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הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
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80:1.

A calm, quiet spot in a troubled land; At Beirut St. Michel narrow-gauge locomotives return to the jungle. The ugly modern building behind is a part of the urban jungle. (Photo: Hermann Neidhart.)

The big news for the Editor is that his doctoral thesis on 'Arthur Kirby and the Last Years of Palestine Railways 1945-1948' was formally accepted by King's College, University of London and, to put it politely, he has been 'doctored', with effect from 1st. February 2008. The culmination of over 25 years of collecting and copying and hoarding information in various archives, libraries and musea, plus many interviews with eye-witnesses of the period, many of whom are no longer with us, and twelve years of attempts to sort the material into a suitable form, the book is also a tribute to help received from many friends over the years, and especially to Paul Cotterell z.l. who found all sorts of interesting tidbits in the Archives. I am proud and happy to say that he received and read a draft issue lasty ear.

The aim is now to turn it into something that might just be possible to publish; in the meantime there are several draft versions which need to be coordinated and the 'final' version prepared. I am also looking for a publisher and have put some 'feelers' out. At the very worst I can get it photocopied and bound at a local copyshop, probably for around 30 Euros pro copy and without any illustrations. But it would be nice to wait a while and see if something more professional could be managed. I ask for 'Savlanut!'

In the meantime work on 'Harakevet' (and other projects) has been delayed. There are still some articles from Paul's computer stored, but I am hoping we can locate the illustrations he intended to go with them, so these will be held back for now. Aharon Gazit, Evyatar Reiter and others sent me many photos electronically which were then, alas, lost when something nasty invaded my computer (in spite of many expensive precautions) and all my stored e-mails were deleted.... (The back-ups proved unreadable. The Editor is an unashamed Technophobe.) Steve Waldenberg has been trying to sift through the lists of recipients, especially of complimentary copies, and Jeremy Topaz has been looking for ways to reduce printing costs. So things do not stand still, it is just that sometimes there is little to show for the efforts. Some new contributors are sending material, all of which is welcomed.

Enjoy!

The Editor.



80:3. An unusual train at an unusual spot. The DGEG special train enters Ramat Hovav station, south of Beer Sheba, which is not served by passenger trains. 14th. November 2004. (Photo: Thomas Meyer-Eppler).

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). FREE NEWSPAPERS.

This plague (for such it seems to be to the Editor) has hit Israel too. According to press releases of 12.12.2007 and 24.123.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. the following conditions are to be imposed on the distribution of free newspapers at railway stations (although no tender as such is required for the distribution rights.) The paper must reach 150,000 copies daily, must have been distributed for at least 3 months during the past year, the editor has to prove his experience as such for at least the previous three years within Israel, and the fee for permission will be \$428,000 plus VAT. The permission will be given for a test period until 31.10.2008, after which the railways reserve the right to extend and/or cancel it.

(The Editor reckons this will probably just about cover the cost of removing tons of unwanted and wasted newsprint from trains, platforms, bins etc.)

(b). EARTHQUAKE PREPARATION.

On 19.12.2007 a training exercise named 'Aurora Light' was commenced at railway headquarters; the aim is for IR to be prepared to be a strategic transport means in an emergency situation, thus providing transportation services for evacuation forces as well as first aid. All senior managers participated; the fictional scenario involved an earthquake of 7.2 on the Richter Scale, focussed in the Jordan Valley. This would leave the northern part of Israel suffering severe damage with thousands of casualties, hundreds of thousands homeless, and heavy damage to infrastructure; Central Israel would also suffer casualties and collapsed buildings, and the rail network could also expect infrastructure and building damage. The last such exercise took place in 2006.

(c). NEW RAILWAYS DIRECTORATE CHAIRMAN.

On 26.12.2007 the Transport & Roads Safety Minister Shaul Mofaz appointed Mr. Jacob Efrati, currently the General Manager of the Land Directorate, as the new Chairman of the Railways Directorate. Mr. Efrati is 58, married with four children, and has fulfilled several posts as Manager of National Infrastructures, Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Jerusalem Municipality etc. He has an M.A. in Economics & Statistics as well as Business Management from the Hebrew University.

Minister Mofaz and Mr. Efrati have decided that the targets for for the railways in

the coming years will be focussed on Safety, Punctuality, Passenger Services, strategic development programmes, and links between the periphery and the centre. Mofaz added that Efrati's vast experience in a variety of posts will undoubtedly help him to bring the railways to their desired targets.

(d). GRADE SEPARATIONS.

The National Roads Co. has announced commencement of works on the long-awaited grade separation on the Ashdod - B'nei Darom road interchange and level crossing on the line to Ashdod and Ashkelon. This involves closure of several roads and changes in the locations of bus stops. The works started on 25.12.2007 and should last until March 2008.

(e). SOLDIERS CAUSING OVERCROWDING.

From 'Ha'aretz' English edition, 14.01.2008: "Show up at the base 3 hours later: Railways offer IDF half fare to reduce crowding." By Avi Bar-Eli.

"Israel Railways has proposed a 50% cut in fares for soldiers - on condition that they report to their bases three hours later on Sunday mornings. The problem, as every commuter knows, is overcrowding. Every Sunday morning between 6:00 to 10:00 AM. the trains are packed, with 142% more passengers than on a regular weekday.

Railways Director-General Yitzhak Harel, a retired general himself, made the new offer to the Defense Ministry, as part of ongoing talks between the railroad and the ministry. Soldiers now get a 22% discount, thanks to a subsidy from the Defense Ministry. Soldiers make up 25% of train passengers, but on Sundays and Thursdays, when many leave and return to their bases for the weekend, the number of soldiers riding the rails jumps 222%, and that is the source of the overcrowding. The worst crowding on Sunday mornings is on trains leaving Haifa and Nahariya in the direction of Tel Aviv and Be'er Sheva. The overcrowding also causes a 10% increase in delays. On Sunday mornings the Railways employ all their available equipment, and that is still not enough. The bottlenecks are the limited tracks through the center of Tel Aviv, the Ayalon; and the single track to Be'er Sheva.

In the past the Railways asked the IDF to change the schedule for reporting at southern bases. In addition, the idea of soldier-only trains was proposed, but the ministry and the army have taken their time in answering the Railways' suggestions. Soldiers bring in an estimated NIS 130 million a year in revenues for the Railways."

(f). JAFFA STATION CONVERSION.

"Tel Aviv converting Neve Tzedek train station into cultural center." By Arik Mirovsky, From 'Ha'aretz': 31/01/2008.

"The District Planning and Building Appeals Committee will allow the Tel Aviv municipality to proceed with its plans to develop the Neve Tzedek train station site. The committee rejected an appeal filed by neighborhood residents, who said that operation of the site as an entertainment, commercial and recreation center would harm their quality of life.

The station site is located in the south-western area of the historical Neve Tzedek neighborhood. It was built in 1891, and served the first railroad constructed in Israel, which connected Jaffa with Jerusalem. The site includes a number of structures, including the late 19th-century tile and brick factory constructed by the Templars. Before being handed over to the Tel Aviv municipality, the site had been used for decades by the IDF, and closed to the public. The buildings, many of which have been designated for preservation, fell into neglect.

The prohibitive cost of renovating and preserving the site, which it estimated at tens of millions of shekels, led the municipality to market the site to entrepreneurs, for operation as a cultural, entertainment and recreation center for a period of 10 years, in exchange for renovation and restoration of the buildings, in addition to rent. The Ezra V'Bitaron construction company is currently renovating four structures at the municipality's expense, and has issued a tender for renovation and operation of 16 others that had been part of the tile factory.

Neve Tzedek residents claim that permission to use the site as a cultural center had been granted illegally, as the land is allocated for public buildings and light industry. Residents are concerned that entertainment usage will permanently disrupt the quality of life in the neighborhood, and increase traffic and parking problems. In addition, they say, there is no need for an entertainment and recreation center in the area.

Although the appeals committee rejected the residents' claims, the committee did order that all of the structures on the site must be fitted with acoustical insulation. The committee also ordered that any background music played at the site be silenced at 11:00 PM., and ordered the municipality to place signs for direction of traffic leading to the site on routes circumventing the neighborhood.

The appeals committee accepted the position of the lower planning committee that the existing plans allowed for stores to be located at the site. Nevertheless, the committee ruled that schools, colleges, production studios, hotels and hostels, as the municipality had wished, are not allowed, because these do not meet the criteria for permitted usage. The appeals committee also limited the number of cafes and restaurants that are to be allowed to operate on the site."

(g). FUTURE PLANS.

From a Press Notice of 05.02.2008: by IR Director-General Yitshak (Hakki) Harel: "We aim to achieve a regular punctuality level

of 92%; timekeeping is the travelling public's most important parameter and our top priority."

The 2007 Summary: 31.8 Million passengers; a daily average of 110,406 passengers; 93,678 passenger trains. The newly-appointed Director-General of Israel Railways Yitshak (Hakki) Harel today summed up the year 2007 and set out the work plan for 2008 - 2010. In his presentation of the programme for the coming three years Harel named as the central goal the improvement of IR's time-keeping standards to a steady level of 92%. "I regard the railways' punctuality level as the first and foremost parameter in our service revolution, therefore I have set a target for IR to strive for international standards."

The work plan presented by Harel for the next three years addresses three areas: service, development and safety. Harel pointed out that the object of the plan is to make IR more punctual, more advanced, and safer during the coming three years. The programme provides for the following:

§ In the field of service - maintenance of a consistent 92% punctuality level.

§ In the field of development - 87 coaches, 6 locomotives, 4 stations, 300 km. of permanent way.

§ In the field of safety - completion of 35 - 57 grade separation schemes (depending on budget); 24 radar installations; and installation of VMD (Video Motion Detection) systems.

The figures for 2007 show that IR continues to strengthen its position as Israel's fastest-growing transport infrastructure. In the course of the year just ended the number of railway users grew by 12%. During that year 31.8 Million passengers were carried by IR (approx. 110,400 on average per day), compared to 28.4 Million in 2006. In terms of passenger train movements, some 94,000 trains were operated in 2007, a 12.2% increase over 2006. Growth was also recorded in goods train traffic in 2007: 7.9 Million tonnes of goods were hauled during the year, compared to 7.6 Million tonnes in 2006 - 4% more. In December 2007 a total of 3.11 Million passengers went by train - an all-time record. In the course of 2007 a total of 17 railway safety incidents occurred: 3 train-road vehicle collisions at level crossings, 2 collisions outside level crossings, 5 suicides, 1 attempted suicide, and 6 pedestrians hit.

(h). RADAR DETECTION OF OBSTACLES-

From a press release of 26.02.08 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"The railways are installing radar systems for detecting obstacles on tracks at level crossing No. 208 - where the important road No. 44 (which by-passes Ramla) crosses the railway line between Lod and Ramla; the second one is at Ashdod-Ad-Halom junction near the station with the same name.

The aim is to increase safety at these

places; it brings the total number of installed radars to 22; last year such radars were installed at Beit-Yehushua (prior to completion of the grade separation), Atlit, Hadera West, Kfar-Vitkin, Zikhron-Yaakov South, Kfar Shemaryahu, and Haifa-Bat-Galim."

More radars have been purchased, and their locations will be arranged according to the decision of the Upper Steering Committee for Level Crossings. It should be mentioned that at least two of the above-mentioned level crossings are soon to be replaced by grade separations, where works are at a very advanced stage.

(i). MODI'IN OPENING.

The final date of opening the Modi'in Central station is now Saturday night, 29.03.08; it depends on some works to be completed around the station regarding access ways for pedestrians, taking into consideration the huge mall still under construction nearby.

However, one thing is sure: one of the nearby streets will be called "Rehov Ha-rakevet", which in Hebrew means: "Railway Street"; streets with this name exist at several places, including Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem, but trains do not exist there any more, unlike at Modi'in.

(j). REALIGNMENT OF JERUSALEM LINE.

Works are well advanced on the realignment of a curvaceous section of line near Wadi Sarar and on towards Na'an; this will include a concrete viaduct over the busy main road. Aharon wrote in February:-

"The railways are building at the moment 33 grade separations to replace dangerous level crossings. One of the interesting grade separations is being built over road No. 3 which runs from Ashdod on the Mediterranean Sea north-east to Modi'in, Jerusalem, and Beit-Shemesh.

The old rebuilt line to Jerusalem crosses this road between Na'an junction and Nahal-Sorek station (used only for trains meeting, and remotely controlled) as well as running on an historical bridge over Sorek river running near road No.3.

This road has become very important and faces severe bottle necks, felt particularly at rush hours, mainly due to the fact that it had only two lanes; the trains to and from Jerusalem are just adding traffic congestion.

It was the National Roads Company which decided that enlarging the road into four lanes would include a quite big bridge functioning as grade separation, as well as track re-alignment and straightening, putting an end to the 106-years-old sharply curved sections as well as slashing up to 10 minutes from travel time to Beit-Shemesh and Jerusalem.

Works are in a well progressive stage and will involve a temporary diversion

of the line in order to enable free working as well as causing minimum disruptions to traffic; the old alignment as well as the old (though rebuilt) bridge will be used for bicycle riders." (photo back page).

80:5. TENDERS.

(i). Tender BN/KB/07/07. A frame agreement for construction of fences along railway lines in the northern part of Israel. To include: survey, measuring, planning and marking the fence alignment, supply and installation of the fence, safety fencing, repair and maintenance works on the existing fences, supply and installation of passages and gates. The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to a further 36 months. Bids by 14.01.2008.

(ii). Tender No. MS/RC/2008/4. For 12 taxi stations at the following railway stations: Binyamina, Netanya; Kiryat-Gat; Ashdod Ad-Halom; Ashkelon; Hod-HaSharon (Nordau; Jerusalem-Malkha; Modi'in Outskirts; and Kfar Sava Central (Sokolov). The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to a further 24 months, Bids by 24.01.2008.

(iii). Tender No. MC/RC/04/07. For Overhaul and Repair Services for the ZF-Ecomat 5HP600 Transmissions of IC3 DMU coaches. For two years and additional option of a further four years. Bids by 14.02.2008.

(iv). Tender No. HN/RC/01/08. For Manufacture and Supply of various types of Timbers. Incl. Railroad Sleepers 260cm., Crossing Timbers 260 - 490 cm. and Bridge Timbers 25x26x280cm. during a period of two years. Bids by 09.04.2008.

(v). Tender No. HN/KB/01/08: Building a new passage for garbage trucks near Petakh-Tikva Sgula station. Works include: preparatory and dismantling works, earthworks, roadbeds and infrastructures, asphalt, concrete, supporting walls, drainage, sealing, electricity, communication, etc. Implementation time: 10 months. Latest bidding date: 17.03.2008.

(vi). Tender No. MH/RC/01/08: An annual frame agreement for current supply of computerized work stations for sites all over the network. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 26.03.08.

(vii). Tender No. BN/KB/03/08: Upgrading Yavne East station. Works include: earthworks, cast concrete at site, pre-stressed concrete, construction works, sealing, carpentry and frames, sanitation facilities, electricity, plaster, covering and paving, painting, aluminum, air-conditioning and ventilation, locksmith, industrialized elements, piles, internal and external furniture, ultra low voltage, signs, water and sewage lines, gardening and irrigation, access roads, upgrading and extending the existing platform, etc.

Works consist on 2 structures: Structure 01: station building. Structure 02: development works and a parking area. Implementation time: 12 months. Latest bidding date: 10.03.2008.

80:6. LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT.

A. TEL AVIV.

(i). PAYMENTS.

From a press release of 23.12.2007 by NTA: The State of Israel transferred some days ago the sum of \$11M to the Red Line concessionaire group MTS as an initial payment; this amounts to 0.5% of the construction payment as agreed when the contract between the State and the concessionaire was signed. The payment was made partially in NIS and partially in Euros, as agreed. According to Mr. Yishai Dotan, the General Manager of MTS, this payment will be put towards the activities involved in the engineering planning required for the most complex infrastructure project ever carried out in Israel.

The payment was made even though the project's financial alignment is itself not fully completed - this is expected only in May 2008. It is assumed at NTA that planning work will be completed in parallel with the financial closure negotiations, thus enabling a start to be made on the boring and excavation works at the underground stations along the 22km. alignment between Petah Tikva and Bat Yam as soon as possible after the financial 'closure'. A detailed presentation had already been made by MTS to clarify the planning milestones in various areas of the works - engineering, rail disciplines, systems etc.

The next payment will be transferred from the State to MTS around March 2008.

(As background information: MTS was announced as the winning concessionaire for the BOT Tender for the Red Line on 32.12.2006. The Group comprises Africa-Israel, Siemens Transportation of Germany, Egged Buses, CCECC of China, Soares Da Costa of Portugal and HTM of the Netherlands. The concession is for 32 years. The total State payment will be \$1.8 Billion, while the cost of the project as a whole is estimated at \$2.6 Billion. The line is to be so constructed that 11km. (50% of the total length) between B'nei Berak and Tel Aviv will be underground, with 10 of the total 31 stations to be underground. Traffic is forecast at 100 to 120 Million passengers p.a. Works are expected to start in the first quarter of 2008 and continue for about 5 years, thus completion is expected around the first quarter of 2013.)

(ii). MUNICIPAL OBSTRUCTIONISM.

From 'Ha'aretz', 18.12.2007. By Yigal Hai

"An elevated urban light rail transit system will be running in Tel Aviv by the end of 2012, the Metropolitan Mass Transit System (MTA) said yesterday. The 22-kilometre line, dubbed the Red Line, is slated to run from Petah Tikva to Bat Yam through Tel Aviv.

Another elevated train, the Green Line, which originates at both Holon and Rishon Letzion and runs to Herzliya via Tel Aviv,

has been "frozen" for the past decade due to the Tel Aviv municipality's insistence on building the line's northern section underground.

In 1998, the government decided that the two lines would be planned and carried out together, as the first stage in the project to provide a complex non-polluting transportation system in the Dan region. But Tel Aviv objected to an elevated line winding along Allenby street, the Carmel market, Dizengoff street, Masaryk Square, Ichilov Hospital and the Arlosoroff railway station.

The Transportation Ministry is interested in an elevated line, which is significantly less expensive and faster to build than the underground one, but the city remains adamant. Meanwhile, intolerable traffic continues to clog the city and pollute the air. Environmental groups say the city is not advancing a mass transit system as an alternative to private vehicles.

Haaretz has found that the city has advanced 10 plans in recent years to build new parking lots, consisting of some 12,000 parking spaces along the Green Line's route.

"The city's policy is making better traffic solutions less worthwhile," said the Tel Aviv director of the Society for the Protection of Nature, Anat Barkai-Nevo. "The Green Line is essential to the city and visitors to it. Building parking lots along the way could reduce the activity on the line, wasting public funds."

The municipality denied it was holding up the Green Line. "An elevated line is not compatible with the city's expected traffic capacity. In addition, an elevated line would clog the traffic."

B. JERUSALEM.

On 14.01.2008 Sybil Ehrlich wrote:- "I was in the right place at the right time... this morning, quite unexpectedly, while in the bus on my way to work I saw from about 10 kilometres away that the final section on the mast for the Calatrava bridge was about to be attached. (They've been promising it "tomorrow" for weeks; it was apparently going to be put up in time for Bush's visit - as if he would have noticed, haha - but the day before that we had the most torrential rain so nothing came of that.)

Anyway, there I was sitting in the bus... we got as far as the start of the new Road No. 9 - the entrance to north Jerusalem in the Arazim Valley - and I could see that the main highway was closed and all traffic was diverted onto Road No. 9. I guessed it was because of the installation. When I eventually arrived, I rushed around taking photos. Later in the day I saw the new section had been installed."

A report reads:

"The final section of the 118-metre-high concrete and steel mast of the Bridge of Strings at the western entrance to the city was gingerly hoisted into position Monday,

to the great relief of light-rail project spokesman Shmuel Elgrabli and Moriah, the municipal company erecting the bridge.

With the last segment of the suspension bridge's pylon now in place, work will now proceed in securing the 66 cables, each 5 cm. thick, which will bear the enormous stress of the 4,500-ton structure.

Elgrabli termed the feat "highly complex," and declined to speculate when the cable installation would be completed. At the same time, work will be carried out on the pedestrian promenade that forms an integral part of the cantilever bridge, he said. With the cables finally in place, the temporary pillars currently propping up the bridge will then be removed, the track bed laid and traffic flow restored.

Through bitter experience, Elgrabli has learned the pitfalls of issuing overly-optimistic construction timetables. The long-delayed light rail transit system, or more accurately the 13.8-km. initial phase of the Red Line, has undergone countless revisions of planning and fitful construction over the last decade. Initially slated to begin operating in March 2006, it was delayed until January 5, 2009, and then postponed again. Elgrabli won't commit to a new date for the ceremonial ribbon-cutting but promises the first tram will be running sometime in May 2010, well into the tenure of Jerusalem's next mayor.

Until then, crews are working from opposite ends of the urban infrastructure mega-project and will meet in the middle. Progress on the track laying is clearly visible from the Pisgat Ze'ev northeast terminus, along Derech Shuafat and following Route 60 south to French Hill. At the far southwestern end, rails have been laid along sections of Sderot Herzl from Bayit Vegan to Beit Hakerem.

Work will begin shortly on Jaffa Road, the city's main artery which in parts is only two lanes wide. The first section to be affected, beginning in mid-February, will be from the Central Bus Station almost to the Mahaneh Yehuda market.

Jaffa Road will not be completely closed, Elgrabli promised, and buses and taxis will continue to navigate through the warren of construction rather than be re-directed through Rehov Agrippas, as City Hall traffic engineers had originally proposed.

At the same time, work will advance south from French Hill to the former Mandelbaum Gate along Route 60. Some time in June, track laying crews will proceed from Mahaneh Yehuda to Kikar Davidka, and from the Mandelbaum Gate past the Old City's ramparts to Kikar Safra. Work on the final section, linking Kikar Safra to Kikar Davidka, will begin in July or August, Elgrabli said, estimating that the whole job would take some one and a half years."

C. HAIFA.

"First stage of Haifa's urban mass transit proj-

ect to open Tuesday." By Fadi Eyadat. From 'Ha'aretz' 18.12.2007: "

"Haifa has for all practical purposes given up on the idea of a light-rail train, but starting in 2010, it will be the first of the three big cities to offer its citizens an advanced mass transit system. The first stage of the city's Matronit urban mass transit project will open Tuesday on Ha'atzmaut Street.

The new mass transit system for the country's third-largest city and its northern suburbs is basically a very large bus running on wheels, which can hold 150-200 passengers. It will have its own special bus lanes, and a set of sensors will automatically change traffic lights on its route to grant the buses priority. The same sensors can also provide passengers accurate information on travel times and stations.

In less than two years, the main Matronit line will start its 25-kilometre route in Bat Galim by the sea, and then travel via the lower city center and through the Haifa Bay area to the Krayot, ending in Kiryat Bialik. Two branch lines will reach Hadar Hacarmel in Haifa and Kiryat Ata. It is being built by the city-owned company Yefe Nof.

Haifa is the only Israeli city with a real underground subway, the Carmelit, built in the 1950s. However, despite improvements in the 1990s, almost no one uses it since the main business areas of the city have moved.

The new system is not electrified, but diesel powered. However, according to Yefe Nof CEO Doron Magid, the new buses meet the strictest new European standards, and also reduces the use of private vehicles, which are the main cause of urban air pollution. Magid says the lack of electrification and tracks sped up the project enormously, as there was no need for lengthy planning and approval as in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Also, the project will cost only about NIS 1 Billion, about 10 percent of Tel Aviv's light-rail project.

'Matronit' is a play on words - while it sounds like it is based on the English word "Metro," in Hebrew it means a respected woman."

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. NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). PALESTINE, TEXAS.

This is just a whimsicality but it won't go away. In 'C.R.J.' No. 152 p. 276: "Texas State Railway: This line has been reprieved, with operations taken over by American Heritage Railways (also operators of Durango & Silverton). The line is no longer a Texas State Park. The basic service is of one return train a day from both Palestine and Rusk, is to be retained, although often only one of the trains is steam-hauled. Further setbacks have been a minor collision and flooding causing a washout in July 2007, which interrupted services. Repairs were expected to be completed by the end of 2007. Check www.texasstaterr.com."

(b). THE END OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN THE NEAR EAST:

From "firstworldwar.com":

"Following the British success in capturing Jerusalem in December 1917 further progress north was effectively stalled in the face of strengthened German forces until September 1918. In part this was because troops had been hastily transferred to the Western Front in March 1918 to assist in the Allies' defence against the German Spring offensive.

Thus on 18 September Sir Edmund Allenby - British regional Commander-in-Chief - launched the Battle of Megiddo at Rafat. This set in trail an unbroken series of victories including those at Damascus and Beirut (the latter seized by a French fleet). It was in light of these overwhelming victories that Turkey sued for an armistice of surrender, which was duly agreed on 30 October 1918 in Mudros. British forces subsequently took possession of Constantinople on 10 November 1918.

Reproduced below is the text of Allenby's official report on fighting at Megiddo, dated 20 September 1918.

"Our left wing, having swung around to the east, had reached the line of Bidieh, Baka, and Messudiyeh Junction, and was astride the rail and roads converging at Nabulus.

Our right wing, advancing through difficult country against considerable resistance, had reached the line of Khan-Jibeit, one and one-fourth miles northeast of El-Mugheir and Es-Sawieh, and was facing north astride the Jerusalem-Nabulus road.

On the north our cavalry, traversing the Field of Armageddon, had occupied Nazareth, Afule, and Beisan, and were collecting the disorganized masses of enemy troops and transport as they arrived from the south. All avenues of escape open to the enemy, except the fords across the Jordan between Beisan and Jisred-Dameer were thus closed.

East of the Jordan Arab forces of the King of the Hejaz had effected numerous demolitions on the railways radiating from Deraa, several important bridges, including one in the Yurmak Valley, having been destroyed. Very severe losses have been inflicted on the masses of Turkish troops retreating over the difficult roads by our air services.

A German airplane, later ascertained to have been carrying mails, landed in the midst of our troops at Afule. The pilot, who believed the place still to be in Turkish hands, destroyed the machine and its contents before he could be secured."

Source: 'Source Records of the Great War, Vol. VI', ed. Charles F. Horne, National Alumni 1923.

(c). P.R. MEMORY.

Eric Stuart has sent an amusing and relevant anecdote: "My wife's foster-father was a railwayman in the army somewhere in the south - Gaza, I think - and he tried to go to Bethlehem for Christmas. At a crossing loop somewhere, the brakevan got left on the single line un-noticed, until hit by the train setting off southwards from the loop into the same single line! He was somewhat uncomplimentary about the local railwaymen, I'm afraid."

On my enquiring for more details he responded: "The incident re. the brakevan took place either during or immediately after WW2 and at night (Christmas Eve?), hence the position of the vehicle being unseen. I suppose, being a railwayman, the gentleman concerned was in the Royal Engineers, but not necessarily. Alas, the gentleman is with us no more. But that's so true of our elders - we wish we had asked them - and listened to them - more!"

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. SYRIA.

TOUR NOTES, OCT. 2007.

From 'C.R.J.' p. 152 p. 273: From an RTC tour in October 2007: "Locos used on the tour train were 2-8-0 160, 2-8-2 262 and 2-6-0T 755, with 2-6-0T+T 66 shunting at Dera'a. Other locos seen.... 2-8-2 260 was in the erecting shop at Cadem, and 2-8-2 261 (presumed) was just the frames. Diesel locos at Cadem were Roumanian 300, 301 and 400, and Schöma 3246 & 3247. 401 & 402 were again missing. All the railcars, R-10/11/12, R-501/502/503 and ACM3 were present. Also at Cadem was a set of coaches built by Sifang in 2005.

On the standard-gauge, French-built Bo-Bo diesel 104 was Cadem station pilot, and Russian-built Co-Co diesels 715, 719, 757 were seen on passenger trains."

B. JORDAN.

From 'C.R.J.' No. 152, p. 270. Also from the RTC Tour in October 2007:-

"Hedjaz Jordan Railway: Steam locos used on the tour train were 2-8-2's 23 and 71 and 4-6-2 85. Other locos seen were as reported previously, but only 2-8-2 53 and 4-6-2 81 were seen at Libban. The tender of 2-8-2 22 was at Amman. but the loco itself was missing. Railway staff stated that there had been no regular passenger services in Jordan for about two years..."

Aqaba Railway Corporation. Pacific 85 hauled the tour train from Aqaba to Rum, with diesels 955 (GE U17C 39955/1974) on the rear. The ARC has some new diesel locos, 701-4 being seen at Aqaba. They are GE type C24MM1, 702 being CTC070002LN of March 2007. Already 701 was badly damaged!"

C. IRAN.

A note in 'Lok Magazin' März 2008, p.29 states that the Cuban State Railways are having difficulty ordering new rolling stock following the collapse of the Soviet Union, but has now placed an order with Wagon Pars in Iran for 200 passenger coaches and 100 goods wagons, to be delivered over the next three years. The contract is worth approx. 135 Million Euros.

D. DUBAI.

Not actually IN Dubai, but 'C.R.J.' No. 152 p. 261 reports that a Dubai-based company, Kampac Oil Company, had signed a \$1.6 Billion contract with the Ghana Railway Co. Ltd. to build and rehabilitate railways in the western part of Ghana. The 35-year contract involves construction of 600km. of new railway, between Takoradi and Hamile in the Upper West Region, and rehabilitation of 400km. of existing lines. Construction was due to begin December 2007. In return Kampac gains valuable mineral and mining rights.

E. TURKEY.

(i). TOROS EXPRESS.

An interesting short illustrated newspaper article, in French, on the 'Toros Express' in 1944, can be found at <http://demiryollariulusimi.page.tl/Toros-Express.htm>

(ii). STEAM LOCO RESTORATION.

A correspondent on the 'TurkRail' site noted in February: "I visited the new depot in Bicerova-Izmir last week with Dr. Acar, Mr Erdal (TCDD staff, Ulukent Station chief) and myself. Steam loco No. 56548 was there. It was under reconstruction. This loco was left at Halkapinar until 2005, and I saw it there two years ago. The reconstruction work is being done by a private company's personnel. It seems necessary to repair the equipment and machinery."

(iii). MAJOR DERAILMENT.

In the newsletter "De Koppeling" of the NS (Dutch railways) is a note:-

"In a railway accident in Turkey nine people were killed and fifty injured. A full train, en route from Istanbul to the southern city of Denizli, derailed near Kütahya. In a curve, two coaches left the rails and overturned. It is possible that the sleepers in this curve had been damaged by frost." (Translation from Dutch by the Editor; thanks to Marc Stegeman for the cutting.)

"Passenger train derailed in Turkey Sunday 27th. January, killing at least eight people and injuring about 50 others, CNN-Turk reported. It was at least the fifth major train wreck in the nation in the past four years. The train was on its way from Istanbul to the western city of Denizli when it derailed near the city of Kutahya, CNN-Turk said. Authorities could not immediately say what caused several cars of the train to roll over. They also did not know how many people were on board at the time. Rescuers had not pulled out all the passengers from the overturned cars, and the casualty figures may change, the station said."

F. IRAQ.

In the newsletter "De Koppeling" of the NS (Dutch railways) is a note:-

"In Iraq a family totalling thirteen persons was wiped out in a train accident. The train from Baghdad to Basra, which had not run for some time due to the war and has been running again since mid-December, hit the vehicle with the family in it, on a level crossing."

(Translation from Dutch by the Editor; thanks to Marc Stegeman for the cutting.)

G. SAUDI ARABIA.

From 'Eisenbahn Revue' 3/2008 p. 135. "The Russian Railways (RZD) have won the contract to construct a 520km. railway line in Saudi Arabia. This will be a north-south line from Al-Zabira to the airport of the capital in Riyadh. It will serve mainly freight traffic."

H. GENERAL. RAILTOUR REPORTS. 2006 & 2007. BY ANDY WILSON.

BILL ALBOROUGH'S 'T.E.F.S.' TOUR 21/05/2006 to 02/06/2006, & D.G.E.G. TOUR 11/02/2007 to 26/02/2007 - JORDAN, LEBANON & SYRIA.

Andy has been twice in recent months to the Hejaz lines, and here is his very detailed report - with a professional eye - and comparison. Chronologically it comes before the reports above, but because it is one long unit covering the whole systems I preferred to publish it together.

"Both tours visited Amman station, before going on to Jiza by train. Not a lot of difference between the two visits and Bill's report is essentially still valid, although the Aqaba tour train and loco 85 were at Amman in February. The coaches are built on chassis from 6000-series tank cars and give a much rougher ride than the ancient passenger carriage bogies, although the bodywork looks nice and is weatherproof. Noted at Amman were two Series-110 Land Rovers, converted with steel wheels like deeply dished overgrown brake-drums, which bolted on to the normal wheel hubs instead of the road wheels. They had some sort of hydraulic attachment to the gearbox, maybe to operate a turntable or as a reverse gear - I am not sure which and I had a communication problem. On the DGEG visit, we saw a new green motor trolley with a sunshade roof, which staff said was from Malaysia - we saw another of these later at Ma'raq. There appears to be still some freight service, and there were a number of grey vans with shiny wheels around the station.

From Jiza, both tours continued by road and subsequently called at Ma'an, on the way to Aqaba. Bill's tour visited only the old HR station area at Ma'an, where various scrap wagons were being cut up, giving me an opportunity to examine the Scheffel self-steering bogies and see how they work. The axleboxes are mounted in independent housings, with rubber and steel sandwich assemblies on top, apparently formed to give a diagonal movement as the axles are displaced under centrifugal force, and there are cross-connections to ensure that both axles steer the same amount. The stone-built HR sheds housed a lot of track machines. The old Bo-Bo diesel electric locomotives which had been used on the construction of the Aqaba line had disappeared; they had been removed some time ago but I had not seen any report of this event. (I was later informed at Aqaba that they had been sold to Syria). By contrast the DGEG tour visited the old station buildings, where Meissner's house is a museum, commemorating its use by King Abdullah I, with various old photographs and archaeological finds, but disappoint-

ingly, nothing whatever about Meissner or his railways. A pity, because there is a wealth of official Ottoman photography of the HR which it would be nice to see here. We then went to the Aqaba Railway's workshop area and found it dealing only with wagons - loco work is now concentrated at Aqaba. Just one complete loco here, Hejaz Jordan Railway No 40211 with a Match truck to adapt couplings, acting as yard shunter. The only other locomotive item was the stripped frame of General Electric 39960, on a wagon and possibly waiting for some accident damage to be repaired.

At Aqaba, during Bill's tour, the complete steam tour train was parked near the workshops, loco 85 and 5 new passenger cars, built on frames from 6000 series tank wagons: Kitchen Car, 3 ordinary Passenger cars and the 'Royal Salon' all with 2005 'Jordan Hejaz Railway' building plates. Aqaba Railway diesel loco No 955, fitted with Hejaz couplings and vacuum brake equipment, was standing elsewhere in the yard. By the time of the DGEG trip, the complete steam tour train had gone to Amman and the diesel loco fitted to work with it was in use as the Aqaba works shunter, with a match truck to suit the ARC couplings. Apparently the tour train had never operated before with passengers from Aqaba. The workshops were busy with locomotive work and there were a number of withdrawn locomotives around the yard in various states of damage and demolition. In February, these included Nos 305, 311, 312, 317, 962, one unidentified, and HJR 40209. In May 2006 we were informed that four new General-Electric U24 locomotives were on order for delivery shortly.

After Aqaba, the two tours covered different ground, Bill's tour going by road to Amman, then in the morning with a steam train to Zarqa, followed by a road transfer to Bosra, in Syria. The DGEG had intended to have a steam train from Aqaba to Wadi Rum but this was not possible and was replaced by a steam special all the way from Wadi el Abiad station to Amman. Wadi el Abiad is the northernmost rail-served phosphate mine and its modern station is the site of the former HR Manzil station. The station is on the phosphate railway, but the mine branch turns off immediately north of there, leaving the old track to Amman, so our tour train was waiting for us on nice track with heavy rail in good ballast, but could only benefit from this for a short distance. The special train was loco 85, a tank wagon for extra water, the 'Aqaba' coaches, minus the royal saloon, and an HR fourgon. By the time we got to Jiza the sun was setting and a U10 diesel was waiting to assist and light the way onward with its powerful headlight. Progress as far as the outskirts of Amman was quite good, but we moved through the urban area very cautiously thereafter, not reaching Amman station until about 10pm. The HR track is completely unfenced except at stations, which may be acceptable in the middle of a

desert, but is no way to run a railway through a densely-populated city. There was just one incident, when a folding step on one of the coaches came unfolded and fouled the handrailing at the start of the Amman viaduct, necessitating a stop to resecure it. The following day was spent with the same train, without diesel assistance, from Amman to Dera'a with no significant incidents, although the Pacific had adhesion problems on one of the gradients in the middle of the journey but just managed to get through the difficult area without anybody having to get out and push. There was no Jordanian border tax, of which Bill complained in Harekevet 73 (nor at the airport on final departure, later on)

We were told that the Jordanians will be starting a project next year for a standard-gauge railway northward from Amman to Mafraq. I think they mean a design study. Obviously Mafraq is not the ultimate objective and I assume they are looking for access to a Mediterranean port. It will be interesting to see where they have in mind.

SYRIA NARROW GAUGE. Bill's first rail trip in Syria was a jaunt down the Yarmuk valley, from Dera'a, planned to be worked by CDS 982. This engine had been brought to Dera'a, but a problem had been found and it was declared a failure, so HR 91 had to be lighted up, and proceeded to lay down a pall of filthy smoke over part of the town for a considerable time until it had generated a useful steam pressure. In the meantime, participants explored the premises and consumed a picnic lunch. Dera'a yard contained a large number of Jordanian grey vans, some of which had makers plates: the 15-ton version, 14xx number series, were by Trains de Roues du Centre, SA, Bois du Luc, Belgique, while the 30-ton version, number series 40xx and 41xx, were by Sincom Material Ferroviaire, Bruxelles, Belgique. Eventually No 91 was ready to start and we went off down to the gorge as far as intended. I think our destination was El Hamme station, where there was a passing loop line with water columns (dry) for both directions. Here we found a motor trolley which had preceded us to check for any obstructions. Usual photo stops and runpasts in bright sunshine.

Dera'a loco shed contained several motor trolleys, a tamping machine, and so on, including a Land Rover conversion, which had been made by altering the axles and wheel hubs to accept wheels of a flat form, unlike the Jordanian conversions which used special dished wheels on the normal road-going axles. Bill had mentioned that the loco depot was under repair, for conversion to a museum, but I saw no evidence of this and the place was still housing similar equipment in February. He had also stated that Dera'a station had been completely rebuilt, which is an exaggeration. It has been provided with new doors and windows and a new foot-bridge has been added over the tracks near the station building. In addition, by the time

of the DGEG trip, the old basalt masonry has been painted an overall blue-grey colour which does not suit the building style at all. The same paint had been applied to the old building at Cadem station too. Ugh!

For the DGEG tour we had a special train from Bosra, pausing for a picnic lunch at Dera'a station while HR No 91 was turned on the wye to go tender-first down the Yarmuk valley. Steady rain at first, finding the leaks in the coach roofs and making the ground very muddy at the photo stops. It cleared up later and water ceased to drip inside the coaches, but the ground remained very muddy all day. The line was declared unsafe lower down the valley owing to the weather conditions and we stopped to run the engine round at Muzerib (Junction), then propelled as far as was considered prudent, at the top of the Yarmuk gorge, where people could hike round the hill to see the first bridge, but without any train on it. So back to Dera'a and by road to Damascus.

Bill's tour got to Damascus in time to have an afternoon look at the state of Kanawat station, essentially a large hole in the ground where the tracks used to be, although the station building is intact and in use as HR offices, with an apparently-unrelated bookstall in the entrance hall. No work in progress yet in the hole; Loco 62 still on display in front and looking smart. I managed to get two glossy pamphlets from the offices upstairs; one, mainly pictorial, aimed at tourists and extolling the historical interest of the Hejaz Railway and the lines managed by it, and the other about the Damascus Hejaz Station and related projects. A new sub-surface railway is under construction from Cadem to the Hejaz terminus, to accommodate a standard-gauge, double track, electrified metro line which will come from the airport, together with a single track for the Hejaz trains. The pamphlet does not mention the main line projects for new standard-gauge lines, but it does say that the proposed underground station at Kanawat will have eight platforms, so it is clearly envisaged as the main station for the city. It also mentions reinstatement of the line from Serghaya and Rayak. It is difficult to assess the seriousness of some of the proposals, but construction of the underground formation from Cadem to the terminus is certainly making good progress. Nothing is said about motive power for HR trains in the tunnels, but it will need to be electric.

Bill's tour had a visit to Cadem works the next morning, as described by him, and the rest of the day was occupied in tourist-type activities. The DGEG tour got a brief visit to Cadem works the day after the Yarmuk trip, before boarding our standard gauge special train. At Cadem, the CDS 982, which had disgraced itself at Dera'a last summer, was now added to the dead lines. In the erecting shop, HR 160 was having tubes fitted and looked to be progressing well. 260 was also in the shop, looking a bit sad. The 263 was outside, rods removed, but clearly had been

working recently, with shiny wheels. 262 was also present although I did not make any note of it. The same 3 Romanian diesel electrics were present as noted by Bill, but there were two others absent, the 401 and 402. The 300 and 301 looked in good order; the 400 is crash damaged. Note the only apparent difference between the 3xx and 4xx is that the 4xx have vacuum-brake fitted, so they can work HR rolling stock, although they need a match truck to adapt from their American-pattern couplers to the HR type. While the 300 and 301 are the only usable main line diesel locos available, they cannot work HR coaches in passenger service because they have air brake only, although they can operate the steel coaches, as I did observe once, in 1996. The set of 5 new Chinese coaches has not operated yet. They are marked as limited to 100 km/h, which implies a significant upgrading of the HR track. The Series 1 Land Rover conversion was just a pile of bits in the yard and I speculate that its wheels and axles have been used to convert the much newer Land Rover seen at Dera'a.

On Bill's trip, I missed the day on the CDS owing to sickness, but the DGEG called briefly to see the equipment on the way back after the main tour and everything was as noted in 2005 and described in Harekevet 72, except that the De Dion railcar had gone back to Cadem. Our visit was not on a working day, it was raining steadily and everything looked very shabby and neglected under the dripping trees. The oil-fuel store here is a converted tender of American style, formerly kept at Cadem, and I strongly suspect to be of Jaffa & Jerusalem origin.

LEBANON. I comment only on Bill Alborough's trip in 2006; the DGEG did not go here. The first visit was to the Rayak works. The place is a shambles, wrecked and vandalised. Plenty of locomotives, but all robbed of parts.

Standard gauge. Two G class - which I did not identify. Five G8 class, Nos 104, 105, 106, 109 and one other, far down the yard, identifiable only by a motion number 4812, probably CEL 101, and one shunting lorry conversion. No sign of the Syrian 2-8-0 which was in front of the loco shed in 1996.

Narrow gauge - At least 7 locos; 6B, 32, 33, S301, S302, S304 and an unidentified 0-8-2T

Continuing from Rayak, we paused at the plinthed train beside the road at Maallaqa o Sidhayel. I did not identify the locomotive.

The following day, I had arranged to do my own visits, separately from the tour group. First rail visit was to Beirut St Michel station, where 5 narrow gauge steam locos were around the loco shed. The only identity I noted was S311. The main tour were due to visit here and I assumed someone would report more details, but they don't seem to have done so. Diesel-electric shunter 201

was in the tinshed, now heavily vandalised - smashed axle boxes to get at the bearings, and the main generator gone. It had been completely intact in 1996.

Next visit was to the standard-gauge Beirut depot, which had been built by the British army in WW2. The whole rail yard is now used as a bus depot, which had the advantage that there was some security, but no problem after a polite request to look at the locos. The main shed contained the 3 Polish Co-Co diesel-electrics, 1201, 1202 and 1203, one EMD 6 wheel diesel-electric shunter, GM No 25463, model G6, and another shunting lorry conversion. The lorry looked in a poor state but the proper locos were apparently in good condition. Another EMD shunter, No 604, was parked outside. There should have been two more of these, two more Moyses diesel electric shunters, and some German diesel rail buses, in another building which I did not investigate on this visit.

In the northern Beirut suburbs, where a length of railway had been removed in connection with highway construction in 1996, there was no sign of its replacement. At Jounié station, the site of the tracks has been made into a car park - in 1996 this had contained a rail bus, various wagons and a shunting lorry. The lorry was probably the one now in the Beirut loco shed.

The final rail objective was the loco depot at Tripoli, which was found to be without any security and falling into dereliction. Two G class locos, 21 and 31, and one G8, 110, were outside the shed and 3 more G8 inside the shed, 102, 107 and 108. The tender of 110 also carried number 104 but that engine was identified at Rayak and its tender had probably been reassigned. All the engines were badly vandalised. Nevertheless, CEL seems to have looked after its equipment carefully and I consider that these engines could have preservation potential. The G class in particular are a type which did not survive in Western Europe at the end of steam.

Note on the HEJAZ RAILWAY. This railway has an unusual legal status. It is a Waqf, an Islamic charitable foundation. Special rules apply under Islamic law, in particular it cannot be abolished or transferred into any other sort of organisation. So the Syrians keep it in being with its obsolete equipment, because they don't have an alternative. The Syrian non-Hejaz narrow-gauge railways to Serghaya and Qatana are legally separate organisations, even though they are managed by the HR. The diesel locomotives, steel coaches and railcars operating on the Hejaz Railway are legally the property of the Damascus Qatana Railway, likewise the equipment inherited from the Syrian portion of the line to Damascus belongs to the Damascus Serghaya Railway (CDS). The Syrian government can do what it likes with these two railways and their equipment. It does not have the same

freedom in respect of the Hejaz Railway.

The Jordanians seem to have interpreted the rules differently insofar as they have replaced obsolete and worn-out rolling stock with new equivalents, but they still have to serve the same places as they always did. Palestine Railways likewise maintained the separate status of the Hejaz lines under their control and they did not scrap HR locomotives which were taken out of service prior to WW2.

Even the Saudis, who have never used their portion of the HR, have refrained from deliberately scrapping it.

SYRIA STANDARD GAUGE.

Before dealing with the actual tour, I append some railway history and current projections for future development of the rail network within the borders of modern Syria.

The earliest standard-gauge line was built northward in stages from a junction with the narrow-gauge at Rayak now in Lebanon, as far as Halab (alias Aleppo) which was reached in 1906. A branch from Homs, down to the port of Tripoli, opened in 1911. The next railway development was the Baghdad Railway, from Konia in modern Turkey to Baghdad - of course there were no international borders in the region at the time; the line was all within the Ottoman Empire. So far as modern Syria is concerned, construction of the Baghdad Railway started at Halab, with lines both to the east and west, using imported materials hauled over the existing railway from Tripoli. The eastward portion, within modern Syria, opened in 1912 and the westward portion in stages, of which the final piece in modern Syria opened in 1917. When the new international borders were finally defined after WW1, the border between Turkey and Syria east of the River Euphrates was set out on the south side of the Baghdad Railway, as far as it had been built, to Nisibin, and the missing rail link to Iraq was not fully completed until 1940, from Syrian territory and into Iraq. In more recent times, the Turks have built a line entirely within their own territory to connect with the eastern part of the Baghdad Railway and the Syrian portion of the Baghdad line eastward from Halab has fallen out of use. Similarly, the Syrians have extended their own lines to connect with the bit of the Baghdad Railway in the east of their country.

The next major phase of Syrian rail development took place over about 20 years from the mid-1960s, under Soviet influence, with new lines from Akkari (on the Tripoli line) to Tartous (1968), from Halab, eastward to Raqqqa, Deir-al-Zor and Qamishlie to join the eastern section of the Baghdad Railway (1968-75), from Halab to Latakia and Tartous (1975), from Homs to Cadem station at Damascus, with a long branch to phosphate mines at Al Sharqia, about 20 km from Palmyra (1982/3). During this period there has also been a thorough upgrading of the old

lines Halab - Homs - Akkari and the construction of many industrial spurs and branchlines. Since then, there has been relatively little rail development, but we were given copies of an ambitious programme of new lines and line upgradings. Details are not entirely clear, but most of the present main lines are shown as having a maximum permitted speed of 120 km/h and are to be upgraded for 160 km/h speed between 2001 to 2020. No present speed limit is mentioned for the ex-Baghdad Railway lines, but those which are in operation are stated to be being upgraded for 160 km/h during the period 2001-2010. I comment that many of the lines could be realistically upgraded for higher speeds, but some are mountain railways, totally unsuitable for 160 km/h operation. The presently-discarded Baghdad line north-east of Halab and the line from Homs to Rayak are proposed to be redeveloped for 120 km/h after 2020. There is a category of line described as 'old' and narrow-gauge lines proposed to be rehabilitated and renewed for 120 km/h during 2001-2005, but the symbol on the map is not clearly identifiable. It may refer to the Qatana and Beirut lines, which are narrow-gauge and not Hejaz, but the idea of running 120 km/h trains over them is far-fetched. Two categories of proposed new lines are shown - 'Railways under execution in the present 5-Year Plan' and 'Railways under study being executed in the present 5-Year Plan.' Three lines are claimed to be 'under execution' firstly a line from Deir-el-Zor, running down the Euphrates valley to cross into Iraq and join an existing line at Al Qaim, and secondly a standard-gauge line from Dera'a to Damascus with branches to Swaida and Shehba. This continues through Damascus city centre to connect with an existing freight branch and provide a better northbound connection. The third line of this classification is the branch from Akkari to Tripoli in Lebanon. We are not aware of any construction having started on any of these. The line 'under study' is a link from north of Damascus to Deir-el-Zor, incorporating a part of the phosphate mine branch near Palmyra.

MOTIVE POWER: There are seven classes of diesel-electric locomotives in service, numbered in groups by class and painted a different colour for each class. All except the smallest are of Co-Co wheel arrangement and have numbers prefixed by LDE and the number of horsepower. In addition there are a few Unilok road/rail shunting machines, built in Ireland. The only diesel railcars in service are some new stainless-steel 5-car sets being delivered from Rotem of South Korea; a total of ten are on order and seven were stated to have been delivered at the time of our visit. These trains are capable of 160 km/h but the fastest permitted line speed is 120 km/h at present. They are working to locomotive-hauled schedules for the time being, with frequent early arrivals.

DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES: - (Locomotive numbers mentioned are just what I

noted - not a comprehensive list). LDE 1200-001 upward, Russian class TEM2 road switchers, painted yellow. These were developed from the WW2 Alco locomotives used in Iran by the US Army and they have very much the Alco look. Quantity may be 12. Numbers noted include 003, 008, 009, 011.

101 upward (No LDE prefix) - Bo-Bo, small road switchers, by CEM France, stated to be 650 hp. Painted green. Used as station pilots and not for main line haulage. Numbers noted during various visits: 104, 106, 110. Quantity may be 10.

LDE 2800-201 upwards. Russian class TE-114. Cab at one end and they normally work cab-forward because of limited vision when running backwards. Very high bodywork with a distinctive slant-sided outline at high level. Painted turquoise. A large quantity of these operate all kinds of traffic. Numbers noted, 216, 233, 276, 279.

LDE 1800-301 upwards. General Electric type U-18 road switchers, painted a brownish red. Hugh Hughes lists these in two number blocks, 301-315 and 351-365. May have different gearing although no difference noticed in usage. These locos have multiple-unit controls. Numbers noted, 309, 310, 311, 312, 314, 353, 355, 362, 363, 365.

LDE 2800-401 upwards. Superficially the same as 201 class, but painted dark red. Presumably these differ technically from the 201 class in some way. Very few seen, either in service or awaiting attention, suggesting that they may have been the preferred candidates for rebuilding as 701 class. Number noted, 426.

LDE 1500-501 upward. Czech-built switcher-style locos. Orange paint. Said to be about 30 of them. Numbers noted, 502, 510, 512.

LDE 3200-601 upwards. A new class said to be of French design and with Alstom works plates which do not quote any number. Ruston engines and erected in Spain. They have cabs at both ends and look like a 6-axle version of the British class 67. They are painted with a dark red lower part and a yellow upper part. Said to be about 35 in service. Numbers noted, 611, 621,

LDE 2800-7xx. These are rebuilds of the Russian TE 114 locos with reputed GE engines. The new engine casing has a flat top, unlike the Russian original. Paint is bright blue with horizontal waist striping, either double red or a single broader red stripe. A few were grey, possibly owing to urgency to get them into traffic. None were seen with the white outline to the red stripe as shown on the latest Hareket. The quantity in service was suggested to be about 35 but the fleet numbers exceed this, so the numbers are not a simple series starting from 1. It is intended to do more of these rebuilds. Numbers noted, 706, 708, 725, 754, 755, 756.

In 1996, a variety of wagons was noted running with Soviet pattern automatic couplers, but on this trip these couplers

were noted only on the phosphate hopper wagons and on the hopper wagons for track ballast. None were seen on any other wagons.

THE TOUR.. Starting from the hotel in Damascus, the party was scheduled to make touristic visits before assembling at Cadem station, so I opted out of this part and walked to Cadem. In a side street in the town centre, I found a piece of tram track and measured the gauge as 1050 mm. Nothing new to see at Kanawat station so I walked on over the route of the former line to Cadem and about half-way along came to the new route, emerging from a cut and cover tunnel heading back towards Kanawat. No way of knowing how far it went. Forward of here the railway formation ran in a cutting and came to a busy construction site close to the old Midan station where more cutting was being built towards Cadem. It was not quite clear, but it looked as though the line would be roofed over from here to Cadem. At Cadem, the special train was waiting for us; a restaurant car flanked by two first class coaches, hauled by No 756. We had a rather hurried visit to the Hejaz workshops before departure - in fact one traveller missed the special and rode the following service train to Halab, in one of the new Rotem diesel trains, and re-joined the group only about half an hour late at Halab. First impressions were that here was a well-built railway, doing plenty of business, but with very little fencing of the tracks. After Homs it was very noticeable that the original railway had been improved by realignments, large and small. Arriving at Halab, we were welcomed by the railway management and presented with publicity material about the Rotem trains.

The next day, 18th. February, was our trip up the Baghdad Railway to Meydan Ekbes - the last Syrian station before the Turkish border.

For this stage, our train was hauled by Nos 355 and 362, although it returned with only the 362. This line seems to be monopolised by the 301 class, apart from a single 001 class, perhaps owing to weight restrictions. Much of the track on this line was in very good condition, recently relaid with heavy rail and stone ballast, although this is largely a mountain railway and speeds cannot be very high. Approaching Meydan Ekbes, the line crosses a very high steel bridge over a side valley and we made photo stops in both directions. The formation of the temporary narrow-gauge line used during the construction period was very clear going up the side valley. A stone plaque, now badly weathered, was set into the rock cutting side at one end of the bridge, commemorating a South African army engineer unit who had been there in June 1943. Meydan Ekbes was a very busy station, clearly exchanging a lot of traffic with TCDD and their loco DE 33009 brought in a long freight train during our visit. On our return to Halab the local railway man-

agement laid on a reception for us.

On 19th. February we first inspected a plinthed G8 near Halab station, carrying plates 040-460, before joining our train to the far north-east, with locos 721 and 754 along the first of the modern lines, to Deir-al-Zor. About 15 to 20 km from Haleb we passed a railway workshop complex on the north side of the line - visited later on. The countryside was much less barren than expected and the route generally follows the Euphrates valley, crossing the river near Raqqah, below the dam that retains Lake Assad. Approaching Deir-el-Zor, there is a triangular junction with the northbound line to Qamashlie, although the east-to-north leg is not in use at present. Quite a short run on to Deir-el-Zor, which is a terminus, with no sign of any work on the proposed extension to Iraq. This day's travel had been quite an easy stage but the following day was very long because of a change in programme to return to Deir-el-Zor that night. So, in the morning, back to the junction and reverse for the northbound line through very green and fertile flat country, reminiscent of the American midwest, complete with sidings to occasional grain silos. This area is also Syria's oil country and plenty of tank car trains were met, although the actual oil wells were not apparent. Arriving at Qameshlie, our train loco 706 was replaced by General Electric 312 and an extra coach was added to our train because there was a problem with the brake on one of ours. Once we got away on to the Baghdad Railway line, the reason for using the smaller loco was apparent; the track is laid with lighter rail and the ballast is grass, although its alignment is good. The only evidence of the planned upgrading was a train load of new concrete sleepers parked at one of the stations. No other trains were passed on this line and there was no cross-border traffic owing to a temporary embargo on the Iraqi side because of the security situation. The sidings at Yaroubieh, the border station, were filled with four long trains of Syrian bogie open wagons, covered with tarpaulins and said to be loaded with sugar for Iraq. By this time, the sun was setting and most of the journey back to Deir-el-Zor was in the dark, making good speed, but still a very long day.

On Wednesday, 21st. February, the defective brake had been rectified and we headed back to Haleb, with only the normal coaches and loco 276, our first haulage by an unrebuilt TE 114. A diversion was made over the branch line to Al Thawra City, which is the location of the dam for Lake Assad. This line did not appear to have had any recent traffic and we ran into a thicket of bushes alongside the terminal platform, but not any real problem. Approaching Halab, we were held for a few minutes at the junction with the main line from the south as a new railcar set swept by but we arrived in good time and were able to do some touring that evening.

Thursday 22nd. February started with a visit to the locomotive workshops which we had seen on the way to Deir-el-Zor - on the way in we passed a carriage workshop where a Unilok was shunting a coach into the shop. Eventually we came to the locomotive shop, further down the site, where the Manager explained what they were doing, which was not much help to me because we had a tour guide translating into German. The workshop appeared to be dealing only with Russian and Czech locomotives of the 001, 201 and 501 classes. No other locomotive types were here - the manager was asked specifically about the 101 class, which he said were maintained at another shop. We did not have a chance to see him after we had had a look around, but it looked as though there must be another quite large workshop to maintain the loco types not evident here.. Most of the locomotives under overhaul were 201 class and it surprised me that the main engines were being worked on without lifting them out of the locomotive chassis. My lasting memory of this workshop is not of the work being done but of the birds singing in the roof. A new maintenance building was under construction nearby for the Rotem diesel trains. Near the locomotive shop, a lot of track machines were stabled and probably maintained in the same area. On completion of the formal tour, on our way out, we saw four of the five OCEM Fauvé-Girel 1050mm gauge locomotives which had disappeared from Ma'an, but they bore no legible numbers or other identification. They were on standard-gauge bogie wagons. They are not identical with the Syrian 101 class locomotives, but presumably contain some compatible components. Further along, we found a G8 steam locomotive, with some fittings missing, but looking cosmetically complete. No identification on it except a motion number 4885 and with some Borsig tender axle boxes (others were DHP). This information does not fit any G8 recorded as on the DHP, although Hanomag 4885, which went to Turkey, might be what we were seeing. In the same area, the shells of some old railcars were dumped

In the afternoon, it was back to the special train, with 756 in grey paint, heading down from Halab to Lataqiya and Tartous. The Lataqiya line is another mountain railway, but of modern construction and built to a good specification, although hardly with 160 km/h potential.. At Lataqiya there is a triangular junction outside the terminus, offering a choice of departure-routes, either to Halab or southward along the coast, and our train took the bypass chord, then reversed to reach the terminus so that our locomotive could run cab-forward down to Tartous. Plinthed outside Lataqiya station was steam loco 030-159, 0-6-0 Esslingen 2490 of 1891, inherited from the Baghdad Railway. One of the Rotem diesel trains arrived while our train was at the station. By this time the sun was setting and we proceeded to Tartous in the dark.

Friday 23rd. February, we departed from Tartous with a new type of locomotive, No 611, to eventually take us to Hama, although we made a first stop at Akkari, the junction for Tripoli in Lebanon. The track had been removed from here to the border, and ended at a buffer stop, beside which an abandoned colour light signal awaited the next train from Tripoli. While we were at Akkari, passing freight trains included empty oil tanks eastbound top-and-tailed with 233 and a 701 class, and a laden phosphate train, westbound hauled by 708. The next main stop was Um Jamah station on the modern line which replaces a section of the original which passed through Lebanese territory. From Um Jamah we made a touristic side trip to Krac des Chevaliers, before continuing to Hama. Arriving here, I and some fellow-travellers got a footplate trip on a freight train along the Mharde branch, hauled by 279 - other people had had footplate rides during the tour, and this is the one which came my way. An interesting experience in the dark, travelling quite cautiously in what was a very large and heavy locomotive. Taxi back to the hotel in Hama, as the train was not due to come back until much later.

Saturday 24th. February. Our train was intended to have been hauled by the same loco as yesterday but it could not be started and the substitute was the 755 running backwards. We called at the Homs freight station where the loco could be turned to run cab forward, then proceeded along the Damascus line to the junction with the freight-only phosphate mines branch, which we took to El Sharqiya, near Palmyra. Phosphate mine branches turned off at two other points along the line as well as our final destination. Onward by road into Palmyra, for tourist visits and hotel.

Next day, by train to Damascus and the end of our Syrian main line tour. Rain all day."

80:9.

TURKISH TRAVEL REPORTS.

(A). "RAILWAY ADVENTURE TURKEY"

In 'Lok Report' 1/2007 pp. 46-51 is a richly-illustrated account by Hans-Georg Löwe of a private railway enthusiast tour of Turkey which reveals a lot about the problems with which one can be confronted. Confessing at the outset that this is not a formal history or even a full travel report but aiming merely to pass on a few tips, readers of 'Harakevet' may find much of worth.

"The timings of the long-distance trains ('Ekspres') can be found under www.tcdd.gov.tr. As we had only 14 days it was of course necessary for us to limit our destinations and set priorities, so we had Istanbul, the gradient at Bilecik and some sections of the Taurus and Euphrates lines on our programme.

Istanbul.

Istanbul has terminus stations on each side of the Bosphorus. Sirkeci on the European side and Haydarpaşa on the Asiatic side. At each station there is a 'Servis Depo', and a link between the two sections is only possible by means of a railway ferry. The line from Sirkeci to Kapikule on the Bulgarian border is now fully electrified (25kV/50Hz). In Sirkeci are stationed electric locos of classes E 43000 and E 52500 (on hire from ZFBH, rebuilds similar to the HZ Class 1141.3) as well as the rather elderly electric multiple units of Class E 8000 (Alstom, built 1955- 1962.)

At the depot of Halkali set at the edge of Istanbul there are mainly Diesel locos of classes DE 24000 and DE 33000 for the freight traffic (including DE33 002, still in the old red/cream livery). A Hall allows also for maintenance of the 88-metre long electric multiple units. In the yard a fully-complete 46.018 stands and dreams of better times, and there are some wrecks of Class DH 33100 (MaK, built 1953-54) in more-or-less stripped state.

The electric multiple units work the suburban service ('Banliyö Trenleri') Sirkeci - Halkali. The trains work in both directions at intervals of from 15 to 25 minutes, depending on the time of day. Usually two units coupled are used. From my notes it appears at least 16 units must still be serviceable. Timetable folders, which also include the timetables for the 'Ekspres', can be obtained from the counter in Sirkeci. The section of line through Istanbul is fenced the whole way. Opportunities to take photos which include the old city walls are difficult due to building works and adjacent military installations, but there is otherwise a rich variety of urban motives.

On the Asiatic side, Haydarpaşa is a more significant station. From here depart the majority of the internal 'Ekspres'. The impressive five-storey building is also the headquarters for the Istanbul Railway Direction ('2. Bölge Müdürlüğü'). The TCDD is divided into seven Directions, and all trains are allocated five-digit numbers - the first digit of which indicates the Direction being traversed.

The station was almost wholly destroyed
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on 5.9.1917 through carelessness which allowed the explosion of benzine and munition supplies for the Jildirim Division of the Ottoman Army, fighting for the Three Powers. Apart from the destruction of the station facilities, around 290 goods wagons were also destroyed.

At the depo of Haydarpasa are allocated, apart from the electric multiple units E 14000 built from 1979, examples of all still-existent classes of electric locomotive - though unfortunately the remaining six locos of the French Class E 40000 have no regular duties. On the other hand the Class E 52500, unloved because of their unreliability, are present in a variety of liveries. The Bo-Bo-Bo engines of Class E 43000, really intended for freight duties, are in fact here used exclusively on passenger services. Photography proved to be wholly uncomplicated in the Istanbul depots, only in Haydarpasa was it necessary once to make the trip to the Direction office, otherwise everything was allowed with a nod of the head.

The Line Istanbul - Eskisehir (-Ankara).

From Istanbul to Kayas (beyond Ankara) the line is electrified (and on the sections Istanbul-Arifiye, İnönü-Hasan-Bey and Sincan-Kayas it is double track.) The line long the several-kilometres long section through the expanding suburbs as far as Gebze (which is where the suburban services end) is not very photogenic. However, already from Arifiye onwards the line traverses a varied landscape, whose climax is the Incline at Bilecik. There are deep rocky gorges, viaducts and a reverse loop, and on the section further on to Bozüyük there are also many interesting subjects for photography. The level of traffic is, for Turkish conditions, relatively high, since all 'Ekspres' from Istanbul to Ankara have to come this way. The freight traffic was not as extensive as we had expected, and all services were headed by Diesel locos (DE 24000, DE 33000). Even though Bilecik is not far from Istanbul, tourists are seldom encountered here.

The Railway in the Adana Region.

Adana is an important railway centre in the mid-South of Turkey. The station is close to a large Depo with a semi-roundhouse for the Diesel locos (DE 24000 and new DE 33000 in the current livery), as well as a rectangular hall for the railcars (Types MT 5500 and 5700.) Although originating freight traffic here is modest, there is a great deal of freight traffic due to the nearby harbour at Mersin. The line between Adana and Mersin is double-track but not very photogenic. Between 06.00 and 23.00 14 passenger trains in each direction use this line, most of them loco-hauled. (One pair of trains goes through to İslahiye, and two in the direction of İskenderun.) Modern diesel multiple units are also used here.

If you are lucky you may find a folder at Adana station giving the current train times - otherwise one must use pencil and paper and note these down at the station.

Only the goods trains due to be remmarshalled or traffic for the north-east goes through Adana; the freight traffic in the direction of Konya and Afyon uses a triangle spur near Yenice, in order to reach the Bagdadbahn line directly and facing north. The section of this line between the stations of Durak and Ulukila is simply breath-taking. However, the line between Durak and Hacikiri can only be reached along rather poor tracks. South of Hacikiri station is the famous Varda-Viaduct, which traverses the Cilician Gate. One has to allow for at least an hour's delay for the 'Ekspres' coming from Istanbul (which does not make planning for photography any easier.) Unfortunately the freight traffic in daytime is modest, only around midday could a northbound goods train be observed leaving Adana. Between Ciftehan and Belededik one could spend weeks exploring all the different photographic possibilities, and here may also be found some withdrawn Uerdingen Schienenbusse alongside the rails.

On the eastern side of the 'İskenderun Sea Bosoms' there is also, as at Mersin, an extensive harbour and a Depo with a rectangular shed which provides accommodation for some E 43000 and DE 24000 locos.

The line from İskenderun to Divregi is electrified. Near Yakacik there is a large steel works (the railway runs right through the middle), and here at the ore unloading installations the ore trains from Divregi or Sivas terminate. There are also many photographic possibilities here in the mornings (with the sea in the background), although here and near İskenderun some caution is advisable, since on the other side of the road there is one heavily-guarded military installation after another.

These block trains are the only freight trains which are powered by double-headed electric locos - for the gradients an electric loco of Class E 43000 is also based at Fevzipasa and Osmaniye as banking engine. All other freights are powered by Diesels (DE 24000 and DE 33 000.)

All trains from the Adana/İskenderun direction heading for Malatya/Gaziantep need to change direction in Fevzipasa, and with some luck one can even see a parallel departure at the north end in the morning.

In Narli the line to Gaziantep veers off to the right, runs for about 5 kilometres parallel to the electrified line to Malatya, and then vanishes between the mountains in a curve towards the south-east. On this line, however, only one goods train was noted, heading for Gaziantep in the evening. The freight traffic between Adana and Kahramanmaraş is, in contrast, heavier - five to seven train pairs, according to the Despatcher in Adana. These trains have to reverse direction again in Köprüagzi, which also explains why there are no through passenger trains

between Adana and Kahramanmaraş.

At almost all stations along this line we had to experience, however, the fact that photography (without a permit) is in general forbidden - one can only speculate as to the reasons - perhaps it might have proved possible after all for a few Lire? It is also almost impossible to find any information. The only positive exceptions in this respect were the stations in the Taurus gradient section Durak - Ulukila, where there were no problems.

Malatya.

The extension of the line from Nurdagi (near Fevzipasa) to Malatya does not offer major photographic subjects, running mainly through the plain. Malatya has extensive railway installations, a Depo and a Wagon Works, which also seems to produce a relatively high amount of scrap. Here, in front of one of the office buildings of the '5. Bölge Müdürlüğü' stands a 6-coupled tank loco as a memorial. The through freight traffic İskenderun - Divregi avoids the town, being diverted over a triangle.

25 kilometres north of Malatya the world is perfect once more; As far as Cetinkaya/Divregi there are many possible subjects offered, and the road running almost parallel to the line is also in good condition. The station of Cetinkaya is reached over a stone bridge. The Malatya - Elazığ line crosses the 'Malatya Gölü' (Lake) on a very photogenic bridge north-east of Battalgazi, and then reaches the eastern slopes of the Karakaya mountain range and the village of Baskil, but this is hard to reach.

The Euphrates line Divregi - Erzincan - Erzurum.

In Divregi the overhead electrification ends. The station, closed in between mountains, also has a Depo. Around 2 kilometres east of the station there is an ore loading installation (unfortunately fenced in and guarded). East of and above the station there is even a Hotel in this small place, from whose terrace the lines to the station between the mountains may be observed.

There is no need to use many words to describe the Euphrates line Divregi - Erzincan - Erzurum - it is like the Taurus section of the Bagdadbahn, simply phenomenal. The number of good subjects is indescribable.

Nevertheless there is a new problem for the photographer in this region - not just the delays to the trains from Istanbul and Ankara, which are here in fact relatively small due to the extensive station stops; but while as far as Divregi the maps are up to date and accurate, further on they begin to deviate from reality and show more the desires of the map makers rather than what actually exists. Or does the Military keep the accurate maps locked away? So the road marked with a yellow line south of the Euphrates gorge from İlic to Erzincan actually ended after Güllübag

in a sort of Nirvana. The name 'road' is also rather exaggerated - a Latvian gravel path would seem like a major highway in comparison.

Here also begin 'difficult areas', one notices that one is coming closer to Kurdish regions, at strategically important points the Gendarmerie has well-built control posts, where strangers are very carefully examined - and occasionally even any further travel forbidden.

Unfortunately the amount of rail traffic over the Euphrates line is also very limited. The 'Ekspres' on this line are partially powered by DE 22000 (built by license from GM - in contrast to the 'Tülomsas-Nose' DE 24000, under the whose canopies French technology may be found.)

At Kemah station a friendly stationmaster allowed us to take a look at the 'current' timetable. At the time it was issued (1999!) something must actually have moved, but when most of the trains mentioned there were pointed to, the response was a shake of the head - with one exception, the Mixed pair 42822/42821, dep. Divrigi 06.10, Erzinan arr. 09.10, dep. back 14.00, Divrigi arr. 16.10. (The arrival time at Divrigi is really more of a fantasy.) To run this sort of train, which in most other railways is no longer possible thanks to the division of the business into separate sectors, requires a fair amount of skill from the train crew. To bring a fairly long train composed of carriages and wagons to a stand, with the passenger and luggage coaches at the relatively short platforms - not every loco driver in Germany would trust himself to manage that!"

B. NOVEMBER 2007 TRIP.

Steve Worthington posted on the 'Turk-Rail' site a report from a recent trip to Turkey in search of long runs behind noisy (preferably EMD powered) diesels.

"I flew out with friend and work colleague Stuart Peers. The flight was with Turkish Airlines from Stansted to Istanbul, and was a bargain at 116 Pounds return. Ticket validity for the trip was an eight day first-class Interail, which at over 90 Pounds doesn't represent fantastic value for money, but at least it allowed us to jump on and off trains at leisure, and not have to worry about buying onward tickets after every move.

10/11/2007

After about half a night's sleep in the Hotel Vezir in Sultanahmet in Istanbul our original plan to do the ferry to Bandirma at 07.00 was regarded as too early having been on late shift all week.

Instead we did 'Baskent Expressi' with 43038. It was this loco that failed on me last year giving us a three hour late arrival in Haydarpaşa. Luckily this time the loco didn't fail, although we lost time for no good reason, arriving just short of an hour late in Ankara.

The Doğu Expressi had managed to

beat us to Ankara, and I was surprised to see it now formed of a solid consist of TVS2000 stock. I was also a touch disappointed to see DE 24 110 on the front as opposed to the more usual DE 22. Still it was required so we took it up the hill to Kayas. There we met another British Enthusiast. We all then took a suburban EMU back into the city.

In Ankara we parted company as our new friend had a bed booked on the 19:55 Malayta whereas Stuart and I had booked a cabin on the 20:15 Adana. I was a little disappointed to see an Alsthom, DE 24 326 on the Adana, and what I thought was a required DE 22 on the Malayta. However on checking my list I was happy to see that I needed the Alsthom, but not the DE22.

We had a meal in the station restaurant before boarding the Adana overnight and securing our berth. We had a few beers in the restaurant car as the Alsthom growled up the hill out of Ankara. Between Irmak and Kirikkale we retired to bed as a huge storm literally buffeted the train!

11/11/2007

We awoke to view the stunning scenery in the Tarsus Mountains to the north of Adana. We had breakfast in the restaurant car and enjoyed the spectacular descent onto the Cukurova plain many hundreds of feet below.

We were pleasantly surprised to see that DE 33 021 had been attached to the front at Pozanti earlier, and it stayed with us all the way to Adana. After getting a few pictures of the DE 33 in Adana we set about covering some of the local services which were mainly in the hands of DE 24 Alsthoms.

Adana is a very busy location with only a relatively small station and a diesel depot situated next to it. As well as numerous local and semi-long-distance passenger services, there's also freight and plenty of shunting and light loco moves. Indeed Adana would make an ideal basis for a small model train layout, if only models of the locos and stock were freely available.

An attempt to secure beds on the 'Incanadolu Mavi Tren' to Haydarpaşa resulted in a refusal from the booking clerk. He claimed the sleepers were "finished"; by this we didn't know whether he meant they were full, or that bookings for the sleeper were now closed. Instead he issued us some free seat reservations. It looked as though we were in for a pretty foul night.

We then had a meal and a couple of beers in a bar just a short walk down the station approach road. We were disappointed to see an Alsthom on the 'Incanadolu Mavi Tren', and not the hoped for DE 33 that others have managed in the past.

On boarding the train it became rapidly apparent how awful this journey was going to be, as the coach was packed, and we had screaming kids in "surround sound". We decided by Yenice to abandon the move, fearing that we'd be up on a murder charge had we continued with the rest of the run.

Instead we headed back to Adana and a hotel, hoping we would get beds on the 'Incanadolu' the following day. We wandered into the city and we were pleasantly surprised with Adana finding it to be a thoroughly pleasant, and indeed modern city with plenty of high class shops, bars and eateries.

After a fifteen minute walk we came across the Hotel Princess Maya, which is featured in the Lonely Planet guidebook. After a bit of haggling with the Receptionist we secured a room for a rather high 140 Lira. The room though was a massive triple, and probably worth the money. After a much-needed shower we headed once again back to the station.

We had a quick spin out to the local station of Sehitlik, gaining us a couple more required Alsthoms. The outward loco, DE 24 387 was the loudest of its type I'd ever heard with a proper dubbing exhaust note which was more ALCo than Alsthom.

Back in Adana we successfully booked a sleeper berth on the following days 'Incanadolu', and then had something to eat and a few beers in the same bar we'd visited earlier.

12/11/2007

After a much needed lie-in we headed out to the station for the 09:58 to Mersin which the day before was an Alsthom, however today it was a DMU, so we duly refused it in favour of the next train, which was loco hauled, and a bit of a sunbathe. The weather in this part of Turkey was pleasantly warm for the duration of our stay.

We had a ride out to Yenice with DE24 309, where it was to be a short wait for a loco-hauled train back.

At around departure time an Alsthom rolled in with an Adana-bound service, but as it was hauling TVS2000 stock with a generator van we concluded that it couldn't be our local train, so we stood back and let it go. It was only as it left that we saw the back coach was carrying a board stating Adana-Mersin-Adana! Whoops! It was indeed the train we wanted. We were now faced with an hour's wait for the next train, which was formed by the DMU we'd refused to take from Adana earlier. Not the most productive of mornings!

After another meal and a beer in the usual bar we stocked up on beers in a supermarket across the road for the nineteen hour run through to Haydarpaşa. We were still not too happy about the lack of a DE33 on the 'Incanadolu Mavi Tren', but our spirits lifted somewhat when we saw a pair of Alsthoms attached to the front. We claimed our cabin, and stored our Efes Dark beers in the fridge provided.

We adjourned to the restaurant car after a short while for beers, and a fantastic panoramic view of the stunning ascent into the Tarsus Mountains. After a few beers in the restaurant car we had our chilled beers in our cabin. At Konya I alighted to view the loco

change, DE 24 266 and 358 giving way to DE 24 255.

On departure we turned in for the night, with all the beer helping to send us both into a deep sleep.

13/11/2007

Although we were supposed to make the 'Baskent Ekspresi' at Haydarpasa by at least an hour late running meant we had to jump off one stop short at Bostanci. The unloading was completed very quickly, and the train was on the move before I could get to the front to identify the E52 properly.

We easily obtained reservations for the 'Baskent Ekspresi', and were a little disappointed to see E52 516 (Bosnian Bin) at the head of the train as opposed to the preferred E43 power.

Punctuality was initially good, but we lost over an hour between Polatli and Ankara for no apparent reason.

In Ankara we bumped into two more British Enthusiasts on the platform at Ankara, and also once again, the chap from Yorkshire who were viewing the power for the eastbound 'Doöu Expressi'. It was DE 22 059 which was required by me, so Stu and I took it up the hill to Kayas.

After taking a local EMU service back into Ankara, we adjourned to the station restaurant. Then we tried to find the metro station and head up to Kizilay to a previously used hotel. However we found a good quality hotel very close to the station. If you walk through the subway containing all the shops, come out the other end, and cross the road of death! Then turn right, first left, and first left again, there you'll come across the very smart Pembe Kosk Hotel. Not only was it a top quality place, but at 70 Lira for a twin room it was cheap too.

14/11/2007

After a bit of a lie-in we headed back to the station, and first booked two beds on the 'Izmir Mavi Tren' for that evening. After that had been easily accomplished we headed up to Kayas to await either the inbound 'Doöu', or 'Erzurum' Expresses. Surprisingly it was the 'Doöu' that arrived first, and on time! We decided to take this train through to Sincan on the other side of Ankara, so we could also get the electric loco too. Rather disappointingly DE 22 024 was the loco into Ankara. I've had this loco on virtually every trip I've done to Turkey. Thankfully though required E43 024 was provided as the forward loco at Ankara. We were amused during the wait at Ankara by two young men attempting to get their motorbikes into the baggage van on the train. There's no way they could lift them on as the distance between the door and the platform was too great. A couple of Youths came to the rescue with a homemade ramp. After much pushing, rewinding and wheel spinning up the extremely steep ramp both bikes were placed on board. After our run

out to Sincan we took an EMU on a local service back into Ankara.

To pass the time we had a walk into the Ulus district of town. As usual with Ankara the entire city's population was seemingly out wandering the streets, and we soon tired of all the hustle and bustle and headed back to the station and its restaurant for a meal.

The 'Izmir Mavi Tren' was dragged into the station fairly early, so we claimed our berth straight away after ascertaining the power. I was pleased to see required DE 22 042 firmly attached to the front.

Once we'd departed we headed to the restaurant car for a nightcap of a couple of beers. I was stunned to see a Steward in the restaurant whom I'd met on the last trip almost exactly a year previously, and who'd looked after Colin Garner and I on the 'Erzurum Expressi' from Kars. He was as stunned to see me, as I was him. Unfortunately we never managed a chat, as the restaurant was extremely busy, and as a consequence very smoky (this being the only part of the train you can legally smoke) so soon after Eskisehir we adjourned back to our cabin. For those who may not know we were surprised to see an Ibis hotel next to the station at Eskisehir, and this would be a handy place to stop so as to cover the three Izmir overnights. By the time we'd left Eskisehir we were running over twenty minutes late, and both Stuart and I fully expected the train to lose more time overnight. The condition of the track rapidly deteriorated after Eskisehir, and the ride was alarmingly rough in places making it very hard to get to sleep.

15/11/2007

The Attendant woke us about twenty minutes outside of Ulukent, and we were stunned to discover that we'd actually gained time, and were now actually a few minutes early!

Whilst everybody else was herded onto the waiting buses for the run into Izmir Stu and I dodged the as-usual friendly staff and headed over the footbridge. Two trains were waiting heading in the opposite direction. One was a single DE24 which departed before we could get to it. However the other was a pair DE 24 171 and 144 on the 07:52 departure to Usak.

We took the pair back up the line for the short run to Menemen. Here there's a small depot which maintains the locos and stock that are used on the lines to the north of Izmir. As well as our train there were a large amount of DE11's stabled and shut down, along with our DE22 off the Izmir Mavi Tren, and a couple of DE33's for the Bandirma services.

During our wait at Menemen I tried to get reservations for the morning train to Bandirma. This was the first time in our trip though that I came away with nothing. The booking Clerk having no idea what our German-issued Interails were, was thus unable to issue the reservation.

As I walked back onto the platform the second overnight from Ankara to Izmir was arriving behind required DE 22 061. We thought it rude to refuse this so we took it back down to Ulukent. Surprisingly this train was also spot on time. Once again we managed to avoid being put on the rail replacement bus into Izmir.

At Ulukent I once again tried to get a couple of reservations. This Clerk was more determined than his colleague at Menemen, and despite a few calls to Basmane (I presume) he still couldn't issue the required reservations. However it was at this point I had a mini brain wave. I showed him an old reservation for a few days previous, and it soon became all clear, and the two reservations were issued in seconds. After this we had a wander off the station in the hope of finding a supermarket. Unfortunately all we could find was the petrol station across the road for snacks.

Back at the station the Bandirma service was already in with DE 33 033 at the head of a generator van, and three TVS2000 coaches. I suppose 3300Hp on four coaches is somewhat of a waste, but at least it gives these big locos some booked passenger work.

Departure was on time, and the running of this train was taken extremely seriously. Station work was brisk at each stop with time keeping obviously a high priority. Also all the staff on the train were smartly turned out. Even the loco crew were smartly dressed in suit and tie!

The DE33 stormed along on the well-laid track, but due to the sound proofing of the TVS2000 coach we were in we could hardly hear it. The only impression of the loco we could gain was of its basic transition were the loco would unload then load back up again at the lower end of the speed range giving a slight tug of the coaches when it loaded up again. Obviously the Driver had the loco in the lower notches during the transition. However coming off a short speed restriction the loco was on full power during the transition, and the tug would probably have knocked you off your feet had you been standing!

On approach to Bandirma the train drops down an extremely steep gradient and through a short tunnel into Bandirma station. Here there was a small amount of confusion amongst the passengers who initially started to alight. The Train crew though kept them on, and the train then reversed 700 metres into Bandirma Gar, which is better suited for the ODI ferry terminal, and the town centre.

Stu and I dashed round to the ferry terminal as we thought there was a departure just after 15:00. However when we arrived the helpful security informed us the next departure wasn't until 20:30! Doh! Luckily Bandirma is a very modern town with plenty of places to eat and drink. So after booking our ferry tickets we headed to a nearby ho-

tel, and used the restaurant for a meal. After this we had a few beers in a couple of bars in the town centre. The people as usual were very friendly, and curious as to why we were there in the off season. One barman even thought we were Russian Sailors!

Soon enough it was time to head back to the ferry terminal. The ferry is a high speed one, and on board you have an allocated seat, which Stu and I thought somewhat inconvenient. The two hour journey soon passed though, and we along with hordes of others were deposited onto the quayside at Yenikapi.

The original plan was to head to Sultanahmet, and the previously used Hotel Vezir. However we stumbled across the lively district of Kumkapi where there were a plethora of hotels and bars. We soon found a good quality hotel, and after our long day retired straight to bed.

16/11/2007

This was our final full day in Turkey, and we'd decided on a run out of Haydarparasa to Izmit. So after a lie-in we headed out via Sirkeci and the ferry to Haydarparasa.

As the next departure wasn't for a while, and the local booking office was shut, we wasted the time getting a few pictures and having a couple of beers in the station bar.

Back at the booking office the Clerk refused to sell us returns, so two singles to Izmit were purchased. Required E43 032 was the loco, and soon after departure the train began to fill up, and lose time. This forced to jump off at Derince. Here was a lengthy rake of Iranian wagons used to transport new cars. Disappointingly our last TCDD loco of the trip was E52 512, a loco I've travelled behind on numerous occasions.

At Haydarparasa we decided to use the station restaurant for a meal, as the food here is usually top notch, and tonight's meal proved to be no exception. After our meal I introduced Stu to the Turkish institution of Raki. Initially he was wary of this cloudy liquid claiming he did not want a hangover on the flight home the next day. However he was soon hooked and we emptied over half a bottle between us! The ferry journey back to the European side of the water was something of a blur, and back on dry land we visited Burger King for something else to eat, before enjoying some more Raki in a local bar back in Kumkapi.

17/11/2007

Nothing to do today but head back to the airport.

Summary

Once again another fantastic trip. Great locos, stunning scenery, and extremely friendly and helpful people. I've travelled pretty much all over the world, and have yet to meet a nicer people than the Turks.

Although no booking Clerks spoke any English, having our requirements pre-written-down on a piece of paper made things a lot easier, and we only had the one slight problem at Menemen in booking tickets."

80:10

A MYSTERIOUS SIDING AT HADERA-EAST

(Amith Ben-Shalom)



Neta & Gidi Sivan of Gan-Shmuel archive had kindly sent me a dozen of pictures from the kibbutz collection, showing the near Hadera-East station.

Some of the pictures are dated from the thirties (The P.R. era), and others are from the fifties (the I.R. era).

One picture, was taken by Elisha Eshed, shows a huge & rare flood in "Wadi (stream) Hadera" just south of the station.

A proper research of this picture, discovered an hidden and interesting detail: A westward arc siding, leaving the main-line between the bridge on Wadi Hadera & the station.

A map of the station layout (dated 1938, from Paul) & a later one (1943) from Chen Melling don't contain that siding.

Gidi remembers that a citrus packing-house was located south-westward from the main station building, and was operated until the sixties, as far as he remembers .

I came along to the station, and found the relics of that point, with a very short section, going this direction.

Has anyone more information ??

Thanks to: Neta & Gidi Sivan, Chen Melling.

Photos: 1 (above)

. A flood at Wadi Hadera, 1952. note to the siding to the left (west ward) (Courtesy: Gan-Shmuel archive)

THE SILICATE BRICKWORKS LOCOMOTIVES.

By Amith Ben-Shalom.

Two years ago I received from Uri Lahav a picture & information about the narrow-gauge lines at the Silicate Brickworks. His father was the driver of one of the locos. The Silicate Brickworks at Tel-Aviv were founded in 19??, at a place known as Klal-House, in the middle of the big city. According to Dr. Irit Amit-Cohen, the Tel-Aviv factory was closed in 19??, because the sand that was needed to produce the silicate bricks ran out.

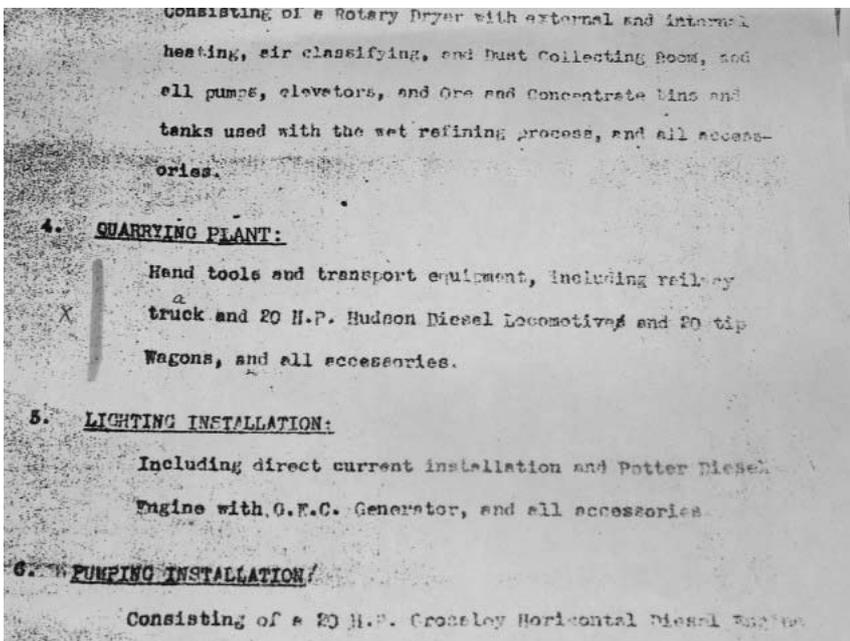
The works moved to Rishon-Lezion, to two separate locations: The northern one was located at Nahalat-Yehuda, near what is now the Rishon-Interchange on the Highway, the exact place being what is now Sde-Hemed, a boarding school there. As far as we know, the narrow-gauge line was laid westwards, to the sand-dunes between the factory and the Mediterranean beach, but the exact terminus and length is unknown. It seems that it was few kilometres long, and was dynamic, being moved according to the sand-mining. This factory was called "Silicate-Nah'le", and the workers from the Tel-Aviv factory moved there, together with the production equipment. It makes sense to assume that the railway equipment was moved too. The southern factory was located about 4 Km south-west of "Nah'le", and was known as "Silicate Ein Ha-kore". There is no evidence that there was a railway system there. Brigadier-General (res.) Dr. Aharon Davidi's (Davidovich) father worked also in the Silicate cooperative and was killed by a trolley that rolled down from the ramp, after the towing-cable tore.

The locomotive in the picture was identified by Paul z"l as a Hunslet 20 hp 4wDM, but the exact number of locomotives is not clear, though there is a link between that loco and the loco at the sulphate-mines near Beeri (Mushaba). Erez Shalev from Beeri found an inventory-list in the Kibbutz archive. A 20 hp Hunslet loco is included in the list, with 20 Decauville-wagons and rails. Has anybody more details?? See also Harakevet 39:10 & 40:6 (i).

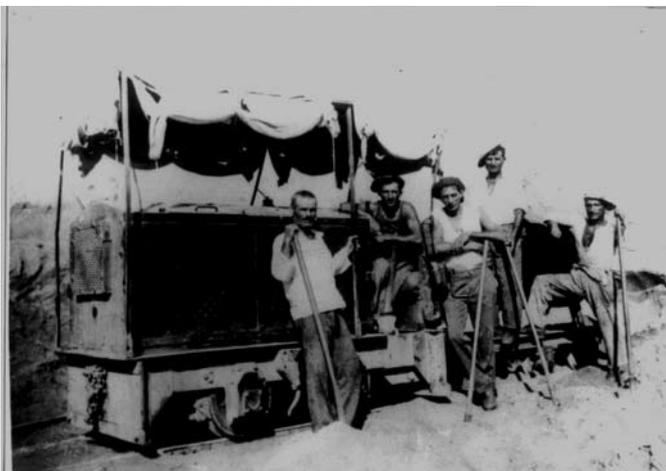
Thanks to: Uri Lahav, Irit Amit-Cohen, Aharon Davidi & Erez Shalev.



Photo 2. The relics of the point & siding (Amith Ben-Shalom)



2. Inventory-list of Sulphate-mines (courtesy: Beeri archive, repro: Erez Shalev).



1. The Hunslet loco at Silicate-Nah'le (courtesy: Davidi collection)

“KOTSO SHEL YUD”

This is the title of a bitter poem sequence (76 poems each of 10 lines) written by Yehudah Leib Gordon (1830-1892). In the “CCAR Journal” [Central Conference of American Rabbis] Summer 2006 pp. 107-188 is a copy of the Hebrew text and a translation and introduction by Rabbi Professor Stanley Nash. The poems detail the sad fate of a beautiful, intelligent woman named Bat-Shua who, due to the circumstances of the time and the poor status of women, is denied a proper education and is married-off young to a man chosen by her father simply because he is a good talmudic scholar, although he is totally impractical and unable to make a living. She bears two children but, when her father becomes impoverished through the introduction of railways and telegraphs, which affect the postal business from which he lives, she is then abandoned by her husband Hillel and has to struggle to support herself and the children, as she is an “agunah”, a woman still ‘chained’ to her missing husband because there was no formal document of divorce. A little later a young Jewish railway engineer, Fabi, involved in the construction of a railway line in Palestine (! - and hence the relevance to this magazine) meets her and falls in love with her. He arranges to track down the missing husband, persuades him to write a letter divorcing his wife and thus freeing her to marry Fabi. However, the stupid and intolerant local rabbi declares the divorce document invalid because there is a tip of a letter missing (the “Yud” in the name of the husband), and despite the pleas of other rabbis who declare the document valid, (and the husband has in the meantime probably died in a shipwreck), he effectively condemns the young woman to remain as she is, to age prematurely and to die still unmarried to the man she loves. It is a violent and eloquent polemic against the stupidity of rabbis and those obsessed - literally - with the letter of the law, insensitive to the results of their opinions and scholastic misuse of authority.....

So - it is fiction. Gordon perhaps took some ideas for railway construction from experience in Russia. It is set in “the city of Ayalon” - Ayalon being, as we know, the name of the river and part of what is now Tel Aviv. It was written BEFORE the railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem was built, probably in 1870-75 - indeed, Gordon died the same year the line was eventually opened - and yet it illustrates the clash of cultures between the old, benighted, hidebound religious authorities and the new, open, technological society being introduced through the arrival of the Railway! It describes as well the effect on those previous providers of transport services. As such it provides an interesting window into the mores and feelings of the time. One wonders what real-life human-interest stories accompanied the real constructors and craftsmen and planners who came to build the railways. Here are a few excerpts from Nash’s deliberately-literal translation, using his merican orthography and the numbering of the stanzas.

(15).

“Hefer, her father, a respected citizen and dignitary
In the place of his residence, the city of Ayalon,
Holds the lease for the postal station, for riders and horses of the mail,
He also maintains there a restaurant and inn for travelers....”

(30).

Rav Hefer, too, witnessed during these days
The great hand that brings low the mighty,
And who could believe that a miracle could be wrought
Even in this faithless generation as in days of yore?
A fiery chariot and fiery horses speeding along with terrifying sound,
The likes of which had not been heard since the days of Elijah,
Were carried along with hurricane force from the East;
Next to them in the air a magical wire was extended -
The wire transmitting a message, sending letters quickly,
While in the fiery chariot travelers were passing to and fro.

(31)

These woeful innovations encompassed the region
Although they had not been extended to Ayalon;
Already the mail delivery system had ceased, the royal couriers
Who traveled on horses grew fewer day by day.
Each day Hefer grew poorer, his money purse thin,
The stables in disrepair, the horses having been sold....

(40).

One trouble begets another, calamity comes in pairs:
Hefer suddenly died; at the time his ears heard tell
That the route of the railroad was to pass through
The city of Ayalon, as well, he suffered a stroke.....

(42).

Fall has passed and the days of spring arrived,
The earth has shed its winter garment:
Farmer and husbandmen have gone out to their work,
All the rivers of the wasteland are now rushing.
Ayalon, too, has awakened to new life:
The work project is under way. From all sides there come
Flocking towards Ayalon, like eagles, builders, craftsmen,
Clerks, as well as excavators and bridge-builders

And Fabi, the supervisor over the building of the railroad track,
Came early on to hire workers for the project.

(44).

A dwelling in the city all facing Bat-Shua’s store,
Built higher than all the houses of the city
Is where Fabi established his permanent residence,
In the same place as the clerk’s office, which Fabi supervised.
The dawn would find him at his writing table
And for those wishing to see him, he was available until ten o’clock,
From then until noon he was not at home,
Because he would walk around the city, in the archives and legal offices
Afterwards he would go out to the field to oversee the work,
And at night he would rest - every day he would follow the same routine.

(50).

...Bat-Shua explained to him, opening her heart,
The severity of her situation these past two years,
That her husband, who married her while she was still very young,
Had deserted her and left her without support, and with her two children.
She said furthermore that according to hearsay
Her husband was now located in the city of Liverpool.

(51).

Now Fabi had an acquaintance in Liverpool named ‘Sasson’
Who shipped railroad ties for his tracks,
And Fabi asked him to look for Hillel from Piraton,
And at the end of a month Fabi received his answer,
That Hillel son of Avicon from Piraton was
A peddler in Liverpool making the rounds of the villages,
And he was set to board ship on ‘The Crooked Serpent’
Which was to depart in a month’s time for the Azores,
And to his wife he would agree to send a bill of divorce, a Get,
If she were to pay him 500 silver pieces in cash.

(52)

All of this Gabi did not relate to Bat-Shua
And on that very day he authorized his associate
To pay the assigned sum to Hillel

And to hold him firmly to his commitment lest he back out
 And at the end of a month Fabi received from Liverpool
 Conclusive notification by 'telegraph'
 That his associate had done what he requested,
 And that same day Hillel had written in the rabbi's house
 A 'Get' for his wife in accordance with Jewish legal requirements
 And he had transmitted it to a courier for delivery.

(55)

Another four weeks passed, for that is how long it takes
 For one to travel from Liverpool to Ayalon,
 Two weeks by boat and two by the main highway,
 If he encounters no obstacle or setback along the way.....

(63).

On the Sunday preceding the synagogue chanting of 'Nitzavim',
 Rav Vofsi summoned to him his two judges,
 And one of them opened the bundle of letters
 And he took out the Get and read it aloud.
 "It's precisely according to law", he said, "There's not a thing
 wrong with it.
 The courier can deliver it to the woman who is being divorced."
 However, Rav Vofsi, having only barely glanced at the Get,
 Declared to the courier: "Don't you even come close!
 Can't you see that the divorce paper is not valid:
 The name Hillel is written without the letter Yud, defective."

(64).

The judge who read it aloud, a man versed in Kabbalah and other
 esoterica,
 Decided on the authority of the 'Ari' that Hillel is indeed to be
 written defective, without the Yud.
 The second judge, too, said the same thing, on the authority of
 the 'BedeK Habayit'
 [a halachic work by Yosef Karo.]
 The two of them expressed their opinions that the Get was valid,
 But Rav Vofsi decided that Hillel should be written with the Yud,
 As was the opinion of the 'Zan' and the 'Sam' [two books about
 divorce], based on the 'Shulchan Aruch'.
 And he scolded them, saying that he was amazed
 How the two of them had forgotten a formalized ruling.
 And thus he held to his opinion like an iron spur, and like a firmly
 rooted tree.
 And he proclaimed in a loud voice in Yiddish: "The Get is posul,
 invalid!"

(65).

If a man have the affliction of leprosy,
 If any illness or disease befall him,
 There are doctors in the world with remedies at hand,
 There is hope for the ailing that they may be saved.
 If a man sin against his fellow man or against God
 And the judge sentences him more severely than the crime,
 There is another judge and yet another above him
 Who will alter the sentence of the condemned man when his
 appeal is heard.
 But a statement from the mouth of a rabbi - who can alter it?
 And to whom can the doomed ones turn and raise an outcry?"

(A good question indeed. And so events take their further tragic
 course.)

(74).

And the work of laying railroad track had completely been done,
 And already the fiery chariot with hurricane fury
 Over iron rails and with majestic and awesome snorting
 Was magically whisking people by the thousands.
 (By now in the study hall they had dropped the topic of the
 agunah, And every Yeshivah student was pondering the halachah
 of the railroad. And after much learned deliberation they agreed

unanimously that the locomotive was none other than the black hound
 That was used for miraculously swift travel 'Kefitsat Haderech' -
 As described at length in the book 'Berit Menucha'.)

(75)

And when the train would stop at the gates of Ayalon
 And the passengers would get off to eat a hasty meal
 There would come toward them from the hotels
 Poor Jewish women selling all kinds of food:
 And amongst them they would see one of them
 An erstwhile beauty with ruined good looks, wearing ragged clothing,
 Whose hair has whitened, although she is not an old woman.
 Her stature is bent, her eyes swollen,
 And naked and barefoot to both sides of her
 Her two children holding onto the hem of her garment...."

(Rabbi Walter Rothschild.)

A trip on Israel Railways.

As "producer" of HaRakvet for Rabbi Rothschild, my wife and I, on
 a recent visit to Israel thought it appropriate to take a train journey.
 We were staying in Herzliyah and I have a cousin up in Haifa. We
 met Jeremy Topaz one evening early on in our visit and he kindly
 gave me an English version of the timetable. Once I got used to
 the layout of this, all southerly direction trains are separate from
 northerly ones; I sorted out suitably timed trains. From Herzliyah
 you have to change at Binyamina, not sure why, but there was
 just about sufficient time for the connection. I found the stations
 immaculate, all new and with very little litter about. The station staff
 were quite helpful, and to one who does not speak much (if any)
 Hebrew, their command of English was thankfully very good. At
 one stage we found ourselves on the wrong platform for the Haifa
 connection, but a person standing close by, hearing us speak of
 Haifa, soon put us right and we dashed off to the correct platform.
 Likewise on the return journey we were not sure which platform
 at Binyamina to take for the train to Herzliyah, but some fellow pas-
 sengers, young folk, said "follow us" and so we did!

The double decker trains were an eye opener for us, we had
 seen them briefly in Holland last year. The trains, both the double
 deckers and the single ones were clean and tidy and quite com-
 fortable. The carriages seemed wider than those here in the UK, is
 the loading gauge wider? The track was also very smooth running.
 Two observations – why is it that the majority of the young people
 on the trains had mobile phones pressed to their ears for much of
 the journey? And where else in the world would you see a young
 soldier with a machine gun strapped to his back, both on a train
 and on a bus!

In all, so far as we were concerned, Israel's railways are a credit to the
 country.

Steve Waldenberg

*Haifa Hof Carmel
 Station*

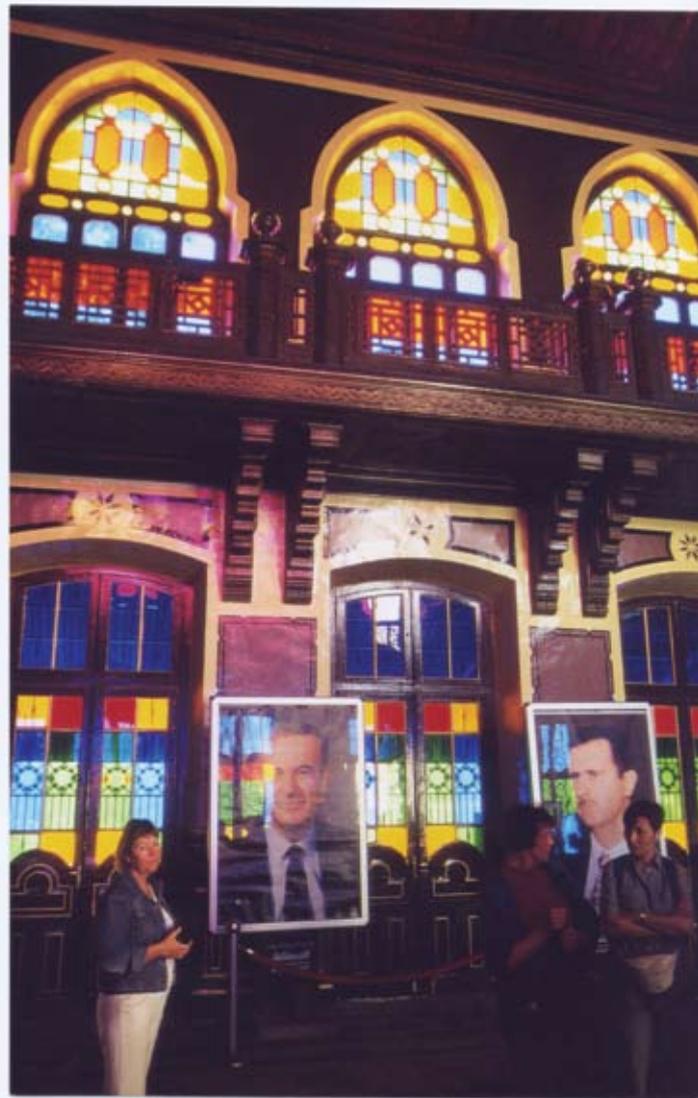


הרכבת

**Two pictures of Damascus Kanawat station,
by Hermann Neidhart.**



Steve Waldenberg at Herziyah station, January 2008



80:14

Erection of the last part of the Jerusalem LRV's Calatrava strings bridge mast last part on 14.01.08; photo by Sasson Tiram of the project management



An IC3 crossing the old Wadi Sorek bridge with the new one in the background (80.4 j)".