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הרכבת

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



95:01: One of the new Vossloh EMD Euro4000 diesel-electric locos for IR being unloaded at Haifa on 04.11.11. (Israel Railways).



95:01(2)

**Another dramatic shot of the loco
being unloaded**

95:02:

EDITORIAL.

This is yet another issue where the current news allows almost no place for the historic view or for specific essays and articles or items from the Museum Archive which I have received - my apologies to the writers. Put simply, on Israel Railways there have been openings, doublings, extensions, more plans for extensions, new stock arrivals - all in a time of major industrial unrest and significant management changes. And elsewhere in the region massive investment is under way in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States - there will be much more to report here in coming years, methinks. The whole region remains in turmoil - One hears in the media only of an undefined 'Arab Spring', of massacres and revolutions, of sabre-rattling and international threats, of military tensions and political intrigue and fundamentalists - at least here we can present a slightly different view of the Near East.

Yet another Series comes to an end - whereas the world has not (yet) - so it is time to consider subscription renewals, whether for our hard copy or our electronic versions. We hope you will stay with us, and support and enjoy what we do.

Shalom,

The Editor.

95:04:

NEWS FROM THE LINE:

(a). OPENING OF NEW RISHON-LE-ZION WEST LINE.

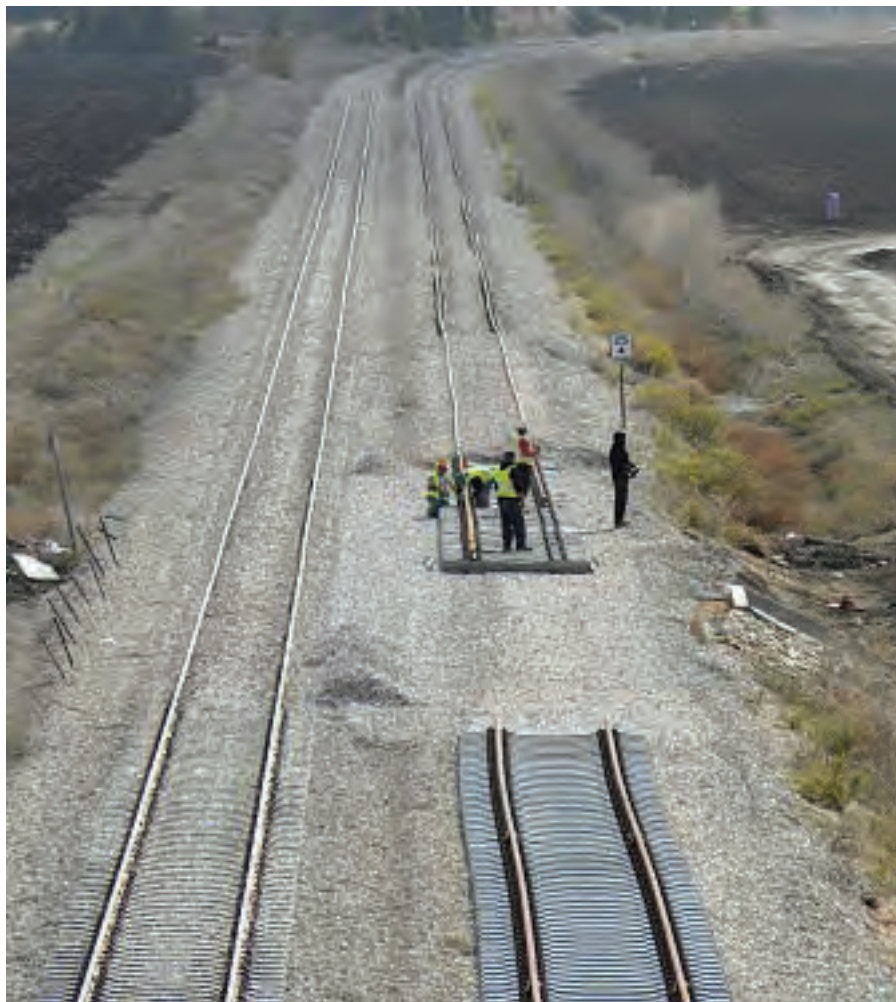
The new line between Tel-Aviv HaHaganah and Rishon-Le-Zion West was to be opened on Saturday night 24.09.2011 - assuming the rail staff did not execute their threat to start a strike as a step against the planned privatisation of maintenance of the new rolling stock due to arrive, to be carried out by the manufacturer. (see item above.)

The first service trains were to leave Rishon-Le-Zion West the following day at 08:29 and call at Bat-Yam Komemiut, Bat-Yam Yoseftal, Holon Wolfson, Holon Gate, all Tel-Aviv stations, B'nei-Berak, Petakh-Tikva stations, Rosh-Ha-Ayin North, and Kfar-Sava-

Hod-Hasharon stations; the train on the opposite direction would leave Kfar-Sava-Hod-Ha-Sharon-Sokolov station at 08:23. On 23.09.11 the new timetable was also to be introduced.

A press release indicated the anticipated service: This would be the first time in the Railways' history that five new stations would be opened on the same day. At the beginning of 2012 the new lines will be opened further on, to Yavne West. The new line will provide an 18-minute journey time between Rishon-le-Zion West and Tel-Aviv HaHaganah and 20 minutes in the opposite direction (due to the steep adverse grades departing from HaHaganah! - this was due to the designer of the Ayalon Highway 'forgetting the railway line' due to a 'passion of creativity' - the result being that a very expensive re-design was subsequently required.) Times will be reduced following electrification. All trains will terminate at Hod-HaSharon and call at intermediate stations. In peak periods there will be three trains per hour in each direction, but following completion of upgrading and signalling and the arrival of further new trains this will rise to four trains per hour per direction. The traffic forecast is for 3.5M annually.

Due to the opening of this line, trains from HaRishonim station (Rishon-Le-Zion East) will now terminate at Tel-Aviv HaHaganah, and passengers will need to change here to continue northbound.



95:03: "Now who's got a spare straight bit?" Double-tracking works on the Acre-Nahariya line at km 25.6. November 2011 - traffic resumed two days earlier than planned! (Source: IR.)

The new line will shorten the distance from Rishon-le-Zion HaRishonim via Lod (24km.) to only 10km and journey times will be reduced from 24 to 18 mins.

Meanwhile, according to some papers, fares will be as twice as higher than by bus; will update when available.

Sybil Ehrlich wrote: „The new line from Tel Aviv to Rishon LeZion opened today, Sunday September 25 (unusually not on a Saturday evening). There was a grand opening ceremony at Rishon Lezion West (Moshe Dayan) station, with crazy dancers in the station forecourt (saw them on TV!) and the transport minister. He wasn't dancing... The only thing missing was the train.

Israel Railways employees were in the middle of a labour dispute and ignored the court order to return to work, but according to the TV news the service started in the afternoon. Exact time not stated.

The new stations are Tzomet Holon (Holon Junction); Holon-Wolfson; Bat Yam Yoseftal; Bat Yam Komemiut; Rishon Lezion Moshe Dayan. There is

some inconsistency in the names on the IR website: Rishon Lezion West (Moshe Dayan)/ Rishon LeZion Moshe Dayan. The names are given in English on the website as Holon Junction; Holon - Wolfson; Bat Yam - Yoseftal; Bat Yam - Komemiyyut; Rishon LeTziyyon - Moshe Dayan.“ [Ed. adds: It is clear that there going to be many orthographic variations in the coming years.]

Jeremy Topaz wrote: „On Tuesday 27th. Sept. I travelled to Tel Aviv and back on the new line. I had intended to go on the previous Sunday on the inaugural train, but that was cancelled due to sanctions by the railwaymen's union. However, the line is now running with a normal schedule.

The train from Rishon Moshe Dayan station was a double-deck consist, hauled as usual by an Alstom Bo-Bo. It left precisely on time at 15.09; the trains leave every 20 minutes during much of the day, which is simpler to remember than the irregular intervals in the Rehovot - Tel Aviv timetable, for instance.

Although I knew that most of the line is between high walls which hide the scenery, I wanted at least to take photos of stations but on the upper deck the windows were so dirty, I didn't see much chance, so I went to the lower deck where they were a bit cleaner. Most of the stations and a good part of their platforms are under bridges, and I was horrified to see how dark and dingy these sections were. The walls are unrelieved concrete or grey blocks and the lighting is very poor. When you compare these with stations in other parts of the world, whose walls are often covered with bright, colourful tiles and even in tunnels, the lighting makes it almost daylight, someone has slipped up. Only the sections of platform outside the covered areas are decently sunlit. One station, Holon Junction, is above ground level and its platforms are out in the open.

The entrance hall of the Moshe Dayan station is impressive, roomy and well lit and the platforms there are not too bad as enough light comes from outside.

The train back from Tel Aviv Hashalom was surprisingly hauled by a G26 Co-Co, normally used for freight. Perhaps it is not so surprising, as more than 70 trains a day have been added to the timetable with the opening of the new line and there must be difficulty finding enough rolling stock.

There is a parking lot close to the Moshe Dayan station although access to it is only from the east, which makes it difficult for people like me, coming from the south, to reach easily. [Ed.adds: of course the line will soon be extended further south.]

This is the first wholly new passenger line to be built in Israel since the line from Beer Sheba to Dimona. Other lines have been resuscitated, based more or less on existing tracks, like Kfar-Saba or Ashkelon but this is completely new. Actually, the highway was envisaged when Holon and Bat Yam were planned, but the centre strip was occupied by a high-voltage electric line. A novel solution was found to make room for the railway - the pylons in the centre were replaced by two pylons, one on either side of the strip, each carrying one of the two 3-phase lines.“

Sybil Ehrlich later wrote:-

On Tuesday [10.2011] I went to investigate the five new stations: Holon Junction, Holon Wolfson, Bat Yam Yoseftal, Bat Yam Komemiut and Rishon Lezion West - Moshe Dayan.

Holon Junction is not to be confused with Clapham Junction! Despite the fact that it's the first time since the First World War that we have a „junction“ station, the junction doesn't refer to a railway junction but to the major road intersection of that name.

I took the 11:19 departure from

Tel Aviv Hashalom. All trains to Rishon West leave from platform 3 at this station. There are no signs to that effect, and I had to ask a station employee. It was the day of Gilad Schalit's release, and station announcements were on the lines of „The train to Ashkelon will depart from platform 2; Israel Railways greets Gilad Schalit and his family on his release.“

I took the train straight to Rishon West, with the intention of making a few return journeys to get decent photos of all the stations. All the trains I saw on this line were double-deckers. At Bat Yam Yoseftal there was a northbound train, no. 636 from Rishon West at 11:19, with - to my amazement - a Spanish (yellow, blue and maroon) loco, the first time I've seen a passenger train hauled by one of these.

I got decent photos of Rishon West, and then spent several hours on foot and by bus trying to get photos of the other stations. Holon Junction was most frustrating. The security guard outside the station was walking up and down talking on his cellphone, and I was walking up and down trying not to get noticed. (IR employees don't care in the least about photography; it's the overzealous security guards who make trouble.) Added to which there was a dustcart parked right in front of the station, so what with one thing and another I'm extremely unsatisfied with that photo. Of course I'll go back there to take better photos. You'll note that there are no pictures of Bat Yam Komemiut. It was logistically difficult to get there in one day by bus and on foot, and I wanted to be home early to watch Schalit's homecoming on TV.“

Chen Melling noted: „Actually, Lydda station appears in some PR timetables as „Lydda Junction“, and Kilo 4.5 was previously known as Acre Junction, until the junction (and the name) moved to Shell Bridge. There were also a few other junction points named as such, though probably not as public stations, e.g. Na'amin Junction (near Acre) and Srafand Junction.

All the locomotives used on the line (as well as with all push-pull passenger trains on IR today) are Spanish, not only the Red-Yellow-Blue ones you saw, which are the Co'Co' freight version (the regular passenger machines are Bo'Bo'). The use of these freight locos on passenger trains, from series 702-709, is due to diminish as the new Euro4000 locos arrive, starting next week. This is not the first time the Spanish Co'Co's have been used on passenger trains due to lack of dedicated passenger power, and I even pictures of them with old slam-door stock some years back.“

(b). FURTHER TRACK WORKS.

Due to work on double-tracking the line and works on communications and signalling, the lines Tel Aviv - Jerusalem and Tel Aviv - Beer-Sheva were to be closed to traffic in both directions from Friday night 02.09.2011- Saturday night 03.09. That between Beer-Sheva and Dimona already from 01.09. The Transport & Road Safety Ministry had instructed bus operators to provide alternative bus shuttle services until Sunday 04.09 when normal traffic was to resume.

Between Sunday 04.09 at 13.00 and Wednesday 07.09.2011 inclusive the line between Tel Aviv Universita and Kfar Sava - Hod-HaSharon Nordau and Sokolov was to be closed for traffic, and again alternative bus shuttles were to be provided until Thursday 08.09.

Between Sunday 11.09 at 23.00 and Monday 12.09 at 04.00 the line between Akko and Nahariyya was to be closed to traffic, then again from Wednesday 14.09 to Friday 23.09. Bus shuttles would be provided until normal services resume on Saturday night 24.09.2011.

(c). GIVAT ADA BUS LINK.

In collaboration with the local municipalities of Binyamina and Givat Ada (a nearby village) on 01.09.2011 a shuttle service of buses and minibus was commenced between Givat Ada and Binyamina station. These are free of charge only for passengers who can show their railway tickets. The service operates Sundays to Thursdays 06.30 - 09.00 and 15.00 - 20.00, co-ordinated with the rail timetable. As yet there are no services on Fridays and eves of holidays. Journey time is about 10 minutes.

(d). MORE LABOUR RELATIONS PROBLEMS .

An illegal strike was avoided at the last minute on 01.09.2011 thanks to an appeal by the IR management to the Labour Tribunal, which instructed the workers to return immediately to work; this was opposed to the Union decision not to work with sub-contractors and not participate in development works. Had the strike gone ahead signalling works at Acre, Beer-Sheva and Na'an would have been halted, paralysing traffic on these lines; other failures could also occur in signalling and communication systems leading to further delays and a decline in safety level.

- But on 18.09 an IR press release reported that the Labour Tribunal had instructed both the IR management and the workers' union to commence intensive

negotiations concerning the future maintenance of rolling stock due to arrive. The Union members had made clear that if disagreements with the IR management and the Finance Ministry (which is even more active in pushing maintenance privatisation than the Transport & Roads Safety Ministry) were not resolved by Wednesday 21.09 they would start sanctions, a work-to-rule or even full strike, which would then delay the opening of the new line to Rishon-Le-Zion West planned for Saturday night 24.09.2011 and the introduction of the new timetable.

- On 21.09.2011 the negotiations did indeed break down and in consequence the workers started imposing sanctions and a ‚Go Slow‘, which caused severe traffic disruption and a punctuality rate of only 20%! Transport & Road Safety Minister Katz immediately instructed the bus companies to strengthen their services and a further 170 buses were added to inter-city routes. He called on the workers to return to negotiation immediately in order to avoid disruption to passengers, adding „It is unacceptable that the workers should use the passengers as their hostages in order to force the management not to carry out the new rolling stock maintenance programme, which is vital for an improved service.“

- On 25.09 the conflict between the Railways' Union and the Management and the Government quickly spiralled into a crisis and while the Labour Tribunal ordered an immediate return to work and to continue with negotiations, many workers did not respect this ruling and although train services did keep running - with some disruptions - the new line to Rishon LeZion West did not open as planned, as the unions prevented an opening train from reaching the station. This was an embarrassing moment for Transport & Roads Minister Mr. Yisrael Katz who arrived there on the morning of the 25th. with the Railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir and found only an empty station with neither a train nor passengers! Katz announced that he does not intend to surrender to those who are punishing the public in order to push their own interests.

Meanwhile passengers began preparing claims to the Supreme Court concerning the brutality of the railway workers on the previous Thursday, when they forced passengers to disembark from trains outside stations.

It was later announced that Mr. Zafrir had asserted his leadership by instructing a complete halt to all services due to the contempt of the law shown by the Union's Chairman Mrs. Edrei. Only after she confirmed her commitment to obey the law did traffic return to regular schedules - including on the new line to Rishon LeZion West. The behaviour of Mrs.

Edrei has caused some anger amongst rail workers, who consider that it will affect them more than others.

On the 26.09 Minister Katz instructed that nine members of the union should be suspended and may lose their jobs. On 27.09 some drivers - and later some inspectors too - then began instead to report being ill - initially no traffic disruptions were noticeable but this changed. The move was to protest against the suspension of union members and to call the management to return to negotiations. The matter was referred to the Labour Tribunal again; they asked the IR management for a response, which was „We are ready to negotiate, but the suspensions remain in force.“ Finally the Labour Tribunal decided to ‚suspend the suspensions‘, provided that both sides would have kept to negotiations and a settlement is reached by 24.10.2011.

The new line to Rishon LeZion West was then finally opened formally by Minister Katz and Mr. Zafrir by riding on a train to Tel Aviv at 09.30.

At a special meeting of the Knesset's Economic Affairs Committee on 02.02.2011 there were clashes between the worker's union chairman Mrs. Gila Edrei and representatives of the Transport & Roads' Safety and Finance Ministries. While Mrs. Edrei claimed that the railways' workers can perform the maintenance of the new Bombardier double-deck trains about to arrive 30% cheaper than the manufacturer and described them as „the world's most efficient“; she also blamed Bombardier for supplying defective parts which caused severe accidents. The committee's members were not impressed and claimed that the staff is unable to maintain the new rolling stock properly and are not yet working per ISO which is not tolerable!

In the meantime, no existing employees would suffer and more will be recruited.

Whether the workers are indeed so efficient is a separate matter; however, during the past three days (2-4. Oct.) there were several cases of trains being stuck on the Yavne East - Rehovot section (still single track), Lod - Qiryat Gat and Modi'in - Tel-Aviv, causing severe delays and hundreds of angry passengers who complained especially about lack of communication from the staff. Some intend to apply to court for compensation and suspect that these events are a part of the struggle between the workers, the management and the ministries.

Minister Katz called for an urgent meeting at his office on 6.10 to discuss the crisis and seek possible solutions.

And see below!

(e). NEW STATION AT NETIVOT.

From a press release of 30.08.2011 by Transport & Road Safety Ministry:- “Good news for the population of southern Israel; IR have just published the tender for building the railway station at the town of Netivot on the 60km. Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line currently under construction at a cost of \$595M and due to be completed in 2015. The station at Sderot is currently under construction at a cost of around \$13M, and the tender for the station at Ofakim (nearer to Beer-Sheva) is to be published soon. The Ministry has instructed the railways to operate services even over only part of the line once the stations are completed and before the entire line is completed.”

(f). OLD JERUSALEM STATION PARK.

From a press release of 04.09.2011 by Jerusalem Municipality: “Today the Mayor of Jerusalem cut the ribbon to open the urban recreation activity linear park running on what used to be the alignment of the historical railway line to Jerusalem, between the historic station and the new Malkha station.” Currently only 2km. of the eventual planned 7km. have been opened. This is however a sad end for such an historic and important section of railway.

(g). EXHIBITION SYNERGY.

From 21-22.09.2011 the Energitech Exhibition on Renewable Energy and increased energy efficiency was held at the Tel Aviv Exhibition centre near the Universita station; those showing rail tickets got free entry.

(h). STAFF REINSTATEMENT.

From ‘de Pers’ (Dutch) 11.09.2011.

A brief note states that IR has been compelled to reinstate 45 Arab workers who had been dismissed because they had never done military service.

(i). HIGH HOLY DAYS TIMETABLE.

Wednesday 28.09.2011 was the evening of the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah) - trains operated as on a normal summer Friday. On 29.09, 30.09 and 01.10.11 which are holidays and Shabbat no trains would run. On Saturday night 01.10.11 trains would commence in the evening as on a regular summer Saturday timetable. On this night Israel converts at midnight to Winter Time!

On Yom Kippur, Friday and Saturday, trains would run till 11.00 as on regular Friday winter timetables, then traffic would gradually wind down and cease.

(j). INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS:

From a Press Release of 24.10.2011 by Isra-Rail Co. “During November 2011 various infrastructure works are to be carried out, and the following changes to passenger traffic will consequently be necessary:-

(i). NAHARIYYA LINE

As part of double-tracking the Kiryat Motzkin - Nahariyya line the Acre - Nahariyya section will be closed for traffic between 00.01 at 01.11.2011 and Friday 18.11.2011 - including the afternoon. Traffic will therefore resume on the Saturday night. The railways will provide bus shuttle services between the stations in both directions. Works between Kiryat Motzkin and Acre will be completed during 2012; works between Acre and Nahariyya will be completed in 2013.

On Friday 04.11.2011 only the section between Haifa Hof-HaCarmel and Nahariyya will be closed and all trains will start or terminate at Hof HaCarmel.

(ii). LEVEL CROSSING AT TZORA:

Due to upgrading a level crossing over a road near the Tzora settlement on the Jerusalem line just west of Beit Shemesh station, there will be no services between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem on Friday 04.11.2011. The works include road widening paving the sidewalks, paving the road shoulders, building a traffic island, installing flashing lights for warning traffic, improving and upgrading lighting, and upgrading the drainage.

(iii). LOD STATION EXPANSION

Due to works building a third platform at Lod station, the additional rush-hours only rail shuttle service between HaRishonim (Rishon leTzion East) and Lod, consisting of seven to eight trains daily, will not be operated between 00.01 on Monday 07.11.2011 and Tuesday 20.12.2011 inclusive. The railways will provide free bus shuttle services between HaRishonim and Moshe Dayan (Rishon leTzion West) stations. The regular trains between Tel Aviv-Hahaganah and HaRishonim stations will operate as usual.

(iv). BEER-SHEVA LINE.

From a public announcement of 25.11.2011 on the railways' website:

„Due to intensive infrastructure works to be carried out in order to promote the „Beer-Sheva in 50 minutes“ project, the lines between Lod, Beer-Sheva, Dimona, and Jerusalem will be closed between Friday, 02.12.2011 and Friday,

16.12.2012; traffic will resume on Saturday night, 17.12.2011. Consequently, there will be no trains to/from the following stations: Kiryat-Gat, Lehavim/Rahat, Beer-Sheva North/University, Beer-Sheva Central, Dimona, Beit-Shemesh, Jerusalem-the Biblical Zoo, and Jerusalem-Malkha.

The trains which are regularly operating between Nahariya/Haifa and Beer-Sheva will start/terminate at Tel-Aviv Hahagana station, except the following northbound trains starting at Lod station:

On Sundays at 06:33 (train No. 100); at 08:33. (train No. 102); at 11:33. (train No. 104); on Mondays to Thursdays at 06:33 (train No. 100).

The trains operated on Sundays only (marked on the timetable with a yellow background) to/from Beer-Sheva are cancelled, and instead, trains from Hahagana station northwards, will be operated to/from Modi'in.

The Sunday Only train which leaves Modi'in Central at 07:57 is cancelled and instead there will be a train departing at 08:03 and terminating at Kiryat-Motzkin.

The Sunday Only train regularly leaving Kiryat-Motzkin to Beer-Sheva at 07:50 is cancelled, and instead, the train will leave the same station at the same time, and terminating at Modi'in Central.

The train regularly leaving Modi'in Central at 06:57 between Sundays and Thursdays, is cancelled and temporarily replaced by the train leaving Modi'in Central at 07:03 terminating at Haifa Central-The 8.

According to the instructions of the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry, bus shuttle services will be provided between Lehavim/Rahat and Tel-Aviv Savidor Central stations between Sunday, 04.12.11 and Thursday, 08.12.11 and between 11.12.11 and 15.12.11 accordingly, at 06:00, 07:00, and 08:00, and at 16:30, 17:30, and 18:30 from Tel-Aviv Savidor Central to Lehavim/Rahat stations."

(k). RESIGNATION OF MINISTRY GENERAL MANAGER HAREL.

From a press release of 09.10.2011 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"The present Ministry's General Manager (General in Reserves) Mr. Dan Harel has announced that he will be ending his job at the end of this month after being there no more than a year; Minister Katz has thanked him for the excellent service he gave to the state, particularly on improving railway safety; also the railway workers agreed at last to fulfill all the paragraphs in the safety requirement; the name of his successor will be announced soon.

Unofficially, the reason for Mr. Harel's resignation were the disagreements with Mr. Katz regarding his offer for the immediate creation of an upper authority for public transport, as well as such

regional authorities at the greater areas of Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa; Minister Katz supported the idea, but was ready to implement it only after the reform in public transport will be completed as well as the full operation of the Jerusalem LRV.

(l). EVEN RABBIS ARE NOT IMMUNE.

On 08.10.2011 a person was killed by a train at the station of Hadera West. The person, a well known Rabbi in Hadera, was returning from bathing in the nearby Mediterranean Sea; the reason for his behaviour is still being investigated.

(m). SALARIES.

11.10.2011: According to the person in charge in the Finance Ministry regarding wages in the public sector, those of the 44 senior railway managers went up last year by 22% while the other 2,030 workers did not enjoy anything. He also added that all the steps made by the union against the management and the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry has caused all the agreements already signed to be put on hold.

(n). NEW MANAGEMENT STYLE: THE GLOVES ARE OFF!

The IR new General Manager, Mr. Boaz Zafir has commenced to 'show his muscles'. He informed four senior staff - the Deputy General Managers of Passenger Services, Rolling Stock, Safety and Operations - that their services are no longer required. All four of these persons were members of the Workers Union, were not very skilled in their tasks and had often caused disruption to the daily work. The new situation has been described as the 'end of the clan regime' and as the beginning of 'a sort of Arab Spring on the Railways'.

But the power games continue. On 18.10.2011 a locomotive travelling at 55km/h hit a five-car Siemens push/pull formation in the Haifa area, causing some €5M of damage, of which the loco is defined as a total loss while the coaches - if repairable - will have to be sent to Germany for this. The driver has been suspended but the Union has taken the strange step of instructing him not to cooperate with the investigation. The Union is also worried about the reorganization programme on which development activity will be separated from current activity - there would be three subsidiaries, for cargo, business development and electrification. The Union is concerned that this would be the first step towards privatisation, which it would of course oppose.

(o). ACCIDENT - A ROUGH KISS.

Re. the above:- On 18th Oct.
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a Siemens rake got stuck due to some technical fault in Lev Hamifratz station. Passengers were transferred to another train and had already left when an assisting loco was called from nearby Haifa Depot. The Driver of the assisting loco ignored several regulations and smashed into the standing rake, wrecking beyond repair driving trailer 807 and also putting the engine (JT42BW bo. 772) out of use. The Driver and another man in the cab were slightly injured.

Some pictures can be found here: <http://hnn.co.il/gallery15980.html>
The damage is however even greater than it seems here in these pictures.

(p). PROGRESS ON THE A1 TUNNELS.

On Tuesday 01.11.2011 a party including Transport & Roads Safety Minister Yisrael Katz, the IR General Manager Boaz Zafir and other senior staff and journalists (including our reporter Aharon Gazit) visited the various construction sites on the A1 fast link to Jerusalem. It was particularly interesting to see the first 1.25km. twin bored tunnel already completed between Sha'ar HaGai and Yitla Creek. The two German TBM recently arrived, their assembly will commence soon, and within two months they will start boring the longest twin bored tunnel - 11.6km. long - on this line. The third TBM will arrive later.

Additional work already completed is the excavation of the vertical shaft up to a depth of 80 metres under street level at the future Jerusalem Binyanei HaUma station.

Minister Katz announced that train services will start at the beginning of 2017 with a forecast of 4M journeys already in the first year of operation. [We hope 'Harakevet' will continue to be published long enough to see if this becomes true! Ed.]

(q). ACCIDENT AT HADERA.

Sybil wrote: „On 7.11.2011 an all-terrain vehicle (ATV - Hebrew 'Tractoron') crossed the main line near Hadera in a place where it shouldn't have, and overturned on the track. A train (formed of an IC3 unit) smashed into it, killing two ATV riders. The line was closed for several hours. My translation of report on Ynet: „A train hit two members of one family, a man aged 58 and his son-in-law aged 28, when they tried to release an all-terrain vehicle that was stuck on the railway line between Hadera and Emek Hefer. The 10-year-old daughter of one of the men witnessed the accident. A Magen David Adom team called to the site of the accident confirmed they had been killed. Following the accident, train service between Haifa and Tel Aviv was suspended.

A Hadera police spokesman said that two ATVs with four riders including a father and his daughter, crossed the line from west to east. The driver of one of the ATVs got stuck between the two tracks, and his father came to help him. Apparently the two didn't notice a train approaching from the south, that hit them and threw them a considerable distance into the air. Train service was seriously disrupted..." etc. etc.

Here is Ynet's own English version of the story:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-4145195.00.html>"

(r). STRIKE.

On 07.11.2011 there was a general strike on all public services for 4 hours between 06:00 and 10:00. As far as the railways were concerned, the first train left Acre station at 10:14. and arrived at Modi'in Central at 12:29. The absence of train (as well as bus) services caused disruptions and bottle necks, but generally the public behaved in a restrained manner.

The strike was originally planned to last at least one day as part of identification with the sub-contractors' workers who do not enjoy any social rights, but the Labor Tribunal instructed the General Labour Union to shorten the strike.

(s). NEW LOCOMOTIVES AND STOCK ARRIVALS:

From an IR press release of 07.11.2011: „On Wednesday, 02.11.2011, two of the first new Vossloh Spain-built EMD Euro4000 diesel-electric locomotives and five Siemens-built single-deck push/pull carriages were unloaded at the port of Haifa; Five new Bombardier-built double-deck carriages joined them on 07.11.2011. The new locos, worth EUR 60 Million, will keep arriving during the following weeks. They are the most powerful locomotives (more than 4000 HP output) on IR and conform to emission standards Stage IIIA and Tier 3.

Once the delivery of these locomotives is completed, the railways will start receiving 15 additional passenger EMD Euro3200 dedicated purpose-built locos manufactured according to the railways' requirements, capable for 160 km/h including with double-deck trains; they are equipped with AC traction motors.

Regarding the double-deck cars, their delivery – a total of 150 carriages including power cars/driving trailers - will be completed during 2012. They are of an upgraded type, equipped with the most advanced fire protection standards, additional sensors for safe door operations,

and electrical sockets for each seat.

The delivery of the new rolling stock will enable the railways to operate more trains with more flexibility, increased speed, and additional 11,000 new seats.

By 2014 all double-tracking works will be completed and train frequency will increase."

(t): CHINESE TO BUILD TUNNELS TO CARMIEL:

On 08.09.2011 a press release: - „Israeli-Chinese Partnership wins tender bid to construct railway tunnels to Carmiel

The Israel National Roads Company notified Danya Cebus and its partner, the giant Chinese company CCECC, that they have won the bid to bore the Gilon tunnels for the Acre-Carmiel railway line. Five groups and partnerships of Israeli and foreign companies participated in the tender published by the Israel National Roads Company for boring the tunnels, with a total length of 10 kilometres.

The bid by the Israeli-Chinese partners Danya-Cebus and the quarrying company China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) prevailed over the four other groups participating in the tender: Hofrei Hasharon and German Max Boegl, Minrav and Russian MOS Metrostroy, Eyal Sela and Rolzur Tunneling and Shafir Engineering and Italian Impresa Pizzarotti. In the past, CCECC executed the excavation work for the Carmel tunnels in Haifa.

The tender for constructing the Gilon tunnels, through which the Acre-Carmiel railway will pass, was published using the Design-Build method, namely: the tender winner is required to complete design and construction of the tunnels within three years. The pair of tunnels will be constructed in the Galilee, at the bottom of the 380 meters high mount Gilon.

The Acre-Carmiel railway project includes a 23 km double-track line, to run parallel to road 85, as well as construction of two railway stations at Achihud and Carmiel. The cost of the entire project is estimated at about \$773 million; the total cost of tunnel boring is estimated at \$276 million. This project is relatively complex from the engineering aspect, due to the fact that in addition to the two main tunnels, an additional 18 connecting tunnels, located 250 meters apart, will be bored to provide easy access for emergency evacuation.

The Acre-Carmiel railway line was transferred for execution by the Israel National Roads Company as part of the Netivei Israel plan, designed to create a network of roads and railway lines that will bring the periphery closer to the centre.

For additional information, please contact: Yevgeny Artsev at yevgenya@iroads.co.il <mailto:yevgenya@iroads.co.il> „

(u). CHINESE INVOLVEMENT IN EILAT LINE PROGRESS??

On Y-Net on 06.11.2011 was a report that China will be involved in the construction of the 180km. long railway line from Nahal Tzin on the Dead Sea and through the Negev to Eilat on the Red Sea. Transport Minister Katz met with his Chinese counterpart in Peking in order to discuss this, amongst other infrastructure projects worth a total of 20 Billion Euros.

(v). FIRE DETECTION.

In the past eight years several fires have occurred on trains - particularly on Bombardier IC3 Flexi-liner dmsu, and more specifically in 2010. The railways have now ordered from a well known Israeli company called Lehavot (flames) fire detection systems. The big question being asked is why it has taken so long to do this, since during this period drivers, inspectors and other employees have warned of such a need. Even more ridiculous is the fact that a special committee appointed by Minister Katz, and headed by Prof. Heckart from the Technion (Israeli High Technical Institute at Haifa), has not yet – after 18 months – come to any conclusion, though they mentioned that the maintenance level of the rolling stock is very poor.

(w). NO ALTERNATIVE TO THE ALTERNATIVE!

Sunday 04.12.2011 was a problematic day for transportation in Israel: a bus providing the service between Beit-Shemesh and Jerusalem, started suddenly to burn, and while nobody was hurt, people spent for more than 2 hours waiting for the road to be cleared, and ironically the old line to Jerusalem, which could have been an alternative to the road, was closed – as was the line to Beer-Sheva - due to infrastructure works! The line closures caused severe congestion at Beer-Sheva and Tel-Aviv bus stations, proving again the importance of the railways!

(x). JOURNEY TIMES REDUCED.

Upon completion of works, not only the services to/from Beer-Sheva will be much improved; the journey to/from Jerusalem on the old line will also be cut by no less than 20 minutes - this being achieved mainly to the improvements on the Lod - Na'an Junction section which both lines share; the service to Jerusalem - and particularly to Beit-Shemesh – could be further improved, should the government decide to double-track the Na'an Junction - Beit-Shemesh section.

(v). FARES REDUCTIONS.

It seems that both the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry and Isra-Rail Company Ltd. are competing on the press release 01.12.2011, according to which, from 01.12.2011, students will enjoy fare reductions of 30% by buying return tickets and 33% by buying a 12 Journeys tickets.

From 01.01.2012, students holding a Semester Ticket or a Yearly Season ticket will enjoy a 50% reduction; from this date, senior citizens will also enjoy 50% reduction; women from the age of 60 (compared with 62 so far) and men from the age of 65 (compared with 67 so far). The reductions are identical to those introduced on buses.

95:05.

TENDERS.

A. (i). Tender No. BN/KB/02/11: Construction of the Railway Station at Netivot. Works on this tender are to be carried out on the alignment of the Netivot - Beer-Sheva line section between cutting sections 302 and 284, and will include also a new alignment for the nearby creek. To include: Earthworks, drainage channels, parking areas, supporting walls, sealing, pedestrian subway, platform canopies, signs, delivery and installation of platform furniture, finishing works, ceilings, floating floor, technical systems, external paving, gardening and environmental development, special wall plating, special finishing of frontage, glass walls, elevators and escalators, co-ordination of works, allowances, preparatory works including unveiling, demolishing, removal of waste materials, replanting of geofittes, treatment of plantations, acoustic barrier walls, access roads, railway communication systems etc.

The tender comprises the following structures:-

- 01: Monitoring and Control and Transformer buildings.
- 02: Railway Station Building and Pedestrian Subway.
- 03: Platforms.
- 04: Track Infrastructure works.
- 05: Relocation of a Sewage Line.
- 06: Parking.
07. Direction of Works.

The project is divided into two implementation stages, each stage to go to a different bidder.

The first stage will include track infrastructure, platform foundations, underground structure between cut 284 and 302 and rebuilding. This stage is planned for 72 weeks. (! - Why so long? Ed.)

The second stage will include: Station

building, control building, the station systems, parking and access road; this will last 71 weeks. Latest date for submission of proposals: 30.10.2011.

(ii). Tender MS/RC/2011/14: Operating a Kosher Fast-Food selling point at Tel-Aviv Savidor / Central station. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Submissions by 21.09.2011.

(iii). Tender No. MH/RS/02/01: A framework agreement for the supply of Fixed Computers (work stations) with an option for extension of additional 24 months to be installed at all Railways' sites. Submissions by 21.09.2011.

(iv). Tender No. CA/MT/03/11: Provision of Consulting Services for Pension Security. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date: 22.09.2011.

(v). Tender No. HN/KB/10/11: An Executive Manager to manage the A1 fast rail link to Jerusalem. To include a full follow-up of the project until its completion. Latest date for submissions: 27.09.2011.

(vi). Tender No. HN/RC/02/10: For Manufacture and Supply of KS Rail Fastening Systems for Wooden Sleepers. The bidder should have experience of supplying 10,000 such KS rail fastenings to ISO 9001-2008, submissions 5th. 2011.

(vii). Tender No. HN/RC/08/11: For Supply of Buffer Stops for Rail Tracks. The bidder must demonstrate experience in manufacture and supply of friction buffer stops with hydraulic elements capable of stopping a mass of over 2,000 tons or a train from a speed of at least 10km/h with a maximum movement distance of 15m. Bids by 5.12.2011.

(viii). Tender No. HN/KB/08/11: Landscape Development, Gardening and Irrigation works along the Lod-Na'an line. Works include: waste materials removal, weed killing, reworking of soil, drainage, gardening, irrigation, parking area at Ramla station, etc. Implementation time: 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 27.10.2011.

(ix). Tender No. HN/RC/06/11: For Manufacture and Supply of Glued Insulated Joints for Rail Tracks. Types 54E1 and 60E1/60E2. The bidder must be certified for Quality Control system and must have supplied at least 400 such kits in each of 2008-2010. bids by 12.12.2011.

(x). Tender No. BN/KB/06/11: Construction of acoustic walls at Neve

Itamar (north of Netanya station) and near Hadera West station. Works include: Excavation to uncover underground infrastructures, foundations for piling and soil replacement, protection of signalling and communication cables, cast concrete on site, production, supply and installation of pre-stressed panels for the acoustic walls, including noise damping material and external stone plating, sealing, grounding, steel constructions, development, gardening and irrigating, road paving etc.

The tender is divided into two sections. Latest date for proposals: 17.11.2011.

(xi). International Tender No. HF/SR/02/09: Latest date for submission of proposals postponed to 24.11.2011.

(xii). Tender No. TK/SR/14/11: Providing Cellular Telephone services for railway workers and their families (also retired workers). The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to 72 months; each extension of 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 15.11.2011.

(xiii). Tender No. MC/SR/07/11: Supplying Diesel Fuel and Kerosene to the railway's various refuelling sites all over the network. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 12 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 07.11.2011.

(xiv). Tender No. MS/R/15/2011: Operating a General Store at Rehovot Station. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submissions: 23.11.2011.

(xv). Tender No. MH/SR/15/11: Supply, installation, operation, and maintenance of Yi-Fi services on 300 vehicles, more than 42 stations, as well as on platforms, halls, and passages. The contract is for 60 months with optional extensions of up to additional 60 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 15.12.2011.

(xvi). Tender No. TK/KB/01/11: Upgrading lighting works at the Ashdod Port Classification Yard station. Works include: dismantling the existing lighting elements, supply and installation of new lighting elements, changes at the electrical control board, etc.

The contract consists on the following structures:

- Structure 01 – Electricity works – increasing the number of lighting elements.
- Structure 02 – Ashdod port classification yard station – security infrastructures.
- Structure 03 - Electricity works – replacing

existing lighting posts.

The contract is for 9 months with optional extensions for up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 20.12.2011.

(xvii). Tender No. KS/MT/05/11: Framework agreement for providing Insurance Consulting services. The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions for up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 22.12.2011.

(xviii). Tender No. MS/TC/07/11: Providing Consultancy and Schedule Control services for the Railways' development programmes. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 29.11.2011.

(xix). Tender No. TK/KB/02/11: Communication works on the Lod - Na'an - Kiryat-Gat - Beer-Sheva line.

Works include: infrastructure works and laying cables, earthworks, excavation, filling, drainage, roadbed and ballast, delivery, distribution and tamping of ballast in varying thickness, removal of construction disposal material and debris, etc. Concrete & reinforced concrete works, treating existing systems, providing main contractor safety services for other contractors to be employed simultaneously on the same alignment.

Work will be divided between 2 areas: the Northern area from Lod station (inclusive) up to Kiryat-Gat (inclusive); the Southern area from Kiryat-Gat station (exclusive) and up to Beer-Sheva North/University station (inclusive).

The intention is to select a separate winning bidder for each area. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions for up to additional 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 12.12.2011.

(xx). International tender No. HN/RC/07/11: For Manufacture and Supply of Trailers for IR - two trailers with three side-tipping platforms, and two trailers for conveying vehicles and equipment. Submissions by 06.02.2012. [NB: This probably means Permanent-Way Trolleys, not Trailers. Ed.]

(xxi). Tender No. MS/RC/16/11: A 23000 sq.m. real estate site for rental adjacent to the Ramla - Na'an junction section alignment. The contract refers to the mentioned area known as „Ta'avura Site“, used to belong to the sole distributors of DAF trucks and buses; this moved to the other side of the nearby Road No. 44. The contract is for 24 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 26.12.2012.

B. TENDERING COMPLETED.

(i). The following Israeli companies have been selected as winners of Tender No. BT/RC/04/09 for supply of Evacuation and Rescue Equipment:
- Ritkuh (welding) Safety Technologies Ltd. for Breathing devices worth \$151,500.
- Amos Gazit for Lukas cutters and spreaders worth \$42,600.
- Ofer Fire-Fighting and Rescue Ltd.; no details available for the \$155,000 contract.

(ii). The following companies have been selected as winners for Tender No. HN/KB/06/11 for rescue excavation at the Hermes archaeological site on the Rehovot - B'nei Darom alignment:-
- I.C. Archaeology Ltd., a contract worth \$151,000.
- Shavit A.A. Consultants Ltd., a contract worth \$752,637.

(iii). An Israeli local computer services company named Dorcom Ltd., has been awarded Tender No. MH/RS/02/11 worth \$0.193 million annually for supplying work stations (PCs and screens).

(iv). The Israeli Magen David Adom (equivalent of the Red Cross) Organization, has been awarded Tender No. LO/RC/06/11 worth \$69000.00 for the supply and maintaining First Aid kits during the coming two years.

(v). An Israeli local construction company named Gili & Yoel Azariya Ltd. has been awarded Tender No. HN/KB/05/11 worth \$43.6M for building Structure No. 100, intended as a depot for maintaining double-deck trains at Beer-Sheva North/University station.

(vi). The Israeli local construction company Ashtrom has been awarded Tender No. HN/KB/01/2011, worth \$85.2M, for design and carrying-out of earthworks, bridges, infrastructures and landscaping on the Netivot - Goral Junction section of the Beer Sheva line. (Tender No. 8)

(vii). The local company RAZ Agriculture, Maintenance, and Development Ltd. has been awarded the contract of tender No. TM/KB/01/11 for maintenance works around railway tracks in the north of Israel.

(viii). The local company Orgad-H.S.N. has been awarded the contract of tender No. MS/RC/2011/14 worth \$86,000 for operating a fast-food store at Tel-Aviv Savidor Central station.

(ix). The local company Sea-mall taxis, has been awarded the contract of tender No. MS/RC/2011/13 worth \$17,000 for operating taxi services to/from Ashdod-Ad-Halom railway station.

(x). The local company Café Café Israel, has been awarded the contracts of tenders Nos. MS/RC/2011/10 & MS/RC/2011/8 worth \$650 each for every 10,000 passengers (boarding and un-boarding) for providing coffee and bakery products at Rishon-Le-Zion-West, Yavne West (to be opened on February 2012), and Holon Gate stations.

(xi). The local company Sheniv has been awarded the contract of tender No. MS/RC/2011/9 worth \$650 each for every 10,000 passengers (boarding and un-boarding) for providing coffee and bakery products at Bat-Yam Yoseftal and Komemiut stations.

(xii). The local company Kadima taxis, has been awarded the contract for tender No. MS/RC/2011/6 worth \$23,000 for providing taxi services to/from Beit-Yehoshua station.

95:06.

LIGHT RAIL.

A. JERUSALEM.

(i). By courtesy of „FROM JERUSALEM“, a Newsletter written and published by Walter Zanger in Jerusalem, Volume 14/No. 7, September 2011:

„CLANG CLANG CLANG WENT THE TROLLEY

That was an adventurous day indeed! It was August 19th., the first day the Light Rail actually went into service. After seven years of building (the Chinese would have built it in two!) and no end of cock-ups — some still unresolved — it was working and we rode on it.

The group was on the Mount of Olives, enjoying the lookouts and sort-of listening to me go on about hills and valleys and boundaries and walls, and all that stuff. Then Ami, our driver, took us north past Mt. Scopos and let us off down at the bottom, right at the station of Ammunition Hill. Then the train came and we actually got on. That was exciting — we were part of history! — and I was excited. The train was clean, quiet, and peaceful.

That ride was also useful, because Friday the 19th was the 3rd Friday of Ramadan

and the Old City was jammed full of Arabs coming to pray. The Police, therefore, had closed off every possible way to get to Jaffa Gate, which is where we had to go to continue our tour. There was no way Ami was going to get our bus anywhere near it, but the light rail let us off at City Hall, which is up at the NW corner of the Old City. A bit farther into the city than it should be, but all-in-all an easy walk to the Gate. So the train saved our day!

I have ridden it twice since. Once when I was on a time limit, but that was a mistake. Because one major problem yet unsolved is the computer program that automatically gives the train right-of way at intersections. That's not happening yet, so the train kept stopping at red lights, and the actual ride was slow.

The third time was for fun, and that was interesting too. Because it was still August. Schools were still on vacation. And the ride was (still is) free of charge. The machines to charge and accept your card aren't up and running yet. So a ride on the train was a perfect, and free!, excursion for parents and little children. Most of whom, it turned out, were from the haredi community. We got a ton of women pushing strollers, a lot of pregnant women, a lot of women holding little babies, (some of who needed - very badly - a change of diapers!) and many who were all of the above. The train was noisy, crowded, smelly, and uncomfortable. And still slow. Passage was difficult for the security guys walking on and off through the cars.

Paula was on it yesterday, in the first week of September. Things have got a lot better now. The kids are back in school (Praise the Lord!), the ride is still slower than it needs to be because of the traffic lights, but it is much more pleasant. And we have been into the new parking garage they installed under the Calder sculpture at Mt Herzl. Very smart, indeed; clean and new. An elevator at the 3 underground levels goes up right onto the train station. Excellent.

All in all, very promising. It's true that they still haven't learned how to spell Herzl (there's no E in it, dummy!) and don't know that "Denia Square" should be "Denmark Square." The crawl inside each car that tells you the next stop is vaguely off sync, so you don't know if the stop displayed is the next one or the one you just left. But these are small things, I guess. We will wait until these small things get fixed, which they possibly will, and the big things too, which definitely will (sez who?). Until they get the traffic lights computer fixed up, the money machines working, and the busses off the streets. And hope the Messiah doesn't come before that to bring an end to history just when we have finally got the damn thing working, and the Palestinians don't screw up our country any more. Then life in Jerusalem will be truly grand."

(ii). BUSINESSES RESUMING.

According to an announcement by the Jerusalem Municipality of 18.09.2011, 115 merchants whose businesses had been seriously affected by the LRV works would soon return thanks to a project implemented by both the Municipality and the Ministry for

Industry & Commerce, at a cost of around \$420M; it is expected that the total number of such 'returnees' will reach 200, which is considered a good sign for the LRV and the renaissance of the city centre. [Ed. adds: It is not quite clear what this means. Was an additional sum of money necessary to persuade shopkeepers to reopen their shops? Or is this compensation for lost business? From whose budget does this sum come?]

(iii). U.I.T.P. VISITS.

From a press release of 22.09.2011 by Jerusalem Municipality:

"The U.I.T.P. (International Association for Public Transport) is today holding for the first time its professional conference on Light Rail Vehicles. About forty specialists from around the world have arrived for the two-day event, during which they will visit the project along its whole alignment as well as the depot. The visitors have already appreciated the determination of Government and Municipality to construct the LRV including additional lines, which they perceive as essential for the city in order to create an efficient transport system. The UITP Chairman for LRV's, Mr. Joao Manuel Relvas Pena Rebelo of Portugal, said that the recently-opened Jerusalem system is the youngest in the world and joins 1,000km of other LRV lines already working successfully world-wide, with another fifty lines currently in various stages of promotion or construction.

Both the Transport & Road Safety Ministry's Deputy General Manager Mr. Alex Langer and the Jerusalem Transportation Plan General Manager Mr. Nadav Meroz said that in addition to the satisfaction at the conference the assistance from the participants was substantial; they advise the project to learn from the performance of the Tenerife LRV running on a 9% gradient as a model for the planned extension of the Red Line from Mt. Herzl to Hadassah Ein Karem Hospital."

(iv). BUS ROUTE CHANGES AND COORDINATION.

From 'Jerusalem Post', by Melanie Lidman. 05.10.2011.

"Jerusalem's bus system will undergo major changes in two months as the light rail reaches full operation, transportation officials announced Wednesday. The heart of the changes is a switch from long bus routes that wind through multiple neighborhoods as they cross the city, to shorter bus routes that bring residents from each neighborhood to the major transportation arteries of the light rail or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lanes. The light rail and the BRT lanes will make an X through the city, dividing the city into four quadrants. The changes will first be rolled out in 17 neighbourhoods in the southwest part of the city, including Rehavia, Kiryat Yovel, Beit Hakerem, and Ein Kerem. It could take up to a year for the full changes to come into effect across the city.

Twenty-two bus lines will be affected in the first stage of changes,

roughly 40 percent of the bus lines in the city. Agripas Street, near the Mahaneh Yehuda market, which has long suffered from a gridlock of buses, will decrease from 16 bus lines to 8 bus lines. The shorter bus routes mean travellers may have to take a bus, the light rail, and another bus to arrive at their destination.

Transportation officials claim that, despite the multiple switches, the complete overhaul of the public transportation system will actually make it quicker and more efficient for people to move about the city. Shorter, locally-concentrated routes mean buses can reach previously under-served areas such as local commercial centers or community centers, said Dror Ganon, the deputy director-general for public transport at the Transportation Ministry.

Long-needed technological upgrades are a major part of the "transportation revolution," as officials have termed it, in an attempt to capitalize on the summer social protests. Starting Thursday, travellers will be able to plan their trips via a website, www.jet.org.il, complete with maps, which reflects the most recent bus changes along with bus schedules and walking routes. The service will eventually be translated into English, Arabic, and Russian, as well as created into downloadable applications for smart phones. Initially it will only be available in Hebrew. More than 30 'smart stops', which announce when the next bus will arrive, have already been installed, and there will eventually be 250 smart stops, including the light rail, over the next 18 months.

"We take full responsibility that public transportation will be a better alternative than private cars," said Zohar Zoller, the advisor to the mayor for transportation issues. "The roads can't physically be enlarged, therefore the only option is to improve public transportation. This is simple mathematics," he said."

And: From a joint press release of 04.10.2011 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry, Jerusalem Transportation Master-Plan team, and the Municipality:

These three bodies have completed their preparations for operating the "South-West Pulse" - a combined network of the LRV and 22 feeder bus lines in all the neighborhoods between Kiryat-Menakhem and Kiryat-Moshe.

The "pulse" is to take place within eight weeks and the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry's precondition for this is that CityPass will indeed succeed in improving the service level and the LRV frequency to 10 minute intervals.

According to the planning, CityPass will continue its efforts to overcome the technical problems, complete the installation of additional smart traffic lights for LRV priority at junctions, and will improve service frequency; This will take time, but the combined lines will enable better deployment of services all over the system.

The improvements to 22 neighbourhood buses will include conversion to feeding services to enable the public to reach the LRV easily; some of the lines will

become shorter with increased frequency, while also offering more focussed services within the neighbourhoods such as clinics, schools, shopping centers, etc.

Transport & Roads' Safety Minister Mr. Yisrael Katz has decided on introducing a single subsidized fare of about \$1.70 all over the Great Jerusalem Area and 90 minutes time to change lines between the buses and between them and the LRV, by using the multi-line card already used by 400,000 people. Two months after introducing the „Pulse“, the whole new transportation network will start operation including: full operation of the LRV at 6 minute intervals, 6 BRT lines, reorganizing of all other lines, and full ticketing as well as electronic real time information boards at all 1,600 LRV and bus stations.

(v). TICKETING ISSUES.

Sybil Ehrlich has sent a report which is worth citing in full, if only to show future generations how Planners Plan.

“First, to explain what is meant by the ‘ticket’ in ‘Harakevet’ 94:06 (vi). It is a ‘smart card’ called Rav-Kav - loosely translated as ‘Multi-Line’, which is being introduced throughout the country as a means of paying for public transport. We’ve had them in Beit Shemesh for almost three years, since Superbus took over the buses in this area. The same card is valid everywhere, provided it’s been ‘loaded’ with the appropriate ‘plan’. It has a photo of the owner and his/her name, and can be used only by that person. (There are also ‘anonymous’ Rav-Kav cards that can be used by anyone, but they don’t offer any discounts.)

Since January 2009 I have had on my Rav-Kav a ‘Hofshi Hodshi’ monthly unlimited-ride ticket from Beit Shemesh to Jerusalem, which comes with a free (paper) monthly unlimited ticket for Egged buses within Jerusalem. I give the bus driver the cost of the monthly ticket, he puts the ticket on the computerised machine in the bus, and it’s ‘loaded’ as a ‘Hofshi Hodshi’ for that route and that time period. There are other options: a 10-local ride ticket, or whatever. (There is no option to put on a sum of money and use it as you like till the money runs out, as with an Oyster card in London). Each time you get on a bus, you put your card on the reader, and it sees that you have a monthly unlimited, or whatever.

Using the same card I got a ‘Hofshi Yomi’ Daily Unlimited ticket for Tel Aviv, for the day I wanted to ride around on TA buses. The reader thingy on the Tel Aviv buses acknowledged the ‘Hofshi Yomi’ for that day, and couldn’t read - or didn’t care - that simultaneously on the same card I had a ‘Hofshi Hodshi’ for Beit Shemesh to Jerusalem. A few weeks ago I saw people using Rav-Kav cards on Jerusalem city buses, so out of curiosity I tried putting my Rav-Kav card on the reader. It flashed ‘not valid’, because I had not activated it specifically for Jerusalem city buses. No problem, I showed the paper ticket to the driver. All fine and dandy.

Now what about the light rail? Rides are still free because the Transport

Ministry hasn’t yet figured out how to do the ticketing!! (Unbelievable but true. A few months ago I put on my hat as a reporter for ‘In Jerusalem’ (the ‘Jerusalem Post’ local supplement) and e-mailed my questions on the topic to the ministry spokesman.

How will cards be activated for the light rail? if you have a monthly unlimited for the buses, will it include the light rail or will you need to pay extra? (In Haifa there are two types of ‘Hofshi Hodshi’, for buses only or including the Carmelit funicular, which costs extra, so will it be the same in Jerusalem?) When you board a bus you can’t avoid seeing the driver and having to put your card on the reader. But Light Rail trains have 12 doors on each side, and you get on at any door. Inside each door is a card reader, but how will the driver know if you get on at the far end?

The Transport Ministry acknowledged my e-mail and said they would let me know the answers. I’m still waiting. Meanwhile, rides are free!

Not all the trains are operational yet, and there is a problem with the traffic lights, meaning that trams don’t yet have right of way, making journeys somewhat slow. But good value considering, ahem, the price of the ticket!

I am truly staggered that so far (tfu tfu tfu) nobody has been run over by a light rail train.”

[Ed. adds: For non-Hebrew speakers: ‘Hofesh’ means ‘free, unrestricted’ - used also to mean free time, a break; ‘Hodesh’ is Month, ‘Yom’ is Day - so these are various adjectival forms.

Of course, once upon a time one purchased a token or a piece of paper or card which could be stamped, shown and sometimes collected in again. But now we live in a time when people have smartcards and tickets downloaded onto mobile phones - which works wonderfully until the battery runs low or the phone is stolen... The problem is that there are too many smart people out there working in IT who have never actually lived a normal life and learned how a coin or a banknote is also a form of payment, that a credit-card doesn’t always help you to buy something at the market or a newspaper - or a bus ticket... These are the same people who assume that Everyone has access to the Internet, Everywhere, and therefore stop producing printed timetables - not thinking that many of those using public transport are the elderly, the poor or even those with eyesight too weak to drive.... Grrrrr.]

However: From a press release of 07.11.2011 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry: „Starting from 01.12.2011, the concessionaire CityPass will start to charge money for the LRV services which have been free of charge for 3 months of running; this is also the date of introducing the multi-mode smart card enabling travel for 90 minutes both on LRV and buses at about \$2.00. The fare of the unified monthly multi-mode free ticket for the Greater Jerusalem Area has been reduced from \$79.35 to \$61.84.“

B. TEL AVIV.

(i). WORKS TO START.

In a press release on 20.09.2011 Minister Yisrael Katz announced that he had instructed NTA to tell its sub-contractors to commence excavation of shafts immediately.

(ii). NTA Tender 043/2011:

Providing Consultancy and Inspection services for Traffic Safety. Latest date for submission of proposals: 24.10.2011.

(iii). TUNNEL BORING STARTS.

From a press release of 20.09.2011 by ILAV-Public Relations Consultants of the NTA:-

„The first stage of boring the tunnel for the Red Line will start tomorrow. The three shafts for the TBM will be excavated at three points along the alignment; the first shaft to be excavated will be carried out by the Abraham-Yitzhak Co. at the corner of Yehudah Halevi and Herzl Streets (in the old Tel Aviv area) to a depth of 23m below street level. From here the two TBM's will start working eastwards.

The second shaft will be excavated near Galei-Gil parking area in Tel Aviv, and this will be carried out by the Zalman Barashi Company.

The third shaft will be excavated at Petah-Tikva; also for operating two TBM, this will be carried out by the Dania Sibus Co.

All tunnels will be built in the cut-and-cover system. According to forecasts, between 100M and 120M passengers will use the Red Line by 2020.

Until now the NTA has spent several years and \$350M moving various existing infrastructures. Chairman of NTA Mr. Michael Razon said: „Since the government decision to build the Red Line with its own budget, numerous tenders have been published in order to start the works at last. The works which are now commencing are an answer to all the cynics who doubted the ability of a governmental company to carry out such a complex project while keeping to a strict schedule.“

(iv). NTA Tel-Aviv Tender No. 035/2011: Providing characterisation, assimilation and consultation services for ERP PRIORITY system from Ashbel House (an Israeli software company.) The contract validity is to be determined by both sides at the time of signing the contract. Latest date for submissions: 17.11.2011.

(v). Tender No. 051/2011. Providing Production, Installation and Maintenance services for labels on fences. The contract is for three years, bids by 10.11.2011.

(vi). Tender No. 049/2011: Providing design, consulting, and planning control services regarding landscape architecture. Latest date for submission of proposals: 04.12.2011.

(vii). Tender No. 037/2011: Providing consulting, design, and control over design works regarding air condition and ventilation. Latest date for submission of proposals: 30.11.2011.

Israel's "Sandwich" Stations

The reference is not to the food served in the station buffets but to the station locations: many of Israel's newer stations are sandwiched between the "Up" and "Down" lanes (to use railway terminology) of major divided highways. The first such station was Tel Aviv Central, which was moved from its original location to sit in between the lanes of the Ayalon Freeway (Route 20) running through Tel Aviv, so that it could be linked along the Ayalon valley to the lines going south to Jerusalem, Beer Sheba and Ashkelon. This was the only free strip of land cutting through the city available for both the rail lines and the highway. All the other stations on this route (University, Hashalom, Hahagana) were built in the middle of the freeway. Since then, many of the newer stations in other places are in similar sites.

The reason for this is connected to the difference between old established countries and ours. In most of the former (Europe, America etc.) train networks were laid down in the 19th century with stations mainly in the centre of cities and towns, being the principal form of transport at the time. In Israel, the lines laid down in Turkish times, and to some extent during the British mandate, brought some stations to population centres, like Haifa, Jaffa, Binyamina, although others were somewhat outside the centres like Hadera East and Rehovot, due to the constraints on the alignment of routes. The development of major roads meant that the right-of-way for a rail line often came together with the road planning, and putting the line in the middle was the best compromise for access, bridges, etc. Since the major highways are usually express routes, traffic on those roads cannot stop at the station entrance. Access to the station must be independent of those adjacent roads, by streets which cross the highway. This means they must be one of two types: those in which the street which accesses the station crosses above the highway, and those where the highway is above the street. In the latter case, parts of the station platforms are under the bridge carrying the street. In the case of the new line to Rishon LeZion West, all but one of the stations are so located.

There are a number of problems resulting from this type of location. In Hashalom station, in the Ayalon valley, the intense highway traffic noise confined by the bridge makes waiting for a train most unpleasant. Some newer stations have better acoustic protection. Another problem is parking space. Usually this has to be on the other side of the main road, and often there is not much space available. At Rishonim station outside Rishon Letzion, lots of land was provided for free parking just outside the station. Other places were not so fortunate.

Jeremy Topaz



Photo 1 - Wolfson



Photo 2 - Wolfson



Photo 3 - Yoseftal

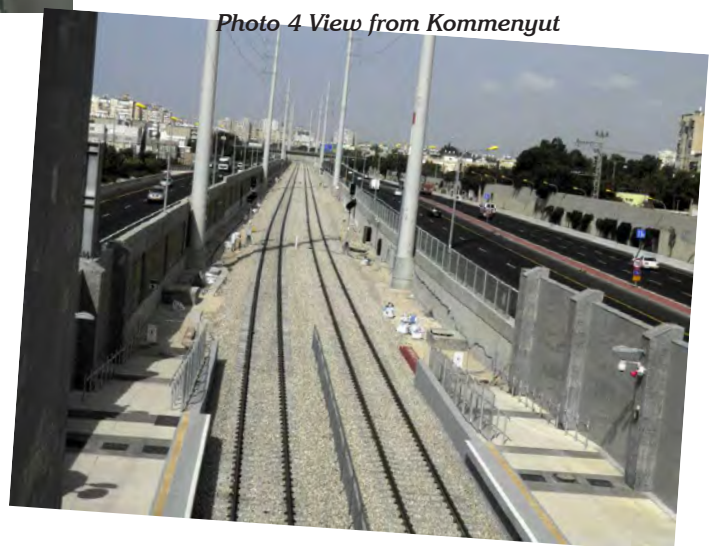


Photo 4 View from Kommenyut



Photo 5 Yoseftal Station

Photos from Jeremy Topaz & Sybil Ehrlich

Photo 6 Yoseftal Platform



A map of the Railway Lines in the Tel-Aviv Area

List of Stations in the Tel Aviv area

No.	Name	Type	In middle of:	Parking nearby
1	Herzliya	regular		Yes
2	Tel Aviv - University	sandwich	Route 20	Yes
3	Tel Aviv - Central (Savidor)	sandwich	Route 20	Yes
4	Tel Aviv - Hashalom	sandwich	Route 20	In adjacent mall
5	Tel Aviv - HaHagana	sandwich	Route 20	Far away
6	Holon Junction	sandwich	Route 20	Yes
7	Holon - Wolfson	sandwich	Route 20	None
8	Bat Yam - Josephtal	sandwich	Route 20	None
9	Bat Yam - Kommemyut	sandwich	Route 20	Only for bikes
10	Rishon Letzion - Moshe Dayan	sandwich	Route 20	Yes
11	Rishon Letzion - Rishonim	sandwich	Route 431	Yes
12	Hod Hasharon - Sokolov	sandwich	Route 531	Yes
13	Kfar Saba - Nordau	sandwich	Route 531	Yes
14	Rosh Ha-Ayin - North	regular		Yes
15	Petah Tikva - Segula	regular		Yes
16	Petah Tikva - Kiryat Arye	regular		?
17	Bnei Brak	regular		Yes
18	Kfar Habad	regular		None
19	Ben Gurion Airport	regular		Yes
20	Lod - Gannei Aviv	regular		Yes
21	Lod	regular		None
22	Ramla	regular		Yes
23	Be'er Ya'akov	regular		Yes
24	Rehovot	regular		Yes

Two of the sandwich stations were designed so that the line could be continued, to join up with other routes. These are Rishonim and Kfar Saba stations. In the case of Rishonim, there was a plan to extend the line to join up with the new West Rishon Letzion line. Israel Railways decided to cancel this project, for what reasons is not clear. This is a pity, because Rishon Lezion is spread over a very long site, from the sea to about 10km inland. This branch would have helped facilitate communication between different parts of the city.

The extension from Kfar Saba to join to the main Haifa line north of Herzliya is still on the cards. It is shown on the IR map of future lines with two stations in Ra'anana. From the photo of Kfar Saba station, it is apparent that the tracks will go over the station entrance, a transport improvement but an aesthetic impairment.

The extension of the line from Rishon - Moshe Dayan to Yavne West is due to open next year. The line runs east of Highway 4, not in the middle, and the station at Yavne West is not a sandwich. The continuation to Ashdod is quite some time away.

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. TURKEY.

(i). CRASH. „On 6.9.2011 there was a head-on crash in Cankurtaran station, Istanbul. A stationary EMU was run into by electric locomotive E43 008 hauling a freight train. 10 people were injured, but not seriously. The locomotive appears to have suffered light damage, but the EMU cab was entirely crushed.“ (From Jeff Hawken of ‚Turkrail‘).

(ii). HIGH SPEED SERVICES.

On 17.12.2010 TCDD opened its second high speed line; around 300km. long, it links Ankara with Konya in the south-west part of central Turkey. As with the first high-speed line, which opened in March 2009 between Ankara and Eskisehir, trains will be able to run at a top speed of 250km/h. TCDD has only ten of the HT65000-series electric trains built by CAF of Spain. There are plans to order a further 48 of the six-car train sets. The third high-speed line, Eskisehir - Istanbul is now about half completed. The long-term aim is to expand the current railway network of around 11,000km to 14,500km. by 2023, with another 2,500km. by 2035. Of this, some 12.000km should be suitable for speeds of 250km/h or higher.

Hyundai-Rotem is delivering eighty 5000kW electric locomotives to TCDD. This is the first-ever export order for electric locomotives for the South Koreans. The first eight will be built by Hyundai-Rotem, the rest in Turkey in co-operation with Tülomsas. Hyundai-Rotem is hoping for further orders from Turkey, including for high-speed train sets.

(iii). NEW LINES.

From ‚Fahrplancenter News‘ No. 47 p.19: „The current political system in Turkey continues to reveal itself as friendly towards Railways. After the first section of the high speed line Ankara - Istanbul had been opened to Eskisehir, on 17.12.2010 construction of the 306km. new line Polati - Konya was completed. Test workings began on 1st. June 2011 and ran at up to 250km/h. Since this line runs due south from the Ankara region, the Konya area will henceforth be only ca. 90 minutes away from the capital; until now a journey from Ankara to Konya with the ca. 700km. detour via Afyon required around 13 hours. On 24.08.2011 scheduled traffic over the line began with four train pairs, departing both Ankara and Konya at 07.00, 11.30, 15.30 and 18.30.

Earthworks for the high-speed line Eskisehir - Istanbul and also works on the tunnel under the Bosphorus are well advanced. The next destinations for high-speed lines will be Sivas, Adana, Malatya and Bursa.

Detailed planning for the new rail line from Kars to Georgia has been completed and finance is now secured for the Turkish section of the route. The interchange station from the 1435mm gauge Turkish railways to the Georgian gauge of 1520mm will be built on Georgian territory near the town of Akhalkalaki.

On the southern and northern banks of Lake Van geological explorations are taking place, with the aim of finding the ideal place for railway construction. Iran is committing to a little more than 50% of the costs of 2.6M. Euros. This will be the last remaining section of the through rail link from Europe to India. The Lake Van region is an ancient area of settlement, but it is also geologically unstable and suffers frequently from earthquakes. In addition an alignment must be found that will not be overwhelmed with large snow masses in winter.

In the European section of Turkey the Istanbul - Edirne line was totally rebuilt in the early part of 2011 and on its reopening on 1st. March 2011 the new 20km. section Muratli - Tekirdag also opened. This serves mainly as access to the Asyaport, the newest harbour in the European part of the country. There are six daily train pairs between Muratli and Tekirdag.“

(iv). ANTALYA TRAM:

‘Old news‘ from ‘Op de Rails‘ 9-2009 p. 436: On 15th. June a new 11-kilometre high speed tramline came into use at Antalya on the southern coast of Turkey. There are 16 stops, two of which are underground. CAF has delivered 4 low-floor trams of the type that is also used in Vitoria in Spain. Whether the trams would continue working after the special opening was unknown soon after the ceremony, for the line had been built in only 18 months and according to media reports there were still many outstanding jobs to be completed, including some which are relevant to operational safety.“

(v). ALONG THE SYRIAN BORDER IN 2010.

In ‘Lok Report‘ 11/11 pp. 50- 53 is a report on ‘Die Bagdadbahn durch Kurdis-

tan - Entlang der türkisch-syrischen Grenze im Zug 62951‘ - an account of a journey through Turkey and along the border area with Syria, by Hermann Neidhart.

“The old Bagdadbahn, the construction of which began in Constantinople over a hundred years ago, has a legendary reputation to defend - which continues despite many wars and conflicts. But one cannot traverse this historic line fully even in Turkey any more. Along the 350km. section from Nusaybin to Gaziantep - which mainly runs along the Turkish-Syrian border - it proved possible to arrange a trip in November 2010. [N.B. One should not omit to mention that in October 2011 Kurdish forces attacked several Turkish police stations and bases causing many fatalities, and the Turkish forces then pursued them into northern Iraq.... Ed.]

First a quick view back - in the time when the Taurus Express, the most famous train on the Bagdadbahn line covered the route from Istanbul-Haydarpara to Aleppo at least once a week in around 35 hours, train travel through Turkey was still a fine affair. Even the connection from München to the Bosphorus at Istanbul-Sirkeci worked relatively uncomplicated in around 40 hours. In less than four days of actual travel time one could travel from Bavaria through the Balkans and through Turkey to Northern Syria and in the process cover some 3,500 km. of railway line. This was, for example, still possible during a journey in Spring 2005 with the ‘Torus Ekspresi‘ - with connection to Damascus. But nowadays this historic train that once traversed the Anatolian plateau and through the Taurus mountains to the Orient no longer exists. But now, in the Autumn of last year, access to the Near East is mainly via sea or road. Only the sections München - Venezia, Corinth - Athens and Tarsus - Adana can be traversed by rail. But ferries are also pleasant means of transport - from Venice via Corfu to Patras, from Piraeus to Rhodos and from there to Marmara (not forgetting the quick detour from Tasucu to Girne in Northern Cyprus). As is well known, no rail line runs along the Turkish Riviera, but instead a large number of bus lines and the frequent individual and group taxis. Along such ways one can pass several weeks until reaching the Turkish - Kurdistan border, for the Eastern Mediterranean has many sights to see at any time of year, even if the days are already rather short by late Autumn.

It is a good feeling to be in Adana again in 2010 - it lies east of Mersin on the historic Bagdadbahn line. At the station of Tarsus one is greeted by a me-

morial steam locomotive which cannot be missed - excursionists let themselves be photographed in front of it and kids clamber over it. [This is 2-8-0 45 004 and a Brake/3rd. coach]. At the ticket counter however there is disappointment - the official can sell a ticket to Adana but not to Gaziantep. Is this section still or once again out of service?

In Adana confirmation comes: One can only continue to Gaziantep by Dolmus or bus. Only from there onwards should there be rail services further towards the East - Inshallah! When the Bagdadbahn was built Adana was an important junction, for from here one could go not only to Aleppo in Syria and to Iskenderun on the Mediterranean, but also to Mersin and of course then further through the Taurus mountains in the direction of Konya and Istanbul.

In the apparently empty station building of Gaziantep - known by the locals just as Antep - the only office that is manned is that of the Chef, and this is only accessible from the rear. The question as to when the next train to Nusaybin runs is answered (in writing, even!) with 'Friday, 10.00'. This does not match the information in the Timetable, which refers to Thursday, 07.00, but comes from the horse's mouth. A day later however it transpires that a train does indeed depart at this time - but not to Nusaybin! This is annoying, for only three days later does anything move in that direction.

For better or worse there is now no option but a joint taxi or bus in the direction of Nusaybin, in the hope at least to be able to travel by train in the return direction to Antep.

At the end of 2010 the political climate is relatively good and even the possibility of a journey further into Northern Iraq seems feasible. It is only a good 200km from the border to Erbil, the capital of the autonomous province of Kurdistan. But no train goes there. In earlier times the Bagdadbahn did have regular passenger services from Nusaybin to the Syrian border town of Qamishli and further on to Mosul, but that has not been possible for a long while.

Silopi in Turkish-Kurdistan would be an isolated, sleepy dump if it had not known how to benefit from its strategic position on the transit route to Iraq immediately after the Gulf War. There are a few simple hotels on the main road, which are quite acceptable for one night. There are proportionally many taxis in this small place, and their drivers are always eager to drive their customers over the nearby border - for a good fare.

Without the help of local taxi drivers the border crossing would hardly be possible. For on the Turkish side there

is a dreadful, impossible chaos. The apparent inactivity of the officials drives the Kurdish taxi drivers into helpless rage which is often expressed in actions. The Turkish passport-stamping formalities and baggage checks last for ever, whilst on the Iraqi side everything is unproblematical. (One had actually expected the opposite.)

One travels with a cross-country taxi via Zakho and Dohuk to Erbil. At a military checkpoint shortly before the city traffic stands for an hour, whilst the other Army or Police checkpoints were passed quite quickly. In the suburb of Ainkawa a former Bundeswehr soldier and Afghanistan veteran now runs a German Restaurant (with pork schnitzel, Bockwurst, potato salad and beer from Thüringen on the menu!) The Citadel with the Old City and Bazar are however pure Orient again. The return journey, running partially close to the Iranian border, is also unspectacular, despite around two dozen security checks.

There is plenty of room in the spacious station area of Nusaybin for many train movements, but nothing is happening. Only one obsessively officious railway official tries to prohibit photography. His colleague even tries to convince us that no passenger trains go to Gaziantep. This is now a matter for the Station Master! He speaks English and gives friendly (and accurate!) information. On Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays at 14.15 passengers as well as freight are conveyed to Antep.

This is very satisfactory information, for it implies that soon a regular train will traverse the famous Bagdadbahn line westwards! With the Chief's permission I may photograph extensively, and we exchange postcards, badges and other railway souvenirs. Next door, in the office of the Freight Supervisor there is the obligatory tea with sugar. The chief even arranges for food to be brought - pita bread, onions, peppers and lentil soup - very tasty.

On the return trip into the city centre the joint taxi drives close to the border crossing to Qamishli, the station on the Syrian side of the Bagdadbahn. There is however no passenger traffic any more over there, only occasional freight movements. The barbed wire complex and the watchtowers in the border area let the question arise as to whether Turkey and Syria are in a pre- or post-war relationship. The Kurdish driver expresses himself rather dismissively over the Arab neighbours.

There is plenty of time before the mixed train departs Nusaybin station to chat with the station personnel - many of them already off-duty by early afternoon. One of the staff even speaks German, he had lived in Germany for ten years and arranges for colleagues to bring us tea.

About an hour before departure time a half-dozen soldiers arrive to form the train guard unit - equipped with guns and other items. They have a relatively approachable leader, who also understands some English.

In the meantime the roughly thirty wagons (only three of them passenger coaches) have been shunted back and forth along the tracks, and the Diesel locomotive now sets itself at the front. Many of those present now want to be photographed around it, especially the engine driver. It is good that the results can be displayed digitally immediately. Finally Train No. 62951 is ready for departure soon after 14.00. One of the accompanying officials gives me some words of warning - Beware of stonethrowers! Don't get too close to the window! Best to say sitting on the seats in the compartment! Don't take photographs! (Oy vey!) A large hole in one of the carriage windows indicates a direct hit on an earlier trip.

Half of the soldiers have taken up station in the next compartment - a rifle leans against the sliding door. The question is: Is one here being protected or observed? It seems advisable to take great caution when photographing (and it would be better to use a second camera that one can if necessary afford to lose.) But although there does not appear to be much happening between the few settlements, the line itself is very interesting. For the tracks run directly along the Turkish-Syrian border, for several hundred kilometres! The line runs between two barbed-wire fences; behind one lies Syria, behind the other lies Turkey. On the Turkish side there is also a military road, and then another fence. Behind this one can see the State Road 400 to Gaziantep. On the non-asphalted road Jeeps, military lorries and also a Red-Crescent ambulance can be seen. At roughly each kilometre there stands a watchtower - an attractive if threatening subject for a photograph, and reminiscent of the DDR times. However, it seems that only about every tenth tower is manned with a soldier.

By the time we reach the station of Senyurt around 16.00 the light is already fading, the conditions for photography are getting worse - now, when the soldiers seem at last to have become accustomed to the regular shooting of pictures (or at least have not made any moves to forbid it!) At the following station the six watchmen get out and walk away; the same number then board as their replacements. The new men check the few compartments and write the details of the passengers, taking the information from their identity papers. There is however not a lot to check. As far as one can tell, there are less than ten fare-paying passengers travelling. The rest are railwaymen or mili-

tary. For each civilian passenger there are therefore two train or guard personnel. The income for the Turkish State Railways TCDD will therefore be very modest. 10 Lira per person (around 5 Euros) - a total of about 50 Euros. Why do so few passengers travel, when it is so cheap? Perhaps because of the late arrival time at the destination, in the middle of the night?

On walking through the passenger coaches it becomes clear that one is empty and unlit, and very few passengers occupy the other two. However the six-seater compartments on this train, that 'rumbles through the wilds of Kudistan' or is 'on the way from Bagdad to Stamboul' (to paraphrase Karl May) are clean and comfortable. In Ceylanpinar, where the journey continues into the night at 17.30, several people with cases and cartons climb on. In Akcakale we wait for half an hour for a goods train in the other direction.

It is now time for supper, that the hotel keeper at Nusaybin has put together in a plastic bag: chicken pieces, rice, pita, salad - and even a fork, serviette and hygiene wipes and toothpick. This, together with lunch there and a drink, had cost together less than 10. To balance this out the taxi driver had tried to charge an exorbitant price for the few kilometres from the hotel to the station (which he did not wholly succeed in getting.)

The train should reach Gaziantep soon after midnight, but at 00.30 it is still at Karkemis on the Euphrates, from where it heads north-west away from the Syrian border. Here the guard soldiers also end their duty and leave their compartment. No-one else gets in. After a further three hours the outer areas of the destination come into view - here and there lit houses and street lamps.

The night porter at the hotel in Gaziantep is aware of the late arrival of the train. He had requested a call so as to be able to send a taxi to the station. And indeed, this is standing there, ready for me, at 03.20 - a real good service for the middle of the night! And this trip costs, including tip, less than that the day before to Nusaybin station. After around 13 hours of night-time train travel through south-eastern Turkey it is quite pleasant the next day to take a road trip the next day - over the border by Kilis - to Aleppo (since no train is due here either.) From Aleppo to Damascus there are apparently several train services each day - hopefully a useful one will be found on arrival. But first it is necessary to overnight in the 'Hotel Baron' in Halab, where the authoress Agatha Christie stayed in 1928 and several times subsequently, before she took the train further to Mosul or Istanbul and Europe."

(vi). VIDEO OF STEAM FREIGHT TRAIN IN TURKEY.

A Gabriel has announced that in late September 2011 together with Dietmar Kramer he took video on the line Alasehir - Usak - Kütahya - Tavşali with 56 548 - former DR Kriegsslok 52 . It may be seen at:- <http://youtu.be/VMuY5QtDR1c>

B. DUBAI.

METRO REPORTS:-

(i). De Pers' (a free Dutch newspaper - translation by The Editor): 11.09.2009: "Today the first Metro in the Middle East commences operation, in the wealthy desert state of Dubai. A journey of 52km. with this underground will cost around 1. This can provide a good alternative to the slower buses for the many Asiatic guest workers, though it is less likely that the residents, used to their cars, will transfer, since petrol prices in Dubai are so low." (Thanks to Marc Stegeman for this and other Dutch items.)

(ii). In 'Op de Rails' 9-2009 p. 436 is a different report: "On 9th. Sept. 2009 the first Metro line in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates opened; it is a fully-automatic metro, and the Japanese builder Kinki Sharyo has delivered 87 five-car train sets. The line currently opened the Red Line, will be around 52km. long, of which 4.7km. is underground. A second line, the Green Line, of 22.5km. is under construction. There will be 47 stations, some of which will have parking for 3,000 cars. Dubai has some 850,000 inhabitants is growing and it is planned to have 3M inhabitants by around 2020. There will then be a further two Metro lines and plans are being worked on for a tramline, for which Alstom will deliver the stock."

(iii). A photo in 'Metro', a free Dutch newspaper, of 30.08.2011, shows Abdul-Majid Al-Khaja, CEO of the railway company, Mattar Al-Tayer, Director of the Transport Authority and Abdul Mohsin Younes of the railway company at a press conference at which it was announced that another 3 Billion Dollars were required to finish off the Red and Green Metro lines, and the project will cost a total of 7.6 Billion Euros. The costs for the Purple Line are not included in this figure.

C. IRAN.

(i). TEHERAN METRO.

From Light Rail Review. Sept. 2011. p. 404. The extension of Line 1 of the Tehran Metro from Haram-e-Motahar to Kahrizak was opened on 21.07.2011.

(ii). NEW LINE IN THE EAST.

From 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 47 (Dec. 2010.Nov. 2011) p. 13:

On 6th. Dec. 2010 State President Ahmadinejad attended the commencement of construction work on the

new 1,350km line through south-east and eastern Iran. The new line begins at the harbour of Chabhar in the Province Sistan-Baluchistan, west of the border with Pakistan. The line then runs from the coast northwards via the cities of Iranshahr and Khash towards Zahedan. In a second stage a further new line will be built from Zahedan to Mashhad, which will run more-or-less parallel to the border with Afghanistan. The new line will fulfil several functions: Strategic, since it will traverse the whole eastern side of Iran from north to South and will run only a few hundred kilometres from the Pakistan and Afghanistan borders; also Economic, for it will open up enormous but underdeveloped areas of Iran; In addition it will provide in conjunction with the existing lines and those under construction lines via Turkmenistan to Kazakhstan and Russian Central Asia a direct link to the Indian Ocean.

(iii). MASSIVE EXPANSION

PLANS:-

Also from 'Fahrplancenter News':-

In December 2010 the Iranian Government admitted to having deposited large amounts of national assets in „secure countries and in banks which are friendly to Iran“ and - although Interest is, strictly speaking, forbidden in Islam, in the meantime „several hundred Billion Rials“ have accumulated. This amounts to more than 30 Billion US Dollars. In addition there is a loan of over \$US 12.5 Billion. With these funds the entire infrastructure of the country is to be massively expanded. Railways will benefit especially from this. In addition to the new Chabahar - Zahedan - Mashhad line mentioned above in 2011 and 2012 the following lines are to be commenced:-

Sari - Rasht.
Tehran - Hamedan - Sanandaj.
Doroud - Boroujerd; Miyaneh - Bostanabad - Tabriz.
Tehran - Miyaneh, second line.
Miyaneh - Ardebil, ca. 130 km.
Qazvin - Rasht - Anzali (already partially under construction; ca. 200km.)
Shiraz - Bushehr - Assaluyeh.
Qazvin - Qom.
Maragheh - Oroumiyeh, ca. 110km.
Yazd - Shiraz, ca. 1,100 km.
Golgohar - Shiraz.
Gorgan - Bojnurd - Mashhad, ca. 300 km.

Not included in this list are those lines which were already under construction before December 2010 and which are financed from other sources.

(iv). ROLLING STOCK EXPORTS:

In 'Fahrplancenter News' No. 47

p. 6 is an article on revival plans for the railways in Cuba. This includes a note: „The rolling stock situation has been eased by the delivery of 130 diesel locos from China and numerous goods wagons of Iranian provenance. Initially many items required some improvements, but in the meantime the Cuban railway personnel have become used to the new stock.“

(v). ARMENIA PLANS DIRECT LINK WITH IRAN.

Armenia's ambassador to Iran, Mr Grigor Arakelyan, says that the two countries have signed an agreement to link their respective railway networks. At present trains between the two countries have to pass through western Azerbaijan. A memorandum of understanding is expected to be signed in the next three months to construct a new 60km line from Jolfa in Iran to the Armenian border, with Armenia set to build a 400km line from there north to link with the existing rail network.

The project is expected to cost \$US 1.2-1.8Bn and will take around five years to complete. Reports suggest Russia will contribute \$US 100M to the scheme. (From I.R.J. July 2011 p.9.)

D. SAUDI ARABIA. **(i). MEKKA.**

(From Light Rail Review. Sept. 2011. p.405). "Expressions of Interests are invited for the construction of four more metro lines in 2013-2017. The city's Metro Line A (18km. or 11.2 miles) opened in Nov, 2010. Ernst & Young and Parsons Brinckerhoff have been appointed to advise on the procurement process for what are expected to be PPP contracts." [Ed. adds: Presumably only Moslems need apply...]

(ii). SAUDI AWARD CONTRACT TO BUILD SECOND STAGE OF HIGH SPEED RAIL LINK:

First:- From 'I.R.J.' 2011.07, pp.7 and 8:

SAUDI HARAMAIN AWARD DELAYED.

"The contract award for the Haramain high-speed railway that will link Mecca and Medina with the Red Sea port of Jeddah has been delayed due to the complexity of the bids. Mr. Ali Al Karni, vice-president for technical affairs at the Saudi Railway Organisation (SRO) says that rival bids from the French-backed consortium, Al Rajhi Group, which comprises Alstom, French National Railways (SNCF) and Saudi construction firm Al Rajhi, and the Al Shoula Group, which includes Talgo, Spain, are still to be evaluated. 'It's a huge project, financially complex with complex bids', Al Karni says. 'It's not as simple as saying one bid is lower than the other. The decision is still not finalised.' The contract involves tracklaying, electrification and supplying

rolling stock."

Then:- In the 'International Herald Tribune' 27.10.2011 p.20:

"The Saudi Railways Organisation has awarded a \$6.74 Billion contract for the second phase of its high-speed Haramain project to the Saudi-Spanish consortium Al Shoula.

The high-speed Haramain railroad will link Mecca and Medina to the Red Sea coastal city of Jidda, a main entry point for millions of pilgrims, and to King Abdullah Economic City, currently under construction. The high-speed link is worth \$9.3 Billion.

'This phase of the contract includes the construction of railway tracks, installation of signalling and telecommunication systems, electrification, operational control center, the procurement of 35 trains, and the operation and maintenance for a period of 12 years', Saudi Railways said on Wednesday (i.e. 26.10) The 450 kilometres, or 280 miles, of new high-speed track will be able to carry more than 160,000 passengers a day, said the Spanish Ministry of Public Works. (Reuters.)"

And:- In 'The Times' 7-11-2011 p.33 appeared an advertisement showing a beak-shaped Spanish high-speed train and proudly announcing:- "Spain to build and operate Saudi Arabia High-Speed rail line. A Saudi Spanish consortium has been chosen by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to construct, maintain and operate during twelve years one of the key railway links in the Middle East countries. The Haramain High Speed Railway between Mecca and Medina. Along its 450km. route, trains will reach speeds of over 300km/h and will provide services to more than 160,000 passengers per day. This important recognition confirms Spain as a world reference in High Speed Railway."

[Ed. adds: This advert is probably due to current tedious debates in Britain about the need for a High-Speed line linking London with Birmingham, Lancashire and Yorkshire. Clearly Talgo wants to get its beak in the door.]

(iii). NEW CAF DIESEL UNITS.

In 'Eisenbahn Revue' Oct. 2011 p. 487 are two photos of the new CAF diesel multiple units for Saudi Arabia being hauled by SBB/Railadventure Bo-Bo Re 421.383 to the Velim test circuit in the Czech Republic and on site. The accompanying text notes that Railadventure, based in München, had hired this loco from SBB to transport the unit from Magdeburg to the German/Czech border at Bad Schandau on 10/11th. August.

The train had been loaded onto a ship and should in theory have been transported the whole way from Bilbao by wa-

ter to the Czech Republic. However, due to the low water level in the Elbe this proved impossible and the vehicles had to be unloaded at the harbour at Magdeburg. [Ed. adds: A fair selection of preserved ancient German stock normally stands here too.] Since the vehicles are extremely wide in terms of the loading gauge and the power car weighs 95 tons, several weeks were then occupied with clarifying with various authorities and infrastructure operators how to get the train set moved further. Amongst other measures, additional stiffeners had to be fitted to reduce the lateral swing.

The Saudi Railways Organisation has ordered twelve such trains from CAF, and each comprises a power car, four centre cars and a driving trailer with luggage compartment. Two additional power cars are being built as reserves. The vehicles are 26.8m long, 3.05m. wide and 4.57m high. Apart from in the driving trailer the entrance doors are in the centre of each side. There are 94 First Class places (set at 2+1) and 192 Second Class (set also at 2+1), plus two places for wheelchair users and a Bar. There is also a Prayer Room, in which an arrow on a screen constantly points towards Mecca.

In the power car is an MTU Diesel engine which produces 3.6 MW. The trains are designed for a top speed of 180km/h; the air conditioning, designed to cope with external temperatures of up to 55°, also demands a lot of energy."

(iv). SAUDI GULF COAST LINK APPROVED.

"The Saudi Government has approved the construction of a link between the North-South line at Ras Az Zawr and Dammam on the Saudi Railway Organisation network. The Saudi Railway Company (SAR) has already invited bidders to prequalify for civil works and tracklaying on the 210km. line, which will run along the coast of the Persian Gulf through Jubail. In addition to connecting the two existing Saudi networks, the line will eventually form part of the Gulf States Railway, with extensions planned to Kuwait and Al Jahra in the north and Duwayhin and the UAE border in the south."

(v). RIYADH METRO - some technical details. Thanks to Marc Stegeman: From a brochure by 'SMA' of 2010-11.

"With 4.6M inhabitants and the main King's palace of the al-Saud dynasty, Riyadh is the economic, cultural and administrative centre of Saudi Arabia. At the northern edge of the desert nation's capital city, a small, independent city is going into being with the Princess Noura Bint Abdulrahman University. On the university campus, there are rooms for the individual departments and numerous laboratories. Everything that the students need for their

daily lives can be found on the campus. According to university president Princess Al-Jowhara bint Fahd, the largest university for women in the Arab world is being constructed there. After its completion at the beginning of 2012, up to 26,000 students will be able to study in 13 departments such subjects as medicine, information technology and languages.

The ground, covering eight square kilometres does not just need to be connected to Riyadh's existing transit system - the campus also has its own train stops. The turnkey subway system will be delivered by the Italian train manufacturer AnsaldoBreda. The total of 22 two-section vehicles is indeed no conventional metro. They are fully automatic and transport the passengers without a driver. Of particular importance to hot Saudi Arabia are the air conditioners, which will be constructed by Webasto. The required converter technology is provided by SMA. The total of 44 systems belongs to the SMA product family SMARTcooler and is based on the time-tested DRN35 three-phase inverter module. The devices comprise a three-phase inverter with 30kVA and a single-phase battery inverter with 230V/2 KVA, which in the event of operating voltage failure ensures ventilation of the interior. The operating voltage of the vehicles in 750V DC. The weather conditions in Riyadh pose a particular challenge to the technology: Temperatures of up to 50deg. C. are not unusual, and the desert city is subject to heavy sandstorms several times a year.

The first vehicle will be given a test run in the fall of 2010. The following year, 22 vehicles are to be shipped - at that time, the university will already be in operation."

E. QATAR.

(i). LRT CONTRACT. (From Light Rail Review. Sept. 2011.) "Qatari Diar, the investment arm of the Qatari Emirate, and the French company Vinci have been awarded a []374M contract for civil engineering work on the Lusail LRT project. The work should take 38 months, with opening scheduled for 2016. Expressions of Interest have been invited for the design and construction of the 22km. (13.7 mile) Metro." (See below.)

(ii). CONSTRUCTION BOOM.

From 'Fahrplancenter news' No. 47 p. 13:- "In 2016/2017 the inhabitants of Qatar will be able to test rail public transport for the first time. Qatar Railways Company will be a large State Corporation for every sort of rail traffic. The Emirate of Qatar is, in partnership with the Deutsche Bahn AG, constructing the following, all of standard gauge: Total investment in rail traffic will be US\$36.6 Billion; the existing road network will not be extended further

and also its maintenance will be reduced to the absolute minimum from 2018. These measures are part of the agreement reached between many Arab lands to reduce oil consumption from 2025 onwards and from then on not to export oil further, in order to maintain remaining reserves for domestic use for several decades longer. (Up to 80% less consumption is mentioned.)

Under construction or in planning are:-

- An Underground Railway network in the capital Doha of some 300km. length with 98 stations; one of the lines will also serve the airport. The first phase is a 22km. line with 15 stations.

- A High-Speed line for 350km from the centre of Doha via the University of Qatar and Doha Airport for 180km. into the neighbouring Bahrain. This line is for passenger traffic only.

- A 100km. long passenger railway laid out for 200km/h to link the Emirate with the neighbouring Saudi Arabia and which will link with the existing line in Saudi Arabia and the network currently under construction. Both high-speed lines will be electrified at 25kV AC.

To complement these long-distance line there will be 325km. of more normal railway line, which will serve both passenger and freight traffic and will initially not be electrified. The top speed for these lines will be 160km/h for passenger and 120km/h for freight trains.

For the entirely new city of Lusail which is under construction, 15km. north of Doha, contracts were exchanged on 5th. Sept. 2011 for the 28.8km long 'Stadtbahn' LRV project, in the form of a modern tramway - 7.6km. will be underground and eight of the thirty-two stations will be on the underground section. This LRV line has been in planning since 2007. The consortium of Qatar Diar and Vinci Construction is responsible for the construction of the tunnel section, the crossing of a motorway and the central depot - these total []374M. The railway in Lusail should open in 2016.

(iii). QATAR TO TENDER 19 PROJECTS BY THE END OF 2012.

Qatar Railways Company (QRC) has announced that 19 construction projects worth \$US 1Bn. each will be awarded up to the end of next year for the first phases of the Doha metro and the Qatari section of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) rail network.

The tender for the first package will be issued within the next two months with the successful bidder expected to be announced by the end of the year. "The final package has to be awarded by the end of 2012 as we need to give eight years for design and construction and then

one year for testing and commissioning ahead of starting commercial operation before the Fifa World Cup 2022," says Mr Ghanim Hussein Ali al-Ibrahim, group director, projects and technical. Qatar's total budget for railway development is estimated at Riyals 130Bn (\$US 35.7Bn) with undertakings split into two phases. Phase One focuses on what is required to provide metro links to the nine stadia that will be used during the World Cup, while Phase 2 calls for completion of the entire network by 2026. The government will entirely finance the projects, although Qatar Railways Company deputy chairman, Sheikh Saoud bin Nasser, indicated that it could be open to other options. "If we have a chance to get financing through a PPP we will look into it, and if the decision makers agree, we will go ahead with it if it is viable and we can finish the project on time." (I.R.J. 7.2011 p.5.)

F. IRAQ.

(i). THROUGH TRAIN TO BAGHDAD?

In 'Eisenbahn Magazin' for July 1978, p8f is a brief article on a planned luxury rail excursion, essentially along the entire route of the Bagdadbahn. The Editor would welcome more information as to whether this actually ever occurred. (Though at this period there was still a weekly Istanbul - Tehran train service.)

"Organised by the Zürich travel agency 'Intraflug', this will be a Luxury Express from Europe to Asia without changing. For 4,900 SFr. railway enthusiasts who have the time, money and interest can travel from Zürich to Baghdad 'in one train'. Whoever wishes to return as well the same way will have to pay 9,400 Francs, or otherwise reckon on the costs for a return flight. Nevertheless the 'Nostalgie Orient Express 1978' from Zürich to Bagdad will be one of the greatest events of the year for friends of classic luxury travel.

The Express should depart Zürich Hauptbahnhof on 18th. October at 15.00; it will pause in Stuttgart from 19.00 to 20.00, and the next morning from 06.00 to 12.00 in Vienna (with a city tour). At 17.00 it will reach Budapest (city tour with an 'Hungarian Evening'), departs again at 21.30 and on the third day at 11.30 will reach Bucharest. Following a city tour and lunch in a typical Romanian restaurant the journey continues at 18.00 for Istanbul, arriving on the fourth day (22nd. October) at 16.30. Travellers will stay here for two nights in the Hilton Hotel are offered the usual city tour and 'folklore' and then - the coaches will in the meantime have been ferried across the Bosphorus - steam onwards at 09.00 on the sixth day in the direction of Baghdad. The train will pause at Ankara that evening from 20.30 till 23.59, with another city tour, then on the next day

the city of Gaziantep will be visited, on the day following Mosul is in the timetable, the train pausing here from 03.00 to 12.00. On the evening of 26th. October it will reach its destination of Baghdad.

Following a stay of three days in the Orient the return flight is planned to leave on 29th. October; the train will depart Baghdad at 08.00 on the 28th. and will arrive at Zürich again at 21.30 on 4th. November."

(ii). IRAQ PLANS BAGHDAD - BASRA HIGH SPEED RAILWAY.

„The Iraqi Minister of Transport has signed a memorandum of understanding with Alstom for a Turnkey project to build a 250km/h line linking the capital Baghdad with the southern city of Basra and Um Qasr on the Kurwait border. The 650km line would serve the intermediate cities of Mussayeb, Karbala, Najaf, Samawa and Nasiriyah. Only Mussayeb and Samawa are on the existing Baghdad - Basra main line, which was heavily damaged in the Iraq war.“ (I.R.J. July 2011 p.5.)

G. AFGHANISTAN.

„WHO IS BUILDING QUICK-ER?“ From ‚Fahrplancenter News‘ No. 47 p. 17:

Whilst the first long railway line in Afghanistan from Hairaton to Masar-e-Sharif is being prepared for operation by the Uzbekistan Railways OTY, and is currently being extended, and the Iranians are building the line from Herat in Western Afghanistan and pushing on at a great pace, Pakistan, China, India and Russia and the USA are still discussing which has the better plans for an Afghanistan railway network and who could build it the faster. The discussion is already bogged down with details such as the gauge and locomotive types. In other areas, however, negotiations are taking place. In a State Treaty which was quickly put together between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, the Turkmenistan Railways received the commission to extend the line which currently ends at Towraghondi, an Afghan town on the border to Turkmenistan, towards Herat. Although Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are not at all friendly with each other, both countries have agreed - with the knowledge of the Afghan Government - to construct the entire main line Masar-e-Sharif - Kabul - Kandahar - Herat, which means that the Afghan network will initially have a gauge of 1524mm. In Herat there will therefore need to be a transfer station to the Iranian standard-gauge (1435mm) line. The only problem: The financing is only partially secured and only in terms of international reconstruction work in Afghanistan, which only covers 50% of costs for new infrastructure.

H. LIBYA.

CONTRUCTION HALTED.

From ‚Fahrplancenter News‘ No. 47 p. 24: „With the outbreak of the revolutionary war against Gaddhafi both China and Russia pulled their technicians out at the beginning of March 2011, and the building work came to a halt. It is unclear to what extent the completed sections Benghazi - Tobruk and Ras Ejdir - Tripolis - Misratah - Surt and the locomotives already delivered have been damaged. At the beginning of 2011 Gaddhafi received a luxurious Presidential Train from Berlusconi. Has this vehicle survived? It could certainly not have served for his flight.“

For the record - Gaddhafi was reported dead on 20.10.2011. The new provisional government is finding its feet and we will have to wait and see.

I. LEBANON.

Technically there are no working railways in Lebanon, nor are there any active plans.- But under http://thereforde-sign.org/rayakrailway/files/downloads/Rayak_Railway_Booklet_AUG09.pdf one can find a 30-page brochure discussing ideas for turning the old railway station at Rayak into a Railway Museum!

Nich Lera comments to this: „One suspects that the nitty gritty of this project is the bit in Arabic. Certainly some of the most interesting photos only have Arabic captions.

I am intrigued by the total absence of the railway company name as quoted in all previously seen sources, including French, plus Baedeker's guide, as the SOCF Damas, Hama et Prolongements, or DHP for short. I think the writer has seen the Compagnie Ottomane des Chemins de Fer (SOCF) prefix followed by the names of the places served and mistaken the latter for part of the title.

Despite the persistent reference to Rayak Works as a ‚usine‘ or factory, no locos were built there, though as in any works replacements parts would have been cast and modifications made. The French should be ‚les ateliers‘ which would then translate as workshops.

Then there's the dreadful layman's inability to distinguish between ‚train‘ and ‚locomotive‘.

These lapses tend to make the specialist sceptical, but one has to be objective and take comfort from the fact that moves are afoot, however tentative, to preserve this fascinating relic of the one-time key interchange between the southernmost point of Asia Minor's standard gauge railways and the Ottoman Empire's 1050cm lines south to the Hedjaz. Its closure in 1976 severed the only rail link to Damascus until the new sg line to the E opened in the late 1980s.

Rayak was evacuated after be-

ing shelled in 1976 and has been left untouched ever since. I enjoyed an all too brief visit in 2007 and would highly recommend it to anyone with a taste for the bizarre in the field of railway relics. Maybe the Lebanese writer of the report could be persuaded to host a foreigners' visit to foster broader support.“

J. JORDAN / MALI.

In ‚Fahrplancenter News‘ No. 47 p.2 is a remarkable item which is indirectly relevant to this magazine. On 27.08.2011 the Transport Minister of Mali announced the construction of a new tramway network of two lines forming a ‚T‘ for the capital city of Bamako. A French and Jordanian consortium is to build the system and operate it for thirty years, following which it will be handed over to the State and the city of Bamako. The Al-Taher group from Jordan will arrange the finance and provide the infrastructure and Lohr of France will deliver the trains and be responsible for the power supply. The whole scheme will cost 100M Euros and yet apparently cost the State of Mali nothing at all. What makes the project interesting is that the Al-Taher Group claims to have gained much experience operating the tramway network in Amman - but in fact there is no tramway in Amman yet!

The announcement of the new tramway network did not meet with universal public approval, for nobody truly believes in a ‚free‘ tramway and the current situation is that 60% of the children in Mali cannot attend school, 70% of the population has no access to medical treatment and about 20% of the population suffers from malnutrition. Even though transport in the capital is indeed in need of much improvement, the priorities appear to be a little strange.

K. EGYPT.

(i). In ‚Fern Express‘ 3/2011 pp. 41-44 is an article by Günther Holle ‚Mit Dem Zug zum Pharao‘ : ‚By Train to the Pharaoh.‘ It describes experiences at the end of a four-week rail journey from Germany through nine countries to Egypt, in November 2010.

„After we had reached the Syrian capital of Damascus by rail from Frankfurt/Main, it was only in Suez that we found rails with passenger services again. Here we made contact with the Egyptian rail network, that reaches southwards along the Nile Valley as far as Aswan - around 1,000km.

After a tiring four-hour bus journey from the famous St. Catherine's Monastery in the rocky desert of the Sinai we found ourselves at the main station of the city of Suez - with its 600,000 inhabitants - and found it slumped in midday almost lifeless lethargy. Yawning emptiness filled

the large main and booking hall, only a couple of railway employees stood around bored and chatted idly with each other. From here there are trains to Cairo (127km) and to Port Said at the mouth of the Nile into the Mediterranean (243km.).

We immediately organised for ourselves tickets for our onward journey to Ismailia. An ancient AEC ticket printer spat out two small Edmonson card tickets, each costing around 20 Euro Cents (!) - for 89km. One can hardly believe it. This is for us the equivalent of travelling for free.

The next train would only depart in three hours. It was no problem to leave our luggage with the ticket clerk and wander around the station area, and soon we came in contact with the friendly chaps on the station. With a small photo collection from earlier railway trips around the world we quickly aroused the curiosity of some, including the station master, who was immediately recognisable by his better clothing and better knowledge of English. We soon had him 'on our side' and he gave us verbal permission to take photographs - something which is normally difficult here - when not wholly forbidden - in the security zone around the Suez Canal.

Punctually at 14.00 our first Egyptian train set bouncily off - it was truly no Pharaonic Express but a train of the lowest category. The suspension was worn out and the carriage body bounced up and down on the bogies. One sits as though on a wildly prancing donkey or a nervous camel.

The windows of the open saloon carriage are mostly either blinded opaque and broken, or are totally missing, which at least makes photography much easier. The external doors stay constantly open. These are standards which I had only experienced before in India thirty years ago. So we 'ride' on our wild creature through this ancient land along the Nile. At first our train is almost empty and we have an entire carriage for ourselves alone, but this situation changes as the journey continues. Travelling dealers come through an loudly shout out their wares - both food and non-food. Street lads run through the carriages and stare at us strangers - but not in a threatening way. It must be especially seldom that foreigners find themselves in such a honky-tonk train.

The towns we pass through are filled with indescribably filth. Rubbish refuse, once even the corpses of two sheep decorate the line to right and left. Utterly indescribable conditions. Dreadful living standards. From time to time an absolutely appalling stink.

Ismailia, a city with 300,000 inhabitants, is worth a two-night stay. From here we make a day excursion to the harbour city of Port Said (Bur Said) 154km.

away. In the 9 o'clock train we land at first in the fully-occupied 2nd. or 3rd. Class, battle our way then through the carriages to the solitary air-conditioned coach, where we are made very welcome as guests from the greatly-respected Germany and are allocated free seats. Immediately some inconspicuously-elegant gentlemen come and join us - undoubtedly members of the secret police, very friendly and forward. They allow photos of themselves to be taken - but not of the Suez Canal, alongside which the line runs. The journey lasts one and a half hours.

Port Said is a harbour city well worth seeing - it has some 600,000 inhabitants. Unfortunately we only have two and a half hours available, and then we return by the same way (and with the same security agents) back to Ismailia.

Our next destination is the ancient harbour city of Alexandria, the second largest city after Cairo and the largest Egyptian harbour on the Mediterranean. Five hours for 256 kilometres right through the Nile Delta for all of £1.70 in the 2nd. Class! The First Class is sold out, or so we are told.

At 08.45 our through Express from Port Said comes and takes us with it. Rather cheekily we push our way into an AC coach (Air-Conditioned) and - well, we find places, once more with the assistance and the accompaniment of a security agent. They keep an eye on Western tourists, of whom we are most certainly the only examples in the whole long Express. The filthy and scratched window panes allow only a 50% view. Our tickets are not valid here but the controller is friendly and for new First-Class tickets each of us pays around £3.50 (25 Egyptian Pounds) - and that is for 250 kilometres!

Hundreds of passengers wait at the intermediate stations for our already packed train. Once more there are Indian conditions. Here in the fertile Nile Delta the population density is particularly high. At 10 we halt in El Zagazig. Due to the crush and also the dulled windows there is no chance of even thinking of taking a photo - this ride through the table-top flat green Nile Delta is merely a form of mass transport. Another halt in the large city of Tanta and then, in the early afternoon, our destination for the day is reached. Alexandria: the Express comes to a standstill in the hall of the great terminus, by the English-built hydraulic buffers. On the neighbouring tracks Diesel locos rumble to themselves after their labours. They are mostly of Canadian (EMD) and German (Henschel) origin. We have come some six and a half thousand kilometres by land since departing from Frankfurt/Man. All went well so far. Allah and God have been kind to us.

With four and a half million in-

habitants, Alexandria is a really interesting, cosmopolitan city, similar to Genoa, Marseilles or Barcelona. In 2002 the famous 'Alexandria Library' was opened and is already one of the world cultural heritage sites. For some reason Alexandria is not frequently visited by the typical travellers to Egypt, perhaps because of ignorance. In any case we have sensibly planned a wonderful weekend here with three nights in a hotel with a wide view over the bay and the Corniche. Tramway fans will also enjoy time here, for there is a widespread network with old trams and even double-deck cars.

From Alexandria a lonely line of rails extends 560 km westwards parallel to the Mediterranean coast via El Alamein and Mersa Matruh to El Salloum on the border to Libya. Of course we want to experience this remote branch also. There are two train pairs per day on the line - albeit only as far as Mersa Matruh. The remaining 250km. of line to the Libyan border are currently closed.

We take the early train from Alexandria. The fare for the 311km. in the standard class is 1 Euro! The timetable indicates a travelling time of five and a half hours. At 06.40, punctually together with the sunrise, the decrepit 'Desert Express' - which nevertheless comprises seven carriages - jerks into movement. The conditions are the ones we have now become used to: windows that are opaque, broken or totally removed. A 'Honky-Tonk Express' with a rather morbid charm, a bit like the 'Tren de la Muerte' in Mexico, in which a few years ago I found myself an unwilling witness to and almost myself a victim of a fatal shooting.....

After about 80 km., from the station of El Hamam, the single-track line takes on a desert character. The finest ochre-yellow sand is blown up by the wind as we travel, pushes its way through the open window holes and fills the interior, slowly turning the air into fog and filling the air for breathing and covering everything with an ever-thickening layer of dust - floor, seats, luggage, clothing, hair and skin. There really is a lot offered for the fare of 1 Euro!

Around 09.15 a halt in El Alamein - the God-forsaken dump in which around 70 years ago the 'Desert Fox' Erwin Rommel and his English opponents played out their major confrontation with their troops, and the Germans as is well known drew the short straw. A half-hour later at the station of Sidi Abdel Rahman (km. 154) we cross the train from Mersa Matruh. There are still two good hours to go before we get there. It is a real devil's journey of the hardest type, a genuine desert ride with ear-splitting noise that never wants to end. One should not even think of mentioning the sanitary conditions....

But at last even this bone-shaking reaches an end, and indeed quite punctually too. At around 12.00 - High Noon - we enter the terminal station of Mersa Matruh. Exhausted, dishevelled and filthy we disembark from the train and seek a nice hotel on the beach in order to recover. One thing is certain - the return trip to Alexandria will be by bus - despite our love for the railways!

Our very last railway stage began then after two wonderful days at the sea in Alexandria and brought us to the final destination of Cairo. This line, 208km long is the main artery of Egypt and also the oldest railway in all of Africa, having opened in 1856. The traffic is accordingly heavy. According to Cook's Timetable the trains between the two cities run in almost quarter-hourly intervals. For our unrepeatable last 'Train to the Pharaoh' we want something special - one of the sleek French-built Turbotrains. But the intended 14.00 train turns out to be a quite normal one, albeit a much better InterCity with 1st. Class. We never saw any of the Turbotrains, and we could not even find out whether or not they are still in service. No problem, or, in Egyptian, "*mish mushkella!*"

The last 208 kilometres fly by as we traverse the flat, green, extremely fertile Nile Delta. The countdown begins - Cairo, we are coming! A late lunch is served at our places in the saloon coach - from the WL, i.e. the Wagon-Lits Company. We pass through all intermediate towns and cities, including Tanta, non-stop. Another half hour! Then endless suburbs of the Megalopolis, our Express races through the vast Nile metropolis with its horn blaring constantly and at high speed. At last it slows down and bores itself into the heart of the of the largest and most monstrous cities of the world. 15, 18 or 20 Million inhabitants? Who knows?

At exactly 16.30 Ex. 916 pulls into the main Cairo Ramses Station. For the last time we climb out, as though this is nothing special. But we are doing this after almost exactly 7.300 kilometres by rail and road since we left Germany. We have reached our destination."

(ii). In 'Continental Railway Journal' No. 167 (Autumn 2011) p. 394 are some reports based on a visit in May 2011, after the change of government: "**SECURITY:** There appeared to be no security concerns throughout the county. There were numerous police check points on all major roads as normal, but according to our reporter's guide *baksheesh* is no longer being demanded to pass through them. Armoured personnel carriers were seen on the streets of Cairo, but a request to take photos was met with a friendly wave.

(iii). CAIRO METRO.

The Metro station for the Ramses main-line station has been renamed. It was formerly called Mubarak, but Metro users voted, from a short list, to rename it Al Shohadaa ('The Martyrs'). A third Metro line is under construction, running roughly east-west through the city centre. Although shown on maps, it was some way from being ready to open.

(iv). EGYPTIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS.

Ramses Station in Cairo is being extensively refurbished, the museum is currently closed and the relics are stored off-site but 0-6-0 968 (Robert Stephenson of 1866) has been repainted and received some cosmetic repairs and is plinched on the new concourse. A date for reopening of the museum could not be ascertained. Traffic on the main line appeared to be heavy despite a massive downturn in tourism. The latter has led to the reduction of sleeper trains between Cairo and Luxor/Aswan to one or two per night, all leaving from Giza station, though this may change when Ramses station is completed. Some commercially available maps show a network of lines in the Kharga area, radiating from a line that runs south from Asyut on the Nile Valley main line. All the lines seen in the Kharga - Barqas area were out of use, but the physical equipment was in place and in generally good condition. A locomotive and several coaches were seen in a compound just south of Kharga. Further north, the line from Iron Mine City via 6th. October City to Cairo was in operation, with two trains of tank cars and a long string of ore cars seen during the four-hour drive on the parallel highway.

(v). HELIOPOLIS TRAMWAY.

This metre-gauge line runs from Ramses station to the north-eastern suburbs. Time only permitted a brief glimpse, but it has an air of faded decrepitude which contrasts strongly with the parallel Metro line. Both are packed to capacity.

(vi). ALEXANDRIA TRAMWAYS.

Egypt's second city has a network of trams running partly on reserved right of way and partly in the street. Even on the reserved track sections progress is slow, as no priority is given at intersections. An interesting variety of stock is in use including PCC cars second-hand from North America. Some lines use pantograph current collection and others trolley pole; all are standard gauge. Some of the trams run with double-deck driving trailer cars, making this one of the few systems in the world still using double-deck tramcars."

(vii). FILM SET.

This has already been mentioned

in a previous issue, but a decade later things haven't apparently changed much, so here is a report (from a Mike Jackson) published in 'Industrial Railway Society Overseas News' Bulletin No. 874, September 2010, p. 874/25.

EGYPTIAN MEDIA PRODUCTION CITY, 6th. OCTOBER CITY.

On 16.12.2010 a visit was made to these former film studios in order to see a former Cairo tram which is used when filming street scenes. However, the studio also has short section of standard gauge railway - about 200m long - complete with level crossing, rural station and semaphore signalling. The 'star' here is 1160, an ex-USATC 0-6-0T. The locomotive appears to be intact, although it has suffered from a grotesque chimney extension. It is propelled, when required by 4339, an ex-Egyptian State Railways 0-6-0 Diesel.

Discussion has led to the tentative identification of the locomotive as VIV (Vulcan Iron Works) 4467/1943, originally USATC 1994, later WD 311 'Sapper', disposed of at Suez in June 1952, and of which nothing more has been recorded.

The metre-gauge 4-wheeled tram, built by La Brugeoise for the Cairo system, runs in a different film set, arranged to look like a street in Alexandria. It was run for the visiting party, but failed after only 10 minutes. The site is about 20 miles southwest of Cairo.

(viii). TEMPLE OF KARNAK.

From the same 'IRS Bulletin' 874: "Inside the temple's Visitor Centre is preserved a 600mm gauge 0-4-0DM, allegedly built by Buda-Lanova in 1934, together with a carriage. The locomotive was supplied new to the temple site, which was then under excavation. The railway was used to carry away the excavated silt and sand. When this work was completed, the locomotive was kept and is now preserved.

(Buda was a petrol and diesel engine manufacturer; Lanova was a design feature introduced by Buda in 1933 - hence its prominence on the engine casting. The locomotive frame carries the name of The Ruth Co. and it is probable that the builder was, in fact, the Ruth Mine Co., a known supplier of narrow gauge mining and contractors' railway equipment.)"

L. ETHIOPIA.

In 'C.R.J.' 167 p. 395. "India has pledged 180 Million Pounds towards the construction of a national rail network. The goal is 2395km. of railway routes, the total cost of which has been estimated at GBP 3.5 Billion. Meanwhile China will fund 85% of the cost of the light rail network in Addis Ababa."

(a). FERROSTAAL.

An item in the 'Berliner Zeitung' of 15.10.2011 notes that the Essen firm Ferrostaal has been saved temporarily from going under by a large investment of some €130M by the Ipic Fund of Abu Dhabi. The former owner MAN, which still owns 30%, had been unwilling to extend any further credit.

This firm had earlier built several steam locos and items of rolling stock for Iran etc.

(b). THE TACHANAH IN JAFFA:

The link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aX4dqmE-lil&feature=player_embedded

will lead one to a 3-minute video clip showing the restored old station in Jaffa, now metamorphosed at a cost of some \$25M into a fashionable complex of cafés, galleries and shops - and including also various older and well-known brief shots of the railways in former times. Recommended.

(c). HAIFA MUSEUM NOTES.

Chen wrote on 04.09.2011: "Last Thursday (01.09.2011) another wagon joined the collection of the Israel Railway Museum at Haifa. This time it is tank wagon no. Dalet 60 021, built by Uerdingen in 1957 (i.e. part of the Holocaust Reparations agreement) with a 60,450 liter capacity. Most of the survivors were rebuilt since the early 1990s with external insulation and heating systems to enable the transport of heavy oil (mazout) and also had their original German UIC bogies replaced with French-built Y25-type bogies.

Dalet 60 021 arrived at the Museum (pushed by T44 no. 131) on the very day it was officially deleted from stock, along with four of its brethren, which were the last tank wagons for the carriage of fuel left with IR. A sixth, withdrawn wagon of the type also survives, and the fate of the five not at the Museum is still unclear, as their chassis and running gear seem to be in a good condition, but with no obvious use for them. All were stored in the fuel sidings at Ashdod Miun marshalling yard (near Ashdod Port) but will probably move now as siding capacities are currently at a premium on IR".

[Ed. adds: The '60 Dalet' designation is explained as 60 tonnes capacity and Dalet for 'Delek', the Hebrew word for Fuel. However, it appears IR pulled out of fuel transport many years ago, even for internal departmental use such as provision for its own diesel loco depots, which are served by road.]

(d). WAGON SPECIALIST NOTES.

After (c) there followed some interesting correspondence (interesting for those, like the Editor, who are interested in wagons):-

Greg Martin initially queried the adjacent wagon in the picture, to which Chen responded:

"The flat wagon is no. Tet 50 012, originally a flat for concentrated loads (e.g. army tanks, though mostly used otherwise), later used as a container flat, now converted as a HazMat fighting vehicle, including a container with appropriate neutralizing materials and added railings around part of it to create a safe platform for rescue crews. This car is not part of the Museum's collection, and is not planned to become one (though I am very fond of the

type), it is just housed on our grounds as it is a convenient place close to the 'action' but out of anyone's way. I attach IR diagrams 103 and 104, showing the two types of flats supplied by DWM (Germany) in the late 1950s."

Chen responded: "Thank you very much for this leaflet of the DWM SSIm. This is very strange, because the measurements in the text are too large, but the picture shows a wagon exactly like the IR Tet 50 series, i.e. diagram

NOTES AND COMMENTS

104. I believe they originally had these pressed-steel bogies as well. Note the correct number and positions of stanchions and also the correct type and position of other items, such as brake handles and wheel. Also, and correct me if I'm wrong, this SSIm type was not built for DB, right? At the time, many manufacturers avoided mentioning that their products were built for Israel, for political reasons, and note that your leaflet also doesn't mention who is the client."

Then Paul Scheller: "Good powers of observation! You are right. The measurements belong to the flat wagons of diagram 103, but the picture shows the diagram 104 variant. On the solebar you find also the inscription -> 10,00 m <- (distance of center pins). Both types were developed and built especially for Israel.

The DB ordered long UIC-type flat wagons. New tank carrying flats were ordered by the allied armies in Germany itself (USTC, FFA-DTMFV (France), DML (Netherlands)), but paid by the German government. Later also the German "Bundeswehr" got tank-carrying wagons (at first ex-USTC flats): All these military flats in the fifties are derived from the WWII DRB SSy Köln.

Yes, deliveries to Israel were "secret" and the destination was veiled. For example the IR vans built by LHB were destined for "Naher Osten" (= Near East).

Do you have also the diagram of the open wagons delivered by DWM?"

Paul answered: "I found it! Yet it's the longer version in the DWM catalogue... It looks like the IR flat and the length is correct, but it is not totally identical. It has only eight pairs of stanchions (the IR diagram shows ten) and it has pressed steel bogies. I assume the IR flats have DB Minden-Dorstfeld bogies as the Tet 50012. The SSys 55 were USTC flats (38 built by DWM).

Greg wrote: "I notice the SSys 55 wagon was privately owned, presumably by the German Army (or maybe by BAOR or US Army)."

Then Paul again: "DWM is a very special enterprise. "DWM" originally means "Deutsche Waffen- und Munitionsfabriken" (= German weapons and munitions works). In 1929 taken over by the Quandt Group, it was nevertheless a partially state-owned company. After 1945 the Berlin branch switched to the renovation and building of railroad and public transport equipment and was renamed "Deutsche Waggon- und Maschinenfabriken GmbH", still using the original "DWM" logo! Whereas established

wagon builders had a lot of private and foreign customers, the newcomer DWM had no such customers. DWM got its orders mainly from the state-owned DB. Some other orders were also financed by the government, such as railcars and tank carrying flat wagons for the USTC and the IR flat wagons. DWM built refrigerator cars for Greece as "NATO"-type and also open wagons for IR... IR flats: I have a copy of a picture of the shorter version from a DWM catalogue, but I couldn't find them. Sorry... And the longer version of the bogie flats had the same loading length (18 m) as the Standard European rail wagons."

(d). ORANGE ORCHARD RAILWAYS:

Sybil Ehrlich sent a reference to a video of a promotional film on the history and promotion of the Citrus Industry in Israel - <http://www.youcover.com.br/video/U94FH2wuZss/index.html>

This is from the Orchard Museum in Rehovot. "I went there a few weeks ago to do a write-up for the "Weekend" section of the Jerusalem Post. The real reason I went was to see whether what's shown on this clip (from 07:16 to 07:51) is still there.

As one can see from the attached photos, there are two flatbed trolleys, one of them still on a length of 30 cm track! And the museum director, Carmit Rapoport, told me that they are having a railway built for them at Kibbutz Ein Shemer - of Ran Hedvati's "Rakevet Ha'alonim" fame of course - that they hope will be ready in six months. It won't be an exact reconstruction of the original, no turntable for starters, and will give rides to children. So of course I'm planning to go there again when it's up and running."

The film lasts 12.57 mins.; There are glimpses of Decauville points at 06.35, the trolleys and wagon turntable from 7.18 - 7.51 as mentioned, and most amazingly of all, at 10.30 a brief shot of an IR 0-6-0T shunting vans at Haifa Port - this is apparently the ONLY known colour film of Israel Railways steam at work!

(e). NARROW GAUGE IN REHOVOT.

Sybil wrote on 22.10.201: "At the Orchard Museum in Rehovot there are still two flatbed trolleys one of them still on a length of 60cm. track. The Museum Director, Carmi Rapoport, told me that they have having a railway built for them at Kibbutz Ein Shemer, of Ran Hedvati's 'Rakevet Ha'Alonim' fame, that they hope will be ready in six months. It won't be an exact reconstruction of the original, there will be no turntable, but it will give rides to children."

(f). BOOZING IN JERUSALEM STATION.

On 31st. October 2011 I was sent a link - Brewing up a party in Jerusalem - Beer Festival www.youtube.com "The Jerusalem Beer Festival features international and local producers, music and merriment.

The Old Jerusalem Train Station was the setting for the seventh annual Jerusalem Beer Festival, featuring booths serving more than 100 international beers and more than 20 local producers from boutique breweries to tiny home operations. Festival producer Eli Giladi stresses that this is the only such festival not sponsored by a beer maker. And lots of non-natives come to check it out.

THE BEIRUT - DAMASCUS RAILWAY IN 1937.

From 'Practical Mechanics' of August 1937, an article "A Remarkable Railway" by G. Long F.R.G.S. (Thanks to Chen Melling for the copy.)

"The building of the Lebanon railway was a remarkable feat of engineering, as it meant traversing two mighty ranges of mountains. It is strange that so little mention has been made in the British press of the Lebanon- or Damascus Railway, for no line has ever been built through more romantic country, or along a more historic route. The track follows the course of that ancient highway which once linked Baghdad and Damascus with the Mediterranean Sea. This is probably the world's oldest road, and it was certainly in use long before history began, for here we are in the very cradle of mankind, and beside its route we can still discover the traditional tombs of Adam's two sons. It was by this rocky, sun-baked road that the silks and jewels of Tyre travelled to the City of the Caliphs, so that the glamorous beauties of the Arabian Nights could be clothed in Tyrian purple. It is a road which was travelled by Naaman in his chariot, as by many a Hebrew patriarch, and it was here that the Apostle Paul witnessed that heavenly vision which changed the whole course of his life and altered the history of the world.

A Formidable Task.

It was in the early nineties that the great project of the Lebanon Railway began. The task before the engineers was indeed formidable. The country was very difficult, two mighty ranges of mountains stood in the path, their rocky sides were swept by blizzards for half the year, and were baked by a tropical sun in summer. The only roads were narrow, steep and stony, and infested by robbers, who, from time immemorial, had regarded the traveller as their lawful prey.

There can be no doubt that the simplest way to reach Damascus by rail would have been to pierce the mountains with a long tunnel. This would have greatly reduced the length of and the gradients of the line, and would have made it unnecessary to lay the track above the snow line, with the added perils of blizzards and avalanches. Careful calculation however quickly proved that the cost of a tunnel would be economically impossible.

"We're originally from California," says a representative of Isra-Ale, who intended to start a brewery the minute he immigrated to Israel. "Everybody told us we're stupid to do such a thing, because nobody drinks in Israel. They were wrong!" he concludes with a laugh. Herzl Beer was there offering flavors including "Cuban cigar," accomplished with the aid of oak chips and the leaves of the cigars. Pretty tasty."

So - as the Hebrew word for 'Capital City' is 'HaBira', and as even Herzl has not been totally forgotten in the alcoholic haze, one can at least take pleasure that the old station is full - if not with passengers.

(g). RESTORATION OF TZEMACH STATION:

An item in Ha'aretz on 26.10.11 reported (translated from the German): "The station building at Tzemach south of the Sea of Genezareth is 106 years old. It was once built as an important stop on the Jezreel Railway, a line that led to the famous Hedjaz Railways..... The Halt was in use until 1948 - and in the complex history of the region in the first half of the 20th. Century it has seen Ottoman, Australian, British, French and Syrian soldiers, as well as Palmach fighters. Following the War of Independence the station declined and was eventually used as a stable for animals. But now it is to be transformed into a Centre for Israel Studies for the new Kinneret College - it will open its doors to students and tourists within a year."

Cost Enormous.

The cost of piercing hard rock is enormously high, even when no special difficulties are present, such as hidden faults, or springs, within the mountain. Experience with the Alpine tunnels proved that the cost per foot varied from 49 Pounds 7 shillings per foot on the great Simplon Tunnel, to as much as 76 Pounds per foot on the Mont Cenis, which was the first great mountain boring ever made.

The rate per foot must have been considerably higher here owing to the cost of transporting machinery and skilled workmen to these remote heights, reached only by a narrow and difficult road, years before the motor car was invented. Further, there was no prospect of sufficient traffic on this line to pay the enormous cost of a low-level tunnel. The Swiss tunnels serve important European main routes with a heavy traffic, but for many years after its construction the Lebanon Railway had one through passenger train each way per day, and although the freight services were better it is clear that the revenue could never be very high.

Through Difficult Country.

The problem then was to build a main line railway through difficult country, and to do it cheaply. It was solved in a very daring way. A narrow-gauge line was planned to follow the course of the road, and was fitted with rack and pinion on all the steep sections. The line is 94 miles in length, as against a mere 70 miles by road. This is because many of the road hills were far too steep to be safely negotiated by a heavy train, even with the aid of rack and pinion, so wide zig-zags had to be constructed to ease the gradient. The line began near the harbour at Beirut, and passing through the town and its suburbs reached the lower slopes of the hills, which are richly covered with glorious groves of oranges, lemons, mulberries and tobacco. Real climbing began at Baabda, 5 1/2 miles from the harbour.

Here the line swung round the base of the mountain in a wide curve, and boldly climbed in daring curves and zig-zags to the

summit of the range. The first part was not so bad, but at Aley, 14 miles from Beirut and 2,460ft. above sea level, the sterner task began. The actual summit is about five thousand feet; it is approached on both sides by naked rock, for the glorious cedars which once clothed these mountains have long disappeared.

Discomfort.

The construction gangs toiled bravely but in much discomfort. During the summer the hated sirocco blew right off the burning desert, and filled the men's lungs with hot sand. In winter their task was even more trying, for the whole range was covered deeply in snow, over which tore howling blizzards of piercingly cold wind, and the course of the line was constantly swept by great avalanches which carried everything before them.

Long before the actual work began, surveyors had studied these bleak mountain sides throughout the year. They had ascended in winter and early spring, when the road was blocked with snow and the roar of avalanches was often heard.

Snow Tunnels.

They carefully noted which slopes were exposed, and so in danger from the avalanches, and which were protected by crags. They also found where falls of rock and stone occurred, and made their plans accordingly. It was clear that the actual summit was too open for a railway, and so the summit ridge was pierced by a short tunnel at Ain Sofar and the dangerous approach slopes were protected by cuttings and snow-sheds. Where the snow threatened most, the line was sunk in a rock cutting about 10ft. deep, and then roofed over to keep out the snow. The lower slopes were protected by long snow-sheds. These were tunnels of wood or stone, in outline like an upturned U, and so shaped that the snow would glide over without carrying them away.

An Important Point.

When the zone of snow was passed, the line descended rapidly to the plain, and at Rayak the junction for Baalbeck was built. Today it is a great air-port, and a most important point on the pilgrims' route to Mecca.

The line now traversed the Bekaa, which means 'cleft'. It is a narrow ravine between rocky mountains, and from time immemorial has been the haunt of robbers. These gentry regarded the railway builders as their lawful prey, and soldiers had to be placed on guard as the work proceeded. Today the bandits have been finally routed, there are blockhouses every ten miles, and armed patrols of French troops keep careful watch. At Yafueh the line passed the traditional grave of Seth, the youngest son of Adam, and at Neby Habil, near the gorge of the Barada, is the tomb of Abel - according to the Koran. The pass of the Barada was a difficult stretch, as the line had to cling to the sheer side of the cliff, above the rushing river. As it followed the river towards the plain, the country became richer and more fertile and the line passed through glorious orchards and gardens as it approached the Meidan, where the terminus station was built."

The Valley Railway

"The Valley Railway" (Rakevet HaEmek) is the Hebrew nickname for the Haifa branch line of the famed Hijaz Railway, which was built in the latter days of the Ottoman Empire to connect Damascus to Medina and Mecca in the Hijaz region of the Arabian Peninsula. This railway served both religious and military purposes.

The branch line to Haifa was built from 1903-1906, to transport materials imported by sea and required for the construction of the Hijaz Railway's main line. The branch line relieved the Turkish government of the need to rely on the private railway that already ran from Damascus to Beirut.

The Haifa branch line was largely based on a failed project from the late 19th century, led by a British company that tried to establish a rail line from Haifa to Damascus, and some of the infrastructure and buildings that remain preserved today date back to that project. The line began at the Haifa Station (later Haifa East), continuing southeast along the foot of Mount Carmel to the Jezreel Valley and the city of Afula. From there, the track descended toward Beit She'an, where it turned north and continued through the Jordan Valley to Samakh, where a second main station was established, also serving the city of Tiberias. From Samakh the rail line continued eastward, ascending toward the Hauran Plateau through the Yarmouk Valley to Daraa in Southern Syria, where it connected to the main line of the Hijaz Railway. This last section of the line posed complex challenges for the railway engineers, eventually leading to the construction of some 15 bridges and 7 tunnels along the Yarmouk alone.

Once the Haifa branch line was completed, additional short branch lines were built from Afula toward Nablus and from Haifa to Acre and a longer branch line was constructed from the Samaria area to the Sinai Peninsula and toward the Gaza Strip in order to serve the Turkish army during World War I.

Despite the fact that the section of the line running through the Jezreel and Jordan valleys was short relative to the overall Hijaz Railway network, this became the most prosperous section of the entire railway, partially thanks to the flourishing Jewish settlement throughout those valleys, which gave the Haifa-Samakh line its Hebrew nickname.

At a time when paved roads were scarce and in poor condition, the locations of some of those valley settlements were selected specifically because of their proximity to the rail line. The residents' reliance upon the railway increased its influence over their daily lives and produced many varied memories and stories, from jokes about the train's slowness to a claim that the birth rate in the valley increased due to early morning train whistles.

תחנת איהוע להופעת רבול SPECIAL CANCELLATION



In the late 1930's the roads in the area improved and the Jewish settlers began to gravitate more toward private vehicles, largely abandoning the railway. Despite a temporary increase in traffic during World War II, the railway's revenue plummeted again immediately afterward and especially after the "Night of the Bridges" in 1946, when the connection to Syria and Jordan was severed. The portion of the line to the east of Afula was damaged during the War of Independence in 1948 and in 1951 Israel Railways shut down the line permanently due to lack of demand.

Work is currently beginning (2011) to re-establish the Haifa-Beit She'an line, this time with a modern railway that will allow travelers to reach Beit She'an from Haifa in 45 minutes, as opposed to the 2-hour trip during the British Mandate. In preparation for the project and during its implementation, efforts are also being made to locate and preserve important built remnants of the original line.

Chen Melling
Israel Railway Museum

Description of the Stamp, Sheet and Cover

Stamp - Hijaz Railway "Hartmann 2-8-2" steam engine and a train against the background of the Jezreel Valley landscape

Tab - Turkish period buildings at the Kfar Yehoshua station, which were renovated and restored and currently serve as a visitor's center

Stamp Sheet Margins - A photograph of Givat Hamoreh from the south (Albatross Aerial Photography)

First Day Cover - Steam engine number 152, an "SLM 2-8-0" leading a train into the Beit Yosef station in the 1930's. In the background - a map of the Valley line and its main stations. The stations built by the Hijaz Railway during the Ottoman period are marked in black.

השירות הבולאי - טל: 076-8873933
שדרות ירושלים 42, תל-אביב-יפו 68021
The Israel Philatelic Service - Tel: 972-76-8873933
12 Sderot Yerushalayim, Tel-Aviv-Yafo 68021
www.israelpost.co.il • e-mail: philiserv@postil.com

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New Stamps to commemorate the "Valley Railway"



The First Day Cover