

Horev, Yisrael (Harkovsky) (of blessed memory)
 Born in 1918 in Russia, made Aliya in 1921
 Joined the nautical course of the Jewish Agency in 1939
 Joined the Palyam in 1943
 Died at Sdot Yam on 5th January 2000
 Written by his daughters: Adva, Dorit and Smadar

This is the Way it Was

Yisrael came to Palestine when he was 3 years old. The first years in the country were those of struggle to acclimatize and make a living. The family lived first in Jaffa, and then on Gordon St. in Little Tel Aviv. In his early teens Yisrael joined the Hagana and was a guard in the movie houses, with a pistol tucked in his clothing. Later, as a member in the Machanot HaOlim movement, he went for training at Givat Brenner and became a policeman whose duty it was to guard the railroad tracks. He became ill with malaria and was sent home. He and his friends then joined Sdot Yam and he went to work in the port; the idea being that Jews should do their own work.

When his hand was injured he was sent to the nautical course in Tel Aviv and that is how his love affair with the sea began. He and his friends helped unload Ma'apilim who arrived on the "Tiger Hill". It was there that he met a newly-arrived girl called Esther Sucrovitch who later became Esther Horev. The idea of work on the sea was at least as important as that on the land, and three men were chosen to work as seamen and Yisrael was one of them. He then wandered about the world on his first ship and on others, took part in the evacuation of Dunkirk, and after many adventures finally returned to the kibbutz. He was soon taken into the Palyam and became an instructor in courses at Sdot Yam. This is when he met Esther who was also a Palyamnik.

Yisrael recalls:

"When I returned from a voyage, Zalman Perach was waiting for me and suggested that I join the nautical company of the Palmach, which had just been formed. I arrived at Sdot Yam for my second course, so was used as an instructor in seamanship while learning theory with the others. As was the case with every platoon in the Palmach we earned our keep by working half-time for the kibbutz. I worked in the port and came back to the kibbutz to instruct the third course for small boat commanders. It was there that I met Esther who had been drafted to the Palyam to be in charge of supplies, act as treasurer, and in general, to be in charge of the welfare of the men. She knew how to use a sewing machine, and could sew sails. I would sew the rope around the edge of the sails. That is how our love story developed. I and my two buddies, Gad Kampinsky and Zeev Fried joined the crew of the coastal sailboat "The Hesitator" in order to gain experience at sea. While I was on shore one day, the boat left the harbor because of a storm and was smashed to pieces on the rocks. My companions were saved and in the evening we got together to toast their good luck. It was the 13th of the month and so it became our custom to

have a toast every 13th of the month. Later I sailed on the "Amos" that belonged to the "Atid" Company, together with several other Palyamniks.

In recognition of my approaching marriage on 20th June 1945, I was sent to Italy to prepare a ship and bring it to Palestine. Under the most difficult conditions we prepared a small vessel and brought 37 Ma'apilim on it to shore at Sdot Yam. They were unloaded without a hitch. This was the "Dalin" and it was the first vessel that arrived safely after the end of the Second World War.

That night my wife came to the ship and told me that she was pregnant, and I sailed shortly afterwards and took the vessel back to Italy. I was then sent to find where a vessel had landed that brought more emissaries from Palestine. I found that they were at the small port of Santa Maria. The map showed us five ports of that name, but we determined that they were at Santa Maria de Luca. When we met the emissaries it turned out that one of them was carrying false documents in the name of Yisrael Harkovsky. This happened to be Tzvi Netzer, my brother-in-law. On my own papers my name was Yanosh or Yona.

After a rather long stay of organizing ships for Ma'apilim in Italy, I again sailed about Christmas time, on a ship of Ma'apilim for Palestine. We had good communication with Palestine and arrived exactly on Christmas Day. We arrived at the Nahariya coast. Because of a moment's thoughtlessness and believing the coast in the area to be deep, I did not measure the depth and we went into shallow water as we approached the shore. I took a small boat but the sea was not calm and the boat overturned. Here I was, sitting on the shore with the boat dangling on the rocks and turning itself broadside into the waves and losing balance, all because of foolishness. I was at a loss for a solution and feared for all of the people on board. Someone suggested tying a rope from the ship to the shore and bringing the Ma'apilim in along the rope. I myself had no strength left, having rowed the boat by myself in the rough sea. Others carried out that idea and helped all the Ma'apilim to shore. Afterwards I heard that one woman had drowned. The ship was the "Chana Senesh", about which Alterman wrote in his 7th Column, "A Speech in Answer to an Italian Captain". I was supposed to be among the honored guests, but my wife was 7 months pregnant and had nothing suitable to wear for the occasion, so neither of us was at the celebration in honor of the unloading of the Ma'apilim of the "Chana Senesh".

After this episode I went to a course of the Palyam for naval officers. When this course was over I was once again sent to Europe, illegally. I was given a pass which allowed me to accompany those who were going to the Zionist Congress in Switzerland. That is; the pass allowed me to accompany them to the ship but to leave the ship before it left port. There were five of us illegals on board and I was the only kibbutznik. We were supposed to travel as stowaways. The other four did not succeed in hiding themselves and were removed from the ship. I happened to be wearing ordinary work clothes and ran into our commander, Yaakov Salomon, on the ship. He asked me what I was doing on a passenger ship in work clothes. He sent me to his cabin where he had an extra jacket and told me to take it and wear it so I would not stand out like a sore thumb. I put his

jacket on and his passport was in the pocket with his cabin number. Actually, there was a resemblance between us and in the passport photo. The one in charge of checking the passengers on the ship did have some suspicions about me and invited me to his office. He asked for my passport and my cabin number and accepted the verification. Yaakov was not able to use his passport for the rest of the trip because I had been identified as Salomon and he became the stowaway. We both managed somehow to reach the port of Genoa.

From Italy, I and two others who accompanied the ship, went by way of France to London. I was to pose as a British sergeant taking two offenders (the Palyamniks) for trial. We arrived in Paris and from there continued down to Marseilles. We went straight to the villa at St. Jerome where a camp for waiting Ma'apilim had been set up. I was put in charge of the camp but was relieved after a short while.

I was sent to another town to meet a Spanish captain.

I was informed that a Hagana ship was ready to load Ma'apilim in North Africa, and that the Israeli crew included an additional man accompanying the passengers and a Gideoni (radio operator).

Several things went wrong and we could not organize loading the ship properly. When we had about 400 on deck of the 700 who were supposed to board, local police showed up and we had to flee to sea. I was sick and found it difficult to get things organized after the storm which delayed us. We did not have sufficient water and coal on the vessel to reach Palestine, so I changed course and headed for Palermo. We arrived there safely. We bought what was needed and once again headed out to sea, but this time in the company of a British destroyer. We knew that if we were stopped at sea, our vessel would be sent back to Tunis, and if we were arrested near the shore of Palestine, we would be sent to Cyprus. That is what happened and I arrived in Cyprus as one of the maapilim. I was afraid that the British would be able to identify me because I was blond and did not look Tunisian. Next, it would not have been difficult to discover that I was Israeli. However, that did not happen and I remained in Cyprus for three months. The name of this ship was "Yehuda Halevi".

At the end of the War of Independence and the State had been founded, I was sent to bring Olim from Cyprus to Israel. This time our ship flew the Star of David."

The daughters continue:

Once the State was founded, father's travels came to an end and he devoted his time to his family and his home. There was his wife Esther and his three daughters, Adva, Dorit and Smadar. There was also Chaim who arrived as a boy after having survived the Holocaust, and also Avi and Yehuda, who grew up in Sdot Yam and our home became theirs. Father was a man of labor and joined the building crew, and later managed the shop that manufactured floor tiles. He built from Sodom to the Golan Heights, as a foreman for "Mifalei Bniyah" and "Solel Boneh". When he became a pensioner he went to work in the kibbutz carpentry shop. As father used to say: "There is no work that is not honorable". He was deeply affected by the death of our mother and in his last days looked to see if she were somewhere in the house. At the same time he

received a great deal of pleasure from the extended family that surrounded him. He was blessed with 13 grandchildren and one great grandchild, of whom he was very proud.

Editorial notes

Dalin came with 37 Maapilim and not 35.

Course of the Palmach in astronomical navigation means Palyam's Officers Course.