



A cover without a train visible! But this beautiful photo, professionally shot and purchased for use in Harakevet by Martin Frey, is already historic for it shows the A1 Jerusalem line close to completion - but not quite. By the time this issue is published there should be overhead catenary installed and test running getting under way though - as noted inside - the formal opening has been moved from a politically-desired Springtime to a professionally-preferred autumn date.

(Photo by Flash 90).

EDITORIAL

We present Issue no. 120 and once again this feels like an occasion for looking back as well as forward. In Jewish tradition Moses died aged 120 and so one wishes people "Bis Hundertzwanzig!" - "May you reach until 120!" (In Berlin one adds "and a Wednesday" on the basis that no-one would wish to die on their birthday.) This is considered the perfect age, for people if not for magazines.

We are indeed getting older and it is a shock to look at early issues on the website so capably cared for by Jeremy. If Israel and IR looks ever younger the same cannot be said of the very informal Harakevet 'team' – Paul has left us, and Steve, Jeremy, Aharon, Uri and others have all grown twenty years older in the past twenty years (not Sybil! She is merely 'more matured'.) How long can we keep going? Well, the editing remains a one-man job, we have no Assistant Editor or team of eager potential successors; the same applies to what Steven does with the layout, printing and - especially – the administration of subscriptions and maintenance of the address list. The 'donkey work'. Jeremy proofreads.... I suppose (if I may speak for the others) we all aim to keep going for as long as we can and when we cannot – then new solutions will need to be found. Or not. For speaking with other railway journalists it is clear that there is a generational change, a greater desire for 'instant news' and less for archiving bound printed magazines. Just as 78rpm's gave way to LP's which gave way to cassettes which gave way to CD's and now downloads..... Whatever, whenever – let us keep going for now, recording what we can, maintaining our standards and general layout, ensuring that less 'fake news' is presented as historical fact. And – adopting an elegiac note - whenever the time might come to stop let us take comfort in a job well done and that it was fun while it lasted.

For now – Till 240!!

The big news this issue has to be the planned opening of the A1 line to Jerusalem.... albeit, for political reasons, the Minister insists it be opened before it is fully complete – one normally needs time to 'bed down' new track and signalling systems... Shortly before we 'closed for press' came an article in 'Globes' which stresses this quite starkly and we hope the message will be taken on board... Because of the Editor's planned travels this issue was prepared on 21st. Feb. and until yesterday we could not tell who would win and whether the line would indeed be opened to regular traffic before the next issue is due! At the last minute (and one assumes partly because someone somewhere leaked their concerns to the press) as of today we learn that the opening is to be postponed for six months.... So maybe common sense and engineering caution has triumphed after all. But this news came after the rest of the magazine had been 'put to bed'. In the meantime we are happy to announce that Martin Frey has kindly purchased publication rights for several photos of the line from the 'Flash 90' agency, to help us avoid any repetition of earlier misunderstandings and unpleasantnesses.

- 120:03
- The Jerusalem A1 line still under construction: Tracklaying through the tunnel - not yet quite finished - and the catenary construction trolley. (Photo Flash 90, thanks to Martin Frey).



NEWS FROM THE LINE

(i). NO MORE I.R. PRINTED TIMETABLES?

Sybil wrote in mid-January. "Our old friend Yossi, the station master at Beit Shemesh, told me there will be no more printed timetables since it's now all on the Internet." Hmmm. Let us hope this is not so. It would indeed be the end of an era.

(ii). NEW TURNABLES.

From a WhatsApp announcement of 13.12.2017 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

With the participation of Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Shahar Ayalon and Deputy General Manager for Cargo Mr. Uri Sharir, the corner stone for the first turntable (after 60 years) has been laid at the Ashdod Port cargo terminal; the second turntable will be installed at Tzefa cargo terminal in the south; both are to be operational by August 2018; more will follow.



- A computer image of the turn table provided by courtesy of Mr. Matan Berkovich from the railways' spokesman office (The image shows a background scenery that does not at first remind one of Ashdod..... Ed.)

(iii). EARLY SUCCESS IN THE GALILEE.

From a press release of 20.12.2017 by both the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry and Israel Railways Ltd.: "Both the railways' Galilee Line between Acre and Carmiel and the Valley Line seem to be a great success with passenger traffic exceeding forecast.



During the first three months of operation (20.09.2017 - 01.12.2017) of the Galilee Line opened on 20.09.2017, more than half a million passengers have used it; 29,015 passengers boarded trains at Ahihud station (between Acre and Carmiel) and 226,175 passengers boarded trains at Carmiel station.

25,532 passengers alighted trains at Ahihud station and 189,609 passengers alighted at Carmiel station; considering that these figures do not include December with its holidays both for the Jewish and Christian populations who travel a lot at this time, it is estimated that traffic will exceed half a million.

On the Valley Line opened in October 2016 traffic exceeded the 2 Million passengers barrier; Yokne'am-Kfar-Yehoshua station was used by 383,789 passengers, Migdal Ha'emek-Kfar-Baruch by 301,583 passengers, Afula by 850,517 passengers and Beit-She'an by 563,418 passengers; A total of 2,099,308 passengers; here too, December 2017 not yet included.

Both Minister Katz and the railways management said: "We're proud and happy to see that Israelis from the north are heavily using the two new lines; very soon the following additional stations of Navon at Jerusalem, Mazkeret-Batya, Kiryat-Malakhi-Yoav, Ra'anana West and more will be opened together with opening of the A1 and the 531 lines (linking the coast line to Ra'anana West, Hod-HaSharon, and Kfar-Sava.)"

Mr. Katz added: "The real estate people have known for a long time how railway stations affect the demands for apartments/houses near stations or with stations easily accessible; This happened more than a decade ago at Binyamina, Pardes-Hanna and Rehovot; it happened during recent years at Yavne, Rishon-LeZion West, Netanya East and is currently happening at Beit-She'an, Carmiel and Afula, and at additional sites in Israel.

I've instructed my people to promote the line from Carmiel on to Kiryat-Shmona in the Upper Galilee, as well as the link from Beit-She'an to Jordan, and from Afula to Jenin in the Palestinian Authority. The railways are thus becoming a social-commercial company."

(iv). LATE NIGHT TO CARMIEL.

On 24.12.2017 IR announced supplementary late-night trains: "Due to growing demand on the line to/from Carmiel (which proves its success), the following two additional trains have started running from today between Carmiel and Haifa Hof-HaCarmel, between Sunday and Thursday, calling at all the intermediate stations: Kiryat-Motzkin, Kiryat-Haim, Haifa Hutzot HaMifratz, Haifa Lev Hamifratz, Haifa Central and Haifa Bat-Galim.

The train from Carmiel departs at 23:36 and terminates at Haifa Hof-HaCarmel at 00:24. The train from Haifa Hof-HaCarmel departs at 23:57 and terminates at Carmiel at 00:51.

(v). HIGH SPEED TEST RUNS WITH ELECTRIC LOCO!

On 21.12.2017 an historic point was reached:

Bombardier-built electric locomotive type TRAXX IR No. 3003 performed the first-ever test run of an

electric locomotive in Israel, reaching a speed of 160km/h along a 12 km electrified section of the A1 line between Anava junction and Latrun Monastery; this includes the longest bridge (No. 6) of any sort in Israel and tunnel No. 1; however it did not traverse the tunnel where final communication works have still to be completed.

This test comes after tests at low speed performed last week on shorter sections.

The railways have ordered 62 such locomotives, of which 3 are already in Israel. The link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IERxyVO85Xs>

brings one to a video of this loco being unloaded together with several carriages.

The following link should, for a while at least, lead to two brief videos of the test runs:

<http://www.railwaygazette.com/news/passenger/single-view/view/electric-tests-hit-160-kmh-in-israel.html>

(vi). OPENING OF THE NEW JERUSALEM LINE? (OR NOT YET?)

From the 'Jerusalem Post' 16.01.2018 – by our very own Sybil Ehrlich!

"The high-speed train made its first test run on Tuesday, carrying Transportation Minister Israel Katz and a large number of excited press photographers and reporters.

The day's event began at Mishmar Ayalon, from where everyone was taken by minibus shuttle to the railway track, adjacent to Road 1 near Latrun. Soon after Katz arrived the star of the show made its appearance – a brand-new electric locomotive hauling standard double-decker coaches.

Katz remarked that this was a historic run, and stressed the importance of linking Jerusalem to the rest of the country by high-speed train. The route is to be called the King David Line, in homage to the founder of the city of Jerusalem and to emphasize the connection of the Jewish people to Israel's capital city.

The minister promised that the line will open on the eve of Passover this year, even though the entire route is not yet complete. Trains will initially run from Jerusalem via Ben-Gurion Airport to Tel Aviv HaHagana. For the first three months, travel on the line will be free with a Rav-Kav smartcard. Passengers boarding at the new Navon station in Jerusalem (between the Central Bus Station and the Jerusalem International Convention Center) will enjoy free travel to anywhere in the country.

It will take several months to complete the necessary infrastructure to allow the electric trains to continue to Herzliya, and after the initial three months' free travel until everything is finished there will be a 50% discount on fares.

The test ride was not long enough to allow the train to reach its normal cruising speed of 160 km/h, since we went only about five kilometres, heading eastwards. We entered the 11km-long tunnel, waited in the tunnel for a few minutes, and then

went back to the start point. The ride was smooth and uneventful, apart from the obvious excitement at the novelty of riding on an electric train in Israel (with the exception of the Jerusalem Light Rail there are no other electric trains operating in the country).

After eight years of planning and construction work, the King David Line is a welcome addition to the country's transportation infrastructure, and it is hoped that with a journey time of around 28 minutes between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, more people will be encouraged to leave their cars at home, preferring the state-of-the-art, 21st-century railway."

Photos show the run started from near km. 23.6 where there is a crossover and a stabling siding where a Vossloh loco stood (presumably either it had brought the electric loco, or was there as reserve in case, or both) and the loco is given its full UIC number of 91 95 0003 003-7 IL-IR.

(vii). THE OPENING OF THE NEW JERUSALEM LINE.

MAH NISHTANAH HALAILAH HAZEH?

From a press release of 09.01.2018 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"Due to an instruction of Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz, the A1 electrified fast link to Jerusalem will start operating on 30.03.2018 at the eve of Pesach (Passover).

In the first stage, only one track will be operational, and as a result there will be only 2 trains/hour each direction for several months. The planned journey time of 28 minutes between Navon station of Jerusalem and HaHaganah station of Tel-Aviv is promised to be kept.

Several months later, when both tracks will become operational, there will be 3 trains/hour, at rush hours to be increased in the future to 6.

Next week, Minister Katz will participate in a test run between Latrun Monastery and Anava junction near Modi'in. Minister Katz said: "I've promised and I keep my word; on Passover holidays, we all will take trains to Jerusalem!"

The line is fitted with ERTMS/ETCS Level 2 and so as stated a ten-minute headway over the 56km line will eventually be possible. Trains would run with just one intermediate stop, at the airport. Costs so far are 1.4Bn Euro."

BUT – and it is a BIG BUT:- This appeared 18.02.2018 in 'Globes' and is worth citing in full. (By Amiram Barkat and Sonia Gorodeisky.) (It also appeared the following day in 'Jerusalem Post'.)

"Engineers and safety experts have told 'Globes' that if the trains start operating next month, there is liable to be a disaster.

Just one month before the scheduled opening of the high-speed railway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, a 'Globes' report finds that the work on it is far from finished. Furthermore, engineers and safety experts are warning that if the trains are operated in late March, as Minister of Transport Yisrael Katz and other ministry figures recently

stated, the result is liable to be a disaster. Recent audit reports and oral assessments by experts obtained by "Globes" state unequivocally that the railway line cannot be used for passenger trains before August at the earliest.

An investigation into the matter by "Globes" found that much work remains incomplete. Laying the track is still taking place, the communications systems in the tunnels are operating only in part, electrification work has not yet been completed, and essential coordination checks between the various systems have not yet been carried out. Even worse, information obtained by "Globes" indicates that safety rules are being ignored in the feverish effort to finish the project on time, while the State Comptroller has already warned in his recent report that the rush to finish the project is liable to endanger human life.

"There is no reasonable chance that the project will be completed on time without breaching the safety rules," a senior electrical engineer accompanying the project told "Globes" today. "Even if they finish the work on time, they have to test all the systems for several months. I have accompanied several overseas projects, and I have never seen such a thing before, maybe only in developing countries like India, where people travel on the roofs of the railway cars. The Ministry of Transport is pressing very hard to finish the project on time, so the railway doesn't dare say that it won't be ready on time."

The engineer said that the two most important systems that must undergo several months of testing are the electrical system and the command and control system. "If the cables touching the train are not well synchronized down to the millimeter, there is a risk of collapse - including during a journey."

"It's too bad that they are messing up at the very end"

One month ago, Katz invited reporters to an initial test journey on the line in the area of Mishmar Ayalon (a 12-kilometer section), and announced March 30 as the date for operating the first track in the project. Last week, Ministry of Transport deputy director general Colonel (res.) Yaakov Blitstein announced that starting on March 29, it will be possible to travel from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and back in 30 minutes each way. Last Thursday, Katz met with Israel Railways CEO Shahar Ayalon, and asked whether work on the project would be completed on time. He was told that it would.

Talks with contractors and engineers involved in the project, however, tell a different story. Work on all the main systems comprising the project has not yet been finished, not to mention the coordination and synchronization between them, which should take months before a passenger train can be run on the line. The most prominent example of the state of work is the railway bridge at the entrance to Jerusalem (Bridge no. 10). The bridge itself is standing, and laying the track on it was completed in recent days, but one basic thing is still missing - the electric poles. Laying the electric poles on the bridge is expected to take several weeks, among other things because of its

great height, which reaches a peak of 100 meters. The work itself has not yet begun.

Responsibility for electrification of the railway and putting up the electric poles does not lie with Israel Electric Corporation; responsibility rests with Spanish company Semi, which won a NIS 2 billion tender two years ago. At the request of Israel Railways, IEC helped with two temporary electrical connections - at Sha'ar HaGai and near Holtz Technical High School in Tel Aviv.

Another important point is the Hahagana railway station in Tel Aviv - the final stop or first stop on the line. Work on connecting the Hagana station to electricity is also far from finished, although it is a very difficult project that must be carried out in a densely populated urban area.

"I have been watching this work from the side, and I simply don't understand," another senior electrical engineer regularly in contact with engineers on the line said today. "Either the minister has not been informed or I don't know what, but it would be crazy to put a passenger train on this line in a month from now."

Another important matter far from completion is test journeys. According to the plan, trains loaded with cargo are meant to travel on the track in order to smooth it down. The test was supposed to take seven months, but it actually began only in January, and for certain parts of the route, no such tests at all have been conducted.

A check by "Globes" also shows that the trains are traveling in the tunnel along the track, even though their communications systems are not yet working. This is a real violation of the safety rules, which forbid putting trains into the tunnels without internal communications systems capable of issuing alerts of malfunctions or accidents.

Another problem of critical importance for passenger safety is coordination between the electrification and signals systems. Tests of the coordination between these two vital systems cannot be conducted in full for the simple reason that the full length of the line has not yet been electrified.

"They waited a decade, and it's too bad that they are messing up at the very end," a transportation source told "Globes."

Relieving the traffic jams between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv

The high-speed Tel Aviv - Jerusalem train, considered the Ministry of Transport's biggest project, estimated at NIS 7 billion, is designed to connect Israel's capital to the Greater Tel Aviv metropolitan region and the central region, and to relieve traffic congestion. Travel time on the high-speed line from Tel Aviv to Binyanei Hauma (International Convention Center), the last stop on the line, located at a depth of 80 meters underground, is projected at less than 30 minutes.

The project began in 2001, but following a series of managerial missteps, the completion date was postponed from 2008 until 2017, and then to late March 2018. The line is 57 kilometers long, including 32 kilometers of new track from the area of Kfar Daniel to Jerusalem, with a system of nine

bridges (with a length of three kilometers) and five tunnels (with a length of 19 kilometers). This system was designed to make the journey straight, continuous, and fast.

In the first stage, the railway is scheduled to operate one track from the Binyanei Hauma station to the Hagana station in Tel Aviv. Frequency on the line in the early months will be two trains per hour in each direction. In the second stage, which will begin several months later, the railway will operate two tracks between the Binyanei Hauma station and the Hagana station, and the frequency on the line will be increased to three trains an hour. In the future, frequency will rise to six trains an hour at peak times.

The project set several local records: construction of the longest bridge in Israel - 1.25 kilometres, the highest bridge - a peak height of 90 metres, the deepest railway station at a depth of 80 metres underground, and the longest design and construction time - almost two decades. Israel Railways said in response, "The plan for the transition to electrical propulsion and laying the high-speed railway line to Jerusalem was approved by the planning authorities, and is being carried out carefully, one step at a time, as necessary with close cooperation between all the relevant agencies and complete dedication by all parties. Great efforts are being made to finish the work and open the line as planned, provided that the safety aspects are satisfactory and ensure the passengers' safety."

Published by Globes [online], Israel Business News, www.globes.com.

STOP PRESS: On 21.02.2018 it was announced on Israel Radio that opening would be postponed for six months.

(viii). EXTENSION OF THE 'A1' LINE TO THE OLD CITY PROPOSED.

Before the line is even opened: A remarkable news item on 27.12.2017 guaranteed to get many people hot under the collar:

"Yisrael Katz approves extension of Tel Aviv-Jerusalem high speed line to Old City, reserving special honour for US president.

A controversial plan to place a train station in the heart of Jerusalem's Old City and whisk tourists from Ben-Gurion Airport to the Western Wall may have a controversial name attached to it: Donald Trump.

Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz said a planned train station would be named after US President Donald Trump, who earlier this month recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and vowed to move the US embassy to the city. Katz's plan, currently in the initial planning stage, involves extending the upcoming high-speed Jerusalem - Tel Aviv train line to the Old City. The plan would involve constructing two underground stations and excavating over two miles (three kilometres) of tunnel beneath downtown Jerusalem and under the politically and historically sensitive Old City. The

Western Wall is the holiest site where Jews can pray.

Transportation Ministry spokesman Avner Ovadia said Wednesday the project is estimated to cost more than \$700 Million and, if approved, would take four years to complete.

Katz's office said in a statement that the minister advanced the plan in a recent meeting with Israel Railways executives, and has fast-tracked it in the planning committees.

Katz said a high-speed rail station would allow visitors to reach "the beating heart of the Jewish people — the Western Wall and the Temple Mount." He proposed naming the future station after Trump "for his brave and historic decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital" earlier this month.

The final plan for the train, which will link Jerusalem to Ben-Gurion Airport and Tel Aviv, includes a three-kilometre underground tunnel from the International Conference Center at the entrance to the city. In addition to the Western Wall station, the train will also stop in the city centre, near the intersection of King George and Jaffa streets. The tunnel will be 52 metres below ground to avoid disturbing sensitive archaeology.

Katz, who is also intelligence minister, defined the project to extend the train line as "the most important national project in the Transportation Ministry." He instructed his ministry to give it priority in terms of planning and budgeting.

Nevertheless, because the tunnel will go underneath the Old City it is likely that there will be archaeological discoveries as workers dig, and each one could derail or severely delay the project."

The same issue had of course a counter-blast, sub-headed "Cleric rails against plan..."

Senior Muslim cleric pans Jerusalem Trump train plans.

"Ikrema Sabri, a senior Muslim cleric in Jerusalem, is denouncing plans to extend a train line to Jerusalem and name a stop for Donald Trump, saying that Palestinians won't accept "any change or act in the occupied territories. Giving the name of Trump to this project will not give it any legitimacy," the former grand mufti of Jerusalem says. "It would be just another implementation of the unacceptable decision of President Trump to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel."

The German 'I Like Israel' site had the following details:

"By rail from Tel Aviv to the Trump Station at the Wailing Wall. "The Wailing Wall is the holiest site for the Jewish people, and I have decided that the station there should be named after President Trump" – thus Transport Minister Israel Katz. He approved the construction plans for a 3km line from the Umma (Nation) station at the entrance to the city to the Cardo in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. He considers this extension of the new line from Tel Aviv as the most important national project. Total costs would be around NIS 2.5Billion. "Around 11 million Jews and tourists from the whole world come to the Kotel (the Wall) annually" he added. According to his plan there should be two underground stations

constructed, each 52m below the surface. The project could be finished in five years, if there are no delays..... In May Trump was the first US president in office who visited the Western Wall during a visit to several countries in the Near East."

(Comment by Editor: In fact there is nothing new in the proposal, which has clearly been made for purely political motives, perhaps as a bid by Minister Katz to boost his popularity at a time when PM Netanyahu is under higher pressure than usual: This appeared in the Jerusalem Post for Thurs. 3 Nov. 2016:)

"Palestinian officials said Wednesday reported plans to extend a train line to the Western Wall in Jerusalem's highly sensitive Old City have the potential to lead to a dangerous conflagration, while also slamming a proposal to run the capital's light rail to several settlements surrounding the city.

On Tuesday, the Hebrew daily Yedioth Ahronoth reported that Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz was floating a plan to extend the new express train from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem into the heart of the capital, where it would reach the holy site of Western Wall.

The line would be extended via a tunnel that would skirt the Old City and end near the sacred site.

In a statement, the Palestinian Foreign Ministry called on the international community and the United Nations, particularly UNESCO and the UN Security Council, to take action to thwart "this dangerous settlement escalation, which threatens to explode" the conflict.

UNESCO recently passed a resolution condemning Israeli construction projects in the Old City, which Palestinians claim as territory for their future state, as well as casting doubt over Jewish links to the Temple Mount and Western Wall, Judaism's two holiest sites.

Katz reportedly said that the extension of the line would relieve pressure on the main Jerusalem train station that is currently being built at the western entrance to the city, and make it easier for tourists, students and others to reach the Western Wall directly from the Tel Aviv region."

Editor comments: Whilst this argumentation would be logical in any other city in the world, to build a link to where many people want to go, such logic does not apply to Jerusalem. Plus, one wonders whether separate exits might be required for men and women, to meet the needs of some of the more obscurantist fundamentalists, the ones who are ashamed of the fact that their mothers were apparently women and who obstruct any plans for new areas for mixed worship.]

(ix). FURTHER SEMI-FAST SERVICES.

From a press releases of 26.12.2017 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"Due to the success of the pilot fast trains between Beer-Sheva, Tel-Aviv and Hod-HaSharon in the morning rush hours, which do not call at Rishon-LeZion West, Bat-Yam and Holon stations, Minister Katz has instructed the railways to start

operating six fast trains daily - three in each direction between these stations.

The trains will depart from Beer-Sheva Central at 05:27, 06:27 and 07:27.

Trains from Hod HaSharon will depart at 15:38, 16:38 and 17:38.

Minister Katz said that the new services will bring the people from the south to the centre fast and comfortably."

(x). LOD UNDERPASS OPENED.

Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz inaugurated on 26.12.2017 a new grade separation at the city of Lod, at one of the most dangerous crossing points. The \$20 Million (NIS 70M) grade separation is called "Eyal Passage" after a railway employee who was killed by a passing train at a crossing somewhere else in the network.

Also participating in the ceremony were the mayor of Lod Mr. Revivo and Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Shahar Ayalon.

(xi). BEIT SHEMESH LEVEL CROSSING: THE END.

Not a big matter in the wider scheme of things, but Sybil who lives here has known and loved this level crossing for decades and wrote on 05.12.2017: "We are only inches away from "Baruch Dayan haEmet" for the level crossing in Beit Shemesh. A few weeks ago it got fenced off, big signs saying "RAILROAD CROSSING CLOSED", no way to get across except the long way round over the bridge (taking no chances on that... I went by bus to get a pic from the other side!!!). The warning lights and barriers were still working. The traffic lights (not LC lights) that had been on permanently for a few weeks were off when I passed on Sunday night, and yesterday when I looked down from the bus I saw men standing on the crossing and looking like they were about to take the barriers away. I've been photographing it over the years, probably the only level crossing in Israel with a complete biography, and I think that book will come to an end in the next few days."

On Thursday 18th. Jan. she wrote:

"The old concrete shelter at the former Ramle station was still there on Tuesday when I passed there on the bus (on the way to Mishmar Ayalon for the press tour). But sadly the Beit Shemesh level crossing is now history. On the same day (sometime between 7:30 on Tuesday and 9:20 on Wednesday, when I passed) the barriers and warning lights were removed. Of course they ceased to operate long before that, once the bridge on the new road was opened."



• Photo: Beit Shemesh level crossing.

(xii). VIADUCT LINK CROSS-COUNTRY.

The District Committee for the Centre of Israel and its Design Centre is currently promoting the construction of a railway bridge to connect the already-designed and approved rail link between the A1, Modi'in and Rishon Le-Zion HaRishonim lines; it was originally planned that this line would run in a cutting, but in order to eliminate damage to the environment it has been decided to build a bridge.

(xiii). TRACKWORKS IN THE SOUTH.

Due to track upgrading works on the Beer-Sheva - Dimona section it was closed for traffic between Friday 05.01.2018 at 00:01 and Saturday night 13.01.2018 at 23:00. Alternative bus services were provided between the two stations for the week.

(xiv). EXTRA SUNDAYS-ONLY SERVICE ON MAIN LINE.

The railways have started operating an additional train between Nahariya and Beer-Sheva on Sundays. The train departs from Nahariya at 06:21, calls at all intermediate stations of Acre, Kiryat-Motzkin, Kiryat-Haim, Hutzot HaMifratz, Lev HaMifratz, all Haifa stations including Hof HaCarmel, and then runs directly and fast to Lod, not calling at any intermediate station, then halting at Ramla, Kiryat-Gat, Lehavim/Rahat and the Beer-Sheva stations.

(In fact Sybil gives a different stopping pattern: "There is now a Sunday morning train at 06:21 from Nahariya stopping at all stations to Haifa including Hof HaCarmel, then Petah Tikva Kiryat Aryeh, Lod, Ramle, Kiryat Gat, Lehavim-Rahat and Beersheva. This is aimed at soldiers returning to their bases after Shabbat, and is designed to reduce the pressure on trains going through Tel Aviv in the Sunday morning rush hour.")

(xv). OVERCROWDING

This leads neatly to a comment by Steve Sattler of Monday, December 18, 2017, regarding a TV report on Channel 10 on Overcrowding on trains in Israel, especially the Haifa, Binyamina, Carmiel and Beer-Sheva routes, particularly true for the

early morning trains and especially the Sunday mornings. "The main problem is that there are not enough passenger carriages. The railway company ordered 160 carriages some 5 years ago but the Treasury approved only 60. Meanwhile, they gave a third of all the carriages out to a PRIVATE contractor to maintain them - and it seems that 20% of these carriages are no long up-to-standard, and have been 'stored'. New carriages are arriving but this takes time. So, meanwhile, railway technicians are removing the seats from the lower level of some of the double-deck carriages

so that on the lower level it is **STANDING ONLY**, while on the upper level there is some seating.

In the mornings, the carriage are 140% full, and many people sit on the floor or the stairs; some people close themselves in the toilet for the full trip (and get a seat) and this neutralizes the toilet.

It seems that about five years ago, there were 33 million yearly train riders, and today there are over 150 million. In five years time the estimate is 700 million. The solution will be to order 200 more carriages, make the trains longer, and then improve the travel technology so that more trains can travel in 'closer bunches' on the tracks, closer to each other."

(xvi). MORE DOUBLE-DECKERS ORDERED.

From 'R.G.I.' 04.01.2018: "A €104M firm order for Bombardier Transportation to supply a further 54 Twindexx Vario double-deck coaches was signed by Israel Railways on December 31. Deliveries are scheduled to be completed by August 2020.

The order has been placed within a October 2010 framework agreement. The latest order covers 11 push-pull driving cars and 43 intermediate coaches, including 11 with dedicated spaces for passengers with reduced mobility. The driving cars will work with the Traxx electric locomotives which are being supplied by Bombardier, and thus will not require diesel generators to feed auxiliary systems such as air-conditioning. The driver's desks will also be redesigned to be identical to those of the Traxx electric locomotives.

'The new coaches will be fully compatible for revenue operation on ISR's first electrified line, the A1, which connects Tel Aviv and Jerusalem', said Avi Zalman, Head of Development & Engineering at ISR's Rolling Stock Division. 'ISR and Bombardier teams collaborated closely to develop the necessary technical adjustments required to enable the trains to operate in tunnels and on electrified lines. We also considered local and international standards to ensure and further increase safety for both operator and passengers, while keeping comfort in mind.'"

(xvii). AND MORE ARRIVED.

From a press release of 23.01.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The passenger rolling stock fleet keeps growing; Yesterday - 22.01.2018 - 6 new Bombardier built double-deck cars were unloaded at Haifa port; so far, 42 cars out of 93 ordered have arrived and entered service.

Six other cars which arrived recently will enter service at this weekend, contributing to reducing train congestion. 54 additional carriages have been ordered to be supplied during 2019.

The cars which arrived yesterday, are being transferred - after a short check by the rolling stock department - to the new depot at the Beer-Sheba University station; the cars arrive "naked" and at the depot seats, tables, additional furniture and other systems are installed."

The railways are also busy in preparations towards the electrification revolution to start with the A1 (King David Railway) fast service to Jerusalem; the first electric locomotive, Bombardier type TRAXX No. 3003 with more than 8000hp output, made last week a test run on the 12 km electrified section with participation of Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz; two additional locomotives out of 62 ordered are under way to Israel.

Additionally, 60 double-deck emus have been ordered from Siemens; However, due to the appeal to the supreme court by Stadler and Hitachi/Ansaldo separately, this is on hold and awaits the court's decision."



• Two pictures of unloading double-deck carriages at Haifa port on 22.01.2018. (Courtesy of IR spokesman Mr Matan Berkovich and Sigal Maritime Services.)

(xviii). BEER-SHEVA STATION EXPANSION.

It has been decided to add a fifth platform at the terminus at Beer Sheva Central. (See under 'Tenders').

(xix). RAMLA STATION UPGRADING.

Israel Railways Ltd. are investing not only in new stations but also upgrading several existing stations; At Ramla station a new entrance and parking area have been added to the second (northern) platform.

The pictures have been provided by courtesy of Mr. Matan Berkovich-assistant of the railways' spokesman.

(xx). FLEXIBLE DAY TICKETS NATIONWIDE: NATIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT TICKET.

On 13.12.2017 Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz, the ministry's General Manager Mrs. Keren Terner, the ministry's legal advisor Mrs. Mali Sitton and other senior officials announced at a press conference that the reform in public transport services will now include a multi-liner Smart Card enabling travel between the great metropolitan areas, using it as a daily free pass; for example: for a citizen of Tel-Aviv, the card will cover all the Greater Tel-Aviv Metropolitan Area, a railway or bus ticket to Haifa, Jerusalem or Beer-Sheva, and all the public services in one of these three cities; it will provide a saving of up to 40% by using this card compared with the separate tickets used today.

From a press release of 07.01.2018 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz announced today that a revolution of intercity public transport tariffs will start on 01.02.2018. This will bring substantial fare reductions for hundreds of thousands of passengers when using a combined urban and intercity 'Day Flexible' multi-liner smart card.

The 'Month Flexible Tickets' (i.e. allowing total freedom of travel within a specific period) were introduced first on urban bus lines within the four great metropolitan areas of Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa and Beer-Sheva; then introduced into all other urban areas. However, the new



• Two pictures of the old Ramla Station being demolished



• ...and the New Ramla Station

\$15.32 (NIS 53.00); this means saving more than 25%.

Such a ticket between Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem will cost \$9.40 (NIS 32.50) and between Tel-Aviv to Beer-Sheva \$10.84 (NIS 37.50); the regional fares (for example between Ashkelon and Kiryat-Gat) will cost \$5.20 (NIS 18.00).

Such a daily free ticket for all over Israel (Eilat and the extreme south excluded) will cost \$17.34 (NIS 60.00) only.

Minister Katz said that such fare reductions and the new Day Tickets will definitely increase the public transport share."

(xxi). ACCIDENT AT ASHDOD YARD.

Israel Railways Ltd. reported on 14.01.2018 that while a freight train was entering the Ashdod port marshalling yard it collided with freight wagons which were standing on the same track; one of these containing acid. Clearly the arriving freight had been wrongly routed, and several of its wagons derailed. A Hazardous Materials Event was immediately declared but was later withdrawn.

There was no leakage from the acid tank wagon. The railways' safety teams were at the site and the General Manager has created an investigation committee.

(xxii). MORE TRACKWORKS CLOSURES.

There are several of these, we include here many (even repetitive) details "for the historical record", these are the growing pains of a network that is rapidly expanding,

the 'Hevlei haMashiach', the birth-pangs of the messianic time!

- On 15.01.2018 Israel Railways Ltd. announced on their website that due to track upgrading works the section between Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and Binyamina on the Tel-Aviv - Haifa line will be closed for traffic between Thursday 25.01.2018 at 00:01 and Friday 26.01.2018 at 16:00; Atlit station will be closed as well.

Train traffic to/from the north will start/terminate at Haifa Hof-HaCarmel; Train traffic to/from the south will start/terminate at Binyamina. Trains between Nahariyya and Modi'in and between Nahariyya and Beer-Sheva will call also at Hadera West.

The night trains to Ben-Gurion airport to/from the north will start/terminate at Haifa Hof-HaCarmel.

The night trains to Ben-Gurion airport to/from the south will start/terminate at Binyamina.

Bus shuttle services will be provided between Haifa Hof-Ha-Carmel and Hadera West.

fares system will enable free travel on all public transport modes, for example in Haifa, then by any public transport mode to Tel-Aviv, where all local public transport services over the whole day are included - all on the one ticket.

The same would cover travelling from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem (in the latter the LRV is also covered by the ticket), or from Tel-Aviv to Beer-Sheva.

But there is even more: The ticket will cover also Nahariya (north of Haifa) and Ashdod (south of Tel-Aviv). Such a Day Flexi-Ticket between these last mentioned cities will cost \$11.60 (NIS 40.00), while the current fare for train travel between Nahariya and Ashdod - not including local buses - is

On 24.01.2018: "The railways explained today that track infrastructures works to take place between 25.01.2018 and 26.01.2018 and which will cause closure of the coast line section between Hof HaCarmel and Binyamina, will include a replacement of a 600m section in the Atlit area.

Israel Railways Ltd. announced on their website that due to electrification works towards the opening of the A1 fast rail link to Jerusalem, the following changes would take place from 04.02.2018 at 21:00 until further notice, regarding train traffic to/from Herzliyya, Beit-Shemesh, Ramla, Kiryat-Gat, Lehavim/Rahat and Beer-Sheva; there could be also delays of several minutes at Tel-Aviv HaHagana station for trains on other lines.

The Herzliyya - Beit-Shemesh section:

-The 19:59 from Beit-Shemesh to Herzliyya will terminate at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central.

-The 20:59 from Beit-Shemesh to Herzliyya will terminate at Lod.

-The 21:59 from Beit-Shemesh to Herzliyya will start instead at 22:16 (17 minutes delay).

-The 21:59 from Herzliyya to Beit-Shemesh will start at Lod at 22:21; passengers from Herzliyya and Tel-Aviv will have a connection to this train through the train of 21:43 from Herzliyya, which calls at Tel-Aviv Savidor at 21:56 and arrives at Lod at 22:18.

- The train of 22:59 from Herzliyya to Beit-Shemesh will start at Lod at 23:23; passengers from Herzliyya and Tel-Aviv will have a connection to this train through the 22:43 from Herzliyya, which calls at Tel-Aviv Savidor at 22:56 and arrives at Lod at 23:21.

The Tel-Aviv-Beer-Sheva line:

-The 19:57 and 20:57 from Beer-Sheva Central to Tel-Aviv Savidor will terminate instead at Lod.

-The 21:57 from Beer-Sheva Central to Tel-Aviv Savidor will depart from Beer-Sheva Central at 22:12.

- The 22:07 and 23:07 from Beer-Sheva Central to Tel-Aviv Savidor will depart instead from Lod at 22:07 and 23:07 respectively.

The Nahariya-Modi'in Central line:

-The 20:18 from Modi'in Central to Nahariya will call also at Herzliyya at 20:18.

-The 19:15, 19:54 and 20:54 Nahariya to Modi'in Central will stay for additional 7 minutes at Tel-Aviv HaHagana station.

The Nahariya - Beer-Sheva Central:

-The train of 19:27 from Nahariya to Beer-Sheva Central will stay for additional 7 minutes at Tel-Aviv HaHagana station.

The Tel-Aviv-Rishon LeZion HaRishonim section:

-The 21:49 from Tel-Aviv Savidor to Rishon LeZion HaRishonim will stay for additional 7 minutes at Tel-Aviv HaHagana station.

From a press release of 07.02.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

Changes in traffic due to electrification works are now being expanded to other line sections:

From 09.02.2018 at 00:20 (the night between Thursday and Friday) and until Sunday morning at 04:45, until further notice, the following changes will take place:

Night trains between Nahariya, Ben-Gurion airport and Modi'in will start/terminate at Tel-Aviv Savidor (Central) station.

Friday trains between Nahariya, Ben-Gurion airport and Modi'in will start/terminate at Tel-Aviv Savidor station.

An alternative free shuttle bus service will be operated between the stations on the closed sections in both directions.

Trains between Tel-Aviv Savidor and Rishon LeZion HaRishonim, between Herzliyya and Beit-Shemesh and trains between Tel-Aviv Savidor and Beer-Sheva Central will start/terminate at Lod; passengers wishing to arrive at their final destinations in each direction must change trains at Lod.

The Negev line between Hod-HaSharon, Tel-Aviv, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Sderot, Netivot, Ofakim and Beer-Sheva will operate regularly.

Between Sunday 18.02.2018 at 00:01 and Monday 19.02.2018 at 00:01 the line between Tel-Aviv University and Beit-Yehoshua - including Herzliyya station - will be closed for traffic.

On Saturday night 24.02.2018 from 18:10 to 23:59 the section between Haifa Bat-Galim and Tel-Aviv stations (the whole coast line) will be closed for service.

As a result:

On the Nahariya - Modi'in line; trains to/from north will start/terminate at Beit-Yehoshua; trains to/from south will start/terminate at Tel-Aviv Savidor; this refers to between Mondays and Fridays.

On the Nahariya - Beer-Sheva line; trains to/from south will start/terminate at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central; this refers to between Mondays and Thursdays; on Fridays, trains to/from north will start/terminate at Beit-Yehoshua; trains to/from south will start/terminate at Tel-Aviv Savidor.

On the Carmiel - Beer-Sheva Central line, trains will operate between Tel-Aviv Savidor and Beer-Sheva Central in both directions between Mondays and Fridays.

On the Netanya - Rishon Le-Zion HaRishonim line, trains will operate only between Tel-Aviv Savidor and Rishon Le-Zion HaRishonim between Mondays and Fridays in both directions.

On the Binyamina - Ashkelon line; trains to/from north will start/terminate at Beit-Yehoshua; trains to/from south will start/terminate at Tel-Aviv Savidor; this refers to between Mondays and Fridays.

On the Beit-Shemesh - Herzliyya line trains will operate in both directions only between Tel-Aviv Savidor and Beit-Shemesh between Mondays and Fridays.

Involved are preparations to complete the Sharon line (No. 531) link with the coast line, completing the infrastructures at the Herzliyya station to link with the A1 Jerusalem line, realigning the 1953-built main line section near Kfar Shemaryahu (north of Herzliyya) in favour of extending the Ayalon highway No. 20 northwards, and demolishing three level crossings (the main one at Kfar Shemaryahu which blocks the congested road running east/west for 6 hours daily!) and replacing them by grade separations; IR intend to replace additional level crossings by grade separations by 2021.

The intensive works will involve all the relevant railway teams and subcontractors' teams. The works will also prepare the ground to quadruple the whole Tel-Aviv - Haifa line in due course.

See photos on next page.....

(xxiv). CLOSURE AT TEL AVIV UNIVERSITA

The railways have announced on their website, that due to works of upgrading platforms 3 & 4 at Tel-Aviv University station the following changes will take place: between Friday, 02.02.2018 at 05:00 and Sunday 04.02.2018 at 05:00 the station will be closed for traffic; trains to/from the north will start/terminate at Bnei-Brak station; trains to/from the south will start/terminate at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central station; bus shuttle services will be provided between Tel-Aviv University and Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central stations.

(xxiv). BETTER SERVICES TO BEIT SHEMESH?

On 30.01.2018 Aharon wrote: The mayor of Beith-Shemesh Rabi Moshe Abutbul, a city of 125,000 inhabitants located on the old line to Jerusalem, has recently asked Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz to complete the city's so-called "transportation revolution" (which so far has consisted particularly in vast improvement to road No. 38 linking with highway No. 1 to Jerusalem), by improving the rail links to the city. The city's forecast for the next decade is for a doubled population of 250,000 and then further to half a million, meaning that drastic changes must be made to the transportation system.

He claims that once the A1 (King David Railway) fast link to Jerusalem is opened, the old line's situation - which is anyhow bad due to its sharp curves and consequently long journey time - will become even more inferior.

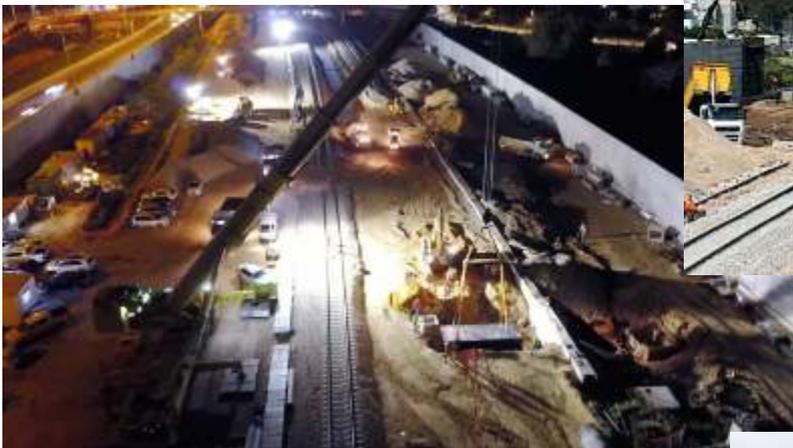
Surprisingly, there was a rise in number of passengers on the old line due to severe bottle-necks on highway No. 1 to Jerusalem, due to intensive improvement works; these have been recently completed and brought relief, which undoubtedly will affect the old line.

On the other hand, many citizens work in the Greater Tel-Aviv Area and face ever-growing bottle-necks towards Tel-Aviv and Ben-Gurion Airport.

The paradox is that a relatively short line section between Beit-Shemesh and Na'an junction on the Tel-Aviv - Beer-Sheva line is still single track, with tight curves and up to 2.5% gradients and had only partially been upgraded; This causes train to wait at the historic loop station Nahal Sorek to cross other trains, thus increasing journey times.



Track and realignment works near Herzliya, provided by courtesy of Mr. Israel Ta/Saranga - the railways' spokesman and Mr. Matan Berkovich - his assistant.



The mayor's request is to rebuild the section by double-tracking it, easing curves and even electrifying it, as well as linking the Beit-Shemesh - Tel-Aviv service with Ben-Gurion Airport through Lod; he explained that many of the citizens came from abroad and fly often; currently, the only way to reach the airport is by car or by at least two buses which becomes a torture; since the Beit-Shemesh - Na'an will not be linked with the AI line and subsequently to Ben-Gurion Airport, this idea seems the best solution.

(xxv). CYBER THREATS TO THE RAILWAYS.

From a press release of 30.01.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Israel Railways are in a momentum of development, moving towards the next generation, and in preparations towards the Cyber age.

As an integral part of the CYBERTECH conference taking place this week, a Cyber war game brief took place on 30.01.2018 at the railways' headquarters at Lod, where the threats with which transportation organizations worldwide have to handle were presented; the emphasis was on worldwide railway companies as well as ways to prevent such threats and the treatment necessary.

Itaking part were Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Shahar Ayalon, the railways' head of Cyber division Mr. Israel Baron, CYLUS General Manager Amir Levintal (the company specializing in protection of railway infrastructure), Brigadier General (reserve) Mr. Ehud Shneyurson, formerly the head of the IDF intelligence unit 8200, etc. Also members of the UIC, SNCF, and DB AG.

Israel Railways Ltd. are defined by the Cyber Protection Authority as a "critical infrastructure", and are developing an advanced Cyber network with heavy investment; it is planned to provide an answer against threats both from professional attackers (states and organizations) and from terror groups.

As a national transport operator, Israel Railways Ltd. are constantly identifying a lot of attempts to hit the rail infrastructure at a much higher rate than other similar rail networks in the world. According to Israeli rail professionals, each month there are about 10 million penetration activities to the rail network which are successfully blocked; the aim of these hostile activities is collecting essential information and implanting hostile viruses and software.

But there is more: the railway communication system, by which the command and control of the whole network is performed, is currently operated by an electronic signalling system through track side colour light signal posts; within the next few years this will be changed to GSM-R as part of a huge project, in which there is a heavy emphasis on Cyber threats.

The railways' head of Cyber division Mr. Israel Baron said: "Securing railway systems is a complicated task because most of the currently relevant systems have not been designed to be Cyber safe; therefore, we have first to map out precisely the threats and weak points and then to provide a solution; some of the solutions will include

stiffer security, but there is also an urgent need to develop an entirely new technology such as a safe and coded communication system for locomotives".

The event was opened by a short review and greetings from Israel Railways Ltd. GM Mr. Shahar Ayalon who said: "The public transport systems and particularly railways are undergoing the change from analog to digital systems; this is an opportunity for advanced technology alongside the required protection challenge. We have to keep learning to protect all our systems and weak points, thus reducing the cyber attack's potential on all our digital systems. Israel Railways Ltd. are considered as an advanced and sophisticated organization regarding Cyber protection, fully cooperating with private business organizations and European railways particularly with their Cyber systems. We will keep investing much more thought and attention together with our national Cyber headquarter and other partners in order to handle this challenge; I thank all the participants both Israeli and from abroad for the successful seminar".

CULUS General Manager Amir Levintal (the company specializing in protection of railway infrastructure) said: "Safety has ever been in the railway systems DNA all over the world, and it is now time that Cyber security will be integrated in the DNA, without which, passengers safety will be in danger".

Israel Railways Ltd. Strategy and Coordination Division Manager Mr. Alex Dan said: " Israel Railways Ltd. is one of the fastest-growing European-style railway networks, which brings big challenges regarding Cyber security; our challenge is to create innovations, forecast risks, and enable continued operation and business even when a Cyber event takes place; it means that passengers should enjoy journeys regardless of Cyber".

Brigadier General (Reserve) Mr. Ehud Shneyurson: "In the not very distant past, people fought mainly with real weapons and the Cyber was considered a secondary weapon depending on the enemy's level of computerization; however, during the last decade the reality has changed dramatically".

Finally, Dr. Mark Entoni, UIC Railway Division Manager, spoke about the complexity of integrating Cyber into railway systems and said: "The range of risks on railway systems is wide, including both attacks of potential damage for the economy and risking life. Such events may cause the loss of trust in the railway services by passengers; we have to re-challenge ourselves every day in order to be sure that all the systems are secured in the most updated form".

(xxvi). LOST PROPERTY.

From a press release of 04.02.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways have started an operation to increase awareness of the passengers not to forget their belongings on trains. The railways carry about 250,000 passengers/day, many of whom, either civilians or soldiers in a hurry to get to their destinations, lose a lot of belongings, following which they assume that it is a lost cause to seek them.

The railways have decided to show the opposite; a store for belongings that had been left behind has been created at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central station; It will be open between 04.02.2018 and 08.02.2018 between 08:00 and 20:00 from Sunday to Thursday, and a special team will man it.

And: From a press release of 07.02.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Since the operation for returning forgotten belongings started at the beginning of this week, there was a rise of 25% in the number of people contacting the specially-created store, as well as a rise of 50% in success of returning such belongings.

Among the items returned recently are: a scooter, 2 laptops, 2 cellular phones, 2 trolley-type suitcases, 2 religious items, a walking stick, a duty-free package including cigarettes and alcohol, a lot of wallets, and a lot of military equipment. The railway authorities are entreating the public to contact the store; belongings which stay for more than two months will be handed over to the police who distribute them as a charity among agencies taking care of poor people."

(xxvii). TEL AVIV SAVIDOR GETS A NEW NORTHERN STATION BUILDING.

From a press release of 15.02.2018 by both Israel Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry and Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz together with Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Shahar Ayalon inaugurated today, 15.02.2018, the new northern terminal of Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central station which serves an average of 50,000 passengers daily, thus considered one of the most congested stations in Israel.

The new \$9 Million (NIS 31.8M) terminal of 1,000 sq.m. links the station directly with the nearby overhead road, thus providing easy access to the nearby Diamond Exchange, a high-tech area and also nearby northern neighborhoods of Tel-Aviv.

The terminal is equipped with ticket vending machines, manned ticket selling positions, escalators, an elevator, and stands for security checks; this is in addition to a new terminal recently opened at the station's southern end.

The railways are also upgrading Tel-Aviv Hashalom station at \$14 Million (NIS 50M) by building a southern terminal to avoid the need to cross the nearby congested road; It has been found that 80% of passengers to/from Tel-Aviv at rush hours use these two stations.

(xxviii). NIGHT TRAINS TO THE NEGEV.

From a press release of 14.02.2018 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"Good news for the people of the South; from the coming spring the services on the Negev Line (or the Western Line as it is also called) will enjoy train services 24 hours/day (except Friday night and Saturday when no trains are operated).

These trains will operate once an hour in each direction, between all Tel-Aviv stations and Beer-



2017 was a momentous year for Israel Railways (IR). After five years of construction the 23km Acre - Carmiel line opened, expanding the network to the northern interior of the country. Some of the railway's major projects, notably the new 57km AI Link between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, also made significant progress, while IR placed a number

of important rolling stock orders.

"The railway's ambition is to increase its share of mass transit and increase passenger traffic by 8-10% annually," says Mr Shahar Ayalon, IR's general manager. "The forecast for the end of 2017 is for the railway to have carried 64 million passengers during the year, with a daily average of 140,000. By adding additional track capacity, and with the new lines which we plan to open, the forecast for 2040 is for this number to reach 340 million."

The 2017 figure compares with 59.5 million passengers carried in 2016, which was a 13% increase over 2015. Some of this additional ridership is attributable to the Acre - Carmiel Line, which has transported half a million passengers since it opened on September 20. The line is currently served by 18 trains per day between Carmiel and Haifa, completing the journey in 34 minutes, while eight trains also travel to Be'er Sheva. IR expects the service to transport 1.7 million passengers in 2018.

Similarly, the 60km Valley Line from Haifa Lev Hamifratz to Beit She'an opened on November 8 2016, and has carried more than 2 million passengers. The line has four stations and is also providing a freight connection to a new terminal at Beit-She'an, close to the Jordanian border. Ayalon reports that the freight link is not yet profitable but IR is working to increase its attractiveness.

2018 is also set to be an equally eventful year for IR as work reaches a conclusion on the AI link, IR's blue-ribbon project. The line is set to cut journey times between the country's two most important cities to 28 minutes from 1h 23min at present.

Ayalon says slab track laying is nearly complete as is construction of Yitzhak Navon Station in Jerusalem, the line's underground terminus. "These works will last another four months and when completed test runs will start," he says. "If successful, commercial operation will begin in 2018. However, there is not yet a definite start date."

Electrification

The AI Link is Israel's first electrified line and it is also sparking a network-wide electrification programme. Trials using a 160km/h Bombardier Traxx unit under 25kV ac 50Hz wires commenced on a 12km section of the AI link in December and further work is underway to electrify the 8km section from Tel Aviv to Herzliyya on the Haifa main line and the 8km branch between Anava junction

• Pictures from the new TA terminal - courtesy of IR.

Sheva stations, calling at Bat-Yam Yoseftal, Rishon Le-Zion West (Moshe Dayan), Yavne West, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Sderot, Netivot and Ofakim.

Ben-Gurion airport will be accessible by changing trains at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central station to trains between Nahariya and the airport (a ten minutes ride).

The Negev line is considered one of the most successful; at the end of the 2017 3rd. quarter it carried a daily average of 420,650 passengers, while since its opening in September 2015 it has carried almost 46 million; it is

estimated that with the introduction of night trains, the number of passengers will grow by dozens of thousands daily.

(xxix). EGGED ATTEMPTS TO RUN A RAILWAY!

A recent announcement was that Qbuzz, formerly a subsidiary of NS and now of Busitalia, owned by the Italian Trenitalia, has won the contest to run public transport in the province of South Holland for the next eight years. Other competitors were Arriva, the current incumbent, and EBS (Egged Bus System).

(xxx). NEW NAME FOR AFULA STATION.

From a press release of 20.02.2018 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"It was the personal decision of Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz to rename the station of Afula; it is now named after the late Lieutenant-General (Reserves) Rafael Eithan (nickname "Raful"), who was the 11th Commander in Chief of the Israeli Defence Forces and served in this job for the longest time ever - five years.

He was by nature a field person, an agriculturalist, a carpenter; but was mainly famous for his courage as an infantry fighter. He was born and lived at a farm in an agricultural settlement called Tel-Adashim not far from Afula.

The ceremony took place 20.02.2018 at the station, with participation of Minister Katz, Israel Railways General Manager Mr. Shahar Ayalon, the mayor of Afula Mr. Yitzhak Maron, members of his family, friends from his army service - particularly from the legendary unit 101 of parachutists, etc."

[The Editor notes: To name a station after a person, they usually have to be dead. Katz's proposal for a Donald Trump station is clearly an exception! But the name is purely political and bears no relationship to any geographical location.]

(xxxi). INTERVIEW AND OVERVIEW WITH SHAHAR AYALON.

From 'International Railway Journal' of 22.01.2018:

"Shahar Ayalon, general manager of Israel Railways, talks to Kevin Smith.

and Modi'in Central. However, the overall programme is behind schedule.

"Electrification is currently four months late and we expect the contractor, SEMI, to accelerate the works," Ayalon says. "The railway is also bringing in temporary transformers in order to return the programme to its original schedule."

The first Traxx unit was delivered in August and is part of a fleet of 62 units which will operate with double-deck coaches in push-pull mode. IR ordered another 33 Twindexx Vario coaches from Bombardier in May, taking its fleet to 462.

In addition, IR placed a \$US 1Bn order with Siemens in September to supply and maintain 60 double-deck EMUs. Each train will feature a single-deck driving trailer at each end and either two or four double-deck cars. A four-car train will seat around 750 passengers, while a six-car set will have seats for around 1000. Delivery is expected to begin in 2020.

Further improvements to network performance and capacity are expected following the rollout of ERTMS. Tenders have been published both for the line-side and onboard elements, and Ayalon hopes the system will be operational by 2020.

IR is similarly striving to improve its freight network. The railway carries more than 9.7 million tonnes of freight per year and Ayalon says IR is working to enhance connections from the ports of Haifa and Ashdod. It is also building new container terminals and wagon maintenance facilities and working to develop new sidings in cooperation with the private sector after the number fell from 230 to just 20. "This hurts our ability to increase traffic volumes," Ayalon says.

In the long-term, IR is looking to develop a new line to Eilat on the Red Sea coast. The project is currently at the preliminary design stage and no timetable has been set for construction. The railway is similarly developing the Lod - Hadera Eastern Rail project, which will revive the Ottoman-British colonial era infrastructure. The Shekels 2Bn (\$US 567m) scheme aims to relieve congestion on the Coastal Line and improve links to central and eastern Israel. "The line is at an advanced stage of design and within two years we expect to publish tenders," Ayalon says. "We plan to open the line in 2023."

These projects are key elements of IR's 2040 Strategic Plan, which outlines investment of Shekels 123.6Bn to double the size of the network from 1232km to 2572km by 2040. The plan was released on June 8, and at the time, Israeli transport minister Mr Israel Katz proclaimed that "Israel is undergoing a transportation revolution." It is indeed an unprecedented time for the country's railway, which is set to celebrate further milestones in 2018.

IR's Israel correspondent, Jeremaya Goldberg, contributed to this report.

120:05.

TENDERS

(i). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 21711: Providing services of Maintenance and Rehabilitation services of Bridges and other structures on the whole network.

The railways intend to divide the services between two sub-contractors; one for the northern part of the network (from Tel-Aviv HaHagana northwards), and the other for the southern part (from Tel-Aviv HaHagana southwards). The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months.

(ii). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 11750: Supplying reusable and rechargeable Smart Cards for the railways to be used on public transport operators services. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 11.01.2018.

(iii). Tender No. 41706: For the Manufacture and Supply of Railbound Vehicle with Rail Surface Defects Elimination System.

"General Terms and Conditions:

Israel Railways Ltd. in accordance with its obligations under the Israeli Mandatory Tender Laws, its implementing regulations and the International Agreement on Government Procurement, wishes to obtain bids for:

The manufacture and supply of a Railbound Vehicle with a Rail Surface Defect Elimination System (the "RSDEV") for a period of five (5) years (the "Agreement Period"), all in accordance with and subject to the terms specified in these General Terms and Conditions and the accompanying Tender Documents.

Until Acceptance of the RSDEV, ISR is interested in acquiring on-track rail Grinding/Milling Services performed by Railbound Vehicle with a Rail Surface Defect Elimination System (the SRV"), which includes preventive reprofiling, corrective reprofiling and new-rail reprofiling, to be carried out on a non-exclusive basis along various lines of the Israel Railway Network as ISR may require from time to time, all in accordance with and subject to the terms specified in these General Terms and Conditions and the accompanying Tender Documents.

1. Prerequisites for Participation in the Tender (the "Pre-requisites"):

1.1. The bidder must be the designer, manufacturer and supplier of the proposed Railbound Vehicle with a Surface Defect Elimination System.

1.2. The bidder has manufactured and supplied, commencing from the beginning of the year 2014 and onwards at least two (2) Railbound Vehicle with a Surface Defect Elimination System with a Minimum Production Capacity that are in commercial use for at least two (2) different Customers.

Minimum Production Capacity - Minimum of 500 [meter] of track per hour with metal removal depth of 1 [mm] from 70° at the running edge to 5° at the field side.

Customer – a customer from a country Israel has diplomatic relations with.

2. Proof of Compliance with the Pre-requisites:

2.1. Bidder shall prove full compliance with all the Pre-requisites specified in Section 1 above, by submitting to ISR all the details, documents and confirmations required under the provisions of the Pre-requisites which shall include, inter alia, the following:

2.1.1. Bidder shall prove its full compliance with the Pre-requisite set forth in Section 1.1. by submitting a declaration certifying that it is the designer, manufacturer and supplier of the proposed Railbound Vehicle with a Surface Defect Elimination System.

2.1.2. Bidder shall prove its full compliance with the Prerequisite set forth in Section 1.2 by submitting a signed and completed Experience and Reference List, in the form attached hereto as Appendix D evidencing that Bidder has manufactured and supplied, commencing from the beginning of the year 2014 and onwards at least two (2) Railbound Vehicle with a Surface Defect Elimination System with a Minimum Production Capacity that are in commercial use for at least two (2) different Customers.

2.2. In addition, Bidder shall submit additional proof such as reports, client references, statements and other relevant documentation.

2.3. Notwithstanding the aforesaid, ISR reserves its right, at its sole discretion, not to disqualify proposals which do not contain all the documents and certificates necessary to prove its compliance with the Pre-requisites. ISR shall have the right, at its sole discretion, to request from any of the Bidders, details and/or approvals and/or recommendations and/or certificates and/or additional documentation, required in order to allow ISR a full and complete review of the aforementioned.

2.4. Bidder shall undertake to maintain its compliance with the Pre-requisites specified in Section 1 above at all times, up to and/or including the Proposal Validity Period as set forth in Section 16 below.

3. Technical Requirements

All bids must comply with all of the requirements and terms included in the RSDEV Technical Specifications.

All bids must comply with all of the requirements and terms included in the Grinding/Milling Services Specifications.

7. Purchase Order

7.1. ISR intends to issue a Purchase Order for one (1) RSDEV within sixty (60) days from the Effective Date of the Agreement subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the Agreement...."

(iv). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 2175: Building a 5th. platform at Beer-Sheva Central station + bridge over Hebron road: Works include: passages and rooms under the 5th. platform to be built as well as supporting walls. Implementation time: 22 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 08.02.2018.

(v). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender PMR 0217: Permit to prepare a part of the lower storey at Modi'in Central station to be used as offices, business areas and café under agreed conditions: The area in question is of 948 sq.m.; there may be up to 3 bidders. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 08.02.2018.

(vi). RFI: Request for Information for quotations for building a cargo terminal at Kiryat-Gat railway station: The contract is for 120 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 01.02.2018.

(vii). Tender No. 617125: Supplying coupons for the railways' employees for buying foodstuffs at chain stores; The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 25.01.2018.

(viii). Israel Railways Ltd. tender No. 11760: For the supply and installation of Railway Vehicle Washing Machines: The contract is for 60 months with optional extensions of up to additional 120 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 06.03.2018.

(ix). Tender No. 11714: A framework agreement for providing services for Renovation, Overhaul and Repair of Locomotives and dmus' diesel Motors and Compressor units:

The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 04.03.2018.

(x). Tender No. 11719: A frame agreement for providing services of Electronic Protection for the whole rail network including, stations, sites, tracks, buildings, etc.:

The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 60 months and optional extensions of additional 60 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 05.03.2018.

(xi). Tender 41801: For Manufacture and Supply of Glued Insulated Rail Joint Component Kits. Bids by 17.04.2018.

NTA – Metropolitan Mass Transit System Ltd, Israel



Public Tender No. 096/2017

Design, Manufacture, Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Elevators and Escalators for Station of the Red Line

NTA - Metropolitan Mass Transit System Ltd. ("NTA") is an Israeli government owned company in charge of the implementation of the mass transit system in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area.

1. NTA, in accordance with its obligations under the Israeli Mandatory Tenders Law, 5752-1992, the Mandatory Tender Regulations 5753-1993 ("the Regulations") and further implementing regulations promulgated thereunder, invites companies to participate in a tender for the Design, Manufacture, Procurement, Supply, Installation, Warranty and Maintenance of the Elevators and Escalators of the Red Line Project ("the Works") all as detailed in the Bidding Documents. The Maintenance Services shall be supplied for a period of 10 years following the Take-Over of the Elevators and Escalators. NTA has an option to extend the maintenance period for 6 additional years.
2. **General Description of Threshold Requirements** - Bidders shall comply with all the requirements of the Threshold Requirements, as further detailed in the Bidding Documents, Volume 1 (Invitation to Bid) available at NTA's website: www.nta.co.il.
3. **Bid Bond** - Bidders must submit within their Bid a Bid Bond issued by an Israeli Bank or by a licensed Israeli insurer in the amount of 2,000,000 ILS, all as further detailed in the ITB.
4. **Participation Fee** - the sum of 5,000 ILS shall be paid by no later than the Submission Date in accordance with the provisions set forth in the ITB.
5. A username and password allowing access to the full set of the Bidding Documents on NTA's FTP server (via NTA's file server at: <http://ftp.nta.co.il>) shall be issued to any interested party within one (1) business day upon NTA's receipt of a request for such access to documents which is to be submitted to the Tender mailbox: Tenders3@nta.co.il. The Tender Documents shall be available at NTA's FTP server as of December 7, 2017.
6. Any requests for clarifications should be addressed in writing only to Tenders3@nta.co.il by no later than **January 4, 2018** at 13:00 noon (local time) ("Last date for submission of Clarifications Requests").
7. **Submission Date** - the date for the submission of the Bids is on **February 6, 2018** from 09:00 am and by no later than 13:00 pm (Israel standard time). The Bids shall be deposited in the designated Tender box located at NTA's offices, as detailed in the ITB.
8. All terms used herein shall have the meaning ascribed to such terms in the Bidding Documents. The information provided hereinabove including with respect to the Threshold Requirements, is partial. Accordingly, Bidders are obliged to comply with all the provisions of the Bidding Documents in their entirety. In any event of contradiction between this notice and the contents of the Bidding Documents or information not included in the notice but included in the Bidding Documents - the contents of the Bidding Documents shall prevail over the content of this notice.
9. Bidders are required to check NTA's website and FTP server on a regular basis for any Addenda, updates, changes or modifications during the tender process and especially before the Submission Date, and NTA shall have no responsibility to inform the individual Bidders of any such publications.



www.nta.co.il

suggested change will require a redesign to cost almost \$106 Million (NIS 360 M) and 2 years' delay.

The Chairman called the two sides to settle up the problems between themselves and at the same time to act according to the courts' decision."

LIGHT RAIL.



(b). NTA Tender 096/2017: For Design, Manufacture, Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Elevators and Escalators for Stations of the Red Line. Bids by 06.02.2018.

(c). NTA tender No. 110/2017: Supply, transportation, and installations of Fences and Barrier Poles: The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 11.03.2018.

(d). Tender No. 2017/107: Providing hosting and storage services for clouds (computer), as well as services of operation and maintenance for NTA website. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months.

(e). Tender No. 2017/133: Providing consulting services regarding agronomy and treatment of trees: The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months.

(f). Tender No. 2017/153: Providing consulting services regarding fire safety: The contract is for 48 months with optional extensions of up to additional 12 months. Latest date for submission of proposals for all the 3 tenders: 11.03.2018.

A. TEL AVIV.

(a). Tel-Aviv LRV/METRO project:

On 30.01.2018 it was reported: "The Parliament (Knesset) economic committee and its Chairman Mr. Eithan Cabel recently discussed the appeal to court of the Ramat-Gan Municipality regarding the alignment of the Purple Line which is planned to run along Yitzhak



Sadeh Road; this is one of the most congested roads in Israel and according to the municipality the LRV will cause chaos at two main junctions.

The municipality is requesting an underground passage at one junction and a bridge at the other junction for the LRV at the cost of \$29.4 Million (NIS 100M), adding that this is a fraction relative to the \$4.7 Billion (NIS 16.1Bn) the total project cost.

NTA General Manager Mr. Yehuda Bar-On, who participated in the discussion, said that the LRV will not cause any chaos; There is no shortage of money - he responded to a Municipality statement that they can provide the money for the change – but that that the



B. JERUSALEM.

(i). EXTENSION PLANS AND TENDERS.

From a press release of 20.12.2017 by the Transport & Roads' Safety and Finance Ministries, the Jerusalem Municipality and the Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team:

"The Finance Ministry has announced today that there has been a high international response regarding the Jerusalem LRV: Eight international groups have applied for the Pre-Qualification Status for the tender to build and operate the LRV network of Jerusalem, both the existing Red Line and the extensions and new lines to be built.

This news is particularly important since there had been fears that the international tender would face difficulties and lack of responsiveness from companies abroad, due to the political sensitivity regarding the Green Line alignment which will start at Gilo (southern Jerusalem not far from Beit-Lehem) and end at Mount Scopus, and even more particularly after Trump's statement about Jerusalem, yet the level of response is so high.

The \$2.57 Billion (NIS 9 Billion) project includes extension of the Red Line to Hadassah Medical Centre in the south and Neve-Ya'akov in the north, and building the Green Line from Mount Scopus to Malkha and Gilo in the south with a branch to Givat Ram – the location of most of the Jerusalem Hebrew University faculties.

Due to disagreements with the Red Line's current concessionaire CityPass, this company will not be allowed to perform the extensions; it will instead need to participate in the tender; the State will have to buy back the concession and give it to the new concessionaire to be selected.

According to the Finance Ministry's announcements the following international LRV manufacturers are competing: Alstom, Skoda, Hitachi-Ansaldo-Breda, CRRC, Siemens, CAF, Bombardier, etc.

Also participating in the tender are LRV/METRO operators from a variety of countries including Spain, Greece, Austria, Russia, Poland, Italy, Romania, etc.

Additionally, the following Israeli infrastructure subcontractors participate: Shikun & Binuy, Electra, Shapir, Minrav, Ashtrom, Oron, etc. and, for the first in this sort of tender, international and local financial companies like: IDT Telecom, Meridiam, Macquarie, Harel, Noy Fund, and IIF-Israel Infrastructure Fund.

Each participating consortium will include an experienced LRV operator, a construction subcontractor, a maintenance subcontractor, and an integrator.

Due to fears that foreign operators and integrators who are experienced and with the knowhow regarding the LRV building would avoid participating in the tender, the state enabled them not to be partners financially and be a concessionaire; instead, those companies will act as subcontractors versus private companies rather than the state.

The project common to the Transport & Roads' Safety ministries, the Jerusalem Municipality and the Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team is to be performed under the PPP system; the total line length will be 27 km.

The winner will operate gradually the whole JNET (Jerusalem Network) which will consist eventually of five lines by 2024 with a forecast of half a million passengers/day.

The state and the municipality have recently started preparations for infrastructure works towards track laying.

The Inter-ministerial Tenders Committee consisting of the Transport & Roads' Safety ministries and the Jerusalem Municipality, headed by the Finance Ministry's Deputy Accountant General Mr. Nehemia Kind, will check the offers, after which it will publish the names of best and final applicants from all the aspects: international experience in operating LRV networks, construction ability, financial strength, etc.

Mr. Kind said: "The project is one of the most ambitious of its kind in the international transportation field, and the level of interest and responsiveness it attracts show a professional trust in the Israeli government and its economy, from international leading companies active in infrastructures, operation, and financing".

Attached herewith are maps of the Red and Green lines and their extensions provided by courtesy of the Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team.

...see map on next page.....

(ii). TROUSERS OFF.

From 'Times of Israel' 08.01.2018:

"Light rail passengers in Jerusalem stripped down to their underwear on Sunday for the worldwide annual "No Pants Subway Ride," drawing embarrassed smiles and dumbfounded stares from fellow travellers.

In bracing 10 degree Celsius (50 Fahrenheit) weather, around 20 young men and women met up at an open-air tram stop on the city's central Jaffa Street and boarded carriages for the 20-minute ride to Mount Herzl.

"The goal of this event is simply to have fun, to do something strange for the people, so when they board the tram suddenly something strange happens with people taking off their pants," one man who declined to give his name told AFP. Another, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said friends had



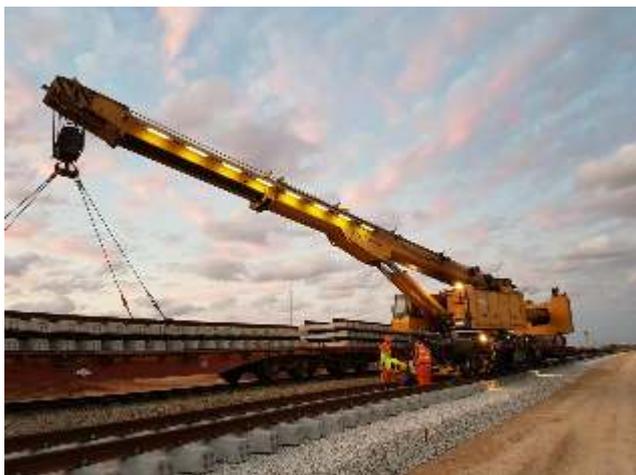
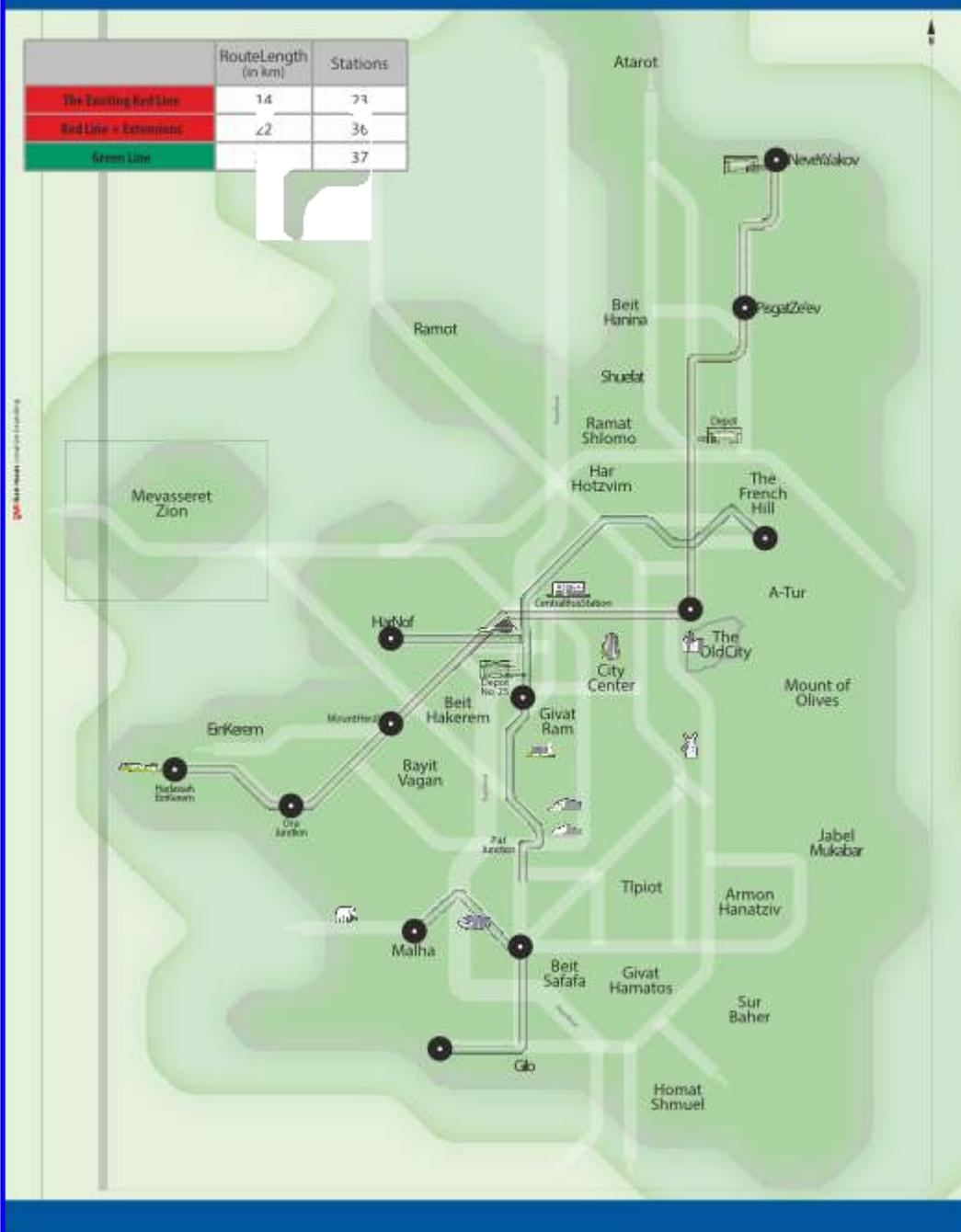
voiced concerns that the show of flesh could bring trouble in a "powder keg" of a city where Orthodox Jewish and Muslim sensibilities are acute. "But every year, this proves to be wrong," he said. "Every year, we meet again people who are smiling where they weren't supposed to smile."

The offbeat flash mob stunt originated in New York in 2002 and has since spread around the world. It was the third year running that it has happened in generally conservative Jerusalem. The idea is that participants behave exactly like normal commuters — just without skirts or trousers."

JERUSALEM'S NEW LIGHT RAIL NETWORK



	Route Length (in km)	Stations
The Existing Red Line	14	23
Red Line + Extensions	22	36
Green Line		37



- The Kirov Crane at work on trackworks



C. HAIFA AND NORTH.

(i). CARMELIT REBUILDING.

From a press release of 12.12.2017 by the Haifa municipality:

"Since the fire that occurred about a year ago at the Carmelit (Haifa metro/funicular) and due to which a lot of damage was caused both for the trains and infrastructure and services ceased, the citizens of Haifa have been anxious to see the trains running again.

The services will resume in September 2018, with two new 2-car trains to be supplied by the Swiss Garaventa-Doppelmayr consortium at a cost of \$14.2 Million (NIS 50 Million).

Each train will have 48 seats and space for 216 standees giving a total of 264 passenger/train or 568 passengers for two trains at the same time, although they will move in opposite directions to each other from both ends and will meet at an existing loop more or less in the midway (the line is single track).

The trains will run at 8 m/second or 28 km/h; the whole route of 1.8 km will be covered within 10 minutes including stops at 4 intermediate stations (it should be mentioned that the original French trains which started operating in 1959 did it in 6 minutes including the same intermediate stations!).

The trains will run between Sunday and Thursday between 06:00 and 11:59; on Friday, the trains will run between 06:00 and 15:00; trains will not run between Friday at 15:00 and Saturday night in which traffic will resume until 11:59; service intervals will be 12 minutes.

According to the instructions of the mayor of Haifa Mr. Yona Yahav, the trains will be equipped with an automatic "water fog" firefighting equipment on each car with sprinklers on the ceiling which will stop smoke spreading for at least 10 minutes until the train can reach the nearest station.

It will be the first such system to be installed on each railway car in Israel.

Passengers will enjoy a decorative lighting system, upholstered seats, modern air conditioning, information boards indicating the train location along the line every minute, as well as other public transport services linked with the stations, and an audio announcement system in Hebrew, English, and Arabic providing train arrival time, and direction.

The same facilities will be provided at the stations and along platforms.

After completion of the new infrastructures and arrival of the trains, there will be test runs along a defined time, during which, the public will enjoy a free travel.

With completion of test runs, passenger will enjoy the 90 minutes of the multi-liner smart card to change from the Carmelit, METRONIT (BRT), or any public transport service."



- A computer generated picture of the new train provided by Mr. Gil Meller of the Haifa



- Laying the last tracks at
- Jerusalem "Navon" station at the end of the Al + Bombardier T R A X X electric
- locomotive #3003 at Lod depot; source: the "Israel Today" newspaper.
-
- Aharon Gazit



Steve Sattler posed some cautious comments on the plans:

"The mayor of Haifa, Yona Yahav and his municipality are building a double cable-car from the north Haifa 'Check-Post' intersection to the Technion and to the Haifa University. It will be a 12 minute ride, at the price of a bus ticket. The corner stone has been laid, money is available and it seems the actual 'cars' have been ordered.

Other 'city architects' are complaining that the engineer in-charge is only an "elevator" expert .

The buses from this checkpoint to each university take 14 minutes do what is to be a 12 minutes ride. The actual 'cars' may or may not be air-conditioned - no decision has been made, and it may turn out to be an 'only tourist ride', since it ignores the centre of the city and all the students who come from the South of Haifa. So, although the Minister of Transport -Yisrael Katz-is very much for it... it may turn out to be a white elephant."

To which David Stiffelman responded: "I agree that the credentials of the engineer in charge of the design should be properly checked. As for the comparison with the bus alternative - the criterion is not only the journey time (by road - even with dedicated bus lanes - it will only tend to increase over time with worsening congestion), but the ultimate capacity of each mode (passengers carried per hour) with respect to predicted demand. Has anyone made such a study

Air conditioning - has anyone looked at the practice and experience in similar systems in other places with comparable climate (e.g. the existing cableway to the French Carmel in Haifa, or the one up to Masada)?

Obviously a single line cannot be expected to directly serve areas remote from the proposed route - priorities for providing new links or extending existing ones have to be set based on demand... as well as interchange facilities at existing transport hubs.

White elephants - you may recall that the Carmelit was shut down for a few years, until someone decided it was worthwhile restoring it to service - now being run by (guess who?) Egged. That's Realpolitik: If you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

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OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. IRAN:

(i).New Diesel Units

From 'R.G.I.' 04.12.2017: "A €720m contract for Hyundai Rotem and Iran Rail Industries Development Co to supply 150 three-car diesel multiple-units to national railway RAI was signed on December 2.

Hyundai Rotem will produce 150 cars at its plant at Changwon in South Korea, with the remaining 300 to be assembled locally by IRICO under a technology transfer agreement. The order is being financed under a credit agreement between South Korea and Iran, and deliveries are scheduled for completion within 6½ years.

The latest units will be an improved version of DMUs supplied under a contract signed in 2004, with the maximum speed raised from 120km/h to 160km/h. Intended for suburban traffic, they will have LCD passenger information screens and dedicated spaces for wheelchair users and luggage.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Minister of Roads & Urban Development Abbas Akhoundi said the order would support transit-oriented development under Iran's sixth Development Plan.

The Korean company entered the Iranian market by supplying 20 diesel locomotives in 1984, and in 2004 won an order to supply 150 DMU cars. Deliveries began in 2007, but were then interrupted by international sanctions imposed on Iran from 2010. Hyundai Rotem said its established reputation in Iran enabled the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the latest DMUs in May 2016 after sanctions were eased, and it is now targeting further opportunities in the country."

(ii). Note News but History: HISTORIC: "GOOD-BYE TO THE M.I.S. - D.I.K. RAILWAY."

Iain Logie found this in a BP newsletter of around 1948/49 in the BP Archives in Warwick. (In 1949 the oil industry in Iran was nationalised). p.96:

"The Field staff have said 'good-bye' to the M.I.S.-D.I.K. Railway, constructed shortly after the first world war. It played an important part in the development of the M.I.S. Field, bringing across the bare, broken, rocky hills all the equipment and stores. At the peak period, 9,800 tons of stores a month were carried. This included the sulphur and gach from the plants at Masjid-i-Sulaiman, which went down the line to Dar-i-Khazineh for transshipment to Abadan, and sand which came up from Abgah to M.I.S. for the building department.

The railway was begun in 1921 and the 36-mile 2ft. 6in. gauge line was completed in 1923. There were eight locomotives and 106 trucks. It was the first railway in Persia, apart from the 1¼ miles of tramway in Ahwaz. On 24th. January 1924 floods in the Tembi valley washed away most of the track and one major bridge and the line was closed for three months.

In December 1943 the Tembi valley was again flooded and 16½ miles of track and three main bridges were swept away. The war prevented the arrival of supplies to make complete repairs until March 1945 but the railway continued to operate by the use of temporary river crossings.

Between 1945 and 1949 the railway worked to its greatest capacity, reaching the peak figure of 9,800 tons a month in 1947. During this period, however, a programme of road construction and improvement between Abadan and M.I.S. was completed. This made it cheaper to operate a direct road haulage system in place of the railway-river-road system, with its expensive transshipment points.

During its twenty-seven years of life, the railway hauled well over one million tons of freight. During the early years of the oilfields, passengers were also carried and many a senior member of the Company first arrived in Fields on the little railway which followed the Tembi river through the hills. Occasionally a train was 'hired' by picnic parties for a day in the country or a moonlight barbecue.

The railway was at first operated with light locomotives and wagons obtained from the Army Disposals Board in Egypt, where they had been used by the Kantara Stores Depot during the 1914-18 war. In 1925 three Kerr-Stuart 0-6-2 tank locomotives and 25 wagons were sent out from Britain and additional wagons were transferred from the Delhurun-Ali Gharbi Railway when that line closed down.

In the summer of 1927 there were scenes reminiscent of Wild West films when Arab bandits roamed the foothills. They held up railway staff and robbed passengers but Company materials were untouched.

The maximum single load carried by the railway was 34 tons. There were two loads of this size, generators for Tembi Power Station. A special branch line was laid from the railway into the power station to carry the generators to their home.

Though the familiar sight of the miniature locomotives and wagons will be missed in Fields, friends of the M.I.S.-D.I.K. railway will be glad to know that it is to begin a new life as a goods carrier outside the refinery area in Abadan."

B. TURKEY.

(i). DRIVERLESS METRO FOR ISTANBUL.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 15.12.2017: "A ceremony to inaugurate Istanbul's first driverless metro line was held at Üsküdar on December 15, attended by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım and Mayor Mevlüt Uysal.

The first 10.5 km phase of Line M5, the second metro route on the Asian side of the city, connects Üsküdar with Yamanevler with seven intermediate stations. End-to-end journey time is 17 min.

Construction of the TL3.5Bn project started in March 2012 and was undertaken by Doğu Construction Group. The second phase, from Yamanevler to Çekmeköy, is expected to be commissioned in June 2018, and would take the route to 20 km with 16 stations. End-to-end journey time would then be 27 min.

CAF has supplied a fleet of 21 six-car trainsets with Mitsubishi electrical and automation equipment under a €119M order placed in June 2014. The first trainset was delivered from Spain in November 2016. The 132 m long sets have capacity for 1,622 passengers. Maximum speed is 90 km/h and power is drawn from overhead wires at 1.5 kV DC. The rolling stock has been produced with 15% local content.

Bombardier has supplied its Cityflo 650 CBTC signalling, which allows 90 sec headways, giving Line M5 a design capacity of 55,000 passengers/h per direction. The stations are fitted with platform screen doors.

Ridership on Line M5 is forecast at 700,000 passengers a day. In the longer term, the route would be extended east from Çekmeköy to Sabiha Gökçen Airport."

(ii). HYUNDAI TO BUILD MORE METRO SETS FOR ISTANBUL.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 13.12.2017: "Hyundai Rotem announced on December 5 that it had signed a 156.5bn won contract to supply rolling stock for two Istanbul metro lines.

Hyundai Rotem is to supply 10 four-car driverless trainsets for Line M8, which is being built between Bostancı and Dudullu on the Asian side of the city. The 14.3 km route will serve 13 stations and have a design capacity of 45,000 passengers/h per direction.

The M8 trains will be 86.3 m long and 2,900 mm wide, with capacity for 1,081 passengers. They will have a maximum speed of 80 km/h.

The same contract also covers 20 four-car sets for the western extension of Line M7. Earlier this year construction work started on the 18.5 km western section of the driverless line between Mahmutbey to Esenyurt, serving 10 stations.

Hyundai Rotem is supplying 75 four-car trainsets for the 24.5 km first section between Mahmutbey and Kabataş, now under construction.

The trainsets for the M7 extension will be 90 m long and 3,100 mm wide, with capacity for 1,205 passengers. Their maximum speed will be 80 km/h.

The South Korean manufacturer will assemble the trains at its plant in Adzaparı, which is operated by the Eurotem joint venture that also includes Turkish company Tüvasaş. The rolling stock will have 50% local content."

(iii). KAYSERI SUBURBAN SERVICE TO BE ESTABLISHED:

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 19.01.2018: "Minister of Environment & Urban Planning Mehmet Özhaseki announced on January 10 that a dedicated suburban service would launch in Kayseri this year. Services on the 156 km route would use existing TCDD tracks between Yeşilhisar in the southwest and Saroğlu in the northeast, running through Kayseri's main station. Services on the Yeşilhisar – Kayseri section are due to begin in April, with the Kayseri – Saroğlu section following by the end of the year."

(iv). TESTING BEGINS ON SECOND IZMIR TRAM LINE.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 17.02.2018: "Test running has started on the Konak tram line in Izmir. The 12.9 km route was due to open late last year, but has been delayed.

Services will operate with a fleet of 21 five-section low-floor trams supplied by the Eurotem joint venture of Hyundai Rotem and Tüvasaş. In April 2017 the Karşıyaka Line on the other side of the Gulf of Izmir opened. It uses 17 trams supplied under the same contract."

(v). PROGRESS ON TENDER FOR GEBZE DRIVERLESS METRO.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 16.02.2018: Kocaeli Municipality announced on February 1 that 15 consortia had prequalified for a contract to build a driverless metro line linking Gebze and Darıca. Seven of these will now move on to the next phase. Construction is planned to start by mid-2018 on the 15.6 km route with 12 stations. Completion is due within 4½ years. It is envisaged that services would run every 90 sec, offering an end-to-end journey time of 19 min. Four-car trainsets are to be used, with a capacity of 1,080 passengers.

C. SAUDI ARABIA.

(i) HARAMAIN LINE TO BE INAUGURATED:

From 'Fahrplancenter News' Mai-November 2017 No. 57 p.19:

In Spring 2018 the first real-time high speed runs will be made on the Haramain high-speed line. The train will work at 300km/h between the stations of King Abdullah City and Medina. The State Administration for Public Transport announced that the first trains for the public would

run at the end of 2017; within the framework of this presentation the travel times envisaged for various sections of the line, which has a total of 450km, were given:-

Mecca – Jeddah 21 mins.

Jeddah – King Abdulaziz Airport 14 min.

King Abdulaziz Airport – King Abdullah Economic City 36 min.

King Abdullah Economic City – Medina 61 min.

King Abdullah Economic City will also be called Rabigh, but what the definitive name for this station will be is as yet unknown.

(ii) INAUGURAL TRAIN.

And from 'R.G.I.' 31.12.2017: "An inaugural train ran between Madinah and Makkah over the Haramain high speed railway on December 31. Completing the 450 km trip in 2 h 52 min, the train conveyed Saudi Transport Minister Dr Nabil bin Mohammed Al-Amoudi and Spanish Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Álvaro Iranzo, along with executives from the Al Shoula consortium which won the €6.7bn railway systems contract to equip and operate the line.

Marking the start of a demonstration phase which will see trains run between Madinah and Makkah on Fridays and Saturdays until the planned start of commercial services in mid-March 2018, the inaugural trip fulfilled a commitment by the Al Shoula consortium to commence initial operations before the end of 2017. This formed part of the deal ratified in January 2017 between the Saudi Arabian authorities and the consortium that set a revised timescale for completion of the project.

Doubts had persisted until late December about whether the inaugural run could take place, not least because the stations at Jeddah and Makkah are far from complete. In the event temporary facilities were provided. During the run the Talgo 350 trainset reportedly exceeded 300 km/h on some sections of the line.

Under the Al Shoula contract Spanish national operator RENFE is expected to run the service for 12 years."

(iii). BUT: A DELAYED LAUNCH?

But then came problems. From 'R.G.I.' 02.02.2018:

"The planned launch in March of commercial services on the Haramain high speed line between Makkah and Madinah is in doubt following further delays in completing three of the line's five stations.

Announcing on January 30 that he would be visiting Saudi Arabia in the near future to agree a timescale for the start of commercial operations over the 450km line, Spanish Minister of Development Íñigo de la Serna said that test trains had been running over the whole route since December 31, when an inaugural special ran between Madinah and Makkah in 2 h 52 min.

Operation of the line will be the responsibility of Spanish national operator RENFE as a member of the Saudi-Spanish Al Shoula consortium which was chosen for the €6-7Bn railway systems contract in October 2011. De la Serna made it clear that the consortium was trying to fulfil its commitments, but that these depended on resolution of issues that were not its responsibility.

Construction of the stations is largely in the hands of local companies Saudi Bin Laden Group and Saudi Oger; those at Jeddah, Makkah and Jeddah King Abdulaziz International Airport are understood to be behind schedule."

(iv). INTERVIEW WITH SAUDI MANAGER:

Dr Bashar Al Malek, CEO, Saudi Railway Company (SAR)

SAR is responsible for developing and operating Saudi Arabia's intercity rail network. It is currently growing freight operations to support the Kingdom's ambitious economic transformation plan, and an extensive passenger network which is changing the face of public transport in the Kingdom.

What will you be discussing at Middle East Rail 2018?

"I will be outlining SAR's network development plans in the context of Saudi 2030. We've already made considerable progress – including launching passenger services from Riyadh to Qassim and Hail. I will describe these and other significant achievements, and talk about minerals and other major projects on the horizon."

Which rail projects across the Middle East are most of interest to you and why?

"I would have to say that in 2018 the launch of our Haramain High Speed Train linking Madinah, Rabigh, Jeddah and Makkah is the most significant single project in the region and one that will provide colossal passenger benefits over the years. Looking further forward, developing a GCC-wide integrated rail network will be of major economic importance for the entire region, and it is very exciting to see that reality approach."

What is the biggest opportunity for rail in the next three years?

"For us it is to develop the modern network that our country deserves, and which underpins Saudi Arabia's position at the heart of the Islamic world. The government approach of private-sector participation in our public transportation opens up exciting opportunities for investors, railway operators, construction companies and suppliers throughout the world."

Don't miss Dr Bashar Al Malek speaking at Middle East Rail 2018 in Dubai 12-13 March 2018.

Dr. Parag Khanna : What will you be discussing at Middle East Rail 2018?

"I will present the future global maps of connectivity among cities adapted from CONNECTOGRAPHY. This is especially relevant to the heavily urbanised Arab world which needs to rediscover its ancient Silk Road fluidity."

Which rail projects across the Middle East, Africa or Asia are most of interest to you and why?

"I have always been enamored by the Hejaz Railway that originated in Istanbul and carried on to Medina. Today we can envision a resurrection of this fabled route, as well as major new branches across the region."

What is the hottest innovation to hit rail in the next 5 years?

"I am of course excited by the prospect of Hyperloop, especially in the UAE where the terrain is hospitable and the government has spent enormously to get the main Emirates more connected to each other."

What is the biggest opportunity for rail in the next 3 years?

"The Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) and the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB) that is organising finance for it should incentivise more passenger rail beyond the freight corridors that have already become well developed from China through Central Asia and Iran to Turkey."

Don't miss Dr. Parag Khanna speaking at Middle East Rail in Dubai 12-13 March 2018."

D. IRAQ.

URBAN RAIL MEMORANDUM FOR BAGHDAD AND BASRA SIGNED BY ALSTOM.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 06.12.2017: "A memorandum of understanding for the development of urban rail projects in Baghdad and Basra has been signed by the Iraqi government and Alstom as part of a Franco-Iraqi inter-governmental meeting.

A 20 km elevated light rail line is proposed for Baghdad, which would link Mustansiriyah, Shaab, Wazireya, Alsarafiya bridge, Al-Khadumia, Al-Muthanna airport and Allawi. It is envisaged that Alstom would supply the rolling stock, electromechanical systems, track and associated civil works.

The proposed Basra metro would have two lines, both 15 km long with 15 stations. One would run north to south from the Shatt Al-Arab to Zubair, the other east-west from Karma.

"We appreciate the opportunity to develop industrial cooperation with the Republic of Iraq, in order to better address the country's needs for urban transport", said Bernard Peille, Managing Director of Alstom in Western & Central Asia, on December 6. "Alstom is ready to bring its innovative technologies and sees the signature of this MoU as a first step towards the development of a long-term partnership with Iraq."

A number of proposals for metro lines in Baghdad have been proposed over the years. In February 2013 Alstom was awarded a contract to undertake detailed design studies for an elevated line on a similar route to the current proposal; at the time it was hoped that construction could begin in 2014 and take around six years at a cost of US\$1.5bn."

E. QATAR.

(i) METRO AND LIGHT RAIL OPERATING CONTRACT AWARDED:

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 7.12.2017:

"Public transport authority Qatar Rail has awarded the RKH Qitarat joint venture between a consortium of RATP Dev and Keolis (49%) and local construction, property and trading business Hamad Group (51%) a contract to operate and maintain the Doha metro and Lusail light rail networks. The contract awarded on December 7 is expected to be worth €3Bn over its 20-year duration. Services are scheduled to be launched in stages from the end of 2018 to 2020.

The 75 km driverless metro will serve 37 stations on three lines. The first part of the network will be largely underground and is expected to open at the end of 2018, with traffic expected to reach 640 000 passengers/day from 2021.

The 18 km first phase of the Lusail light rail network will have four lines serving 25 stops. Half of the network will be underground. The first section is scheduled to open in January 2019, with completion planned for 2020.

RKH Qitarat said the pre-launch mobilisation phase was an 'extremely short timeframe compared to the 18 months usually accorded'. As a result it would have to recruit and train employees in less than 12 months, with 1 500 staff being needed within two years.

RATP Group CEO Catherine Guillouard said SNCF and RATP had 'teamed up to offer Qatar the very best French urban mobility know-how to operate and maintain its automated metro and light rail system, providing a benchmark in mobility — efficient, innovative, reliable and sustainable — to meet the needs of all of Doha's inhabitants.'

'This partnership brings Qatar into the exclusive club of cities with automated metro networks', said Pierre Abi Nahed of Hamad Group. 'It represents a real opportunity to use the latest technology in this field and reflects Qatar's commitment to being at the cutting edge of innovation and making the best use of the international expertise being delivered by these two companies.'

(ii). CITADIS TRAM FOR LUSAIL READY.

From 'Metro Report Intl.' 25.01.2018: "Alstom has presented the first Citadis for the Lusail Tram project to officials from Qatar Rail, following the completion of factory acceptance tests in France.

Alstom is supplying 28 trams for the Lusail network. Branded Al Mehmel, the vehicles' design is inspired by a type of traditional dhow used for pearl fishing. The 32 m long 100% low-floor trams will use the APS ground-level power supply system.

The 18 km first phase of the network is scheduled to open in January 2019, and will have four lines serving 25 stops. Completion of the entire 38.5 km network with 32 stops is planned for 2020. The line is being built by a consortium led by Alstom and the QDVC joint venture of Qatari Diar (51%) and Vinci Construction Grands Projets (49%). A joint venture of Hill International,

Italferr and ASTAD Project Management is providing project management.

Services are to be operated by the RKH Qitarat joint venture between a consortium of RATP Dev and Keolis (49%) and local construction, property and trading business Hamad Group (51%)."

F. SYRIA.

The link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1ZEzVDP3o> brings one to a film of the renewed tourist steam trains to Zabadani, showing also at the far end some stock including a Ganz Mavag trailer and 4wh Diesel and bogie stock. The train itself consists of an 2-6-0T and three four-wheel coaches.

Another film shows one of the Korean dmu sets departing a restored Aleppo station in January 2017, a sign of returning normality, with many flags inside and out, but it is not clear where to.

G. ETHIOPIA.

From 'Die Zeit' 4. Jan. 2018 'Politik' p. 2. An article by Angela Köckritz on the advances of the Chinese in Africa – a million Chinese are already working in the continent. (Translation by Editor).

"Addis Abeba. The tramway runs over the elevated tracks through this city that, in its breathless haste to enter Modernity has not given much effort to trying to stay attractive. Buildings are constantly being pulled down or built, and little is left of the old charm of the former Imperial city..... The Tramway is a prestige project, built by the Chinese; It is the only one in the entire continent apart from South Africa. Addis is the headquarters of the African Union (AU), a shop window, almost the secret capital of Africa. All African States have their diplomatic representatives here. Here one can demonstrate what is possible – with China's help. Near the new AU headquarters – built by China – the offices of various Chinese state enterprises have been established. Chinese construction firms can be found all over the city. China is not only the largest infrastructure financier on the continent, 50% of all international projects are built by Chinese firms.

....China is not only expanding the harbour (in Djibouti) but also in several places in Tanzania and Kenya, which are competing to be the greatest port complex in East Africa. The infrastructure is complemented by various railways. The line Mombasa – Nairobi has just been completed, that between Djibouti and Addis should be opening soon. Both lines should one day be linked and expanded into Uganda, Burundi, Rianda, Congo, Sudan...."

and: RAILWAY ACADEMY TO OPEN.

From 'R.G.I.' 16.01.2018: "Work is to start later this year on the construction of a railway training academy, Ethiopian Railways Corp announced on January 13.

When fully operational, the academy is expected to employ around 250 teachers and administrative staff, training up to 1,000 students at a time in seven different railway-related disciplines.

The Chinese-built electrified railway linking Addis Ababa and Djibouti began full commercial operation on January 8, following a year of trial running since its formal launch in October 2016. The line is initially being operated by Chinese contractors, but is scheduled to transfer to local management after five years. While some Ethiopian staff have already been sent to China and Russia for training, the new academy is expected to play a key role in ensuring that the necessary operational and engineering skills are available.

Under an agreement signed in December 2016 a joint company is being established to manage the railway, owned 75% by Ethiopia and 25% by Djibouti. Ethiopia is to appoint three of the four board members, including Transport Minister Ahmed Shide who will act as Chairman, according to ERC Communications Director Dereje Tefera."

H. NORTH AFRICA. LIBYA AND EGYPT.

As a bored schoolboy the Editor used a red pen to fill in gaps in the railway network of Africa in his school Atlas, for all these lines seemed to taper off into nowhere in the interior of the continent and it seemed – from the perspective of a school desk – such an obvious idea to link them! Even now the temptation is strong – just look at: <http://www.openrailwaymap.org/>

Now a map and article on p.14f of the 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 57 of May-Nov. 2017 does the same thing, describing a vast array of projects to open up what is still in many respects a fragmented and underdeveloped 'Dark Continent'. Here we shall look only at those in the north-eastern corner, which are more directly relevant to the term 'Middle East', and omit many interesting schemes in the Maghreb.

"Under Ghaddafi Libya began the construction of railways in the 1990's, with Russian and Chinese assistance. Lines were proposed from Tripoli to Ben Gardane (Tunisia), Sabha in the centre of the country, Surt (Syrt) on the centre of the coastline and a rail system from Benghazi to Ajdabiya on one side and to Tobruk on the border with Egypt on the eastern side. Under pressure from Ghaddafi Tunisia also altered the project for its railway from Gabès from Metre Gauge to Standard Gauge and Egypt refurbished the barely-used line Mersa Matruh – El Sollum, where Libya envisaged creating a connection. Since the Libyan regime also wished to extend its sphere of influence into Central Africa; a line was also planned southwards from Tripoli to Sabha and in further stages via the cities of Murzuq and Toummo (both in Libya) to Niamey in Niger: Ghaddafi announced that "It would not be long before the railways will link Libya with the coast of West Africa."! In the meantime Ghaddafi is no longer there and the railway builders have left the country.

Egypt has better plans. On the one hand it is intended to improve internal communications in the country, on the other there are still plans for reactivating the old line along the northern coast of

the Sinai Peninsula to Gaza in Palestine and from there further on to Israel. Already some fifteen years ago an initial start was made with this project through the reactivation for operations of the section between El Kantara on the Suez Canal and El Arish. But the current security situation did not allow the operations to continue for long. The reconstruction of this line matches the Israeli visions of the system from 2040, whereby there could be good chances for the work to be done if the political situation were to allow it.

Egypt's second international project is the construction of a line along the Lake formed by the Aswan Dam to Wadi Halfa in Sudan, in order to connect there with the Sudanese network. This is of course an old project, for even the British African colonial explorer Cecil Rhodes had included this in his plans for a Cape-to-Cairo Railway."

I. JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA (AND ISRAEL).

PEACE ON THE RAILS?

In 'Fahrplancenter News' p.19 No. 57 (May-November 2017) is an intriguing article on Middle East developments from a different but positive perspective, albeit the item itself was mentioned in a previous issue. (Translation from German by Editor).

"On 6th. April 2017 the Israeli Transport Minister Yisrael Katz issued a press release a statement that a project that had been slumbering since the 1990's, to build a railway line into Jordan, was to be realised as soon as possible; The original project envisaged an extension of the line recently opened from Haifa to Beit She'an as far as Irbid. The new version however considers an extension of this line in a West-East direction right through Jordan to Saudi Arabia. In this way the new plan has been presented also to various Arab countries, the Emirates and Saudi Arabia. In a response the Saudi Government found positive words for the project; for the countries on the Gulf this line would mean a great shortening of the distance, from currently around 6,000 km by sea round the Arabian Peninsula to around 600 km through Jordan to the Mediterranean harbour at Haifa. Already goods are exported by lorry from the Arabian Peninsula and through Jordan by lorry to Haifa Port, so in itself this would not be entirely new, but with a railway line more goods could be transported faster and significantly cheaper to the Mediterranean or from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf – according to the Saudi position. This would also mean that several countries would de facto recognise Israel's existence and at last some peace could come to the region.

Until now nothing has been said as to whether a new railway would also convey passengers. Jordan, which has maintained relations with Israel for over twenty years, would gladly see a passenger link between Irbid and Haifa. Within Jordan the line should go from Irbid on to Mafraq and then eastwards. From Mafraq a standard-gauge connection on to Amman has long been proposed."

(Continued on page 22)

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(i).A MISSING AEROPLANE OR A MYSTERY ALREADY RESOLVED?

This item caught my interest and is truly fascinating but – it may be a storm in a teacup and an example of conspiracy theories which are plausible until one learns they are based on only half the available knowledge. Mr. Richard Hobby in Canada has written extensively – his responses are given below - and his website entries repay careful study, because they cast light on some pretty enormous strategic political issues of the early 1940's.... but this also touches upon an aspect of transport in Palestine (and use of rail transport to boot) which is little known.

Hans-Wilhelm (Will) Berghoff of Lübeck wrote:

"Alon Siton with help from Chen Melling have been searching in the Israeli National Archive for documents that Ilan Palkov handed over here when he retired from his position at Haifa.

Amongst other things a set of photos was found:
<http://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#/Archive/0b07170680024752/File/0b07170680be8970>

Some of these show the loading of aeroplane fuselages onto a railway wagon. The images come from the period 1933 - 1943.

The D.H.50 of Imperial Airways with the registration G-EBFP was stationed in Cairo and also flew to Lydda and Gaza. It is recorded as being scrapped in 1933. It seems it was not unusual for Imperial Airways machines to be transported by rail for scrap, for the Archive of the US Congress includes similar pictures, and almost always the registration can be made out.

But now to the rather exciting matter:

The aeroplane hanging from the crane is a Handley-Page H.P.42. These were typical for the long-distance aeroplanes used from Cairo on the Imperial Airways routes London – Cairo – South Africa and London – Cairo – Gaza – Lydda...-India - Australia and has been documented in many photos of air services.

There were exactly eight of this type of machine (all with names that began with an 'H', written under the cockpit window.) The fate of seven of these machines is known – they crashed in Western Europe in 1939/40 and were scrapped. The design was not very stable in poor weather. The first machine of the series, 'Hannibal', after which the series is often named as 'Hannibal Class', disappeared on a flight from Karachi to Cairo via Sharjah in Oman on 1.3.1940 and according to the investigation reports no remains were ever found.

The aeroplane on the railway steam crane at – presumably – Haifa is an H.P. 42. (On one of the photos it seems the Grands Moulins near Haifa East station can be seen in the background, thus confirming

(Continued from page 21)

This is indeed a semi-messianic vision but it is followed by a positive report on Israel – we have given statistics etc. in issue 119 but give here the overview again in the ME context:

"The Israel State Railways presented in mid-2017 their plans for the period to 2040. According to this scheme the network should grow from the current 1,232 km to 2,572 km., including the new lines to Eilat and in the Golan region and also further lines to increase network density in the West. The number of stations should rise from 68 to 120 and the number of daily passenger trains should be tripled. For 2017 an estimate is for a total of 59.5 M. passengers, but by 2020 this number should rise to over 81 M per annum and by 2040 to around 306 M! By this point – according to forecasts – the railways should have an 8% market share as opposed to 3% at present. In the same period goods traffic should also rise by 100%. The Israeli taxpayer will have to contribute around €30 Billion for this but in return there will be many new jobs created and this should also lead to improvements in the general economy."

the location as Haifa; there is mixed-gauge track and what looks like the HR goods shed in the background. Ed.) Surely it must therefore be the 'Hannibal'. Contrary to all other such photos, in this case the identifying areas have been covered. It has long been presumed that the crash of this plane was subject to a cover-up for political reasons. It was after all wartime and it is possible that internal political problems in India could have played a role, for the passenger list included some very high-level people. It is interesting that the fuselage shows no camouflage livery. [Perhaps because the machine was in civilian service well away from the then-conflict, whereas the three other H.P.42's that survived to be 'impressed' by the RAF were all re-registered and repainted in camouflage. Ed.]

So the question is: Did the fuselage of an aeroplane that apparently disappeared in Oman in 1940 come to be hanging from a railway steam crane in Haifa and, if so, how? It should be noted that the loss of this plane is still held secret under the '100 Year Rule'."

Here are some interesting (sometimes overlapping) links:

Imperial Airways
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Airways

Facts to Flight CW197
http://www.rrhobby.ca/Hannibal/flight_cw197.htm

Questions regarding the accident
<http://www.rrhobby.ca/Hannibal/quest.htm>
 and
<http://www.rrhobby.ca/Hannibal/quest2.htm>

Historical Background to the Situation in Sharjah
<http://www.rrhobby.ca/Hannibal/Backgrnd.htm>

The Weather reports
<http://www.rrhobby.ca/Hannibal/meteorology.htm>

Technical aspects of the H.P.42
<http://www.rrhobby.ca/Hannibal/maintenance.htm>

Questions regarding the relevant local Time Zones employed
<http://www.rrhobby.ca/Hannibal/Time.htm>

Crash theories
<http://www.rrhobby.ca/Hannibal/assumpt.htm>

An irrelevant but interesting example of another unknown fuselage on an HR wagon in 1936:
<https://www.loc.gov/item/mpc2010003677/PP/>

However, on enquiry, Richard Hobby kindly responded:

"I cannot agree that the images you have recovered from the archive is 'Hannibal' after 1 March 1940. I recall that one of the fleet suffered damage at Galilee early in its career and had to be returned to Heliopolis (Cairo airport) for rebuild. The images you refer to are very interesting. Somewhere in my archive is reference to the particular airframe and incident - However I note that the image of the De Havilland DH50 G-EBFP leads one to assume the collection is from earlier than 1940 as this airframe is reported scrapped in 1933. We should call for more data on the incident.

Although the mystery of 'Hannibal' is intriguing I favour the report that one of the Imperial Airways fleet of Handley Page H.P.42 aircraft suffered wind damage at Samakh and was transported to Haifa on the Palestine Railway 1.05m gauge. The photographs referenced by Mr. Berghoff are very likely

showing the transfer of the dismantled aircraft on to the standard gauge railway at Haifa, after transfer by the 1.05m railway. If the De Havilland D.H.50 was also damaged at Samakh at the same time and was scrapped in 1933 as a result, the time line of the photographs is likely earlier in the 1930's than 1943! The archive record sheet at the top of the NLI webpage lists the page as being 1933-1943. Also the style of dress of people in the illustrations suggests a 1920's attire which was generally out of fashion by 1940.

If by some quirk 'Hannibal' eluded a stop at Sharjah on 1 March 1940 and was secretly transported via Iraq and Syria through Palestine then I am sure families and widows of the 'Lost' crew would be very interested. There is a theory that 'Hannibal' was on a special service as it had returned at short notice to Karachi to carry these particular passengers. Two tons was the freight capacity and is an aspect in the loss and the intrigue of its disappearance."

There are still a lot of 'ifs' but essentially it is clear that bits of aeroplanes were amongst the freight PR carried and where necessary transhipped. The Imperial Airways site listed above lists many planes which crashed on land or at sea with the loss of some or all of those aboard, a timely reminder of just how risky these early 'airliners' were. One also wonders at the enormous logistical efforts required to provide and maintain and supply a string of stopping-points for landing, refuelling and overnighing along the routes out to the Empire.

Richard has continued his researches and found a few more oddments:

<http://www.nzstamps.org.uk/air/external/eastern/easternroute.html> describes many changes in the route and equipment for technical and political reasons. And the fact that wind damage had affected several of the planes is, he thinks, significant:

"Hengist" was destroyed in a fire at Karachi 31 May 1937. The others seem to have been blown away or run into ditches or embankments from positions on the ground in the UK. It is interesting for our discussion that so much damage was done to H.P.42 aircraft by wind! It was because 'Hannibal' encountered such strong headwinds between Gwadar and Jask in late February that it returned to become the vehicle for those aboard on 1 March 1940."

<http://www.timetableimages.com/ttimages/iaw/iaw33m/iaw33m-3.jpg> shows IA timetables.

But this is from the 'The World's News', Sydney, Wed. 5th. April 1933, p.34, found on the 'Trove' website of the Australian national newspaper archive.

"STORMY GALILEE. Flying Travellers driven from historic Sea. There are references in the New Testament to tempests on the Sea of Galilee. It was there that Jesus walked on the waters and calmed the frightened fishermen. Galilee still has a reputation for sudden tempests during the night and

early morning when strong winds will rise suddenly from one quarter and within a few minutes be blowing from the opposite direction. These gusts have driven the big liners of Imperial Airways from the Galilee district, which was a night stopping place on the London – India air route. The practice has been to peg down the liners in the open, but the sudden violent gusts have proved too much for the planes on the ground. If the winds could be expected from one quarter only, the machines could be left in safety, but they could not be tethered afresh to meet each change of the direction of the wind. Flying boats which alight on the sea can ride out to the storms, for they swing at their moorings head-on to the wind. Owing to the risk of the big land 'planes being torn from their moorings and damaged in Galilee it has been decided to make Ramleh the port of call for travellers, who will this miss spending a night by the historic sea."

Where exactly was the airfield at Samakh? Photos mostly show a bare background, without the sea or the mountains visible.

Dov Gavish's works <https://scholars.huji.ac.il/dovgavish/book/airfields-and-landing-grounds> imply it was existent in World War I (along with Nahal Soreq and others). Ramleh became an RAF base later and Halifax bombers were stationed (and attacked) here. And the IA timetables indicate Gaza was used still for land planes and Tiberias for sea planes.

On <http://www.gazaairport.com/history.html> is a photo of H.P.42 'Hanno' G-AAUD at Samakh in 1931, the caption indicating the service had just started, with passengers transferring from the Kent flying boats which had landed from Greece, to these planes for onward journeys to India. (The H.P.42 entered commercial service in May 1931).

https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Battle_of_Samakh is a 24-min. Audio account with one illustration on the battle in WWI.

On the internet is also an image of 'one of KLM's HP-42's PH-P at Samakh Airfield! But it turns out this is a "what-if" fantasy based on the Hanno photo above and indicates how careful one must be.

Another question would of course be – How was this aeroplane or its components loaded onto a 105cm bogie flat in Samakh in the first place? Tourret (p.151) lists only a 5T hand crane No. 999 among DHP stock and none in CFH stock (p.159 & special wagons on p.161), nor is there any photo or diagram or mention of a steam crane. (Most railways would have had some form of heavy crane to deal with accidents and derailments.)

I suppose when an aeroplane crashes from the air (as opposed to hitting the ground or a mountain, or accidents at take-off and landing) there are two main possibilities; Slow or Fast. Either there is a long-drawn-out period of increasing anxiety as landfall is not made or the fuel gets lower, due to navigational error or strong winds, or the machine has been damaged by enemy action, maybe an engine on fire or not working, maybe damage to

control surfaces, and the pilot wonders how best to save himself and his load from the situation; or there is a catastrophic failure in the air which leads to the machine plunging non-aerodynamically, perhaps in fragments, out of the sky. In such cases there is no chance of arranging a controlled crash-landing or a ditching, control is lost immediately whether by structural failure or sabotage and hardly any time to be aware of what is happening. When a pressurised cabin splits due to metal fatigue, (think of the first D.H. Comets) death comes quickly. The list of IA accidents and losses shows that some passengers perished swiftly when their machine hit the ground whereas others drowned after a flying boat had crash-landed.... We do not know what happened to 'Hannibal'. We know only that there was some urgency to operate this flight to bring a small number of men to England; there was a crew of four, experienced men, and of the four passengers (the H.P.42's could carry up to 24) one was a senior Air Force officer, one a senior Indian politician and one a courier carrying very important and sensitive documents. The lack of any (recorded or reported) distress signal indicates something sudden. They left behind them grieving family, friends and colleagues, and a still-unsolved mystery.

(ii). EGYPTIAN STOCK DIAGRAMS.

The collection of the late railway enthusiast Ilan Falkov, who was the man behind the establishment of the Israel Railway Museum passed to the National Archive of Israel. It includes numerous gems, including the ESR Carriage Diagram Book of the mid-1940s and the 1906 wagon book, which are scanned and can be downloaded here:

1906 Wagon Diagrams:

<http://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#/Archive/Ob07170680024752/File/Ob071706808547c3>

1940s Carriage Diagrams Book:

<http://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#/Archive/Ob07170680024752/File/Ob07170680837a18>

(iii). MIDLAND RAILWAY AMBULANCE TRAINS.

In 'Railway Magazine' Dec. 2017 p. 64 is an item in the "100 Years Ago" rubric: From Dec. 1917.

"At Derby Carriage and Wagon Works the Midland Railway has recently completed another new ambulance train for service with the British forces overseas. The train (No. 40) is specially designed for service in hot climates, being provided with a double roof, insulated against heat by an asbestos mattress, with an air chamber between the two roofs. Each carriage is mosquito-proof, the windows throughout the train being double – one of the usual plate glass and the second consisting of a louvred frame covered on the inside with brass wire gauze. The complete train consists of 16 cars each 54 ft. long with a total length of 913 ft. and unloaded weight of 430 tons."

This is one which came to the Middle East. Incidentally the same issue has a photo of a Napier lorry fitted with flanged wheels and used in 'German East Africa after occupation by British forces' to haul

4-wheel wagons on what is presumably metre gauge. (GEA is now Tanzania, Burundi and Ruanda); The 341 km Usumbara Railway from Tanga Port was metre gauge, the Tengi Bahn 750mm.).

(iv). **BOOK REVIEW. 'TRACKS IN THE SAND'.**

By James Foster Dodds and Catherine Dodds. Jardine Press. Price 30 Pounds. ISBN 978-0-9934779-4-2.

This is a book to fall in love with. An album that cannot be praised highly enough. One of those 'labours of love' over which one stumbles from time to time. It comprises the moving love letters and crystal-clear photographs of Tim Foster, a British railwayman, a clerk on the Great Eastern Railway, the Grandfather of James Foster Dodds, who was called up and served at Gallipoli and then, having almost succumbed to typhoid, was posted with the Royal Engineers running military railways - first at El Kubri on the east bank of the Suez Canal; he then followed the construction of the Sinai Military Railway from Kantara East through to Lydda; he became the first British Station Master at Jerusalem and describes the problems of working the line and also the sights he saw and the way life was..... Then he was transferred to Tulkarm station and later to Samach. An old case containing the letters and photos was passed down through the family and a veritable treasure trove it is. He wrote like a poet, not only words of yearning and romance but also describing the horrors of the Gallipoli campaign, his tasks as a railwayman, the places he visited in Egypt and Palestine both in the course of duty and on leave. His demobilisation was delayed several times due to the needs of the service, including a strike and rebellion in Egypt in 1919, something he was very unhappy about.

Included are memoirs of his wife Pollie, beautifully written for her daughters and also giving wonderful insights into a schoolgirl's life in that period (she was just 16 when they met and fell in love!) and the agonies of waiting for post from her man overseas. They later married and he became a station master in Britain, including at Harwich during the Second World War (which means he presumably took charge of Kindertransport arrivals here) - then retired in 1951 and died in 1956.

There are important insights into the land at the time. Here from Jerusalem in February 1918: "Poor old Jerusalem, blest not with milk and honey, the people begging for food were thankful for a hard army biscuit, the shops have little to sell but souvenirs of the Holy Land, mostly worthless articles at high prices, and no change can be had for there are but few coins in the city acceptable by the British, and the few articles there are of any worth are at famine prices." And from Samakh in March 1919: "This valley is in hot weather a death trap, malaria clasps hold of you and off you go. A day or so ago Ahmed my valet gave me my lunch at 12.30 and at 4pm I saw him buried. The Jordan valley is one of the most unhealthy places in the world, its graveyards tell the tale."

But the photographs in this book tell many tales, they include landscapes and townscapes but also many images of the military railways and the men who worked them, captured locomotives and stock, the light railway built from Jerusalem station towards Ramallah, the railway in Galilee. The photographs are crystal sharp and magnificent even though he was an amateur who developed his own films and made prints in the waters of the Sweet Water Canal using sunlight! They show infrastructure and methods of working, interesting loads (volunteers, Turkish prisoners, Armenian volunteers, narrow gauge locos), the offices of the station master, the workshops, the aftermath of accidents and much much more. Yet one must stress this book is not just for railway historians but for anyone interested in the history of the land of Israel at this period.

The pages and pictures are not numbered but it is a massive album and excellent value. A few typographical errors have been noted and will be corrected in future editions.

The book can be ordered from: www.jardinepress.co.uk or info@jardinepress.co.uk, Price GBP 30 (currently ca. \$43, or 145 NIS) plus p&g.

(v). **THE LATE LATE RABBINIC SPECIAL.**

(The Editor was touched and impressed by this news item and so includes it even though the railway content is peripheral.) On 12.12.2017 Sybil wrote: "Extra trains are to be put on for the funeral of Rabbi Aharon Leib Steinman (who died this morning at age 104 and is being buried in B'nei Brak as I write this, noon, Tuesday) from Haifa, Beit Shemesh, Beersheva and southern towns. Special trains from Beit Shemesh to B'nei Brak via Lod at 11:10, and from Ofakim at 11:02 via all the stations on that line."

From 'Times of Israel' 12.12.2017 come these excerpts concerning this rather remarkable rabbi:

"There were no eulogies, as requested by Steinman in his will. The will, which was read at the ceremony by a student, also saw the rabbi ask his followers not to name their descendants after him or publicize any articles about him in the newspaper. "Ten people at my funeral would be enough," he wrote in the document.

Estimates on the number of funeral-goers varied, with Israel Radio reporting police were expecting some 600,000 to arrive over the course of the afternoon. Magen David Adom said it had treated some 70 people for light injuries, including fainting, feeling unwell and minor injuries due to the crowd..... From 10 a.m. police started closing roads in and out of the mostly ultra-Orthodox city, including Roads 1, 4, 5 and 20 near the city and the entire length of Highway 471. Police said in a statement that private vehicles will not be given access to the funeral and urged mourners to use public transportation. Steinman had been considered the top leader of the community since the 2012 death of Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv.

He was also the spiritual leader of the Degel Hatorah faction of the United Torah Judaism political party. Born in 1913 in Belarus, he studied there and in Switzerland before emigrating to British-mandate Palestine in 1945. He taught at the leading Talmudic schools in B'nei Brak, a predominantly ultra-Orthodox city outside Tel Aviv where he also lived.

Steinman was famous for eschewing wealth and the trappings of power. He held almost no formal positions in ultra-Orthodox institutions and lived out his days in a modest apartment...."

(vi). **CECIL J. BAKER.**

Percy Cecil John Baker was the last Superintendent of the Line of Palestine Railways. Recently the Editor was pleased to be contacted by Julian Baker of Oregon, his grandson who is researching some family history. There will be more to come (Chen has already dug out some useful documents) but we now know that he married Grace Ellen Garnett around 1925, who died alas of toxicaemia on 19th. January 1928 four days after the birth of their son - Julian's father. They had celebrated their wedding at the Windsor Hotel at Carmel Avenue.

He was born 6th. Nov. 1888; His railway career had begun on the Great Western Railway, then he served in the war and was with PR from the beginning on 1st. Oct. 1920. After being widowed he later married Frida, his children's nursemaid. After the end of the Mandate (he was awarded an O.B.E. for his services during World War 2) Cecil moved to Kyrenia in Cyprus; he passed away due to cancer in 1964 and is buried there. Frida stayed on till the Turkish invasion of 1974 then moved to Stuttgart where she died 1994. His next of kin was given in the staff records as a sister, Mrs. J. Willis in East Sheen.

Further illustrations of trackworks on the A1, on Bridge 10 over Cedar Valley and Tunnel 4 at the entrance to the city. (Photos courtesy Lesico Ltd.)





Images of the light rail project from Aharon Gazit



- All pictures show works at Galei-Gill shaft near the diamond exchange in Ramat-Gan.





The test run with the first IR electric loco and matching set. (Photo Flash 90, courtesy of Martin Frey)
Photo 2018.01.16