Reik, Haviva

(1914-1944), One of the Jewish parachutists from Palestine sent by the leadership of the Yishuv and the British on military and then rescue missions in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Born in Slovakia, Reik was a member of the *Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir* Zionist youth movement. In 1939 she moved to Palestine, where she joined Kibbutz Ma'anit and later enlisted in the *Palmah,* which was the fighting branch of the *Hagana* (the *Yishuv's* underground military organization). At the end of her *Palmah* service, Reik found out about and joined the new parachutists' unit; her hope was to be sent to her native Slovakia to help rescue Jews there.

On September 21, 1944 Reik parachuted into Slovakia-right in the middle of the Slovak national uprising. Her assignment was to reach Slovakia's capital, Bratislava, and connect there with the leaders of the semi-underground Jewish rescue organization called the Working Group. A week earlier, three other parachutists, Rafael Reiss, Zvi Ben-Yaakov, and Chaim Hermesh (Kassaf), had infiltrated Slovakia. At the end of September, a fifth parachutist arrived, Abba Berdiczew, carrying radio transmitters for the rest of the group. However, Reik and the other Palestinian emissaries were unable to even begin rescue operations, as they were totally occupied with fighting for their own lives.

Intending to establish a Jewish Partisan unit, Reik and her comrades managed to gather about 40 Jewish partisans who had been fighting in the non-Jewish partisan units in the area. When the Slovak National Uprising was suppressed in October, Reik's group withdrew into the mountains, where they gathered weapons and tried to set up a small fortification. However, on the sixth day in the camp, they were caught and taken prisoner by a group of Ukrainian *Waffen-*SS soldiers. On November 20 the Germans executed the captive Jews, among them Reik, Ben-Yaakov and Reiss. Later Abba Berdiczew also was killed.

Haviva Reik is considered to be a Zionist hero and consequently, she is memorialized by Kibbutz Lahavot Haviva, the ship *Haviva Reik,* which brought

Jewish "illegal" immigrants to Palestine after World War II, and the Israeli educational center Givat Haviva. (see also Parachutists, Jewish.)