

Levi, Gileada (Goldin)

Nickname: Aviva

Born 25 May 1925 in Haifa

Joined the Palmach in 1943

Joined the Palyam in 1946

This is the Way it Was

I grew up in the Bat Galim neighborhood; my father was the secretary of the neighborhood. I joined the Palmach in 1943 and was assigned to "D" Company. This was the natural continuation to my having already been a member of the Hagana. We stayed and we trained in a number of kibbutzim: Givat Chaim, Ein Harod and Beit Hashita. In Beit Hashita we reorganized so that we would found our own kibbutz in the Galil. We were the group that later founded Ramot Naftali. I was to be the nurse in our kibbutz. Even then there was politics involved in decision making, and because of that the place that we were supposed to get was given to a group of former Jewish Brigade members and our nucleus disappeared.

I returned to Tel Aviv and was in a reserve group. I was in training at Juara when it was announced that nurses were needed in the Palyam. I immediately volunteered for the Palyam and went to a course for midwives at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem for training. Yossefle Tabenkin gave me the nickname, Aviva.

In November 1947 several of us left for Europe; we went to Prague and from there we continued on to Italy where I lived together with a group of people who worked in procurement [*of arms, in preparation for the War of Independence*]. A

I went to France in the beginning of 1948 and we lived and worked with the Olim who were waiting to go to Eretz Israel. We accompanied convoys and we helped choose places for anchoring the vessels and we prepared the Olim for Aliya to Israel. This included self-defense. In addition I also worked with a group of orphaned children who had been gathered from children's hostels and hospitals and had been brought in an organized manner to villas that had been prepared for them. We would tell the children stories of Israel and teach them songs and games.

We heard of the declaration of the State when we were in the big camp near Marseilles, Mizra, and shortly after that I joined those who were accompanying the Olim on the last ship, "Fabio" = "The Battle of the Ayalon Valley". (Ben Gurion gave the vessel its name.) The vessel arrived in Israel on the 29-30 May 1948. We were received as we approached the shores of Israel by an Israeli warship under the command of Yoske Pinchuk (Almog). The British had already left the country, except for a small contingent in the Haifa Bay area, so we unloaded the Olim on the shore of Caesarea, and on May 30th we entered the port of Haifa.

I was drafted to the navy by Avraham Zakai and became the first social welfare officer in the navy. As a protest against ignoring the simple soldier and favoring the officers I resigned my position and went back to work for the Mosad for Aliya. I boarded the vessel, "Gallila" which continued to bring the remnants of the Holocaust to Israel. We brought very many from the camps in Cyprus to Israel.

After that I went to work in the Youth Aliya as an inspector of the groups that were scattered in the kibbutzim and in institutions throughout the country. I would visit the children and talk to the group leaders and arrange courses for the leaders. I also worked in the Military Industries as the secretary of the workers committee. After that I worked in the Ministry of Labor.

That is more or less the sum of my life of activity, where I did what I could for this little country with large aspirations. There will always be two groups in our world; one that gives and the other that takes – greedily.