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הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
Edited and Published by Rabbi Walter Rothschild
Passauer Strasse 4, D - 10789 Berlin, Germany
Tel/Fax +49 30 214 73889
e.mail: Rothschild-Berlin@t-online.de



68:1

*A computer image of the Alstom Citadis LRV of Jerusalem running along Jaffa street near King George street corner; note the wall painting at the right
Photo Evyatar Reiter.*

Also in this issue - pictures of the work in progress on the line to Jerusalem.

68:2.

EDITORIAL:

The big news this quarter has been the very swift progress on tracklaying on the 'old' line to Jerusalem, at least as far as the massive new station at Malha. (We consider it to be a major error to allow the remaining few kilometres into the original station to fall into disuse - despite the presence of several level crossings, we see no reason why the line and a couple of platforms could not be built - this would still allow plenty of land to be made available at the former station area for development, since the goods yard and stabling sidings would not be required.) We have received several photos of works trains along the section from Beit Shemesh, in the wonderful scenery, and use as many as we can. Works on other lines, including that to Modi'in, and plans for yet further expansion of the system are also sprouting forth, and the political situation, whilst by no means rosy, is certainly a lot better than it was before a certain 'Rais' took his last helicopter ride - which could have long-term implications for railway developments into the Palestinian areas and towards Israel's other neighbours. Let us hope so.

Late news is that the new IR summer timetable is to come into force from Saturday evening 09.04.2005; this will include trains on the reopened Jerusalem line and also to the new Ashkelon station. However, because this is meant to be the March edition, we will have to leave an analysis until the next time.

So - on the whole, the news is good. Let it remain so! Enjoy.

The Editor.

68:4.

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). MORE BONES. OR: "TRAINS DELAYED BY THE WRONG SORT OF BONES ON THE LINE"

From the Israeli TV station 'Arutz Sheva'.

"Discovery of a cemetery from the Byzantine era has pushed back



68:3. The first works train to arrive at Jerusalem Malha station on 9.2.2005. Tracks in the station had arrived by road and were laid earlier. Photo Eran Eyal.

several months the launching of a new train line from Modi'in to Tel Aviv. The ancient grave site was discovered during work on the line in the Ben Shemen area, east of Ben Gurion airport.

Israel Railways, having to solve the problem of obeying Israeli law which requires preservation of antiquities, has started digging a 60 million Shekel tunnel under the ancient site. This will delay opening of the new line until the end of 2006, according to officials of the national rail system. Modi'in is a new city of about 50,000 residents and is half-way between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

The 19 kilometer (11 mile) section of track will be an extension of the newly inaugurated line from Tel Aviv to the new Terminal 3 at Ben Gurion Airport and later will be extended to Jerusalem.

Cost of the entire project will be more than 3 billion shekels, including five bridges. Most of the 56 kilometer (35 mile) line will be in tunnels."

In several Israeli or Charedi papers, there were articles about protests, where various officials proved to be reluctant to re-plan the line and were supposed to disinter the remains and go forward with said plans.

(i). MODI'IN LINE DELAYS.

Possibly a variant of the above story:- "The works of building the line between Ben-Gurion Airport and the city of Modi'in may last longer than originally planned, due to the uncovering of an important archaeological site - a huge Jewish public bath complex dating from the Maccabean time - during excavation works south-east of Lod for building a railway bridge; rescue works, including an under-track tunnel will be carried out; Israel Railways spokesman Mr. Benny Naor, has clarified however, that works continue at full tempo up to the point in question, and all efforts will be made to reduce delays to opening the line."

(b). OCTOBER 2004 STATISTICS..

"On November 3 IR General Manager Yossi Mor said that the railway had handled more than 2 million passengers in October, bringing the total for the year to 18.5 million, a 15% increase on the same period in 2003. Around 1500 passengers/day used the US\$82m

branch to Ben Gurion airport which began running on October 10 (below), and Mor expected this to increase rapidly following the opening of the new airport terminal on November 2. The airport branch was formally opened by Finance Minister Benyamin Netanyahu on October 21." (R.G.I. Dec. 2004.)

(c). NOVEMBER 2004 STATISTICS.

From a press release of 05.12.2004 by Israel Railways Ltd.: 2.2 million passengers have used rail during November 2004; 20.5% more than in November 2003; from the beginning of 2004, 20.6 million used rail - that is 15.6% more than in the same period of 2003.

The rise in passenger traffic per lines was as follows:

Tel-Aviv - Haifa line: 467000- +11%; 4.6 million from the beginning of 2004.

Tel-Aviv - Rosh-Ha-Ayin - Kfar-Sava line: 177000- +43%; 1.5 million from the beginning of 2003.

Haifa - Nahariya line: 173000- +23%; 1.7 million from the beginning of 2004.

Tel-Aviv - Rishonim (Rishon-Le-Zion) line: 66000- +63%!! ; 555000 from the beginning of 2004.

Tel-Aviv - Ramla - Beit-Shemesh line: 52000- +44%; 476000 from the beginning of 2004.

The General Manager Mr. Yossi Mor, said: "This month we started operating the Ben-Gurion Airport Express (he said this because the new Terminal 3 was opened on 02.11.04, though rail operation to the airport station had started already on 10.10.04. A.G.), which carries 3000 passengers daily, and is an important milestone for the railways which have joined other countries in the world already enjoying such services".

He added: "We're nowadays working at full tempo on completing the rebuilding and upgrading of the old line to Jerusalem from Beit-Shemesh; the infrastructure works all along the line are almost completed; the infrastructure works of water, electricity, and communication at Malha station (the end of the line) are completed; works on platforms and hall are heading towards completion; works started on building a platform at the Zoo station, while laying tracks and installing signalling and communications are under way; opening is due in April 2005!!"

JANUARY 2005 STATISTICS.

From a press release of 07.02.2005 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

2.2 million passengers were carried during January 2005, 21% more than in January 2004.

The rise in passenger traffic as per lines was as following:

Tel-Aviv - Ashdod line: 350000 - +23%.

Tel-Aviv - Haifa line: 457000 - +10%.

Tel-Aviv - Rosh - Ha-Ayin - Kfar-Sava line: 174000- +39%.

Haifa - Nahariya line: 175000- +23%.

Tel-Aviv - Beit-Shemesh line: 56000- +51%.

Tel-Aviv - Rishon-Le-Zion (Rishonim) line: 66000- +55%.

Tel-Aviv - Netanya line: 221000- +28%.

Tel-Aviv - Beer-Sheva line: 260000- +7%.

The line to Ben-Gurion airport, which was opened on 10.10.04, (sic) carried 71000 in January 2005. Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Yossi Mor, who briefed the press with the mentioned data, added that "due to opening of new lines and stations during 2005, the traffic forecast is for 26.1 million."

(d). BUDGET AND CONSTRUCTION PLANS.

From R.G.I. December 2004: "Sharon boosts Israel Railways budget. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Transport Minister Meir Sheetrit announced on November 10 that they had agreed a budget of US\$ 910M for Israel Railways in 2005, compared to US\$ 546M in 2004 and half that in 2003.

Sharon has approved further investment for the rebuilding of the Tel Aviv - Jerusalem line and for construction of a new line to Beer Sheva via Ashkelon, Netivot and Ofakim. He also wants to see an early start on construction of the line to Eilat."

(e). JERUSALEM LINE DEVELOPMENTS.

In December tracklaying began EAST of the new Malha terminal station in Jerusalem, even though the section between Malha and the original Turkish station has been abandoned. This is to recoup time losses in laying track from the west into the new station and is designed for operational convenience while work continues on completing relaying of the upgraded Jerusalem line, and reflects the importance given to reo-

pening the line according to schedule. The isolated section of new trackwork east of Malha station will allow for shunting etc in the station area in the meantime. Track panels have been trucked by road to site (at no small cost) and, possibly, a loco or small motive power unit of some sort will also have to be moved up by road for operation on the new rail sections. By the end of November tracklaying along the line from the west had passed Bar Giyorra in the heart of the Judean mountains. One of Evyatar Reiter's photos, taken on 12/12/04, shows track being unloaded and laid on the east side of Malha station by Menofei Avi (Avi's Cranes). Track was laid first in the station area, and then gradually towards the station as well.

(f). DIMONA DEVELOPMENTS.

The city of Dimona, located 36 km south-east of Beer-Sheva on the line to the phosphate ores of the Tzin desert, and until recently suffering from neglect and a high rate of unemployment, is now facing an economic boom; the biggest amusement park in Israel is being built, and new factories are moving to the awakened city; regarding the railways, here there is a real change: the line from Beer-Sheva as well as the railway station and the loco depot are being entirely rebuilt, and a new factory for building and maintaining railway cars (at the moment-freight wagons only) is under construction in the station area; the revival of passenger services is expected in July 2005, when daily services between Tel-Aviv, Beer-Sheva, and Dimona will cover the distance in 80 minutes; the mayor of the city, Mr. Meir Cohen, said: "The trains will provide oxygen for the city; we'll be able to bring investors and offer them to build their factories here, on behalf also of the employees who can arrive by trains from any residential areas; Initially, we'll offer to operate six daily trains in each direction".

(g). DOUBLING TO BEERSHEBA.

An Israeli company Isotest, which specializes in providing laboratory and q/a services for infrastructures and construction, will participate in the \$27 million project of rebuilding and double-tracking the Kiryat-Gat-Beer-Sheva line; The company already participates in the construction of the third track of the Ayalon railway line; the line to Modi'in, and now also in the first LRV

line of Tel-Aviv, on the section between Petakh-Tikva and Bnei-Brak, where works of moving infrastructures for the building of the LRV line will soon be carried out at a cost of \$9 million.

(h). DOUBLING TO KFAR

SAVA.

Ramet, which is one of the biggest Israeli construction companies, recently won an Israel Railways tender for double-tracking the Tel-Aviv-Kfar-Sava line (including bridges), at a cost of \$4 million.

(i). TUNNELLING PROJECTS TO AVOID POLITICS.

In 'Ha'aretz', Fri. 31.12.2004, an article by Aluf Benn.

"Transportation Minister Meir Sheerit decided last week to approve plans for an express railway from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, two sections of which will pass through the West bank. With the approval, the plan will move into the operational phase.

The train will pass through two tunnels, parts of which are beyond the Green Line, with the first near the Latrun enclave, and the second near Mevasseret Zion. Several months ago, Attorney General Menahem Mazuz froze plans for the section between the Daniel Intersection and Jerusalem in order to research the legal implications of building tracks beyond the Green Line.

The subcommittee for roads of the government's Supreme Planning Council in Judea and Samaria submitted the investigation request to Mazuz, asking him to examine land rights, and determine whether building the tunnels within the territories violates international law.

The Justice Ministry said that Mazuz demanded that 'planning and operational steps be taken to allow the rail infrastructure of the State of Israel to be connected in the future to the rail infrastructure serving the residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip'. In this way, apparently, Mazuz sought to comply with international law requirements that any use of occupied territory should benefit its residents.

Deputy Attorney General Malkiel Blass announced to the coordinator of government activities in the Territories, Major General Yosef Mishlav, who is in charge of planning and construction in the West Bank, that planning procedures may be resumed.

The tunnel at Latrun will pass

under Canada Park, which was developed over the ruins of Palestinian villages destroyed after the 1967 Six Day War, and within the area on Israel's side of the separation fence. The tunnel near Mevasseret Zion will pass through only a very small section beyond the Green Line."

(j). DISABLED ACCESSIBILITY.

On 23.11.04, the most popular newspaper in Israel, "Yediot Acharonot"- "The Latest News"- dedicated a long article to accessibility of trains for the disabled; it started with some compliments to the railways, mentioning that "with an annual growth of 15% in passenger traffic, there is no doubt that this is the mode of transport most in demand! The service is becoming increasingly comfortable, quiet, and safe and people really enjoy it - with the exception of the disabled and bicycle riders!"

The article then interviewed some disabled persons who claimed, that, "they have to announce 24 hours in advance their intention to use the train, this in addition to the fact that not all the stations as well as the trains are equipped for disabled, and this in a country where terror events (as well as a rise in car accidents) unfortunately lead to a rise in the number of the disabled; They further claimed, with the assistance of Members of the Knesset, that they should have also the right to free tickets or at least reduced fares".

The second issue in the article was Bicycles; for several years the Greens have requested the railways to operate trains with space for this vehicle, as in Europe, adding that it will contribute to the environment, thanks to people using fewer cars to and from the stations; the Railways' spokesman, Mr. Benny Naor, explained that 24 hours notice in advance is according to the law, which only the government and the Parliament can change; However, the railways are doing their best with the Disabled; he added that due to insufficient capacity for regular passengers, who sometimes have to wait for the next train, adding more arrangements for Disabled would even worsen the situation; However, the railways are seriously checking all ways to improve the situation; Furthermore, the railways still operate more than 50 coaches which are more than 50 years old and cannot be adapted for the disabled; with the arrival of new rolling stock replacing

these obsolete coaches, the situation will be much improved.

Regarding the bicycles, here, he explained, the situation is even more complex; the special space needed requires also anchors and will cause longer journey times in addition to further reducing seating capacity, but again, the Railways Administration is well aware of the rising demand for carrying bicycles by train and is working on a proper solution, hopefully to be found soon. So far, the quotation from the newspaper.

Well, in this case the campaign for the Disabled was fruitful and quick: In a press release of 30.11.04, the Directorate of Israel Railways Ltd., has decided to shorten the time of advance notice from 24 to 12 hours, starting from 01.12.04!

The responses were better than the railways could ever imagine; all organizations have said that, "Good Will can always beat even the toughest law".

In Late February Aharon Gazit sent a further, modifying report:-

TRAVEL FOR THE DISABLED.

An initiative led by a member of the Knesset has brought in legislation according to which disabled people will have to announce to the railway administration only 6 hours prior to their planned journey - in order to prepare for them the special lift at those stations not yet equipped with standard lifts for disabled - compared with the 24 hours formerly required; a TV program on Channel 2 called "A Leader is needed" had adopted the proposed legislation as a mission to fulfill, and exposed it to the public, thus contributing to its acceptance; the media can be helpful sometimes!!

(k). PUBLIC SATISFACTION.

On the same day - 30.11.04 - the same newspaper ('Yediot Ahronot') published the results of a market survey made recently, regarding the public's level of satisfaction with public services; It is divided into 2 groups, the best in green and the worst in red; the highest available grade is 5; the results speak for the themselves:

The group of the best services:

Israel Railways Ltd.	- 3.96!
Postal Authority	- 3.85
El-Al (national airlines)	- 3.51
The Israeli Electricity Company	- 3.50
Bus companies	- 3.48
The group of the worst services:	
The Courts	- 2.88

The Police	- 2.78
The Taxation authorities	- 2.67
The Municipalities	- 2.67
The Employment services	- 2.41

(l). TERROR ATTACK AVOIDED.

From "Israel Line" 21.12.2004:- "Hezbollah Agent Arrested in the West Bank

The Israel Security Agency revealed today that it recently arrested a Hezbollah agent sent to establish a terror cell in the West Bank, Ha'aretz reported. The agent, Mohammed Abu Gweid, a Syrian-born Palestinian, allegedly planned to bomb train tracks and kidnap soldiers to exchange them for Palestinian prisoners.

Abu Gweid entered the Palestinian territories in 1998 and then worked in the Galilee up until the start of Palestinian violence in 2000. According to the probe, Abu Gweid underwent training by Palestinian terror group Abu Musa - a Fatah splinter group - in 2002. A year later he volunteered for the Iraqi army with which he fought against American forces. After the war, he traveled to Jordan where he was contacted by Hezbollah agents. Abu Gweid joined Hezbollah and was sent to Syria for training. He returned to Jordan and was ordered to establish several cells in the West Bank, including an Israeli Arab cell. In June 2004, he returned to the West Bank and was arrested in late August before he could establish any terror cells."

(m). CARMELIT TO CLOSE?

'Yediot Haifa' of 07.01.05 reported that it had been decided to close the Carmelit underground passenger cableway from 01.06.05. Some 600,000 passenger journeys are made each year, but the accumulated deficit had risen to about 200 million Shekels. The subsidy paid by Haifa City Council to the Carmelit fell by 50% from 2.8 million Shekels in 2003 to 1.4 million in 2004. The Chairman of the Carmelit Board was quoted as saying that there is an operating deficit of 1 Million Shekels (presumably per year) and that to reach financial stability it would be necessary to increase ridership by 100 per day. (This seems a small number.) The Carmelit Chairman had presented a recovery plan to include pay cuts and reductions in the number of employees. Closure would result in 17 people losing their jobs. Representations were being made to the Transport Minister for assistance, and a

member of the Haifa City Council thought that the municipality could find another million Shekels in its budget to rescue the Carmelit. All this may well be merely manoeuvres to increase the subsidy. Time will tell.

(n). MORE ON THE NEW BEER SHEBA NORTH / UNIVERSITA STATION.

This station, which is due to replace the original 1956 station nearby, should be completed by September 2005, at a cost of \$12.6M. The main finance is coming from the Railways but there is also a donation by Mr. Larry Goodman of the USA, who is giving a lot of money to the city's Municipality. The station will cover an area of 800 sq. m., and will be linked by a pedestrian subway to the Ramot D neighbourhood and to the High-Tech and Scientific Park of the University, both adjacent, while a roofed pedestrian footbridge of 320 m. will link the station with the campus. This will be financed partially by the Transport Ministry and partially by donations from the University of Mexico.

(o). JERUSALEM LINE PREDICTIONS.

The Chairman of the Israel Railways Ltd. Board, Mr. Moshe Leon, has told the press and the Jerusalem Forum for Business, in mid-January 2005, that the rebuilt/upgraded old line from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, due to be reopened in April 2005, will be covered by trains in 72 minutes, cutting 33 minutes from the period before the upgrading, though this will still be 22 minutes longer than the 50 minute journey time originally planned with the use of tilting trains. There will be stops at Lod, Ramla, Beit Shemesh, and the Biblical Zoo, which will be reopened together with Jerusalem's Malkha station.

(p). PRIVATE FINANCE.

For the first time in its history, Israel Railways will seek to raise money from the private financial markets. The Railways have recently surveyed finance grading companies in order to select a favoured bidder. This will be the 'Midrug Company', the manager of which is Mr. Gazit (no relation to Aharon, our informant!), who has explained that all public utilities are now using this system in order to raise necessary credits. The Railways will raise \$1.48 Billion from the private market out of the \$4.58 Billion Five-Year "New Deal" plan,

\$286 Million of which will be raised in 2005.

(q). EGGED MAINTENANCE CONTRACT.

The Egged company, the biggest bus company in Israel, has recently announced that, for the first time in its history, it may also become involved in the maintenance of railway diesel engines and gearboxes. The Company's Chairman, Mr. Erich Ratner, explained that Egged has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bombardier Transportation and IAL-Ramta for co-operation in the maintenance of these components, once the Railways' plan for privatising Maintenance Services is finalised. Egged has gained a lot of experience in maintaining diesel engines and ZF gears - the latter similar to those installed underfloor in IC3 dmu's. The company is already providing maintenance services for heavy vehicles of other companies. The Railways' General Manager, Mr. Yossi Mor, said that the Railways Administration had not yet made a final decision about the privatisation of Maintenance, and that the idea is still at the early stages of consideration. However, in the international tender issued for 84 Push/Pull trains, there is a clause which enables the railways to request a quotation for maintenance. In 2004 the Railways spent \$13.73 on maintenance.

The Israeli company which engineered the agreement is KGM, headed by the international entrepreneur Mr. Moshe Kornick.

(r). THESSALONIKI MEETING.

From a press release of 30/01/2005 by the Transport Ministry: "Transport Minister Mr. Meir Shitrit recently returned from Greece, where he met with transport ministers from Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine, Rumania, and Moldova, who all belong to the BSEC, as well as with the German Foreign Minister Mr. Yoschka Fischer, (who participated in a memorial ceremony to commemorate 60 years to the Greek Jewish holocaust) all taking place at Thessaloniki (where the biggest Jewish community in Greece existed until the outbreak of the 2nd world war).

As far as railways are concerned, Mr. Shitrit said that there is a great importance in the involvement of the EU in initiatives in the BSEC countries as well as in the Middle East, where the EU is showing a growing

interest in railway projects, such as extending the Hedjaz line (which is being revived) to Irbid and Amman in Jordan as well as even to Bagdad, a Palestinian rail link between the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria, and a rail link between the ports of Ashdod and Gaza. Mr. Shitrit added, that, the disengagement program on which he is responsible, will certainly contribute to the promotion of the project.

(s). PALESTINIAN LINK PROPOSAL.

Sybil Ehrlich notes:- "A small item in "Ma'ariv", February 24, 2005, says a railway line from Gaza to Ramallah via Tel Aviv has been proposed, as part of the disengagement plan. It would be possible to travel directly from Ashkelon to Ramallah but no getting off in Tel Aviv! Well, if it ever happens, that's one I won't be reporting from!! Note it says you could get on in Ashkelon but not in Tel Aviv..."

(t). ASHKELON LINE PROMISES.

From a press release of 02.02.2005 by the Transport Ministry: "Transport Minister Mr. Shitrit has briefed the press with the following: "Good news for the inhabitants of Ashkelon and the nearby area; from 09.10.05, and onwards, this city will also enjoy passenger rail services; initially, the service frequency will be 1 train an hour each direction between Tel-Aviv and Ashkelon, while from September 2005, upon completion of double-tracking between Ashdod and Ashkelon, the frequency will rise to 2 trains an hour each direction. The journey between Tel-Aviv and Ashkelon will take 45 minutes through Lod, while upon completion of the link between Rishon-Le-Zion West and Pleshet junction, time will be cut by at least 10 minutes, avoiding the present detour through Lod. The line project will cost \$53.4 million; An additional \$5.68 million are being spent on building a new station for passengers. Mr. Shitrit added that in a densely populated country like Israel, developing the rail infrastructure is of the greatest importance."

(u). A NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: From a press release of 16.02.2005 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

IR have decided to introduce changes in their organizational struc-

ture and to create two new departments.

The Directorate's Chairman Accountant Moshe Leon, has brought the new structure to the directorate's approval. The new structure means that the activities of Design and Development for the next five years ("New Deal"), will be separated from the existing infrastructures department, and will be concentrated in a new "5 Years Plan Management", which will be responsible for managing and implementing the ambitious plan, which includes planning of infrastructures, tracks and bridges, electrification, keeping plans to schedule, budgeting and quality control.

The second new department to be created will be called Business and Real Estate Department, which will deal with selling and renting the railways' real estates, aiming at achieving maximum profits, as well as realizing the railways' commercial potential, and increasing income, hand in hand with new initiatives and co-operations.

The organizational change is based on a managerial concept, according to which the railways will have three profit-making business sectors (departments): Passengers, Freight, and Business and real estates.

Mr. Moshe Leon said: "The changes which the railways are undergoing nowadays, will enable them to cope with the national and economic missions about to come; the railways are to be managed on purely business lines and to act according to commercial and economic criteria while improving quality and service; the railways are now in an era of rapid development, and the new structure will enable the implementation of the 5 Year Plan efficiently, to schedule, and under continuous control".

The railways' General Manager Mr. Yossi Mor added: "The organizational change is necessary and requires the commitment and involvement of all the railways workers; it is the continuation of the new way which we started a year ago, at the end of which the railways will realize their national destination".

The change was recommended by the Kav Proyekt (Project Line) company - an Israeli Management Consulting company - which will control the implementation of the change during the coming year.

(v). FREE TRAVEL FOR SOME

COMMUTERS.

The Municipality of Herzliyya has started this week providing free transportation services for the high-tech employees working at the city's industrial zone, to and from the railway station each morning, between 07.00 and 09.30 at a cost of \$16,000. This is a three-month trial.

(w). TARIFF CHANGES AND LEGISLATION.

The Knesset's Economics Committee approved at the end of February proposed legislation, whereby the railways and public transport operators would be committed to introducing a combined ticket for intercity rail journeys and urban transport; the authority to fix the tariffs will be reserved for the Transport Minister.

Mrs. Julia Maroz, who is responsible for Transportation at the Finance Ministry, said that "It is important to introduce a common infrastructure for all public transport tariffs so as to bring them under the law of inspection on products and services; the combined ticket will encourage demands for public transport services and reduce tariffs."

The Railways' representative, Chief Economist Mr. Eli Dalitzky, who supported the legislation, requested at the same time the addition of a commitment by the Transport Ministry to discuss the subject with the railways; the committee rejected this, claiming that there is no legal precedent for the Transport Minister to discuss the subject with public transport operators; the committee accepted the railways' request to introduce inspection-free freight tariffs.

(x). IC3 ARRIVALS.

Two sets of refurbished second-hand three-car IC3 sets from Sweden arrived at Qishon port aboard the VIKINGLAND on Sunday 27/2/05. These are IR sets numbers 42 and 43, previously SJ 1385 and 1386 respectively.

Set No. 42 arrived on 02.03.2005 at 11:37 at Haifa Depot.

Set No. 43 arrived on 28.02.2005 at 17:02 at Haifa Depot.

(Thanks to Evyatar Reiter for these details, and also for several photos used in this issue).

(y). PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY.

One of the two most popular

newspapers in Israel, 'Yedioth-Akharonot' ('Latest News'), made a survey in the last week of February to find out the level of satisfaction regarding the railways' services.

The article, named "A view from the platform", mentioned 20 stations, and 10 trains.

The stations of Lod, Rehovot, Rishonim (Rishon-Le-Zion), and Ben-Gurion airport received the mark of 'Very Good'; the stations of Hertzliya, Nahariya, Kiryat-Motzkin, Kiryat-Gat, Kfar-Sava Sokolov, and Ashdod, received the mark 'Good'; the stations of Beer-Sheva Central, Bnei-Brak, and Haifa Lev-Hamifratz received the mark 'Medium'; the stations of Tel-Aviv University, Haifa-Hof-Hacarmel, Haifa-Bat-Galim, Petakh Tikva-Sgula, Tel-Aviv Hashalom, Yavne, and Haifa-Hutzot-Hamifratz, received the mark 'Needs to be Improved'.

The Bombardier-built double-deck trains and IC3 dms received the mark of 'Very Good', while a train of refurbished aging cars was described as one that must be scrapped. Among the trains, one was 11 minutes late at the station of Yavne, and 4 trains at different stations were 2 minutes late, but on this point of view the general impression was positive.

(z). THEFT OF OLD JEZREEL VALLEY TRACKS!

By Eli Ashkenazi. From "Ha'aretz" of 07/03/2005.

"A 25-year-old Julis man was arrested yesterday morning in possession of iron rails that once were part of the Jezreel Valley railroad from Haifa to Damascus. The suspect was arrested at the Tzemach intersection by Tiberias police volunteers, and police suspect that the rails were stolen from the old Tzemach railroad station.

The alleged theft is part of a series of thefts of the remains of the historic railroad line. Israel Rail officials say there is a rising tide of thefts from the old railroad line, in Afula, Beit She'an and now Tzemach. A few months ago, the iron wheels of some refurbished Jezreel Valley railroad cars were stolen from the old railroad station at Kfar Yehoshua. The wheels were sawed off the axles of the carriages, which had been restored over many years of work. Some were found in a junk heap in the Acre Ironworks plants, shortly after they disappeared, but the damage done to the carriages is irreparable. The Council for the Preservation of Buildings and Other Sites is calling it "a worrisome phe-

nomenon, it's a real 'Iron Rush.'" The value of a ton of iron in the stolen metals market can reach hundreds of shekels, police said yesterday.

Two weeks ago, Beit She'an police caught two residents of Yarka with rails from the Jezreel Valley train line. A day later, Kiryat Tivon patrolmen caught two Acre men with pieces of the railroad line, which used to pass the town. Unlike the Kfar Yehoshua train station, which has been restored as a historic site, the Tzemach train station has not been restored, and if not for the alert volunteers, the theft might have gone unnoticed for some time. The station is one of eight Turkish-era stations built on the rail line that went from Damascus to Haifa."

68:5.

I. R. TENDERS.

(i). HN/RS/10/04. A framework agreement for manufacture and supply of angles for guard rails on bridges.

The contract is for 12 months with an optional extension of up to 48 additional months. Latest bidding date: 29.12.2004.

(ii). HN/KB/25/04. A framework agreement for implementing Flash Butt Welds of rails.

The contract is for 12 months with an optional extension of up to 48 additional months. Latest bidding date: 05.01.2005.

(iii). BN/KB/33/04. Building of Refuelling Stands at the Lod railway depot.

Works include: building the refuelling stands with control systems, electrical boards, PLC systems, instrumentation, earthworks, concrete casting, frames, dismantling, fuel pipes, and electricity. Time of implementation: 3 months. Latest bidding date: 27.12.2004.

(iv). MC/KB/06/04. Building of 10 small Refuelling Stands at different railway sites, with an option for 5 additional stands within 12 months from works start.

Time of implementation: 3 months. Latest bidding date: 14.12.2004.

(v). HN/KB/40/04. A framework agreement for maintenance and rebuilding of Railway Bridges and Culverts, and rebuilding of tracks at Level Crossings.

The contract is for 18 months with an optional extension of up to 60 additional months. Latest bidding date: 18.01.2005.

(vi). BN/KB/03/05. Upgrading Tel Aviv Hashalom station.

Time for implementation: 4 months. Bids by 08.02.2005.

(vii). HN/KB/02/05. Fast link to Jerusalem: A1 Alignment. Construction of six bridges and additional infrastructure works on section A2.

Time for implementation: 10 months. Last bids by 10.02.2005.

(viii). TM/KB/01/05. Framework agreement for manufacture and supply of buffer stops made from used rails.

Works include: loading of track panels onto lorries with cranes and transporting them to the manufacturer's facilities; manufacturing and painting of the buffer stops, and returning them to the various railway stations. The contract is for 24 months with an option for extension for up to an additional 24 months. Bids by 19.01.2005.

(ix). BN/KB/02/05. Rebuilding the Parking Area at Atlit Station.

To include: concrete works, preparation and dismantling, earthworks, roadbeds and infrastructures, asphaltting, edging stones, and drainage.

Time for implementation: 2 months. Bids by 02.01.2005.

(x). MC/SR/02/05. Providing repair services for diesel engine heads of IC3 dms.

The contract is for 24 months with an option for extension of up to 24 additional months.

(xi). TK/SR/01/05. Providing maintenance and installation services at signalling, electricity and communications facilities. Works include services also at level crossing facilities. The contract is for 12 months with an option for extension of up to additional 36 months. Bids by 2 0 . 0 1 . 2 0 0 5 .

(xii). CA/SR/06/05. Provisison of operational car leasing services for the railways, including maintenance. The contract is for 36 months with an option for extension of up to additional 36 months as well as additional services. Last bids: 14.02.2005.

(xiii). HN/KB/01/05. Infrastructure works for building the new line between Beer Sheva and Ashkelon, section A between Beer Sheva and Netivot. Works include the following structures:

02: Track infrastructure works; 03. Construction works for Culverts and retaining walls; 04: Bridge No. A2; 05: Agricultural underbridges UAG1 and UAG 2; 06. Security building. Time for implementation: 14 months. Bids by 14.02.2005.

(Note: This line is of especial importance, since it will create a fast link between Netivot, Ofakim and Sderot, with Beer Sheva, Ashkelon and Tel Aviv, as well as forming an additional route between Beer Sheva and Tel-Aviv.)

(xiv). MS/RC/2004/22. Introducing a trolley with drinks and kosher food at Beer Sheva Central Station.

MS/RC/2004/25. Introducing a trolley with drinks and kosher food at Rishonim station.

Each contract is for 36 months; last bids by 06.01.2005.

(xv). HN/KB/08/04. Infrastructure works for double-tracking and upgrading the Naan - Beer Sheva line, section 5 between Km. 59.700 and Km. 67.525.

Works include: Structures: 01: Infrastructure works; 02-06, various railway bridges; 07 Security buildings; 08 - Option - laying of monoblock type concrete sleepers and rails along the alignment.

Time for implementation: 8 months. Last bids by 13.01.2005.

(xvi). HN/KB/41/04. Building the Rishon leZion West - Ashdod line, the section between Holot road interchange and Yavne.

Time for implementation: 10 months; bids by 07.02.2005.

(Note - this is a very important link; when completed, it will enable a much faster service between Tel Aviv, Ashdod and Ashkelon, avoiding the need to use the inadequate line through Lod.)

(xvii). BN/KB/31/04. Demolishing two storage sheds at Atlit station.

Works include: Dismantling, demolishing, cutting structures, and waste removal. Time for implementation: 45 days. [This presumably refers to the two former PR corrugated-iron warehouses which,

together with the body of a PR steel van, have stood on the west side of the station for decades. WLR.]

Bids by 17.01.2005.

(xviii). BN/KB/01/05. Construction of a control building at Tel Barukh Junction (1.5km. north of Tel Aviv University station). To include: Frame-

works, finishing, electricity and air conditioning systems, development works. The project includes two structures:- 01: control building, 02: Access road. Time for implementation: 6 months. Last bids by 13.01.2005.

(xix). HN/KB/08/05. Construction of the Tel Aviv - Rishon LeZion West line, section Wolfsohn - Yoseftahl.

Time for implementation: 8 months. Bids by 16.02.2005.

(xx). HD/RC/01/04. Supply and Installation of a Driving Simulator for Israel Railways.

(An international tender). This is a turnkey project for the manufacture, supply, installation, assembly, technical support and maintenance of a new driving simulator, able to represent a JT42BW or JT42CW diesel-electric locomotive.

Last bids by 15.02.2005.

(xxi). HN/KB/38/04. Construction of the new line between Akko and Carmiel (Western Galilee) section km. 4.000 to km. 9.250.

Implementation, 12 months. Bids by 20.01.2005.

(xxii). MS/RC/2004/24. Operating special taxi services to and from Akko station.

MS/RC/2004/26. Operating special taxi services to and from Kiryat-Gat station.

MS/RC/2004/27. Operating special taxi services to and from Netanya station.

Each contract is for 12 months with an option for extension by up to an additional 24 months. Last bids by 30.12.2004.

(xxiii). MS/RC/2005/5. Operating special taxi services to and from Jerusalem Malkha station.

MS/RC/2005/6. Operating special taxi services to and from Ashkelon station.

MS/RC/2005/7. Operating special taxi services to and from Beit-Shemesh station.

MS/RC/2005/8. Operating special taxi services to and from Kfar-Sava-Nordau station.

MS/RC/2005/9. Operating special taxi services to and from Ashdod-Ad-Halom station.

The contract for each tender is 12 months with an option for extension of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 24.02.2005.

(xxiv). MS/RC/2005/1. Allowance for operating a food store at Akko station.

The contract is for 12 months with an option for extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 24.02.2005.

(xxv). MS/RC/2005/2. Introducing ATMs (cash machines) at railway stations.

The contract is for 60 months. Latest bidding date: 10.03.2005.

(xxvi). MS/RC/2005/3. Introducing a trolley with drinks and kosher food at Jerusalem Malkha station.

MS/RC/2005/4. Introducing a trolley with drinks and kosher food at Ashkelon station.

The contract for each tender is for 12 months with an option for extension of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 03.03.2005.

(xxvii). CA/SR/06/05. Providing of operational Car Leasing services for the railways including maintenance.

The contract is for 36 months with an option for extension of up to additional 36 months as well as additional kinds of services. Latest bidding date: extended to 21.02.2005.

(xxviii). HN/RC/01/05. Supply and installation of racks for a main Store at Lod station.

Latest bidding date: 02.03.2005.

(xxix). MC/KB/01/05. Frame agreement for replacing carpets and strengthening floors on Passenger Coaches.

The contract is for 12 months with an option for extension of up to additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 23.02.2005.

(xxx). HN/RC/01/05. For the Manufacture and Supply of Various Types of Turnouts for Standard Gauge Tracks. For "an unlimited quantity" over a period of 5 years, bids by 14.04.2005.

(xxxi). HN/KB/10/05. Infrastructure for tracks on the Rishon-Le-Zion - Bnei-Darom section C - Pleshet tri-

angle (the junction leading to the port of Ashdod).

The project includes the following structures:

Structure 01- Infrastructure works for tracks and communication.

Structure 02- Bridge No.1.

Structure 03- Bridge No. 2.

Structure 04- Supporting walls.

Structure 05- Culverts and drainage.

Structure 06- A bridge over Yavne river.

Structure 07- Supporting walls and culverts.

Structure 08- Infrastructure works for tracks and communication.

Structure 09- Regulation works.

Time of implementation: 10 months.

Latest bidding date: 20.03.2005.

Note: this section is the last one needed to create the long awaited direct link between Tel-Aviv, Ashdod, and Ashkelon, avoiding the inadequate long detour through Lod.

(xxxii). HN/KB/42/04. Construction of the Rotmann road bridge over the railway line at Hadera West.

Works include: earthworks, cast concrete, sealing, electricity, frames, and various development works. Time of implementation: 6 months. Latest bidding date: 21.03.2005.

(Note: this bridge is of special importance; the road crosses near the railway station and is often being closed, causing severe traffic bottlenecks; the construction of this bridge will put an end to the problem.)

(xxxiii). BT/SR/13/05. Guarding and security services at Haifa-East station; Shemen Beach (Haifa-East) marshalling yard; and Kishon Works.

The contract is for 12 months with an option for extension of up to additional 36 months.

Latest bidding date: 17.03.2005.

(xxxiv). MS/RC/2005/1. Introducing automatic sale machines for cellular PRE-PAID dialling/air time cards at railway stations.

The contract is for 12 months; the Railway administration reserve for themselves the right to extend it up to additional 24 months.

Latest bidding date: 17.03.2005.

(xxxv). HN/KB/15/05. Double-tracking and upgrading the existing line section Ashkelon - Yad-Mordekhay (grade separations).

Works include: earthworks, bridges,

concrete, sealing, asphalt, roadbeds, metal frames, piles, and the following structures:

Structure 01- roads building.

Structure 02- bridges and supporting walls.

Structure 03- Different works.

Implementation time: 10 months. Latest bidding date: 28.03.2005.

68:6. LIGHT RAIL NEWS.



A. JERUSALEM.

(i). From a press release of 24.11.2004 by Jerusalem Mass Transit System Project:

The District Committee of Planning and Building approved yesterday (23.11.04) the building of a Park-and-Ride facility at the French Hill (Northern part of the 1st LRV line).

With a capacity for 730 cars, it will be built at the foot of a large LRV station to be built at the road junction at the top of the descent towards the Ramot neighborhood; it will be partially underground, while the other part in the open will be integrated with the landscape; additionally, many trees will be planted to further integration with the area's natural afforestation.

The parking facility is intended to enable the residents of Northern Jerusalem, as well as those coming to the city from road No. 443 (from Modi'in), Begin Road (entrance tunnels), and the planned road No. 9, to use it, and so to make all their arrangements in the city by using the LRV as well as the new planned buses system.

Along the LRV alignment, (13.8 km. from Pisgat Zeev to Mount Hertzl), three additional Park-and-Ride facilities are planned: at Mount Hertzl; Givat-Ha-Takhmoshet (Ammunition Hill); and between Pisgat Ze'ev and the road to Shuafat.

The project designers hope that the 4 parking facilities will convince many car owners to prefer the use of LRV rather than wasting hours in the bottlenecks at the entrances to

the city as well as in the city centre.

The French Hill Park-and-Ride will have elevators bringing the passengers directly from the parking area to the LRV's platform; payment will be by smart cards combining parking + journey by LRV; this will give full preference for LRV users.

The parking facilities are designed and built by Jerusalem Mass Transit System Project and the Municipality, and financed by the Transport Ministry and the Municipality. Works are due to start once receiving approval from the Urban Building Plan Committee.

Computer images of the French Hill park-and-ride, by e-mail.

(ii). A lengthy report from Jeremiah Goldman has been received, courtesy of Aharon Gazit (the English has been edited slightly but remains a different style):-

Subject: Jerusalem Mass Transit System Project - Facts & Figures:

Background:

The Mass Transit System being constructed in Jerusalem is the most advanced in Israel; the solutions it contains will create the base for the development and prosperity of the city, while giving a distinctive preference to the use of modern and efficient public transport.

The system contains a variety of transport means suitable for the range of uses and the urban structure:

- High capacity facilities - like LRV lines and advanced bus routes.
- Public transport lanes.
- Routes feeding from the outer neighborhoods to the trunk routes.
- Park-and-Ride facilities.
- Ring roads around the city and around the city centre.
- New traffic and parking arrangement at the city centre.

These arrangements will reduce car traffic, noise and air pollution, and return life, culture, and business to the centre.

Transportation Master Plan Team:

The team is active within "The Association For Planning, Design, and Preservation of Jerusalem", which itself belongs to the city's Municipality; the team is working in co-ordination with the Transport Ministry and other ministries.

The team contains an administrative and professional staff, as well as a "missionary project manage-

ment", which acts to co-ordinate, plan, and control the designers, professional consultants, and implementation companies, both local and international.

Planning and Implementation:

The team leads the planning stages of all the mass transit components and the long term planning of the transportation system of the city, according to the city development and the foreseen demands; the team is further assisting the Transport Ministry and the municipality in implementing the B.O.T. tender. Simultaneously, the team updates the network of LRV and advanced buses which will be needed in the coming decades.

The Urban Company for Developing the city – "Moriya":

The leading factor in carrying out all infrastructure works which are under the responsibility of the government and the municipality, in order to prepare the public transport lanes and the city streets towards the urban upgrading.

The Company for Developing the city center- Eden":

Responsible for upgrading the public areas, including: pedestrian areas, squares, rebuilding of house fronts and sidewalk edges, etc.

Infrastructures which have been built, replaced, and upgraded include water pipes, electricity, telecom, drainage and cables, roads, sidewalks, bus stops, and "park-and-ride" facilities.

Jaffa Street will become a pedestrian area along its full alignment, including 5000 trees which are to be planted.

The alignment of the 1st LRV line- 13.8 km.

From the north - Pisgat Zeev central and east, through Ramalla, French Hill junction, Ammunition Hill, the urban road No. 1 - outskirts of Maalot Daphna, Sheikh Jarakh, Morasha, Beit-Israel, Nablus Gate, The New Gate/ the Franciscan Hospital, the IDF Square (Jaffa Gate), Jaffa Street - Municipality/Safra Square, Zion Square, King George, the Davidka Square, Makhane-Yehuda market, Central Bus Station and Binyanei haOoma, the "strings bridge" (suspension bridge) over the main western entrance to the city, Herzl Ave – Kiryat Moshe, Beit-Ha-Kerem and Yefe-Nof, Shaarei-Tzedek hospital, Mount Herzl cemetery, Yad-

VaShem (Holocaust Memorial), and the top of Mount Herzl.

Extensions planned for the 1st line - in design and preferences:

In the north: up to Neve-Yaakov - 2.7 km.

In the south: up to Hadassa Ein-Kerem hospital - 7.0 km.

Status of implementation:

Most of the infrastructure works for preparing the alignment and creating the LRV line are completed, with the exception of building the "rope bridge" at the city's western entrance, as well as lowering the IDF Square to be adapted for LRV traffic.

In progress are the works of building the "internal ring road" around the city center, "Park-and-Ride" facilities at the French Hill, Ammunition Hill, and at Mount Herzl, as well as building the Yekutiel Adam bridge at Pisgat Zeev.

The Concessionaire and the Concession for the LRV B.O.T.

The winning concessionaire is City-Pass Group, consisting of:

Alstom Transport from France.

Connex of Veolia group from France.

Ashtrom - the Israeli construction company.

Polar - the Israeli investments group.

Harel - the Israeli insurance company.

The concession contract between the State of Israel and City-Pass for 30 years B.O.T. of the first line has been signed; the concessionaire has succeeded in raising \$295 million for closing the deal.

City-Pass prepares itself for building the LRV system:

During 2005, Alstom will start production at its European plant of the 23 Citadis trains; in Jerusalem will start the laying of grooved rails along the alignment, building the electrical feeding network, control and maintenance center, 24 passengers stations, signalling system, electronic control and information centre, operational and smart ticketing system, and the beginning of operating the LRV network in co-ordination with the new public transport of the city.

The works are estimated at 36 months; the first train should be running at the end of 2007.

An advanced buses lane H.G.B.: 9 km

From the southeast of the city- Hebron Road, Gilo, Har-Khoma, Talpiot, Armon-Hanaziv, Geulim, Abu-Tor, the Khan Theatre, the Bell Garden and Yemin-Moshe, Keren Hayesod Str.- Paris Square, the big synagogue- Shlomo Hall, The Jewish Agency's buildings, the Independence Garden, King George Str., Jaffa Str. Corner, Bikur-Kholim hospital - Strauss Str.-Union's building, Shabbat Square- Mea-Shearim-Geula, Yeheskel Str.- Bukharian neighborhood, Shmuel Hanavi Str., Bar-Ilan junction, Ramot road- Ezrat-Tora neighborhood, Zikhron-Moshe and outskirts of enlarged Sanhedriya neighbourhood, up to high-tech industrial area Har-Khozvim en-route to Ramot neighbourhood.

Implementation status:

The infrastructure works for preparing the advanced buses lane are well underway; works will take place from both ends towards city center; works currently take place at Hebron Road and Keren Hayesod Str., and will start soon at Shmuel Hanavi Str.

New advanced buses:

Parallel to carrying out infrastructure works, the Transport Ministry and the Project Management are checking the idea of purchasing new low-floor buses, planning new stations, and creating a computerized information system for passengers.

Improvements at the central ultra-orthodox Jewish area.

The Municipality is checking implementation of projects to improve visually and functionally the areas of Shabbat Square, as well as the neighbourhoods of Geula and Mea-Shearim, which are the core of ultra-orthodox Jewish people in the city.

The time for carrying out the H.G.B. lane - 36 months.

Anticipated operating start - the end of 2006.

Greater Jerusalem Metropolitan Area- Data.

Year- 2000 population: 680,000 employees - 216,400

Car ownership (private car for 1000) -172. Daily car entrances at morning rush-hour- 10,325 (all sorts of vehicles)

Year- 2020 estimated population: 942,500 employees- 391,600 Daily car entrances at morning rush-hour- 22,395 (all sorts of vehicles)

For the first time in Israel, a project of this size is taking place with a whole involvement with the community, which includes co-ordination with all neighbourhood managers, the Green activists, activating a committed community-social "check-list" prior to implementing works at residential areas, activating community members along the alignment and providing unique solutions, and talks with as well as providing special solutions for population of disability and of special needs.

Main activities- planned schedule:
Start of tracks laying by the concessionaire - mid 2005.
Beginning of LRV vehicles production at France - January 2006.
Arrival of the first LRV train - January 2007.
Opening the first LRV line - towards the end of 2007.

Costs and investments in the Jerusalem Mass Transit System Project:
First LRV line + advanced buses lane- \$738 million.
Of which \$323 million to be spent on works by the public sector. City-Pass works- \$415 million.

B. TEL-AVIV

Solel-Boneh, one of Israel's biggest construction companies, has recently won the tender for moving infrastructures at Petakh-Tikva, in preparation for building the 1st line (Red Line) at this section; it will cost \$14.4 million, and includes a sunken passage 600 metres long, for initial use by pedestrians, later to be used by the LRV between HaShakham (granite) and Orlov Streets.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). THE MONUMENT AT HAIFA EAST.

From Paul Cotterell: "In 38:12 I mentioned a meeting I'd had with Klaus Kreiser who was visiting Israel for research into surviving Ottoman period monuments, including the famous HR one at Haifa East station. A recent browse through the internet showed that his work has now been published and can be viewed under the title "Klaus Kreiser. Public Monuments in Turkey and Egypt, 1840-1916". (It is probably best to search for this title rather than give the inordinately long web address). I quote a couple of extracts from this which give pause for thought.

Kreiser noted that the inscription on the monument reads: "Inscribed in 1319/20 April 1901-9 April 1902" [sic] He also noted that it was "constructed immediately after the transfer of the Haifa - Damascus railway from a private company to Ottoman hands (March 1902)". He noted his sources for this information in a footnote: "David Kushner, 'The Haifa Damascus Railway: The British Phase, 1890-1902', in Decision Making and Change in the Ottoman Empire, ed. Caesar E. Farah (Kirksville, Mo., 1993): 193-213; Ufuk Gulsöy, Hicaz Demiryolu (Istanbul, 1994), p.130".

From the above it would seem that the monument was erected as early as April 1902. If so, it could well mean that we need to revise our estimates of certain not unimportant dates (eg. the caption to Plate 12 in my book). It has been generally agreed that the official opening ceremony of Haifa (East) station, and presumably the line itself, was in 1905 - almost certainly on 1st September which was the accession anniversary of Sultan Abdul Hamid 2. But has anyone actually seen documentary confirmation for 1905? It would be nice to see some real evidence of this in what is believed (or merely supposed perhaps) to be the centenary year of Haifa East station and The Valley Railway.

I have not heard of David Kushner before. The 'Haifa-Damascus Railway' would be the British owned Syrian-Ottoman Railway Company."

(b). THE LAST HR TRAIN?

From Paul:- "The question of the date of the very last train to travel over The Valley Railway has occupied minds for many a long year and led to some interesting discussions. File Kaf/4/6 in the IRM Archives may provide a conclusion. The file is entitled "Operating the Railway in Times of Emergency - Narrow Gauge". There had been numerous complaints and requests for the line to be reopened and 5000 Lirots were spent on reconditioning the track which was made ready by 20th August 1951. This was a lot of money back then. The Transport Ministry advertised the reopening but, in the event, nobody took advantage of it despite all the previous local demands, much to the disgust of those who had done the work and paid for it. The only subsequent use made of the line, it seems, was sometime between August and November 1951 when a special train was run (presumably to Afula though it is not stated) for "army manoeuvres". Further information will be welcome."

(c). NOTES ON THE D.G.E.G. 2004 TRIP.

From Paul: "Glad to see that DGEG appear to have enjoyed their trips on the Holy Land Railways. I hope Tomas won't mind a few remarks on his extensive report in 67:8.

(1). The new large exhibits museum building is, indeed, the renovated former Hedjaz Railway loco shed, but it was not built in 1903. In fact, this is the SECOND HR loco shed at Haifa East. I do not have a precise date for its completion; however an aerial photo taken in October 1918 shows it with four walls standing, but still without a roof - it appears obvious that the British finished off the work. This photo also shows a partially built extension to the west end of the second HR shed, ie. where the main museum entrance and lawn are now situated. For some reason this extension was not proceeded with and was eventually demolished. The first HR loco shed at Haifa was situated at what was then the end of track (see Plate 35 in Hedjaz Railway - the second loco shed was later built out of picture at right just across the tracks), and this first shed did date from about 1903. This first loco shed, together with an adjacent small workshop and carriage shed, had already

disappeared by the time of that aerial photo taken towards the end of 1918. It is not known when or why this first shed and accompanying facilities were removed.

(2). The "four-axle steam-loco tender" at Qishon Workshops is from an ex-P Class 4-6-0, and there is another in the north yard of the Works. They are from PR Nos.60 and 62. Following scrapping of the locos themselves the two tenders were loaded with concrete blocks and used for bridge testing.

(3). The small Deutz 60cm gauge diesel noted at Ein Shemer is 57082 of 1960. It is now much altered from its original appearance as seen in 46:13, having been rebuilt for use on the Rakevet HaAlonim (Oaks Railway) at the kibbutz.

(d). BAGDADBAHN BOOK.

For those interested, the book by Peter Heigl: "Schotter für die Wüste: Die Bagdadbahn und ihre deutschen Bauingenieure" - ("Ballast in the Desert - the Bagdad Railway and its German Engineers") - pub. Amberg 2004, 172 pp., 24x22cm., many photos, and based on the work for the exhibition at the Verkehrsmuseum in Nürnberg - is available from "Buchhandlung Otto Slezak, Wiedner Hauptstrasse 42, A-1040, Wien, Austria." E-mail: verlag.slezak@aon.at. Price is 17.80 Euros (plus p&p).

(e). SYRIAN - OTTOMAN RAILWAY.

Paul has found a map in an ancient book "Le Mont Thabor, Notices Historiques et Descriptives, par le P. Barnabé, d'Alsace, O.F.M., Missionnaire apostolique", which is accompanied by a "Carte géographique, en quatre couleurs, des environs du Thabor", published by J. Mersch of Paris, 1900. Interesting is that the map shows a railway 'under construction' - this can only be the ill-fated scheme for the standard-gauge Syrian-Ottoman Railway, shown as commencing at Haifa, and following essentially the route which the narrow-gauge Rakevet HaEmek later followed, i.e. generally south-east to Beit Shean and then curving sharply north-east towards the Sea of Galilee. It is known the Turks used the earthworks that had been completed earlier for their narrow-gauge line.

(f). DAVID'S CITADEL MODEL RAILWAY.

Walter Zanger writes - "I was doing a shift in the Police on Shabbat, walking the Old City, which is my beat. Stopped into the David's Tower Museum at Jaffa Gate, because they have a clean loo. My partner was a bedouin from the Galilee who was curious about things, so I took him downstairs to see that 19th century model of Jerusalem. That was where I saw a door open that had always been closed. Found a guy inside (Russian I think, but maybe not) working on a huge model railway. The room must have been 5-6 metres on a side and this table took up most of it. There were tracks up and down and around and over & under; and bridges, tunnels, junctions and switches, lights, signals, and god-knows what else. 4-5 locos going at any one time, etc.

I asked if this was the Model RR club, and he said no, the Museum had ordered it, that he was working now on landscaping and scenery, mountains, tunnels, etc and that it would open to the public in the spring."

(We should note that a further account appeared in Walter's own regular and entertaining newsletter "From Jerusalem" - Feb. 2005, Vol. 10 No. 10. Anyone interested in subscribing to Walter Zanger's personal perspectives on Israeli events, as a tour guide, policeman and raconteur, can contact him at walterz@netvision.net.il.)

(g). ANONYMITY AT KFAR CHABAD/HABBAD.

Paul asks:- "Perhaps someone can provide an answer to a query. Why does Kfar Habbad station not have any platform name signs? Several journeys past the station in December failed to reveal a name anywhere. Enquiries to the IR Spokesman/PRO and elsewhere have not provided a solution."

(h). S.S. THISTLEGORM.. (see 23:6:(d), 28:20.)

A brief article in the Jan./Feb. 2005 issue of "Legion", the magazine of the Royal British Legion (for veterans of the armed services) describes how "Diver Steve Wood took time to remember those who lost their lives on the WWII armed merchant ship SS 'Thistlegorm' during a dive safari in the Red Sea...he .. placed a poppy cross on the wreck... which was sunk by enemy aircraft on 6 October 1941,

to honour all who lost their lives on the vessel and to make other divers aware of the ship's tragic history. Although the ship, which was discovered in 1955, was sunk on active service during World War II, it is not considered an official war grave."

(i). A RAILWAY TOUR OF IRAN!!

Yes, it sounds incredible, but Tomas Meyer-Eppler of the DGEG is organising one.

Details are: "Secret Iran. 5th. - 18th. October 2005.

A study tour in day- and night trains of the Islamic Republic of Iran State Railways. This will be the very first group organised tour for railway enthusiasts! We shall visit the towns of Tehran, Karadj, Tabriz, Ghom, Arak, Isfahan, Yazd, Mashhad and Shahrood, and the depots or workshops there. Direct flight from Frankfurt/Main. Group leader: Tomas Meyer-Eppler.

Info / Booking: DGEG Bahnen & Reisen Bochum AG, Postfach 10 20 45, 47410 Moers; Fax : +49 2841 56012; E-Mail: ; Internet: www.dgeg.de

(j). JAFFA STATION.

Re 66:4:e. It seems that work on renovating Jaffa station did not last long. When Chen Melling visited in January 2005 there was no sign of any recent activity or evidence of repairs, but at least the place was well fenced off. Chen managed to get inside by prior arrangement to have a good look round.

(k). TURKISH DIESEL TOUR - POSTPONED.

Jim Colley writes, "Unfortunately we have had to cancel the tour due to TCDD sending us a new itinerary superceding their "final" itinerary which removed the interesting lines of the tour and two types of locos.I am trying to find out why this sudden change and if I can get them to revert back to their own original itinerary I will reschedule sometime in the autumn.What a fiasco! I will keep you informed of developments."

(l). POLITICAL PROPOSAL.

Frank Adam wrote at the end of February:- "Meanwhile as Condoleezza Rice for the US and Benedetta Ferrero Waldner for the EU have been offering the PA aid by the \$ 300 millions each, I have been insolent enough to write to Jack Straw and Tony Blair apropos their conference on Palestine next week to sug-

Jerusalem Line progress

gest that a 5- or 20-million slice of that U money will be well spent retracking the Rafah - Ashkelon; and Rosh Ha Ayin - Tulkarm - Nablus & Jenin links; and then new build Kiryat Gat - Idna if not Hebron all of which will provide a useful [relatively] cheap result for their efforts that should please both: The Arabs who want at least social contiguity; and the Israelis who want to keep the security problem of travelling Arabs out of their hair..... Has anybody investigated what sort of traffic at what density or TEU flows would be available or needed to make it worthwhile retracking Kantara - Gaza and Haifa - Beirut?

(m). BLOWING UP HAIFA EAST IN 1946.

Yair Safran of the Haifa Historical Society dropped by the Railway Museum recently and related some ironic details about the sabotage of Haifa East station on 20th September 1946. Yair had tracked down and interviewed a surviving Etzel (Irgun Tzva Le'umi) veteran who had taken part in the raid. Etzel had two barrels of explosives hidden away at Qiryat Haim which they intended to lash together and place under the hull of a ship in Haifa harbour as makeshift limpet mines. However, the Haganah (or perhaps it was the Palmach - one or other of the mainstream Jewish groups anyway) found out about this plan and confiscated one of the barrels for their own purposes, leaving Etzel to figure out what to do with the other. This was loaded onto a lorry and driven into Haifa, but on arrival at the station it was not possible to take it into the building because the parking space outside was occupied. The lorry was driven around town for a while, but on return to the station it was again found impossible to offload the explosives. Once more a trip was made through the streets of Haifa, and on the third attempt the saboteurs were successful. Etzel made a phone call to the station master to warn him of impending events and the station area was cleared. British sappers arrived in the meantime and managed to get a long rope round the barrel to drag it out of the building to an open area where the damage would be far less. It was when they tried to move the barrel that it exploded, still inside the main building. (P.Cotterell.)



Battir 13 Feb 2005



first works train at Malcha Feb 2005.



OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

There is quite a lot of information and pseudo-information available on the Internet. A little bit of idle surfing has produced some current and older items, which are included here amongst the more recent News. The Editor.

A. IRAQ.

(i). From 'Iraq Directory' (online) 22.10.2004.

"Iraq .. The first Arab country uses satellites for surveillance of trains movement ..Soon. " The Iraqi railway general company seeks now the use of a very modern system depends on satellites and computer systems for control over movement of trains.

The Iraqi railway general company will be the first company in Middle East and Arab world that uses such system for the control over movement of trains. It must be mentioned that such systems are used only in countries like America and Canada ..while the European countries are still in phase of experiences [sic. - he means experimenting. Ed] to use such system.

About that, Eng. Ala'a al-Din assistant of the company's general manager said that the work of this system is on basis of installation of computer systems, transmitters and monitors being set on board of our working trains in addition to the establishment of central control department with several sections depends on a central computer and giant monitor for surveillance and control over movement of trains and forming contact systems with the satellites that has complete reliability where the use of any alternative means of communication is possible in case of one of these means breaks down.

Advantages of this system are: providing complete safety system to avoid accidents and collision of trains, safety for workers in maintenance of railway lines, increasing speed and efficiency of trains and increasing speed and efficiency for the central control ..in addition to tracking the movement of trains through information exchange between drivers and central control.

Mr. Ala'a al-Din added: as well as sending the help immediately in the emergencies cases and stopping trains compulsory for speed exceeding state or the instructions violation."

" (The web-site notes: "Translated from Arabic". Ed. adds: Into gibberish.)

(ii). BAGHDAD BY-PASS PLANS?

From Marc Stegeman: An ANP news item of 26 November 2004, that a Dutch Engineering Constancy consortium has been awarded a \$1M Iraqi contract. Arcadis, DHV and Witteveen & Bos have been asked to investigate the construction of a railway line around the capital of Bagdad. However, due to the current security situation, it was not planned to send any representatives of the firm actually to Iraq. Instead, local Iraqis will be employed for the work.

(iii). I.R.R. DIESEL LOCO STOCKLIST.

In "Continental Railway Journal" 140, Winter 2004/5, p.302 is the following:-

"The following list is thought to show all standard gauge diesel locos that have been ordered by Iraqi Republic Railways since the inception of dieselisation. Classes built up to 1980 were listed in the CRC book 'Middle East Railways' by Hugh Hughes, but are repeated here for completeness, and also because a few locos from this era still survive. Details of locos built since 1980 are taken from two independent sources, which agree with one another in almost all respects. Both of these show the 2701 series locos as built new by Dalian, casting major doubt on the claim (published in CRJ 138 p. 197) that they were originally built in Roumania and merely refurbished in China. The 'Railway Directory' quotes IRR as possessing 353 diesel locomotives in 2001. In May 2004 only 103 locos were in service, this figure including some of the new deliveries from Lugansk and Bryansk. The letter prefixes to locomotive numbers signify Diesel-Electric Main-Line (DEM), Diesel-Electric Shunter (DES) and Diesel-Hydraulic Shunter (DHS).

Nos.	Type.	HP	Builder	Builders Nos.	Year	Total built	In service	May 2004./Notes.
DHS 101-3BB	DH	600	Nippon Sharyo	-	1986	3	-	
DHS 111-3BB	DH	600	Nippon Sharyo	-	1973	3	-	
DHS 121-7BB	DH	600	Nippon Sharyo	-	1982	7	5	in total of all three series.
DHS 131-144Bo-Bo	DE1000	Tulomsa	-	-	2002/3	14	8	
-	501-2	0-4-ODM	150	CKD	5398/9	1961	2	-
DEM 2001-10	Co-Co	DE 1650	CKD	5657-66	1963	-	-	
DEM 2011-20	Co-Co	DE 1650	CKD	5802-11	1964	20	-	
DEM 2101-5	Co-Co	DE 2000	Alco	3416.01-5	1965	5	-	
DEM 2201-20	Co-Co	DE 2400	Alsthom	-	1971	20	-	
DEM 2301-30	Co-Co	DE 2000	Montreal LW	6083.01-30	1975/6	-	-	
DEM 2331-61	Co-Co	DE 2000	Montreal LW	6093.01-31	1976/7	61	3	(a)
DEM 2401-55	Co-Co	DE 2000	Macosa	1631-85	1980/1	55	8	
DEM 2501-10	Co-Co	DE 2250	Henschel	32711-20	1983	-	-	
DEM 2511-82	Co-Co	DE 2250	Henschel	32639-7101	1983	total 82	27	
DEM 2701-50	Bo-Bo	DE 2000	Dalian	-	2001	50	31	
DEM 2801-30	Co-Co	DE 2630	Lugansk	-	2004	30	3	(b)
DES 3001-5	Bo-Bo	DE 650	CKD	5135-9	1962	-	-	
DES 3006-8	Bo-Bo	DE 650	CKD	5734-6	1963	-	-	
DES 3009-22	Bo-Bo	DE 650	CKD	7723-36	1969	-	-	
DES 3023-34	Bo-Bo	DE 650	CKD	8469-80	1973	-	-	
DES 3035/6	Bo-Bo	DE 650	CKD	8801/2	1973	total: 36	-	
DES 3101-3	Co-Co	DE 1100	CKD	11301-3	1979	-	-	
DES 3104-11	Co-Co	DE 1100	CKD	12204-11	1981	-	-	
DES 3112-200	Co-Co	DE 1100	CKD	12272-360	1982	100	17	
DES 3301-6	Bo-Bo	DE 1200	Bryansk	-	2004	6	1	(b)
DEM 4001-11	Co-Co	DE 3600	Alsthom	-	1980	11	-	(c)
DEM 410161	Co-Co	DE 3600	Alsthom	-	1980-2	61	-	(c)

Notes:-

- (a). The three survivors have been rebuilt
- (b). Still being delivered.
- (c). 4001 series intended for passenger traffic, 4101 series for freight.

B. LEBANON.

Old News; From "News@Lebanon.com".

"News from Beirut November 11 1997 ... Conference of Inter-Arab Railways Union opens in Beirut.

The eighth Symposium of the Inter-Arab Railways Union this morning opened in Beirut. It will last for four more days. Under the patronage of Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri, the Symposium was opened by transportation minister Omar Miskawi. Miskawi stressed Lebanon's insistence on reviving its railway network. Among the participants in today's conference were president of the railway authority, Bassam Abdel Malak and international representatives of the railway sector in many countries of the world. Abdel Malak saw today's conference as another sign that the country restored its Arab role. He said the Symposium will pose "Future prospects for the railway activities at the threshold of the twenty first century?" as a major point of emphasis. Abdel-Malak pointed to the special situation of the Lebanese network adding the country has railway workers without having railways. He stressed the important role of trains in the field of communication, a role which is characterized by a dynamic harmony between the concept of the train and the concept of safe speed, the punctuality and the preservation of nature. President of the Inter-Arab Union for Hotels and Tourism Osmane Aidi pointed out the importance of the transport in general and the railway sector in particular in implementing good cooperation amongst Arab countries in the world. Aidi linked the development and promotion of Inter-Arab tourism with efficient transportation sectors especially the railway sectors which he said can play a very important role in the field of developing tourism amongst the Mediterranean countries."

C: EGYPT.

'THE FRIENDS OF ARAB RAILWAYS'.

From: "Al-Ahram Weekly". Profile: Volkhard Windfuhr: Battles and Rails, Gamal Abdel-Nasser, Der Spiegel and a ride on the peace train" by "Youssef Rakha 28 Feb. - 6 March 2002. Issue No.575.

"When Volkhard Windfuhr, head of the Arab office of "Der Spiegel", the renowned German magazine, last week received the German Cross of Merit, the highest official award, for "services to furthering German-Egyptian friendship," he accepted the honour with typically modest pride; and he is eager to point out today, in endearingly disjointed constructions, that his role in the magazine has little to do with it. Intercultural cooperation — rightly, after all — seems far more important to him than journalism. "No, no, no, not "Der Spiegel", he insists. His Arabic is impeccable; yet there is always a straining, a well-meaning enthusiasm to make it classically eloquent and invest it with rhetorical flourish. Through the duration of the conversation — conducted amicably in his remarkably busy Mohandessin office, the walls of which bear testimony to his journalistic exploits — he picks up the phone and speaks fluently — in German, Arabic, English, even Turkish..... For 12 years the head of the Foreign Press Association in Egypt ("which," he asserts importantly, "with 700 members, is now the fourth largest such association in the world, ranking higher than Paris and Rome"), he is the informal chief of the foreign correspondents' tribe. He is also the founder and president of the Association of Friends of Arab Railways and the person who established (and continues to head) the first Arab office of "Der Spiegel", first in Beirut, then in Cairo.

A medium-built, broad-shouldered man who looks younger than his years, Windfuhr dresses formally and has an indelibly charming manner. In large measure he has adopted the insouciant warmth of the East, which he incorporates into a naturally civilised European bearing.

Born in 1937 in Essen, he left Germany in 1955, accompanying his mother to Egypt where she was to teach at the German School. His father, he recounts, had "been martyred" (Windfuhr aptly uses the indigenous term "istushhid") in "Hitler's war;" and they had come not on an Orientalist vacation but to earn their bread. When she returned to Germany, however, "I stayed on." The reason? It is not entirely clear, though the veteran correspondent speaks of the "spirit of revolution," of a fascination with Nasser, of the absence of any significant obstacles in his way to establishing a life here in Cairo. "There were no difficulties," he reiterates. "No culture shock to speak of. At that time Egyptians could enter Germany without a visa — and vice versa, yes, of course. Nobody went on planes then," he digresses — a constant feature, it turns out, of his conversation. "Everybody boarded ships; and transport was always to and from the cities and ports of the Mediterranean."

He studied Oriental languages at Ain Shams University, specialising in Arabic. And during his school and university years, he remembers, "there was extraordinary cultural activity." The "spirit of revolution, especially in its early years" aside, "we all eagerly await the resurgence of such great book series of the time as the Silver Book, the Golden Book, Iqraa..." Agricultural reform was only just being implemented, Windfuhr notes, "and what I noticed most often was how incredibly high unemployment rates were. People were sleeping on the streets, very large numbers of them. And we believed" (here he assumes his well-deserved Egyptian identity) "that the July Revolution would bring about a significant change for the better. If you visited the countryside, for example, you could see the injustice right there in front of you. How the feudal lords treated the fellahin. It was terribly saddening, a travesty, incredibly unjust — so much so that the extent of it is next to impossible to describe. So agricultural reform was more than welcome. The class differences especially were utterly enormous, dire. And yet, even before the reforms started having an effect, there was a spirit of goodness, an all-embracing goodness" that took him in. "And the excitement," he recalls, "the hopefulness and activism were astonishing." Windfuhr implies that, in historical terms, at least, he came to Egypt at the right time. "The one thing to which people paid the most attention," in the 1950s and 1960s, "was culture. Sadly, and for obvious enough reasons, everything in the Middle East is tied up with politics. But at the time culture predominated. I was deeply influenced by Gamal Abdel-Nasser, so much so that, until a few years ago, I would actually have described myself as a Nasserist. But there was much literature and art besides, inspired by the liberation and the future.

In 1970 — significantly, the year of Nasser's death — he went back to Germany to work in the German radio's Arabic service. Already he had acquired not only a perfect knowledge of Arabic but a broad and expansive understanding of the dynamics of life in the Arab world. He stayed for only four years, however, joining the staff of "Der Spiegel" and opening the Beirut office in 1974. Does he miss his homeland? "But I go there a lot," his tone is reassuring. "Three or four times a year I go. Last year I also bought a house near where I was born, in Cologne — because I wanted to have a home in Germany. Although I don't occupy it for most of the year, I don't rent it out either. When I go it is there for me, and this is all I want."

"Unity is good and I am all for unity," he repeats, "while taking into account the necessity of preserving each country's individual character, of course. I feel it is like the [Cairo] red bus, on which large numbers of different people stand side by side as they progress through the same journey, getting on and off at the stops of their choice." This image, equally applicable to a railway journey, is among Windfuhr's most treasured. His own first stop, after "the three-year spell" in Germany, was painful and

hazardous; by the time he left, the Lebanese war had left an indelible scar. "There was an abduction, yes." He has already mentioned it in passing. "But I don't like to talk about it a lot. It was after I was released that I relocated to Cairo."

Many stops were to follow: "I remember," he says repeatedly. "I remember everything. All that I witnessed and covered, I remember." Lebanon was "disastrous, horrible: six per cent of the population were killed in the course of a year and a half;" but there was also the Ethiopian-Eritrean War, the Libya-Chad War, the Israeli invasions of Lebanon and the massacres of Sabra and Shatila: "all this, and a lot more, I covered." Within Egypt — his principal forte — Windfuhr remembers the Suez War ("I was on the tram on the way to my house in Faggala, and as soon as we reached the church on Galaa Street I could see the explosions perpetrated by the English to announce the impending attacks"); the nationalisation of the Suez Canal ("I was in Manshiya"); the 1967 War ("the whole of Egypt was very angry with the army, and veterans whom I met told horror stories"). "The Student Movement," Windfuhr goes on with his list, "and when they laid the High Dam foundations and Khrushchev came to supervise the Soviet contribution. As soon as the project was underway, Abdel-Halim [Hafez]'s voice was everywhere joyfully proclaiming it. I remember... The Iranian Revolution I covered from the start, returning to Tehran on the same plane as Khomeini; and in 1973 I had the honour of accompanying Osman Ahmed Osman in the first Egyptian helicopter to fly over the Bar Lev Line..." Since 1990 the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has preoccupied him more than any other topic: "I accompanied Yasser Arafat on his historic journey from his exile in Tunis to the Andrews base in the US," he remembers happily. "And again when he entered Palestine through Rafah, I was there with him."

About his private life, in the end, Windfuhr says little: "I had an Egyptian wife, she passed away a long time ago and I decided to marry journalism. No children. I love classical music and opera, as well as some music by Umm Kulthoum, Abdel-Halim, Fairuz... My three extracurricular passions: history, geography and music," not to mention the languages of the East. And his political orientation? "I am all for social justice and the freedom of the people," he asserts. "The rest, I feel, is in the end mere detail, irrelevant and unimportant." In 1997, Windfuhr recounts on a lighter note, he founded the Association of the Friends of the Egyptian and Arab Railways, thus "realising a childhood dream." Here again, rather than waxing lyrical about actual train journeys, he places this hobby in its wider context: "We work very closely with the German-Arab Chamber of Industry and Commerce, of whose board I have become a member, organising seminars and seeking the support of major German and Arab figures. We call for developing and improving the railway networks of the Arab world. And with the

direct endorsement of President Mubarak, following the Luxor massacres, we set off the first 'peace train' on previously abandoned tracks from Safaga to the eastern mountains. This is a luxury train designed for tourists who, in the course of their journey, have the opportunity to explore Ancient Egyptian monuments throughout the area. Every year a 'peace train' sets out from Safaga; and this is our contribution to the struggle against terror and the challenge of presenting the world with an appropriate image of this country, displaying its treasures."

D. JORDAN.

The following appeared in the 25 January issue of Lloyd's List: "Rail Links to be Upgraded. Plans are afoot to upgrade the rail links that transport bulk potash cargoes to and from the port of Aqaba. Aqaba Railway Corporation has signed a contract to upgrade its infrastructure and review its labour arrangements with Team Engineering and Management Consultants."

John Alexander comments: "No information on time scale or detail. However, I doubt any intention for the Railway to carry any potash FROM Aqaba."

E. IRAN.

MORE INFORMATION ON PURCHASES FROM SPAIN IN 1998.

Thanks to Chen Melling I have been directed to the 'STOL' website on Spanish railways. Here can be found a report on the 1998 rebuilding and refurbishment of the stock purchased from RENFE. The English is a little 'quaint' and has been amended here:-

"The Central Workshops at Malaga, together with the repair workshops at Seville, Valladolid and Villaverde Bajo, are currently refurbishing 135 coaches of RENFE conventional [i.e. not Talgo] night stock for the Iranian railways. Each train will comprise couchette cars, a restaurant car and a generator van, and will traverse lengthy routes in Iran.

This remodelling involves sixty Couchette Cars in the 11.600 Series, five Restaurant Cars of the 12.900 Series and five Generator Vans of the 12.900 Series. In the second stage, five Generator Vans of the 9.400 Series will also be included.

The adaptation of the coaches for the Iranian railways involves the following elements:

- modifying of the bogies to run on the international standard gauge of 1,435mm. For this, the Central Workshops in Malaga together with the assistance of the Workshops in Valladolid has been carrying out work on the axles.

- Increasing the water capacity of the WC's because of Iranian customs. Three new water tanks, two of 200 litre capacity and one of 400 litres, have been built in.

- substitution of traditional lavatory pans by Turkish stype.

- installation of a water circuit for personal ablutions.

- incorporation of a new 800 litre water tank in the storage area close to the kitchen of the restaurant cars.

- the cars have been fully overhauled and then repainted according to the instructions of the Iranian Railways."

F. TURKEY.

(i). PURCHASE OF MORE DB STOCK.

From 'Today's Railways' 111, p. 49: "Deutsche Bahn announced on 12 January that it had delivered a large number of former InterRegio (IR) first-class coaches and restaurant cars to TCDD. A first 14-vehicle 'demonstration train' was hauled by Railog GmbH from Dortmund to Halkali (near Istanbul). All the former DB vehicles will have to be tested on both sides of the Bosphorus before entering service. The first group of 12 former IR coaches and two café vehicles are initially subject to a temporary technical permit."

(ii). LINK TO GEORGIA.

Also in 'Today's Railways' 111, p.43: On 29th. December 2004 an agreement was signed between Georgia, Turkey and Azerbaijan to develop rail links between Turket (eastern Turkey) and Akhalkalaki (Georgia). and Akhalkalaki and Tbilisi, together with a line to Baku. The first two of these projects will require investment of around USD 360M."

G. OMAN.

From Dieter Zoubek I learn that the Austrian paper 'Kurier', in its regional edition for Vienna & Region on 02.03.2005, p.10, reported on various projects in connection with stalactite caves in Oman, where some students are apparently working on schemes to make these accessible. It includes:-

"The opening up of these stalactite caves is a major project. From the end of the valley a one-kilometre long narrow gauge line is being built (from near a hotel) to the entrance of the caves. The stock has been especially constructed by a manufacturer on the Mariazellerbahn in Austria."

This is given as : MT-Eisenbahnbedarf Handelsges.m.b.H, An der Museumsbahn 5, 8630 Mariazell. Alfred Fleissner is the Managing Director. <http://kunden.echonet.at/eisenbahnbedarf/> Email: mt-eisenbahn@nextra.at Fax: +43/3882/3393

Further information indicates a three-car set, with a centre motorised section on two axles, attached to end driving cars which are articulated at the inner end and run on an unpowered bogie at the outer ends. All three cars will be of the same length, and the train will be 20m. long in total. gauge will be 760mm. (as typical for Austria). The vehicles will be 1,600mm wide, and the floor at 800mm above rail top. The centre coach will hold 16 passengers, each outer coach 11 passengers plus driver - i.e. 38 passengers in total. Only the cans will be glazed, the rest will be in the form of 'open summer-style'. Power will be provided from batteries. Top speed will be 15 km/h. There will also be an undefined number of 2-axle 'Service wagons' provided with buffing and coupling gear.

67:10.

A BAGDADBahn JOURNEY THROUGH TURKEY.

"Focus" is a German weekly news magazine, of doubtful accuracy. (The Editor speaks from experience, having once been interviewed about Religion, together with a priest, by a young journalist who seemed never to have heard of Jesus...) One could describe it as 'the poor man's "Spiegel"' when defining its depth and accuracy. Nevertheless, on walking past a poster which advertised a description of a journey on the Bagdadbahn, the Editor bought a copy of the 15th. Nov. 2004 issue, and turned to p. 126....

The article is by Wolfgang Bauer, photos by Yavuz Arslan. Somehow Arslan managed to get a photo from the rear of the train of the track paralleled by the barbed wire Syrian border controls. The point of the article is fairly clear and has more to do with grim politics than railways... Translation by the Editor.

"The Long Train to the West. Destination Europe, arrival time unknown, the former Bagdad Bahn rolls through a divided country. From War to Partytime. A Turkish Journey." A two-page map spread shows the line from Nusaybin via Nizip, Gaziantep, Osmaniye, Ceyhan, Adana, Eregli, Cumra, Konya, Afyon, Eskisehir, Adapazari, Izmit to Istanbul.

"The train, whose arrival time no-one knows, comes in. Juddering, with noises as though it was making great efforts, it sets off again. It is night, deep darkness reigns outside, where there is fear and terror stalks the houses in the villages. Nusaybin, the (Turkish) station on the Syrian border. One jerk forwards, two backwards. Passengers bundle their way aboard. The wheels begin to squeal. The last latecomers emerge from the darkness and jump on. With sparks flying the wheels begin their way along the rails, half rolling, half still blocked. The first metres of a journey of 1967 kilometres. Fragile wooden sleepers bend under the weight, rails rise and fall on ancient beams. Those on board, Kurds

and armed soldiers of the escort troop, take their prayer beads in their hands. Each pearl is a characteristic of God's mercy. "I am always frightened during the journey", says a trader in the early morning light, "You never know what might happen."

From the furthest eastern edge of Turkey, the train sets a course towards Europe. It will cross over the next three days a State which, after forty years of waiting, has at last good chances of becoming a member of the European Union. The EU Commission has already agreed, the European Parliament should make its decision on 17th. December. With 44 wagons coupled on, 450 metres long, the train travels through the middle of a nation which is at same time foreign and yet well known to Europe. One that attracts and repels like hardly any other. A country that is itself split, without wishing to acknowledge that fact. A land in two continents and with many cultures. Currently one of the most successful economies in the world, with 13.5% growth, yet in many wide areas exceedingly poor and suffering destruction from war. On a track which zig-zags its way through the country, often allowing only 25 km/h., and often in danger of coming to a standstill due to some technical problem, the train fights its way towards Istanbul, Europe's biggest city, the final station for the dreams, that so often sink in the Bosphorus. "Get out here!" is the call here for many - who then drown.

The barbed wire that runs along the tracks after Nusaybin tears into one's flesh, a bit more with every movement. The train guard, a melancholy man, explains how it functions. Left and right of the line the wire has been rolled out, razor sharp, in several rows, with mines laid between them. They are laid in groups of three. They are apparently German tanks and Canadian mines. "It doesn't look very pretty", he acknowledges. This is the view for the next 300 kilometres. At the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, in 1921, the line became the border. Every hundred metres now the muzzles of machine guns point at the passing travellers. The Military have allowed the train only a narrow strip to traverse. If it derails, there is a danger it could fall into a minefield. Since the 1960's Turkey has increasingly isolated itself from its neighbours Syria, Iraq and Iran. It wants to prevent access by smugglers, by Kurdish Peshmergas, and in more recent times by Arab terrorists. Schoolchildren recently found an explosive charge on the railway bridge at Nusaybin. They threw it into the river, just in time.

Wars characterise the region. The Front is now what, in the future, could become the ultimate border of the EU. At night the Kurdish separatists and the Army shoot at each other. Police stations are blown up, military convoys drive onto remotely-fired mines. According to estimates, 30,000 people have been killed in this conflict. The PKK resumed its terror attacks on 1st. June following a pause of several years. The Army responds with helicopter and armour attacks. Nusaybin can barely accommodate the refugees. The town has swollen from its

former 40,000 inhabitants now to 100,000. There were also 70 dead recently on the other side of the barbed wire, in the neighbouring Syrian part of town. There, too, battles are fought between Kurds and Arabs. Tension is everywhere, and spies are all around.

The train rolls close past the house of Zeynem Mah, 28. The man came back yesterday from Iraq, haggard and hollow-cheeked after two weeks away. The refrigerator on his truck is twisted and damaged. "A collision accident", he says. "In the convoy I was in, a shell hit further forward, and I didn't watch out and brake sharply enough". He sprays the lorry clean. His 6-year old son polishes the hub caps. 90 per cent of the inhabitants of this small town live from the transports to Baghdad. It is normal that three or four families pool their resources to buy a lorry. Mah drives Coca-Cola into the war zone, and earns 600 dollars for a trip. Drivers are sometimes killed, others are taken hostage. There is, however, hardly any other source of income in Nusaybin, since the cotton prices fell by a half. His cousin, says Mah, had recently had a breakdown on the return trip, and got out to effect some repairs. When he got in again and turned on the ignition, the lorry exploded. Tomorrow Mah will be out on the road again, with his shiny Volvo.

It will only go well for another two or three years, says the engine driver. He stands in his Diesel locomotive like the Captain of a ship on the high seas. Across one undulating wave after another, the train rolls its way along the tracks shimmering in the heat. The rails, in desperate need of repair, still date partially from the 19th. Century, when German engineers laid them here. The prestige project of Kaiser Wilhelm II, financed by the Deutsche Bank, built by the Holzmann company, it was intended to bypass the British-controlled Suez Canal. Berlin to Baghdad in 13 days. It was one of the causes of the First World War. Even today there is, in every town along the way, a "German Bridge" and station buildings that look like those in Baden between Basel and Ettlingen. In fact, they are of an identical design.

The young conscripts, who previously had checked the compartments so authoritatively, are now relaxed, laughing. They clap each other's hands, lay their weapons down and almost dance with pleasure. They grab their mobile phones and talk to distant girl friends. The escort squad lost their commander at the last station. He wanted to buy something to eat, got out, and stood so long in the queue that the train set off without him. Now he is chasing it in a taxi, at his own expense. The engine driver refused to wait. "This is the new Turkey", beams the Guard. "Formerly, we'd have stood and waited anywhere along the line for the chap, no matter how long."

The traders, thin men behind turbans and beards, watch the uniformed men mistrustfully. "Such types shot my son in Nusaybin", complains one, who sells plastic hand brushes. "And my nephew", concurs a toothless greybeard next to him. "And why?" he asks. "It didn't help them. It didn't help

us." He paints a single Sura on a label during the hours-long journey, at a pace so slow one cannot bear to watch. One fibre of paper after another. "Allah is Great".

A part of the journey to Europe is the landscape. Abandoned villages cling to the cliffs, under which the loco makes its way through fields of cotton. There are 3000 destroyed settlements in Turkey. Estimates speak of three million people driven from their homes. "My whole family lived here once, 15 people", says the Kurdish sheep breeder Mehmet Adal, standing before ruins that reach only as high as his waist.

He had decided to return to the village of Cayköy, because life as a cotton plucker in a tent far away near Izmir, together with his wife and son, was even more miserable. He drives the sheep at night into the classroom of the school. Shit covers the floor, centimeters deep. Beetles scurry over it. 100 families lived here until 1993, when the Army came and cleared the village. Before that, Special Units had burned the village above them, and the one below was to suffer the same fate. That is the dilemma of the rural inhabitants. The Military destroy their houses if they provide help to the Kurdish resistance fighters; the PKK do the same, if they don't.

The Special Units, Adal has heard, are holding back at the moment. There are only a few arrests. No electric shocks at the investigation centres any more, only fake executions. The government is donating ten sacks of cement to each citizen who returns. Adal has already used nine, to build just one wall. He hopes that this business with the EU works out. Not because he believes he'll get any more cement from them. "Europe will let us breathe freely here". And the train continues indifferently through the country.

In Gaziantep, the sixth-largest city of Turkey, an ambitious provincial capital, the train is remmarshalled. The empty goods wagons that had come from Iraq are uncoupled. The town is filled with a wave of construction. Business people stand thoughtfully in the streets and stare at the machines digging for the new underground railway. Wearing suits, they stand up to six rows deep. The local paper reports jubilantly the announcement that 100 Italian electrical companies intend to take up places at the industrial complex at the edge of town. There is a new mayor, who is having all the new buildings painted blue and white. In Gaziantep the train crew changes. The new Guard of the 'Toros Ekspresi', as the train is now called, is still full of praise for the pleasure houses of the city. "Russian women, Syrians, Turks. Great, the best brothels in Turkey".

Once more everything is demanded from the two engine drivers. The adrenalin production in the rattling cab reaches its peak. A Kurd and a Turk hold to their positions. On this, the second night of the journey, the train climbs up into the Taurus mountains, as high as the Alps. It weaves over dizzying bridges. "It's a struggle every time", says the Turkish driver, who doesn't

want to be named. "We should go up at 50 kilometres per hour. We only manage 30; We should come down at 40 - we manage only 60." The brakes, an old German product, don't hold the train properly any more. Once, the Kurd remembers, whilst the water for the tea warms slowly on the armature, the brakes failed completely. Faster and faster they went, with 103 on the clock they shot down from the Taurus peaks. He sips from his tea glass and laughs as he jerks his head from side to side. Unbraked through the the sharply curved tunnels, rattling over delicate bridges over the dark emptiness, faster, always faster, they almost derailed. "Good night", he then says, as a conclusion. We'll get by this time, too.

In Konya the passengers stand at the station kiosk. It is famous along the whole line for its sheeps' cheese. In the town, which is considered to be extremely conservative, Islamic Holding Companies are based in skyscrapers. People speak of 'Green Capital'. [Green is the Moslem holy colour. Ed.] The economic crisis of three years ago has wiped some of the shine off. The train rolls further. Anatolia creeps past. Izmit, the great refinery on the Sea of Marmora, with tankers waiting outside, colossal ships as far as the horizon.

There she is. White, red, green, sparkling, noisy, at the same time both demeaning and invigorating. The incomparable metropolis of 16 million people. Istanbul swallows the train into a sea of lights. With a delay of eight hours it rolls into Haydarpasa station at 2 in the morning. Haydarpasa, an impressive station, built by German engineers in 1908 on an artificial island. Confused, uncertain, Europe and Asia seek here a common link. They reach out to each other with long fingers of land only 660 metres apart. Bridges have been thrown between them in the meantime, and are regularly blocked by traffic jams. Ferries travel back and forth, regularly overfilled. In Istanbul the tension between the continents is almost a physical one. The hairs on one's skin rise. Travellers from all parts of Turkey get out of the coaches, into a castle of stone with shouting loudspeaker announcements, and give themselves over into the hands of this city.

The Muezzins call to inner penitence, their choir of voices spreads over the jungle of satellite antennae - "We thank God that we were born into Moslem families!". Istanbul, during the fasting month of Ramadan. The mosques are overfilled. "When God doesn't love someone, then He doesn't give them a Belief!" Exhausted, the pious await the sunset, the Iftar, the fast-breaking meal. Modernity and Tradition are neighbours in Istanbul. They rub against each other, but do not merge into each other. There are Party Miles with bars and clubs, as extensive as in Paris or London. The most fashionable discos are different every month. There are red light districts and the only open Scene for transsexuals in the entire Islamic world. Impressive shopping streets, that make the centre of Frankfurt appear cheap in comparison. The youth divide themselves into Punks, Ecos and Hip-Hopper. Bare midriffs are 'in'. The Carsaf also - it is black as night and allows the women only a thin slit for the eyes.

There is great excitement in front of the Central Mosque in Sultanbeyli, a centre for the Fundamentalists, a part of town which is, with 180,000 inhabitants, in reality a large town on its own. At the end of the Friday Prayers the emotions are raised. A bearded man raises his fist against a City Council worker. Once again he has not been allowed to enter the City Hall. The official attempts weakly to respond. "You won't let me in because of my beard! That is a scandal!" A second bearded man joins in. His daughter was not admitted to hospital, because she wore a veil. In Turkey there is a prohibition on headscarves in official buildings. The men complain further. That there are too few schools in Sultanbeyli. That the classes have 80 children. No factories. Almost all those who stand before the mosque are unemployed. As are apparently 75% of the men in the district. The Prayer House is the place where they feel morally anchored. It was in these fever-ridden immigrant slums of Istanbul that Recep Tayyip Erdogan grew up; the Premier of Turkey, himself strongly religious, who has reformed the land as no-one has managed since Atatürk. But others also come from here. Those who want to bomb a mosque from the world.

An hour after the train has arrived, 17-year old Mehmet Öksüz is still sitting at the station. The uncle who was meant to collect him is not there. His parents in the village have sent him here to work in a jeans bleaching factory. He pulls his new suit jacket straight. He has made himself smart for the encounter with Europe. Like all of Turkey. Mehmet crouches on a wooden bench, pulls his legs in. "They'll come".

67:11.

PUTTING OUT FIRES.

Paul Cotterell.

Railways the world over have ever been looked upon by their immediate neighbours as suitable targets for litigation and financial compensation. Throughout the nineteenth century, in particular, railways were dragged into court by irate neighbours with a grievance, sometimes honest, sometimes contrived. As a result, innumerable laws and bye-laws were enacted to protect the railways from unjustified claims. And mighty inscrutable were many of these laws; and rarely known – let alone understood – by the layman. It is hardly surprising then that claims for compensation (for one reason or another) should continue throughout the twentieth century, and PR had plenty of claimants knocking, metaphorically, on their doors.

File 123.3/151-300 in the IRM Archives is blandly titled 'Lands Generally'. Much of its contents are to do with queries concerning railway boundaries by urban neighbours wishing to build close to the tracks. The rest is made up of claims by farmers along the line whose fields and crops had been damaged by fires caused, so they insisted, by passing locomotives. It is worthy of note that, of all the numerous complaints in the file, only two appear to have been settled in favour of the complainant when these cases came to court. It would be exceedingly tedious to list all the incidents, but extracts from a couple of examples will give an idea of what may be found in the file. If nothing else, the fact that individual engines, trains and even crews are frequently listed allows further insights into the day-to-day running of PR.

1) The District Engineer, Lydda, noted that on 22/5/1934 "a spark from the Sentinel Cammell car (Train No.71) caused a fire which destroyed 2.175 dunoms [sic] of barley and 0.240 dunoms of wheat at Km.102.240 [just north of Kafr Jinnis], Haifa-Lydda line. The fire did not start within railway limits but some distance outside where the spark alighted.

The Assistant Running Superintendent certifies that the car had a proper spark arrester; thus under section 32 of the Railways Ordinance, 1927, there is no liability for damage."

2) On 15/5/1934 there was a fire in crops at Km.46.188 on the Haifa-Samakh HR line (in fact, there were lots of these fires along the 'Valley Railway'). The Superintendent of the Line noted that the "fire was witnessed by Station Master Ein-Harod at about 1535 hours before [my emphasis-PC] passage of Train No.56...and could not have been caused by sparks or live coal from its engine.

Trains 33 and 82 (latter steam car) left Ein Harod at 1119 and 1239 hours respectively and were the last trains that passed the place of fire prior to train 56. However, Engine No.258 [Hartmann 2-8-2] of Train No.33 was examined in shed and spark arrester and ashpan damper were found in good condition. The spark arrester arrangement of Steam Car No.12 (working train No.82) was also examined and found in good condition."

The Chief Engineer appended a note remarking that as "the crops at the point where the fire started were within a distance of 8 metres from the Railway Boundary, the Railway is not liable as per clause 32(a) & (b) of the Railways Ordinance 1927."

Back in the 1990's there was much anguish in the railway enthusiast community of Britain when preserved steam engines working special trains on the main lines began setting fire to adjacent fields with increasing frequency. Bad coal, inexperienced crews, untrimmed lineside vegetation, and Global Warming were all blamed, but something had to be done otherwise these steam tours were in jeopardy, and spark arresters were fitted to steam locos allowed out on the main lines. In a hot, dry country such as Palestine the problem of lineside fires was ever present, but File 123.3/151-300 is the first detailed written evidence I can recall

Continued on page 19

68:11.

RESPONSE TO E.S.R. AMBULANCE COACH QUERIES IN 62.10.

Alan Clothier.

Now that I have had a chance to catch up on my essential reading I see that I owe you and Paul Cotterell something by way of explanation regarding Paul's offering in issue 16/62. With the possible exception of the Nile Cataracts in Upper Egypt the word cascading is probably not one that folk would expect to be appropriate in Egypt! However apply it to what ESR/ENR did with its coaching stock over their often lengthy lives and it becomes most apt! Paul's 'find' of the four ESR Carriage Diagrams illustrates this point admirably.

The last serious duty for all of them was to form vehicles in one of the pre-second world war ambulance trains. Each of the stretcher cars had started life as one of a pair from two distinct batches (both Metro built with 55'-5½" bodies), one of first class corridor clerestory and the other of first class corridor brake clerestory type whereas the personnel and kitchen cars were from another batch (Birmingham built with 60'-3" bodies) first corridor clerestory.

Continued from page 18

finding which indicates the fitting of spark arresters in PR locos (though their use should have been obvious enough, of course). The necessity for regular examination and maintenance of the ashpan damper doors to prevent live coals dropping on to the track and bouncing around is also blindingly evident. All this was at a time when coal was still the universal fuel for steam engines. There is much less danger of sparks and lineside fires with oil fuel, and I have no doubt that these incidents dropped dramatically when the steam engines were converted to oil firing in WW2. Nowadays, with nothing but diesels, IR has very few lineside fires with which to contend, though stray sparks from brake shoes have sometimes been blamed for such conflagrations.

Finally, though I have not quoted extracts from it, there is at least one other thick file (123.3/301/400) known to deal with the subjects of railway boundaries and lineside fires. Taken together, I daresay these two files would provide plenty of material for anyone wishing to do an esoteric PhD thesis..

The Diagrams referred to reveal much of the long prevalent practice on most railways (nay, almost certainly, all railways) to find another use for a vehicle once it became dated, time-worn or too expensive to maintain; in other words, to transfer it to other duties sometimes with modifications but sometimes not - what's known as the gentle art of cascading and which can often transfer such a vehicle into the service vehicle category. In my experience ESR/ENR were past masters at the game and the practice was widespread, befalling pretty well every class of coaching stock as it fell on bad times, numerous bogie coaches even becoming brake vans for goods trains! Ambulance trains were then nothing new on ESR as they had seen duty there during the first world war (and probably earlier) - a 'Hospital Train No.6' is referred to in the Drawing Register in 1917. As late as the 1970s and 80s I saw the Red Crescent Hospital Train stored in the Cairo area and Hadara shed at Alexandria still provided an occasional haven for a single Ganz railcar of the early pre-war type as an Ambulance 'train' for the Western Desert line (the Drawing Register for 1939 shows six to be so modified). Strangely the Registers are singularly lacking in any reference to the modifications of coaching stock to ambulance train duties. There was however, as early as April, 1936, mention of the conversion of Ford V8 pick-ups to rail operation for military purposes!

I attach two tables (not reproduced here) which show the various changes brought about by this cascading as it affected the coaching vehicles mentioned, namely ESR 1901-04 and 1910-11, and which almost certainly constituted an Ambulance train. This formed an essential part of the preparations for war during the 1930s like the conversion of the narrow gauge portion of the line towards Mersa Matruh and reinstatement of the desert line to Suez. I never came across any direct evidence that the ESR Ambulance Trains were worked over PR lines, but in view of the through working of other vehicles which regularly took place it seems highly likely that they would have done so. Enquiries of two folk who had war-time experience in this theatre failed to confirm such use though I do have a hazy recollection of someone's memoirs mentioning a sighting of an ambulance train in Palestine.

Sorry not to have been of more help.

67:12

L.N.E.R. STEAM CRANES IN IRAQ.

The following is an excerpt from page 194 of "Railway Steam Cranes", by John S. Brownlie. This book (which has been mentioned before in HaRakevet - see 63:9(g)) was published in 1973 and is regarded as the definitive work regarding the British steam-powered breakdown cranes. As its preface explains, its main subject is steam-powered travelling Breakdown Cranes (as opposed to cranes built for Permanent-Way maintenance or hand cranes) built and used in Britain, and so only scant mention is made of overseas cranes, even of British make. One such mention regards two cranes built by Cowans, Sheldon and Co. and sent to Iraq during WWII:

"In 1939, six 45-ton cranes were ordered on behalf of the L.N.E.R. [The London & North Eastern Railway of Britain] as part of the re-armament scheme. These were very similar to the previous two in 1936, being of the relieving-bogie type. They were delivered to the various Sections for strategic use, but, about two years later, the last two of those at the Gorton and King's Cross Depots were requisitioned for service abroad. Hastily converted to oil-firing, they were shipped East. Landed in Iraq, the first was put into service and allocated a driver - by coincidence, the very man, called Topping, who had been in charge of it while at Gorton!"

According to the table on page 320 of the book, the two cranes that went to Iraq are Cowans, Sheldon maker's order numbers 6874 and 6875 which became L.N.E.R. nos. 951515 and 941600, respectively. Both were taken over by the War Department in 1941.

Note - A relieving-bogies type of crane includes two small auxiliary wagons (the 'bogies') which can act as supports to the main carriage of the crane when it is necessary to distribute its weight over more track-length and axles. Such a breakdown crane, built by Ransomes & Rapier, was also used in Palestine and Israel from WWII until the 1960's or 1970's.

Alexander Grafton in Egypt and the Sudan.

While describing the history of 'Grafton & Co.', page 290 of the book "Railway Steam Cranes", by John S. Brownlie mentions the fact the company's founder, Mr. Alexander Grafton (1845-1907) had worked for 'Appelby Bros.' (a well known British railway cranes maker) between 1867-1879, his work there including a period of 4 years in Egypt, where he took "... charge of the Sudan Railway and other contracts...".

FROM THEN TILL NOW

(Part 16).

Noted in reading by Paul Cotterell from Baruch Katinke's book 'Me'az v'ad Hena'; see earlier installments in 11:22, 13:17, 16:15, 19:19, 20:15, 24:11, 30:21, 38:15, 46:12, 59:15, 61:9, 63:11 and 66:13. This is the chapter entitled 'An Horrific Collision' on pp. 216-18 of that book.

For hundreds of years the Turks and Arabs ensured that Jews and Christians could not visit the Arabian Peninsula.

At the time of building the Hedjaz Railway it was necessary to rely on the help of non-Moslem experts. Special permission was given by the Turkish Sultan (who was then also the Caliph of Islam) to the Christian engineers and specialists to enter and work in the Arabian Peninsula, as far as the city of Medinah.

My appointment as Chief Inspector to that district, and my responsibility for the whole line, for the workshops and the pumping stations, gained me special license to travel to the centre of the Arabian Peninsula all of which was under the control of Turkey, including the small peripheral states like Yemen, Hazer-Mot [Aden] and Saudia (tiny in those days).

On arrival in my new district I met with the German engineer Kaufer (spelling) who oversaw the district in the post of Chief Inspector for more than three years until my arrival. He introduced me to the special technical difficulties of the railway in that forsaken area, and presented the team of officers who were at my command by saying that he valued each of them.

In addition to the general problems of the railway in the fourth year of the First World War, in addition to the serious shortage of machinery, tools and spare parts, and in addition to the serious shortage of water and firewood in the desert, an epidemic of sabotage broke out. The chiefs of the Beduin tribes received regular payments from the Turkish command as wages for guarding the railway, while at the same time also receiving payment from the Englishman Lawrence and his assistants as wages to sabotage the track, culverts and bridges. Many trains derailed on

the damaged track. The length of railway in my new district, over a thousand kms, demanded great effort and an alert eye both by day and by night. Despite these many difficulties I slowly learned the work and began to overcome the obstacles with the help of my new team of assistants, among whom were skilful and dependable professionals.

My predecessor, the engineer Kaufer, left me two tidy offices with spacious work rooms and bedrooms for me and my batman. One was in Amman (Rabat Ammon) and the second in Ma'an. In addition I had a small office in Medain Saleh station nearer Medinah. Most of my time was spent in journeying along the line, and I endeavoured as far as possible to visit at least once a week all the important places in my district. I visited the Medinah railway station three times. I didn't want to leave the station to go into the city and visit its mosques, even though I was invited to do so by my escorts of Turkish and German officers. I was satisfied with viewing the city from afar, its buildings and the tall towers of its mosques.

Once, when I was at Rabat Ammon station, I heard a cry of fear ejaculated from the mouth of the station master; he shouted that two trains were about to collide, one that had just left the station for Damascus, the other from Damascus which was due any minute. I didn't go into details and didn't ask him what had happened. I immediately leaped aboard the shunting engine and left to chase after the train which had departed for Damascus, all the while whistling long warnings for it to stop.

I saw the train just a kilometre in front of me but was not successful in halting it. Apparently the driver did not hear, or did not understand, my whistles. He carried on until hitting the second train. At the moment of impact I was a quarter of a kilometre away. I halted my engine and jumped off. The great and shocking noise of collision and the sounds of screaming and groaning filled the air.

In the approaching train there were forty coaches [wagons] packed with soldiers travelling to the front

line. The train from Amman was also made up of many coaches, crowded with sick soldiers on their way to Damascus for medical treatment and soldiers on leave. The two trains, which together had a length of about 300 metres before the smash, crashed into each other, coach into coach, and were reduced to nearly half their original length. And in that huge heap of metal young men, who only a moment before were whole and healthy, were crushed, killed, and dismembered.

I rushed back to the station to bring medical help to the scene. I found the medics and doctors already waiting with their equipment, sitting in two empty coaches on a side track. I handed over the engine to its driver for him to take the coaches to the disaster site. I remained in the station to immediately investigate the reason for the catastrophe and to determine who was responsible, but I told the loco driver to return at once to take me and the people of the technical team to clear the rails and repair the track for following trains to pass.

Upon investigation the details of the disaster became clear to me: as is known, a train may not proceed without permission from the next station. The Amman station master gave permission, but before he could write it down in the register he was called to his apartment on the second floor of the same building where his wife was having difficulty giving birth at the time. Before ascending he told his assistant to record the permission in the register. The assistant entered the station and met the conductor in charge of the train which was ready to leave Amman for Damascus. The conductor requested permission to depart for Damascus. The assistant made a mistake and confused the two trains, and thinking the station master meant the train leaving for Damascus, gave it permission to leave. As the train whistled upon departure the station master realised what had happened and rushed downstairs to stop it, but was too late. [see Note at end of article].

After a few minutes the assisting train returned to the station to take me and the experts and the labourers to clear the line. When we arrived at the disaster site I saw that the work would take a long time, and that it would be best to lay a side track and connect it up at both ends to the main line. The work began immediately.

In the meantime the doctors went about their labours. Terrible

screams filled the air and a lake of blood formed.

And one trouble attracts another.

Enemy aeroplanes on their way to bomb the station saw us from on high and dropped their bombs on us, and we - in the open with no cover or refuge. It was awful to watch the injured, without arms and legs, as they crawled away trying to escape the place and save their lives.

We worked until about midnight in that hell of blood and tears. The casualties were taken by special train to a military hospital near the station. The dead were taken away for burial. Only the metal corpse remained, without possibility of immediate removal.

In the meantime the temporary [side] track was completed and we were ready to lock the points with special locks so they could not be opened at night by the Beduin. I went to one point, closed it and worked it, and after I saw that everything was okay, locked it with a chain and lock. The other point did not work properly. I thought that ballast had entered between the blade and rail. I put my hand into the space to clear out the ballast. My hand touched something soft and cold. When I removed it I saw I was holding a dismembered arm. On its fingers were rings of silver wire [filigree?] of the sort Moslems wear as a charm against illness. I buried the arm. I closed and locked the point and returned to the station.

I washed and went up to my bed. For a long time sleep would not come, despite my tiredness. And when I did fall asleep it was only to dream terrible nightmares of the railway disaster. I awoke, and was unable to sleep more. The next day I learned that one hundred and fifty people had been killed in the collision and a similar number injured.

A harvest of death caused indirectly by the birth of one extra person.

Note: This is a less than precise description of single line working, and no amount of rereading has made it any clearer. Nevertheless, I think we all have a fairly good idea of what went wrong - it was permission for the train from Damascus which the Station Master forgot to enter in the Register.

68:14

If one looks under winthrop.edu/haynese/mlas/xo01.htm one will find a web-site for the Arab Union of Railways. Alas, it is a fairly old website, last revised February 1995:-

"ARAB UNION OF RAILWAYS."

The Arab Union of Railways was founded in 1979. The purpose of the organization has been to coordinate international railway links in the Arab world and the development of railways in the member states.

The Chair (1993) is Tahar Azaiez and the Secretary-General is Mourhaf Sabouni.

ADDRESS: Arab Union of Railways, P.O. Box 6599, Aleppo, Syria; phone (not dialable from USA) 220302.

Last revised 26 February 1995"

Notable here is the total absence of Saudi Arabia, the presence of Palestine, the use of the word "Arab" rather than "Moslem". Following links one finds:-

Directorate of Arab Relations, whose web site indicates "The Arab Railways Union was formed by Council Decision 745 /D 27 of 07.06.1976. Commencement: 18.04.1979. Headquarters, Aleppo".

and:-

Japan Railway & Transport Review No. 12 (pp.22-25)

Feature: International Cooperation, Arab Railways Past & Present
Mourhaf Sabouni

Introduction

The 'Arab Homeland' covers 13.3 million km² and has a population of approximately 270 million. It is comprised of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Yemen, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia and the Comore Islands. Despite this large number of nations, it shares a broadly common culture, society, and written language.

Birth of Arab Railways

The first railway in the Arab Homeland (and in the Middle East and Africa) was opened in 1854 between Alexandria and Kafar Zayat in Egypt. Railways were subsequently built in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. The most important railway axis called the Hijaz Railway, linking Medina in Saudi Arabia with Damascus in Syria, via Amman in Jordan, was built in the early 1900s. It was financed by Islamic institutions in Arab countries and elsewhere. The Arab railways were constructed during the colonial period for military and strategic purposes, as well as to provide distribution routes for products from the industries of the colonizing nations. Consequently, the lines have different technical specifications depending on which country constructed them.

Present Situation

There are railway lines in only 11 Arab countries: Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. They total approximately 25,000 km (Table 1).

Most of the Arab railways are standard gauge and the others have four different gauges: 1000 mm in Tunisia, Algeria and Iraq, 1050 mm in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, 1055 mm in Algeria, and 1067 mm in Sudan.

The Arab countries are now modernizing their lines to the standard gauge, except in Sudan and Tunisia. Most lines are single track with only 2399 km of double track and 694 km of electrified track. The density is very low compared to advanced countries. The diversity of track gauges makes through traffic difficult, and even traffic between two Arab countries difficult. In addition, the design speed varies from 60 km/h in Sudan to 250 km/h in Iraq and the maximum axle load varies from 12 to 25 tonnes. There are also different loading gauges.

Table 2 shows the number of rolling stock and passenger and freight volumes.

Table 1: Arab Railways
Photo: Morocco's express train linking Meknès and Rabat competes with the national road running parallel to it.

(K. Urakawa)

Table 2: Rolling Stock and Passenger and Freight Volumes

Foundation of Arab Union of Railways

Road transportation has grown rapidly in Arab countries due to development of the road network as well as stagnation of the railway sector. However, Arab governments have been motivated to upgrade and extend their existing networks by the importance that advanced countries attach to railways and by rail's merits in economic development. The Arab countries are also aiming to integrate their economies

and have realized the importance of unified transportation, especially railways, in international trade. These factors are causing railway traffic to boom. In 1979, representatives of some Arab railways met in Amman and decided to establish the Arab Union of Railways to assist in development of relations between neighbouring networks, to establish international cooperation between railway organizations, and to obtain an increased share of the transport market. The Union membership is comprised of most Arab railways and is based in Aleppo, Syria. The Union:

- Organizes scientific conferences on important subjects by holding bi-annual international symposia. The eighth one will be held in Beirut, Lebanon, in autumn this year. Special seminars on subjects of interest to Arab railways have been held in Aleppo in 1994 and in Cairo in 1996.
- Organizes training courses to raise the professional level of railways staff
- Conducts studies and presents proposals on unified regulations and technical specifications.
- Unifies railway terms in Arab countries by issuing six dictionaries of 25,000 railway terms in Arabic, French and English
- Publishes Arab Railways, a railway quarterly in three languages, Arabic, French and English. The Union also publishes annual statistics on the Arab railways.

Future Developments

Recent modernization and construction of new railways in some Arab countries have produced positive economic results and social progress in the region. The Union has played an important role in highlighting the importance of the railway mode in Arab society and economy; it has convinced the Arab governments to develop railways and to improve relationships between themselves and with neighbouring countries. One Union study on linking various Arab railways was adopted by the Council of Arab Transportation Ministers, giving new emphasis to the importance of new railway projects in Arab countries (Figure 1). The nine new main axes of the proposed network will be as follows:

- 1). 1700 km connecting Syria with Iraq and Mediterranean Sea with Arab Gulf
- 2). 1860 km connecting Iraq and Oman via Kuwait and Saudi Arabia
- 3). 2560 km connecting Saudi Arabia and Jordan
- 4). 1700 km connecting Syria and Saudi Arabia via Jordan
- 5). 4000 km connecting Oman and Saudi Arabia via Yemen
- 6). 2300 km connecting Egypt and Sudan
- 7). 6200 km connecting Egypt and Mauritania via Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.
- 8). 3000 km connecting Algeria and Mauritania.

9). 1500 km connecting Somalia and Djibouti and on to Yemen via Red Sea by ferry
It is estimated that 20,000 km of new track is needed to implement the above proposal. The Secretariat General has evaluated the required materials to be 2 million tonnes of rails, 34 million sleepers, 40 million m³ of ballast, 136 million fastenings, and 7000 switches. These figures do not include requirements for stations, and signalling and telecommunication equipment, etc. The total required locomotive power is 4.125 million kW, pulling 10,000 passenger coaches and 70,000 freight wagons.

Photo: Waiting at Alexandria Station (EJRCF)

Figure 1: Existing (solid) and Proposed (dotted) Major Railway Axes Linking Arab Countries (Numbers correspond with text) (Source: Arab Union of Railways)

Difficulties

The Arab countries all face similar difficulties in developing and improving their railways, focused on the following points.

- Lack of government conviction. Governments of countries with no or limited railway networks have little interest in railway development, which hinders introduction of new lines.
- Increasing government emphasis on road and highway construction
- Necessity for massive capital investment at beginning of construction. The huge interest payments on massive investments constitute a major budget difficulty for governments oriented towards economic growth.
- Difficulty of obtaining private financing for projects with slow rates of return. The World Bank has not financed railway projects in Arab countries but has contributed to highway construction, explaining why Arab governments focus on road development.
- Through-traffic problems due to specification differences. This also weakens the profitability of railways.
- Lack of media emphasis of railway's safety, economic, social and environmental merits, compared to other transport modes

What Should We Do?

Some of the most important measures required to develop the railway sector in Arab countries are described below.

The Union should continue its efforts to complete the links between Arab countries and should ask the Council of Arab Transportation Ministers to include financing for the missing sections in their national budget plans. The standards and technical specifications prepared by the Union should be adopted. These specifications are in harmony with international railway standards and adoption will facilitate transit traffic between Arab and neighbouring countries. International, regional and Arab banks, especially the World Bank, should support railway projects in and between Arab countries.

Countries like Japan with advanced railway technology should assist projects in Arab countries by technology transfers, and dispatch of experts, and their governments should conclude bilateral aid agreements. International manufacturers of railway equipment, and railway construction companies should focus on the Arab market to supply materials and equipment based on international financing and government agreements. This may also be possible through local or joint-venture companies like in Egypt.

Specialist Japanese companies should participate in Union symposia to broaden their knowledge of Arab railways and to open up new opportunities for cooperation. The Arab media should focus on the importance of the railway sector. They should promote the economic, social, environmental advantages of the railway mode and especially its safety.

(EJRCF)

Current International Cooperation and Requirements

Recently, transport sectors other than the railway sector have benefited from international cooperation. However, more international cooperation will be required to establish effective links to Arab networks. Since the EU has recently paid more attention to a possible railway link between Spain and Morocco via Gibraltar, completion of the main railway axes between Arab countries will permit through traffic to Europe via Turkey, to Asia through Iran, and to Africa. In this way, the Arab Union of Railways will reach its target of '...constructing an integrated, complete and advanced railway network'.

Mourhaf Sabouni

Mr Sabouni is Secretary General of the Arab Union of Railways. He graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering and joined Syrian Railways where he served as Deputy Director General until 1983, before being appointed to his current position.

Directorate of Arab Relations.

One of the most important directorates of the Ministry. It is in charge of: economic and commercial relations with Arab states. the League of Arab States and organizations of joint Arab action.

A. Economic and Social Council.

It was established pursuant to Article 8 of the Collective Defence Pact and Economic Cooperation between members of the League of Arab States.

Its first session was held in Beirut on 25.05.1953.

Following amendment of the above mentioned Article in 1977, the Council has assumed other functions pertaining to planning, organization and coordination, eventually becoming the highest Arab body in charge of drawing out economic policies. Members of the Council: All states which are members of the Arab League

Headquarters: Cairo.

Principal tasks:-

Drawing out the general policy of Arab socio-economic cooperation and program planning. Supervision of specialized Arab organizations and creating any new organization. Calling for the initiation of joint Arab enterprises.

Achievements of the Council-

The initiation of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area as from 01.01.1998.

12. The Arab Railways Union Council Decision 745 /D 27 of 07.06.1976. Commencement: 18.04.1979. Headquarters, Aleppo

ISLAMIC RAILWAYS.

In 'Eisenbahn Magazin' for August 1983, p.15, a small item was to be found:

"Locomotives for Allah. The Islamic countries have, during the years 1979-1981, imported from non-Islamic lands approximately 360 locomotives, 1,400 carriages and 10,500 goods wagons, as well as other railway materials with a total value of US\$1.2 Billion. Now they want to create their own production capacity and deliver amongst themselves.

The Islamic Economic Council (Wirtschaftskammer) recommends that the member states of the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) should increase its production capacity and work closer together, should member states decide to commence their own production of railway equipment. Especially Turkey and Pakistan already possess relatively extensive workshop facilities. The OIC is offering financial help for countries that have declared themselves prepared to order equipment from other Islamic states. Due to its coordinating function it would appear indeed possible for the OIC to succeed in implementing such protectionist aims for its members. It is intended also to establish an office which will observe all developments in the field of Railways and also provide consulting and advisory facilities. Consideration is even being given to the establishment of an international organisation, on the model of the UIC, the International Union of Railways.

The intention to reduce imports from non-Moslem countries could influence, above others, the major railway projects in Turkey, Algeria and Bangla Desh."

(Translation by Editor).



More photos from Evyatar Reiter showing work on the line to Jerusalem





G12 115, crane and bogie flat at Malcha on 1.2.05, separated from the station by a few metres of still missing track over the side road at the station throat. Photo: Evyatar Reiter.



TWO(!) tracklaying trains at Bittir on 11/1/05. 112 & 126 doublehead one works train, 120 on other. Severe curvature apparent. Photo by Evyatar Reiter.



Tracklaying train being propelled towards Jerusalem by 112 & 126 on 13/1/05. Western outskirts in back of one pic including trolley behind train. Photos Evyatar Reiter.