

**Hilb, Gad** – Ship's Captain  
 Nickname: Aviv  
 Born 1924 in Mannheim, Germany  
 Made Aliya in 1926  
 Mobilized for Aliya Bet in 1946 in the USA

### **This is the Way it Was**

#### **Summary of C. V. until Mobilized**

1938 – Completed formal education, 8 years of schooling. On August 31, 1938, when I was 14 ½ years of age I went to work as a deckhand on the Israeli ship “Amal” and served on it for two years. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, 1939 World War II broke out. In November, 1940 the tragedy of the sinking of the “Patria” took place in the harbor of Haifa. I saw it happen as I sat in a bus that was riding down from the Carmel into lower Haifa. I was looking for a job on another ship, but jobs were very difficult to obtain in those days. At the end of the month there was a notice that a big passenger ship was looking for sailors. Since it was rumored that the ship was to be used to deport the ma’apilim of the “Atlantic”, no Israeli volunteered. However, three weeks later 10 sailors, and I among them, joined the crew of the “Verbania”, a British merchant ship (formerly Italian, but seized as a war prize by the British).

December, 1940 – October, 1941, I was a seaman on the “Verbania” on a 9 month voyage from Haifa to London with a stopover at Port Louis in Mauritius (without any connection to the deportees of the “Atlantic”, who were kept in a detention camp on this island.) Later we made a voyage around the Cape of Good Hope to North America and from there, traveled in a convoy of 120 ships to Great Britain.

From October 1941 – March 1942 (6 months) we Israelis waited in London in vain, as per instructions of the owners of the “Verbania”, to be returned to Haifa. This promise was never fulfilled. In London I was officially accredited with the rank of Able Seaman (AB), and received training DEMS as an anti-aircraft gunner for the defense of merchant ships.

From April 2, to May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1942, I served as a seaman, together with Ephraim Tzuk and another Israeli, on the “Koenjit”, a Dutch cargo ship that sailed from Liverpool to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and whose ultimate destination was Port Suez, via the Cape of Good Hope. On 12<sup>th</sup> of May, 1942 the “Koenjit” was sunk in the Atlantic Ocean when hit by a torpedo fired from a German submarine, the “U-156”, (under the command of the champion of German U-boat commanders, Werner Hartenstein). This occurred about 500 miles east of the Caribbean Islands. For the next 7 days I and 23 other sailors sat in a lifeboat until we reached Roseau, in Dominica on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May. This was a small island belonging to Great Britain. Ephraim Tzuk and another Israeli were rescued in another lifeboat and picked up by a tanker at sea that brought them to New York. In July 1942 I was taken by an American passenger ship from Dominica to New Orleans and from there I traveled by train to New York.

From September 1942 – August 1946 (4 years) I served as second mate on six American cargo ships in voyages between ports in the USA, Great Britain, and North Africa (the landing by the US Army at Oran), Northern Europe (bombardments by V1's and V2's of the port of Antwerp), Australia, Papua – New Guinea, the Philippines, Okinawa, Guam and other places.

### **Drafted for Action for “Aliya Bet”**

In order to somehow keep contact between Israeli seamen, I placed a diary in the desk of Yosef Israeli, the representative of the Hechalutz movement in the USA, and a member of Kibbutz Afikim, in 1942. This was a notebook in which any Israeli seaman could note details of present service, including the ship he was serving on, and his fleet postal address. While working as second mate on the American ship, “John S. Casement”, I received a letter from Yosef when the ship was in Buckner Bay, Okinawa. In response to the letter, when the voyage ended in Oakland (San Francisco), in August of 1946, I took a train to New York where I met Zeev (Dani) Shind, who represented the Mosad for Aliya Bet in the States. He hinted that he wanted me to join a crew of some ship for an illegal Zionist operation. I had been absent from Palestine for some 5½ years and for much of that time had been a lonely wandering Jew, so that I had almost no knowledge on the subject of illegal Aliya. Now I found myself volunteering and assigned to the ship “Ulua” (the “Chaim Arlosoroff”). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, 1946, in a secret ceremony on the ship in the port of Baltimore, I, together with Ephraim Tzuk and a group of Jewish American volunteers, were sworn into the “Hagana” by Yaakov Dostrovsky (later to become Yaakov Dori, the first COMINCH of the IDF).

### **My Activity in Aliya Bet**

August 1946 – 28 February 1947: I was captain of the “Ulua” (“Chaim Arlosoroff”). On the 15th of October, 1946 we left the port of Baltimore and sailed to Ponta Delgada in the Azores, where we loaded fuel. From there we sailed to Marseilles, where we spent 7 weeks preparing the ship to carry 1,350 ma'apilim. Here, I first became aware of the tremendous activity of the Mosad for Aliya Bet and met the fine group of Israelis who were involved in the work. There was Gideon “Gedda” Shochat and Shmarya “Rudy” Tzameret. In Marseilles we were joined by the one who was to command the voyage for the “Hagana”, Aryeh “Lova” Eliav and four men of the Palyam: Moshe “Musik” Gidron (the Gideoni, radio operator), Nissan Levitan, Yisrael “Srulik” Auerbach and Tzvi “Miri” Katznelson. An officer and four seamen, all Spaniards, were also hired for the voyage.

The “Ulua” departed from the port of Marseilles on the 31st of December, 1946 and went through the Straits of Gibraltar on January 1, after refueling. She went up to Sweden by way of the Skagerrak and Kattagat (not by way of the Kiel Canal as has been wrongly published in a number of places). We entered the port of Copenhagen to take on supplies and to bide time. We then went through the Strait of Oresund and reached the small port of Trelleborg in southern Sweden. We loaded 664 young people who were survivors of the Holocaust and who arrived there in a first class train. There were about 500 girls and 160

young men. When we sailed southwards we entered the port of Le Havre where we again refueled and took on fresh water, and for the same reason put into Algiers. We then stalled in the region of the port of Skikda, Algeria, while awaiting instructions of the Mosad as to where to go next. We also had a bit of repair work to do on our boiler. We then continued to Sousse in western Tunisia and to Gallipoli in the Gulf of Taranto, in the boot of Italy. There, we also took aboard Leizer, Yisrulik and Dani. They were Alon's (Yehuda Arazi's) boys and they were to help us in taking aboard more ma'apilim at our next stop, the shore near Metaponto, on the western end of the Bay of Taranto.

On the evening of the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, 1947 we traversed the 54 miles to the shores of Metaponto in the company of another small boat that worked for the Mosad.

A cable about 60 meters long was fixed from the ship to the shore and another 734 Ma'apilim were loaded onto the ship while Yehuda Arazi and Ada Sereni watched the operation from the ship. Among those ma'apilim were 50 "orphans of Salvino". We also took on board Yechezkel Maoz, a Palyamnik, and two returning soldiers; Avraham(Avrum) Shavit and Yaakov(Yankale) Arnon. Yehuda, Ada and the three Alon's boys left the ship and on the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> of February, 1947 we pulled away from shore to sea with a total of 1,398 ma'apilim, 27 members of the crew and 8 men of the Mosad for Aliya Bet (1,433 souls).

On February 27<sup>th</sup> the "Ulua" was discovered by a plane of the RAF, and soon encountered the warship, "HMS Chieftain". An exchange of signaling then followed between me and the "Chieftain's" commanding officer. I said that their blinding us, with their bright light, was preventing us from continuing our journey safely, and was a breach of international law. They shut down their bright searchlight. I then told them a "cock and bull" story that we had picked up people at sea from a shipwreck, and were carrying them at their request, to Palestine.

In his report to the Admiralty for the month of February, the commander of the British vessel saw fit to remark on the very correct use of the signal code as used by warships: "The Illegal signaled using naval procedure that...". He also recounted the "fairy tale" about our ship rescuing people at sea: "... but had rescued some survivors from a Jewish refugee ship en route whom she intended to land at Tel Aviv".

That evening we sailed slowly down along the coast from the north, in the company of five ships of the British navy: "St. Austell Bay", "Welfare", "Chevron", "Rowena" and "Chieftain". We were at the head of the convoy. In the early morning of the 28<sup>th</sup>, the "Ulua" made a sudden dash for shore at full speed, surprising the British and dashing towards the port of Haifa. The Star of David was now flying from the mast and all the ma'apilim sang Hatikvah. A series of maneuvers and counter-maneuvers followed, between the "Ulua" and two of the British ships that tried to squeeze the "Ulua", now the "Chaim Arlosoroff", between them. During this maneuver, two officers and a number of British sailors jumped onto our ship and hand-to-hand fighting took place between them

and the ma'apilim. When the marines threw tear gas into the engine room, Ephraim Tzuk and his men were forced to evacuate, but not before the ship ground to a halt on the rocks of Ras-el-Krum opposite Bat Galim. (Unfortunately, a British camp was located there. Today this is a training base of the Israeli Navy). Several of the ma'apilim from Trelleborg jumped into the water and got to shore where they were picked up by British soldiers and later placed together with those who had remained on the ship. All the passengers and crew of the "Ulua" had arrived safely on this, the longest voyage by any ship during the entire period of Aliya Bet. The voyage had taken 34 days, the ship had traveled a distance of 4,500 nautical miles, and had called at 5 ports and 3 other stops. From Baltimore to Haifa, the ship had covered 10,300 miles and called at 13 ports or other points of call. There were no breakdowns of the engines or navigational mishaps.

When the voyage of the "Ulua"- "Chaim Arlosoroff" was over and the British had taken over the stranded ship, I was left without any instructions as to what to do, where to go, or what the rest of the crew was supposed to do. It was a situation of "every man for himself". Ephraim Tzuk and the American volunteers were arrested by the British and sent to the prison in Haifa. The 3 fellows of the Palyam hid in a "slick" that they had prepared below deck, were taken off the ship the following night and swam ashore to Bat Galim. I left the bridge and mingled with the ma'apilim. I was transferred to a British landing craft and brought to the harbor of Haifa and then to the deportation ship "Ocean Vigour". The ship took us to Famagusta, Cyprus, and from there we were interned in the camps

As I had been absent from Palestine most of the time since 1938, when I was 14½, and all during the years of WW II, I had never had the good fortune to be a member of a youth movement (except for a few months in Hatzofim). I was also, not a member of the Hagana or the Palmach or the Palyam. As a result, while I was on the bridge of the "Ulua" I was not too familiar with the Mosad for Aliya Bet. Despite the six months that I had spent with the other members of the Mosad, I had not known these men previously, nor did they know me; now we were thrown together in the detention camp. This situation made things difficult and delayed my being freed from the camp; I was a lone wolf.

After I had been identified in the camp, I was smuggled out on a deportation ship which was about to return to Haifa. Once there the Mosad was to get me off the ship and out of the port. This did not work out and I was taken with all the other ma'apilim to the detention camp at Atlit.

Here again, at Atlit, was a repetition of the same story.

I knew no one and no one knew me. It took several days for me to make contact, or for Mosad people to make contact, with me. I was then smuggled out of the camp in a van that brought food supplies. I was directed to the offices of the Mosad for Aliya Bet on HaNamal Street in Haifa. There I made the acquaintance of the admirable Davidka Nameri and taken home.

In June, 1947 I was sent with a false identity and false papers as a passenger on a Romanian passenger ship "Transylvania", from Haifa to Marseilles. I took part in the activity surrounding the deportation of the "Exodus 1947". When the three deportation ships were at Port de Bouc I was in the crew of the small motor launch which went out every day, circled the ships and exhorted the ma'apilim not to be tempted by the British to leave the ship in a French port.

On 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947 I was appointed captain of the "Pan York" with a crew consisting of 3 professional Israeli officers (me, Ephraim Tzuk and Werner Salomon). There were three other officers, six experienced Spanish seamen, and 7 American Jewish volunteers. There were also 3 men of the Mosad for Aliya Bet, Nissan Levitan, Reuven (Pupchen) Oren and Shlomo Hans Rosen. The ship sailed at first, in order to try to fool the British, to the port of Safi in Morocco. There, we took on a load of phosphate which was unloaded at Brest, in northern France and at Rouen, which was up the Seine River. The ship then took on fuel near Bordeaux, in the estuary of the Gironde River and once again appeared in Marseilles to take on various supplies and equipment. Geda Shochat then also joined the ship.

From the 10<sup>th</sup> of October to the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1947, This included the 29<sup>th</sup> of November decision of the UN regarding the division of Palestine into two states. The "Pan York" spent two and a half months in the port of Constanza, Romania, in order to prepare for carrying 7,500 ma'apilim. Its sister ship, the "Pan Crescent" under the command of Yitzchak "Ike" Aharonovitch was waiting for the same treatment as well. While there, Yosef (Yossi) Hamburger, the CEO of the operation involving these two ships, joined us. With him came the Palyamnik, Akiva Offenbach. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December the two ships left Constanza and sailed to Burgas, Bulgaria. 7,600 ma'apilim boarded each vessel upon arrival at the port by train. The whole operation of loading 15,200 ma'apilim took 36 hours.

The "Pan Crescent" and the "Pan York" left the port of Burgas on 26<sup>th</sup> of December. They went through the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles to the Aegean Sea. As soon as they left the Dardanelles two ships of the British Navy that had been waiting for them tailed them constantly, and in a short time, another 4 ships joined them, all under the command of the admiral on the cruiser "Mauritius". The "Pan York" led the convoy that traveled in perfect formation. I made certain to inform the British of our route and every time we changed azimuth I signaled clearly, either by flags or by blowing our horn, as was customary in convoys. As had been agreed between the Jewish Agency and the British Government, and as per instructions of the Mosad for Aliya Bet, our two ships were to obey the commands of the British admiral. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of December at 15:00 hours and after an exchange to ensure the safety of the crews of the two ships, they stopped one mile from the port of Famagusta and an officer and a number of sailors, who came from the Mauritius in a motor launch, boarded our ship.

Our second mate, Werner Salomon, received them and accompanied them. as was customary, to the bridge. There, we stood waiting to see what would be the next step. There was Yossi, me, Steve, Nissan, Willie Rostoker and others. In an official sounding exchange we handed over our ship to the British; that is we handed over the helm and the engine telegraph. It became clear almost immediately that for the sake of the safety of the passengers, it would not be wise to pass control of the ship to the British, so this was only a formality. We were actually still in control, and we ran the ship. The same thing happened aboard the "Pan Crescent" with a crew that boarded it from the ship "Phoebe"; so both ships continued their parade to Famagusta in Cyprus. As soon as we arrived the following morning, I descended to the pier with Werner Salomon, and there, on shore, I had a conversation with the British admiral, Rear Admiral Richard Victor Symonds-Taylor D.S.C. (Naval Authority): I told the admiral in no uncertain terms that if we were not given, in writing, a guarantee for the personal safety of the crew, they would abandon their stations and the responsibility for the passengers would be on Britain's shoulders. The food, sanitation, air flow to the holds, etc. for the 15,000 passengers would be Great Britain's responsibility. We needed fuel immediately to keep the engines going and that had to be supplied before everything.

The Admiral could not give his answer on the spot, but very shortly after our exchange a destroyer tied up to us and started filling our tanks with fuel. We could also see activity on shore and it was obvious that the Governor of Cyprus and other authorities had been notified. On the following day a letter was presented to us from "Your Obedient Servant Commissioner Famagusta". A warrant for the arrest of the ship came with this and both were signed by the Governor of Cyprus. I decided not to act exactly as in accordance with what was the rule for the Palyamniks; but to remain with the ship. I and the first mate, Esteban Hernandorena, the Basque later known as Captain Steve our very good friend, persuaded the 6 Spaniards and the 8 Bulgarian ma'apilim who had worked with them as crew, to remain on the ship and take care of it for us. A parallel story unfolded on the "Pan Crescent", under the command of Ike. All the Palyamniks and others who had accompanied the ma'apilim had already mingled and disappeared into their midst.

We marked time for four and a half months in the small anchorage at Boghaz, until the day the State was declared on May 14, 1948. On each ship there was a permanent squad of soldiers and a British officer. Nearby, two British warships lay at anchor. (These warships remained there even after our ships were "freed", and until the middle of June.) We had no contact with the Mosad for Aliya Bet during this period and were completely "on our own". We developed good relations with the officers of the British vessels, whom we would sometimes invite for a cup of tea or a drink. On the advice of the representatives of the Jewish Agency and the Joint on the island (Maurice Laub, Yehoshua Leibner and Rabbi Yaakov Shreibaum), Ike and I approached the owner of a local travel agency, the legendary Prodomos Papavassiliou, a staunch supporter of Israel (later on and until the present, the representative of the Zim

Company in Cyprus), and asked him to take care of the supply of foodstuffs and other necessities for the two "Pans".

On the day that the State of Israel came into existence, there was an emotional ceremony on board the ship, which was still at Boghaz. There was a ceremonial drill with Nimrod Eshel presiding, and everyone sang Hatikva. There were representatives of the Jewish Agency, the Joint, Prodromos Papavassiliou and other invited guests, and I raised the Star of David to the head of the mast. That same day we changed the name of the home port of the vessel from Panama to Haifa.

For the duration of our stay in Cyprus we, the crew, enjoyed complete freedom of movement. We carried false passports and false identities which we issued on the ships. We went ashore whenever it pleased us, entered or left the camps at our own discretion, and wandered about the island as we pleased. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, 35 days after Israel became a State, and without orders from anyone or any organization, both ships left the island and headed for Haifa. The British thought that we did not have enough fuel to get very far. The ships guarding us had supplied us each time with very little fuel, but they filled us up quite often and our tanks were almost full.

We attempted to make contact with some authority in Israel but were unable to do so. When we came fairly close to the coast a British warship came out to meet us and signaled that we had been given a spot where we were to berth. I made great efforts to prevent the British from boarding my ship and all the while I was trying to contact the Mosad for Aliyah Bet without success. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of June I was taken by force, by an officer and a squad of soldiers, from my ship and brought under arrest to the British camp at Bat Galim. Two days later I was taken, handcuffed and escorted by soldiers, to the British Military Court and sentenced for not being willing to read or sign a warrant forbidding me to move the "Pan York" without British military authority. I was defended by the lawyer Solly Friedman and after payment of a fine. was released.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June I was back at my old station as Captain of the "Pan York", whose name had been changed to "Kommemiyut". I continued to serve on that ship during the War of Independence and until the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1949. During that period I made nine voyages and carried 30,000 olim and numerous boxes of "Articles of Olim" from the ports of Famagusta, Naples, La Ciotat, Marseilles and Bakar, Yugoslavia, to the port of Haifa.

### **My C.V. After 1948**

**1949-1950:-** I took a refresher course and passed the government exams in New York and in Haifa, and was accredited as a Captain "capable of long voyages". As I had been at sea for ten years – during WW II and during the period of Aliya Bet - I had had no free time until 1949 to take the tests necessary for government confirmation of the rank of Captain.

**1950-1954:-** I served on cargo ships of the Israeli Zim Line. One year I was first mate under the command of Captain Esteban Hernandorena and after that I was captain on 3 other ships.

**1955-1989:-** For 34 years I was in charge of a department of the Zim Company that overlooked the behavior at sea of Zim ships. At times I also went to sea in command of 4 cargo ships and two passenger ships. There were also two periods when I was the representative of Zim in London and as such, oversaw the operation of the fleet of the Black Star Line of Ghana. From 1975 to 1981 I oversaw the operation of British ships of the Haverton Shipping Line of London.

In 1975 I was loaned by Zim to carry out a secret mission of procurement, and sailed from a European port to Haifa as captain of a ship that did not belong to Zim and did not sail under the Israeli flag. Since my retirement in 1989 I have been active within the framework of the USO, the contact offices with the US 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet, and assist visiting seamen in visits to the port of Haifa. I volunteer for the Civil Guard, and occasionally give talks to groups of Israeli visitors and tourists about "the good old days" of Aliya Bet at the Atlit Detention Camp. I sometimes also do the same for cadets at the naval officers training base in Haifa. I am married and the father of three children and grandfather of four.

### **Summary**

The successful voyages of the "Ulua" – "Chaim Arlosoroff" and the "Pan York" – "Kibbutz Galuyot" in their bringing thousands of ma'apilim to Palestine safely, and a bit later, of the "Kommemiyut", to Israel, was due to the devotion and cooperation of each member of the team, no matter the task he performed. Had it not been for the professionalism and devotion of Ephraim Tzuk and his engine room team, we would not have been able to maintain satisfactory conditions for the thousands of ma'apilim on board and the ships would not have gone ahead one mile.

There is such a thing as shipboard routine, which is particularly important on long voyages such as that of the "Ulua" and the "Pan York". This routine is necessary for a peaceful and secure voyage. It was due to the unlimited devotion of the 24 American and Canadian volunteers (among them, the first mate, Arthur Bernstein, chief helmsman Willie Rostoker, the bosun, Irving Weingarten, and the radio operator, Al Potashnick). Nor can we forget the contribution of the fourteen Spanish seamen (including Captain Esteban Hernandorena) and the group of Bulgarian ma'apilim who volunteered at the beginning of 1948 on the "Pan York".

Who knows what would or could have happened were it not for the conduct of Lova Eliav. He sometimes acted without instructions from above, but used intuition and common sense in dealing with shore authorities and others that the "Ulua" came in contact with, at eight ports en route. He ensured that the "Ulua" received everything that was necessary for the continuation of our voyage, all within the framework of the sleek operation of the TTG. The voyage of the "Ulua" could not have been as successful as it was without his contribution.



On the voyage of the “Pan Crescent” and the “Pan York” it was Yossi Hamburger who made sure that relations between the ma’apilim and the crew were friendly and congenial. He also facilitated cooperation between the two Pans, their crews and their accompanists. It was he more than anyone who succeeded in finding a modus vivendi with the commander of the British ships that followed us. So it came about that this voyage with thousands of passengers came to an end with no one injured.

The 12 Palyamniks who accompanied us worked around the clock under difficult conditions and for an extended period of time on the long voyage of the “Ulua”. Their efforts kept the ma’apilim orderly and all the services for them functioning properly, which helped bring the voyage to a successful conclusion. This included three births which took place on the ship while at sea. I would also wish to point out, in conclusion, that the sailors of His Majesty’s Navy who escorted our ship played their roles in as humane and decent a way as possible, despite the strict orders of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, our sworn enemy, Ernest Bevin.

### **Vignettes**

“**Amal**” – When the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War broke out in September 1939, there were 50 Israeli men, women and children on the island of Cyprus. We had the honor to be the ones to pick them up at night, under orders of strict blackout, and bring them from Famagusta to Haifa. We strayed from our course of Iskander – Alexandria, polished one of the tween-decks where we usually carried sheep, and took the people instead, and tried to make the journey as comfortable as possible for them.

“**Koenjit**” – When this ship was sunk, the U-Boat came onto the surface and the commander exchanged words with the survivors in the liferaft. As a Jew, and an Israeli Jew I sat and prayed silently until the sub took off and went underwater. Only then did I allow myself a sigh of relief.

“**Ulua**” – On the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, 1947 and in broad daylight in the Bay of Biscay, a fleet of His Majesty’s Navy sailed past our vessel on their way to a state visit in South Africa. The King and Queen and their two daughters, Elisabeth, (the present Queen) and Margaret were all on board the “Vanguard”, which led the convoy. It is curious to note that the “Vanguard” did not notice who or what our ship was, as we are not mentioned in the historical diaries of that event.

I corresponded with Buckingham Palace to gather information on this, but they had no knowledge or report about us. There seemed to have been a serious lapse in British Naval Intelligence.

It turned out that the British did not know of our call at Metaponto either.

When the “Ulua” entered the Mediterranean after the stormy Bay of Biscay and the cold Atlantic, we came across a Spanish fishing vessel and bought a number of cases of fresh fish. The girls we had taken on in Sweden, were now allowed on deck for the first time, and a number of them eagerly went to work

preparing the fish for the following meal, while sunning themselves in the warm Mediterranean sun.

When the “Chaim Arlosoroff” broke for the shore near Haifa, the bosun, Irving Weingarten, a volunteer from the USA, ran to the bridge and climbed the mast to protect the Star of David flying there. The British boarded the ship at the same time and an officer of the British ship “Rowena” (Lieutenant John Evelyn O’Leary), stood on the bridge and fired one shot in the air above his head in order to restore order among the passengers. He did not notice the sailor in the mast above and his bullet lodged in Irving’s behind. Irving “stood his ground” on the mast, but this episode brings a smile to the face of anyone and everyone who hears it.

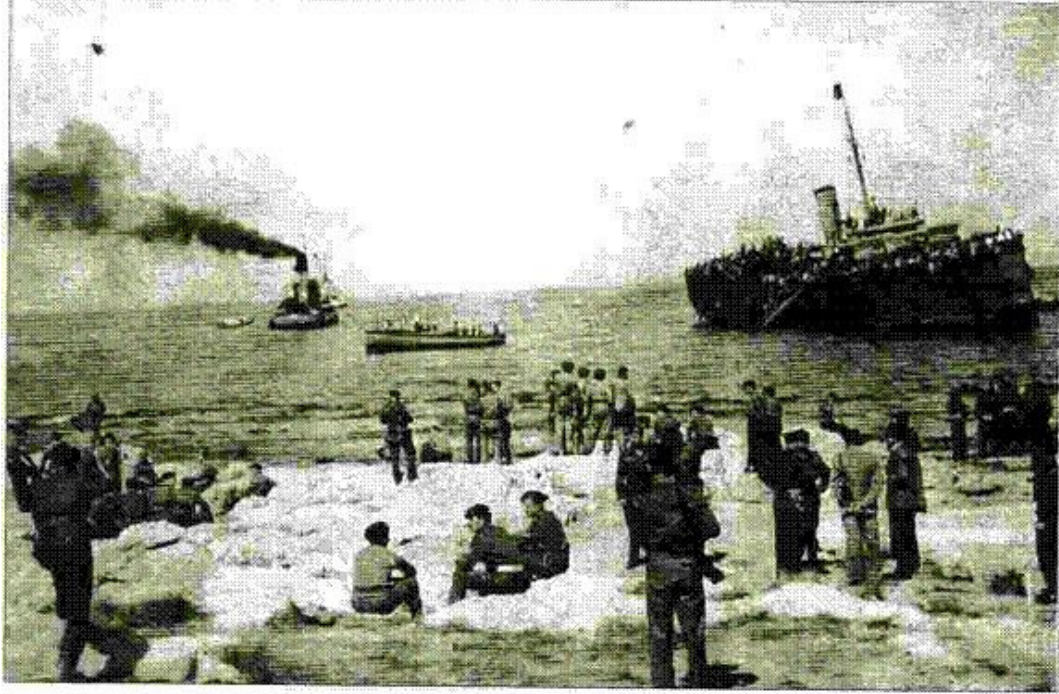
Until the moment the door opened to my home on the Carmel in Haifa, my parents, sister and brother knew nothing of my having volunteered and taken part in Aliya Bet. Nor did they know that I, their long lost son, was the captain of the “Chaim Arlosoroff” when it purposely ran aground on the shore of Bat Galim. They thought that I was a second mate on some American ship somewhere in mid-ocean. They were very surprised to hear from a bus driver that he was ‘delivering’ me to their door on orders of the Mosad for Aliya Bet. This was after an absence of six years. Further, I was ordered by the Mosad not to sleep at home, as there was a Jewish officer who worked in the immigration department of the British, and lived across the street from my parents. He was liable to report me to the authorities. After a short visit with the family I left them as I had been told to do.

**“Pan York”** – (“Kommemiyut” – “Kibbutz Galuyot”) When I came to take charge of the “Pan York” the Spanish seamen and their Captain, the legendary Captain Steve, were already on board. Captain Steve thought of resigning as I seemed too young for him to work under me. After a short time, he saw that I was an experienced professional and familiar with the customs of the large, new navies of the Allies. Also, I was not one to stand on matters of protocol and honor or unnecessary discipline, and he finally agreed to stay. In the course of the years we not only became a good team but also became very good friends.

While the two “Pans” were at anchor in Boghaz, Cyprus. Ike and I went to a government hospital in Nicosia for some purpose, and met several young Israeli nurses there who worked as midwives for the camps of ma’apilim. When we told them that we were the captains of the “Pan York” and the “Pan Crescent” one of them said: “If you are a captain, then I am Napoleon”. That is how young we still were. In time we became friends.

In early May Ike and I visited the ship “Kedma” in the port of Larnaka, as we wanted to have two flags ready for the day that Israel officially became a State. When we returned to shore from the ship, with the two little packages, we were accosted by Cypriot policemen and thrown into jail, in separate cells. The jailers were not impressed by our declarations that we were the captains of the “Pans”. They even made fun of us despite Ike’s threats that he would complain to the

American consul. Only when Prodomos Papavasiliou appeared two days later in the company of the director of the port of Famagusta, and attested to our being the captains of the two ships, were we freed. The four of us returned to Famagusta in Prodomos' car and joked about the incident.



האוניה "חיים ארלוזורוב" עם 1,348 מעפילים בחוף בת גלים בחיפה

**The ship Chaim Arlosoroff with 1,348 Ma'apilim in Haifa's Bat Galim beach**

No.: S.1/48

Tel.:

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,  
FAMAGUSTA.

2 Jan 48

To The Captain  
SS 'Pan York.

Sir,

I am directed by my Government to convey to you and your crew the following assurance.

"The crew of the Pan York is made up in part from professional seamen and in part from intending Jewish immigrants to Palestine who have volunteered to serve in the capacity of seamen. It is not the intention to arrest any of these persons for the part they have played to date in the mission of the Pan York. To the extent that intending Jewish immigrants volunteer to serve in the crews of the ships for the purpose of conveying them in due course to such destination as may be finally decided upon, they may be assured that they will be returned to Cyprus if they so wish and accepted for detention within the Jewish camps.

Professional seamen who undertake a similar task i.e. of serving in crews for the passage from Cyprus to their ultimate destination, may be assured that, (unless they commit some offence other than that in connexion with the recent voyage of the Pan York) they will not be arrested, whereas, on the contrary, every effort will be made by the appropriate authorities to repatriate them, if they wish, to the country from which the vessels departed or to such other destination as they may desire.

I remain Sir

Your obedient servant

COMMISSIONER FAMAGUSTA

מכתב התחייבות של ממשלת פאמגוסטה לצוותי האוניות "פאן יורק" ו-"פאן קרסנט"

**A letter from Famagusta's Commissioner to the crews of Pan York and Pan Crescent**

Detention Order

THE DETENTION (ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS  
SHIPS) LAW, 1948.

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DETENTION ORDER UNDER SECTION 3

...Winstar (Sgd)  
Governor.

I, the Governor, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 3 of the Detention (Illegal Immigrants Ships) Law, 1948, do hereby order that the ship PAN YORK accompanied to Cyprus on the 1st January, 1948, by H.M.S. Mauritius and certified to be an illegal immigrants ship by Rear Admiral Richard Victor Symonds-Taylor, D.S.O. (Naval Authority), Officer in Charge of the Escort, under certificate dated 2nd January, 1948, shall be detained in the territorial waters of the Colony.

2. Copies of this Order shall be posted up in not less than two conspicuous places on the above-mentioned ship with translated copies in the Jewish language.

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Made this 2nd day of January, 1948.

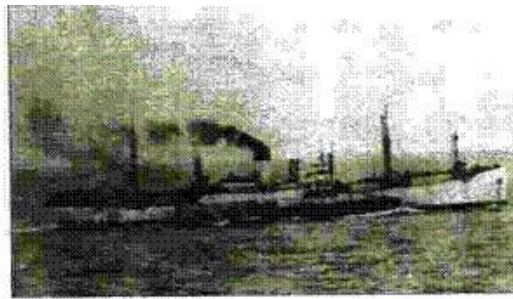
מכתב התחייבות של מושל פמגוסטה לצוותי האוניות "פאן יורק" ו-"פאן קרשנט"

A letter from Famagusta's Commissioner to the crews of Pan York and Pan Crescent



"פאן יורק" - היא "קיבוץ גלויות"

Pan York



"פאן קרשנט" - היא "עצמאות"

Pan Crescent