
To: Secretary of the Admiralty.

Illegal Immigration.

10. Three illegal immigrant ships, Merica, San Miquel, and Ulua, were intercepted during the month by ships of the Palestine patrol.

11. Merica, an 800 ton Italian schooner, had been at Marseilles undergoing conversion for illegal immigrant purposes since November, 1946, sailed on 17th January, 1947 to Leeds where she embarked the Jews and then sailed eastward for Cuba. She was intercepted after a three weeks passage on 5th February by H.M.S. ships "Cilean" and "Ruler" and taken to Halifax, where her 657 passengers were transferred to Empire Ligurian for passage to Panama.

12. San Miquel, the first arrival of a Swedish coastal ship which had been under observation since they were sold to a suspect Panamanian company in the Autumn of 1946. Built in 1874 she is a 500 ton packet steamer designed to carry 800 passengers. Leaving Copenhagen on 7th December, 1946 for Marseilles, she reached Marseilles on 15th January and sailed again on 1st February, cleared for Oran in ballast, but proceeded to Sri Lanka where she embarked Jews, nominally bound for Cuba. On 10th February, she was intercepted by H.M. ships "Ruler" and "Kiwi" and her 504 passengers transferred to Empire Israel for passage to Panama.

13. Ulua, an 800 ton ex-U.S. Corvette, was reported as long ago as 8th December, 1946 connecting for this traffic at Marseilles. She then visited Stockholm and Copenhagen and on 23rd January, arrived at Bremerhaven where she embarked 600 Jews with visas for Cuba and was searched for suspected arms without result. She then sailed via Kiel, Heligoland and Sundsvall to the Palestine coast.

14. Acting on reports from an H.M.S. air search, H.M.S. "Cilean" intercepted "Ulua" in position 34° 15' North, 35° 15' East at 1750 on 27th February. This interception was further to the south and west than any previous one. H.M.S. "Cilean" was joined by H.M.S. ships "Chester", "Ruler", "Belfast" and "Kiwi", and Oran. At 1800, the vessels signalled using naval procedure that she was the Ulua, part of the registry DECEMA in HAMBURG, with 600 passengers for ARGENTINA but had released some survivors from a Jewish refugee ship on route Maas she intended to land at IDA AVIV.

15. As the vessel entered territorial waters off MAFA, on the morning of 28th, H.M.S. ships "Chester" and "Ruler" boarded simultaneously, but the illegal took violent avoiding action and increased speed to over 13 knots so that only 13 of the boarding parties got onboard. Some of those were soon overpowered and thrown overboard to be rescued by the destroyers. H.M.S. "Oberon" succeeded in getting a further party onboard as the vessel grounded herself on Ras AL MIM at IDA AVIV.

16. Some Jews were rescued and were rounded up by the crew. The boarding parties were gainst control but not without casualties on both sides.

17. Efforts to tow the ship off the beach failed as she was Blocked in the engine room and 328 immigrants were transferred to the waiting transports in a calm.