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הרכבת

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84:01. Siemens
Israel Rolling
Stock being
unloaded at
Ashdod, and right,
in service at
Tel Aviv



EDITORIAL:

Hang on tight - It is time for the latest instalment of the Editor's tirades.... following a very crowded one-week visit to Israel in February. Of course, tensions were still high in the period between the end of the campaign in the Gaza Strip and the elections in Israel.

To get from Tel Aviv to Dimona by train, one has to leave HaHaganah at 07.11, and this provides a connection at Beer Sheva Tzafon arr. 08.33 for Dimona, dep. 08.40, arr. 09.04. The next arrival is 18.04! I do not know the reason for this dreadful 'service' - one issue is clearly that people want to leave Dimona in the mornings, not to go there, and another might be issues of capacity on this single-track line, which is also heavily used for freights. Be that as it may, if one misses this train, then a bus is the only alternative.

So on Thursday 5th. February I was rather tense about finding a taxi from my hostel to the station in time, but managed this with time to spare. Except that on the 7am radio news the first item was to do with a labour dispute on Rakevet Yisrael! On arrival at the station, several people hung around outside, and on the glass door was a handwritten notice regarding a strike 'until further information'.

One might assume that this was an interesting, if frustrating subject for a photo. But immediately three security people, two guys and a gal, came storming out - "Assur Letzalem!"

Here I demonstrated my first mistake. The lady PRO (Doveret) of Israel Railways had, of course, not bothered to answer any e-mails. And due to my cramped schedule - I was travelling with family this time - I had not made the time to turn up in person at the offices adjacent to Arlosoroff station - though some months ago I had done exactly that and, whereas the Doveret herself was not in her office, someone else had kindly made out a letter on IR letterhead, with passport details and so forth - and I had brought this with me, even though it was out of date; this, and several copies of Harakevet to prove my bona fides, and a couple of other railway magazines too. The big problem, however, was that this letter did not bear an official stamp and seal!! Something which had not been a problem in the summer.

So I was given the full treatment, even threats to confiscate the film; Did my story make sense? Whose story makes sense? The main thing is to keep calm, to try to answer questions, when three ask at once to say "Hang on, one at a time, please", and so forth. Which I did. Presumably they were bored as there were no other passengers to check. And eventually all was accepted. But what a time-wasting palaver! Several times I explained who I was, what I did, and that photography on stations is NOT forbidden. To no immediate use. Superiors were radioed. I was told off for not having a stamp on the Permit. Without this stamp it was not valid! This had not been a problem ever before.

And I never got to Dimona. Nor did I get a photograph of the sign telling me why this was, on this day, impossible.

But due to some (quite critical) correspondence with a couple of readers, I feel I need to stress again for readers of this magazine: 'Harakevet' is my hobby, to be squeezed in between working, losing work, finding work, travelling to work, trying to save a marriage, trying to rebuild a social life, trying to keep up with my kids, and all the rest of the things that make Life so fascinating. I get NO help from anyone official at Rakevet Israel or any other institution in Israel, no assistance from Tourist authorities, no information from the press officers, no subsidies, no free tickets, no invitations - if it were not for the network of willing volunteers who send me materials (not to mention Steve who does so much administration in addition to the printing and despatch) this magazine would not survive. It is just as frustrating for me to use up valuable holiday time in Israel chas-

ing people who do not respond and who do not assist, who always find time to say "No!" or "Assur!" but never just accept that there might be people in the world interested in what was and what is, and not just in two-dimensional video games or sport or whatever else is classed as 'normal' in these times.

OK - End of tirade. As is now becoming normal, each quarter sees further progress on infrastructure improvements in Israel - more doubling, or realignment, more road underpasses or overpasses. It is really quite amazing and hard to keep up. The tramway projects, in contrast, seem stuck in the doldrums for reasons no-one can adequately clarify - the press releases and articles reproduced here are full of obfuscation.



84:03/1 "Not a terrorist attack, but "men at work" on the tramway on Jaffa Road, Jerusalem, Feb 09

84:04.

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). NOVEMBER 2008 TRAFFIC STATISTICS.

From a press release of 16.12.2008 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.: "In November 2008, a new monthly record of passenger traffic was achieved: 3.26 Million, the highest ever, and 16.6% higher than in November 2007! Between January and November 2008, traffic reached 31.85 Million, 11.1% higher than in the same period of 2007.

Another record, of daily average passenger traffic, was also achieved in November, reaching 133,089; this is higher by 17.1% than in November 2007; the average daily passenger traffic between January and November 2008 reached 119,811, which is 9.7% higher than in the same period of 2007.

Revenues from passenger traffic



84:03/2 Tracklaying Jaffa Road, Feb 09



84:03/3 Surface Work Jaffa Road Feb 09

in November 2008 reached \$11.5 Million, 18% higher than in November 2007; the revenues for the period between January and November 2008, reached \$114.00 Million, 11.20% higher than in the same period of 2007.

Isra-Rail Co. Ltd. General Manager Mr. Yitzhak (Haki) Harel said: "Isra-Rail Co. Ltd. is undergoing a continuous development process, in terms of both operations and infrastructures; it is for us to fulfill the mission to make the infrastructures and rolling stock suitable for the growing service demands; therefore the teams are developing the infrastructures all over the network, and in few months time, the new single-deck push pull trains (a total of 87 cars) will enter service. Rail service is the only solution for traffic congestion in the centre of Israel, and I'm pleased to see that a growing number of the state citizens have realized it!"

(b). CORRUPTION SUSPICIONS.

On 16.12.08, an article in Y-NET of 'Yediot-Aharonot' (Israel's most popular newspaper), unveiled that 4 railway employees are being investigated by the police on suspicion of receiving bribes; no details available as yet. The Railways Management immediately announced that they will fully co-operate with the police.

(c). EARTHQUAKE PLANNING.

Also on 16.12.2008, IR management responded to an Order given by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, regarding preparation for earthquakes in the Haifa area. The Order had been published even before anybody at the Railways had seen it; and therefore the management response was that they would first have to study it, and meetings with members of the Ministry would soon take place. They added that,

as a Green mode of transport the railways, which are environmentally friendly, will take any steps needed for this purpose.

(d). COLLISION.

On 18.12.2008 an ore train en-route from Oron to Tzefa (on the phosphate ores line) became stuck at Mamshit and called for rescue; a locomotive sent for that purpose did not succeed in braking in time and hit the train; the driver was lightly injured. The case is being investigated by the Railways administration.

(e). HOLON - WOLFSON STATION.

From a press release by Israe-Rail Co. of 28.12.2008:

"The construction of the suburban line between Tel Aviv HaHaganah and Rishon LeTzion West stations, via Bat Yam and Holon, continues at full pace. Today the railways have announced that the Israeli construction company Asher Green Ltd. has won the \$14M tender for building the Holon Wolfson station at Wolfson Road No. 20 (Ayalon) Interchange, as well as the infrastructure works for the new tracks at this interchange. Other competitors were the Israeli construction companies Ter Arme, Ortam Trading Ltd. and Minrav Engineering Ltd.

Last weekend the Railways Tenders Committee approved publication of tenders for the construction of the Sha'ar Holon (Holon Gate) station, as well as infrastructure works for the line between Tel Aviv HaHaganah and Rishon LeTzion West stations."

(f). BEAM ME UP...

From a press release of 08.01.09: During a regular inspection at Tel Aviv Savidor (Central) Station, the team found that one of the beams which holds the roof above Platforms 5 & 6 had become partially loose; as a result traffic was diverted through platforms 1 to 4. The building contractor was called in and on Sunday afternoon 11.01.09 traffic returned largely to normal, though there were some disruptions for two days.

Another cause for temporary disruption was the suicide of a woman at Haifa Hof-Carmel station.

(g). TRACKWORKS ON THE MAIN LINE & JERUSALEM LINE.

Due to track infrastructure and maintenance works to be carried out at Haifa Bat-Galim station and Tel Aviv - Tel Barukh Junction, traffic was stopped from Tuesday 13.01.09 00.01 till Wednesday 14.01.09 23.59. Works included the replacement of 300m of deteriorated track at Bat-Galim station, and laying new turnouts at Tel Barukh Junction as part of preparation work for adding a track; both works will contribute to increased speed, capacity and safety.

On 13.01.09 no services would run between Haifa Hof HaCarmel and Nahariyya in both directions, and trains would not call at

Haifa Bat-Galim, Haifa Central-the 8, Lev HaMifratz, Hutzot-HaMifratz, Kiryat Hayim, Kiryat Motzkin, Akko and Nahariyya. Train No. 196 departing Modi'in Central at 22.04 would terminate at 23.50 at Hof HaCarmel; Train No. 198 dep Modi'in Central 23.04 would terminate 00.45.

On 14.01.09 no services were run between Tel-Aviv Savidor and Haifa and Nahariyya in either direction, though some reduced services continued to serve Universita. On 15.01.09 traffic returned to normal, except Train No. 5, which normally starts at Lev HaMifratz, started from Hof HaCarmel.

From 16.01.09 and 30.01.09 there were no services between Tel Aviv Savidor (Central) and Jerusalem - due to the track realignment and completion of grade separation No. 812 over Road No. 3. (Nahal Soreq.)

(h). *ELECTRIFICATION HELD BACK, NEGEV SUPPORTED.*

The Ministries of Transport & Roads Safety and Finance recently decided to shift about \$260M from the budget originally destined for electrification works and use it instead to accelerate the construction of the line between Ashkelon and Beersheva, which would pass through Sderot, Netivot and Ofakim - all places until January suffering from rocket fire from Gaza. Ministers Mofaz and Bar-On announced that "particularly at a time when citizens of the Negev are at the forefront of the attack, it is the government's commitment not only to protect them, but also to strengthen the social and economic structure of the region. The railways are one of the most significant 'locomotives of economic growth' that we have; the line, when built, will bring the periphery much closer to the centre, will create thousands of new jobs and thus strengthen the local economy, particularly in times of an economic and security crisis."

The line's construction has been partially budgeted as a part of the Railways' current 5-Year Programme. The shift is made possible by the delay of the completion of the A1 fast link to Jerusalem to 2014, which itself enables the delaying of the first stage of electrification to the next 5-Year Plan.

(i). *NEW CONTROL CENTRE.*

On 20.01 2009 the Israel Railways formally inaugurated the new 'Masua' Central Control and Command Centre, enabling safe control and routing of train traffic over the whole network, from one point. Thus the technological gap between the railways in Israel and the world's leading railway networks is reduced still further. The ceremony at Hof HaCarmel station included Mr. Shaul Mofaz the Minister of Transport and Road Safety; Mr. Yitzhak Harel, General Manager of Israel Railways

Co. the Railways' Vice-President of Operations, Mr. Harel Even; Mr. Yona Yahav the Mayor of Haifa; and Mr. Yitzhak Wimer, the Manager of E.S.S., the local representative of Thales Communications Inc. who built the facility.

Yitzhak Harel said "The switch to the 'Masua' system is a significant step for the railways from the aspects of safety, service and operations, which will bring the railways technologically to European standards. We believe this move will significantly improve the trains' performance and the company's ability to cope efficiently with the high traffic growth, and in hand with providing a better, more punctual and safer passenger service." The new control centre is provided with the most modern and updated information monitoring systems used by European railways, particularly in Germany.

These technologies transmit information in real time, relating to train traffic and train location on the network, as well as precise information in real time regarding train arrival times and not only the scheduled arrival times. This gives a large-scale operational vision.

The control centre will soon be interfaced with the P.I.S. (Public Information service) system.

It will also improve the quality of traffic management in emergency situations by enabling a more focussed treatment on a section where traffic has been disrupted for any reason. It will also enable the railways to operate in coordination with European railways, thus being able to adopt more easily to their standards and regulations and be integrated into their operational systems, including implementation of any lessons learned regarding improvements in safety and quality. The railways currently operate about 500 trains daily, of which 338 are passenger trains.

Until now traffic control has been worked through a system consisting of ten regional signalling centres, which were used for train routing along the network in a coordinated manner. These centres controlled 73 signal stations (formerly called boxes) spread all over the network. Traffic management and monitoring of trains' performance was manual and not computerised. This control system was not advanced enough to enable daily traffic growth management, which caused a serious problem due to the high traffic growth in recent years."

[The Editor adds: This optimistic press release came to me, via Aharon Gazit, just a week after the German railway system was almost paralysed for almost 24 hours due to a computer failure at their centralised command centre east of Berlin! One can only hope that there is a back-up somewhere and that this is one of the 'lessons that can be learned'....]

הרכבת

(j). *WILDCAT STRIKE.*

'Haaretz' of 06.02.2009 p. A4 has a very intriguing and informative article by Avi Bar-Eli and Fadi Eyadat:-

"'Illegal' Wildcat Strike shuts down Nation's Railways.' A wildcat strike shut down train traffic throughout the country for more than half the day yesterday until the strike was halted by court order. The strike, which was called by the northern chapter of the rail workers union, began at midnight Wednesday, though there [had been] scattered disruptions even earlier. The union did not give any reason for its action, nor was the strike preceded by the declaration of a labour dispute, as required by law.

Israel Railways immediately sought an injunction against the strike, but the Haifa Labour Court issued it only eight hours later, at 8am. And though workers in the south and centre of the country decided to honour the injunction, only three and a half to four hours later was a train service in these areas finally running again. The union's northern chapter, in contrast, initially decided to ignore the injunction. Only at a follow-up court hearing, which took place at 1pm., did it finally agree to resume service, and actually getting the trains running then took additional time. Thus service to and from the north remained shut down until mid-afternoon.

The Histadrut labour federation repudiated the strike as 'illegal' and 'irresponsible', and Histadrut chairman Ofer Eini said he would begin immediate proceedings to oust every member of the chapter's workers committee. "The Histadrut will not allow committee members to take wildcat action, without the Histadrut's permission and in defiance of its instructions, that also causes unnecessary harm to the public," he said.

The harm was felt widely, since Thursday, when soldiers and students head home for the weekend, is Israel Railways' busiest day. Naval crews with leave from their Haifa base, for instance, found themselves unable to get home. The trains were not running, and the buses were consequently jammed. "I haven't been home for two weeks, and this morning I was supposed to go on weekend leave", one said bitterly as he gave up and returned to base. There were also many frustrated drivers on the roads, as people who would normally have taken the train resorted to driving instead, generating traffic jams. Even taxi drivers who had hoped to make a killing from the strike found themselves disappointed, as would-be train travellers nevertheless passed them by. "It's mostly soldiers here, and they don't have money" explained one driver as he gave up and left. [N.B.: Military personnel get free transportation on IR and buses. Ed.]

Though the northern chapter has yet to explain why it called the strike, its

workers committee has been on edge ever since three senior committee members were arrested on suspicions of bribery, fraud and breach of trust a month ago.”

[This is intriguing. Why did all the IR workers agree to strike without themselves knowing why? Why did many refuse to recognise a Court Order, thus placing themselves in even worse conflict with the legal system? As well as with their own Trades Union leadership? What did they hope to gain? And all this six days before a hard-fought General Election? There must be more to this story than meets the eye..... Ed.]

An IR press release refers to the strike actually stating 04.02.09 (presumably shortly before midnight) and that traffic in the southern region had returned to normal by 11.30.

(k). ANTI-ISRAEL POLITICS.

A report in the Jerusalem Post of 06.02.2009 noted in passing that rising anti-Israel feeling in Sweden had led to Veolia, a Swedish transport company, losing its contract with the Stockholm Metro due to its involvement with the Jerusalem Light Rail project. This is a worrying indicator; but one wonders whether, for example, links with DB will also be cut because of its links selling rolling stock to Iran? Alstom, Bombardier, Siemens are all involved in selling to Israel.....

(l). TRAFFIC ISLANDS.

In conversation with Jeremy Topaz, who is thinking of writing a full article on this topic, we realised just how many of the IR stations are or will be effectively built in the middle of major roads. This means that the passengers waiting to enter quiet, cool, air-conditioned railway carriages are exposed in that time to constant traffic noise and exhaust fumes - noise and air pollution. The Ayalon stations, Herzliya, Rishon LeTzion Rishonim (which once stood in splendid isolation over the surrounding landscape but is now hemmed in by viaducts on each side) and soon the stations on the new line, Kfar Saba, Patay Modi'in.... there may be good reasons in terms of planning in a small, crowded country where space is at a premium, but there is a down side too. In Britain, once upon a time, the stations had full waiting and catering and toilet facilities whereas the trains were primitive boxes on wheels; then came a gradual trend whereby the stations lost most facilities and have become mere bus shelters, whereas the trains have toilets and catering. An interesting 'reverse trend'.

(m). RA'ANANA SHUTTLES.

The Jerusalem Post 'Metro' edition 06.02.2009 reports a new initiative by

the Ra'anana Municipality to run shuttle buses to and from the station in Herzliya, to reduce car use and pollution caused by commuters. A good idea. Unfortunately a mere drop in the ocean when one sees what has been invested in new road schemes in the area.....

(n). ELECTIONS.

On 10.02.2009 the elections for the 18th. Knesset were held in Israel; in the media comments Benyamin Netanyahu of Likud was quoted as promising extension of the railway (and road) network both to the extreme north and the extreme south of the country..... We shall see..... For the rest, transport hardly seemed to be mentioned as an election issue.

(o). STOCK OPTIONS.

It was reported in early February that IR has decided not to pursue a idea to purchase another twenty double-deck coaches from Bombardier as an 'emergency' to fill the rolling-stock gap caused by delayed delivery of the Siemens single-deck vehicles. (These would have been diverted from the current Bombardier assembly line.) Apparently it has been decided that as the original order was fulfilled, and there are no further 'options' to be exercised, rules require another tender to be issued 'later this year'. Since suitable stock and a relationship with a successful supplier already exists it is hard to see what this time-wasting procedure would bring - one doubts whether Siemens need bother applying - but presumably the political and marketing rules have to be obeyed.

(N.B. The Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon railway in Switzerland, faced also with a temporary shortage due to late delivery of new stock for the Bern S-Bahn services, hurriedly arranged the hire of five DB double-deck coaches intended for the Schleswig-Holstein Transport Authority.)

(p). I.R. REPORT FOR 2008.

From a press release of 28.01.2009:

The year 2008 can be summed up for the Railways as very successful and showing a strong growth. Passenger traffic grew by 10.5% over 2007; 14% on suburban services, and 5% on inter-city services, mainly thanks to the opening of Modi'in Central and Petah-Tikva Kiryat-Arie stations, and the first fully-operational year of Modi'in Outskirts stations. Revenues reached \$125M, while average daily passenger traffic reached 129,387 - 9.2% higher than 2007. Average punctuality reached 91.3%, the highest over the last decade!

The operational deficit has been reduced during 2008 by \$15M, by reducing the activities of external consultants and full control of the company's costs; rise in revenues from freight and business, imple-

mentation of the employees' retirement programme, and a significant reduction in the employees' wages following the increasing efficiency programme. According to this programme, signed in March 2008 between the management and the union, for the retirement of at least 150 employees, at least 130 employees have already taken early retirement; the average reduction in wages is currently 4% and will reach 6% upon completion of this programme.

The Development Fund being mainly managed by the Railways for the State, in excess of \$375M, yielded in 2008 a nominal return of capital of 9.3% (5.5 to 6% in real terms), whilst most of the capital funds in the economy have made substantial losses; The money is to be invested in various railway infrastructure projects.

During 2008 Israel Railways invested \$425M in development programmes, while continuing to improve infrastructures, developing new lines and investing in safety measures. Regarding Safety, The Railways were active in promoting construction of ten grade separations in different stages of implementation all over the network - three of these have been recently completed and become operational. the rest will be completed within the next two years.

Additionally the recently-opened 'Masua' control centre at Haifa Hof-HaCarmel station has brought the railways to European standards in terms of modern information and operational technologies.

(q). IR PLANS FOR 2009:

Also from the same press release:

"General Manager Yitzhak Harel announced: 'Due to the expected recession, the Railways are preparing for a rise of 11% to 13% in passenger traffic in 2009 over 2008, instead of the initial 8% forecast, since many will switch from use of private car to rail. Since the plans for purchase of further rolling stock will not change in 2009, the Finance Ministry has been asked to check a proposed programme of tariffs prepared by IR to cope with both the recession and this rise in passenger traffic, to include amongst other measures, significant reductions of 20-25% for off-peak ticket prices to reduce congestion. In addition Mr. Harel has contacted the Finance Ministry's Accountant General to promote the issue of debenture bonds in excess of \$125M and \$250M to accelerate the financing of the development programme. He said, 'The Railways can assist in relieving the financial crisis by issuing the debentures, thus providing a double contribution to the economy: by creating hundreds of new jobs and by opening a channel for institutional investors who are looking for solid investment opportunities.'"

(r). WORKS BETWEEN HAIFA AND NAHARIYYA.

From a press release of 12.02.09: In order to carry out development works and build a grade separation, the Haifa Hof-HaCarmel - Nahariyya section was to be closed temporarily from Monday 16.02.00.01, to Wednesday 18.02.04.00. This meant that train 198 (from Modi'in to Nahariyya) on Sunday 15.02 terminated at Kiryat Motzkin at 01:17, and there were then no services as all on this northern section. Tracks at Haifa Bat-Galim were to be replaced, improving the track and riding qualities; on the Kiryat Motzkin - Akko section, works on double-tracking and grade separations were to continue.

(s). WORKS ON BEER SHEVA LINE.

From a press release of 16.02.2009: From Wednesday 25.02.09 00:01 to Sunday 01.03.09 04.:00, the section Kiryat Gat - Beer Sheva was to be closed to traffic to enable works to take place. These include:

Near the Ramot neighbourhood of Beer-Sheva traffic will be diverted to a grade separation, thus enabling completion of works on an access road to Ramot; Track will be realigned onto two new bridges, while further preparatory work on track upgrading will continue; works to open the pedestrian subway at Kiryat Gat station will continue - to improve passenger service. During this period all passenger services to Kiryat Gat, Lehavim/Rahat, Beer-Sheva North/University, Beer Sheva Central and Dimona were suspended.

Further: The section between Lod and Na'an Junction, particularly between Ramla and Na'an, which is more than a century old and suffers from sharp curves requiring speed restrictions as low as 50km/h (and is also a bottleneck with the Jerusalem line services) is to be realigned and double-tracked, enabling line speed to be raised to 100km/h.

Due to the fact that Tel Nagila station is now defined as an operational station (i.e. for operational purposes only - with passing loops) the railways have no other way than to stop traffic on and from Thursday 26.02.09 (despite this being a busy day in terms of traffic) to install the new operational software for the station; this requires a restarting which can affect the whole network, and this can be done only on weekends.

Double-tracking of the first 6km. of the section Kiryat Gat - Ahuzam has been completed; this joins further sections of the route which are being doubled and upgraded. In addition further grade-separations are being built along the line; the target is to complete all the works sometime in 2011, cutting journey times for the 108km. between Tel Aviv and Beer-Sheva to 50 minutes, at an average speed of almost 130 kmh.

(t). SIEMENS COACH NUMBERS.

The Siemens productions series numbers are IZ 001 - IZ 087. On Israel Railways they will be numbered:-

Power Cars/Driving trailers: 801 - 810.

Trailer cars with facilities for Disabled: 825 - 849.

Other Trailer Cars: 901 - 953.

(u). BRAKING PROBLEM.

On Monday 22.02.09 Train 38 (Modi'in Central dep. 06.06 for Haifa Central (The Eight), failed to halt at Pa'atey Modi'in, coming to a stand only several hundred metres beyond the station. From a Railways press release published the same day, it seems the train had not been properly prepared, and only the locomotive brakes were applied. The train was halted by the Indusi system (German: Induktives Zugsicherung). The case is seen as potentially serious and the driver was immediately suspended.

84.05:

TENDERS.

(i). Tender No. MC/SR/09/08: Frame agreement for providing international air and sea forwarding services as well as custom commission services for import/export. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to 48 additional months. Latest bidding date: 15.01.2009.

(ii). Tender No. BN/KB/08/08: Frame agreement for design, supply, and making usable pre-stressed concrete buildings of two sizes: 13 m2 net minimal area, and 9 m2 net minimal area, to be located at various places on the railways, and used as offices in peace times, and as protected shelters - as per the Army Home Command specifications - in war times; works include also connections to electricity and communication sources. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 22.01.2009.

(iii). Tender No. HN/KB/11/08: Frame agreement for building new bridges, and culverts, dismantling of old bridges, earth works, roadbeds, etc. along the Kiryat-Gat - Beer-Sheva line. The contract is for 18 months with optional extensions of up to additional 12 months. Latest bidding date: 19.01.2009.

(iv). Tender No. LO/RS/05/08. Delivery and Installation of portable buildings at various railway sites. Bids by 21.01.09.

(v). Tender No. HN/KB/14/08: Completion of Acoustic Walls at Binyamina. Works include. Earthworks, cast concrete, prefabricated elements, sealing, painting, drilling and inserting piles. Implementation time: 6 months. Bids by 10.02.09.

(vi). Tender No. BH/SR/02/09. Framework agreement for providing routine maintenance services the railways' water-based fire-fighting systems. For 60 months, with optional extensions of up to a further 60 months. Bids by 15.03.09.

84:06:

LIGHT RAIL NEWS.

A. JERUSALEM.

The situation here seems to get from bad to worse, as the following items demonstrate.

(i). INFORMATION BOARDS.

From a press release of 15.12.08 by the Jerusalem Master-Plan team, the Municipality, Egged Bus Co., and the Transport and Roads' Safety Ministry:

All the boards involved in the Transportation Master Plan have started an experimental electronic information board. This first board of the NEXT BUS system located at Keren Hayesod Street (city centre) displays in real time the actual bus arrival times and is mounted on buses and connected via GPS to the city's control centre, soon to be located in the city centre.

The Master Plan Deputy General Manager Mr. Nadav Meroz, explained that "the board updates the passengers continuously with the arrival times of all bus lines calling at the station, the exact location of the buses along the lines, and the minutes left until their arrival."

The board is to be tested for 2 months, after which - if successful - a tender will be published for purchasing 50 such boards to be installed at the 44 bus stations along the Blue BRT line, the length of which is 10 km, and which links the neighborhoods of Gilo in the south and Ramot in the north/west through the city centre, and which is now in a progressive stage of construction.

Generally, almost \$7.8 Million are to be invested in technologies needed to upgrade the Blue line, which together with the LRV Red Line - along which similar boards are also to be installed soon - will form the core of the city's modern public transport now being created.

Mr. Meroz added that during the test the levels of information reliability, as well as punctuality, in addition to its ability to function in different weathers, and the level of visibility and comfort for the passengers are all to be checked; consideration is also being given to make the system accessible by the internet and mini-hand-calculators.

The Master Plan Manager Mr. David Levi said: "Today's world tendency is to upgrade public transport systems, and the same is done in Jerusalem; our efforts

are to upgrade it in all aspects - creating preferred bus lanes, integration between advanced systems like LRV and buses, real time information, smart card system common to all means of transport, and of course a serious improvement of service level; additionally, high capacity buses like the Dutch Phillias which has been tested and failed, or the Mercedes-Benz CAPACITY now being tested, will be tested until the best and most suitable and cost-effective one will be found”.

(ii). *CITY VOWS TO SPEED UP CONSTRUCTION ON JERUSALEM LIGHT RAIL.* By Etgar Lefkovits. Jan. 13, 2009. Jerusalem Post.

“The light rail infrastructure work under way on Jerusalem’s main downtown artery will be completed by the end of the year, the head of the Citi-Pass conglomerate said Tuesday. Citi-Pass director-general Yair Naveh pledged on Tuesday to complete the work on the capital’s Jaffa Road by the end of 2009.

But residents said they were sick of unkept promises. “Shame, shame,” one merchant shouted out as Jerusalem mayor Nir Barkat and Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz toured the mostly blocked street. “They are only working because the mayor is here,” said another.

The international group building the repeatedly delayed light rail system faces mounting public and municipal pressure to speed up work on Jaffa Road. The decision comes a month after longtime project opponent Barkat took office. The municipality under his leadership is taking a much more hands-on approach to the issue. “There is no doubt that the public is suffering immensely because of this project,” Barkat said. “You can imagine that I am very dissatisfied with the pace of the work.” Barkat said during the mayoral campaign that he would “examine better alternatives” to the light rail system, including environmentally friendly buses, and would seek a fundamental discussion with government officials to find the best solution to the city’s transportation needs, over and beyond speeding up the infrastructure work on project.

But Mofaz clarified Tuesday that there was no stopping the light rail project at this late stage, even though it is years behind schedule. “Under the present situation, we need to finish this,” he said. At the same time, Mofaz said that everything must be done to expedite the work, and to reduce the hardships residents are facing. “We need to minimize as much as possible the damage and suffering of the public,” he said.

The rail is now scheduled to begin running in September 2010 “It cannot be that the city centre is paralyzed for years because of this work,” said Shimon Darwish, head of the workers’ committee at

the Mahaneh Yehuda market, located south of Jaffa Road. “This kind of thing doesn’t happen anywhere else in the world.” The solution is to work on the site 24 hours a day, Darwish said.

State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss recently found that the government incorrectly estimated the public sector’s investment in the project, which has soared from NIS 500 million in 2000 to NIS 1.3 billion as of the end of 2007. The project is meant to ease traffic congestion, improve access and reduce pollution downtown. But in the meantime, it has created a traffic nightmare and turned parts of the city into a big, dusty construction site.

The 14-km. inaugural “Red Line” will run from the northern neighborhood of Pisgat Ze’ev to Mount Herzl via the city center, with 23 stops along the way. Barkat could nix the plans for additional lines.

Two months before November’s municipal election, the city acknowledged severe disruptions, postponements and general mismanagement in construction, and blamed Citi-Pass. The allegations, outlined by the city in a letter to the Finance Ministry, cite the lack of an updated stage-by-stage work plan, limited working hours, and insufficient manpower and construction equipment.

Last year, merchants said the infrastructure work on Jaffa Road was destroying their businesses. City-Pass placed the blame on the municipality, saying the city delayed issuing building permits for many months.”

(iii). *IN JERUSALEM, ARABS AND JEWS FINALLY AGREE.....ON ONE THING AT LEAST. PEOPLE IN BOTH CAMPS SAY THE CITY’S TRAM IS A DUMB IDEA.*

By Andrew Higgins and David Gauthier-Villars, January 30, 2009.

“JERUSALEM -- It took perhaps nearly a millennium, but Arabs and Jews who each claim this sacred city as their own have found a cause that unites them: hostility to a streetcar none desire.

Anti-tram feelings spring from many - and mostly incompatible - sources. At a time when conflict over Gaza is pouring yet more poison into the gulf separating Israelis from Palestinians, a repeatedly stalled and still unfinished Jerusalem tram project is galvanizing the city’s feuding camps against a common foe.

The whole project, says Mayor Nir Barkat, voicing a view widely shared across religious and ethnic lines, has been “a very negative experience.” The elected mayor, who took office late last year, proposes converting more than four miles of track already laid into a bus lane. But that would create another headache: what to do with the 42 tram cars -- each one costing more than \$3 million and fitted with special glass to resist stones and firebombs -- al-

ready delivered to Jerusalem from France? “I don’t know if I should laugh or what,” says Alex Kroskin, chief engineer of City-Pass, a private consortium of Israeli and French companies overseeing the project and determined to press on. When planning for the light-rail system began in the 1990s, the idea of trams running across a city fragmented by faith and rival loyalties seemed to offer an environmentally friendly way to bind communities, relieve traffic congestion and lift downtown areas out of the doldrums. Peace was in the air following the 1993 signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. “It was a very different time,” says Mr. Kroskin, the chief engineer.

Today, the mood has soured - and just about everyone is jumping on the anti-streetcar bandwagon. In addition to Mr. Barkat, Jerusalem’s secular Jewish mayor, ultra-Orthodox rabbis and the PLO are also fired up against the tram. The rabbis have urged city hall “to cancel this evil.” A leading Israeli business magazine this week called it “the cursed train.”

Jerusalem’s rare unity of purpose in denouncing the tram is hardly a harbinger of future harmony: anti-tram feelings spring from many - and mostly incompatible - sources. The PLO fumes against an “illegal Zionist project” it says is designed to consolidate Israeli control over Arab districts seized after the Six-Day War in 1967. It has gone to court in France trying to get Alstom SA and Veolia Environnement SA, French companies providing know-how and equipment, to pull the plug. A hearing on the case is due next week. Neither company would comment prior to the hearing. Mayor Barkat dismisses the French case as “noise” and “totally irrelevant.” His gripe with the tram program -- launched by a predecessor -- is that it is simply too expensive, too inflexible and too disruptive. He thinks technically advanced modern buses and possibly even a subway would make more sense. The tram line now under construction will cost around a \$1 Billion in public and private money. The original plan called for as many as eight additional lines. The mayor doesn’t want more and has doubts about the wisdom of finishing even the first. “We are asking serious questions about the economic viability of this project,” he says.

Ultra-Orthodox opponents have their own set of complaints. They worry about easy mingling of the sexes at tram stops and on the tram and say the light rail system will disturb a network of so-called “kosher buses,” a privately run service that keeps male and female passengers separate. In a letter to city hall last year, seven rabbis complained that their followers will have to pass through secular areas “where a God-fearing person would not set foot.”

Behind all these different strands of anti-tram sentiment lurks a bigger, more

fundamental issue: What is the status of the city the tram is meant to serve? The PLO wants at least the eastern parts of Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. The mayor, like most Israelis, wants the city to remain forever undivided as the capital of Israel. The ultra-Orthodox debate whether Jerusalem should be anyone's capital until the Messiah comes and creates a Jewish homeland, though very few reject the current state of Israel. Until the war of 1967, Jerusalem was divided between Israeli-ruled West Jerusalem and Arab-controlled East Jerusalem. The tram line straddles the old East-West boundary, known as the "Green Line," and stretches from Mount Herzl deep in the western part of the city near the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial to the Israeli settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev in East Jerusalem. On the way, it passes through the Arab district of Shuafat, the site of a Palestinian refugee camp.

"It is a waste of money, a waste of time, a waste of everything," says Ishak Abu Khadeir, a Palestinian who works in Shuafat near the site of a planned station. He predicts that if trams ever run they will likely be attacked with stones or worse. The tram windows are designed to resist rocks but not gunfire or bomb shrapnel. Its roof is curved in the hope that projectiles tossed on top will slide off.

To try to rally at least Jewish public opinion, tram backers promoted the project as the fulfillment of a dream dating back to a 1902 book by Theodor Herzl, founder of the modern Zionist movement. He envisioned a future Jerusalem made up of "modern neighborhoods with electric lines," which tram boosters view as an endorsement of streetcars. But Herzl's vision quickly got swamped by the din of construction, complaints about traffic jams and concerns about safety. Last July, an angry Palestinian hijacked a bulldozer working near the tramline on Jaffa Road. He killed three and wounded 45 before being shot dead by police. His motives are still unclear.

After seven years of work, which started with the rerouting of sewers and has included the construction of a spectacular harp-shaped bridge, barely half of a first line stretching 8.3 miles has been completed. Trams were supposed to be running by now but are now due to start next year.

Mr. Kroskin, the CityPass chief engineer, acknowledges "many problems" but says there is no turning back: "We have to press forward." Other cities, he says, faced "huge opposition" to trams during construction but, when work is done, "people ask: 'why didn't you do this before?'" People do need to be able to get from place to place.

Alstom, which is providing cars and laying track, and Veolia, which is due to operate the Jerusalem system for 30

years, first won the tram contract in 2002 along with Israeli partners in the CityPass consortium. It took another three years to arrange financing. When construction finally started, the companies faced a host of unexpected obstacles. The discovery of buried archaeological sites slowed work. Concrete poured by a state-of-the-art French track-laying machine cracked. Bureaucratic delays over permits put a further brake on progress.

In 2007, Veolia and Alstom started having legal hassles in France as a result of a complaint from lawyers acting for the PLO. The PLO argued that the tram violates international law and France's own position that East Jerusalem is not sovereign Israeli territory. When a French tribunal began examining the matter, Veolia and Alstom said the court had no jurisdiction. Pressed by a judge over the nature of their involvement in the Jerusalem tram, the companies later submitted six thick volumes of contract documentation. After two years of procedural wrangling, a tribunal in Nanterre, a suburb of Paris, is due to review the case and decide whether it can rule on the affair. In Arab quarters of Jerusalem, meanwhile, supporters of the PLO raise more concrete issues: Will it be safe to get on a tram used by Israeli settlers? Nabil Issa, a shopkeeper whose store looks out on a heap of tram-related rubble, curses the project for disrupting his business and thinks that riding with Israelis will be "too risky." Some Jewish settlers, he says, can be aggressive but he's more worried that the tram will become a target for Palestinian militants. "It is not safe for my family to ride with Israelis," says Mr. Issa."

(iv). TRAMWAY CONSTRUCTION DETAILS.

On 09.02.2009 the Editor made a brief walk along a section of line being laid along Rehov Jafo. There were workers visible, but all sitting or lying asleep around their workplaces. An engineer told me it was their Pause, but then showed me the stone blocks being laid to form the surface between and around the rails. There is a 5cm. layer of some form of glue and then a layer of cement and then the heavy stone tiles - a form of polished granite - which is actually imported from China! These tiles are laid between and next to the rails and are apparently very very firm. They can do about 5m a day like this. These particular ones are 24 x 24 x 6cm., Desc. G684, TKT RG6A-D, 102 make up 1000 Kg. From 'Jerusalem Gardens' Stone Works Ltd.

(v). CALATTRAVA BRIDGE ACCEPTED.

From a Press Release of 01.02.2009.

"The Calatrava bridge is completed and has subsequently been received

at last by CityPass. During the past nine weeks the bridge had undergone sophisticated tests, and the results have satisfied all involved. According to plan, the CityPass engineers will soon start track-laying works on the bridge, as well as installing control and electrical supply systems. According to the Project Manager of Moriya Co. and Gadish Co., Mr. Gober, the completion of the tests was enabled thanks to positive discussions between the architect Calatrava and Transportation Master Plan Project Manager Mr. David Levy and CityPass General Manager Mr. Yair Nave. He added that "authorisation runs are to start soon after the track laying. Jerusalem has received a bridge which, in addition to its beauty, is of high quality in terms of safety and technology; during the past months spectacular development works have been carried out in the square surrounding the bridge including special paving, lighting, planting of olive trees and other plants, as well as attractive stone benches."

Additionally, a new and innovative system of marking paths for the disabled has been integrated in the square; the Master Plan people are also trying to convince the CityPass people to enable pedestrians and especially the disabled to use the pedestrian lanes on the bridge, which are entirely separated from the track areas, but this depends on safety permission and other agreements. Finally, it has been announced that track-laying works are being carried out all over the Red Line, four of the twenty-four stations are under construction, and 42 LRV Citadis trams out of 46 ordered are parked at the depot."

(vi). JERUSALEM LIGHT RAIL PROJECT 'NOW IN FINANCIAL DANGER'

By Etgar Lefkovits, 'Jerusalem Post',

'Jerusalem's repeatedly-delayed light rail system is facing new delays, and may be postponed even further due to financial problems, the Israeli head of the international conglomerate that is carrying out construction of the project said Tuesday. The remarks, which took government officials by surprise, heralded the latest in a series of delays and derailments that the controversial transportation project has faced.

Yair Naveh, the director-general of the City Pass conglomerate, said workers would not meet a September 2010 deadline set last year for the inauguration of the project after previous target dates were pushed back. Naveh said that he now hopes the light rail will begin running "by the end of 2010," but added that further delays were possible due to economic difficulties and delays in the transfer of NIS 100 million from the Finance Ministry.

"If the money is not transferred, there is a clear danger that the project will be lengthened further," Naveh told reporters, during a tour of the rail depot near the city's French Hill intersection. He said that the company was facing losses in the "hundreds of millions of shekels" on the project. "There is no engineering risk to the project," he said, in an indirect reference to the faults in the construction which have been found in the past, "but the project is in financial danger." Naveh also cited antiquities buried beneath a major city thoroughfare as a cause of potential further delays.

The City Pass press event, which included a minute-long ride in the light rail at the depot and a tour of the light rail station at Ammunition Hill, was expected to be a PR event for the project after all the bad press City Pass was getting following the repeated delays. Instead, it quickly erupted into a verbal altercation between Naveh and a state official present at the event.

"The company will receive the remainder of the state's payment when it finishes the work it has committed to doing," said Nadav Meroz, deputy director of the Jerusalem Transportation Masterplan, which works jointly with the Transportation Ministry and the Jerusalem Municipality. "We will not tolerate any further delays." Meroz noted that the state had already transferred \$130 million (NIS 700 million) to the company to date, and challenged Naveh on the issue. "This is the only project in the world which is being carried out against the will of the city and the mayor," Naveh countered.

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat has long been an opponent of the project but his predecessor, Uri Lupolianski, was an avid proponent of the plan during his five-and-a-half years in office. Barkat said Tuesday that he was not surprised by what he termed the company's evasion of responsibility. "When he took office, the mayor demanded that the conglomerate present a detailed timetable, which they have not done to date, in a serious violation of the agreements," Barkat spokesman Evyatar Elad said in a written response. "The mayor is not willing to see the suffering of the city's residents extended, and is determined to act to safeguard the public's interests, while ensuring that the public coffer is not exploited."

Barkat has previously said he would examine the project's feasibility and would consider cheaper, more effective alternatives to the light rail system, including the use of environment-friendly buses.

The NIS 4.2 billion project, which is being jointly funded by the state and the Jerusalem Municipality, is the first of its kind in Israel.

The long-awaited light rail, which was originally slated to be running by now, stalled almost as soon as work began due to a lack of manpower and first-time construction problems, which included incorrect tracking installed on the line on a main thoroughfare near the Mount Herzl military cemetery. It has since been ripped out and redone. The pace of the work has greatly increased since Barkat took office in December, a government official said.

In a recent report, State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss found that the government incorrectly estimated the public sector's investment in the project, which has soared from NIS 500 million in 2000 to NIS 1.3 billion as of the end of 2007.

When it finally gets off the ground, the revolutionary transportation project is meant to ease traffic congestion, and improve access to and reduce smog in the city center. But in the meantime, it has created a traffic nightmare for motorists, and turned many parts of the capital into one big dusty - and inaccessible - construction site. It has also hit hard at merchants downtown, particularly on Jaffa Road, which has been ripped apart by the infrastructure work, and turned into a virtual no-go dust zone for many city residents, who are shopping at city malls instead.

The inaugural line, the nearly 14-kilometer "Red Line," will run from the northern Jerusalem neighborhood of Pisgat Ze'ev to Mount Herzl via the city center, with 23 stops along the way.

Last year, the Jerusalem Municipality finally acknowledged severe disruptions and blamed City Pass. The damning admissions, outlined in a city letter to the Finance Ministry, cited a lack of an updated stage-by-stage working plan, limited working hours, and insufficient manpower and construction equipment. For its part, the City Pass conglomerate placed the blame right back on the municipality, saying that the city had delayed issuing building permits for many months."

(vii). EDITORIAL COMMENT.

One quite tragic outcome of the disastrous working practices and poor project planning of the Jerusalem tramway is that any further such schemes in the country are almost bound to get the thumbs down. Citizens and traders will point to the disastrous and long-drawn-out disruption (this in a country that can build motorways and viaducts within a few months!) and protest with justice against the prospect of the same being repeated in other streets or other towns. A visit at the end of January showed bits of track near Mahaneh Yehudah but no sign of any tracks near the Central Bus Station or approaching the Bridge or for the first few hundred metres along Herzl Boulevard. How-

הרכבת

ever, further along, towards Mount Herzl, the landscaping teams had planted trees alongside the disjointed sections of the tracks in the central reservation - and this before the construction teams had planted poles for the overhead catenary! Along Rehov Jaffa there was a bit of new concrete laid but again very few workmen actually finishing off sections so that they could be at least temporarily restored for road traffic.

Nir Barak, the new Mayor of Jerusalem, is an opponent of the tramway scheme; it may be too late to stop this one now, but by the time it eventually opens all the glamour will have gone; the rolling stock will have been standing for over a year, exposed to the elements outside the depot. And the chances of building a decent network will have gone for a generation. The big questions is Why? Why this incompetence in a country which can build so swiftly and dramatically and well? What went wrong with the project management, so that years after the line should have been up and running there are still disputes with the Municipality about permits? The trams have been delivered before the poles and catenary.... Tractors and bulldozers stand idle for days or longer at a time rather than being used for their proper purpose. The problems with tracklaying were unfortunate but do not explain all the other delays. Is it sabotage?

B. TEL AVIV.

The MTS consortium, the Red Line concessionaire, recently presented to the Finance Ministry's Accountant General commitment letters from nine banks for an overall financing totalling €930M. Among the participating banks are: China Development Bank, BES of Portugal, Bayern and KfW of Germany, and Standard Bank of UK.

For €500M, which will enjoy State guarantees, the banks will provide a loan with labour plus interest of 2% to 2.5%. whereas for the remaining €430M the interest rate will be 3 to 3.5%. The Accountant-General is expected now to check these submissions. An additional €300M will be provided by Bank Leumi le-Israel (Israel National Bank), selected as the local bank to participate in this financing.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). *BOOK ON JAFFA - JERUSALEM RAILWAY.*

Tony Travis, a long-time Harakevet reader and contributor, has just had a magnificent book published.

On Chariots with Horses of Fire and Iron: The Excursionists and the Narrow Gauge Railroad from Jaffa to Jerusalem. By Anthony S. Travis
Here is the Publisher's Blurb:- "Published in January. This book deals with the arrival of modernity in the Holy Land in the form of the 86 km Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway. Befitting the completion of such a substantial undertaking, the inauguration, in September 1892, was a grand affair, attended by representatives of the Ottoman Empire, consuls, religious leaders, and foreign delegations. The tracks approached Jerusalem from the southwest through the Judean Mountains, taking advantage of the deep, winding river bed of the Soreq Valley. This afforded the least steep route, though even then the grades were a challenge for the locomotives. Since the tracks were of narrow metre-gauge they could easily follow the natural contours of the land on the ascent to Jerusalem, the highest point, at about 700 metres above sea level.

The railroad was the largest civil engineering project ever undertaken in the modern Holy Land. It was built to exploit the tremendous growth of pilgrim traffic and tourism during the second half of the nineteenth century. Though several proposals had been put forward since the 1850s, it was only in the 1880s that two young Jewish entrepreneurs, Joseph Navon of Jerusalem and Joseph Amzalak of Jaffa, backed by the Protestant banker Johannes Frutiger, were enabled to take the first steps leading to the acquisition of a license from the Ottoman government for laying down the iron rails. Unable to raise sufficient capital in Europe, Navon sold the license to a group of Catholic businessmen in Paris, who established the Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman de Jaffa à Jérusalem et Prolongements. When the first locomotive was tested on a short length of track at Jaffa half the population turned up to witness the event, such was the novelty of the sight and sounds of the horse of fire and iron. Despite difficulties due to the low cost of construction and poor traffic during the early years, the railroad opened up Jerusalem to modern tourism, brought greater numbers of pilgrims, and contributed to the growth of the city. It also delivered fresh water in times of drought.

This is the most thoroughly researched publication ever to appear on the first railroad in the Holy Land. Moreover, it relies extensively on the one resource that best captures the spirit of the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway: magnificent photographs, mainly taken between 1891 and 1914. These early photographs, gathered from archives in Israel, the United States, England and Germany, are supplemented with those taken by British forces from December 1917 on, from Israel, Australia and England, and a number of color images dating from the mid-1980s.

Details of locomotives and rolling stock, maps, tables of statistics, track plans, extensive notes, a bibliography, and index are included. The intended audiences, apart from general readers and railway enthusiasts, are historical geographers, historians of the Holy Land in modern times, and transport and tourism historians."

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And here is the Editor's Review:-

"Tony Travis has produced - with the help of his publishers - a magnificent book. In it he has written and illustrated almost all there is to know of the early years of the railway from Jaffa / Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Commencing with a brief overview of pilgrimage and 'tourism' to the Holy Land from the 19th. Century, and of Jaffa from Biblical times onwards as a 'Gateway' port, he puts the railway, "the first large civil engineering project of modern times undertaken in the Holy Land" into its context of the gradual Europeanisation of Palestine in this period as rival hotels, banks, churches, hospitals, postal services etc. were established by various European powers. Few readers would know of the Ottoman 'firmans' of 1852 and 1853 regarding control of Holy Places that led indirectly to the Crimean War, the 1856 Treaty of Paris and the 1878 Treaty of Berlin..... the history of this region is much more complex than most journalists would have us believe. An entire chapter introduces us to the activities of Thomas Cook, Rollo Floyd, Gaze and other operators of services for tourists. The economics of the early operations, the need to improve the infrastructure, the manner in which the Ottoman government frustrated various attempts at expansion, all are dealt with in a light and readable but informative manner. The impor-

ance of the line for the growth of tourism, pilgrimages, Jerusalem's population (and its water supply) are described.

The setbacks included periods of closure due to outbreaks of cholera and scarlet fever. But above all it is the pictures which astound. This reviewer has spent some thirty years researching the line (and some of his writings are cited as sources) and thought he knew most of the small, faded, sepia and grey pictures that exist - but Travis has found new photos, new documents, new maps, and all have been magnificently presented - enlarged, the tones clarified, the clarity improved. This must reflect a significant amount of digital reworking, but the results are more than worth it. The little Baldwin 2-6-0's and their passengers come to life on the page.

The chapter on the First World War describes the Turkish conversion of the line and its integration into their military supply network, then the British conversion and its integration into THEIR military supply network, the extensive narrow-gauge branches built for the military supplies, and - a nice touch - modern colour photos of some of the locomotive types preserved at the current time supplement some amazing contemporary shots of the trains toiling around Jerusalem. The use of mixed-gauge track and temporary timber trestles to replace or circumvent sabotaged bridges is well illustrated.

Extensive and informative notes are provided at the end of the book, likewise a list of Sources and an Index..

Reservations? Nitpickings? Only a very few. Essentially it is a wonderful book about the Ottoman period and until 1920 - but the main Mandate period is covered very sketchily indeed (no mention of the construction of Tel Aviv station!) or the sabotage that led to closure for several years during the Arab Uprising of the 1930's, or the sabotage of the 1945-48 period. The modern post-1948 period is likewise sketched in only three pages of text. A set of photos by the author taken in the 1980's shows how the line and its trains looked at the time. Mention is made of the truncation at the Jerusalem end - a classic case of bad city planning combined with architectural megalomania, the replacement Malha station being at the edge of the urban area, largely isolated and four times too big for the services on offer. A picture of this might have rounded off the story and given a contrast to the early, quaint French-provincial stations. The line built around 1916 from Jerusalem station to serve German airfields along the Derech Hebron is not mentioned. (A part survived until the 1980's serving goods sheds and the Government Printer.)

On p.156, the raised letter 'f' in the coaching number is unlikely to mean

'France' and more likely 'frein' - brake.

But this is a book that anyone interested in the history of Israel - whether of the State or of the 'Holy Land', whatever your perspective - should have. It is not just for railway enthusiasts, for the photographs reveal the nature of the country and the cities in the Ottoman period, the landscapes and the peoples, and the text describes well the religious and political and financial wheeler-dealing that characterised those times. This is THE definitive book on this subject. I cannot recommend it highly enough."

The Editor met with Tony in Jerusalem in February - and learned that only 500 copies of the book have been produced; it is classed as 'semi-academic' rather than 'commercial', which assisted with gaining permission to use some of the photographs whose rights are in the hands of universities and foundations. And the aim was very deliberately to focus on the narrow-gauge period of the line.

(b). *TIMBER FOR THE BAGDADBAHN.*

From Keith Chester of Vienna, an expert on the railways of Bosnia-Herzegovina:

From the unpublished manuscript Chronicle of the 'Steinbeis' firm, a firm specialising in timber and timber products, which operated its own extensive narrow-gauge railway system in Bosnia:

"The Dobrljnj Sawmills delivered all the sleepers and timbers for the construction of the Süd-Bahn (Southern railway) - the Bagdad Bahn, as well as for the bridge construction. The Brannenburger timber specialists therefore travelled as far as the Euphrates and the Tigris. The contract for the delivery of sleepers was valid, according to the Annual Report of the company, from 1902 and for five years. In addition the supply of telegraph poles was met from Dobrljnj."

(c). *NOTES ON THE ROD 2-8-0's.*

The Railway Operating Division of the British Army in the First World War used these Great Central Railway '8K' Class 2-8-0's, built from April 1911, which after 1923 became LNER Class 04, and in World War 2 many were once again requisitioned for military use and found their way to the Middle East. This has all been well-documented elsewhere (see especially Rick Turret's book on War Department Locomotives.) A total of 521 had been built by 1919, many were hardly used, some were sold to British railways of the period, and the Great Western Railway initially purchased 20 and hired a further 84, later returned the hire locos but purchased a further 80 very cheaply, later decided to scrap some, rebuild others, reuse the ten-

ders.... the story is complex and is subject of an authoritative article in 'Backtrack' No. 214, February 2009 by Andrew Wilson, pp. 70-77. However, their use in the Middle East is cause enough to quote a few passages from this article.

"There were three ways of stopping them: by using the steam brake, putting the valve gear into reverse and opening the regulator, and by winding on the tender handbrake.... The relative slackness of the coupling between the engine and tender caused the tender to hunt and surge into the engine, making the conditions on the footplate very uncomfortable. This also ensured that coal would fall off the tender onto the permanent way and fall as the tender was self-trimming, the fallplate was often ankle-deep in coal. Yet with barely 100psi on the pressure gauge they would seemingly plod on forever with substantial loads on the drawbar, a tribute to Robinson's use of 10in piston valves and direct steam passages." In Bristol "the class was regarded as inferior to the Churchward 28XX 2-8-0's because the fireholder doors were higher than on the standard Swindon boilers which made firing and disposal more difficult, features guaranteed to lower the esteem of the class. Washing out the boilers was also more of a problem as it was difficult to clean the corner water spaces in the firebox. As a result scale would build up which in turn affected the steaming. The tubes also seemed more prone to blockages and these nest-boxes again reduced the efficiency of the boilers to raise steam." (Quoted from D.J. Fleming, 'St. Philips Marsh', Bradford Barton.)

A fireman at Neath shed, Harold Clements, is quoted: "When fresh out of the shops.. they were good engines but they were always regarded with a hint of suspicion because they were not built at Swindon. They steamed well enough on the coal they were given and although they did not ride as well as the Churchward 2-8-0's they were acceptable on the unfitted work they were assigned. The boiler, however, would steam on a candle and when steam-tight it was easy enough for the fireman. Not built for speed, they had a prodigious appetite for seemingly plodding on with heavy loads, often at little more than walking pace, indefinitely! The problems came when individual locomotives had run for a significant period since being shopped as the driving axleboxes became worn and the big end and coupling rods bearings started to knock, impairing the ride. This, added to the lively riding of the tender, made life particularly uncomfortable for the crew."

Of course many of the locos used in ME military service were fitted with air brakes and oil-firing, so not all the above comments would apply. On the LNER, also, they were considered to be good engines - the Great Western men maybe

just had difficulty with the unfamiliar. All the GWR/Western Region locos were withdrawn by 1958 whereas the 04 Class on the Eastern Region was still intact at this time!

(d). *WATER TRAINS?*

Chatting to a chap at Innotrans - alas, I never got his name - he said that some seven or eight years ago some former employees of Wisconsin Central had a firm, G2 Rail Technologies, that had proposed the transport of water by train along the Hedjaz Jordan Railway line from where the aquifers could be tapped to where the population was. Nothing came of the idea. Does anyone know any more of this? There is a website for G2 Railway Services, based in Canada and specialising in container transport in Canada and North America.

(e). *YAD VASHEM.*

In the big exhibition is also the side and one side of the frames and wheels of an old covered van - No. '138' or '947/705 and 'Type 9481A 4', one axlebox marked '1918 Elberfeld', the other '1924 W. Luders Wernigerode.' A little further was also a 60cm. gauge tippler from Gross Rosen KZ. Also a narrow-gauge buffer stop and some rails on sleepers, labelled as being genuine original but they can hardly be so.

(f). *TEREZINA MEMORIAL.*

In Jaffa, on Rehov Raziell near the roundabout before the Clock Tower, a short section of tram-type rail is set into the newly-reconstructed pavement - clearly intended as a symbolic reminder of the former 60cm. gauge 'Terezina' line that ran from Jaffa station to the harbour.

(g). *FILM OF EGYPT; PALESTINE; TRANSJORDAN IN 1930.*

Henry Posner III has sent a link to an amateur film from 1930, in which an American couple travel through Egypt, up the Nile, visit various ancient Temple remains and the Assuan Dam (built 1898, rebuilt 1912 and being further raised and extended in 1930 - two 60cm. gauge lines are just briefly visible running along the top). The film lasts 62 minutes, and for most readers of 'Harakevet' the most interesting sections come at 30:20, where an ESR Atlantic runs into Assiut station hauling amongst other things a Pullman coach, and there is some hectic activity on the platform; from ca. 40.00-52:00 scenes in Jerusalem; and more especially 58:40 for two minutes where the weekly train from Amman to Ma'an is filmed shortly before departure and at some desolate intermediate halts. No shots of the locomotive (!) but of HR coach 428, van 1703, bogie open 1601 fully laden with an horse and furniture.... the film shows that the train

Continued on page 12

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. IRAQ.

Mostyn Lewis writes:

"On 23/12/2008 Sky News here had an item on a rail commuter service from Baghdad Central, which it incidentally showed being restored "to past glory". Being an US report it was inevitably a bit sketchy and gave no indication of where it went to or how far. There was a diesel loco and what seemed to be three (?) carriages, which were understandably a bit scruffy, and the entrance footboards were reached with the aid of a handy rock. The bit the female reporter found most hairy was that the urban "grade crossings" were all unprotected and the traffic and pedestrians "played chicken" with what is evidently not a particularly fast (probably quite rightly given the track) or frequent service. I would have thought that would have plenty of parallels in other parts of the world! Patronage is apparently wary and there are plenty of competing minibuses. The crossings looked to have had their crossing protection furniture ripped out although some of that could be bomb craters....."

B. LIBYA.

From 'Continental Railway Journal' No. 156, Winter 2008/9, p. 454.

"The last section of the former 950mm gauge railways in Libya closed in 1965... Now, more than 40 years later, the country will soon have railways again. In 2001 the Railway Executive Board stated that work was in progress on a line from Ras Ejder on the Tunisian border, but this has not been completed. In the early part of 2008, China Railway Construction Corporation was awarded contracts worth 3.2 Billion Dinars to construct a 352km. line from Al Khums (presumably the end of the line from Ras Ejder) to Surt by 2013, as well as an 800km. line from iron ore deposits at Wadi Shati, near Sabha, to the port of Misratah by 2012. Then on 30th. August, Russian Railways began the construction of a 554km.-double-track railway parallel to the Mediterranean coast between Surt and Banghazi. The Office for the Implementation of Railway Projects had signed the contract with RZD in Tripoli on 17th. April. Construction of this line is expected to take four years at a cost of \$2.2Billion, with the work being undertaken by Russian specialists working with local companies. It will be standard gauge, as presumably will all the other new lines. It is planned to have four major and 24 minor stations, of which two will have both passenger and freight facilities and four will be for freight only. There will be 30 rail and 23 road bridges and diesel traction will be used initially with electrification to follow in a second phase of works. Completion of these various lines will go a long way towards achieving Libyan ambitions of a railway along the coast from the Tunisian to the Egyptian border."

C. TURKEY.

FORMER DB COACHES PURCHASED.

The Deutsche Bahn has just sold a further 160 redundant suburban/local train coaches - 100 to Hungary and 60 to Turkey. These are the so-called 'Halberstadt' type, from the carriage works in this town in the former DDR. A note in 'Eisenbahn-Revue' 1/2009 p. 34 shows also Wiener Lokalbahn electric loco ES 64 U2-022 hauling nineteen of these vehicles through Austria from Passau to Hegyeshalom.

Cotined from page 11

comprised at least seven vans and one open wagon, and three passenger coaches at the rear. Since there are so few images available of the HR line in this period - not many enthusiasts would wait a week to get a shot of a train! - they are especially valuable, despite their amateur focus more on wandering animals and smiling tour participants.

The link is: http://www.archive.org/details/upenn-f16-0747_1930_circumnavigation_2 and the film comes from the University of Pennsylvania archives, to whom all rights belong.

D. QATAR.

(See 83:07:E:(v).) An item in the NS magazine 'De Koppeling' notes that the Deutsche Bahn will be assisting in the development of a rail network in Qatar. The oil-rich state is planning a network of lines for internal traffic and cross-border links for passenger and freight, including a high-speed line to Bahrein. The DB will be sending advisers but will not be investing in the project.

E. IRAN.

LINK TO ARMENIA.

From 'Lok Magazin' Dec. 2008 p. 28: "The railways of Armenia, which since 1st. June 2008 have been operated by

the Russian Railways (RZD) as the South Caucasian Railways (SCR), wish to build a line into their neighbour Iran. The Armenian Railways are not linked to the outside world apart from a line through Georgia (and then further to Russia). The border crossings into Azerbaijan and Turkey have been closed for several years. Discussions about a line linking the countries has been discussed by both sides since 2006. With Russian capital plentifully available, the line could now become reality. It would be some 400km. long and begin north-east of Erivan in Gagarin. A further 80km. would need to be built in Iran, and the new line would then join the existing Tabriz - Djulfa line. However, no concrete information exists as to a time for the construction to begin."

'NEW CHANCES'- OLD DEUTSCHE REICHSBAHN COACHES IN IRAN, 1976.

In 'Eisenbahn Kurier' 10/82 p. 17 is an article by Harald Schön on the 'second life' of many former DB coaches.

"The older-type coaches of the Deutsche Bundesbahn are showing signs of age, and one reads of veritable orgies of withdrawals. This is understandable - the DB can hardly keep operating fleets of antiquated vehicles just for reasons of nostalgia. There is a slight comfort for us railway enthusiasts, however, when we hear that a large proportion of these redundant coaches have been sold to foreign countries, even if these be distant. And who knows, maybe one day during a foreign journey we may yet stumble across a pair of old acquaintances.

This happened to me a few years ago. A long journey brought me to Teheran, and during the almost-duty visit to the station, I couldn't believe my eyes - almost all trains were formed exclusively of pre-war German coaches. All these coaches still bore the DB emblem and even the Home Depot (Heimatabbahnhof) - I recognised all the inscriptions. My first thought was - Special trains to Teheran! Then I realised - What rubbish! There are no through rail links to the Near East, for there is still no railway bridge over the Bosphorus in Istanbul. In any case, there would be no reason for such special trains, and in any case it was clear that these trains had been assembled to work to destinations within Iran.

The answer was simply - the Iranian State Railways had purchased the coaches from the DB. Nothing special. Intriguing was merely that they had not been repainted. But then - why bother? The old paint was still in good condition, and a new livery costs money!

The surprise was even greater when, a few days later, I boarded the 'Vangölü-Express' to Istanbul. An American diesel loco ('World Standard Diesel'), a

4wh. 'Donnerbucher' Post/Luggage van (built Steinfurt, Königsberg 1938), two Turkish 1st.-Class bogie coaches and then a beige-blue and a blue 2nd.-Class Bundesbahn Couchette! The Bundesbahn coaches were still supplied with German inscriptions both inside and out. Only on the beige/blue one had one side of the coach been 'reclassified', for both coaches now ran (or run still) as 'First-Class Special'.

The high point of the journey was the crossing of the 'Vangölü' (Lake Van) to the Eastern Turkey. After a journey of three hours with the railway ferry over the Lake, 1720m high and surrounded by high peaks, it was a later version of a G8.2 2-8-0 that pulled our train from the ship. A G8.2 and a blue/beige Bundesbahn coach, who had ever dreamed that such a sight would ever be possible again!

Incidentally, this 3050km long journey six years ago cost me no more than DM 38 (with a 50% student discount) in the 'normal' 1st. Class, equivalent to our 2nd. Class."

F. DUBAI.

Kenneth McQueen wrote on 11.02.2009: *"We had a milestone day yesterday, (10th. Feb.) riding the first train along the complete alignment, end to end, at 15kph. It's a fantastic railway, more akin to a roller coaster, but gives wonderful views of the City, so it will be a good tourist attraction if nothing else. It was even rumoured the Queen would come for a ride next month, but unfortunately Prince Philip is none too well and it has been cancelled."*

He attached an (undated) newspaper article:

"UK AGENCY TO HELP ENSURE METRO PASSENGER SAFETY.

The Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) in the United Kingdom will provide support to the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) to ensure safety of public, passengers and staff of the Dubai Metro system - set to start on September 9. 'The ORR will attend to certification and regulations of the railways network to ensure all safety aspects of the Dubai Metro operation', said Mattar Al Tayer, Chairman and Executive Director of the RTA, after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the ORR officials in Dubai yesterday.

Al Tayer said the ORR would provide support for two years including training of the RTA staff to enable them to monitor the metro operation. 'The MoU comes in line with our plans to cover all aspects of safety for our metro operation, which is one of the most sophisticated driverless systems in the world', said Al Tayer. Safety is ensured at all levels of contractors, consultants and of Safety Regulations and Planning Department of the RTA. 'The ORR will be top of all these as it will support us to get accreditation by international certification bodies for the design, construction and operation of the metro system in the city', said Al Tayer.

The ORR will also support the RTA in developing and implementing health and safety regulations of the railways in Dubai including powers for inspection and enforcement. The RTA is building the 74.6km. long metro network comprising the Red and Green Lines at a cost of Dh 15.5 billion. The 52.1km. Red Line will become operational on September 9 this year while the Green Line will be launched in March next year.

Allan Spence, Deputy Chief Inspector of Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate in the UK, said ORR would try to align the various processes of the Dubai Metro project with international standards and specifications. 'We will use our over 150 years of expertise of railway safety to ensure safe operation of the Dubai Metro', he said. Spence said that ORR would also train the RTA staff to monitor the operators to ensure all safety procedures are followed. Serco Middle East, a UK-based company, has already been given the contract to operate and maintain Dubai Metro for the first ten years."

[Intriguingly, at the same time as this item was received, the news reported that an Israeli tennis-player was having big troubles being admitted to this paradise. One wonders to what extent Politics affects also the firms designing, supplying and building the system.]

84:09.

A RAILWAY HOLIDAY IN SYRIA.

In 'Fern Express' 4/2008 pp.58f is an article by Matthias Hille - "Eisenbahnerlebnis Syrien" - RAILWAY EXPERIENCE SYRIA." (Translation by the Editor.)

"Although just one week of remaining holiday entitlement is actually much too short for a foreign trip, a friend and I were suddenly attacked in February 2008 with the yearning for faraway places. Our destination had to be a country with interesting and as old as possible railway rolling stock.

A search for cheap flights on the Internet was successful and soon we had decided: We shall go to Syria. This time, though, not to the famous Hedjaz Railway.

Regular operations at the Hedjaz Railway station in Damascus-Kanawat has been suspended due to building works since the end of 2006 and the Sundays-Only steam-hauled excursion trains into the mountains start well outside the city area. So we wanted to spend the coming few days instead investigating the standard-gauge network of the Syrian State Railways (CFS). Due to the limited time available we decided to limit ourselves to two lines in the country's north-west, and due to the limited number of trains in the CFS timetable we decided also on a hire car to get around.

Although it was only 6am. the handover of the hire car at Damascus Airport on the Monday morning was relatively straightforward. Soon we had left the big city behind us and slowly the sun forced its way through the rising mist. On the way north we wanted to see the Damascus - Aleppo line. This 367-km. long line links the two largest cities of Syria, via Homs and Hama. Although there had been a standard-gauge line to Aleppo from 1906, it was only in 1985 that the line was completed.

Traditionally, travellers in Syria have preferred to use the buses and so until recently there was only one daily through express train. To provide more attractive and especially faster travel options, from 2007 the CFS ordered ten five-car Diesel Multiple Units from South Korea. So in 2008 there were already four daily train pairs between Damascus and Aleppo. Two of these worked as Expresses with the new units, whereas the other two were loco-hauled.

In the evening we reached Aleppo. The road traffic in this city of over a million people is chaotic. One-way roads with up to five lanes made looking for the hotel not exactly an easy proposition. For the next few days we used the very central Al-Boustan Hotel as our base. From Aleppo Syria's oldest standard-gauge line begins; the sections from Meydan Ekbez to Aleppo and from Muslimiya to Karkamis were once parts of the famous Baghdadbahn and were finished in 1912.

The cut-off line from Fevzipasa to Barak - entirely on Turkish territory - was built many years later. Whereas the eastern line from Muslimiya to the Turkish border is not used any more, the single-track line from Aleppo to the border station at Meydan Ekbez is still the only railway connection between Syria and Europe.

One can still find here rails dating from the beginning of this line's history. In consequence the permitted speeds are severely limited. In addition the line allows only limited axle-loading and has an alignment with several se-

vere gradients. In consequence the now-elderly LDE 1800 Class engines remain the standard machine on this line, where they are usually employed double-heading.

For us the next day was an opportunity to observe the traffic on the line between the Turkish border and Aleppo. The regional road is useful for this - in the northern section of the line it often runs within sight of the line. Passenger traffic is however very limited on the entire line - there is only a single train pair; in addition there are the weekly through coaches from or to Istanbul. Therefore our main hopes lay with the freight traffic. After we had managed several shots of the passenger train to Aleppo we drove to the border station at Meydan Ekbez, to assess the situation there. Seven locomotives stood at the station awaiting their next services. In order to photograph, we went of course first to get permission. The Station Master and a further railwayman agreed and so we set off to our task with a clear mind. On an earlier trip, at that time in the through coach from Istanbul, there had also been no problems with photography at this station.

However, after only a few minutes there happened what supposedly should not happen - a man in a jogging suit came towards us, gesticulating wildly. We had to go to his little office next to the tracks. There he showed us his ID - aha, a 'Railway Policeman'! Although the term 'Stasi' would have fitted him better. - What else could we do but make the best of an unpleasant game. To make matters worse the man took our passports. Then we could walk at will in the station area, but of course with the strongest prohibition on photography. Following Murphy's Law, a short time later the first double-headed goods train set off for Aleppo, and also the sun broke through the mist.

About an hour later a Turkish DE24 rolled into the station with another goods train. Whilst the next two LDE 1800's took over the train, the next freight train set off southwards in perfect light for photography! It could hardly have been worse! Our 'Policeman' had not been inactive in the meantime and had telephoned around. We were to travel with him to Aleppo, and there we would get a proper photographic permit from the CFS headquarters. Rather unsure what this really meant, the three of us set off to Aleppo. With some frustrated pushing on the accelerator pedal I made our unwanted passenger sweat. Revenge is sweet!

In fact we did reach the car park in front of the CFS headquarters after two hours. After some waiting an official brought us into the building and suddenly we were standing in the waiting room of the General Director. A translator conversed with us in perfect German, whilst our little Shitter (!) stood humiliated outside the door. At last we were invited in. Next to the Director sat another man, and it was immediately obvious to which 'Department' he belonged! As we drank tea we explained as extensively as we could our purpose; to demonstrate how above suspicion we really were, we even showed our German engine-driver licenses, which were immediately photocopied. After an hour we were promised a written photographic permit, which a CFS employee would bring round to our hotel that evening. Then we were given our passports back and we were permitted to leave these dignified premises.

As was naturally to be expected, no-one came with any papers to the hotel. Instead the Porter next morning asked in great detail concerning our plans for the day. We told him some hocus-pocus and headed once more for the Bagdadbahn. The station at Meydan Ekbes we observed of course only from a safe distance. To our good fortune the freight traffic today was at the same level of intensity as the previous day and so we managed a good range of trackside photos.

We spent the last two days in Syria on the equally interesting line from Aleppo to Latakia. This line is also single-track and was taken into service in 1975. All stations are equipped with Russian colour light signals. The last 60 km. before Latakia are especially attractive, for here the line has to conquer the range of coastal mountains (Jebel Sahiliye), of some 1,500m. As well as the South Korean diesel multiple units the locomotives used include the Class LDE 2800; these engines of type TE 114 can also be considered to be a variant for tropical climates of the well-known TE 109 (the DB classes 232-234 Co-Co's.)

Another class found on this line is the LDE 3200 of French origin. Although the line is important for goods traffic to the harbour at Latakia, in February 2008 goods traffic was very modest. The passenger timetable had also been thinned out, in that the Express pair had been simply dropped, so that as well as the dmu sets there were only the two passenger train pairs.

There were other lines in Syria to visit, but alas our holiday had gone by - as usual - far too quickly. In spite of all the problems we had enjoyed a very successful tour. If possible, we will continue our exploration of the Syrian standard-gauge lines next year."

84:10 A MYSTERIOUS BOILER AT HAR-TUV

(Amith Ben-Shalom)

The old Jewish settlement at Har-Tuv (Artuf) had several sites around the main community. Northwest of Har-Tuv was an industrial zone, for producing oil, spices, hyssop, linen etc.

One of the remains there, is an old boiler, used as an industrial-facility, moulded in concrete & stones. The place is well described in Ran Aaronson's book, "Lehu ve-nelha", in the chapter about Har-Tuv.

Is this an old JJ locomotive boiler? Has anyone more information?

Photographer: Meir Shapira



THE OAKS-LINE RUSTON IS BACK IN SERVICE !!

(Amith Ben-Shalom)

The narrow-gauge locomotive at Ein-Shemer, which was in overhaul repair, had returned to service in 09/2008.

During the repair, it was converted from 3 speed manual gear to an infinity-speed hydrostatic transmission, originally used in an agriculture harvester.

Acording to Ran Hedvati of Ein-Shemer, this allows the operator an easy & simple driving, with no mechanical failures, that lead to the conversion.

The speed controlling is done with a single lever, that also controls the direction of travel and allows a very good braking (the regular hand-brake is used for emergency and for parking).

Those levers, together with the small throttle-lever, controls the locomotive.

A new electric horn was installed too and the locomotive was painted, with green & black color, as it was painted before.

The blue Deutz locomotive is now a reserve locomotive and being used once a month, to preserve its servability. Meanwhile it is covered with a grey tarpaulin cover.



Pictures: all by Amith Ben-Shalom, 10/2008:

PLANS FOR INDUSTRIAL RAILWAYS REVIVAL

(Amith Ben-Shalom)

Hot & good news from Ran Hedvati of Ein-Shemer. Plans were made to establish 2 restoration sites of 600 mm industrial railways.

The first is supposed to be at the citrus growing site in Rehovot, known as "Pardess Minkov" (=Minkov orchard).

A 1 km. (approx.) circular line would host a full-scale replica of the first hebrew-built locomotive, the famous "Loco from Naan" (see 76:10), together with 4-6 passenger-coaches. The original Hamenia locomotive will stay as is at Naan.

The replica will be powered by a regular petrol Ford 4 cylinder engine, with a hydrostatic transmission, as all "Ran's products" (The locomotive at Gesher & the 2 locomotives at Ein-Shemer).

In Rehovot there were few citrus lines, but they were hand/animal powered, even not in the exact site, but in the area.

The second plan is supposed to be at Sdom, where the Palestine Potash Company were (later became Dead-Sea Works). The whole complex will include a visitor-center, a 1 km. narrow-gauge line, a jetty and a crane.

The motive-power is planned to be a restored Brookville locomotive, whose ruins survived at the factory yard.

Three Brookville 5 tons BCL locomotives were supplied to the Palestine Potash Company between 1944 to 1946, and only one of them survived.

Ran is planning to rebuild it with a Caterpillar 40 hp diesel engine.



Photo: The remains of the Brookville locomotive (Gabi Weiss, Dead sea works ltd, h.d public relation, 2007)

Previous plan to import Ruston locomotive, became irrelevant.

Four to six passenger-coaches, rails, sleepers, points etc. will be purchased from abroad, together with the equipment for Rehovot.

SYRIA. MOTIVE POWER OF CHEMINS DE FER SYRIENS.

By Johannes Glöckner, in 'Fern Express', 4/2008, p. 62f.

A. Steam Locomotives.

All steam locomotives of CFS were replaced from 1967 by Diesel railcars and from 1972 by Diesel locomotives. Almost all the steam locomotives were scrapped in the steelworks in Hama during the 1980's. Only three engines have survived:-

030-159. Esslingen 2490/1891, ex CdF Ottoman d'Anatolie No. 19, delivered for service in Tripolis, now plinthed at the station at Latakia.

040-452. Former Prussian G8, Stettin 4805? - ex DHP 802? Stored at repair works at Aleppo.

040-460. Former Prussian G8. Set up as memorial in front of the Railway Headquarters, Aleppo.

B. Diesel Locomotives. (Marked with an Asterisk * - means not personally sighted by Glöckner but included to make up the class statistic. In many such cases the exact works number or date is not known for certain and therefore omitted, in others it can be derived from available information.)

Class LDE 1200. Co-Co DE, Russian type TEM2 (for Syria: TEM2S.)

001	Brijansk 1972	..... Aleppo Works, scrap condition.
002	Brijansk 1972*	
003	Brijansk 1972.	..... Aleppo.
004	Brijansk 1972*	.....
005	Brijansk 1972*	
006	Brijansk 1972	..... Aleppo Works.
007	Brijansk 1972 *	
008	Brijansk 1972,	..... Deir-Ez-Zor.
009	Brijansk 1972,	..... Aleppo Works.
010	Brijansk*	
011	Brijansk 1974.	..... Deir-Ez-Zor.
012	Brijansk 1974.	..... Aleppo Works.

Class LDE 650. Bo-Bo DE. (CEM 1967/68, France.) Shunters.

101	CEM 1099.	..... Homs, stored.
102	CEM 1100.	..... Damascus.
103	CEM 1101.	..... Aleppo.
104	CEM 1102.	..... Damascus (seen 1999).
105	CEM 1103*	
106	CEM 1104.	..... Damascus (seen 1993).
107	CEM 1105.	..... Damascus.
108	CEM 1106.	..... Raqqa, stored.
109	CEM 1107*	
110	CEM 1108*	

Six similar locomotives of CEM, 1115-1120 of 1969 (Nos. 1 - 6) were used by the construction firm 'Grant Lion Railbouw' during the construction of the Aqaba Railway in Jordan. Four of these 1050mm-gauge locos were standing on standard-gauge wagons at Aleppo Works in February 2007. It looked as though they were being used to provide spare parts for the LDE 650 Class. One has apparently been lost through an accident.

Class LDE 1800. Co-Co (General Electric, Type U17C). In service through the whole country.

301	GE 40664/ 1-76.		310	GE 40673/ 2-76	
302	GE 40665/ 1-76*		311	GE 40674/ 2-76*	
303	GE 40666/ 1-76*		312	GE 40675/ 2-76	
304	GE 40667/ 1-76*		313	GE 40676/ 2-76.	Scrap condition at Aleppo Works.
305	GE 40668/ 1-76.		314	GE 40677/ 2-76*	
306	GE 40669/ 1-76*		315	GE 40678/ 2-76.*	
307	GE 40670/ 1-76*				
308	GE 40671/ 1-76.				
309	GE 40672/ 1-76		351	GE 40679 / 2-76	

352	GE 40680 / 2-76.	Aleppo Works.
353	GE 40681	
354	GE 40682	
355	GE 40683/ 3-76.	
356	GE 40684/ 3-76.	
357	GE 40685/ 3-76	
358	GE 40686/ 3-76*	
359	GE 40687/ 3-76*	
360	GE 40688/ 3-76.	Aleppo Works.
361	GE 40689/3-76.	
362	GE 40690/3-76.	
363	GE 40691.	
364	GE 40692*	
365	GE 40693/4-76.	

Class LDE 1500, Co-Co DE, (CKD Type CME3), Shunting loco in large cities.

501	CKD 13087/83.	.....Aleppo Works.
502	CKD 13088/83*	.....
503	CKD 13089/83	.....Aleppo Works.
504	CKD 13090/83	
505	CKD 13091/83	.....Aleppo Works.
506	CKD 13092/83*	
507	CKD 13093/83	..... Aleppo.
508	CKD 13094/83	...Withdrawn, Aleppo Works.
509	CKD 13095/83	..... Aleppo.
510	CKD 13096/83	.....Homs.
511	CKD 13097/83	.....Latakia.
512	CKD 13098/83	.....Aleppo Works.
513	CKD 13099/83	Aleppo (seen 2001).
514	CKD 13100/83	.....Aleppo Works.
515	CKD 13101/83	..... Aleppo.
516	CKD 13102/83	.....Aleppo Works.
517	CKD 13103/83	.....Tartus.
518	CKD 13104/83*	
519	CKD 13105/83*	
520	CKD 13106/83	.....Aleppo Works.
521	CKD 13107/83*	
522	CKD 13108/83*	
523	CKD 13109/83*	
524	CKD 13110/83	
525	CKD 13111/83*	

Class LDE 3200. Co-Co. (Alstom Type AD33C.) Service through the whole country.

601	Alstom 1999.	
602	Alstom 1999.	Aleppo Works.
603	Alstom	Aleppo Works.
604	Alstom	Aleppo Works.
605	Alstom	
606	Alstom	
607	Alstom*	
608	Alstom*	
609	Alstom	
610	Alstom 2000.	Aleppo Works, burned-out.
611	Alstom 2000.	
612	Alstom 2000.	
613	Alstom 2000.	
614	Alstom 2000*.	
615	Alstom 2000	
616	Alstom 2000.	
617	Alstom 2000.	
618	Alstom	
619	Alstom	
620	Alstom	..... Aleppo Works.
621	Alstom	

622 Alstom*
 623 Alstom*
 624 Alstom*
 625 Alstom*
 626 Alstom
 627 Alstom
 628 Alstom 2001. Aleppo Works.
 629 Alstom 2001. Aleppo Works.
 630 Alstom 2001.

Class LDE 2800. Co-Co. (Russian Type TE114, here TE114S for Syria.) Green livery.

201 Lugansk. Aleppo Works.
 202 Lugansk 0004/74. Aleppo Works.
 203 Lugansk 0005/74 Aleppo Works.
 204 Lugansk 0006/74.*
 205 Lugansk 0007/74 Aleppo Works.
 206 Lugansk 0008/74 Aleppo Works.
 207 Lugansk 0009/74 Aleppo Works.
 208 Lugansk 0010/74. *
 209 Lugansk 0011/74 Aleppo Works.
 210 Lugansk 0031/75 Aleppo Works.
 211 Lugansk 0032/75 Aleppo Works.
 212 Lugansk 0033/75. Aleppo Works.
 213 Lugansk 0034/75 Aleppo Works.
 214 Lugansk 0035/75 Aleppo Works.
 215 Lugansk*
 216 Lugansk
 217 Lugansk 0042/76. Aleppo Works.
 218 Lugansk 0043/76
 219 Lugansk 0044/76.*
 220 Lugansk 0045/76 Aleppo Works.
 221 Lugansk 0046/76.*
 222 Lugansk 0047/76.
 223 Lugansk 0048/76.*
 224 Lugansk 0049/76 Aleppo Works.
 225 Lugansk 0050/76 Aleppo Works.
 226 Lugansk 0051/76 Aleppo Works.
 227 Lugansk 0052/76 Aleppo Works.
 228 Lugansk 0053/76 Aleppo Works.
 229 Lugansk 0054/76.*
 230 Lugansk 0055/76. Aleppo Works.
 231 Lugansk *
 232 Lugansk 0126/81 Aleppo Works.
 233 Lugansk 0127/82 Aleppo Works.
 234 Lugansk 0128/82.
 235 Lugansk 0129/82 Aleppo Works.
 236 Lugansk 0130/82.
 237 Lugansk 0131/82.
 238 Lugansk 0132/82 Aleppo Works.
 239 Lugansk
 240 Lugansk
 241 Lugansk *
 242 Lugansk Aleppo Works.
 243 Lugansk *
 244 Lugansk *
 245 Lugansk * (seen 1993)
 246 Lugansk *
 247 Lugansk Aleppo Works.
 248 Lugansk *
 249 Lugansk *
 250 Lugansk
 251 Lugansk *
 252 Lugansk *
 253 Lugansk *
 254 Lugansk *
 255 Lugansk

256 Lugansk *
 257 Lugansk *
 258 Lugansk
 259 Lugansk Aleppo Works.
 260 Lugansk *
 261 Lugansk *
 262 Lugansk *
 263 Lugansk (seen 2000).
 264 Lugansk 0203/84. .. Aleppo Works.
 265 Lugansk 0204/84 *
 266 Lugansk 0205/84 *
 267 Lugansk 0206/84 *
 268 Lugansk 0207/84 *
 269 Lugansk 0208/84 *
 270 Lugansk 0209/84 *
 271 Lugansk 0210/84 Aleppo Works.
 272 Lugansk 0211/84.*
 273 Lugansk 0212/84.(Seen 1993.)
 274 Lugansk 0213/84.*
 275 Lugansk 0214/84.*
 276 Lugansk 0215/84.
 277 Lugansk.*
 278 Lugansk.*
 279 Lugansk.*
 280 Lugansk 0233/84.

Class LDE 2800. Co-Co. (Russian Type TE 114, here T114S. Red-liveried variant for 120km/h.)

401 Lugansk 0141/82. Aleppo Works.
 402 Lugansk 0142/82 Aleppo Works.
 403 Lugansk 0143/82 Aleppo Works.
 404 Lugansk 0144/82 Aleppo Works.
 405 Lugansk 0145/82 Aleppo Works.
 406 Lugansk 0146/82.*
 407 Lugansk 0147/82(Seen 1993)
 408 Lugansk 0148/82 Aleppo Works.
 409 Lugansk 0191/83 Aleppo Works.
 410 Lugansk 0192/83 Aleppo Works.
 411 Lugansk 0193/83.
 412 Lugansk 0194/83.
 413 Lugansk 0196/83.*
 414 Lugansk 0216/84.
 415 Lugansk 0217/84.*
 416 Lugansk 0218/84.Aleppo Works.
 417 Lugansk 0219/84.
 418 Lugansk 0220/84.
 419 Lugansk 0221/84.(seen 1993).
 420 Lugansk 0222/84.Aleppo Works.
 421 Lugansk 0223/84.*
 422 Lugansk 0224/84.Aleppo Works.
 423 Lugansk 0225/84.*
 424 Lugansk 0226/84.Aleppo Works.
 425 Lugansk 0235/84.*
 426 Lugansk 0236/84.
 427 Lugansk 0237/ *
 428 Lugansk 0238/
 429 Lugansk 0239/85.
 430 Lugansk 02440/85Aleppo Works.

Rebuilt Former Class LDE 2800. Co-Co. Blue and grey livery. Class TE 114, 21 of which were re-engined from 2001 with General Electric Type V12GEF7DL engine with new Generator, new cab and new transmission. Also new numbering - the classification LDE 21800 is no longer appropriate, since the locomotives are now of 3,200 hp. No workplates are carried.

Numbers currently known:
 Re-engined and Renumbered from the 200 Series: 701, 702, 703, 704 (SA3), 705 (SA3), 706, 707, (SA3), 708 (SA3), 710 (SA3), 710, 712 (grey), 713, 715, 716, 718 (SA3), 719, 721 (grey, SA3), 723 (SA3), 724 (SA3), 726.

Re-engined and Renumbered from the 400 Series: 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756 (grey), 757.

(Several locomotives used for Phosphates traffic have been fitted with the SA3-centre coupling.)

A further 30 locomotives of Type TE114S should be re-engined according to a tender of the 'Syrian Petroleum Company' which was issued in October 2006.

C. Diesel Railcars.

Class AB4. B-B diesel-hydraulic. (Simmering-Graz-Pauker, similar to ÖBB Class 5042): Delivered to CFS for international traffic Beirut - Aleppo - Kamichli.

1T SGP 79087/1966.*

2T SGP 79088/1966.*

3T SGP 79089/1966. Scrap condition, stored in Midan Ekbes.

4T SGP 79090 *

5T SGP 79091/1967. Scrap condition, stored at Aleppo Works.

6T SGP 79092/1967. Scrap condition, stored at Aleppo Works.

7T SGP 79093/1967. Scrap condition, stored at Aleppo Works.

Two railcars are stored in the vicinity of Aleppo Station.

Class 98 97 9 673. 5-car Multiple Units, including three Power Cars. (Rotem, South Korea). Into service from end of 2006 in Aleppo. 10 Trains have been ordered. Service on all rebuilt lines. In February 2007 a new depot/workshop for these trains was under construction in Aleppo.

673 01 Rotem 2006

673 02 Rotem 2006

673 03 Rotem 2006

673 04 Rotem 2006

673 05 Rotem 2006

673 06 Rotem *

673 07 Rotem *

673 08 Rotem *

673 09 Rotem *

673 10 Rotem *

WITH FULL STEAM AHEAD THROUGH THE DESERT.

From the Swiss newspaper "Tagesanzeiger" of 21.01.2009. By Daniel B. Peterlunger. (Translation by the Editor).

The Railway of the Prophet runs again; Tourists let themselves be transported through Syria and Jordan, through a land where History is still being made.

The heat dries the mouth and eyes; the shrill whistle almost breaks through the eardrums. Often orange flames shoot through the cab of the locomotive, exactly 90 years old, which was once in service in Germany. [sic.] They sing the legs of the engine driver Hassan Alsokuy and the arms of his assistant Shaer Aljama. There is a smell of burnt hair and heavy oil. Their workplace is a wobbling, narrow footplate. It rocks like the bridge of a ship that is pushing its way through stormy seas, whilst the steam machine plods across the uneven and seldom-parallel rails - we are under way at 25 km/h.

Shortly before 9 we boarded our renovated, comfortable Oldtimer Coaches at the Cadem station in Damascus. Now, an hour later, we are still rolling through the outskirts of Damascus, the former city of the Caliphs. Our distant destination - Dara, Syria's most southerly city; beyond here, Jordan begins. We will cross the border in a bus, and then from the Jordanian capital of Amman we will go further by train into the desert, southwards to the station of Khan al-Zhabob, that lies somewhere in the middle of Jordan.

Hassam pulls on his steam whistle constantly, to scare away the donkeys and goats. Cyclists and pedestrians are warned. They stand alongside the unprotected railway tracks and wave enthusiastically. Some look rather shocked, as though the chuffing Hedjaz train is a Djinn, an Arabian spook that has escaped from a book of fairy tales. In a way, this is what it is.

The railway represents the old spirit of history - Colonialism, War, Betrayal. A major force behind the construction of the Hedjaz Railway, named after the desert region in what is now Saudi Arabia, was the German Kaiser Wilhelm II. He last visited the Turkish Ottoman Empire in 1898, to push forward his colonial and military policies: The Bagdadbahn should link Constantinople, the later Istanbul, with Basra via Baghdad. The Hedjaz Bahn would link Damascus with the holy cities of Medina and Mecca. The Hejaz line brought the Ottomans strategic advantages, and spared Moslems the weeks-long journey by camel caravan to Mecca for the pilgrimage. From 1908 the trains began to travel to Medina - but the rails never reached Mecca. The massive Wilhelmine building style of the stations along the 300-kilometre long line still reveals the handiwork of German engineers.

Then the First World War began. The railway became a favourite target for the Arab tribes, which fought against the Ottoman Empire under the leadership of Thomas E. Lawrence, the legendary Lawrence of Arabia, but also for their own independence - for Great Britain had promised them this. A promise that after the victorious entrance of the Arabs into Damascus would be broken also by their Ally, the French. Here also the Railway played a role - the French General Governor commanded the Arab tribes to leave Damascus, and to assemble at the Hedjaz Railway station, from which the Special Train would depart at 5am. The Arabs were sent into the desert by train. In 1924 the last train travelled to Medina. The tracks were filled with desert sand and badly maintained; the locomotives were worn out or broken.

A Prayer to Allah for the Loco.

That trains run again on a section of the historic Hedjaz line is mainly thanks to the Swiss archaeologist Ulrich Bellwald (who is mainly busy in the Jordanian Petra) and his local partners. During our journey we halt repeatedly and wait until the boiler pressure is restored. Or because screws need to be tightened again, or because somewhere needs more lubrication. There is time to ask the engine driver how it goes with the old lady. Never before has a passenger been so interested in the condition of the locomotive. Will it last the trip?

We travel through a country that is like a desert. At a village we hear a Mu-ezzin from a nearby mosque calling. Stop - the train personnel prays in a goods wagon on a siding. Shortly before dusk (seven hours for 126 kilometres!) we are in Dera, on the Jordanian border. But we won't cross it today. A bus brings us to Bosra, in a town that possesses a wonderfully-maintained Roman Theatre with places for 2000 persons.

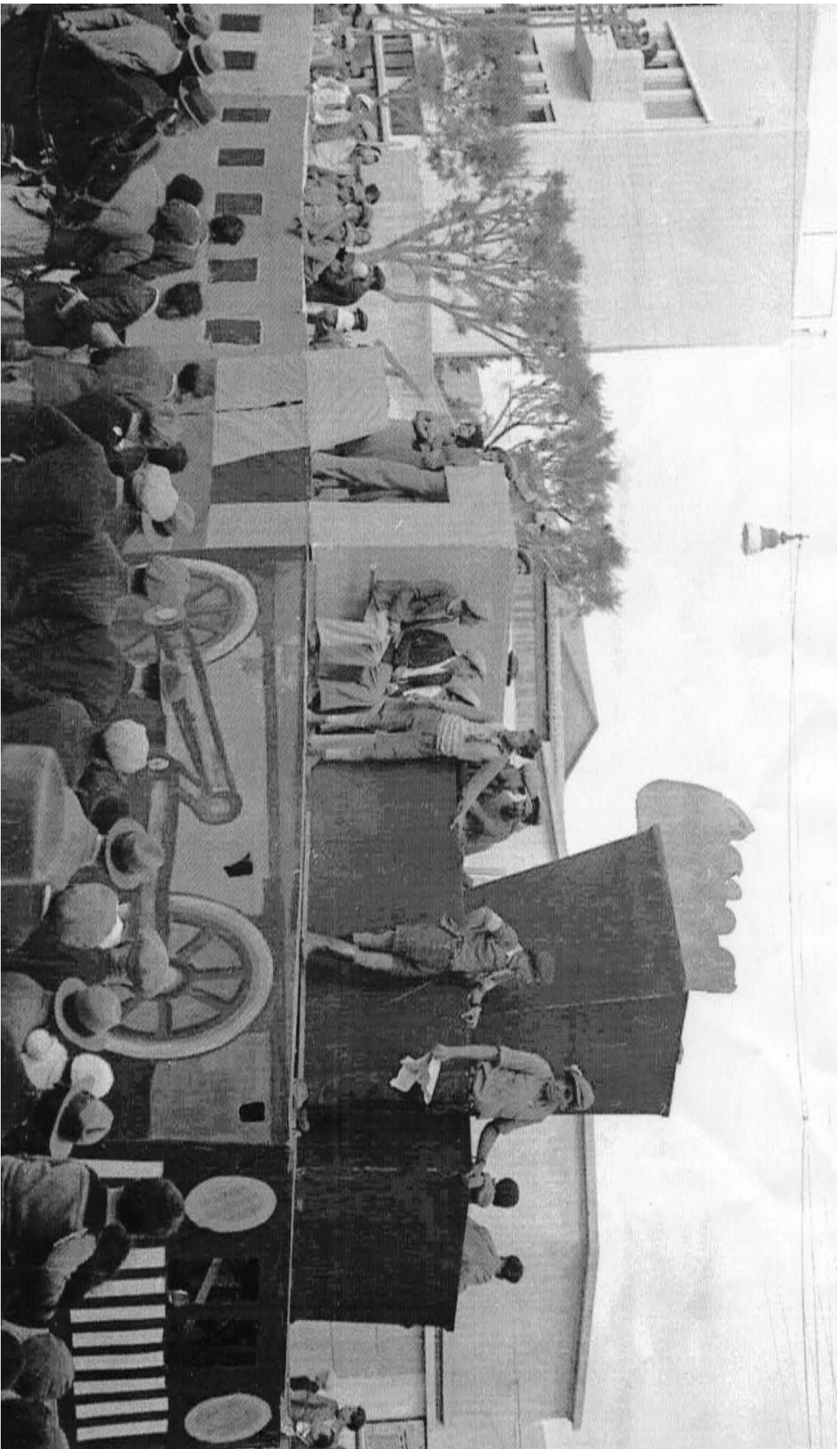
Deserts and Oases in Jordan.

Thanks to the bus we can visit another of the highlights in the region before we cross the border - the ruined city of Jerash, situated a long way from the railway line. The pillars, thousands of years old, are still standing after several earthquakes. A tribute to Roman building skills.

In Amman the train winds itself along long curves alongside a hill above which the city of two million squats like a Kraken. We pass by back yards, cemeteries and piles of rubbish. At last the desert. Here a warm east wind blows. Small birds accompany us, they come from the small dips with water and olive trees which we are now passing. Then desert again. In the Kitchen Car a buffet with traditional hors d'oeuvres, with humus and pitta bread is served.

From time to time a station, but the Chef is ready for each one. He serves the passengers a small but strong coffee. "That is the custom" explains the new engine driver, the Jordanian Abdullah Abbadi. In the late afternoon two stone cubes emerge slowly from the sandy distance. The station of Khan al-Zhabob. Our final station in the desert. Next to it, the bus waits. Only by bus could we reach from here the city of Petra, three hours away, the cliff city of the Nabataeans in the south-west of Jordan. By foot we pass through the Siq, the 1.2km.-long gorge which leads to the 2000-year-old city.

We travel a further hundred kilometres with the bus, then a few more by Jeep, to a place in the desert not far from the border to Saudi Arabia. Here there are fantastic mountains rising up to 3,700m out of the sand. Wadi Rum is the name of this labyrinthine landscape. Here Beduin-style tents are set up to enable the tourists to overnigh. The local guide points to a cleft in the rock and says "Here is where Lawrence of Arabia hid with his friends, before they attacked the railway." It is surprising, how the old ghosts are still employed for tourist reasons."



84:12
Purim in Tel Aviv, 1937. Photo Leah Grundig, from Akademie der Kunst, Berlin



Rusting and rotting rolling stock in Beirut.
Photo: Hermann Neidhart

