hebrew: gathering from the Diaspora], but after the declaration it was changed to: “Komemiut”