

Haviva Reick: A Kibbutz Pioneers Mission and Fall behind Nazi Lines



Between the happiness of the individual and fulfilling ones duty I choose to set forth like a mother breaking into a burning house to rescue her children. These were the words of the parachutist Haviva Reick before leaving her kibbutz in British Mandatory Palestine in WW2 on her double mission behind Nazi lines in Slovakia. On behalf of the Jewish leaders in pre-state Israel she had to organize and save the remaining Jews. Her British intelligence mission was the extraction of Allied aircrews that had parachuted into enemy territory. She also assisted the Slovakian fighters in their uprising against the regime that collaborated with Nazi Germany. She carried out her missions with initiative, leadership and courage. Haviva was born in WW1 and fell in the line of duty in WW2. She went to her childhood domains in Slovakia, while her family had already been sent to Auschwitz.

The camp she set up in the Slovakian mountains together with three comrades parachutists for a group of Jews was attacked. Haviva and two of her comrades were captured. Their RAF uniforms were of no avail, they were not considered as POW. The Nazis and their local collaborators shot her in the back of the neck, on the edge of a mass grave in which hundreds of Jews, Gypsies and dissidents were buried. At the end of the war her body was transferred to the cemetery in Prague and finally to the military cemetery on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. This book, initially published in Hebrew, is enriched by many photos and documents. It is based on journeys to the domains of her life and death, on deep research and on hundreds of testimonies. The book depicts her dramatic life as a liberated woman who went on the dangerous and finally fatal mission despite entreaties of men who loved her and whom she loved. The description of the life and the death of Haviva Reick is incorporated into events of WW2 in occupied Europe.

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