

Series 29 #3

Issue No. 110 September 2015

הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
Edited and Published by Rabbi Dr. Walter Rothschild PhD
Passauer Strasse 4, D-10789 Berlin, Germany
e.mail:Rothschild-Berlin@t-online.de



110.01

A view
of the future. Now that at least 62 Traxx
electric locos have been ordered by IR for the system that is to
be electrified, this could be a future view at Tel Aviv Merkaz. A computer
generated picture of the Traxx type Bo-Bo locomotive; (Source: Bombardier
Transportation, by courtesy of Mr. Shahar Wiesman from the
IR spokesman's office.)

EDITORIAL.

With all the dreadful things happening in the world and especially in the Middle East it seems foolish to grumble when we have so much good news to publish – new lines and systems, railways, tramways, metro lines, in several countries – in Israel and the Gulf. The only problem for me as Editor is fitting it all in and realising that, once again, many historical items and articles which are on file are simply going to have to wait again as there are so many new developments to report and these fill the pages we have available. Looking back, there were times when we had much to report from Jordan and Syria and almost nothing from Saudi Arabia – now the Arabian Peninsula including the Gulf States are booming with railway projects. After a period of relative stagnation the last two decades have seen continuous plans, constructions, openings and stock orders in Israel. An old Chinese curse was “May you live in Interesting Times”; these times are indeed interesting – especially for those who can observe from a safe distance...

The Editor.

On 5th. August two refurbished EMD NGT26CW 3,300hp Co-Co's are unloaded at Haifa-Kishon Port for use on IR freight services. (Photo courtesy of Shahaar Wiesman, IR press office.)



NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(i). FIRST QUARTER 2015 STATISTICS.

From a press release of 27.05.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

“On Wednesday 27.05.2015 the railways presented their achievements for the first quarter of 2015, which show positive results; the number of customers is rising, as is the profit.

- The first 2015 quarter ended with a net profit of \$55 M.

- The profit from current activity (not including property sales near stations) reached \$4.4 M. compared with a loss of \$21 M. in the first quarter of 2014.

Passenger sector:

- In the first 2015 quarter, 12.6 M. were carried compared with 11.8 M. in the same quarter of 2014-up by 7%.

- The income from passenger services for the first 2015 quarter reached \$46.4 M. compared with \$43.3 M in the same quarter of 2014-up by 7%.

Punctuality:

· The average punctuality in the first 2015 quarter was 96.6%, compared with 95.3% in the first 2014 quarter, and 94.7% in the first 2013 quarter.

· The improvement of punctuality is a result of administrative attention, employees' commitment, introduction of a new timetable, and expanding the rail network.

Freight sector:

· During the 2015 first quarter 1.9 M. tons were carried, compared with 1.7 M. tons during 2014 first quarter – up by 12%.

· The incomes were \$10.5 M., similar to those of 2014 first quarter, due to tariff adjustments to the customers as a result of a reduction in fuel prices.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "The railways keep growing, the rising passenger traffic is thanks to improved service, punctuality, accelerated development of the railways' infrastructures and achievement of administrative targets; The railways will continue their constructive activities in order to become the Israeli leading public transport provider."

(ii). SPECIAL TIMETABLE FOR VALLEY LINE WORKS.

A new special timetable (due to the infrastructure works to link the new Valley Line with the Haifa - Nahariya line at Haifa Lev Ha-Mifratz) was introduced on Saturday night, 30.05.2015; there was a threat from the employees to start a strike on that date, but the Labour Tribunal described their proposal as violating the law, so everything went well and on Sunday 31.05.2015 punctuality was above 95%!

The reason for the strike threat was the closure of the Lod depot for conversion to deal with electric traction; at the same time the railways' biggest depot has now been opened at Beer-Sheba; the Lod workers have been instructed to work temporarily at Beer-Sheba, in order to avoid unemployment, as well as to assist the newly-recruited workers at Beer-Sheba. This created a grievance which – for the moment – does not affect daily operation.

(iii). ZAKA VISIT AND COOPERATION.

From a press release of 28.05.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways hosted on 28.05.2015

a special visit by a special organization: The chiefs of ZAKA - "Rescue and Save" - a 1,500-strong voluntary organisation consisting mainly of ultra-Orthodox Jews (but also Arabs and others) who are the first to arrive at disaster-hit areas, always ahead of the regular ambulances, and who on more than one occasion have saved lives or at least reduced injuries. The cooperation between the railways and ZAKA has lasted for years and it was a decision of the IR General Manager to make them more acquainted with the railways' daily operation.

The visit included travelling in the driver's cab of a EURO 3200 loco from Tel-Aviv to Haifa, the control centre at Haifa Hof-Ha-Carmel, Haifa East depot and explanations from Deputy General Manager for Safety Mr. Udi Kaplan-sky. The railways surprised the organisation's leaders by presenting them with three lighting sets for working at night and at disaster-hit areas with poor light conditions.

The chairman of ZAKA Mr. Yehuda Meshi-Zahav thanked Israel Railways

Ltd. G:M. Mr. Boaz Zafrir for the "Warm hospitality, the cooperation, and the mutual understanding of the honour for the disaster victims and even more for the rescued people, as well as for the special gift to be installed in the organisation's ambulances, to be used particularly at nights."

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "We're glad and proud to host ZAKA people who are doing holy work in emergency situations, assisting the railways to resume traffic quickly after such events; the cooperation is excellent, and I'm confident it will continue so."

(iv). LEVEL CROSSING SAFETY.

From a press release of 02.06.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The issue of cars crossing a level crossing dangerously is an international problem. It forms a significant challenge for rail operators, creating a high risk both for car and train passengers.

In order to increase public awareness of this danger, 43 railway operators worldwide have unified forces in order to organize the ILCAD – International Level Crossing Awareness Day. Israel Railways Ltd. participated in the event for the 4th time. In Israel delays of 350 minutes occur weekly due to breaking barriers at level crossings; this also reduces the reliability of services for passengers.

The day, to take place on Wednesday, 03.06.2015, would focus on protected level crossings only under the common message: "Act safely at level crossings".

The day included several activities:

· An international convention "How to improve safety at level crossings and surroundings" to take place at Istanbul, Turkey.

· An international film clip to be broadcast in all participating countries.

· Special educational activities to be carried out at level crossings.

As part of the cooperation between the railways and the traffic police to mark the ILCAD - International Level Crossing Awareness Day - the traffic police will be distinctively present at level crossings all over Israel for a whole week.

The railways' stewardesses will be at level crossings and adjacent fuel stations to welcome drivers with leaflets and gifts.

Israel Railways Ltd. G. M. Boaz Zafrir said: "Israel Railways Ltd. is one of the world's leading railways in the development and installation of advanced technological devices to improve safety at level crossings; however, even the most sophisticated devices can't stop a train approaching a crossing at 160 km/h when a car driver crosses at red lights; such a driver must understand the enormous risk he is taking. We are acting to increase awareness through the main message: "No crossing when the lights flash".

He added: "In addition to providing in-



formation and police enforcement the railways are acting together with the Ministry for Internal Security, installing and operating police cameras at the crossings; These will record drivers crossing the red traffic lights erected near the crossing (they are coordinated with the level crossing flash lights), thus trying to eliminate the drivers' dangerous behaviour".

Data about crossing at red lights in Israel:

During 2014 18,000 drivers crossed the rails after the barriers were down, thus causing the application of passenger trains' emergency brakes and risking human lives; 79 barrier arms were broken just a few seconds before a train's arrival.

Despite all the precautions introduced to raise the safety level near the crossings, almost all accidents occurred due to the dangerous behaviour and disobedience of car drivers or pedestrians. Despite the low number of level crossings (only 75 in Israel compared with 200,000 in USA) the local investments are among the world's highest.

In recent years, the railways - together with local manufacturers - have developed innovative technological means of warning drivers of approaching trains and monitoring cars stuck on the track. The railways have built dozens of grade separations, costing \$150 Million, thus reducing by 50% the number of active level crossings from 152 in 2005 to just 75 in 2015.

In Israel, a variety of technological solutions are operated:

- The road traffic lights are positioned just before the level crossing.
- VMD - Video Motion Detection cameras intended to find a stuck car between the barriers and reporting immediately to the railways' control centre.
- Radars installed at the crossings - scanning the area between the barriers after they close the road; if a trapped car or any obstacle is detected, the signalling system activates a red light to the train driver; if he does not stop the train the remotely controlled automatic braking system is applied.
- A monitoring system based on loop sensors installed between the barriers in order to identify and warn both the train driver and the railways' safety centre about a car crossing the rails or staying there too long after the barriers are down.
- Warning signs on approaches to level crossings with poor visibility."

(v). STATION UPGRADES.

From a press release of 03.06.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Since 2011 the railways have enjoyed a constant rise in passenger traffic. As a result of growing demands and the ambition to keep improving the service the railways have recently started upgrading various passenger stations including: Hai-

fa Hof-Ha-Carmel, Binyamina, Pardess-Hana-Keysaria, Hadera West, Netanya and Rehovot.

Within two months the railways are to start adding an exit/entrance building to/from Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central station to the overhead Modai road bridge (on which there are also sidewalks) located north of the station, on which tens of thousands of passengers pass daily to and from the nearby Diamond Exchange and high-tech. areas.

Improved service for passengers will be achieved by adding escalators and lifts from the platforms directly to the building and the bridge; the project is quite complex, since works have to be carried out in an active station through which more than 55,000 people pass daily.

The winner of the tender is one of Israeli biggest construction companies, Dania Sivus; the designers are the architecture office Bar-Hana.

Israel Railways Ltd. Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "The railway stations are the meeting points with our customers, as well as the gates from and to trains and platforms; Keeping the service quality at stations and their appearances is an integral part of the service concept we lead in recent years.

The additional exit/entrance to the railways' biggest station is an important step for our many customers using the station; We will continue to improve services, and our intention is to add further escalators and lifts at the southern exit from Tel-Aviv Hashalom station to Hashalom overhead road bridge (part of Ammunition Hill Street)."

A month later came another related press release of 02.07.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways are currently adding new gates and upgrading the existing gates at Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central station, in order to ease passage to/from the Diamonds Stock Exchange and adjacent business area used daily by 55,000 passengers.

Passage is currently provided by a pedestrian bridge over the platforms leading to these areas, used daily by 55,000 passengers and other pedestrians, and due to being narrow, this creates "human bottlenecks" every morning and afternoon.

In order to release stresses the railways will carry out upgrading and improvements between Monday evening 06.07.2015 and Saturday night 11.07.2015, during which two gates will be dismantled, and instead eight new gates will be installed at a separate location.

During the works the passage will narrower than usual and stewardesses will assist the passengers. The gates will be operational on Sunday, 11.07.2015.

General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "After years of massive investments in

הרכבת

building new lines and stations the time has come to upgrade the existing stations in order to raise service levels, as this is our main goal."

And then a further press release on 20.08: "Starting on Sunday 23.08.2015, the railways will start a deep treatment of rebuilding the elevator on platforms 1 & 2 (island platform) of Savidor Central station serving northbound passenger trains. At this station there are three elevators which have been serving constantly for 26 years; the railways have recently completed rebuilding the elevator on platforms 3 & 4 serving southbound trains, due to a serious failure in the lifting piston which caused operation stoppage. Checks which took place recently on the elevator on platforms 1 & 2 have shown that mechanical parts of this one are also worn out, hence the rebuilding, which will last three weeks.

All efforts are being made to reduce disruption, especially for the disabled, to the minimum.

Additional elevators will be installed on the northern ends of the platforms linking the station with the nearby Modai overhead road bridge."

(vi). NEW FOOTBRIDGE.

On Friday 19.06.2015 from 00:01 there was to be no traffic between Kiryat-Gat, Beer-Sheba, and Dimona due to erection of a new overhead pedestrian bridge; consequently, the following changes were to take place:

"On Thursday, 18.06.2015 the 23:07 train from Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central station will terminate at 23:54 at Kiryat-Gat, and will not call at Lehavim/Rahat and Beer-Sheba stations. On Friday, 19.06.2015 trains will start/terminate at Kiryat-Gat. Traffic will resume on Saturday night, 20.06.2015."

(vii). HAIFA PROJECT – THE MAIN LINE TO BE SUNK UNDERGROUND.

From a press release of 09.06.2015 by the Haifa municipality: "The newly elected Finance Minister Mr. Moshe Kakhlon and the mayor of Haifa Mr. Yona Yahav signed today a \$348 Million project for turning the railway line section between Hof-Ha-Carmel and Haifa East (running mainly along the Mediterranean sea coast) from a surface line into an underground section to enable the construction of many apartments for young couples as well as developing the whole area in terms of business and hotel areas; The project is called: "The Sea Front". (See below under 'Quadrupling')

(viii). INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM.

From a press release of 10.06.2015 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"Transport & Roads' Safety Minister Mr. Israel Katz announced today that Israel has become a member of the International Transport Forum (ITF), together with two additional new members, Argentina and Morocco. Mr. Katz further said that being a full member in the ITF shows the world trust in the Israeli economy; during recent years, Israel has invested 1.4% of the GNP in transportation compared with 0.5% to 0.8% in the developed countries."

(ix). BETTER BEHAVIOUR.

From a press release of 11.06.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways started today a new campaign on all advertising media - TV, press, hoardings and digital media - referring to behaviour on trains while travelling. The \$520,000 campaign is intended to increase awareness of correct behaviour in order to make the train journey more pleasant and attractive."

(x). SMART CARDS.

From a press release of 14.06.2015 by Is-

tender for charging the multi-liner smart cards using credit cards.

Israel Railway Ltd. G.M. Boaz Zafirir said: "In recent years the railways underwent many revolutions in terms of rolling stock, safety systems, maintenance facilities, progressive applications; now the railways have made another step forward with the credit cards, and I'm proud to say that the railways are the first Israeli public transport company to introduce this!"

(xi). HAIFA LEV-HAMIFRATZ DEVELOPMENTS.

From a press release of 28.06.2015 by Yefe-Nof (Greater Haifa Transportation Master Plan Team): "Works on building the new transportation centre adjacent to Haifa Lev-Ha-Mifratz station have started recently. The Israeli company Ter-Arme has started inserting piles for both the pedestrian bridge of the Valley Line (Hejaz) station (over Lev-Ha-Mifratz station) and the northern part of the bus terminal. The \$52,000 project is to be completed within 30 months; this will be Israel's biggest and most advanced trans-

Cohen, all mentioned the fact that Haifa is the Israeli city leading the modern transport revolution."

Attached herewith are 2 computer generated IMAGES of both the new bus terminal and the Valley Line (Hejaz) station; in the (xvi). **COMMUTER PASSENGER SURVEY.**

An interesting passenger traffic survey prepared by the website Walla reveals the fact that, despite heavy investments in railway stations, particularly those which have been upgraded - with the exception of Tel-Aviv stations - the number of passengers using rail to/from work is still low compared with the number of jobs in the stations' nearby; for example: B'nei-Brak is used by about 2,000 passengers/day while there are more than 150,000 work places within a walking distance of up to 7 minutes! The absurdity is even greater when taking into account the fact that both Tel-Aviv and Petakh-Tikva are both just five minutes from B'nei-Brak by train; the same journey can take up to an hour either by bus or by car in rush hours The railway management is aware of the unused potential and is con-



Computer-generated image of both the new bus terminal and the Valley Line (Hejaz) station; this line turns to the left towards Haifa; the round roof is of the bus terminal, while after that can be seen a new parking area for 400 cars. The image is by courtesy of Yefe-Nof public relations office by Ofer Amar.

rael Railways Ltd.:

"The railways today – 14.06.2015 – took the first step in making it possible for passengers to charge their multi-liner smart-cards through the internet or the smart-phone by using their credit cards. This has become possible after Israel's biggest credit card company Isra-Card won the

portation centre and will serve users of trains, METRONIT (BRT), regular buses, taxis, future cable to/from Mount Carmel, and the planned train/tram to/from Nazareth.

Both Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz, the mayor of Haifa Mr. Yona Yahav and Yefe-Nof General Manager Mr. Avishai

sidering ways to change it. (Aharon Gazit adds: "It seems to me that the best solution could be a train/tram running between the stations at least in off-peak hours at much shorter intervals and times due to higher acceleration/deceleration capabilities co-ordinated with heavy rail similar to that of Karlsruhe and Saarbrücken.")

(xvii). COMMEMORATION CEREMONY.

On Thursday, 16.07.2015 there were two different railway ceremonies:

In the morning, there was a memorial ceremony to commemorate the sad event in which eight railway employees were killed by a rocket on 16.07.2006 (the 2nd. Lebanon War) just after finishing their breakfast at the Haifa East railway depot; the ceremony itself took place near a statue at Kiryat-Yam - a satellite city of Haifa - from which most of the victims came. And then:

(xviii). NEW TRACK-RECORDING CAR.

In the afternoon of the same day there was an entirely different ceremony at the Haifa East railway track machinery depot: Receiving the \$8M. Plasser & Theurer EM120H new track recording car. The new vehicle carries eight computerized laser-integrated optical measuring systems as well as DGPS.

Israel Railways Ltd. G.M. Boaz Zafrir said: "Due to the growth of the network from 700 km in 2002 to 1,100 km. today, with another 300 km to be added by the end of the decade, the need for a modern track-recording car arose, and now with the new vehicle the railways have joined their most advanced counterparts." Attached herewith are 2 pictures of the new vehicle at Haifa East track machinery depot provided by courtesy of Mr. Shahar Wiesman-spokesman office.

A film of the test the vehicle has passed in Austria can be seen in the link:

<http://www.plassertheurer.com/de/mediathek/videos/kunden-videos/basket/2115469/secret/b820e39dd5da3c74e26e5dd4b7084d0.html>

(xix). TRACKLAYING BEGINS ON THE CARMIEL LINE.

From a Press release of 30.4.2015:

"Work has begun on laying the train tracks along the Akko - Carmiel line in the Western Galilee, at a total cost of 2.8 Billion Shekels. The first metres of train track have been laid adjacent to Macher Junction, and each day 400 additional metres of train track will be laid.

The Minister of Transport and Road Safety, Israel Katz, said that this is one of the most important train lines in the periphery and will help close social and economic gaps for the residents. According to the Minister, the Ministry of Transport is continuing to plan the railway line from Carmiel to Kiryat Shmona. "In addition to a high quality of life, residents of the Galilee and the many tourists who visit the region will enjoy an advanced and fast transportation system. We are proud to bring the railway to Akko, Carmiel, Beit She'an and other cities, in parallel with the comple-

tion of other transportation projects in the North and South."

A unique method for laying tracks in train tunnels will be employed in Israel for the first time ever. This is the Swiss LVT method. As part of the work on the rail lines, a pair of parallel tunnels was dug, "Gilon Tunnel", at a length of 4.6 km. in which the track will be laid on a concrete slab as opposed to a ballast base as is done in the conventional method.

The laying of the tracks along the rail line is being executed by two Israeli companies, Lesico and Shikun Binui, and a German company, DB BAHNBAU that specialize in the field. Each day some 800 tons of ballast will be laid along the route to serve as a base for the laying of every 400 metres of track.

Mikha Kopilovsky, Acting General Manager of Netivei Israel, said: "The track-laying phase, as part of the giant railway construction project, is an especially important and exciting phase. The work on the railway project is progressing on schedule and the progress can already be seen at the two stations in Ahhud and Carmiel. Along with infrastructure work and railway construction, action is being taken to preserve the natural environment and landscape, including the regulation and restoration of the streams that run across the railway route and the relocation and preservation of hundreds of trees and thousands of geophytes." Kopilovsky added: "The rail line will serve the residents of the North by connecting to the national railway system, which will significantly shorten travel times to Haifa and to the central region. The railway is expected to attract new residents and entrepreneurs to the region. It will encourage the economic development of the region, which is already being felt, in the construction of new residential neighbourhoods along the route. New businesses and industrial zones, such as the new Bar-Lev Industrial Zone, will host new plants employing thousands of workers."

In the framework of the project, infrastructure is being built for a double track at a length of 23 km. to connect between Carmiel and the coastal line at Na'aman. The trains will speed along the modern tracks at a speed of 160 km/h, and will serve two passenger stations - Ahhud and Carmiel.

The work on the project includes: construction of railway tunnels totalling 4.6 km in length; construction of eighteen secondary tunnels to serve as emergency passageways; a pumping station for drainage of rainwater to prevent water from entering the tunnel; bridging sections and road paving; bridge construction; service roads and agricultural roads. Furthermore, Road 4 has been raised above the railway track and over the Hilazon Stream, which was redirected along a stretch of 750m.; bridges

הרכבת

of 30m in length were built over Na'aman Stream and of 90m over the Hilazon Stream. In addition extensive landscape restoration work and electricity, lighting and communications infrastructure work has been done, as well as the redirection of existing local and national infrastructure systems."

(xx). NEW AGREEMENT ON EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING.

From a press release of 26.07.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"On Thursday, 23.07.2015 a work agreement was signed between the IR management and the workers' delegation (the General Labour Union was deeply involved) as an integral part of the employment conditions of passenger trains' drivers considering the unprecedented rate of the railways' development. The agreement's principles: More work, more Training, fewer Absences!

In the next five years the railways will recruit 250 new employees each year while facing many challenges including: Completion of the Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line (the Netivot - Beer-Sheva section), completion of the A1 fast rail link to Jerusalem, electrification, completion of the Haifa - Afula - Beit-Shean line (the Valley Line or formerly Hedjaz line), completion of the Akko (Acre) - Carmiel line, purchasing of new rolling stock and motive power, and continuing service improvements.

By 2020 the number of daily passenger trains is to be doubled to 860 with a forecast for 70M. passengers/day, while raising the service quality and level to that of the world's most advanced railway services.

The railways' management expects and hopes that the agreement signed will bring the expected changes to proper operation, greater training and intelligence for the employees and implementation of targets for passenger services."

(xxi). NEW FREIGHT COMPANY ORGANIZATION.

From a press release of 28.07.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Mr. Kathriel Moriya (56), married with three children, a citizen of Tel-Aviv, has been appointed as the first General Manager of the railways' subsidiary "Rail Cargo Ltd."

Mr. Moriya is also a manager and partner in the companies: ICG (administrative consulting and bank investments) and "Moriya Investments and Financing Ltd." In his former jobs he was - amongst others - the Finance & Operational Deputy General Manager of YES (satellite communication) and General Manager of "Yishfar Investments".

"Rail Cargo Ltd." was created in July 2014 after a government decision;



Top
 The new Goral flying junction north of Beer-Sheva - the main Beer-Sheva (left) to Tel Aviv (right) line with, diverging, the new link towards Netivot and Ashkelon.



Below
 Tracklaying commences on the 'A1' fast route to Jerusalem, the long viaduct leading to Latrun visible in the background.

the estimated income of the company by 2020 will exceed \$80 Million/year. Immediately after the meeting of "Rail Cargo Ltd." directorate on the same month, the procedure of finding a candidate for the company's General Manager was started by publishing the appropriate tender. In February 2015 the directorate approved the appointment of Mr. Moriya, from 25 candidates; This was recently approved by Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz, and today – 28.07.2015 - the railways received the letter of appointment.

In his new job, Mr. Moriya will create the administrative and managerial backbones of the company, thus starting its activities. The company is to be customer-focussed, and will act to enlarge the logistic services' basket of rail cargo haulage, such as door-to-door services, and additional services including storage, bonded warehousing, despatching, etc.

The government decision says that the company will recruit a strategic investor who will have a 51% share, thus the company's status will change from a governmental company to a mixed company.

The company will have the exclusive right to haul cargo through the railways for their customers, while the railways will perform the haulage for the subsidiary.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Boaz Zafir, who is also "Rail Cargo Ltd." Chairman said: "Creating the company is a meaningful step for the railways as well as for the Israeli industry. The new company will work on increasing rail cargo haulage significantly, thus reducing the number of road heavy vehicles and their mileage, increasing safety, reducing air pollution, and eventually will accelerate the railways' development, their economic stability, and their contribution for the economy."

(xxii). QUADRUPLING PLANS FOR THE MAIN LINE!

From a press release of 27.07.2015 by the Haifa municipality:

This refers to the national infrastructure programme of quadrupling the coast line between Haifa Hof Ha-Carmel and Tel-Aviv University stations - 80 km - due to the fact that in 2040 the passenger traffic forecast is for 250 Million and there are no other solutions to cope with such numbers. Travelling time will be cut from current 50 minutes for suburban trains to 30 minutes. The upgraded section will be fully grade-separated; Ten stations will be upgraded while a new station will be built for changing trains from suburban to fast services; the latter will have only one stop; The location is to be determined at a later stage.

The quadrupling will consist of two stages: first between Netanya and Shefayim (north of Herzliya and in the near

future the junction for the line to Kfar-Sava and Ra'anana - running in the median of road No. 531; both are under construction). Then along the coast line the two additional tracks will be laid east of the existing double-track line, while between Netanya and Haifa Hof Ha-Carmel the new tracks will be laid west of the existing double-track line, according to land availability.

So far so good.

But the picture changes - according to the Haifa Municipality - due to the fact that the railways also want to quadruple the line further on along the full alignment up to Nahariya; this is in "head-on-head collision" with the municipality's plan for running the line underground at least between Haifa Hof Ha-Carmel and Haifa East, in order to leave the coastline free of a railway line in favour of parks and entertainment activities. They are even more worried about the electrical wires and masts that will appear with electrification, which will further spoil the landscape.

The Municipality has already approved financially their programme (for running the line underground) and while it may be a subject for discussion, the railways' programme for quadrupling even the short section between Haifa Hof Ha-Carmel and Haifa Bat-Galim may be found problematic, as there is hardly any space even for one additional track; there are also several historical buildings along the line; a sensitive matter in itself.

The railways have not yet responded, but in a meeting with all those involved, it has been decided to re-check the tunnelling issue.

Attached herewith are 2 pictures of trains running between Haifa Hof Ha-Carmel and Haifa Bat-Galim; on picture ZR4 6706-11.jpg (2 MB) the white houses in the distance are a Greek church and the home of the Greek Archbishop.

Also attached is a cross section drawing of the mentioned section after quadrupling; all provided by courtesy of Mr. Roni Grossmann-municipality's spokesman office.

(xxiii). NEW FLYUNDER JUNCTION NORTH OF BEER SHEVA.

From a press release of 03.08.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways have recently completed the \$530M. (NIS 2 Billion) 70km Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line by creating Goral Junction north of Beer-Sheva. Whilst the track itself had been completed already about two months ago, this past weekend the signalling system has been completed and connected to the whole network. Thus the line became operational.

During the weeks to come and until the official line opening in September 2015 freight trains will run on it hauling loads of 100,000 tons in order to settle down the

track and prepare it for passenger train operation; the intention is to enable the people of Ashkelon, Sderot, Netivot and Beer-Sheva to use the line while initially passing through Ofakim station at reduced speed; this station - now in an advance stage of construction is to be opened towards the end of 2015.

The line will be operated from 2016 by 25 trains daily each direction. It includes seventeen bridges including four grade separations, eleven agricultural (both over and under-line) crossings and a bridge over road No. 40.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafir said: "The Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line is an entirely Zionist project; linking Ashkelon and Beer-Sheva through Sderot, Netivot, and Ofakim, will attract a lot of young couples, increase employment in the south and improve life quality for hundreds of thousands of people living there.

I am glad to see the growing service demands from Sderot and Netivot towards the centre of Israel (mainly the Greater Tel-Aviv Area) and I'm sure that once the line is opened there will be a significant rise in rail use."

The aerial view shows the Goral junction north of Beer-Sheva; the long line running from the upper right to the lower left is the existing Tel-Aviv-Kiryat-Gat- Beer-Sheva line; the curved line from lower left and which turns left is the line to/from Ashkelon; the closer track (to Ashkelon) can be seen running under the existing line in a grade separation to avoid the danger of collisions between trains from/to the 2 lines.

(xxiv). TRACKLAYING ON A1 JERUSALEM LINE.

A second meaningful event on 03.08.2015 was the start of laying the first track on the A1 fast link to Jerusalem at its western part towards the longest bridge in Israel (both road and rail) not far from Latrun monastery. A picture shows track laying on the A1 by a team of Lesico Ltd. (the railways' sole sub-contractor for track laying and rail welding); the longest bridge can clearly be seen just straight ahead, while the entrances to the first twin bore tunnels on the line can be seen at the far distance on right. (Both pictures have been provided by courtesy of Mr. Shahar Wiesman-railways public relations office.)

On 27.08.2015 Sybil wrote: "I took a bus to Tel Aviv this morning (on my way to Netanya) and saw disconnected lengths of track laid at around the 30 km (from Tel Aviv by road) marker. There are also piles of concrete sleepers all along there. Since it's disconnected it obviously isn't being laid by a works train!"

(xxv). NEW ELECTRIC LOCOS.

On 5th. August it was announced:- "Bom-

bardier wins Israel Railways locomotive tender. The Canadian company will supply 62 electric locomotives with an option for 32 more.

Canadian company Bombardier has won the huge Israel Railways tender. Worth NIS 13.7 Billion, this is one of the tenders in Israel Railways' electrification project. As part of the project, Israel Railways will buy 62 new electric locomotives from Bombardier with an option to buy 32 more. The value of the locomotives tender is NIS 1 Billion. *(NB this is unclear but presumably the 13.7 figure relates to the entire project. Ed.)*

The tender that was issued drew four bids: the winning bid from Bombardier and bids from French company Alstom and Chinese companies CSR and CNR. However, CSR and CNR merged recently, raising concerns about price-rigging and the Chinese companies were disqualified from the tender.

Last week Israel Railways sent letters to Bombardier and Alstom asking them to begin the pricing process. The bids were received on Monday and today Bombardier was declared the winner.

Israel Railways CEO Boaz Zafir said, 'The Israel Railways electrification project is moving forward and being transformed from a vision into reality. Converting 420 kilometres of railway tracks so that they will be operated by electricity will completely change the face of the Israel Railways company. The transition to an electric railway, as operated in most advanced countries, will be a major leap forward in everything regarding railway operations and will be the main factor in the future ability of the railways to continue growing and reaching new destinations.'

Bombardier said, "We thank Israel railways for its confidence in us. We will make every effort so that the people of Israel will receive locomotives that serve it loyally in the complex electrification process."

Further (some repetitive) information came from an IR press release of 05.08.2015:

"The railways announce that the winner of the \$315 Million (NIS 1 Billion) international tender for 62 electric locomotives (with an option to additional 32) is Bombardier Transportation. Other bidders were: Siemens, Alstom, CNR, CSR, Hyundai Rotem, Skoda, and CAF.

The locomotives to be supplied are type TRAXX with 6 MW output, and capability to pull trains of up to eight double-deck or twelve single-deck coaches carrying up to 1400 passengers at maximum speed of 160 km/h.

Parallel to the purchase of the new electric locomotives, the railways are currently in the tendering process for purchasing double-deck emus, while 294 push/pull double-deck coaches are currently being

converted from diesel to electric push/pull operation with the assistance of Bombardier Transportation.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafir said: "The railways' electrification project is in progress and vision becomes a reality; electrifying 420 km (out of 1100 km) of the rail network will significantly change the railways capabilities with higher speeds and cleaner environment." Attached herewith is a computer generated picture of the type Traxx locomotive; source: Bombardier Transportation by courtesy of Mr. Shahar Wiesman from the railways' spokesman office.

(xxvi). NEW FREIGHT DIESEL LOCOS FROM CROATIA.

On 05.08.2015 it was also announced: Another event was arrival and unloading at the Kishon Port (the eastern branch of the port of Haifa) of the first two (of six ordered) diesel-electric locomotives type EMD NGT26CW for freight services. The locomotives are equipped with a 3300hp EMD 645 engine, weigh 125 tons, and are capable of pulling freight trains of 2300 tons.

The locomotives have been purchased from NRE in USA with final assembly at Gredelje Croatia through their local representative Mr. Dov Berger, owner of CIC-Railway Equipment.

Although considered as second-hand (for the first time in the Israeli Railways' loco history!) the only refurbished parts are the diesel engine and bogies - so they are as new - and they contain Microprocessor for power management and GPS Technology for positioning and data transfer which are parallel to the systems on the new Vossloh EURO 4000 locomotives; they have the same expected life-time but at about half the price and with a much shorter delivery time.

The six locomotives were purchased at total price of \$13.5M. (NIS 50M.); there is an option for an additional six locomotives. They are numbered 710T and 711T - it is not known what the letter 'T' signifies - and appear to be refurbished HZ (Croatian) 2063-class line diesels.

The railways intend to use the locomotives in hauling container trains between the ports of Haifa and Ashdod with a daily movement of TEU 500, doubling movement of sand and waste materials from the current 1,500 tons daily to 3,000 tons in 2016, increasing haulage from terminals at Hadera West, Ramat-Hovav, and B'nei-Brak for new customers, and preparing to haul steel from ports to customers, and hauling rocks from the north of Israel to Ashdod for building a new port there. (This last activity, if it comes to pass, will be a repetition of the beginning of the 1960's when a special siding was built from the Lod - Rosh-HaAyin line to a quarry near

a place called Tirat-Yehuda and an operational station called Rinatya; it can be said that the railways built the current port of Ashdod and are now doing this again!)

An additional reason for purchasing the new locomotives is the age of the freight locomotives fleet, some of which have already reached the age of 50!

Yaron Dozet has sent a series of photos of the unloading, which can be found under:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bN740a0CUzE>

Attached herewith are pictures of the unloading the locomotives at the Kishon port, as well as at Haifa East depot provided by courtesy of both Mr. Shahar Wiesman from the railways' spokesman office and Mr. Dov Berger who made the deal.

(xxvii). EXTRA TRAINS FOR TEL AVIV COMMUTERS.

The railways are contributing to the efforts to reduce disruption to those wishing or needing to arrive at the Greater Tel-Aviv Area during the LRV works which started on 02.08.2015, so the following service improvements are to start from Saturday night, 15.08.2015 on the Hod-Ha-Sharon - Tel-Aviv - Sderot - Netivot line: On the Rishon-Le-Zion West (Moshe Dayan) - Tel-Aviv - Hod-HaSharon: - 4 trains/hour each direction in the morning and afternoon rush hours; Between Ashdod and Yavne West - additional trains between 10:00 and 14:00; Between Sderot and Netivot - additional trains during the day time.

(xxviii). AIRPORT STEWARDESSES.

Israel Railways are providing the passengers using Ben-Gurion international airport railway station with stewardess service; these ladies will carry their luggage between 16.08.2015 and 31.08.2015 24 hours/day between Sunday and Thursday.

(xxix). 2015 FIRST HALF FINANCIAL RESULTS.

On Tuesday, 25.08.2015 the railways have published their financial results for the first half of 2015, which continue to look positive:

The railways completed the first half of 2015 with a net profit of NIS 239.4 Million.

The profit from current operations in the first half reached NIS 39 Million; in the second quarter of 2015 it reached NIS 22 Million compared with NIS 17 Million on the first quarter.

Passengers sector:

The number of passengers carried during the first half of 2015 reached 25.9 M. compared with 23.7 M. during the first half of 2014; 9% more.

The revenues from passenger traffic during the first half of 2015 reached NIS 375.5 M. compared with NIS 375 M. during the first

half of 2014; 9% more.

Punctuality:

Average punctuality for the first half of 2015 was 96.12%, compared with 95.76% in the first half of 2014, and 94.84% in the first half of 2013.

Cargo sector:

During the first half of 2015 freight haulage grew by 3% compared with the first half of 2014.

During the first half of 2015 3.7 Million tons were carried compared with 3.6 M. during the first half of 2014.

The railway directorate has meanwhile approved the agreement with the Defense Ministry for clearing GSM radio frequencies in favour of improving the railways' signalling and communications on the Ayalon corridor and towards the operation of the A1 fast link to Jerusalem at the beginning of 2018 (hopefully).

The railways will pay the Defence Ministry NIS 220 M, of which the first payment of NIS 60M. is to take place on 01.09.2015.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "The railways continue their growth both in activities and revenues; During the first half of 2015 a new record both in commuter and monthly passenger traffic; this tendency is expected to grow after the line between Ashkelon and Beer-Sheva will be in full operation in September 2015, first without Ofakim station (which is not yet completed) and towards the end of 2015 with this station too.

The railways are currently involved in two other important processes: building the Tel-Aviv LRV Red Line, for which the frequency of service between Hod-Ha-Sharon and Netivot has been doubled at morning and afternoon rush hours to enable commuters to reach Tel-Aviv without traffic jams caused by the LRV works, and the tariffs' reform led by Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz".

(xxx). TRAIN FORGETS STATION STOP!

Passing a station or a halt by a passenger train instead of stopping there should not occur, but this happened on Sunday 16.08.2015 when the 18:16 train 528 from Jerusalem Malkha to Tel-Aviv passed the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo station at 18:18 without stopping, leaving 15 angry passengers on the platform and other angry passengers on the train; the driver went on until arriving at Beit-Shemesh at 18:59, on schedule.

Aharon Gazit notes: "Beyond the driver's unforgivable behavior, several questions need to be asked (and the railways are investigating the case):

1. The Jerusalem Biblical Zoo station has only one track with no turnouts; the driver had probably a green light to continue after the scheduled halt, otherwise he could not go on; if so, regulations must change to avoid such cases on future.
2. Train 528 had to meet train 525 from Beit-Shemesh at either the loop of Bittir or Bar-Giyora; he was probably ahead of time, which is sometimes problematic from the safety aspect.
3. Supposing that the driver made a mistake, why was it noticed by the central Control only after frightened passenger called the railways' Passenger Service Centre, who called the conductor, who explained to the passengers that the driver probably "fell asleep"?

An interesting point is the fact that some people are taking trains between the two Jerusalem stations, using the good parking facilities at the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo station, enjoying just a 2 minutes ride and saving at least half an hour by avoiding the Jerusalem traffic bottle-necks; but for this purpose the IC3 trains are too expensive to operate; maybe a railbus could be used for a shuttle at higher frequencies.

Another point that the Bar-Giyora loop was once an active station; in the 1950's steam locomotives used to take water from the upper station water tanks fed by the nearby spring; Since 2005 it is only a remote-controlled loop.

I've long ago suggested to build there two platforms for use by bicycle riders as well as ramblers who like the beautiful nature there; but furthermore, in such a case of ignoring a station by the driver (which, hopefully will not be repeated), or any other trouble, passengers will be able to change trains, saving them a lot of trouble and for the railways saving the need to send taxis to bring them to their original destinations."

(xxxix). On the same day – 16.08.2015 – there was an extreme heat wave with temperatures reaching 46 centigrade; as a result, the speed of trains on the line to/from Beer-Sheva was restricted to 80 km/h; punctuality was down to 88%; after the weather relief on the following day punctuality returned to its normal level; well above 90%.

(xxxix). WORKS AT DIMONA.

The railways have announced on their website today – 19.08.2015 - that due to infrastructure works, the station of Dimona will be closed between Wednesday 26.08.2015 and Friday 28.08.2015 (inclusive); as a result, trains from/to Beer-Sheva stations will start/terminate at Beer-Sheva North/University station; bus shuttles will be provided between Dimona and Beer-Sheva North/University.

110:05.

TENDERS.

A.

(i). Tender No. MS/RC/2015/2: Permission to operate advertising media as well as installing advertising screens at railway stations and on trains: The contract is for 120 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 30.07.2015.

(ii). Tender No. 21508: Providing consultancy services for Safety. Latest day for submission of proposals: 24.06.2015.

(iii). International tender No. 41405: Manufacture and Supply of Underfloor Wheel Lathe - latest day for submission of proposals postponed from 09.06.2015 to 30.06.2015.

(iv). Tender No. 21513: Carrying out sub-contractual works of construction, infrastructures, and upgrading: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to 48 additional months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 07.07.2015.

(v). International tender No. 41501: see attachments.

(vi). Tender 41502: For the Manufacture and Supply of Various types of Turnouts, Diamonds, Expansion Switches installed with various types of Bearers and on Slab Track and their Parts and Components for use in Israel Railways conventional Track Network. The Bidder must have an integral design department and have experience in making 1/8, 1/9, 1/12, 1/20 turnouts, double slips and scissor crossovers, with rail profiles 54E and/or 60E, for use on wood or concrete. Proposals for tenders by 21st. Sept. 2015. There is a 141-page (!) accompanying technical specifications document for download.

(vii). On 31.07.2015: RFP No. 51502. 'Request for Proposals' for project Management and Site Supervision services for the Electrification of the I.R. Network. This is addressed specifically to "eligible participants" who have been pre-selected and comprise: Emch & Berger; GAUFF Rail Engineering Germany; Obermeyer Planen & Beraten; Parsons; Parsons Brinckerhoff; Pöyry; SNCF; Systra; Voessing; Bechtel. The project Management Company will be responsible for all necessary activities to bring the Electrification project to its successful completion, on budget, on time. Proposals to be submitted by 09.09.2015.

(viii). Tender No. 11521-Supply of shoes (types S3, Q2, and fine shoes) for railway employees: Latest date for submission of proposals: 20.08.2015.

(ix). Tender No. 31505-Supply of up to 20 forklifts (Diesel and electric with lifting capacity between 0.5 and 2.0 ton) for various railway sites: The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 06.09.2015.

(x). Tender No. 21522: Performing rescue

excavations at an archeological site at Acre railway station planned eastern parking area: Latest date for submission of proposals: 24.08.2015.

(xi). Tender No. 21519: Supply, installation, and maintenance services for lighting facilities at 27 level crossings, 9 railway stations, 8 sites, and roads under the railways' responsibility all over the network. Latest date for submission of proposals: 03.09.2015.

(xii). Tender No. 11522: Consultancy services for managing risks in the railways including: methodology, mapping the risks and degrading, and monitoring the risks treatment and implementation. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 23.08.2015.

(xiii). Tender 41502: For the Manufacture and Supply of Various Types of Turnouts, Diamonds, Expansion switches installed with Various types of Bearers and on Slab Track and their Parts and Components for Use in Israel Railways Conventional Track Network.

Bidder must be the manufacturer and supplier of the proposed turnouts, Diamonds and Expansion Switches; and must have an integral design department; and has designed, manufactured and supplied at least the following Turnouts: 1/8, 1/9, 1/12, Double slips and Scissors Crossovers and Expansion Switches with rail profiles 54E and 60E, with nominal track gauge of 1435mm; all Turnouts for speed up to 160km/h (or more) and Turnouts 1/12, 1/20 and Expansion Switches for speed up to 200km/h., and from 2010... has manufactured and supplied a total of at least 1,500 Turnouts (including Double Slip and Double Crossovers and Scissors Crossovers) on wood and concrete bearers and Slab Track..... Proposals to be submitted by 21st. September 2015.

(xiv). RFP No. 41505: For the Supply of Load Box for testing and run-in after overhaul railway diesel engines. "Israel Railways Ltd. ...wishes to obtain bids for the Supply of Load Box for testing and run-in after overhaul... Bidder must be the supplier of the proposed Load Box and from 2012 and up to the Final Submission Date, Bidder has supplied at least two portable Load boxes for diesel engines between 1,000 and 4,000 hp..... proposals to be submitted by Sept. 2nd. 2015..."

The link leads to a 101-page (!) specification document from which the following (with slightly picturesque English) is taken:-

"The following specification outlines the Load Box requirements of IR for testing and run-in after overhaul railway engines, allowing a quickly troubleshoot

problems such as low horsepower, insufficient current/volts, and leaks. The method of loading the engine should be Load Box with all accessories, means of control and supporting system required. The Load Box should be portable with wheels pulled by heavy car. The ranges of engines to be tested at between 1000-4000hp.

The Load Box should consist of dynamic brake radial grids and blower assemblies, and contactors, which allow various combinations of grids to be inserted into the total loading resistor circuit. Switches at different positioning will set the various combinations to test different engines. Set of cables should enable us to connect the Load Box to the locomotive. The power to the Load Box can come from the locomotive itself and the ground as well. High voltage power cables for the power circuit (locomotive generator output) positive and negative should be provided. The positive cables should be marked with Red tape at both ends to avoid confusion. The Load Box shall be equipped with display and operator panel that provides user friendly operation for operating and getting the test results. The measured values should be saved on Hard Disk and have the option to print it out or transfer it to Excel file. The main operator panel should equip with current and voltage gauges, load setting, horse power selectors and warning indicators. The Load Box should be equipped with means and procedure to be able to calibrate the test meters of the

at least 4 hours without malfunctions.....

On 13.08 the deadline was extended to 17th. September.

(xv). Tender No. MS/RC/2015/8: Running a pizza & light drinks shop at Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central station: The contract is for 60 months; there will be also a 6 months grace time due to station renewal works to take place soon. Latest date for submission of proposals: 27.08.2015.

(xvi). Tender No. 21512: Excavating and wall works at the Lod railway complex: Latest date for submission of proposals: 03.09.2015.

(xvii). Tender No. 11530: Manufacturing & supply of special angles as reinforcement to guard rails on railway bridges: The contract is for 24 months + optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 10.09.2015.

(xviii). Tender No. 21509: Contractual works of rail communication: Latest date for submission of proposals: 12.10.2015.

B. TENDERS AWARDED.

(i). The local company Y.R.N. won Tender No. 21248 for building the northern wall at the Beer-Sheba Depot; value: \$1.552 Million.

(ii). The local company Regavim Regavim Ltd. won Tender No. 21430 for improving Haifa Bat-Galim station accessibility at \$2.8 Million.

(iii). The local company Rolidar Ltd. won Tender No.21506 for constructing a building for track workers at Beer-Sheba depot at \$1.56 Million.

(iv). The local company Y. Lehrer won Tender

The list of systems to be tested are:-

HP	Alternator type	Engine type	Loco type
1425	D12	12-645E	GM G12
2200	D32T	16-645	GM G26CW
2000	AR10-D18	16-645E	GM G26CW-2
3000	AR10-D14	16-645E3B	GM GT26CW-2
1650	D25		12-645E T44
3000	AR10NBET-CA6B		12N710G3B JT 42BW
3000	AR8NBET-CA6B		12N710G3B JT 42CW
1250 (900kW)		ALSTOM AT 4.4	220 V1 MTU-8V396TB14 DE-GA 900AS
4000	AR20/CA6	16-710G3B-T2	Euro 4000
3200	TA12		12-710G3B-T2 Euro 3200.

current and voltage.

Environmental Conditions: Ambient Temperature: 0°C – 47°C; Humidity: up to 90%

Acceptance tests: The manufacturer shall be responsible to deliver the Load Box according to specification, including supply of all accessories, adapters and recommended spare parts. Delivery time shall be maximum six months after receiving the contract order. The manufacturer shall be responsible for the delivering to ISR site, correct functioning, run-in and operation.... for the correction of all defects, detected by ISR after testing and run-in. After installation, the Load Box shall be run in and operate a full test for at least five engines, each of the five engines will be run

No.21525 for linking the Valley Line (Hedjaz) with the Haifa - Nahariyya line at \$4.163 Million.

(v). The Israeli company Almog Technical Equipment Ltd. won Tender No. 31501 for supply of various tools at \$220,000 annually, as well as Tender No. 31502 for supply of machining tools at \$63,000 annually.

C. TENDERS DELAYED.

Tender No. 11420: Providing operation, maintenance, cleaning, pest-control, gardening, and other services to buildings, facilities, systems, yards, and infrastructures of the railways' logistic site (depot) of Beer-Sheva; Latest date for submission of proposals postponed from 09.07.2015 to 06.08.2015.

Attached herewith is a map of the site (unfortunately in Hebrew only).

LIGHT RAIL.

A. PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN GENERAL.

From a press release of 04.08.2015 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz has launched today – 04.08.2015 - a revolutionary reform in the structure of metropolitan public transport fares, which are intended to save each passenger several hundred Shekels monthly

Minister Katz said that the reform, which will cost \$32 Million (NIS 120 Million) annually, offers - for the first time in Israel - a modern, efficient, and friendly fare structure for public transport users, combining between bus and rail modes as in Europe, thus making public transport more attractive.

The reform has been agreed and signed today between Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz and Finance Minister Mr. Moshe Kakhlon; Minister Katz has instructed the Authority for Public Transport General Manager in the Transport Ministry to be prepared to implement it immediately. He further said that in addition to the \$32 Million mentioned, additional budgets in excess of dozens of NIS will be spent on increasing services in the great metropolitan areas and other cities in order to attract more people to public transport services. This will reduce social gaps and significantly reduce the costs of living for public transport users.

There will be a unique tariff in each of the great metropolitan areas of Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa and Beer-Sheva according to the Zones (rings) included and at an equal level for everybody; passengers will enjoy 90 minutes unlimited travel on all modes (buses, METRONIT=BRT, Israel Railways, LRV, and the Carmelit (Haifa funicular underground train) within the price of a single journey.

The reform, which is to be under way within few months, will offer - for the first time - dramatic fare reductions of dozens of percent for users of combined bus/rail monthly free tickets that will provide them with a free interchange between bus and rail for a whole month all over the metropolitan area.

Here are some examples:

Between Tel-Aviv and Rishon-Le-Zion: current price NIS 400; new price NIS 252 = 37% less.

Between Tel-Aviv and Rehovot: current price NIS 491; new price NIS 286 = 42% less.

Between Tel-Aviv and Ashdod: current price NIS 574; new price NIS 351 = 42% less.

Between Tel-Aviv and Netanya: current price NIS 491; new price NIS 351 = 30% less.

Between Tel-Aviv and Modi'in: current price NIS 574; new price NIS 351 = 40% less.

Between Tel-Aviv and Lod (Lydda)/Ramla: current price NIS 399; new price NIS 252 = 35% less.

There will also be price updating and adjustments of public transport fares all over Israel.

The ministry has checked and found that the number of passengers passing from one transport mode to another is high even today; now, with the reform, commuters will save hundreds of NIS monthly; it will enable the passengers to choose - for the first time - the mode of public transport they like more while the combined services will simplify the public transport benefits.

The reform will put an end to the distortions which were a daily matter for years; after completion the reform in the metropolitan areas, the ministry intends to perform the same sort of reforms on the inter-urban services not included in the current one."

B. TEL AVIV.

(i). CHINA COOPERATION.

In 'Times of Israel' 2.6.2015 is an article by David Shamah: "Israel's Radware is helping China Railway with its ticketing system – while the Chinese firm will be helping to build Tel Aviv's subway.

Israel and China are helping each other out on moving railway passengers. In China, Israeli tech firm Radware is supplying China Railway with e-ticketing equipment, while that same company will be working with Israel's Solel Boneh to build Tel Aviv's Red Line train. In recent months, China railway began selling tickets online, a service that has become so popular that it overwhelmed the network. With close to a billion passengers a year, the railway sells millions of tickets a day – and to keep the network robust, the company chose a hardware and software solution from Radware.

Radware's application delivery controller (ADC) provides virtualization, integrated application acceleration and on-demand scalability that allows the railway to quickly determine prices, capacity and statistics on how many passengers are using the railway.

Meanwhile, China Railway's Tunnel group, along with Shikkun Binui Solel Boneh Investments group has won a \$7450M tender by Israel's NTA Metropolitan Mass Transit System to build the Red Line, the first in the planned subway network that will eventually

criss-cross the Tel Aviv metropolitan area.

The Red Line will originate in Petah Tikvah and continue along Jabotinsky Street in Bnei Brak, and through Ramat Gan. The line will continue to the Arlozorov train station, run along Begin Street and near the Azrieli Center, from where it will continue on to the south of the Kirya, Manshiyya, Jerusalem Blvd. In Jaffa, and end in southern Bat Yam. In the future the line may be extended to Moshe Dayan interchange in Rishon Lezion.

The line will extend for 24 kilometres, 11 of which will be underground – most of that within Tel Aviv. 24 of the line's stations will be above ground, and 10 will be underground. The plan is for trains to run about a minute and a half apart during rush hours and three to four minutes apart off-peak.

It should be noted that the Red Line - along with seven other routes - have been in the planning stage for many years, with bureaucratic snafus and budget shortfalls delaying progress since at least 2000, when the current mass transit plan for Tel Aviv was first approved. The total cost for the Red Line is estimated at \$3 Bn.

NTA is a government company founded in 1997 for the purpose of providing appropriate solutions for Tel Aviv's transport problems. The Red Line is one of eight mass transit rail/subway lines that the company hopes to build in the coming years to solve the transportation problems in the centre of the country."

(ii). RED LINE CONTRACTOR SELECTED.

From 'Railway Gazette' 10.06.2015: "Project authority TA has selected a Chinese-Israeli joint venture to undertake civil works for the Red Line of the Tel Aviv metro. The joint venture comprises the China Railway Tunnel Group subsidiary of China Railway Group (51%) and the Solel Boneh infrastructure subsidiary of Shikun & Binui group (49%). The design-build contract is valued at 3.1Bn. Shekels.

The scope includes boring 11km of 5.5m diameter twin tunnels linked by 16 cross passages, as well as six underground stations. The stations are to be designed by NTA.

The 23km. Red Line will link Petah Tikva to the northeast of Tel Aviv with Bat Yam to the south. It is expected to open for traffic in 2021. Seven more lines are planned for the city."

From Aharon Gazit: "NTA has announced that the local construction company Solel-Boneh together with the Chinese company China Railway Tunnel Group, won the tender for boring the tunnels in TBD system as well as constructing the underground stations of the Red Line at Allenby Street, Yehudit Ave, Shaul Ham-

Jerusalem new bridge



Picture provided by courtesy of Mrs. Samuel Elgrabli- Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team Spokesman - see 110:06 C(vi)

elech, and Arlosorov in Tel-Aviv and Abba Hillel and Bialik of Ramat-Gan (known as the 'Red Line western section').

Other participants were: Shafir of Israel with Ghella of Italy, and Danya Sivus of Israel with Vinci of France.

(iii). TENDER WIN.

NTA has announced that the local construction company Danya Sivus together with the Chinese company China Railway Tunnel Group, won the tender for boring tunnels in TBD system as well as constructing the underground stations of the eastern part of the Red Line between B'nei-Brak and Petakh-Tikva.

(iv). CHINESE LINK WITH IRAN.

From 'The Times of Israel' 06.07.20165:

"The Chinese company digging the tunnels for Tel Aviv's light rail transit system has indirect ties with a corporation developing Iran's nuclear weapons facilities, according to a report on Israel's Channel 2.

The China Railway Tunnel Group in May won a nearly NIS 3 Billion (\$800M) bid to help build Tel Aviv's long-awaited light rail. CRTG is a subsidiary of CREC, China's largest construction company, which has business ties with Iran's Khatam-al Anbiya Construction company worth billions, including a high-speed rail project announced earlier this year connecting Tehran and Isfahan.

Khatam-al Anbiya, notes Iran Watch, is a corporation run by Iran's IRGC (Revolutionary Guards) which is involved in the development of its nuclear weapons facilities. It is listed among the companies Israel is banned by law to have business with because of its ties to an enemy government.

The Israel Roads Authority, which is responsible for the Tel Aviv rail project, told Channel 2 in response to the report that CRTG was not a blacklisted company and that it was on the right side of the law. According to an 'Ha'aretz report from 2010, Israeli law forbids investment of over

\$20M in companies trading with Iran. The measure is rarely enforced, that report said, pointing to two instances where Dutch and German companies operating in Iran received major deals with Israeli industry."

(v). BUSINESS TAX REDUCTIONS?

Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz requested on 30.06.2015 the municipalities of Tel-Aviv and other 4 municipalities through which the Red Line alignment will run to consider seriously reductions in taxes for businessman along the alignment in order to reduce their suffering from works; mainly businesses to be damaged.

(vi). DAN INTEREST IN OPERATIONS:

20.07.2015: "The newly-elected chairman of Dan Buses Company - the biggest public transport operator in the Greater Tel-Aviv Area - said last week that as such they want to take an active part in the project, and see themselves as a natural LRV operator, particularly due to the fact that their consultants are no lesser

than the SNCF and referring also to the METRONIT (BRT) bus services they provide both in Tel-Aviv and Haifa.”

(vii). 'CARMAGEDDON.'

The 'Times of Israel' on 28.07.2015 had a rather alarmist item by Marissa Newman:

"Israelis are famously resilient when it comes to war and living under the threat of terror attacks, but there are some seemingly mundane issues that can propel residents of the Jewish state into foetal position, prompting an uncharacteristic display of mass panic. Extreme weather, for one, or as evidenced by the Hebrew newspapers on Tuesday, large construction projects and the traffic jams they are expected to engender. With the beginning of the construction of the Tel Aviv Light Rail, 'Yedioth Ahronoth' and 'Israel Hayom' dedicate their front-page coverage to 'The State's Traffic Jam' and the 'National Traffic Jam' as their headlines respectively read. "The good news: 45 years after Golda [Meir]'s government presented the plan to build the Tel Aviv metro, on Sunday the construction of the light rail will commence on the streets of the city," reports 'Yedioth'. "The bad news: After we found out that Tel Aviv is expected to become one large traffic jam, yesterday police announced that this is simply the tip of the iceberg. The traffic jams are expected to spread to Netanya and Ashdod, and to cause drivers from north to south to rue the moment they got into their cars."

The paper proceeds to outline the extent of the construction, map out the affected areas, and sow collective road rage.

The daily also features an interview with a Tel Aviv driver-on-the-street, a restaurant owner who fears his business will suffer from the construction, and an accountant who says he's "captive" to a three-year lease for his office.

"It's going to be difficult. Very difficult even," writes Aharon Lapidot in a column in 'Israel Hayom'. "The pessimists say that a large traffic jam is expected from Ashdod to Netanya for the next decade. They promised us that the 'red line' of the Tel Aviv Light rail, the underground line, will open in 2021 – some six years from today. But past experience doesn't bode well [for the deadline]." Still, he concludes, that "in the end, it will be good. It will raise real estate prices in the satellite cities, help job-seekers and students, broaden the offerings of apartments, and improve the standard of living for everyone. Until then – we need some patience. A lot of patience."

Then came a later report from Aharon Gazit: "As previously announced, works started on Sunday night, 02.08.2015, at the corner of Allenby and Yehuda Halevy streets. Despite public fears, traffic flowed almost without interrup-

tions. All those concerned believe that this is thanks to summer vacation, when many people are abroad or not at work; some assumed that the statement warning of initial difficulties at the beginning convinced people to use park-and-ride facilities and free shuttles (several facilities are still be prepared) to use them. It is therefore still too early to say how disruption for daily life will be; I will follow up and report, once work will start at additional sites."

**(viii). Tender No. 2015/0047:
Creating and operating the
transportation model:**

Latest date for submission of proposals: 03.08.2015.

**(ix). Tender No. 2015/0113: Design
services (head designer) for
the Turkish line:**

These headlines need explanation: it refers to the section between Yehuda Halevy street - where tunnel boring works are to start at the beginning of August - and Jerusalem Boulevard in Jaffa which will be a surface section; it actually uses the original railway line between Jaffa and Jerusalem opened on 26.09.1892 as a metre gauge line, converted into 1050 mm gauge during WWI to match with Hedjaz and other lines, and converted again in around 1920 into standard gauge when services between Jaffa, the new city of Tel-Aviv, and Jerusalem resumed. However, at the outbreak of the Israeli independence war (or occupation war according to others) all the services stopped, the section was closed, and with the years to pass, rails were dismantled, and the alignment became partially a parking area. Today, even those who then opposed rail traffic, now admit that it was a short-sighted move, and a lot of money could have been saved should the line section have remained in service!

(x). Public Tender No. 0058/2015:

For the Procurement and Implementation of Cloud Based Electronic Document Management Systems (EDMS) – (taken from a 43-page document of specifications): "NTA hereby invites proposals for the procurement and implementation of an EDMS Solution in order to establish a single common repository or communication, correspondence and document submissions with easily searchable records and history for all parties involved in the Programme. The main goals are... (i) to provide the ability to manage a large amount of Documents and Correspondence, including the engineering and designers submissions and their modification through the project in one common platform; (ii) the ability to save legacy of Documents and Correspondence in a formal and efficient way; and (iii) high accessibility to multi number of Parties. The subscription term is for 8

years (unless terminated early) with a right to extend such term for additional periods of one calendar year each, until completion of the Programme, as further set forth.... Submission by 22nd. Sept. 2015.

**(xi). TENDER FOR ASSURANCE MANA-
GEMENT AND TECHNICAL AUDITING SER-
VICES (for the Metropolitan Tel Aviv Mass
Transit System.)**

From 'R.G.I.' 06.08.2015: "Tender No. 0045/2015 –1. N.T.A. - Metropolitan Mass Transit System Ltd. 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.

2. The services under this tender are for the provision of assurance management and technical auditing services throughout the lifecycle of the project.

3. Bidders eligible to participate in this tender are only those bidders which meet the pre-qualification requirements detailed hereunder:

- 3.1. The bidder has managed for at least three consecutive years the design and construction phases of one rail transit project during the last ten years. The total project value shall not be less than USD 300,000,000.

- 3.2. The bidder has provided assurance services for at least three consecutive years during the design and construction phases, in one rail transit project during the last ten years. The total project value shall not be less than USD 300,000,000.

- 3.3. The bidder has ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management Systems Requirements certification.

- 3.4. The technical auditing manager to be presented by the bidder (a) is an engineer with at least 20 years' of practical experience as an engineer; (b) has at least 10 years' experience in managing the design and construction phases in infrastructure projects; (c) has managed, for at least three consecutive years, the design and construction phases of one rail transit project during the last ten years. The total project value shall be not less than USD 1,000,000.

- 3.5. The deputy technical auditing manager to be presented by the bidder (a) is an engineer with at least 10 years' of practical experience as an engineer..... (etc. - similar to above.)

4. The term of the engagement under the services agreement is for a period of seven years. NTA has the option to extend the term of the agreement for three additional periods of 12 months each.

5. Part of the tender documents may be printed from NTA's website in the following address. [Http://www.nta.co.il/tenders](http://www.nta.co.il/tenders). Access to all the tender documents shall be granted upon a non-refundable payment

of 5,000 NIS.

6. The last date to submit bids occur on October 7th. 2015, 14.00.... in NTA's offices situated in 1, Azrieli Center, Harokmim and Halahav Street Building A, 9th. Floor, Holon, Israel....."

(xii). THE END OF THE MA'ARIV BRIDGE.

Aharon wrote: "Regarding the starting works for Carlebach station, significant changes for both private cars and bus traffic started on Tuesday 11.08.2015, which saw many bus lines diverted to alternative streets, while some bus lines are cancelled. All these are preparations towards the demolishing of a road bridge forming part of Menachem Begin road, one of Tel-Aviv most important and congested roads crossed by not less congested Carlebach & Hakhashmonaim roads.

The bridge is called "Ma'ariv Bridge" after a famous newspaper of the same name, the building of which is adjacent though abandoned.

The exact date of demolishing by controlled explosives is still secret, due the involved factors' fear of too many curious people who may endanger their lives; The bridge which soon will become history; after the completion of works (promised for 2021) the crossing road will run underground."

And then: "Despite many sceptics people, the Ma'ariv overhead road bridge was demolished on Friday 20.08.2015 at 06:30 to give place for works on the Red Line Carlebach station."

This link will take one to an article and possibly still a video on the demolition.

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/WATCH-Demolition-of-Tel-Avivs-Maariv-Bridge-412767>

From the 'Jerusalem Post' 25.08.2015:

"If you heard a blast in central Tel Aviv on Friday morning there was no reason to be concerned. The iconic Maariv bridge was demolished Friday at 6.23am to make room for construction of the Tel Aviv Light Rail's first line. Police stood by as the public stood behind barricades at a safe distance and observed the explosion that took down the overpass. The explosion was followed by cheers from the crowd.

Earlier in the week, police were already closing streets around the bridge, which takes traffic from Menachem Begin Street over the junction with Lincoln, Carlebach and Yitzhak Sadeh streets. Streets around the demolition site were closed to traffic, including Menachem Begin Street north from Harakevet Street, and southbound from David Hachami Street; Hamasger Street and Yitzhak sadeh in the direction of the junction; Yehuda Halevi Street; and the area around Beit Rubinstein. Public transportation lines running in that area have been diverted to a section

of Hamasger Street.

Transportation Minister Israel Katz symbolically detonated the explosives affixed while a engineer activated the actual explosives.

Dedicated in 1976, the overpass has become a local landmark and an icon of the central Tel Aviv landscape. It was named for the headquarters of the Ma'ariv newspaper, which occupied the corner of Carlebach and Menachem Begin for decades until the paper was sold in 2012 and later vacated the premises. The demolition will make way for a light rail station at the site as part of the construction of the Red Line – the first in the new rail system – which began earlier this month."

On 28.08.2015 Sybil wrote: "The apocalypse has not hit Tel Aviv (light rail work) despite dire predictions of massive traffic jams from Netanyahu to Ashdod. That doom-laden scenario should be filed with the Millennium Bug, that was to be the end of civilization as we knew it, SARS and bird 'flu', both of which it was claimed would reduce the human population of the globe by around 90 percent, and I don't know what else.

I picked up a lot of leaflets about park-and-ride into Tel Aviv from various peripheral locations. Parking is free, buses have to be paid for.

I took the train from Hashalom to Netanyahu, and made a point of taking a good look at the work on the new station at Netanyahu Sapir (south of Netanyahu, and much closer to Beit Yehoshua). There were men working on it."

(xiii). A 'FORWARD' ARTICLE.

From 'Forward' 24th. August 2015: by Naomi Zeveloff, Tel Aviv

"In 1936, Israeli poet Nathan Alterman was already bemoaning Tel Aviv's lack of a subway. The "underground dream" of the new city, he wrote in Haaretz, had "evaporated."

Lamenting the transportation system in Israel's metropolis has practically become a national pastime, as government inaction has delayed such a project for decades. But now, 79 years after Alterman penned his verse, workers have finally broken ground on Tel Aviv's new underground train, the first phase in a multicity mass transit project.

It's not quite a subway — in most portions beyond Tel Aviv, the train is at street level — but it goes a long way toward assuaging Tel Aviv's nagging inferiority complex about whether it can be considered a world-class city without world-class transit.

"Every important city should have an underground; even Cairo has one," said Maoz Azaryahu, a Tel Aviv native and professor of geography at the University of Haifa. "It's a kind of sign of modernity, and Tel Aviv prid-

ing itself as a modern city is very backward when it comes to public transportation."

In early August, work began on two of the 10 stations in the urban Tel Aviv portion, part of the so-called Red Line. But along with disbelief that the project had kicked off at last, Tel Avivians expressed apprehension about what the massive construction might unearth. In advance of the drilling, Israeli publications ran interviews with exterminators, stoking fears that rats will flood the streets in "revenge" for being jostled from their underground habitat. While some city dwellers call the rat theory a bald exterminator public relations stunt, others are genuinely freaked out.

"It sucks," Noam Dotam said when asked about the drilling a block away from the insurance agency where she works, on South Tel Aviv's Allenby Street. On a cigarette break with a friend, the 26-year-old said she was anticipating rats, road closures and traffic. She said the construction would lengthen her commute, at least in the short run.

"It will take longer to get home," she said.

The concept of a Tel Aviv area train predates the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and even the founding of the city in 1909. According to [Harakevet,](<http://www.harakevet.com>) an English-language newsletter about Middle East railways, the idea was floated as early as the late 1800s in the Ottoman period. That was when Lebanese engineer George Franjeh proposed a tram to cross Jaffa. The line was never built, but the concept stuck.

In 1973, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir approved of a plan for Tel Aviv mass transport. But for years the project stalled. In the 1990s it was a topic of debate in a Tel Aviv mayoral race, with candidates Ron Milo and Avigdor Kahalani at odds over whether Tel Aviv deserved a subway or a light rail. (Milo won the race, but the current construct is a hybrid of the two ideas.)

Eventually, Israel looked to private companies to build the rail, awarding a contract in 2006 to a group of five international companies and one Israeli one that would execute and run the project for its first 32 years. But their efforts flatlined amid financial problems. In 2010, Israel nationalized the project, handing it over to the NTA Metropolitan Mass Transit System, Ltd., a government company founded to deal with the Tel Aviv area's gnarly transportation woes.

Part of the reason that the Tel Aviv rail has been so long delayed — to compare, Jerusalem's light rail opened in 2011 — is that it entails coordination between multiple municipalities that make up the city's greater metropolitan area, called Gush Dan. The Red Line alone encompasses five municipalities: Bnei Brak, Petah Tikvah, Ramat Gan, Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Bat Yam. Costing 16.1 billion shekels (about \$4.2

billion), the Red Line is slated for completion in 2021. It will carry some 235,000 passengers in and out of Tel Aviv each day.

When the entire system is done — no one knows exactly when — it will consist of eight lines totaling around 130 miles of track. According to an NTA representative, it will not run on the Jewish Sabbath per Israeli law.

Meanwhile, without a mass transit system, Tel Aviv grew up with cars. Once a small seaside city, it expanded as waves of Jewish immigrants populated the city and its environs. Like Los Angeles, Phoenix and Houston, over the years the city became synonymous with traffic jams and parking shortages; it is not unusual for Tel Avivians with wheels to spend an hour each evening after work in search of a street side parking spot. The Gush Dan train is meant to alleviate congestion, but in the short term it is likely to make it much, much worse, as major Tel Aviv streets will be blocked off for years. In the tradition of major American traffic snafus, Haaretz predicted that Tel Aviv will soon endure ["car-maggedon"]

(<http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel/.premium-1.670251>).

Whether or not the light rail will prove to be Tel Aviv's Big Dig — the Boston mega-project that ran severely over budget and tore up the city for decades — remains to be seen. But Chris Whitman, a Boston-area native who works at a Tel Aviv workers' rights hotline, wasn't dreading the construction. He said that the city seems to be rerouting traffic with relative grace, for now. "At least they are putting up signs and people seem to be getting it," he said. "Maybe these are lessons learned from the Big Dig."

The next step will be the demolition of the Maariv Bridge, a hulking '70s-era overpass in central Tel Aviv, to make room for the second station. Across the street from the Maariv Bridge is one of the oldest steakhouses in Israel, called Mifgash HaSteak (roughly, "Steak Meetup"). The restaurant has become the de facto headquarters for a movement of shop owners who worry that construction will demolish their livelihoods. Their motto, printed on fliers with photographs of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon and Economy Minister Aryeh Deri, is, "The government is running over our income."

"We are independent taxpayers," it continues, "we serve in the army, we built our businesses, we slave away and one day they are going to trample everything we built."

Sitting in the wine room, Shir Sagie, the spokeswoman for the fledgling movement, was busy typing away on a black laptop in advance of a neighborhood meeting. Her husband is a key cutter, and he is anticipating major losses in the coming phases of the project when customers won't be able to reach his store. Sagie said that the group is asking for three provisions: compensation for affected businesses, such as in wartime; a relief from city taxes during the construction period, and representation in the NTA decision-making process moving forward. "The businesses are going to collapse," she

said. "No one wants to eat in a construction zone."

Soon, a barrel-chested man in a black shirt walked in. Mickey Vinner is the head of the Israel garage union. While restaurants are still able to receive customers on foot, car garages will be totally cut off from their clientele. Meital Lehavi, a Tel Aviv deputy mayor, said that the city is aware of the issue and is planning alternative routes for customers to connect to their garages. But Vinner is skeptical. "They say they have a plan, and they don't have any plan," he said.

Not all business owners are panicked about the train's effect on their livelihood. Eli Cohen, head of Israel's exterminators association and part of a family of legendary Israeli snake catchers, said that he expects "tens of thousands" of rats to stream into the city, leading to a possible sanitation crisis in Tel Aviv. The city's underground is already filled with rats, he said, and when the drilling begins in one area they will flee to another, eventually coming onto streets and sidewalks.

He rejects the accusation that exterminators are peddling fear in order to drum up business, saying the rodent threat is not to be underestimated. On a brief tour near South Tel Aviv's central bus station, he stopped by a crumbling apartment building to point out droppings and the carcass of a rat that had met its end near a pile of used tea bags: "And this is before the train." (Contact Naomi Zeveloff at: Zeveloff@forward.com)

This article originally appeared at forward.com on August 30, 2015, and is reproduced with permission. Get the Forward's free newsletter and enjoy the best in Jewish news, culture and opinion every day. Visit jd.fo/enjoy.

C. JERUSALEM.

(i). 80 ATTACKS ON THE TRAM JANUARY-JUNE 2015.

From 'www.israelnetz.com' 3.7.2015, by Elisabeth Hausen. (Translation by Editor)

"Since the beginning of the year, there have been more than 80 incidents where items were thrown at the Jerusalem tram — stated Jaron Ravid, the General Director of the firm to a Knesset sub-committee. On Thursday evening (02.07) unknown persons threw stones at the tram three times, causing damage to window panes. The attacks came after a procession in memory of the Palestinian youth Muhammad Abu Chdeir, murdered a year ago. The location was Shuafat in East Jerusalem. Police are hunting those responsible. But this is just one example for many attacks on the tramway. In the first half-year 2015 cars were attacked eighty times with stones or other objects. In 46 cases windows had to be replaced."

(ii). A NASTY DOCUMENTARY.

(a). *From the Jerusalem Post*: "LONDON — A BBC documentary examining the role of Jerusalem's light railway in redefining the capital's demography has come in for strong criticism after it depicted a city in which Israelis have used the tram line to strengthen their grip over the Palestinians.

The 30-minute documentary in the BBC's flagship 'Panorama' series, contentiously titled "The Train that Divides Jerusalem," was described by the publicly financed corporation as being aired on the anniversary of "last summer's brutal conflict in Gaza" in which a "filmmaker, Adam Wishart" visited Jerusalem to ride on the city's so-called 'controversial train.' In the pre-broadcast publicity blurb, the BBC added that, with only 9 miles from start to finish, some had hoped it could help heal divisions between Israelis and Palestinians, "but as Wishart discovers, it has only deepened the sense of resentment on both sides."

The BBC added that, walking through Jerusalem's Old City, he came "face to face with the battle over one of the world's holiest sites and asks could it be the flashpoint for the start of another war?" What the blurb failed to announce was that Wishart, an award winning documentary maker, is Jewish but has an understanding about Israel which places him very strongly in the pro-Palestinian camp.

The program, which had its first broadcast last Monday evening, pulled in an estimated 1.7 million viewers, which a BBC representative told 'The Jerusalem Post' is an average audience for such broadcasts.

What was also disclosed later the following day was that the BBC had received 24 complaints. Fair enough? Well, after such a controversial examination of the conflict over Jerusalem, it would be inevitable that many more complained.

However, the BBC has a strict policy in dealing with such complaints, triggered in part by the constant (and in this journalist's view, often unjustified) barrage of criticisms aimed at the BBC virtually every time Israel is in the news, by so called pro-Israel lobbyists, who urge followers to flood the BBC with complaints.

This has led the BBC to decline to give out complaints figures "when there has been evidence of lobbying or where media coverage has influenced the number" and it is known from internal leaks within the corporation that far less concern is taken after such organized campaigns.

Wishart, 46, said his parents were proud Zionists, and he admitted he had toured Israel with a Zionist youth group 31 years earlier. But he soon demonstrated that he now believes the train is not only divisive, but that its route had been planned only to serve Jewish settlements such as



Pisgat Ze'ev and was not aimed at helping Palestinians cross the city or access hospitals, shopping malls, and the like.

Interviews with people like Rivka Shimon – a prominent member of the Women's Forum for the Temple, which claims the right to rebuild the Temple regardless of which Arabs are in the vicinity – didn't help either. A peripheral figure in Jerusalem politics, not even she could claim to represent mainstream Israeli thinking in the capital.

Other interviews in a similar vein also distorted the image of most Jerusalemites. Even snippets from Mayor Nir Birkat failed to balance the impressions in the documentary about Israeli intentions.

Luke Akehurst of the 'We Believe in Israel' advocacy group in the UK made clear his displeasure, branding the program "inaccurate and biased." He added that the significance of fringe Jewish groups was exaggerated. On the other hand, "The role played by Palestinian extremist groups and incitement in both bringing about and celebrating deadly attacks on Israeli civilians was overlooked."

The BBC had no response when questioned by the 'Post' as to what controls had been deployed to ensure the program was balanced, and whether it would consider commissioning a further documentary showing the other side of the argument about Jerusalem. All the spokeswoman would say was that the programme "explored the tensions in Jerusalem through the eyes of a British Jewish filmmaker, reflecting what he witnessed in the city and heard from a range of voices expressing alternate views."

Yiftach Curiel, spokesman at Lon-

don's Israeli Embassy, told the 'Post' that the program presented one of the most biased accounts of Israel in recent memory. "It builds a largely fictional narrative, by utilizing marginal voices in Israeli society and presenting them as 'mainstream' while at the same time sidelining Palestinian terrorism and incitement." Life in Jerusalem, he added, is indeed complex and challenging, "and deserves in-depth analysis, which this programme fails to deliver."

(b). Another message came from Luke Akehurst of 'We believe in Israel' -

"On Monday January 20, the BBC aired an episode of Panorama, entitled 'The Train That Divides Jerusalem'. The description of the programme reads as follows:

"On the anniversary of last summer's brutal conflict in Gaza, film-maker Adam Wishart visits Jerusalem and rides the city's controversial new train. Only nine miles from start to finish, some hoped it could help heal divisions between Israelis and Palestinians, but as Wishart discovers, it has only deepened the sense of resentment on both sides. Travelling through the old city, he comes face to face with the battle over one of the world's holiest sites and asks, could it be the flashpoint for the start of another war?"

This episode of Panorama was problematic for a number of reasons. Several points highlighted the programme's bias and inaccuracy including:

a). When discussing the Temple Mount and the Dome of the Rock, the programme clearly stated that they are among the holiest sites for Muslims, without making

clear that the Temple Mount is also the holiest site in Judaism. Instead while the programme stated the importance of the Western Wall to Judaism, its narrative ignored that it is the Temple Mount which is the holiest site for Jews. It is true, however, that Jews are forbidden from praying on the Temple Mount.

b). Jews who aspire to rebuilding the Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount are not a mainstream group but on the fringe of Israeli society. The programme portrayed this fringe as far more significant, larger and more mainstream than is really the case.

c). Panorama gives no context to Jerusalem pre-1948, or in the years between 1948 and 1967. The programme states that before 1967 "Israel only held the western part of Jerusalem, then in 1967, Israel occupied the eastern areas." Jerusalem was a divided city until 1967 with East Jerusalem, including the Old City, under Jordanian occupation. During these years, and in violation of the 1948 armistice, Jews were not allowed access to their holy places. Synagogues and cemeteries were defiled and destroyed during the 19 years of Jordanian occupation, and the Jews who lived in the eastern parts of the city were expelled. Despite having a Jewish plurality for much of its pre-1948 history, between 1948 and 1967 Jews were unable to live, pray or travel in these parts of the city. These parts of the city came under Israel's jurisdiction only after Israel was forced to fight a defensive war against the armies of Jordan, Egypt and Syria in June 1967. This context was lacking.

d). The programme covered the tragic and abhorrent murder of Mohamed Abu Khdeir. Only after this did the programme make a fleeting reference to the tragic, abhorrent murder of three Jewish boys by Hamas operatives. The murder of the three boys preceded that of Mohamed Abu Khdeir and was vital to the events that unfolded in the Summer of 2014.

e). When Palestinians attack Israeli guards at a check-point and clashes follow, the boy speaking says clearly the word 'Jewish' - "they are attacking the army – the Jews" but there was no translation for that part of the sentence (17:30). This follows the recent similar lack of accurate translation in the BBC's recent Children of the Gaza War, in which the Arabic word for Jew was mistranslated in the subtitles as "Israel."

f). Although the significance of fringe Jewish groups was exaggerated, the role played by Palestinian extremist groups and incitement in both bringing about and celebrating deadly attacks on Israeli civilians was overlooked.

We urge you to write to the BBC to voice your concerns about the interview, stating why you believe it was problematic. Please remember to keep your e-mails polite!"

The Editor, who had seen most of the film while in England, wrote: "I happen to be editor of a magazine about railways and tramways in the Middle East - see www.harakevet.com - and have ridden the tram in question and written about it many times. One thing I noticed - the electronic destination blinds are constantly 'scrolling' with English, Hebrew and Arabic characters; the Arabic was never shown on screen. The stops, timetables etc. are also with Arabic - surely an important issue to show, in a line which links and Joins rather than Divides sections of the city. I have often seen Arab passengers in the Western section (e.g. heading for Central Bus Station or the University - yet these were not shown. A Video of a car driver deliberately driving into a queue at a tram stop and murdering civilians was presented as though this action were somehow justified. (In London, too?) I have to assume this was a deliberate editorial policy of those making the film."

The next move was an item in the 'Jewish Chronicle' online on 30.07.2015;

(<http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/141031/bbc-defends-panorama-documentary-trainline-running-through-jerusalem>)
From 'The Jewish Chronicle Online' 30.07.2015:

"BBC DEFENDS PANORAMA DOCUMENTARY ON TRAINLINE RUNNING THROUGH JERUSALEM." By Rosa Doherty, July 30, 2015:

"The BBC has rejected claims its Panorama documentary on the trainline running through Jerusalem as 'biased and misleading' against Israel. The corporation said that it received 24 complaints after 'The Train that Divided Jerusalem' was aired on BBC1 on July 20.

The 30-minute film, presented by British Jewish documentary-maker Adam Wishart, was billed as exploring how the light rail, opened in 2011, had deepened resentment between Israelis and Palestinians. One viewer, Edward de Mesquita, complained that the programme 'presented a heavily skewed impression that the Israeli administration of Jerusalem was divisive, racist and unfair to Arabs living there.' He added: 'It repeatedly interviewed an Israeli woman who held totally unrepresentative views, and carefully selected information to incite the British public against Israel.'

In its response to Mr. de Mesquita the BBC said it believed 'the film was balanced and fair' and was 'careful to represent the views of both Israelis and Palestinians living in Jerusalem.' It added, 'The film was largely observational in style with Adam spending time with two main contributors, Rivka Shimon and Baha Nabata - one Jewish, the other an Arab.' It also

noted that Mr. Wishart was an experienced filmmaker and that the programme took care to explain his background as a British Jew and how his grandparents had campaigned for the establishment of Israel.

Mr. de Mesquita said he was 'grossly disappointed' with the response 'which implies because the programme presenter is a British Jew, it makes the entire content acceptable.' He said, 'Whether he is a Jew, an Arab or whatever else cannot be used as an excuse to justify misleading and dishonest reporting.'

The BBC told the 'JC' that the 'Train that Divided Jerusalem' had been 'watched by over a million and a half viewers and explored the tensions in Jerusalem through the eyes of a British Jewish filmmaker, reflecting what he witnessed in the city and hearing from a range of voices expressing alternate views.'

An accompanying op-ed article by Yiftah Curiel in the same issue:- "Why Panorama Went off the Rails":

"BBC Panorama's recent program on the Jerusalem light rail starts off on the wrong foot, with the following synopsis: 'On the anniversary of last summer's brutal conflict in Gaza, film-maker Adam Wishart visits Jerusalem and rides the city's controversial new train.' One wonders how a war in which Hamas fired 4,500 rockets on Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem and Sderot can be described simply as 'a conflict in Gaza'; moreover, how is the conflict's one-year anniversary related to Wishart's train visit? This remains a mystery. Finally, the light rail, operating since 2011, can hardly be described as new, nor is it controversial.

'The train is dividing the city', Wishart states matter-of-factly, ignoring the huge success of the project in connecting the different parts of the metropolis, bringing closer its Jewish and Arab neighbourhoods, and no doubt contributing to coexistence. He goes on to deliver his version of the Israeli narrative by focusing on a marginal group called 'the new Temple Movement' which he ludicrously presents as 'mainstream'. We also meet a Palestinian youth worker, whose campaign for equal rights lays the blame for all of the woes of his neighbourhood on Israel alone.

As the train crosses into the Arab neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, we are provided with a 20-second history lesson, which goes like this: 'The state of Israel declared itself an independent nation in 1948.' Declared itself? What of UN Resolution 181? The partition plan which offered a homeland for both Jews and Arabs, but was rejected by the Arabs? What of the war they declared, and their subsequent occupation for the next 19 years of the land that the UN destined for the Arab citizens of mandatory Palestine? Having omitted

these apparently insignificant historical facts, we are then told that "in 1967 Israel occupied the eastern areas [of Jerusalem]. No mention of the Six-Day-War in which five Arab armies again attempted to destroy the young Jewish state.

In the Eastern part of the city, we hear that 'the Palestinians who live here remain angry at being under Israeli control, while the train adds to their grievances.' This sweeping generalization is at odds with surveys showing that a clear majority of Arabs in East Jerusalem would prefer to live under Israeli sovereignty and carry Israeli IDs, which provide generous health and social benefits, than under the rule of any future Palestinian state.

When Wishart visits an East Jerusalem neighbourhood he witnesses a violent attack on an Israeli checkpoint; a young boy praises in Arabic those who are 'attacking the soldiers, the Jews,' translated to BBC audiences as 'attacking the soldiers' in what has become a worrying trend recently at the BBC, rather than see the statements for what they are - symptoms of widespread institutional incitement within Palestinian society - editors make do with telling us that 'when they say 'Jews' they mean 'Israelis'.'

A large chunk of the programme is devoted to the sensitive religious sites in Jerusalem's Old City. Again we meet 'Jewish zealots' eager to pray where they are not allowed, next to peaceful Arabs concerned only with their religious rights. No mention of recent incitement to violence by preachers from within al-Aqsa Mosque itself, nor of the very real violence perpetrated against Jews in the Old City, not of the simple historical fact that it is only under Israeli control that Jerusalem has experienced complete freedom of worship for all religions, for the first time in its long history.

The narrative is completed with coverage of the Jerusalem Day parade, the day in which Israelis celebrate the unification of the city and the first time Jews gained the freedom to pray at their holy sites in the city's historic Jewish Quarter. Here, the Western Wall is referred to in an almost predatory manner, as the place that 'borders the Moslem holy site, where [Israelis] want to build their temple.' We are told that the idea of erecting the third temple in Jerusalem 'is gathering support from within the [Israeli] mainstream', a baseless assertion. And a final, ominous warning: 'I can't help but think that if Jews push much further, this surely would be the last stand by the Palestinians.'

The metaphor is now complete, we are in 'World War Z' starring Brad Pitt, and the Jews are the Zombies climbing the Western wall to devour the Palestinians at the top of the al-Aqsa compound.

The programme ends with Wishart telling his audience that he can't be-

lieve this is the place his grandparents dreamt of all those years ago. I can't believe it either, and nor should anyone else, because his skewed narrative resembles a fictional good guys / bad guys film rather than the reality of one of the most complex cities on earth. Within that reality, the light rail enables 140,000 people a day to traverse the city, step-free, at an affordable price for all: Christians, Jews and Moslems, riding the same train together from Jewish to Arab neighbourhoods, and vice versa, in creasing commercial, cultural and societal interaction. Surely the train is part of the solution, not the problem."

So the Editor sent off a letter to the 'Jewish Chronicle':

"I am editor and publisher of 'Ha-rakevet', a magazine on railways and tramways in the Middle East, and have travelled and written extensively on the tramline in Jerusalem (so far there is only one, albeit it is being extended at both ends.) I am also one of those who wrote to the BBC to complain after the Panorama broadcast - pointing out that we were never shown the destination displays in Arabic or timetable and fare information in Arabic, thus giving the impression that Hebrew was being unilaterally imposed on potential Arab users. We never saw any Arab passengers in Western Jerusalem (there are many.) A video clip of a car being deliberately driven into a queue at a tram stop (and we know that several totally innocent persons were killed in this attack) was presented - I felt - as though anger somehow justified this.

I understand Adam Wishart's grandparents were Zionists, but I do not understand what this has to do with anything or why it should explain or excuse anything. One of my grandfathers fought for the Kaiser of Germany, one fought against him; one was a judge, one was a tailor. This does not make me a 'maven' on jurisprudence or fashion or mean I have greater insights into modern German politics. But I have eyes to see and ears to hear and this so-called documentary was exceedingly polemical and one-sided. Maybe it went off the rails because it couldn't see the point?"

From the BBC – came a standard response:-

"Dear Dr Rothschild

Reference CAS-3409469-DNKFNO

Thank you for contacting us regarding BBC One's 'The Train That Divides Jerusalem: Panorama' on 20th July. We understand you feel the programme overlooked Arabic characters and passengers during coverage of the railway system. In addition, you believe the broadcast justified the actions of a car driver who drove into a queue at a tram stop.

The programme focussed on the new light railway network and passengers using the system. It was largely observational in

style with the presenter spending time with two main contributors, Rivka Shimon and Baha Nabata. Throughout it he spent time with them at events, on the train and at their homes to try to get a deeper understanding of their opposing points of view and why they held the opinions and beliefs they did.

Brief sequences displayed some of the dialect [sic. - did he mean 'dialectic?'] associated with the area. During the course of a thirty minute film it would have been impossible to cover every detail but the programme was careful to represent both Israelis and Palestinians living in Jerusalem.

Regarding your concerns about the tram video, the feature examined how violent incidents had spread into the rest of the city. Video footage was used to contextualise the story and demonstrate the dangers faced by civilians, however we never seek to condone such actions.

Adam spoke to people from both communities and reported the impact of violence on both sides. We believe the film was balanced and fair and provided its BBC One audience with an illuminating view of the ancient city of Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, we value your feedback about the content of the programme. All complaints are sent to senior management and programme makers every morning. We included your points in this overnight report. These reports are among the most widely read sources of feedback in the BBC and ensures that your complaint has been seen by the right people quickly. This helps inform their decisions about current and future programmes.

Thanks again for taking the time to contact us.

Kind regards

Alastair O'Donnell

BBC Complaints

www.bbc.co.uk/complaints

NB This is sent from an outgoing account only which is not monitored. You cannot reply to this email address but if necessary please contact us via our webform quoting any case number we provided."

The Editor reckons that the term 'balanced' might be understood to have included interviews also with those who had a positive view of the tram line, and that the very title showed in which way the coverage was tilted. Why not just 'The Tram in Jerusalem'? How would the programme have presented this project had it been designed and built to run ONLY in Jewish areas and ignored the Arab districts entirely? What do Palestinian Christians think of the Al-Aqsa Mosque?

In the meantime, an article in 'Private Eye' No. 1397 (24.07.2015) p. 13 on BBC intrigues reads:- "BBC staff have asked.... has anyone seen this man? He is

Ceri Thomas, who was parachuted in as editor of 'Panorama' last October (salary GBP 166,448) to minimise trouble by making he programme dull enough to escape the notice of any Beeb-bashing ministers.

He has duly delivered historically low viewing figures, ensuring that even culture secretary John Wittingdale can't regard the show as 'too popular'. And there's no danger of complaints from Downing Street, given that the new season kicks off with a report on 'Labour in Disarray' and an edition on artificial intelligence presented by David Cameron's former special adviser, Rohan Silva. Job done, Thomas has now disappeared on six weeks' holiday. But some colleagues would like to track him down. They worry that he has been so successful in making 'Panorama' invisible that BBC1 controller Charlotte Moore may now struggle to justify keeping it in the main channel's prime-time schedule at all."

(iii). PASSENGER BOOM AND EXTENSIONS.

From a press release of 14.07.2015 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry: "Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz, the mayor of Jerusalem Mr. Nir Barkat, and CityPass General Manager Mr. Yaron Ravid, announced today (14.07.2015) that due to the fact that passenger traffic has risen from 40,000 daily in 2011 to 140,000 today, it has been decided to improve service frequency over most of the day from 7/8 minutes to 6 minutes, so that passengers will not have to wait more than 3 minutes. It has been found that there is demand for services even in what have been considered as off-peak hours.

All the bodies involved are now in agreement to extend the Red Line to Neve-Ya'akov in the north and Hadassa Ein-Kerem in the south, as well as adding new lines to the government and university campuses in the south and from Gilo neighborhood in the south-east to Mount Scopus university campus in the north-east."

(iv). STRIKE!

On Sunday 2nd. August two brief mails from Sybil:

At 10:13: "To mark the introduction of improved frequency, scheduled to start today (August 2), the drivers have gone on strike and there are no trams at all! Posters in the stations (in Hebrew and Arabic, hah!!) that I saw on Friday say every 6 minutes between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Meanwhile, work is starting on the Tel Aviv LR this evening."

At 10:38: "Labour court has ordered drivers back to work. By the time you read this they should be running normally."

(v). ALTERCATION ON THE SYSTEM.

Video shows Jerusalem light rail guard beating up US tourist. Accounts differ

on what exactly happened but both sides lodge police complaint over incident
By Times of Israel staff August 4, 2015.

An American tourist was physically attacked by a light rail guard in Jerusalem, as other guards and passengers stood by, a video that surfaced Monday showed.

In the clip aired on Channel 10, the young tourist can be seen shouting "get off of me!" and "let go of me!" repeatedly in English as the guard holds him down, shakes him and even puts his hands around his throat at some point.

The attack occurred at one of the stations of the rail, which runs across the capital. As the tourist gets more worked up, the guard seems more determined to restrain him and acts with force. A woman, who also appears to be a guard, tries to calm her coworker who keeps holding down the distressed tourist. "He's not normal," she says of the tourist, tugging on the guard's arm in what seems to be an attempt to have him let go.

Later in the video, the woman can be heard telling someone that the tourist "tried to jump [onto the rails]" and that "police and an ambulance were called to take him away." Both the guard and the tourist filed a complaint against the other with police.

The guard claims the violent altercation started when the tourist bit another guard and didn't pay for a ticket to ride the the rail. The tourist said he paid for a ticket and that the guards were just harassing him. CityPass, the company that operates the light rail, said in a statement that the passenger in question was known "for having a history of altercations with light rail guards, drivers and passengers." The company said the tourist, in one incident, almost led to an accident while riding his skateboard on the rails. Citypass added that the unnamed US tourist was arrested by police and that a complaint was lodged against him but that an additional review of the situation would take place given the publication of the video showing the incident.

An attorney speaking on behalf of the tourist said that the video "speaks for itself" and that "such violence, even if applied by law enforcement officials would be unusual." "There was real violence here. The tourist is considering leaving Israel following this incident," he told Channel 10.

(vi). NEW BRIDGE.

From a press release of 09.08.2015 by Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry, Jerusalem Municipality, and the Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team: "The Jerusalem LRV project has seen another important milestone when the casting of Ben-Dor bridge over Begin road linking Hertzal Boulevard and Lorach

street has been completed on Friday, 07.08.2015.

The 80m long and 30m wide bridge contains in addition to the LRV tracks, 2 car lanes and 2 pedestrian sidewalks.

The \$4 Million (NIS 15 Million) bridge has been planned by the Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team & Arenson Architects Office, and built by Moriya Company through Galnor Company uses modern methods of embedding steel rolls in the roadbed to insert through which the required infrastructures, is part of the campuses line to link between the Hebrew University on Ram Hill (Western Jerusalem) and its branch on Mount Scopus.

The line will mainly consist of the Red Line with two extensions; one is that of the bridge, and the other from the French Hill on Northern Jerusalem; the foreseen daily ridership is 30,000.

The Mayor of Jerusalem Mr. Nir Barkat, the Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team General Manager Mr. Nadav Maroz, and Moriya General Manager Mr. Doron Neuwirt, all said that "The bridge is an integral part of the transportation revolution which Jerusalem is undergoing; it will not only serve thousands of students from both parts of the university, but will also be an important access axis to the new business centre the municipality is building at the city's western entrance, which is to become the central business, economic, and tourism center on future".

(vii). CUSTOMER SURVEY.

On 25.08.2015 Aharon wrote: "A special survey carried out recently by the YNET (internet network) regarding the degrading of the Jerusalem LRV by the public, unveils that as far as the service frequency is concerned the mark is 9 (out of 10); crowded vehicles - 6; behaviour of passengers at stations - 5; the worst grade - 1 - was for the problematic vending machines who often do not give change."

D. HAIFA.

(i). CARMELIT.

Sybil wrote: "I don't know whether anyone has reported that the Carmelit has been closed for repairs. I've just read on a travel website that the Haifa municipality has approved a budget of NIS 1.5 million for repairs. A replacement 2 km cable will be installed on July 13 and the Carmelit is scheduled to reopen around July 20. New ticket machines have been installed, and there are negotiations to add the Carmelit to the Metronit (big glorified buses) with transfer tickets so passengers do not have to pay twice."

Well, the reopening came ten days later than scheduled!

From a press release of 27.07.2015 by the Haifa municipality:

הרכבת

"After being closed for four months due to an urgent need to replace the pulling cables of the only Israeli metro (eventually an underground funicular) called Carmelit (or Karmelit), services resumed at the beginning of this week; a new smart card called multi-liner system has been introduced, thus enabling passengers to use it together with other public transport services. The Carmelit, opened in 1959, faced many hard years and was closed for a while, but recently there is a comeback, thanks to the fact that the long- deteriorated downtown has been rebuilt and is inhabited by thousands of students."

(ii). THE HAIFA-NAZARETH

TRAM-TRAIN PROJECT.

A new entry: From 'Railway Gazette' 06.08.2015: "Announcement for the Pre-Qualification Phase for an International Engineering Company. Yefe Nof Transportation, Infrastructure, Constructions Ltd. Public Tender No. 26/2015. "Yefe Nof is seeking the services of an International Engineering Company that will provide it with engineering design services for the construction of the Haifa-Nazareth Tram-Train Project. It is the intention of the Tender Committee to conduct a two-phased competitive selection process in order to select the entity which provides the service.

- 1.1. Pre-qualification of participants.
- 1.2. A Request for Proposals process, in which those participants which will have been deemed to comply with the requirements of the pre-qualification phase will be invited to participate.
2. The pre-qualification stage includes several Threshold Requirements all as further elaborated in the Pre-Qualification Documents.
- 3.... These are available for online review starting 08.07.2015 at the website www.yefenof.co.il
4. The Pre-Qualification Documents may be purchased for 10,000 NIS at the address specified in Section 7 hereinafter....
5. Upon purchase of the Pre-Qualification Documents each purchaser, or its appointed representative, shall be required to present a confirmation from the bank through which the payment was made, identity itself using an Israeli Identification Card or a foreign passport, and shall be requested to provide the identity of the purchasing entity and provide details about its appointed representative, including its postal address, telephone and facsimile numbers and e-mail address..... Only Participants who purchased the Pre-Qualification Documents will be entitled to submit Pre-Qualification Submission....."

The document continues, clearly many safeguards against time-wasters are being sought. Deadline for submissions is 11th Oct. 2015. One is reminded however of the passage in Herzl's novel 'Altneuland'

where the characters take the electric train from to El-Kunetra, "a railway junction between Safed and Damascus"....

110:07

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(i). Yaron Dozet has sent a link to some brief video shots of Israel Railways:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkg-rqOdHOM>

(ii). In 'Today's Railways Europe' No. 234 p.59 is a photo and item - THESSALONIKI MEMORIAL.

"Loco Lambda-Beta-964 (a former War Department 'Austerity' 2-10-0) arrived at Thessaloniki on 3rd. March top-and-tailed by Adtranz diesel locos 220 006 and 220 031. After being presented (with five wooden two-axle wagons) at a ceremony to remember the Jews from Thessaloniki who were deported to Auschwitz and other concentration camps (of the 46,091 sent to the camps, only 1,950 survived), from 15th. March 1943, Lambda-Beta-964 is going to be used as part of a film set. Lambda-Beta-964 is the last main line steam loco remaining in operating condition (with her sister Lambda-Beta-962) in Greece, at Dráma depot, although both need major repairs in order to haul a train without assistance.

Many media reported that the loco was one of these that hauled the trains to the death camps, but this was not possible as it arrived in Greece after World War III!"

The Editor checked a couple of websites on this matter and found: In the 'Jerusalem Post' 23.12.2013 – "Thessaloniki to build Holocaust Museum and Research center: The northern Greek city of Thessaloniki will build a Holocaust research centre at the site where some 50,000 of the city's Jews were deported to Nazi death camps. The agreement to establish the Memorial Center on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research at the city's old railway station was signed between the Thessaloniki Jewish community, the city and the Greek transport ministry. The Jewish community of Thessaloniki was one of the most important centres of Sephardic Jewry for 450 years following the expulsion from Spain. Known as the Flower of the Balkans, it was the centre of Ladino culture in the region.

In March 1943 the Nazis began sending Jews in railway convoys to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. By August, 49,000 out of the city's pre-war population of 55,000 Jews had been deported. Fewer than 2,000 survived. "This is the fulfilment of an historic responsibility for Thessaloniki," city mayor Yiannis Boutaris told reporters at the signing on Friday. Boutaris has been instrumental in acknowledging the city's rich Jewish history and the extent of its devastation. Earlier this year he organized a public march to commemorate 70 years since the first deportations, the first such display by the Jewish community since the end of the war. The Thessaloniki Jewish community said the project was a long-held dream and particularly important when Greece is struggling to deal with the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn Party which has 18 seats in parliament....."

And: (by Conor Gaffey, 23.03.2015): "The leader of a Greek Jewish community is hoping to finance a €20 Million Holocaust memorial project by claiming compensation from Germany for Nazi atrocities committed during the second world war. David Saltiel, President of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki, says the money is due after Greek Jews were forced to pay their own train fares as they were sent by rail to Nazi death camps in Poland in 1943. Almost 60,000 Jews were forcibly deported from Greece during the German occupation. The total cost of the train fares came to more than two million Reichsmark, equivalent to around €25 million today.

..... The memorial project will include a Holocaust memorial monument, an educational facility and a human rights centre, Saltiel says that site of 15,000 sq.m. has already been secured and the memorial will be built on the site of the train station from which Jews were sent to their death during the war..... The Jews in Thessaloniki were almost completely wiped out by the German occupation of Greece. Saltiel says that 50,000 Jews, or 98% of the city's Jewish population, was decimated by the occupation, which lasted for three years from 1941 until 1944. Overall, 300,000 Greek citizens starved to death during the occupation and 130,000 were executed in reprisals.

The Jewish community ... has obtained seven cheques from the Bank of Greece archives, which detail the payment of more than one billion drachmas between November

1942 and January 1943. The cheques bear the signature of Max Merten, who headed the Nazis' economic administration in Thessaloniki and who was sentenced to 25 years prison by a Greek court in 1959. Saltiel says the community originally applied for the reparation payment back in the 1990s but their application was rejected he now insists the claim has been registered with the Greek government and will be included as part of any renegotiation of the reparations settlement....."

(iii). THE COVERED WELL AT KIBBUTZ EIN TZUBA.

In 'Times of Israel' for 13.06.2015 is an article on this archaeological relic, now restored and made more accessible to visitors. It includes the following note which, while historically not wholly accurate, indicates that some former sleepers from the J&J line (either 1.00m gauge as from 1892, or 105cm. gauge as from ca. 1915) are still visible.

"Some years ago, however, members of Kibbutz Tzuba cleaned out the spring, removed masses of disgusting debris from the landscape, and created an absolutely enchanting recreation site. Today a short, sturdy but narrow ladder leads into the tunnel, where you walk through clear water 45 meters to a beautifully arched chamber, completed at the end of the Second Temple period.

The railroad ties that support the roof have an interesting history. In 1924 the British who ruled Palestine began work on a new railroad to replace the one built by the Turks half a century earlier. The Turkish tracks were only a metre apart and the new and far heavier British trains required wider tracks.

After dismantling the Turkish tracks, the British used cement and some of the Turkish railroad ties to repair springs located throughout the Judean Hills. That included Ein Tzuba, which had remained virtually untouched for two millennia and whose roof had completely collapsed."

(iv). NOTE ON THE NABLUS LINE.

From 'The Engineer' for 24th. April 1908, p.427 (Thanks to Greg Martin):-

"It is said that a railway from Haiffa to Nablous and Jerusalem has been decided upon, and that it is to be completed within two years. A new means of access to Jerusalem will thus be afforded, which should prove a great boon, as the dangerous and frequently impossible landing at Jaffa will be avoided. But it will be necessary to build a port at Haiffa, which, though possessing natural advantages, is at present but little better than Jaffa. The length of the projected railway will probably be some 100 to 120 miles."

Presumably this refers to the

Hedjaz line from Afula through Jenin and Messudiyeh that reached Nablus. Turret (p.34) describes construction as having started in 1912, the line opened as far as Jenin on 17th. February 1913, work continuing through pass of Yible'am to Sileh (km. 40 from Afuleh) and through the 250m Ramin Tunnel at km. 49, opening in autumn 1914 to Massoudieh – then with the outbreak of war the extension into Nablus was completed but in 1915 it was decided instead to run a line down to the coastal plan from Massoudieh to Tulkarm, and the Nablus – Jerusalem section was never commenced.

(v). NOTES ON 109:01 AND LEBANON:

Andrew Wilson of Leeds, a long and loyal reader, has written the following personal notes:-

"The two small diesel locomotives on the cover of issue 109 are Nos. 3246 and 3247 of the Syrian Hedjaz Railway, they are quite old, dating from the 1970's. But I never saw them away from Cadem where they were yard shunters and never seemed to do very much. See Turret p.165 – He is not very informative about them, but the running numbers are the maker's numbers; From Schöma, or they may be inscribed Schoema, which is how the name used to be given. Turret gives the manufacturer as Schottler, but there were actually two members of the same family in similar businesses – Schöma and Diema. Diema has closed down but Schöma is flourishing, with good sales to the tunnel construction industry in Britain, where there is no real competition for the sort of high-powered diesel locos which are needed.

Dumare is certainly a station on the line up the Barada valley heading out towards Lebanon, but I do not identify Rabwa, which is stated to be near the Umayyad mosque. There has never been a station, or railway, near there and I suspect this location is just a bit of journalistic exaggeration. The steam locomotives and coaches observed further up the Barada valley, during the DGEG tour of 2007, are probably outside the area under Basher's control.

So, Robert Fisk foresees a railway revival for Lebanon? Ummm! Back in 1995/6, when I was resident there, the last operational bit of the HBT was taken out of use to provide space for road traffic. The French had done a study just before then, recommending the electrification and double-tracking of the route, but I spoke to the Lebanese railway chief and he said there was no interest from the financial markets for putting up money for the project. I can't see any change until Lebanon finds a way

of governing itself. The present fragmented system of powerful factions, uninterested in anything which benefits any other faction, is hardly encouraging for massive public works projects.

The idea of tunnelling under the Lebanon range to get a reasonable route from Beirut to the Bekaa is something which appeared to me to be feasible, although the suggestion of going into tunnel as soon as Baabda did not seem right. (I am a professional civil engineer.) Still quite a pull up from Beirut, but it could be done with electric traction, then through a longish tunnel into the Bekaa, which would eliminate the route closure due to winter snow over the Darb el Baidar. Once through there, the continuation to Damascus would be practical, although not easy. Transit time from Beirut to Damascus would have to be competitive with the road. This would have to be a completely new route. No way could the old line be transformed with its rack and pinion grades, sharp curves and reversals and snow-blasted 1400-metre summit. As mentioned by one of Mr. Fisk's informants, there would be complications in tunnelling through the mountains which are largely limestone and full of water. The tunnel would have to be sufficiently water-proofed in order to avoid drawing off the natural water from surface springs, which would have huge political implications. Water resources are important in Lebanon."

More on 109:01: from, of all places, 'Heritage Railway' issue 203, June 2015, p.26: "Steam Back in Damascus. The war-torn Syrian capital Damascus is probably not on many UK enthusiasts' itineraries this summer. However, the once-popular narrow-gauge Rabwah steam train which was stopped four years ago is back in action.

The return of the 100-seater train in early May, with its distinctive yellow carriages and leather seats, and hauled by a diesel, drew dozens of people, many waving Syrian national flags. The railway ferries city residents to the countryside with tickets costing the equivalent of 17p.

Zuheir Khalil, one of the officials behind the revival, said: 'We decided to restart this train to give people hope again and put a smile on people's faces in Damascus.'

However, the 3ft. 5 11/32nd in. gauge railway will only run through parts of the city still in control of the Assad government, and not those held by rebels."

[Interesting in this report is that, despite the heading, there is in fact NO steam back in Damascus! And the imperial exactitude of the gauge is also fascinating. Latest figures seem to indicate 230,000 have died in Syria since March 2011, four Million refugees have left Syria, 7.6 Million are refugees displaced within the country, and the Assad government controls about a fifth of the country.

הרכבת

It will take a lot to put smiles back on the faces..... Ed.]

(vi). STUDY TOUR INTO THE NEGEV.

Tony Travis organised a Study Tour on 1 July 2015, to examine remains of the Egyptian Branch of the Ottoman Hedjaz Railway constructed during World War I. This was in connection with the Sidney M. Edelstein Center Workshop on Science, Technology and World War I. Publicity announced: "The tour will depart from the Safra Campus at noon. It will take us along Routes 4, 40 and 211, down to Nitzana in the Negev desert, close to the border crossing with Egypt. We will follow the route of the Turkish railway, constructed during 1916, intended to enable capture of the Suez Canal. However it got no further than Kusseima, almost at the 1906 border with Egypt (as agreed between the British and Ottomans). The most prominent remains are the 15-arch bridge just south of Beer Sheva, and the station, bridges, water tower and hospital at El Auja (Auja el-Afir). The road follows closely the route of the former railway, as well as the ancient Nabatean Incense Route. Nearby are the remains of a Nabatean city, a Byzantine church (Christianity came to the Negev in the 4th century), an ecological village, Dani Karavan's environmental sculpture "Way of Peace," and a monument to the soldiers of Israel's Eight Brigade, who participated in one of the last operations during the 1948 War of Independence.

Possible stopping points (watering places!) are the Be'erotayim picnic area, and Golda Park near Bir Asluj, (final watering place for Australian soldiers and their horses before the attack on Beer-sheba); on the ANZAC Trail, inaugurated in 2102. Modern Beer Sheba developed from an important Turkish army garrison. It was captured by Allied forces (at the Battle of Beer Sheba, 31 October 1917). The Ottoman railway was completely disabled by Allied forces, mainly with explosive charges that brought down arches on at least six bridges."

(vii). LUMIÈRE BROTHERS FILM OF 1896.

This brief segment of silent, Black and white grainy film is well known and bits are shown in different museums. The link <https://vimeo.com/86980049> will bring the reader to the film itself which includes a view from the rear verandah of the coach of a J-J train going downhill from Jerusalem and a brief shot of a train arriving.

(viii). IRAQI TRAVELS.

The Habbite' is a newsletter for former military personnel who served in RAF Habbaniya in Iraq. The Editor recently corresponded with the other editor, who agreed

to include a note that memoirs were sought and Ted Jones has sent the following:

"I read with interest the article in the 'Habbite' newsletter about railways in Iraq and am responding to your request for information based on personal experience. I served in the RAF and arrived in Iraq in April 1942 via Bombay with a Signals unit. We disembarked at a port near Basra which, from memory, was called "Margil" or something like it. We travelled by train to Baghdad and then by truck to RAF Habbaniya where I was stationed for about 18 months. Later in 1943 I was posted to the Middle East. To get there I went by truck to Damascus and then train to Helwan which is on the outskirts of Cairo. Unfortunately I didn't keep a diary during my travels so cannot provide anything in the way of details about the railway journeys.

There was a good service from Helwan into Cairo which we used regularly. After some months in Egypt I was posted to Cyprus so travelled by train to Palestine (probably Haifa) and then boat.

I remember seeing the Nairn buses at Habbaniya but my transport was usually in the back of a 3 ton truck! I am sorry not to be able to provide any real detail for you but it is always interesting to come across something which strikes a recollection from period which, now, was quite some time ago."

110:08.

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. SAUDI ARABIA.

(i). SCHOLARSHIPS. From 'R.G.I.' 03.06.2015

: "Saudi Arabia offers 1,000 railway scholarships. The Ministry of Education and Saudi railways organisation have signed a partnership agreement to provide scholarships which will enable 1,000 Saudis to undertake specialist railway courses abroad over the next five years.

Minister of Education Dr. Azzam bin Mohammed Al-Dajkhi said this would provide Saudis nationals with the skills and qualifications enabling them to take up jobs on the country's railway projects. The scholarships will include bachelor's and master's degrees and cover infrastructure, rolling stock, electrical, signalling and telecommunications engineering, as well as railway operations, safety and logistics.

SRO President Mohamed Khaled al Suwaiket said a shortage of qualified Saudi nationals means there are job opportunities on the existing network as well as on the Haramain high speed line, GCC railway, North-South, Landbridge and other expansion projects, and with the metro projects in Riyadh, Makkah, Jeddah, Madinah and Dammam.

Applications for the scholarships should be made through the Ministry of Education from June 27."

(ii). REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR CONSTRUCTION.

(From R.G.I. 12.06.2015):

"Organisation: Saudi Railway Company (SAR); Location: Saudi Arabia ; Deadline: 23 Jul 2015;

Web site: www.sar.com.sa

Saudi Railway Company (SAR) invites the specialized companies in Facilities Management and Maintenance to participate in prequalification for the tender of Facilities Management and Maintenance that's includes: Passenger Stations, railway depots buildings, signalling and support services buildings. Those who are interested are invited to provide the following:

Filling up the "RFI" through the following link www.sar.com.sa

Provide the requested information no later than 23 July 2015 to the following address:

Saudi Railway Company – SAR

Procurement and Contracts Department

Al Kindi Plaza, Diplomatic Quarter Building 77

P.O. Box 64447 Riyadh 11536. E-mail [Fm-tender\(at\)sar.com.sa](mailto:Fm-tender(at)sar.com.sa) "

(iii). MANAGEMENT TENDER.

From 'R.G.I.' 06.07.2015:

"Saudi Railway Company ('SAR') issued a Tender for: Prequalification for the tender of 'Facilities Management and Maintenance', deadline 23rd. July. SAR "invites the specialized companies in Facilitated Management and Maintenance to participate in prequalification for the tender of Facilities Management and Maintenance that includes Passenger Stations, railway depots buildings, signalling and support services buildings. Those who are interested are invited to provide the following: Filling up the 'RFI' through the following link: www.sar.sa and provide the requested information no later than 23 July 2015 to the following address:

We regret to announce the deaths in August of Dr. Alfred Gottwaldt of Berlin, former 'Obercustos' for over twenty years of the railway section of the German Technical Museum in Berlin - Alfred was personally involved in researching and publishing the role of the Deutsche Reichsbahn and its relationship to Jews as employees, willing and unwilling passengers; and Walter Zanger of Ein Karem, a wonderful tour guide who helped the editor, as a student, explore inaccessible bits of ancient railway history, and publisher of the 'From Jerusalem' newsletter.

Saudi Railway Company – SAR
Procurement and Contracts Department
Al Kindi Plaza, Diplomatic Quarter Building 77,
P.O. Box 64447 Riyadh 11536."

(iv). OFFER FOR LEASE AND SALE OF LOCOMOTIVES.

From 'R.G.I.' 06.07.2015: Irolli Trading Group of Saudi Arabia has issued a tender: "Heavy-haul DE 3300hp AC/DC Co-Co, standard gauge. Manufacture year 2011. 22.5 tonnes/axle. Microprocessor, event recording system; air-conditioning. Full maintenance history for last 4 years. Operation history in GCC climate and conditions for last 4 years. Options of maintenance and/or operation available."

It looks as though an unspecified number of locos is being disposed of.

(v). JEDDAH METRO.

From 'R.G.I.' 06.07.2015: "Announcement for Pre-Qualification of Programm Management Office (PMO) and Project Management / Construction Management (PROM) Consultancy Services for Jeddah Public Transport Programm (JPTP).

Pursuant to Council of Ministers Decree No. 131 dated 29/04/1434 H (12 March 2013) Metro Jeddah Company (MJC) was established to implement Jeddah Public Transportation Programm. (JPTP). JPTP consists of Metro & Light Rail Transit System, Bus Network, Marine Ferries/Taxis and supporting infrastructure, Corniche Tramway, Al-Muntalaq Multi-Modal Station with supporting infrastructure, Park & Ride facilities and Obhur Creek bridge.

Metro Jeddah Company (MJC) announces the pre-qualification process for PMO and Project Construction Management (PMCM) Consultancy Services. MJC solicits competent and experienced local and international consultants with capabilities of managing mega, complex and

dynamic programs and projects to submit proposals for PMO or PMCM Consultancy Services.

Tender Packages will be:

- Programm management Office (PMO)
- PMCM for Obhur Creek Bridge.
- PMCM for Marine Services, LRT, Corniche Tramway, BRT and Buses Network.
- PMCM for Metro Orange Line.
- PMCM for Metro Red Line.
- PMCM for Metro Green & Blue lines including Al-Muntalaq Station.
- PMCM for Metro systems.

Pre-qualification documents can be downloaded from the website: ftp://metrojeddah.com.sa

Deadline for submitting responses to the pre-qualification of PMO and PMCM contracts is 2pm KSA time on Wed. 8th. July 2015."

And: From 'R.G.I.' 'Metro Report' 05.08.2015:

"Public transport project promoter Metro Jeddah Co has invited initial expressions of interest in the civil works contract for the future metro network, prequalification for a separate contract to design and build its planned light rail and tram lines, and the provision of overall project management services. Metro Jeddah is seeking to gauge the capacity of the construction market to undertake the metro project, which would include four lines and involve extensive tunnelling. The authority will consider the technical capabilities, financial strength and local experience of the consortia which respond, but it is not undertaking the pre-qualification process at this stage.

In a separate procurement, consortia are invited to prequalify for a contract to design, build and supply rolling stock for three light rail lines and one tram line.

The light rail network would total 39 km of double-track on three east-west lines running along Sari Street, Tahlia Street and Palestine Road, with around 43 stations and 65 trainsets.

The double-track Corniche Tramway would run 16 km along the coast from the Globe Roundabout in the north to a terminus near Tahlia Street, with 15 stops and a fleet of around 11 trams.

The project and construction management consultancies would provide the management and technical expertise for monitoring the delivery of the works and ensuring compliance with the promoter's requirements.

The projects are part of Phase 1 of the Jeddah Transportation Master Plan, which is designed to meet the strategic transport needs of the city by 2020 and support sustainable 'liveable city' development. A second phase running to 2033 would cover local transport requirements specified in the Jeddah City Structure Plan.

The master plan also includes local bus and bus rapid transit services, ferries and water taxis, and a suspension bridge over Obhur Creek.

(vi). MAKKAH METRO: CIVIL CONTRACTOR SELECTED.

From 'R.G.I.' 07.07.2015: "A consortium of Isolux Corsan, Kolin Insaat Sanayi ve Ticaret and Haif Company has been selected as preferred bidder for civil works for Makkah Metro lines B and C. The 3.2 Bn contract is expected to be signed in the next few months.

The scope covers an 11.9km. section of Line B with three stations and a 13km section of Line C with six stations including two interchanges. This includes enabling works and the construction of

the order would not cause a substantive change in its economic projections for the 2015 and 2016 financial years.

Thanking Talgo for its understanding, SRO emphasised "it's appreciation" for the company as the supplier of the trainsets for the Haramain high speed line. Three months of test running with a Talgo 350 trainset have now begun at King Abdullah Economic City, following the rectification of problems with the overhead electrification in June."

(viii). JEDDAH 'VISION' SIGNED.

From 'Tramways & Urban Transit' May 2015 p. 175: "A vision for the city-wide public transport plan in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, is to be developed by Foster + Partners, following the signing of a contract on 30th. March. Metro, ferry, bus, cycle and public spaces are all part of the vision, which aims to shift the percentage of

Jeddah Transportation Master Plan Phase 1					
Line	Stations	Tunnel, km	Elevated, km	At-grade, km	Depots
Metro					
Red Line: north - south, along King Abdulaziz Road and King Abdullah Road	24	15	45	0	5
Blue Line: city centre - airport	19	7	27	0	
Green Line: through the city centre	12	14	4	0	
Orange Line: north - south, along Al Madinah Road and Old Makkah Road	30	8	37	0	
Light rail transit					
Three east-west lines on Sari Street, Tahlia Street and Palestine Road	43	0	9	29	3
Tram					
Corniche Tramway: north - south line along the coast from Globe Roundabout to near Tahlia Street.	15	0	0	16	1

19.6km of mined tunnels, 6.7km of bored tunnels, 4.1km of cut-and-cover tunnels and 1.2km of viaducts, in addition to station structures and pedestrian underpasses.

Kuala Lumpur transport agency Prasarana was selected (in Nov. 2014) to provide consultancy services during Phase 1 of the Makkah Public Transport Programme, which includes the construction of a four-line driverless Metro.

(vii). TALGO ORDER CANCELLED.

From 'R.G.I.' 24.07.2015 (but story dated 17.07): "Saudi Railways Organization has decided that "Following the reassessment of our rolling stock needs" it is not to proceed with the an order for six 200km/h Talgo diesel trainsets for the Riyadh - Dammam line. The US\$20M contract was announced on February 12 but will not now be signed, SRO said on July 15. A final decision regarding a new tender will be made once SRO's internal analysis of its needs is finalised.

Talgo said the cancellation of

population living within a ten-minute walk of Jeddah's transport nodes from 12% to 50%. The intention is that new neighbourhoods will be created around the new stations. The contract was signed by the governor of Makkah Province."

(ix). NEW CHINESE DIESEL LOCOS.

From 'R.G.I.' 29.07.2015: "CRRC's Qishuyan factory has rolled out the first two of eight type SDD17 diesel locomotives ordered by Saudi Railways Organisation. They are due to be delivered during August. SRO placed the firm order for the locomotives in December 2014, following the successful operation of two locomotives which CSR Qishuyan supplied in 2011 for use on the Dammam - Riyadh corridor.

The single-cab Co-Co locomotives are customised to cope with sand and high temperatures, and are suitable for both freight and passenger operation. Powered by a 12V280ZJ engine and equipped with AC-DC transmission, the SDD17 has nominal rating of 2,070kW

and a maximum speed of 100km/h.

A quick Google provided: CSR Locomotive Co., founded in 1905, is situated in Changzhou, in Jiangsu Province, between Shanghai on the east and Nanjing on the west and with the main Shanghai-Beijing railway line and the Shanghai-Nanjing inter-city line passing through the works! It is a major supplier of diesel locos for CNR and the SDD17's have also been delivered to Thailand (where the different livery of the front section gives them a very different appearance.)

B. JORDAN. AMMAN AIRPORT RAIL LINK PRE- FEASIBILITY STUDY.

From 'Railway Gazette' 10.06.2015: "The Ministry of Transport is developing plans for a light rail link between central Amman and Queen Alia International Airport. The proposed line would run for around 35km on the existing Hedjaz Jordan Railway corridor between Amman station in the Al Mahatta district of the old city and Jeeza, where a 2km branch would be built to a new station at the airport.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has been asked to provide support, and has invited experienced consultants to express interest by June 30 in a contract to undertake an initial assessment of the outline feasibility of the scheme. The consultant would advise on options including the choice of gauge (the existing line is 1050mm gauge), the use of tram, tram-train or main line rolling stock and the potential for suburban rail services.

The study will also consider the potential for private sector involvement. Because of uncertainty about the ridership levels, EBRD envisages this could be through an operating concession or lease with the public sector retaining the demand risk.

The study is to be funded from the European Commission's Neighbourhood Investment Facility. The contract would begin in July and run for three months, with the possibility of being extended if further funding is made available."

C. TURKEY:

(i). NEW HOME-PRODUCED SHUNTING LOCO.

From "R.G.I.": "Tulomsa? has rolled out a prototype electric locomotive designed and manufactured using Turkish technology. Intended for shunting and short-distance light freight duties, the E1000 is a single-cab Bo-Bo rated at 1 MW.

It has been produced in partnership with research agency Tubitak and national railway TCDD under a 2011 agreement.

The organisations have spent TL10m developing domestic technology for the locomotive, including the traction converters, control units and software.

Following testing it is due to be delivered to TCDD by November. Certification trials are expected to be completed next year, and Tulomsa? hopes to undertake the series production of 70 locomotives in 2016-23."

(ii). FREIGHT TRAIN CRASH.

On 5th. July at ca. 20.00 two freight trains collided at a crossing loop to the east of Cetinkaya. Train 53026 of bogie flat wagons conveying concrete sleepers in five-high stacks from Sivas (loco DE 24398) collided with train 53293 with empty hopper wagons; one of the drivers on DE 24398 was killed and the other severely injured. The loco also hit and damaged the reinforced-concrete piers of a road overbridge and sleepers were scattered over the site.

(iii). KONYA TRAMS TO SARAJEVO.

Konya purchased 69 former Köln Stadtbahn cars (built in the early 1960's) but is now replacing these with new vehicles; twenty of the Stadtbahn cars are now being donated to Sarajevo.

(iii). BUS REPLACEMENT.

On 03.08.2015 it was reported: "According to <http://m.yenisafak.com/gundem/tren-seferleri-iptal-2209950> - The Ankara - Kars Dogu Express is replaced by buses between Erzurum and Kars and vice versa, as a result of the recent bombing. This is not yet reflected on the TCDD website, and the precise duration of this arrangement is unclear."

(iv). IZMIR METRO TRAM DESIGN REVEALED:

(from R.G.I. 06.08.2015): "Izmir Metropolitan Municipality has revealed the design of the metro cars that it ordered from CNR Corp. Earlier this year. The 17 five-car sets ordered in March under a TL 192m contract will increase the fleet to 182 cars. To be manufactured in China, the first trainset is due to arrive in Izmir in October 2016, with deliveries due to be completed in May 2017.

The cars would form the second build of Chinese rolling stock on the Izmir metro. In 2009 eight four-car trainsets were ordered from CSR Zhuzhou."

(v). SECURITY SITUATION AFFECTS TIMETABLES.

On 24.08.2015 on the 'Turk rail' chatline, by Jeff Hawken: "Perusal of the TCDD website reveals the following alterations: 31619 07:35 Alsancak – Usak and 31620 16:20 Usak – Alsancak are SUSPENDED until 31/12/15 due to engineering works.

52861 07:15 MWSO Tatvan – Elazig MIXED is retimed to depart at 06:00 until 15/09/15, due to engineering works.

52862 07:05 TFSunO Elazig – Tatvan MIXED is retimed to depart Mus at 16:00 (instead of 14:08) until 15/09/15, due to engineering work.

However, running of these trains in any form is doubtful at present, due to the security situation.

The twice-weekly Ankara – Tatvan service appears to be suspended east of Elazig at present, judging from the information available in the ticket reservation system. This might be either the engineering work or the security situation, but there has been no announcement that I am aware of either way.

The weekly Trans-Asia Express Ankara – Tehran and the weekly Tabriz Express Tabriz – Van are both suspended. (This isn't on the website, but has been announced by Iranian Railways)."

D. QATAR:

(i). DOHA METRO: RED LINE.

From 'R.G.I. Metro Report' 10.06.2015: "DOHA METRO BIM contract awarded. Hochtief ViCon is to provide building information modelling services for the Doha Metro Red Line. The scope covers a 6.7km. stretch of the Red Line between Lusail and Msheireb, which includes elevated and at-grade sections. ViCon is to prepare the initial BIM documents including an implementation plan and the modelling guidelines. ViCon will also coordinate the implementation. Last year a consortium of Rizzani de Eccher, Lotte Engineering & Construction and Redco Construction won a US\$609M contract to build this section of the Red Line."

(ii). DOHA METRO: GOLD LINE.

From 'R.G.I. 24.06.2015: "Arcadia announced in June that it is to provide architectural, branding, design and construction consultancy services for the Gold Line of the Doha Metro under a £20M contract. Arcadia is already providing similar services for the Red Line South.

The scope takes in design and co-ordination of architectural finishes for ten of the thirteen underground stations. This includes the design of the mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems and landscape, as well as construction support and consultancy services. The design phase is expected to take 12 months and construction support a further 24 months.

The east-west underground line linking Airport City North with Al Rayyan South is to be completed by 2019. It is being built by the ALYSJ joint venture of Aktor, Larsen & Toubro, Yapi Merkezi, STFA Group and Al Jaber Engineering under a £3.2Bn design and build contract."

(iii). TRAM SYSTEM NOTES.

In 'Eisenbahn-Revue International' 6/2014p.306 in an article about Siemens projects is a section on the Avenio Tramsystem for Qatar.

"Siemens is preparing itself for the worldwide increased demand for modern, ecologically-friendly tramway and Stadtbahn systems. According to current prognoses the populations of cities will rise in the coming fifteen years from 3.5 to 4.7 Billion. The market divides itself into those systems which wish to expand their existing networks, and renew their fleets, and those cities and regions which wish to start building urban railway systems from scratch.

According to information from Siemens there are some 200 cities worldwide, each with more than a million inhabitants, which still have no rail urban transport system. As well as the low-floor tramway types Avenio and Avenio-M (multi-articulated vehicle, a development of the Combino) as well as the types types S70 and S200 for the American market, complete system solutions are also offered according to the customer's wishes.

During a visit to the Wegberg-Wildenrath test centre Siemens presented the 'Qatar Education City People Mover system'. This key-ready complete tramway system was ordered by the State-owned Qatar Foundation in Doha, the capital of the Emirate of Qatar. Siemens took over the project management and all contract works. As well as the construction of 19 Avenia trams this includes also the signalling and communications, planning and construction of the electrical equipment as well as the equipping of the depot. In addition Siemens will be responsible for the first three years for operation and the maintenance of the vehicles. The contract, awarded in 2012, was worth more than 100 Million Euros.

The tramway should be in operation from 2016 in the University Quarter Education City on two standard-gauge lines with a total length of 11.5km. and without any overhead catenary. The line to the Southern Campus is planned to open in June 2016, that to the Northern Campus in December 2016. At the total of 24 stations energy supply will be assured through short sections of powered overhead rail. The Avenios are equipped with small current collectors for this purpose; during charging they rise only ca. 50cm. above the roofs; and they are fitted with the energy storage system Sitras HES.

The equipment fitted onto the roof comprises a combination of Double-layer Condensers (Supercaps) and Lithium-Ion high-capacity batteries. The condenser units guarantee a high performance with short charging times, whilst the traction batteries assure the current supply during untimetabled stops and if

journeys take longer without recharging possibilities. The condensers are slowly emptied during acceleration and are then loaded again during movement from the batteries. Braking energy is also used for loading the energy storage system; as an annual average about 30% of the energy dissipated by braking should be recovered and used for operation.

The vehicles set up the charging process at the stations – it lasts for only a few seconds – themselves. On entering a charging station the vehicle automatically reduces the energy flow, so that no sparking occurs when the power rail is touched. Dependent on the operation and line parameters the hybrid energy storage unit allows travel without catenary for a maximum of 2.5km.

An especial challenge is formed by the extreme climatic conditions where these vehicles are to operate. Extreme heat, a high humidity, sandstorms and occasionally also heavy rains. One vehicle has been tested extensively in advance in the wind / climate Tunnel of the Rail Tec Arsenal in Vienna. Efficient air conditioning have to be able to work at over 40°C external temperature and a humidity of some 30% and provide an internal ambient temperature of 25°.

The vehicles are built in light steel, wholly low-floor with a Bo-2-Bo axle arrangement. They are 27.7m long over the couplings, and 2.55m wide. They offer 48 seats and 16 fold-down seats; total capacity is given – with four standing places per square metre – as 154 persons. Entrances are 350mm high.

The vehicles are painted white with black design elements and heavily tinted windows as a contrast and against the intensive solar rays. The interiors impress with sand-coloured, well-upholstered seats. WLAN and an Infotainment system are also equipped.

Two vehicles, still unnumbered, could be inspected during the visit to Wegberg-Wildenrath. An almost-complete coach had been presented to the customer the previous day. The second Avenio, which is still lacking parts of the interior furnishing, ran round the 2.4km long inner test ring, which had been fitted with several loading stations to simulate the catenary-less operation.

The first tram will be delivered to Doha in June 2015. The remaining vehicles will be prepared by the end of 2015 at the Siemens works in Vienna and then transported to Doha by February 2016. By then - according to current plans - the line to the Southern Campus should already be complete. Extensive works are still under way to erect the ambitious stations. The training of operating and maintenance personnel is also being prepared."

From photo captions: "Even though, according to Siemens, vandal-

הרכבת

ism is not a topic in Doha, it still seems questionable whether the sand-coloured upholstery will prove suitable in daily operation."

(iv). FIRST 'AVENIO' FOR DOHA EDUCATION CITY TESTED IN VIENNA.

From 'Tramway & Urban Transit', May 2015, p.172:

"The first Siemens 'Avenio' low-floor tram for the 11.5km (7.2 mile) Education City tramway was tested in the RailTec Arsenal in Wien, Austria, in March; 19 three-section, double-ended, 27.7m cars are on order and being built in Wien under the €412M turnkey contract for the line.

The new trams feature supercapacitors and NiMH batteries to permit catenary-free operation; batteries will be recharged at the 25 stops, requiring just 20 seconds. The trams are adapted for operation in high temperatures with uprated air conditioning, tinted windows and shades to protect roof-mounted equipment.

Maximum speed on the campus line will be 40km/h (25mph) and no fares will be charged. The line is due to start carrying passengers in September 2016."

(v). TROLLEY.

From NVBS 'Op de Rails' magazine 2015-8: p.392 about Dubai: "At the end of April the first section of the Dubai Trolley was put in operation. This stretch has a length of about 1 km. Starting at 4pm (weekend service starts at 3pm) a single tramcar provides transport service until late at night."

E. OMAN. TENDERS:-

From 'R.G.I.' 06.07.2015:

(i). Oman Rail issued on 21.06.2015 an "Invitation to Tender – Appointment of Freight and Network Operations & Maintenance Partner. Site visits are available 02-04.08.2015, technical tender to be submitted by 24.08.2015, the Commercial tender to be submitted later – t.b.a."

(ii). And: "Oman Rail Company hereby announces the following Tender : No. C-011-15. For: Provision of Independent Safety Assessment (ISA). Tender fee: R.O. 500/- non-refundable. Last date for collection: 18.6.2015. [sic] Bid Submission Date: 30.06.2015. The Tender documents can be obtained from Oman Rail Office Beach 1 Building, Third Floor, Qurum, Muscat...."

In relation especially to (i)., Oman Rail has a fancy booklet on its website (www.omanrail.om) filled with contradictory pictures – the cover shows camels, cliffs, tribesmen, a child and a high-speed train in Oman Rail livery, very 'artistic'. The inside is filled with proud and optimistic and un-

verifiable information about Oman's geographical position on many trade routes, 9% annual growth, and advantages, and much 'management-speak'. From this:-

"In 2012-2014 Oman already invested more than US\$ 20 billion into the expansion of its logistics infrastructure resulting in the enhancement and establishment of three major ports, five new airports and 2,500km of new road infrastructure. In addition, a national logistics sector strategy was developed to ensure the provision of all the 'soft infrastructure' required for best-in-class logistics industry in Oman. Consequently, Oman's logistics sector contributed \$US 5 billion to the national GDP in 2014. In the upcoming years, the Sultanate will continue to further invest into its logistics infrastructure focussing on the build-up of the national railway network (more than 2,100km) and further upgrading its highway infrastructure (more than 500km). Together with the establishment of a dedicated government agency responsible for driving the development of the logistics sector these measures are expected to double the country's cargo throughput, adding further \$US 5 billion to the Omani economy and creating 50,00 new jobs by 2020....

The introduction of the railway and the development of the overall logistics infrastructure will further enable the growth of international trade by providing Omani companies with a more efficient supply chain.....

Oman is blessed with an abundance of natural resources aside from oil and gas. In particular, the Sultanate is rich in gypsum, limestone, copper, marble and chromium. While these resources currently already form a substantial portion of Omani exports, a strong increase is expected over the next decade building on an improved transportation infrastructure. The majority of the above-mentioned natural resources are located in remote areas of Oman, which are typically served by road transport (if at all). As a result, the mining of these resources is currently often economically unfeasible. The build-up of the railway network (designed to pass through areas with a high concentration of natural resources) will improve the economic attractiveness of a multitude of mining projects significantly.

Overall, while mining will occur in a respectful and sustainable manner, it is estimated that the railway network will enable a 6-fold growth of Oman's mining industry.

.....Given Oman's advantageous geographic position, it is expected that the upcoming railway network will enable Oman to capture a disproportionate volume of the GCC market cargo growth (with a current growth rate of 8%).

.... Omam can build on a variety of competitive advantages: Firstly Oman enjoys a

premier geographical position to distribute goods into and out of the GCC, as well as around the Indian Ocean. The benefits of this geo-strategic advantages include:

- Faster access into and out of the GCC markets (land based transport with rail could be up to 36 hours faster than shipping with feeders).
- More reliable access into and out of the GCC markets (avoiding the politically sensitive Straits of Hormuz and the congested ports of the other GCC countries)
- Cheaper access into and out of the GCC markets (up to \$US 250,000 savings on fuel charges per vessel alone).....

Oman has developed a world-class infrastructure including:

- Three deep-water ports, capable of handling all sizes of vessels (some of which are currently unable to call at regionally competing ports), including the corresponding freezones (offering enticing incentives for key industries),
- a new international airport under construction (Muscat) and four newly-developed regional airports,
- an extensive expansion of the road infrastructure and other infrastructure such as a newly-developed logistics park.....

The development of the railway network in Oman project is partially driven by the development of the GCC Railway Mainline. Designed to generate economic, social and environmental benefits for each of the member countries, the GCC Railway Mainline will link all six GCC member countries along their eastern sea border, from Kuwait in the north, through Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates to Oman in the south. In order to effectively facilitate cross-border trade and thus maximise the impact created, the entire rail network of the GCC region is designed to allow full interoperability. Furthermore, the network will accommodate both passenger and freight services.

The full rail network in Oman will ultimately span 2,135km and connect Oman's major ports, industrial areas, mineral deposits and population centers with each other and with the wider GCC region.

The railway will benefit from the following technical specifications:

- Double track designed for future electrification,
- Safety by design (no crossings at grade, protected by fencing),
- Mixed freight and passenger operations,
- Locomotive and wagon axle load of 32.4 tons,
- International design standards (AREMA AAR/UIC),
- State-of-the-art signalling and communications systems (ECTS Level 2, GSM-R.)

Firstly - The establishment of the rail network will drive the growth of inter-

national trade. The advent of the railway will enable Oman to take full advantage of its geographically advantageous location. Once operational, the railway will provide the most cost effective and reliable distribution channel into and out of the GCC region, while also having the added advantage of allowing:

- Containers. It is expected that the railway will attract an incremental 2 million TEU to Oman's ports within the first five years of being operational, to be distributed into the wider GCC region by rail (this equates to less than 8% of the total addressable rail market).
- Automotive. By 2020, over 3 million new cars are forecasted to be sold every year in the GCC. Currently, new cars are distributed by the car manufacturers to each individual country of the GCC. Based on preliminary discussions with several car manufacturers, there is a clear potential to consolidate the distribution in one country, with Oman being able to offer an attractive value proposition once the railway is developed.
- Bulk. For example, one bulk shipping company currently imports 8 million tonnes of iron pellets into Sohar Port, which are subsequently distributed into the GCC region; preliminary discussions indicate that this volume could ultimately be distributed fully by rail. Furthermore, the railway could attract numerous other bulk shippers to import/export through Oman.

Secondly, the upcoming railway network will drive the growth of international inward investment. As more customers distribute their GCC region destined cargo through Oman, the opportunity for Oman (and in particular Omani freezones) grows to offer value added services such as e.g. warehousing, packaging, assembly. In addition, as the establishment of the rail network enables a more efficient and reliable supply chain, Oman will become a more attractive location for international companies to locate their business.....

Thirdly, this new mode of transportation will improve the competitiveness of the domestic industry significantly. The railway network will provide Omani companies with a re efficient supply chain solution, thus enabling Omani companies to become more cost competitive on both the domestic and international stage. In addition, the railway will enable a strong growth in the exploitation of natural resources (particularly gypsum, limestone and marble) due to improved economics. It is estimated that the railway could be used to transport up to 20 million tonnes of gypsum from Thumrait to the ports of Salalah and Duqm already within two years after the start of operation. In addition, the railway could be used to transport 10(M)

tonnes of marble, gypsum and limestone from northern Oman to the port of Sohar within the same time period.

Finally, the railway will lead to a significant reduction of road congestion and improved road safety as well as a decrease of environmental pollution.

Consequently preliminary discussions with major potential customers demonstrate great enthusiasm and demand for the new railway.

....Oman Rail is seeking an internationally experienced partner to ensure the successful build-up of its freight railway operations. It is envisioned that the partner will have proven expertise in developing, operating and maintaining a safe, efficient and effective railway business, and as such will be best placed to successfully aid Oman Rail in maximising the economic value potential of the railway. Particular benefits for the operating partner include: the opportunity to develop operations in a greenfield set-up. To maximise the probability of success, the operating partner has the opportunity to shape the development of the railway (e.g. Terminal design, rolling stock procurement, operational guidelines) right from the beginning without legacy issues or having to overcome preconceived ideas. ...The project offers a unique business opportunity with very limited risk, given the large existing domestic base demand from a concentrated customer base. Over 20 million tonnes of existing cargo flows from three potential customers are already in advanced discussions for conversion to rail. A further potential of up to 70 million tonnes of domestic volume capture within the first two years from a concentrated base of large domestic mining companies. The partnership offers large demand upsides from international opportunities. In addition to the domestic base demand, there is a large potential upside from international opportunities, including the potential to transport up to 5 million TEU from Oman's ports to the GCC region within the first five years, as well as the potential to consolidate car manufacturer's and bulk traders' distributions into and out of the GCC....."

[In short, the 'pitch' is that Oman sees its geographical advantage in that it borders the Indian Ocean rather than the Persian Gulf and so transshipment here to rail transport further north-westwards into the other Gulf Cooperation Council states would be advantageous. The system is to be developed from scratch, but in coordination with the other GCC railway schemes. Ed.]

F. IRAN.

(i). TURKMENISTAN LINK

: From 'R.G.I.' 05.07.2015: "The Ministry of Railway Transport has awarded Huawei a contract to supply GSM-R for the 265km. line from Bereket to Ak Yayla on the Iranian border. The line was officially inaugurated by the presidents of Turkmenistan, Iran and Kazakhstan on December 3rd. last year. The scope of the contract includes a multi-service transport platform backbone, video conference facilities for station offices, data-storage and station public address systems.

The Chinese company had previously won contracts to supply GSM-R to supply GSM-R for the Burthun – Serhetyaka, Buzhun – Chilmammet, Chilmammet – Bereket and Ashgabat – Bereket – Turkmenbashi lines."

(ii). TEHRAN METRO.

From 'Tramway & Urban Transport', May 2015 p.207: A new Metro station on Line 3 at Meydan e Vall-e Ast opened on 2nd. March.

(iii). NEW DIESEL MULTIPLE UNITS.

From 'R.G.I.' 26.06.2015: "Irico plans to produce 150 DMU cars by March 2016."

(iv). SERVICE SUSPENSION.

On 04.08.2015 it was announced by Jeff Hawken: "Iranian Railways has suspended the operation of the weekly TransAsia Express from Teheran to Ankara because of the security situation in Eastern Turkey. No mention was made of the weekly Tabriz to Van train, but I expect that is suspended too."

G. DUBAI.

(i). "TIG/m delivered the first heritage outline tram to Dubai Trolley in February, but due to delays in completing the depot, the hydrogen cell propulsion package could not be installed until April."

(ii). The following items come from 'Tramways and Urban Transit' magazine, May 2015. pp. 188-191: "DUBAI: SHOWCASE FOR THE GULF?"

"It is 10.6km (6.6 miles) long and uses Alstom 'Citadis' trams. Such a statement could

make the Dubai Tramway appear 'Pretty' ordinary – but that's one thing it certainly isn't.

The new light rail line opened in November 2014, under a 'turnkey' contract with Alstom that includes maintenance for 13 years. Like the Gulf State's metro, the tramway is operated by Serco, under a deal signed in 2013 that included a period of preparation then five years of operation.

The tramway is part of a programme intended to move public transport take-up from 15% to 30%

Situated on the Persian Gulf, Dubai has a hot – and sandy - climate. These things themselves create technical challenges, but the line also brings together various innovative features in one place. Most eye-catchingly, it is the first modern tramway of its kind to be completely wire-free over its whole service length, using Alstom's 'Alimentation par le Sol' system of ground-level current collection.

Dubai's harsh climate also had a key influence on the design of stops, which are quite different to the more basic calling points common in many places across the globe. Here, explains Prou, the line has fully enclosed passenger stations "which in turn imposed something new for a tramway, automatic platform screen doors. They are very exposed to the environment."

In order to judge the effects on the doors over time under these difficult conditions, Alstom built a 'mock-up' station to try it out. "We replicated the kind of passenger station and we recreated the operation for ten years," said Prou. "We had the doors opening and closing every ten seconds to come up with millions of cycles."

However platform screen doors were not the only aspect of the new line subjected to rigorous testing. Indeed, a whole 44m tram was taken to be thoroughly tested in the RailTec Arsenal climatic wind tunnel in Wien. Alstom has a stake in the state-of-the-art facility, which also includes Bombardier and Siemens among its shareholders.

"We recreated in the climatic chamber the exact conditions of Dubai..." explains Prou, "and we tested the performance of the equipment. Of course we had done a number of software simulations before that.... and luckily enough, the results in the climatic chamber were quite conclusive and successful."

Initial experience in the period following opening appeared to have borne out that work, says Prou. "We can already say we have been through the hottest months of the year without any surprises, and very successfully."

Catenary-free Operation.

One of the major innovations is use of Alstom's APS throughout the public

section of the tramway, a decision taken on aesthetic grounds. It's a first – quite aside from it having to work in a harsh environment. "We knew this would be a major challenge," says Prou. "Although APS 'first generation' is fully proven, we knew we would have to go to the next generation. We have completely re-engineered it."

That has not only been about ensuring the system can put up with heat and dust because, as Prou explains, "there are heavy floods in the region. "We had to ensure that the power boxes themselves can be immersed; we have also paid great attention to the way we drain the whole platform. Nevertheless dust – or rather sand – was indeed a major complicating factor, given that trams using APS pick up electricity from ground level.

"We had to analyse the effect of the sand. We incorporated a heavy duty brush under the tram, and then in the laboratory we tested the choice of material on the contact shoe to check the wear on this interface. We used actual sand from Dubai.... to ensure we had the exact same sand."

Other innovations are less visually obvious than the lack of overhead catenary or the enclosed stations – or indeed aspects such as the fact that the tramway runs almost exclusively on its own segregated formation, except at the signal-controlled highway crossings.

Given the need for supreme accuracy in driving and the challenge of ensuring tram doors line up precisely with platform screen doors at stops, the Dubai Tramway has been equipped with a form of signalling more associated with metro systems: Alstoms 'Urbalis 400'. This is a Communications Based Train Control (CBTC) system, and provides speed control along the line, interlocking protection at signals and stopping accuracy at stations with applied braking profile.

"This is really something new," says Prou; "The traditional principle of driving at line-of-sight is still applicable like on any other tramway but other features are new and bring enhanced safety to the system."

One Stop Shop.

In all this, Alstom has acted as the leader of a consortium to provide a 'one stop shop'

for the customer, Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority. Although the €700M project has included fielding many of its own products, it has also meant the French conglomerate working with others.

That has meant the Belgian company BESIX, which undertook civil engineering aspects such as utility diversion, building construction, and creating the elevated section of line running on a 2.5km (1.6 mile) viaduct.

Giving some idea of the range of

what has been covered in the creation of the new line, Prou explains that "We had within our scope of work a number of studies and analyses that traditionally would be delivered by engineering companies before the authorities issue the tender." Examples are Urban Insertion Studies, passenger flow analyses, road traffic flows analysis, and Station Context Planning.

He adds that work has also "re-generated the urban environment by recreating landscapes – examples including the cycle track that runs parallel to the line. The result is very much appreciated by the residents and commuters."

Prou seems pleased with the performance of the Dubai scheme, and pays credit to the entire team that created it – including the customer. "We have delivered the whole project ahead of schedule – nearly two months early," he says, adding "And the introduction into service has been very smooth."

Indeed, it is clear that Prou sees the Dubai line as a possible beacon for others. "We will.... drive a lot of experience into the next project which we have secured, which is Qatar. We hope that Dubai can be a real showcase for the region."

A graphics panel shows 'DUBAI TRAMWAY AT A GLANCE':-

December 2009: Construction begins.

November 2014: First tram runs.

Client: Dubai Roads and Transport Authority.

Owner's Representative: SYSTRA.

Power supply: APS II ground-level.

Number of classes on the tram: 3. Gold Silver and Green (women and children).

11 fully-enclosed stations, with platform screen doors and air-conditioning.

100% of main line that is catenary free, powered using Alstom's APS.

1 control centre for the line.

10.6: distance in km. (6.6 miles) of the first phase tramways that opened in November 2014.

13 years – Alstom's maintenance contract.

8 traction power substations-

11 fully-low-floor 44m Alstom Citadis 402 trams to provide the service (capacity 405, length 44m, maximum speed 50km/h / 30mph).

Passenger capacity per tram: 408.

23 road junctions equipped to give the tramway full priority over other road vehicles.

66,000 expected daily passenger numbers by 2020; expectations were for 27,000 per day initially.

14.7 km (9.1 miles) – distance once a planned second phase extension has opened; integration with the Mall of the World will influence this development. Ideas also exist to expand the tramway in the mid-term.

14 – the number of trams in option for sec-

ond phase."

(iii). pp.193f.: "DUBAI'S RAIL REGULATIONS."

"Gurmeet Kaur, Head of Projects (IAE at Law firm Eversheds LLP, considers some of the key legal and safety regulations governing the rail sector in Dubai.

"There have been a number of significant developments in the transport sector in Dubai and UAE generally. The Dubai metro commenced operations in 2009 and has been a great achievement for Dubai, with ridership numbers increasing year on year.

With the increasing demand for public transport and the successful Dubai Expo 2020 bid, the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) has announced further plans to expand the metro to the Expo site and is studying the feasibility of further expansions of the Red and Green lines. Abu Dhabi has also announced plans for a combined metro, tram and bus network; further details are expected later this year. The 2116km (1315 mile) Gulf Co-Operation Council (GCC) railway network is another significant development in the region.

In Dubai transport schemes have been or are being developed by other developers, such as the monorail system on the Palm Jumeirah by Nakheel, the peoplemover system by Dubai Airports, and most recently the heritage tram system by Emaar.

In the UAE, Dubai has been at the forefront of developing a rail-related regulatory framework. The RTA, as regulator, has the responsibility to regulate the design and planning of passenger transport in Dubai, including free zone areas, and has put in place a number of regulations. These regulations provide a framework to guide planning and development of rail infrastructure and ensure safe and effective operation of railway systems.

The key legislation regulating the rail sector in Dubai is Regulation 5 of 2009 (as amended) on the regulation of railways in the Emirate of Dubai (Railway Regulation). This applies to the whole Emirate and sets out the planning and safety certification process for all rail infrastructure and operations. Other relevant instruments include Administrative Decision (68) of 2010 Issuing the Implementing By-Law of Regulation (5) of 2009 Concerning Railways in the Emirate of Dubai (Administrative Decision), Dubai Executive Council Decision I of 2014 on the Regulation of the Dubai Tramway (Tramway Regulation) and the Dubai Rail Planning and Design Guidelines (RPDG).

In addition there are regulations such as Dubai Municipality building regulations, which need to be complied with for

building projects in Dubai and also requirements of utility providers such as Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), to the extent there are interfaces with service lines and utilities.

Regulation 5 contains a fairly broad definition of a railway, and covers most forms of light and heavy rail infrastructure, including the tram and mono-rail systems. Under the regulation, the Rail Agency of the RTA has the responsibility for issuing permits for the development of rail infrastructure, provision of rail vehicles and other work in relation to development and maintenance of railway systems. It is also responsible for issuing No Objection Certificates (NOC) for the construction, demolition and excavation of railway infrastructure.

The process for applying for the development permit and obtaining relevant NOCs are set out in more detail in the Administrative Decision and the Rail Planning and Design Guidelines (RPDG) and summarised below.

Pre-Design Phase.

Under the RPDG, any developer of developments that feature a rail transport component is required to submit a Conceptual Master Plan and a development brief to the RTA as part of an application for the RTA NOC. This must clearly identify the potential requirement for rail transport. Once these have been reviewed and approved, the RTA will issue an in principle NOC to the developer.

The developer must then formulate the Urban Master Plan, confirm the requirement for public transport, undertake a feasibility study to confirm the rail transportation mode required, prepare a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) and finalise the Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Any cost-sharing arrangements and agreements relating to the proposed rail transport project, whether with the RTA or any other entity, should be finalised by the developer and accounted for prior to the completion of the feasibility study.

After confirming the feasibility of the proposed rail project, the developer produces a project brief and issues it to the RTA, along with the proposed development's TIS/TMP. This brief should describe the scope and extent of the proposed railway project and include the details required in the RPDG such as details of the project background, funding strategy, cost-sharing arrangements, station planning information, potential impacts of the project, projected power demands, etc.

Upon review of the developer's project brief, the RTA may request additional information or clarification, which the developer must address. Once the RTA is satisfied with the information, it will issue the development NOC.

Design Phase.

Once the development NOC has been issued, the developer can appoint an RTA-prequalified designer to prepare the concept design. Under the RPDG, it is the developer's responsibility to ensure that any entity appointed to undertake rail-related works (whether studies, design, construction, etc.) are recognised by the RTA and are in possession of an RTA Prequalification NOC, and are licensed by Dubai Municipality. Failure to procure the services of RTA-prequalified rail service providers is illegal and will result in RTA's rejection of submitted deliverables or completed work.

The developer can also appoint an RTA-pre-qualified third party reviewer (IRB) to check and verify on behalf of the RTA that the appointed designer/contractor's work and deliverables are in compliance with the project brief and project information (as previously submitted to the RTA), the RTA's requirements for rail transport projects in the RPDG, and with the relevant local governing laws and regulations.

The scope of work and contract terms of the IRB shall be approved by the RTA to ensure that it is able to discharge its responsibilities, and the appointment of the IRB will be approved by the RTA to ensure that the organisation has the necessary skills and experience to perform the role.

The developer may also consider appointing an RTA-pre-qualified operator to oversee design development and ensure that designs are capable of meeting the specified operational requirements and service levels. The developer should develop all stages of the design in accordance with the RPDG and any additional input provided by the RTA.

Once the concept design is complete the developer then submits the same to the IRB for review. Once deemed compliant, the IRB normally instructs the developer to develop the preliminary design. The submission process described above is repeated for the preliminary and detailed design submission; however, this time RTA approval will be required in order for the developer to proceed to the next stage. The IRB will then forward these submissions to the RTA.

The RTA applies fees for the review of the preliminary design and detailed design submissions. If deemed compliant by the IRB and if the RTA has no objections, the RTA will issue a preliminary design NOC to enable the developer to proceed with the detailed design stage. In cases where the IRB and/or RTA have comments on a submission that they deem as minor and that are easy for the developer's designer to address in a subsequent design approval submission, then an NOC with

comments may be issued by the RTA.

If the project is to be delivered as a design-build project, the developer ensures that the appointed RTA-pre-qualified contractor procures the services of an RTA-pre-qualified designer as well. At the completion of the detailed design stage, the developer submits the final design deliverables for approval and applies for an RTA permit to commence construction – which is given upon approval of the detailed design.

Operations.

The Railway Regulation includes a prohibition for operating rail infrastructure unless the owner obtains a Safety Certificate from the Safety Regulatory Authority (SRA) and the operator obtains an Operational Safety Certificate from the same. The administrative decision contains detailed requirements that will need to be satisfied in order to obtain the relevant certifications. The operator must design a safety management scheme in accordance with the criteria set out in Article 14. There are substantial fees to apply for the Safety Certificate and Operational Safety Certificate, and fines for violations: for example, under new amendments made in 2012, the fees for the issuance of the safety status certificate is a fixed fee of AED 2M (Euro 0.5M.)

Subsequent legislation in Dubai such as the Tramway Regulation follows the approach adopted in the Railway Regulation. The Tramway Regulation is consolidating (by bringing together new and existing legal provision into a single location and providing for all subsidiary regulations and codes to be made under it) to deal with technical and other matters. The Tramway Regulation deals with the added complexity of interface with road users and provides for responsibilities of the owner, developer and operator. There are a number of fines imposed for pedestrians and road users who infringe the tramway right-of-way, and a number of public awareness campaigns and programmes have been organised by the RTA.

In summary, successful rail regulation will need to address all aspects of the operation itself, the infrastructure that supports it, and its interface with others in complex environments. The Dubai regulatory framework has provided a good system for regulating rail infrastructure and operations, but there are some areas where further clarity would be beneficial. For example, there are questions on whether all aspects of the RPDG are suitable for the different modes of railway transport, and for smaller projects. There is also no overarching safety regulation for non-rail transport in Dubai that would cover private operators; it may be useful to have general safety principles that are mandatory for all transport providers in Dubai.

Another aspect to consider is the

impact and interface with rail networks in the other Emirates and GCC networks, and to develop wide-reaching principles that govern safety and effective operations between the Emirates and wider GCC.”

[Editor's Comments: The authoress of this piece has, according to a brief bio, "been practicing in Dubai for the last seven years focussing in transport and energy projects" and her firm Eversheds has "advised on renegotiation of the Dubai metro concession and advising on the legal aspects of a feasibility study of the red and green line metro extension."

I have quoted the entire article because it is illustrative of one way of doing things – and it all looks like a recipe for enormous backhanders and complications. The tramway system looks incredibly over-engineered – quite the reverse of the 'KISS' principle ('Keep It Simple, Stupid!') especially for a sand-laden windy atmosphere; And the bureaucracy contained in the approval system whereby only a 'closed shop' of pre-qualified rail design experts (this in a

country that had not seen a rail until recently – what do they do or what do they pay to 'pre-qualify' to earn fees?) whose employment (at what level?) is compulsory, is another form of 'jobs for the boys.' A government department creates a system whereby it can impose new requirements and will charge developers repeated unspecified fees for doing its job at each stage. Plus half a million just for a safety certificate! Of course, the contractor just adds all these extra costs onto the final bill. Everyone will do very nicely indeed, thank you, out of such engineering and management systems and the public probably aren't paying directly in any case and so won't mind. Money will flow like sand.....]

H. EGYPT.

CAIRO METRO LINE 1 – NEW HYUNDAI UNITS.

From 'R.G.I.' 16th. July. 2015: "The first Hyundai Rotem trainset on Cairo metro Line 1 has entered passenger service. This is four weeks ahead of the original schedule, as the National Authority for Tunnels was sufficiently satisfied with the results of test running, which started in March. The NAT signed an E£2.16bn contract in December 2012 for 20 nine-car air-conditioned trainsets, funded by the national government. Four sets will be manufactured in South Korea, with the rest assembled in Egypt. The agreement stipulates that locally made components account for at least 22% of the deal's total value. The contract includes a two-year warranty period, and Hyundai Rotem will maintain and repair the cars for a further eight years. The first trainset arrived in Cairo in March, and deliveries are due to be completed by the end of next year." They had been ordered in Jan. 2013.

110:09

Tramway construction works begin in Tel Aviv. The board says: "Here are taking place works for the LRV". (Photo: Aharon Gazit)





Demolition of the "Maariv" overpass to make way for the Tel-Aviv light railway station there and an underpass to replace it.

