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הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
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December 2013: Tel Aviv and the Ayalon under floodwaters. At the bottom right corner can be seen trains standing in Tel Aviv Merkaz (Savidor) station, unable to proceed further owing to the lack of amphibious equipment. (Image from Internet.)

EDITORIAL.

Yet again this issue tends more to current events than to historical matters, for the simple reason that so much has happened. Especially in Israel! First, we report on the storms and flooding caused by the winter weather – weather that disrupted services in the short-term through snow and flooding and then caused the near-catastrophic closure of the main line from Tel Aviv to the airport and Modi'in over a lengthy period. Then there have been further extensions to the network and more to report on works for yet more expansion; then the usual flurry of reports on other matters including industrial unrest but also satisfactory traffic statistics, and plans for future electrification.

It has been hard to decide on a list of priorities for the following news items and in the end the topics have largely been left in the order in which they initially occurred even though, since we publish only quarterly, some of the earlier items get overtaken by later ones. This at least permits the historical record to be maintained and the sequence of events too. But it is amazing how swiftly the situation changes with new lines, new plans, new stock, and more.

In terms of the rest of the Middle East – unfortunately in most countries there is either no news or only negative news. Apart from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, most railway plans seem to involve attempts to avoid countries that have collapsed into chaos.

Enjoy!

The Editor



104:3 *The Cedar Valley viaduct on the outskirts of Jerusalem - an aerial view (this page) and a computer-generated picture of the completed viaduct - next page. (Photos from Transport Ministry.)*

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). ANOTHER STRIKE, AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS PROBLEMS.

(i). From a press release of 21.11.2013 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Today, without any notice, the railways' workers' union stopped all the activities of the railways' Training Centre at Lod, including training for train drivers, both for new drivers, and for veteran drivers regarding the new Euro 3200 diesel locos (now in process of acceptance); additionally, the training and refresher courses in safety regulations for mechanics on rolling stock and the handling of hazardous materials for freight

train drivers have been put on hold.

Four of the Euro 3200 locos (out of ten delivered so far) are already in service; with more training taking place, more trains can be operated and more drivers will be able to work on various lines. According to schedule, the line section of Ashkelon - Sderot (part of the Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line at an advanced stage of construction), is to be opened for traffic about a month from now; it will enable a 12 minutes journey between Sderot and Ashkelon, and 56 minutes between Sderot and Tel-Aviv; the service frequency will be two trains/hour at rush hours and one train/hour at slack hours in both directions.

Operating trains on the new line will require a much higher number of drivers and particularly those authorized for driving the Euro 3200 locos. Putting on hold the Training Centre activities will eventually cause lasting damage to current train operations, including the opening of the new line to Sderot.

The railways' authorities said: "The conflict has been declared without any reasonable reason, and it is a pity that instead of continuing to improve services, the union has decided to continue disruptions to activities and customer service, hand in hand with damaging the railways' employees.

We are very sorry that the union is threatening a disruption to the railways' activities, and this is particularly serious after a comprehensive wage agreement has been signed for a change in the organizational structure, including bonuses for the employees and a commitment for a temporary settlement."

(ii). On Tuesday, 07.01.2014 a sudden strike was announced by the railway workers, thus returning them to the situation of more than half a year ago, when strikes and other work conflicts were daily matters. The date is not a coincidence; on this day Alstom was supposed to start maintaining the Bombardier IC3 dms as the first outsourced maintenance.

While the workers claim that the whole subject of outsourcing has not been carried out with consultation with them, the railway management and the Transport Ministry see it as a wild strike and say it will affect operations already from this afternoon.

According to the workers, Alstom was supposed to start the maintenance at their own site, but as it is not yet ready they entered the railways' depot and incidents started.

(iii). On 08.01 it was reported: The Labor Tribunal has accepted the railways' request to stop the workers' sanctions and to return immediately to regular



million project of upgrading and double-tracking the Kiryat-Motzkin - Nahariya line. It is the first time in the railways' history, that a continuous double-track line can be operated between Beer-Sheva in the south and Nahariya in the north.

Starting from the next summer timetable in the first half of 2014, the frequency will increase from the current 2 trains/

hour to 3 trains/hour in each direction at rush hour, and to 2 trains/hour at other parts of the day.

The project included: The second 20 km. long track between Kiryat-Motzkin and Nahariya, upgrading of the existing 20 km long track, upgrading the railway stations of Acre and Nahariya, increasing safety by demolishing level crossings and replacing them by grade separations at RAFAEL, and the villages of Bustan-HaGalil, and Shavei-Zion, building overhead pedestrian bridges at Nahariya and rebuilding the landscaping, building acoustic walls and acoustic apartment protection at Kiryat-Motzkin, Kiryat-Hayim, Bustan-Hagalil, Acre, and Nahariya."

General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafirir said: "The railways are continually working on improving services for the passengers; double-tracking the northern section and upgrading the stations of Acre and Nahariya is an important part of preparing the railways for growth in the coming years - by increasing train frequencies as well as improving the station."

(d). NEW MANAGEMENT APPOINTMENTS.

From a press release of 01.12.2013 by the Transport, National Infrastructures & Roads' Safety Ministry: "The following new appointments took place on 01.12.2013:

Engineer Avner Floor has been appointed as Senior Deputy Traffic Manager, succeeding Mr. Uzi Yitzhaki, who was in the post of Deputy General Manager for only eight months.

Brigadier General (in Reserves) Meir Chen has been appointed as General Manager of the National Public Transport Authority, currently being created in the Ministry. Mr. Chen was until recently Provost Marshal General and gained a lot of experience in operating complex systems including safety and public transport.

Mr. Moshe Amsalem has been

work! The judge mentioned that despite the workers' claim that the sanctions are a result of the work conflict announced three months ago, she found that it is connected in fact with the already-mentioned outsourcing of the IC3 dms to Alstom and therefore instructed them to return to work; she instructed both sides however to negotiate all the remaining controversial issues.

(iv). A few days later came: "Disagreements Continue Between Israel Railways Management And Workers. The endless struggle between the management of Israel Railways and the workers union continues to embitter the lives of passengers (the customers). The workers union announced the implementation of sanctions, arguing that there have been violations of collective bargaining agreements. According to the management, those who are suffering from the move are commuters who will have to deal with disruptions in the movement of trains.

Earlier on Tuesday, the employees announced the implementation of sanctions due to what they felt were violations of the collective bargaining agreements across the board. Israel Railways announced that sanctions could cause malfunctions on trains beginning in the afternoon. In response, the workers' union said that threats from the management regarding potential disruptions were false and that they would not act against the commuters.

Israel Railways management had signed a collective bargaining agreement with the workers under which the disputes between workers and the management were fully resolved. In addition, it was agreed that there would be industrial quiet for three years, as well as one-time grant of NIS 40 thousand per employee. The main part of the agreement dealt with the privatization of maintenance by the international company "Alstom." According to the workers, the company's actions in this regard are contravening the agreement,

because they are not dealing or solving potential problems for the workers in this business arrangement.

According to the Israel Railways management, in stark contrast to the collective agreement, the workers union is causing work disruption. Some of the sanctions include maintenance workers leaving work and inspectors not checking tickets. However, the union responded by saying that operation of the trains will not be disrupted as workers in the depot will continue working, albeit in a limited fashion. The union also blamed the management for making a common threat that it has made during similar disagreements between the management and the union. The union also stressed that talks between the sides will most assuredly not disrupt the functioning of the trains."

(v). On 13.01.2014 "All workers returned to regular work (at least until further notice...); it has been agreed to clarify and settle all the disagreements while keeping rail services on the run."

(b). SURFING THE NETWORK.

The railways are now permitting surfers to carry surfboards with them on trains. Surfboards can be carried between Sunday and Thursday between 09:00 and 15:00 and between 19:00 and 06:00 on all lines; on Fridays it is permitted all day during train services' hours; but it is not permitted on Saturday nights.

Only surfboards and boogie boards are permitted; the item must be taken in an enclosed carrying bag, and the carrier has to stand during the whole journey at the car entry vestibule holding the surfboard vertically. The railways' staff may forbid the carrying the surfboards on a train if they consider it dangerous.

c). DOUBLE TRACK TO NAHARIYA.

From a press release of 21.11.2013 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways have completed the \$186

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appointed as Senior Manager of the Railway Department in the Ministry. Mr. Am-salem worked for 29 years in the railways, being Operational Manager, Traffic Manager, and Deputy General Manager for Passenger Services; he was also responsible for enforcement of railway regulations, as well as monitoring rail services; thus he is well experienced and is no new face in the railways' area."

(e). NIGHT SERVICES CHANGES.

The railways announced that on the night between Thursday, 05.12.2013 and Friday morning, 06.12.2013, there would be changes to the night trains (in fact, reductions): The 22:06 train from Nahariya southwards would terminate at Ben-Gurion Airport instead of Modi'in. The 01:46 train from Beer-Sheva Central northwards will start instead at Ben-Gurion airport at 02:50. The trains of 23:46 and 00:46 from Beer-Sheva Central northwards, of 00:07 from Acre southwards, and of 00:41 from Tel-Aviv Savidor Central southwards are cancelled.

(f). NEW PASSENGER RECORDS.

From a press release of 03.12.2013 by Israel Railways Ltd.: "On Sunday, 01.12.2013 the railways reached a new record in demand for passenger services: 205,000! In addition to the commuters, many families preferred to arrive at the many Children's Festivals and other entertainment events by rail.

Among the most noticeably busy lines were: Binyamina - Tel-Aviv with 42,500 passengers, Tel-Aviv - Haifa with 33,000 passengers, and Tel-Aviv - Ashkelon with almost 30,000 passengers.

This remarkable data is in addition to the already-mentioned November record of a daily average of 181,000; this is 2% higher than the former record of 178,000 between March and July 2013.

In October 2013, which enjoyed more operational days than November, a new monthly record was broken; 4.17 Million passengers; 18% higher than in the same period of 2012.

The railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "The railways are active in several parallel initiatives in order to increase passenger traffic; the opening of new lines together with improving punctuality and other improvements have brought a significant rise of demand for railway services; the new motive power and rolling stock which is currently entering service will enable the railways to further increase frequencies and the number of seats; thus enabling the railways to cope with further increases in demand for service."

Here is perhaps a place to report in summary from an interview Zafrir gave

to the newspaper 'Modi'in News' and its editor Eli Danon on 24.01.04 :

It was Mr. Zafrir's own will to become the General Manager; this is particularly distinctive because he had previous jobs as a manager of factories and companies where he earned a great more; so it is for him a mission and a challenge. He wants to see as many trains as possible reaching as many places as possible, in the shortest available time, as well as with the highest comfort and punctuality.

He explained that were he to be in his job at, for example, the Swiss SBB, this would not be a big deal due to their traditional high level of managerial culture; whereas it is just the opposite to be in his job here, where employees have been under the influence of a corrupted union which very often endangered the safety of trains; he has already implemented a cleaning-out of corruption from the administration; more than once this has meant risking his own life! He justified the negative image the railways used to have with the public, but now everything is changing rapidly.

As an example he brought the line between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv where punctuality reaches 99%; the line carries 14,000 passengers each morning to Tel-Aviv, while the railways' potential is at least twice this; therefore, three new parking areas near Modi'in Central station and one near Modi'in Outskirts are needed in order to increase use of trains; it should be mentioned that many Jerusalem citizens arrive by car at one of these stations, park there, and prefer to continue by train, thus arriving at Tel-Aviv within between 28 and 40 minutes compared with up to 90 minutes at rush hours despite the 'Fast Lane' on Road 1!

The line has been closed for more than three weeks due the Ben-Gurion Airport station and tunnels being flooded by the heavy storms of December 2013 and the loss of income is not known as yet; on the other hand, during the stormy days, the railways carried an unprecedented traffic of 80,000 passengers on the old Jerusalem line, an all-time record on this tortuous line when it was the only connection with Tel-Aviv and surroundings in these difficult days; Mr. Zafrir did not forget to add that this was thanks to the devoted workers; it is possible that this traffic may somehow compensate for the line closure!

(g). STORMS AND SNOW.

There is a lot to report on this topic! So here are several separate items:-

(i). From a



press release of 10.12.2013 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Due to the forecast for heavy stormy weather in the coming days, the country is being prepared and the railways are no exception. There will be a reinforcement of station staff and teams due to an expected growth in demand for rail services as a result of possible blocked roads. Technicians will be at passenger stations. Extra trains will be on standby.

Emergency teams of drainage, water pumps and tractor operators will be positioned along the tracks. Maintenance teams for tracks, electronics, and communication will be positioned at all railway stations. Track maintenance vehicles will be operated on sections that may be subject to natural disasters in order to remove snow (expected on the line to Jerusalem), rocks, trees, etc.

In case of snow in Jerusalem and on the roads to/from it, the railways are prepared to increase the number of trains to/from Jerusalem, as well as operating longer trains to provide the public with free access while roads are blocked, while enjoying the sights of snowy landscapes; it should be mentioned that on several occasions during previous years the railways formed more than once the only active transport mode to/from Jerusalem despite it being a tortuously slow line!

During recent months, the railways have carried out a survey to check the condition of trees along all tracks in order to perform preventive treatment intended to prevent trees collapsing onto the track. Agronomists who checked the trees have advised on which trees may endanger trains and should be trimmed, and this was done.

Meanwhile, today – 11.12.2013 - Situation Rooms have been opened both at the Transport Ministry and at the Railways, speed restrictions were imposed on problematic sections and thus punctuality went down to 78%."

Sounds goo!
But then came (ii).
:- SNOW! And lots of





it....

Snow came to Jerusalem on Thursday 12.12.2013 – apparently the heaviest snowfall since records began – and on the next day, a Friday, all the access roads were blocked, cars were stuck everywhere, and so IR ran some additional extra services - departing Malha at 15.00 and 15.30, 17.00, 18.30 and 22.00 – to enable those trapped in Jerusalem to get away before (and during!) Shabbat.

Sybil heard on the radio at 13.00 that roads to Jerusalem were blocked. In addition the Light Rail was blocked by damage to the overhead and after a period when it continued to run even after buses had stopped, it too had to cease operations.

(iii). SHABBAT RUNNING.

Even more amazingly, at short notice IR received permission to run two trains from Jerusalem to Haifa the next day, 14.12, on the Sabbath! This is the first time ever on IR that passenger trains have run 'officially' on the Sabbath. (On occasion there have been engineering trains during Shabbat 'possessions'.) The times were broadcast on TV (presumably anyone interested in travelling on the Shabbat would have no problem using the television on this day either.) On instructions from the Transport Ministry a free shuttle bus service ran from Binyanei HaUma to the Malha railway station to connect with the trains.

An announcement was made: "Two Jerusalem-Haifa trains to run Saturday due to weather: Due to weather conditions, Israel Railways said it will operate two special trains on Saturday departing from Jerusalem toward Haifa. The trains were scheduled to depart at 11:00 and 14:00 and will stop at the following stations: the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo, Beit Shemesh, Lod, Tel Aviv Savidor, Netanya, Binyamina and Haifa Hof HaCarmel."

On Saturday night there were extra trains from Jerusalem at 20.50, 22.30 and 23.30, stopping at Beit Shemesh, Lod and TA Savidor.

Flooding led to closure of the

Modi'in line.

(iv). SUNDAY.

Exactly what followed is hard to describe precisely because there are contradictory reports and the IR website was constantly changing; Sometimes the IR website announced, say, a train from Jerusalem to Rehovot but passengers were told by station staff to disembark as the train was cancelled at short notice... (a report heard

by Sybil.) By Sunday 15.12.2013 it was reported:-

"The snow storm which paralyzed many parts of Israel and particularly Jerusalem, also crippled the Jerusalem LRV, which even today - 15.12.2013 – is not yet working. Ironically, the only connection between Jerusalem and other



parts of the country - mainly Tel-Aviv - was the old rebuilt Jerusalem line which on 13.12.2013 alone carried more than 2,200 passengers - 11 times more than on a regular day. (!)

However, the bad weather did not leave the railways in peace, and at the following places there were floods: The first to be damaged was Lod station communication system; thus trains could not pass here, paralyzing traffic in all directions; this lasted for about 2 hours.

Later on, the western tunnel leading to Ben-Gurion Airport was flooded - and still is - and as a result no traffic between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv was possible; bus shuttle services were provided. Another point flooded was between Lod and Tel-Aviv HaHagana station. Teams were working around the clock to repair the damage."

The IR website showed on Sunday December 15, 00:30:- Ashkelon to Hod Hasharon running normally

Beersheva to Nahariya running normally

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Beersheva – TA – Herzliya cancelled
Fast trains to/from Beersheva cancelled
Jerusalem – TA line, running via B'nei Brak to Tel Aviv
Trains Tel Aviv – Beit Shemesh extended to Jerusalem
Direct trains to Jerusalem cancelled
Rishonim to Tel Aviv cancelled
Ashkelon to Binyamina, hourly
Rehovot to Binyamina hourly
Rehovot to Netanya will run only from Netanya to Tel Aviv
Buses will be laid on as follows:
TA Savidor to Modiin Merkaz
Modiin Merkaz to TA Savidor
Lod to airport
Rishonim to Rishon Moshe Dayan
Beer Yaakov to Lod.

It will be noted that some of these entries seem contradictory! But the term 'direct to Jerusalem' means travelling southward from TA Savidor.

(v). BY THE MONDAY.

On 16.12.2013 Aharon added:-

"Further to the flooding near Ben-Gurion Airport station and in the tunnel along seven kilometres, the signalling and communications systems are not functioning and trains are having to reduce speeds; punctuality yesterday was down to as low as 46% and today it improved to 64%; travelling times are much longer due to the fact that trains to Jerusalem have to go north to the University station, then through B'nei-Brak, Rosh-Ha-

Ayin and Lod instead of directly through the Ayalon line; thus it takes 3 hours instead of 83 minutes; Teams are pumping the water and repair the damage; it will be completed hopefully soon.

The railways have added a train from Jerusalem departing from Malkha station at 23:00; this is a lesson from the last snow storm in which the city was disconnected from other part of the country, except via the rail service."

Sybil added: "Extra trains on the Jerusalem line – all those that normally terminate in Beit Shemesh are extended to Jerusalem, and according to the IR website "with more seats". Today on my way home from work, by bus, we stopped at the Beit Shemesh level crossing to let the 18:08 go across. The train seemed endless, either 12 or 15 coaches (I couldn't really count them in the dark!)

I missed my chance to go via Rinatya. The website is no longer showing that! Every time I look there's something different there. No point in giving you the precise cancellations/extras, because as



fast as I bash them out they will be outdated. Modi'in line still out of action."



(vi). On Tuesday 17.12.2013 came a press release by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"As if the troubles caused to the railways by last week's stormy weather were not enough, a new one came last night just north of Lod station when news



came of sabotage in the INDUSI box with copper communication and signalling cables stolen! This last problem has been overcome but, due to manual control of train traffic, a special timetable has been prepared and serious delays are caused.

Regarding the flooding near Ben-Gurion Airport station, the teams are pumping 144,000 cubic metres of water per 24 hours; only after the pumping has been completed will it possible to estimate the real damage."

(vii). By Wednesday 18.12.2013: "Repair and recovery works on damaged sections continue and average punctuality is now higher than 70%."

(viii). Later:- From a press release of 22.12.2013 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Now, almost a week after the storm, the real data about the damage caused to the Ben-Gurion airport rail station by the collapse of Shafirim Creek can be revealed: the track was flooded along 2.5 km by 250,000 cubic metres of water, the level of which reached 8 metres!

For five days, railway teams together with sub-contractors specializing in pumping worked 24 hours around the clock in order to enable the tracks to be uncovered, thus revealing the damage, and starting reconstruction works.

The result of the flooding is a total loss for the control, communication, and signalling building and systems, in addition to total destruction of the tracks. The damage for the control, communication, and signalling alone is estimated at \$4.5 Million!

The work is difficult due to the fact that the whole section is either in tunnels or sunk in cuttings, thus the access for heavy engineering equipment is limited; also the blowers for removal of smoke from tunnels went out of use and must be replaced. The whole reconstruction works may last several weeks and it is a big loss for one of the most successful railway lines in Israel.

It should be mentioned that the railways were among the best-prepared bodies for the storm, and apart from the

line to Jerusalem, which - as already reported - was the only link from Jerusalem to Tel-Aviv and other parts, all the available services operated in harsh conditions.

The collapse of the creek bank is not under the railway's responsibility, however, the railways cooperate strongly with all the involved sectors.

Meanwhile, the Transport Ministry has instructed KAVIM bus operator to provide extra services between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv, starting 23.12.2013, free of charge - as well as shuttle services to/from Ben-Gurion airport station. Passengers using certain sorts of the Multi-Liner smart card will be compensated by the railways for the period with no rail services.

Starting 24.12.2013 and until March 2014, all trains calling at Beer-Sheva Central and University stations and at Lehavim-Rahat station, will depart 4 minutes earlier than in the current timetable."

(ix). On 26.12.2013: "As already reported, due to the damage at Ben-Gurion Airport station, there are no trains between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv; trains from the north, i.e. Nahariya and Haifa, start/terminate at Tel-Aviv Hahagana station; trains to Ashkelon, Sderot (since 24.12.2013), to Beer-Sheva and to Jerusalem (which are not running through the airport), operate as usual.



Regarding the line to/from Modi'in,

the Kavim bus operator provides services between Tel-Aviv Savidor Central and Modi'in twice/hour at regular bus fares which are cheaper than rail; on this line, the public enjoys also the regular services of Line 111 which runs at 30 minute intervals on an almost parallel alignment to that of rail.

The Kavim replacement bus services from the airport to/from Modi'in and Tel-Aviv are provided each round half an hour each direction free of charge.

(x). By 30.12.2013: Apart from the section between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv HaHagana stations which is not yet in service, other lines were functioning OK and the average punctuality was now over 90%, reaching also 100% during the day.

(xi). On 08.01.2014 the railways confirmed that currently final works, checking, and tests were being carried out towards resuming traffic between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv through Ben-Gurion Airport on Saturday night, 11.01.2014! Initially, the speed at Ben-Gurion Airport station and the rebuilt section will be restricted, until it has been proved beyond any doubt that the ground was stable enough to carry trains at regular speed.

Consequently, trains from Modi'in and the airport stations to Tel-Aviv will depart 3 minutes earlier than in the timetable; trains from Tel-Aviv will depart as per timetable.

The stations of Modi'in and the airport will be manned from tomorrow, Thursday, 09.01.2014 in order to be ready for reopening. The passengers who used the "multi-liner" RavKav smart card and used it on Kavim buses will have the right to replace it at all stations' ticket vending positions until 09.02.2014.

It can now be reported that due to the catastrophic flooding, the railways had to replace 300 metres of track, the whole ballast layer, the whole signalling, the electricity and communication systems, as well as 14 blowers providing fresh air to the tunnels. Works were carried out 24 hours around the clock assisted by ten different planning specialists in a variety of functions. Works included, among the others, casting 1,000 cubic metres of concrete in order to stabilize the creek banks along 250 metres, the drainage system along 1 km, etc.

(xii). On Saturday night, 11.01.2014, traffic on the Tel-Aviv - Ben-Gurion Airport - Modi'in resumed, but with temporary speed restrictions at the airport station and tunnels leading to it until soil is stabilized. So far, the cost of direct damage from the flooding is around \$14 Million; the damage due to loss of passenger traffic is to be published later, definitely affecting the figures on annual passenger traffic. The only "light at the end of the tunnel" is that the works were completed ahead of forecasted time.

(h). SDEROT STATION OPENS.

(i). Sderot station was due to open on December 24. This is the first station on the Ashkelon - Beersheva line.

From a press release of 17.12.2013 by the Transport, National Infrastructures & Roads' Safety Ministry: "Minister Katz announced today that from Thursday, 24.12.2013, following the opening of the Ashkelon - Sderot line and the station of Sderot, the people of the whole area will enjoy free travel all over Israel for all day and night hours for three months, during which the line will be in service for test running; also students at the nearby Sapir College and those arriving there from other parts of Israel will enjoy free travel in order to get them used to rail service and so preferring it over private cars; this will be done by a multi-liner rechargeable Smart Card which passengers will receive at Sderot station.

This is the first Israeli station built to withstand rocket and missile attacks from the nearby Gaza strip.

At the end of 2014, Netivot and

Ofakim stations, also located on the Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line, will be linked, thus a continuous service will be provided between the three cities both to Beer-Sheva in the south and to Ashkelon, Tel-Aviv and the north."

On 18.12.2013 Sybil heard a radio announcement:- "Sderot station, which is due to open next Tuesday (December 24), will be the first railway station in the world that is rocket-proof. It cost 50 Million Shekels to build. Trains will run at least once an hour, journey time to Tel Aviv Hagana 55 minutes, journey time to Ashkelon 10 minutes. It is part of the national effort to bring the periphery closer to the centre. For the first three months, travel will be free for local residents to encourage its use. The station is 1 km from the town, and there will be free shuttles from the town to the station and back. It's hoped it won't be like Dimona, where nobody uses the train because it's too far from the town. The line passes very close to the Gaza Strip border, and it isn't protected there. In six months the next station on the line, Netivot, is due to open, and later on Ofakim."

To which her comment: "The comparison with nobody using the train from Dimona is a little ridiculous. Three trains a day from Dimona at idiotic times, nothing between 05:36 and 08:18, arriving Hagana (after a change at Beersheva of course) at 07:05 or 09:50, makes it hardly attractive to commuters."

(ii). From a press release dated 24.12.2013 by Israel Railways Ltd.: "The line between Ashkelon and Sderot - as the first stage of the line Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva currently under construction - as well as the Sderot station, were opened today for passenger service with the participation of Prime Minister Mr. Netanyahu, Transport Minister Mr. Katz, the railways' General Manager Mr. Zafir, and many others. The station, built at a cost of \$56 Million, is the 54th railway station in Israel.

For all those criticizing the need for the line and the station, here are data received from the Central Chamber of Statistics of the Industry and Commerce Ministry regarding the change that the station will bring to the people of Sderot:

There are 6,500 families in the city, of which 51% do not have private cars; the remainder of 49% have at least one car, of which 13% have two cars or more. There are 8,825 people with a driving licence, whilst 40% do not have the licence. 36% of the citizens work outside the city.

The station enjoys a parking area for 400 cars, an access road, a new traffic circle, and currently a special lane for both pedestrians and bicycle riders is being paved. The station is being served by Egged Ta'avura bus operator, with dedi-

cated bus line No. 3 from the city's northern and western quarters, and by line No. 4 from the eastern quarter and the city centre.

The railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafir said: "In recent years, the railways are in a momentum of development and more sites are being linked, which will result in prosperity and initiatives coming from outside thanks to the better link with the centre of Israel".

(iii). On 30.12.2013 it was reported: More than 3,000 people have taken the opportunity of 3 months of free tickets between Sderot and the Greater Tel-Aviv Area, and are travelling satisfactorily daily between the two points; they define it as "Having the feeling of freedom!"

On the following day came a press release of 31.12.2013 by the Transport Ministry:

"To correct yesterday's report, the number of people living at Sderot and surroundings who applied for the "Free of charge for 3 months multi-liner smart card", has exceed 15,000! The railways have erected 10 issuing positions within Sderot and at the railway station."

Aharon Gazit commented: "As to how the public will behave when the three months are over and payment will be compulsory - we will have to wait and see."

(iv). The railways provided extra trains at no charge to the recently-opened station of Sderot, to all those who participated in the funeral of the late General and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, whose grave is at the centre of the family's farm which is very near to the station.

(v). On 06.02.2014 it was reported by Aharon: "The railways started recently a new initiative to encourage the public to travel to the southern part - for example near the newly-opened station of Sderot - where there is a beautiful blossoming of the red anemone flowers which look like a red carpet; the demand from the public is so high that all trains are already booked ahead!"

(i). OFAKIM STATION TENDER.

From a press release of 03.03.2013 by the Transport, National Infrastructures & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"Further to the tender published recently for building the Ofakim passenger railway station, here are some details: the \$16 Million station will include a modern passenger terminal, platforms, an underground pedestrian passage to connect between the platforms, three tracks with an option for a future fourth one, parking facilities, easy access to public transport, traffic circles, and bicycle lanes.

Minister Katz said that the Ofa-

kim station is an integral part of the \$540 Million 60 km line between Ashkelon and Beer-Sheba; the journey time between the two cities upon line completion will be 42 minutes, and 4 trains each direction will be operated. The line includes two additional stations at Sderot and at Netivot, as well as 15 railway bridges, 3 road bridges, four grade separations, 11 agricultural passages, and 48 culverts. The opening of Ofakim station is to be followed by opening of the other two stations even before the whole line completion, in order to connect the periphery with the centre."

(j). CAMELS.

From the online 'Jerusalem Post' on 17.12.2013 - "14 camels were killed in a train accident in Southern Israel. A train that was travelling from Dimona to Be'er Sheva this evening hit 14 camels that were standing on the train tracks near Segev Shalom. The camels were killed. None of the passengers were injured.

The accident occurred at 19.30. The engine driver apparently didn't notice them in enough time in order to brake the train. After the accident, the driver stopped the train at the next station. According to the prescribed procedure, he made sure there was no damage caused to the train or its passengers following the accident; After that, the train continued on to its final destination, Be'er Sheva. "To our sorrow, these kinds of incidents happen frequently in the south," Israel Train told Israel's Channel 2 News. "The train travels in the dark and there are a lot of camels in the area."

[Presumably this has nothing to do with hump shunting? Ed.]

(k). FOOTBALL SPECIAL.

The railways added a train to depart on 08.12.2013 at 23:30 from Jerusalem Malkha station at the end of a football match between two local senior football teams. The train was to be operated in the "Fill-up and Go" system, calling at Lod and Tel-Aviv Savidor Central stations.

(l). FARES RISE AFTER CALL FOR FREEZE.

From a press release of 22.12.2013 by the Transport, National Infrastructures & Roads' Safety Ministry: "Transport Minister Mr. Yisrael Katz, has requested Finance Minister Mr. Yair Lapid to prevent the planned rise of 4.7% in public transport (including rail) fares from 01.01.2014. The reason he mentioned is that "Most of public transport users are of low income, youngsters, elderly people, and new immigrants for whom even the rise of a few percent is significant." He further explained that the ministry is working hard on encouraging the use of public transport by making it more attractive,

and the benefits from keeping the current prices is greater than the additional planned income."

However the move failed and the fares increase came into effect.

(m). TEL AVIV UNIVERSITA STATION MASTER KILLED.

On Sunday 29.12.2013, Mr. Eyal Shitrit, 40, married and with three children, the Tel-Aviv University Station Master, who had just finished a meeting at the railway offices at Lod station, rushed to catch the train to Tel-Aviv Savidor Central to receive a Certificate of Merit from the railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir; Unfortunately, while crossing the track at a crossing for railway employees only he did not notice an IC3 train approaching and was killed on the spot. An irony of fate is that the train driver was one of his best friends; he was unable to return to work for a while due to the shock. It is also ironic that an experienced employee did not notice the oncoming train; it was reported that, while rushing, he was speaking in his cellular phone.

While the railways' management published a message of condolence, senior workers said that such an event was not a surprise because visibility is poor at this crossing and there is no warning of any kind at the spot. The Transport Ministry is thoroughly checking the case.

His widow Mrs. Carmit Shitrit said during the funeral: "He went to receive a Certificate of Merit; instead, I've now received a Death Certificate"! May his soul rest in peace.

(n). MORE ON THE NEW JERUSALEM A1 LINE.

(i). From a press release of 15.01.2014 by the Transport, National Infrastructures, and Road Safety Ministry:

"Minister Katz announced today that works on the A1 fast rail link to Jerusalem are advancing rapidly; this week, both the Railways and the Ministry - through the subcontractors - have started laying the first sections of the railway bridge over the so called Cedar Valley (actually there are no cedars there; it remains only an intention...) at the western entrance to Jerusalem at a cost of \$39 Million.

The double-track 1 km long bridge will be 100 m high over the valley - thus the highest bridge of any kind in Israel. It will form a link between two recently-completed tunnels; an 820m long tunnel and the 2.5km long Lifta tunnel leading to the Binyanei Ha'Uma station 80 m below street level currently under construction, adjacent to the Central Bus Station, LRV station, and the congress hall with the same name - Ha'Uma.

The bridge is supported by 14 huge piers, the highest of which is 100m

over the valley; the bridge roadbed is being built on the box-pushing system enabling construction from both sides simultaneously; it will also avoid disruptions to traffic on road No. 9 when works on the new alignment of Highway No. 1 to Jerusalem start. So far, the pushing of eight sections with an overall length of 180 m and weighing 600 tons each has been completed.

The piers' bases will be covered by Jerusalem building stone, thus integrating them with the surrounding landscape. The railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said that special emphasis has been put on preserving nature and landscape of the valley with minimum damage.

Both Minister Katz and Mr. Zafrir said that they are confident of completing the A1 towards the end of 2017 due to the rapid advance of works."

(ii). However, it should be added here that the Editor and Sybil Ehrlich enjoyed on 23.02.2014 as an adjunct to a hike to visit the building sites a guided tour by a senior member of the project management, visiting the new viaduct east of Mevasseret Zion and the tunnel linking this to the 'Cedars' viaduct and - anonymously and off the record - he considered that 2019 would be a more realistic starting date.... Let us not overlook the fact that before the line can be operated it needs not only completion of civil engineering, tracklaying (probably slab track, at least in the tunnels), and signalling, but also that the entire line AND THE LINE ONWARDS TO TEL AVIV AND NORTH TO HAIFA would need to be electrified, electric stock acquired, staff trained, since otherwise the new line would offer only a shuttle service Jerusalem - Tel Aviv or, at best, a loco change somewhere in the crowded and busy Tel Aviv area.

(o). "I THINK I CAN I THINK I CAN - OH, I CAN'T!"

On 28.01.2014 an IC3 dmu which departed from Tel-Aviv for Jerusalem at 07:00 managed to pass Beit-Shemesh station when it suddenly stopped after a further 15 minutes; the reason was "Inability to climb the gradient"; It was decided to roll the train back down to Beit-Shemesh.

On arrival there, passengers were advised that buses to Jerusalem had been organized, but a traffic update advised that roads were closed due to a road accident; the patient passengers decided to wait instead for the next train, expected an hour later; this one arrived 20 minutes late but finally arrived at Jerusalem 2 hours late.

However, this was not the end; in the evening, one of the trains to Tel-Aviv had to terminate at Beit-Shemesh due to brake failure; again, buses were organized and this time the passengers used them. The railways' reputation was however bad-

ly damaged.

(p). BETTER BUSES FOR BINYAMINA.

Due to improved services of feeding buses between Binyamina station and surrounding settlements, the special shuttle buses services to/from the railway station will discontinue from 04.02.2014. Instead, thanks to a cooperation between, the ministry, the railways, and Kavim bus operator, a new line number 35 and the existing line number 36 will provide regular services to/from the station coordinated with the railway timetable

(q). MORE 2013 STATISTICS.

From a press release of 09.02.2014 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

On 09.02.2014 the railways published the data for 2013; this is divided as follows, according to subjects:

(i). Passenger Traffic: This rose by 12% from 40.4 Million in 2012 to 45.1 Million in 2013; compared with traffic between 2009 and 2011 the rise has reached the impressive rate of 25%.

The daily average passenger traffic rose by 12.7% from 151,400 in 2012 to 170,700 in 2013; November 2013 was outstanding with a daily average record of 181,100.

The main rise was on the following new and upgraded lines:

Hod-HaSharon - Tel-Aviv: 14,500 daily average- +27%.

Beer-Sheva - Tel-Aviv: 15,000 daily average- +25%.

Jerusalem – Tel-Aviv: 6,500 daily average- +25%!

Yavne West - Tel-Aviv: 11,500 daily average- +24%.

*The rise on the Jerusalem line is remarkable; quite remarkable is also the general rise despite closure of the Tel-Aviv - Modi'in line for more than three weeks due to the floods at Ben-Gurion Airport station in December 2013; this was partially offset by 80,000 passengers which used the Jerusalem line for several days during the big storm; it was for several days the only way to access Tel-Aviv from Jerusalem.

(ii) Punctuality: This has reached an average of 93.3% in 2013, compared with 90% in 2012 and 86.6% in 2011; This has been achieved mainly through administrative attention, completion of double-tracking between Nahariya and Beer-Sheva and introduction of modern Vossloh EURO 4000 and 3200 diesel locomotives.

(iii). Rolling stock: During 2013 IR received 18 new double-deck cars with a total of 2,000 seats from Bombardier (Görlitz) as well as 15 new EURO 3200 DIESEL Bo-Bo locomotives from Vossloh (Kiel); this is in addition to 152 new double-deck cars with 18,400 seats received during 2011 from Bombardier, as well as 14 EURO 4000 diesel locomotives from

Vossloh respectively.

The railways continue to implement the plan for building and upgrading maintenance facilities as well as rolling stock parking areas; This includes an advanced operational site at Beer-Sheva at a cost of \$370 Million and an area of 25,000 m²; it will be used for both present diesel and future electrical motive power according to the development plans.

(iv). Improved services: During 2013 the installation and assimilation of the PIS (Passenger Information System) has been completed at all railway stations; the digital boards provide real-time information regarding schedules of trains arriving/departing at/from platforms.

A special emphasis has been given to cleaning rolling stock; new cleaning infrastructures have been improved; the cleaning arrangements at terminal stations have been re-arranged, and a new cleaning sub-contractor selected.

A new Telephone Customer Service has been created to cut response time; simultaneously, the railway workers has been trained to increase their awareness for customer service.

The railways have introduced several digital services: cellular application, an online application form on the website, chat on the website, customer service application on the face book; the telephone service hours have been extended.

The railways have operated 32 special additional trains to and from sport events including football and basketball games at stadia adjacent to railway stations: Jerusalem, Haifa, Netanya, Tel-Aviv, etc., as well as entertainment events (mainly at Ha-Yarkon Park adjacent to Tel-Aviv (University station); 70,000 passengers were carried in these events.

The railways also strengthened the connection with commuters; artists arrived by surprise at different stations and platforms to give the public a good time prior to and after travelling; the railways created also partnerships with leisure sites adjacent to railway stations (like the new station of Sderot) at reduced fares.

(v). Development momentum towards new goals:

During 2013 the railways continued with the development momentum:

- Ashdod and Ashkelon have been linked to the coast line (through Yavne West and Rishon-LeZion West) with doubled frequency and shorter journey times.

- Completion of double-tracking on the Kiryat-Motzkin - Nahariya line section.

- Opening of the Ashkelon - Sderot line (with Sderot station) as the first section of the Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva \$570 Million line - currently under construction with stations at Netivot and Ofakim.

- Replacement of five life-expired

railway bridges on the coast line and near Beer-Sheva.

- The Committee for National Infrastructures has approved the electrification programme which is progressing according to the schedule of service commencement on the fast A1 link (Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem) - the most significant project in the railways' development plan.

- A cooperation agreement has been signed between the SNCF and Israel Railways Ltd., particularly regarding the turning of railway stations into business and recreation centres.

(vi). Safety: During recent years the railways have completed building of fifty grade separations which have replaced level crossings; during 2013, two additional grade separation have been completed; also, level crossing No. 132 at Ramla, No. 12 at Lod, No. 14 at Nachsholim/Dor, and No. 55A at Hazerot Yasaf; works included improved road pavements between barriers' arms, safe pedestrian passages, lighting, etc.; 6 systems of monitoring road vehicles travelling over tracks have been installed and started working.

(vii). Main goals for 2014: During 2014, the railways will continue service improvements:

- A new and meaningful timetable is to be published around June 2014, which will include increased frequencies on a number of lines, while strengthening the links with Haifa and Beer-Sheva.

- The railways will continue receiving new rolling stock while upgrading the existing fleet.

(viii). Maintenance of Rolling Stock:

The IC3 dmsu' maintenance has been outsourced to Alstom; the first outsourcing of rolling stock in the history of IR.

The railways will receive the third batch of new double-deck cars from Bombardier and locomotives from Vossloh.

The railways have ordered new cleaning equipment for rolling stock; the existing rolling stock fleet is to be refurbished, including repainting.

(ix). Infrastructures; Construction and Developments:

The 2014 work programme includes continuing the works on the Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line (between Sderot and Beer-Sheva), promoting the project of linking Hod HaSharon with Ra'anana and the coast line (in the median of the transverse East-West Highway 531 which will be constructed simultaneously with the railway line), completion of and operating the huge passenger rolling stock maintenance facilities at Beer-Sheva, completion of upgrading the Heletz freight line between Kiryat-Gat and Ashkelon in order to improve freight services.

The railways will continue to promote the A1 fast link project; after

completion of the statutory procedures for Electrification, the railways intend to further accelerate the project by publishing tenders for Electrification, an electrical fleet, further design of systems, etc.

The railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "During 2013 the railways achieved a record of goals in terms of service and development; the public has shown that they enjoy and trust the rail services; in 2014, the railways will continue developing and reaching new goals, while strictly keeping to high punctuality and thus increasing rail services which are a social and financial leverage for the state".

Aharon comments: "So far, this sounds nice; the reality is, however, a little bit different: the temporary settlement in relations between workers and management is very fragile; the workers are doing all they can to let Alstom fail in IC3 maintenance; train drivers are disappearing from time to time; technical failures still occur too often as well as collisions between trains in depots; let us hope this will all soon improve!"

Finally here is a link to a film from the railways to be watched at: /watch?v=1ARnboKvejw&feature=youtu.be

(r). DOUBLE-DECKERS TO JERUSALEM?

On Monday 24.02.2014 Sybil wrote: "I was sitting in a bus on my way to work at 9:18 this morning when the level crossing barrier came down. I assumed it was for the 9:08 train, 10 minutes late. But no, a DOUBLE-DECKER train went across, quite fast (heading towards Lod). It appeared to be e.c.s., and because of the speed I assume it had not stopped at Beit Shemesh station. And even more surprising, in the indicator windows on the side it said "Jerusalem Malcha". Since when did any double-decker go to Jerusalem? I thought they couldn't for technical reasons, so the fact that there is the option to include that destination is surprising.

Next day she enquired of the Station Master at Beit Shemesh who professed basic ignorance, thought it might have been due to stock shortage, even claimed that this was normal and that the double-decker sets had 'Jerusalem' but not 'Beit Shemesh' in their indicator panels, whereas in fact when they were used to Beit Shemesh they had of course that station name displayed! So the mystery continues, since until now it has been maintained that the double-decker coaches are out-of-gauge on the sharp curves of this line.

(s). PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS AT STATIONS.

From a press release of 18.02.2014 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"A comprehensive lands agreement was signed on 18.02.2014 between Israel Railways Ltd. and Israel Lands Authority, according to which both bodies will be able to develop business centres, employment sites, and apartments adjacent to and above railway stations. Some complementary information:

The overall area to be used for land development is 7 million sq.m. as follows:

Development of business and employment centres within and above stations totalling 800,000 sq.m.

Development of business and employment centres totalling 1.7 million sq.m. at a distance of 300m from stations.

Development of business, employment, and residential centres totalling 4.5 million sq.m. at a distance of more than 300m from stations. The railways will pay the Lands Authority as following:

2% annually of overall revenues from selling passenger tickets and cargo haulage.

8% annually from commercial services.

A capitalized payment due to 49 years leasing of building and business rights at stations' sites.

In the solemn ceremony of signing the agreement which took place at Modi'in Central station - the first one to enjoy this development - participated: Transport Minister Mr. Yisrael Katz, Finance Minister Mr. Yair Lapid, Housing Minister Mr. Uri Ariel, Lands Authority Manager Mr. Benzi Liebermann, the railway's General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir, the Mayor of Modi'in Mr. Bivas, and many other VIPs.

All the participants had one important message: Railway stations are much more than just a place for passengers coming and going; they can become a financial leverage for economic and social growth, as well as provide a solution for shortage of apartments at reasonable prices for young couples by building in the stations nearby; the income will be used to improve rail services and bring more passengers to use public transport services instead of private cars, thus improving the environment."

In the 'Jerusalem Post' of 18.02.2014 Sharon Udasin wrote:-

"Train stations across the country have been grouped according to their potential development size. An agreement signed on Tuesday between Israel Railways and the Israel Lands Authority (ILA) will enable the development of new commercial centres at train stations around the country. According to the terms of the agreement, the Israel Railways will be able to commercially develop business and residential areas near and above train stations to various extents, depending on

the sizes of the stations. Within the next 10 to 15 years, the signers estimated that Israel Railways will develop about 6 Million square metres of real estate with expected annual revenues of NIS 1.5 Billion, compared to current revenues of about NIS 400M. Also partaking in Tuesday's agreement were the ministers of transportation, finance and housing. "The agreement is designed not only to develop Israel Railways," said Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz. "It involves an understanding that the train is not just a tool of mass transportation from distances to and from the Centre. Each station holds the potential for active business development in the environment in which it stands." Constructing office buildings and shopping centres at and around the country's train stations will exploit the great potential of these locations, as well as fulfill employment, entertainment and commercial demands, the signers agreed. In addition, building such facilities will strengthen peripheral areas and make public transportation more attractive to travellers, they said. The train stations have been grouped according to their potential development size, with small stations defined at 1,500 square metres, medium stations at 3,000 square metres and large stations at 6,000 square metres, the agreement explained. Examples of medium-sized stations are those at Ben Gurion Airport, Beersheba, Haifa Bat Galim, Holon, Petah Tikvah and Rosh Haayin. Examples of large-sized stations are those at Tel Aviv Savidor-Merkaz, Tel Aviv HaShalom, Haifa Merkaz Shmona, Netanya, Bat Yam and the future Jerusalem Binyanei HaUma site. "Today's agreement brings the future to train stations in Israel," said Finance Minister Yair Lapid. "The connection between transportation and real estate is a classic case of a greater whole than the sum of its parts. This is a connection among transportation infrastructure and economic benefits with increasing potential, which are the product of real estate development." It is the hope of the agreement signers that the increased income accrued by Israel Railways, the ILA and the relevant local authorities will reduce the company's dependence on government subsidies, as well as allow for continued improvement in passenger service, they said. Israel Railways will need to pay 2% of its total annual revenues from operational services and subsidies, as well as 8% of the income generated by the commercial developments to the ILA, the agreement added. With increased profits, Israel Railways will be able to better the quality of service available to its customers, company CEO Boaz Tzafir stressed. "This will transform the perception of train stations, as they are today, and strengthen the periphery, ease road congestion and contribute to the environment - improving quality of life for us all," Tzafir said."

[Presumably this means that soon all stations will begin to look like Birmingham New Street.... with cavernous 'underground' platforms and tracks. Ed.]

(t). MORE LIFTS AT STATIONS.

From 13.02.2014, hydraulic elevators are provided at the stations of B'nei-Brak and Kfar-Habad to bridge over the different heights of platforms.

(u). MORE ON EILAT LINE DEVELOPMENTS.

From a press release of 05.01.2014 by the Transport Ministry:

"An important move on the line to Eilat: the government rejected on Sunday, 05.01.2014 the appeal of the Minister for Protecting the Environment Mr. Amir Peretz regarding the line; the decision was taken by the Ministerial Committee for Internal Affairs and Services; a majority of 11 ministers voted in favour while 6 voted against the project.

Transport Minister Mr. Katz said that this is good news and of significant importance for the project. He added that the chosen alignment has reached this stage after consulting with all the 'green' organizations and takes into consideration factors regarding nature, etc. The electrification, tunnelling, bridges, etc. will be built integrated with the surrounding landscape to minimize damage.

The government has three different ways of implementing the project:

1. A governmental agreement with the government of another country.
2. Partnership with the private sector.
3. Financing it by governmental budget.

The decision is to be taken soon. During the past year, the Transport Ministry contacted numerous countries, the governments of which have shown interest in the project: Germany, France, South Korea, Japan, China, USA, Italy, Spain, and India.

Spain, China, and France have sent work teams who will soon crystalize their offers regarding the line construction and a long term financing.

According to Minister Katz, each train when running on can replace 600 cars." It should be mentioned that the all Israeli governments supported the line - the decision was first received already in 1956 - but only now the vision may become a reality.

(v). ELECTRIFICATION.

It has been reported that IR want to order 80 electric locomotives for use with existing push-pull sets. Also, IR want to order 60 electric double-decker train sets. Decided was for electrification of 420 km railway line." 104:05.

TENDERS.

(i). **Tender No. HN/RC/01/13:** Supply of Hand-Pushed Trolley equipped with Eddy Current Inspection System suitable for rail-head checking defects detection. Latest date for submission of proposals postponed to 08.01.2014.

(ii). **Tender No. 11309:** Providing Transportation Services to/from railway sites: The transportation services mentioned are for employees, for rail passengers (in case of line closure etc.), and those provided to a third factor like the Israel Defense Army - soldiers' transportation; the services are to be provided by a variety of vehicles such as buses, minibuses, taxis, etc.; each sort defined for its job in the tender.

The services are divided into three geographical areas: North, Central, and South; a bidder can win only one area. The tender is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 07.01.2014.

(iii). **Three tenders** for operating special Taxi Services to/from railway stations; Tender No. MS/RC/2013/12: Binyamina station.

Tender No. MS/RC/2013/13: Ashkelon station.

Tender No. MS/RC/2013/14: Jerusalem Malkha station.

Each of the tenders is for 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals for each of the tenders: 30.12.2013.

(iv). International Tender No. 41301 : Manufacture and Supply of Various Types of Wooden Sleepers. Latest date for submission of proposals postponed to 09.01.2014.

(v). **Tender No. MS/RC/2013/16:** Operating food and drink stores at the stations of Petakh-Tikva Kiryat-Arie and Acre. The contract for each station is 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 06.01.2014.

(vi). Free Newspapers. The railways have published a permit for distributing newspapers free of charge at all the railway stations - except Ben-Gurion airport - for 36 months. The permit fees are \$0.5 Million for a newspaper of one firm, and goes down to 0.3 Million for 3 and more different newspapers.

(vii). The railways have published an RFQ as part of international tender No. 2138 (to be published later) for Designing, building, and maintenance of Electro-Mechanical Systems and slab tracks on the A1 fast link to Jerusalem. Latest date for submission of proposals: 18.02.2014.

(viii). **Tender No. 11309:** Providing special transportation services (buses, minibuses, etc.) to/from railway stations: The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 07.01.2014.

(ix). **Tender No. 21307:** Upgrading works at the stations of Netanya and Hadera-West:

The winner will not be able to participate also in tender No. 21311 for upgrading the stations of Binyamina and Hof-Ha-Carmel published recently. Latest date for submission of proposals: 12.01.2014.

(x). **Tender No. 21315:** Providing Services for promoting Land Expropriation: Latest date for submission of proposals: 26.01.2014.

(xi). **Tender No. 21301-Maintenance and Restoration Works** on the lower slopes on the Beit-Shemesh - Jerusalem line: Latest date for submission of proposals: 27.01.2014.

(xii). **Tender No. MS/RC/2013/17:** Operating a Parking area at Haifa Hof-HaCarmel station: The contract is for 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 13.01.2014.

(xiii). **Tender No. 11314:** Design, styling, manufacture, and installation of Sales Stands at railway stations. The contract is for 12 years with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 13.02.2014.

(xiv). **Tender No. 3141:** Providing ancillary items for all railway sites: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 27.02.2014.

(xv). **Israel Railways Ltd. tender No. 21404:** Providing Land Assessment services. Latest date for submission of proposals: 06.03.2014.

(xvi). **Israel Railways tender No. MS/RC/5/2014:** Authorization for clearing out and selling of scrapped equipment from railways sites. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 13.03.2014.

(xvii). **International Tender No. 41302:** Manufacture and Supply of Ultrasonic Inspection Systems for Rolling Stock's Hollow Axle, Solid Axle and Wheel Sets. Latest date for submission of proposals postponed to 28.01.2014.

Further Postponements:

Tender No. HN/RC/01/13 for Supply of Hand Pushed Trolley equipped with eddy current inspection system suitable for rail head checking defects detection. Latest date for submission of proposals postponed to 13.01.2014.

Tender No. 21311 for upgrading works at Binjamina and Hof-Ha-Carmel stations. Latest date for submission of proposals postponed to 09.01.2014.

- International tender No. HN/RC/01/13: Supply of Hand Pushed Trolley equipped with eddy current inspection system suitable for rail head checking detects detection. Latest date for submission of proposals postponed to 08.01.2014.

- International tender No. 41302: Manufac-

ture and Supply of Ultrasonic Inspection Systems for Rolling Stock's Hollow Axle, Solid Axle and Wheelsets - latest date for submission of proposals postponed to 21.01.2014.

- International tender No. 41301: Manufacture and Supply of Various Types of Wooden Sleepers - latest date for submission of proposals postponed to 09.01.2014.

Tenders Allocated:-

(i). The local consortium Electra Construction Ltd. Won tender No. MN/KB/01/13 for systems at the Jerusalem HaUma station (end point of A1 fast link); worth: \$69.6 Million

(ii). Strauss Café B.V. has won tender No. MC/RC/2013/6 worth \$2.72 Million for introducing coffee and bakery products stands at passenger railway stations.

(iii). TATA STEEL FRANCE RAILS won the railways Request for Proposals for the Manufacture and Supply of R350HT Heat Treated Railway Rails 60E2, 54E1 valued EUR 3,159,000.00.

(iv). The Israeli company "Team 3" won Tender No. NO/SR/04/12-providing cleaning services for the railways' rolling stock.

(v). The railways Tender No. TC/MT/17/12 for providing measuring services is shared by four winners: The Galilee Measurers Ltd; A.Pinkas and Sons Ltd.; M.T.B. Measuring; M.L. Sne Measuring and Engineering Ltd.

104:06.

LIGHT RAIL

A. THE JERUSALEM LRV:

(i). **CHANUKAH.** From a press release of 04.12.2013 by the concessionaire CityPass:

"On the occasion of the Hanukah holiday (festival of candles and lights), CityPass in collaboration with the Chabad Youth Movement (Orthodox Jews) put a big Hanukiah candlestick at the LRV station adjacent to the Central Bus Station and just above the new HaUma railway station which is at an advanced stage of construction; hundreds of passengers pass this place every minute.

The central ceremony was honoured by Rabbi David Grossman of the northern city of Migdal HaEmek, an admired person who founded there a school to treat troubled youths and succeeded in reducing the level of crime to a minimum; it is called The Light House and the connection with the festival of lights is clear! In his greetings he said "The managers and heads of CityPass deserve special credit as they make travelling in the Jerusalem easier including the holy places for the religions; I wish CityPass and all of us to have more lines and trains for the benefit of both the residents and visitors".

CityPass General Manager Mr. Yaron Ravid gave some details of the LRV future plans: "Today the LRV carries

130,000 passengers/day; that is not enough and we're working hard on planning additional lines as well as other service improvements in order to continue the transportation revolution the LRV has brought so far."

The LRV inspectors distributed doughnuts and whipping tops, two Hanukah symbols, and the children's choir called 'The Jerusalem Flowers' made the event pleasant with Hanukah songs."

(ii). **SNOW.** As mentioned above, the system was affected by damage to the overhead power lines. Trains began to run again on the afternoon of Monday 16.12 but only from the Central Bus Station to Givat HaMivtar – apparently there were still some issues with the bridge. On Tuesday 17.12 services commenced as normal from 05.30.

According to one report, one of the problems was that some of the points froze – and that for such occasional brief occurrences as this, it is not considered necessary to install point-heaters as is normal in Central Europe.

All LRV services returned to normal on 17.12.2013 after the heavy storm of the previous week.

(iii). **EXTENSION TO GIVAT SHA'UL PLANNED.**

From Daniel K. Eisenbud, 'Jerusalem Post', 16.2.2014. Route to extend 1.5 kilometres and add four new stops; Part of NIS 1.1 Billion public transportation infrastructure overhaul.

"The Interior Ministry's District Building Committee has approved an extension of the Jerusalem Light Rail route to reach the Givat Sha'ul neighbourhood.

According to the ministry, the new route will be extended by 1.5 kilometers, from the intersection of Herzl Boulevard and Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Street, along Kanfei Nesharim Street to the entrance to Har Nof, with four new stops.

In a statement released Sunday, the ministry noted the importance it places on ongoing improvements of the capital's infrastructure – particularly with respect to the public transportation system – to reduce traffic and pollution. "By improving transportation from Har Nof to other neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, this project will significantly improve accessibility to employment centres, education facilities and cultural institutions throughout the city," the statement read. "In addition, the programme will improve access to the Givat Shaul industrial zone, developing greater employment opportunities in the area for businesses."

Despite numerous objections to the extension, the ministry said that it authorized the project due to its "fundamental importance to further upgrade the urban infrastructure and use of public space."

In June, the Jerusalem Regional Planning Committee approved a NIS 1.1 billion allocation from the Transportation Ministry's budget to extend the light rail line to Hadassah-University Medical Center at Ein Kerem. The railway currently travels from the northern neighborhood of Pisgat Ze'ev to Herzl, west of central Jerusalem.

Transportation Minister Israel Katz lauded the expansion, noting that it was part of a joint effort between the ministry and the Jerusalem Municipality to provide more efficient transportation solutions to the capital's residents."

B. TEL AVIV

(i). **SUBCONTRACTORS.** From a press release of 15.01.2014 by NTA- The Tel-Aviv Metro/LRV project management:

"Thirteen of Israel's biggest construction sub-contractors have today participated in the meeting for bidders for the LRV depot and depot portal for the Red Line, to be built at Kiryat-Arie industrial area in Petakh-Tikva; the bidder is to be selected within six months and will start works to last about four years.

This meeting took place just four days after the meeting of bidders for the systems in which four international groups have been selected after passing successfully NTA PQ.

Among the subcontractors participating in the depot meeting are: Minrav Engineering & Building, Shapir Civil and Marine Engineering, Danya Cebus (all these three participated in the systems' bidders meeting), Solel-Boneh, and Eli & Joel Azarya.

NTA Chairman Mr. Alex Wishnitzer said: "Both the depot and depot portal tenders are important milestones in the project, and together with the systems' tender, the winner of which is to be selected soon, plus the tender for the TBM soon to be published, they prove NTA's serious intention of carrying out this big project; the question whether there will be a METRO/LRV system is not on the agenda anymore; we're strongly supported by Minister Katz, thus being already deeply into the project".

NTA's General Manager-in-Chief Mr. Moshe Ben Alon said: "The project will bring the Greater Tel-Aviv Area onto the level of many worlds' metropolitan cities; anybody arriving at a big metropolitan area, looks first of all for orientation for a metro system before looking for other modes of public transport; I believe the same will be the case here within a couple of years; we hope to complete the tender procedures towards the end of 2014 with works to start over the whole sites at the beginning of 2015".

The Red Line Manager Mr. Tony Burchel said: "The success of the depot and depot portal tender is a meaningful

milestone in the success of the Red Line project; it depends on three non-compromised factors: keeping schedule, strictly keeping of safety, and strictly sticking to high quality standards; all these will promise the success of the whole Greater Tel-Aviv Area Metro in general and particularly of the Red Line." Soon, subcontractors from abroad will also bid.

(ii). PRE-QUALIFYING FOR BIDDING PROCESS.

From a press release of 13.01.2014 by NTA-Tel-Aviv Metro/LRV project management:

The following four international bidders, some of them in partnership with Israeli companies, have passed the Pre-Qualifying for the Red Line published about 18 months ago, and will now bid for the final tender which includes the electrification, tracks, signaling and control, security and safety:

1. Alstom Transport and the Israeli company Minrav Engineering & Building;
2. Bombardier Transportation and the Israeli company Danya Cebus;
3. T.A.T group (comprising of: Colas Rail, Thales Communications and Security, Systra and the Israeli company Shapir Civil and Marin Engineering);
4. Sefarad (Spanish) Infrastructures group (comprising of: Ineco Ingenieria Economia del Transporte, Indra Systemas, Grupo Isolux Corsan, Isolux Ingenieria, Corsan-Corviam Construction and Metro de Madrid).

At the meeting with the selected bidders which took place on 13.01.2014 at Tel-Aviv, NTA Chairman Eng. Alex Wishnitzer promised that NTA will carry out the mission for which it has been created: "We will carry out building of the whole mass transit system with all its 8 lines and even more simultaneously; we've a full cooperation and backup from all parts of the Finance Ministry to budget the additional lines (apart from the Red Line); we've also full support from the Transport Ministry; the overall cost of the project is around \$28 Billion and, if needed, we'll find external financing sources".

Mr. Wishnitzer further promised that within a month a new General Manager for NTA would be appointed.

NTA Chairman-in-Chief Mr. Moshe Ben Alon said: " We've committed to the government, the state, and the citizens to carry out the Tel-Aviv Greater Metropolitan Mass Transit System, and as such will implement the construction of the most available lines; if we can we will construct the southern Blue and Brown lines, the Blue Line from Rehovot to Holon Junction, originally planned as BRT but eventually an LRV line, and the Brown Line from Ramla-Lod to Rishon-Le-Zion, even before the Red Line".

Last year NTA published the ten-

der for works on the first section of the Pink Line - BRT Hasharon - from Kfar-Sava through Ra'anana to Herzliya.

The Red Line Manager Mr. Tony Burchel said in the meeting: "I don't see any reason why the Red Line between Petakh-Tikva and Bat-Yam (and later also to Rishon-Le-Zion) should not be completed as promised on October 2021 or even earlier; I've completed world-wide projects much more complicated than that of Tel-Aviv, such as: Dubai, Abu-Dhabi, New Delhi, Cairo, and Singapore ; there is no doubt that problems will arise, but with cooperation with all the factors involved we'll be able to fulfill the mission".

The winner of the Red Line System tender is to be selected in the next quarter of 2014, while the contract is to be signed at the beginning of 2015.

Meanwhile, works on the Herzl Street shaft of Tel-Aviv, through which the TBM will be brought in, are almost completed. Within 6 months, works are supposed to be completed on the Petakh-Tikva Em-Ha-Moshavot shaft too.

On Wednesday, 15.01.2014, NTA will hold a meeting of subcontractors for the depot and the depot portal to be built at Petakh-Tikva.

Within 3 months, Dan bus operator will start operating BRT buses - locally known as METRONIT or URBANIT - along the planned Red-Line alignment, in addition to existing bus services. This type of buses is already operated in the Greater Haifa Area by the same operator, called there Dan-in the North. The aim is to make the public to get used to the alignment, while being an alternative to private car and regular buses while works on the Red Line are carried out. Unlike in Haifa, where the BRT will remain as it is, here these buses will be diverted to already-planned BRT lines once the Red Line is completed.

(iii). NEW GENERAL MANAGER.

From a press release of 12.02.2014 by NTA:

"NTA's directorate approved on 12.02.2014 the recommendation of the Committee for Finding Senior Managers for the appointment of Mr. Yehuda Bar-On as NTA General Manager to succeed Mr. Moshe Ben-Alon the temporary General Manager.

Mr. Bar-On, 54, an economist and auditor (accountant) by training, was formerly the General Manager of Ayalon Roads, of the Dan bus company, and was Deputy General Manager of Israel Roads (also known as Public Works Department, and later National Roads Company).

In his last job, together with the then-National Roads Company General Manager (and today's NTA Chairman, Engineer Alex Wishnitzer), he led the action of turning the National Roads

Company from a government-supported division in the Transport Ministry to an independent governmental company busy in building roads, interchanges, bridges, and in recent year also railway lines all over Israel with participation by the private sector.

Among the projects he has managed are: The re-planning of Road No. 1 to Jerusalem, the Iksal tunnels in the Lower Galilee, Hamovil and road No. 77 in the Lower Galilee, the Krayot bypass road, and road No. 431 from Rishon-Le-Zion to Modi'in (one of the most important transverse east-west roads).

NTA Chairman Mr. Wishnitzer congratulated Mr. Bar-On on his appointment and said: "We both cooperated successfully in managing the Israel Roads Company, and I'm confident that we can equally lead again, this time the important mass transit system of the Greater Tel-Aviv Area; Mr. Bar-On with his rich experience in transportation and infrastructure will be of great help to Israel's most complicated and important project; building a network of eight LRV and BRT lines from Netanya in the north to Rehovot in the south."

Mr. Wishnitzer thanked the temporary General Manager Mr. Moshe Ben-Alon. Mr. Bar-On is to start his new job only after being approved by the Brenner Committee in the Governmental Companies' Authority, as well as by the Transport and Finance Ministers.

(iv). PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLANNING BILL.

From a press release of 06.02.2014 by NTA-Tel-Aviv Metro/LRV project management:

"The Knesset (parliament) Economy Committee headed by the Chairman Member Professor Avishay Brawermann started today preparing for the second and third readings of the Public Transport Bill, intended to remove obstacles from design, implementation, and financing, in order to accelerate the building of urban and interurban railway lines all over the country.

At the opening of the meeting, Professor Brawermann said that Israel is far behind the western world as far as mass transit is concerned; in most cases the ministers are cutting the same ribbon several times, while projects are stuck; therefore, he intended to promote the discussions regarding the bill in order to enable promotion of these stuck projects.

Transport Coordinator in the Finance Ministry Mr. Asher Dolev, said: "The dependence on private car use causes the economy an annual damage in excess of \$11.2 Billion in addition to a huge loss of working hours, environmental damage, and accidents; the existing laws are not suitable for the projects to be implemented in the Greater Tel-Aviv Area.

The Bill consists of 3 Chapters:

- Chapter 1 deals with the authorities to be given to the railway line builder to enter into land properties to perform engineering surveys and preserving buildings.
- Chapter 2 deals with authorities to be given to the builder to perform land expropriation in order to build temporary organizational sites.
- Chapter 3 deals with enforcing the laws on public transport lanes in the cities."

NTA Chairman Mr. Alex Wishnitzer said: "The Greater Tel-Aviv Area Metro/LRV project is the most complicated one in Israel at the cost of \$28 Billion; it requires the approval of 2 district committees, 30 local authorities, and additional local planning committees; the Red Line, which is the project's core, has passed the statutory approval stages and is to be completed in 2021; Ten years were required to clear the alignment and to reach the stage of beginning the works; he added that the only solution to the congestion at the Greater Tel-Aviv Area is to build all the other lines until 2021; otherwise, the congestion will be like in Moscow and private cars will not be able to move!"

The Tel-Aviv mayor deputy for transport in the Tel-Aviv municipality Mrs. Meital Lehavi said: "The subject of private land expropriation must be carefully treated to minimize any invasion of privacy".

NTA Performance Department Manager Mr. Udi Lehrmann said: "Without the authority for temporary land expropriation it will be impossible to build anything, in particular stations.

Chairman Brawermann finally said: "We'll do the maximum to minimize invasion and damage to privacy; NTA members are requested to provide all the necessary data to locate the people who may suffer, to invite them to a meeting, after which the most optimal solution is to be found."



Flooding on the Line near Ben Gurion Airport station. Photo Aharon Gazit

104:06

MODELLING NOTES.
 Naumann of Köln is now selling HO models of the Euro 4000 Co-Co in IR livery; however, delivery to Israel itself has proved problematic. Now Yaron Dozetis is importing models for resale - and here are some of Andreas Lindner's collection.



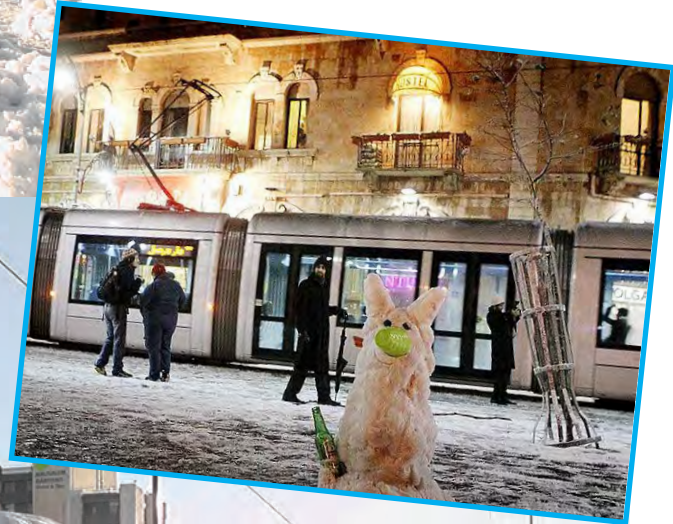
Yaron Dozetis
 Railways&model railways specialist
 I.R. models production website:
www.ydo.co.il/trains



104:07



**Trams
(and lack of trams)
in the snow in
Jerusalem.
15th. Dec. 2013.
(Photos: Tony Travis).**



OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. IRAQ.

Not News by any means but clicking on :- <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060022609> should bring you to a short (five mins.) film showing Indian Sappers building a railway line across the desert in Mesopotamia during World War 1. This is from the Imperial War Museum (IWM) collection.

B. TURKEY.

(i). OLD PHOTOS.

This website brings one to a series of historic photographs of Turkish railways. <http://www.gwrarchive.org/site/sitel2pg/Turkey/turkey.php>

also: <http://www.trainsofturkey.com/w/pmwiki.php/Steam/44001>

(ii). BURSA TRAMS.

Thanks to Marc Stegeman: From NVBS 'Op de Rails 2013-12': Three more metro train sets from Rotterdam (5206, 5207, 5228 & 5235) left for Bursa via Zeebrugge in November, 2013. These will be used on T2, a 17.5 km fast tramway line (light rail) dubbed 'Bursaray' since 2002, which will be expanded to 50 km length. Other rolling stock consists of adapted Stadtbahn-B trams and U5 metros from Frankfurt.

Also in Bursa: a 6.5 km long tramway line T1 opened on October 12, 2013. T1 is a standard gauge single track circle line downtown with 12 stops. Rolling stock consists of 14 5-fold articulated trams dubbed "Silkworm" built by Turkish Dumaray factory, comprising a Siemens drive line.

The Bursa T3 is the metre gauge "touristic" tramway line which has operated since 2011 with Gotha trams from Istanbul or, due to mass transport requirements, with Stadtbahn-M trams from Bochum.

Back to the Rotterdam metros: the undisclosed (German) trader who has contact with Monterrey in Mexico has received 5213 & 5227. For scrap: 5263 & 5267.

On 19 Nov 2013 Marc added: "One more (5223) left for Bursa on September 10, 2013. Possibly 5204 left for Bursa as well on September 25, to be cannibalized. Not for Bursa but to a scrapyards: 5220, 5224, 5233, 5262. To undisclosed trader: 5225, 5237, 5255. For overhaul: 5353, 5350, 5362."

(iii). ANKARA RAILWAY MUSEUM.

In November 2013 it appeared that the locomotives here, which were installed in September 1990, were being removed. On enquiry it transpired that "they were moved to the back of Mar?andiz yard for further contemplation" ...

(iv). MARMARAY TUNNEL OPENING.

More information on this very important project can be found in 'Fahrplan-center News' No. 50 p.13:- "On 29th. Oct. 2013, the 90th. Anniversary of the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the government was able to open the Marmaray Tunnels between the European Istanbul and the Asiatic Haydarpasha. Initially a form of 'S-Bahn' local urban service is offered between Kazlıcesme (on the European side) and Ayrilik Ceshmesi (on the Asiatic one). The trains work in each direction at ten-minute intervals between 06.00 and midnight. On the way these trains serve the underground stations at Yenikapi, Sirkeci and Üsküdar. The line is 13.6km long; the whole S-Bahn from Halkali to Gezbe, 76.3km, will be placed into operation from the middle of 2015.

An indication of how important this new link on the Bosphorus is can be seen from the fact that within the first fourteen days of operation five million passengers were carried!

(v). TCDD REPORTS.

After a lengthy period in which the railways played only a secondary role in the Turkish transport network, this position appears now to be changing substantially. The total number of long-distance passengers sank between 2003 and 2009 from 27.3M to 22.5M, however by 2009 they were travelling on average 241km whereas in 2003 it had been only 129km. With the opening of the first two YHT high-speed lines passenger numbers had recovered to almost 30M.

On the S-Bahn system in Ankara and Istanbul in the same period passenger traffic rose from 49.5M. to 57.2M.

Goods traffic stagnated from 1970 to 2003 at a level of around 15M tons, but by 2008 it had reached 23M tons for the first time. Inland traffic dominates this figure, with international freight traffic reaching only about 2M tons, which is especially due to the closure of the border towards Iraq and the lack of a direct rail link round the Lake Van and over the Bosphorus.

In spite of this growth the TCDD

has for the first time, due to modernisation measures, reduced its staff levels from 40,000 in 2003 to around 34,000 in 2009. In addition the average age of staff has become younger – in November 2013 alone 500 new loco drivers and several dozen new workshops staff have been recruited.

It is already now clear that following the completion of the existing high-speed project Eskisehir – Istanbul the third line of this type will go from Ankara eastwards to Sivas. However the strategy paper of TCDD does not give any proposed opening date.

(vi). THE LINE TO IRAQ.

The mixed train between Gaziantep and Nusaybin does not work much at present. Between Karkemis and Nusaybin this line forms the border between Syria and the line has therefore been shot at several times. The Turkish Army has taken over the line, in order to repair it each time after damage has been caused."

(vii). ANOTHER STEAM RAILTOUR IN TURKEY IN AUTUMN 2014.

From 12-17th. October 2014 another railtour is proposed in Western Turkey, in the area Üsâk – Afyon – Dinar – Burdur – Isparta. The main focus for the tour, which is run largely for those who wish to take photographs en route, will be the system of secondary lines around Burdur. Here, away from the main lines and in an attractive landscape with its small village stations time seems to have stood still. The train will comprise 2-10-0 No. 56 548 (formerly DRB 52 7429) and the four museum carriages stationed at Üsâk and so will run most of the time as a purely passenger train (Turkish: Yolcu). From time to time goods wagons will be added, to make up a Goods train with Passenger accommodation – (Turkish 'Posta'). Different but authentic rakes are promised for each day. 56 548 was in use until 1989 on the lines that are to be traversed, the current rail traffic is very sparse and so there is time for photo runpasts.

A diesel loco will be coupled on to haul the set over longer distances, but will be uncoupled for the photo runpasts. This is a system which has worked well in the past and means less time is required for resupplying the steam loco with coal and water.

The exact programme is lengthy but involves departure from Istanbul (Sirkeci) at 12.,00 on Saturday 11.10.2014 or Izmir Basmane at 16.30 the same day;

the Sunday in Usak, Monday bus transfer to Banaz and then the rest of the day on the line to Afyon, Tuesday 14th. Direction Isparta and Burdur, Wednesday till Friday in Burdur and on the network of lines in this region. A maximum of 30 persons may travel, registration by 30th. April. More details from Dieter Kramer at kramer.dietmar@web.de

(viii). TRAVEL ADVICE NOTES.

Link to much easier to use TCDD booking site, active from Saturday 1 February
<https://yolcu.tcdd.gov.tr/view/eybis/tnmGenel/tcddWebContent.jsf>

Also of note for Turkey, electronic visas are now needed before arrival, it is no longer possible to buy on arrival
<https://www.evisa.gov.tr/en/>

C. SYRIA.

“WAR DAMAGE. From ‘Fahrplancenter News’ Nr. 50 p.14. In a Turkish and an Arabic television programme at the end of October, almost by coincidence, pictures of the Bagdadbahn in the East of Syria were shown. The news item was primarily concerned with the battle for the city of Qamishliye. The track to the border bridge to Turkey is apparently mined and sleepers had been pulled out from under the rails. The station at Qamishliye showed some damage and several burnt-out goods wagons could be seen. Near Rabia (El Yaroubieh) south-east of Qamishliye the tracks on the main line towards Iraq are also damaged, there are some sleepers missing and several rail lengths lay next to the actual alignment, though unfortunately the reasons for this could not be understood. Other sources confirm that all rail traffic in the country has been suspended and the CFS website had been switched off.”

D. TURKEY-IRAQ.

From ‘Fahrplancenter News’ No. 50 p.19. “The difficult situation in Syria is also affecting the traffic relations between Turkey and Iraq. In consequence a summit meeting was held between the Transport Ministries of each country on 26.11.2013. The opening of new border crossing points in south-eastern Turkey was decided upon. At present there is only a road crossing near Simak. In addition to further roads a new direct rail link should at last be built; this will go from Nusaybin eastwards but north of the border with Syria to Shirnakh and near Ovaköy cross the border into Iraq and then run on to Mossul. The project is in itself not new; such a line had been discussed back in the 1980’s although then with a border crossing slightly to the east at Zakho. But now time is pressing.”

E. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.

From ‘Fahrplancenter News’ 50 p.20.

“Etihad Rail has begun initial test runs on the 264km. line between Shah, Tarf and Ruwais. Trains run with three diesel locos and 110 goods wagons which are intended for transport of sulphur. Commercial transport of sulphur will begin in the first weeks of 2014. Each train will then convey 11,000 tons.

The line’s own concrete sleeper factory has now begun production of the sleepers required for the 628km. Of line of the second phase; these will include the lines Ruwais – Gewifat (the border to Saudi Arabia), Tarf – Musaffah (Abu Dhabi) – Dubai and Musaffah – Al Ain. With the opening of this second phase in 2017 passenger traffic should also begin. According to initial plans there will be up to eight train pairs daily between Abu Dhabi and Dubai.”

F. TURKMENISTAN – AFGHANISTAN – TADJIKISTAN.

(It is sometimes hard to calculate exactly where the boundaries of ‘Harakevet’ should lie, but these three items from ‘Fahrplancenter News’ No. 50 pp.20f. relate to the gradual emergence of an east-west new railway ‘Silk Road’ in parts of Central Asia which also impacts upon the Middle East.)

“The three countries have signed a new treaty for the construction of a rail corridor through the north of Afghanistan. The line will cross the existing railway line in the region of Mazar-e-Sharif.”

And: KAZAKHSTAN – TURKMENISTAN:- “On 17th. May 2013 regular goods traffic began between these two countries over the newly-constructed line from Uzen in Kazakhstan over 146km. to Serhetyaka, only a few kilometres inside Turkmenistan. The line which should continue a further 470km. through Turkmenistan from Serhetyaka via Kyzylkaya, Bereket and Ereket to the Iranian border is currently under construction. In addition the 70km.-long connecting line in Iran from the border to Gorgan was ready by autumn 2013.”

and: UZBEKISTAN: “The Chinese firm China Railway Tunnel Group has won the contract to build a 19km. tunnel under the Kamchik Pass. This will be part of a new route of 129km. Angren – Pop, which will allow internal rail traffic between the various Uzbek regions to avoid having to traverse Tadjikistan.”

G. SAUDI ARABIA.

(i). EVEN MORE LINES!

(‘Fahrplancenter News’ No. 50 p.14): “Although the ‘Haramain’ high-speed line from Jeddah to Mecca and Medina is still under construction, the

government and the State Railway Organisation (SRO) are already issuing tenders for studies for another new project. This will involve a high-speed line between the capital Riyadh and the port city of Dammam. The new line will wherever possible run parallel to the existing railway line, but be laid out for a speed of 350km/h and will be used solely for passenger traffic. In each city the existing stations will be expanded and in addition the new line will serve the airports at each city. Travel time between the two cities, which are some 449km. apart, will be reduced to around 90-100 minutes.

In the meantime heavy investment is being made in the existing railway network, The top speed will through various construction projects be raised from the existing 140km/h in stages to 180km/h by the end of 2014, enabling travel times with the existing diesel trains to be cut from 4hrs. 20min to 3 hrs. 10min. In addition four further identical trains will be ordered from CAF in Spain, thus raising the fleet to 12 units and a further four units should be delivered in 2015/6. The SRO’s aim is to offer a 2-hourly service between Riyadh and Dammam. The older line via Haradh will be doubled in the coming years, in order to be served also by regular-interval freight trains.”

(ii). RIYADH METRO.

In ‘Railway Magazine’ Jan. 2014 p. 87: “Plans to build a six-line automatic metro network in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh over the next five years are now underway. Six lines, totalling 176-route kilometres, will be built by three different international consortia at a cost of £16.3 Billion. Construction is due to start in 2014 and all six lines should open by 2018. Both Alstom and Bombardier will be building the trains.”

In the Internet (www.strukton.co./news/2013) is also a report from this Dutch construction company. “Strukton, as a member of the FAST consortium, has been awarded a contract by Arriayadh Development Authority (ADA) to provide a complete automatic and driverless metro system to equip three of the six lines to be launched by the city. It includes also an option for 10 years of maintenance services. The total contract value amounts to £6 Billion. Strukton’s share represents almost £1.0 Billion. The project is financed by the Government of Saudi Arabia through the Public Investment Fund. The project is to be executed in five years, and will employ over 15,000 people. The driverless metro network in total will be 176 kilometres long and will include 87 stations. It is scheduled to enter commercial service in 2018. The other members of the FAST consortium... are FCC (Spain - consortium leader), Freyssinet (Saudi Arabia); Alstom (France); Samsung CT (Korea); Setec (France) and

Typsa (Spain).

The ADA has awarded the FAST consortium one of three contracts to build the Riyadh Metro, the longest metro system under development in the world. The contract includes the design and construction of lines 4 (yellow), 5 (green) and 6 (purple), which will have 25 stations. Construction will include 64.6km. of rail, 29.8 km. of viaducts, 28.6 km. of underground tracks, and 8.2 km. of overground track. The consortium with Strukton will use three tunnel boring machines (TBMs) to build tunnels almost 10m in diameter for the three lines. These lines will then use two-car driverless trainsets supplied by Alstom. There will be four types of stations: elevated, ground level, underground and intermodal to connect with different lines.

The six lines of the Riyadh metro project will, with 176km., be the largest subway under development in the world at present; construction will require 600,000 tonnes of steel... 4.3 M. tonnes of concrete, and will employ over 30,000 people.... The new metro will transform Riyadh, reducing traffic congestion, strengthening and driving the Saudi economy and improving living standards for citizens. Riyadh currently has a population of 5.7 Million, which is expected to increase to 8.3M by 2030. The subway is a solution to daily traffic problems; of 7.4M daily commuters, only 2% use public transport.

The double railway tracks are using Appittrack. In order to optimize energy consumption, the traction power system will be equipped with HESOP, Alstom's innovative reversible substation solution, which allows the energy recovered during braking to be re-used by the network."

H. EGYPT.

From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 50 p. 19:

"As a result of the civil disturbances all rail traffic in Egypt was suspended from 14th. August 2013. No trains worked at all until 27th. September. From 28th. Sept. a limited service was recommenced and from 22nd. October further trains were added, but from 1st. November as a result of further disturbances once again almost everything was suspended. On 23rd. Nov. a train pair was operated from Cairo towards Assyut. However, since there has been almost no maintenance work since August it is almost impossible to introduce regular traffic. Also on 28.11.13 there were only scattered individual train movements, and only on the main lines. The Railway Administration is unable to announce any estimate for a full resumption of rail services. It appears that some 5% of the normal freight trains are working."

I. LEBANON.

From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 50, Mai – Dezember 2013 p.13:

"The Lebanese Government and the European Investment Bank EIB invited several consulting firms to Lebanon in September 2013, to prepare initial studies for the reinstatement of the infrastructure and restoration of services on the railway from Beirut via Jbeil to Tripoli. The studies must cover not just the possibilities and the economic justification but also the social influences the railway could have and its influence on the environment. The studies for the ca. 80km. line will cost around 2M.

This would in fact be the second study of this type, for at the end of the 1990's, when the alignment was still largely free, since there had been limited operations on some sections until 1997, a similar set of studies had been prepared, which covered the entire line almost up to the border with Israel. Officially the scheme failed at that time due to fears of 'electro-smog' from an electrified railway (!), whereas all other positive factors were ignored. The study at that time was carried out by the Transport Ministry itself, which at that time was closely involved with the very strong roads and car lobby in the country.

Back in 2002 the Transport Ministry of Lebanon and Syria celebrated the commencement of construction works for the restoration of the narrow-gauge line (1050mm) from Rayak via Serghaya to Damascus, but the funds made available by the Lebanese government - \$US 700,000 – were not even adequate to clear the undergrowth from the stretch from Rayak to the border, there were no new sleepers available and it was even neglected to dismantle unused rails from places where they were not needed to replace damaged sections. In addition there was no useable rolling stock on the Lebanese section, and the Syrian section was also never so repaired that a regular operation would be possible. The \$700,000 were therefore literally just thrown away."

J. PALESTINE.

On 11.02.2014 appeared on Arutz Sheva: "Financial Crisis? PA Planning Airport and Railway. PA announces several new transportation related projects and is even seeking to expand into areas under Israeli control. By Elad Benari

Despite complaining of a financial crisis, the Palestinian Authority (PA) is working on several new transportation-related projects in the areas under its control - and is even seeking to expand into areas under Israeli control.

The Bethlehem-based Ma'an news agency reported on Monday that the PA's Ministry of Transport has been

working with Egypt to prepare plans for an airport in the areas of Judea and Samaria under its control and for a seaport and railway line in Gaza. Nabil Dmeidi, PA minister of transport and chairman of Palestinian Airlines, told Ma'an that the transport ministry has signed a protocol of cooperation with Egypt's civil aviation authority in order to benefit from Egyptian expertise. The airport is planned to be built east of Jericho, Dmeidi said. If that is not enough, he also told Ma'an that Egyptian experts are due to visit the region to explore possible locations for a second smaller airport on land currently designated as Area C, which is under full Israeli security and administrative control.

Dmeidi, who is currently visiting Cairo, added that a plan is being discussed to build a railway line between Gaza and Egypt, with the nearest Egyptian railway station 70 kilometres away in Beer al-Abed. Plans are also being discussed to build a seaport in Gaza, he told Ma'an. The Yasser Arafat International Airport in Gaza was destroyed by the IDF after the terror onslaught known as the Second Intifada or the Oslo War, which began in 2000. Inaugurated in 1998, it was able to handle 700,000 passengers per year and was visited by former U.S. President Bill Clinton. Palestinian Airlines resumed operations in 2012 but, since the Gaza airport is in ruins, only offers flights between Egypt's El-Arish and Amman. The renewal of operations was facilitated by an agreement reached between the Palestinian Transportation Ministry and the authorities in Egypt and Jordan.

The latest projects come as the PA has continued to claim that it is suffering from an economic crisis. Its former Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad, several times warned the entity may fail financially and cease to exist because of its financial crisis. The PA, which relies heavily on foreign donors, has been begging the world to step up financial aid in order to save it from collapsing. At the same time it has continued to provide huge monthly salaries to terrorists serving time in Israeli prisons while blaming Israel for the financial crisis. Monday's report is not the first time that the PA has announced a project in Area C, despite it not being under its control. In 2012, Fayyad inaugurated a water dam to be built in "Palestine" at a cost of over \$1 million, ignoring the fact that the project was located in an area under Israeli sovereignty"



NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). FILM FROM WORLD WAR 1.

Clicking <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060023322> brings one to a 12-minute IWM film including (from min. 8.00) footage of railway construction in Palestine, including shots of an LSWR Adams 0-6-0, then from mins. 08.16 to 09.22 film taken from the roof of a train heading through the bare hills to Jerusalem.

(b). THE TURNTABLE AT TZEMACH.

The following appeared in 'Haaretz' on 21.04. 2013.

"I had butterflies in my stomach," said Yehuda Levanoni on Monday as he stood at the site of the old train station in Tzemach, at the southern tip of Lake Kinneret. After 12 years of research, he has succeeded in proving the theory that has been keeping him, and a few other amateur historians, busy for so long.

It turns out the railway turntable for the Jezreel Valley railway line built by the Ottomans in 1905 - the round device used for turning around trains, especially the engines, so they could head back in the direction they came from - was buried under the ground, as Levanoni had argued in the face of another, widely accepted theory.

"It was really exciting for me," said Levanoni, a 71-year-old Rishon Letzion resident who has been researching the railway line, widely known as the Valley Train, for the last several years.

Originally, the Valley Train was a branch line connecting Haifa and the Jezreel Valley to the Hejaz Railway, which traveled from Damascus to Medina. The line also operated under the British Mandate until 1948. Today, Israel Railways is building a modern rail line along much of the old route.

Levanoni has been burrowing through archives, going out in the field and interviewing people about the incredible transportation project the Ottomans built, after many failed attempts, more than a century ago.

"I've already interviewed 1,000 people; I found three people who were born on the train," he says, calling his interest in the railway "obsessive." He came up with his underground turntable theory a long time ago, "but except for Yair, no one believed me."

Levanoni is referring to 68-year-old Yair Mish, a good friend of his who helped him conduct research. Mish is a collector of tools from the beginning of the Jewish resettlement in the Land of Israel, and he goes almost daily to the flea market in Jaffa and makes discoveries that enrich Levanoni's work.

With the blessings of the Council for Restoration and Preservation of Historic Sites in Israel, which also provided a tractor to help with the earthworks, Levanoni and Mish arrived at the Tzemach site Sunday to watch as a professional surveyor made measurements and the tractor started digging. Slowly the rock wall of the turntable was uncovered. Then the metal wheel on which the turntable was set was discovered, and then

more metal, which Mish says was used to shovel the coal for the steam engine, and a metal stake used to fix the track in place. Levanoni was very excited: "This is a real discovery."

The Valley Train may have run for only 43 years, but the line from Haifa to Afula, Beit She'an and Tzemach is an integral part of the story of Zionist settlement in the northern valleys. "It was the main means of transportation, and sometimes the only one," says Levanoni. "You need to understand, they built this impressive transportation enterprise with hoes. They didn't have tractors like we have today."

The turntable is a round platform with railroad tracks, encircled by a round structure of basalt stones. When the locomotive arrived from Haifa in the west, or from the Syrian city of Daraa in the east, the engines were detached from the rest of the train cars and drove onto the turntable. A group of workers would turn it so the locomotive was facing in the opposite direction, toward where it came from, and then the engine was hitched to the cars that came from the opposite direction. There were similar turntable facilities in Haifa, Jaffa and Jerusalem.

"There was a need to switch between engines since the engine that travelled to Daraa needed to be a much stronger locomotive," said Levanoni. "It needed to climb differences in height of 900 metres - from Tzemach, which is 200 meters below sea level, to Daraa, at an altitude of 700 metres. These altitude differences required the construction of 15 bridges along the way, and seven tunnels were dug. This difficult route needed an especially strong locomotive, while the engine that came from Haifa and returned there had an easier route."

Tzemach was also the border between two different provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and after World

War I it was also a border post between the British Mandate in the Land of Israel and the French Mandate in Syria, which made the ability to switch locomotives there even more important.

In June 1946 Palmach fighters



blew up the railway bridge over Yarmuk River, which transformed the station at Tzemach from an international transport hub to a station at the end of the line. At that point, the turntable was used only to turn the locomotive that came from Haifa.

In March 1948 the Valley Train stopped operating completely. Two months later, during the War of Independence, Tzemach was the site of a bloody battle between the Jewish forces of the newly founded state and the Syrian Army, which captured the train stations, as well as the nearby police station, and was stopped only when it reached the gates of nearby Kibbutz Degania.

When the turntable was discovered this week, it was covered with a large amount dirt and garbage from the IDF base that has been on the site for years.

Levanoni held fast to his theory about the turntable's location even though many other history buffs believed it to be located about 50 metres eastward. Levanoni was troubled because the round object thought to be the turntable was lacking a number of essential parts, such as the central axle on which the huge device turned.

Levanoni examined British maps from 1943 and noticed the facility that was widely thought to be the turntable had actually been a huge underground tank for storing heavy fuel oil that was built in 1942. The roof of the oil tank was at ground level and was round, with the same diameter as the turntable.

Near the large tank, a concrete tower was built. Until now it was assumed that it was used as a water tower for refilling the steam engines. But the British map makes it clear that this tank held heavy fuel oil that was pumped from the underground tank.

Until his theory was proved right, he says, "Everyone thought I was dreaming."

In fact, the locomotive change was as much for political as operational reasons, as Samakh (as it was called) was, as mentioned, close to the border between Palestine Railways and the Chemins de Fer du Hedjaz.

Yehudah has added some personal notes:

"After the heavy rains in the 90's, a circle - made of concrete, appeared on the ground, near the British tower - on the east side of the station. All the researchers and amateurs (including me) thought that this was the Turntable.

"The Society for Preservation of Israel Heritage Sites" ("Shimur-Atarim"), dug that circle at the beginning of 2013. Soon it was realized - it couldn't be the Turntable.

In the plan of Samach station 1943, updated to 1947 (Israel Railways Archives), there are depicted two circles: the first

one - 8m north to the British tower - is the 550 ton fuel-oil, in an underground tank (the concrete circle mentioned before), the second - 22m west to the tower - the lost Turntable. On the ground I found a hint - a section of a bow, 1m in length. On 19.1.2014 we dug at the site, together with "Simur-Atarim", and immediately found the Turntable.

The details: a 17m diameter circle of Basalt cut stones; Inside the Basalt circle - 64 rectangular iron plates were connected, (originally, a circular rail was fixed to them and on this used to run the bridge of the Turntable); In the middle, we found the place of the central axis of the Turntable; We found also, parts of the bridge - made of iron and parts of draining-canal made of concrete.

The British Turntable of Jaffa was renewed and everyone can see it at 'Beit HaOsef' near "Ha'Tachana" in Jaffa.

The British Turntable of Jerusalem is not complete.

The Turntable of Haifa - does not exist anymore.

There is only one Turkish Turntable, the one that we exposed now in Samach."

More powerful locos were used on the steep gradients of the Golan and the Hauran by the Ottomans; therefore a turntable was needed to turn them back. In addition, there was a need to change the direction of the locomotives for maintenance in the loco shed. After WW1 there was an additional reason for turning the locomotives: now there were two railway companies - in Syria under the French Mandate and in Palestine under the British Mandate. Everyone knew the Turntable of Samach station, but after the Independence War it was covered and forgotten.

(c). A POSSIBLE RAILWAY FILM FESTIVAL?

From Marc Stegeman: The death of Peter O'Toole led to some musings on railways in films, especially with a Middle East connection. I like movies, especially when they feature trains, but it is not my everyday occupation. The famous Amsterdam film museum EYE wrote on the 4k restoration of this film in Dutch: www.eyefilm.nl/lawrence-of-arabia-4k but also gives a link to:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_of_Arabia_%28film%29#New_restoration.2C_Blu-ray_and_theatrical_release

Anyway, I would be glad to learn what real Baghdad / Hedjaz railway documentary footage would be available eventually. And do any HaRakevet readers know sources for documentary films as mentioned below?

Possibly the Baghdadbahn and Hedjazbahn movies or documentaries could be part of a future international future film event centred around the Ottoman era. This idea was flagged to me by one of the staff members of the film institute in Holland and could possibly be realised in cooperation with a Swiss institute.

Of course, all kind of "Orient Express" type of movies are nice to see, but not of interest for this film event, so I ignore these. So far, I found just a couple of film titles which could be applicable:

The iconographic film: "Lawrence of Arabia" even though, if I remember well, this was partly filmed in Tunisia.

The subject is clearly mentioned in the title: "Die Bagdadbahn". Dokumentary at <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doku-Drama> in 2 Parts of 45 Minuten;

Teil 1: "Aufbruch ins Ungewisse", Teil 2: "Auf gefährlichen Pfaden"; Deutschland, Frankreich, Türkei. 2006, Buch: Chiara Sambuchi. and http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland_May_%28Regisseur%29 Roland May, Regie: Roland May, Produktion: Lavafilm (www.lavafilm.com),

<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/SWR>, <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arte> arte, Erstaussstrahlung: 3. und 6. Januar 2007 in arte, <http://www.daserste.de/bagdadbahn/> Filmseite der <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/ARD> mit Video-Ausschnitten,

and: <http://www.arte.tv/de/Willkommen/Die-Welt-verstehen/Geschichte/Die-Bagdadbahn/1428330.html> Inhaltsangabe von arte.

Same title but much older: "Die Bagdadbahn". Dokumentary and book; http://temporati.de/J%C3%BCrgen_Lodemann.html Jürgen Lodemann; 1987; 60 minutes. Zugfahrt durch unbekannte Türkei. ("Train Journey through Unknown Turkey")

From www.swr.de/eisenbahn-romantik/archiv/-/id=2250046/umiz0c/index.html. I am not sure if "Eisenbahn-Romantik: Mit dem Zug durch die Türkei" by Alexander Schweitzer (43 minutes) would be relevant.

On <http://vidgrids.com/turkish-railways> some rather recent (and short) low-quality films were uploaded about the border railway line near Nusaybin to Syria (Taurus Express / Toros Ekspresi). By the way, also the new Saudi Arabia Railways are staged here.

On www.eisenbahn-im-film.de/eif1.htm I found just one possibly relevant film: "Background to Danger; Spion im Orientexpress". Drama; USA 1942; b/w; Raoul Walsh; 77 minutes. The hero appears to be a executive in the oil business, but is

in reality an American OSS agent, and he travels with the 'Taurus Express' from Baghdad to Ankara. (In the German version from Beirut not Baghdad.) Hunted by Nazi thugs and Russian spies. He tries to prevent that secret German military plans should be revealed that would force the neutral Turkey into the Second World War. The railway scenes were all filmed in a model landscape, similarly to the railway scenes in the film 'Avalanche Express' (, <<http://www.eisenbahn-im-film.de/info/law.htm>>Lawinen-Express“), and in addition film material from British Railways is used.

Another TV film is: "Der Kaiser und der Sultan / Auf den Spuren der Bagdad-Bahn" (from the ARD-Series "Skizzen aus dem Orient"). A film of Dieter Sauter. In the old "Pera Palace" Hotel in Constantinople there are Agatha Christie, Mata Hari and Leo Trotzky. The Guest list of the famous Hotel seems like a "Who's Who" of the ending 19th, and beginning 20th. century. They have all travelled to Constantinople with the 'Orient-Express'. The construction of the line from Paris to Constantinople was the first section of a line, that was built with the support of the German Empire and was intended to traverse the Orient and reach Baghdad. But in 1917, when Kaiser Wilhelm II. visited Istanbul and the Padischa of the Ottoman Empire for the last time, the rails had only reached the Turkish-Syrian border. This section was recently reopened. The line traverses breathtaking landscapes, past ruined settlements of the German construction workers up to the edge of the Syrian-Iraqi desert. Along the line there are Pavilions and Serails, which had been erected for the Kaiser's visit. The Film gives the history of the Baghdad-Bahn and follows its route. (ARD/BR)

The new TCDD Bosphorus railway tunnel documentary was mentioned on www.3sat.de/programm/?viewlong&d=20081101 "Gegen den Strom; Der neue Bosphorus-Tunnel". Film of Wolfram Giese. For Istanbul this is the project of the millennium, and should rescue the city from its traffic thrombosis. The Marmaray-Tunnel is the first railway link between Asia and Europe - a technical masterpiece in one of the most dangerous places in the world, for Istanbul is threatened by earthquakes like no other city in the world. The 1.5km. Tunnel tubes were sunk into the Bosphorus with giant cranes - eleven tubes, each of 30,000 tons. The strong current made the accurate sinking of these tubes into one of the most difficult challenges in tunnel construction. Never before have such tubes laid at a depth of 60 metres, at a depth where there is no visibility; acoustic navigation techniques had to be used. The works were constantly endangered by

passing Supertankers. At the end of 2006 a 150m. Russian tanker collided with one of the floating excavators.

The TCDD-Eisenbahnmuseum in Eskisehir may be able to supply a couple of Ottoman-era documentary films. But I am not sure about the films lurking in the dusty archives of the Railways Headquarters (or Railway Museums, if any) in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. And there might be documentary films in other historic or even private collections too. So, with a little help of my friends, I hope, we might be able to draw up a list of relevant film material. Even if it's just a few minutes, it could be useful. Can anyone please give me some clues about this subject or forward this request to HaRakevet readers? Any hints or tips would be most welcome! Marc Stegeman; mr.m.stegeman@hetnet.nl; +31 (0)20-6827423

(d). THE 8F 2-8-0 IN BEERSHEBA.

There has been some correspondence about the quality of the restoration - some correspondents even wonder whether a return to working order would be feasible! Personally, the Editor considers this to be in the realm of messianic speculation; as well as boiler-work etc. There would be issues of water, of driver training, of fuel, and even the problem of where to run the loco!

Adrian Gunzburg wrote:

"What have they done to the valve gear? It looks like they have fabricated up a bent rod that has taken the place of the return crank and the eccentric rod. This joins onto the expansion link, which is now pushed forward at a peculiar angle. The return crank and eccentric rod are two separate rods, joined with a pin. As the coupled wheel rotates, the return crank also rotates with it and moves the eccentric rod back and forth, which then drives the valve via the Expansion Link. They also have done something odd with the Radius Rod - it looks like they have just made up a piece of metal to fit!!

I know the loco is a cosmetic restoration, but if you can get it technically correct for the same effort, then it would be worth it.

I hope you don't mind me raising this. As you can probably gather by now, I am a bit fussy in these matters. I have studied steam locomotive design and construction for a long time and build my own model locos, so I like to get things correct. I do realise the guys doing the work are not familiar with steam locomotives, which makes what they have done even more amazing!!"

To this Chen answered: "You are correct about the crossheads etc. see photos of the loco at arrival. The drawings are indeed easily (and cheaply!) available,

which has been known to the Municipality beforehand, and they even received offers of help from the sellers in locating replacements for the missing parts (there are several active 8Fs in the UK). So, indeed a shame..."

Adrian's response: "Oh I see! But the crossheads, slidebars and the expansion link and lifting link are still there. Maybe the other missing valve gear rods might be available somewhere in the UK? I believe there is at least one working 8F there. Might be worth inquiring to see if they have any spare parts? A shame that they fabricated look-alike parts but not accurately. I'm sure drawings would be available from the UK."

Chen answered: "Only the coupling rods were available when the locomotive left the UK (perhaps also when it left Turkey) and these are the only original parts."

And Adrian to this: "Shame, I like to have things done correctly, so that future generations can understand how it all worked, but obviously they are not bothered if it is not technically correct. Were some pieces of the motion missing or did they cut them up and weld them together? At least I thought I would raise it with you. Should they ever want to run it again it can always be corrected.

And Chen: "I am fully aware of the mistakes made in the 'restoration' of the locomotive's motion, and have actually tried to convince the people in charge to avoid these BEFOREHAND, however, as it is the Municipality's engine, not the museum's, I couldn't force them to do anything."

(e). OLD NEWSREELS.

Alon Siton has come across the following film in the British Pathé collection (the interesting bit starts at 1:40 minutes). This is just one of several relevant clips in that collection which have surfaced in recent years:

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/jewish-agency-leaders-released/query/palestine+railways>

The film was made in the late 1940s, probably between 1945-1948, but the location is unknown. I believe however this is the derailment of a Kantara - Haifa train near Rehovot. The breakdown crane on the scene is the War Department Ransomes & Rapier 36T crane, pulled by a Palestine Railways Baldwin 4-6-0 (H-Class). The coach is ESR 883, a steel-bodied 3rd class bogie vehicle of diagram 83, the number painted at the left end in Farsi or Hindi numerals.

(f). 1930's PLANS.

From Peter Kraus: From the 20th. January (Jänner) 1933 issue of the newspaper 'Der Jüdischer Arbeiter' (Wien):

"Leben in Palästina. Eisenbahnlinie Ägypten – Palästina. Das ägyptische Verkehrsministerium befaßt sich jetzt mit dem Plan der Erbauung einer Eisenbahn zwischen Ägypten und Palästina, die 240,000 Pfund kosten würde. Die Linie soll in Port Fuad beginnen und an die Linien Kantara – Palästina angeschlossen werden. Ein aus Vertretern der Suez-Kanal-Gesellschaft und des ägyptische Eisenbahn- und Zoll-Departements zusammengesetztes Komitee wird noch im Januar zusammentreten, um die Einzelheiten des Planes auszuarbeiten."

Translation:-

"The Egyptian Transport Ministry is currently involved in planning for the construction of a railway line between Egypt and Palestine, which will cost 240,000 Pounds. The line will begin in Port Fuad and link to the lines Kantara – Palestine. A committee formed of representatives of the Suez Canal Company and the Egyptian Railway and Customs Departments will meet in January in order to work on details of the planning."

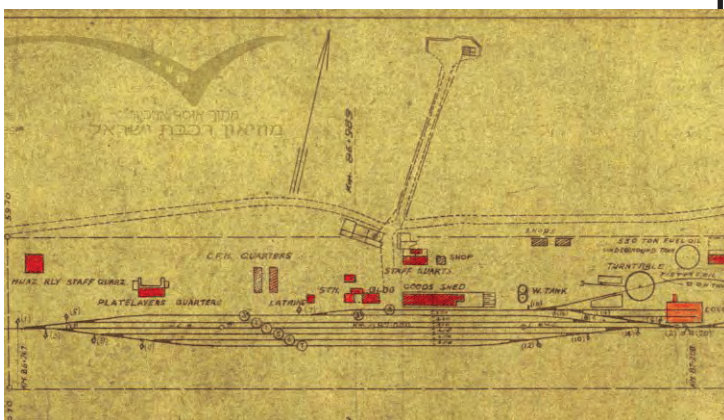
Also from 'Der Jüdische Arbeiter', 10th. März 1933 - :

"April 1933: Eisenbahnlinie Haifa – Bagdad. Arabische Zeitungen teilen auf Grund zuverlässiger Informationen mit, daß im April 1933 mit dem bau der Eisenbahnlinie Haifa – Bagdad definitiv begonnen werden wird. Die Eisenbahnlinie wird nach ihrer Fertigstellung viele Möglichkeiten für Palästina eröffnen, Haifa wird dann das Zentrum des Nahen und Mittleren Ostens werden. Bei den Bauarbeiten werden Tausende Arbeiter Beschäftigung finden. Erbauer der Eisenbahn ist die englische Regierung."

Translation:-

"Arab newspapers report on the basis of reliable information that in April 1933 construction of the railway line Haifa – Baghdad will definitely begin. Once it has been completed this railway line will open up many possibilities for Palestine. Haifa will then become the centre of the Near and Middle East. Thousands of workers will find employment during the construction. The railway will be built by the British Government."

Adrian Gunzburg



Ground plan (part) Samach Station
see page 19

104:10 "TOURISTS TO PALESTINE.

Easter Sunday Expected to See Many More Americans n Jerusalem than Heretofore.

By T. Walter Williams.

It has been estimated by travel experts on the Near East that fully 50 per cent of the American tourists who are going to Egypt this winter will make a trip to Jerusalem after the Nile season is over. East Sunday occurs on April 16, when the climate of Palestine in the higher altitudes is agreeable than it is during the Winter months. The coast line from Beirut to Jaffa is warmer, but the pleasure of travelling there in January and February is somewhat marred by heavy rains.

Jerusalem has passed through a siege and war without being damaged by the invaders or the besieged, for the first time in the history of the city. The British airplanes flew over the city frequently to observe the movements of the Turkish forces, but no bombs were dropped on its historical buildings, by order of General Allenby, the Commander-in-Chief. It was the eighteenth time the place had been captured since the city was built.

Formerly the tourists to Palestine travelled by train from Jaffa to Jerusalem and then went on horseback through the country and slept in tents or in the convents and monasteries when the weather was too wet or cold. The trip from Jerusalem to Nazareth, Sea of Galilee, Damascus and across the Lebanon range of mountains to Baalbec and Beirut occupied thirty days and entailed a good deal of self-sacrifice on the part of the travellers, for them to agree with each other until the end of the journey.

In addition to the Hotel Allenby, outside the walls overlooking the railroad station, there is the Grand New Hotel inside the Jaffa Gate and the French and Russian hospices, where good lodging can be obtained in Jerusalem. There are some Greek restaurants on Hospital Street near the Public Gardens which are clean and serve good food for travellers who are frightfully fond of oil. There are also small clean hotels kept by Palestinians of German descent at Jericho, Nazareth, Haifa, Tiberias by the Sea of Galilee, Mount Carmel and other places where the pious tourists want to stop.

Instead of travelling by Arab steeds with sore backs all day long, the journeys are made in flivvers which bump over huge boulders, climb the rocky sides of the Judean hills or plunge into deep holes at great speed, while the occupants hang onto the sides with the tenacity of despair and try to look interested in the scenery. When the travellers are told by the dragoman that the Prophet Moses looked down on Palestine from the top of the sand mountain by the Dead Sea and then turned back, they are not surprised and express great respect for his judgement.

The main roads leading from Jerusalem to Jericho, to Jaffa and Ramalah, from Haifa to Mount Carmel and Nazareth, and from there to Tiberias, are fairly good when the damages done to them by the heavy Winter rains have been repaired. General Allenby built 200 miles of roads during the campaign in Palestine against the Turks, but the upkeep is very costly. The best material for repairing them used to come from east of the Jordan, which is now known as Transjordan, and is populated by nice Bedouins who spend their time in watching their wives work and in planning midnight raids upon the Zionist camps across the sacred river.

Thanks to the war the high spots in Palestine have been connected up by light railways – one connecting Jerusalem with Egypt – (constructed by British engineers) and the coast line from Jaffa to Beirut and Damascus, constructed by the French to the Syrian frontier. It is well known in the Near East that the 100 miles of railroad across the Sinai desert, from El Arish to El Kantara on the Suez Canal, would never have been constructed if it had not been for the war, as British policy was against helping any power in a march on India. There is nothing on either side of the line except sand – hot, yellowish red sand – as far as the eye can reach.

Halfway across there is a water station which consists of a tank with pipe for the locomotive, one moth-eaten camel of the desert wearing ragged turbans and dilapidated burnouses, two British Tommies and a small brick bungalow, with shed for the animals. It would take a really great artist to depict the look of utter gloom combined with ferocity on the faces of the Tommies as the train dashes past, for very few need to stop for water.

The cars on the Palestine railways are large and airy and have wide seats comfortably furnished. They have a double roof, with space between for ventilation, and meals are served in the dining car. From Jerusalem to El Kantara East the journey is made in the daylight, daily; from Kantara to the Holy City it is made in sleeping cars, and coffee and biscuits are brought to the compartments by Arab servants as the train chugs its way slowly up the steep grade of the hills of Judea. The trains from Haifa and Jaffa join the train from Cairo via El Kantara at Ludd, the junction for Jerusalem. The journey to Damascus is made in twelve hours; Haifa and Jaffa, four to five hours, and from Cairo in seventeen hours.

While the temperature in the lowlands is mild in the spring, Jerusalem is apt to be raw and cold when the sun is not shining, and good woollen wraps are needed, with thick boots in case the streets are muddy. The civil police force is recruited from the young Palestinians and the Zionist immigrants; and all public notices are printed in English, Arabic and Hebrew, which are the only languages recognised officially by the Government.

To the stranger the majority of the natives in and around Jerusalem appear to spend their time carving all kinds of queer things out of olive wood and stringing beads cut from the big mother of pearl shells which are brought across the desert by caravan from the shores of the Red Sea. The ancient city, where more than half of the population live in stone houses like caves underground, has been cleaned up by the efforts of the new civil administration. The people have been taught to collect their garbage and cover it over until called for and to sprinkle the surface of the water in their quaint old cisterns with crude petroleum to keep the mosquitoes from breeding there in the Summer during the malaria season.

The Governor said recently that the plan was so successful last Summer that myriads of mosquitoes, many of them descended from families that bit the Crusaders and even the ancient Romans, had left Solomon's Pools, which supply the city and are nine miles from Jerusalem, and had gone across the Jordan to live among the Beduins.

There are plenty of modern stores outside the walls of Jerusalem where trav-

ellers can buy almost all they may need during their stay in the country. The red and white wines made at the Zionist colony of Richon le-Zion are quite palatable and may be drunk with the water served at the table in the hotel, with imported mineral water or that made locally at the two soda water factories inside the city gates by the Tower of David. The water from Solomon's Pools comes from a spring, as it did in the days of the great Hebrew kings, and is quite good and refreshing."

(from *The New York Times*, 8th. January 1922.)

From a Thomas Cook Guidebook also for 1922: 'Palestine and Syria'. pp. 2f.

Routes. Now that Palestine is connected with Egypt by railway, it is no longer necessary to enter the country by sea and undergo the ordeal of landing at Jaffa. The traveller may journey to Egypt the whole way by sea, or he may use one of the quicker trans-continental routes.

All Sea Route: From its directness, and the benefit to health invariably derived from a voyage of twelve to fourteen days, the all sea route has much to commend it. The principal services are from London, Liverpool and Southampton.

Trans-Continental Routes. If the traveller decide to se one of the trans-continental routes he may embark at Marseilles, Toulon, Genoa, Venice, Naples, Trieste or Brindisi. The sea passage to Egypt from these ports varies from two to five days.

Entering by Sea. There are regular and frequent sailings by numerous lines of steamers from England, Continental and Egyptian ports to Jaffa, Haifa and Beyrout, should the traveller wish to enter Palestine or Syria by sea.

The choice of routes to Egypt and Palestine being almost unlimited, travellers are recommended to apply to Thos. Ccook & Son for full details and the latest information as to fares, dates and hours of sailing.

Methods of Travel. Travel in Palestine has been facilitated very considerably since the Great War by the development of railways and the building of proper high roads.

(a) Railways. There is rapid communication with Egypt, and an efficient railway system connects tthe chief cities of the country. Through trains with dining and sleeping cars leave Kantara East, on the Suez Canal, every weekday for Jerusalem and Haifa. The journey to either place occupies about nine hours. From Lydda Junction the line branches south-east to Jerusalem and north-west to Jaffa. From Tul Keram, on the direct line to Haifa, a branch goes to Nablus (Shechem) and runs north to Afule. From Haifa a line runs through the plain of Esdraelon via Afule and Semakh on the Sea of Galilee to Dera'a, and there links up with the Hedjaz railway, which runs north to Damascus and south via Amman, the capital of Transjordan, to Ma'an, the present terminus and the nearest station to Petra. Damascus is connected by rail with Beyrout, and also with Baalbek by a branch line from Reyak. Other branch lines connect Beersheba with Rafa on the main line to Egypt, and Acre with Haifa.

(b). Motor Transport. Throughout the War and under the British Administration which has succeeded it, the roads of Palestine have been enormously improved, so that motoring is now practicable almost on an equality with European States. Motor cars have revolutionised travel in the Holy land, and they are now used both for long and short tours.

Roads suitable for motoring connect the following places:-

Jerusalem – Bethany – Jericho.

Jerusalem – bethlehem – Solomon's Pools – Hebron – al Dhaheriyehh – Beersheba.

Jerusalem – Ramleh – Lydda – Jaffa.

Jerusalem – Nablus – Nazareth – Tiberias.

Haifa – Nazareth – Tiberias.

Tiiiberias – Safed – El Kuneitra – Damascus.

Damascus – Lebanon – Beyrout.

Tripoli – Beyrout - Sidon – Tyre – Haifa.

(c). Carriages and Donkey. Victorias drawn by two or three horses abreast can be supplied, when this mode of travel is preferred. Donkeys are generally used on short excursions outside the walls of Jerusalem....."

MORE ON THE DR WAGON FOR NETANYA.

The photos show the transport of this wagon from Hombourg in Belgium, whence it was transported via Antwerpen and Ashdod to the Gan LeBanim Park at Netanya (Simcha Ehrlich St.) From Ashdod it was escorted by some fifty motorbikers from two Israeli motor bike clubs! The van now stands on a short section of (actually modern) track in the park. Although the roof has been repaired the sides still show old original paintwork - the remains of a 'B' for Belgian Railways (SNCB/NMBS) and the number '947/601' - presumably some form of internal departmental number. Also markings for tare weight 8.750kg. and internal loading area 21.6sq.m. The four axle-box covers were all different and all German:-

'Krautheim Chemnitz 1940'; 'DWV 1913 G J Jaeger Elberfeld'; 'Wittman 1923 Haspe DWV 1913'; 'W Peyinghaus Vollmarstein 1920'.

From this one assumes the design is standard Deutsche Staatsbahnwagenverband (DWV) type of 1913 (actually most goods wagons built in Germany between 1910 and ca. 1924 were to these set of standardised designs) but individual wagon



works were used for later repairs and applied their own individual trade-mark axlebox covers. Haspe and Vollmarstein are both near Hagen, Elberfeld is now part of Wuppertal. Clearly repaired in Chemnitz in 1940, it must have ended up after 1945 stranded in Belgium. (Photos by Tatjana Ruge of Berlin and Ronny Dotan, who initiated the project.)

