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הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
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**'Batachanah beBeer-Sheva amad Katar...
The moment when a Stanier 8F 2-8-0 re-
turned to Israel.... at the Old Station in Beer-
sheba on 25.12.2012. Former WD 341, later
TCDD 45166.**

(Photo by Sybil Ehrlich.)



EDITORIAL.

It is common for magazines which reach a 'round number issue' to look back. So let us indulge in a little personal nostalgia.

It was following a visit to Israel, on which I finally met Paul Cotterell for the first time after much correspondence, that I decided to jot down a few notes and ideas and circulate them. He had told me there was no chance of a second edition of his book, and yet more information constantly coming to light. The idea – and also that for the title - came when walking my dog Kalbah round the block along Nursery Lane in Leeds 17 – I had to walk Kalbah three times a day and got most of my creative ideas during these times. (For non-Hebrew speakers, her name means simply 'Bitch'!)

Issues 1 (of March 1989) to 7 (March 1990 – the early issues were almost bi-monthly) were typed on a massive metal monstrosity on my desk in my office at Sinai Synagogue, Leeds, with hand-drawn sketches and Hebrew, photocopied and posted off to a few people whom I thought might be interested. The list grew. Eventually I acquired an Amstrad (Remember those? Green letters on black screen, the whole thing had to be booted up on starting, fixed 3" discs, Locoscript....) and then printed off and – when one uses the term 'cut and paste', that was literally how one did it in those days. On my dining-room table. The paste was sticky, too. The A4 sheets were then photocopied and stapled at the top left., - one had to remember to leave a margin space for the reverse side. But already when reduced to A5 size and folded and stapled (from No. 9 in July 1990) it looked like a 'real' magazine. From no. 49 (June 2000) we went back to A4 and with no. 50 introduced a colour cover.... From No. 15 (Dec. 19091) we 'went legit.' and acquired an ISSN number and henceforth were a 'proper' publication. I recall how proud I was at that!

Paul wrote a lot, of course, but also Sybil Ehrlich and Aharon Gazit, Alon Siton, Steve Tish and many others..... information came from various sources (none of them 'official')

Without Steve Waldenberg's help the magazine would not have continued. I cannot recall now how we met – he was not a member of my congregation – but we did. Steve is more an enthusiast for old cars, especially the Jowetts that were once built in Bradford. At the time he worked for a printer in Morley near Leeds and was able to use the remnants of paper left after a big commercial job to produce newsletters and magazines cheaply for a variety of small enthusiast groups, including the Jowett Car Club. Initially there was no subscription and all copying and postage etc. costs came from my own pocket. (We had just one attempt at including an advertisement – it was a disaster; the issues sent to Israel went astray – as happens still with disturbing frequency – should one get paranoid about sabotage? - and we were threatened with legal action by the advertiser.) Since then we have simply endeavoured to keep the costs so as to match the income, the use of modern technology such as .pdf files (not to be confused with paedophiles) helping in this respect. No-one gets paid for anything. People send me news, (I get no official hand-outs, only indirectly through Aharon Gazit and others) or I come across things in new or old magazines and books, some of which need translating, I type things onto my laptop while travelling, transfer them to my main computer at home, download photos and every three months have a panic attack when I realise I really MUST get the next issue put together and sent off in various forms (usually he prefers .txt) to Steve for the layout. After what has gradually turned into the regular sequence of Editorial, News, Light Rail, Notes, Other Middle East Railways, we then see how much space remains for other items to get a 'round number' of pages filled. My computer is a little untidy and some files are misplaced, the Index is not up-to-date, one sometimes forgets what has been already used....

So – it's a hobby, time-consuming, but it is gratifying to find such a response from the readership, and it is also a hobby with a pur-

pose – to illustrate that there is much more to Israel than just what one reads in the European press, and to provide as far as possible factual historical items to provide the context for the present-day. We offer an opportunity for items to be published, and provide often correction to some of the untruths and fantasies which circulate. At least one knows that in various libraries and archives around the world serious researchers will have access to more information than would be the case if we (and I say 'we' deliberately) did not produce this magazine.

How will the future look? One learns not to prophesy. I hope to keep going for a while yet and then, who knows? Maybe someone or a team will take over and transform the magazine with more hi-tech. There is always plenty of News but also a constant stream of new information about the Past, so I trust a balance between Current and Historical can be maintained. My thanks again to all the contributors, subscribers and readers down the years.

So – enough of the nostalgia and self-gratification. To Issue 100: As usual there is a lot happening – especially in terms of the Jerusalem line, the Jezreel Valley line, the line to Eilat – Oh my goodness, how the picture has changed since issue No. 1! The weather has provided some – well, variety and entertainment. And the Big News, that just scraped into the last issue, is the arrival of a real live (albeit rusty) standard-gauge steam loco in Israel again, fulfilling the dreams of many.

Enjoy!

The Editor.

100:03.



Shades of Genesis Chapter 6. The Ayalon valley and the railway line on 8th. Jan. 2013, shortly before the line between Tel Aviv Savidor and HaHaganah had to be closed due to flooding.

הרכבת

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

A lot can happen quickly in the Middle East and so it is important to make notes for future reference.

(i). TIMETABLE CHANGES.

For some reason we neglected to report fully in the last issue (see 99:04:(iii)) on the new IR timetable that commenced from 02.09.2012. Sybil noted a few changes: Departures from Beit Shemesh to Tel Aviv are changed from XX:23 to XX:08, with arrivals from Tel Aviv at XX:36 instead of XX:45. Trains cross at Na'an instead of Nahal Soreq.

(ii). JERUSALEM EXPRESS.

Regarding the plans for the Jerusalem line outlined in 99:04:(ix), the issue of upgrading Road 1 (Tel Aviv to Jerusalem) over the next four years or so, an article in 'Yediot Achronot' on 06.09.12 included more information: Park and Ride to be established at Latrun and Mitzpe Modi'in on Road 433, and „Israel Railways will run an upgraded service on the old Jerusalem line; Direct trains will leave Tel Aviv for the capital, with no intermediate stops. Travelling at their maximum speed in regard to the terrain, and will reach Malha after 65 minutes. This is still slower than the bus, but it's an improvement of 17 minutes over the current travel time. In parallel, the fares will be reduced from NIS 22.50 to NIS 18, the same as the bus fare, and shuttles will operate from Malha to the city centre. A more significant change, still under consideration, is operating freight trains on the Jerusalem line, to reduce the number of lorries going up to the capital every day. The lorries slow traffic down, so the Transport Ministry is considering limiting their hours on Road 443 to the same as on Road 1. (Heavy lorries are not allowed on Road 1 06.-30 – 09.30 going up to Jerusalem, 6.00 – 18.00 going down.)

Of course, there are no longer any freight transfer facilities, loading bays, cranes, sidings etc. at Jerusalem.....

(iii). PUNCTUALITY AND THE EFFECTS OF WAR.

On 26.11.2012 Aharon wrote: „Surprisingly, only few days after the beginning of war near Gaza Strip and up to its end and since, punctuality quickly returned to its normal rate and runs now around 95% on the average. The railways' management has decided to extend the validity date of all tickets by one week in order to compensate passengers who could not enjoy rail services during the war near Gaza Strip.

(iv). NAME CHANGE FOR ROADS COMPANY.

Since the Israel Roads Company is now engaged in extensive work for Railways as well it is only logical that the decision should have been taken to change its name. Accordingly a formal letter was despatched: „For the record, I hereby inform you that based on the decision of the company's Board of Directors and approval by the General Assembly of shareholders and records maintained by the Company's Registrar, and according to law, MA'ATZ – The Israel National Roads Company Ltd. has changed its name and will from now on be named:

“NETIVEI ISRAEL - National Transport Infrastructure Company Ltd.”

The company's registered number will remain unchanged: 51-346720-9.

All the company's undertakings and entitlements will remain valid.

The company remains fully owned by the government of Israel.

The company's current address, including its contact details (telephone, fax, email, website, etc.) will currently remain as is until further notice...”

GOOD RESULTS FOR 2012.

From a press release of 13.01.2013 by Isra-Rail Company Ltd.:

The initial summary of December 2012 shows that during this month, about 4 Million passengers went by rail; this means that for the first time ever, the annual passenger number exceeded the figure of 40 Million!

An analysis of daily traffic shows a rise of 22% on last December compared with that for December 2011.

The tendency of growing traffic continued on the line Tel-Aviv - Rishon-Le-Zion West - Yavne West. However on lines to Beer-Sheva and to Jerusalem (old rebuilt line through Beit-Shemesh), there was an impressive traffic rise thanks to improvements; also on existing lines there is a tendency of significant growing traffic; 29% on the Tel-Aviv - Netanya line and 16% on the Tel-Aviv - Haifa line.

The year 2012 was a meaningful one for the railways, characterized by several 'milestones' including: A change of the management culture and the start of the company's reform; Acquisition of dozens of new trains; Operation of the upgraded Tel-Aviv - Beer-Sheba line; Completion of double-tracking the Hod-Hasharon - Tel-Aviv line; Extension of night train services; Installation of real-time information systems at railway stations; Introduction of the multi-liner Smart Card; Permission to carry bicycles on trains; Signing the collective work agreement which, at last, put an end to the lasting labour conflicts.

The railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafir said: “In 2012 the railways reached a record in terms of the investments aimed

at improving passenger services, both by increasing the number of trains and seats, providing a better travelling experience, and a significant improvement in punctuality (normally exceeding 90%).

The investments in service have shown results and I'm delighted to see the new records the railways have reached; We'll continue to improve services in order to convince the public to leave their private cars at home and go by rail.”

(v). EILAT LINE PLANS DEVELOPING.

(a). From a press release of 03.12.2012 by “NETIVEI ISRAEL”-National Transport Infrastructure Company Ltd. (formerly National Roads Company):

The District Committee for Planning and Building in Southern Israel approved today (03.12.2012) most of the alignment - 180 km out of 240 km between Beer-Sheva and Dimona and between Hazeva and Eilat - for the planned passenger services. (The alignment for freight services will be 260 km long).

The committee did not yet discuss the main planned section between Dimona and Hazeva (“Yamin Plain”), where three different alternatives are being checked both for surface and underground alignments; discussion is to take place within two months.

Both the Transport, National Infrastructures & Roads' Safety Ministry, and “NETIVEI ISRAEL”-National Transport Infrastructure Company Ltd., responded positively to the approval given by the committee after being approved by the Ministry of Environment; now a survey will start on the environmental effects of the project, to be followed by handing it over for public responses.

The committee further decided that after, completion of the survey, the subjects of building a cargo terminal and the railway station at Eilat will be discussed.

Minister Katz said that “The railway line to Eilat has significant advantages in improving the strategic position of Israel; Eilat will be reached in 2 hours, the enlarged port of Eilat and the rail link will turn it into an international trade centre between Asia and Europe, and this will contribute to the economic independence of Israel”.

The design work on the line is now at last moving forward; Six different design offices, each allocated sections of 40 km, are working around the clock in order to enable the plan to be prepared by the beginning of 2013.

(b). On 08.02.2013 Sharon Udasin wrote the following in the 'Jerusalem Post':-

“The government's planned route for the Eilat railway will be destructive to nature and landscapes that have thrived since the biblical era, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority announced on Thursday.

Ecological reports from INPA and an economic assessment by Prof. Ezra Sadan, a former director-general of the Finance Ministry, indicate that establishing the railway as planned would be "a fatal blow in the Negev," the authority said. "The Negev is the last refuge of many animals... and also the last haven for millions of travellers, who wish to connect to simplicity, and to the primeval beauty of the Negev wadis" a statement from INPA said.

If the government moves forward with its intended plans, ramparts will reach heights of up to 50 meters – equivalent to the height of 17-story buildings – spread over lengths of many kilometers, the INPA explained. In addition, the project would involve the construction of multiple bridges and the flattening of open spaces, as well the establishment of about 14,000 electricity polls and fences surrounding the tracks.

In order to avoid such destruction, the INPA has proposed two alternative routes with only slight differences from one and other. Emphasizing environmental protection, the proposals involve quarrying an underground tunnel that would leave the surface untouched and would not damage the desert land.

Experts from the authority have worked together, for months, with those from the Environment Protection Ministry, in cooperation with local and international planning teams, to develop a more eco-friendly alternative. "A railway construction project is for 100 years – it is forbidden that temporary considerations should cause us to lose and destroy nature and landscape forever," the INPA statement said.

In response, the Israel National Roads Company said the current plans will reduce pollution by trucks and cars, and boost local businesses. "[It] will help millions of citizens of Israel, especially the hundreds of thousands of residents of the South, the Negev and the Arava," the company added. Environmental, human, economic, and engineering considerations were taken into account during the planning processes. Additional billions of shekels would be required to implement INPA's suggestions, which could lead to the cancellation of the entire project, the Committee said."

(c). Then on 13.02.2013 Sharon wrote:-"The Southern District Committee for Planning and Building approved on Monday the final leg of the future Eilat railway, choosing an eastern corridor alternative proposed by the Transportation Ministry.

Deciding on the missing piece of the railway, which will travel at speeds between 220 and 260 kilometres per hour, the committee reviewed three routes from Dimona to Hatzeva – the eastern path of the Transportation Ministry and Israel National Roads Company, the western route of the

Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) and a third central route.

The committee approved the eastern route due to its engineering feasibility, low cost, minimal safety risks, low environmental impact and an operational convenience that will allow for the use of many trains, the Interior Ministry said. The decision comes about two months after the committee approved the two other sections of the train route – from Beersheba to Dimona and from Hatzeva to Eilat.

"The project will bring a blessing to the factories of the South, which account for a large and meaningful component of Israeli exports," Transportation Minister Israel Katz said, noting that there would be significantly fewer large trucks on Road 90 once the train begins operating

With a rail link to connect the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, the country will see a swifter passage of goods to both Europe and Asia and a resultant strengthening of international relations, Katz said. In addition, the railway will improve tourism to Eilat and significantly reduce air pollution levels, he added. "For the project, a social contribution is of top priority for the 700,000 people living in southern Israel," Katz said.

Work on the Eilat railway, which will involve six planning firms, will include a 240- km. passenger route and a 260- km. freight route, the Transportation Ministry said. In addition, the plans involve eight operational stations, four cargo terminals and five new passenger stations – in Dimona, Sapir, Ketura, Ramon and Eilat, Israel National Roads Company CEO Shai Baras explained.

In addition to shifting the 60-km. section between Dimona and Hatzeva southwest, the alternative proposed by the INPA called for digging tunnels that researchers said would leave the surface of the desert nature untouched. This option, the INPA stressed, would reduce the need for 50-meter-high ramparts to elevate the train line, land bridges and flattening of open spaces.

While the alternative supported by the INPA and the Environmental Protection Ministry has several environmental benefits, it also has many disadvantages, the Southern District Committee decided. The alternative would reduce the operational capacity of the train by 30 percent so that fewer trains would be able to travel, and would add huge financial costs and safety risks posed by more than 13 km. of tunnelling, according to the Interior Ministry. Tunnels also face ventilation problems and risk obstruction, and require escape hatches, the office said."

d). The official press release of 11.02.2013 by the Transport, National Infrastructures, and Roads' Safety Ministry:

Minister Yisrael Katz announced today – 11.02.2013 – that a historical deci-

sion has been taken: the Southern District Committee for Design and Building has approved today his suggestion for building the rail link to Eilat. The committee discussed two alternative alignments for the 60 km Dimona-Hazeva section, accepted the one suggested by Israel Roads (formerly National Roads Company); 2 months ago, two other sections – Beer-Sheva - Dimona and Hazeva - Eilat had been approved.

Israel Roads General Manager Mr. Shay Baras said that "There are neither winners nor losers in the decision, and only the national interest counts." (He did refer to the appeals of the Greens).

..... The line will be double-tracked, electrified, and with partial separate alignments for passenger and freight; the passenger line between Beer-Sheva and Eilat will be 240 km long; for freight 260 km.

e). On 17.02.2013, Minister Katz said – in a conference of transportation managers at Eilat – that he plans to make bond issue in order to allocate money for the line, due to the expected cuts in budgets. He added that he is confident that he will continue in his job; however, this is not clear as yet.

(vi). LABOUR RELATIONS: AGREEMENT REACHED AT LAST.

From a press release of 06.12.2012 by Isra-Rail Company Ltd.:

The railways have today undergone a milestone in their history, due to the signing of the long-awaited Wages' Collective Agreement by the railway management, representatives of the new Railways' Workers' Union, and representatives of the General Workers' Union.

Since this agreement has been mentioned already in previous reports, only the main points are here mentioned:

1. In order to cope with the significant growth of the rolling stock in the coming years, the maintenance will be partially outsourced; This refers to the whole Bombardier IC3 Flexi-Liner dmu fleet and 30% of the future electric rolling stock; this, together with constructional change at the depots, and the workers' commitment for 24 hours/day work by shifts will bring significant improvements in maintenance quality, while combining international integrated standards and saving costs and spare parts.
2. Creation of a subsidiary company for Cargo haulage, to be 51% owned by a private investor and 49% by the railways, while operation will remain entirely in hands of the railways; the private investor will enjoy business freedom, which will bring a significant growth to cargo haulage; this area has been stagnating during recent years; also, increasing rail share will reduce accidents and air pollution.
3. Creation of a subsidiary company for business and commerce, to be owned 100% by the railways, but this will be per-

mitted to create partnerships with relevant private factors; the aim is to utilize the huge potential of the various stations' and other railway sites' unused areas, thus improving passengers services, increasing incomes and - at the same time - reducing government support.

The workers are committed to keeping a temporary state of peace for three years and to put an end to all strikes, slowdowns, and other conflicts.

The workers have achieved a 25% rise in wages as well as a one-off bonus of around \$10,000, both to be given to the workers - for the first time in the history of a governmental company - preconditioned on achieving the aims: passenger service level, excellence, rolling stock availability, train cleanliness, fuel and spare parts consumption.

Both the Transport, National Infrastructures, and Roads' Safety Minister Mr. Yisrael Katz and the railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said that the new organizational structure will change the railways drastically and turn them into an efficient national hauler.

(vii). CHANNUKAH CRUSH.

The railways announced on 08.12.2012, that, due to the expected overcrowding during the Hanukah Holidays between 09.12.2012 and 16.12.2012, there would be no reserved seats.

(viii). BICYCLES ON TRAINS AND TRAMS?

From press releases of 09.12.2012 by the Transport, National Infrastructures, and Roads' Safety Ministry:

Transport, National Infrastructures, and Roads' Safety Minister Mr. Yisrael Katz, has instructed the Ministry's General Manager Mr. Uzi Yitzhaki and the Ministry's Public Transport Department Manager Mr. Yehuda Elbaz to require the public transport operators - including the railways and the Jerusalem LRV concessionaire CityPass - to find and suggest technical solutions to carry unfolded bicycles inside or outside urban buses as well as trains - including intercity services.

The aim is to encourage use of bicycles as a friendly transport mode, the awareness of which and thus the use of, is growing steadily every year.

(ix). FARES FREEZE.

On the same day, Minister Katz announced that tariffs on public transport services - including the railways - which are regularly being changed twice a year - on 1st. January, and 1st. July, according to the index increase, and which were to be raised by 2.7% on the average, will remain unchanged for the second time this year; the aim is to keep encouraging the public to use public transport; the number of users grew during 2012 by 2.5%, mainly

on the urban lines in the big metropolitan areas as well as on intercity bus lines.

(x). ELECTRIFICATION TENDER PROGRESS.

From a press release of 12.12.2012 by Isra-Rail Company Ltd.:

Under the headline "A Green Future", the bidders' meeting as a preceding move towards the publishing of the electrification tender, took place on 12.12.2012 with the participation of the Transport, National Infrastructures & Roads' Safety Ministry's General Manager Mr. Uzi Yitzhaki. While the advantages of electrification are known for years, the perception of electrification as being a must rather than a luxury and as being an integral part of the railways' developing programme has now been clearly understood.

Mr. Gregor Kahlhausen, the railways' appointed Electrification Project Manager with a rich experience in international projects, has introduced the general plan which includes - at the first stage - electrification infrastructure works for 420 km, building transformer stations as well as a control centre.

Four new railway lines are currently under construction: Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva, the Valley (once Hedjaz) between Haifa, Afula, and Beit-Shean, Acre - Carmiel, and the A1 fast rail link Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem.

Both the Acre - Carmiel and the A1 lines have steep gradients and run through long tunnels where diesel traction can't provide the needed solution, thus, they will be electrified from the outset.

The meeting met international interest among 50 international leading companies among which are: Siemens, Alstom, ABB, China Civil Engineering Corp., Electra, and many others. Also participating were representatives of Israeli companies interested in the project.

The public Tender is to be published during 2013 and the winning bidder to be selected at the end of 2013.

Mr. Yitzhaki held the salutation, and greeted all the international (as well as local) participants who have shown interest in the project and its tender.

He added that the project is the best part of the "Netivei Israel" (formerly National Roads Company), approved and budgeted by the government decision in 2010, and that both the government and his ministry are committed to the project.

Isra-Rail Company Ltd. General Manager Assistant Mr. Yaron Ravid said: "The electrification will bring the railways into a new era; its ability to haul faster and longer trains, will enable carry more passengers safely and at the shortest time from place to place, and it means: a sharp rise in passenger traffic, and consequently, less vehicles on roads, less accidents, and less air pollution".

He added: "Faster trains at higher fre-

quencies, will put an end to the periphery termination, will close socio-economical gaps, and will increase the living and employment possibilities".

(xi). FREIGHT TRAFFIC BOOST AND EXPANSION PLANS.

(a). From a press release of 12.12.2012 by Isra-Rail Company Ltd.:

„The shipping company MSC has signed a contract with the railways, according to which its ships will call at the port of Haifa, while container shipment between Haifa and Ashdod will be made by rail. The value of the deal is estimated at \$3.5 Million annually, consisting of a traffic of thousands of containers.

The contract will require special preparation by the railways to enable them to be ready to ship the large quantities for MSC; it is expected to increase traffic on the opposite direction - Ashdod to Haifa - too.

This new activity, is an integral part of the railways programme to invest in and develop the freight division, as well as creating a daughter company for freight haulage. The railways are to invest in the next year more than \$35 Million in purchasing freight locos and cars, thus increasing the freight rolling stock fleet by 35%, which will effectively double freight within 5 years from 7 Million tons annually to 13.5 Million tons, and triple rail share in container haulage from 8% to 25% towards the end of the decade.

The railways' intention is to act in a number of channels in order to increase freight traffic, amongst others, by improving customers' services in the aspect of supply-chain including logistics and cooperation. The railways also intend to build new sidings (after decades of dismantling) and terminals to be linked with the network, and proper solutions regarding door-to-door services.

The railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "While the current share of rail in the Israeli freight market is only 8%, I believe that with the right investment, we can triple it within several years, increase significantly the income, while reducing the number of lorries running on roads, accidents, and air pollution".

(b). From a press release of 30.12.2012 by Isra-Rail Company Ltd.:

„Following the decision of the railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir, and budget approval by the Transport, National Infrastructures & Roads' Safety Ministry and the Finance Ministry, more than \$34 Million will be invested in purchasing 162 second hand/refurbished freight wagons and 16 freight diesel-electric locos; This will increase the rolling stock and motive power by 30% and enable the haulage of additional 300 containers daily; the tenders are to be published soon, since offers have already been received following the

RFI published recently.

The aim is to double the freight volumes within five years from the present 7 Million tons annually to 13.5 Million tons, while tripling the company's share in container haulage from 8% to 25% by the end of the decade.

Already in 2013 the aim is to increase income from freight by 15% from \$34 M to \$39.5 M.

The railways are already busy in improving the freight infrastructure as follows:

During 2012, the railways built a siding to the "Milobar" silos company (between Kiryat-Motzkin and Acre) for haulage of grains, and another siding to the Overseas Terminal at the port of Haifa; Additionally, the railways signed a cooperation agreement with the maritime giant MSC. In the coming years, to following projects are to be carried out:

Upgrading the Hadera West and Bnei-Brak freight terminals.

Building a new classification yard at Ashdod; works to start on 2014.

Building a new container terminal called "The Jubilee Garden-Beds" at the rear of the Ashdod Port; works to start in 2014.

The company is now starting construction of a container terminal at Rotem Plain at Southern Israel. In the first week of January the largest container ship ever to dock in Israel arrived at Haifa – owned by MSC it has a capacity for 9,200 containers.

(xii). SCANDAL ON CLEANING CONTRACTS.

A severe scandal, regarding payments being given to cleaning subcontractors for work not being carried out, was being investigated both by the police and by the State Controller in January.

The complaints regarding dirty trains and locomotives are not new, but the fact that the work of the subcontractors had not even been checked, although paid, is new - at least officially.

Cynical as it may sound, somebody said that heavy rains are needed – at least trains will be kept clean externally...

On 01.02.2013 an official within the IR management commented on the findings, saying: "As the findings indicate, the work of the cleaning services' employees was unfortunately contaminated with severe irregularities, mounting to breach of trust, abuse of position and even breaking the law." As a result of the disorderly conduct, the official added, "The company has paid extra funds per year, amounting to millions of shekels, for work that was allegedly not even done."

Moreover, he stressed, when cleaning services were in fact provided, "the cleaning was done poorly, while hindering the level of service to the customers and the

company's reputation."

Following the review, the train services CEO, Boaz Tzafrir, ordered to open a disciplinary hearing process against all employees involved in the case. According to the results of the hearing, the Railways board is to decide whether to take the matter to the police. Once the findings were released, Israel Railways management turned to the State Comptroller, the Finance Ministry and the Transport Ministry.

(xiii). VALLEY LINE PROGRESS: BEIT SHEAN STATION.

From a press release of 30.12.2012 by Doing Strategy (Transport Ministry's public relations):

„ History was made today! In a festive ceremony with the participation of Prime Minister Netanyahu, Transport, National Infrastructures & Roads' Safety Minister Mr. Yisrael Katz, the mayor of the city of Beit-Shean Mr. Jacky Levi, and other mayors, the corner stone for the new Beit-Shean station was laid today at the yards of the remains of the historical railway station on the former Hedjaz Line.

Prime Minister Netanyahu said: "Building rail and roads networks all over the country, is much more than transportation and economy solutions; it is also – first of all - a social idea".

Minister Katz said: "The station of Beit-Shean is a significant milestone in developing the network and strengthening the link between the Galilee and the Negev with Central Israel; the station will open with the first journey on the Valley Line at the beginning of 2016. The project's contribution is far beyond being a comfortable mode of transport; it will be beneficial for business and tourism. Two years have passed since the government decision, and along the whole alignment one can see works taking place at a most impressive tempo; construction of the line and the stations are an additional proof of the state's commitment to its citizens and the ambition to become a state united by its transportation systems".

The General Manager of Netivei Yisrael (formerly National Roads Company) Mr. Shai Baras said: "Most of the line's tenders are already at various stages of implementation; due to the project's scope, and the ambition is to shorten schedules while enabling the participation of as many subcontractors as possible; It has been divided into 17 sections.

The station is the most easterly one on the line, but the design in cooperation between the transport ministries of Israel and Jordan takes into consideration the possible extension of the line to Jordan through the border passage of Sheikh Hussein.

A lot of freight traffic – by trucks – is currently passing between the two countries at the border crossing, to and from the port of Haifa and other destinations in

Israel; the new railway line will enable a reduction in the number of trucks and thus congestion and air pollution; the stations along the line will be integrated with local public transport services, and will have parking facilities and easy access roads".

The subcontractor who won the station tender is Abraham Yitzhak Ltd. managed by Ofer Sali Company.

The old station will be rebuilt, preserved, and become an integral part of the new one.

(xiv). LOCKERS.

The railways have introduced a new locker service at Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central station. The lockers have 2 sizes: 60 x 40 x 30 and 60 x 30 x 70 cm. The service is against payment and under responsibility of the operators, 'Everybody-Lockers and Safe Lock.'

(xv). STORMY WEATHER – FLOODS AND SNOW!!

(a). On Sunday 6.1.2013 sudden torrential rains and storms with winds gusting at up to 100mph led to flooding of the tracks on the main line and especially of Herzliya station (which for those who do not know is linked to the platforms by a lengthy pedestrian subway under a major road.) Services were briefly suspended whilst the tracks were pumped clear and the station was closed for at least two days and instead a bus shuttle was run to Tel Aviv Merkaz. Drivers were also advised to take caution at level crossings as some of the barrier arms had been blown away! Punctuality sank to less than 90%. The meteorological service predicted as much precipitation in the coming five days as in an entire normal January, and the gusting was much stronger than normal.

(b). On 10.01.2013 Sybil wrote: "Trains are running normally again, except to Jerusalem where they are running EXTRA. The trains that normally terminate in Beit Shemesh are continuing to Jerusalem, giving Jerusalem an hourly service, since the road to Jerusalem was (still is?) closed

I went to Bat Yam this morning. There are umpteen ways of getting there from Beit Shemesh - various combinations of train and bus. I took the express bus from Beit Shemesh to Tel Aviv Azrieli (Hashalom station), and train from there to Bat Yam Yoseftal. Coming back, I did the whole thing by train. Because of poor connection times (leaving Bat Yam Yoseftal at 12:55, just in time to miss the train to Beit Shemesh at Hagana), I stayed on the train to Merkaz and changed there. Good thing I did. By the time the train pulled out of Merkaz at 13:53 it was pretty full. More people poured in at every station. When I managed to fight my way out at Beit Shemesh there were thousands of haredi families on the platform trying to force

themselves into the train, as if it was the last plane out of Saigon. I assume most of them didn't manage to get on (I didn't hang around to watch the circus). Snow is such a rarity here that people take their kids to see it.'

(c). Free Travel. From a press release of 09.01.2013 by the Transport, National Infrastructures & Roads' Safety Ministry:

Due to the weather forecast, according to which snow is expected in Jerusalem from today – 09.01.2013 at noon - Minister Katz has announced that from 18:00 travel by public transport modes – including the LRV – will be free of charge till midnight or end of service.

In case snow keeps falling tomorrow as well – 10.01.2013 – the services will be free on that day till evening.

Since snow is some kind of event in Israel and particularly in Jerusalem, the ministry has made preparations for many guests who may arrive to watch the "wonder"; by strengthening the number of trains Flexliner IC3 dmus (the only sort of train operated on the old rebuilt line to Jerusalem) are considered.

(d). From an announcement by Isra-Rail Company Ltd.. on 09.01.2013

After a stormy 24 hours in which many sections of the Ayalon railway line were flooded (for the first time since 1992), and damage was caused to signalling and communication systems, which caused many sections to be closed, regular traffic resumed today, with the exception of the line to Beer-Sheva, where frequency in each direction is a train every two hours instead of every hour.

A Situation Room is operating 24 hours/day, logistic teams with pumps are deployed all over the network, while technicians are patrolling along the lines to check communication systems.

Additionally, there are 40 buses on standby near stations all over the network in case they may be needed.

(e). A mail by Aharon Gazit of 10.01.2013:

Mother nature is making here everybody crazy; after rail traffic resumed yesterday on all lines, the sudden fall of a tree at the station of Netanya caused delays and meant angry frozen passengers, although the tree removal itself did not last more than 10 minutes.

This morning, there was no traffic for several hours on the old (but rebuilt) line to Jerusalem between Beit-Shemesh and Jerusalem, due to frozen points at Bittir station; it should be mentioned that rail was almost the only mode of transport to Jerusalem functioning till this morning; roads were closed due to heavy snow and dangerous ice.

Meanwhile traffic is regular all over the network, though with delays; consequent-

ly, average punctuality is down to around 80%.

(f). On 20.01.2013: The railways announced on their website that due to the damage caused to tracks on the Ayalon railway and near Herzliya station by the heavy rains 10 days ago, there will be delays to night trains between Nahariya, Haifa, Tel-Aviv, Ben-Gurion Airport, and Beer-Sheba between 23:00 and 05:00 the next morning; repair works on the damaged sections are being carried out during the nights for a week.

(xvi). PLANNED OPENINGS TO SDEROT AND NETIVOT.

On 12.02.2013 Minister Katz announced that from December 2013 the citizens of Sderot will enjoy rail link to Tel-Aviv to be reached in less than 60 minutes, to be followed by Netivot on March 2014, and Ofakim during 2015 – then to be linked also to Beer-Sheva.

(xvii). ELECTION DAY SERVICES.

On 22.01.2013, the Election Day, every citizens with the right to vote could enjoy rail travel free of charge, provided that they are 20 km away from their election point and produce their identity card and the election announcement. Between 21.00 and 05:00 the next morning, traffic will be restricted; There will be no services between Beer-Sheba and Dimona; also there would be no reserved seats.

(xviii). NAHARIYYA LINE WORKS.

The railways have recently announced that due to double-tracking works to be carried out, the Acre-Nahariyya section will be closed for traffic between 12.03.2013 and 27.04.2013. Monthly free tickets of all sorts from/to Nahariyya will not be sold. The railways will provide bus shuttle services between the 2 stations.

(xix). THE ARRIVAL OF THE STEAM LOCO AT BEER SHEBA





This is News and yet also by now not so New. We are enormously happy and grateful for the fulfilment of this long-standing dream – way back in 1989 we thought of the possibility of acquiring an 'HaElEmmEss' from Turkey but were simply without the necessary contacts, knowledge and stamina. It was a wholly unrealistic project. Now others with better abilities and contacts have managed it and the '8F' has come not direct (political relations between Turkey and Israel are rather frosty at the moment in any case) but via Britain to form the centre-piece at a new museum at the old station at Beersheba (where, ironically, the 8F's did not work – but no matter, let us be grateful. There is so little of the old PR or of early IR days left....

<http://www.whatsontv.co.uk/video/youtube/id/YD1DpY6wEpo/offset/22> leads to a 10-minute television news broadcast including the landing of the loco, shots at Beer Sheba and with Chen Melling at the Museum, interviews with former railwaymen.

And http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=LxWIsZz_IW0 will bring one to a video of the engine's arrival by flat-bed lorry, to bluegrass music accompaniment! And see 100:08 (iii) for more information.

100:05.

(a). TENDERS.

(i). Tender No. LG/SR/23/12: Providing Maintenance services for Sewage and Drainage Pumps installed at the railways' various sites.

The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 05.12.2012.

(ii). Isra-Rail Company Ltd. Tender No. HN/KB/03/12: Manufacture, supply, and installation of waiting shelters at bus stops adjacent to railway stations:

The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 24.12.2012.

(iii). Isra-Rail Company Ltd. Tender No. BT/MT/02/12: Providing investigation services including: follow-up, installation of a

hidden video system, graphology checks, spotting addresses and telephone numbers, and any task connected with investigation. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 30.12.2012. (Aharon notes: It is interesting how money solves sometimes everything; Under normal circumstances, the workers' Union would have never agreed to be under investigations and follow-up, though some of their behaviours really justify it!)

(iv) Isra-Rail Company Ltd. Tender No. MS/RC/2012/10: Permission to operate a taxi station at Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central station. The contract is for 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 03.01.2013.

(v). Tender No. MC/SR/20/12: Breakdown Maintenance Services for the railways' re-

fuelling and oil facilities: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 14.02.2013.

(vi). Tender No. MN/KB/04/12: Photography and Documentation services including high quality video films along the whole alignment of the A1 fast link to Jerusalem. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 18.02.2013.

(vii). Tender No. TC/SR/09/12: Providing blue prints services for customers. The railways intend to select three bidding winners, one for each of the following areas: Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, and Haifa. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 21.03.2013

(viii) Tender No. BN/KB/04/12: Works for building passenger railway station at the city of Ofakim (on the Ashkelon-Beer-Sheba line). The project is to be carried in 2 stages with separate offers for each stage. Implementation time: 79 weeks. Latest date for submission of proposals: 04.04.2013.

(viii). Tender No. MS/RC/2013/2: Operating a taxi station to provide services to/from Haifa Hof Ha-Carmel station. The contract is for 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 04.04.2013.

(ix). International Tender No. HN/SR/04/12 :-

(x). International tender No. EL/PQ/01/12: Electrification of the Israel Railways Network - latest date for submission of proposals changed to 28.02.2013.

(b). TENDERS ALLOCATED.

The railways have recently announced the names of winners of various tenders:

(i). The Israeli company Ter-Armee won Tender No. BN/KB/06/11 for building acoustic walls at Neve-Itamar (near Netanya railway station) and at Hadera (near Hadera West station), worth \$2.3 million.

(ii). The Israeli company Hasvil Hayarok ('the Green Path'), won Tender No. HN/KB/08/11 for aerial development, gardening, and irrigation works on the Lod - Na'an section, worth \$1.59 million.

(iii). The Israeli companies Keinan Shefi Institute Ltd. and Adam Mila Ltd. won Tender No. CA/SR/14/12 for senior management placement and Headhunting.

(iv). The railways announced on 31.12.2012 that the winners of tender No. TK/KB/01/12 for carrying out communication works are: Manolid-Herut Systems Ltd; Uri Nakhmani and Sons Drilling works Ltd.; Elmor Electricity Installations and Services (1968) Ltd.

LIGHT RAIL.

A. TEL-AVIV LRV/METRO PROJECT.

(i). INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS ALONG STREETS:

From an announcement in NTA newsletter of 26.11.2012:

'NTA has completed recently all the infrastructure works on the last section at Orlov Street of Petakh-Tikva (the most eastern point of the planned Red Line).

The \$13 Million works included renewal and re-location of infrastructures now embedded under the street, as well as a new underground pedestrian passage to/from the local central bus station, to be used later also by the LRV passengers.'

From an announcement in NTA newsletter of 28.11.2012:

'NTA will complete next week the re-locating of all the high voltage masts along 4 km of Jerusalem Boulevard of Jaffa and embedding the cables under ground in order to create a free space for works on the Red Line to run there.

All works are being carried out between midnight and 05:00 to minimize disruptions for the neighbourhood.'

(ii). COOPERATION WITH LANDS ADMINISTRATION.

From a press release of 03.12.2012 by NTA:

'Further to the success in cooperation between the Israeli Public Lands' Administration and NTA (with the assistance of Tel-Aviv Municipality) in promoting the Tel-Aviv LRV Green Line from Herzliyya to Rishon-Le-Zion through Tel-Aviv under Ibn-Gavirol street, the two bodies are tidying their cooperation on the whole project, taking care also for removal the huge quantities of earth after boring the tunnels and other works.

The administration will also help in liquidating the existing military camps along the various alignments and building thousands of apartments, by solving the statutory legal problems.

Both NTA General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Zuchman and the Administration General Manager Mr. Benzi Lieberman said that with the current increase in car ownership in the Greater Tel-Aviv Area, the traffic will reach a standstill point within five years unless a modern public transport system is completed.'

(iii). TRIAL BORINGS FOR TUNNELLING WORK.

From a press release of 24.12.2012 by NTA (Project Management):

Parallel to works currently being carried out at the three shafts of the Red Line, NTA started on 24.12.2012 experimental drillings for the planned Green Line at Ibn Gavirol Street - one of the main north-south axes of Tel-Aviv.

The drilling is the first out of seven to be carried out along the east side of the section between Nordau and Yehuda Hamaccabi Streets, under which the LRV line is to run, with the intention to check the soil prior to the beginning of further planning. The drilling will reach a depth of 40 m; deeper than the underground water level.

Works are carried out on the sidewalk while keeping strictly to safety regulations, without disruptions to the surrounding, traffic, and businesses in the area; all factors involved have been announced prior to the beginning of works through NTA Department of Links with the Community.

The drillings could be carried out only after the instructions of Minister Katz to NTA for tunnelling the main section of the Green Line under its entire alignment, including Ibn Gavirol Street; this put an end to discussions lasting more than ten years.

NTA General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Zuchman said that NTA has taken the initial - but meaningful - step of starting the Green Line. The Green Line will start with two arms at Holon and Rishon-Le-Zion and run northwards through the centre of Tel-Aviv, terminating also with two arms: the city of Herzliyya and Kiryat-Atidim (the Tel-Aviv eastern high-tech area).

The entire length of the line will be 39 km, of which 4.5 km will run under Ibn Gavirol Street; It will have 58 stations of which 5 will be underground; the traffic forecast is for 65 Million passengers/day. Works are expected to start on 2016 with start of operation on 2021.

(iv). TENDER FOR CARRIAGES

From an NTA press release of 09.01.2013

Only 2 months after publishing the PQ tender for the LRV Red Line trains, NTA held today the bidders' conference in which 22 international companies – including from France, Spain, Italy, the Czech Republic, Poland, Switzerland, Germany, and Israel – participated.

It is the biggest tender published so far by NTA and was approved by all the bodies involved: the Transport and Finance ministries, and the municipalities through which the Red Line is to run: Petakh-Tikva, Bnei-Brak, Ramat-Gan, Tel-Aviv/Jaffa, and Bat-Yam.

The tender contains an offer for 90 LRV cars with an option for an additional 30 cars. The bids will be submitted to NTA by the 2nd quarter of 2013, while the winner is to be selected soon after. NTA General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Zuchman said: "The trains' tender brings us by leaps and bounds to implementation of this mega project; one of the most complex ever made in Israel.

The blocking of the Ayalon Highway yesterday (in addition to the railway line) is the proof that we need an appropriate mass transit system over the Greater Tel-Aviv Area (Dan Block); without it, the scenes from yesterday will unfortunately become a daily matter within a few years even without rains!

NTA wanted the tender to be for higher number of cars than the 90 approved, and I do believe that towards the delivery date we'll publish an additional tender, a bigger one.

We must thank Minister Katz as well as the whole government, who - despite it being the eve of elections and an age of budget cuts - give us the full back-up without any fear for lack of financing.

The project is progressing very well; there is no doubt that today's conference is an expression of trust in the project and in the State of Israel and a huge step towards the project's implementation.

We'll thoroughly check the winning bidder, not compromising on quality; he will play a major role in the project due to being responsible not only for delivering the trains but for maintenance as well".

(v). CORNER STONE LAYING.

From a press release of 16.01.2013. by NTA's Spokesman Mr. Ilan Leizerovich:

"Two years after receiving the authorization and responsibility for Building the Greater Tel-Aviv Area LRV system, NTA held today the ceremony of laying the corner stone, which took place at the so called Herzl Shaft located between Petakh-Tikva and B'nei-Brak where the Red Line will run, after leaving Petakh-Tikva, entering the tunnel through Bnei-Brak, Ramat-Gan, and Tel-Aviv, then emerging to surface run at Jaffa, Bat-Yam, and later also to Rishon-Le-Zion.

The Red Line is planned for a daily passenger traffic of 240,000 and about 70 Million annually, which is one third of current public transport users and twice the number of the current Jerusalem LRV users.

The ambitious Transport, National Infrastructures & Roads' Safety Minister (still, at least until after the 22.01.2013 general elections...) Mr. Israel Katz who initiated and pushed the handing over of the project to NTA by the government, said: "The construction of the new Greater Tel-Aviv Area mass transit system is underway

at its non-reversible point, and is already affecting many subjects such as real estate prices along the alignment; nobody can stop it and the line is to start commercial operation in 2018. Many corner stones have been laid in the past, but this is the first time such a ceremony has been held after completing the design while works are already running."

Mr. Katz unveiled that the estimated budget for the Red Line is currently \$3.72 Million; "A project of that size can be implemented only by the government."

NTA General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Zuchman said: "NTA has managed to do within the last two years of its current activities much more than did the former concessionaire in four years - during which hundreds of millions of dollars went down the drain - despite the most complex project ever to be done in Israel in an extremely congested urban area."

We're in the middle of excavating three shafts for the TBM: here at Em HaMoshavot, at Galei-Gil, and at Herzl Street; at two of these places the stage of building the peripheral walls is completed and we have started the excavation of the shafts.

All the important tenders for designing, tunnelling, boxes, railway systems, and rolling stock with the participation of dozens of international leading companies - partially with Israeli joint ventures - have been published.

An additional seven lines are planned; four of which will be LRV lines and 3 BRT, as well as an additional BRT line which will be a forerunner of the Red Line, and will run on its alignment as long as works last.

NTA has also started experimental drillings for the second LRV line - the Green Line along Ibn Gavirol Street.

Soon, the tender for the NTA Control Centre is to be published, as well as selecting the subcontractors for carrying out the Shenkar Portal works and build the underground station at Em HaMoshavot.

All these activities could not be realized without the strong support of Minister Katz. Only yesterday representatives arrived from the company selected recently to monitor and survey all the structures along the Red Line alignment in order to provide online information regarding their condition in order to prevent collapsing of structures during works; it shows that we're looking forwards to turning the Tel-Aviv LRV project dream into a reality."

Also participating in the ceremony were the Mayor of B'nei-Brak Rabbi Jacob Asher, and additional mayors of the cities through which the Red Line will run.

(vi). SHENKAR TUNNEL ENTRANCE WORKS.

From a press release of 07.02.2013 by NTA: NTA has published today tender No. 045/2012 for the imple-

mentation of the Shenkar portal on the Red Line. It will be a 400 m underground tunnel to link between the surface section in the median of Jabotinsky Road at Petakh-Tikva and the underground section on the road with the same name westward in Bnei-Brak near Shenkar street. The tender is to be carried out by Israeli companies with financial strength as published in tender. Latest date for submission of proposals: 08.04.2103.

Both Minister Katz and NTA General Manager Mr.Zuchmann said that the tender proves the non reversible stage which the project reached. Works are to start at the end of 2013 by cut-and-cover system, and will include traffic arrangements, heavy construction works, pumping deep water, and moving infrastructures on Jabotinsky Road at its Bnei-Brak section. NTA continues with experimental drillings for the Green Line all over Tel-Aviv; last week it started two such at Toscanini Road in central Tel-Aviv, thus completing the first stage of these drillings.

(vii). RELICS OF FORMER SCHEMES.

Gary Pickholz wrote on Pasim on 4.1.2013: 'I recently attended a bank reception held on the subway platforms under the Shalom Tower. They are used now for catering events. It is like walking into the NYC subway circa 1970. When they built the tower they had to include the subway stops, and since it was inconceivable back then that the "soon to be built subway" would not run through the then-tallest building in the Middle East, they built the stations and waited for the subway line to meet it. That never occurred, and never will, although the "soon to be built" light rail line will stop three blocks away as the Shalom Tower has drifted into class B building status and location vs the new modern downtown business district a few blocks further east.'

There is another such at HaNeviim Tower.

(vii). NTA tender No. 048/2012: for supply, assimilation, and maintenance of Forescout NAC system. Latest date for submission of proposals: 28.02.2013.

(viii). CHINESE TENDERS.

On 22nd. February the Harbin metro cars designed and manufactured by CNR - Changchun Railway Vehicles Co. Ltd. - won the German IF (International Forum) Design awards in Hannover. The Harbin Line 1 cars are the first to be designed to be resistant to extreme cold - and can operate at ambient temperatures of -38°C. This is, says their triumphant press release, 'the first rolling stock project that has been granted a gold award since establishment of the IF design Award over 60 years ago - an honour which has never been granted to Siemens.' The company proudly sent

הרכבת

this and other information to IR and the Tel Aviv Metro, where they are participating in the tendering process. On the other hand, it is unclear how often temperatures in Tel Aviv would regularly reach -38°.....

B. JERUSALEM.

(i). CHANUKAH.

From a press release of 10.12.2012 by the concessionaire CityPass:

'On 09.12.2012, CityPass held a special festive event for the LRV passengers at the LRV station adjacent to the Central Bus Station. At the site, a big Chanukah had been erected by the Chabad Hasidic movement, on which candles are lit on each of the eight Chanukah evenings (Chanukah is a festival of candles, lights, and doughnuts).

The person honoured with lighting was Rabbi Samuel Rabinovich, responsible for the Western Wall (the only remains of the temple) and other Jewish holy places in the old city.

The inspectors of CityPass distributed doughnuts and whipping/spinning tops with pictures of the LRV purchased by CityPass from the friendly society "The Apple of One's Eye" which gives work to disturbed children. The children's choir called "The Jerusalem Flowers" created a pleasant atmosphere.

CityPass General Manager Mr. Yehuda Shoshani said: 'Beyond the daily LRV operation, I see it as highly important to create such events in which our customers can smile; we've chosen to light up the way with symbols of Chanukah - the candleabrum, whipping/spinning tops, and doughnuts, in order to rise - for a moment - above the daily routine and to see our own miracle - the first Israeli LRV operating as an integral part of the Jerusalem routine.

As a breakthrough company who brought to Israel the first LRV, it is important for us to serve the public efficiently, and indeed, we are constantly improving and adapting ourselves to the public needs; frequency has recently improved significantly, and traffic data shows that the service demand is growing.'

Rabbi Samuel Rabinovich greeted the heads of CityPass: 'The LRV is a dream which became a reality, and your success is our as well. Many of those whose destination is to pray at the Western Wall use the LRV, thus cutting journey time, improving travelling experience, and encouraging tourism to the Western Wall and other sites of the old city. 110,000 passengers/day is something to be proud of; it is a new transport mode for Israel, which started in Jerusalem from which the message goes out to Tel-Aviv, the cities of Central Israel, and to other areas; We, the people of Jerusalem can be proud of it.'

[Editor adds: The Rabbi of the

Western Wall is hardly someone I would personally approve of normally – he is a fundamentalist and a government appointee who makes life difficult for women and Reform Jews who wish to pray there! And Chabad get seemingly EVERYWHERE. But this is the news...]

(ii). OVERCROWDING!!

Stanley Graham, formerly of Leeds, wrote to Steve: "I travelled on the Jerusalem tram one day during the first three weeks, when travel was free. It was so 'jam packed' it was impossible for me to reach my mobile when it rang. The passengers' bodies were so close together I'm sure that some women who were not pregnant when they got on were 'trogging' when they got off!"

(iii). SNOW.

From a press release of 09.01.2013 by CityPass Spokesman Mr. Ozel Vatik: The falling snow has not so far caused any disruption for the LRV, unlike the severe disruption to road traffic. The LRV drivers operated trains overnight along the whole alignment, in order to keep trains with full availability. CityPass Spokesman Mr. Ozel Vatik said: "The LRV is the only mode of transport available for running even in a snowy weather; to see the train loaded with passengers and operating in Jerusalem is a real reason for pride".

This was a short-lived statement, as due to frozen turnout points (as with heavy rail) and the collapse onto the track of a wall being constructed near the LRV alignment at Jaffa Street, there was no traffic for several hours. LRV traffic later resumed, but bus traffic was paralyzed due to heavy snow.

(The photo which was in this place has been removed, due to the photographer demanding outrageous damages from us for having included it, unknowingly, without her permission!)

100:07.

WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE OLD JERUSALEM STATION? PLANS AND PROGRESS.

Things are happening! From 'Israel Hayom' newspaper, translated by Sybil:-

„The historic coach was moved last Thursday [i.e. 03.01.2013] by a tank transporter and two cranes, operated by ten workers who loaded and accompanied the coach on its way from the railway museum in Haifa to its old home in Jerusalem.

The historic coach, No. 322, was part of a series of nine coaches built by the British company Birmingham RC & W in 1921-1922 for the British Mandate railway. This coach, 4 metres high and 20 metres long, had 112 seats. The transfer of the coach was supervised by Gilad Halper, the senior Israel Railways supervisor, Chen Melling, the director of the Haifa museum, and Asher Ohana, responsible for special projects for the First Station group [?]

don't know whether this is the name of a company or what].

The cost of moving, renovation and fitting out for the station complex is about 700,000 shekels, which has donated by the entrepreneurs of the station project, Avi Mordoch and Assaf Hemo."

A photo seems to show also part of a container flat wagon.

For more details on the coach, see Paul's book, p. 90, fig. 95. The centre doorway was part of the rebuild of the BRCW 3rd. class coach.

In 'Ha'aretz' on 31.10.2012 appeared a well-informed article by Keshet Rosenblum, here cited extensively.

"More than two years ago, the Hatachanah shopping and restaurant complex opened in south Tel Aviv in the



Pictures of the LRV under snow at Jaffa Street at night, by courtesy of Mr. Vatik; pictures taken by Mrs. Olivia Fitoussy.



buildings of the old Jaffa railway station, whose tracks used to lead to Jerusalem. After its launch, the station which had been abandoned and neglected for decades, and which underwent comprehensive renovation, became a polished and stylish compound that attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors in its first months. The success of the new complex, known simply as 'Hatachanah' ('The Station') is controversial. Supporters say it is a unique and attractive project that offers a flourishing economic model on the seam between Tel Aviv and Jaffa, while its detractors argue that Hatachanah has an inauthentic, élitist feel.

The Templer [sic], Ottoman and Mandatory buildings of the Jaffa railway station have already grown accustomed to the sight of locals and tourists browsing displays of designer jewelry at Hatachanah, but at the other end of the former track stands the Jaffa station's deprived twin - the old train station in Jerusalem.

Ever since 1998, the year the last train clattered out, the terminal between the Hebron Road and the Bethlehem Road, not too far from the Cinemathèque, has been largely abandoned. In 2005 the railway station in the Malha neighbourhood became the final destination of the train to Jerusalem.

However, the old Jerusalem station - which this year celebrates its 120th. birthday - is now taking on a new appearance, albeit with little fanfare. It emerges that this coming April Jerusalem will have a station complex of its own. In Jerusalem argot the site is called 'the first station' and it is destined to serve as a cultural, culinary and historical complex - the first of its kind in the city. Though, as in its Tel Aviv counter-

part, there will be passenger cars that go nowhere, an 'authentic' train engine and a 4,000 square metre area covered in wooden decking, the developers are promising it will not be like Hatachanah.

A decade ago a residential plan was developed for the Jerusalem station site, to the south of the original Ottoman building, but it was not implemented. Five years went by until the Jerusalem Development Authority approached Israel Railways, which owns the site, with a proposal to convert it into a cultural and leisure complex. 'This is a national preservation site that has been neglected for years', says the authority's deputy CEO Anat Tzur. 'It was not fitting, neither from a historical perspective, nor of course for a capital city, for such a special place to look like that.'

Preservation architect Moshe Shapira, who also serves as a preservation adviser in the Interior Ministry's Tel Aviv district, was called upon to document the current state of the old train station. His plan also recommended preserving a large building to the south of the station that served as warehouses during the British Mandate era. 'We have residential buildings in Jerusalem, but] there is no industry and trade, and these spaces ... provide us with an experience that in any other city would be familiar and trivial.... It is an industrial story that is a very important element in the city's history.'

The new complex will be operated by a group of developers who were selected in a tender issued by Israel Railways. The group consists of Assaf Hemo, Erez Navon and Avi Morduch - who was involved in Tel Aviv's Hatachana project. Shapira has worked together with preservation architect Eyal Ziv, who was also a partner in the planning of Hatachana. The developers will preserve, operate and maintain the place for a period of 10 years and in exchange will receive the proceeds from rent and income from special events. At the end of the decade, the site will revert to Israel Railways control and the station's use will be at its discretion.

The developers are branding the new complex 'an encounter between culture and the culinary.' It is located within an area that the municipality terms the 'Cultural Mile', which includes the Jerusalem Theatre, the Hansen complex (the former leper colony, where there are also preservation developments under way to establish a media centre), the Khan Theatre, the Cinemathèque and the Sherover Cultural Centre now under construction in the Abu Tor neighbourhood. In addition, the station is adjacent to Liberty Bell Park and the Traintrack Park - a joint project by Israel Railways and the Jerusalem Municipality. This park, which is three-quarters complete, is located along the route of the train line between Malha and the old train sta-

הקרן ההיסטורי
צילום: חרי שעד



נוסע אחורה בזמן

קרן רכבת היסטורי מתקופת המנדט הבריטי הוחזר למקומו במתחם תחנת הרכבת הישנה בירושלים

יורי יבון, נחנע נירושלים

גלגלי ההיסטוריה נעים: קרון רכבת מימי המנדט הבריטי חזר לאחרונה למקומו המקורי במתחם תחנת הרכבת הישנה בירושלים. הקרון ההיסטורי שונע ביום המישוי האחרון על ידי מוביל טנקים ושני מנופים, שתופעלו על ידי עשרה אנשי צוות, שהעמיסו, הובילו וליוו את הקרון בדרכו ממוזיאון הרכבת בחיפה לביתו הישן בירושלים.

הקרן ההיסטורי, מספר 322, הוא חלק מסדרה של תשעה קרונות שייצרה החברה הבריטית Birmingham RC&W ב-1921-1922 בעבור רכבת המנדט הבריטי. קרון זה, שגובהו כ-4 מטרים

ואורכו כ-20 מטרים, מכיל 112 מקומות ישיבה. על העברת הקרון ההיסטורי פיקחו גלעד הלפר, מפקח בכיר בר-כבת ישראל, חן מלינג, מנהל מוזיאון חיפה, ואשר אוחנה, אחראי פרויקטים מיוחדים מטעם קבוצת התחנה הראשונה. עלויות השינוע, השיפוץ והתאמתו למתחם התחנה הן כ-700 אלף שקלים ונתרמו על ידי היוזמים אבי מורדוך ואסף חמו.

לצפייה בקרון ההיסטורי חוזר לתחנה, סירקו את הברקוד



tion, serving as a promenade for pedestrians, runners and cyclists. Completing the picture is the old station's relative proximity to the Old City - close enough to attract tourists, but far away enough not to be included in the religious-pilgrimage narrative. In fact - unusually for Jerusalem - the developers are promising the complex will be open on Shabbat and most of the restaurants will serve non-kosher food. 'We are creating a unique leisure experience', says Ofer Berkovich, the director of strategy and content for the complex on behalf of the developers.... In addition to three restaurants and a food market that will be established in the Mandatory warehouses, the Ottoman building will contain culinary workshops, a pub and an information centre, from which tours of the complex and areas outside it will begin. There will also be a 160 sq.m. art gallery, which will function as a small theatre as needed. A series of stands will serve a marketplace and small metal and glass structures will be erected on the train track for additional food stalls, sports equipment stores and activities for children. The developers are also planning a series of musical, literary and artistic events. Berkovich is not deterred by the current lack of outdoor culture among Jerusalemites, who are mostly see

scurrying home, laden with shopping from the Mahaneh Yehuda Market. 'I think this will get a lot of people out of the house.... maybe until now there hasn't been a location that is sufficiently cut off and convenient enough. In the end, it is the largest city in Israel and 3.4 million tourists come there every year - I am assuming some of them will pass through the station at one point or another.'

The train station, where tens of thousands of visitors are expected to munch their way through gourmet meals, has witnessed thus far in its 120 years two empires and a state. The driving force behind its construction in 1892 was developer Yosef Navon, together with a French company - after decades of attempts to build it. Among others involved in the plan were the German missionary Conrad Schick, Moses Montefiore and the French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps - who developed the Suez Canal. The railway's planners wanted to lay the tracks up to the Old City, but the Ottomans did not agree and the station was moved to the Hill of Evil Counsel, upon which the Abu Tor neighbourhood now stands.

The original railway station consisted of a two-storey building with one-storey wings to the sides, a [turntable], an open-sided shelter and a large water tank. Its architecture was influenced by 19th. century European and Templar [sic] buildings. The station building is identical in shape to its brother on the fringes of Jaffa, except for the building material, which was determined by what was locally available - limestone in Jerusalem and calcareous sandstone in Jaffa. During the station's construction, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who saw the laying of the track as a symbol of the victory of enlightenment, coined the Hebrew word for Train: 'Rakevet'. A few weeks before the dedication ceremony, he published a paean of praise in his newspaper 'Ha'Or': 'The roar of the engine is the roar of the victory of education over ignorance, work over sloth, wisdom over vanity, progress over backwardness, the mind over foolishness, a victory of the pure and health-giving spirit over the spirit of polarization and bitterness, a victory of the educated over the foolish. Let those who are enlightened rejoice, the educated of Jerusalem!'

A single track was laid along 88 kilometres, and the train passed over 176 bridges on its way from Jaffa to Jerusalem. On September 25th. 1882 [sic - it was 1892 WLR] sheep were slaughtered on the track for good luck and the first engine chugged out of Jaffa towards Jerusalem, pulling coaches adorned with Imperial Ottoman flags. The laying of the track shortened the journey between the two cities considerably - from 12 hours by horse-drawn coach

to only four hours.

With the conquest of Palestine by the British in 1920 [sic - it was 1917/18, but the Mandate was allocated from 1920 WLR], the railway was improved. The British linked the track to the Cairo - Beirut track [sic. - these ends of the Kantara-Haifa route only apply really from the Second World War. WLR] and the track of the Jezreel Valley train, all of them operated by Palestine Railways.

Under the Mandate, the Jerusalem station was enlarged, the warehouses were added alongside it. The station operated almost without interruption until the establishment of the state, when traffic on the line ceased due to the War of Independence in 1948. The first official Israeli train, which travelled to Jerusalem on August 7th. 1949, hauled a symbolic freight of flour, cement from the Neshet quarry and Torah scrolls.

The stone signs at the station gates, which displayed Jerusalem's name in French and Arabic, were plastered over and replaced with a Hebrew inscription in an identical style. Israel Postal Company warehouses, the Israel Electric Corporation and the fuel companies operated nearby, as well as the Government Printing Office - which was served by a special branch of tracks that went right to the entrance and carried the heavy rolls of paper. As time passed, the number of passengers on the train to and from Jerusalem declined sharply and for many years the train ran only once a day. In 1998 Israel Railways decided to shut down the station. Its closure led to neglect of the building and, over the years, it was plundered and most of the wooden items were taken. In those years the building served as a shelter for homeless people and became a favourite canvas for graffiti. A raging fire incinerated a great many of the wooden beams, but the station survived.

When architects Ziv and Shapira first came there, they found buildings from various periods with additions built on over the years. Careful examination of the various layers helped to establish ...a cross section through time. 'We are talking about construction carried out over a broad spectrum of years', explains Shapira. 'Many decisions were necessary [to determine] the range of preservation, reconstruction and renovation. The compound was Ottoman and Mandatory, and to this the Israeli story was added.'

The train station absorbed many shocks throughout its history. part of the track was dismantled in World War 1 and the line ceased to operate. During the time of the Mandate, the Jewish underground carried out attacks on the railway line and on the station itself. 'The ravages of time are everywhere but here, because of the geopolitics of Jerusalem, the place was

simply ruined', says Shapira. Thus, for example, an additional layer of 60cm. thick concrete was poured on the roof of the Ottoman building by the British, apparently to protect the site which was considered a strategic target in World War 2 when Italian planes strafed the country.

Because of the many changes, the station's appearance has never been uniform. Shapira relates, for example, that six different kinds of wooden ornamentation were found at the site. 'In the end, we chose one of them, and we said that what's important isn't to freeze time the way it once was. So there isn't historical precision here, but there is the design of something that could have been here. More strict schools of preservation will come along and see this as a deception but I think the station is a symbol.'

A kind of faded turquoise-coloured paint found on the columns and the window and door frames was also chosen from among a number of colours that adorned the station at one time or another. This, too, was a decision that has more to do with branding the complex than with preserving the station. 'Clearly, I would have preferred the space to have remained as it is, without additions and subdivisions', says Shapira, when asked of his opinion of the way the developers are using the site, 'but you can see what happens to a place that hasn't functioned for a number of years; another two years and people would have demolished the place and nothing would have remained here. So when people are doing esoteric things like eating a good steak and enjoying the aesthetic values around them, it develops the Jerusalemites' sensitivity to preservation, which isn't always strong. Use is the best preservation, even if during the course of it you take a lot of specific decisions that could be argued about.'

These projects, however charming they may be, are arguably the unpleasant glorification of nostalgia - a forceful combination of conflicting histories. 'There is something a little kitschy when you try to reconstruct the feeling of the past', says architect and researcher David Kroyanker, but he adds, 'the fact is that it attracts people. The fact is that it gives a sense of what it used to be. The success of these places has to be multidisciplinary; an attractive place is a commercial place. if it isn't commercial, it doesn't make money. Therefore I am cautious about criticism. It is necessary to encourage people, phenomena and processes like these. This is very important. It is possible to destroy everything easily.'"

[N.B: It is as yet unclear exactly what locos or stock will indeed be placed on display here amongst the trade stalls. Editor.]

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

UNKNOWN HALTS.

Sybil wrote: "While rummaging about in the "railways" file of the Jerusalem Post archives I found some amazing information in the files, such as the fact that Binyamina station didn't have a platform until June 1983, and that in an article dated August 31, 1967, moaning about delays (on the Inland line of course) "the stop at Tayibe, which serves the Little Triangle and its Jewish neighbourhood, often takes up as much as 10 minutes", and that the 11:00 departure from Dimona was to stop at the Huzeil tribal encampment from April 29, 1970. Two more "stations" for my collection - has anyone else heard of Tayibe and Huzeil as stopping points for trains?!"

(i). EARLY PLANS.

Thanks to Peter Kraus of Innsbruck for this hot piece of front-page news from the 'Innsbrucker Nachrichten' of 22nd. January 1866: "England hat, wie die 'N.Fr. Pr.' berichtet, schon Verhandlungen eingeleitet, welche auf die Führung einer Eisenbahn nach Ostindien von österreichischem Gebiet gerichtet sind. Die letzte Anwesenheit des österreichischen Generalkonsuls v. Hahn in Wien dürfte wesentlich der Erörterung dieser Frage gegolten haben. England scheint hinsichtlich der Trace seiner Zukunftsbahn mit sich bereits vollständig im Reinen zu sein."

i.e. "According to the Wien 'Neue Freie Presse', England has already initiated negotiations which are directed towards the construction of a railway to the East Indies commencing from Austrian territory. The recent presence of the Austrian Consul-General von Hahn in Vienna seems to have been linked to this project. England seems to be already quite clear as to the route of its future railway."

(iii). MORE ON TURKISH 8F's.

With the news of the arrival of one of these locos in Israel it is worth noting some other information about the sister engines. In 'Heritage Railway' issue 170, Nov.12-Dec.19th. 2012 pp.48-53 is an article on the specialist firm 'Moveright' founded by Andrew Goodman, which has undertaken many jobs transporting preserved locomotives around the world. On p.50:

"In 1989 fellow enthusiast Mike Hoskins told Andrew that he had bought a Stanier 8F in Turkey By then, Andrew certainly had the necessary expertise. As part of the deal, they went on a railtour, flying from Heathrow to Istanbul and on to Ankara, and then taking an overnight coach to the Black Sea resort of Samsun. Woken up at 4am by callings to prayer, they boarded a special steam train for a week's tour of the Turkish rail system. He and his fellow travellers used up all their rolls of film on the first day, and when they arrived at Sivas, went to look late at night for a shop to buy some more. They found one next to a café, but it was closed, and asked the café owner when it would open again.

The café owner drove off in his battered old Fiat van emitting clouds of smoke, and 20 minutes later came back with the owner, who agreed to open despite the time of day. He was rewarded by the group buying his entire stock of film. 'It is amazing what you can do talking pidgin English and the signs,' said Andrew. At the Sivas steam depot they saw a range of 8F's. 'Never did I think for one moment that I would one day be going back to recover two of them,' he said.

At one point the railtour went close to the Syrian border, where some runpasts were staged. 'All of a sudden there was a load of click click clicks,' recalled Andrew. 'We were suddenly surrounded by Turkish army conscripts. Their captain had trained at Sandhurst and we told him we were railway enthusiasts. He said it was a very dangerous area and gave us a military escort out.'

After that, North British 2-8-2 No. 46185 headed the train up into the Taurus Mountains (Toros Daglari)..... After climbing for a day, the train ended up at Konya where the purchased 8F had been brought down from Izmir after overhaul and then pushed into the half roundhouse, breaking the main bearing on the turntable in the process. The party had to wait for a week, during which one man with a diesel jacked up the turntable and changed the bearing.

The party lived in a railwaymen's hostel for a week, and had been warned not to venture out if they could avoid it, and if they did so, to tell anyone who wanted to know that they were Australians or Canadians, and definitely not British or American. Konya was still ruled by Mullahs and Salman Rushdie's 'The Satanic Verses' had just been published, lighting a tinderbox in the Muslim world, with threats of reprisals. The 8F was marshalled into a half-mile-long freight train, but in the middle. It departed at 5am, and the buyers riding on its footplate were chilled to the bone in the freezing mountain temperatures. After a few hours the party managed to persuade the Turkish crew to remarshal the train,

so that the 8F was behind the diesel. In the cab of the diesel they took turns to crouch down on the floor next to the heater to get warm.

At 8am the end of this leg of the journey was reached and the train remmarshalled again. Andrew recounted, 'What followed was the railway journey of a lifetime because we came down the Taurus Mountains through the night and it was absolutely spectacular. The diesel on the front was trying not to brake, and the whole train rolled right through ravines, across viaducts and through tunnels. A shower of sparks flew off the wheels of the diesel every time the driver touched his brakes. It was just like November 5th.'

The 8F, Turkish State Railways No. 45160, had been exported as a kit of parts to Turkey in 1940, and was now coming home complete. It was sent to Mersin, the main port in southern Turkey to be loaded on to a ship for the homeward journey. Horror of horrors! The shipping agent at the port said it could not be loaded before the ship sailed, because it was Ramadan, and the stevedores refused to work.

Eventually a deal was struck with the stevedores. For two bottles of whiskey and 400 Marlborough they agreed to work on the Saturday evening, and so the party was able to load the 8F over the weekend. Left absolutely shattered by the Monday morning, they flew back, while the ship with the 8F on board sailed to Immingham and the 8F went on to the Swanage Railway, its first restoration base. It ran for a time in Turkish livery but was later rebuilt, and has been running as LMS No. 8476, a Swindon-built example of the class, on... the Gloucester Warwickshire Railway. .. The Turkish ambassador travelled behind it on a special train on October 28th.

(p.52.) Two More Stanier 8F's. Moveright International returned to Sivas in Turkey in December 2010 to repatriate two more 8F's, which will be overhauled and rebuilt to British outline. ...TCDD No. 45166 was acquired by the Turkish 8F group, owner of No. 8274... It is now at the Barry Island Railway awaiting the work. Its rebuild may take between 10-15 years to complete.

Privately-owned sister engine No. 45170 was displayed at Locomotion until summer 2011. In September 6th. this year it arrived at the North Norfolk Railway where it will be a long-term restoration project."

p.53. Andrew hopes to return to Turkey where he believes that there is another redundant 8F 'just about' worth saving, a long-term project..... He had also looked at the possibility of bringing back one of the three Robinson O4 2-8-0's preserved in Australia, where they entered industrial service after the First World War....." [He has also transported a USATC-type Class 62 0-6-0T from Yugoslavia to Britain.

These are all classes that worked on Palestine Railways in the 1940's. Ed.]

2.

Then in 'Steam Railway' Issue 411 February 2013 p.10: The Stanier 'Black 5' 5MT 4-6-0 No. 44901, one of the last hulks to be purchased from Woodhams' Yard at Barry Docks 'is to move to the yard of Moveright International's Andrew Goodman for storage, pending finalisation of a restoration plan by the group that owns ex-Turkish 8F No. 45160 and masterminded the repatriation of two others..... However, the Stanier engine is to make its trip without its boiler – which is destined instead as a spare for Bury's Ian Riley, who already owns 'Black Fives' Nos.- 44871 and 45407. The Crewe-built loco also lacks a tender. Chris Brooks, of the Churchill 8F Group.... said..the engine could be running again in around ten years from when the overhaul begins, using a boiler and tender from a Turkish 8F. The front boiler ring on a 'Black Five' is longer than on an '8F'; in all other respects they are right-on identical. The bottom line is that we've got a lot of parts in our ownership.... The Churchill 8F Group proposes to use a Turkish 8F boiler because it already has extensive experience of refurbishing the steel firebox, significantly reducing the estimated overhaul costs. Although the Group sold its previously Barry-based 8F (NBL No. 24641) for export to Israel last year, the group said at the time it would continue to seek repatriation of another. ...'

(iv). CONTEMPORARY REPORTS ON THE OPENING OF THE JERUSALEM LINE.

Peter Kraus has sent a copy of the article that appeared in 'Die Neuzeit' (Wien) on 18th. December 1891. (Translation by the Editor).

' The Railway to Jerusalem. According to the Statutes of the Société du chemin de fer Ottoman de Jaffa à Jerusalem et prolongements on embrachements, Mr. Joussof Navon Effendi and Jean Frutiger, Chief of the banking firm J. Frutiger & Co. in Jerusalem, the Société de travaux publics et construction, and the Société anonyme franco-belge pour la construction de machines et de matériel de chemin de fer, have formed together this Company. The duration is set at 70 years. The railway itself is an interesting mountain line that crosses the Lebanon, whose scenery matches that of the Semmeringbahn. It is 87 kilometres long. Construction began on 1st. April 1890, although heavy unexpected rainfall delayed the work. On the 4th. [a word is missing here] 46 kilometres of the line from Jaffa was opened to public traffic and in April this year it is hoped to open the entire line. In the 1888 Report of the English Consul in Jaffa to the Foreign Office may be mentioned that the line's engineers have estimated the future income of the railway for the first year as 13,500 Francs per kilometre brutto, that is some 1,180,000 Francs for the whole line. The basis for these calculations are the number of pilgrims and tourists, of whom there are some 40,000 per annum, and the goods traffic has been not included in this. A return journey is reckoned as 30 Francs on average, that is 10 Francs each way for

the 3rd. class, 15 Frs. For the 2nd. and 20 Frs. for the 1st. Class, according to French operational norms. The entrepreneurs hope with this railway to increase French prestige in the Orient. We Austrians are interested only in the financial results to the extent that the Lloyd line may convey a higher number of Austrian pilgrims and tourists to Jerusalem. From the point of view of Judaism it is to be hoped for that every year a steadily-growing number of our brethren may take a view and visit in respectful remembrance the holy places where the teaching of the only true God was preached, when the ancient Greeks were still just starting to develop their culture. May our younger people also undertake a holiday journey to Jerusalem and return to spread the mild teaching of forgiveness, which our prophets taught with such fiery commitment and preached so.'

(v), MODEL NOTE.

The new IR Vossloh Euro 4000 diesel loco is to be produced in HO scale. According to Ulrich Gosse the model will be produced by Südexpress, a Portuguese company, and actually made in China. According to Ferenc Naumann of Köln who markets these and other models, deliveries should commence in April-May 2013, though it is almost certain that there will be delays, maybe until July/August. The chassis is diecast, the body being of plastic. The model is to be equipped with two flywheels and will be available in both AC and DC versions. It is highly detailed and has been praised in the model press. Of course the term 'Made in China' is not exactly a guarantee that all human and labour rights are respected.

100:09

SAMAKH STATION – HISTORICAL “END OF THE LINE”

By Giora Goodman

(Translated from the Hebrew by Jeremy Topaz)

The compound of the railway station at Samakh (also spelt Semakh; in Hebrew צמח = Tsemakh, Zemach, Tzemach,) is one of the most important railway sites in the modern history of the Land of Israel. In spite of this, it is one of the places which are less well known to the general public. The tale of the Samakh station is part of the overall story of the enormous contribution of the railway in the development of the country in the first half of the 20th century. It is also part of the story of the political, national and even international struggles which shaped the history of the whole country and especially the Jordan valley and the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) region. In the fascinating story of the station, distant governments, the local population, Turks and Germans, Australians and Englishmen, Arabs and Jews, are all involved. In the documentation of the annals of Samakh station four distinct periods are revealed, each of which represents the station in its own time-line.

THE FIRST STATION - THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

The Samakh area became part of the railway map of the Middle East at the beginning of

the 20th century as a result of the building of the famous Hedjaz railway from Damascus to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, which included the construction of a branch line to Haifa along the Yarmukh river and through the Jezreel valley. The ambitious project, announced by Sultan Abdul Hamid the 2nd in 1900, was intended to help Haj pilgrims but also to increase the strategic control over the territories of the Ottoman empire. The initiative and financing came from the Ottoman regime, and the execution was managed by the German engineer, Heinrich August Meissner. Construction of the line and its operation necessitated an outlet to the Mediterranean, from which building materials and enormous supplies of coal could be brought in from Europe. Meissner decided to lay a line to the then-developing port of Haifa, a decision which was destined to have an enormous influence on the history of the north of the country.

Construction of the branch started from Haifa eastwards in 1903 and lay-

ing of the track to Samakh was completed at the beginning of 1905, and this was the first time that trains reached the Jordan valley. On the 1st of September, in honour of the occasion of the ascent of the Sultan to the throne, the festive declaration was made of completion of the line and connection of Samakh to the section of the Hedjaz line from Mezerib to Deraa. But in fact, the complex engineering work of building the bridges over the Yarmukh river was not yet finalized. Only in May, 1906 did the line begin regular operation and the Samakh station was inaugurated.¹

The Samakh station building was one of eight original structures erected along the part of the line in Palestine. It was made of white stone and had two stories and a tiled roof, similar to those on the northern part of the Hedjaz line (structures like these are still found today in Syria and Jordan). In addition to the central station building, there were, in close proximity: a storage warehouse with a 30 metre unloading platform; an engine shed with room for two locomotives to be serviced; a coal loading platform; a water tower for filling tenders which had two large water tanks, which drew water from the nearby Kinneret; 4 parallel tracks of 300 m. length for stationing passenger carriages and goods wagons alongside the station; and a turntable for reversing the direction of locomotives. Such turntables were located only at large stations or those at the end of a line, indicating that the station was designed to handle trains whose destination was only to Samakh.

The size of the station building and the scope of the additional service buildings showed the relative importance of the Samakh station. It was, in fact, a terminal station in the topographic sense: the last place on the plane where it was possible to build a relatively large station for the purpose of operating trains and loading and unloading of goods before the start of the long ascent along the Yarmukh valley to Syria. Additionally, the fact that there was a large supply of water – the Kinneret – was vital in the age of steam.

The planners of Samakh station intended it to serve the town of Tiberias and the Kinneret area, further adding to its importance. Evidence for this was the building of a pier for boats on the shore of the lake near the station at the same time as the station itself was constructed. A service of steam boats to and from Tiberias was operated from the pier, timed to match the arrival and departure of trains. In the absence of a good road on the west side of the Kinneret, this service, which took about one hour, was the fastest means of transport to the town. The railway and the station were destined to change, in particular, the status of the nearby village of Samakh. Prior to the coming of the station, this was a small village, consisting of poor houses

Samakh village with the station, around 1931



made of clay, whose residents, many of them immigrants from Algeria in the 19th century, eked out a living from growing grain and fishing in the lake². With the influence of the railway, signs of growth in the economy and in tourism were seen – in particular Christian pilgrims wishing to visit the sites holy to Christianity on Lake Kinneret's shores. At first, the train ran regularly only three times a week, but in 1908, it began to arrive once every day.

THE SECOND STATION – THE AUSTRALIAN CONQUEST IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

The First World War contributed to major development of the railways in Palestine. War necessitates the movement of large ground forces, and in the age before the road and the car, railways were the most efficient means of transport to quickly move troops, and particularly supplies. The Ottoman authorities expanded existing stations and laid new tracks, (especially in the Negev) in connection with their attack operations in the direction of the Suez Canal, at the beginning of the war. The British later laid down their own tracks in the opposite direction, as part of their war effort in the south of the country. Although the fighting took place in the south during most of the war years, nevertheless the Samakh station area, through which troops flowed from the north, became in this period an important military centre, buzzing with train movements. Additional

buildings sprang up in the station precinct, additional sidings were laid down, and in the last year of the war, after the British forces had conquered the south of the country, a small airfield with a squadron of German pilots began to operate there.

When the British army, in autumn 1918, began its major offensive to capture the north of the country and Syria from the Turks, both sides regarded the Samakh station as of great importance, being at the junction of the land route along the Jordan valley and around the Kinneret and the railway route up the Yarmukh river. The importance of the place can be seen in the decision of the German commander of the Ottoman forces, Field-Marshal Liman von Sanders, to try to delay the advance of the British army by appointing a German officer as commandant of the station precinct and reinforcing the defence of site with a unit of German soldiers armed with machine guns.

Many of the "British" armed forces who fought in the Middle East theatre in the First World War, in fact came from the eastern part of the British Empire: India, Australia and New Zealand. As part of the British war campaign, the 4th Brigade of the Australian Light Cavalry was given the task of conquering the village of Samakh and the station precinct.

The battle for Samakh was destined to be one of the last cavalry charges ever, because the progressive mechanization of the battlefield in the 20th century brought to a close the long and rich history

Samakh station, about 1920



of this type of warfare.

In the official history book of the Australian army in the First World War, it is told that, on the morning of the 25th of September, 1918, the Australian force advanced from the south, riding on horseback, by moonlight, when suddenly they came under fire from German machine guns. In spite of the darkness, with only moonlight to depend on, the commander of the 11th cavalry battalion gave the order to charge after which the cavalymen drew their swords and raced ahead. In this dangerous gallop, some of the horses tripped and fell with their riders. The German fire got more accurate, the closer the horsemen got to the station, and hit some of the horses and their riders. The toughest fighting was within the station itself, where it was easier for the Germans to take cover in the stone buildings, (as compared to the clay houses of the village of Samakh). The cavalymen who succeeded to reach the area of the station jumped down from their horses and continued face-to-face fighting with their rifles with bayonets.

The battle ended only after about an hour, at 5:30 a.m., just after dawn. On the German/Turkish side there were about 100 dead, mostly German soldiers, and many wounded. Altogether, the cavalry captured 364 prisoners, half of them Germans and half Turkish. 14 Australian horsemen were killed, including three officers, 29 were wounded; in addition they lost about half of their horses. The Australians surmised that delaying the order and charging in daylight would have brought much heavier losses. The cavalry charge and the conquest of Samakh became a famous tale of heroism in the history of the Australian army, whose ultimate success with relatively light losses was in sharp contrast to the unimaginable, futile losses in other areas where Australians (and all the other armies) fought in WWI.³

An additional benefit of the Australian conquest to the history of the Samakh station is the photographic record left by the Australian army photographers. When the battle was over, the photographers documented the area, and their collection of photos is preserved in the Australian army museum. In fact, prior to the morning of the conquest, there are as yet no known photos of the Samakh station and its surroundings.

The engineering corps of the Australian and New Zealand armies quickly repaired the bridges blown up by the Turks and Germans retreating on the Hedjaz line, and it became part of the British command structure in the period of military government after the war. In the army camp adjacent to the station, a garrison of Indian soldiers was stationed. In the period when the political future of the area was uncertain, the conquering British army itself became a target for attacks. In April, 1920, Bedouin tribes from Trans-Jordan attacked the Indian garrison, cutting the railway to prevent reinforcements coming from Haifa. But the British command had at their disposal the air force, and a few planes soon drove the attackers away. Again in the riots of spring, 1921, the British military command sent reinforcements to strengthen the army guards in the area

of the station and the bridges on the railway line.

THE THIRD STATION – THE BRITISH MANDATORY PERIOD

The period of the British mandate gave a great impetus to the technological and economic development of the country, and it was only to be expected that the railways would benefit from this. Railways, after all, were invented in Britain at the beginning of the 19th century, and it was British engineers who laid down railways in many parts of the world, within the British Empire and elsewhere. But the period of British rule over Palestine coincided with the period when rail transport was diminishing in importance, while that of road transport was increasing. The British did not develop rail transport in the land as they might have done one or two generations earlier. An example of this is the fact that they did not invest major resources in the old-fashioned narrow-gauge lines which were part of the Hejaz Railway within the territory they controlled. In spite of this, the outdated, slow line was affectionately called "The Valley Line" (Rakevet Ha-Emek) and contributed significantly to the economic and agricultural development of the Jezreel and Jordan valley areas in the 20's and 30's, including building of new stations and halts for settlements which came into being along the route. In the middle of the 1930's, a period of intensive activity on the railways all over the country, there were three trains per day arriving from Haifa and returning from Samakh.

Samakh station was an important service station for the Tiberias area and the Jordan valley and the Jewish settlement being established there: Trains brought passengers and mail to the settlements and carried milk from their dairies to the towns. The sta-

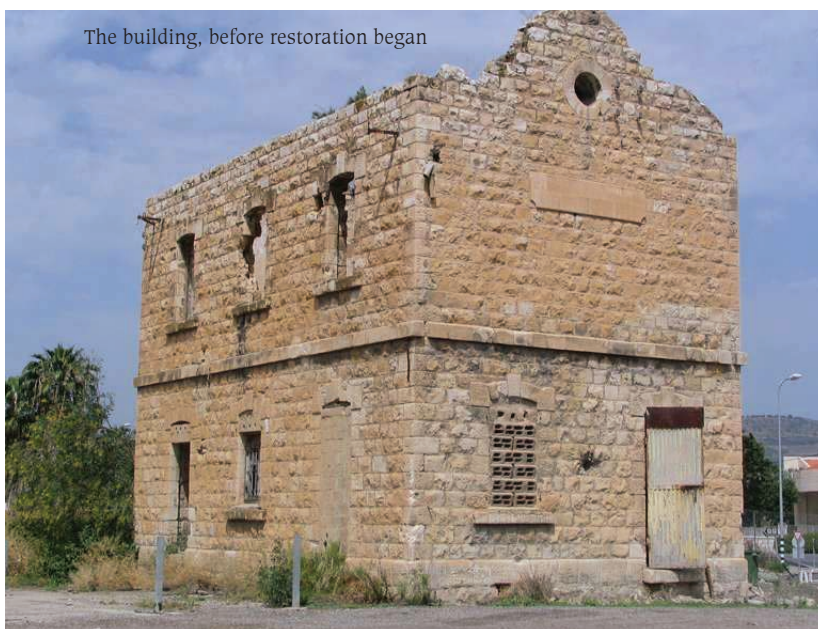
Remains of the water tower



tion and the activity there encouraged in particular the development of Samakh village, whose accelerating demographic growth was already apparent in the last years of Ottoman rule. Most of the residents were Muslim Arabs, but at the beginning of the Mandate period, a number of Jewish families settled there and engaged in trade. One of them even ran a pension close to the station. In the early '30's, Samakh was a town with almost 2000 inhabitants, and by the end of the Mandate, according to a census of the British administration, more than 3000 people lived there. South of the station, a neighbourhood developed known as "El Bastin".

The importance of the link to rail transport – in spite of the continuous development of road transport in the country – was clear from the many requests by the Tiberias community leaders, both Jews and Arabs, to extend the line to the town and not to be content with paving the road from Samakh to Tiberias in the early 20's. Further evidence of the importance of the station was the arrival by train of material to build the workers' camp on the road near the Tiberias hot baths. The railway line and the road, even if they competed with one another, sometimes displayed active cooperation. For example, the management of "Palestine Railways" offered special prices and even a special train to large groups of Jews from Jerusalem who wished to reach the "Lag B'omer" celebration on Mount Meron.⁴

In the period of the Mandate, after the borders were fixed in the early 20's, the importance of Samakh station further increased: it now served as a border station between two separate Mandated territories: Palestine and Syria. Despite the fact that the British got, in the agreement with the French Mandatory government in Syria, the area of El Hama, they quickly transferred the operation of the small, geographically isolated station there to the French-Syrian railway, the "Société Ottomans du Chemin de Fer de Damas-Hama et Prolongements", known by the initials



The building, before restoration began

"DHP". The Samakh station thus became, in the mandate era, the "end station" in the political sense as well as in the topographical sense.

The significance of its location and the definition of Samakh station as a border station was the enlargement of the station area and the addition of buildings for the customs authority. By arrangement



and now, undergoing restoration work.

between Britain and France, joint customs activities were carried out for goods entering Palestine from Syria, and for those going in the opposite direction. Another result of the division of the Hejaz Railway between the region controlled by the British Mandatory government and that of the French mandatory government in Syria, was that locomotives were always changed at Samakh. Locomotives operated by Palestine Railways brought the carriages to Samakh and they were then hauled by Syrian locomotives operated by DHP, and vice-versa. The locomotive shed and turntable at Samakh served both companies. Close to

the Samakh station there was a quarantine pen for animals, and in the early 30's, a small landing strip was prepared for aircraft of the British airline "Imperial Airways" flying to Iraq and India. (See box).

Railways are a means of transport thirsty for wide open spaces, which in fact don't exist in such a small country, but in the Mandate period, trains went not only eastwards but also, from Haifa, on other lines, southwards to Egypt and, from 1942 onwards, to Tripoli in the north. These travel possibilities were exploited by Jews of Syrian origin living in Tiberias and the

Jordan valley settlements, who were in the habit of travelling from time to time from Samakh to Damascus to visit their relatives.

The railway served not only as a means of transport with economic importance, but also as a means of military control and symbol of government rule. The

fact of its operation or attempts to disrupt the operation were nearly always part of the struggle on political control of the whole country. In the period of the bloody riots of the Arab revolt in the 1930's, when the whole railway system came under attack, the Haifa-Samakh line was also a target. Most of the attacks were in the region of the Jezreel valley and Beth Shean, but even Samakh town was seething with nationalistic activity, and Jews from the surrounding villages were attacked there. Jews living in Samakh who had remained after the riots of 1929 now left their homes. In 1936, the Kibbutzim in the area arranged with the Railway management a sort of improvised station between

Beit Zera and Afikim to avoid the need to enter the town. Agricultural produce was still shipped from Samakh because only there were the ramps and tracks needed for loading, but this was under guard of the army.

As a result of the Arab revolt, one of the conclusions of the British administration was the need to strengthen the defence of rail and motorized transport, by building a network of police stations at strategic locations, which were designed by the Imperial defence expert, Sir Charles Taggart. And thus, one of these police buildings, known as "Taggart Fortresses",

was built not far from the road junction and the Samakh station. Likewise, for defence of the rail line, a British army camp was set up near the station precinct. Towards the end of the mandate period, it was the Jews who challenged the British mandatory government, because of the anti-Zionist policy exemplified by the "White Paper" of May 1939. On the "night of the bridges" in June 1946, the Palmach blew up the big bridge over the Yarmukh, which at the time was the largest bridge in the country. The British did not repair the bridge, and train travel to Syria stopped.

THE FOURTH AND LAST STATION – THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The end of the British mandate and the establishment of the State of Israel was accompanied by a battle for control of transport routes, and within a few months, the entire railway system was immobilized. At the end of April, 1948, the forces of the "Hagana" captured the Samakh police station, and the people of Samakh fled, that very same day, mostly eastward over the border. During the Syrian invasion of the Jordan valley immediately after the declaration of Independence, the area of the station too became a battlefield. On the morning of May 16th, the Syrians began a heavy bombardment with artillery and mortars on the station area, and the central building caught fire. A squad of six soldiers who took part in the defence of the compound, withdrew when their commander, Danny Kazin, was killed in one of the structures near the station building. The Syrians captured Samakh town two days later, but they abandoned both it and the station precinct a few days later, after their failure in the battle for Degania. The main station building has remained without a roof since then (until the start of the preservation project). Signs of the battle are still visible on the eastern side of the building in the form of holes from bullets and 37 mm shells from the Syrian armoured cars.

After establishment of the State of Israel, the "Valley Line" never returned to Samakh. At the beginning of the 50's, trains ran a few times as far as Afula, after which the operation was discontinued. An army camp occupied the large station compound. After 1967, when the north-eastern border moved away, the army evacuated the site, and in time, it began to serve the Jordan Valley district council. During this entire period, the historic station building was neglected and open to the winds. Some of the service buildings in the station area remained standing, but the engine shed, which up until the 50's

was still extant, was demolished, and of the storage warehouse only the foundations remain. The metal water tanks in the impressive basalt water tower were removed, but the structure itself remains almost untouched. The base of the loco turntable remains in its entirety, largely buried in the ground.

In recent years, activities are under way to renew train travel to Beit Shean and perhaps on to the north of the Jordan Valley, but it is not planned to reach the area of the historic Samakh station. Instead, the restored station site will become a centre for activities of the Kinneret Academic College and its Department of Land of Israel Studies. In the planned visitor centre, the historical importance of the station as the geographical and political "end of the line" will be emphasized, as will its contribution to the economic development of the north of the country and the Jordan Valley, during the late Ottoman and British mandatory periods.

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Samakh as a gateway to the world.

by Jeremy Topaz

Not only was Samakh the border railway station between Palestine and Syria. In October, 1931, Imperial Airways, the forerunner of BOAC and later British Airways, inaugurated a service of flying boats from Southampton on the south coast of England to the Lake of Tiberias, as part of a route to India. The flying boats landed on the lake and passengers were taken by boat to Samakh, where an ordinary plane was waiting to fly on to India via Iraq. Thus the small landing strip there was, in fact, an "International Airport" (some seven years before Lydda airport was opened).

Passengers whose final destination was Palestine could continue their journey via the Valley Railway.



Imperial Airways' Hanno (G-AAUD), a Handley Page HP42 seen near Samakh by the lake of Tiberias in Galilee in 1931. The airline had just established a junction there between the Kent seaplanes (which landed on the lake, to the astonishment of the locals) arriving from Greece and the HP42 service to India via Iraq and Persia. Copyright Unknown. Later, larger flying boats came into service, which themselves continued on to India after an overnight stop at Tiberias.

The service was discontinued in 1942 after one of the planes crashed while landing on the lake in a storm



Flying boat "Clio" (a Short S23 Class) on Lake Kinneret with snow covered Hermon behind

PALESTINE TRANSPORT

PROJECTED ELECTRIC RAILWAYS RADIATING FROM JERUSALEM

(From A Correspondent in The Electrician, Jan. 5 [1934])

Recent economic developments in Palestine – of which the most important is the completion and formal opening of the new harbour at Haifa – tend to emphasise the isolated position of Jerusalem in respect of railway facilities. It is 35 miles distant (by rail to Ludd) from the Palestine-Egypt main line (Haifa–El Kantara–Cairo), with which it is only connected by a branch line (the original Jaffa–Jerusalem Railway, and the first in Palestine), and about 60 miles distant (by road) from the Hedjaz Railway in Trans-Jordan.

A project has been formulated for a Jerusalem–Trans-Jordan railway with the object of providing Jerusalem and Palestine with a direct and up-to-date high-speed system of rail transport – where no railways exist at present – by the construction of four new electric lines, viz. (1) Jerusalem Northern (Nablus); (2) Jerusalem Eastern (Amman); (3) Jerusalem Southern (Beersheba); and (4) Jericho-Dead Sea branch line – all three main lines converging on Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem terminus for all the new lines would be located outside the city on the north side and east of the Damascus Gate.

Jerusalem Northern Railway

The route (67 miles) from the Jerusalem terminus is by a descent in an E.N.E. direction – roughly parallel with the Jericho Road – to the Wadi Fara at the head of the Valley of Achor, at which point the line turns northwards, then N.N.E. along the foothills west of the Jordan Valley to the Wadi Bakr, descending at that point to the level of the Mediterranean and continuing northwards along the western side of the Jordan Valley the line descends to the 500-foot level below the Mediterranean (Wadi ar Rishash), and at the Wadi el Musetterah turns N.N.W. parallel with the Beisan Road, thence N.W. parallel with, and north of, the Nablus Road, ascending the Wadi Fara at the head of which the line turns S.W. to Askara and Balata, then N.W. to Nablus and Samaria) thence continuing westwards parallel with, and south of, the existing narrow-gauge line – to Tulkarm Junction, on the main Haifa–El Kantara Cairo line.

Jerusalem Eastern Railway

The line (55 miles) would leave the Jerusalem Northern line at the Wadi el Musetterah west of the Jordan, and runs thence in a N.E. direction across the Jordan Valley, crossing the River Jordan a few miles south of the confluence of the River Jabbok (Nahr ez Zerka) with the latter, thence continuing N.E. along the valley of the Jabbok to the eastward bend of the river, then due east, ascending the Jabbok Valley to the Wadi el Hasab, then S.E., S., and W., along the Nahr ez Zerka, to the Kalaat ez Zerka Station on the Hedjaz Railway, then W. and S. to

Amman, the capital of Transjordan, and the headquarters of the British Government's High Commissioner.

Jerusalem Southern Railway

This line (50 miles) would run from the Jerusalem terminus southwards – east of the city – via Bethphage and Bethany, and thence S.W. to Bethlehem, continuing southwards to Hebron. From Hebron the line runs southwards to Yutta, thence S.W. to Beersheba.

Jericho Branch Line

From a point on the Jerusalem Northern line at the Wadi Fara a branch line (18 miles) would run eastwards, down the Valley of Achor to Jericho, and then S.E. and S.W. to the N.W. shore of the Dead Sea.

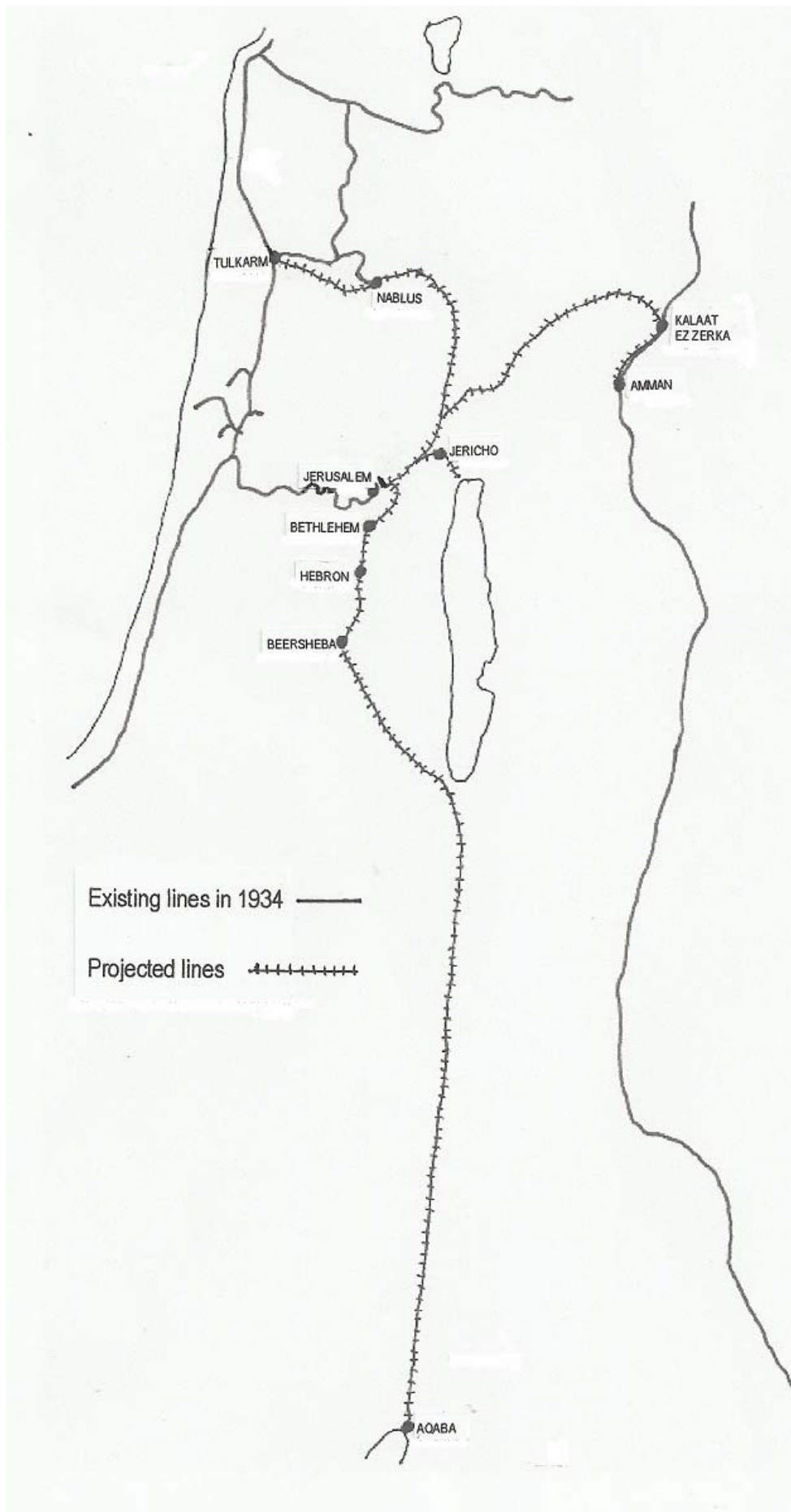
It is proposed that a storage dam and power station be built in the Jabbok Valley, in Trans-Jordan, to provide the current to operate the four railways, but as a possible occasional or seasonal shortage of water from the River Jabbok, an additional storage dam and hydro-electric power station may be built in the valley of the River Arnon, on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, at a point S.W. from Madaba, from which the current would be transmitted by overhead lines at a high voltage to a central sub-station on the main line near Jerusalem. This second power station would be necessary to supply current to a proposed future Red Sea Extension Railway, should this railway materialise later.

To Akaba

The route of a proposed railway from Haifa Harbour on the Mediterranean Coast to the ancient port of Akaba (Gulf of Akaba on the Red Sea) was plotted some years ago. This line – so far as regards the section of the then proposed railway north of Jerusalem to Haifa – has now been abandoned and a new project prepared for future consideration.

The projected Red Sea Railway would commence by a junction with the terminus of the Jerusalem Southern line at Beersheba, and run thence in a S.E. direction to the Wadi Akaba, and then southwards along the latter to the port of Akaba, at the head of the Gulf of Akaba, on the Red Sea.

Construction of this Beersheba-Akaba line would place Jerusalem in a direct sea-to-sea railway from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, and enable a through train service to be run from Haifa via Tulkarm, Nablus, Jerusalem, Hebron, Beersheba and the Wadi Araba to Akaba, the Red Sea terminus, thus reviving the ancient and formerly prosperous trading and traffic route from the Red Sea to Damascus and the Levant of the times of Solomon, the Nabataeans (when Petra flourished) and the Romans.



A PRISONER OF WAR IN TURKEY IN 1916.

From 'My Campaign in Mesopotamia', the memoirs of Major-General Sir Charles V. F. Townshend K.C.B., D.S.O., published by Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 62, St. Martin's Lane, London W.C.2, in Feb. 1920. A copy of an extract from this book has been sent to me by Erich Schmidt. It is fascinating for the insights into the mind of a well-educated chap who has clearly seen much of India and also Austria, who can observe military movements yet takes almost childish delight in being complimented. The Age of Chivalry was not yet past – at least for the Officer Class. It is amazing to think of a Prisoner of War being allowed to shoot fowl.... and to jot down notes like a tourist. Townshend of the Indian Army had been captured after the siege of Kut-al-Amara (7th. December 1915 – 29th. April 1916) when British and Indian troops surrendered to Ottoman forces. We can learn a lot about travel conditions before the Bagdadbahn line was completed.

p. 359-363. Chapter XIX. A PRISONER OF WAR.

I left Baghdad on 12th. May, 1916, in company with Colonel Parr, Captain Morland, and Colonel Isàkh Bey, a Circassian, who was the Turkish officer in charge of me, my Portuguese cook, an Indian servant and two British orderlies. We went by rail to Suwarra, the rail-head, where we arrived at 8.30 p.m., and were given quarters in the railway station by the German station-master. Leaving Suwarra by road, and driving in crazy old 'Arabans' and an old Chippendale victoria, we reached Tekrit, on the right bank of the Tigris, at 11 p.m., by a rough and rugged road over a monotonous plain, in places undulating and accidented by stony ravines. At Tekrit we had to rest our weary, half-starved little horses until 3p.m. on the 14th., and I shot four or five couple of sandgrouse before breakfast for our mess. At that hour we started again and reached the Turkish fortified post of Seriniyeh at midnight.

On the morning of 15th. May I shot six couple of sandgrouse before breakfast. We did not start till 3p.m. And we halted at 4 o'clock on the morning of the 16th. At a place where a small brackish stream crossed the track, where we slept in our carts. Here we overtook a party of about forty ragged and weary British and Indian prisoners, who had been taken from Gorrings's force, and included the survivors of the 'Julnar'. They were under Sub-Lieutenant Reid, R.N.R., who told us they had to pay for donkey hire, and that one of their number was ill. Before we moved off I made Isàkh Bey give Reid fifteen liras for expenses of this nature, and deliver a severe lecture to the Turkish officer in charge of the prisoners. This was all I could do.

At 2p.m. on 16th. May we reached Kila Shergat, on the right bank of the Tigris. Many of the houses of this place are of white marble, and it is inhabited by a great colony of storks. It is the site of the ancient fortified city, of which the ruined walls of the citadel or 'reduit' alone remain; there is also the perfect trace, with some columns still standing, of a palace or temple, which has been excavated by the German antiquarians, who have been at work in Mesopotamia for some years past. They have worked busily inside the citadel. And I was told that they have found many treasures. It was a great treat to reach the river again, for the road had run many miles inland from it, and to have a swim.

We resumed our journey at 5 a.m. on 17th. May and reached Gazàra arrest-house, on the right bank of the Tigris, at 11.45 a.m. Enver Pacha, with a large suite of German and Austrian staff-officers, passed down the river on rafts or 'killiks' at 6 p.m. on his way to Baghdad to confer with Khalil Pacha. Motor cars and baggage were loaded on the rafts.

On 18th. May we reached Hammam Ali, a small village with a bath for rheumatic people. There is petroleum all about this country, and we encamped alongside a petrol spring. We had much difficulty on this day's march, crossing many small streams in boggy depressions, in which the carts stuck. The baggage had to be unloaded in order to extricate them.

At 11 a.m. on 19th. May we reached Mosul. Here we lodged in the club-house of the Turkish officers of the garrison, which is situated close to the barracks in a little garden on the bank of the river. Opposite, on a plateau on the left bank, stood the ruins of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrians and the home of Semiramis the great queen.

Mosul is a large Arab city on the right bank of the Tigris, the centre of a country which is the veritable granary of Asia Minor. It is estimated that the Mosul district could easily feed an army of 70,000 men annually with meat and grain,.

We started again from Mosul on 22nd. May, a day and a half having been passed by Isàkh Bey in procuring transport to take us on. We now had three motor-lorries, and we made for Ras-al-Ain, the rail-head.

The Turkish line of communications from Constantinople to Baghdad via Mosul, which was the route we were following, is some 1,255 miles in length. It runs from Baghdad via Mosul, Ras-al-Ain, Aleppo, Tarsus, over the Taurus Mountains, Bozanti, Konia, and Afion Kara Hissar to Constantinople. In May 1916 the rail-head towards Baghdad was Ras-al-Ain. Between this point and Samarra, whence the railway ran into Baghdad, a gap of three hundred miles had to be crossed.

The remaining unfinished gaps in the railway at the time of which I write, were:-

(a) Islahi-Marmouri – some forty miles of hill-road, crossing the Amanus Mountains.

(b) Tarsus-Bozanti – about forty-five miles over the Taurus Mountains.

We negotiated both these gaps on motor lorries.

The road between Samarra and Mosul was bad, but it presented no difficulty for a railway. The Turks used 'killiks' (skin rafts) between Mosul and Baghdad, as this section of the Tigris is very rapid, the river in many places reminding me of the Indus on the north-west frontier of India.

On 22nd. May, the day that we left Mosul, we halted at Nisibin at 6 p.m., having experienced difficulties at drifts on the road. This was a fortified town in the days of the Roman general Belisarius, who commanded the expedition sent by Justinian to reconquer Mesopotamia from the Persians in 541 A.D., and used Nisibin as his advanced base.

We left in motor lorries at 9 a.m. On 23rd. May, and did the seventy miles to Ras-al-Ain by 4p.m. We passed some 4,000 Turkish infantry on the road, who were marching to Baghdad.

Ras-al-Ain was a small village with a standing detachment of German engineers and transport corps. The German soldiers were young and of fine physique, in brand-new khaki uniforms and equipped with odd bullet-shaped helmets. We had met so many German officers on

the road between Baghdad and Ras-al-Ain that we had no doubt in our minds that they intended to make Turkey an appendage of the German Empire, and to found an Eastern Empire in Mesopotamia. The Germans were even manufacturing the gold Turkish liras, and they were attaching their officers to all Turkish regiments and battalions. In conversation with us the Turkish officers deeply resented this, and said openly that Enver Pacha was evidently in the hands of the Germans.

On 25th. May we left Ras-al-Ain by train at 6 a.m. and reached Aleppo at 6.30 p.m.-, a journey of some 180 miles. The Euphrates is crossed by a bridge of the Forth Bridge type at Jerrabus.

I was met at the station of Aleppo by a large number of Turkish officers and gendarmerie, who were drawn up on the platform and saluted me. We drove to Barron's Hotel, where it was a great luxury to have a proper bath, good food, a bedroom and clean sheets. I was also given a private sitting and dining-room.

During our stay at Aleppo I visited the ancient citadel, which interested me very much. It evidently dates from the time of the Crusaders, or shortly after; its fortifications are of the Middle Ages, and the walls – of an enormous thickness – are in a splendid state of preservation, as also is the palace with its great hall of audience. The citadel stands on an isolated hill in the middle of the city. It is surrounded by a vast ditch, revetted with stone from the foot of the walls to the bottom of the ditch, and it is therefore impossible to escalate.

A high bridge like a viaduct – I suppose about a hundred and fifty feet in height – crosses the ditch from the fortified bridge-head to the castle. I have read, in some novel or other, of a duel between two knights on horseback who charged each other from the opposite ends of this bridge, which has no balustrade and is very narrow. All I can say is that had some nerves!

The Turkish General Commanding at Aleppo, Chefik Pacha, a man of great stature, was very polite to me, and called on me at the hotel, accompanied by some of his officers. He was a friend of Colonel Isàkh Bey, who seemed to be a most popular man wherever we went. I also met the American Consul, Mr. Jackson, who, so I was told at Constantinople, had helped British and French prisoners a great deal.

We left Aleppo by train at 6a.m. On 29th. May, and arrived at Isàhi at mid-day. Here the railway ended, and we had to cross the mountains, under which the railway is being tunnelled., to Amànus, the next rail-head. This range of hills is

called the Amanus 'mountains', but where we crossed the pass we were certainly not over 5,000 feet above sea level. We found ourselves in a beautiful country of hills, valleys and streams, the hills of greystone covered with scrub. Our transport was German motor-lorries with German chauffeurs, part of a large motor-lorry depot of 250 to 300 cars. We reached Marmourie, where we got the rail again, at 5.30 p.m.

We left the next morning at 9 a.m. by train, and arrived at Tarsus about 5.30 p.m. We were to stay for the night with the Turkish General Commanding at Tarsus, another friend of Colonel Isàkh Bey, and had to motor some two or three miles to the town from the railway station. The German officer in charge of the motor transport wished to drive me to the town, and an altercation took place between him and Isàkh Bey, who refused to let the German get into the car, saying that he was in sole charge of me, and that the German must remember that he was in the country of the Turks, not in Germany, and could give no orders here. Isàkh was so menacing and furious that the German submitted, and we drove off in triumph without him.

The Turkish General had a good dinner for us, and he and Isàkh passed the evening in round abuse of the Germans. The General told me that British warships had bombarded him at long range a short time before, doing no damage, as his troops were concealed behind small hills. They used to damage the telegraph wire, but it was always repaired in two or three hours during the night.

We left Tarsus the next morning, 31st. May, in a German motor-car, with a German chauffeur, for Bozanti, the next rail-head. The Germans had about 150 cars and lorries working the Bozanti-Tarsus section. We travelled over the Taurus Mountains by a most beautiful winding valley, which reminded me of the Sind Valley in Kashmir, through great pine forests and along mountain streams, with great peaks and cliffs towering above us. We passed through a rocky defile, very precipitous and narrow, which is named Alexander the Great's Gate. Here is a tablet of stone cut out on the face of the rock with an inscription by Alexander to commemorate the march of his army through this defile; Belisarius and Godfrey de Bouillon also took this road. From this we debouched into a great wide valley bordered by pine-covered hills, which resembled a valley in the Austrian Tyrol.

At Bozanti, Enver Pacha's special train was drawn up, and he sent for me to see him in his carriage. He spoke in a very flattering way of the defence of Kut,

and of my ability in advancing nearly to Baghdad with what he called une poignée d'hommes. He said that I should be the honoured guest of his nation, which appreciated the way I had done my duty to my country. I reminded him of his offer to me in a telegram to go home on parole if I did not destroy my guns. I told him that it was impossible for me to purchase my liberty in that way, and so I had destroyed them, but now I hoped he would allow me to be exchanged and go to England. He said that perhaps that would be done, he would see. I must not grieve at being a prisoner, it was the fortune of war. I remarked that I knew that, and that during the Napoleonic Wars half Napoleon's marshals had become prisoners of war at some time or other, and that it always happened in war if the leaders have to be in the front line. He said he would see me on my arrival at Constantinople, as he was on his way there, and, shaking hands cordially with me, ended the interview. A large staff of German and Austrian officers was with him, and as I walked along the train many of them saluted me, and I saw others snapshotting me with Kodaks.

I noticed that the bulk of the rolling stock on the railway from Bozanti to Constantinople was Belgian; all the trucks were marked 'Brussels' and had the numbers of men and horses painted on them in French. The locomotives were German, as were the engine-drivers, stokers and guards.

We arrived at Constantinople on 3rd. June, our twenty-second day from Baghdad. For some time we were running along the shore of the Gulf of Ismid in the Sea of Marmara. We passed several picturesque little towns nestling under capes and cliffs, and we noticed considerable numbers of coast craft and fishing craft.

We arrived at the large terminus of Haidar Pacha at Skutari, opposite Constantinople, at about 5.30 p.m. On the platform I was met by the G.O.C., 1st. Turkish Army, his staff, and many War Office officials. There were also large crowds of people in the station. Isàkh Bey, and a Turkish naval A.D.C., Tewfik Bey, who had been specially attached to me, and had come to meet me at Haidar Pacha, introduced me to all the officers, and I had a reception and cigarettes and coffee in the waiting-room of the station. I wondered at this reception of me, a prisoner...."

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Snow in Jerusalem! The Trams encounter Holy Snow for the first time in January 2013
(see Job 38:22).
Photo Aharon Gazit

