

## **The Voyage of the “Chaim Arlosoroff” (ex-Ulua)**

The “Ulua” had been an old American coastal vessel. It was bought in the summer of 1946 by a front company of Ha’Mossad Le’Aliya Bet and lay in the harbor of Baltimore for three months, where it was overhauled and assigned a crew of 27 men. Most of them were young Jewish American volunteers, headed by two Israeli professionals: the Captain Gad Hilb and the chief engineer Ephraim Tzuk. On October 16<sup>th</sup> 1946, an emotional ceremony was held on board, in which the volunteers were sworn into the ranks of the Hagana and on the following day, the vessel left harbor and sailed for Marseilles, France. During the months of November and December she was outfitted to carry 1,500 Ma’apilim. At this juncture, Lova Eliav, code name Arthur, who was an activist of Ha’Mossad Le’Aliya Bet came aboard to take command of the vessel. Accompanying him were the Palyamnikim Nissan Levitan, Israel Auerbach and Tzvi (Miri) Katzenelson. The Gideoni was Moshe Gidron.

On January 24<sup>th</sup> the vessel entered the port of Trelleborg, Sweden and took on 664 Ma’apilim; 500 of them were young girls, Holocaust survivors, who had arrived from Germany towards the end of the war, in a ‘deal’ arranged between Sweden and the Gestapo. On its long voyage to Palestine, the vessel had to make a number of port calls, in order to renew supplies. She also marked time for several weeks in Algerian waters, while plans for her future activity were decided. Original plans for her to meet the “Barak” and take its passengers had to be dropped, when the “Barak” proved unseaworthy and its engines broke down. Towards the end of February, she picked up an additional 734 Ma’apilim from the port of Metaponto, Italy. Among them were 50 children, referred to as the “Salvino children”. These were young orphans, Holocaust survivors who had been gathered from the village of Salvino, at a camp that was prepared for them by members of the Jewish Brigade. Three members of “The Gang” (ex soldiers of the Jewish Brigade), Avraham Shavit, Ya’akov Arnon and Yehezkel Ma’oz also joined the voyage. From this point onwards she sailed to Palestine under the name of “Chaim Arlosoroff”, named in memory of the leading member of the Yishuv and the head of the Political Section of the Jewish Agency, who was murdered by unknown assailants on the shore of Tel Aviv in 1933.

On February 27<sup>th</sup> the vessel was discovered by a British scout plane and on the following day a stiff battle broke out between the British forces and the Ma’apilim, lasting close to three hours. Approaching Haifa Bay area, the crew managed to direct the vessel onto the shore. Unfortunately, it happened opposite the large British base at Bat Galim. All the 1,398 Ma’apilim were caught and deported to Cyprus. Lova Eliav wrote a fascinating account of the voyage in the book: “The Ulua” – Arthur’s Story”, which also includes story of Lova and his wife-to-be – Tania, who was one of the girls the vessel picked up in Sweden.

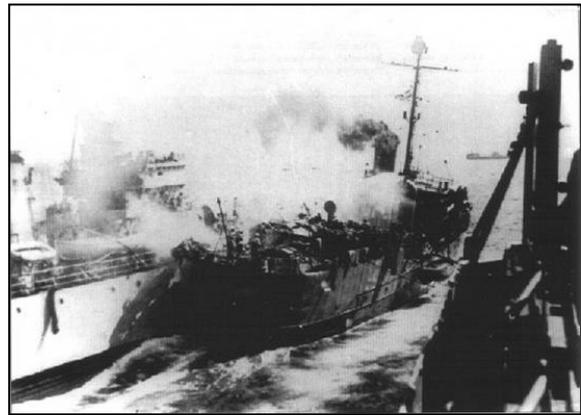
The story of this vessel is tied to the one known attempt of the Revisionists to send a vessel of Ma’apilim to Palestine, (aside from the “Ben Hecht”). An Italian Jew purchased a 60 ton vessel that was renamed the “David Raziell”, after the commander of the Etzel (an extreme right wing Jewish underground), who was killed in Iraq. 200 young people were put aboard this vessel under very difficult circumstances. A fire broke out and the vessel had to be cleared and brought in to a

shipyard. The Hagana and the Etzel reached an agreement and the youngsters from the "Raziel" were transferred to the "Chaim Arlosoroff".

(Compiled by Tzvi Ben-Tzur)



*The Ulua arriving at Marseilles, France*



*The battle on the Chaim Arlosoroff*



*British soldiers at Bat Galim, watching the Chaim Arlosoroff after the battle*