

The Voyage of the “Natan B”



The vessel “Nettuno”, which had been “Natan A”, now became “Natan B” and was ready to take on its second group of Ma’apilim, less than one month after she had returned to Italy. This time her commander was Israel Rotem (pictured here) and the Gideonim was Yechezkel Stern (Shavit). Another fellow who belonged to “Nakam” accompanied him.ⁱ (He remained anonymous)

The vessel sailed from Naples on September 24th 1945, carrying 73 Ma’apilim. She arrived on October 1st at the shore of Shfayim, without being spotted by the British. The Ma’apilim were debarked with the aid of small boats. Once again she returned to Italy taking with her 15 Gideonim and more equipment.

When she returned to Italy, the vessel was taken into custody by the Italians, due to pressure applied by the British and with the aid of the ship agent, from whom the vessel had been purchased, who betrayed the trust of Ha’Mossad Le’Aliya Bet. This same agent made up for his former betrayal three years later, when he disclosed to Ha’Mossad Le’Aliya Bet that he had leased the vessel “Arjiro” to the Syrians, so that they would be able to move 8,000 Czech rifles to Syria. On the basis of his information the whole “Pirate” operation was planned.

(Compiled by Tzvi Ben-Tzur)

ⁱ a group formed by Abba Kovner at the end of WW II, consisting of former rebels of the Ghetto. Their aim was to kill former SS men.

