

INFAMOUS SPIES

An
Espionage
Series



ELI COHEN



ISRAEL'S MAN IN DAMASCUS

Perhaps the Mossad's most infamous spy, Eliahu "Eli" Cohen (1924-1965) was born in Egypt to Syrian Jewish parents. Fluent in several languages, he began his career as an Israeli spy in Egypt. When conflict erupted over the Suez Canal, Eli was discovered and expelled from the country. He immigrated to Israel, where the Mossad twice rejected his efforts to rejoin the agency. When he finally succeeded in winning them over, it would seal the fate of the rest of his life.

After undergoing rigorous training, Eli became an operative in Argentina, posing as a Syrian expat to build ties with the local Syrian community there. When he finally moved to Syria, these contacts enabled Eli to gain the trust of the ruling elite, including the prime minister. From 1961 to 1965, Eli, known for his lavish parties, gleaned important information from these inner circles that he sent back to Israel. His daring efforts are credited with securing Israel's victory during the Six-Day War.

In January 1965, with the help of Soviet intelligence, Syrian authorities uncovered Eli's identity. After being found guilty at his trial, he was executed on May 19, 1965, at the age of 40.



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