

## **Film Guide**

### **SEARCH FOR DESTINY**

#### **PART 2**

Perhaps Britain never meant to honor any of its promises to the Arabs or the Jews; ironically it saw its possession of Jerusalem in the Great War and occupancy after the war as a sign that it was a new “Chosen People.” Although the 1930s saw the British trying to end Jewish immigration to Palestine in a cynical maneuver to control Arab oil for their own empire, the spiritual leader of Islam in the Holy Land, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, was driven to ally himself with the Nazis, and eventually fled to Berlin. Ironically, most of Britain’s oil came from the US instead anyway. 1940 saw the Italian invasion of Egypt, the British invasion of Libya, and Rommel’s drive for the Suez Canal. The British used Indian, South African, Australian and New Guinea troops in the struggle, and lined up tanks against the supposedly independent Egyptian king’s palace to force him to support them. His humiliation was seen as Egypt’s humiliation, and undoubtedly German troops would have been welcomed as liberators from the hated British; young Anwar Sadat worked as a spy for the Germans. Iraq, too, was a British satellite, and British troops invaded neutral Iran. When the British-backed DeGaulle drove out the legitimate Vichy government of Syria and Lebanon, --French killing French for Britain’s government-- France gave those countries their freedom; but DeGaulle tried to revert to the antebellum status quo. In 1943 Lebanon rose in revolt.

As the war ended and the extent of the Holocaust became known, international support multiplied for a Jewish homeland, but again Britain temporized. The world was horrified by the British refusal to accept boatloads of refugees such as that on the ship “Exodus;” those who had survived the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps were herded into British concentration camps. Despite American support for a Jewish state and FDR’s promise of an independent Palestine, Britain continued to pour troops into the tiny area. Before the war Arab terrorists, originally trained in

murder by Britain, struggled against the British occupiers; after the war, Jewish terrorists struggled also. Jewish military units such as Haganah, Irgun, and Stern smuggled in weapons for the fight for freedom, and on July 22, 1946 blew up the British headquarters in Jerusalem in the King David Hotel. The more British troops that arrived were the more British coffins sent home until finally in 1947 the British evacuated all civilians, and in 1948 secretly abandoned Palestine. On May 14, 1948 Israel declared its independence; American recognition followed 11 minutes afterward. The surrounding Arab powers immediately advanced as war broke out; in hard-fought battles Transjordan took Jerusalem. Britain released the Zionists it was holding in concentration camps on Cyprus; Zionists and volunteers came from all over to finance the project, but soon after withdrew. Nasser defied and astounded them by nationalizing the Suez Canal, under international law perfectly legal, and offering to pay for the canal. Britain’s Eden considered Nasser a fascist like Mussolini and secretly plotted to have Israel invade Egypt so Britain and France could intervene and retake the canal. The Israeli indeed advanced into Egypt; the British and French destroyed the Egyptian air force and on Nov. 5 invaded Egypt. But Egypt blocked the canal and the outraged Arab neighbors began a very effective oil embargo; prices skyrocketed and the US insisted that Britain withdraw. Once again, the great powers had played out their power games in the Middle East. The Suez crisis was a turning point in British and Middle Eastern history; while militarily Nasser was defeated his defiance of Britain” Let the imperialists choke on their rage! “-had brought him to the peak of his popularity in the Arab world; and as the Arab powers rallied to his cause Israel’s future again became problematic.