

## From the Shavei Zion Archives: Transportation and Transport

February, 2015 Judith Temime

On April 21, 1938, one week after the founding of our moshav, the "Juedische Rundschau", the official newspaper of the German Zionist Federation, wrote excitedly: "A new place on the map of Palestine, the light of a new projector in the night skies of Palestine, a new name in the mouths of the Jews of Palestine and the Diaspora. Out of **Rexingen, Schawei Zion** has risen...the people of **Rexingen** have settled on their land."



Paving the entry road in **Shavei Zion**, spring 1938. On the left, a Jewish Settlement Policeman (JSP ghaffir) stands guard. From the collection of the **Shavei Zion Archives**.

"Davar", on April 14, 1938, only one day after the tower and stockade encampment was built here on the first day of settlement, reported that "the settlers went out this morning to pave the road...one kilometer long, it will link the new settlement with the Acre-Beirut road". In mining sand from our seafront for use in construction, the settlers worked alongside laborers from "Even v'Seed" and in paving the road they

worked with laborers from "Solel Boneh" so that from the very inception of the moshav, members earned wages to support the settlement. At the beginning of May in 1938, **Dr. Manfred Scheuer**, the British Mandate-appointed "mukhtar" (headman) of the new, little settlement wrote in his journal: "Today, **Fredy Weil and Zev Berlinger** began to learn how to lay stones in paving the road. **Fredy** had the opportunity of acquiring the skill during his six weeks in a concentration camp and (*he*) said yesterday that a man should be able to lay 60 square meters and earn a high wage. This morning, at work, he said the work (*here*) is different from that in Germany: here, it's necessary to match up the stones and to stand them upright and he would be happy (*he said*) if he could lay 12 meters." **Dr. Scheuer** continued, "The expert workers of 'Solel Boneh' finished 23 meters today. Also, we learned in working at Hill 650, that a tractor is apparently more costly than handwork...and this is an opportunity for us to make some money ourselves".

Despite the disappointing pace at which the settlers worked, on May 22, when **Dr. Scheuer** returned from a visit to his family in Haifa, he wrote, "Already from far away, the white ribbon that is our paved road is visible, stretching toward the sea". And on June 16, he wrote, "...We held a small party to celebrate completing asphaltting (*the road*) and some of the (*outside*) laborers will be going home. Beer and sandwiches. Our members took part in the drinking, of course, and finished all we had, 29 bottles at 0.870 Palestine Pounds (*a sum*) that we don't earn so quickly. I thanked 'Solel Boneh' for the hard work they did so well (*and thanked*) the manager, the laborers and our members. One of the laborers responded, wishing us everything good in the future. Whether or not we again celebrate the opening of a road with ribbon-cutting and so on, is doubtful...we can't always be celebrating. Some of (*our*) young people would be happy to do so. Even if the following day everyone is in good spirits—singing and reciting—that (*gay mood*) affects work output and obscures the economic and political hardships and the situation of the Jews in Germany who are in our thoughts and about whom we read in the newspapers and in letters."

In his book "Nahariya", **Erich M. Lehmann** cites the minutes of the Nahariya Small-Holders-Cooperative-Society Ltd. from April, 1935 in which it was noted that the bus line called "The French Line" would be "the most convenient for the transport of mail". While we haven't been able to discover with certainty what was meant by "The French Line", it may well have been the route that linked Haifa and Beirut, a section of the "Nairn Transport Co. Overland Desert Mail" that was active to one extent or another between the years 1920 and 1959. The company transported passengers and mail from Haifa to Beirut, Damascus and Baghdad. Various material on the Internet tells us that the **Nairn Brothers**, New Zealanders who had served with Allenby in the Near East during the First World War, won support for their enterprise from the French authorities in the region, including the award of the contract for the overland transport of French mail, some financial grants for the operation of the line, the waiver of import duties on equipment used by the company and even, on occasion, armed escorts for the company's vehicles. The British may have realized the value of the services provided by the **Nairn Brothers** but they, unlike the French, gave the company

no practical support. When the Cooperative Society in Nahariya discussed the options for sending and receiving mail, the directors referred to the bus line—"Autobus-Linie"—and, in fact, the Nairn Company used particularly powerful buses, especially suited to stand up to the difficult conditions of the roads they traveled, though the original fleet of vehicles had been Cadillac and Buick sedans.

"From 1936", **Klaus Kreppel** writes in his book "Nahariya and the German Emigrants to Eretz Yisrael, the Story of the Founders 1935-1941", "(Bus) Line 14 connected Nahariya with the outside world." That is, the early bus line operated by a Jewish cooperative. "And", continues **Kreppel**, "from the first day (*of operation of*) the line, **Walter Schachtel** sat at the wheel, driving pupils and workers and visitors to the markets to Haifa in the mornings". **Kreppel** quotes **Fela Yitzhaki**, one of the founders of Kibbutz Evron, from her book "The Kibbutz": "The trip (*from Nahariya*) to Haifa took an hour and a half, sometimes even two hours. There were no fixed stops along the way but **Schachtel** knew where his passengers would be waiting. He talked with the passengers during the trip and his conversations lengthened the trip." **Walter Schachtel** had studied law and economics in Berlin and had worked as a journalist and editor until the Nazis came to power. **Klaus Kreppel** writes that like many other German immigrants to Eretz Yisrael (Palestine), **Schachtel's** academic background didn't equip him to earn a living after he left Germany and, at the beginning of his life here, he used the small car that he had brought with him to work "deliver(*ing*) cakes for the Café Krips in Haifa". Later, **Schachtel** "experienced all of the temporary changes in the transportation cooperative for which he worked: beginning with 'Kvutzat Zifzif' (*and then*) for 'Mishmar HaMifratz', 'Shachar', 'Chever', 'Eshed'—and including 'Egged'". Today, veteran **Shavei Tzion** residents remember that **Schachtel** liked to tease the early settlers here during that period when the moshav kept a herd of sheep, "schafe" in German. **Dr. Siegfried Hirsch**, the "Rassco" (Rural and Suburban Settlement Company) agronomist who was responsible for the moshav on behalf of the company, wrote in his memoirs, "When the bus driver from Haifa stopped at the junction, he would call out "Schafe Zion, aussteigen!"—"Sheep of Zion, get off!"

Line 14 was also known as "The Zifzif Line", taken from the name of the first transportation cooperative in the area. The cooperative, in turn, had received its name—"The Zifzif Group"—from its early enterprise in Acre, the Krayot and Nahariya: the mining of beach sand ("zifzif" in Hebrew) for use in construction. Later, as we have read, the men of **Shavei Tzion** would work with "Even v'Seed" in mining sand from our own strip of beachfront.



Mine cart transport of sand from the beach in **Shavei Zion**, 1938-39. First from the left, **Siegfried Steinharter** and to his left, **Sally Krautmann**. In the leather cap, **Asher Berlinger**. From the collection of the **Shavei Zion Archives**.

From the website of Beit Grushkewitz, the archives and museum of the history of Kiryat Motzkin, we learn that "The Zifzif Group" had lived and worked in Acre from 1924, "within the framework of 'Hebrew Labor'". The bus service that became Line 14 was an early additional project undertaken by the group. At first, the line served only Haifa and the Bay area; only later did it reach Nahariya as well. The Beit Grushkewitz site tells us that "In 1938, the group brought a large shed which was used as its central bus station as well as for parking the buses. The shed (*'tzrif* in Hebrew) was placed at the Kiryat Haim junction on the Acre-Haifa road, and that is the source of the name 'the 'Tzrif Junction' which is current even today although the shed itself has long since disappeared." In 1938, the story of public transportation in the area became linked to the history of **Shavei Zion**. **Dr. Scheuer** wrote in his journal on June 21, 1938, "I spoke with the man from Line 14. They agree that the bus will drive in (*that is, will drive in from the Haifa-Beirut road and up to the encampment*), if Nahariya agrees to the longer journey. **Oskar Mayer** (*the mukhtar of Nahariya*) has agreed for the time being and will inform the bus company of this in writing."

In the article "Shavei=Zion" in "Davar" on April 24, 1939, a year after the settlement was founded, we read, "Security here (*is*) a particular concern. There has already been one victim of the (*Arab*) riots—the sainted **Binyamin Berman**. The people (*of Shavei Zion*) knew enough to build (*their*) village at a distance of one kilometer from the main road and that has made keeping watch easier." Perhaps the "Davar" reporter **A.S. Uris** was right in believing that that one kilometer was a boon to security in the

encampment itself, but when, during the first months after the moshav was founded, members found themselves obliged to leave the camp on errands, reaching the main road on foot and waiting there for a bus were dangerous. **Dr. Scheuer's** journal helps us understand the importance of having the bus pick up and deposit its **Shavei Zion** passengers next to the camp, rather than on the road.

**Dr. Scheuer** wrote: "Today, Sunday, July 24, 1938 at 6:30, I went down (*to wait for*) the bus on the main road. I sat on the cement edge of the bridge for a quarter of an hour and looked over my paperwork. I wanted to get to Nahariya. About a quarter of an hour later, **Fredy Weil, Max Marx, Sally Lemberger, and Kaethe Lemberger** arrived. They wanted to take the bus returning to Haifa. That is, **Sally Lemberger** was escorting them with a hunting rifle. When they were about 150 meters from me, the bus to Nahariya arrived, red and gray, that is to say not (*painted in*) a unified color and lacking the screens customarily used now against bombs, (*and the bus*) slowed down. I walked around it and when I stood in front of the bus, several shots were heard, one after the other, and they whistled by my ears. After about five shots, the bus sped away and disappeared. I got into the ditch along our side of the (*main*) road because I told myself that I wouldn't be able to cross the distance in the open (*and reach*) the ditch on our entry road, about 30 meters, while a firefight was going on." Here, it's important to note that **Dr. Scheuer** had lost a leg in the First World War, fighting for Germany, his homeland, and in the events he described in his journal entry he was trying to find some protection from the bullets while navigating the open space with his wooden leg and cane.

The journal continues: "The shooting kept up and in the first minute about 30 shots were fired. I saw that I could crawl under the cement bridge. I took my briefcase and cane with me so that I wouldn't be discovered. There was a lull in the shooting. **Fredy Weil**, who was with the group (*of settlers*) in the ditch alongside our entry road, called out: '**Dr. Scheuer**, are you hurt?' Despite the wind, he understood me when I called back that I was safe and that they should remain (*where they were*), but apparently the enemy saw him and the shooting resumed."

**Dr. Scheuer** continued: "Cars passed by me as I lay in the dark tunnel and I was afraid and felt that, having no weapon, I was in a trap. I heard shots from our fields. Was it our 'notrim' (*Jewish Settlement Police*)? Or were there Arabs on our land? Finally, I saw an armored car arriving from the direction of Nahariya. I called out and gestured to it to stop. The car continued traveling until it reached about the place where **Fredy Weil** was. I felt abandoned and jumped from my hiding place and crossed the road to the ditch on our side. Two shots went past me and I lay down in the ditch which was full of ants. The armored car drove slowly in reverse and (*its occupants*) shouted, 'Stay where you are, they're shooting over your head!' They shot a barrage in order to subdue the enemy—who was still firing—and I crawled into (*the car*). The others (*that is, the other settlers*) crawled inside, too. It was a car from Nahariya, driver + four persons. The (*Shavei Zion*) guard **Shlomo (Linver)** and a girl from Nahariya drove

(with us) into **Shavei Tzion**. There was an uproar (in the camp) with (JSP) policemen in pajamas and so on."

**Dr. Scheuer** ended his dramatic report: "After a few minutes, I went to Nahariya in the armored car, not because of my errands but rather to telephone (and say) that in the future, the number 14 bus would have to drive up to the camp because none of us would walk down to the main road, or up from it (any longer)...We heard that the bus had been hit by four bullets. One person had been hit in the forearm (thank God, not in the stomach as we had heard at first), and when (the car) reached Nahariya, I phoned from there to the (Mandatory) police in Acre. As an eyewitness and also as mukhtar, I went with the (British) officer **Ford** to the spot where the events had taken place...I settled the business with Line 14 by phone and I informed Rassco of the events. I fortified myself with cognac and coffee...I asked the driver of Line 14 why he had left me and fled. He answered, 'Because of 30 passengers.'" The journal entry went on to describe finding bullet casings and footprints in **Shavei Tzion's** corn field, and also reported the conversation with **Ford**, in which **Dr. Scheuer** once again implored the officer about the urgent need for permits for additional weapons for the settlers. He described the emotional scene and the tears of relief in the encampment when the event had ended and he concluded his journal entry promising that "on Shabbat, (I'll) recite the Birkat HaGomel", the Blessing of Thanksgiving said by persons saved from death.

The security of settlers in Palestine was a principal concern and **Dr. Scheuer**, in his role as the representative of the people of **Shavei Tzion**, was relentless in protesting to the British authorities the dearth of weapons in the camp. Even when official permission for one more pistol or rifle had been received, much time passed before the weapon was actually placed in the hands of the settlers. In the days of the early encampment, bread was brought to the little settlement in a small truck driven by **Yehoshua (Hugo) Tuchman**, the father of **Yehuda Shilo**. **Hugo** baked bread in Kibbutz Ein HaMifratz when the people of the kibbutz were still living in Kiryat Haim, before they settled on the land in the location known to us today. **Hugo** not only baked the bread but also delivered it to the settlements of the vicinity. But along with the baking and the delivery, it's said that, in the service of the Haganah, **Hugo** smuggled illegal weapons to Hanita and **Shavei Tzion**. He would hollow out the soft part of a loaf of bread and hide a pistol inside. The act of smuggling was daring and dangerous as we know. In the days of the British Mandate, possessing illegal weapons (that is, weapons without the necessary permissions) was punishable by death. Illegal weapons in **Shavei Tzion** were hidden in a "slick" (cache) opposite the water tower, in the kitchen of the house of the first teachers here, **Zev** and **Margalit Berlinger**. The cache, to the credit of the small circle of the persons privy to the dangerous secret, was never discovered.



Bread delivery to the camp in **Shavei Tzion**, 1938(?). The baker **Hugo Tuchman**'s truck.  
From the left, **Thea Lemberger**, **Mrs. Goldschmidt (Lisbeth)**. In the doorway of the communal kitchen-dining room, **Bilha Stein**. Photo by **R. Weissenstein**.  
From the collection of the **Shavei Tzion Archives**.

During the Arab revolt in Palestine ("the Uprising") between the years 1936-1939, harsh measures had been taken by the British Mandate, among them limitations on the movement of vehicles and individuals. In "Davar" in October, 1938, it was reported that "from the 22<sup>nd</sup> (of this month) and in the future, the roads in the Acre district will be closed to traffic, with the exception of the Ras-A-Niqra—Acre—Haifa road and the roads branching from that road to Nahariya, Hanita and **Shavei Tzion**. Movement will be permitted only to drivers already in possession of documents signed by the deputy of the (Mandatory) police..." And, as we've seen, the danger to travelers in the vicinity was real. **Klaus Kreppel**'s book tells us that in January, 1939, **Elsa David**, a resident of Nahariya and the mother of seven children, was killed "by an Arab sniper in Haifa" while she was riding in the bus driven by **Walter Schachtel**. **Schachtel**, "the driver who throughout the whole period of the great Arab revolt safely returned his passengers to Nahariya every day...the man who loved people...the legendary bus driver...was stricken...with shock" in the wake of the murder of **Elsa**

**David.** "A year later," **Kreppel** adds, "after another attack on the bus, **Schachtel** himself was badly wounded". Despite the clear dangers to travelers on the main road and the danger inherent in reaching the main road by foot, and despite earlier agreements, a permanent arrangement for the security of the settlers in **Shavei Tzion** was not put into place and in October, 1939 the management committee of the moshav recorded in its minutes that "Line 14 will look into the possibility that, in order to calm the camp, the bus will enter **Shavei Tzion** twice a day".



Bus service, "bringing news...and newspapers". 1944-45. At right, the old entry gate to the moshav. Photo by **Lasar Duenner**. From the collection of the **Shavei Tzion Archives**.

After the immediate danger of attacks on buses in those early years had passed, the main mode of transportation serving the people remained the buses. But service was often cumbersome and unpredictable. In November, 1951, **Esther** (nee **Froehlich**) and **Heinz (Dan) Jacoby** were married in the garden of **Rabbi Dr. Aaron Keller's** house in Nahariya. **Amos Froehlich**, **Esther's** brother, drove the couple and the bride's family from **Shavei Tzion** to the chuppah, in the moshav's truck. Meanwhile, **Ruth** and **Georg, Heinz'** parents, left their home in the Amidar neighborhood of Acre in order to travel by bus to the wedding which was to take place at two o'clock that afternoon. They waited fruitlessly for two hours beside the "Spina" sparkling lemonade drink factory in Acre. That's the way it was, sometimes. In the end, **Amos** drove the truck south



and collected the groom's parents in Acre where they were still looking expectantly for their bus.

When essentially everyone in the country, having little choice, rode the buses, small dramas were sometimes enacted during the journeys and those dramas clearly reflected the collective mores and behaviors we associate with Eretz Yisrael and with the Israeli character. **Mordecai (Motke) Berkowitz** tells us about one such incident. **Motke** came to **Shavei Zion** from the youth village Kfar Batya, at the beginning of the 1950s, and he worked here until he began his military service. A soccer player on Nahariya's team, **Motke** used to get to town for practices and games by bicycle or on horseback. On one occasion during his army service, **Motke**, home on Sabbath leave, fell ill after a game played for Nahariya. On Sunday, of course, he was expected to return to his base though he felt very sick indeed. He woke late that morning and hurried to catch the bus. Together with **Yehudit Stern**, who was traveling to her secretarial classes in Haifa, **Motke** was obliged to stand. When a seat became free, **Motke** grabbed it. **Uri Aloni** (a member of Moshav Regba and, later, first the principal of the cooperative grammar school in Regba and then of the "Yad Natan" high school) was on the bus as well. "Soldier!" **Uri**, dressed in his lieutenant colonel's uniform, commanded **Motke**, "Get up and give your seat to someone older than you!" **Yehudit** intervened at that moment, saying, "**Uri**, this soldier is sick. He has to have a seat!" **Motke**, who was actually suffering from severe flu and was subsequently hospitalized for several days, was permitted to sit for the rest of his journey.

And, again, still during that period when everyone (including lieutenant colonels) rode the buses, during the years of the government austerity program (1949-59), **Chava Lemberger Berkowitz** remembers that the inspectors of the Ministry of Rationing and Supply would blockade roads and board buses in order to search for contraband among the passengers' belongings. In the event that an inspector discovered items or quantities of items that couldn't be accounted for with an individual's ration card, the inspector confiscated them on the spot. Eleven year-old **Chava** and **Kaethe**, her mother, were returning home by bus from a visit to relatives in Haifa when an inspector climbed on board. **Chava** was afraid that the inspector might demand to see the package that **Kaethe** carried and, of course, that's exactly what he did. He didn't believe **Kaethe**'s story about the contents of the cardboard box until it was opened and he saw that it really did contain nothing more than the Purim costume—a Spanish dancer's outfit—that the Haifa relatives had lent to the little girl. The face of the inspector (who might well have thought he was about to capture a big-time black marketer) turned bright red with shame.

Early work on the farm and in the farmyard was accomplished using horses, mules and donkeys, including bringing everyday supplies to **Shavei Zion** from Nahariya and the transport of cans of milk from our cowshed to the original iteration of the Strauss dairy: a small operation in the yard of the **Strauss Family** on Herzl Street in the little colony. **Yitzhak (Isak) Stein** drove a small donkey cart doing those routine, essential

errands for the moshav. **Ludwig Marx**, too, (and later **Ernst Pless**) drove to Nahariya, but in a four-wheeled wagon, hitched to a horse. In fact, remembers **Ernst's** son **Yoram**, sometimes two horses were used, often "Yanush" and "Imre", the white "Hungarians". **Motke Berkowitz** tells us that **Ludwig** (or **Ernst**) might have brought a bicycle to Nahariya to be repaired there (in the days when bicycles were ubiquitous and necessary, both here in the moshav and in the neighboring colony), and he would return to **Shavei Zion** with foodstuffs and with a quantity of ice which was produced in a factory in the area of the present Lochamei HaGhettaot Street in Nahariya. **Motke**, who worked then as a stand-in in the duty roster and often substituted for **Ludwig**, explains that the blocks of ice were divided into smaller chunks by driving a screwdriver into them until they split apart. A bell warned the women of the moshav—on a break from work between 12 and 1 o'clock in the afternoon—that the wagon had arrived, and they would walk out to meet it with big metal tongs or a basin or a towel with which to carry home their portion of the ice. Later, a canvas-covered coach brought **Shavei Zion's** older children to school in Nahariya and **Chava Berkowitz** remembers the coach as being very much like the covered wagons used by "cowboys".



**Yitzhak (Isak) Stein** doing his daily errands, in Nahariya in the early 1940s.

From the collection of the **Shavei Zion Archives**.

In the 1970s, **Pinchas Erlanger** published in the moshav's "Beineinu" ("Between Us") newsletter, a series of reports and decisions from the minutes of the management committee. So we can read, for example, from March, 1940, "We need another pair of horses, not only for work on the grounds and in construction but also, in the future,

for farm work". Despite that, a year later the committee noted, "Due to a successful purchase, we can sell two horses...since we'll be able to make do with five pairs." The carters were to decide which horses would be sold. But when, in August, 1941, the mare mule "Filleh" was stung to death by hornets in the banana plantation, the committee decided to replace her with two horses. In August, 1948, the committee reported that "the army has taken the horses we received from the experimental station at Acre and has given us others in their stead". We can imagine that it was difficult for carters and stablemen to relinquish horses with which they had grown accustomed to working, and perhaps it was hardest of all for **Moshe Stark** who is rarely pictured in old photographs without a horse by his side.

Horses continued to be a costly and important asset to the moshav well into the 1950s. Minutes of a meeting of the management committee in October, 1949 announce that "the use of horses (*that is, work horses*) for private riding will not be permitted under any circumstances without the agreement of the farm manager". For a time, the pride of those **Shavei Zion** members who worked in agriculture was the pair of Yugoslavian horses called "Chamuda" and "Chemda", admired for their size, strength and beauty.



From the left: **Moshe Stark**, **Pinchas Erlanger** and **Lothar Stern** harvesting clover. The horses are the valued and beloved Yugoslavians. Early 1950s.

From the collection of the **Shavei Zion Archives**.

**Motke Berkowitz** tells us that as a youth of 17, he was working one day with another farmhand and Chemda and Chamuda in the fields in "the east", bringing clover to the dairy barn. **Moshe Sahm** saw **Motke** returning to the farmyard and ran to **Sally Lemberger**, the farm manager. "How," complained **Moshe**, "can you put two such

expensive horses in the hands of such a young boy?" **Sally** answered, to **Motke's** credit, "Don't worry about it. That boy is all right." In 1960, that same young man whose character had earned the moshav's respect, married **Chava Lemberger** and became **Sally's** son-in-law.

In 1943, when, **Amos Froehlich** tells us, **Shavei Zion** was allowed to farm an additional 1,000 dunams—the dunam is an Ottoman unit of measurement of land area equaling, in Palestine, 1,000 square meters—east of the Haifa-Beirut road, the demands of the work were beyond the capacity of the 16 "horses" owned by the moshav. **Amos** explains that the word "horse" was loosely used by the settlers to refer also to mules. And he tells us that prior to 1948, particularly sturdy livestock were brought to Palestine from Syria, Lebanon and Cyprus and that some of the "horses" in **Shavei Zion** had been bought for a symbolic price from the experimental agricultural station in Acre which was operated by the Mandate. The station occupied itself with the improvement of farming in the country in general and especially with the improvement of livestock. **Amos** says "My pleasantest memory is of the station," because, he adds, of its size (about 4,000 dunams) and the clean and orderly grounds that reflected British standards. Even today, **Amos** wonders at the beauty of the place: "There were flowers everywhere!"

So, with the additional 1,000 dunams of land to be worked by the moshav, the first tractor and combine were purchased in June, 1944, and a second tractor was purchased in 1945. Those dates are recorded together with the dates of purchase of further mechanical implements as milestones in "Unser Entwicklung", "Our Development", in a modest German-language booklet outlining the moshav's history to date, published in 1953 to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the settlement. In 1963, in a booklet published in both German and English for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, **Leopold Marx** wrote with pride that the moshav possessed: "2 trucks, a van, a jeep, 12 tractors with all sorts of implements, 2 combines...and all the additional, necessary tools needed for work in farming and gardening". He added, "Almost all of the repairs on (*our*) trucks, vehicles, tractors and other equipment are carried out in our own workshops".

Sometimes, farm equipment was needed to solve complex and major problems in the life of the moshav. Thus, the minutes of deliberations of the management committee in June, 1940 record that, "because of the fear that Italy will enter the war, **Dr. (Siegfried) Hirsch** suggests that we buy a tractor. With the proper transmission, it will be possible to hook it up to the water pump of the well in the event that the power station is damaged (*by Italian air attacks, wrote Pinchas Erlanger when he published these minutes in 'Beineinu' in 1980*), or the power (*supply*) is cut. Rassco has received from K.K.L. (*Jewish National Fund*), 1,000 dunams of land which can be leased to us for a year or two years or three—land which cannot be worked without a tractor. The only tractor in the area is in Ein Sara (*probably at the training farm there*) and it's already old and not always available to us. It's also expensive (*To borrow? To run? The reference is unclear.*) Without the use of a tractor, we're capable, with our present

equipment, of pumping (*only*) 18 cubic meters of water instead of 90 cubic meters per hour, and with a 6 hp diesel engine, (*running*) the projector and the lights of the watchmen's room (2,000 watts), that's insufficient. With the instability in Eretz Yisrael, we're ready to buy a tractor on credit, on condition that Rassco advances us the funds. Perhaps we can 'raise' about 100-150 Palestine pounds for the purpose by selling a pair of horses and the small pump, if Rassco can find the rest of the 575 pounds which is the price of the tractor."

The tenacity of the people of **Shavei Zion** and the whole of Western Galilee was tested, as we know, during the Arab blockade of the area in spring, 1948. The Hebrew-language article "The Partition Plan of November 29, 1947" posted on the web site of Beit Lieberman, the Museum of the History of Nahariya, tells us, "The (*U.N.*) partition plan shocked the people of Nahariya. All of Western Galilee was to be given to the Arabs, including not only Nahariya but **Shavei Zion**, Regba, Evron, Hanita, Matzuva, Eilon and Yehiam. All construction work in Nahariya stopped immediately...workmen and their families left and the number of residents shrank from 1,800 to 1,500. An economic crisis took hold, accompanied by a dark mood...The U.N. partition plan of November 29, 1947, left Nahariya beyond the border of Eretz Yisrael. The Arabs increased their hostile actions around Nahariya and blockaded the colony. From two months, March 17-May 14, 1948, before the War of Independence began, Nahariya suffered a complete overland blockade and only by sea could (*the little town*) be reached. "

**Tzadok Eshel's** book "Nahariya" tells us that "because of the danger (*or, in fact, because of the impossibility*) of transporting people and goods by land, **Abba Khushi**, secretary of the Workers' Council in Haifa, initiated a system of transportation by sea. (*Thus*) began the transport of people and equipment in boats, from the port of Haifa and from the Krayot seafront, to **Shavei Zion** and to Nahariya." From letters in the archives of Israel Railways, we learn that the Nahariya Local Council appealed to the Zionist institutions for general assistance and, in particular, for help in opening the sea route. Keren HaYesod (The Foundation Fund) and Keren HaKayemet L'Yisrael (Jewish National Fund) responded with a grant of "20,000 pounds". "The trial (*runs*) went well," **Eshel** continues, "and that was the beginning of the sea route that linked Haifa and the Haifa Bay area with Nahariya." The Beit Lieberman article adds, "Motorboats and the towed craft called 'maona' reached Nahariya from Haifa several times each week, bringing mail, passengers and goods."

And as in Nahariya, so in **Shavei Zion**. **Leopold Marx** wrote in his diary, "This is how the blockade began: no traffic on the roads and within one day, no electricity, no telephone, and no radio. Two trucks (*belonging to the moshav*), with their passengers, were stranded in Haifa and couldn't get home." For an issue of "Beineinu" in 1981, **Mordecai (Putzo) Rosenberger** told editor **Rivka Olami**, "The main road from Nahariya to Haifa passed through the Arab village of Samaria (*the remains of which village can be seen today near the Mateh Asher Regional Council building*). One day, a convoy of trucks carrying sand from Nahariya to Haifa was attacked as it drove through the

village. After that, only armored trucks were allowed to travel on the roads in this vicinity. Shortly after that incident, the Arabs of Acre blocked the road in that city and traffic to Haifa was completely blocked...and all supplies reached the area only by sea." **Hans Schwartz**, too, shared his recollections with "Beineinu" readers in 1981: "*(When)* the Arabs from Samaria completely destroyed 5 meters of the main road, the resulting barrier prevented any sort of vehicle from reaching the area and the area was completely cut off. Only two alternative routes remained open to link us *(with the country south of Acre)*, the sea and the air."

A chapter by **Herbert Lubrani** in **Erich M. Lehmann's** book "Nahariya", tells us that before the total blockade of the Western Galilee, mail sent by the settlers in the area, including those in "**Schawei-Zion** and the kibbutzim, and mail sent to them, had been transported by the Jewish autobus collective". In fact, from the inception of our moshav in 1938, mail meant for **Shavei Zion** was handled by Rassco as one of the services rendered to the little community by the company that provided planning and practical assistance here. Already in 1938, when a meeting of the mukhtars of Nahariya, Hanita and **Shavei Zion** discussed subjects of common interest, **Dr. Scheuer** noted in his journal that the postal agency in Nahariya would open at the beginning of August and, "the mail bus *(would)* enter **Shavei Zion** at 10:00 and at 1:15". But only in 1941 did **Shavei Zion** begin to receive mail directly from the agency in the colony instead of through Rassco.

**Hans Schwartz** remembered that, for a time after the blockade of Western Galilee, "mail and newspapers were sent to the area in a little Piper aircraft which would fly low *(enough)* to toss the mail to the ground". But as the area organized to cope with an extended blockade, it became clear that the sea would afford the only feasible means of transport. **Herbert Lubrani** explained: "the local committee in Nahariya hired two motorboats and a row boat from the 'Ogen' transport company in Haifa, and transport was renewed using a sea route. In March, 1948, 'Mishmar HaYam' opened a post office in Nahariya which sent onward mail bearing Mandatory postal stamps with the cancellation mark 'Blockaded Nahariya-Western Galilee' in both Hebrew and in English." From April, 1948, stamps with a face value of 10 mils for postcards, 20 mils for letters and of 50 mils for parcels and registered mail were printed *(in Nahariya)*. "On the stamps, in Hebrew and English, were the words "Nahariya-Haifa Emergency Post" with the cancellation mark "Blockaded Western Galilee" in Hebrew and "BY SEA" in both languages. *(When it received such mail)*, the post office in Haifa was obliged to add additional Mandatory stamps."



Envelope sent by "Emergency Post", 1948.  
From the **Archives of the "Tapuz" Collectors' Forum**.

**Putzo Rosenberger** wrote in "Beineinu" about the transport of goods: "In order to purchase supplies needed (*by the moshav*), we had a number of friends in Haifa and they saw that (*foodstuffs, fuel, seeds and other things*) reached the ships that would bring them to the area...(then) the goods were removed from the ships (*and from the "ma'ona", a kind of large raft*) on bridges lowered to dry land..." **Hans Schwartz** added, "...food meant for all of the settlements was unloaded...in Nahariya and every settlement sent a truck in order to collect its own goods." In the minutes of the **Shavei Tzion's** management committee dated April 27, 1948, we read that the committee believed that space on the boats had been unfairly allotted and that the moshav's interests had thus been damaged. The chairman of the committee, **Dr. Scheuer**, duly complained and received a promise that in the next shipment more space would be allocated to **Shavei Tzion**.

**Hans Schwartz** said, "...the power supply to the area was cut off (*when*) several electric poles were blown up (*in a separate hostile incident*), so that not only could traffic not get through...but we also had no electricity...could not listen to the news (*on the radio*) and we got our information on events in the country only belatedly, when we read the newspapers. Besides routine, essential supplies, the "ma'ona" also brought a tractor and a generator (*to Shavei Tzion*) in order to solve the problem of the supply of electricity. It was very difficult to unload the tractor from the "ma'ona" and after great

effort (*that is, despite the effort made*), the tractor fell into the water". **Putzo Rosenberger** recorded the conclusion of the episode which must surely have seemed rather less comical than it does today: after much hard labor, he said, "we succeeded in pulling (*the tractor*) from the water."

An additional challenge in securing supplies was bringing the ritual foods needed for Passover to the isolated settlements. **Hans Schwartz** remembered, "We were worried that the Passover matzos wouldn't arrive in time but, to everyone's joy, they arrived just on the eve of the holiday." And, again to everyone's joy, on the very same day, the eve of the holiday celebrating freedom, the news "Haifa has been liberated!" was received.

As we've read, the boats also transported passengers to Western Galilee. In his 1960 review of events in the early years of the moshav, **Leopold Marx** wrote that in April, 1948, "...the ship has brought welcome visitors—the Rassco representatives **Dr. (Ludwig) Pinner** and (**Dr.**) **Siegfried Hirsch**. In the evening, **Pinner** talked to an assembly of the moshav, encouraged us, (*praised*) our courage and our determination to overcome. But not only for that had he come. He had a gift in his pocket: much-needed, significant financial help from the Jewish Agency."



Unloading supplies on the beach in Nahariya, spring 1948.  
From the collection of **Andreas Meyer**, courtesy of **Beit Lieberman**.

The article on the blockade of Western Galilee on the web site of Beit Lieberman tells us that "toward Passover in 1948, a large shipment of matzos arrived from Haifa (*and*



also) machinery and work tools for the construction of a pier on the Nahariya beach, to be used by the water craft (*that transported goods*). The work of loading and unloading the "ma'ona" was done by residents of Nahariya who had been marshalled for that purpose, in particular the young men of the "yamiya" (*the local sailing flotilla*) who had earlier been trained (*for such an operation*). The members of the "yamiya" were those who had helped the illegal immigrants disembark from the ships, (*and*) many photos document those moving occasions. Because there was no proper harbor for the boats, different sorts of bridges had been built (wooden ramps) for the transfer of people, goods and animals from the boats to the beach or vice versa. In stormy weather, when the "ma'ona" could not approach the beach, various vital supplies, such as kerosene, were stored in tins that were cast into the sea. The men of the "yamiya" dived into the cold water and swam the tins in toward the shore where other residents helped them bring the tins to the safety of the beach."

In the German-language journal kept by Nahariya resident **Alfred Katz** and quoted in **Erich Lehmann's** book, we read in the entry for May 14, 1948: "Our two-month isolation from the outside world has ended. This morning, a convoy of 25 vehicles, protected by an armored car, arrived and residents greeted it with shouts. The first truck bore the message "It's Nahariya time again!" And, on May 24, **Katz** wrote, "The Omnibusse (*autobus*) has begun once more to keep a set schedule, though only once a day, and Nahariya residents are allowed (*to travel*) only with official permits as there are still (*security*) concerns when one travels. (*But*) we see people walking about...it improves the general atmosphere when one no longer has the feeling that the world is locked to us".

The farm lands to "the east" already mentioned here, comprising about 1,100 dunams on the far side of the main road, were worked in collaboration with Kibbutz Kfar Masaryk to which enterprise the kibbutz brought its tractors and the additional necessary implements that the moshav did not possess. In the "Review of the Moshav's Development" written by "Ya'acov" for **Shavei Zion's** "half-jubilee" in 1963, we read that "the lands in the east were fertile but (*exploiting*) those distant fields, as they were then considered, caused many problems and often particular effort and courage were demanded to work them." We've read that farming those fields was beyond the capacity of the horses owned by the moshav and **Shavei Zion** was ultimately compelled to acquire a tractor of its own. **Ya'acov** continued his review, writing: "In 1946, those fields were given over to Regba. The twin sister of our cultivation at home was 'the farm in the Negev', a branch worked by the youths of the moshav and young members. During the six years (*that we farmed in the Negev, at the beginning of the 1950's*), that branch was profitable and besides the economic aspect...we fulfilled a pioneering task when we adopted Moshav Shuva (*there*). So, (*it was*) a pioneering branch, replete with adventures..."

From the beginning of the farm project in the Negev, produce was brought north by truck. We read in minutes of a meeting of the management committee in June, 1953

that the committee had discussed an appeal by the drivers—moshav members—to place a radio in the truck in order to make the five or six-hour trip to **Shavei Zion** a bit less onerous. But apparently a radio was never installed because minutes from April, 1956 tell us that the drivers' request for a radio for "the Dodge" had been discussed by the committee once more and once more denied. The committee noted that its intention was to have "produce brought by railroad from the Negev, insofar as that is possible". And, indeed, in the 1963 review of **Shavei Zion's** history, **Leopold Marx** wrote that "our youth worked in rotation (*in the Negev*) and during those few profitable years, the produce (*mostly fodder for our dairy barn and seeds*) was brought home in special train cars, directly from Ashkelon".



Unloading fodder from **Shavei Zion's** farmlands in the Negev. 1950s.  
From the collection of the **Shavei Zion Archives**.

**Menachem Bloch** remembers that unloading the farm produce was an urgent undertaking and as many moshav members as were available were drafted to help in order to free up the railroad track in the shortest possible time. For the kindergarten children, watching the taxing work was, says **Menachem**, a real treat.

The general history of the railways in Eretz Yisrael reflects the complicated and variable play between political, military and economic forces, but the small story of passenger train service to Nahariya links the story of the whole district to that of **Shavei Zion**. From various information published on the Internet, we learn that the construction of the Hejaz Railway by the Ottoman Turks began in 1900 and was completed in 1908 when Damascus and Medina were joined by rail. A relatively long branch of the railway—the Jezreel Valley Railway—linked Haifa with Afula, Beit Shean and points east to Dera'a in Syria and, from 1911, a short branch line of the railway linked Haifa and Acre. From 1920, the railways in Eretz Yisrael operated as the Palestine Railways, under the aegis and supervision of the British Mandate. During the Second World War, British forces in Palestine began to lay wider-gauge tracks to create, for strategic purposes, the Haifa-Beirut-Tripoli line (HBT). Work on the HBT began in 1941 and the line was completed and opened for service in 1942. The laying of track from Haifa in “August, 1941” was noted as a milestone on the **Shavei Zion** “timeline” published in the moshav’s newsletter in 1981. From the chapter “Arthur Kirby and the Last Years of Palestine Railway, 1947-1948”, adapted from the doctoral thesis of **Rabbi Dr. Walter Rothschild**, we learn that the line between Haifa and Beirut was built by South African army engineers, and by Australian army engineers from a point south of Beirut northward. On that part of the line for which the Australian engineers were responsible, **Rabbi Rothschild** writes, a specially-drafted team of South African gold miners worked as tunnelers. The presence of those gold miners in the area may explain why some of our veteran **Shavei Zion** population (who were children then, of course) remembers that “soldiers from Congo” built the line although, as **Rabbi Rothschild** tells us, they were most likely Basutos.

During the Second World War, the Palestine Railways timetable posted the hours of service from Haifa to Damascus, Haifa to Tel Aviv (Jaffa-Jerusalem-Egypt), and Haifa to Acre, with stations in the “Krayot” settlements south of Haifa. **Rabbi Rothschild** cites the minutes of a meeting of the management of the Railways in April, 1945 in which “summer passenger train service to Nahariya” was announced. In **Tzadok Eshel**’s book “Nahariya”, we read that “a cooperative for the management of the ‘Galei Galim’ bathing beach” had been working from early in 1941. And, **Eshel** tells us, “Nahariya’s reputation preceded her, not only in Eretz Yisrael but also in Egypt. Tourists began to visit from there and to spend their annual vacations (*in the little colony*)...The tourist season of 1943...was a record season, with 6,000 visitors...(and) many of those (*visitors*) had come from Sudan, Egypt, Syria and Iran. Nahariya had become an important center of tourism in Eretz Yisrael...” There’s no doubt that summer season train service to Nahariya served the tourist industry in the colony well and, at the same time, served **Shavei Zion** where guest housing and a hotel had been established in the early 1940s and where, somewhat later, the famous children’s overnight summer camps would be operated by the moshav. We read in **Rabbi Rothschild**’s thesis that before the World War, 14 trains in each direction had served Kiryat Haim and Kiryat

Motzkin, and he quotes the Haifa Bay Development Company in 1945: "There (*is*) considerable dissatisfaction among the public with the bus service (*to the Krayot*) and it would appear desirable to use the light train set being prepared for the Nahariyya service for additional service to those places."

That same train service during the tourist season and the service to Nahariya in general, was curtailed for reasons that are unclear to us and the service reestablished only in 1950. On May 24, 1950, in a wonderfully optimistic article, "Davar" reported the resumption of Haifa-Nahariya service that would begin in several days: "New cars have been installed on the train that will serve the increased summer traffic to Nahariya and Western Galilee. Marking the opening of the line, the first train will leave Haifa for Nahariya on Sunday, the 19<sup>th</sup> day of Sivan. That date has been proclaimed as the 15th anniversary of the founding of Nahariya, 'the mother of the settlements of the Western Galilee'. On that same occasion, the 'Nahariya' passenger station will be dedicated. This section of the track continues to Achziv and to Rosh Hanikra, and it is part of the international train line that will eventually link the state of Israel with her neighbors to the north and, passing through Turkey, will link her with direct trains to the European continent." On May 29, 1950, in a rather less breathless article, "Al Hamishmar" wrote that the realization of the plan to renew service had been "accompanied by countless promises during many months, made by the heads of the Ministry of Transportation...This train (*with its*) importance for the colony, will increase tourist traffic, will lower the costs of transport of the sand mined by (*Nahariya*), and will reveal new opportunities for the development of the entire district". On May 30, ahead of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, **M. Meisels** wrote in "Maariv", "The face of Nahariya has changed. It's no longer that same "Yekkestan" where, it was said, when the bus from Haifa arrived, the children would call "Mother, the bus from Eretz Yisrael is here..." The "Maariv" article described the plans undertaken for the celebration in the colony and the "festive train" that would be decorated and would travel "in splendor".

An article in "Davar" on June 4, 1950 not only announced the renewal of train service but also praised the "excellent" link to Haifa provided by the "Shahar" bus company and reported, as well, that "there is some interest in linking Nahariya with Haifa and other locations using motorboats". On June 5, 1950, the day after that article was published, the much anticipated five-car first train left Haifa at 10 o'clock in the morning (45 minutes after the announced departure time). "Davar" wrote, "All along the route stood residents of the settlements (*of the vicinity*), joyfully greeting the train. They welcomed the train with thunderous applause as it passed bearing the slogan "It's Nahariya time!"—the same slogan displayed by the armored vehicles which broke through the (*land*) route to Nahariya in May, 1948." And in an impromptu gathering, the report continued, "**G. (Gerschon) Tatz**, the head of the (*Nahariya*) Local Council praised the Ministry of Transportation for opening a new chapter in the development

of the Western Galilee". The Ministry's representative **P. Globman** responded saying, "The day is not far off when the Nahariya station will be the first stop for throngs of new immigrants who will arrive by land". "Davar" reported that "service from Haifa and back again would be provided by 4 trains each day. The journey (*in each direction*) would take 58 minutes. The price of the trip would be 120 prutot".

But once more, and once more for reasons that are unclear, train service to Nahariya was suspended some two years after the 1950 renewal. Service was reestablished again, and this time permanently, but only in 1958. On May 5, 1958, "Davar" reported that "the track to Nahariya has been rehabilitated and the first train traveled the line yesterday. The line was dedicated in a festive ceremony which took place at the new Nahariya train station. Representatives of the government were present, (*as well as*) tourists and a large public." And, while article doesn't tell us so, a memo in the railway archives notes that after the ribbon-cutting (and, presumably, after the speeches), refreshments would be served at the Penguin Café. "Davar" does note that "**Y. Savidor**, the director of Israel Railways, said in his greetings, 'From Nahariya to the northern border is only 9 kilometers. And the day is not far off when Israel Railways will cross the northern border and, in three days and three nights, reach Paris'." The "Davar" article quoted the acting head of the Local Council, **Tatz**, who did not mention Paris but did "thank the Ministry of Transportation for reopening the line, which would be a significant step in advancing the economic future of Nahariya and the Western Galilee".

For the continuation of the renewed service, three daily trains had been announced. The trains would leave Haifa at 4:58 and 9:20 in the morning and at 4:30 in the afternoon. Trains would depart Nahariya for Haifa at 5:50 and 10:20 in the morning and at 6:05 in the evening. "A direct link", reported "Davar", "from Nahariya to Tel Aviv would be provided by the first train (*each day*) which would arrive in Tel Aviv at 8:06". In a different article, in "Davar" in January, 1958, we read that "the prices of the journey (*by train*) will be lower than the prices for bus travel, in keeping with the present customary difference in price..."

An immediate concern of residents of Nahariya who traveled by train, and very characteristic of the little town at that time, was how to safely leave their bicycles at the station. Thus, in a letter by **Nechemia Hecker** to the railway, dated April 27, 1958: "The announcement of the opening of the Nahariya line...has found a positive response among residents...As is known, Nahariya is a colony (*in which*) the topography and the relatively scattered placement of her neighborhoods...make it possible to use bicycles as a means of transportation. There's hardly a single household without a bicycle at its disposal. So it's to be hoped that many residents will use their bicycles to get to the train station." **Hecker** asked that a suitable rack be installed at the station, noting that "...the important thing from the perspective of the

railway will that the...public correctly values the means by which the railway provides good service to travelers."

In **Shavei Tzion**, too, it was hoped that the railway would provide service sensitive to the needs of the moshav. Thus, on January 30, 1958, the chairman of the **Shavei-Tzion** Local Council **Dr. Manfred Scheuer** and the council's secretary **Simcha Ofer**, wrote to the management of Israel Railways: "We have read in the newspapers that the Haifa-Nahariya railway passenger line will reopen in the month of April. We request that...the timetable (*include*) stops at the **Shavei-Tzion** station. You know that in our village, in particular during the summer, there is a big influx of tourists and recuperating patients (Dolphin Hotel, the Kupat Cholim Rest Home, Beit Hava etc.), such that it is necessary to make their arrival and departure here easier. We will be grateful if (*the railway*) facilitates the boarding and detraining of passengers with an (*appropriate*) accommodation since boarding is difficult from an open track, particularly for the elderly." But no such modification was ever made here and boarding and descending from the train at the **Shavei Tzion** stop remained challenging.

Still, on May 4, 1958, that happy day when train service was once more renewed, residents of **Shavei Tzion** waited at the local halt at the side of the tracks in order to clamber onto the train and travel the three kilometers to Nahariya. The Israeli flag flew above the heads of the excited children of the moshav. The train itself bore a long banner proclaiming the reopening of the line and the engine was garlanded with greenery. Not long after the service had been restored, **Menachem Bloch** tells us, a row of oleander bushes and two chinaberry trees were planted next to the little shelter and bench at the stop here. A holiday indeed for the moshav!



At left: Waiting for the first train to Nahariya. **Shavei Zion**, May 4, 1958. Photo by **Pinchas Erlanger**. From the collection of the **Shavei Zion Archives**.

At right: Boarding the train to Nahariya. **Shavei Zion**, May 4, 1958. Photo by **Pinchas Erlanger**. From the collection of the **Shavei Zion Archives**.



Going to Nahariya! The first train, passing through **Shavei Zion**, May 4, 1958. Photo by **Pinchas Erlanger**. From the collection of the **Shavei Zion Archives**.

At least as early as 1950, several trains a day did stop in **Shavei Zion** and by 1961, a total of 18 weekly trains served residents and vacationers here. But that number gradually dwindled to 12 in the summer months of 1968 and in 1973 there were just as few (or only just as many). In 1996, a couple of trains traveling in each direction still stopped in the moshav but in 1997, though there was an active station in Chatsrot Yasaf serving the immigrant caravan colony there, "**Shave Ziyon**" had disappeared from the timetable altogether.

The story of transportation and transport in **Shavei Zion**'s early years brings together the moshav's struggle to ensure a livelihood for the community with its rough and ready experience of life in Eretz Yisrael and in the young state. There are old-timers among us here who lived those days, who still speak wistfully even of the unending labor in the camp and on the farm in the Negev and who remember well the caterpillar-treaded and iron-wheeled tractors that worked the empty sands; the Oliver 80, that first tractor with rubber wheels; the tireless Chevrolet Bulldog truck that hauled loads of five tons; the headstrong and notably rascally mule Zib'le; and the beautiful, faithful horses.



Setting out to harvest fodder for the dairy barn. The Oliver 80 tractor. **Shavei Zion**, 1940s. From left: **Resi Pressburger Schwartz, Sally Lemberger, Pinchas Erlanger, Bilha Stein, Yosef (Seppel) Lemberger, Miriam Windmiller (Kalbermann), Yehudit Marx.**

Courtesy of **Hava Berkowitz.**