

The Voyage of "Shivat Zion" [Return to Zion]



This vessel sailed from a small bay west of the city of Algiers, Algeria, carrying 411 Ma'apilim on board. This was the second voyage of Ma'apilim from North Africa, taking place only two months after the first, which was that of the vessel "Yehuda Ha'Levi". The commander of the "Shivat Zion" was David Maimon (pictured here), accompanied by the Gideoni - Michael (Mike) Harari. When she was to be in the vicinity of Crete, the Ma'apilim were supposed to transfer to the vessel "Yod Dalet Halalei Geshet Aziv". However, due to a lack of navigation equipment and poor communications, this plan fell through.

The British identified the "Shivat Zion" from the time it was in the vicinity of Tunis, and a destroyer soon tagged on to her. As she advanced eastward, this destroyer was joined by three others, all tailing her. She arrived opposite the shore of Palestine, when the deported Ma'apilim of the "Exodus" arrived back to southern France. With the change that had taken place in British policy, and due to the fact that there were 120 babies and young children aboard the vessel, it was decided that there would be no resistance to occupancy of the vessel by the British, or to deportation, giving Ha'mossad Le'Aliya Bet an opportunity to examine the intentions of the British. The vessel was seized by the British on July 28th and was towed into Haifa. All the Ma'apilim on board "Shivat Zion" were deported to Cyprus.

(Compiled by Tzvi Ben-Tzur)

