

The Voyage of the “Henrietta Szold”

This was a small vessel named Arites Salas, purchased in Greece. Its name was altered to “Henrietta Szold” in honor of the American Zionist activist and founder of the Hadassah Women’s Association. This vessel left Athens, Greece on July 30th 1946, carrying 396 Ma’apilim. This was one of the few voyages where two ships worked together: The “Henrietta Szold” was accompanied by a smaller vessel, “Rafi”, which carried 140 Ma’apilim. (Two months previous, the “Haviva Reik” and “Rafi” had combined their passengers.) Rafi was named in honor of the Israeli parachutist, Rafael Reis, who was caught by the Nazis in Slovakia and executed in 1944.

The sea was very rough and the engine of the vessel cut out. The “Henrietta” was forced to seek shelter near the island of Sirina. The inhabitants of the island refused to allow them to stay and demanded they leave. The vessel left and found shelter at a neighboring island, Camilla Nisi. The “Rafi” took parts of the engine with her to Greece for repairs and waited until the job was completed. Six days later both vessels resumed their course, when about 150 miles from Palestine the Ma’apilim of the “Rafi” transferred to the “Henrietta Szold” and the Greek crew returned to Greece with the “Rafi”. The vessel was captured by the British and became the first, together with the vessel “Yagur”, whose Ma’apilim were deported to Cyprus.

(Compiled by Tzvi Ben-Tzur)



The Henrietta Szold surrounded by British patrol boats