

**Frank, Yaakov** (of blessed memory)

Born 23 March 1913 in the Old City, Jerusalem

Volunteered to serve on the Aliya Bet Ship, "Hagana"

Died 9 July 1993

Written by: Mina Frank

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

Yaakov was the son of a family of Rabbis. In his youth he volunteered for various operations of the Hagana against the British. Following a serious incident with the British, he was smuggled out of Palestine to the USA where he worked and studied during the period of WW II. When the United States entered the War, Yaakov volunteered for service and fought in the Marines on the Japanese front. He was wounded and sent back to the States.

When the War was over he joined a group of young Jewish volunteers that was organized to man two ships, the "Wedgwood" and the "Hagana". These were purchased by the Hagana for the purpose of sailing to Europe and taking survivors of the Holocaust from there to Palestine. Yaakov was assigned to the crew of the "Hagana". The "Hagana" entered the port of Marseilles and then began the work of preparing the ship to take the Ma'apilim. When readied, she sailed with about 1,000 passengers, survivors of the Holocaust, toward Palestine. When they had gone past Cyprus it was decided to transfer the Ma'apilim to a Turkish vessel ( the "Akbel." renamed the "Birya") which would continue toward Haifa, so that the "Hagana" could return to Europe and pick up another load of passengers.

The "Hagana" sailed back to Greece where it took on fuel and then continued to Yugoslavia. There, it took on 2,700 survivors of the Holocaust and sailed once again towards Palestine. When the "Hagana" was discovered by the British, it was taken in tow and brought to Haifa. From there the Ma'apilim were taken to the Atlit Detention Camp. Yaakov was set free shortly afterwards, returned to his home and started to rebuild his life.

He and his brother Avraham built a factory for springs called "Techno Springs". When the War of Independence began, he volunteered for the Givati Brigade and became second-in-command to Shimon Avidan, the Brigade Commander. In 1949 he was transferred to the Air Force and served as a contact man between the English-speaking volunteers of the Force and their Israeli commanders.

In 1951, in accordance with a request of Reuven Shiloach, he was assigned to Intelligence and sent to Iraq to organize Aliya from there.

When this job was over, he again returned to civilian life and joined the Avoda Party. In this capacity he became the National Chairman of "The Organization for Small Industry and Tradesmen". He held that position until he died. In his capacity as Chairman he also served on the City Council of Tel Aviv for many

years. In the years 1976 and 1977 he was a Member of the Knesset as a representative of the Avoda Party. He died in July 1993.