

HARAKEVET

הרכבת

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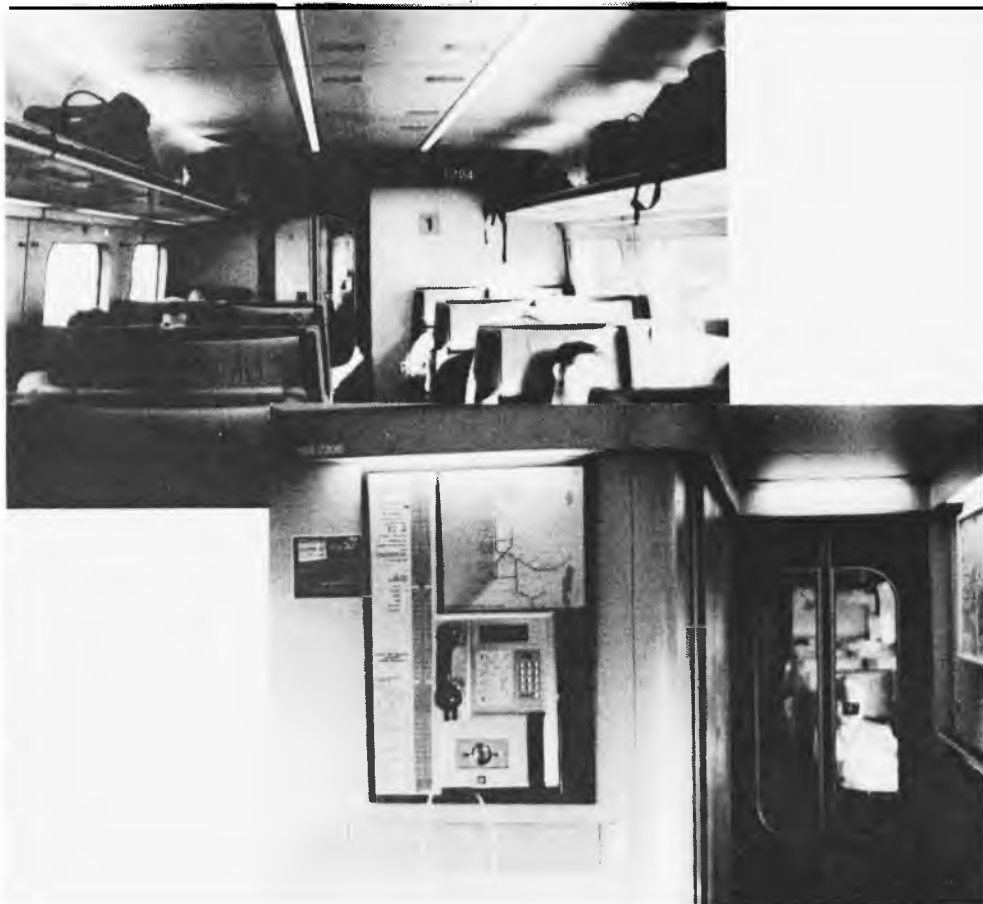


P R Kitson 2 - B - 4T No. 4 shunting at Jaffa, 1947. (D.S.Currie)

Issue 25 is a little unbalanced, simply because there is such a lot happening on the railways of the Middle East at the moment. In Israel especially there are (potential) new locos and coaches to report, new tracks and schemes; Lebanon too is planning a complete rebuild of its surviving system, and the political negotiations concerning the 'peace process' have got many journalists excited at the possibility of renewal of international links. Here at 'Harakevet' we are not holding our editorial breath, but it would be nice to be able to travel from Haifa along the Lebanese coast once more... There is as yet not even a whisper of the revival of the title 'Palestine Railways' for the line from Rafah through the Gaza Strip !

So - a lot of current news this time, and a little less historical material, but a lot is already 'on the stocks' for forthcoming issues. Enjoy !

25:3. Interior of an IC3 coach; note digital clock over bulkhead.



Interior of an IC3 coach lobby (188-7206), showing 'Telecart' telephone, technical specifications in Hebrew and English, and misleading system map. Automatic sliding doors to saloon.

a). Keep It Rolling ! The Carmelit underground cableway at Haifa had to be closed in the evening of 1/5/94 following the discovery of an undisclosed fault in the haulage system. An expert from Von Roll in Switzerland was swiftly despatched to Israel to find out what had gone wrong and it was expected that the Carmelit would be out of action for several days. An official described this as the first breakdown to the Carmelit since its reopening in July 1992 and expressed his view that the cableway is completely safe to travel on - which, of course, makes one wonder.....

b). Pray For A Piece Of Jerusalem... There have been more recent rumours (unsubstantiated) concerning the future of Jerusalem station. According to these, Jerusalem Municipality wants the line cut back to terminate near the Teddy Kollek football stadium right on the edge of town (near the 'Canion' shopping mall), several kilometres short of the original and present terminus. The Municipality has long coveted this station site for redevelopment purposes, but any shortening of the line would only render it further redundant and could well be the clinching argument for complete closure. It is very difficult to envisage anyone bothering to go by train if they have to make an even longer bus journey into and out of town, and the present minimal freight activity would almost certainly disappear too. If the line were cut back it seems likely that the old Turkish station building would be preserved; However, everything else would be obliterated and a pleasantly tranquil corner of town, redolent with history, would be submerged under something which will probably turn out to be ugly and flashy; no matter what the developers would have us believe.

Once these things gain momentum they are usually impossible to stop. Is there any way to safeguard the present route before it comes under imminent threat of destruction ? A public campaign perhaps ? Readers are invited to write to the Jerusalem Municipality and the Ministry of Transport in Jerusalem..... The dreadful warning of what happened to traffic from Tel Aviv once the station was moved to the outskirts should not be ignored !

c). More Coaches ?

According to RAIL Magazine No. 224, 13th-26th. April 1994, p.14, fifteen British Rail Mk. 2 coaches formerly used on the Waterloo-Exeter service are parked at Old Oak Common depot for possible sale to Israel Railways; These are Nos. 5439, 5443, 5446, 5447, 5450, 5454, 5458, 5471, 5472, 5475, 5480, 5495, 5497, 6513 & 6517.

d). More Esslingen Rebuilds. A second Esslingen former diesel railcar trailer has been refurbished by the Ha'argaz Bus Works (near Sarafand), and numbered 112 Bet. A third such vehicle was reportedly being refurbished during April.

On 26/4/94 the Editor had a chance to travel inside 111 Bet and made the following observations: Upholstery is blue with black/red/purple vertical stripes; ceiling is light grey, interior walls, seat backs, luggage racks etc. are blue/grey;

seating is 2 + 2 throughout, with folding tables fitted in each seating bay. Seats are of railway rather than bus type; the windows are original, with a handle that winds the upper section down to a maximum of about one-third; Doors are also original, folding inwards rather than swinging outwards.

(Incidentally, a former Esslingen trailer body, very derelict, can be observed from the train near the Beth Shemesh cement works in the valley near a quarry).

e). More Double-Tracking. In the last week of April 1994 a tender offer was accepted and a contract awarded to "Ravid Ltd." to double the remaining track of the main line between Binyamin and Haifa, within six months.

From personal observation at the end of April, the second track was under construction (on the west side of the existing line) from Tel Aviv Merkaz towards Tel Baruch, with two new concrete viaducts essentially complete over the road near Ramat Aviv and the Yarkon River; apparently progress over this bottleneck had been held up due to an argument over liability for sewage works alterations. From Tel Baruch junction (km. 89) the second track is in operation to Netanya, with a crossover at Galilot Junction, the second platform between tracks 2 and 3 at Herzliyya still at only a very early stage of construction; At Shefayim (km. 78), where there used to be a passing loop, there is now an additional third track making a refuge loop, on the west side of the main line. There is a second platform and subway in use at Bet Yehoshua. (The sidings on the west side of Bet Yehoshua remain connected).

At Netanya the station has been expanded, with a second (island) platform between tracks 2 & 3 (on the east side of the former main line), and a subway and new shelters.

Immediately north of Netanya station the track became single again, though the trackbed was complete apart from ballast and rails, on the east side of the original line, all the way to Kfar Vitkin, with the exception of the level crossing immediately to the south of Vitkin loop. Northwards from Kfar Vitkin the trackbed was again almost complete and largely ballasted until about 2km., south of Hadera, the second trackbed itself (east of the original line) having only one gap, just south of Hadera station.

Hadera has a second platform, shelters and subway, and the second track continues to Binyamina; At Remez Junction there is a crossover allowing access to the line to Hadera East. Northwards from Binyamina to Haifa Bat Galim the line is as it was, with the tiny new platform at Zichron Yaakov the only recent change.

North of Bat Galim the second bridge over the new underpass has track laid but is still unconnected, the operating line becoming single at the station throat and staying so until the Dagon silo. Between Haifa Merkaz and Mizrach work was in hand on laying in the second and third tracks and new entrance to the Harbour area, the semaphores still standing but mostly out of use.

From Haifa Mizrach the second line continues (on the east side of the original one) past the yards and out as far as Kishon (where the occasional trains that stop do so at the level crossing and signal box, not at the former works halt a little to the north). The second track is laid from Kishon on

the west side almost as far as Kiryat Motzkin, but is not yet in use; the stations at Kiryat Haim and Kiryat Motzkin remain as they were, the former with one platform and the latter with one platform and two loops. North of Motzkin the trackbed is prepared northwards (still on the west of the current line) and with signs of much lifting of disused former sidings in the old camp on the west, until just before a road overbridge.

From here on to Nahariyya there is little change apart from the addition of Atar Yesef platform on the west side, just south of the level crossing, although at Nahariyya itself there is a new station building/ticket office on the platform, rather than as part of the shopping complex that rears over it.

f). Keep Left ! Just for the record - although the double-track sections in use are signalled for bi-directional running, the norm is to run on the left-hand track, unlike the roads in Israel where the norm is to drive on the right, or in the middle....

g). Stock Purchases. Israel Railways has ordered a further seven IC3 units from ABB-Scandia, though these will be fitted out slightly less luxuriously (more seats per coach) to assist in handling suburban traffic. A further eighteen coaches are to be purchased (it is not clear whether this includes any second-hand British ones as mentioned above) and a further four main-line diesel locos. In the running are double-ended GM types similar to the Class 59's running on BR.

h). Ayalon Progress. Trains now head merrily southwards from Tel Aviv Merkaz, but run non-stop to Kfar Habbad..... The line through the Ayalon is double, as far as just before the junction with the spur that still runs into the 'old new' Tel Aviv South (to distinguish it from the 'old old' one at Bet Hadar or the 'new new' one not yet constructed. Maybe we should call it the Altneu Bahnhof ?) The 'old new' station seems to be used purely for training purposes and has a couple of old grain vans stored there. The two tracks are bi-directionally signalled, and there are two scissors-crossovers and a loop on the east side used for stabling IC3 sets. At South there is a single-storey cabin on the east side, from which a signalman emerges to hand over or receive the single-line token from this point to Lod.

There are early signs of three stations under construction, one with an island platform, but no indication of work actually progressing or of completion dates. Meanwhile the train rattles merrily past the queues of traffic in both directions..... At the Yehud road junction the road is being dual-carriageway and a further bridge is being constructed over the line.

i). Indicators. Departure and Arrival Electronic Indicator Boards, similar to those now installed at most Egged bus stations, were noticed at Tel Aviv Merkaz and Haifa Bat Galim stations.

j). Double Track. Some belated news, which should have gone into issue 24: Additional also to (e) above: Three more sections of double track have recently been brought into public use as follows:

12/12/93: Haifa East - Zevulun Junction (also known as Akko Junction/Kilo 2/Gesher Paz etc.) On the same date electric signalling replaced mechanical signalling between Haifa East and Qishon.

16/12/93: Tel Aviv Central - Tel Aviv South (i.e. along the new Ayalon link) and Shefayim - Herzliyya.

k). Esslingen Refurbishment. See (d) above - late news: The third former Esslingen intermediate trailer to be refurbished (No. 113 Bet) made a trial trip from Haifa to Hadera and return on 10/5. It was hauled, extravagantly, by 'Jumbo' No. 612. Somebody had heaved rocks through two of its windows, apparently while it was being delivered from the Ha'argaz works to Haifa, and the damage will have to be repaired before it can enter public service.

l). The Sparks Effect. According to a report in the financial section of 'Yediot Aharonot' on 11/5, a joint team from the Ports & Railways Authority and the Israel Electric Corporation has been formed to oversee the electrification of passenger-carrying lines on IR. The General Manager of IR stated that basic work necessary to electrify these lines could be carried out for 270 million Shekels (approximately £70 million, or \$ 9 million), and that this work could be completed within three years of a favourable decision being made.

The newspaper report went on to say that "in the first stage" the following passenger lines were to be electrified:

Netanya - Lod / Rehovot. 113 kms. (Via Tel Aviv).

Netanya - Haifa East. 143 kms.

Haifa East - Nahariya. 38 kms.

Tel Aviv - Ben Gurion Airport. 10 kms.

Kfar Sava suburban. 32 kms.

(The last two would presumably require the laying of new lines; it also appears that track rather than route length is being described.)

The General Manager of the Ports & Railways Authority is quoted as saying that it is the long-term intention to electrify all lines on IR, "especially the suburban services, primarily because of ecological considerations."

The report also noted that the railway appears to be going from strength to strength. According to figures given by the Ports & Railways Authority passenger numbers had risen by a record (and whopping) 73% in the first quarter of 1994 compared to the same period in 1993.

No mention was made by 'Yediot Aharonot' of the present continuing work on double-tracking the main line between Tel Aviv and Haifa, and northwards to Kiryat Motzkin. Presumably this would have to be completed before any electrification work began.

However, the article undermines its credibility somewhat by including a photo of what appears to be a German Maglev train with the caption: "They're planning this dream for us as well."

Further extensive details on Electrification next issue.

m). The Light Tube. On 13/5 'Yediot Aharonot' reported that the Mayor of Tel Aviv and the Minister of Transport had reached agreement on the necessity of building an underground railway in Tel Aviv. The Minister is quoted as saying that he "is not opposed" to an underground system and also that, in his opinion, a light rapid transit system (tramway) will be needed in addition to an underground railway. The Mayor said that without co-operation between the Transport Ministry and the Municipality of Tel Aviv the city would become one big traffic jam.

25:5.

A DREAM ?

Sybil Ehrlich, Harakevet's ace reporter who moonlights occasionally on the 'Jerusalem Post' as their railway correspondent, wrote in that paper on 8/3/94:

"NIS 1.5 Billion Boost for Railways.

The government and the Ports and Railways Authority are each planning to invest NIS 1.5 billion in bringing the country's railways into the 21st. century.

The Railways 2000 Plan, unveiled yesterday aboard a train from Rehovot to Tel Aviv, is a comprehensive programme for modernizing existing track, integrating stations with other forms of transport, and electrifying lines to create a reliable and economic system for passengers and freight. The plan also includes proposals to construct rail links to Arab countries.

Plans for the Tel Aviv area include the completion of new stations on the Ayalon line, branches to Petah Tikva, Rosh Ha'ayin and Kfar Sava, a line from Lod to Modi'in [a planned large new town, Ed.] and one from Tel Aviv to Ben-Gurion Airport. A light railway is also proposed that would link the Tel Aviv Central railway station, the new central bus station, Bat Yam and Rishon Lezion.

85% of the cost of the infrastructure is to be borne by the state and 15% by the Ports and Railways Authority. The authority will finance the station buildings. Operating costs of the passenger railways will be subsidized by the government, while the freight lines are to be self-supporting.

Additional proposed projects are an high-speed passenger line from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, cutting travel time to 35 minutes, a railway to Eilat and Akaba, and rail links with Arab countries.

The link to Lebanon is to be along the coast, and to the Jordanian and Syrian systems via Haifa, Tzemah, El Hama and Dera'a (along the old "Valley Railway")."

By coincidence, the same week I received notification of a Lebanese scheme to rebuild the old Haifa-Beirut-Tripoli line (or at least, that part of it within Lebanon) to a double-track, electrified and modern rail network.

In the latest issue (No. 13, May 1994) of Samuel Rachdi's excellent "Fahrplancenter News" (available from Tellstrasse 45, CH 8400 Winterthur, Switzerland) is a full eye-witness report (pages 23-26) of the current state of the railways in Lebanon. Here is my translation of a large part of this article:

"From the former 324 km. standard gauge and 102 km. narrow gauge in the country, only about 60 km. of the standard gauge coast line is useable.

The standard gauge line in the Bekaa Valley, from the Syrian border near El Ka'a to Rayak, is totally destroyed. The rails and sleepers were taken by the warring factions and used for construction of bunkers and barricades, and the very trackbed has disappeared over lengthy sections. The station buildings suffered severe damage, and several have been taken over for other purposes.

It's no better with the former 1050mm. gauge line from Beirut via Rayak to Serghaya on the Syrian frontier. Between Beirut and Aley the tracks are still in place, but the station buildings show evidence of war damage. The station and yard areas in Beirut are totally overgrown, since the last Sunday excursion trains were suspended in 1980/81. The majority of the locos...are unusable, many demonstrating gunshot damage. They are however all standing in the depot at Beirut, unless they happened to be in Syria at the outbreak of war. Above Aley several bridges have been blown; the station at Rayak now houses a motor repair garage in its ruins. Here and there the embankments have been destroyed, where they were in the firing line. From Rayak to Yahfoufa everything appears pretty dismal, only southwards from Yahfoufa are the tracks still complete, albeit totally overgrown. In the urban area of Beirut rubble from demolished buildings lies over the tracks and in various places where road crossings have been constructed they have simply been laid over the rails.

The so-called Nakoura-Beirut-Tripoli Railway (NBT), along the coast, is indeed the youngest railway in the country, being constructed...in 1942, and indeed still consists of its original 210 km. length, yet here as well the war has left its marks. In order to reduce chances of damage and avoid Lebanese territory the Syrians have realigned their route eastwards of Tall Kalakh, which at the same time reduced the length of their new line to Tartous; before this the line had followed the contours and had twice crossed the Lebanese frontier. The frontier now lies almost immediately to the south of the line. The Syrian frontier station is still in use, since it is now served several times daily by the Syrian trains on the Homs - Tartous route.

From Akkari the line still remains almost undamaged for a length of over 20 km., but the nearer one comes to the town of Tripoli the worse becomes the war damage. In Tripoli goods wagons have been taken from the tracks and used as roadblocks. As well as Lebanese wagons there must be, according to eye-witness reports from 1987, also Turkish, Iraqi and probably Bulgarian wagons used in this way (a wrecked wagon with Cyrillic markings was noted), since the warring parties were

not choosy.

Of the short branch from the station through the town to the harbour, that used to be laid in the street, nothing remains to be seen. The station area at Tripoli is little but rubble and refuse. Homeless inhabitants are building shanty huts amongst the dereliction. It could be assumed that the actual tracks are still largely present, under all the mess.

Southwards from Tripoli the picture changes again. Certainly almost all stations show fire and artillery damage, but few of the buildings here have been totally destroyed. Technically the entire track still exists here, though only those with local knowledge might be able to find it in places! In those stretches where only the vegetation has spread itself, a reinstatement appears straightforward; however, a tunnel in the Batroun area is in poor condition, having been used several times as a shooting bunker.

Also near Batroun a road bridge was blown up; in consequence the road authorities reconstructed the road along the railway track and simply covered the rails with asphalt. Similar things have occurred at other points along this stretch.

From somewhere around Jbail station the line is clear once more for about 36km. to the Beirut town area of Dora. This stretch had been mostly used only as a rubbish dump. Thanks to these circumstances the tracks here were never seriously damaged; this situation permitted the railway to resume traffic here soon after the Cease-Fire, only the rubbish needing to be removed.

In Beirut itself several instances of destruction may be noted; the branch down to the Harbour has been blocked for years by the rubble of collapsed houses. Much of this rubble has been moved to the sides of the roads, but the tracks themselves not fully cleared. At the Port, however, several tracks are clear and could be easily useable. The station at Beirut NBT, the former main station, is restorable. The building has several pockmarks from shells and is missing many windows, but a completely new building would not be necessary. As in Jbail and Jounie the yards here are cluttered with a large number of goods wagons and other items of rolling stock. Most of the locos (4 American and 3 Polish diesels, as well as the Uerdingen (ex-DB) railbuses) survived the war in stations north of Beirut, where it was thought they would be less at risk; nevertheless the success in this respect has been variable. The Uerdingen railbus trailers which remained in Beirut during the war are however not totally destroyed.

Where the track from Beirut to the south crossed the so-called Green Line, the security line between the Christian north and Moslem south of the town, the tracks have been removed for a few metres and a wall crosses the trackbed. Southwards from Beirut the tracks still remain intact most of the way to Saida (Sidon) and are actually in original condition in places. The bridges and stations have however all suffered damage to various degrees. Since there isn't a single operational vehicle south of Beirut, no traffic operation is possible here. In Saida and also in the southern town of Tyre the railway facilities have suffered particularly from Israeli air attacks in the second half of the 1980's. Between Tyre and Nakhoura (Naquora) the track is largely removed or destroyed.

South of Nakhoura a tunnel forms the frontier with Israel.....

This is an approximate overview of the current situation of the "Chemins de Fer de l'Etat Libanaise et des Transports en Commun de Beyrouth" (CEL-TCB), as the concern has been named since 1984, when the administration of rail and bus traffic was unified..... The road infrastructure has also suffered severely, especially in the east of the country, with many road bridges destroyed and temporary diversions constructed. In the neighbourhood of Zahle, for example, the destroyed road has simply been replaced by use of the railway trackbed.... The railway, already of limited importance before the war, has been simply forgotten during it.

The last pre-war timetables saw only one daily railcar return trip between Homs-Tripoli and Beirut; in addition there were mixed trains, from once to three times a week, from Aleppo in Syria to Beirut and from Homs to Rayak. The narrow gauge line was used for Sunday excursions between Beirut and Rayak. There was also goods traffic southwards from Beirut to Tyre and when required freight trains worked between Beirut and Damascus. Until the beginning of the 1980's, when Syria completed the new standard gauge line between Homs and Damascus, freight was also carried between Homs and Damascus via Rayak (with transfer to the narrow gauge there). In consequence the main source of income for the CEL (85 - 90%) came from freight. Passenger traffic was so unimportant that even the otherwise well-informed taxi drivers in Beirut had difficulty finding the station !

During the war years goods traffic remained almost continuously between Beirut and Jounie, as in Jounie there was a power station that needed to be supplied with oil. Thanks to this traffic, the lights in Beirut never went totally out ! The passenger traffic came to a swift end; around 1978/9 the railcar worked for the last time between Syria and the Lebanese capital, and a few years later the decreasing Sunday excursions to Aley and Rayak were also suspended. Only at the beginning of the 1990's, as the weapons paused for longer periods, was the CEL administration able to clear the stretch from Beirut-Dora to Jbail under its own steam, and start running passenger trains again. One of the large Polish Cegielski diesels pulled one of the former DB railbuses, even this vehicle showing several bullet holes ! Three return trips were run daily, and in 1992 alone around 10,000 passengers were carried. The travel time of one hour may appear long, but it should not be forgotten that the numerous level crossings are totally unsecured, unofficial crossings abound, and quite frequently cars are parked on the tracks ! All this can lead to heavy delays. Against this, the fare of 400 Lebanese Pounds (about 40 Pfennigs [maybe 15 pence ? Ed.] is quite low. Further, the trains are less over-crowded than the buses which follow the parallel road, since they are usually already filled with travellers from further north. The buses have to contend with overcrowded roads and are even slower than the train ! The CEL has now put all available manpower and resources into track renewal between Beirut and Jbail, as well as trying to free the track in the direction of Batroun, in order to enable transport of cement to the capital - a potential traffic of 500 tons per day. For oil transport the Beirut-Saida stretch is recognised as important.

The French firm Sofrerail completed last year its study into the rebuilding of the Tyre-Beirut-Tripoli-Akkari line and has presented its recommendations. The government has been convinced of its worth and, for the first time since the country's independence, has given priority to the coastal line. On 10th. March 1994 the official reconstruction plan was officially put to international tender. The Plan includes doubling of the 170km. line from Tyre to Tripoli and electrification at 25Kv AC; passenger trains should be able to reach a maximum speed of 140 km/h; in the conurbations a new route will be necessary, especially where the old one has been built over. Approximately 50 bridges will need strengthening or rebuilding; 11 stations and 21 Halts need to be completely rebuilt and modernised; two tunnels, with a combined length of 1700m, need to be widened and renewed, and a third tunnel of 600 m. length needs to be bored. The signalling system will be centrally controlled from Beirut and a new Telecommunications system will be installed. 50kg/m rails and Bi-Block concrete sleepers will be used.

The whole reconstruction will cost around \$US 500 Million. The stretch from Tripoli to Akkari will remain single track and for diesel power only. The decision as to who shall undertake this work should be made in May 1994 and the work should commence before the end of the year. Traffic over the new route should begin November or December 1997. Estimates are for around 30,00 passengers per day initially, rising after ten years to 100,000 passengers per day.

Since neither the State nor the railway has sufficient money, a mixed State/Private company is being formed, the State contribution to which will come from a petrol tax. The private side will receive a concession for construction and operation for at least ten years, after which the line will revert to State ownership. It is not yet clear what sort of stock will be used and from what builder. The passenger traffic will presumably be developed using electric multiple units, the international goods traffic with diesel locos.

The doom of the Beirut-Rayak-Serghaya and Rayak-Jusiya lines appears sealed. Because of the differing gauges and the thinly populated areas, topographical difficulties and the lack of industrial development in the east of the country, a complete rebuilding of these stretches would not be worthwhile. The reconstruction of the link with Israel will depend upon the political developments in the Near East and for the moment lies in the distant future. Also Beirut's tramway system is unlikely to be revived. The harbour railway network in Beirut will certainly be rebuilt, whereas the future of those in Saida or Tripoli remains vague.

Perhaps there are in Lebanon some railway enthusiasts who would restore one of the SLM steam locos and place it before the new station in Beirut, as a symbol that the Hedjaz system once began here....."

REPUBLIC OF LEBANON
 COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION
 LEBANESE RAILWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT
 OFFICE (OTC)

PREQUALIFICATION OF CONTRACTORS

The Lebanese Government represented by the Lebanese Railways and Public Transport Office (OTC) and the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) invites applications from suitably qualified Contractors or Consortia of Contractors (joint venture) Lebanese and/or International, to prequalify to tender for the Rehabilitation of the Railway Line Tyr-Beirut-Tripoli.

The project includes the reconstruction of the coastal line of Lebanon for the transport of passengers and goods over an improved alignment to accommodate maximum traveling speeds of 140 km/hr on a dual track. The lines will be electrified in 2 x 25 kV a.c.

Over the entire trajectory of 170 km, mainly in urban areas, the Contractor will have to:

- Establish a new platform of the railway with long welded rails 50kg U36 on double transversal concrete sleepers
- Construct or rehabilitate the railway bridges and the bridges necessary for intersecting roads (approximately 50 locations, 18 of which having a span of more than 30 m).
- Upgrade the two existing tunnels having a total length of 1700 m.
- Construct a 600 m long tunnel.
- Reconstruct 11 stations and 21 stop points.
- Equip the line with signaling system including central command and traffic management from a single location (transmission by double-circuit, copper and fibre optics).

The Contractors will have to prepare the working drawings for the various trades of the project (earthworks, civil engineering, railway lines, categories, feeder traction, signaling system, central command, telecommunications, etc...) the rolling stock is not part of this Contract.

The works under this contract will have to be planned such as to deliver an operational railway transport system by the end of 1997.

The Tender Documents are expected to be available for withdrawal by prequalified contractors as of Wednesday 15 June 1994.

Interested Contractors are invited to retrieve the Prequalification Document from CDR offices as of March 10th, 1994 against a non-refundable sum of U.S. Dollars Five Thousand (\$5,000), at the following address:

The Council for Development and Reconstruction
 Tallet Al-Serail - P.O. Box 116-5351
 Beirut - Lebanon

The prequalification documents completed by the Contractors should be in conformity with the format proposed by CDR and duly returned to the above address with all relevant supporting material by 12:00 o'clock noon Beirut local time on Tuesday, May 10th, 1994.

25:7. CEL Railcar A 10452, former DB Schienenbus 798 707-6 of Bw Trier, withdrawn 31/8/83, photographed at AW Kassel 10/12/85 by Peter Grosse.



25.8. Observations in April 1994.

Your Editor was able to make a brief (flying) visit to Israel Railways and makes the following personal observations, in addition to those incorporated in 'News from the Line':

a). IC3 Interior. These trains are very luxurious inside; upholstery is dark blue, with detachable purple head-rest covers (a very soothing combination, especially with smoked-glass windows); these covers bear the IR and Ports Authority logos. Chairs have fold-down armrests. Sounds are deadened by the noise insulation. Access to the cab is from side doors but also by a door from the front saloon. There are plugs in the luggage rack and several passengers were noted with ear-phones connected to wires dangling from these racks, though there were no signs indicating the existence or use of these devices.

In one lobby per set is a card-phone booth. (These have also been fitted in several of the hauled buffet cars, with others having the booth without yet the phone). In the lobby is also a map of the Israel railways system - rather a deceptively complete map, since it shows the closed Inland Line from Hadera East to Rosh Ha'ayin and the siding to Tel Hanan as part of the current active system! There is also a sheet with the specifications of the units in Hebrew and English.

b). Mind Your Head! Travel on the Jerusalem line is becoming a little riskier - due simply to the unchecked growth of shrubbery close to the track; I recall the days when you could lean out to take photos along most of the route - now you risk decapitation or at least a severe scratching.

Freight traffic now consists only of one or two bogie wagons daily conveying containers. The morning train from Jerusalem comprises two carriages, the afternoon one (formed of the stock of the morning arrival) consists of a standard eight-coach main line set.

c). What a Way to Run a Railway! On Sunday 24/4/94 121 hauled the 1605 train from Haifa Bat Galim to Nahariyya, comprising eight coaches (including 111 Bet). At Mizrach, having crossed 611 on a six-coach train, it departed at 1620 having uncoupled coaches 75 and 633 (a buffet) from the rear. Shortly thereafter several very angry passengers descended from these coaches, demanding to know why no-one had told them their coaches were to be detached from the train.....

d). Bring Your Own Sandwiches. Although IR runs several buffet cars, several of them now quite decrepit internally, and the new IC3's are meant to feature a trolley service, apparently there has been an argument with a contractor and no refreshments are currently on offer at all on the trains....

e). Service Suspended. Although the line from Na'an through Kiryat Gat to Beer Sheva has now been thoroughly upgraded, passenger services cannot apparently be re-introduced yet because of a shortage of rolling stock. Such a pity no-one thought of this earlier!

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

From Hugh Hughes a variety of observations on issue 24:

On 24:7; USATC tank WD 71304 became WD 311 and then ESR 1160. (WD 306 was formerly 71294).

On 24:9. The German 2-6-0's for the Baghdad Railway were built by Borsig (611-3/7-22) & Hanomag (614-6/23-33). The three that went to Mesopotamia were 623-5.

On 24:10, page 18, Note 1: Presumably he meant the 4-4-0's temporarily transported from Egypt and Sudan (see 'Middle East Railways' p.40) and the J-JR Baldwin 2-6-0's.

Note 3: The 2-8-0T (No. 300) would not have been at Haifa (MER, p.81) - he probably meant 0-10-0T.

Note 4: I don't think that the 0-10-0T engines ever got to Deraa. he may have meant 2-8-0 tender engines and the sole 2-8-0T - he does state that he was writing from memory!

Note 8. Yes, 616 was a Hanomag engine; this should probably be 618.

Note 9. On checking the original article I find the loco referred to was No. 2140 and not 2410 as given in Harakevet! [Apologies, Ed.] Now Etat Belge 2140 was a Type 12 2-4-2, Franco-Belge 945 of 1894, which checks up nicely except for the date - though a 4 can easily be misread as 1. It would indeed be interesting to know just how 2140 got from Belgium to Aleppo!

Re. the Etat Belge Type 12 - see Loco Mag. 1898, p.69. Of these 20 were built in 1891 (EB 1939-55/86-88), by Cockerill, Tubize, St. Leonard & La Meuse.

0-6-0T "Adana" and "Tarsus" (and others) belonged to the Mersin-Adana Railway in Southern Turkey; they were built by Dick Kerr, not Kerr Stuart.

From Ray Ellis come further comments on 24:10, which have been slightly edited to eliminate duplication with Hugh's observations:

"This is an interesting article, despite some of its inconsistencies. That goods train with three engines, two on the front and one banking, going up the Jerusalem branch, must have sounded good! Pity they didn't have good movie cameras in those days!

The Baldwin 2-8-0T's at Alexandria - these are undoubtedly Baldwin 2-6-0T's, part of ESR Nos. 535-544, Baldwin 18446-50/9-63 of 1900 as listed in Hughes 'Middle East Railways' (the ESR had no 2-8-0T's), and also described and illustrated in the 'Locomotive' for 15th. August 1905, p.131.

The Baldwin 4-6-0's were numbered 871 to 920 (not 871 to 880) and were built in 1918 (not 1916-17). All of these would have been in service by the time of this article, so it's curious why the author got the numbers wrong.

The metre gauge 4-4-0's on the Jerusalem line would be the very Indian-looking 4-4-0's from the 3' 6" gauge Luxor-Aswan Railway in Egypt, built by Franco-Belge in 1897, which the PMR 'borrowed' for use on the 3' 5½" gauge lines.

Standard gauge Ambulance Trains on the Jerusalem line - the second train would have more likely been the Egyptian Red

Crescent Hospital Train. The Red Crescent Society was/is the Moslem equivalent of the British Red Cross, and performed similar duties. It was previously thought that the Egyptian Red Crescent Society only provided one ambulance train for use by the British Army. This train, which features in Australian War Memorial photo C4021, is shown to have consisted of the nest ESR bogie stock and is therefore NOT the train referred to here. Brought into service in 1915, possibly with the number 5, it was renumbered 57 in 1918 and spent all of its tours of duty in Egypt as far as is known. Its large cars would have been banned from the Jerusalem branch anyway.

The article mentions a train of seven six-wheel vehicles, and considering that stock of some quality was probably used for a Red Crescent train (similar to the train above), is it possible that this is in fact the train shown in Ron Garraway's photo in Harakevet 11:12? This train consists of good quality ESR 6-wheel stock, but is only six vehicles and there was a previous thought it MAY have been Gen. Allenby's headquarters train. Maybe it isn't. The seventh coach? Well, maybe it was somewhere else - under repair, not on the train for that tour of duty, etc. Ron's photo was taken in 1919, also the date of the article.

Before people start crying "But where're the red crosses?" which were always a feature of ambulance trains, it is possible these may have been removed by this time, although other ambulance coaches did retain their red crosses well after the war. It should be remembered that the red crosses on some British ambulance trains in France were removed after the war when these trains found a secondary use (as well as their ambulance train duties for sick and wounded soldiers) on military leave trains between Germany and the French ports. As well as still being ambulance trains, they also carried sick and wounded prisoners of war and refugees, as well as soldiers going to and from leave.

Regarding the Belgian State Railways 2-4-2 - pure supposition, but could this have been brought to Syria after the war by the French? There were a lot of Belgian engines in France during the War (evacuated from Belgium prior to the German occupation of the country), the French used some and the British ROD used some 0-6-0T's and 0-6-0's. Maybe the French 'snaffled' this one and brought it to Syria to assist a possible engine shortage there caused by DHP locos being damaged by the retreating Turks. Remember that three of the PMR's ex-LSWR 0-6-0's went from Palestine to Syria between June-July 1918 and August 1919 presumably to assist the French with an engine shortage.

The two 0-6-0T's 'Adana' and 'Tarsus' at Aleppo were undoubtedly from the Merdin-Tarsus-Adana Railway in Turkey and described in Talbot's "Steam in Turkey". He lists two 0-6-0T's 'Mersina' and 'Bagdad' built by Dick, Kerr & Co, about 1885, two of as many as five locos on this line in 1895. A photo of an outside-cylinder 0-6-0T for this line with the name 'Mersina' (which could possibly have been applied for photographic purposes only, a common ploy which caused confusion on more than one occasion!) appears on p.388 of the Industrial Railway Society's 'Record' dealing with the loco

25.10. DISAPPOINTMENT IN TEL AVIV. By Wyn ('Doc') Fear.

builders of Kilmarnock, of which Dick, Kerr was one. If in fact the two tanks at Aleppo were inside cylinder locos, which were undoubtedly brought south to here by the Turks, then the Mersin-Tarsus-Adana Railway must have had two types of 0-6-0T's, one with inside and one with outside cylinders.

Re: 23:10 & 24:5: I cannot agree with Paul on his supposition that the ex-LSWR Pay Car No. 77 must have featured in the incident described in 23:10. Ex LSWR Third no. 313 (which is missing from later lists of the LSWR coach conversions) appears to have been converted about 1929 to an Instruction car No. 77 (such a car first starts appearing in statistics at this time, but no mention of a pay car) and was not changed to its role as Pay Car (with apparently no change in the interior layout) until some time between 1939 and April 1943 when it starts appearing as such in statistics and the instruction car disappears.

Compare the coach shown in the photo on p.24 of Harakevet 20 with the coach shown in the diagram Fig. 57 in Paul's book, and some similarities will become immediately apparent - the unusual side panelling, the flat end on one end of the clerestory roof to the turned-down end at the other end of the car, and the position of the stove chimney in exactly the right place in the photo to where it should be as shown in the diagram! Also apparent in the photo is the rather long end platform which features in the diagram.

Notes from the "Report on the Palestine Administration July 1920 to December 1921" kindly provided to me by Hugh Hughes say that four service coaches were purchased from the ESR by the PR and Paul gives diagrams for all of them in his book. The other car which interests us here is the one which is barely visible ahead of the clerestory roof car in the photo 20:24. Its window layout confirms it is not an ex-LSWR or Midland car, or one of the newer PR cars. I would offer the suggestion that this is the service coach shown in Fig. 54 in Paul's book. What is interesting is that this diagram shows in one corner of the saloon a safe (?) with the notation 'Cash'!! Could this therefore be the Pay Car? Quite possibly.

One may well ask, What's the clerestory roof service coach doing there if it is not the Pay car. There is some logic in the assumption (based on practice in other parts of the world on colonial railways, including my home state Queensland) that one or more service coaches did often accompany the pay car on its vital foray on the pay circuit and were used by officials wishing to make contact with certain members of staff as it could be guaranteed they would always turn up on pay day. It also added security and company for the Paymaster as well.

Nothing concrete, admittedly, but maybe something to chew on.

FURTHER CORRECTIONS:

24:19: The 2-8-2 loco is No. 71, not 51.

'Doc' served in 193 Railway Operating Company, Royal Engineers, based in Beirut - this is one of several tales he has sent!

"What a disappointment! Beirut, June 1945. It was a typical hot day when my Fireman George Sleight and I were called out to go to Nahr Ibrahim to pick up a dead loco (a Black Eight 2-8-0 which had been despatched from Iraq for repairs). I had to drive a Black Eight, also to be sent for repairs. The state of the loco was shocking; steam was leaking at many joints, and there was only one gauge glass. One steam gauge was cracked. There was a groan coming from the right-hand steam cylinder. Only one injector (water) was working.

Now, because we were going to Jaffa we planned to have one or perhaps two days in Tel Aviv; so, we put clean slacks, shirts, socks and shoes in a kit-bag ready for a holiday. Then we took our usual Train Guard, Sapper Radcliffe, to ride on the "dead loco" as per rules. For safety I took three spare gauge glasses which I placed in my tool box.

Arriving at Nahr Ibrahim I found a note on the steam gauge that the Right-hand leading axle box was running hot - hence the reason why the loco had been left at this station. Because the side rods of the dead loco had been taken off, the mechanical lubricator was not working, so I poured oil directly into the axle box, hoping it would help. Soon we set off, no train but just the dead loco in tow, and made good time back to Beirut. We stopped for Tiffin (lunch), collected some food, half a loaf of bread, some army biscuits, just enough tea and sugar for two cups of tea - and we were all set for Jaffa.

We backed out of the triangle, onto the main line, and were all set for Jaffa. We made good time to Sidon, when George shouted that the injector was not working. The Left-hand injector was the Exhaust Injector; I tried the Right-hand one, but it was no good, and would not pick up. We stopped in Sidon and threw out most of the fire. The boiler was nearly up to the top of the gauge glass so, because it now looked as though we had two dead locos, the station staff were not too happy.

After thinking a while, I took the cones out of the right-hand injector and could see why it would not work; the cones were worn and even damaged, because one end was no longer round. I looked at the right-hand injector on the dead loco and, after some heaving, managed to get the cover nut off, pulled the cones out and they looked almost new. I washed them in a bucket of water and inserted them into the injector space, tightened the nut, turned on the water, put both hands together in prayer and George turned on the steam - and it started singing before the steam stop valve was even properly open! We must have both yelled out in pleasure at our success.

Our Guard, "Raddy" Radcliffe, was even happier. His comment was, "If you weren't so ugly and dirty I'd kiss you!" We were just cleaning up the footplate when - "Bang, Hissss" - the left-hand Gauge Glass had burst! We believed our boiler to be nearly full, and had started building up the

fire again, so again the bucket was used as I stripped down the gauge glass parts and put them in the bucket because they were hot. Now, using the gauge glass which I had brought with me, I replaced the broken one whilst George stripped down the one which was already broken. I had the left-hand gauge glass whilst George was taking out the pieces of glass on the right-hand assembly. Upon examining the rubber rings it was obvious that they would never be able to make a good joint as they were frayed and damaged, so again I went to the dead loco and looking at the gauge glass, the fitting looked like a new one; I took it to pieces and found the rubber rings to be fairly good, so I assembled the gauge glass and, after two hours, we were able to proceed, with a fairly reliable injector and two gauge glasses that worked!

It was now 3pm., with still about 100 miles to go, so after getting the "staff" we set off and made good time to Haifa. We pulled up under the water bag and filled the tender as a shunter came up with the usual cry, "Will you take a train for Lydda?" "Sorry; our Westinghouse compressor doesn't work, our brakes are bad, etc." From experience I knew that when one refused to take a train you would be put into every siding they could find, but when I showed him the state of the locomotives he understood.

Then the Palestine Railways Control decided to interfere. Because I had not "signed for the road" (signed to say I knew the route) I needed a Pilot. A Pilot was a driver who would tell you when to stop, etc. "O.K., Let's have a Pilot!" No, no Pilot available until 8.30pm. It was now 5.10pm. "O.K., I'll sign for the road". "No, you cannot sign for the road until an Inspector says you have passed". "O.K., Tell an Inspector I am ready for the test." After an hour a man came on the footplate saying "I am the Right of Way Inspector, my name is Greenberg."

We set off from Haifa at about 7pm. We had eaten our food and were feeling hungry. Every station had the signals at danger until we stopped, then they would change to green, and Mr. Greenberg was writing like mad in a big book. Eventually, at 11pm. we arrived at Lydda, and as we came to a stand our Guard "Raddy" went to the Railway Transport Officer begging for food. He received a lecture that we should be carrying enough food! I just stood amazed as Mr. Greenberg came back to the loco with a pile of pittas (Arab flat bread) and cheese; his only comment was "You are a very good driver, keep it up!" I signed for the road when I returned to Haifa.

Now we had to get Line Clear from Lydda to Jaffa via Tel Aviv. Not much trouble here.

We set off from Lydda and in half an hour we got through Tel Aviv and down to Jaffa. Yes, we had to wake the Guard to open the gate! There was just enough room to put both locos inside the Gate, Throw the remains of the fire out, fill the boiler up to the whistle, then get some food, shower, a clean-up and into bed at 12.30am.

After all of that, could we get sleep, beautiful sleep? No - at 6.30am we were called to get ready, our loco was waiting! Some shunting was needed, and the locos we had brought had to be pushed onto another road. A loco which had been rebuilt was waiting and in steam; I did the shunting, then had breakfast - but now the rebuilt loco had to be tested

on the main line.

Our Train Guard checked with Jaffa Station, and they had a goods train for Lydda, so we hooked on and got the "Right Away" for Lydda. The gradient from Jaffa station to Tel Aviv is 1 in 20 so the loco was blasting its way up to Tel Aviv; I was leaning out of the cab looking for the signal which is away to the extreme right when a red-hot spark came out of the chimney and went into my right eye. I knew it was hot because it sizzled as it landed! I stopped in Tel Aviv station, explained to the Station Master what had happened, and he, doing his best, put a few drops in my eye, and I carried on to Lydda, pushing the loco to see if it was mechanically sound. The goods train was left in Lydda and I returned to Jaffa, where a motor truck was now waiting to take me to hospital. A doctor attended to my eye, putting a small tablet into my eye and digging a piece of grit out. I was sent back to the workshops with orders to stop in bed, which I did.

Next morning it was decided I was to take the tested locomotive back to Beirut for work on the HBT Railway. A very good run back but our couple of days which we had planned came to nothing. I didn't even see the sea front of Tel Aviv! All of us were disappointed.

After checking various parts of this loco over it was noticed that the boiler bore the name of Douglas Hawthorne of Singapore, and the plate on the steam chest had a name from Hong Kong, so it became known as 'The Chinese Cracker'. I am of the opinion it was a Spare Parts Job, but to give credit to the builders they had done a great job, because later I drove it on several trips to Tripoli or Haifa and back, and found it to be a very good loco."

25.11.

FRIENDLY ARCHIVES : THE ISRAEL DEFENCE FORCE ARCHIVES.

The I.D.F. (or, to use its Hebrew acronym, the 'Tzahal' Archives, are to be found on a quiet semi-suburban street in Givatayim, a township which is fiercely independent but which is, to an outsider, nowadays little more than an eastern suburb of Tel Aviv. The large modern building stands at 50, Jabotinsky St. (not to be confused with a more important Jabotinsky St. in nearby Ramat Gan), phone 03-314141. Postal address for all enquiries, though, is "I.D.F. Archives, Ministry of Defence, HaKirya, Tel Aviv".

Director is Micha Kaufman, Librarian is Batsheva; a phone call beforehand is really appreciated, though the staff did their best to be helpful when I called in at no notice whatsoever.

Included in the archives are several albums of photographs, ranging from captured Turkish photos of World War I to a variety of snapshots from the Sinai and 1967 (and later) wars. Very few are of direct much railway interest, alas, but there may well be some hidden gems awaiting discovery.

25.12. "DIE HEDSCHASBAHN" A Video Review.

Recently appeared in the 'Eisenbahn Kurier' 'Globetrotter' series of videos is No. 5617 'Die Hedchasbahn'. In fact it is a Nick Lera production in his "World Steam Classics" series, (copyright 1992, Nick Lera and Locomotion Pictures), though for some reason your reviewer has never seen an advert for the English version; this tape has a (well-informed and factual) German commentary, though the (several) maps shown during it are labelled with the English version of place names.

Duration is ca. 55 minutes, price is 49.90 DM (plus 3 DM P&P); order to: Schweitzer Eisenbahn-Touristik AG, Postfach, CH-4002 Basel, Switzerland. Fax (0041) 61 313-26 65

The quality of the main subject matter is excellent (Nick Lera is a BBC cameraman), shot mainly on a 1991 TEFS trip to Jordan and Syria, with some older material (apparently taken from cine film) from 1968 in Jordan and Lebanon, taken by Lera, and in Syria 1983 (during the TEFS trip that went down the Yarmuk gorge) taken by Manfred Stolz. In the nature of things this older material has slightly different colour balances. It could be said that, in this film, one has almost all one would want to see and know of the northern sections of the Hedjaz. Qatrani is the most southerly point reached. Stations, passenger and freight rolling stock and the landscapes are all lovingly covered.

Now to the content. The film opens with shots of a Japanese Pacific tender-first on a train; there follow views of activity at Amman in 1968, with Jung No. 52, Belgian No. 73 newly-ex-works, a Jung 28-2 ready for the eight-coach International Train. Action then moves to the 1991 trip, with No. 71 working southwards on a special, over the level crossing, over the famous 'double-deck' viaduct (two runpasts with a four-coach train), exiting from the tunnel, etc. There follow runpasts with a 'special freight' comprising three grey box vans, a couple of flat wagons and a coach, as far as Qasir um-El-Heran. One amusing incident shows Bill Alborough of TEFS organising muscle power to remove a Mercedes parked on the rails. The following day's trip to Qatrana with Jung 2-8-2 No. 51 on water tank 6019, three coaches and three flat wagons involved trouble with the sanders, a lot of slipping, hand-sanding of the rails. At Jiza Halt 37 km. south of Amman there is a run-past. Further mechanical trouble with one of the coaches leads to shots of repair work beneath the underframe during an enforced stop on the open line. The train continues through open desert over viaducts and embankments to Qatrana - the limit of steam operations due to water supplies. As the triangle is shown full of stored box vans the return trip is undertaken tender-first.

A few minutes are occupied with views of Petra, then the action returns to Amman and the preparation of a double-headed run-past train employing Nippon Pacific 82 and RSH 2-8-2 23, the latter in 'light steam' only due to its condition.

By now 30 minutes into the tape, 82 (in very poor condition, with steam and scalding water leaking through the cab controls !) takes a special train comprising a water tank and three coaches to Mafrag, through a crowded market, past deserted basalt-built derelict halts, over a reconstructed

viaduct at km. 190, the commentary even drawing attention to the Belgian rails stamped "1900". At Mafrag time is taken to explore the interior of some coaches, e.g. the Nurnberg 1906-built composite 'AB 182' showing the benches with Arabic seat-numbers painted on.

Attention now moves to Dera'a, the camera focussing on the range of derelict rolling-stock in store there, including four-wheel wooden and steel vans and wagons. The shed holds Borsig 2-8-0 9010/14 (originally built for three Peloponnese Rly., according to the commentary), the Jung 2-6-OT+T of 1906, Hartmann 2-8-2 No. 263 - here we are informed that 22 of these were built, 12 were used on the Hedjaz having been sent dismantled and put together by a British engineer who found the parts after the conclusion of Allenby's campaign, others being sent to Java etc. - and, intriguingly, we are briefly shown another example now preserved in a Javanese railway museum, a nice touch - before a trip on the Gasim - Bosra branch behind 263 on five coaches. The train is shown arriving at Bosra Fort, before shots inside the fort of the archaeological remains there. On the return we are shown Lawrence's 97th. and final bridge, which he demolished just before the war's end and which had to be totally rebuilt.

Having returned us to Dera'a, we are now taken down the Yarmuk Valley line with a Borsig 2-8-0 and four coaches, over Tell esh Shehab viaduct and along the gorge - these being 1983 shots.

Back at Dera'a, with sheep on the line, we see Ganz railcar R-503 moving off on the daily Dera'a-Damascus train before 263 is prepared for a re-enactment of the former International Train to Damascus - a van and eight coaches. The local official, Mr. Aziz, is interviewed - interestingly, he speaks German but not English - then there are a few shots from the train - of a British semaphore signal near Damascus - before arrival at Cadem. There follow five minutes devoted to Cadem works - the antiquated belt-driven machinery in use, a trip along the electric traverser showing the derelict locos standing awaiting repair - in some cases, after almost 70 years in the queue - the Works Manager in his office, some Rumanian diesels and ancient railcars and views from the overhead crane.

This leads to a section devoted to the Damascus-Beirut line. First come 1968 views of steam-hauled freights on the rack section near Aley and Bhandoun, one 0-10-ORT hauling a mysterious and anonymous 0-4-0+0-4-0 diesel loco in the consist. This section of line closed in 1975. After shots of Damascus Kanawat station we then follow SLM 2-6-OT No. 751 (851/1894) for a ride on the line to Serghaya. This was the first train for six months (compare with the previous Eisenbahn Kurier video 'Dampfabenteuer im Libanongebirge', reviewed in 5:15), and we see a P-Way crew removing rocks that had fallen onto the track. The train comprises a four-wheel van, a four-wheel and a bogie coach, but this proves too much for the loco on the last section, so all four participants are crammed into CDS van for the final entry into Serghaya, where the loco is turned on the hand-powered turntable.

This effectively concludes the tape, though there are brief 'tasters' of other tapes on Paraguay, Poland, Indonesia and Patagonia before the final credits.

Highly recommended !

WLR.

25.13. THE FRONT LINE. 1918. By Paul Cotterell.

My conjectural map and notes of the WW1 light railway around Jaffa, which appeared in 17:29, can now be compared with how things actually were, thanks to The Pick Thesis. The accompanying sketch map is based on an official British military map appended to Dr. Pick's magnum opus. He discovered it in the 'Official History of the War: Military Operations Egypt and Palestine', 2 vols, (3 parts), ed. C. McMunn and C. Falls, 1928. Apparently the maps illustrating the various fronts in this Official History were contained in a separate map case; if this has been detached from the main text then the reader will be left floundering.

An added bonus with this particular map is that it also shows something of the lines further east. A few apparent difficulties remain but I won't labour the point; I think regular readers are familiar enough with the queries involved for me not to have to re-run them here.

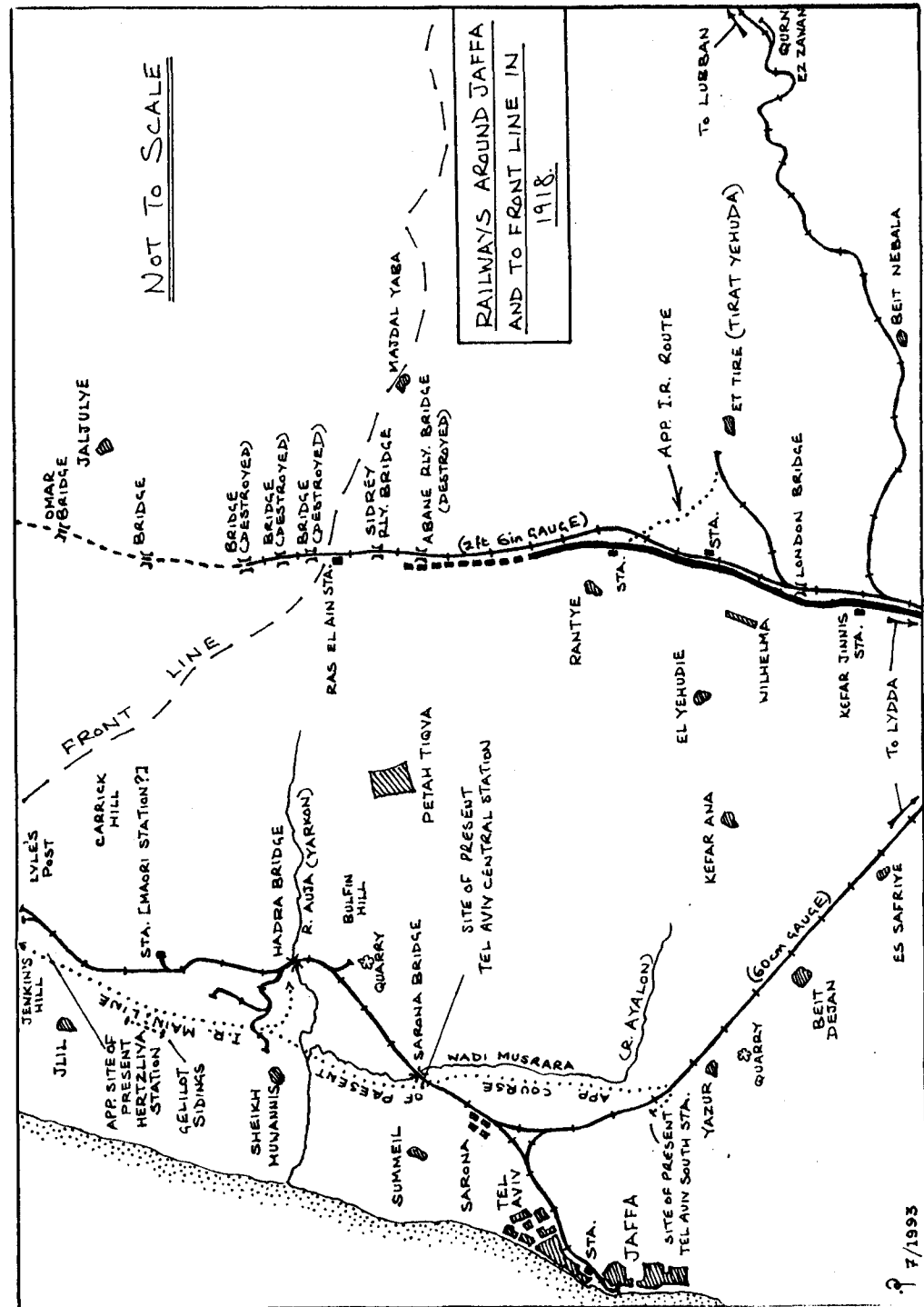
Dr. Pick made note of these lines as follows:

"The following narrow-gauge light lines were built in central Palestine after November-December 1917:

1). Jaffa Port - Jaffa Station - Lod. This line, of 600 mm. until, like the others, it was apparently converted to 1,435 mm. standard gauge, was the first light line built after the Third Battle of Gaza.

Jaffa had been captured on the 16th. Nov. 1917, and since stores had up to then been unloaded on open beaches at the mouths of the Wadi Sukheir (Nahal Shikma) and the Wadi Rubin and what installations it had (and its skilled manpower) at once opened up the possibility of unloading supplies there. However, there were two difficulties: a). The track of the original Jaffa-Jerusalem line had been taken up at the behest of Meissner between Jaffa and Lod in 1915, to supply rails and ties for his Sinai railways. Consequently movement of supplies by rail out of Jaffa port was impossible; b). Owing to the initial stabilization of the Sharon front along the Auja (Yarkon) River, the port itself, and any proposed railway to Lod, were exposed to Turkish artillery shelling. The British at once set out to rectify the problems. They built, probably in the beginning of December 1917, a 600 mm. light railway, from Jaffa port through the town itself to Lod, to link with the 1,050 mm. line from there to Jerusalem. Except in its first section, from the port to Jaffa station, this line was just relaid on top of the track of the old French railway of 1888-92. In order to free Jaffa and its port, and the light railway from any Turkish threat, the British initiated what was later called, with some exaggeration, the Battle of Jaffa, that consisted mainly of the forcing and crossing the lines of the River Auja on December 20-21, 1917. As a result, the Turks were pushed out of range, north of the river, as far as Arsuf (Rishpon), and thus the threat to the port and the railway ceased.

2, Sheikh Muannis - Carrick Hill. The latter hill, whose name was bestowed on it for identification purposes by the British, was a low hill, north of the Auja (Yarkon) River, near today's Neveh-Magen. This line, mentioned only once, and



not shown on any map, may possibly have been a branch, separately listed, of line 3.

3. Jaffa - Sarona (Today Hakiryia, part of Tel Aviv);-Jallil. (Gelliot Yam). This line, together with its spurs, must have been altogether some 20 kms. long, or more. It branches off from the Jaffa-Lod line where this crossed the Jaffa-Kalkilya track, i.e. where some years later Tel Aviv (Beth Hadar) station was located. [This was the old T.A. Darom (South) station, now disappeared. PC.] It followed the Kalkilya track [road] past Sarona, crossed the Wadi Musrara (Nahal Ayalon), and then paralleled the Auja River for several kms. to Tel Abu Beitun (today near Bnei-Berak station). On top of this line lies today's main road from Elite Square to the Ramath-Gan Stadium. A very short spur about here turned south-east to 'Bulfin's Hill' (today one of the prominent hills of Bnei-Berak), headquarters of the British XXI Corps, under Lt.-Gen. Sir Edward Bulfin. Near Tel Abu Beitun the line turned sharply north (as still does today's main road that lies on top of it), to cross the Auja River at Hadra Bridge (today's Yarkon bridge at Yad HaMa'avir). Once across the river the line split into several branches. One turned west to split again into one short and one long spur, both ending near Sheikh Muannis. The main branch continued north, to throw off a very short branch to 'Carrick Hill' - perhaps the line mentioned under No. 2 above. The main branch then continued north, to end in two short spurs at 'Jenkin's Hill', north-north-east of Jellil, practically in what are today the western outskirts of Hertsiya. This line supplied the western sector of the front line, occupied by the XXI British Corps.

4. Lod - Ras El-Ain (Rosh Ha'Ayin). This line may have been of 600 mm. gauge, and British built. But there is a fair possibility that it was a section, to the north of Lod, of Meissner's Beer Sheba line, taken over by the British, who had adequate rolling stock for it. It certainly lay on the Turkish track, to judge from contemporary maps, and led from Lod Junction to the much-shelled spot where it was broken by the front line, between Ras el-Ain (Antipatris) Castle and Mirabel (Medjed Jaba) Castle. This line was apparently not identical with the standard-gauge line - previously mentioned - that had been laid alongside it as far as Km. 315, the advanced depot at Rantiye (Rinath-Yah). [See note.] The lighter line served only the front line troops to September 1918, when Allenby's final offensive started.

[Note: A few pages earlier Dr. Pick had noted: "...soon after reaching Lod, the British continued their standard gauge line due north, to Km. 315 (from Kantara), just beyond Rantiye village, some 6.5 kms. from the front line." P.C.] [See also the reference to this narrow-gauge line half-dismantled next to the standard gauge, in 24:10. Ed.]

5. 'London Bridge' - Tireh. This short spur branched off line no. 4 to the east, from a railway bridge designated on army maps as 'London Bridge', near Wilhelma (Bnei Atharoth), south of Rantiye. The purpose of this short line has remained totally obscure, unless one takes into account the fact that some 45 years later Israel Railways built another spur

practically from the same spot, again to the location of Tireh. This was done to haul stone for the construction of Ashdod harbour from the big quarries at Tireh. Allenby's otherwise unexplained spur line may have hauled railway ballast, and material for fortifications, but this remains a guess.

6. Kafr Jinnis - Lubban. This line, some 20 kms. or more long, including spurs and sidings, corresponded in importance in the eastern sector of the Sharon to the Jellil line in the western sector. It branched off the main line towards the east at Kafr Jinnis (just east of today's Ben Gurion/Lod airport). It then continued deep into the hills of Ephraim, following a succession of wadis, past Beit Nabala (Nevelath), to end at the village of Lubban, approx. one-third of the distance from the Plain of Sharon to the watershed, and the road Jerusalem-Nablus, on top of the north-to-south mountain ridge. This line supplied the entire eastern, hilly, sector of the XXI Corps and, conceivably, also some units of the neighbouring XX Corps, that held the front in the hills. Supply and ammunition dumps were established alongside it, as evidenced by the sidings shown on the maps of the line, and these were to play a considerable role in Allenby's advance."

There is little in Dr. Pick's researches and conclusions with which I could quibble. He was definitely wrong on one point, though: the later standard-gauge I.R. line to Tireh (Tirat Yehudah) quarries did not branch off at "practically...the same spot" as the WW1 light railway. The junction was at Rinatya (Rantye), and I have indicated the approximate standard gauge route on my sketch map. This IR branch is now closed and at least partially lifted (I have not examined its course at first hand). I would guess that it closed about 1963 after the last load of stone was taken out of the Tireh quarries for completing Ashdod harbour. On the other hand, Dr. Pick's findings amend and correct my speculations on the line as it was in WW1 (see sketch map 2 and notes in 21:16).

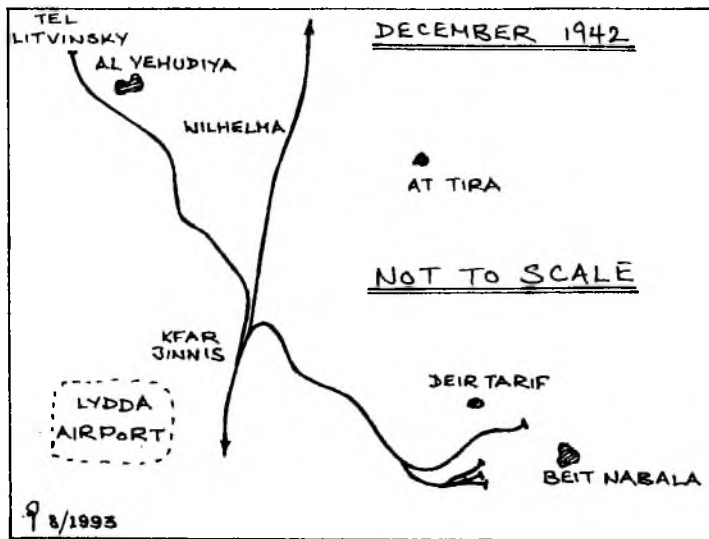
By way of a brief update my second smaller sketch map shows the situation around Kafr Jinnis in World War 2. It is based on an official map dated December 1942. The branch line to Tel Litvinsky (now Tel Hashomer) had only just been laid by this date. It served an army base, and I seem to remember being told that it was built by American troops. The line did not last for long, being redundant by the end of the war. I do not know when it was lifted. Apparently very few traces now remain, and I believe much of the course has disappeared under the much-expanded Lod/Ben Gurion airport. Changes along the Beit Nabala line will be noted, though I am unable to say whether the slightly different course of this branch in the second sketch is due to cartographical inaccuracy or to an altered alignment when it was standard-gauged. All lines shown on the small map were of standard gauge at the time.

[Notes by Editor: In summer 1992 I walked along the line near Ben Gurion airport, searching for any traces of the spurs westwards to Tel Litvinsky and eastwards to Beit Nabala. This latter has been a vast and very busy supply depot in the 1940's.

In the PRO, Kew, File WO 960-966, War Diaries of the Directorate of Transportation, Middle East Forces, it is noted that Beit Nabala was an R.E. Stores Depot; a survey for the line was completed Jan. 1941, for 3½ miles; earthworks started the next month, with completion due by November 1941 - a revised total (possibly including sidings) of 5½ miles. Beit Nabala was always shunted by a PR loco on a trip working from Lydda, as was Tel Litvinsky which, if not built by American troops (this is unlikely, since they did not have any railway Construction Battalions in the area) apparently did serve an American base. There is no reference to this base in any US Army records so far discovered.

In April 1994 I was able to visit Rinatya - a signal box and two loops near the moshav of the same name. The spur to Tireh is still visible, only the rails near the actual junction having been dismantled. From there it curves off at 90 degrees on a low embankment towards the east. There is an almost full set of semaphore signals, some comprising posts without arms.

The northern extension of the Ayalon dual-carriageway highway has successfully obliterated almost all original land levels in the area. 'Jelil' is still the site of Gelilot Junction, north of Tel Baruch, where a spur westwards serves the Paz Gaz depot.]



The first bridge north of Ras el Ain (Rosh Ha' Ayin) station, as seen from the east in May 1993. Photo: Alon Siton.

25:14.

TEL AVIV TRAMS.

Various items of information have been received concerning the plans to build a 'Light Rapid Transit' or modern tramway system in the Tel Aviv area. Some bits are complementary, some contradictory.....

From "Het Openbaar Vervoer" ("Public Transport"), a Dutch newsletter, No. 429, February 1994, p.36:[My translation]:

"The internationally-operating Consultancy "Holland Transport Advising", jointly owned by HTM, GVBA and RET [i.e. the public transport organisations of Den Haag, Amsterdam and Rotterdam respectively] is developing an initial plan for a modern tramway system in Tel Aviv (500,000 inhabitants, 1.8 million in the region). Here there exist great transport difficulties due to the number of cars and buses (around 1500 buses are in use here, whereby on some routes there are 150 buses per hour.) A total of six tram systems were investigated but, after an initial contact with the GVBA, the HTA was chosen.

The requirement in the first instance is for a design for a super-tram line with a capacity of 130,000 passengers per day and a length of 24 km., to be traversed by low-floor trams with totally independent tracks and priority at road crossings. Later a further three lines should follow. The design covers the entire system - tracks, overhead catenary, sub-stations and trams.

In the short-term two 'senior consultants' will be going to Tel Aviv to set up the first works. The first design should be ready within 11 weeks. and HTA will earn 2,500 Hfl for this. If the construction goes through, it will be a project costing millions. The Israeli government will invest about 400 million US dollars in the project."

THE BATTLE FOR THE RAILWAY BRIDGE AT WADI SUREIR (WADI LACHISH). 1948.
By Uri Ben-Rehav.

Driving south on the coastal highway one passes a bridge south-east of Ashdod; next to it is another one, a railway bridge. A small plate fixed on a watch tower tells the story of the battle which (in broad outline) will be told here; but let's deal first with the bullet-riddled watchtower.

During the "Disturbances" (a typical British understatement...) between 1936-39, more appropriately called "The Arab Revolt", many acts of sabotage were also directed against the installations of Palestine Railways. In order to protect all, or nearly all of these sensitive installations such as this location, a bridge, a watchtower was erected - termed, in the contemporary slang, a 'Pillbox'.

After two weeks of hard and bitter fighting against the Jewish settlements of Kfar Darom, Nirim and Yad Mordechai, defended by the settlers and units of the Palmach 'Negev B Division', the Egyptian Army started its northbound push on 29th. May 1948. The Egyptian force consisted of an infantry division, reinforced by a battalion of field guns and a Company of armoured cars, under the overall command of Brigadier Muhammad Naguib, the very man destined to become the first President of the Republic of Egypt after the overthrow of the monarchy. This force started from Majdal (Migdal Ashkelon). A fierce battle was fought at Kibbutz Nitzanim; the Kibbutz itself was conquered and the survivors taken prisoners of war. From observation points along the road urgent reports were received at the headquarters of the 'Givati' Brigade stating that a huge Egyptian force was on its way to Tel Aviv. As the Egyptians progressed rather quickly they encountered no resistance as they moved through territory occupied by local Arabs. The observers' reports became more and more frantic. At last the advance was stopped at Wadi Sureir (Wadi Lachish) where both bridges, road and railway, had been blown up by Haganah units. The Army engineers at once commenced construction of a temporary bridge.

At this point General Shimon Avidan, Commander of the 'Givati' brigade, realised the momentary respite and demanded from General Army Headquarters immediately all available forces, including the 'air force', to reinforce his troops.

In those days the Israel Air Force consisted only of light planes, with but four fighter planes - Messerschmidt 109's, World War 2 veterans, which had arrived dismantled by transport plane from Czechoslovakia. By chance (or destiny) the ground crews at Tel Nof completed assembling the planes on this very day and the order arrived for them to attack and harrass the enemy - even before checking the planes' components or carrying out one test flight; the situation was simply too serious.... Eventually they took off in the evening hours, in charge of Squadron Leader Modi Allon. After a short flight they spotted the enemy and went into action. The enemy was taken by surprise, having never dreamed of being attacked from the air, but nevertheless opened up with heavy fire. The attacking planes soon developed troubles, the most serious being guns jamming. One plane was hit and its pilot, E. Cohen, killed in action. Flight leader Modi Allon's plane also received a hit but managed to return to base. However, the

result of the attack was as planned: The Egyptian Army stopped its advance and prepared to stand. This was immediately recognised by the Israelis and reinforcements were sent to the battlefield, including four heavy mortars and three old, outmoded field guns which were called 'Napoleonchiks' by their crews, because it was rumoured that they dated from Napoleon's time! That's the way it was in those days - that's all that was available. At nightfall a commando unit of the Givati Brigade infiltrated through the front line and harrassed the enemy camp, with some success. As both armies were now static the front line now stretched from the railway bridge in the north to Isdud (Ashdod) in the south.

At this stage of the war Israeli Army headquarters prepared a decisive stroke against the most menacing concentrations of the attacking Arab armies, including this one which was only 32km. south of Tel Aviv. The task fell to the Givati Brigade, reinforced by units of the 'Negev' Brigade and Etzel. The attack took place on the night of 3rd. June and 1,200 soldiers participated in it. After a very fierce fight the attackers withdrew, having suffered heavy losses: 50 dead or missing in action. The focal point of the battle had been the railway bridge. Battalion 54 of the Givati Brigade attacked this important strategic position but could not dislodge the defenders. On the 7th. June these units attacked again at nightfall; Ashdod was captured but the attack on the railway station and railway bridge again failed and the army had to withdraw. A temporary stalemate ensued. During later stages of the war small commando units of the Givati Brigade continued to harrass the defenders but could not dislodge the Egyptians from the "finger" between Isdud and Majdal. Only in October 1948, after the successful completion of "Operation Yoav" by the Israel Army the Egyptian army evacuated the "finger". On the 27th. October the first units of the Israeli army entered the area, finding it empty and deserted.

Thus ended the long and bloody battle for the railway bridge, station and general area, only 32 km. from Tel Aviv.

For further references see 'Harakevet' 11:6, 18:5, 16:4 & 16:5.

THE BUSES OF 1935.

Sybil Ehrlich has sent details of bus timetables taken from a German-language 1935 "Palastina-Fuhrer" which includes the following details on bus routes; they may be a comfort to those trying to make sense of the modern 'Egged' system!

Route S3 ran Tel Aviv-Tulkarm-Hadera, "no traffic on days with rainfall".

Route 17 ran Haifa -Nahalal - Affule-Emek-Beit Alfa, leaving Haifa 15.45, on days with rainfall only from Affula 6.30.

Route BS Haifa-Tiberias-Rutbah-Baghdad ran once a week, took 32 hours, and is marked "Uncertain in Wintertime"!

25:17. ISRAEL RAILWAYS AND THE SUEZ CAMPAIGN OF 1956.

I recently purchased "One Hundred Hours to Suez" by Robert Henriques, published by Collins, London, 1957 - an early example of the 'Instant Book' genre, having been researched within a fortnight in November 1956 and written during December. Since the campaign opened with a parachute drop at the Mitla Pass on 29th. October 1956, this is pretty current material ! Henriques is at pains to emphasise that the campaign was implemented after the very barest minimum of preliminary planning - that there were only about five days' notice at most to prepare and mobilise the necessary forces and create plans.

There isn't a great deal of mention of railways - and no mention of any captured Egyptian stock - but the following is of interest:

pp. 130f. "Five medium-sized landing craft (L.C.M.'s) were taken from Haifa to the port of Eilat, and were ready to support the brigade during its move south [to Sharm el-Sheikh], to supply it with fuel and anything else that it might need, and to bring it light tanks.

This was not exclusively a naval occasion, since the landing craft were taken overland, a distance of 220 miles as the crow flies. This was not easy. An L.C.M. weighs nearly 30 tons and is about 14 feet wide. It can carry a light tank.

The decision to get them to Eilat was taken at midnight on the 26th. of October. It was scarcely a feasible proposition, but the breaking of the blockade in the Gulf of Akaba had been a long-term naval ambition and the Navy was desperately keen to have some part in it.

The original plan had been to carry the landing-craft on tank transporters; but to do this would have meant the risk of blocking the only two roads to the south, both of which were already gravely congested. Accordingly, the Navy were forbidden to use tank-transporters and, for a few sad hours, it seemed that the project would have to be abandoned. It was six hours in fact. By the end of that time, experiments had been made, and the naval engineers had discovered that railway trucks could be modified or adapted to carry landing craft as far as Beer-sheba. From there onwards, the craft would fit onto the special auto-cars which were normally used for transporting phosphates from the Dead Sea to Haifa. That these auto-cars had to be purchased solely because the port of Eilat could not be used for exporting the Dead Sea phosphates provided a pleasant pinch of spice to this land-borne naval project.

It was not very easy to modify the railway trucks for the purpose. But between midnight on the 27th. and midday on the 28th. the Navy and the railway officials between them designed and constructed a special cradle. At noon loading began. This was itself an engineering problem, and it was not until eight o'clock that night that the train was ready to start. It was then found that a house on the outskirts of Haifa was a little too close to the railway line to allow the trucks to pass. They moved the railway line 10 inches away from it, to clear the house. They sent ahead a dummy mock-up which gave them warning that several railway signals and other devices

including a passenger bridge at one station, had to be removed to allow the train to pass. It reached Beersheba at dawn on D-Day.

It took all day to lift the landing-craft from the train and get them on the auto-cars. It took two further days to drive them down from Beersheba to Eilat. They were, of course, heavily camouflaged; but they could only move by night, since, in many places, they were less than a mile from the Jordan frontier....."

Does anyone know any more of this extraordinary incident ? How a line down to Eilat would have helped ! There are echoes, of course, of the cradle built onto an HR wagon to transport the Palestine Police launches 'Hawk' and 'Eagle' from Haifa to Samakh and the Sea of Galilee mentioned in 20:19 - one wonders whether someone at Qishon Works recalled that exercise. The implication is that five wagons were adapted and used simultaneously. Which was the bridge that had to be moved ? Only Haifa Merkaz comes to mind.

p.240. On the Fedayeen terrorist attacks that commenced in 1955: " There have been five attacks on the railways, which might be called military objectives - although the railways are rarely used in Israel for military purposes - but apart from these, there has not been one case [in two years] of fedayeen attacking a military target."

On p.245. "On 10th. September (1956) they blew up a part of the Beersheba railway, and on 11th. September Israel responded by blowing up Rahwa police station, a fedayeen base."

----- WLR



25:18. The bridge over the Suez Canal at El Ferdan, after it had been damaged by a Dutch cargo vessel. 1947. (D.S. Currie).

HOLD ON TO THE CASH !

Charles S. Eadon-Clarke F.R.G.S. has written from Guildford, Western Australia:

"I am an expatriate Englishman who, although based in Australia for 49 years, was previously a member of the British Colonial Police and served in the Palestine Police from 1938 to 1942. I was born in 1917 into a devout Christian family and spent my early life in the Anglican rectories of my uncles, scattered throughout the south of England and Wales, my ancestral home being Conway Castle. From an early age I became a student of the Bible and for that reason volunteered with alacrity to serve in the Middle East. Here in the Palestine Police my scriptural knowledge pleased my superiors, and I spent a large portion of my time guiding V.I.P.'s and their families around the many places of religious interest, 'from Dan to Beersheba'. Between these travels I was allocated many unrelated errands, such as escorting the High Commissioner on his various visitations, and from time to time escorting large sums of money for Barclays Bank, Colonial Dominion and Overseas, between Cairo and Jerusalem.

This was not a pleasant task as the railway from Jerusalem was mostly non-operational; and the start of journeys to Lydda through the Seven Sisters hills by truck was frequently the subject of road blocks and guerilla attacks, especially as we were carrying large sums of money. From Lydda [he calls it El Lud; Ed.] we usually had a gangers' trolley preceding us with several prisoners on board - for them to enjoy the explosion of mines laid along the line. In view of the large amount of currency in transit we were, for the most part, locked into the wagons carrying the valuable cargo - a hair-raising experience when bombs went off in front of the train. Of course in those times of riot prisoners were expendable !

The railway line across the Suez Canal was closed at that time and we had to alight at El Kantara and be ferried across the Canal and rejoin a train for Cairo.

These experiences were not the only times I travelled by train from Lydda through the dangerous orange groves to Gaza and across the usually dry river bed of the Biblical "River of Egypt" and the desert before reaching Kantara, as I was not infrequently ordered to proceed to Port Said to pick up new recruits that had landed there by ship from the U.K. and take them back to Jerusalem for training at the barracks at Mount Scopus. After negotiating the hazards of the Seven Sisters, where the recruits spent much time lying flat on the back of the Police trucks, it was not surprising that several encouraged their families to buy them out of the Police Force and they returned to England after only a fortnight in El Kuds.

To me the Hedjaz Railway and its offshoots were no more than a necessary but highly dangerous evil, and I frequently prayed that Lawrence of Arabia might have done a better job in destroying the iron road and saved us from the experiences that claimed so many lives."

EGYPTIAN EXPERIENCES.

Ray Howgego of Caterham, Surrey recently wrote:

"Last summer I spent some time touring Egypt with a small group expedition, during which I visited virtually every part of Egypt and at some point saw nearly all its railway system. Unfortunately, Egypt is even more security conscious than Israel; photography of any part of the railway network is punishable by fourteen days imprisonment and, as our expedition was discreetly shadowed by a jeep full of armed soldiers for almost its entire route (for our own protection, I must add), it was not worth the risk. In addition, there seemed to be no publications available (in Arabic or any other language) on Egyptian railways. My requests in all the major Cairo bookshops (all four of them, three which are run by Copts !) met with raised eyebrows: Why should anyone want to read about railways ? The Egyptians, in any case, have an odd attitude to books - only students appear to read them, and most can't afford them. You can, at least, haggle in the bookshops, most of which seem happy with a 1% mark-up.

Attempts to obtain railway timetables met with a very similar reaction. Booking Office clerks could tell me when the trains left - why should I need it in writing ?! As it turned out, Cook's Overseas Timetable was remarkably accurate, at least in its departure times. Arrival times are purely hypothetical: the prestigious Wagons-Lits from Aswan to Cairo left on the very second, only to stop for half an hour some twenty miles further on after which it started off again backwards.

It appears that the European cartographers have similar difficulties in tracing Egypt's railways. Apart from the obvious Nile valley line (which most agree on), a close inspection of large-scale maps from publishers like Bartholomew, Hallwag, Kummerley & Frey, VWK. etc. reveals considerable disagreement on the route followed by certain lines, or even their very existence. The same applied to some quite major roads, not all of them recent. I can only guess that this is due to the reluctance of the Egyptians to divulge information since the wars with Israel....?

[Unlikely; British cartographers were in charge until early 1950's, and in an age of air reconnaissance an inaccurate commercial map would hardly constitute a major obstacle in war. Ed.]

In particular, the strategic line from Qena (on the Nile) to Bur Safaga (on the Red Sea) was shown incorrectly on every map. The original meandering line through the Eastern Mountains (built in 1941/2 - and again in the early 1960's ?) was pulled up some time ago (though Cook's continued to include its timetable) and has been very recently replaced by a new line over a somewhat different route. The original line ran alongside the road for most of its length, but then the road was rebuilt as well - leading to the cartographic nightmare. At the junction of the Wadi el Oreiya and Wadi Qena, about 30 miles north-east of Qena, there is the most massive railway graveyard I have ever seen which must contain virtually all the stock of the original line, apparently unknown to enthusiasts. However, very special written permission would be needed even to stop, let alone photograph

on this road. There are police checkpoints at both ends, and even the road bridge at Qena has signs prohibiting photography. In the middle of a vast expanse of flat, arid sand-desert an extraordinary bridge has been built; a bizarre and wholly unnecessary construction intended to carry the road (with its two or three vehicles an hour) over the new railway (with its two or three trains a day) even though both are at the same level."

On this line Ray adds - and further information would be welcomed - "The 1941 British-built line is not shown on any atlases that I know of. Very few new map plates were prepared in the later years of the war and by the 1950's the line must have been dismantled. [True - Ed.] It's first reappearance is on map plates prepared in 1960 and most atlases from 1961 onwards show it. It ran along the north side of the road for its entire length. I am not sure when services ceased but every part of the line is now dismantled and the track-bed is only visible in places. Its original route can still be traced beneath an overhead cable and alongside an occasional derelict rest-house. The new Qena-Safaga line appears to have been completed by 1990 and is intended to be the first half of a completely new line from the phosphate mines at Abu Tartour (west of the el Kharga oasis) to the coast via a new bridge across the Nile. The Qena-Safaga section also conveys bauxite from the coast to an aluminium plant near Nag Hammadi. I saw the near end of the western section of this new line (the el Kharga section) and it appeared to have been finished. The map suggests that it follows a more direct route than the old long-abandoned route to el Kharga, and a little to the south.

The new Qena-Safaga line runs mainly to the south of the road (itself largely rebuilt and straightened); about 10 miles from Safaga it disappears to the south and I'm not sure where it hits the coast. There appear to be three mineral lines converging on Quseir, 85 km. south, from inland phosphate mines. Permits for travel in this region are difficult to obtain.

I was delighted to see that the complex network of narrow-gauge lines along much of the west bank of the Nile was still in place, although hardly any of it is in use except as footpaths. In some places one could see the tracks disappearing through the walls of houses and re-emerging on the other side! I have no knowledge of this very extensive system or what forms of traction were used. Very few maps indicate its existence. Much of the Delta system is still shown on the maps (although most is abandoned).

An extension to the system is the line to the el Kharga oasis which plunges straight across 150 miles of desert and was, at one time, the only direct route for freight and passengers across the Nile. I saw this line meandering out into the desert just north of Nag Hammadi but could not tell whether it was still in use. Certainly it was closed for some years and definitely carries no passenger traffic, but the maps show a recent extension to mines at Abu Tamar, 50 miles west of el Kharga.

The remaining desert line is the very modern-looking standard gauge route from the Nile just south of el Giza near

Helwan 200 miles across the desert to the mines at el Gedida near the Bahariya Oasis. This is definitely freight-only and followed it to its terminus on the banks of the Nile only to find that it disappeared through massive wooden doors into a precinct enclosed by a very high brick wall. This line was built for carrying iron ore from the mines at el Gedida near the Bahariya Oasis (350 km.). It is often blocked by sand drifts and is intended to be re-routed in places. Egypt has seen an enormous increase in passenger rail traffic recently and it seems to be general policy eventually to open mineral lines to passengers.

As regards the rest of the rail network, Cook's timetable seemed to be correct although the old direct line from Cairo to Suez looked pretty run down and I could not be sure that passenger services were still operating. The modern route is via Ismailia. Restrictions on travel without the necessary paperwork prevented me from investigating the lines to the east of the Canal.

Most of the Egyptian stock is caked with wind-blown sand and even the most prestigious "tourist" trains (most of which are now virtually empty of tourists) can be delayed for hours by an ill-tempered donkey or overturned cart."

FURTHER NOTES ON EGYPT:

25.21.

Readers who have access to Hugh Hughes' 'Middle East Railways' will be able to compare this account with his maps on pp. 12 & 15; By coincidence your editor's attention was drawn recently to the December 1992 edition of "Eisenbahn Kurier" (back numbers available from EK Verlag, Postfach 5560, 7800 Freiburg, Germany) which has a lengthy illustrated article on pp.52-61 on "Unter Pyramiden: Eisenbahn in Agypten" by Jurgen Wolter and Ingo Seifert. This includes a map which shows not only the Qena -Bur Safaga line but the freight-only line Nag Hammadi - Al Kharijah (i.e. the same as the el Kharga mentioned above), and the Western Desert Railway and its Extension open to passengers as far as As-Sallum (Sollum) near the Libyan border. According to the text there are three trains each way over the 311km. to Mersa Matruh (including a through express from Cairo), and one stopping train which traverses the remaining 239km. to Sollum in 11 hours. The Cairo-Suez direct line is also marked as open to passengers.

The latest Cook's Overseas Timetable indicates (Table 2661) the Qena-Safaga line as 130km. long but lists no train times; Cairo - Suez (El Suweis) (Table 2654 - 140 km.) with four trains each way daily, one of which is a railcar with catering facilities; the Western Desert Railway from Alexandria has three trains to Mersa Matruh (one through from Cairo) plus a few shorter workings, and the Mersa Matruh - El Salloum service (Table 2656) leaving Mersa at 0740 and arriving at El Salloum 1840. As your editor is interested in the history of this former British military line, any further details from readers would be welcomed (though technically this region is North Africa rather than the Middle East); however, in February 1994 Moslem Fundamentalists made a bomb attack on a Cairo-Aswan tourist train, so extreme care is indicated.....

25.22.

RAY ANSTEY'S MEMORIES.

In 23:18 Ray recounted a few memories of life on the HBT Rly. He has now sent some background personal information:

"I joined the Southern Railway as a Goods Porter in 1939 and used to drive lorries about the yard, and on Saturdays used to help the Drivers deliver the beer to the country pubs - naturally, I was the one who drove home !

I was called into the RASC in 1942 and was transferred to the R.E. Railway Operating in 1943; I passed tests for Brakesman/Shunter, also Checker M.C. and served all the usual places, but mostly at East Ham, London, at the docks. I was bombed out of a hotel at Tilbury, returned to Longmoor, then was sent to the Suez area in 1945 after Embarkation Leave, and from there to Beirut.

I think we handed over to the Lebanese authorities late in 1946, because we returned to a tented camp near Port Tewfik and from there I came home on leave (LIAP - Leave in Advance of 'Python').

When my 30 days' leave expired I had to report to Dover Castle where they told me there was no point in my returning to my unit as I had not long to go. I had to report instead to the Railway Operating & Maintenance Detachment R.E. at Bicester and the first person I met in the Orderly Room was the Capt. Hall who was with us in Beirut, and who I had used to drive up and down paying out and replenishing the Blockposts. He said "I heard you were arriving, Shorty - you can be my driver" - and I stayed there until my Demob."



25.23. Changing face of IR: G12 116 and a train formed of IC3 units at Tel Aviv Merkaz station, 21/4/94.