

Eliav, Lova  
 Nickname: Arthur  
 Born 1921 in Moscow, Russia  
 Came to Israel in 1925  
 Volunteered to the British Army in 1940  
 Drafted to the Mosad in 1945  
 Joined "The Gang" in 1946

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

### **Personal Memoirs**

We lived in "Little Tel Aviv" where I studied at the Herzlia Gymnasium. I was a member of the Hagana, starting with the riots of 1936, first in communications and then as a policeman in the special Jewish Police Force attached to the British Police. I was stationed near Holon and then at Givat Brenner and Ben Shemen, and lastly at Shfeya. I commanded a platoon of students in Jerusalem. In 1940 I enlisted in the British Army. I served first in an artillery unit and later in the Royal Engineers (R. E. 745). Most of the time I was in Israel, Egypt, the Western Desert and Italy.

### **The Period of Illegal Immigration**

Even during the war, the members of Hebrew units, including mine, helped Jews wherever they came in contact with them. At first this was with Libyan Jews whom we aided in setting up community institutions in Bengazi and Tripoli. We also helped to send some of their youngsters to Israel. When we reached Italy in 1943 we were able to aid, to a small extent, those Italian Jews who had been caught in the Holocaust.

In 1944 I was sent to take charge of a group of several hundred Jews who were allowed to immigrate legally to Palestine on the "Stephen Baturi". I returned and remained in Palestine after that, but then was summoned by Shaul Avigur (the head of all Aliya Bet operations) for work at Aliya Bet headquarters in Tel Aviv. At first my work was against the British forces in Palestine, both in the field of intelligence and in the field of sabotage directed against police stations along the coast.

In 1946, I and several other Palyamniks and Gideonim sailed to Italy on the "Ada". There I joined the group of men working with Yehuda Arazi. We worked together with "the Gang" that had been in the British Army and with other Palyam men who had joined them. Our job was to prepare ships for carrying immigrants and preparing camps to house the immigrants prior to sailing. At the end of that same year I was sent by order of Shaul Avigur to help organize Aliya from Belgium, and from there I was sent to Marseille where I was given command of the ship, the "Ulua". The whole story of the voyage of the "Ulua" which was later renamed the "Chaim Arlosoroff", was told by me in the book, "The Ulua". Here I shall just mention in brief that this ship, which had previously been an American

warship, was manned by Jewish-American volunteers and several Palyamniks, among them Uzi, Nissan and Miri. The captain was Gad Hilb and his first mate was Arthur Bernstein. The Gideoni was Musik and there were also several Spanish sailors.

At the port of Trelleborg in southern Sweden 700 refugees, remnants of the Holocaust and for the most part, young women, boarded the ship. Most of them had sought refuge in Sweden during the War. The ship sailed from Trelleborg at the beginning of January, 1947 to Le Havre, France. It left Le Havre and sailed into a storm in the Bay of Biscay but managed to continue and to reach the Mediterranean. There it put it at the Algerian ports of Philippeville and Susa. It then continued to the Italian port of Taranto where 700 more passengers were taken aboard as well as several Palyamniks and several members of "the Gang". Among these were Avraham Stern (Shavit) and Yechezkel Maoz.

The Ulua arrived close to the shore of Palestine in February, was discovered by a British plane and then surrounded by six British warships. After a short but fierce fight with the British, we beached the ship on the shore of Bat Galim, south of Haifa. All of the passengers were interned and exiled to Cyprus. The Ulua, which had been renamed as the "Chaim Arlosoroff" made the longest sea voyage of any of the Hagana ships. The immigrants on all the ships of the Hagana deserve a special award of honor. After all the trials and tribulations which they underwent during their years under the yoke of the Nazis. they still found the courage to volunteer to travel under the difficult conditions that existed on the Hagana ships, and to even do battle with the British Empire, in their desire to reach the shores of Eretz Israel and build a Homeland of their own.

It should also be pointed out that without the support of non-Jews in foreign countries, everything that was accomplished could not have been done without their aid. It was not only heads of governments and officials who gave assistance, but also sailors, fishermen, drivers, port workers and plain ordinary people who stretched out their hands to us and helped us when we needed it most.

I have a personal memoir of the journey which has been with me for more than 50 years. My wife Tania was among the women who boarded our ship in Sweden and we have been together ever since. Tania is also a survivor of the Holocaust and came from the city of Kovno, Lithuania. Her parents and sisters were victims of the Nazi atrocities but she was saved from the same fate by the Swedish Red Cross.

When the period of illegal immigration came to an end, with the establishment of the State of Israel and the outbreak of the War of independence, I participated in the battles to keep the road to Jerusalem open. Next, I was active in creating the Israeli Navy and at the conclusion of the War had reached the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Israeli Army or commander in the navy. In civilian life I devoted

many years to absorption of immigrants and their integration into Israeli society. I helped establish Moshav Nevatim in the Negev, of immigrants from Cochin, India. I was also among those who organized the establishment of settlements in the Lachish area of Israel and of the town of Arad in the Judean Desert.

I also served in the diplomatic corps of Israel in Moscow, Russia, as well as in Iran, Nicaragua, Kurdistan and Morocco. I served as a member of the Knesset for 14 years and a tour as General Secretary of The Mapai Labor Party. For the past twenty years I have worked as a teacher and have taught in schools in development towns in the Galilee and in the Negev. Since 1986 I have been active in building the youth village