

The Voyage of “Bonim VeLochamim” [Builders and Fighters]

“Bonim VeLochamim” sailed from the port of Bakar, Yugoslavia on 18th February 1948, carrying 1002 Ma’apilim. Her commander was Moshe Rabinowitz and Pinchas “Pinko” Dafni accompanied the Ma’apilim. The Gideoni, (wireless operator) was Shimshon Lotan (see editor’s note). A British scout plane discovered the vessel on 28th February, when it was opposite the shore of Nitzanim and it was soon after overtaken by a British destroyer. One hour later she was surrounded by five British destroyers that accompanied her to Haifa. Since the British mandate was coming to its inglorious end, the Ma’apilim did not resist capture. On the following day the Ma’apilim were transferred to two deportation ships and brought to the Cyprus detention camps.

This was the second sailing with Ma’apilim for the vessel, whose original name had been Rondine. On its first trip in early 1946 it had been named the “Enzo Sereni”. This second sailing had been possible because the British freed the vessel that had been kept captive for a year and a half. (Details of this episode are found in the article about the voyage of the “Enzo Sereni”).

(Compiled by Tzvi Ben-Tzur)



Moshe Rabinowitz, a key player in the La Spezia incident and commander of the “Berl Katznelson”, “Palmach” and “Builders and Fighters”



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