

Jewish Cemetery of Rhodes – A memorial dedicated to the illegal Jewish immigrants who died in Rhodes while fleeing Nazi-Europe on board “The Pentcho” en route to Palestine (1940-1942)



LEZEKHER MAAPILEY ONIYAT PENLO
(PENTCHO)

SHENIFTEROU BEMAKHANE HAATZOURIM
BERODI-RODOS

BESHANIM TAV'SHIN-TAV'SHIN'BET (1940- 1942)

VEKIVROTEHEM LO NIMTSEOU :

RODI

HAUSER SIMCHA
METZGER HERSH
METZGER FRUMA
GOLDSTEIN RICHARD
DUKES ISRAEL
LANDSHUT ISRAEL
PORIES MARCEL

NISPOUR BEOSHVITZ

FAHN RESHKA
FAHN RUDOLF

TAVOU BEMETZOULO HAYAM

MITELMANN YTZCH
ROSENFELD YESHARU

YEHI ZIKHRAM BAROUKH

In memory of the illegal immigrants of the boat Pentcho. Few of them died in the detention camp in Rodi – Rhodes in the years 1940 – 1942. Their burial site could not be found.

Deceased in Rhodes

Hauser Simcha
Metzger Hersh
Metzger Fruma
Goldstein Richard
Dukes Israel
Landshut Israel
Poris Marcel

Killed in Auschwitz

Fahn Reshka
Fahn Rudolf

Drowned in the depth of the sea

Mitelmann Ytzchak
Rosenfeld Yesharu

THEIR MEMORY WILL BE BLESSED

The story of the Pentcho

The Pentcho was an 85 year-old paddlewheel steamer hired by the Revisionist Zionist movement to bring Jewish refugees to Palestine.

It departed from Bratislava on May 18, 1940 with some 400 Slovakian Jews and proceeded down the Danube. A few weeks later it picked up over 100 Austrian Jews at the seaport of Sulina, bringing the total to some 510 Jewish refugees.

The Pentcho left Sulina on September 21 and after a stormy crossing on the Black Sea, it passed the Dardanelles and reached the Greek port of Mytilene (Metelin) on the island of Lesbos. After the ship was ordered to leave without refueling, the passengers wired the Committee for the Relief of Refugees (CRR) in Athens stating their predicament. They headed for the port of Piraeus, where the CRR arranged for a delivery of food and fuel. The Pentcho left Piraeus on October 3 and four days later reached the port of Rhodes where they were provisioned by the Italian authorities but ordered to leave the following day.

A few days later, on October 9, the ship's boiler exploded, and the ship broke in two off of the deserted island of Kamilonissi in Dodecanese territory, then under Italian control. The passengers and crew were able to get ashore and off-load their supplies before the ship finally sank. Five men took the ship's only lifeboat to look for rescue. Though they were caught in a storm and lost their bearings, they were eventually rescued by a British destroyer and taken to Alexandria.



*Illegal immigrants from the Pencho on island of
Camilla Nisi watch as the ship sinks*

When the CRR learned about the wreckage of the Pentcho, it alerted Greeks in Herakleion who then endeavored to have supplies delivered to the stranded refugees on Kamilonissi. On October 18 and 19, Italian authorities picked up the refugees on two sorties and brought them to the main island of Rhodes where they stayed for the next year and a quarter in a hastily constructed camp in the soccer stadium of Rhodes. On December 25th they moved them to San Giovanni Camp in Rhodes.



Campo San-Giovanni, tent camp set up on island of Rhodes for illegal immigrants of the Pencho

They lived comparatively well with the help of the old Sephardic Community. Living conditions in Italian occupied Rhodes were difficult, food was scarce, diseases raged.

In January 1942, the refugees were transferred to the Ferramonti internment camp in southern Italy. They were kept there until the Allies captured Italy.

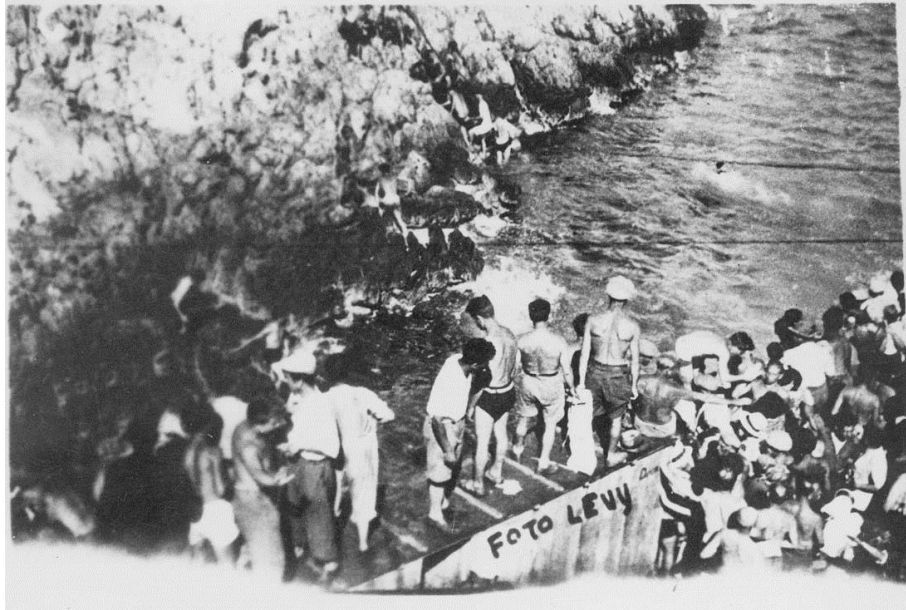
Most of the Pentcho's passengers arrived in Palestine in June 1944, but twenty-four of them were among the 1000 refugees brought to the US in 1944 aboard the SS Henry Gibbins and sheltered at Fort Ontario. The Pentcho was the last illegal immigrant ship sponsored by the Revisionist Zionist movement. Afterwards illegal immigration to Palestine was organized by the Mossad, the Organization for Illegal Immigration.

Watch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgfqli64SxM>

Continue to read the story of another boat....

RIM BOAT 1939



On June 30, 1939 an old ship named “Rim”, flying a Panamanian flag, stopped in Rhodes. It came from Constantza, on the Black Sea, and carried about 600 Jews from Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary and Romania on their way to Palestine.

In Rhodes another 200 “foreign” Jews were taken on board because of the racial law of September 7, 1938 that forbade foreign Jews, the ones who came to reside in the Aegean possessions after January 1, 1919 to remain, revoked their Italian citizenship and forced them to leave the island within six months.

Rim sailed on July 3, but it soon caught fire in the waters of the nearby islet of Symi. Italian naval units intervened, saved all the passengers and took them back to Rhodes. The Italian authorities put the city stadium at their disposal, tents were pitched, the Rhodian community helped providing food and clothes and so did the Joint Distribution Committee. The shipwrecked Jews remained in Rhodes for months as it was difficult to find a vessel to take them to Palestine.

There were marriages, there were births. At last at the beginning of 1940, when Rhodes was still governed by De Vecchi a ship was found and they all left, taking with them a Sefer Torah, a gift of the Rhodian community.

They reached Palestine and succeeded in landing in spite of the strict control of the British Royal Navy. A young Jew of Rhodes, Haim Levy, even succeeded in taking pictures for a reportage of that extraordinary adventure.

Source "A History of Jewish Rhodes" by Esther Fintz Menascé, 2014 publication, pages 155-156