

The Voyage of the “Haviva Reik”



This vessel was so named in honor of Haviva Reik (RIP, pictured here), the Palmach parachutist who was dropped into Slovakia in German-held territory. She was caught and killed by the Nazis.

In June 1946, the vessel left from Cape Sounio, Greece, carrying 343 Ma'apilim. As in other voyages, there was to be cooperation between two vessels, and the vessel “Rafi”, carrying 119 Ma'apilim left harbor at the same time.

The “Rafi” was named in honor of the parachutist Raphael Reis (RIP, pictured right), who was also dropped into Slovakia in 1944 and was caught and killed by the Nazis.



The commander of the “Haviva Reik” was Arie (Kippy) Kaplan and the Gideoni - Shalom Burstein. The commander of the “Rafi” was Shmuel (Samek) Yanai and the Gideoni was Avraham Lichovski.

On June 5th, the Ma'apilim of the “Rafi” with Samek were transferred to the “Haviva Reik”. The “Rafi” with the foreign crew and Avraham Lichovski went back to Greece, where they waited for **two** months, before making another voyage, using similar tactics, with the vessel “Henrietta Szold”.

There were 462 Ma'apilim crowded on to the “Haviva Reik” when she was approaching Palestine. She was discovered on June 7th by a British destroyer that butted her with force. On June 8th, soldiers boarded her quickly, overpowered the crew and towed the vessel into Haifa, where the Ma'apilim hauled up a big poster that read: “Keep the Gates Open Because We Are Not the Last Ones to come!” The Ma'apilim were brought to the Atlit detention camp, but the Palyamnikim mingled with the harbor employees, using false papers of identification, which had been prepared in advance.

(Compiled by Tzvi Ben-Tzur)

