

## Document A: “*The Brigade*,” Howard Blum (2001)

[Israel] Carmi returned from Paris wondering if perhaps he had promised too much. He needed the resources of a full-time military unit: trucks, food, blankets, petrol, even border passes. The Brigade could covertly provide the men, but Brigadier Benjamin and his English adjuncts would never sign off on the necessary requisitions. The more Carmi thought about it, the more he realized that it would require an army to move the refugees to the sea. So he invented one. And he did it with just three letters: TTG.

TTG had the short, crisp punch of a military acronym. It sounded like the name of an army unit. But Carmi had chosen the letters from a phrase in a contrived, nonsensical portmanteau language, part Yiddish, part Arabic. The words were “*tilhas tizig gesheften*.” Roughly – and it was meant to be rough – translated, it sneered, “Up your ass.” But only the Jews from Palestine knew that.

Once Carmi had the name for his new unit, he started quickly issuing orders. Boxes of blank British Army of the Rhine requisition forms, work tickets, and transport authorizations were stolen with surprising ease from the Brigade storerooms. [Johanan] Peltz simply told a clerk, “I want you to pretend I’m not here.” And when he walked out of the storeroom with dozens of boxes, he realized he could not reprimand the private for failing to salute. The soldier was, after all, only obeying orders.”

At the same time, the call went out for men who had been artists in their former lives, and three reported for duty. Carmi led the volunteers into a room and handed each of them a document with the brigadier’s signature. “I want you to be able to sign the old man’s name in your sleep,” he instructed.

Carmi returned several hours later to see how they were progressing. The three documents were returned to him. He was immediately annoyed. “What is this?” he thundered. “I told you to study them.”

One of the men stepped forward. “These are not the old papers,” he explained with a smile. “And Benjamin did not sign them.”

After that demonstration, the forgers went to work. Dozens of work forms and transport orders were “signed” by Brig. E. F. Benjamin. With the authority of these counterfeit documents, the TTG unit was rapidly outfitted.

British transport units across Europe accepted the paperwork without question and transferred trucks to TTG. Busy quartermasters glanced quickly at the papers and returned with cans of petrol, boxes of fresh food, dozens of uniforms for the men of TTG. Work orders were issued transferring soldiers from the Brigade to special assignment as drivers for TTG. Literally overnight, the farmhouse in Camperosso, once the base of operations for a conspiracy of killers, became the headquarters of a phantom army.

Now that they were mobilized, the TTG units swiftly went off to war. The priority was always the children, and they rushed across Europe to gather them up.

*Source: The Brigade: An Epic Story of Vengeance, Salvation, and WWII, Howard Blum, HarperCollins, 2001, p. 229-230.*

## **Document B: “Second Exodus,” Ze’ev Venia Hadari (1991)**

Ernest Bevin was in control of British foreign policy. When he adopted a policy which spelled all-out war against illegal immigration, he was able to harness the support of the whole British Government machine. The Foreign Office initiated a long series of consultations and officials from different branches of the Civil Service, the Army and the intelligence services helped to formulate ways of countering Jewish immigration. The quantities of documents to be found in various archives attest to thorough staff work. ...

In September 1945, Sir Alan Brooke, the Chief of General Staff, sent a telegram with instructions for dealing with illegal immigration to the Foreign Office, the War Office and the First Lord of the Admiralty. The Labour Government had already begun its attempt to block the immigration movement at the source in Europe.

1. When the war is over, illegal immigration to Palestine can be expected to increase; almost certainly it will be carried out at sea.
2. First and foremost ships must be stopped from sailing from various ports. At the same time the coast of Palestine must be guarded more vigilantly.
3. For this purpose it is desirable to use a small craft (instead of the big ships of the fleet.)

*Source: Second Exodus: The Full Story of Jewish Illegal Immigration to Palestine, 1945-1948, Ze’ev Venia Hadari, Valentine Mitchell, England, 1991, p. 73.*

**Document C: “*The Palestine Triangle*,” Nicholas Bethell  
(1979)**

It was around this time, mid-September 1945, that the Jewish leaders realized that their hopes in the new government had been misplaced. Since July 26<sup>th</sup> they had bombarded the new ministers with memoranda and requests for interviews, only to be told again and again that the matter was being urgently considered, that they would be informed as soon as any decision was reached. But the weeks passed and the silence seemed to them more and more ominous. Perhaps Weizmann and Shertok, who were in London, learnt what was in store from certain close friends with access to Cabinet decisions. Perhaps the gist of Attlee’s two letters to Truman reached their ears from some American source. Anyway, it became clear at this point that their euphoria had been in vain, that they would have to fight Britain after all. Golda Meir says: ‘We kept hearing the argument, “The Arabs can create so much trouble, therefore you have to give in.” So in the end we decided, very well, we’ll create trouble.’”

*Source: The Palestine Triangle, Nicholas Bethell, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 1979, p. 207-208.*

**Document D: “Letter from the Jewish Community of Palestine to the High Commissioner,” (Jan. 15, 1946)**

...our strongest protest against the stoppage of immigration and the negotiations now being conducted with the Arabs for the concession of a small number of immigration certificates. ... The right of the Jewish people to return to their country, to rebuild it and redeem it from its desolation is an eternal right that cannot be taken away ... The Jewish community which came into being in this land through hard pioneering and determined self-defence will not acquiesce in the undermining of its future and in its surrender to the mercy of others. We are convinced that our cause is just. We have served loyally the world’s fight for freedom. ... We have far-reaching plans for increasing the absorptive capacity of the country, plans which hold unlimited blessings for the benefit of others, as well as ourselves. ... We, the representatives of the Yishuv, ask you to transmit this Note, whose restrained words convey but little of our sadness, to His Majesty’s Government. We request that: the gates of the country be opened for the immediate rescue of our survivors; the land laws which strangle our settlement work be revoked; the Jewish Agency be vested with the authority required for the development of our immigration and settlement plans to the fullest possible extent; the sacred promises given to the Jewish people be fulfilled and that they be encouraged on their one and only path toward redemption.

*Source: Under the White Paper, Daphne Trevor, Jerusalem Press, Jerusalem, 1948, p. 177-178.*

**Document E: “*Under the White Paper,*” Daphne Trevor  
(1948)**

The Labour Government had already begun its attempt to block the immigration movement at the source in Europe. In April 1946, the Italian authorities held two ships in La Spezia harbor, shortly before they were to sail for Palestine, the *Fede* and *Fenice*, with about 1,000 people on board. The ships had been re-named *Dov Hos* and *Eliahu Golomb*, in honour of two Palestinian Trade Union leaders. The news of the arrest reached Palestine on the eve of the Passover, together with the report that the refugees had gone on a protest hunger-strike and were threatening to blow up their ships and go down with them. No resentment was felt against the Italian Government – the source of the order was perfectly clear. This concrete example of the lengths to which the Labour Government was going in order to stop immigration roused the population to an emotional pitch unparalleled since the *Struma* affair. The Vaad Leumi called for a general strike and a nation-wide fast for the 14<sup>th</sup> April, and announced that, from the 12<sup>th</sup> on, a group of national leaders would fast in sympathy with the La Spezia refugees until they were released. ... Throughout the fast the courtyard of the building was thronged with subdued crowds that broke into cheers when one or other of the fasters was seen. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, it was estimated that some 30,000 people had been present during the day. That evening, when the fast had lasted 101 hours, it was learnt that the High Commissioner had agreed to the Jewish Agency’s allotting the La Spezia refugees the certificates available under the quota commencing on 15<sup>th</sup> April, or any other unallocated permits. It was felt that a moral victory had been achieved, and the fast was ended. ... It was a very slender gain – the British government did not stop attempting to prevent Jews from leaving Europe for Palestine – but to the Jews in Palestine in their angry frustration it was encouraging to have achieved even that much...

Source: *Under the White Paper*, Daphne Trevor, Jerusalem Press, Jerusalem, 1948, p. 198-199.

## Document F: “*Second Exodus*,” Ze’ev Venia Hadari (1991)

*Exodus* was taken to Haifa on 17 July 1947. The refugees, who had been granted only a few minutes in the country of their dreams, continued their struggle on the quayside and the British troops had great difficulty in transferring them to the waiting ships. ...

The British continued to try to justify their actions in the media. They pointed out that the whole Palestine question was about to be debated in the UN and referred to the “inhumanity of shipping 4,500 souls ... to bring these passengers back to France we have provided three ships, each of which is larger than the *President Warfield*.” ...

This was what the immigration movement wanted to achieve; to draw the attention of the whole world to the plight of the Holocaust survivors. ...

The Exodus affair was now front page news. ...

The British Government was also losing support at home. On the same day as the article in the French newspaper, *The Manchester Guardian* wrote that the Foreign Office’s reasons for sending the refugees back to Germany were spurious. There was no place under British jurisdiction with less food and fewer houses than the zone of occupation in Germany. It added that there could be no sight more disgraceful and humiliating than British soldiers forcing Jews to disembark in Hamburg or Bremen and it was time for Attlee and Bevin to intervene and put a stop to this scandal.

Source: *Second Exodus: The Full Story of Jewish Illegal Immigration to Palestine, 1945-1948*, Ze’ev Venia Hadari, Valentine Mitchell, England, 1991, p. 176-196.

**Document G: “*The Palestine Triangle*,” Nicholas Bethell  
(1979)**

The evidence therefore suggests that Britain’s first priority was no longer to maintain her privileges in Palestine, let alone British rule. She *hoped* to retain something, but was prepared to risk losing everything, bases and influence as well as control. The first priority now was to rid herself of the burdens imposed by the Mandate. If the United Nations would help her to do this and to remain in Palestine also, she would accept. Otherwise she would withdraw and concentrate on salvaging what she could of her treaties and interests elsewhere, in other parts of the Middle East.

Britain therefore decided to expedite this inevitable process. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> she asked the UN Acting Secretary General to summon a special session of the General Assembly, in order to appoint a special committee, which would prepare a report in time for consideration at the regular session in the autumn. By April 13<sup>th</sup> a majority had approved Britain’s request and Secretary General Trygve Lie announced that this session would take place at Flushing Meadows, New York, on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

*Source: The Palestine Triangle, Nicholas Bethell, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 1979, p. 312.*