

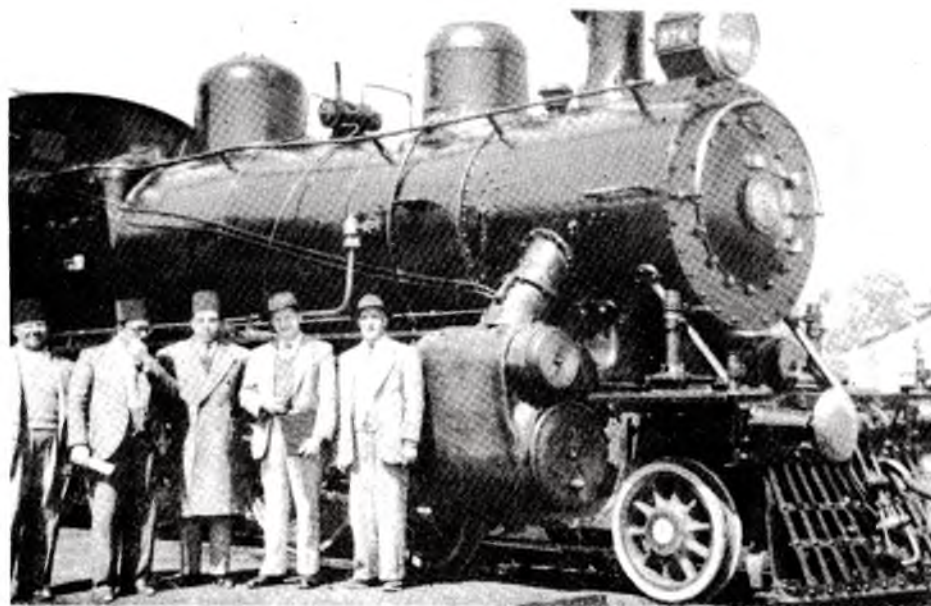
HARAKEVET ----- -----הרכבת

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A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East.
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*31:1 A SYMBOL OF A PEACEFUL FUTURE? At Kantana East, April 1948;
formal handover of the Rafah - Kantana line to the Egyptian State Railways.
PR & ESR delegations pose in front of gleaming PR Baldwin 4-6-0 No. 874.
This line may yet re-open - but the loco is gone forever. Photo: John Lee.*

Issue 31 has been delayed by variety of factors; I now spend half of each month working in Vienna, and have had several other international journeys to make searching for another position. However, the mail piles up, and when I get the chance (and family and health allow) it is always a pleasure to hear from readers and contributors. So - here is some reading for 1996.

The delay means even more snippets of "News from the Line" have accumulated - gradually this and the "Notes and Corrections" and "Other M.E. News" sections have expanded as issues pass. And yet - there is such a lot happening at the moment in the Middle East ! Proposals for new lines, reopened lines, new stock, new trams..... who knows, it may yet prove possible to take a train from Haifa into Jordan, there may even be a new "Palestine Railways" operating a line from Rafah northwards. And the history continues to fascinate, as more material comes to light....

Enjoy.



31:3 IR G12 Bo-Bo 126 in new livery at Tel Aviv Central, 12/9/95, hauling one of the ex-SNCF coaches. (Photo: Hans Kohut.)

1. High Speed and Statistics. On 20/9 'Yediot Achronot' reported the IR Spokesman as saying that the section of main line between Hadera and Netanya had been upgraded for a top speed of 130 k/ph. It is planned eventually to reach a line speed of 140 k/ph which would reduce the journey time between Tel Aviv and Haifa Bat Galim to 45 minutes instead of the present 60 minutes for the fastest trains. The Spokesman said further that during the month of August 1995 some 511,000 people travelled on IR, the greatest number of passengers ever in a single month. Most of these journeys were for pleasure during the main holiday month for such travel. The Jerusalem line was also well favoured during August with some 16,000 passenger journeys, largely because of the new station built to serve the relocated Biblical Zoo on the south side of Jerusalem. In the first four months of the year the total number of passengers on IR reached 3.4 million, a rise of 27% compared with the same period in 1994, and a 14% increase in freight.

From 1996 the whole Tel Aviv - Haifa route should be double track, mostly suitable for trains capable of 160 k/ph. speeds, and the service will be expanded to three or four trains in each direction per hour.

2. Nahariya Line. For a week in mid-September the Akko-Nahariya section was closed completely for engineering work with a substitute bus service being provided. Working around the clock, the Engineering Department relayed track between Bustan HaGalil and Nahariya.

According to 'Fahrplancenter News' 19, p.6, the Dutch delegation that visited Israel in June looked not only at possible construction of lines linking Eilat with Aqaba and Haifa - Irbid, but also at possible reconstruction of the line northwards from Nahariya (or Betzet, the current terminus for freight traffic) and Lebanon along the HBT route.

3. IC3's. Also from 'Fahrplancenter News', with thanks to Samuel Rachdi: A further seven IC3 d.m.u. trainsets are to be erected at the RAMTE workshops in Beersheba. The Qishon workshops and the Haargaz works remain busy with coach refurbishment, including new seating and air-conditioning.

From other sources comes the information that the value of the Feb. 1994 order is \$43M, and that RAMTE will assemble the underframes and bogies. According to IRJ (Feb. 1995), however, there is an option for yet a further ten units.

4. Vive La France ! From Hans Kohut comes a slightly jaundiced view of current stock and the eight refurbished French coaches, which he spotted at Tel Aviv Merkaz one day in September, coupled together with a Yugoslav generator coach and G12 126 in its new livery, "red-nosed with a little black and yellow moustache on the front !" He writes: "The interior of these old-timers looked rather like an inside view of a 707 jet aeroplane, in stark contrast to the refurbished Esslingen VT-08-type trailer coaches, also of the late-'50's and early '60'; their interior, however, remained 'conservative'. Now, on the 'high iron of the Holy Land', we have old-timers of the "Entente Cordiale", i.e. France and Britain, led by the O & K and Esslingen old-timers from GrossDeutschland, and last but not least the sturdy Cidric coaches from their now-truncated Yugoslav fatherland, but supported by their old and reliable Minden-Deutz "leicht" bogies. However, with the one exception of T44, all the mainline motive power is solidly "Stars and Stripes". How long will they soldier on ? Can you show me one bus in service on the battlefield of our highways that is 30-40 years old ?"

5. Filat Line Proposal. On 19/10/95 'Yediot Achronot' reported that among a package of agreements just concluded between Israel and Jordan was one for "the laying of a railway from the Dead Sea to Aqaba and Eilat".

6. Museum News. Minor improvements are being carried out at the Haifa East Railway Museum with the rearrangement and better labelling of small exhibits. An extra room, previously used by the catering services, has now been made available for museum use and this will allow for more exhibits to be put on public display. Several large items of rolling stock, at present scattered around Israel [does anyone have a list ? Ed.] are reserved for the museum, but proper covered accommodation for these and other such items already at the museum is lacking. The large exhibits building is practically full, but extensions to the roof would provide a cover to stock standing on two sidings.

On 20/9/95 a small ceremony was held at which the museum was rededicated in memory of the late Moshe Paicovitch, the first General Manager of I.R. (see issue 28 for some references to him.)

New dark-orange Edmonson card tickets have been introduced for museum admissions.

7. The Train From Spain. In "Maariv" 23/11/95 is a photo of one of the brand-new coach bodies built by GEC-Alsthom in Spain being unloaded at Ashdod Port - part of an order for 20. They will be fitted out by Haargaz.

Total cost of the order is put at \$20M, and they are due to enter service on the suburban trains in mid-1996.

8. News From the Underground. Not the Israeli Underground - and not a political reference to recent horrific events - but Steve Tish has sent a cutting from issue 403 (July '95) of "Underground News", the suspiciously-entitled newsletter of the London Transport Underground club; It mentions that LUL has bought three BR Mark 2 coaches, TSO's 5458, 5495 and 5497 - from Old Oak Common depot, London - "they had been earmarked for Israeli Railways but the sale was cancelled". They were moved to Ruislip depot by road. See 25:4(c) for an earlier reference to this sale.

9. More Shunters. In the "Jerusalem Post" 10/10/95 appeared a Tender 8900/001 for three new Diesel shunting locos, with an option for up to three further units in the next three years.

10. Further News Stories. Steve Tish has sent another bundle of cuttings - including "Globes" 1/9/95, pp.49 & 53, a whole article on the idea of removing rubbish by rail; "Maariv" had a "Shabbat Supplement" with two pages on the Tel Aviv LRT scheme; "Haaretz" in september had a supplement on Transport, including the usual "artist's impression" of a TGV in IR colours; in contrast "Yediot Aharonot" of 24/10/95 (p.8) has an article on plans for Jerusalem and Tel Aviv illustrated with a Manchester Metrolink Tram 1001 trundling along a palm-lined boulevard (dear readers, do not believe all the pictures in Israeli newspapers - no wonder we were commanded not to make "graven images").... "Maariv" 29/8/95 had an article on the supply of new seats for IR coaches; from 9/9/95 the winter timetable had some slight alterations relating to evening trains after the end of the Shabbat and festivals (since earlier nightfall makes this feasible)....

11. Further Stock News. Also from Steve:

- Coach No.57 has been officially taken off the inventory after collision damage and a lengthy wait for assessment at Qishon.

- 111 Bet and 112 Bet were repainted in the new livery in 10/95. Both have now lost the "Bet" suffix. 113 Bet was repainted in 9/95.

- Locos 116 and 117 have been repainted in the new IC3-style livery in 10/95, joining 126 repainted the previous month.

- The only Esslingen shunters left dumped at Qishon are now 217 and 222.

- The first French ex-SNCF coach, now numbered 91 and built 1958.,

returned from Haargaz in early September and entered IR service shortly thereafter.

12. More Tram Plans Again ? According to "Fahrplancenter News" 20, p.10, Jerusalem Council has decided to close Jaffa Road (a major highway route through the "new" city) to private vehicular traffic and lay a double-track tram line along it instead..... (this idea was first mooted in 1912. Ed.)

"Maariv" of 11/12/95 had an article on proposals to build a tramway in Beersheba. A Dutch delegation was due to visit that week, some having been involved in the earlier visit some five months ago; a Japanese group had also shown interest. At the beginning of the '90's this city had 113,000 inhabitants; this has now grown to 180,000, including 17,000 students at the University. Traffic problems are escalating.....



31:5 HR 2-8-0 No. 103 at Qishon Works, 2/10/1945. Note Sentinel railcar just visible on right. (Photo: Bob Ireson.)

31:6

NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

First some from Paul Cotterell, whose workplace looks out on the subject of his first comment !

a). On 30:4:4. The steelwork of the footbridge at Haifa Central is painted silver, not red. It has been silver for at least 30 years.

b). On 30:12/13. Khartoum. More information on the Khartoum Steam Tram can be found in two articles in the 'Continental Railway Journal', issues 72 and 96. It would appear that the Khartoum Light Railway (to give what is believed to be its proper title) did not have any Krauss locos. It owned some O&K O-4-2T's, but the loco in 30:12 may be one of two Borsig O-8-0T's built for the Heeresfeldbahn, but after the end of World War 1, and seen without its spark arrester.

c). On 30:22. "Two Fakes". This article was written several years ago and has since been overtaken by events. [Apologies, Ed. Several articles have been on file for a very long time.]

The dummy American 4-4-0 seen at the bottom of p.34 has been painted, put back on its wheels, and is now displayed in the tiny Qishon Park at Kiryat Haroshet on the old Hedjaz Railway Haifa branch (see 27:4:1.) At Kiryat Haroshet the 'station' building (just a stark brick shelter) still stands, and a surviving length of H.R. track has been disinterred from the earth and weeds. The tinline 4-4-0, being of standard gauge, now stands on a third rail laid outside the H.R. track. The park, though small, is pleasant. The railway display is far less kitsch than might be supposed, and the spot can be recommended for a quiet coffee break when exploring remains of the Valley Railway. Bring your own refreshments.

d). On 30:25 - "Yank in Palestine". In reply to the editorial query, I am as certain as it is possible to be without firm evidence that the Jerusalem-Bittir shuttle service was not operated as a push-pull train. Robert Richardson's recollections do make it sound as though such a train was being worked, but I have never come across any suggestion in official material to indicate that PR converted rolling stock or locos for push-pull working. It is possible that the train was propelled back to Jerusalem [which is my understanding too, Ed.], even though this would be a blatant infringement of the rules. A special dispensation might have been forthcoming from the management.

This train, part of which is seen at the bottom of p.6 (issue 30) was interesting. It seems only to have worked for a couple of years about the end of WW2, and was known as 'The Radish Train' (Rakevet HaTznon). It ran on Jerusalem market days for the benefit of farmers at Bittir wanting to take their produce to market. Bittir was apparently known for fine vegetables. As can be seen from that photo on p.6, produce is being loaded into the gutted engine and driving compartment of the Sentinel railcar which militates against the likelihood of this compartment being used as a driving cab for push-pull working.

[Ed. notes: I wouldn't argue with Paul, except to say that the presence of a few sacks of radishes in a driving cab wouldn't stop it being used ! My opinion is that a driver, brakesman or guard occupied the front cab of the former railcar, and the loco crew (possibly only the fireman ?) responded to messages or simply kept going unless and until the brake was applied from the front. Bittir was only ever a passing loop without, I believe, goods loading sidings or facilities, (hence the inability of any freight train to pick up separate wagons with Bittir produce), and the presence of the remains of an overrun-catch point to this day indicates that shunting and running-round at this point may have been a dodgy business, best avoided.]

Incidentally, Robert Richardson is better known in some circles as an authority on the narrow-gauge railroads of Colorado, having been involved in their preservation and the recording of their history.

e). Naharayim - see 28:15. It now appears that the reference to the derelict remains of a Hibberd petrol loco at Naharayim is incorrect. The Industrial Railway Record contains an article entitled 'The Origin of the Species' which discusses the many difficulties involved in untangling the history of relatively early internal combustion locos. It was written by the late Brian Webb who was the acknowledged expert on such matters. In a photo caption to his article it is stated that the Hibberd works at Park Royal only opened in 1932 and that locos attributed to Hibberd before this date were not actually built by them. Since the PEC 'Hibberd' arrived in Palestine about 1928 it seems that it must have been built by someone else with Hibberd's acting as agents or dealers. Possibly they put their own 'worksplate' on the loco and studiously inferred in correspondence that they were the builders without leaving themselves open to the possibility of litigation; a not uncommon occurrence with other firms as well at this period. So perhaps Andy Robson was right after all and that derelict at Naharayim really is a Motor Rail 'Simplex'.

f). On 29:12: The illustration of the light railway layout at what is thought to be Kiryat Avoda is, in fact, a composite photograph. Close scrutiny will show that the shadows in the top half fall in the opposite direction to those in the bottom half. There is also an impossible crossover of tracks in the middle right of the illustration.

g). On 30:20; WD 4-6-4T No. 143 ended up in Jordan along with the other five members of the class which had been on the Qena - Safage line in Egypt. The photo of 143 at Suez raises a question: how were these locos transferred to Jordan ? If they were shipped across then they presumably landed at Aqaba but, at the time, this would have meant an onward continuation overland by road (to Ma'an ?) as Aqaba had no rail connection to the Hedjaz Railway at the time. Because of politics, it is unlikely they were transported on standard gauge wagons via PR to Haifa for transshipment onto HR wagons and thence to Jordan. Also, where and when were they regauged from metre to 1.05 metre gauge ? On p.83 of 'Middle East Railways' Hugh Hughes shows these 4-6-4T's as "to Jordan late 1951" which would surely rule out any possible Qishon connection.

[I reckon if the locos were sold by the WD to Jordan any conversion work would surely have been handled by the Suez R.E. workshops; delivery could have been via Beirut - Damascus. But - I'd love to see more information on such deliveries. Ed.]

h). On 30:17, p.27, Andy Wilson notes: The intermediate stations on the El Shatt line east of the Suez Canal bear just Arabic numbers, not names. Wahad = 1, Ithnein = 2, Thalatha = 3, Arb'a = 4, Khamsa = 5, Sitta = 6, Sab'a = 7, Thamanya = 8, Tis'a = 9. So what happened to the missing numbers 4, 6 & 8 ?

31:7

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAY NEWS.

a). Iran. In "Abenteuer Eisenbahn" in "Loki" (a Swiss magazine) 12/1995, pp.74-80 is an illustrated article by Harald Navé about travel in 1992 on the Iranian Railways from Tehran to Ahwaz and back, complete with illustrations of derelict steam locos at Tehran in 1969 on an earlier visit and a sketch map of the remarkable mountain-climbing techniques of the line between Gaduk and Pole Sefid in the Elburz mountains.

b). Turkey. In "Modell Eisenbahner" 12/95 is not only a two-page article on Israel Railways (pp.24/25) but an advert for a video entitled "Bagdad Bahn - von Istanbul nach Bagdad", ca. 60 minutes long, order no. 386, cost DM 49.80, (plus p&tp if abroad), to be ordered from Komplett Video, Robert Koch Strasse 38, D-82031 Grünwald, Germany.

The Editor has purchased a copy. Without giving a full review, let it be said that the quality is good, the variety of shots interesting - but the title is misleading, for in fact it follows the route from Istanbul Haydarpasa to the border with Iraq - not beyond ! Well worth purchase for its coverage of the Turkish section of the Bagdadbahn, but we await with interest any future films of the eastern section.

c). Egypt & Sinai. According to "Fahrplancenter News" 20, p.10, ten firms have tendered for the construction of a new railway bridge over the Suez Canal and the (re)-construction of a line to Rafah, now the border of the Palestinian Autonomous Region. "Maariv" of 18/12/95 reported that the Israel Ports & Railways Authority is also considering this project, costed at 100 million shekels. Stage 1 involves (already reported) an 8km. spur from the line from Ashdod to Ashkelon, to the northern border of the Palestinian area (former "Gaza Strip") at Erez. Further extension over the old route to Rafa (disused for 20 years and requiring major reconstruction to 120 kph standards) would/might then follow.

Egypt has also ordered a further 23 diesel locos from ABB-Henschel.

A major rail disaster occurred in December, when a Luxor express crashed into the rear of a local train, south of Cairo.

d). Lebanon. Andy Wilson reports not a lot of change on the CEL - if anything the state of the disused lines gets worse. More of the line has been torn up for the motorway approaching Beirut from the north, and the gap is now about 10km. between Dora and Zouk Mikayel. The one-year temporary closure mentioned to him in February 1995 is clearly going to last a lot longer.

Regarding the proposal to rehabilitate the HBT line - Sofrerail had a stand at an environmental exhibition in Beirut last autumn; some general information on Sofrerail (a subsidiary of SNCF) was being handed out, but nothing very specific to the CEL scheme, though there was apparently some display material - for a double track electrified line, price tag of \$500 million. He writes: "Nothing is happening on the project as far as I know, because there is no funding, but at least it has some kind of official status and the HBT route should be protected."

e). Syria. A report and photo in "European Railways" 10, p.63, indicates that Hartmann 2-8-2 263 (with the tender of 261) hauled the International Train to Dera'a on 27/8/95, returning 28/8; On 30/8 130-755 (see below) hauled the summer-only daily train from Damascus to Zebadani.

f). Preservation: A French group is interested in purchasing some of the disused and rotting 195cm. gauge locos and rolling stock lying at Beirut St. Michel, for operation over a new museum line in the Oise Departement, north of Paris. Latest news is that CEL are not very interested in selling, (M. Rabiah Am'ash, the Director-General of Internal Transport, stated the derelict stock was "not for sale"), but the group remains optimistic. Anyone wanting further information or wishing to assist should contact:

Christian Labetoulle, 2, Ave. du Pasteur Martin Luther King, 78230 Le Pecq, France.

In "Voie Etroite" issue 91, for 6/85, appeared an article by J.L. Dolfus, a French resident of Lebanon, on the narrow-gauge remains in Beirut; Clearly a lot of decay will have occurred since then, but the SLM locos remaining at St. Michel shed, steadily sinking into the undergrowth, are listed as:

- A 37. (1775/1906); (0-8-2 RT)
- S 303. (3123/1926). (0-10-0 RT)
- B 10. (986/1896). (0-6-2 RT)
- B 8. (848/1894). (0-6-2 RT)
- A 36. (1774/1906). (0-8-2 RT).

Further, some moves have been initiated to try to save a De Dion railcar and a Hartmann loco from the Syrian Hedjaz section. The moving spirit here is: M. Ph. Quiot, "Times of Glory", Route d'Arnier 18, Case Postale, CH-1090 Belmont, Switzerland.

In recent years some remarkable purchases have been arranged - one thinks of the return of former FO SLM locos from Vietnam to Switzerland - and purchase of a French-built Pacific from Vietnam was foiled at the last minute only by some idiot scrapping the loco in question.

Apparently one of the Syrian SLM 2-6-0T's (130-755) has been repainted in a garish livery for "tourist train" purposes: yellow smokebox door, red smokebox, chimney and boiler, blue side tanks and cab.

In 'Middle East Railways' p.88 Hughes shows a tramcar drawn by two horses on the tramway 'dating from the 1870's' linking Baghdad with Kadhimain, near Shalchayah. This is an Imperial War Museum print; another (ref. Q 25318) also shows Indian troops on this tramway, 15/11/1917 - two tramcars on what appears to be a section of double track ! (It seems too long to be a passing loop on such a line). I am indebted to Naim E. Dangoor, Editor of 'The Scribe', for further details:

The tramway was constructed in 1869 by the famous Midhat Pasha, Wali (Governor) of Baghdad at the time. The line was about 6 km. long. The Fare was ½ anna. (There were 16 annas in a rupee and 13½ rupees was equivalent to £1.)



The Taurus Express is alive and - well, sort of well - despite rumours of its demise. From Ian Cliff I have received a full account of a journey from Istanbul Haydarpasa to Aleppo, and later Damascus to Amman, made in August this year.

"We left Haydarpasa on time at 08.55 on August 24th. 1995. The 'Taurus Express' consisted of a TCDD electric locomotive hauling 6 coaches (one a Sleeping Car) and a van. Four of the coaches were destined for Gaziantep and two for Aleppo. There was no Restaurant Car, despite the fact that one is advertised. A German traveller I subsequently met on the Hedjaz Railway, who had travelled on the Taurus Express a week before we had, said that there had been an excellent Restaurant Car on his train - so perhaps we were just unlucky. At all events, purchasing food at major stations *en route* was never a problem.

The 'Taurus Express' travelled at a smart pace across the flat, industrialised neck of land North of the Sea of Marmora to Izmit. After Izmit it became clear that the term 'Express' was something of a misnomer, as the train stopped at virtually every station. It was well filled for most of the way - bursting at the seams at times - but many of the passengers were making relatively short journeys between intermediate stations. The landscape beyond Izmit changed to one of attractive green wooded hills and mountains and racing streams. At Eskisehir, the "Crewe" of Turkey, the electric locomotive came off at the relatively small Enveniye Station (direct trains between Haydarpasa and Konya do not run into the main station) and was replaced by a standard TCDD diesel - built at Eskisehir.

Beyond Eskisehir the landscape became more stony and less green, with mountains in the distance. The architecture of the stations is distinctly German, which seems odd in rural Anatolia until one considers that this is part of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway scheme. At Haman, near Afyon, the whole village seemed to have turned out to see the train, and on the platform were two horses with superbly-crafted bridles, each pulling a small cart. The train was just under an hour late at Konya, famed for its whirling dervishes, where a very large number of people joined for the overnight run to Adana. The 'Taurus Express' left Adana on time at 06.50 the following morning. Although the line East of Adana is electrified, we continued to run with a diesel under the wires. The station buildings at Yakapinar, Ceyhan and Toprakkale east of Adana are of a striking oriental style. The train affords an excellent view of the Armenian/Crusader Snake

Castle perched on a hilltop near Ceyhan and the Earth castle at Toprakkale, which is the junction for the electrified branch line to Iskanderun. Between Osmaniye and Fevzipasha the train climbed slowly through spectacular mountain scenery, passing through one long tunnel and numerous short ones.

Fevzipasha, a small junction high in the mountains, turned out to be a hive of activity with long lines of freight wagons and no fewer than four TCDD diesels engaged in shunting activities, one of them being turned on a turntable in the process. Here the 'Taurus Express' was split. A TCDD diesel removed the Gaziantep portion, consisting of the two front coaches and the two rear coaches, and headed North, still under the electric wires. Another diesel shunted the two centre coaches, destined for Aleppo, onto a line of freight wagons and, after some complex manoeuvres, the Aleppo portion of the 'Taurus Express' left Fevzipasha 35 minutes late as a mixed train made up of a brake van, two passenger coaches, and 18 open and closed freight wagons - several of which had "Hama" chalked on the side as the destination.

At Islahiye notices on the very German station building welcomed and bade farewell to passengers arriving in or leaving Turkey in English, German, French, Turkish and Arabic. After a brief wait for Customs and passport procedures, the TCDD diesel continued South through some more dramatic mountain scenery and over the border into Syria at Meydan Ekbes. As we entered the station I noticed a rather battered Syrian Railways General Electric diesel starting up in the shed to take the train on to Aleppo. After lengthy but affable Syrian entry procedures for the dozen or so passengers still on the train, we boarded the 'Taurus Express' again for the last leg of our journey to Aleppo at about 15.00. The TCDD diesel came off and the Syrian GE diesel approached the train. However, it then detached the rear 10 freight wagons, ran round them, and then disappeared up the line with them towards Aleppo, leaving the rest of the train with no visible means of locomotion. Eventually a railwayman explained to me that, because the train was too heavy for the GE diesel to take up the gradient to the next station at Rajo, it had taken half these now and would return for the other half in about an hour's time. This is indeed what happened. The locomotive eventually reappeared running light, attached itself to the two passenger coaches and eight freight wagons, and, after the driver had very kindly shown me round the cab and demonstrated his cab-to-shore radio telephone, we set off over the switchback route to Rajo and rejoined the rest of the train. There was then a considerable delay while the 'Taurus Express' waited to cross the afternoon Aleppo-Meydan Ekbes local train, which eventually arrived from the South, made up of another elderly GE

diesel with three packed passenger coaches of Kurdish villagers (the villages in the mountains to the North of Aleppo are mainly Kurdish) and three closed vans. We then headed through a landscape of olive groves in the gathering dark to Afreen, where it turned out that it was necessary to split the train again because of the gradients ahead. This time the passenger coaches were part of the section of train taken first up the hill - to Katma station. Then the locomotive disappeared for an hour to pick up the rest of the train. After the train had been reformed, we headed down to Muslimiyeh, the junction just North of Aleppo, where the original Baghdad Railway headed North-East for Karkamis via Akhterin. We were told by a Syrian railwayman that this route is now completely closed and some of the track has been lifted. After some shunting at Muslimiyeh and a prolonged stop at a red signal, the 'Taurus Express' finally reached Aleppo some 6 hours late at 23.00 on 25th. August.

After travelling from Aleppo to Damascus by road (unfortunately the trains only run overnight and this did not fit in with my other commitments), I took the Hejaz Railway International Train from Damascus to Amman on Sunday 27th. August. Hartmann 2-8-2 Mikado No. 263, rather confusingly with the tender from No. 261 attached, steamed into the Hejaz Station with three carriages (1st., 2nd. & 3rd. class) and proceeded to do some elaborate shunting to pick up a luggage van. I have been quite lucky since I was pulled by the same locomotive (with its correct tender) when I made the same journey in July 1994, although I gather there is a more than 50% chance of getting one of the four Romanian Co-Co diesels on the Damascus-Amman train. No. 263, one of the Hartmanns erected by the British Royal Engineers at Cadem Works in November 1918, was in smart black and green Hejaz livery and seemed in better mechanical order than a year ago, when it had made rather heavy weather of a mixed train of three coaches and about 12 loaded wagons. On this occasion it could make light work of three coaches and a luggage van.

We left the Hejaz Station on time at 07.15, with about 30 passengers on board (10 of them Europeans) and threaded our way with much whistling through the streets of Damascus and round some sharp curves where the track has recently been realigned to avoid some new building. (This necessitated the closure of the line between the Hejaz Station (Qanawat) and El Cadem for several months earlier this year.) At El Cadem we saw Romanian Co-Co diesel No. 402 with a train of Ganz Hungarian coaches forming the daily trip to Zebadani and SLM tank engine No. 130-755 in a bright blue, red and yellow livery being put through some steam trials. After picking up another 15 or so passengers at El Cadem we paralleled the

standard gauge line to Homs and Aleppo as far as the grain terminal, where a Russian diesel was shunting a train of Polybulk-type hopper wagons; the standard gauge line then crossed the 1.05 metre gauge and swept round towards the East. After a brief stop at Kissoué the train ran through the now-closed Deir Ali station and stopped at Mismiyeh where the crew attempted to take water from the water crane. Unfortunately, it turned out that there was none. At this point the friendly Syrian driver, Adib, invited a German passenger and myself onto the footplate. He said he could get to Dera'a with the water in the tender and pointed to the gauge indicating half-full. We then had the privilege of a footplate ride across the Hauran through Mohaja, where four or five passengers got off, to Izra. [Ezraa]. Here the train stopped for a while and Adib boiled up some sweet tea on the locomotive grate. I asked him whether the Bosra branch was still usable; to my surprise he replied that although there was no regular traffic the line was used for through trains from Damascus each September for the Bosra Festival, and he would himself be driving one of these this year; it would, however, be diesel-hauled.

After Izra I resumed my rather dusty 1st. Class seat for the run to Dera'a, with a brief stop at Ghazale. At Dera'a the Hartmann was quickly uncoupled from the train and Adib and his fireman shunted their locomotive back to the shed alongside a dead-looking Borsig 2-8-0 and the hulk of the former Dera'a pilot locomotive, Jung 2-6-0T No. 66 with a tender attached.

A Jordanian General Electric A1A-A1A diesel No. 40123 was waiting in a siding with a luggage van and rapidly attached itself to the front of the train. It then proceeded to push and pull the carriages for short distances. It turned out that this was not some complex shunting manoeuvre but was caused by the need to change the bulbs in the Dera'a station lampposts ! The station ladder was too short for this purpose and so was placed on the roof of the train so that a man could climb up and change the bulbs. The train had to be moved so that all the long series of lamp-posts could be covered. While this was going on, another 20 or so passengers went through some lengthy Customs checks and boarded the train, bringing the total complement to about 60 (and 15 assorted railway, customs, passport and security staff). The Jordanian locomotive then headed South from Dera'a, taking the train through the junction station for Bosra, known in Arabic as Kum Gharz but sometimes described in English as Gassin Junction, over the border into Jordan (there was a brief stop to enable a Jordanian soldier to board the train) and into the neatly-kept station at Mafraq, protected by a very British semaphore signal. It was very noticeable that as soon as we entered Jordan the quality of the track improved and the stations (other than Es Samra) looked distinctly smarter than in Syria. After a lengthy ceremony

to hand back passports to all the passengers at Mafraq station, the train moved off at 15.20 and headed into more mountainous country with desert punctuated by green areas of irrigated agriculture. There were some quite dramatic curves, the train did not stop at the half-derelict Es Samra station, now a request stop, and after passing the large oil refinery, still rail connected, the train arrived at Zerqa, where quite a lot of passengers disembarked. A fuel oil tank wagon was standing in the loop at Zerqa and rather to my surprise, the loco was detached, ran forward to fetch it, and then attached it to the front of the train, which was now very definitely "mixed". We then headed off at a smart pace through the main Zerqa souq and over the Zerqa viaduct. Apart from a small area of irrigated agriculture the route from Zerqa to Amman is almost wholly built up, and quite suddenly we were running past Amman shed with its fleet of steam locomotives outside and into the station which is full of lines of freight vans which almost seem to give the lie to its status as the starting and finishing point for little more than one train a week. We arrived at 17.15, exactly ten hours after leaving the Hejaz Station in Damascus.

I returned from Amman to Damascus the following day, Monday 28th. August. Arriving a little early for the 08.00 departure, I was introduced to Mr. Fatallah Qaisi, the only Jordanian driver still qualified to drive steam locomotives. He told me that there are normally about five special excursions a year using steam locomotives, either up to Mafraq or South into the desert. Mr. Qaisi showed me round the shed, pointing out in particular the 1955 Jung 2-8-2 that is regularly used on such excursions, and the FUF 2-6-2 tank that is used for shunting. He also took me round the Carriage and Wagon repair shops, which were quite busy with a wooden carriage frame being refurbished.

Mr. Qaisi then boarded the G.E. diesel, the Station Master rang the bell and the train departed - a few minutes late. Running between Amman and Zerqa was slow in places as several culverts were being repaired. At Zerqa Mr. Qaisi invited me to join him and colleagues for a cup of Arab railway tea in the Station Master's office. We made a brief halt to pick up a passenger at the Es Samra request stop and arrived at Mafraq for the border formalities. The train was well loaded from Amman and with the extra passengers picked up at Zerqa and Mafraq I calculated that there were about 70 fare-paying passengers on board. This is a remarkably large number compared with the reports in recent editions of 'Harakevet' of very small numbers of passengers travelling on the Hejaz Railway International Train. However, I was told by several of the railwaymen that passenger numbers are much greater in the summer than in the winter "when the train is too cold."

As we arrived at Dera'a a steam whistle could be heard in the distance as Hartmann No. 263 returned from being turned on the triangle North of the station at the start of the old line to Haifa. The Hartmann arrived with the same crew that had brought it down from Damascus the previous day; they had stayed at Dera'a overnight. The Jordanian diesel came off the front of the train but then went into the sidings from where it emerged with four empty freight vans which it attached to the rear of the train to continue on to Damascus. The Jordanian locomotive then prepared to return to Amman with two luggage vans while the Hartmann steam locomotive was coupled to the front of our train. This caused great excitement for three German archaeologists on the train who had clearly not expected to be hauled to Damascus by a steam locomotive built by their fellow countrymen during the First World War. One of them also commented that the buildings at Dera'a were those of "a typical German station".

A fair number of passengers alighted at Dera'a but as we headed North it was interesting to note that the train did a reasonable amount of business at the smaller intermediate stations. I noted 3 at Ghazale, 3 on and 7 off at Izra, 2 on at Mahaja, 2 on at Mismiyeh and 12 off at Kissoué. Driver Adib gave me a footplate ride from Mismiyeh to Kissoué, enlivened by an unscheduled halt near the abandoned Jebab station when a brake shoe on one of the carriages started catching on the wheel and had to be tied back with wire.

After a lengthy stop at El Cadem we ran through the streets of Damascus in the gathering dusk. As we approached the junction with the line from Zabadani the whistle of a second locomotive could be heard and SLM 2-6-0T No. 130-755 appeared just ahead of us with a train of four 4-wheel coaches and one bogie coach bursting with passengers from Zabadani. Much to Adib's annoyance the Station Master insisted that our train wait for the Zabadani train to disgorge its passengers and clear the station area before coming into the platform propelled by No. 263, which was then able to remove the four empty vans from the rear of the train and push them into a siding. It was 19.15 by the time we got onto the platform at the Hejaz Railway Station. I had hoped to make a trip up to Zabadani one day while in Damascus, but official duties at the Damascus International Trade Fair prevented me from doing so. But it was interesting to see in the pavilion of the Syria Ministry of Transport at the Trade Fair a scale model of Hartmann 2-8-2 No. 263 behind and on which I had spent so much of the previous two days....."

My thanks to Ian for this insight into contemporary life ! There is an illustrated article on the Hedjaz Station at Damascus in "La Vie du rail" No.

2511 (13 Septembre 1995) p.28. In addition Andy Wilson has provided some notes and photos of current railway life in Lebanon and Syria, which differ slightly from the above. He writes:

31:10

LEBANON AND SYRIA.

"Not much has happened on the CEL recently. More track has been torn up in connection with the motorway project in Beirut's northern approaches. Recovered track panels have been taken back to the standard gauge CEL yard in Beirut - mostly by road transport, but there was one train movement at the end of July, observed by a colleague when some track materials were collected on a couple of flat wagons. It is not clear why this was done, since CEL has very little capability to do this sort of thing, most of the suitable wagons being on the wrong side of the break.

In Tripoli some railway-size bridge openings have been constructed through an overpass and the slip roads being built on a motorway which has destroyed part of the HBT line; in fact, the last 2 or 3 km. of the HBT in Tripoli are seriously damaged and obstructed, and it is encouraging to see evidence of will to restore it eventually. South of Tripoli, the line is intact to the break near Beirut, although overgrown and obstructed by asphalted level crossings, heaps of rubbish and so on in a few places. This part of the line could be put back into use with fairly minimal repair and clearance; the overgrowth gives a misleading impression of the state of the track, which is surprisingly good and must have had a lot of money spent on it before the period of anarchy.

I have tried to find the location of the picture in issue 29, p.15, but without success. I do not think it is Dbaye, as you suggest, because the shadow direction is unlikely. My guess would have been between Jubail and Batroun, where the scenery is similar and where the shadows as shown could be possible. However, a careful reconnaissance of this part of the line does not reveal a fit. It does seem likely that a Beirut photographer would make his pictures closer to home but the whole area out to beyond Jounie is now suburbs and must have changed enormously in the last 50 years. The Beirut depot chief may be able to identify the place.

I had a day trip to Damascus on 3rd. September and went to Qanawat station to find out what, if anything, was running. I found people obviously waiting for a train, which I was informed was the 14.00 daily departure for Bosra, which was due back to Damascus at midnight. This arrived after a few minutes; 301 and 3 steel coaches. The 301 looked as if it has been recalled to duty part-way through a repaint. Later in the day, from a bus in the Barada valley, I saw the daily train coming back from Serghaya; 402 and 5 steel coaches. This would reach Qanawat at about 19.00. The track in



31:11 HR 2-6-0 derelict inside the engine shed at Medain Saleh, in North-West Saudi Arabia. March 1993. (Photo: Martin A. Barker.)



31:12 Romanian-built diesel No. 301 at Damascus Kanawat station, on 14.00 departure to Bosra. 3/9/95. (Photo: Andy Wilson.)

the Barada valley looked very flimsy for the load it was carrying.

I also walked out to Cadem where the coaches for the standard-gauge 17.00 to Aleppo were at the platform. Nothing moving at the time I was there, and no motive power visible.

I find that the diversion of the narrow-gauge, halfway between Cadem and Qanawat stations, which was done earlier this year, is at the same place where the planned deviation for standard-gauging into the town will begin; from here an empty formation exists through two bridge openings and along the centre of a motorway in cutting to a point about 800 m. from Qanawat."

OTHER MIDDLE EAST NEWS.

31:13

From "Fahrplancenter News" No. 19, Aug.- Oct. 1995, with thanks to editor S. Rachdi, come the following items:

Lebanon. The modest rail traffic from Beirut (Dora) to Jbeil is frequently broken, sometimes for weeks at a time. Sometimes a level crossing will be asphalted over during road repair works, sometimes the rails will be damaged by construction machinery; It has even occurred that a crane being used for the reconstruction of a building adjacent to the line was found, without notice, standing on the CEL rails ! The continued existence of the railway seems to keep being overlooked.....

However, Syria has announced a proposal to rebuild the Beirut-Damascus line on standard gauge (! - whether with rack is not known) - and also the Bekaa Valley line from Rayak to Homs should be reconstructed.

Work on rebuilding the Tripoli - Saida (Sidon) coastal route (the former HBT) remains unstarted; apparently results of an environmental study are being awaited. In the meantime, Lebanon has received massive financial help for the reconstruction of its road network (naturally, without any environmental studies or considerations !) The Dutch railway delegation that visited Israel (see last issue) also went to Lebanon, to consider possible reconstruction of the Nahariya - Rosh Hanikra - Saida line - i.e. the reopening therefore of the entire former HBT.

Turkey. TCDD reports that, due to falling demand, the passenger traffic to Iran is suspended indefinitely; goods continues.

Traffic to Armenia is suspended due to earthquake damage, and there is no through traffic to Iraq. Traffic to Syria on the Ankara - Halab (i.e. Aleppo) continues, though both passenger and goods demand is weak. The route to Syria via Akhterin remains closed for lack of traffic.

Egypt. The Egyptian Railways (ER) is considering bids for the construction of a bridge over the Suez Canal near Verdun, some 12 km. north of Ismailia. The construction of this bridge should be the first stage in the reconstruction of the Sinai line towards Rafah in the Gaza Strip. It is hoped to commence bridge construction works in 1996.

Iran. The Turkmenistan Republic is building and planning several new rail links both within its territory and - relevant to this magazine - to link with Iran, so enabling easier access to the Persian Gulf. This is part of a network including a line along the east side of the Caspian Sea - freight traffic of about 20 million tons p.a. is envisaged between Russia and the Gulf.

The line from Tejen (the junction on the Mary - Ashkabad line) to the Iranian border near Sarakhs is largely complete; on the Iranian side, the tracks are being laid.

Lines are being planned from Dashgavus to Gazanjik (ca. 480 km. long) and Dashgavus to Ashkabad (ca. 350 km. long.) From Gazanjik and also from Turkmenbashi lines will extend to the Iranian border town of Bandar Torkamen (totalling 550 km.); this town lies on the Iranian line from Teheran to Gorgan. Another 100 km. long line will join Gorgan to the line to Mashhad. It is hoped to build all these lines over the next 20 - 25 years.

Syria. The CFS wants to modernise 32 diesel locos of Soviet origin; bids for the work have been received from ABB Henschel, General Electric and Jenbacher Werken (Austria).



31:14 Esslingen 0-6-0DH 218 at Haifa East shed on 23/4/88.
(Photo: Paul Cotterell).

31:15

THE TRAMWAYS OF ALEPPO, UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

AS AT MARCH 1961

i.e. SYRIA

1/4 1/2 MILE

0 0.5
KILOMETRE



DEPÔT

RAILWAY
STATION

BOULEVARD FAROUK

BOULEVARD KOUATLY
PLACE
BABEL FARADJ

FORMERLY
SINGLE TRACK &
LOOP EAST OF JCN.

RUE TITEL

RUE KHANDEK

BAB ANTAKIYE (BAB ANTAKIÉ)
(ANTIOCH GATE)

1 CITADEL
RECENT
EXTENSION

(FORMER
TERMINUS)
BURICK
MASLAU
(BARRIÉL EL
MASLAKH)

HAMIDIYE (HAMIDIER)
2

LOCATION OF PASSING LOOPS
ONLY APPROXIMATE
DATE OF CLOSURE UNKNOWN

3

SOUKS

DATE OF CLOSURE AND
TRACK LAYOUT UNKNOWN

2

RUE KALLASSEN

MAPS OF ALEPPO - EVEN DIFFERENT MAPS BY
THE SAME CARTOGRAPHER - DISAGREE OVER
STREET DETAILS AS WELL AS TRAM ROUTES
AND TERMINI. THIS MAP IS COMPILED FROM
DATA TAKEN FROM FOUR MAPS.

SPELLING OF PLACE NAMES IS APPROXIMATE ONLY
AS SOME MAPS SHOW OTHER ALTERNATIVES

BASED ON INFORMATION FROM L. LAMBLEY & H. N. FORBES

JCB No 363.

drawn by W.J.W. 4/61

31:16 Rail Net to Internet.

Your Editor has not (yet) advanced to the heights of Internet, but has received the following information from Ray Howgego which is hopefully of interest and use to those readers who do have such facilities. (Ray can be contacted by E-mail on: howgego@easynet.co.uk)

1. General. A site run by a Mr. Bowdidge, in Canada, gives hypertext links to virtually every known source of railway information, including all timetables on-line. Some are very impressive - for example, the Finnish timetable even gives pictures of its stations and local sites of interest.

Access is also provided to a Russian enthusiast, D. Zinoviev, who has placed beautifully coloured maps of most of the Russian and ex-Russian network on the Net.

<http://www-cse.ucsd.edu/users/bowdidge/railroad/rail-gopher.html>

2. Israel. The official Israeli "home page", linked to a university, gives immediate hypertext links to all known Internet sites in Israel, including travel, tourism etc.

<http://gauss.technion.ac.il/~nyh/israel/sites.html>

3. Jordan. Jordan appears to have Internet access only indirectly, through the MIT in the USA. The official home page giving access to transport and communications information etc. is

<http://www.mit.edu:8001/activities/jordanians/jordan>

4. Lebanon. The home page gives access to railway information (rather unenlightening at present) and to all Lebanese sites, including the Beirut Times and a number of very pretty recent maps

<http://www.sparc.com/lebanon.html>

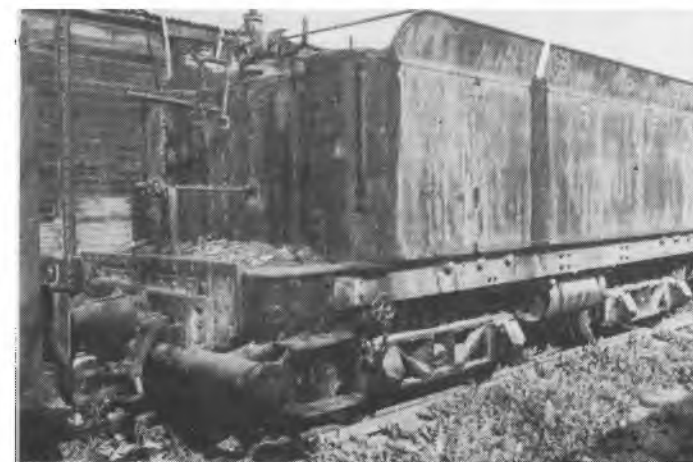
5. Syria. Syria at present has no Internet access but, according to an internet news group newsletter, is shortly to come on-line, although access will be restricted. However, there is a reasonable quantity of information available from sites elsewhere by Syrian students and expatriates. Detailed up-to-date maps are also available for downloading. The following site (actually at the University of Texas - always a depository of semi-classified information) provides access to everything Syrian:

<http://menic.utexas.edu/menic/countries/syria.html>

In addition, all countries are covered by the CIA depository of information at <http://www.odci.gov>

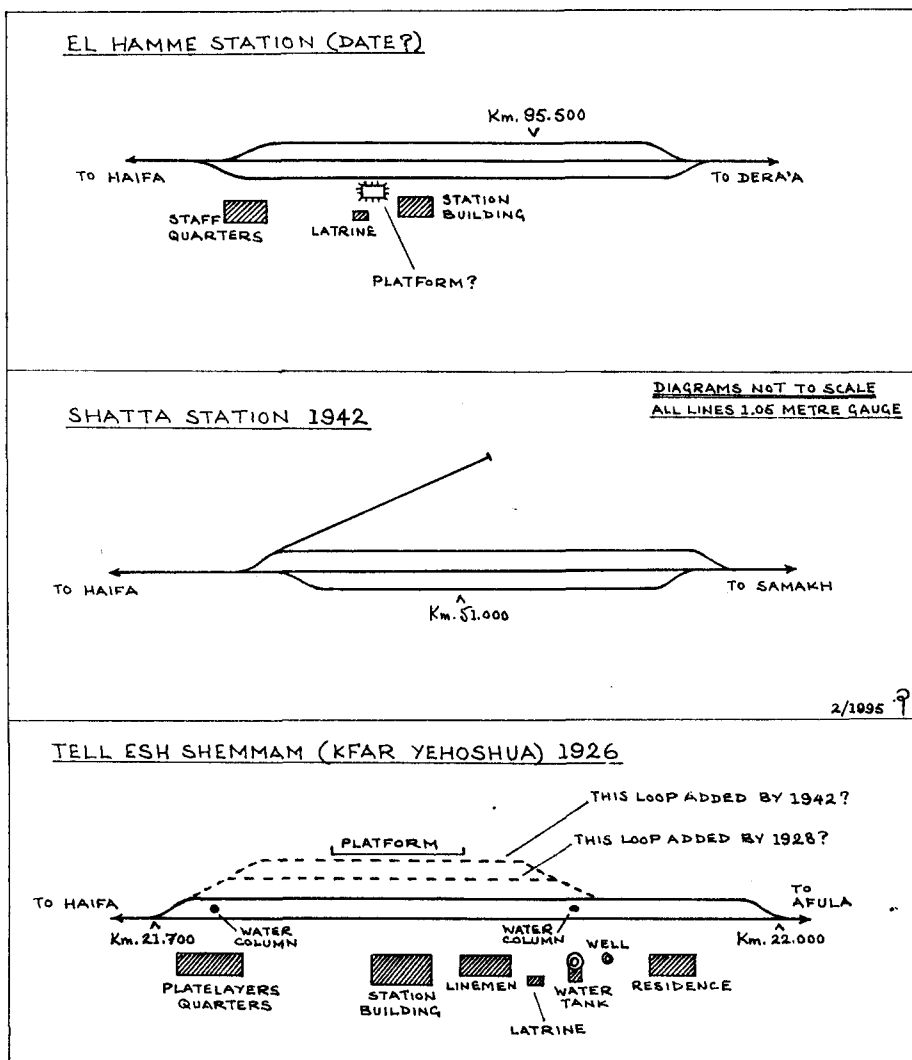
For those who know, the above will make some sense; for those who don't - sorry ! Hopefully "Harakevet" will one day appear on the Web too. Ray says that there are now several hundred Web sites carrying railway information.....

31:17 Back in issue 29:6, p.10, we made mention of photos of former Mazout carrier 1810 at Cadem Works, Damascus. Unfortunately the photos got left out ! Here are two shots showing what appears to be - though this is yet to be confirmed - an original Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway Baldwin tender. April 1995.
(Photos: Andy Wilson.)



31:18 THREE VALLEY RAILWAY STATIONS. By Paul Cotterell.

The original PR Ways & Works Dept. diagrams vary in the amount of detail recorded and this is reflected in my present sketches. There were four versions of the layout at Tel Esh Shemmam, from different dates, in the files. These show what appear to be progressive slight enlargements to the track layout here, as indicated. It seems that the goods loading platform opposite to the station building was pushed back as each additional loop was laid. Shatta was only a minor Hedjaz railway station and I wonder if this layout reflects wartime additions. There was some stone quarrying in the locality which might explain the siding. This site is now occupied by a maximum-security prison on the south side of the main road from Afula to Bet Shean.



31:19 "THE TIMES HISTORY OF THE WAR".

Frank Adam has sent a thorough gleaning of references in "The Times History of the (First World) War" and other journals, which readers may care to pursue:

- Vol. 4, p.328. The Turks took up the French track south of Damascus to build southwards from Afuleh to Tulkarm and Beer Sheba, but were hampered by local theft.
- Vol. 10, p.397. The British track was laid at 2/3rd. mile per day.
- Vol. 14, p.304. Muzzy picture of Egyptian Labour Corps building the railroad.
- Vol. 15, p.153. Picture of Beer Sheba station [in 1967 the building and its surround was a military office, but since then it has been turned into an arts centre.]
- Vol. 18, p.227. Picture of a troop train in open wagons. [Col. Patterson in "With the Judeans in the Palestine Campaign" comments that this was like advancing behind a pillar of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night - as per Book of Exodus.]
- Vol. 19, p.193. Afuleh captured with 8 locos, 2 trains and 40 lorries.
- Vol. 17, p.277. Light railway engines picture from Mesopotamia.

From "The Illustrated London (War) News". These are all good-quality photos.

- Vol. 150. (1917). p.767. Railway construction in Sinai including a very ancient es-LSWR 0-6-0 "Waterloo".
- Vol. 151. (1917). p.97. British railway war construction totalling 4,000 miles s.g.
 - p.747-8. Beer Sheba station.
 - p.752. Clear view of the camel-borne water tanks. (i.e. 'Fanatis').
 - p. 755. Artillery detraining at Gaza.
- Vol. 152. (1918). p.352. Egyptian labour building railway.
- Vol. 153. (1918). p.365-6. Trainload of camels for Palestine Front.

1929. p.453. Armoured train.
1936. p.17. Motor on rail wheels patrol; derailed 4-6-21.

- p.108. Marines guarding and bluejackets operating a 4-6-0.
- p.158. Armoured caboose and bluejackets.
- p.444. Rail patrol; tender engine and armoured wagon.
- p.486. R.N. patrol on rail trolley.
- 1937. p.746. Derailed 4-6-0.
- 1938. p.215. Lydda derailment.
 - p.348. Tank locomotive, Gaza bridge pillbox.
 - p.546. Burnt signal box and police post.
 - p.691. Arson in the sleeper dump.
 - p.738. Derailment; [good underview].
 - Cavalry move by rail, [horses 2 per wagon fore and aft, probably on 105 cm. line.]
 - p.739. Armoured car on rail wheels.
 - p.1159. Pillbox & Arab repair gang.
- 1945. p.552. Lydda signal box blown up.

Frank notes that the pictures are an interesting reflection on the Navy's "aid to civil power" and its own constitution in the steam age, when the engine-room department was three-quarters stokers and the Marines company crewed at least one of the major turrets of cruisers and battleships, plus the Gunnery Information transmitting station that linked the directors and turrets. At anchor in Haifa Bay the engine room crew were available to use their steam skills to run the railways abandoned by their (mostly Arab) footplatemen, while the guns (that would be sledge-hammers in the china shop of internal security) could release their marine crews for guard duties, and no doubt the telegraphists to man the signal boxes.

From Jacob Wahrman I have received a copy of part of a rather rare official British Directory of Palestine for 1923. From p.163ff:

PALESTINE RAILWAYS

Head Office: Haifa

Telegraphic Address : "Railways, Haifa."

- General Manager:- Co. R.B.W. Holmes, O.B.E.
- Asst. General Manager:- C.M. Campigli, M.C.
- Chief Mechanical Engineer:- H.A. Cotching.
- Chief Engineer:- M.S. Thompson.
- Traffic Manager:- J. Axler Bey.
- Superintendent of Stores:- J.A. Hawkes.
- Telegraph & Signal Engineer:- J.L. Price.
- Asst. Chief Accountant:- P.C.J. Baker.
- Secretary:- Capt. G. Ferguson.
- Asst. Mechanical Engineer:- A.L. Jones.
- Running Superintendent:- J. Mouchly.
- District Traffic Superintendent:- H. Simpson.
- Asst. District Traffic Supt.:- N. Tibshirani.
- Assistant Chief Engineer:- R.F. Scrivener.
- Assistant Accountant:- G. Khoury Bey.
- Carriage & Wagon Inspector:- J.A. Lavens.
- Paymaster:- T. Crawford.
- Asst. District Engineer:- F.H. Taylor.
- Asst. Supt. of Stores:- K.H. Vernon.
- District Running Superintendents:- J.D. York, Kantara;
D. Garnet, Ludd.
- Assistant Accountant:- P.H. Forbes.
- Inspector Ghaffir Force:- A. Mackie.
- Chief Boiler Inspector:- E. Morgan.

"The total length of the Palestine Railways is approximately 1250 kilos, including the branch lines and sidings, subdivided in the following sections:-

STANDARD GAUGE (4' 8½")

- Section Kantara, Haifa (Kantara, Rafa double line) Kilos. 617.315.
- Section Jaffa, Jerusalem..... " 86,527.

Section Rafa, Beersheba.....	"	59,550.
Ludd, Surafend Military Siding.....	"	4,350.
Kafr Jinis, Beit Nabala Quarry Siding.....	"	3,800.
Ras el Ain, Petah Tikvah Line (Under construction)	"	6,500.

NARROW GAUGE (3' 6")

Section Haifa, Acre.....	"	17,750.
Section Haifa, El Hamme.....	"	93,300.
Section Nasib South, Ma'an.....	"	323,000.
Section Afule, Nablus, Tulkeram.....	"	80,000.
Jenin Military Siding.....	"	2,190.

The Kantara, Rafa Section (approximately 200 kilos) is at present being operated by the Palestine Railways on behalf of the War Office and is known as the "Sinai Military Railway."

[Notes: At this point the S.M.R. was still double track; this is the only reference I have seen to a 'Jenin Military Siding'. The n.g gauge is given in Imperial rather than metric terms ! Ed.]

PALESTINE RAILWAYS MAIL LINE SERVICES. [sic.]

KANTARA EAST TO HAIFA.

(Daily, except Sundays).

Kantara East.....	Dep. 12.0 midnight.
Ludd Junction.....	Arr. 6.30 a.m.
Ludd Junction.....	Dep. 7.0 a.m.
Haifa.....	Arr. 9.30 a.m.

Dining and Sleeping Cars.

Dining Car to Haifa daily, EXCEPT Sundays.

Sleeping Car to Haifa daily, except Saturdays.

Sleeping Car to Jerusalem daily, EXCEPT Sundays.

HAIFA TO KANTARA EAST.

(Daily, except Sundays).

Haifa.....	Dep. 8.0 a.m.
Ludd Junction.....	Arr. 10.20 a.m.
Ludd Junction.....	Dep. 10.40 a.m.
Kantara East.....	Arr. 5.15 p.m.

There is through communication with Egypt, and trains connect at Kantara West daily with Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and other parts of Egypt.

First class accommodation with Dining and Sleeping Car Service exists on the main line as well as the Jaffa, Jerusalem section.

On 1st. January, 1921, the demolition of the Swing Bridge over the Suez Canal was commenced and vehicles are now sent across the Canal by means of a truck transporter, which so far has successfully coped with the traffic.

A regular weekly mixed train service for Goods and Passengers from Haifa to Amman, (Transjordania), was instituted on 10th. August, 1921.

North of Haifa, the Palestine Railways system terminates at El Hamme, and the section El Hamme - Deraa, (junction of the Hedjaz Railway to Medina) is operated by the Hedjaz Railway which in turn is controlled by the French Government.

There is through communication thrice weekly from Haifa to Damascus direct for passengers and goods. Trains are run as often as required."

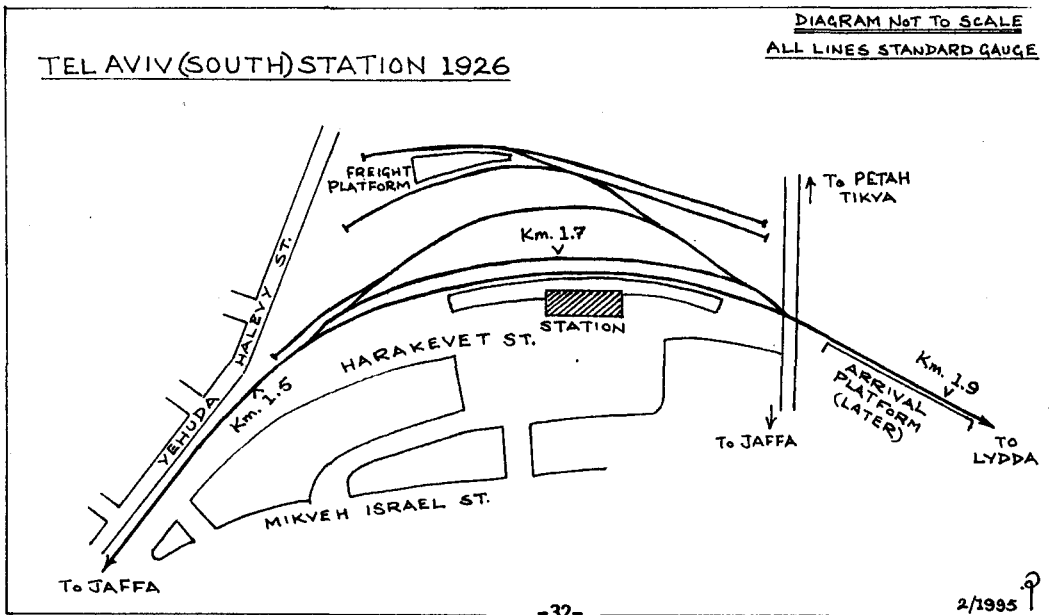


31:21 Kantara East: Baldwin 4-6-0 NO. 886 on the lifting jacks. April 1948. A steam crane with vertical boiler is just visible on left.

(Photo: John Lee).

In 1926 this was simply Tel Aviv station, for there was no other station in town - it was only considerably later that things became more complicated with several other such establishments being dotted around the burgeoning city. When I came to know the South station in 1969 there was an arrival platform just across the level crossing over the Petah Tikva road. Trains would pause here for passengers to get off before pulling into the main station itself - an arrangement I never really understood since there were only 200m separating them. I don't know when this arrival platform was built; in fact I'm ignorant of Tel Aviv South station's history as a whole. One PR Ways & Works Dept. diagram shows that, at one time, there was a scheme to rebuild a new station opposite the arrival platform, presumably to replace the original mean edifice, but nothing came of this and the cramped layout seen here had to suffice practically unchanged until the new white elephant was constructed out in the boonies in 1970. Last time I dropped into the old Tel Aviv South station site it was just about impossible even to imagine that a railway had once existed here, and the station yard had become the inevitable car park.

It is obvious that the WW1 60cm. gauge military line from Jaffa to the Yarkon River and beyond (see 25:13 and 26:13) was closely followed by Yehuda Halevy Street. This street can also be seen at the right of Plate 82 on page 83 of 'The Railways of Palestine and Israel'. From this photo, and a later PR layout diagram, we know that one subsequent alteration at Tel Aviv South station was the extension of that short siding by the 1.5km. mark to reach further in the Jaffa direction alongside Yehuda Halevy St. Not much else appears to have been done in the way of alterations to the station layout over the years.



A useful source book for details of economic and diplomatic treaties in the region is "The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary record", by J.C. Hurewitz, published by Yale University Press, 1979. It contains transcripts of major treaties and Concessions, suitably annotated; the treaty language is of course complex and verbose, reflecting standard legal formulae, but insight is given into the origins of some of the lines in the area.

From Vol. 2, covering the 1914-1945 period, come the following items of railway interest:

pp.360f. The IRAQ PETROLEUM COMPANY.

The Convention of this Company includes:

"Article 20: The Company may construct and operate :

a). Within plots selected under Article 5 or Article 6 hereof, and the Company's refineries, power houses, workshops, tank depots and stores in Iraq, such railways as may be necessary for its operations hereunder;

b). elsewhere within the defined area, such railways, of a gauge not exceeding two feet six inches, as may be necessary for the Company's operations hereunder, and such other railways (except for the purpose of a pipeline to a Mediterranean port) as may be necessary for the purpose of other pipelines, or for connecting such plots and premises with another railway or transportation system, or with sources of supply of materials produced in Iraq, unless suitable railway facilities for such purposes are already provided by the Government or by a person holding a concession from the Government;

c) elsewhere within the region formerly the wilayet of Basrah, such railways as may be necessary for the purpose of the company's pipeline, or for connecting the premises aforesaid with another railway or transportation system;

- provided that plans of any such railway, other than those to be constructed within such plots and premises, shall be submitted to the Government for their approval, which shall not be unreasonably withheld, nor shall their decision be delayed more than 60 days, and provided also that the Company shall construct no such railway of a gauge exceeding two feet six inches, otherwise than within such plots and premises, unless the

Government, or a person holding a concession from the Government in that behalf, do not within three months after receipt of a written request from the Company to construct the same agree to do so, or do not within six months after such receipt proceed with such construction, or do not complete the same within a reasonable time.

The Company may construct and operate such railways as may be necessary for the purpose of a pipeline to a Mediterranean port, provided that plans of the same shall be submitted to the Government for their approval, which shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed, no such railway shall be constructed of a gauge exceeding two feet six inches.

The Government shall have the right at any time, if the interests of the public so require, to purchase at a price to be agreed, or, failing agreement, fixed under Article 40 hereof, any railway of a gauge exceeding two feet six inches constructed by the Company, otherwise than within the plots and premises aforesaid, but on any railway so purchased the Government shall provide at reasonable rates all reasonable traffic requirements of the Company. The Company's rail vehicles shall not be sent over Government railways without the approval of the Government, and Government rail vehicles shall not be sent over the Company's railways without the approval of the Company, but such approval in either case shall not be unreasonably withheld, nor shall the decision be delayed more than 30 days."

[Note from Editor: Clearly the concern was to allow the IPC to build light railways for its own needs, without in any way infringing on the public traffic facilities of the metre-gauge and standard-gauge Iraq State Railways; According to Hughes (p.86) the IPC did build a short metre-gauge line north of Kirkuk to link with the Bagdad-Arbil line, and three 2-8-4T's were built by Hudswell Clarke (1852-4) in 1951-2 for this line.]

p.461. **The KUWAIT OIL COMPANY POLITICAL AND
CONCESSIONARY AGREEMENTS.**

Article 5(A): "For the purposes of its operations hereunder the Company shall have the right without hindrance to construct and to operate power stations, refineries, pipelines and storage tanks, facilities for water supply including boring for water, telegraph, telephone and wireless installations, roads, railways, tramways, buildings, ports, harbour, harbour works.....and any other such facilities or works which the Company may consider necessary...."

31:24 **"BRITISH RULE AND REBELLION" by H. J. Simson.**

This book was published by William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh & London, 1937. It deals with the Arab Revolt of 1936. The following comes from pages 132-141, 180-182, 194-5. The style is strange - a mixture of poetic fancy, gruff military descriptions of maps and topography, and references to London and the South of England - places clearly familiar to the author and, he must have assumed, to his readers.

"It is necessary first of all to take a quick tour round Palestine to see it as it was in early 1936, and is, in essentials, still. Fortunately, there is not much of it, and we need not bother about that long narrow triangle of almost empty desert stretching away south for a hundred miles to its apex at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. What matters is only 130 miles long by 70 wide at the south, between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean, narrowing to just over thirty miles wide along the northern frontier.

The points of importance are the towns and the communications, particularly those which serve as ways in for us, the main line from Kantara on the Suez Canal along the coast to Haifa, and Haifa itself, the only suitable port of entry. Another point of importance in the circumstances is the distribution of the Jewish settlements. With a hundred thousand times ten Arabs competing with as many times four Jews for the same country, the ruler had every prospect of doing a deal of ruling.

One normally arrives in Palestine from Port Said via Kantara, the journey taking just about twelve hours to either Haifa or Jerusalem. After covering more than half the distance through Egyptian desert comes the frontier, and twenty miles inside Palestine Gaza. Gaza has an aerodrome, one of the chain to the Far East, but is otherwise a secondary Arab town in a completely Arab area stretching away east to the Dead Sea. All the south of Palestine, in the area Bethlehem, Hebron, Beersheba, Gaza is Arab, but for two small Jewish settlements, one fifteen miles east of Gaza and the other just south of Bethlehem. It is an extensive area for Palestine, but relatively unimportant. In it desert merges into cultivation and the plain into hills. The communications are poor, all tracks, but for the railway and road leading north along the coast from Gaza, and the road from Beersheba through Hebron to Jerusalem.

Soon after passing Gaza northward the country becomes more fertile, and the area of Jewish settlement and orange groves begins. By the time Lydda is reached, an hour and a half from Gaza by train and about the same by road, one is in the midst of Jewish settlements, and can see the contrast between the squat, solid, closely grouped stone houses of an Arab village

and the ramshackle wooden bungalows of a Jewish one, looking like some new place in the once Wild West, deserving a name like Medicine Hat. One can also see the contrast between the picturesque flowing garments of the Arabs, capped by the thing like a duster, trailing to three points over their shoulders, which they wear on their heads, held there by what looks like a couple of turns of thin black rope, and the comparative nakedness of the Jews in shirts and shorts, and, as often as not, bareheaded. However, we are just as bad ourselves in most hot countries.

Lydda, an Arab town, is surrounded by Jewish settlement; an eight-mile half-moon lies all round the south of it; a ten by five mile egg five miles to the west of it, and south of that again a V with eight-mile legs and a detached egg. Ten miles north-west of Lydda lie the cities and ports of controversy, Jaffa and Tel Aviv, side by side. It takes no time to get there by a first-class road, and there lies contrast that shouts. Jaffa is all Arab, with good streets mixed with warrens, open shop fronts, much sitting about, and not much traffic. Tel Aviv seems invisibly darned to the north of Jaffa, but there is no mistaking it. It teems with life, traffic like Hammersmith Broadway, cafés, streets full of people buying from each other's shops, and houses in every stage of construction and of every ultra-modern shape. It looks like the site of a competition, open to architects and builders in concrete. On the northern edge of Tel Aviv, with its back to the sea-front, stands the Levant Fair, a jerry-built White City, and just behind it across the sands is the famous Tel Aviv jetty.

The coast of Palestine being a straight line all the way to Haifa, there are no harbours but Haifa. At Jaffa, ships anchored a mile or so offshore and took in and discharged cargo from lighters. The Arabs owned and worked the lighters, employing lightermen expert in handling them in spite of the surf. The lighters were kept in a harbour constructed for them at Jaffa. The Jews of Tel Aviv and the neighbourhood had most of the trade, so when fighting broke out in April 1936 between Arabs and Jews, or, in other words, Jaffa and Tel Aviv, the Arab lightermen went on strike. Furthermore, they stayed on strike throughout the 1936 rebellion, that being their contribution to the nationalist cause. The Jews then built a jetty at Tel Aviv from which goods can be loaded into or unloaded from lighters. They also built a lighter anchorage, and seem to have been able to blow the bluff off the word expert, as far as lightermen are concerned. They will, no doubt, soon have transit sheds on the spot instead of a Levant Fair, and that will be that.

Continuing the journey northward from Lydda by train one notices at once that the hills to the east seem to be edging nearer and nearer to the sea, lying somewhere close to the west, hidden by a low ridge covered by

perhaps to take the toy train and see more Jewish colonies.

The train turns its back on the sea and heads inland towards the south-east. Once more the steep scrub-covered slopes of Mount Carmel lie close on the right, and again the plain on the left is colonised by Jews. The plain narrows about ten miles from Haifa, and then gradually widens. Finding more room, the line edges away from Mount Carmel, stretched out seaward like a great thumb from the mountain hand of Palestine. Mount Carmel is all Arab, but for the little nail at the tip, the Jewish Hindhead.

The plain looks extremely fertile, and has now widened to five miles, and soon widens to ten. About twenty-five miles from Haifa, soon after Afulah, the line begins to go downhill. The town, perched high on the top of a hill away across the plain on the left, is Nazareth. It fades from sight as the toy train trundles down and down to Beisan, fifteen miles farther on. The line did not seem to climb at all from sea-level at Haifa, but it has definitely descended to Beisan, only three miles from the Jordan, deep in that great trench which holds the Sea of Galilee, the winding Jordan, and the fifty mile by ten Dead Sea. For miles and miles across the front stretches the trench wall on the farther side, the Mountains of Moab. And all the way to Beisan, which is Arab, there have been Jewish colonies extending over the plain, five of them, almost touching and continuous for all the forty miles, not far after all, but all the width of Palestine. What a little place is Palestine, only three miles of it left, and then beyond the river lies Transjordan, an Arab state with an Arab ruler, but in the mandate. There are no Jews there, where the inhabitants may walk about with rifles over their shoulders, and do.

The toy line does not seem to like the look of Transjordan and turns abruptly north, still swinging down among the rounded spurs of reasonable hills. Just after crossing the pipe-line, pushing Iraq oil to Haifa, it crosses the Jordan, enters another Jewish settlement, and passes close by the hydro-electric station, from which pylons bearing high-tension cables radiate away westward to illuminate the chosen. Five miles on lies the Sea of Galilee, or Lake Tiberias, looking rather like a loch in Scotland if the clouds hang low. The toy train seems to hate water for it turns again away, this time back to east, and departs into Syria.

Enough of that line and its toy train. From Samakh a run of half an hour by car, all along the edge of the lake, brings one to Tiberias....."

p.180: "After the rising in 1929, when at least 470 people were murdered or wounded apart from those killed and wounded in restoring order, only three death sentences were carried out, although twenty-nine death sentences were passed by the courts. That gave some indication of what

orange groves. The train runs on through a wide plain with unfenced fields. Soon fingers from the hills extend closer to the line, with here and there Arab villages of dumpy, solid, flat-roofed, stone houses clustered on their knuckles.

Fifteen miles north of Lydda is Qalqilya, an Arab village, and ten miles farther on Tulkarm, another. Up to there all on the right of the line has been Arab, Arab for miles, up into the hills and beyond; all to the left has been Jew, Jew to the sea, four great fat eggs of Jewish settlements, almost continuous, filling the plain. At Tulkarm the hills come right down to the railway line, which retaliates by edging way from them and making for the sea. Twenty miles north of Tulkarm the line unmistakably arrives at the sea, but the hills keep chasing after it. Ten miles farther on another nest of three Jewish settlements has been passed, the first two small, only three or four miles across, the third, a regular cuckoo's egg fifteen miles in length. On the left lie sand-dunes, the sea obviously close, then a ruined castle on a knob, and soon the line is almost jostled on the beach by Mount Carmel.

For five miles north of the cuckoo's egg there is nothing but the steep scrub-covered slopes of Mount Carmel on the right and the twinkling Mediterranean, breaking languidly on a straight line of sand, on the left. Then, suddenly, the train finds itself running into the sea, dead ahead, and saves itself by turning east round the curve of another Jewish egg, number thirteen settlement, and so into Haifa. The smokestacks and masts of ships show over the tops of lines of sheds, on the left the houses thicken and close in, while close and high on the right, Mount Carmel seems to have allowed itself to be crowned with a kind of Hindhead.

If one did not enter Palestine via Gaza by train the alternative would normally be to arrive by sea at Haifa. Haifa is a strange place. All the flat part down by the harbour is Arab, except a neat little German corner. The upper part and the crown on the top of Mount Carmel is Jewish. The crown resembles a half-finished hill station, with roads twisting about in loops and curves, all ready for more houses to spring up. The price of land up there rivals the price in the middle of London. The shapes of the houses, each one standing in its own plot, vary as much as in Tel Aviv. They are of stone or concrete, and almost all are new, except for an occasional copper-roofed German bungalow. In the evening the central Jewish part of Haifa is thronged, dense crowds bustling round the cinemas, while below, on the flat, the streets are almost deserted.

From Haifa one can go to Syria, either by toy train to Damascus, or by car along the coast road through Acre, which lies white in the sun eight miles away across the crescent-shaped bay. The frontier is quite close, only twelve miles beyond Acre, so one can be in Syria within the hour. Better

might happen next time, though not even the most sanguine rebel could have expected that not one death sentence would be carried out after six months of rebellion, entailing much greater loss of life than any of the previous disorders.

Behind the Palestine Police, to meet the case of serious internal disorder, stood H.M. Forces garrisoning Palestine. By a redistribution of commands between the Army and the Royal Air Force, Palestine had come under the latter, and the commander of the forces was an Air Vice-Marshal. But the High Commissioner, who was a Lieutenant-General on the active list, had extended powers as if he were commanding a fortress, and exercised command as Commander-in-Chief.

The garrison consisted of two squadrons and four sections of armoured cars of the Royal Air Force, covering Palestine and Transjordan, and two battalions of the Army, both stationed in Palestine. There was also a local force, the Transjordan Frontier Force, an Arab unit partly mounted and partly mechanised, about one thousand strong, officered by British officers. This unit was mainly recruited and stationed in Transjordan, but was available for duty in the eastern part of Palestine.

The two infantry battalions were stationed, one in Jerusalem, with a company at Sarafand, near Jaffa and Tel Aviv, and the other at Haifa. The battalion in the south was in a position to deal with Jerusalem and Jaffa, and, of necessary, Hebron, all centres of trouble in the past. The battalion at Haifa could keep that seaport in order and detach companies to Nablus and Safad, old centres of disorder in the north. There was nothing in hand but the armoured cars to guard communications, and the situation was complicated by the lack of a through main road in the maritime plain between Jaffa and Haifa. This defect appears to have been due to fear that a through road might compete with the main line of the government-owned Palestine railways. In consequence, the only through road from south to north ran from Jerusalem through Nablus to Haifa, through very difficult hilly Arab country.

The nearest reinforcements in case of serious trouble were in Egypt, and must use either the desert road from Suez through Hebron, or the main line into Palestine through Gaza. After Egypt there was Malta, from which reinforcements might be sent, in which case they would probably land at Haifa. There was not much margin of safety in Palestine itself, taking all the circumstances into consideration. A policy of nipping trouble quickly in the bud seemed to be indicated...."

p. 194: "The Jaffa riots they used as a pretext to rouse the people. Without the Arab leaders there would have been no spontaneous rising. In fact, the

response was not spontaneous at all, and the Arab people took a good deal of rousing.

It was not till eight days after the end of the Jaffa riots and four days after the Higher Arab Committee had announced its self-appointed existence and its demands on the government - namely, the 29th. April - that disorder became spread over all the country. On that day a convoy of cars escorted by police was stopped near Jenin by Arabs and forced to go back to Nazareth for military aid, after losing one car which was set on fire. At Nazareth a crowd of about two thousand Arabs collected, and could not be dispersed till after the police had opened fire. At Nablus, Jaffa and Haifa police patrols were fired at and there were cases of arson. At Acre some railway stores were set on fire. At Tulkarm another crowd of about two thousand had to be forcibly dispersed by the police. At Beisan a police patrol was fired at, and in Jerusalem there were cases of arson, and a Jew was stabbed. In addition to these activities, several attacks were made on Jewish colonies.

That was the position at the end of April. All the Arab shops were shut, Arab buses and taxis were laid up, the Arab lightermen in Jaffa were on strike, the Arab leaders were agitating and urging; but for some reason Arab government servants, including the railwaymen, who in Palestine are government employees, remained at duty."



31:25 Marines and crew from "H.M.S. Sussex" at Haifa during the 1936 riots; apparently ready for an "undercover" foray, hidden by tarpaulins in standard PR open wagons - though those ladders must have been a bit of a giveaway! (Photo: Courtesy of Martin Allen.)