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Edited and Published by Rabbi Dr. Walter Rothschild PhD
Passauer Strasse 4, D-10789 Berlin, Germany
e.mail:Rothschild-Berlin@t-online.de



108:01: Blue sky thinking!

New livery in the national colours
of IR Vossloh Bo-Bo loco No. 731.

(Photo courtesy of Shahaar Wiessmann, IR Public Relations Office.)

EDITORIAL.

How does the world look in March 2015? The Islamic fundamentalist groups that form IS are on the march across parts of Syria and Iraq, there are tensions between Iran and several Arab Gulf states (as well as Israel), unrest in Egypt... There are certainly plenty of people who prefer to kill and destroy rather than to build. There are millions of injured and traumatised and afraid and refugees. At times like these it does not necessarily feel 'right' to concentrate on aspects of a hobby rather than on human misery.

And yet – 'Harakevet' has always attempted to maintain a slight distance, to record events as they happen and also the historical events that are otherwise overlooked or forgotten. Just a brief look back over issues from ten years ago and twenty years ago reveals how certain themes recur with depressing regularity, and how many 'cold' or 'hot' conflicts have raged. Please read with this in mind.

And there are as always elements of progress to report, especially with new lines and stations opening in Israel – which is, as this issue went to press at the end of February, facing a new election. The only problem is finding balance – there are times when we receive a lot of information on a specific country or, as last issue, from Innotrans, lots of glowing optimistic schemes – but at the moment the fact is that there is almost nothing of positive railway interest coming out of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon..... On the other hand, in the last issue we had to omit 'Notes and Comments' completely and so there is a lot that has accumulated under this rubric (and more, recently arrived, which will have to wait until the next issue.) Plus more historical items flow in and await space and opportunity.

A slight apology is also called for – Normally 'Harakevet' likes to cite sources very carefully – we take information and news from wherever we can get it and receive e-mails and letters from many friends, official and unofficial sources, and cannot always get official permission to reproduce texts etc., but the cover picture on 107:01 was taken from the TurkRail chatline and was part of a lengthy discussion about whether the raitour in question had been successful and well-organised or not! (Unfortunately I filed the photo separately from the e-mails and hence did not add some relevant information. The loco is TCDD 56.548 (formerly DR 52.7429) and the tour went near Usak. One person countered criticism of the carriages with photos of how he had personally cleaned and repainted them after they had been standing unused for a while and semi-vandalised, and posted some of these. There is more information under 'Other Middle East Railways'.

The Editor.

\$195 million tender (published on June 2014) for designing, building, and maintenance of tracks and systems in the tunnels and on the bridges particularly electricity, ventilation, fire extinguishers and fire-fighting, control, etc.

For the first time in the Israeli railways, slab tracks will be used in tunnels and on bridges.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "The A1 project is moving ahead rapidly, and we're now entering the last phase of building the infrastructure systems of tracks (slab tracks), electricity, and signaling, while tunnels are completed, bridges almost completed, and the Hauma Station in Jerusalem in almost final stages of construction; thus the infrastructures will be completed in 2017 and the commercial operations at the end of the first quarter of 2018".

see photo on back cover.

108:03: Aerial view of the new A1 Jerusalem line, looking westwards near the Latrun Monastery. (Photo: IR.)

From a press release of 06.02.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.: The A1 fast rail link to Jerusalem has moved one step forward with the announcement of today-05.02.2015- that the group Electra Boegl JV, consisting of Electra Ltd., Electra Infrastructures Hasharon Excavators Ltd., Signon Schweitz AG, and Max Boegl Bauunternehmung GmbH & Co KG, is the winner for the



Orj Lavee

proposed new buildings at Lod and Modi'in stations



108:04

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(i). PROGRESS ON THE NEW JERUSALEM LINE:

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For the first time on the Israeli railways, slab tracks will be used in tunnels and on bridges.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr.

Boaz Zafrir said: "The A1 project is moving ahead rapidly, and we're now entering the last phase of building the infrastructure systems of tracks (slab tracks), electricity, and signalling, while tunnels are completed, bridges almost completed, and the HaClma Station in Jerusalem is in almost the final stages of construction; thus the infrastructures will be completed in 2017 and the commercial operations will commence at the end of the first quarter of 2018."

(ii). A SEARCH FOR NEW HOME-GROWN ENGINEERS.

On 02.12.2014 Israel Railways Ltd., the Governmental Office for Developing the Negev and the Galilee, and the Atidim (Future) Lobby published a joint call for young people to enrol for studies to become mechanical technicians, developing mechanical engineering equipment and tunnelling techniques. Scholarships and other expenses will be paid for the selected

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students.

(iii). BETTER TRANSPORT COORDINATION.

From a press release of 30.12.2014 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

Good news for public transport users: starting on 01.01.2015, 20 new bus lines all over Israel will be introduced coordinated with the railways' timetable as part of the "Continuous Line" project; the initiative of Minister Israel Katz.

The new bus lines' timings are coordinated so that each bus arrives at the railway station several minutes prior to the arriving train and waits until all arriving passengers have left the train; the project is a cooperation between the ministry, the railways and the bus operators: Metropoline, Egged Ta'avura, and Kavim.

The cities: of Ashdod, Zichron-Ya'akov, Kfar-Sava, Ness-Ziona, Petach-Tikva, and Hod-HaSharon, as well as the settlements: Matan, Nirit, Yarchiv, Ma'abarot, Tira, Kalandua, and the industrial zone of Neve-Ne'emman will enjoy the new services.

Minister Katz said: "The project is intended to improve the integration between bus and rail services, as well as the public transport infrastructures; it includes better information for the public, and combined smart cards.

The National Authority for Public Transport Mr. Meir Chen said: "Some of the routes are new; other are existing routes which have been improved and adapted to the rail time table."

The project consists of four main elements: bus services coordinated with the Railways timetable, improving infrastructures to avoid delays of buses arriving at the railway stations, installing canopies for the waiting passengers, and improving the electronic information systems.

(iv). SIGNALLING FAILURE.

On 7.12.2014 Aharon Gazit wrote: "As a result of an electrical failure at the signalling system at Tel-Aviv today, there were many disruptions to rail traffic; the failure was overcome, but some trains were not calling at all stations, while replacement trains were sent to reduce the damage. As if this were not enough, a train running from the south was stuck near Tel-Aviv Ha-Hagana station due to a technical failure. Punctuality is down to 76%!"

(v). TIMETABLE ALTERATION: LOD.

From Israel Railways Ltd. announcements of 03.12.2014 at the website:

From Sunday, 07.12.2014 and further, trains 701, 703 and 705 departing from Haifa Central the 8 at 06:36, 07:36 and 08:36 respectively to Beer-Sheva, will call at Lod at 07:56, 08:56 and 09:56 respectively on Sundays Only; there is no change to calls at the stations of Kiryat-Gat and Beer-Sheva.

(vi). CHANUKAH EXTRAS.

Due to the increased traffic forecast on the Chanukkah (candles festival) holidays between 17.12.2014 and 24.12.2014 (not including Friday and Saturday), there would be additional trains between Haifa and Tel-Aviv as following:

From Haifa Central the 8: at 11:06, 12:06, 13:06 and 14:06; trains to call at Haifa Bat-Galim, Haifa Hof-Ha-Carmel, Tel-Aviv University, and Tel-Aviv Savidor Central.
From Tel-Aviv Savidor Central: at 10:23, 11:23, 12:23 and 13:23; trains to call at Tel-Aviv University, Haifa Hof-Ha-Carmel, Haifa Bat-Galim, and Haifa Central the 8.

(vii). CHANUKAH EXCURSION.

From a press release of 17.12.2014 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

“On Tuesday, 16.12.2014, an event called “Heroes following the Maccabean”, (connected with Hanukkah), which included a challenging road for jeeps carrying sick and disabled children, sitting near the fire and lighting Hanukkah candles.

The event was organized by an organization of First Aid volunteers who brought their own 100 jeeps thus creating an impressive convoy travelling through the Jerusalem mountains.

The railways also joined the event by opening the A1 alignment for the jeeps, thus enabling them to travel near bridge No. 6 (the Israeli longest bridge) near Latrun Monastery and through tunnel No. 1 linking the Ayalon valley (just under the bridge) and Sha’ar Hagay (a canyon).”

Attached herewith the picture of the jeeps convoy near the tunnel, provided by courtesy of Sahar Wiesman - the railways’ spokesman office. (see page 23)

(viii). EILAT LINE PLANNING.

The National Committee for Planning of the Negev has requested from the railways a detailed survey report regarding transportation of hazardous materials, particularly for the planned link to Eilat; the committee members said that the report is highly important due to the fact that trains are running just 25m. from some neighbourhoods of Beer-Sheva, and after serious environmental damage which occurred when spillage of fuel from a fuel truck spread even to the neighbouring country of Jordan.

(ix). HAIFA REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME.

From a press release of 16.12.2014 by the Haifa municipality:

“The National Council for Urban Issues has approved the Finance Ministry, the Building Ministry, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Lands Authority programme for redeveloping the coastal strip section of Haifa and turning it into a “Barcelona-Like” area at a cost of about \$250 Million.

As far as rail is concerned, the historical railway line between Hof-HaCarmel and the eastern part of the downtown will become underground in the cut-and-cover system in order “not to obstruct the coastline and create a continuous view”.

This is part of a major project to revive the Downtown and Bat-Galim areas (western Haifa) which have suffered stagnation through the last 40 years, and as a result of the project will gain thousands of apartments and not less than 43,000 sq.m for business and entertainment.”

(x). BIG PROBLEMS WITH IC3’s ON JERUSALEM LINE.

On the morning of Sunday, 21.12.2014 passenger services ceased between Beit-Shemesh and Jerusalem while services between Beit-Shemesh and Herzliya continued regularly.

It had been believed that a single technical failure on valves of an IC3 Flex-Liner d.m.u. that caused the problem would not disrupt later trains, so for the time being the railways provided bus services as alternatives. But later the truth came out, and the fact that out of the forty-five IC3 multiple-unit fleet only five are serviceable; the drivers refuse to operate even the five remaining trains, claiming that their poor condition endangers their operation.

There are mutual accusations between

the railway employees from one side and the management and Alstom (who won the outsourcing maintenance contract) on the other side.

The employees are backed by the State Comptroller. But for some reasons the sides involved (with perhaps the exception of the drivers) are ignoring the simple fact that due to their lengthy wheelbase these train were never suitable for the sharply-curved Beit-Shemesh - Jerusalem line where a different and much simpler train is needed; the railway management insists on operating these costly trains on the old (though rebuilt) line, claiming that within three years when the A1 fast link will be operational, the old line will then be used for tourism; meanwhile, and for the sake of “unified logistics” and with awareness of frequent wheel cracks, business continues almost as usual!

Aharon added more in relation to the timetable revisions to cope with planned snowfall in January:-

“The question is why only now? As already mentioned, the EUR 6 Million IC3 trains with 160 km/h capability, which are badly needed on other lines, are operated at 50 km/h on a sharply curved line with a maximum of 60 passengers on board on a “loaded train at rush hours”; it has been long ago suggested to operate much cheaper trains on the problematic section,

Works train Accident near Binyamina



Another view of the work train at Binyamina station

while passenger can change at Beit-Shemesh; the section between Beit-Shemesh, Tel-Aviv, and Herzliya enjoys a high demand; maybe one day somebody will think about this!

The low number of available trains is a result of the well-known conflict between the railways' workers' union and the outsourced maintenance winner Alstom Transport; as a result, trains between Beer-Sheva and Dimona now consist of a Euro 4000 loco and a single Bombardier power car driving trailer (due to the air condition needed), all this for an average of 6 passengers per train who managed to complain about the absence of a toilet for the 30 minutes journey!"

Our 'Reporter on the Spot' Sybil Ehrlich wrote on 23rd. January: "When I was in Beit Shemesh station yesterday I noticed a poster saying that from January 3, 2015, there is a new timetable for trains on the Jerusalem line "see details on website or app". This turns out to mean that trains in the early morning and the evening have been given the chop.

Weekday departures from Tel Aviv Merkaz (all trains actually start from Herzliya, but for sake of clarity I'm giving departure times from TA Merkaz) to Jerusalem at 6:44, 7:44, 8:44, 10:44, 12:44, 14:44, 15:44, 16:44, 17:44.

From Jerusalem at 6:17, 7:17, 8:17, 9:17, 11:17, 13:17, 15:17, 16:17, 18:17, 19:17.

The trains that have been withdrawn still operate to and from Beit Shemesh. More fame and importance for Beit Shemesh! And this explains why, in the last few weeks, I have seen trains waiting in Beit Shemesh station when passing in a bus in the late evening, at times when I thought there should have been nothing there!"

(xi). NEAR-DISASTER NEAR BEN-GURION AIRPORT.

On 03.12.2014, passengers on a train approaching Ben-Gurion Airport station at 02:00 could not imagine that they were running towards a near-disaster; the Traffic Controller routed it - by mistake - onto a track that had been dismantled for maintenance purpose; it was only the alertness of other controllers that prevented a disaster, as they radioed the driver to stop immediately; the train stopped 250 m from the site with no casualties or damage; the train then returned to the active track, and as a result there was a delay of 28 minutes. The reason for revealing the incident only later was to keep it in secret in order to avoid panic; however, the Transport Ministry has requested a commission of enquiry in order to avoid such cases on future.

Passenger services between Beit-Shemesh and Jerusalem have not yet resumed; alternative bus services are provided.

(xii). STATION REBUILDING PROJECTS.

Further to the agreement signed recently between the National Land's Authority and Israel Railways Ltd. for marketing and selling the lands around more than 30 railway stations for building of shops and business, the pioneer project is underway at Modi'in Central station, where a business tower with 20,000 sq.m. of offices, 3,000 sq.m. of business, and 400 underground parking places will be built.

Further to this: from a press release of 17.02.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways have activated the process of tracing and recruiting a General Manager for the subsidiary company for the business and commercial development of the various railway sites.

The railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafir said: "The recruitment and activation of the subsidiary company for business and commercial development of the various railway sites' General Manager, is a meaningful step for both the railways and the state; it will revolutionize the concept of the station from the present one, which sees them as stations only, to business centres which will attract businessmen and increase incomes."

Here are two computer generated pictures (See previous page courtesy of IR Spokesman's Office) of stations to become business centres:

One shows the Lod hub; the building with the stripes is the new railway management HQ currently under construction.

One shows Modi'in Central station, of which only the small building in the centre currently exists.

One shows a futuristic railway station at Giliot (south of Herzliya station) to be built near Cinema City and a big nearby mall.

(xiii). SNOW ON THE JERUSALEM LINE: AN ANNUAL SAGA?

The severe storm which was expected on Wednesday, 07.01.2015 was found to be much less hard than anticipated; the railways had prepared the fleet of six Bombardier IC3 Flexi-liner dmus (the only ones serviceable!) to run between Beit-Shemesh and Jerusalem; the section between Beit-Shemesh, Tel-Aviv, and Herzliya was being served by Bombardier double-deck push/pull trains.

An eye-witness report from Sybil Ehrlich: Wednesday January 7:

"Because of the snow in Jerusalem, roads to and from the city were closed, and buses heading towards Jerusalem from other parts of the country terminated at Beit Shemesh, with passengers continuing their journey to Jerusalem by train. I live in Beit Shemesh and work in Jerusalem, but I normally travel by bus, a very easy journey with only a five-minute walk at each end, far more convenient than going by train. But since the road was closed from about

midday, I had no choice but to go home by train. It was announced that trains from Jerusalem terminated at Beit Shemesh; passengers wanting to continue to Tel Aviv and beyond had to change trains in Beit Shemesh. I left work at about 13:30 today (and made my way - in the snow that had started falling - to the Central Bus Station. By that time Highway No. 1 was open only intermittently and intercity buses were not running. I'd already made up my mind that I'd get to Malha station and go home by train.

There was no sign of the promised shuttle service from the central bus station to Malha station, but there was some added excitement caused by a suspicious object in front of the CBS, with police sappers and all. Eventually a 14 bus came. It goes only to the Malha mall, but a bus at the stop is worth ten on the timetable, so I hopped aboard. There were few people about so it was a quick journey. The driver did us all a favour by deviating slightly from his route and stopping just above the railway station. No complaints! By that time it had stopped snowing.

The station wasn't as mobbed as I thought it might be, although there were probably around ten times as many people there at once as there are in total on any other day. Trains were running only to Beit Shemesh (where onward passengers had to change), at xx:17 (the usual timetable but hourly instead of big gaps). I had plenty of time to join the long queue at the ticket window and get on the train. By the time the 15:17 12-coach train left five minutes late it was raining heavily. To my immense surprise we crossed at Bittir, the first time I've ever experienced that! I wondered if we'd cross again at Bar Giora, perhaps they'd squeezed an extra train in, but no, it was instead of, not as well as.

Arrived at Beit Shemesh, platform 3. A double-decker was waiting on platform 2, and of course most passengers simply crossed the platform to board that train. Down the stairs and up on the other side, and then I saw to my immense excitement a THIRD train (IC3) at platform 1! I ran to the end of the platform to get a photo of three trains in Beit Shemesh station. Presumably because Beit Shemesh station is the star of the show today, it was swarming with security people. I got yelled at and pounced on. Haha! I didn't care, I got my photos, and knew I wouldn't be locked up. "No photography!!" Haha, I said, so what's this then? - pulling out the photo guidelines that say photos are permissible. The woman security guard said "You should ask permission first." I said, ahem, I would have but I didn't want to miss the opportunity of photographing three trains in the station; it's OK, everyone knows me here, etc., etc. (Of course by this time the train heading to Tel Aviv had left.) No! NO!!! She took the page with the photo guidelines.

I was escorted to the station manager's office; just my luck (not that I really cared) neither Yossi nor Moshe was there. The duty station manager read the photo guidelines. "Stills, OK, no problem!" he grinned and handed the page back to me. Yes, I said, I know, and would you mind telling all your security guards that?!! I said to the woman security guard that I knew it was OK, and anyway I got the photos I wanted. "That's good!" she said.

Sigh."

By 09.01.2015: "Traffic between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv resumed with the exception of the following trains starting/terminating at Beit-Shemesh instead of Jerusalem Malkha stations:

Train No.502 to Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central will start at 05:59 at Beit-Shemesh instead of 05:17 at Jerusalem Malkha; train No. 532 to Herzliya will start at 20:59 at Beit-Shemesh instead of 20:17 at Jerusalem Malkha; train No. 534 to Herzliya will start at 21:59 at Beit-Shemesh instead of 21:17 at Jerusalem Malkha.

Train No. 501 of 05:44 to Jerusalem from Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central will terminate at Beit-Shemesh at 06:29; the train of 18:29 from Herzliya will terminate at Beit-Shemesh at 19:29; the train of 19:29 from Herzliya will terminate at Beit-Shemesh at 20:29.

Although the snow of 08.09.01.2015 was not as long as in 2014, the old line to Jerusalem has been found vital, and many used the IC3 trains.

; attached are pictures of Jerusalem Malkha station under snow provided by courtesy of Mr. Shahar Wiessman-spokesman office.

But the snow came again in February! :-

Thanks to extraordinary efforts by the railway employees and operating passenger trains to/from Jerusalem between the snow storm of 19-20.02.2015, 10,000 passengers travelled on the line; the railway being the only connection between Jerusalem, Beit-Shemesh, Tel-Aviv, and other parts of Israel while all the roads were closed!

On 19.02.2015 I.R. Issued a press release:- "Due to the stormy weather expected from today – 19.02.2015 at noon, and until Saturday, 21.02.2015 noon, the railways have made all the necessary preparations in order to enable passengers to enjoy the best available services, particularly when the roads to and from Jerusalem may be closed entirely or on and off. (Aharon adds: How absurd it is that this situation recurs almost every winter, and that the old rebuilt line to Jerusalem the future of which is uncertain, particularly after the opening of A1 some time in 2018, is the only way to reach the capital city!)

From this morning the railways have

started deploying technical teams (signalling and other railway technicians) along the whole network of lines; the teams are equipped with all-terrain cars, water pumps, salt to be distributed along the track near Jerusalem, and a variety of engineering equipment; on some of the trains there will be special technicians.

Railway stations, with the emphasis on Jerusalem Malkha, Jerusalem Biblical Zoo and Beit-Shemesh stations, have been reinforced with supporting teams to assist passengers; they are equipped with bottled water, beds, and emergency equipment.

The train services will run as follows:

Today - 19.02.2015:

On 19.02.2015: Between morning and noon there will be additional trains for passengers and soldiers. Between noon and till late at night, there will be trains between Beit-Shemesh and Jerusalem every hour in both directions; these trains will be longer than usual - each with 850 seats (equal to 17 buses); they will operate until midnight. Due to the need to use staff and stock for these additional trains, the trains between HaRishonim station at Rishon-Le-Zion and Lod, as well as between Beer-Sheva and Dimona are cancelled and alternative bus services will be provided. During the night, the railway teams will keep the track to Jerusalem free of snow.

Friday, 20.02.2015:

The special trains between Beit-Shemesh and Jerusalem will continue operating as on 19.02.2015. According to demand, the train will operate on the "Fill-up and go" principle until Friday afternoon 17:00. The services between Harishonim station at Rishon-Le-Zion and Lod, will operate regularly."

Aharon added next day: "That was yesterday; currently, as predicted, both of the main roads to/from Jerusalem are opened/closed on and off; thus, the only convenient way to/from Jerusalem is by rail!

The LRV, however, did not operate this morning; public transport services were provided by Egged buses equipped with chains to/from Malkha station."

(xiv). 2014 STATISTICS.

From a press release of 01.02.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

The railways presented a summary of 2014 with positive results; a sequential tendency over the last three 3 years.

Passenger traffic rose from 45.1 Million in 2013 to 48.5 Million in 2014 – 7.5% up.

The new revolutionary timetable introduced in mid-June 2014 included the addition of dozens of trains and brought a daily record in passenger traffic - 196,000; this is a remarkable achievement despite the sharp decline during July and August when the "Solid Rock" military operation at the Gaza Strip took place and trains on the Ashkelon - Sderot, as well as Askelon - Ashdod lines did not operate at all or only

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partially.

Traffic on the Ashkelon - Tel-Aviv line grew by 21%, and on Hod-HaSharon – Kfar-Sava - Tel-Aviv by 15%.

Passengers' satisfaction grew from 60% in 2012 to 73% in 2013 and to 78% in 2014.

Punctuality improved from an annual average of 87% in 2011, to 90% in 2012, 93% in 2013 to 95% in 2014.

The railways carried 232,605 passengers during 2014 on 54 special trains, additional services to special events like football games, shows, etc. compared with 32 such trains in 2013; this added an income of \$1.23 Million.

Freight haulage grew from 6.7 Million tons in 2013 to 7.5 Million tons in 2014 – a rise of 12%; revenues grew from \$37 Million in 2013 to \$43 Million in 2014; up by 15%.

The improvement in freight haulage is a result of the following activities: maximizing track time utilization and optimizing wagon turn round; increasing speed from 60 km/h to 80 km/h.; traffic management, schedule management, and on-time departures. Punctuality rose from 44% in 2013 to 81% in 2014, defined as per destinations and measurements, raising reliability from 68% in 2013 to 82% in 2014; and collaboration with end customers such as shipping companies.

2014 was characterized by an emphasis on infrastructures which include: quick progress on the Sderot - Beer-Sheva section of the Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line; upgrading the Kiryat-Gat - Ashkelon freight line; preparations towards construction of a new passenger station at Netanya Sapir industrial and business zone; completion of the \$329 Million Beer-Sheva depot with an area of 25,000 sq. m. to serve both electrical and diesel trains - this is the biggest and most modern one in the Middle East; and upgrading six existing passenger stations.

Regarding Electrification, on December 2014 the government finally approved the project, the railways started preparing the specifications of the tender for emus, and during the last months, the railways in collaboration with Bombardier Transportation are converting the whole push/pull fleet to electric traction; it is to last 4 years while in the meantime until the full network conversion to electric traction (expected on 2020), both diesel and electric trains will be operated in parallel.

During 2014, the railways received from Bombardier 72 new double-deck push/pull cars which added 9,000 seats as well as 12 new Vossloh Euro 3200 diesel locomotives.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafir said: "The results of 2014 show that a balanced management with

efforts to improve services bring more satisfied passengers and freight customers; the railways still face challenges like completion and starting operation of the A1, as well as reaching the goal of operating 860 trains daily and an annual traffic of 70 million passengers."

(xv). EXCELLENT I.R. GROWTH RESULTS.

From a press release of 06.01.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

According to the railways' summary regarding the activities results over the 3rd quarter of 2014, the tendency of growth is continuing since 2012; the first 9 months of the year show a profit of \$36.43 M (NIS 143.758), which are 9% of the \$406 m cycle.

During the 3rd quarter of 2014, passenger traffic reached 35.46 Million compared with 32.8 Million in the same quarter in 2013 - up by 8.1%; this is a remarkable achievement, considering the "Solid Rock" military operation in Gaza, which caused a serious reduction in passenger traffic during July!

The accumulated growth in incomes from passenger services during the 3rd quarter (Q3) of 2014 reached \$10.97 M - 9% up: \$132.27 M in Q1-Q3 of 2013 as against \$121.40 M Q1-Q3 of 2014.

The accumulated growth in incomes from freight services during the 3rd quarter (Q3) of 2014 reached \$5.83 M - up by 22%; \$32.69 M in Q1-Q3 of 2014 as against \$26.86 M Q1-Q3 of 2013. During December 2014, the railways reached the highest monthly record ever achieved in passenger traffic: 4.7 Million!

The company intends to issue bonds at up to \$507 Million based on financial reports as for 30.09.2014; the current prospectus is for \$ 254 M.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "Thinking business, improving efficiency, and significant investments in service, bring a rise in passenger and freight traffic as well as in profit; as a company committed to the passenger, the profit will be invested in further service improvements".

The railways are heavily investing in increasing freight traffic and as an integral part of this, upgrading the freight cars fleet and increasing co-operations with other parties involved.

In addition, and in order to encourage container haulage between the ports of Haifa and Ashdod, a special reduction of 15% is given to those using the service.

The following improvements achieved in 2014 over 2013 are:

Operating of more than 90% of scheduled trains compared with an average of 70%. Punctuality of 85% regarding arrival at destination compared with 45%.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr.

Boaz Zafrir said: "The freight haulage market has a huge potential and we're doing all we can to improve our customers' services".

(xvi). ISO 9001 CERTIFICATION.

From a Press Release of 15.01.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

In a modest ceremony which took place on 15.01.2015 the Railways received for the first time the ISO 9001 certification from the Israeli Standards Institute; participants were a small number of the railway management, safety department' trustees, the Israeli Standards Institute General Manager and the authorizing team, and Prof. Abraham Ofec-the manager of the company which monitored the certification process.

The Israeli Standards Institute General Manager Mr. Danny Goldstein said: "I congratulate the railways for their achievement presented for us; the railways' management commitment to fulfill the ISO 9000 requirements will promise the further development of the company, while strengthening the quality of services provided to the customers as is done in the worlds' advanced railway systems."

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "While the certification we received today proves the deep efforts carried out during last years to achieve improvements, it encourages us to further continue with this tendency to provide even much better services to the variety of our customers on future."

(xvii). E.T.C.S. COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS AGREED.

An important agreement was reached on 21.01.2015, between the budgetary departments of the Ministries of Finance and Defence to clear two communication frequencies and channels in favor of the railways' ETCS to be installed in the near future. The cost of alternative channels would have been about \$56 Million.

(xviii). WORKS TRAIN DERAILMENT NEAR BINYAMINA.

On 18.01.2015 a freight car of a work train derailed near the station of Binyamina at 04:30, thus blocking one of the tracks. As a result, there was a chaos all the day, even after the track was cleared; punctuality was down to 63% at 09:00, up to only 78% in the evening but returned the next day to around 96%.

The main passenger complaints concerned not being informed in time, although there was sufficient time to make announcements.

Some days later, secret testimony from a railway employee revealed that the reason was a wedge put at the end wheels of the last car to prevent it moving while parking overnight; the track workers just forgot

to remove it when the train was pushed; hence the derailment and the chaos thereafter! The railway's response was: "Lessons have been learned"; however, they claim that maintenance works at the station area had nothing to do with the derailment.

(xix). WORKS AT MODI'IN.

On 25.01.2015 the railways announced that due to maintenance works to be carried out at Modi'in Central station during the night between Monday, 26.01.2015 and Tuesday, 27.01.2015, the last train No. 135 from Nahariya regularly terminating at 00:28 at Modi'in Central station, would instead terminate at Modi'in Outskirts at 00:20.

(xx). ATTEMPTED STRIKE.

The railway employees tried to announce on a strike at the Lod training centre, claiming that the management is increasing work without increasing manpower, which forces the same drivers to operate 450 trains daily compared with 300 as was the case prior to the introduction of the new timetable in June 2014; they claim that drivers are becoming much more tired and it reduces safety.

However, and unexpectedly, the General Labour Union rejected their threat, claiming that the railways are recruiting new drivers and it is only a matter of time before they will complete training; they have been commanded to work as usual.

(xxi). STRIKE.

On 06.02.2015 the railways announced that the employees at the Haifa Kishon depot had called a strike as a protest against outsourcing of IC3 maintenance and the upgrading work on older GM-EMD locos; this might cause cancellation of 13 passenger trains on Sunday, 08.02.2015.

(xxii). LINE TO NETIVOT OPENED.

On Sunday, 15.02.2015 the section Sderot - Netivot on the Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line was opened; From a press release by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"The line Sderot - Netivot and the station of Netivot were opened this morning with the participation of Transport Minister Israel Katz, the Ministry's General Manager Mr. Uzi Yitzhaki, Israel General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir, and the mayor of Netivot Mr. Yekhiel Zohar. The cost of the station was \$15 Million. It should be mentioned that due to the coming elections, the station was opened without an official ceremony.

All the participants said that the line and station are of great importance to the city and its surroundings and will bring an economic boom; they mentioned the success of Sderot station opened a year ago, which was operated even through the "Solid Rock" military operation in the Gaza strip

for as long as the passengers were not in danger.

The people of Netivot will enjoy free travel for the next three months, as was the case with the Jerusalem LRV, the Haifa BRT-Metronit bus services, and the rail services from Sderot, in order to let the public get used to the new service.

There are be two trains/hour in each direction at rush hours; this has brought some amendments to the timetable. Ashkelon is reached in 22 minutes, Rishon-Le-Zion West in 55 minutes, and Tel-Aviv HaHaganah in 65 minutes

(xxiii). PROGRESS ON THE VALLEY LINE.

On 12.02.2015 it was announced that laying of 6 km of double track (out of 60) on the Valley Line (the former Hedjaz Jezreel Valley branch) between Afula and Beit-Shean, as well as 3 km near Kfar-Yehoshua (midway between Haifa and Afula) have been completed; work is continuing at full tempo along the whole line.

(xxiv). IR BONDS ISSUE: PROSPECTUS PUBLISHED.

On 26th. February 2015 a draft Prospectus Announcement was issued by the Spokesperson's & Information Division:

"An Israel Railways Ltd. Company prospectus was published this evening in preparation for a NIS 1 Billion bonds issue, based on the September 2014 reports; the offering is expected to be launched in the course of March 2015. The issue is pursuant to the Israel Railways development and operation framework agreement signed in June 2014, the money raised being earmarked for investment in rail infrastructures development. Israel Railways is pioneering the issue of bonds by government corporations in the infrastructure and transport branch.

Also published today was the credit rating of Israel Railways and the bond series on offer, granted a high score reflecting the company's ability to meet its commitments, and such as to categorise the railway bonds as a low-risk investment.

Midroog Ltd. Rating: Aa1 Stable.-

Standad & Poor Maalot rating: iAA+/Stable.

The average duration of the bonds is 3.6 and repayment is expected by 2020.

The company's financial reports as of 30th. September 2014 included the following points:

- The company's equity capital amounts to NIS 708 Million

- Net profits totalled NIS 1.508 Million.

- Among other things, the net profits took into account one-off revenues totalling 1.362 M.; If these are discounted, the net profits for the period amounted to NIS 146 Million.

The company will proceed with the marketing of the bonds offering to potential investors starting from next week."

108:05

TENDERS.

A. I.R. TENDERS.

(i). RFI: Retrofit of Israel Railways Ltd. D/D cars. -This is a six-page document concerning 'Management and Inspection Companies for the ISR Double Deck Rolling Stock retrofit project'; this means retrofitting for service on electrified tracks – and is "currently expected to include 294 coaches". Expected duration is 48 months, beginning May 2015, and the intention is to find a company that will oversee the company that wins the actual tender for the work, which includes making suitable for 160km/h operation with magnetic track brake, modifications to the body and electro-pneumatic brake to permit use in tunnels up to 12km long, the passenger alarm system and upgrade of driver's desk and diagnostic systems, smoke detection systems and control cabling.

(ii). Tender No. 21424: Providing services for survey, tests, design of rebuilding and new building of Bridges and engineering structures. The intention is to select up to 4 winning bidders. Latest date for submission of proposals: 16.12.2014.

(iii). Tender No. 11426: Supply, installation, and maintenance of Kitchen Equipment for the railways' Headquarters (under construction) at Lod station. The contract for the equipment is for 12 months; the equipment is to be supplied within 3 months from receiving the order; the guarantee is for 24 months from the first day of operating. The contract for maintenance (including preventing maintenance) is for 36 months from the end of guarantee with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 29.12.2014.

(iv). Tender No. 11424: A frame agreement for Supply of Diesel Fuel and Kerosene to all the railways' refuelling points. The contract is for 24 months with optional extending of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 05.01.2015.

(v). Tender No. 21418: Constructing a building for track workers at Lod railway complex; Latest date for submission of proposals postponed to 24.12.2014.

(vi). Tender No. 21415: Providing Measuring Services for preparing a plan of Land Registration: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 06.01.2015.

(vii). Tender No. 21425: Linking the Valley Railway line (the historical Hedjaz line) with the Haifa-Nahariya line near Paz bridge. Works include: earthworks, structures, bridges, and drainage. Latest date for submission of proposals: 25.12.2014.

(viii). Tender No. 21430: Improving Accessibility at Haifa Bat-Galim station. Latest date for submission of proposals: 29.12.2014.

(ix). Tender No. 21248: Enlarging the freight terminal at Hadera West station: Works include: building a drainage system and a fence linked to the railways' security system. The implementation time is 7 months with guarantee time of 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 05.02.2015.

(x). Tender No. 11322: Consultancy, Guide, and follow-up of assimilating the Service Concept on the railways: The requirements include: ability to perform On the Job Training ("OJT") procedure to different managers/employees; personal consulting for 5 managers responsible on services; performing at least 10 courses for managers/employees dealing with services; creating SLA guided service work procedures. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to optional additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 02.02.2015.

(xi). Tender No. 11416: RFQ for providing rebuilding services for Electric Motors, Alternators, and Coils as used on railways: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to optional additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 05.02.2015.

(xii). R.F.I. for initiatives and solutions for building devices/structures for creating Storage areas and Stores at railway stations: The requirements are: solutions that can be implemented in a short time; the statutory licensing must be considered; information about the time needed for building the devices/structures and the costs for building and maintaining; information about existing and proved similar solutions. Latest date for submission of proposals: 15.02.2015.

(xiii). Tender No. 11409: Lifting devices for disabled passengers at stations. Latest date for submission of proposals postponed from 25.12.2014 to 22.01.2015.

(xiv). Tender No. MS/RC/2014/16: Permission to install and operate Cash Drawing and invoice paying machines at railway stations: The contract is for 60 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 05.02.2015. (See below).

(xv). Tender No. 11321: A frame agreement for producing Entertainment Shows and events for the railways' employees: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 60 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 18.01.2015.

(xvi). Tender No. 21427: RFI for design, installation, and operation of an Air Pollution Prevention System at Tel-Aviv Ha-Shalom station as per "Clean Air Law 2008" and environmental clean air regulations; the project is to be implemented in the DBOT (Design,

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Build, Operation, Transfer) system: The contract is for 58 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 26.02.2015. (It should be mentioned that also Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central and HaHagana stations (and to a less extent the University station) are suffering from air pollution and noise caused by the nearby Ayalon highway, and if successful, such systems maybe installed there too.)

More details of Tender No. 21427: RFI for improving clean air standards at Tel-Aviv Ha-Shalom station: Works include: building and operation of air-cleaning and smoke-prevention systems as well as evacuation arrangements in case of a fire. The railways intend to build a western acoustic wall to isolate and insulate the platforms from the nearby Ayalon highway noise and air pollution. The implementation times are as following: designing: 4 months; implementation: 10 months after the design. The service is to be provided for 48 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 26.02.2015. The following local bidders have shown interest: Chemitron Technologies Ltd., Electra Ltd., Ventilation and Engineering Ltd., and A.B.F.- Chemical & Ventilation Engineering Ltd.

(xvii). Tender No. 21428: Completion of a northern wall at the Beer-Sheva depot: Latest date for submission of proposals: 24.02.2015.

(xviii). Tender No. MS/RC/2015/1: Operating Taxi services to/from Herzliya passenger railway station. The contract is for 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 19.02.2015.

(xix). Tender No. 11325: Providing 'BTL' - Below the Line services: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 60 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 23.02.2015.

(xx). Tender No 41405. For the Manufacture and Supply of Underfloor Wheel Lathe. Submissions by 19th. April. The Bidder must be the manufacturer and Supplier of the lathe, and must have manufactured and supplied at least five such lathes suitable for re-profiling of wheels and brake discs of rolling stock since 2010.

(xxi). RFI for Test benches for brake components with automatic testing procedure of Air Brake Valves. Responses by 02.03.2015. The system shall be used to inspect and detect any leakage of air as a result of a defect and/or malfunction. For use with Single-deck passenger coaches.

B. TENDERS DELAYED.

(i) & (ii). Tenders No. 41404: For the Exterior Vinyl Wrapping of Israel Railways Ltd.'s Rolling stock and HN/RC/01/13: Supply of Hand Pushed Trolley equipped with eddy current inspection system suitable for rail

head checking defects detection - are cancelled.

(iii). Tender No. MS/RC/2014/16: Installation and operation of cash machines at railway stations - has been put on hold.

(iv). Tender No. 11416: Providing rebuilding and upgrading services for electrical motors, alternators, and coils: Due to the request of a large number of bidders, the latest date for submission of proposals has been postponed from 05.02.2015 to 19.02.2015.

C. TENDERS AWARDED.

(i). The winners for Tender No. 11410: Supply of Printed Material:

1. Hahavezelet Print (1972) Ltd.

2. C-Copy (1986) Ltd.

(ii). The winners for Tender No. 3412: Supply of work stations (computers and screens) and laptops are:

1. Harel Information Technologies Ltd. (fixed LENOVO computers and laptops) - worth \$220,000 annually.

2. Dor-Com Computers Ltd. (HP 20" and 24" screens) -worth \$41,000 annually.

3. One-Combined Systems Ltd. (HP laptops) - worth \$65,000 annually.

4. The railways have announced that the Israeli company Y. Lehrer (Engineering) Ltd. won the \$4.43 Million tender No. 21413 for upgrading Binyamina and Haifa Hof-Ha-Carmel stations.

The construction company Shikun-u-Binuy Solel Bone Infrastructures Ltd. won the \$6.7M million tender No. 21409 for building a road bridge over railway tracks in Beer-Sheva.

(iii). The company Pro-S.I.A. Engineering, Construction, and Infrastructures Ltd. won Tender No. 21407 for providing services of management planning, implementation management, and management of roads' maintenance as well as level crossings under the railways' responsibility in the Southern region; the company Yoram Gadish Engineering Company Ltd., won the same tender for the Northern region.

(iv). Tender No. 11409: RFQ for purchasing and maintaining of Lifting Devices for Disabled Passengers:

The following bidders have been selected for the best and final round:

Ta'amal Mizra Electra;

Kfir Elevators Services.

Sadan I.T.S. Ltd.

Ambar Forum.

Decision will take place on 08.01.2015.

(v). Electrification:

From a press release of 17.02.2015 by Transport Ministry and Israel Railways Ltd.:

The best and final candidates for electrification tender No. EL/PQ/01/12 who passed the PK are:

Alstom, CRPM, Elecnor, SEMI, and Siemens.

The winner is to be selected soon.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafir said: "The railways' electrifica-

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tion is by no doubt one of the biggest and most significant technological and infrastructural programmes ever carried out in Israeli rail history; it will entirely change the way we function, and will double the number of customers; it is now moving ahead rapidly to be implemented already on the A1 fast link to Jerusalem."

(vi). IR Tender No. 51402 for the Supply of Electric Locomotives – Notice No. 7, dated 20.11.2014:-

[Quoted in extenso to indicate the kind of wording used!] "It being clarified that unless otherwise explicitly stated herein, the Tender Documents remain unchanged and fully binding..... ISR is still in the process of reviewing requests and questions submitted by Participants with respect to other provisions of the Tender Documents, which are not addressed in this Notice. ISR will issue an additional Notice to Participants with respect thereto, which will include marked amended Tender Documents reflecting the changes to the Tender Documents specified in all notices to Participants issued by ISR until then.

1. Following the Bidders Meeting conducted on November 12, 2014, and with respect to the questions raised concerning the alternative solutions as specified in Section 0 in Volume B, ISR would like to clarify that prior to the Submission Date, ISR shall not examine the compliance of Participants' Technical Proposal with the requirements set forth in the Technical Specification. Such compliance will only be examined following the submission of proposals.

Nevertheless, at this stage, as a part of their requests for clarifications, Participants may request to clarify whether certain technical solutions, with respect to specific clauses within the Technical Specification, can be accepted by ISR.

The deadline for submitting requests for Clarifications to ISR as per Section 11.2 of the Instructions to Bidders is postponed to November 27th. 2014." There have followed further Notices 8 and 9.

Netivot and Ofakim stations under construction, in late 2014/early 2015.



Aerial pictures of stations on the Ashkelon-Beer-Sheva line; Netivot and Ofakim; courtesy: Israel Railways Ltd.

LIGHT RAIL.

A. TEL AVIV.

(i). LRV BIDS.

From 'R.G.I.' August 2014 p. 19: "Stadler, CNR, CAF, Alstom and Vossloh have submitted bids to supply 90 light rail vehicles to Tel Aviv from 2017, with an option for 30 more."

(ii). REQUEST FOR INFORMATION.

The Tel Aviv Metropolitan Mass Transit System issued in November a lengthy 'Request for Information' No. 0127/2014. This gives large amounts of technical information and technical jargon and various disclaimers that no-one is committed to anything. "NTA is an Israeli Government-owned company in charge of promoting the construction and implementation of a mass transit network for the Tel-Aviv Metropolitan area. The lines of the mass transit system have been included in an official planning document, the National Outline Plan (NOP), referred to locally as TAMA 23/A/4. This plan outlines an integrated network that includes eight lines comprised of five Light Rail Transit (LRT) lines and three Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines. The LRT lines are currently in varying stages of statutory approvals, Procurement and design processes.

The LRT line at the most advanced stage is known as the Red Line. The Red Line alignment extends from Bat Yam to Petah Tikva via Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan and Bnei Brak and is one of the most heavily used traffic corridors in the Tel Aviv Metropolitan area. In addition, the population density along the corridor is one of the highest in the metropolitan area,

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to gather information to assist NTA in defining the scope of work in relation to the provision of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) service, initially for the Red Line but potentially also for extensions of the Red Line and/or for other LRT lines in the network.

NTA is inviting urban passenger transport operators and maintenance organisations to participate in this information gathering exercise aimed at informing the decision on appropriate contractual and commercial structure for these services....

4.1. Red Line Alignment.

The Red Line has a total length of approximately 23km. It comprises at-grade sections at both ends and a central underground section. The southern at-grade section is 7.5km long, It includes 16 stops and approximately 33 signaled intersections. The line starts at the southern boundary of Bat Yam, proceeds northward through central Bat Yam and then continues along Jerusalem Boulevard in southern Tel Aviv. At Yafo Manshia, the alignment enters the underground section with Elifelet as the last at-grade stop (already in a shallow cut.)

The underground section is 11.5km long, It includes 10 stations with a pocket track south of Allenby, which can be used as a reversing facility. Continuing northward from Allenby, there is a statio approximately every kilometre until Arlosoroff Station. From there, the Red Line turns eastward and continues through the municipalities of Ramat Gan and Bnei Brak where it has a fully underground, grade-separated split.

The main line exits the tunnel just west of Shenkar stop and continues to the eastern at-grade section to Petach-Tikva. This at-grade section is about 4km long and includes 7 stops, with approximately 11 signaled intersections. There is a segregated right of way along Jabotinsky and Orlov Streets and the line continues to the terminus at Petach Tikva Central Bus Station.

A branch line diverts in the underground section in the northern direction to Em Hamoshavot Station and then exits the tunnel and continues to the depot and a terminus at Kiryat Aryeh.

An optional southern extension to Moshe Dayan in the city of Rishon Lezion would add another 2.5km, 3 intermediate stops and a key interchange point for connection with Israel Railways services and other LRT routes.

The Red Line will be double track throughout and will be designed for 1500 Volts DC to be supplied from a catenary system for both at-grade and underground sections. All stations will be capable of being converted to public shelters for use in emergency situations. Routinely a range of security measures will be in place to control public access to underground stations, at-grade stops and tunnels.....

4.2 Operations.

The Red Line will deliver fast, efficient, comfortable and frequent services to the highest possible level of reliability. In the tunnel section, the systems will be designed to be capable of supporting a headway of 90 seconds, on the at-grade sections, traffic junc-

tions will be designed to accommodate LRT priority.

On the at-grade sections, light rail vehicles (LRV) will be driven on line of sight principles and in the underground section, Automatic Train Operation (ATO) is envisaged, However, safety supervision will remain with the driver and therefore a driver must be present in the cab at all times. All underground stations will have platform edge doors synchronized with the vehicle door system. Door closing and dispatch will be the driver's responsibility. The transition from one operating mode to the other will take place at the at-grade stops closest to the tunnel portals.

A fully-equipped depot facilities with sufficient stabling for the whole Red Line fleet will be built at Kiryat Aryeh.

The primary Operations Control Centre (OCC) for the LRT network will be in a new purpose-built complex, known as the TMACC (Tel Aviv Metropolitan Area Control Centre) to be constructed close to Arlosoroff Station. This state-of-the-art facility will also accommodate the Traffic Management Control Centre, the BRT Control Centre and representatives of other transport operators as well as a crisis room for use by emergency services and Government agencies in the event of a major incident requiring an integrated, multi-agency approach.

The depot at Kiryat Aryeh will house a Stand-by Control Centre (SCC) with full functionality along with a Depot Control Centre (DCC) for management of LRV movements within the depot site, The depot will also accommodate a sophisticated training facility with simulation equipment to aid in the training of control centre operators and LRV drivers.

The transition from construction to revenue service will be in phases. NTA expects that the south section from Bat Yam to the Elifelet portal area will be the first section to start operating passenger services. To facilitate this, it may be necessary for a temporary depot facility (including temporary control centre) to be provided at the southern terminus.....

4.3. Rolling Stock.

The initial rolling stock fleet with consist of 90 vehicles. These will be low-floor, 2.65m wide and up to 37.5m long. Most of the fleet will have a driver's cab at one end and a semi-permanent coupling at the other end in order to create a double-unit, bi-directional trainset with a maximum length of 75m. Most of the time, trains will run in this configuration. However, some vehicles in the fleet will have two driving cabs in order to be able to deploy single bi-directional LRV's at times of lower passenger demand.

The LRV shall have the ability to operate in ATO mode as is foreseen in the underground sections and under driver control

in the at-grade sections.

The LRV fleet is being procured in a separate procurement package, The rolling stock supplier is also being asked to provide fleet maintenance services for a period of sixteen years following the acceptance of the last of the 90 vehicles, with a possible contract extension for a further sixteen years. The scope of these maintenance services will include, inter alia, routine inspections, preventive and corrective maintenance and intensive overhauls.

The intention is that the responsibility for the management, inspection and oversight of the rolling stock maintenance contract will be assigned to the O&M contractor ('the Operator'). In consideration of such services, the Operator will be entitled to a fee in an amount to be determined by NTA.....

It should be noted that the contract language for the project is English but the language principally used for day to day operations and maintenance activities will be Hebrew.....

4.5.1. Capacity Requirements and anticipated Passenger demand.

The Operator will be obliged to provide revenue services that offer sufficient passenger carrying capacity to meet the ridership demand whilst also meeting the service quality criteria to be established by NTA.

The anticipated AM peak hour passenger demand for the Red Line in year 2030 is as follows: [There follows a graph showing between 2000 at Bat Yam to over 10,000 at Bialik.]

4.5.2. Passenger Service Operating Hours.

Subject to amendments of the times set forth in the table, it is anticipated that the first service trans from each of the termini will be no later than 05:30 hours each weekday and that the last service trains will depart each of the termini no earlier than midnight. No services will run on Shabbat (sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday). Service provision requirements for religious holidays shall be as notified by NTA. (This is defined then as Fridays and holiday eves – 05.30 to 1 hour before commencement of Shabbat; and on Saturdays starting 1 hour after end of Shabbat, to midnight.)

4.5.3. Service Patterns and Frequencies.

Once the full Red Line is in operation, the intention is that services will operate from Bat Yam to Petach Tikva and from Al-eleny to Kiryat Aryeh.

The service frequency on the common sections of route will be approximately 2.5 minutes at peak times and no less than 10 minutes in the off-peak periods. The sys-

tem will be designed to support operating service headways of 90 seconds in the tunnel section and 3 minutes on the at-grade sections. However, service patterns and frequencies will be subject to change in accordance with changes in demand and phased implementation as the network demands..... All timetables proposed by the Operator will be subject to approval by NTA....."

The document continues with technical details of requirements and submissions.

(iii). TENDERING DISPUTE.

In early February 2015 the Finance Ministry directed NTA (project management) to put all tenders on hold, due to inaccurate calculations which may double the overall project's cost; in includes also the rolling stock tender. The Transport Ministry immediately announced that the Finance Ministry is not authorized to intervene.

However, a press release of by the Transport Ministry of 08.02.2015 stated: "After a meeting between the Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz, the Finance Ministry's Accountant General Mrs. Michal Abadi-Boyanjo, and the Finance Ministry's Budgets Manager Mr. Amir Levi, it has been decided that the project will continue as planned and not be put on hold; the costs will, however, be re-checked."

(iv). NTA Tender 0016/2014: For the Construction of Carlebach Interchange Station.



".... As part of the project, NTA is in charge of the implementation of the 'Red Line' from Bat Yam through Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Bnei Brak to Petah Tikva, over a length of 23km., approximately 11km. of which is underground.

NTA hereby invites local and foreign entities to participate in a public tender for the selection of a qualified contractor for the construction of the Carlebach Interchange

Station including a vehicle underpass and all other works detailed in the Tender Documents.

General Description: Carlebach Station is a three-level underground station located beneath a major urban street in the municipality of Tel Aviv that will be the interchange station between the Red Line and the future Green Line. The main structure is approx. 250m. long, 24m. wide and 25 to 27m. deep. In addition, the station works also include two passenger entrances (plus provision for a third passenger entrance), separate vehicle and pedestrian underpasses, involves the demolition of an overhead bridge, as well as the construction of various external underground shafts that connect the station to the surface for ventilation and other functions.

.....The bidder, or...the Lead Member [of a consortium] has gained experience as a Main Contractor in the construction of at least two Underground Structures, out of which at least one.... is a (light or heavy) railway station box which have been completed after 1.1.2014 and before the Submission Date.....

Last date for Requests for Clarification: 19.1.2015. Last date for Submission of Proposals: 12.2.2015....."

(v). PREFERRED BIDDERS.

From a press release of 22.02.2015 by NTA-Tel-Aviv LRV/METRO project management:

The following four infrastructure groups (out of thirteen) have been selected

by NTA as the best and final for tender No. 0016/2014 – the construction of Carlebach Interchange Station:

- The Israeli company Shikun-U-Binui-Solel Bone Infrastructures with CRTG-China Railway Tunnel Group.

- The Israeli company Shapir Civil and Marine Engineering with the Italian company Ghella Impresa Pizzarotti.

- The Israeli company Dania Sivus with CCECC-China Civil Engineering Construc-

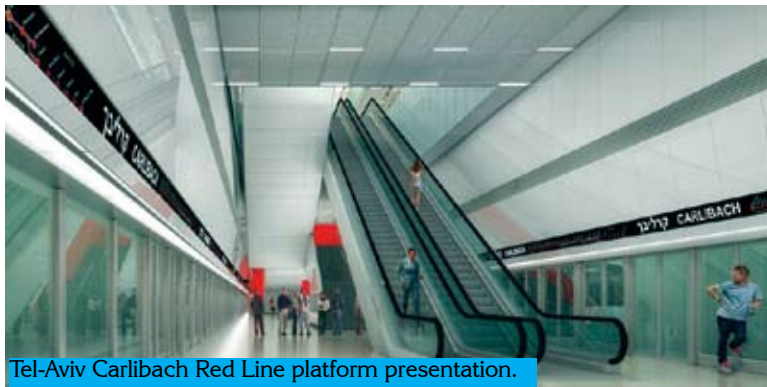


Tel-Aviv Carlibach concourse at north entrance.

tion Corporation.

- The Israeli company Minrav Engineering with CHEC-China Harbor Engineering Company.

The Carlebach Interchange Station is one of the more complex projects within the Tel-Aviv LRV/METRO project; the station will be one of the biggest, and as an interchange where the Red and Green lines cross each other will consist of three levels: the Red Line which links Petakh-Tikva with Bnei-Brak, Ramat-Gan, Tel-Aviv, and Bat-Yam; the Green Line which will link Rishon-Le-Zion West, the center of Holon, Holon Junction, the center of Tel-Aviv, and the



Tel-Aviv Carlibach Red Line platform presentation.

high-tech area of Ramat-Ha-Khayal; the third level will be dedicated for ticketing machines.

As a result of the station construction, an overhead road bridge is to be demolished and replaced by an underground one.

The winning group is to be announced towards mid 2015; works to commence on the second half of 2015.

[It is worth adding here that the Editor suggested to Aharon that the pictures show the spelling 'Carlibach' and asked that NTA reconsider this – the German rabbinic family after which the street is named spelled their name with an 'e'. NTA's spokesman proved initially resistant.]

(vi). A LOOK BACKWARDS:

From the 'Jüdische Volksstimme' of 15th. September 1906:

"Jaffa. Jüdische Kapitalisten haben eine Konzession zum Bau einer elektrischen Tramway erhalten." "Jewish capitalists have obtained a concession to construct

scheme.

B. JERUSALEM.

(i). UNDERWEAR PRANK.

From 'The Times of Israel' 12.01.2015: Party-wearing pranksters ride Jerusalem light rail -

Clad in boxers and briefs and braving extreme cold, 'Improv Israel' members bring smile to capital's commuters. *By Renee Ghert-Zand January 12, 2015.*

"Some light rail train riders had no problem being caught with their pants down Sunday

evening in Jerusalem. In fact, they purposely dropped trousers as part of an improvisational performance planned to coincide with similar pranks

happening the same day in other cities all over the world.

Apparently oblivious to the 4° Celsius (40° Fahrenheit) temperature outside, around 50 young people travelled back and forth from one end of Jerusalem's light rail route to the other wearing nothing but skivvies on their bottoms. Reading books, chatting with friends, checking their smartphones, they looked like regular commuters—except for the fact that some of their clothing was missing.

The No Pants Subway Ride is an international event staged annually in January since 2002 in cities with subway and light rail systems. Originally conceived by Improv Everywhere, a New York-based prank collective, the event has taken place in Jerusalem for the last three years.

"Actually, we just found out that this is the fourth consecutive year, not the third," said Božo, one of the prank's organizers. "It happened four years ago, but only three people showed up that time." Božo, a 30-

an electric tramway." Only 110 years later and it seems some progress is at last being made. As yet we have found no further details of this

year-old animator who divides his time between Jerusalem and Berlin, is part of Improv Israel, a group of like-minded people who connect via social media, and whose only major improv performance so far has been the No Pants Train Ride. Improv Israel members ride the Jerusalem light rail train in their underwear for No Pants Train Ride, January 11, 2015. (Nati Shohat/Flash 90)

Clad in wild and playful winter hats, sweaters and scarves to complement their equally colorful undergarments, the participants said they liked the event because it was about nothing other than having fun. "The point is that there is no point. It's the only pointless, nonpolitical activity people have had in Jerusalem for some time now," Božo said, referring to the Israeli capital's reputation for contentiousness. "It's about nothing more than just laughter, foolishness and bringing a smile to people's faces," said another organizer known as Kwak, who came from Sde Warburg, a moshav north of Kfar Saba, to ride the train pantless.

The pantless riders may have acted like regular commuters once they boarded the train, but the atmosphere beforehand at the group's gathering point in Zion Square, and later on the Jaffa Road platform, was decidedly party-like. The riders, some having already peeled off their trousers, danced to loud music as they waited for the train.

Neither the cold nor Jerusalem's predominant modesty-minded ultra-Orthodox community were of concern to the pranksters. "It'll be warm in the tram and we have beer," said Helena, a 26-year-old landscape architect visiting from Berlin as she smoked a hand-rolled cigarette.

Shaily, 23, who has participated twice in the No Pants Subway Ride in Chicago, was excited to be doing it in Jerusalem, which she acknowledged is a conservative place.

"There's a big modesty trend going on here, but the Haredim have a sense of humor...I hope," she said as she showed off her blue-with-pink polka dots boy shorts from Victoria's Secret.

Both on the platform and in the train cars, the improv group's members' bare legs were largely met with looks of bewilderment rather than hostility. When an incredulous teenager heard one member of the improv group ask the others on the platform if they all had tickets, he excitedly exclaimed, "Never mind train tickets—you people don't even have pants!"

It appeared that few of the people on the train actually interacted with the pantless pranksters. Some stole glances at them and whipped out their smartphones to take pictures and immediately post them to social media. A pair of blushing female soldiers shyly checked out some of the naked legs on some of the young men. A male soldier ogled the women's gams while tex-

ting about the spectacle. Several older ultra-Orthodox men appeared to purposely try to direct their gazes away from the pantless commuters, though only one actually got up and changed his seat so as to move away from some half-dressed young women. A couple of Orthodox teenage girls dressed in long black skirts were unfazed by the half-naked people waiting next to them at the Mount Herzl station, where the group got off to change trains at the end of the line. "Good for them for overcoming the cold for the sake for their art," said one. "The way they are dressed is okay. It doesn't bother us. We're used to this kind of thing from the way people dress in the summer," said the other.

Some riders were even oblivious to the entire performance. One woman, when

that the pantless group was not trying to make more of a statement. "Initially I thought there was more of a point to this. Then I realized it was just silliness," said Esteban, a tourist from Argentina who evidently expected a bit more seriousness from Jerusalem's young people.

Yissi, 25-year-old student from Jerusalem wearing black boxer shorts and a furry panda hat, considered the No Pant Train Ride to be part of young people's efforts to revive and strengthen secularism and pluralism in Jerusalem. "It's part of our saying that we are not giving up on this city," he said.

At the same time, Yissi said he was aware that there are more sensitivities to take into consideration in Jerusalem than in say, New York or London. It is hard to

and public transport operators CityPass and Egged (bus operator). During these times the LRV will not operate between Ammunition Hill and Central Bus Station; replacement services will be provided by a special bus line #79 to run parallel to the Red Line.

(iii). ANOTHER RIDE ON THE LINE.....

Walter Zanger describes in his 'From Jerusalem' Newsletter Vol. 16 No. 6, January 2015, another ride – to visit his accountant at Givat HaMivtar in mid-November 2014.

".... The train goes north on Herzl Boulevard to the Bridge of Strings, turning right at the Central Bus Station, and goes all the way east along Jaffa Road, though the middle of town, to City Hall. Then it curves north again along the walls of the Old City



Jerusalem LRV in the recent snow

asked by this reporter what she thought of the pantless commuters, said she had not even noticed them.

On the other hand, an elderly man had noticed some young men taking their jeans off right in front of him. He warned them to be careful that no one took off with them while they weren't wearing them, leaving them exposed to the elements for longer than planned.

While most train patrons appreciated the intended lightness of riding the rails in one's underwear, one man was dismayed

ignore the city's huge ultra-Orthodox community, which includes the family in which Yissi himself grew up. "My mom would be shocked if she knew I was riding the light rail in my underwear," he said."

(ii). EMERGENCY EXERCISE.

The police announced on 12.02 that on Tuesday, 17.02.2015, between 10:00 and 12:30, a big emergency and terror event exercise will take place along the Red Line alignment with participation of police, first aid services, fire fighters, rescue services,
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and past Damascus Gate. So far so good; that's the most travelled part of the line.

Things get a little tricky after that because the train heads north right along the seam separating Jewish Jerusalem on the left from mostly-Arab Jerusalem on the right. First thing I noticed was that there were no Arabs on the train at all. That was unusual – The Arab communities depend on and use the Light Rail a lot – and I understood that as a result of the recent terror attack in the neighbourhood. (Footnote:

'But Paula (his wife) went back next day and reported seeing many Arabs on the train and on Jaffa Road again – Good.')

107:08

The first stop after Damascus Gate is Shimon Ha-Zadik (Simon the Just, an important figure in Jewish history. His tomb is said to be here), a religious enclave opposite Meah Shearim. That's where an Arab driver (on November 5th.) had rammed his car into people waiting at the station, killing a Druze border policeman and injuring 14.

I was wondering what effect that attack would have on the train itself. the answer came soon. a 2-man squad of the black-jacket motorcycle police commandos came in the front door of the train at the Shimon Ha-Zadik station and went walking right through to the back door and out again. imagine that might have frightened any Arabs who had thought to travel; it would sure have scared me! In any case, this was heavy-duty security. I had never seen anything like that on the Light Rail.

Quiet again going north, up the road to French Hill where I was supposed to get off, but into the interests of reporting to you, and my own curiosity, I stayed on the train. Ammunition Hill was next; the last 'Jewish' stop. Then we were going through the Arab neighbourhoods of es-Sahel, Shuafat, and Beit Hanina. That's where the local youth throw stones at night (when it's not raining), to relieve their boredom.

I don't know what I expected to see. Something out of a war movie: the ruins of battle, burnt stores, destruction from riots, etc. But there was none of that at all. Everything looked completely normal. People were going about their shopping and business as usual. And apart from the fact that the ticket vending machines, destroyed when the rioting broke out last month, had now been removed completely from the Shuafat station, and that nobody got on or off the train there, as far as I could tell, one would never have known that anything like the weeks of rioting and confrontation last fall had ever happened.

Geography now: if the train had kept going straight north with the road after Beit Hanina, it would have sailed right into Ramallah in a few minutes. (Hard to imagine from abroad how close these places are!)

But it made a sharp right turn and was soon in the enormous new neighbourhood of Pisgat Ze'ev. That place is so big (50,000 people) that there are 4 train stations in the community. And that place is the reason the Light Rail has to keep going through the Arab neighbourhoods; the rail is the only connection between Pisgat Ze'ev and the rest of the city of Jerusalem and cannot be cut. I stayed on the train to the last stop. It straightaway changed direction (I didn't even have to get off and change platforms) and headed back to town. Now there were a few Arabs riding towards the city. Good! Soon I got off at Givat Ha-Mivtar to see my accountant...."

Snow in Jerusalem, Malka Station



NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). BY TRAIN TO PALESTINE IN 1944.

On a Dutch historical website (<http://www.niod.knaw.nl/nl/70jaar-wo2/joden-uit-bergen-belsen-kommen-aan-palestina>) is an intriguing item – translation from the Dutch by the Editor:-

“Following years of repression and many sufferings, on 10th. July 1944 222 Jews from the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen arrived in the city of Haifa in the British Mandate of Palestine. The group had left the camp eleven days earlier and was to be exchanged for Germans who had remained in Palestine.

The idea for the exchange came from the Germans. They wished to bring the so-called ‘Reichsdeutschen’ from enemy territories back to Germany, and one group of such were still in Palestine. Before and during the war many Jews would gladly have moved to Palestine. However, one could not just go there on one’s own initiative – one had to have an Immigration Certificate and to be a Palestinian citizen or the close relative (wife and children) of one. The people who fulfilled these requirements were placed on the so-called ‘Istanbul List’.

The British wanted to ensure that in any exchange of prisoners for these ‘Reichsdeutschen’, only persons on the Istanbul List should be considered. However, it appeared during the negotiations that these people had disappeared or died in the meantime. The Germans therefore suggested an exchange using prisoners from those at Bergen-Belsen.

Officially the British never formally agreed to this and instructed the Germans to continue searching for the missing people. The 222 Jews from Bergen-Belsen therefore received only a temporary permission to stay in Palestine.”

This is quite remarkable, indicating also that in July 1944 it was still possible to run through trains (of what stock?) right across Central and Eastern Europe and Asia Minor. Wyn Fear once described in a memoir driving a loco hauling a train of Jewish refugees who had come from Turkey, but they continued on towards Suez.

(b). LNWR ‘COAL ENGINES’ IN PALESTINE.

I am indebted to Simon Fountain of the ‘London & North Western Railway Society’ who wrote in February 2014 with information by member Peter Rowledge and some copies from a book on ROD locomotives in World War 1. From this:-

“Transfer of ‘Coal Engines’ to the duplicate list started in April 1912 but withdrawals had begun in March 1901; until 1912 the ‘new’ numbers were simply ‘cut up’ entries as all replaced engines were scrapped, other than two sold [to the Manchester & Milford Railway], instead of running as duplicate stock.....

However the largest number sold following requisitioning by the government for use by the Railway Operating Division of the Corps of Royal Engineers during the Great War. During the winter of 1916-17 70 were shipped off from Avonmouth and Cardiff to France, retaining their L&NWR numbers in the ROD list. A few returned to Crewe Works for attention and were then sent back again to the Western Front. Then engines were required in Egypt to work the Rap to Midd section of the Kantara Military Railway [sic. - ‘Midd’ could be meant to be ‘Ludd’] and so 15 were sent directly from Liverpool to be joined by 27 transferred from the Western Front. Because 48 were numbered in the L&NWR duplicate list they were allotted capital list number 2671 to 2718 during their absence; all were expected to return and so they were also allotted new capital list numbers as shown in the Table. However the 42 in Egypt were not transported home and so they were purchased by the government for 2,500 Pounds each in August 1921 and written off L&NWR stock. Then on 1st. May 1922 the War Office sold the whole lot to a scrap merchant (Disforgeries & Rogers) who moved them from Kantara East to Gabbary in July 1922 for breaking up.”

Then in a page of Tables:

“The following LNWR 0-6-0 Coal Engines were sent to Egypt in late 1917. 15 were taken from the LNWR and 27 were transferred from France. At the end of government control in 8/1921 all were purchased from the LNWR and then sold for scrap in 5/1922.

No.	Taken from LNWR	3053	10/1917	LNWR 0-6-0 numbered in the duplicate list were allotted special capital list numbers 2711 – 2718:
153	9/1917	3105	10/1917	2711: 3387
354	10/1917	3109	10/1917	2715: 3339
2047	10/1917	3151	10/1917	2716: 3448
2371	9/1917	3320	10/1917	2717: 3119
2381	10/1917	3339	10/1917	2713: 3105
2436	10/1917	3387	9/1917	2714: 3109
		3448	10/1917	2718: 3320
				2448 10/1917

Transferred from France: 17, 198, 778, 1099, 1179, 1316, 1339, 1349, 2090, 2171, 2255, 2383, 3119, 3209, 3231, 3271, 3325, 3353, 3356, 3414, 3415, 3418, 3419, 3420, 3421, 3422, 3423.

(c). A NOTE ON THE IC3 UNITS.

In ‘Eisenbahn Kurier’ 11/96 p.32 is a brief illustrated item on “The New Railcars for the Israeli State Railways.”

“Recently the first of seven new Triebwagen [the word can mean ‘Railcar’ or ‘Multiple Unit’. Ed.] for the Israeli State Railways was completed by its builder Israel Aircraft Industries Ramta Division. The licence giver for the trains is Adtranz Denmark. Their close kinship with the Danish IC-3 railcars is clear. Interestingly two of the Israeli trains have been hired to Amtrak for two and a half years, and here they will be used for demonstration purposes.”

[Were they actually built by Ramta or, more likely, merely assembled or fitted out there? And it IS interesting that Amtrak hired Israeli rather than Danish trains for their tests which, as we know, did not lead to any new orders! Ed.]

(d). THE RAILWAY QUEEN IN PALESTINE.

It is amazing what one stumbles across. In ‘Steam Railway’ issue 431 (15th. August 2014) p.80f. is an article by David Wilcock on the ‘Railway Queen’ – this was “a national title competed for annually between 1925 and 1975, by the daughters of working railwaymen and women right across the network.... The contestants had to be aged between 14 and 16 years.... But the Railway Queen competition wasn’t a beauty contest, and didn’t require the girls to parade flesh on stage... The winner...was chosen from photographs submitted to the contest’s organising committee by her own family, and as part of her duties she was expected to perform an international ambassadorial role, with each newly-elected queen travelling to a different country each year, and conveying a message of unity, global friendship, peace and goodwill to all railway workers, from the railwaymen of Britain.....” And then there is mention that in 1934 Londoner Ruby Dovey had visited Palestine. (In 1933 the Railway Queen went to the USA, in 1935 to the Soviet Union!)

I had never come across any mention of this in any newspapers or reports – and wondered whether anyone know any more? When did she travel, for how long, what public events did she take part in, who organised it? It did not take long for Sybil Ehrlich, who works at the ‘Jerusalem Post’, to come up with the following items from the ‘Palestine Post’ of 1935 – not 1934 – and with a few inconsistencies in the girl’s name!

Thursday, March 28, 1935

BRITISH RAILWAY QUEEN DUE HERE.

(From Our Own Correspondent)

Haifa, Wednesday. – Miss Ruby Dovey, the "Queen" elected this year by British railwaymen, will arrive tomorrow at Haifa, and will spend some time in Palestine.

Each year the new "Queen" visits another country as a gesture of goodwill and receives a link of friendship which is added to an international chain.

A delegation of the Railwaymen's Union will meet the "Queen," who is sixteen years old. A reception will be held in her honour tomorrow evening.

Sunday March 31, 1935 RAILWAY QUEEN ARRIVES FROM ENGLAND

(From Our Own Correspondent)

HAIFA, Saturday. – A link to the world peace chain of the British railwaymen's organisation was added by Palestine railway workers when Miss Ruby Dovey, 15-year old "Railway Queen of Great Britain," appeared at a function at the Workers' Hostel in Hadar Hacarmel on her arrival from England.

A message of good will from railwaymen in Great Britain to the railway workers of Palestine, was brought by Miss Dovey, who was preceded by Mr. William Rubinstein, publicity manager of Belle Vue, Manchester, where each year the Queen is crowned.

Railway Chiefs Present

Mr. C. R. Webb, Mr. Campigli, Mr. Williams, and other members of the Palestine Railways administration were among the 300 persons present when Mr. Dov Hos, of the Central Committee of the General Jewish Labour Federation, opened the proceedings.

Mr. Dana, secretary of the Central Committee of the International Union of Railway Employees, spoke.

Miss Dovey and her party arrived at the Jerusalem Railway station yesterday morning and were cordially greeted by a large group of Arab and Jewish Railway workers.

In the afternoon Mr. George Fares, Jerusalem Station Master, and Mrs. Fares were hosts to the Queen and her party at tea at the King David Hotel.

Mr. Shelley, Mr. Fares, Mr. Nielson, Mr. Dana and Prof. Brodetsky spoke.

Monday April 1, 1935

PALESTINE AS A LINK

Palestine cordially welcomes the British Railway Queen who has added a link from this country to the chain of good-will which already joins some nine lands in a bond of international friendship. Every effort which brings the people of Britain into closer touch with the people of Palestine is to be commended. An understanding of each other's conditions is indispensable to an understanding of each other's prob-

lems. Miss Dovey is greeted here not only as the representative of the railway workers of Great Britain but as the emissary of the British working class as a whole, of which the railwaymen are among the most progressive and enlightened. In these days when war scares are all too frequent the extension of the hand of fellowship from nation to nation is doubly significant, and in this land, where Peace was raised to the pinnacle of idealism, we reciprocate the gesture with sincerity and warmth."

(e). THE OBSCURE HISTORY OF EGYPTIAN SIX-WHEEL COACHES.

We have already noted Chen Melling's hopes to restore one or two such former ESR coaches which ended up on I.R. - albeit as service stock, not in passenger-carrying service. The following is edited and adapted from recent (July - September) e-mail exchanges to reveal to our readers - and to keep for the historical record - some of the problems historians face!

Chen began: "My current focus is the two 6-wheel former ESR coaches, IR numbers 4717 and 4720, used in Israel as the crew vans for the Haifa and Lod breakdown trains, respectively. I have now ascertained that they were among the five such vehicles captured in 1956, which carried the following Egyptian numbers:

Inspector Vans - 2375, 2390 (renumbered 4720 and 4717, resp.)

Dormitory Vans - 2479, 2309

One vehicle marked "For Diesel Workers" - 2634

I hope someone, perhaps Alan, could shed some light on the previous history of these coaches, obviously renumbered into a departmental series from their original 3-digit numbers."

Alan Clothier, who used to work on ENR, responded:

"I found some time to take a look at my ENR records when I established the following:

2227 - 2487 were built at Bulaq as II class carriages 1891 - 1904. 2375 and 2390 were converted at Bulaq to III class in 1937. Later they were converted to Inspector vans but I can find no date for this although it seems likely to have been post 1939. The numbers 2375 and 2390 puzzle me as in every case I can find of vehicles of this type being converted to other purposes they are renumbered into a higher series, often 29xx. I have just found a list of six-wheeled passenger vehicles said to be in stock at 01.06.1981 and surprisingly it includes all the numbers you gave Chen except 2634. The other numbers are all followed by a question mark and of course we know why!! On 27.12.1981 ENR CM&EE requested me to arrange for my team to examine a large number of vehicles with a view to their withdrawal and the list was

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annotated that it might contain the numbers of some vehicles already withdrawn - the list included all the numbers above with the exception of 2634. 2309, 2375, 2479 & 2390 were all listed as II class passenger vehicles!

Re. 2634 - this vehicle was built at Bulaq in 1894 and was later converted to a Disinfector van at Bulaq in 1940 when it was renumbered from 2228."

At this point the Editor replied with an excerpt from P. Ransome-Wallis (published also in Harakevet 106): "'I never found anything peculiarly vicious or wicked about Port Said. The shedmaster here was very co-operative and took a great delight in showing me the official engine register of the railway. I had made a considerable study of this in Alexandria and had copied much of it down for my own information. It was thus, with considerable dismay, that I found the Port Said list differed very greatly from the Alexandria version. In fact, I was later to see the official lists at both Suez and Cairo and all were different in many details. It was quite evident that the locomotive stock of the Egyptian Railways was in something of a muddle, and they really did not know quite what they had got. Several years later this theory was confirmed by several British enthusiasts, who while serving in Egypt did manage to get out something like a reliable stock-list. I gather their efforts were much appreciated by the management of the railway, but how the Stores Department ever got the right spares for the right engine is still beyond my comprehension - maybe the Egyptians have a flair for improvisation in these matters, and if so, it may be due to the fact that so many of their railwaymen are British-trained."

To which Alan: "I ran up against the same problem on many occasions, but I think that I can now lay claim to an accurate EGR/ESR/ENR stock list as I was on ER long enough to get to the bottom of things!!"

Chen was intrigued: "'The information about the coaches is most valuable. It is a complete surprise to me that BOTH our ex-3rd class vehicles were actually converted from 2nds, and so could not have been 3rds-converted-to-ambulance cars in WW1, which is what I intend to restore it to, at the moment .

However, according to your information, there should have been some 240 2nd class coaches built between 1891-1904, whereas both Wiener (writing in 1932 about 1904) and the WW1 diagrams you scanned speak of 105-110 2nd class coaches, and Wiener writes that no more 6-wheelers were built after c. 1905. Plus, our coaches have the exact external appearance of ESR 3rds, which is quite different (window and roof lamps-wise) from the ESR 2nds. Could it be the case that some 3rds were reclassified as 2nds and

then reclassified again back to 3rds?

I really would like to know the build date for 2375. IR's lists note 2390 as being built 1904, but there are inconclusive indications that 2375's build date is 1894.

In the meantime, I also discovered another ex-Egyptian 6wh coach in Israel, which appears in none of the lists I have – see attached photo from 1968 by Hans Kohut, with Arabic number 2956 and non-IR livery. These plus the date suggesting this was captured in 1967.” [This photo appeared in 106:]

Finally Alan was able to reply: “At last I have got to the point where I can reply to your query - but not as well as I had hoped to do. I unearthed my recalcitrant coaching stock file but only to find that when I had trawled the ENR stock records I found the six-wheeled vehicles were a 'dog's breakfast' to put it mildly! The relevant diagrams in my c1916 book were all without specific 'year built' dates and by this time the majority of the vehicles were no longer in their original form. Many diagrams use words like 'originally III class' whereas the reality is that was what the vehicle was when it was converted or modified not necessarily what it was when built.

Look at Diagram 169 – Vegetable & Perishable vans pre-1926 nos 1684-1703 (20, but 1689 a spare); post-1926 nos 2640-2658 (19). 2640, 2645 & 2647. Originally I, II & III class. Date of construction 1891-1893 & 1904. 2640, 2645 & 2647 r/b on Franco Belge underframes; 2642,2646, 2648, 2656 & 2657 on Braine le Compte uf; 2641, 2654, 2655 on Baume Marpent uf; 2643, 2649, 2650, 2651 & 2658 on Metropolitan uf; 2652, 2653 on Brown Marshall uf and 2644 was originally the Green State Saloon. Converted at Bulaq 1923-1924.

In my searches I came across a poorly hand-written list of service vehicles given to me in Egypt. This lists 63 six-wheeled service vehicles but build dates are given for only 31 of them as follows: Accommodation saloons – 2033 (1903), 2284 (1897), 2903 (1904), 2904 (1904), 2906 (1904), 2907 (1884), 2909 (1893), 2910 (1895), 2911 (1884), 2915(1893), 2919 (1891), 2921 (1884), 2924 (1884), 2925 (1884), 2926 (1884), 2927 (1893), 2934 (1893), 2935 (1895), 2938 (1894), 2940 (1904), 2945 (1904), 2948 (1891), 2949 (1903), 2951 (1903), 2954 (1903), 2956 (1891), 2958 (1903), 2959 (1903), 2034 (1884), then 2035, 2038, 2040, 2045, 2048, 2051, 2054, 2056, 2058, 2079, 2250, 2256, 2271, 2303, 2304, 2360, 2361, 2365, 2224, 2240, 2261, 2479, 2563, 2309, 2375 and 2390 all without years given. Hospital coaches – 2000 (1910). Prisoner coaches – 2611 (1902), 2612 (1891). Cashier's coaches – 2972 (1903), 2934 (1904 but also given as 1893 in Accommodation vehicles above!). Also mentioned without years and probably Prisoner

coaches were – 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621 and 2624. I rest my case! You will see how difficult it is to give you a definite build year for 2375 and 2390. 2956 however has a diagram to itself (262) on conversion at Bulaq in 1938 from III 2235 (on diagram 148) to an accommodation vehicle for the Signal Department but on looking at diagram 148 it gives, for a large range of vehicles, a build date of 1891- 1904! It was included in an ENR Stock Return of 1981 as an Accommodation vehicle with no hint of where it really was!! And it was amongst a large number of old vehicles I had to arrange to have examined!”

(f). THE RED-MED LINE.

From 'Future Rail Magazine' issue 16, July 2014.

(Thanks to Lewis Mostyn for the link.)

“THE SUEZ ALTERNATIVE: Scheduled to break ground within the year, Israel's Red Med project – a 186 mile rail link – aims to provide a freight transport alternative to the Suez Canal. Dr. Gareth Evans learns more.”

“For nearly a century and a half, the Suez Canal has been the unrivalled principal artery between Europe and Asia, with around 10% of the world's trade and a fifth of all global container traffic navigating the 120 mile water-way. However, 150 years of effective monopoly could come to an end as Israel prepares to develop a new 186 mile rail link to carry freight between Eilat on the Red Sea and Ashdod on the Mediterranean.

Work on the potentially game-changing project, dubbed 'Red-Med', is scheduled to begin within the year and will take five years to complete., but even before a single piece of track has been laid, it is apparent that the impact of the scheme goes far beyond just how goods are transported.

“It is a major project,” says transport consultant and occasional blogger Ernie Bell, who has been following the project since the first reports emerged in early 2012. “The line is going to cost around \$2 Billion, and the upgrades to the ports at either end at least as much again – not to mention the costs of rolling-stock and so on,” he says. “But it's not really about the nuts-and-bolts; it's the geopolitical aspect to this railway that's really interesting.

For one thing, the project marks a another step in the growing alliance between Israel and China, which has been gathering pace over recent years, both economically and diplomatically. Although trading figures between the two still remain modest in absolute terms, the rate of increase has been staggering, from less than \$10M a year in the early 1990's to an estimated \$10 Bn now. Between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's aim of turning

his country into a major Middle Eastern trading hub and Beijing's goal of ramping up its interests in major foreign infrastructure projects. Red-Med could hardly have come at a better time.

Israel's Suez alternative – declared a national priority and fast tracked by the country's government – will be developed with a massive Chinese contribution of money and engineering skills.

The project represents a clear confluence of trading interests for both nations, but it is perhaps its strategic importance that serves to cement Sino-Israeli relations most strongly. While China on the whole adopts a largely agnostic view of commerce when it comes to the religious or political ideologies of its trading partners, many analysts have noted Beijing's unease over the ongoing instability in Egypt.

Bell says that although unloading cargoes at one port, consigning them to rail, and then having to re-load them aboard vessels again at another is less than ideal, the alternative route through this troubled region to and from the important European marketplace has obvious appeal – even if only as an insurance policy.

The changing mood of Egypt in the post-Mubarak era also inevitably raises concerns in Israel and currently there can be little certainty how relations will eventually turn out to be with whoever does finally emerge to hold sway. For Chinese and Israelis alike, events such as the rocket-propelled grenade attacks on two ships navigating the Suez Canal last year, one of them Chinese-owned, and reports of growing jihadist activity in the Sinai peninsula, do little to calm their fears of being cut off from this vital trade route.

There are worries in Cairo, too. The Suez Canal has long provided a significant boost to Egyptian coffers, bringing in an annual \$5Bn and remaining a major source of hard currency throughout the years of turmoil since the 2011 revolution, which have seen foreign investment and tourist revenue dwindle.

In an attempt to milk this cash-cow even harder, and raise perhaps as much as 20 times more in an attempt to bolster the country's struggling economy, the government proposes to turn 29,000 square miles of land alongside the canal into a huge new logistics and industrial hub. Although the Red-Med project has provoked considerable domestic controversy, and led to threats to close the canal, from a variety of groups claiming to represent the communities set to be most affected, it was put out to international tender in January.

The last thing Egypt needs now is anything else which might be seen to threaten the future success of its prime economic asset. This new freight line proposal has, understandably, not been well

received. Israeli sources have been quick to issue reassurances to Cairo, saying that the Red-Med rail link is simply intended to augment the existing trade through Suez and help pick up any future capacity shortfall, while linking the country's industrial north to its only Asian water port at the south in the interim.

Israel clearly has nothing to gain by deliberately damaging its neighbour's economy; to do so would merely destabilise Egypt still further, and risk precipitating the rise to power of a hostile regime.

However, it is something of an open secret that plans are being made in case the historic peace treaty between the two countries were to be eroded, and their relationship turn sour. Long before that, however, if any of the groups operating in what the Centre for Maritime Security has described as the "lawless zone" of Sinai were ever able to make good on their threats to close the canal, it would be a catastrophic demonstration of the failure of the Egyptian state to maintain security.

Perhaps more to the point, whatever the original intention of the architects of the Red-Med project might be, shipping owners and trading companies the world over would instantly be eyeing the prospect of 186 miles of Israeli-owned rail track in an entirely new light.

The idea of a rail link from Eilat to the Mediterranean is almost as old as the State of Israel itself, and it has re-emerged at roughly decade-long intervals ever since – but this time, Bell thinks that it looks much more likely to go ahead. "The timing is right, Israel is looking to the growing markets of Asia, and China gets a technologically savvy, international, strategically placed partner as its economy evolves out of its historic role as the world's 'provider of lowest cost.' A bit of healthy rail competition with the sea-way should benefit global trade too," Bell says.

One thing seems clear; if it does all go to plan, the new land bridge will inject fresh choice into the business of transporting goods between East and West, and end 150 years of monopoly in just five."

Other articles point out that the Chinese plan for an east-west enw Silk Route through various Central Asian and Middle Eastern countries – and western regions of China itself - looks increasingly threatened by the growth of conflicts and Islamic fundamentalism, in which case this route would provide a safer alternative.

(g). JUBILEES AND POLITICS – SOME NOTES.

In 'Backtrack' February 2010 pp. 70-77 is an article by Sitwell D. Williams on the history of the naming of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway '5XP' Class 4-6-0's, normally called 'Jubilees' as the first of

the class was given an especial livery and named 'Silver Jubilee' in May 1935. Several were then given the names of famous admirals and some of famous warships (and previous articles dealt with those); this third instalment deals with the 'Imperial Jubilees', those named after various far-flung parts of the British Empire of the time. This meant some slight embarrassments.

"Renaming became slightly more complex in the case of Nos. 5623 'Palestine' and 5633 'Trans Jordan'. These two areas, forming 'the greater Holy Land', came under British control as 'mandated territories' following the break-up of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. After the Second World War Trans Jordan formed the basis of the newly-created independent Kingdom of Jordan with no formal ties to Britain. In September 1946 No. 5633 was therefore renamed 'Aden' after the former 'coaling station' at the south east end of the Red Sea, part of the vital sea route to I

Palestine formed the bulk of the new Jewish state of Israel which was created in 1948. Israel again had no formal British ties and yet, unlike Trans Jordan, the locomotive name remained unaltered - perhaps this logical change was overlooked in the excitement of the creation of British Railways, or was there some attachment to a name with such spiritual resonance?"

This was intriguing, (not to mention that 'Transjordan' or 'Trans-Jordan' are more normal spellings), so the Editor whipped off a Reader's Letter to 'Backtrack':-

"Dear Editor!

Politics are always more potentially troublesome even than Admirals, but Sitwell Williams has done a very good job on delineating the 'colonial' and 'imperial' names bestowed on the 'Jubilees'. I had not known that 5633 'Transjordan' was renamed in September 1946, i.e. still in LMS times; Transjordan was created in September 1922 out of the League of Nations Mandated territory of Palestine, as an Emirate; The original Mandate document (dated 24th. July 1922 but officially in force from 29th. September 1923) was modified to exclude Transjordan from the area allocated for

Then in March 1946 the Treaty of London approved formal independence for Transjordan - it was on 25th. May 1946 that formal independence was declared with the Emir becoming a King and the name being changed to the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan. The Arab Legion then came nominally under local control but in practice it was the British (and officers such as Glubb Pasha) who provided the leadership and there were military cooperation treaties. Palestine Railways, a department of the (mandatory) Palestine Government,

had operated the lines in Transjordan at a whopping deficit throughout the 1920's and 30's and 40's, and a formal division of stock and stores now had to be organised - the railway itself was a owned by a Moslem Waqf.

Putting all together it means that someone, somewhere took a political decision to dissociate the LMS from the newly-formed Kingdom, and it took from the end of May until September to work this out and maybe to order the new 'Aden' nameplates.

But Mr. Williams then states: "Palestine formed the bulk of the new Jewish state of Israel which was created in 1948. Israel again had no formal British ties and yet, unlike Trans Jordan, the locomotive name remained unaltered - perhaps this logical change was overlooked in the excitement of the creation of British Railways, or was there some attachment to a name with such spiritual resonance?" I would venture to suggest that the answer is much less idealistic. Whereas Britain was able to withdraw with dignity from Trans-Jordan, with treaties and effusive reciprocal assurances.

One should recall that much of the contemporary violence was between Jews - and especially Jewish refugees and Displaced Persons denied access to Palestine - and the British forces in the post-war period. Much bad feeling was left on both sides. I recently completed a PhD thesis on the Palestine Railways in the difficult 1945-1948 period and have read surviving sources and interviewed numerous former railwaymen, Royal Engineers, Palestine Policemen and soldiers (who describe for example being given an hour "to do as much damage as possible" before withdrawing from their barracks near Haifa) - the proposed UN Commission which was intended to provide some form of continuity was unable to do so because the British Government refused to cooperate with it and the country sank into a welter of sabotage, violence and civil war. Law and Order broke down totally. For a period Britain refused to recognise Israel formally and the British Consul to Palestine" stayed sadly in Haifa.....

In these grim circumstances it would be understandable if someone, somewhere had said "I'll be damned if the name of that bloody country should be carried by one of our locos!" - and so 'Palestine' it remained to the end, for political and emotional but not for pious reasons. I wonder if it were the Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin, himself? He was a former T&GWI leader, and sat on all sub-committees in Attlee's Cabinet. He died in April 1951. Will we ever know?"

Incidentally, 5623 was built at Crewe in December 1936, renumbered 45623 by British Railways in 1948 and withdrawn in July 1964.

Then in August 2014 a photo of 'Palestine' hauling a train was published and so I sent off another letter:-

"The photo of 'Jubilee' 45623 'Palestine' on p. 468 (August issue) interested me as there seem to be very few photos of this particular loco. But especially in view of current events the name is a highly significant one and I have a question which maybe one of your readers could answer.

As is well known there were eventually a total of 191 of these handsome 4-6-0's, originally classed as 5XP, later in BR days 6P, and all built between 1934 and 1936. Since this was still a period of national and imperial pride, several were named after British colonies, dependencies and other related territories. A look at the complete list shows (after the initial No. 5552 'Silver Jubilee' which gave this designation 'Jubilee' to the entire class and was also subject to an identity swap) first 5553 'Canada' and then nine constituent States (e.g. 'Alberta' or 'Manitoba'), then 5563 'Australia' and seven constituent or related names (e.g. 'Queensland', 'Tasmania', 'New Zealand'), then 'South Africa', and then 5572 'Irish Free State' and 5573 'Newfoundland', which should really have belonged to the Canadian series; then 5574 'India' followed by twenty constituent states (e.g. 'Bengal', 'Punjab'); then 'Southern Rhodesia', and then 'miscellaneous' onwards alphabetically from 5596 'Bahamas' through 5608 'Gibraltar' and 5620 'North Borneo' to 5638 'Windward Islands'; then come series named after Admirals, naval battles, classical names and a further miscellany. The last four, Nos. 5739-5742 were named after parts of Ireland - 'Ulster', 'Leinster', 'Munster' and 'Connaught'. I make this together ninety names of 'geographical/political significance'.

Of course politics could become embarrassing, especially as the Empire disintegrated, and so 5572 'Irish Free State' was eventually renamed 'Eire'; 45610 'Gold Coast' was renamed 'Ghana'. Intriguingly 5633 'Trans-Jordan' built in November 1934 was renamed 'Aden' at some point. ('Trans-Jordan', created in 1922 by Churchill out of the mandated territory of Palestine entrusted to Britain by the League of Nations, became officially independent as the Hashemite Kingdom of Trans-Jordan in 1946, and 'Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan' on 1st. December 1948 following (ahem) its occupation of the West Bank and the UN neutral 'Holy Places' of East Jerusalem and Bethlehem in the war of May 1948). When exactly? 5616 'Malta' became 'Malta GC' but this was to do with bestowing a post-war honour on the island. BUT - Interestingly no name change was ever made to No. 5623 'Palestine', which was completed at Crewe in October 1934 and withdrawn as 45623 in July 1964 from Newton Heath shed, Manchester; it was scrapped at Central Wagon Co., Ince, near

Wigan in September 1965.

The last survivor in BR service, 'Alberta' was withdrawn in November 1967. Four of the locos have been preserved, two named after territories ('Bahamas' and 'Kolhapur') and two Classical characters ('Leander' and 'Galatea'); Perhaps it is fortunate for the sake of political harmony that 'Palestine' was not one of them. Still, 45623 ran from May 1948 (when Israel was founded) to July 1964 uniquely bearing the name of a 'Mandated Territory' that no longer existed under this name. It would be interesting to find out why, especially in view of the fate of 'Trans-Jordan'! Which committee would have considered any changes, and which committee - or whoever there was above it - decided NOT to make the change? And do its nameplates survive?

Incidentally, there was never either an 'East Pakistan' or 'West Pakistan' either! (Created 1947 - could it be that a part of the problem was that so many of these political changes came just before or during Nationalisation? By the time Bangla Desh split off in 1971 all the steam locos had gone....) There was never an 'Iraq' (or 'Mesopotamia') since this gained independence in 1932, and why did 'Aden' get left out originally too?"

In correspondence to the question of the 'Jubilee' 4-6-0 'Palestine':

From Martin Bairstow: "5573 'Newfoundland' did not belong to the Canadian series. From 1907 Newfoundland was a Dominion in its own right, so correctly followed New Zealand, South Africa and Irish Free State. In 1934, the Dominion of Newfoundland petitioned the Crown to have self government suspended. The economic crisis was too much for them. It became a colony again until 1949 when it joined the Dominion of Canada."

Julian Rainbow added: "The four named after parts of Ireland are the four 'Provinces' of Ireland. I suppose we should think ourselves lucky that no-one realised that three of the counties that make up Ulster are in the Republic and the other six are British. Also 'Irish Free State' must have been renamed when it left the Commonwealth. I assumed 'Gold Coast' was renamed after that county gained independence as it was the only West African colony that changed its name." [N.B. Gold Coast became Ghana in 1957.]

(h). A PALESTINE LINK TO A BRITISH LOCO.

An article in 'Backtrack' Nov. 2014 on war memorial locomotives includes reference to a LNWR 4-6-0 named after a British railwayman who earned his Victoria Cross in Palestine. A bit of internet research came up with the following:

"John Alexander Christie VC (14 May 1895 - 10 September 1967) was an Eng-

lish recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces.

Christie (known as 'Jock') was 22 years old, and a Lance-Corporal in the 1/11th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (Finsbury Rifles), British Army during the First World War when the following deed took place, for which he was awarded the VC.

On 21 December/22 December 1917, at Fejja, Palestine, after a position had been captured, the enemy immediately made counter-attacks up the communication trenches. Lance-Corporal Christie, seeing what was happening, took a supply of bombs and went alone about 50 yards in the open along the communication trench and bombed the enemy. He continued to do this in spite of heavy opposition until a block had been established. On his way back he bombed more of the enemy who were moving up the trench. His prompt action cleared a difficult position at a most difficult time and saved many lives. His medal is privately held."

LNWR 4-6-0 'Claughton' Class No 1407 was named 'Lance Corporal J. A. Christie VC'. Built by Crewe Works in February 1920, No 1407 was renumbered by the LMS in February 1927 as No 5967, which it carried until November 1934 when it was withdrawn from (16) Longsight shed. Unlike the other two Claughtons named after railway employees who earned the VC, ('Private E. Sykes VC' and 'Private W. Wood VC') whose names were then perpetuated on the successor 'Patriot' class 4-6-0's (which were technically 'rebuilt' but effectively new engines), the name of Lance Corporal J.A. Christie V.C. was not transferred to a new loco - one theory mentioned in the article is that this was because he did not return to railway service after the war. He had been a parcels clerk at Euston before military service. However, a plaque to him was unveiled at Euston Station in April 2014.

(i) UNILOKS

Andrew Wilson writes, he met the managing director of Unilok in summer 2014 and was told that IR had expressed an interest in acquiring two of his shunting locos. It is unclear whether an actual order has followed.

(j) FRENCH RAILWAYMEN ON THE BAGHDAD RAILWAY.

Andrew Wilson writes that he has a copy of an English translation of a French book of memoirs by a main line loco driver - entitled 'Pacific Senator' by Michel Péroche. From this: "In late 1939 the French were anticipating a German move against the Middle East and wanted to strengthen their

position in Syria; in this case in terms of rail transport, in case Germany should move that way. At this time France and Britain already had a non-aggression pact with Turkey. So Peroche was called up into the French army as part of a group of railwaymen, who arrived in Beirut in April 1940. Shortly thereafter they were deployed at Aleppo to work the Baghdad Railway line north-westward from there to the Turkish border at Maidan Ekbes, the last station in Syria. The DHP withdrew entirely from the line and left it to be worked by the military railway men who were to be provided with 55 German-built locomotives transferred from eastern France. By the time Peroche arrived, forty of these locos had arrived, which were sent via Italy, which was not yet at war. Peroche was selected to drive the main passenger train, the 'Taurus Express', for which two ten-coupled locomotives were available, Nos. 901 and 902. The book has a photograph of Peroche with two colleagues, standing beside No. 901, but not much detail of the loco is visible; it has a large cast number plate on the cab and the upper part of the cab side is vertical. He found working on large steam locomotives in the Syrian climate to be a very tough proposition.

France collapsed in 1940, by which time 53 of the planned locomotives had arrived from France. Peroche was out of a job in June, when German and Italian military arrived. He was eventually evacuated through Beirut, with the permission of the Royal Navy, and he finally got home and was returned to the SNCF in October that year."

[A bit of research in Hugh Hughes' book soon revealed:

The ten-coupled locos must have been the Prussian-type G10 0-10-0's, Borsig 8569 and another of 1913, which became CFS 050.501 and 502. Hughes lists these on p.64 of his 'Middle East Railways' without any DHP numbers and until the WD 2-10-0's came later they were the only s.g. ten-coupled locos in the country. But where did they come from and when?

The 0-8-0's were also Prussian G8's which had been part of German Reparations to France; these became DHP 801-48 and later CFS and CEL locos after Lebanon split from Syria in 1946 – he has a whole page of 'Appendix E' on p. 119 listing them. I wonder how they got to Syria – possibly through the port of Tripoli, or maybe even overland through Turkey (ferried across the Bosphorus) – there was no standard-gauge line at Beirut until 1942. Ed.]

Andy continued: "Hughes also credits the Iraq railways with having ten G8s, no dates, no details. The Baghdad Railway had a last gap in the north of Iraq which

was finally completed in 1940 and I speculate that the DHP had loaned some of their G8s to Iraq to help out when it was difficult to get new ones. Note that Peroche mentions the Baghdad express as coming from Mosul, not from the border station, at least implying that the DHP was hauling it from there. Whatever, Iraq was subsequently to get more motive power from the British military and presumably the G8s went back to the DHP?

As for the disposal of the G8s, the ten for Lebanon are well documented and I saw all of them in 2007 and 2008, and Hughes suggests that 25 were retained in Syria, although his Appendix E only identifies three (Nos. 464, 466 and 469). Two were still existent in Syria in 2007, seen on the DGEG tour; one plinthed near the CFS headquarters in Aleppo and the other at Jibreen Works near Aleppo, neither identified.

'Steam in Turkey' by E. Talbot, another Continental Railway Circle book of around the same date as Hughes, lists the G8s on the TCDD. Many of these came from Germany in World War 1 and they then had a batch of new ones, but later numbers are "thought to have come from Syria, some originally from France." There is a series of fleet numbers 44057 to 44083 (27 locos) plus an odd 44087 (stated to have been observed.) So we have 28 numbers and if there are no gaps then at least 31 are implied, suggesting rather fewer were retained in Syria. None of the three works numbers mentioned by Talbot fit the list in Hughes' Appendix E. Clearly, more research is required".

And then Dirk Forschner of Berlin sent me a copy of a page from "Lépopée des locomotives - "Armistice 1918", by Jean-Marc Dupuy et Jean Buchmann.

[My translation from the French. Ed.]
"KPEV G8, formerly Nord Nos. 4.572 – 4.598.

During 1919 the Nord received a batch of 27 machines as a part of its allocation from the Armistice agreement. They were incorporated into the Company's stock and carried the numbers 4.572 to 4.598 and were allocated to the depots of Bourget (3), Boulogne (8), Fives (2), Busigny (2), Arras (4), Epluches (2), Fouquereil (4), Béthune (1) and Dunquerque (1). Later reallocations meant that the depots at Aulnoye, Hirson and Valenciennes received engines and the allocations at Fives and Béthune were slightly increased. Some were loaned during the 1920's to the Belgian railways, including nos. 572, 575, 579, 580, 581, 582, 592, 593, 595 and 596.

Even before the reclassification and renumbering as 2-040 C Nos. 1 to 27 on the formation of the SNCF, the entire group was no longer in commercial service. As at 1st. Jan. 1938 they were stored in the depot sidings at Lille Délivrance, (2-040

C Nos. 1, 2, 4, 10, 12-14, 17-20, 23, 25-27), Tourcoing (2-040 C 3, 6 and 16) and Aulnoye (2-040 C 5, 7-9, 11, 15, 21, 22 and 24.) [Note: the new numbering meant 2 for the former Nord Region, 040 for the axle arrangement, C as the class letter for different types of locos with the 0-8-0 (Whyte) wheel arrangement, then the running number within the class. Ed.]

The 27 locos were sold to the DHP and together with a further 21 identical machines from the Est region were transported to Syria in 1939-1941, in spite of the events of that period. Numbered 801 to 847, they received several modifications, such as conversion to oil firing. In order to reduce fuel consumption and increase tractive effort, the draughting systems were improved. Signs of these modifications are a fuel tank on the tender and a wider chimney with a rectangular section below the round length. The DHP concession was repurchased by Syria in 1955 and by the Lebanon in 1959, and this meant that the stock was divided; 25 went to the CFS (Chemin de Fer Syriennes) as nos. 040 451 to 475; ten came to the CFL (Chemin de Fer libanais) as nos. 101 – 110. The others (5 or 13 depending on the sources) were returned to the TCDD, where they encountered once more their former brethren which had arrived here in 1916, nos. 44057 to 44090."

(k) AUSTRALIAN ENGINES THAT NEVER CAME TO PALESTINE.....

Behind this perhaps enigmatic heading is a fascinating tale that was totally new to the Editor.... In the British Overseas Railways Journal No. 39 (Summer 2014), an issue dedicated to military railway activities in the First World War, is an article by Julian Rainbow (pp.43-45) on a batch of the T524 (later D50) class of 2-8-0 locomotives designed by Beyer, Peacock for the New South Wales Government Railways. The first engine, T528 entered service in May 1896 and a total of 280 were built, 150 by Beyer, Peacock, 84 by North British Locomotive Co., 10 by Neilson & Co., 31 by Clyde Engineering and 5 by Dübs. N.S.W.G.R. had ten locos on order from N.B.L. (Order L669 of October 1916) when the Ministry of Munitions decided that the needs of the R.O.D. (Railway Operating Division) were more urgent than those of the N.S.W.G.R. and requisitioned them. They were under construction at Hyde Park Works in Glasgow, had superheated boilers and double bogie tenders; the first five had copper fireboxes, the second five steel, and they arrived in France between March and April 1917 and were allocated R.O.D. numbers 701-710 (another source states in July, when they arrived at the St. Étienne du Rouvray workshops for final erection.)

"Sometime in mid to late 1918 the 10 N.S. Wales 2-8-0 engines were sent in for a thorough overhaul before shipment

to Palestine. Every effort was concentrated on these, and after a big rush they were got away to Marseilles, where they were held up for a few weeks. In the meanwhile General Allenby had defeated the Turks, so the engines were duly sent back to traffic in the French area." (From C.H. Robinson, "The Main Base Locomotive Workshops of The British Expeditionary Force, St. Étienne du Rouvray", in 'Journal of the Institution of Locomotive Engineers' No. 58, Paper No. 135, 1922.)

"The War Diary of 5th. Australian Broad Gauge Operating Company states that a party of 12 men had been away since 13th. July 1918 when they had taken a number of unspecified engines from Rouen to Marseilles for shipment. The boat had been delayed and they had to guard the engines." The men returned to the Company in August 1918, but there is no mention of what happened to the locomotives. Post-war the N.S.W.G.R. refused to purchase the engines, which were by now heavily worn and on sale at a price higher than the original, and they were left in a military dump – possibly at Ghent docks, possibly at Audricq – while attempts were made to sell them - eventually they were disposed of to the Nord of France and the Nord-Belge and to an industrial user in Ghent but were not popular with crews and were mostly scrapped in the 1940's.

This is most intriguing. Whether or not Allenby had won by this time, the British military railways in Egypt and Palestine were still in dire need of powerful freight locomotives for a few years and we know the Baldwin 4-6-0's were just beginning to arrive as the war ended. So, but for some problems with timing and shipping, there could have been Australian-type Consolidations working over the Sinai line!

(I) HUNGARIAN-BUILT STOCK FOR EGYPT.

From Paul Scheller: "SEMAF built its first goods wagons in 1955 or 1957 and later passenger coaches with assistance of the Hungarian Ganz-MÁVAG works. The first bogie goods wagons had Diamond bogies, then the ESR adopted the Hungarian version of the UIC bogie. New built goods wagons like the Refrigerator cars have American Amsted or Ride Control AR-1 bogies.

Ganz-MÁVAG built a lot of passenger coaches, sleeping and dining cars and diesel trains for ESR in 1950 - 1960. After 1980 Ganz-MÁVAG developed and built passenger car bogies for ESR and transferred the production step by step to SEMAF. Ganz-MÁVAG assisted also in the design of modern passenger coaches built by SEMAF (and so I got the copy of the SEMAF catalogue from a Ganz-MÁVAG engineer...)"

(m) SOUTH AFRICAN LOCOS IN THE SUDAN.

In July 2014 Alon Siton found some wartime photos of locomotives in Sudan. Ray Ellis was excited:

"A remarkable find as photos of these locos in the Sudan are rare indeed !! Fifteen of these 4-6-0s were originally built for the Cape Government Railways in South Africa as their 6th class, and one (No. 713) was originally built for the Orange Free State Railway as their 6th class, and identical to the CGR engines. This latter engine became part of the Central South African Railway in 1902. All sixteen engines became part of South African Railways in 1910. They were purchased by the British War Dept. in 1942 and were loaned to the SGR to assist their shortage of motive power during the Second World War. During their wartime service in Sudan the engines carried an "M" prefix to their 700 series numbers. They were officially returned to the British War Dept. in 1945, but were never returned to South Africa. Some sources say they were purchased by the SGR, probably in 1946, but this has never been positively established. They were all later withdrawn and scrapped.

All were 4-6-0's, and all built by Dübs apart from 711, 712, 714 and 715 which were by Neilson Reid.

700: 3050/1893

701: 3051/1893

702: 3054/1893

703: 3070/1893

704: 3060/1893

705: 3088/1893

706: 3067/1893

707: 3447/1896

708: 3467/1897

709: 3463/1897

710: 3475/1897.

711: NR 5319/1898

712: NR 5323/1898

713: 3343/1896

714: NR 5250/1898

715: NR 5629/1898

Many SGR locos hauled water tenders to supplement their water supply. These locos would have been right "at home" in

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the Sudan as they were not unlike the 4-6-0s that the SGR already had in their fleet." One photo shows "a loco is on shunting duties at Atbara, the HQ of the SGR. Note it is missing its headlight, as on such duties it would not have been required; they rarely shunted at night!! These locos are mentioned on page 33 of Tourret's combined volume."

(n) MORE FROM INNOTRANS.

A Molinari-Rail AG of Winterthur project was the supply and installation of generator sets in the Siemens push-pull coaches for IR, specifically for ten driving control trailers. A consortium was formed with Zeppelin (Caterpillar Motors) and Hitzinger (Generator builders), under Molinari's leadership. Works included design of the engine rooms, the roof-mounted cooling systems, complete exhaust gas system, piping for cooling water and air, ventilation of the machine rooms, a cyclone filter with dust extraction, ventilation of the generators and delivery and installation. It was especially important to ensure that passenger comfort was not affected by the generator sets and their operations. The coach bodies were built by Siemens Transportation Systems Slovenia and at Siemens SKV in Prague, and here the generator sets were installed and tested. The deliveries began in 2008 and were completed in early 2009; further Option deliveries followed in 2011.

Specifications: 2 Generator sets per carriage; 350kVA; maximum capacity along the train cable when both sets were in use simultaneously: 520 kVA; supply of loco-operated trains with train power at 3 AC 400/230V 50 Hz, to all EN, DIN and UIC specifications. Noise kept to 75 dB(A) at 7.5m distance from track centre at 35° ambient temperature. Fire security systems installed for the passenger coaches.

(o) BEERSHEVA OLD STATION MUSEUM NOW OPEN.

From Sybil Ehrlich: "A few days ago someone told me that the museum in the Turkish station in Beersheva is now open. I went today, and it is very nicely done. It opened officially at Hanukka. The main building has a restaurant downstairs and a "gallery" upstairs, which will have changing exhibitions. The current exhibition is the panels showing the history of railways in Israel that was on display in the First Station in Jerusalem when it opened for business. (Perhaps this travelling show will make its next appearance in Eilat station?!) A small wagon houses the information window and a gift shop. They sell mostly activity things (drawing, painting etc.) for kids, and also T-shirts. They have explanatory leaflets in Hebrew and English (separately). The other largish building houses a display of historical photos, none of which is really new to me. One very strange exhibit of a

kind I have never seen before is a sort of sandpit in a glass box, maybe 2 x 3 metres. You can choose to have projected on the sand in either English or Hebrew the history of Beersheva, not only railway related. It's a three-minute whiz through the history, the sort of thing that's usually shown on a screen, but this one is on a horizontal sandpit! Two restored passenger cars; one has real live pull-down windows on a leather strap (yes, I remember those), and has benches and tables where kids can sit and do their projects. The other is done up with "passengers" sitting, reading a newspaper, etc. The lamp standard has four panels, one on each side showing different phases of history (three photos, the fourth side being an audio-visual programme lasting about three minutes). The loco looks very nice. I thought of Paul and how much he would have liked to see it.

Chen has informed us: "The vehicles lent by IR to Be'er Sheva Municipality are PR Saloon 97, ex-LSWR 3rd/Brake PR 316 and a WWI WD 10T van built to LNWR D.88 and later converted by PR to a 7T meat van. The loan contract with Be'er Sheva Municipality states that they to treat them as listed buildings, and approve with me any work to be done beforehand. My stated goal is to restore 97 as authentically as practicable and 316 and the van externally only (the interior to be used for shops etc.). The LSWR 316 stands on modern freight bogies, and will remain so until someone donates more authentic ones (or funds a reproduction)."

(p) ALLAN GARRAWAY z'l.

There have been several obituaries published of Allan Garraway, who passed away peacefully in his sleep on 30th. December 2014 at the age of 88. The funeral was held in Inverness on January 7th. as he and his wife had moved to Boat of Garten after retirement in 1983 from being General Manager of the Festiniog Railway – a post he had held since 1957! He was born in Cambridge 14th. June 1926, gained a degree in engineering at Cambridge University, was called up to National Service in 1947 and obtained a commission in the Royal Engineers, trained at the Longmoor Military Railway and was posted to No. 348 Railway Operating Squadron as locomotive superintendent on the Detmold Military Railway.

The Editor only met Allan once – he had been retained together with a representative of the Tallylyn by the Jordanians to survey the Hedjaz Railway in that country and make a report on possible future tourist operations – but we corresponded and he was very generous with the use of his father Ron's diaries recounting construction of the Sinai Military Railway in the First World War and travels in Syria at that time. These were published in issue 7. He was clearly a great chap and one of the 'old school' who are now alas departing the scene one by one.

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OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. TURKEY.

(i). RAILTOUR STOCK.

More information in relation to our cover picture in the last issue. From 'Eisenbahn Kurier' Jan. 2015 p.33: The last three TCDD steam locos in use were 56 009, 56 359 and 56 508; their boiler certificates expired in 2002, but in 2008 surprisingly 56 548 was overhauled once more and fitted with replacement wheelsets and a new water-tube firebox constructed by a firm in Bursa. This was the former DR 52 7429, built 1943. Four carriages have also been restored, three four-wheelers and a bogie vehicle.

There are plans for the former Prussian G8 0-8-0 44 071 (built 1912) also to be rebuilt with such a firebox, quotations have been obtained.

And in 'Modell Eisenbahner' 2015/1 pp.34-36 is a comprehensive illustrated article on the tour by Markus Behrla:-

"This year Dietmar Kramer organised again a steam-hauled photographic charter in cooperation with TCDD. However, compared with the steam paradise of the 1990's when a variety of loco classes were available, there is not much left. Apart from memorial locos plinthed at various stations – both Afyon and Dinar stations have examples of the class 55 (former Prussian G10 0-10-0) and the museum at Camlik east of Kusadasi there is not much more left to remind one of the steam loco era.

In the depot at Usak, lying between Izmir and Afyon and the starting point for our six-day tour, are now based the last working steam loco of Turkey and another dozen in varying conditions. The former German Kriegslok built in Wien-Floridsdorf as 16882/1944 for the DRG came to Turkey post-1945 and was given the number 56.548. The loco, which is coupled to a Wannentender, has been kept serviceable for special trips by a group of railwaymen. Three two-axle Donnerbüchser coaches and a bogie coach have been externally restored this year as a private initiative by the tour organiser and are available for special trains.

In addition to these carriages our special photographic train comprised several closed and open goods wagons in order to represent as authentically as possible the mixed train formations of the 'Posta' which formerly worked on many Turkish railway lines. The train was also accompanied by a diesel loco and a workshop wagon with personnel. The loco DE24 295 was built at Tülomsas in Turkey under a licence from General Electric, and on several sections of the route it took over traction of the train so as to save the time-consuming need for the loco to take water.

In consequence there was time for several photo stops and run-pasts along the line. Our 'Posta' initially went from Usak via a pause in Banaz up to the high plateau towards Afyon. The route continued via Sandikli to the network around Burdur, our destination, now used only by a few freight trains. From here we travelled on different days to Dinar and Isparta and through the unusual reversal at the junction station of Karakuyu. There are only three freight train pairs per day here, taking coal to a cement factory in Göltaş and the sugar refinery in Burdur, and so this allows for plenty of photo stops along the route in this rather empty area, well away from the main tourist region. The lines are all above 1000m above sea level and the cool temperatures also led to good condensation of steam in the mornings and evenings – good for photography!

Many ballast trains are run to the Karakuyu station for track renewals – in September one of the locos in use on these 1,500-ton trains was DE 36 000, a Co-Co, also built in Turkey under licence from General Electric, and which had been displayed at Innotrans. The new locos replace the DE24 class which had been used in pairs. Nos DE36 002, 003 and 004 were seen in service; at the Depot Burdur the much older DE18 108 is also stationed for shunting duties.

It remains to be hoped that the enthusiastic efforts of the TCDD men at Usak will be rewarded. They didn't only replace the defective steam whistle of 56.548 (using that from the plinthed 57.620 at Burdur Station) but also ordered a steam pump from (Usak some 200km away and had it delivered to Dinar where it could be exchanged overnight. The depot at Usak is being rebuilt into a museum, the engine shed is already being renovated, and a TCDD manager from Izmir who was travelling with us informed us that 44.071 is to be restored as a second serviceable steam loco. It would appear that the basic requirements for further excursions remain, in spite of the increasing modernisation of the TCDD system."

(ii). MARMARAY – AN OBITUARY.

In 'Heritage Railway' issue 197 Jan. 2014 p.37 is an obituary for David Holmes who was an engineer and enthusiastic museum railway volunteer, who has passed away aged 60 from pancreatic cancer. "One of his last work projects was the railway tunnel under the Bosphorus in Istanbul, Turkey. It had to be constructed of compartmentalised boxes due

to it being in an earthquake zone. Unfortunately, he was never well enough to return to visit the finished product with his wife Anne, which was one of his few regrets."

(iii). ANOTHER 'CHURCHILL' FINDS A HOME.

A further ex-TCDD Stanier 8F 2-8-0 was moved on 15.11.2014 to the Scottish Railway Preservation Society home on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway at Bo'ness where it will be restored externally at first, but there are hopes that, having had an overhaul at Sivas works in May 1984 (including a new firebox) and being withdrawn in 1986, the basic elements of the loco might even be restorable in the longer term! TCDD 45170 was built by NBL in 1942 as WD 554 and is being purchased in three stages for a total of GBP 120,000 from John Oldcorn at Hepscott, Northumberland. It will remain on static display for now - It is estimated a further GBP 250,000 would be necessary to restore the machine to working order.

(iv). JAMES BOND ON THE T.C.D.D..

A recent opportunity to re-watch the opening sequence of the latest James Bond film 'Skyfall' meant one could see the sequence in which the good agent chases the evil agent onto a TCDD train. The whole sequence is of course a load of tosh, especially from a railway-operating point of view, but it would be interesting to learn more from someone about the actual filming. A diesel-hauled mixed train passes under a road bridge, allowing both villain and hero to ride motor bikes through the parapet and onto the roofs of some steel-sided four-wheel vans. Bond, being behind the Baddie, lands on a wagon some way behind him – but eventually takes cover from machine-pistol shots (the Baddie has just used the same gun to shoot wildly at the Girl and three Turkish policemen, but seems to have an endless supply of ammunition in the magazine) in a road excavator mounted on a bogie flat. He then uses this machine to crawl over several new cars also loaded on a bogie flat and uses the bucket to claw a hole in the roof of one of the vans – thus rather disturbing a large number of presumably 5th-class passengers inside it! - so as to overcome the gap between the main train and the wagons on which he finds himself – the baddie, with a few pistol shots from the roof, has managed to disconnect the brake pipes and also the coupling! Without bringing the train to a standstill! All this takes place while the train is on a flat single line, initially in an urban setting and then in the country. Suddenly however the two agents, grappling in classic style on the roof, are in mountainous country, having to duck several times to avoid tunnels, and then on the 'Warda' Viaduct where one gets shot, (I don't wish to spoil the plot!),

falls off – and falls into deep water.

A previous James Bond film starring Sean Connery included sequences shot on the 'Orient Express' or the 'Taurus Express' hailed by a Kriegslok and with wild fights and murders in the compartments of Wagons-Lits. Of course, happy endings of one sort or another are guaranteed, with many rather abrupt endings for other characters along the way.....

(v). NEW DIESEL LOCOS.

From Railway Magazine' Dec. 2014 p.98: "Turkish locomotive builder Tülo mas is building 20 class DE 37000 GE 'Powerhaul' locos for national carrier TCDD. The vehicles are modelled on the new European PH37ACai version of the Powerhaul (not the UK Class 70 – GE type PH37ACmi) and are based at Afyonkarahisar.

Tülo mas also built one Class 70 from a kit supplied by GE in the USA; this loco (as 70801, formerly 70099) is now in use in the UK with Colas Rail.

Tülo mas is also building 80 new Bo-Bo electric locos for TCDD in conjunction with South Korean manufacturer Hyundai Rotem."

(vi). ESKISEHIR TRAMS.

From the NVBS magazin 'Op de Rails' Nr. 2014-5 p.228: [Translation from Dutch by the Editor]: "In March the Eskisehir tramway network was expanded with a third line of approx. five kilometres to the eastern part of the city. The metre-gauge network now extends over some twenty kilometres. The stock consists of 23 Bombardier 'Flexity Outlook' type which are derived from the type used in Linz, Austria, including the livery which is white with an orange band.

(vii). NEW HIGH-SPEED TRAIN SETS AND SERVICES.

From 'Op de Rails' 2014-5 op.223.

The TCDD has announced an order for delivery of ten new high-speed trains. In July 2013 the Turks ordered seven Velaro-D train sets with a maximum speed of 300km/h from Siemens to complement the twelve 6-car sets built by CAF. TCDD needs extra sets for the new high-speed line between Eskisehir and Gebze, the first section of which is now available for use for test trains. When this line is complete, travel time from Istanbul to Ankara will be under three hours. In Turkey three other high-speed lines are under construction; these will link Ankara with Sivas, Bursa with Vezirhan on the Eskisehir - Gebze line and Izmir with Polatli. As part of its 'National Trains' programme Turkey eventually wants to develop its own capacity to construct train sets with a maximum speed of 250km/h, and the manufacturer Tülo mas will play a significant role in this plan. Eventually it is considered at least ninety high-speed sets will be required."

More on the YHT high-speed system from 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 52 p. 18:- "On 26th. July 2014 the TCDD opened another section of the high-speed line between Eskisehir and Pendik east of Istanbul. The YHT trains run since 2009 between the stations of Ankara, Sincan, Polatli and Eskisehir; on the new section, which extends the line to 530km, the stations of Bozükyük, Bilecik, Pamukova, Sapanca, Izmit. Gebze and Pendik are served. At a later point the line will be extended a few kilometres further to Sägütlücesme, not far from the historic Haydarpasa station.

For the present there will however be only six trains per day in each direction over the new section, for the signalling systems have not yet been completed. The coming elections in Turkey however forced the earliest possible opening of operations! On all the new sections the trains can run at a maximum of 250km/h and each train offers 419 seats. According to the intermediate stopping pattern journey times vary between 3hr. 40min. and 3hr. 55min. The following trains are currently scheduled 'until further notice':-

From Ankara: 06.00, 08.50, 11.45, 14.40, 17.40, 19.00.

From Istanbul Pendik: 06.15, 07.40, 10.40, 13.30, 16.10, 19.10.

The YHT trains provide good connections to and from services to Tatvan, Kars, Malatya, Kurtalan and Adana."

(viii). KONYA TRAMS AS GIFT TO SARAJEVO.

From 'Op de Rails' 2014-11 p.549:

"The Sarajevo Tramways are shortly to receive from Konya between fifteen and twenty trams which have become surplus to requirements there due to the delivery of new low-floor stock. The vehicles are concerned are Düweg double-articulated trams of the 1960's, which Konya acquired in the 1980's from Köln. In view of the large number of passengers in Sarajevo the new stock will certainly be welcome. They are – including spare parts and transport costs - a gift from the Turkish government which is working for better relations with the mainly Moslem Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Recently some thirty second-hand buses from Istanbul were also donated.

The Sarajevo system currently uses a mixture of vehicles – mainly articulated Tatra K2's, a few of which have been modernised and lengthened with a low-floor centre section, then some double-articulated Tatra KT8's and the Amsterdam 'Blokkenzozen' and still a single former Viennese E1 type is in use. The arrival of the Turkish Köln trams will presumably see the end of those cars from Amsterdam and Vienna."

(ix). NEW ALIGNMENTS.

From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 52 p.25: The construction of new dams along the Euphrates, east of Beyhan in the province of Elazig, is having a major impact on the railway line to Tatvan. In mid-January 2015 as a consequence a new 26km. line was opened between Beyhan and Hodan – since the region to be traversed is every mountainous this has involved boring twelve tunnels of differing lengths. The villages of Gökdere, Ekerek and Suvaran now have rail access on the new, higher alignment – although these halts are nevertheless some distance from the respective villages. The first two are simply halts with a raised earth platform and nameboard, the third has a crossing loop to reduce the distance to the next large station at Genc.

Some kilometres east of Genc, from Dikköy construction of a further section of the raised alignment has commenced; this will be almost 40km. long in order to avoid an area to be flooded by a new dam and reservoir around Yenibasak. Here also a large number of tunnels and bridges over side valleys is necessary and so the works are taking some time. The new sections of the route have many curves and also substantial gradients.

B. LEBANON.

From 'Railway Magazine' Dec. 2014 p. 98: "A Feasibility study is looking at the case for building a coastal railway from Beirut to Tripoli, in Lebanon. The study is being financed by the EU's European Investment Bank and should be completed in 2016.

Lebanon's rail system used to offer connections to Syria and Turkey, but was closed due to the country's civil war in 1997."

On the other hand – a noted journalist commented drily recently that there have always been such schemes but with IS or ISIS or ISIL or whatever they call themselves currently advancing towards Lebanon, it is highly unlikely that anyone would wish to invest in the country until the security situation has calmed down a little...

C. BAHRAIN.

FREIGHTLINER'S GULF LINK.

A brief item in 'Today's Railways' UK No. 157 p.18 states that "On 13 November the Wall Street Journal reported that Bahraini company Arcapita, which bought Freightliner in 2008, is putting the rail freight operator up for sale. Freightliner is the second biggest rail freight operator in the UK.... and also operates heavy haul freight in Poland and owns ERS which runs intermodal services in Europe. Arcapita is said to be hoping the sale will raise up to 400 Million Pounds...."

Who knew this former British Rail division had been owned by Bahrain for six years?

D. SYRIA.

ONLY OLD MEMOIRS.....

There is no current railway 'news' from this country in blood-soaked meltdown; Only some notes from a conversation with Nick Lera in January 2015, which are at least worth recording:

In 2007 he was participating in a TEFS railtour of Jordan and Syria. he and a comrade left the group towards the end at Dera'a and rather than joining a sight-seeing segment to Jerash etc. hired a car and driver and drove to take views from the top of the Yarmuk Gorge, then followed the former Damascus – Muzeirib line (closed and lifted in 1916 to provide materials for the Hedjaz line), then drove to Rayak for a look around, then on to visit Hama (where the former station is now a restaurant, still with the stone inscription with the name) and other stations on the standard-gauge line and had been hoping to continue to Tartessus and find the section of line abandoned when Syria rebuilt the line to Tripoli so as to remain inside its own borders..... And he comments how no-one would ever dream of going to this region now, where most of the Middle East is in 'lockdown'. On the other hand, even a cursory inspection of some of the accounts of the Armenian massacres of 1916-1918 reveals how absolutely awful the history of the region has always been and makes it all the more remarkable that in the 1970's till the early 2000's it was still possible to wander round and take photographs with an ease and a carelessness unthinkable today, with Syria divided into three or more conflicting factions....

In Damascus itself, the connecting line from Baramke (the former DHP terminus from Beirut) and Cadem is long gone; the site of Baramke station is now a bus station, not a brick is visible.... at Cadem the signal box on a street corner and a part of the track inlaid in the road is still present but the rest has been lifted at some point. So the section of DHP line on to Barada, just a few kilometers used for tourist trains, has been isolated; on here is a HR 2-8-0 (of a type that never worked this line before) and a couple of SLM tank engines. From Cadem to Kanawat of course the former HR line has been lifted several years ago and the alignment for a low-level sub-surface metro station dug out – and then left as a big hole in the ground. But the DHP also had a three-road engine shed at Cadem, which remained in use – despite some bomb damage – until relatively recently. This would presumably have been the depot for locos using the line onwards to Muzeirib, which was closed in 1916 soon after the parallel Hedjaz alignment was opened and abstracted all the traffic, and the track materials were requisitioned.

E. IRAN.

(i). SHIRAZ METRO.

From 'Op de Rails' 2014-11 p.550: "In the city of Shiraz (1.3M inhabitants) in the south-west of Iran a metro line was opened on 11th. October 2014. The line is currently 10.5km long and will be extended in coming years to a total of 22.5km. A second line is under construction and there are plans for a further four lines. The rolling stock comprises 27 five-car sets of Chinese construction. Shiraz is the third city in Iran to have a metro; The capital, Teheran has had one since 1999 which has since grown to a network of five lines; Mashhad has had one line since 2011, with a second under construction. In this case it is a 'real' Metro with a separate alignment, but the stock consists of low-floor trams from China."

More information is to be found in 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 52 p.18. The current line runs from Ehsan in the north of the city down to the station of Namazi in the city centre. Construction required thirteen years! Currently the further ca. 12km. onward to Gol-e-Sorkh Square and and 15km. long Line 2 are under construction; plans for the 10km.-long Line 3 are ready, and planning for lines 4, 5 and 6 has begun. The network will be mostly underground, whereby most of the lines will be built by the cut-and-cover method. Only some 35% of the network will require actual boring of tunnels. The entire network will be electrified at 1500V DC with overhead supply. The 27 5-car sets were built by CNR and fitted out by IRICO in Iran. In future IRICO will assemble all the trains from parts supplied from China.

(ii). ELECTRIFICATION TEHRAN-MASHHAD.

(Also from FCN 52.) "The 926km. Line from Tehran to Mashhad will be electrified. This line through the north-east of Iran is the most important passenger route in the country and carries over 10M passengers per annum. The Iranian firm MAPNA has rebuilt the double-track route for 160km/h speeds in recent years. On 29th. June 2014 the contract for further rebuilding and the electrification of the line was signed between the State railways RAI, the Iranian government and a Chinese-Iranian consortium, with participation by MAPNA. As a result of this contract the line will be fettle for 200km/h running, whereby the bridges etc. will be constructed to allow a future increase to 250km/h. The electrification will be carried out using Chinese technology and will include delivery of 790 locos. The Islamic Republic of Iran will carry 15% of the costs and the China 85%. The works should last four years and eventually it is planned to run hourly services throughout the day and a journey time of some 6 hours, which should permit the transport

of some 35M passengers per annum.

In September 2014 the automatic train control system ATP was inaugurated on this line. This is the first stretch of the Iranian railway network to be so fitted, but in the coming ten years a further 10,500km. of line should be so equipped. 50 EMD and 30 Siemens 'IranRunner' diesel locos and ten Paradis-InterCity multiple-unit train sets will be equipped for working with ATP and also fifty stations along this line of over 900km."

F. ERITREA.

We have occasionally covered developments here. In 'Steam Railway' No. 437 (January 30-February 26 2015, p.18) is a sad article by Toby Jennings on the current situation:-

"A shortage of coal and damage caused by multiple washouts may spell the end for one of the world's last remaining outposts of working steam in Eritrea, it is feared. The small North African country made railway history on the early 21st. century, when after gaining independence from Ethiopia in the 1990s, it returned its narrow-gauge Italian colonial system to operation, using the original Mallet 0-4-40Ts brought out of storage.

Since then, it has become a popular destination for railway photographers, although the only regular steam workings have been occasional trips for the benefit of other organised groups, such as passengers on cruises calling at the port of Massawa.

However, reports received from the most recent enthusiast tour – organised by Bernd Seiler of FarRail – suggest that the participants may have already witnessed the the last working steam in the country; The line has been severed by washouts at Embatkalla, which interrupted the second day of the tour, and by rockfalls below Ghinda – while supplies of coal, replenished by Bernd Seiler at his own expense in December 2013 after Eritrean Railways' original stockpile ran out, are believed to be running low.

ER had already been hit in April 2014 by the death of its General Manager, Amanuel Ghebreselassie, who had originally been the driving force behind the rebuilding of the line and had brought other former employees out of retirement to repair the locomotives.

Mike Tyack of 'Steamscenes', whose planned trip to Eritrea was cancelled in January 2014, takes up the story: 'The workshops appear not to have any electricity and all the machines are gathering dust, so engineering back-up is non-existent – it appears that no work has been done on the locomotives since our last tour in January 2012, and their reliability is awful. There are only a few bags of coal left in the entire country, so the chances of anything

ever moving again are very slim.

As there is no internal coal source, it has to come from outside and there has to be a will to arrange it, as the bureaucracy can be obstructive. I honestly can't see how that is going to happen, as running steam is hardly a big priority for the country. Tour groups, with their hard western currency, are the only source of income, so it's a Catch 22 situation – no coal, no groups; no groups, no coal!"

G. AFGHANISTAN.

Basically a first for 'Harakevet' but of course this country is planned to become part of an East-West strategic route from Asia to the Middle East. "At the 42nd, Conference of the OSShD it was agreed to accept the Railway Administration of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan into the organisation.

The total rail length of the IRA network is currently 102km., the main line being 75km. of this. Current new construction is 120km. Currently some 4M tons of freight are moved annually. A study should clarify if a further 500km of line should be built, and the final extent of the network could be even 5,000km."

H. IRAQ.

From 'Fahrplancenter news' o. 52 p. 26: The Turkish builder Tüvasas is constructing fourteen new passenger coaches for the Iraqi State Railways. These will be used initially on the line from Baghdad southwards, since due to the current political situation services to the north (to Mosul, Kirkuk etc.) are suspended.

H. ETHIOPIA.

From 'Op de Rails' 2014-5 p.228. "In March 41 three-section low-floor trams were ordered from the Chinese supplier CNR in Dalian for the future tramway network of Addis Abeba, the capital, which has ca. 3.5M inhabitants. It is hoped that the first trams could even be delivered this year. At present work is under way on a high-speed tramway network with three lines and a total length of ca. 38km."

(More on Ethiopia in the next issue. Ed.)

I. GENERAL:

(i). THE NEAR EAST AS A STRATEGIC BRIDGE FOR THE EAST-WEST AND NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDORS.

This is a translation from a German text published in the 'Zeitschrift der OSShD' No. 4-5, 2014 – the 'Organisation for Railway Cooperation' – pp. 13-16. [The original article is by Hossein Ashouri, Vice-President for Operation and Traffic at the RAI (the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran) but I assume the German is also a

translation of his original. Ed.]

"Iran has an enormous transit potential for the railway traffic in the region. The rail network of the RAI is linked with the Turkish Railways (TCDD) in the West of the country (border station: Razi) and thereby has access to Europe; In the North-West of the country there is a link to the Azerbaijan Railways (AZ) – (border station Djulfa) and so access to the Caspian Sea and to the harbours of Turkmenistan, Khazakstan, Azerbaidjan and the Russian Federation; In the North of the country Iran possesses the ports of Amirabad and Neka and via these to the Turkmenistan ports and so to the country of Turkmenistan itself, to the countries of Central Asia, to Russia and China; In the North-East there is a transport link with Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan; and in the South-East of the country as well as via the Persian Gulf (the ports of Bender-Abbas and Bender-Imam) there is access to the international sea routes.

In view of this background and bearing in mind the strategic situation of Iran, the creation of through rail links with the railway networks of neighbouring countries via the International Corridors East-West (OSShD Corridor No. 6) and North-South (OSShD Corridor No. 11) have great importance. Total length of the the RAI is 10,500km, of which 7,000km forms main lines. Expansion of the rail network is planned with a further 8,000km of route. At present the RAI has a stock of 645 locomotives, 2076 passenger coaches and 22,098 goods wagons.

Since freight transport by railway plays a key role in the economy, there are short-term plans to increase capacity from a current 33M tonnes to 70M tonnes by 2018. In order to achieve this aim the acquisition of a further 11,000 goods wagons is planned.

Transit Corridors which traverse the Near East.

The Near East region, through which various corridors pass, can be seen as a bridge linking them and enabling the realisation of rail transport in two directions between Asia and Europe. There are however a range of problems affecting the use of these corridors, and these include a lack of developed infrastructure in several countries, competition from sea transport and relatively high risks in several countries. The most important corridors which pass through the Near East are:-
Asia – Europe from East to West.

This corridor, which on Iranian territory comprises a part of OSShD Corridor No. 6, is used for international intermodal traffic and transit traffic with the countries of Asia, the Near East, Europe and Africa. The traffic routes run through the territories of the following countries:

a). China, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tadjiki-

stan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and further to Europe.

b). China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and further to Europe.

c). China, the FSU-countries, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Mediterranean, Greece and then further into Europe.

d). Persian Gulf, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Mediterranean, Greece and further into Europe.

Near East – South-East Asia.

This corridor runs from Iran via Pakistan to India and further on to Bangladesh and South-East Asia (Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia etc.) There is a range of obstacles and some sections of this transport chain are still missing in the south-east Asia region. The construction of a link from Bam to Zahedan has been completed. The connection to the Pakistan Railway network does not meet current modern standards and should be reconstructed and modernised to form a highly effective corridor.

The railway lines which link Iran and Iraq.

Two railway lines have been built to link Iran and Iraq. the first is from Khorramshahr to Basra and has a length of 51km; construction of the Iranian section (16km) is already completed and the 35km. Iraqi section should be completed in 2015. [NB The article refers twice to 'Iranischen Teilstrecke' but one of these must be a misprint for 'irakischen Teilstrecke.']

The second section Arak – Malayer – Kermanshah – Khosravi is 536km long and is still under construction, but this should be completed by the end of 2016.

The 'Marmaray' Route along the underwater railway tunnel beneath the Bosphorus, which was built as a link between the European and Asiatic sections of Istanbul. This route allows not only a link with Europe but also forms simultaneously the expansion of the continuous transport chain Europe – Asia. The total length of the new line is 76.3km. The Bosphorus Straits are crossed by a tube 56m deep and of 12.2km length. Train traffic through the tunnel began in 2013.

The North-South Corridor. This links the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf via Iran to the Caspian Sea and further via Russia (St. Petersburg) with Northern Europe. At present this route is used for 'combined traffic' (i.e. road trailers on rail wagons). Over this route goods are transported also over the Caspian Sea via the southern ports of Iran to India (Mumbai). Direct through rail traffic over the territory of Iran and Azerbaijan will be feasible when construction of the missing link between the railway networks of Iran and Azerbaijan is completed, this means the section Qazvin – Rasht – Astara.

At present the railway networks of the

countries of the Near East are linked with the FSU countries via Iran (the south side of the Caspian Sea) and Turkmenistan. The Near East countries therefore use the Iranian railways as their access to the Caspian Sea.

Two corridors to link the Near East with Central Asia and China are currently under construction:

The Corridor Iran – Turkmenistan – Kazakhstan. This will be 926km. long. The section Kazakhstan – Iran is already finished and the construction of a 32km section in Turkmenistan remains to be completed. This corridor will commence operations during 2014.

A further new Corridor between Iran – Afghanistan – Tajikistan – Kirghizstan – China.

This corridor along the East-West line links China and the FSU states with Iran and Turkey and thence onwards into Europe. Preparation of this route has already begun. There are still some missing sections along this transport route but they are under construction.

The Corridor of the Member States of the Arabian Gulf Cooperation Council.

This corridor with a length of over 2000km links six countries with each other, namely Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirate, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman.

Obstacles to the Development of the Corridors.

The missing links in the transport chains form the greatest obstacle for the smooth performance of rail traffic in the Near East region and make the use of international transit corridors difficult. This has negative effects on the logistics chain, costs and delivery times. The existence of elderly infrastructure that does not meet modern standards is the greatest and most obvious obstruction to the creation of effective transport systems.

Major investment is necessary in the infrastructure for meeting the transport needs of the railways. The process of changing from one gauge to another, the time necessary for the changing of bogies, non-existent standard norms and rules or their non-observance – these are only a part of the problems in the creation of a smooth and continuous transport process.

International Organisations and their roles in the development of the Corridors.

Each international and regional organisation is concerned for the development of its own regional and international traffic and prioritises its transport routes whilst working with the other member States. The OSShD organisation and the ECO 13 have agreed upon five corridors which are to be prioritised. The organisations UNECE, UN-ESCAP and UIC have also decided upon their transport corridors. The development

of transport has to follow international agreements and regulations. The efficient fulfilment of these international standards, agreements and conventions can reduce the number of legal differences and a simplified cross-border transit. As well as the transport norms and regulations, however, the countries concerned need to support the construction of lines to fill the missing links in the transport chain.

From this background can one take the following conclusions, that the following steps are necessary to overcome the obstacles and must be undertaken:

- Increase of speed with the construction of new sections of line and completion of the missing links in the transport chain, especially along the corridors: as examples, construction of the line Qazvin – Rasht – Astara and the project Herat – Mazar-e-Sharif and the line round the Lake Van.
- Cooperation between the international organisations, such as OSShD, OTIF, UIC etc. Increase in the stock of wagons and locomotives.
- Development of container transport and removal of obstacles at border crossings, removal of obstacles with Customs controls, introduction of a new technical facility to encourage the competitiveness of rail transport.
- Introduction of measures for shortening delivery times along the transit routes.
- Incorporating in the timetable planning the timings for regular and also faster trains during negotiations with freight customers.

Conclusions.

At the moment the economic development of the Near East region is of great strategic importance. Rail freight transport plays a major role in meeting the most significant economic requirements. I would like to express the hope that in the near future it will be possible to create the necessary links between neighbouring countries, a link that would be characterised by peace and friendship and that will create an unbroken transport chain. We would then witness economic developments, the movement of streams of goods between Asia and the Near East and Europe and a growing share of rail in the transport market."

(ii). "EUROPE CASHING IN ON MIDDLE EAST RAILWAY PROJECTS" – from 'Asian Review' 13.11.2014. By Takeshi Kumon, a Nikkei staff writer, from Dubai:

"The Middle East is going on a railway-building spree, and the world's biggest makers want in. Railway car and facility providers from Europe, which have strong historical ties with the Middle East, are leading the race to capitalize on the boom. Chinese makers are also gradually gaining ground in the region. Japanese companies continue to lag.

At stake are contracts related to mammoth railway projects in the Middle East and North Africa estimated to total \$300 Billion.

International Interest.

Qatar, which is to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, will soon select contractors for the Doha Metro project. Consisting of four lines, the metro will cover the Greater Doha area and play a central role in efforts to develop an urban transport network ahead of the sporting event. A consortium of Japanese companies that includes trading giant Mitsubishi Corp. is competing for related contracts.

In Saudi Arabia, urban railway projects are underway in Riyadh, the capital, and Mecca. Intercity railways are also being built, including a line between Riyadh and Dammam, a city along Saudi Arabia's Persian Gulf coast, and another running from Qatar's capital to its border with Saudi Arabia.

Market Domination.

A railway will also be built on a planned second bridge between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia at a total cost of \$5 Billion.

The region's market for railway equipment has been dominated by leading European producers of railway cars and facilities. These include Alstom of France and Siemens of Germany, each of which is leading a consortium that won contracts for separate lines of the Riyadh Metro.

Alstom has become the Middle East's largest railway contractor in terms of the total value of contracts for ongoing projects. Siemens is ranked second, excluding local businesses.

In Arabian Peninsula nations, European consulting companies are often involved in railway projects from the planning stage, giving European contractors a competitive advantage.

But Chinese players are starting to catch up, as their expanded operations have made their prices increasingly competitive. CSR has bagged a contract to supply cars for the United Arab Emirates' Etihad Rail, and a major Chinese construction company has clinched a deal to build a monorail in Mecca.

Continued Growth.

Despite their advanced railway technology, Japanese companies have not done so well. A consortium that includes Mitsubishi Corp., Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Obayashi and Kajima won a contract for the Dubai Metro; the deal is one of Japan inc.'s only high-profile victories in the region. Some analysts say this is because Japanese rail companies tend to prioritize closer-to-home Asian markets.

Ed James, a researcher for MEED, a Middle Eastern economic magazine, said countries in the region along with those in North Africa are keen to develop railway networks as their economies continue growing. The UAE has already started building a railway that will traverse the country, and there is a plan to connect the long-distance railways of the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

The GCC railway project calls for the construction of a rail network with a total length of 2,000km at a cost of more than \$100 Billion."

THE ROLLING CARPET.

In 'Die Zeit' for 30th. October 2014 p.59 in the 'Travel' section an article by Christoph Dieckmann on a two-week tour by rail through Turkey and Iran!

[Translation by the Editor]

"Here ends the known world. Turkey releases us in Kapıköy, its most easterly border station. Neon lights buzz, the walls are a poisonous green, the State officials measure up carefully the midnight passengers. The stamp is banged down. Now the train rattles onwards into the darkness. It is called Iran.

What are we doing here?

The answer is: The Orient.

This railway history began in Istanbul in 1898. The German Kaiser visited the 'Sick Man of the Bosphorus'. The Sultan Abdulhamid II badly needed to modernise the shabby infrastructure of his country. Wilhelm II, the "Friend of All Muslims", had strategic aims in the Orient. There was a great project – the Bagdadbahn. German engineers and capital and Ottoman labour should create 1600km of railway alignment from the Central Anatolian Konya (already linked with Istanbul) to Baghdad. There were gigantic obstacles to be overcome: the Taurus mountains, gorges and deserts, the wild Kurdistan. In the world war the half-finished railway was recruited to the war effort, but then the Monarchies that were supporting the construction collapsed. The victorious powers dismantled the Ottoman Empire. The planned destination now lay in the newly-created Iraq. It was only on 17th. June 1940 that the first through train departed from Baghdad and four days later reached the station of Haydarpasha.

That is where we start from.

'1001 Nights' is the name of our special train journey. We will be travelling for twelve nights, partly along the old Bagdadbahn, but then we will head for Iran rather than into Iraq. The route and the programme to accompany it has been planned by the German travel organiser Lernidee. It promises a lot of romantic and cultural experience, but avoids all political issues. Is that possible, however, then the whole Orient is burning?

The journey begins on Istanbul's Asiatic shore. Here Haydarpasha rises up like a big sandstone castle. Brass music is to be heard in the station hall, musicians costumed like the Janissaries, the Sultan's military élite, and they play military music. But where is the train?

Haydarpasha has seen its role as a station end and is to become a shopping centre. We actually start by bus, several kilometres through newly-built city areas – Istanbul is eating up the territory towards the Orient. In Gebze our rolling carpet is waiting, a normal train of the Turkish State Railways, decorated for this journey. A red Diesel loco hauls the eight coaches: the Generator coach, the accommodation car of the 15-strong train crew, the orientally-decorated restaurant cars 'Istanbul' and 'Teheran' and four sleeping cars for the five dozen Travellers of the East.

We settle in. Each one has a folding bed, a little table, a hand washing basin, there is a toilet along the corridor. One turns the light out and lies down excited at the new start. Above in the night sky the Great Wagon rolls, here below the smaller ones. From the anonymous darkness a house suddenly appears, lit up like a golden chandelier. A woman is sweeping the stoop. So is it that both her and our day ends.

Early, at 6 the light awkes us. Outside is a red and bare empty land, the horizon garnished with blue mountains. Now the sleeping city of Sincan appears, then suburbs of Ankara. On the platforms the proletarian morning faces, blank, silent. But the sun rises steadily. The on-board radio stutters: "Good morning, dear Guests! Breakfast is ready!" We hurry to the table.

Who are We? Two Englishmen, a Russian pair, a group of Swiss, a handful of Ossis and around fifty former Bundesrepublik Seniors. Amazingly there are no railway encyclopaedists amongst us, the so-called buffer kissers, also not the classic Complainer, the dreadful German, the Hypochondriac and Dr. Know-It-All. Most of the fellow travellers are however nice world travellers who, it seems, have already been everywhere; to Jordan – "the hatred in the eyes of the children. Did you also have Hassan as tour guide in Syria? In Namibia diarrhoea isn't really the problem, but it is in Uzbekistan. In Borneo I saw real shrunken heads, but alas they were not for sale. The Trans-Siberian? Great, we sang: 'A soldier stood on the banks of the Volga'. If we arm the Kurds, we'll create a second Israel. No, please, no political conversation! Hallo, driver, open the door!"

Now we are travelling by bus again. The Turkish railway network is extensive but does not cover the Göreme valley. There, in the Cappadocian heartland of early Christianity, a dozen cliff churches have survived. They were dug into the volcanic rock, with domes and aisles, decorated with frescos. Göreme's Apple Church, Sandals Church, the Dark

Church, Christ, the Apostles, the Evangelists are blind, for the Islamic conquerors scratched their eyes out. The Christians hid themselves underground. Not far from Göreme lie Özkonak and Derinkuyu, cave cities, several levels deep. You had to push your way through the shafts to the deepest cavern, here one crouched feeling pressed down by the mountain, with hammering pulse; what would happen when the light went out?

Back into the open air. What a landscape. Its climax is the snow-capped Erciyes, 3916m high. Cappadocia's Fujiyama. Magma and the volcanic ash cover the land. Rain, wind and eternity have created woods of penisses and fairy chimneys – fantastic sculptures, as though the world had become a record sleeve for 'Yes' by Roger Dean. In these cliffs people live. The policeman of Zelve resides in a stone mushroom, which must give him some added authority. At sunrise an armada of hot-air balloons rises – first threee, then eleven – then it is sixty-two.

Our train awaits us a little further east, near Kayseri. Lunch on board. The passengers have already done some shopping.

"Helmut, would you like to see the vase again? Not right now, Gerda. Funny, I can eat whatever I like, I never lose weight."

We rise upwards. Melon fields, pomegranate gardens, waving railway workers, women picking berries, policemen. Then it becomes alpine. Now we are really travelling along the Bagdadbahn, on the single-track spectacular line through the Taurus mountains. Tunnel follows tunnel, in between a second's glimpse in the yawning chasm. We are approaching the Cilician Gates. It was through this North-South gap in the mountains to the Mediterranean that Xenophon rescued his ten thousand Athenians from Persian military service in the year 401 BCE; In 330 BCE Alexander rode through here to the Battle of Issos.

We pause at the station of Hacikiri, sixty kilometres before the city of Adana with its millions of inhabitants. Here the Gates are open. Nearby stands a magnificent arched viaduct, the Gavurdere Viaduct, 172m long, 98m high, completed in 1907. Down in the ravine a grill picnic is prepared. A Café Trio plays Viennese waltzes and 'Kalinka' on their fiddles. The traveller suddenly feels a desire to walk over the bridge, along the rickety footpath. He climbs into the dusk. High above the Nothingness he meets three grinning fellows who inform him that Real Men walk on the right side of the tracks, where there is not even a hand-rail.... From a distance one can hear 'La Paloma'....

Survived, thank God! Never again!

We awake in Gölbasi. A flotilla of six minibuses is awaiting us and shall take us to Mount Nemrut, to the tomb at the summit, that of King Antiochus I from the last

pre-Christian century. Narrow serpentine roads lead to the volcano. Our pilots are Kurdish rally drivers; the chief puts his foot down, his crews follow him with full power into the curves. Green in the face the traveller requests a slightly less masculine tempo. This is allowed with some sarcasm on the way back, but beforehand one has looked down on the world like Moses from Mount Nebo. Deep down below us the fields spread, rivers and lake, surrounded by rows of rocky mountains. headless sitting giants, ten metres high, guard Antiochus' grave; their heads lie at their feet: the divinely-revered King himself, Zeus, Apollo, Hercules, the Eagle of Freedom, the Lion of Power.

And then comes the rain. It pours down for a night and a day. In the morning our train rolls along the muddy brown river Musrat, a source of the Euphrates. Stop! An avalanche, a rockfall has blocked the track. A clearance train comes, but the drama is repeated. After an enforced halt of several hours' duration, buses evacuate us to Van. Eastern Anatolia. The Iranian border is now close by. Also that of Iraq.

The train, freed at last, is brought across Lake Van in the night. We also cross over the Lake, the biggest in Turkey, to the Armenian church on the island of Akdamar. Our Turkish guide indicates to us the snow-capped massif on the horizon – Ararat. The holy mountain of the Armenians! Photos are taken with great enthusiasm, but sadly the big Baedeker map indicates that this cannot be the 5,137 metre Ararat – it is the Saphan, a thousand metres lower. From its peak to Ararat would be still another 130km.

The little church in the lake, built in 915, makes tourist visitors happy with its frescoes and ancient Bible-reliefs; Jonah's Whale: a wolf swimming on its back. The Armenian community has vanished. Instead of local folklore we are greeted by a German chamber concert, beginning with Bach's 'Air', followed by a strong coloratura alto singer with Schubert's 'Lindenbaum'.

How unpolitically can man or will one travel? With the dream capsule through the romantic galaxy? In spite of the closeness to Iraq and the IS? Not counting the many thousands of victims of the Kurdish conflict for independence or alternatively for keeping the country together? Our German travel guide Elisabeth Völlger is an archaeologist. Through the on-board PR system she gives talks on cultural history. At least she mentions the millions of Armenians murdered by the Turks in 1915. The Turkish guide can only cope with that with some difficulty. He prefers to talk of the terror caused by the PKK. Perhaps their leader Abdullaah Öcalan is actually an Armenian?

At the station of Van we are bid a wonderful farewell. Twelve girls in red-gold

costumes dance, sweat and cry out. The 'home boys' stare, jealous of the show. During the journey through the night to the border stones are hurled at the train. A Kurdish custom, we are told. A window is split, but we stay intact. 'Wine-Tasting' is on the programme. Before we enter the world of abstinence the alcohol content of the train has to be filled into the passengers. With a jolly mood we reach Kapiköy. And now across, to Iran!

We had expected many things, but not this. The Iranian border station Razi is shining. A great show! Flag-waving children in the middle of the night. Banners: 'Welcome, Honoured Tourists'. Maids of Honour present honey, nuts, red roses. The Governor of the Province Khoi speaks. Cameras, microphones. How do you feel? – I'm impressed! - the old Bundesrepublik glows with praise. The passenger who has been trained in the DDR notices also the many men from the Security services who go through the train during the festivities.

Next morning, behind glass, the first natural picture. In mountainous terrain, near a village destroyed by an earthquake, an old goatherd leans on his staff. The traveller in his train compartment raises a hand in greeting, the goatherd nods in return.

The bare landscape is similar to that in Turkey, but the travelling in Iran is different. The big reception committees are everywhere. Sometimes a Police escort receives us, then we are honoured with dancers, drummers and flautists. At one point a full harvest festival has been prepared for the honoured strangers, which has to be eaten up before the Winter Journey can continue.

We are a political issue. The first special train with foreign tourists is visiting Iran. The land wants to demonstrate its openness. The media report. According to the 'Isfahan Times' there are on board our train representatives from Denmark, Spain, Australia and Singapore. Our Iranian tour guide informs us, in Iran there is much freedom, here one can do everything one wishes.

The traveller is captured, but makes the most of it to enjoy it all wherever he can. The finely ornamented Oljeitu Mausoleum near Sandschan rises skywards. We reach the desert town of Jazd. Around 30,000 believers here still follow Zoroaster's teaching of the Four Elements: Fire, Water, Earth and Air, and the Three Principles: Think good things, Say good things, Do good things. In the hot sky before the city two flattened round mountains rise up, the 'Towers of Silence'. We climb up to the plateau, upon which forty years ago the dead were left to the vultures. This burial into the air saved the earth from being poisoned by the corpses.

Jazd soaks up water. The results can be seen in Isfahan. Here a 33-arch bridge

has spanned the Sajandeh since 1602, Postcards and posters show this to have been the main sight in this beautiful, lively city. But the river has vanished, for three years now. Jazd and the agricultural activity consume all the water, before it can reach Isfahan.

For the rest, this city of two million is bubbling with life and presents its decorative side. Isfahan's crown jewels are the delicate Lotfullah Mosque and the Chehel Sotun, the palace of forty columns. Twenty of the columns are made of wood, and twenty of light, in the mirroring waters of the pool. The giant Imam-Square, says our Iranian guide, is the third most beautiful square in the world.

Amin, where do we then find numbers one and two?

Er, perhaps in France?

Iran's bazaars are wonderful. One lets oneself enter the activity. one can wander for kilometres through shadowy arched parades of stores and measure the universe of carpets, spices, candies and the fruits of the land. One can listen and smell, one can suck in all the images of this human theatre. One observes 1001 methods of wearing the headscarf – from islamic modesty to flaunting a desire to flirt. One can enjoy the dialectic of concealment and the play of eyes. One would so willingly be invisible, but with a camera. On the other hand this would then mean missing out on the many friendly encounters which the stranger receives: Hello! German good! Joachim Löw! Excuse me, your bag is not closed.

Greetings and nuts, a grape, a handshake, a brief conversation. We learn that German beer is the best, followed by Belgian. In many houses alcohol is concealed. many of the young people would love to emigrate. As a Christian one lives in fear. Women may not sing in public, but may work when the spouse permits this. The Islamic Inquisition has been a bit loosened. Yet again a young man comes up to us and wants to know everything very quickly – origin, name, occupation, the name of the newspaper, the section...

Halt, what are you then?

A student of Information. We are an enclosed land and need information.

Two men observe the entire Republic. Their double portrait is everywhere – Ayatollah Chomeini and Ayatollah Chamenei. With dark expression the leader of the Islamic Revolution of 1978 and 1979 watches, with a milder expression his successor stares out. Amongst our travelling party there is an eye-witness of the revolution, Heinz Albach, State Secretary (retired), was at the German Embassy in Teheran when the opposition to the Shah's regime grew in the mosques. Naturally, he says, the Secret Service was always present at the Friday Prayers. The Imam said, Now

we will take the turban off and wind it up again. Whoever could not do that, was exposed – Savak, Stasi.

The Shah was a creation of the West. 'Democracy' was experienced by the Iranians as a kleptocratic murdering regime. The Shah tortured and executed, he let demonstrations be mown down. That led to the revolt. Heinz Albach experienced a machine pistol at his head and a knife at his ribs. What saved him, he says, was his talent to encounter people with respect and warmth. He led dozens out of the country. In Bonn it was said, Albach loves kissing dirty beards....

And the present in Iran? The UN has counted over 250 executions already in 2014. The most recent prominent case was the 26-year old Rejhaneh Djabbari, whose hanging was announced last weekend.

Everywhere there hang the pictures of the dead. The streets of Shiraz – for miles the lamp posts are hung with the portrait of the young men, some of them still children. These are other dead – the 'Martyrs' who died three decades ago in the war against Iraq. 'The Imposed War' is the foundation myth of the Islamic Republic. It was indeed imposed, begun in 1980 by Saddam Hussein. But once Iran was liberated in 1982, Chomeini's regime turned to the counter-attack and for the next six years sent its youth "into Paradise".

This history is also no topic for our programme. We travel through the ancient world. In burning desert heat basks Persepolis, the Throne-City of the Achaemidian rulers Darius and Xerxes, whose cave tombs are situated nearby in Naksh-i-Rostan. Persepolis' brushed lions' heads and horse skull, the glorification frieze of the Medes and Persians have become a World Heritage. These ruins were not created by time. Alexander caused them, 331 years before Christ, engraving himself into the frieze as later did Ghengis Khan and Tamerlain. Frau Dr. Völlinger lectures: Alexander was concerned with exploring the world and conquering the world, he was therefore a man thirsting for knowledge and

filled with curiosity.

We land at a place of Peace. In Shiraz, the city of the knotted whips; there lies under white marble Persia's Poet Ruler. Hafiz died in 1390, highly revered, and he is still visited. Goethe made him into his Alter-Ego in his 'West-östlichen Divan'. Hafiz's own Divan contains amazing verses. "Go and take care of yourself, preacher! Yes, it is true my heart has erred, but what errors are known to You?.... The Pietist in his arroganz did not find the right way, but the drunkard in his dependence found Paradise."

The State Television comes close, two young women draped in black with cameras and microphone. How do you find Iran?

I express thanks for the warm welcome. I have only been here six days. I see the pretty sides, but I am aware of the darker ones. I come from East Berlin. 25 years ago the Wall fell, and the Cold War ended. I am happy, if Iran wants to open itself up.

The ladies smile. Please broadcast!"

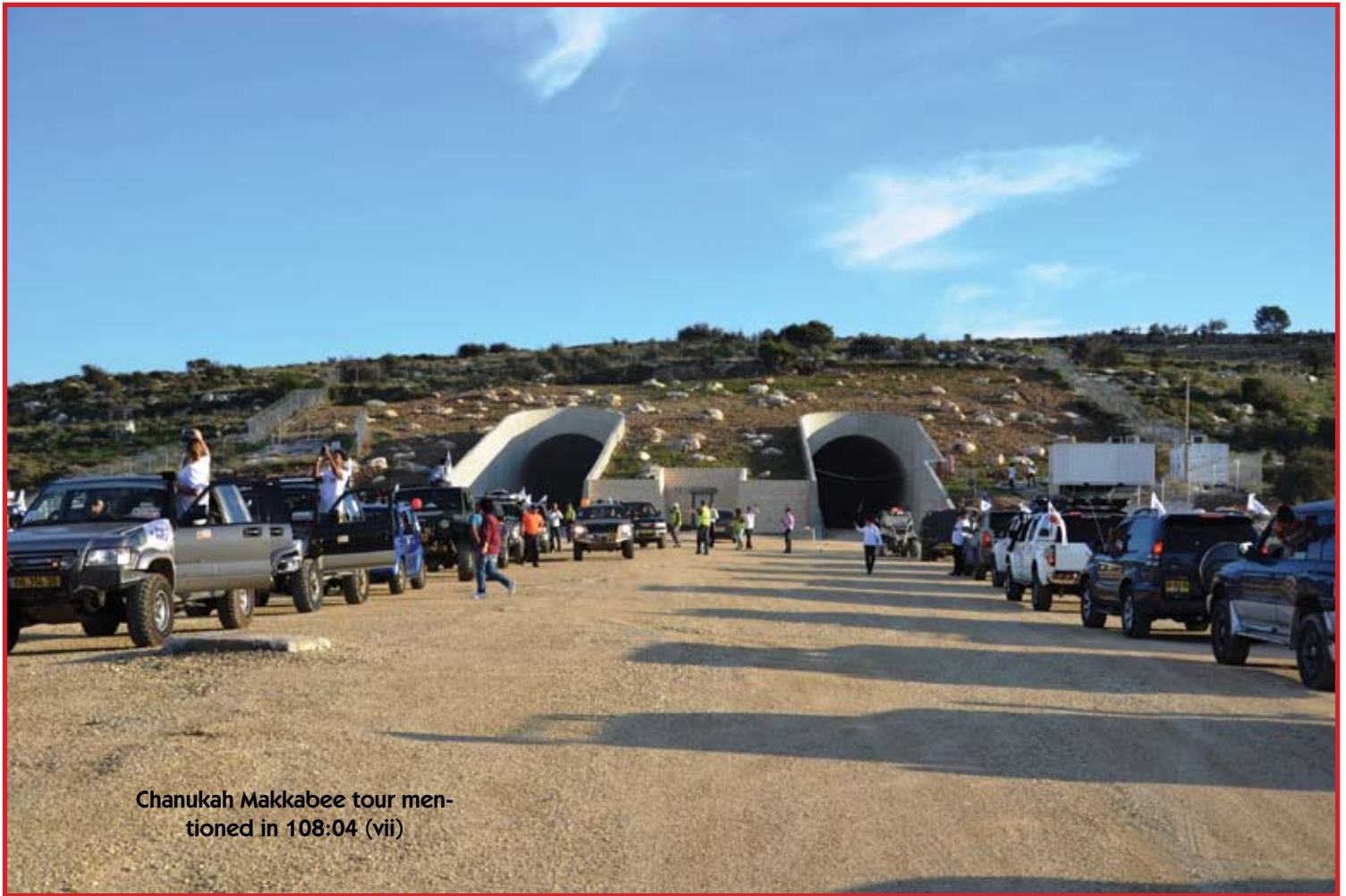
Note:-

The tours '1001 Nights – from Istanbul to Isfahan' - are organised by Lemidee Erlebnisreisen, Kurfürstenstrasse 112, 10787 Berlin. Future dates are 19th May to 1st. June 2015 and 29th. Sept. - 12th. October 2015, from Istanbul and 30th. May – 12th. June and 10th. to 23rd. October (from Teheran.)



108:13

The new schematic railway line map including the section to Netivot



Chanukah Makkabee tour mentioned in 108:04 (vii)



Tunnel vision on the way to Jerusalem (Photo I R)