



ISRAEL 1954

The development of a modern state hinges to a great extent on its communications. Up-to-date transportation and tele-communications are essential for the efficient and rapid functioning of economy and administration. And sea and air communications are a pre-requisite for sound commercial and political contacts with the world.

Accordingly, the Israel Government has laid special stress upon the development of its communications, and a large part of the annual development budget has been allocated for the purchase of new equipment and the expansion of transport and tele-communications.

Ports

Situated on the eastern Mediterranean seaboard with hostile Arab states to the north, east and south, Israel depends entirely upon the sea for trade and overseas communications. The development of the country's harbor facilities was therefore a major concern of the Government from the very beginning, and expansion in this field has been both considerable and swift.

In 1953, Israel's ports handled a total of 1,500,000 tons of cargo; in 1949 the figure was 1,294,000 tons. Purchase of new equipment, new port construction, increased storage facilities, mechanization and greater organizational efficiency were the principal goals of the port expansion program.

Haifa Port

The greatest progress was made in Haifa, Israel's main harbor and one of the largest and best-equipped ports of the eastern Mediterranean. New equipment here included a number of huge cranes, among them a giant floating crane, the largest in the Middle East, weigh-bridges, cargo trollies, tractors and forklift trucks able to facilitate speedy and efficient handling.

To cope with increased tonnage, additional storage sheds were erected, and the internal road and railway network extended. The quays had been rebuilt, and the extension of the main quay to provide berthing facilities for two additional ships has just been completed. Space has also been added for the mooring of harbor craft to increase the volume of lighterage work at any one time.

Work was started on a large grain elevator with a 29,000 ton capacity and the construction of a modern passenger terminal has already passed the blueprint stage.

By the end of 1954, Haifa port's cargo-handling capacity will have been increased to one and a half million tons a year.

Ports of Tel Aviv and Jaffa

Israel's other two main ports, Tel Aviv and Jaffa, have a combined capacity of 400,000 tons a year. In both ports, ships loading and discharging lie in open roadsteads, with the cargo carried between ship and shore in lighters. Capacity is being stepped up to 500,000 tons annually by the introduction of new equipment and the enlargement of storage facilities.

Kishon Development Scheme

The Kishon Development Department was set up in March 1951, to plan additional port facilities near Haifa harbor. An auxiliary port is now under construction at the mouth of the Kishon river where a canal to take vessels up to 3,000 tons draught is being constructed. The development area is some three kilometres in length and will be equipped with modern warehouses, factories, and possibly a graving dock. Work on the Kishon development project began in June, 1951. The first stage was completed early in 1954, and the first ship to use the new facilities registered in the anchorage book in March, 1954. Certain areas earmarked for a free zone, cargo handling and factory sites were offered for



Israel fruit carrier in Haifa port

immediate development and the first leases have already been taken up.

Elat

Elat, Israel's southernmost outpost on the shores of the Red Sea at the head of the Gulf of Akaba, is currently equipped with a provisional jetty. Described as Israel's "window to the East," Elat has already received a number of ships bringing cargoes from Aden, Abyssinia, East Africa and the Sudan. Plans now being prepared called for the construction of a larger jetty to handle goods from East Africa and the Orient. The port is destined also to become the export outlet for minerals mined in the southern Negev.

Shipping

Israel-owned shipping was practically non-existent in 1948. The entire fleet then consisted of one passenger vessel in a poor state of

repair, four small coastal freighters and a number of obsolete vessels used for the transportation of "illegal immigrants" running the British blockade.

The total gross tonnage of this "fleet" in May, 1948 was 6,000 tons. Today, the Israel merchant fleet includes 31 vessels, sharing a total tonnage of 120,000 tons gross. The merchant fleet numbers three passenger steamers, including the newly-acquired SS. Jerusalem, which has a displacement of over 15,000 tons, and 28 freighters, including five fruit-carriers.

Since the establishment of the State 70% of all passengers arriving by sea were carried in Israel vessels; about 55% were new immigrants.

To meet the growing need for crews, special training courses in seamanship were held for ships' masters, mates, engineers and marine radio operators. Thus the increase in shipping was accompanied by an equal increase in personnel, from some 100 officers and sailors in 1948 to 1,200 today. Israel still suffers from a shortage of trained marine engineers, but it is hoped that this will be overcome shortly by a special scheme for local training.

The Israel flag is now carried by Israel vessels to most parts of the world. Regular passenger and cargo routes are run to Cyprus, France, Italy and Turkey in the Mediterranean, to Dutch, Belgian and British ports in the north, and to the East Coast of the United States and Canada, as well as a cargo run to West Africa.

Progress during the past six years has ensured Israel a firm place among seafaring nations. Israel ranks as the second maritime power among Middle Eastern States.

Aviation

With the liquidation of the Mandatory Government, the foundations of civil aviation in existence by April, 1948 were destroyed. The central base of civil aviation—the Lod (Lydda) Airport—was surrendered by the Mandatory Government to Arab forces, and the international air companies discontinued their operation.

Israel, attacked on the day of its birth, was forced to operate an improvised air service on scratch landing fields through the first weeks of its existence.

Airfields

Lod Airport was reopened shortly after its liberation by the Israel Army (July, 1948) and extensive development work was car-

ried out at once. Old equipment was renovated, new equipment installed. The main runway was extended to a total length of 2,400 metres, rendering it suitable for all types of modern aircraft, including jet passenger planes. The airport is now in the International "B" class, ranking with London, Paris and Zurich. Equipment now being installed includes modern electronic navigational and approach aids, further ensuring the safe use of the field under all conditions.

Lod is now used by 10 international airlines which together operate 15 different routes to or through the airport to all parts of the world. In 1953 1,568 planes of international air carriers entered the airfield carrying 60,517 passengers. Cargo handled rose from 458,633 kilos in 1949 to 1,633,550 kilos in 1953, while airmail handled rose from 129,675 kilos to 244,463 kilos.

A modern aircraft overhaul base is being completed at Lod and will start operations in 1954. At this base major maintenance and overhaul of local planes, and eventually of foreign aircraft, will be carried out.

The Haifa airfield is used by Cyprus Airways on its international service and by the "Chim-Avir" Company, which aerially sprays and dusts Israel's crops and trees. Plans for resiting and development of the Haifa field are being discussed.

The "Dov" airfield in Tel Aviv is used mainly for inland traffic and is the headquarters of the Israel Aero Club's flying school. The Club also uses the field for gliding instruction.

The Elat field is used for regular daily service between Lod and other local airfields.

El-Al

As was mentioned, at the outbreak of war in 1948, Israel was abandoned by virtually all major international air lines previously operating in Palestine. The new State was cut off from the rest of the world.

Accordingly, one of the first acts of the Provisional Government was the establishment of an Israel air line. El-Al was founded. The air line developed so well that it now handles a substantial part of the air traffic to and from the country. The company is financed and controlled by the Government, the Jewish Agency, the General Federation of Labor (Histadrut) and the Zim Israel Navigation Company.

In the past four years El-Al established a network of routes to four continents—Asia, Europe, North America and Africa—



El-Al Constellation at Lydda Airport

reaching London, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Zurich, Vienna, Rome, Athens, Johannesburg, New York, Nicosia and Istanbul. It maintains its own repair shops at Lod and operates its own fleet of passenger transport vehicles.

Local internal air services are operated by Arkia, a company established in 1950 mainly for the carriage of passengers and freight to Elat. Recently it started regular services between Lod, Haifa, Tel-Aviv, Galilee and Beersheba, and it will ultimately maintain air communications with Jerusalem, thus linking all parts of Israel.

Air agreements providing reciprocal rights were signed with the United States, Turkey, the Netherlands, Great Britain, the Philippines, France, Switzerland and Belgium, and El-Al reached inter-airline agreements with most of the foreign airlines using Israel as a terminal or transit station.

For air traffic safety Radio Beacons were installed and Very High Frequency (VOR) stations are used in various parts of the

country thus providing electronic guidance to incoming and outgoing aircraft engaged on international flights to Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Far East.

Training and Licensing

Training of aviation personnel—air and ground crews, navigators, engineers—progressed rapidly under the supervision of the Department of Civil Aviation, of the Ministry of Communications, with the cooperation of International Civil Aviation Organization (I.C.A.O.) experts. Officials of the Department of Civil Aviation, belonging to the Technical Services of Lod Airport, were sent abroad on fellowships under that organization's training scheme.

The Department of Civil Aviation is the examining and licensing authority for aviation personnel and the air worthiness authority for aircraft and aeronautical equipment.

Road Construction

Israel's road system expanded when new construction and a fine system of repair, maintenance and improvement was inaugurated. In six years, 543 kilometres of new and reconstructed highways and 303 kilometres of feeder roads to agricultural settlements were built, and 931 kilometres widened and improved. This work included the construction of hundreds of bridges and culverts, and the blasting of hundreds of thousands of tons of rock. This entailed major engineering feats through rugged mountainous terrain. The main roads completed during these years include:

1. Road of Valour, linking Jerusalem to the Coastal Plain.
2. Tel-Aviv-Herzlia-Nathanya coastal road, shortening the distance to Haifa and serving scores of villages.
3. Faluja-Beersheba road, forming the southern section of the main north-south trunk line and bringing Beersheba to within less than two hours travel from Tel-Aviv and opening thousands of acres for development.
4. Beersheba-Sdom road, opened in March, 1953. The construction of this road was vital for the resumption of the operations of the Dead Sea potash works. The construction of the Kurnub-Sdom section of the Beersheba-Dead Sea Road, which crosses mountainous country and drops from its high-point at Kurnub, 423 metres (1,387 feet) above sea level,

to the shores of the Dead Sea, 392 metres (1,286 feet) below sea level is the lowest point on the earth's surface, represented an amazing engineering feat.

5. Kadesh-Ramim-Misgav Am road, parallel to the Lebanese border in the north.
6. Parallel all-weather road linking Jerusalem with the coastal plain.
7. Bnei Braq-Yazur, central section of north-south trunk road and Tel-Aviv bypass road which links up with the coastal road in the south.
8. Mamshit (Kurnub)-Phosphate fields, development road linking the Beersheba-Kurnub-Sdom road to the phosphate quarries and processing plant and to the kaolin quarries in the Mahtesh Hagadol (Great Crater).
9. Beersheba-Nabatim-Mamshit (Kurnub) Road, first section of the main road link between Beersheba and Kurnub. It will shorten the distance to the Potash Works, phosphate fields and other mineral workings in the Southern Negev by 11 kilometres and improved gradients.

The road to Sdom



Important road building projects now under construction include:

1. Beersheba-Nabatim-Mamshit (Kurnub) Road, construction of second section (first section, see above).
2. Safiah-Beit Hagedi, completion of the agricultural development road in the Northern Negev.
3. Beersheba-Tel Yerucham-Sde Boker-Abda-Wadi Ramon-Elat road, passes through the center of the Negev instead of along the border, like the old Wadi-Araba road to Elat. The part of the road running through the wild and mountainous area of Wadi Ramon required exceptional engineering skill and considerable use of blasting explosives. At Independence Heights, on the walls of Wadi Ramon, the road rises to 3,000 feet and falls rapidly thereafter to sea-level at Elat. The road is partly asphalted and partly built of kaolin found in the area. The road will be opened to general use in May, 1954.

Road Transportation

Road transportation has always been Israel's mainstay for the movement of passengers and goods, and, in 1953, the transport services expanded radically to meet the needs of a growing population, developing industry and new settlements in hitherto undeveloped areas.

Bus Transport

Passenger bus transport is maintained mainly by three bus cooperatives, the largest of which covers interurban traffic together with Haifa and district, the others the Jerusalem and Tel Aviv districts, respectively. During 1953, the bus cooperatives received 75 new Chausson buses from France, of which 40 were specially designed for local city traffic providing a minimum number of seats and a maximum amount of standing room in order to cope with rush hour traffic. Another 90 large Leyland buses were ordered in Britain and will arrive during the first part of 1954. They replace smaller, obsolete buses. Despite these additions, it is estimated that a further 500 buses are needed to meet the needs of efficient passenger transportation services.

Bus services between the major cities are complemented by interurban taxi services running on regular schedules. About 500 of the total 2,271 licensed taxis in the country operate on such interurban runs.

Continued increase in the number of vehicles registered (excluding motorcycles and ambulances) is shown in the following table:

	1951	1952	1953
Private Cars	10,541	11,779	12,745
Taxis	1,521	1,984	2,271
Buses	1,505	1,677	1,741
Commercial Vehicles	14,769	16,122	17,139

Railways

Only a few sections of the Mandatory railway system remained within the area of Israel when the State was established. Their total length was less than a quarter that of the Palestine Railways, and there was no rail communication between the three main cities. Even the small amount of track left within Israel was in a bad state of repair, with many culverts and bridges destroyed or damaged in the fighting, and many lines unusable without extensive repairs.

The railway rolling stock left behind was mostly life expired and had not been properly taken care of during the years preceding the termination of the Mandate.

Of some 7,000 railway employees during the Mandate regime, only 6 percent were Jews, and these continued to work with the Israel Railways. Most of them were fitters and clerical employees, and there were almost no employees trained in specific railway trades, such as engine drivers, platelayers, shunters, etc.

Repair work and new construction began immediately and traffic was resumed on certain sections within a few months.

In August, 1949, the first train reached Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, and that year the Haifa-Tel Aviv, and Haifa-Jerusalem lines reopened for regular freight haulage, while the Haifa-Tel Aviv line reopened for passenger services. The latter line was shortened by the laying of new sections, including one skirting a salient on the Jordan frontier, by-passing a section which previously passed through enemy-held territory.

In Haifa port extension lines were laid in the new cargo jetty, while new sidings were laid in Sarafand. Extensive railway workshops were reopened for the construction and maintenance of passenger and goods waggons and for the overhaul, repair and rebuilding of locomotives, coaches and freight cars. Three new diesel locomotives

and track construction and maintenance machinery were put into service. This resulted in marked improvement of service and considerable saving of money. 215 waggons, 100 box cars and 100 open waggons, each 25 tons, and 15 flat waggons of 50 tons were purchased abroad during 1953 and assembled in the Kishon Railway Workshops.

Over 500 transportation employees, 1,000 skilled workers and 144 engine crews were trained. A railway training school fitted with modern equipment and appliances opened at Haifa and 57 youngsters are now being trained and qualified in essential railway skills.

Since 1948, the length of track rose from about 200 kilometers to 506 kilometers of which 336 kilometers are main line and 170 branch and extension lines. The number of passengers and freight handled by the Railways rose consistently during this period:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Passengers Travelled</i>	<i>Freight Carried</i>
1948-1949	281,615	167,983 tons
1949	829,000	390,000 "
1953	2,414,000	970,000 "

New Lines

The new coastal line from Hadera to Tel Aviv North was brought into operation in 1953 for both passenger and freight traffic. By the summer of 1954 this line will extend to a new Tel-Aviv terminal—the Arlosoroff Station. When this line is completed, the travelling time between Tel-Aviv and Haifa will be only 75 to 80 minutes. The existing Tel-Aviv North station will be converted into a modern goods station.

Plans are now underway for a line, by-passing Tel-Aviv entirely, to connect the Haifa-Tel Aviv coastal line with Jerusalem.

Negev Railway

The Negev Railway from Na'an Junction to Beersheba is now under construction. About 60 percent of the earthwork, bridges and culverts were completed and the first 7 kilometres of line laid. It is hoped that the line will be finished by 1954.

Plans and surveys are being prepared for the continuation of this line to Mamshit (Kurnub) since cheap rail transport is essential for the heavy loads of phosphates, glass sand, kaolin and potash which must be transferred from mining areas to processing factories and ports.

Posts, Telegraph & Telephones

With the termination of the British Mandate, all post offices and postal agencies closed. Local telephone services continued to operate since these exchanges were largely manned by Jews, but trunk lines passing through territory not held by Israel were dislocated. All contracts for the conveyance of surface and airmail abroad were cancelled, and connections with the Universal Postal Union and International Telecommunications Union severed.

This situation was remedied quickly. An elementary internal postal service sped into operation and the first Israel stamps appeared. Local telephone lines were repaired and trunk lines passed through Israel territory, but damaged in the fighting were patched up. New temporary lines were put into operation to by-pass enemy territory.

Communications abroad were reorganized by individual agreements reached with foreign states for the resumption of postal and air communications, and in June 1949, Israel was admitted to the International Telecommunications Union, in December 1949 to the Universal Postal Union.

In 1953 many new services were put into operation and existing services expanded. Three sets of figures indicate the scale of these services:

209,000,000 units of postal matter—letters and parcels, inland and overseas—were handled.

630,000 local telegrams were dispatched and 650,000 over-sea cables dispatched and received.

74,000,000 local and 4,500,000 interurban telephone calls were made. There were 17,000 international calls.

A new telephone exchange for 7,000 subscribers was opened in Tel Aviv North, another for 4,000 subscribers in Tel Aviv South, and a 2,000 subscriber exchange in Ramat Gan. These exchanges provided for further expansion of over 10,000 lines. A new interurban telephone exchange will operate in Tel Aviv this summer considerably improving the transmission of long-distance calls.

The transmission of telegrams by telephone to and from subscribers was introduced in 1953 and has become most popular.

A Post Office Bank, providing the usual facilities, was opened in November, 1953 and is developing rapidly.

A new medium-wave broadcast transmitter of 50 kilowatt was put into operation in May, 1953, providing improved reception throughout the country. A short-wave transmitter of the same output is under construction to be inaugurated soon. It will be beamed to Europe, North and South Africa and tests will be made to beam transmissions to North and South America.

An Electronic Standard Time Clock, with an accuracy of 1/10 second per day, was constructed for the Ministry of Posts and has been in operation since January, 1954. The clock serves as a master clock for the postal services, broadcasting stations and for scientific institutes all over Israel. It will also provide time signals for the "speaking clock" which will be installed next year in the Jerusalem Telephone Exchange.

A central four-year training school for telecommunications technicians has been operated by the Post Office since 1951. The school has 58 students in the first three grades and will graduate its first class next year.

At the "Bible and the Stamp" International Philatelic Exhibition held last year in Austria by the Protestant Church Union, the Israel exhibit was awarded one of six gold medals. Exhibits have also been placed on show in London and Lisbon.

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