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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



82.01

*The first double-deck double train formation approaching Tel-Aviv Savidor (central) station on 15.09.08;
source-Mrs. Liran Gordon-Isra-Rail Co. Ltd. Spokesman*

EDITORIAL.

The last months have been very hectic ones for the Editor, with several weeks of travelling when he never really 'touched base'. And at the time of preparing this issue the same applies - so some delays are unfortunately inevitable.

In August a brief visit to Israel allowed me to gain a few impressions of current activity - or lack thereof. Some of the news items which follow - thanks to Aharon Gazit, Uri Ben-Rehav, Sybil Ehrlich and others for the constant stream of information - provide the confirmation for my impressions.

Firstly, it is amazing how long it takes to bring some sections of double-track into use. And yet, a lot has been built - for example, northwards from Kiryat Motzkin. It just isn't connected yet! The fourth track, southbound, between Tel Aviv Universita and the carriage sidings outside T.A. Merkaz remains out of use and rusting - why? The bottleneck between Lod and Na'an remains one - why? Around Ramle station the alignment is cramped, but for the rest the line passes through open country. Some realignment work seems under way, but not a lot. The Beer-Sheva line shows much evidence of new alignments - one day it would be worth an article in itself to compare the original 1950's line and what is emerging as new sections are 'spliced in' - many new embankments, cuttings, bridges, trackbeds were visible - but hardly a single worker. Lehavim station is big and glossy and glassy, but the second platform or the goods avoiding loop remain unconnected. Kiryat Gat station has been rebuilt with four platforms but with only two tracks serving them - what is planned here?

Israel Railways remains very much a fortress with restricted access and a fortress mentality. There are probably good reasons for a lot of this, but at times it can be a little exaggerated. It means, of course, that every station has to be guarded with fences and barbed wire and armed custodians. That makes any informal stopping place an impossibility. And yet many of these people sit in the shade and have nothing to do apart from when the hourly train stops. My first step on arrival was to go to the IR headquarters at Tel Aviv for a Photographic Permit; although the Doveret was not there, other friendly staff assisted me. With this paper on official letterhead I could then show literally scores of security men in only four days that I was permitted to take photographs. A typical conversation would then go: "Assur Letzalem!" "No it's OK, here's my permit." Security man (into his radio or mobile): "There's a man here with a photo permit... May he take photos?" "Crackle Crackle mutter mutter" - and then I could. Except, of all places, at the Jaffa station site being rebuilt, and the adjacent Beit HaOsef military museum collection.

The timetable makes it relatively easy to get to or from Tel Aviv, but not so easy to go from anywhere else to anywhere else - say, Beit Shemesh to Rehovot, or even Ganei Aviv to Ramle. The stopping patterns mean that loads are evenly distributed, but the trains that stop at Kfar Chabad do not stop at Ganei Aviv. Most trains seem to 'skip stops' somewhere or other - it makes it vital to check the timetable sheets! One cannot speak of 'stopping services' that stop at all stations, and 'semi-fasts' that all skip the same ones. Confusing. In Jerusalem, I was able to walk almost the whole of the tramway under construction - and take buses past the sections which hadn't yet been started, or were barely started. It seems a bizarre itty-bitty way to have some sections with tracks neatly laid and tiled, ending at a stretch of tarmac where the first spade has yet to dig. The depot looked filled with trams, but there was no sign of even masts being installed for the overhead yet on those sections that otherwise looked finished - and few signs of workers at work.

Speaking personally, it was good to meet with Chen Melling and discuss ways of progressing Paul's last book, "Make Straight The Way" - Chen has done a lot of work on this, and the hope is to produce editions eventually in Hebrew, English and maybe even German. It was important for me to visit Paul's grave, as I couldn't get to the symposium held to mark his Yahrzeit, and I miss his regular input and sardonic but constructive criticism. I still have a few of his last articles on file, but without the illustrations meant to accompany them. It was good to meet with Jeremy Topaz and Sybil Ehrlich, and my apologies to those readers and enthusiasts in Israel whom I could not meet in a crowded timetable.

This issue is, again, weighted rather towards Current Events in Israel, with some historical items too. But this simply reflects how much is happening! And the lack of photos from other railway systems. Nevertheless, I trust you enjoy!

The Editor.

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). SIEMENS COACHES.

Hardly had the last issue (belatedly) been sent off, when this appeared on www.haaretz.com of 20.06.2008: "Six new carriages, eight months behind schedule." By Avi Bar-Eli.

"The first shipment of passenger cars manufactured by Siemens for Israel Railways - a mere six of the 86 ordered - finally arrived at Ashdod Port yesterday, though the German company had been supposed to start shipping the carriages beginning in December 2007. However, it will probably be another two or three months before passengers are able to enjoy their new ride, as additional assembly and running-in are required. According to the terms of the NIS 700 Million tender awarded to Siemens back in January 2006, the company was obligated to supply 86 cars starting in December 2007, with an option to pro-



82.03 A road bridge to replace the level crossing south-east of Ashkelon; the road bed is that of the new line between Ashkelon and Beer-Sheva being built; photo-Aharon Gazit

vide an additional 585 carriages at a price of about NIS 4 Billion. The supply delay heightened the already serious shortage of rolling stock. Carrying capacity has not increased over the past two years, while the number of passengers rose by about 15%, creating overcrowding, delays and higher maintenance costs."

An I.R. press release of 19.06.08 confirmed this, adding: "Each train will eventually consist of 10 coaches, of which one is a power car/driving trailer. Each trailer coach is 26.4m long, 2,85m wide, 4.35m high, and weighs 47 tons. On each train there will be three coaches accessible for the disabled, and all trains will be convertible to electric traction.

It was anticipated that by August 2008 some 20 coaches (including two power/driving trailers) will be here, thus enabling two complete test trains to be formed for

trials prior to introducing them into daily services from October or November 2008; the balance of 67 coaches are expected to follow at an increased rate.

This hopefully puts an end to the tension between IR and Siemens which has lasted for more than a year; it is, however, not clear whether the whole option of up to 585 coaches will be taken up. Yitzhak Harel said "The new coaches are essential for the railways to cope with the ever-growing demands for services and due to the opening of new lines; the 87 coaches will only reinforce the existing fleet and are unable to replace the older outdated and unsafe equipment."

Due to a technical glitch some reports from Aharon Gazit from February and March were filed in the wrong place and so a few items are presented here which are not quite 'News' but which are worthy of record.

"One of the Israeli most important economical newspapers, TheMarker, recently reported that due to the delay in the delivery of the first single-deck push/pull trains from Siemens, the railways are checking the legal aspects of the tender conditions regarding the penalties to be paid by Siemens due to the delay; the railways authorities are also checking the possibility of publishing immediate tenders for cars (not clear as yet if single-deck which need a tender, or double-deck trains, in which case Bombardier has open options, thus a tender can be avoided; A.G.).

It was not possible to get any response, either from the railways or from Siemens."

Update - In the first week of September 12 railway employees went to the Siemens works in the Czech Republic to be trained on the new coaches; by this time 20 coaches had arrived in Israel, none of which was a power car / driving trailer, hence the need to undergo training at the maker's, where these vehicles are undergoing tests.

(b). I.R. REPORT FOR 2007.

On 05.02.08 there was a press conference by the Railways' Director General Mr. Yitzhak Harel (Hakki) in his office at Tel-Aviv Savidor (Central) station at which he presented the summary for 2007 and the company's plans for 2008. After the press conference, in which correspondents of 2 TV channels also took part, Mr. Harel met with several press members (including myself), and revealed the following: Although the passenger traffic forecast for 2008 is for 8.4% more than in 2007, the train frequency may be 3% lower than in 2007 (340 trains daily compared with 350 in 2007) due to a shortage of rolling stock. He added that the railway administration is considering publishing tenders for additional passenger cars - including double-deck - from various manufacturers in addition to increasing the initial order from Siemens for 86 single-

deck cars, the delivery of which has been delayed until an unknown date in 2008.... He further said that he had asked the Transport and Finance Ministries to try to reduce fares on long-distance travel in return for raising fares on part of the congested suburban network, thus avoiding the need for subsidies; the reason for this request is that the fares for long distance travel are high, and if the rise continues, the railways may soon face fierce competition.

The Railway's Budget for 2008 will be \$920 Billion, of which \$640 Million will be spent on development; this means an increase of \$140 Million for development due to completion of line construction. The Railways have finished 2007 with a budget deficit of \$14 Million, but are expected to reach a balance at the end of 2008. Within a few weeks about 200 employees will retire after an agreement has been achieved with the Finance Ministry.

He finally explained the new phenomenon of closing railway lines either at weekends or even during week days - such as the recent case of closing the line between Kiryat-Gat, Beer-Sheva, and Dimona between 03.02.08 and 07.02.08; he said: "We prefer to close the lines for relatively short periods, even though some inconvenience is caused to the public; the alternative is to spread the works much longer with many more delays, traffic disruptions and inconvenience for the public".

(c). STOP-GO ON ASHKELON - BEER SHEVA LINE - TO SAVE MONEY?

From 'Ha'aretz', 29/06/2008: By Avi Bar-Eli. "The planned railway line between Ashkelon and Be'er Sheva is to stay on the drawing board, while the express route to Jerusalem is to be reexamined, according to a compromise being hammered out between the finance and transportation ministries in response to Israel Railways' current budget crisis. Representatives of the parties decided on Thursday that the NIS 4 Billion in cost overruns on the original railway development program would be covered with money budgeted to other projects. Participants at the meeting, which was held at Israel Railways' offices, included treasury budgets director Ram Belinkov, Accountant-General Shuki Oren, Transportation Ministry Director General Gideon Siterman and Israel Railways Director General Yitzhak Harel. The participants agreed that the overall approved budget of NIS 29.5 Billion will remain in place. Full details of the compromise deal are to be worked out in the coming days.

It was revealed about a month ago that the treasury had frozen Israel Railways' development fund transfers in the wake of the budget overruns - chiefly, overspending of about NIS 1.7 Billion for the Jerusalem express (A1) line, on an original budget of NIS 4.23 Billion. Spending on the track-lay-

ing project between Lod, Na'an and Be'er-Sheva exceeded its original NIS 1.8 Billion budget by NIS 500,000, for a total cost of about NIS 2.36 Billion so far. The Ashkelon - Be'er-Sheva track, originally expected to cost NIS 1.6 Billion, exceeded estimates by NIS 300 Million, for a total of NIS 1.9 Billion.

In the wake of the deal with the Treasury, these funds will be unfrozen. Israel Railways also requested an additional NIS 1.5 Billion to carry out several projects that did not appear in the original development plan, most of them in order to obtain a vertical separation of tracks.

After its budgets were frozen, Israel Railways was forced to announce the suspension of ongoing projects and tenders and paid only its most urgent contractors' bills. Sources in the transportation industry say that the Ashkelon - Be'er-Sheva route is the one that can be expected to "pay the price," due to previous claims regarding planning defects on the line."

In 'Ha'aretz' for 01.07.2008 a more political slant was put on this decision - in an article by Na'ama Sheffi. Here are some extracts:-

"Israel Railways' deficits will be paid off by exactly the wrong people: the inhabitants of southern Israel who live in the greater "Gaza envelope" between Ashkelon and Be'er-Sheva. A compromise between the finance and transportation ministries has led to the suspension of work on the railway line between the two cities, a line whose planning has been complained about from the start. Some NIS 300 Million will be paid for by the people of the southern periphery. This would not have been terrible had they not already been paying three heavy bills: Israeli society's continuing alienation toward them, high - sometimes double-digit - unemployment, and the exhausting need to cope with bombardments from Gaza for about eight years now.

Ever since the South's development towns were established, they have been perceived as superstitious believers in amulets, with their entire purpose being to anchor the country's southern border. They have never succeeded in taking off beyond the image that stuck to them in the 1950s. And in the current decade, when it looked as though there was a change in direction, they were stricken by the heavy blow of the Qassam war..... the country's leaders hastened to express solidarity and promise aid. Now Finance Minister Roni Bar-On and Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz have forgotten the solemn promises and have returned the region to its permanent place in society: at the margin of the margins, out of sight and out of mind, wretched in its isolation. The suspension of the work on the Ashkelon - Be'er-Sheva railway line, which has been under construction at a snail's pace for some time now, is a death-blow to any initiative to help the southern

periphery. The fragile cease-fire with Hamas and the reserved attitude toward it by the heads of the political and military establishments ensure that no one will move from the center of the country to the South. The way has been blocked to the possibility that the South's inhabitants could look for work outside their region, whose employers are thin on the ground."

On 13.08.2008 Aharon reported:

"After three months of disagreements between the Ministries of Transport and Finance, which caused a pause in the railways' financing, the new development budget was at last signed on 12.08.2008 by the Transport Ministry's General Manager, Gideon Siterman, the Finance Ministry's Accountant-General Mr. Shuki Oren, and the Railways' General Manager Yitzhak Harel. According to the agreement, the budget of about \$9 Billion will be slightly decreased and instead redeployed to cover until 2012 instead of 2010; The railways will not be allowed to deviate from the budget. For the first time since the State Railways became Isra-Rail Co. Ltd., the company will itself sign off on its financial reports. This means that in case of any budget deviations, the Railways will have to finance this themselves; however, should the budget limits be kept, investments will grow.

Public pressure has certainly helped, and the result is that the line between Rishonle-Zion West and Pleshet Junction en-route to Ashdod will be completed; the controversial line between Beer-Sheva and Ashkelon will indeed be built, but only as a single track and after redesign. The fast rail link (A1) to Jerusalem is being re-checked, due to statutory problems, and will probably not now be completed before 2014, as will also a proportion of the planned grade-separation schemes - though which, has not yet been decided. Part of the budget overspend so far will be covered by the government as a result of the money saved on Road 531. It has also not yet been decided if the option for the 585 further single-deck push-pull coaches will be activated.

(d). MODI'IN AND JERUSALEM LINES - ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROVERSY.

In December 2007 two controversial reports were published; according to the first one, the Economical Company of the city of Modi'in, headed by the member of the municipality lawyer Amnon Merhav, is considering an appeal to the court, claiming that the railways have caused a damage of around \$1.56 Million to the city's main park (Anabe; still in creation), during construction works of Modi'in central station and the line leading to, which passes through the park, mainly by not removing the waste materials and by avoiding from

restructuring the park area; the railways in the response described the claim as a "blackmail", adding that only the court will decide.

The second report, which seems to be a "counter weight" to the attack has been published by Ing. Michal Zussman, the manager of Environment and Landscape treatment of the railways, it reveals that many flowers and trees are being planted along the line to Modi'in, which proves the railway commitment; these works will be carried on during 2008 also along the road being built aside the double-track line. The Railways' Administration has been recently put in a frustrating situation regarding the expected delay in boring the tunnels on the A1 fast rail link to Jerusalem, This is due to the fact that the Railways have not yet found a solution to the problem of disposal of surplus soil from the tunnel boring. This means that work will not start in April 2008 but instead at the beginning of 2009, which in turn means instead of opening the line in 2011, this will not happen before 2013 or 2014!

The delay is due to the Jerusalem District Court which accepted the appeal of the Green organizations against damaging the environment. This caused a lot of anger against the railways from the Transport and Finance Ministries who claimed that the railways tried to ignore the problem which is well known from the outset; this was announced before Mr. Harel became General Manager, and added that they hope he will bring some order into this situation.

The Railways' administration confirmed "that the approvals will not be accepted from the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Environment before the beginning of 2009, but added that the railways have offered several technical solutions which are being discussed at both ministries within the regular statutory procedure, which normally takes about a year".

Linked to this theme: "The Ministry of Environmental Protection announced on 30.06.08 that according to an agreement signed with the railways, the latter has committed that the materials used in the large construction works carried out all over the network will be recyclable, thus contributing to the environment, and reducing the cost by up to 30%; the railways are now including this as a precondition in all the new tenders published for the sub-contractors."

(e). MODI'IN OPENING AND PROBLEMS.

From a press release of 01.04.08 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"The railways opened today (at last! A.G.)

the second railway station in the city of Modi'in called Modi'in Central station; it is located in the city centre 6 km from Modi'in Outskirts station which opened on 01.09.2007.

The 4-platform station is 30m under the surface, has three levels, and an area of 3,000 sq.m; it is served by 58 trains daily - 29 in each direction between 05:30 and 23:15, many of them terminating as far north as Nahariya, with 2 trains hourly in each direction at rush hours.

The station was built at a cost of \$42.5 Million, which is 10% of the cost of building the entire line between Ben-Gurion Airport and Modi'in, and concludes this project. Travel time between Modi'in Central and Tel-Aviv Hahagana stations is 27 minutes including halts at Modi'in Outskirts and Ben-Gurion Airport stations; by bus or by car this takes up to 90 minutes at rush hours! Fare in one direction to all the stations of Tel-Aviv and/or Modi'in is \$3.65 while a monthly season ticket is sold at \$91.5; there is also a combined Isra-Rail/Veolia/Connex monthly season ('Hodshi Hofshi') ticket (for internal bus services in Modi'in) at \$103.00. The station is served by three Veolia/Connex bus lines which cover all the city, but they are not always really coordinated with the railways' timetable; the bus operator claims the central bus station - located adjacent to the railway station - and other infrastructures around the railway station are incomplete - which is true!

IR General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Harel (Haki) came himself to inspect the opening and said: "The railway line to Modi'in completed today is so far the biggest and most complex infrastructure project built in Israel in recent years, with far-reaching macro-economical implications. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Housing (which is responsible for developing works at Modi'in and has its own tempo of work...A.G.) has not yet completed the works around the station, which would have provided much better access and services to the passengers, I've decided to open the station, for the public welfare." He added that he believed the ministry would do all it could to accelerate and finish the works as soon as possible.

In the first two hours of operation some 800 passengers used the trains, thus demonstrating the public trust in a rail service. According to the Railways' forecast, 1 Million will use the line in 2008 rising to 1.2 Million in the coming years - which is more than 4,000 daily.

Aharon adds: "It should be mentioned that this was the 'Actual' opening of the station; the 'Official' opening had been planned for 08.04.2008 with the participation of Transport and Roads' Safety Minister Mr.

Shaul Mofaz, the ministry's General Manager Mr. Gideon Sittermann, the railways' General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Harel, and the Mayor of Modi'in Mr. Moshe Spector, but that morning, when all the invited guests (including my wife and myself) arrived at the station, it was announced that this had been cancelled due to technical reasons and a new date would be published; so far there has been none; the frustrated guests were very angry, particularly due to the fact that the reason was the running of an emergency exercise intended to check the public's behaviour, and Minister Mofaz thought that his participation had been compulsory - but this had been known long ago!

Just one week before the opening, during crew training, a locomotive which was shunting collided with the end coach of a parked train; the coach was seriously damaged, the locomotive only lightly; As the coach is almost 50 years old it will probably not be repaired, which in the present time of severe shortage of rolling stock, when no spare trains are available, may have disastrous consequences."

Also: "Despite the high average daily passenger traffic of 4,500 on the Modi'in - Tel-Aviv line (both directions), which proves that rail is the preferred mode of transport, there are daily complaints from passengers about the strange phenomenon of being stuck in the 1.8km tunnel (between Modi'in Central and Modi'in Outskirts stations) for between 5 to 25 minutes; the passengers further claim that this happens on every second train; one has even said that since the train team never gives explanations, she is really considering using Veolia/Connex bus services where the delays due to bottle necks are at least expected and no explanations are needed!

Even more interesting is the railways' unofficial response, according to which the delays are routine failures on the Alstom/Vossloh diesel locomotives, which are "resting" only 4 hours daily, and sometimes make 10 journeys daily on the 165km Modi'in - Nahariya line and back, which means minimum maintenance!

The unofficial source added that the phenomena of stuck trains in the tunnel is caused by the fact that the "track is still fresh and has to be strengthened; the speed restriction of 60km/h has yet to be removed".

The conclusion is that this shows the railways' severe shortage in rolling stock and motive power, partially caused by the delay in supplying the single-deck push/pull trains from Siemens, thus causing the railways to operate services without having a single train in reserve!

The problem regarding the "fresh track" that has to settle-in is strange - this could hardly have been unknown during the period of more than a month prior to the opening of Modi'in Central station, when all trains arriving at Modi'in Outskirts station continued

to the new one and back - without passengers but with technical teams - to train the drivers; could nothing be found then?"

(f). MODI'IN LINE TRAFFIC SURGE.

From a press release of 17.04.08 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"The opening of Modi'in Central station has increased passenger traffic on the line to Tel-Aviv by 50%; prior to the opening of the new station, the daily traffic was 2,500 to 3,000 passengers, while from the opening, it reached 4,500 passengers daily - which actually exceeds the forecast for daily traffic for 2009! There are already signs of some traffic reduction on the roads to and from Modi'in, which is clearly a result of using more intensively rail services.

IR General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Harel, said: "It is very important that trains reach most of the population; the traffic data show that railway stations located at city centres contribute a lot to the centres, reduce the social gaps, and improve the quality of life of the citizens"

(g). LINE CLOSURES FOR MAINTENANCE.

From a press release of 29.06.08 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"The railways will start in mid-July 2008 to carry out intensive infrastructure works, developing and rebuilding all over the network, on the sections: Ramla - Jerusalem, Lod - Beer-Sheva, and Haifa - Tel-Aviv. Additionally, beams of bridges on the Na'an - Kiryat-Gat line will be laid, as well as an environmental development of the Hadera West - Haifa section by cutting weeds, cleaning, and rebuilding the drainage along the alignment.

The aim is to complete the \$9.25 Million works, which are intended to improve safety, service, travelling quality, safety, and speed, before August 2008, which is a month characterized with heavy passenger traffic. The works will cause closures of the afore-mentioned sections of line, each for a few days; the railways Administration has published the announcement in the media, internet, and newspapers, with an attached apology, and for the commuters on these lines, it is recommended to reconsider buying the monthly season tickets for July 2008."

The Tel-Aviv - Nahariya line was closed to traffic between Thursday night 23:30 01.05.08 and Sunday morning 05:30 04.05.08. Between Kiryat-Motzkin and Akko (on the Haifa - Nahariya line) double-tracking works were carried out, while at Herzliya and Kfar Vitkin (on the Tel-Aviv - Netanya section), maintenance works were carried out including: bridge maintenance, cleaning and weed-killing spraying along the tracks.

All trains terminated and started at Tel-Aviv

Savior (Central) station during the line closure. The railways' administration published an apology for the inconvenience caused to passengers due to the line's closure. (Of course this meant just the Thursday overnight trains to Ben-Gurion, the Friday services and the Saturday night services. Nevertheless, it must have meant chaos for all those seeking to get home for the weekend.)

(h). MORE LINE CLOSURES.

In September 2008 three of IR's main lines will be closed for a period of two or three days due to massive development, maintenance, realignment and double-tracking works as well as preparations for grade-separations.

From 08.09. to 10.09.2008 the section between Kiryat Motzkin and Nahariya will be closed to allow construction of a grade separation (i.e. underbridge) between Akko and Nahariya. All trains will start and end at Kiryat Motzkin.

Between 15.09. and 17.09.2008 the section Na'an - Beer-Sheva - Dimona will be closed - trains to Nahariya will start and end at Tel Aviv HaHaganah. Once the works have been completed, the travelling time between Tel Aviv and Beer-Sheva will be reduced to 45 minutes, at an average speed of 140 km/h.

The Jerusalem - Tel Aviv line will be closed 15.09. - 17.09.2008 due to works on building a grade separation on the Na'an - Beit Shemesh section; this will be the new alignment and road bridge at Nahal Soreq.

IR's spokeswoman Mrs. Liran Gordon explained that despite the inconvenience caused to passengers, the works must be carried out now, since they cannot be carried out during the winter and would thus be severely delayed."

(i). THE NEW STATION OF PETAH-TIKVA - KIRYAT-ARIE & TICKETS.

The suburban Petach-Tikva Kiryat-Arie station opened on Saturday night 03.05.2008, With the opening of Kiryat-Arie station at a cost of \$17 Million, the stations on the Tel-Aviv - Kfar-Sava line are now completed. The station, located between the existing stations of Bnei-Brak and Petach-Tikva Sgula, is intended to serve the nearby high-tech. area, as well as the northern neighborhoods of Petach-Tikva, with an annual forecast of 900,000 passengers. The station has a 400 sq. m passenger hall, easy access for disabled including elevators and escalators to and from the underground pedestrian subway between the two platforms, a parking area for 300 cars, an access road of 400 m, and a public transport terminal. In the (hopefully) near future, the station will also be the interchange point with the Tel-Aviv LRV/METRO Red Line, the depot of which is to be built nearby."

Continued at foot of next page...

(j). THE NEW STATION AT GANEI AVIV.

The Lod-Ganei-Aviv station (i.e. Spring Gardens) opened on Saturday night 10.05.2008. It is located on the Tel-Aviv - Lod line, at the Lod's northern outskirts between existing nearby Lod (now central in practice) and Kfar-Habad stations and near the neighborhood of the same name. The station, built at a cost of \$10.5 Million, includes a 220 sq.m passenger hall, easy access for disabled including elevators, special ramps, a pedestrian subway, a special parking area, as well as a parking area for 100 cars, a 550 m access road, and a public transport terminal. The station is intended to serve the northern parts of Lod, as well as nearby inhabitants, and the annual forecast is for more than half a million passengers.

The railways' General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Harel (Haki) said that "The more railway stations that are opened in city centres, the more attractive rail service will be".

(k). 60TH. ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

For the 60th Anniversary of the state of Israel, as well the Israel Railways, 5 Million specially-designed tickets have been produced; the tickets carry the emblems of the anniversary and of the state. In addition several IC3 units have been painted in an attractive white and blue wavy pattern with the anniversary symbols.

(l). RUN OUT OF FUEL.....

Being short of fuel is something familiar to car drivers, but as far as trains are concerned, this may happen only during war or other emergency situations; but the following story proves that this can sometimes happen on a regular day:

On 02.04.2008, just one day after the opening of Modi'in Central station, a train which departed Nahariya at 06:00, due to reach Modi'in Central station at 08:30, was halted at Akko station upon arrival; the passengers were instructed to disembark and wait for a replacement train, as the fuel tank was empty!

A replacement train arrived after 20 minutes and departed at 06:38, 30 minutes late; all the passengers were compensated; the Railways' Administration confirmed the story, adding that the occurrence is under investigation!

(m). LITIGIOUS PASSENGERS.

Another severe case of delay happened in early 2008 when Mr. Gad Shelef of Jerusalem who works at Tel-Aviv, and one of the few using the slow and long rail service, arrived at Jerusalem Malkha station to catch the 06:40 train. He was told by the station master that there would be a 10 minutes delay in the departure, but that at Beit-Shemesh the connecting train to Tel-Aviv would wait for his train to enable passengers to continue to Tel-Aviv. However, upon arrival at Beit-Shemesh, he found that the train to Tel-Aviv had already left according to the instructions of Central Control!

The angry passenger appealed to the court and the judge decided that the railways should pay the passenger \$565.00 as penalty and compensation. He added: "The timetable is like a contract between the railways and its passengers and must be kept and respected; delays mean there is no respect for the contract; if public transport timetables are not reliable, passengers will stop using it; furthermore, the railways have an important advantage over buses as they are a monopoly - they are the only track user; thus, if trains can't be punctual, who can?"

(n). NEXT STOP EILAT?

At the annual conference of the Israeli building subcontractors, which took place at Eilat - the Israeli extreme southern point on the Red Sea - both Prime Minister Mr. Ehud Olmert and Transport and Roads' Safety Minister Mr. Shaul Mofaz told the press that they have allocated \$42.50 Million for detailed design of the missing 171 km of rail link between Har Tzin (the extreme southern point of rail track in Israel) and the port of Eilat; they added that this dream of more than 50 years, which has been discussed and cancelled many times, and was then pushed forward at the preliminary design level about five years ago by the then-Finance Minister Mr. Netanyahu, will probably become a reality within four years from the date of final approval.

From a press release of 29.06.08 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd. : "Starting from 01.07.08, a new monthly combined rail/bus season ticket will be introduced, enabling freedom of travel on the Tel-Aviv - Petach Tikva railway line, as well as on the buses of the Kavim ('Lines') company operating in Petach-Tikva and the surrounding area, as well as to and from the stations of Sgula and the newly opened Kiryat-Arie, both at Petach-Tikva. The new ticket will save 20% compared with separate monthly season tickets for rail and bus separately; 7 trains are calling daily in each direction at the stations on the line."

So, what has suddenly changed in the area that has brought this dramatic decision, particularly if we bear in mind that only recently the government considered closing the port of Eilat altogether, owing to the small number of ships using it (the whole idea of building the line is to provide a land bridge between the Red and Mediterranean Seas; passenger traffic was considered negligible)?

Both ministers confirmed that C.R.C.C. of China, a delegation of which came to Israel recently to discuss the subject, have shown interest in making the port of Eilat their 'home port' for their products destined for Europe as well as building the rail link under the BOT system at an overall investment of \$2.54 Billion, of which \$0.56 Billion will be financed by the Israeli government, and the rest by the concessionaire.

Also included in the project is a new international airport at Timna (an area of historical copper mines, planned for revival) north of Eilat.

The former head of the secret service Mr. Jacob Peri, now a businessman who has good connections with the Chinese, also has an initiative to build a rail link to Petra in Jordan.

The Transport and Roads' Safety Ministry told the press that Canadian Pacific Railways has also shown interest in the project.

(o). NEGATIVE HORSE POWER.

On 16.04.2008 a train hit a horse at the entrance to Bnei-Brak station; no damage was caused to the train, but there were delays to traffic between Kfar-Sava, Tel-Aviv and Rishonim.

(p). ELECTRIFICATION.

At a conference organized in March at the Tel-Aviv exhibition centre, Mr. Wilhelm Krenz of Bombardier Transportation presented their concept regarding passenger trains and electrification.

On 22.08.2008 Aharon reported that the Transport Ministry had also given its approval to the Electrification project, which means that the Railways now have only to select a winning bidder. Also, the tunneling works on the fast A1 route to Jerusalem had also finally been approved after all, - mainly thanks to the contractor Alpine, who had already brought all their equipment and threatened an appeal to the Supreme Court due to the losses they would otherwise face, with their equipment lying idle. The excavation works on the 80m deep new Jerusalem station, which had been halted for three months, should also recommence soon..

(q). NEW I.R. SPOKESWOMAN - 'DOVERET'

A new appointment at the railways is the new Spokesman - actually a woman, Mrs. Liran Gordon. She is 33 years old, married, with 3 children, and has had a variety of jobs, including: 1999 - 2000 as an assistant to the Spokesman of the Tel-Aviv Municipality, 2000 - 2002 a Parliamentary Assistant to the then-Knesset member Joseph Paritzky, and between 2002 and 2004, when he became the Minister of Infrastructures, she was his senior communication adviser and the ministry's spokesman. Her most recent job, from 2004, was as spokesman of the Nature Preservation Society. We wish her well in this post.

She can (theoretically) be contacted at: dover@rail.co.il or at 00+972 - 3 - 6076610 .

(r). WHO WILL GUARD THE GUARDS THEMSELVES?

Railroad Employee Severely Beaten in Likely Terrorist Attack. 22 July 08 by Ze'ev Ben-Yechiel and Nissan Ratzlav-Katz (from IsraelNN.com).

"An Israel Railways employee was beaten severely early on Thursday [17th. July] by a group of Arab young men. The attack is believed to be "nationalistically" motivated, which would define it as an act of terrorism. Ronen, 20, reported that a group of young Arabs confronted him at his guard post at a railway crossing near Atlit around 3:00a.m. The young men descended upon him and, without warning, struck him in the face. Then, after demanding his weapon and hearing he was unarmed, the attackers savagely beat Ronen with sticks, fists and feet.

Ronen can barely speak, as the attackers fractured bones in his face and body, but after the assault he managed to make his way to a nearby IDF Navy base, where he received first aid. Neither Ronen nor the guard post were robbed, pointing towards a terrorist motive behind the attack.

Ronen's parents, speaking to police on behalf of their son, conveyed their son's account of the attack, as well as their horror at the result: "I arrived at the post and saw that it was full of blood," Ronen's father said. "I was certain my son had been murdered."

The police are investigating the incident, alongside an internal investigation by the Hashmira Security Technologies Company, which provides security for the Atlit railway crossing. Initial inquiries show that the alert system in place at the guard station failed to function as it should."

(s). TERRORISM EXERCISE.

On 28.08.2008 the Railways, in co-operation with the police and emergency services and regional authorities, carried out an exercise near Bar Giyyora loop in which (theoretically) a train between Beit Shemesh and Jerusalem was attacked and derailed.

(t). JERUSALEM - NEW CENTRAL STATION.

All the observer could see in August was a large hole opposite the Central Bus Station and an information sign, but on 01.09.3008 IR announced that the following local construction firms were competing for the work of constructing the new station: Ram Engineering, Linom, Ter-Arme and Amet. The excavation works by Moriyah Co. had been put on hold for several months due to disagreements between the Finance and Transport Ministries. The go-ahead has now been given and the winner should be selected soon. (See Tender 82:05 (xii).)

(u). MORE TRAFFIC RECORDS.

From a press release of 15.06.08 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"About 8.5 Million passengers used rail services during the first quarter of 2008, 16% more than in the same quarter of 2007; the daily average number of passengers reached 122,000; 14% higher than in the same quarter of 2007. During May 2008, 2.89 Million passengers were carried; the income of the first quarter of 2008 reached almost \$37 Million, 13% more than in 2007, while the income of May 2008 alone reached \$12.5 Million, 13.55% more than in May 2007.

Punctuality in the first quarter also improved reaching 90.92% compared with 88.8% in 2007; this is mainly thanks to the railways' General Manager Mr. Yitzhak Harel (Haki) who made it his top priority.

Mr. Harel himself said that the positive results prove that better service frequencies as well as opening new stations at city centres will eliminate - in a small country like Israel - the concept of 'Periphery.'

Freight traffic, however, did not show any rise and reached on May 2008, the volume of 683,000 tons; here Mr. Harel said that though the citizens have shown their willingness in rail services, there are others who are less interested, and undoubtedly he meant the Finance Ministry who had put the railways' budget on hold for reassessment.

A Press Report of 11.08.2008 gave the following figures:-

In the second quarter of 2008 (April to June) IR passenger traffic reached 8.8M. - 14% higher than in the same quarter in 2007; Daily average was 131,500, 11% higher than the same quarter. In June 2008 alone 137,600 were carried.

One of the reasons for the traffic rise was the opening of the stations at Modi'in Central, Lod Ganei-Aviv and Petach-Tikva-Kiryat-Aryeh. Passenger/km. rose from 473,237,000 in 2007 to 492,237,000 - a rise of 4.1%.

Income from passenger traffic rose by 13% from \$28.5M to \$34 over the same comparative period. However, the average income per passenger was 0.6% lower due to the higher proportion of short-distance suburban journeys in the overall passenger sector. 59% in 2008 as against 57% in 2007. On the other hand, the share of civilian passengers rose from 75% to 77%. Load Factor Index rose from 201.14 in the first quarter of 2008 to 215.4 in the 2nd. quarter.

Regarding Freight Traffic, income for the 2nd. Quarter reached \$11.3128M, 14.6% higher than the target of \$9.83M. Ton/km rose from 25,674,000 to 293,726,000, 14% more.

In August 2008 a new monthly record in passenger traffic was reached, with 3.23 Million passengers being carried - the highest figure ever since the Israel Railways were founded in 1948. This is 15% higher than for August 2007. Daily average traffic was 130,215, 17.2% higher than in August 2007.

The most intensely-trafficked lines were:-

Tel Aviv - Haifa: 592,417.

Tel Aviv - Ashkelon: 541,469.

Tel Aviv - Netanya: 296,467.

Between January and August 2008 traffic reached 23.42 M., 13.5% up in the same period in 2007. Punctuality in August was also 91.46%, also a record and this in spite of the heavy traffic demands.

(v). FREIGHT TRAIN DERAILMENT.

From a press release of 02.07.08 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"On Monday night 30.06.2008, around 22:10, freight train No. 336 left Ashdod classification yard, consisting of 25 wagons; the intention was to bring 10 wagons to Haifa, while leaving 15 at Hadera West. Whilst the train was under way, the Central Control changed the first destination, instructing the crew to leave the 15 wagons at Binyamina instead.

Upon arrival there, the crew uncoupled the 15 wagons, parking them on a siding, put a brake under the first northbound wagon, and continued to Haifa.

At about 01:00 on 01.07.08, another crew pulled 2 wagons in order to couple them with the 15 parked wagons and then to depart with all 17 wagons southwards for Hadera West as originally planned. The loco driver was asked to push the 17-wagon formation in order to clear the shunting limit,

but from this point everything went wrong: The crew forgot to remove the brake under the first northbound wagon, thus this vehicle - No. 70 057 - a flat container carrying type - derailed near the passenger platform, while the train continued with the derailed car for 400 m without anybody of the crew noticing it. As a result four point machines have been totally destroyed, another wagon derailed and lost one of its bogies, as well as the container which was on it, and blocked the main line."

Aharon adds: "The damage was severe, as all train traffic was held up until 24:00 on 02.07.08, and despite announcements in the media, internet, etc., not all the passengers heard or saw the news and they responded angrily. At least it shows that rail has become important!"

(w). MEGA-TRAINS.

From a press release of 15.09.2008.

"In order to bridge the gap between the rising number of passengers and the available rolling stock, IR today operated for the first time in its history a formation of two double-deck trains coupled together - two sets of five coaches each with a locomotive, giving a total capacity of 1,200 seats, compared with the 800 seats normally available on a single double-deck train.

[! sic! The Maths here is a bit strange. Ed.]

Initially such formations will be operated on the Nahariyya - Beer Sheva and Beer Sheva - Tel Aviv services which are the most congested, and on Sundays and Thursdays when traffic reaches its peak.

The intention is to operate such megatrails in the long term on other busy lines such as Ashkelon - Binyamina and Nahariya - Tel Aviv on all weekdays."

In addition to these new double-deck formations the 86 new single-deck cars from Siemens now available will be formed into 10-coach formations (9 normal coaches plus a driving trailer), providing 744 seats each, and this will undoubtedly also provide some relief.

Since he started in his job some eleven months ago the new General Manager Yitzhak Harel ('Haki') has defined the raising of punctuality and service quality as the railways' top priorities. But this is quite a complex issue as the railways have to cope with a growth in demand unprecedented amongst public companies in Israel; during the second quarter of 2008 alone 8,8M passengers were carried, 14% more than in the same quarter in 2007 - hence the need for greater capacity.

(x). UITP CONGRESS.

From 15-17.09.2008 Israel Railways hosted

the half-yearly congress of the UITP, with participation by representatives of fifteen countries, including France, Belgium, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Italy, the UK and Hungary, headed by its General Secretary Mr. Hans Raat.

According to Mr. Harel Even, Israe-Rail's Deputy General Operations Manager who is a member of the UITP and is hosting the congress, "It is a great achievement for the Railways to host this Congress here, for the first time in Israel; Know-how can be exchanged and we strengthen our position in the general community, particularly due to the sharp rise in demand for passenger rail services and the need to bring the Israeli rail system up to a European level, after dozens of years in which the rail infrastructure was neglected."

The railways will present their achievements of recent years, particularly the rise in passenger traffic from 17M in 2002 to 32M in 2007. other subjects to be discussed are the futuristic development plans. particularly the A1 fast link to Jerusalem, which is to be electrified, and other aspects the railways see as important for passengers, such as punctuality, smart-card systems, PIS system and a complementary transport system.

The Railways will also review innovations in safety, a topic in which they have become world-wide leaders due to emphasis on level-crossing equipment such as radars, sensors and CCTV - in addition to grade separations, in which Israel is leading in terms of numbers (both being built and already existing) relative to road/rail crossings.

The congress will be divided into teams with specific topics to be discussed: Access for the disabled, investment in rolling-stock maintenance, maximum utilisation of infrastructures, and passenger station management. The participants will also enjoy a tour of the central control facilities at Haifa, as well as some of the rolling-stock maintenance facilities.

(y). WOLFSON SUBURBAN STATION.

On 22.09.2008 IR published the tender (see below) for carrying out infrastructure works one construction of the Wolfson suburban station on the new Ayalon line between Tel Aviv, the eastern side of Holon, the western side of Bat Yam and Rishon le-Tzion West. Enlarging Tel Aviv HaHaganah station, where this line commences, has also reached an advanced stage. This will be the third station to be built on the 9.2km. line, running in the median strip of the Ayalon Highway, running north - south. The station at Moshe Dayan (N.B. - these names refer as so often to the names of adjacent roads) is also at an advanced stage of construc-

תרכב

tion, whilst the station at Yoseftal is already completed. The line is expected to open in the first half of 2011 and will become a trunk line, providing a transportation solution for the densely-populated area south of Tel Aviv. The Railways forecast that the number of passengers using Wolfson station will reach 750,000 in 2011, 980,000 in 2012 and about 1.3M in 2013. (The station is almost adjacent to a large hospital with the same name.)

The extension link from Moshe Dayan station via Peleshet Junction and Yavneh West to Ashdod is also at an advanced stage of construction, and this will also add to the traffic potential when opened.

(z). INNOTRANS.

IR sent a delegation of thirteen staff members to the vast Innotrans Trade Fair in Berlin in September 2008. The Press considered this negatively as a waste of money. (The Editor, who has tramped around a mere fraction of the exhibition halls, can only say that there is an awful lot to see and learn there, and halls full of stands for specialist firms, and it is sensible to divide the work if those same journalists want to see progress and contacts with modern technology and service providers.)

(z.2.) HIGH HOLY DAY TIMETABLES.

For the Jewish New Year festival, IR introduced from Sunday 28.09.2008 to 02.10.2008 a special timetable in order to improve service and reduce congestion. On Sunday 28.09 a combination of Sunday morning and Thursday afternoon (i.e. peak) timetables were operated, thus increasing the number of trains; on Monday 29.09 (the eve of the festival) a Friday service was operated, but trains 8064 & 8152 (Beer Sheva - Kiryat Motzkin) and return 8151 & 8153, and the Tel Aviv - Beit Shemesh - Jerusalem services were run with three rather than two IC3 units, or four instead of three units. Thursday 02.10.2008 also saw a combination of Sunday and Thursday timetables.

(z.3.) INDICTMENTS.

From 'The Jerusalem Post' 17.09.2008: "State files indictment against Israel Railways."

"The Southern District Attorney's Office filed an indictment at the Beersheba District Court on Wednesday, accusing Israel Railways and three of its senior employees of criminal negligence in the 2005 Revadim train accident.

The indictment also included an accusation over a separate train accident which occurred near Moshav Ahuzam.

On June 21, 2005, a train collided with a truck near Kibbutz Revadim, killing seven and injuring 190 people. Just two weeks

later, on July 8, 2005, a train on the same line hit a truck that was stuck on a strip of track near Moshav Ahuzam, south of Kiryat Gat, injuring 36.

According to the indictment, the accused did not carry out the reasonable measures in order to prevent the accident. In addition, the accused were allegedly notified a month ahead of the accident that a similar incident had been prevented at the last moment.

The senior administrators did not order the trains' speed limit to be lowered, nor did they employ a supervisor to watch over the crossing during trucks' working hours in the area. An automatic barrier was not deployed, and the large amount of traffic was ignored, the indictment stated.

Israel Railways was also accused of not implementing conclusions reached by an internal committee that investigated a previous accident that occurred at a nearby crossing.

The District Attorney's Office claimed that Israel Railways officials did not close the railway crossing near Moshav Ahuzam, nor did they take measures to ensure the crossing be fixed although they were aware that the incline at the crossing could be dangerous. Also, despite being ordered by the Israel Railways CEO to immediately close the Ahuzam crossing, it remained open.

Attorney Yehuda Weinstein, who is representing Israel Railways, expressed on Wednesday his discontent with the indictment. "Legally, this is a wrong decision. Israel Railways is not responsible for this accident and we believe the court will reach this conclusion," he said.

(The three are: Mr. Sorin Shayowitch, Deputy Manager for Infrastructure Maintenance; Mr. Ilya Wolkov, Deputy General Manager for Planning and Development; and Mr. Harel Even, Deputy General Operations Manager.)

82:05:

TENDERS:

(i). Tender No. TK/KB/01/08: Frame agreement for Communication works on the Lod - Beer-Sheva line

Works include: preparatory works, supply of communication cables and an optic fiber including the tube, unveiling, opening and closing of concrete ducts, laying of cables and tube for optic fibre, supply of cables assemblies and connecting the cables, installing and connecting the pedestals, supply and installation of final boxes and corona blocks, and checking cables' relays. The contract is for 24 months with an optional extension of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 28.04.08.

(ii). Tender No. BT/MT/13/07: A frame agreement for Consultancy Services regarding Security and Protection Systems.

The contract includes: characterizing, preparing tenders, and follow-up of projects. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 14.05.08.

(iii). Tender No. TH/SR/05/08: Checking Lifting Equipment by an authorized inspector.

The contract is for 24 months with optional extension of up to additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 28.04.08.

(iv). Tender No. TN/MT/03/08: A frame agreement for Passenger Traffic Counting Services, market surveys, statistical and data analysis.

The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 13.05.08.

(vi). Tender No. TM/KB/01/08: Annual frame agreement for providing Maintenance Services for the Drainage channels and drainage facilities located along the railway lines and within railway sites;

works include also rigid walls. The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 27.02.2008.

(vii). Tender No. SN/MT/01/08: Annual frame agreement for providing Stenography services to the railways directorate and general management meetings.

The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 19.02.2008

(viii). Tender No. BZ/MT/04/08: Annual frame agreement for providing Sontology services of Quality Control and assurance.

The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 24.02.08.

(ix). Tender No. BT/KB/01/08: Annual frame agreement for design, manufacturing, installation, and maintenance of Electronic Security Systems for protection of all railway sites including bridges, tunnels etc., to be connected to the central control at Haifa;

works also include the changes needed to be carried out at the Tel-Aviv control centre in order to turn it to a standby backup. The contract is for 2 years with an optional extension of additional 6 years; there is an option for additional 8 years extension for the maintenance services. Latest bidding date: 06.03.08.

(x). Tender No. MC/RS/08/07: Annual frame agreement for supply of Brake Shoes for rolling stock. The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to additional 48 months. Latest bidding date: 31.12.2007

(xi). Tender No. MS/RC/2008/26: Permission for Removal and Sale of Scrapped Equipment located throughout the Railway. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest bids: 15.07.2008.

(xii). Tender No. HN/KB/03/08: For carrying out works of building the framework for Jerusalem Ha'Uma Station (i.e. the Central Station) and excavating shafts at the entrance to Jerusalem, as a part of constructing the station. (This will be the final point of the 'A1' Fast Rail Link.)

Works include: Digging and boring, filling, access roads, excavating, support and wall works of the various types of tunnels (railway, ventilation, access), excavation of escape and rescue shafts, and building the structures above them; casting piles, building support walls, concrete works for various elements in the tunnels, bridging works, infrastructure works - including moving existing infrastructures - and additional works. To include the following structures:-

§19: Elevators and Emergency Stairs.

§20: Upper diagonal Escalator section shaft.

§21: Air-blowing tunnels at the western edge.

§22: Two ventilation tunnels between the railway tunnels.

§23: Eastern ventilation shaft.

§24: Secondary western ventilation tunnels.

§25: Secondary western vertical ventilation tunnels.

§30: Upper station (at street level) - framework.

§31: Ventilation tower framework.

§33: Eastern system building.

§34: Upper structure and shafts.

§99: Round shaft (20 storeys) and structure.

Implementation time is 28 months, bids by 12.07.2008.

(xiii). Tender No. HN/KB/13/08: For Building Acoustic Walls near Kiryat Yam (on the Kiryat Motzkin - Nahariyya line.) To include: Earthworks, cast concrete, pre-cast elements, sealing, painting, drilling and inserting masts, development, sewage and water pipe-lines. Implementation time: 5 months. Bids by 22.09.2008.

(xiv). Tender: No. MC/KB/08/08: for building a structure for refurbishing sub-assemblies at the shore at Shemen, near the Haifa East depot.

Works include: cast construction, sealing, carpentry, locksmith, sanitary, electricity, elevators, aerial development, dismantling, compressed-air facilities, landscaping, water and sewage pipelines. Implementation time, 18 months, Bids by 27.10.2008.

(xv). Tender No. BN/KB/07/08: Infrastructure works on the Tel Aviv - Rishon-le-Zion West line, section Tel-Giborim - Wolfson, and building Wolfson Station, including upgrading of an existing platform. Works include: Earthworks, cast concrete works on site, pre-cast concrete, sealing, electricity, plastering, painting, locksmith, industrial components for building, walls and piles, access roads, sanitary facilities, escalators, electrical facilities, dismantling, water and sewage pipelines, carpentry, steel frames, paving and covering, aluminium frames, air conditioning, communications, fire-fighting equipment, ultra-light electricity, development works at the site, landscaping and irrigation, external furniture, temporary traffic arrangements in and out for works vehicles, and organisation of works.

Implementation time: 22 months, Bids by 13.11.2008.

כביש מס' 1-אשכול-שרגאי-איזון מסילות

A view from northern Jerusalem towards the city, showing track laying along the Eshkol-Shragai road; source-project's management



Works on progress at the Jerusalem LRV depot at French Hill; the Citadis trains can clearly be seen; source- City-Pass.
Thanks to Aharon Gazit for these two photos.



Tenders, continued from previous page

(xvi). Tender No. TP/MT/05/08: Providing Management, Co-Ordination, Design Control, inspection of Implementation and Quality Control services by a Management Company, for sections B and C of the A1 fast link to Jerusalem. The contract is from the beginning of engineering works until the end of subcontractors' works, including the time needed for detailed checks on each section. Bids by 30.10.2008.

(xvii). Tender No. TK/KB/02/08: Laying Trunk Cables at Tel Aviv Tel-Barukh Junction. To include: Preparatory works, cables delivery, uncovering and closing new concrete channels, laying of copper and optical trunk cables in the channels, delivery of assemblies and connecting the cables, installation and connecting of pedestals, delivery and installation of crown boxes and blocks, and checking cable relays. Implementation time: 4 months, Bids by 28.10.2008. (N.B.- This Junction dates from November 1954, connecting the Tel Aviv - Haifa main line with the B'nei Berak - Petah Tikva - Rosh HaAyin main line.)

82:06

LIGHT RAIL PROJECTS.

TEL AVIV.

(a). CUTTING.

Tel-Aviv Metro/LRV project: Works started on 10.04.08 on the sunken passage of Jabotinsky Road in Petakh Tikva in preparation for the alignment of the first LRV line, the Red Line.

(b). TEL-AVIV MASS TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN:

On 07.07.08, a ceremony took place at Tel-Aviv, with the participation of Transport Minister Mr. Mofaz, The Ministry's General Manager Mr. Sitterman, the Chairman of NTA (project management) Mr. Waknin, and NTA General Manager Mr. Dotan, in which the plan has been introduced and signed by the minister.

JERUSALEM.

(a). BRIDGE CRACKS.

As noted in 81:06:(b), cracks were found during welding works on the LRV Calatrava bridge. The building company Kur Metals said that the problem was only 1.83 metres long but agreed that repairs had to be carried out.

(b). DISMAY AT SLOW PROGRESS.

(From 'Jerusalem Post' 23.06.2008): The Knesset's State Control Committee chairman Zevulun Orlev (NU-NRP) expressed dismay at the costliness, slowness and inefficiency of work to build a light rail in Jerusalem. The committee was scheduled to go on a tour aimed at gauging the progress of the works and toured the proposed route of the train, Monday, but apart from representatives of the various bodies involved with the project, Orlev was the only committee member to show up.

"We can only be sorry about NIS 750 million that have been already buried between the rails," Orlev said. The tour, prompted by State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss sharp criticism of the light rail project, has already been postponed twice.

The group's bus lagged for almost an hour over

a just a few kilometres along the train tracks, stuck in bottlenecks which, Orlev learned, will still remain unchanged even after works are completed. "Why are there no workers and mechanical equipment along the train's route? Why is the work being done so lazily?" Orlev asked. Alex Krosky, a representative of City-Pass, one of the companies involved, said "working slowly felt like the right choice," but added that the company was recruiting more manpower and will soon work in shifts.

The State, the Jerusalem Municipality and a private contractor have all passed the blame for the wasted funds. "There were tensions," a representative of the Finance Ministry said, "but now a new schedule has been set." According to the new schedule, The train will now only be operational in 2010.

Orlev also discovered that there were still no building permits for two of the points on the train's proposed route. He also expressed doubt regarding the security of passengers. "Buses have one door and a driver keeping an eye on passengers and their bags. Who is going to look after six doors on each train car?" A Jerusalem police spokesperson said there was a "joint security committee" working on the issue but its work remained confidential.

Omri Edomi, from the Green Course organization, commented that 14 train cars await the line's opening in an open parking area. "Did anyone consider how these cars will look after being exposed to Jerusalem's weather?"

In June Aharon Gazit commented that "Despite all the difficulties reported so far, the project is in progress - though a little bit slower than planned". He had met with Mr. Christian Schmidt of HANNING & KAHL GmbH & Co KG of Germany who had recently visited Israel; the company is supplying the project with point machines, LED signals, and signalling equipment.

(c). BRIDGE OPENING AND MORE.

On 19.06.2008 Gil Zohar wrote in the 'Jerusalem Post':

"Today, at 8 p.m., the Bridge of Strings, popularly known as the Calatrava Bridge, will be inaugurated at a dazzling celebration complete with performances by David De'or, Dudu Fisher, the Jerusalem Dance Troupe and hundreds of dancers - at a cost of NIS 2 Million. But the promised razzle-dazzle and pyrotechnics dedication raises awkward questions. In the past week workers have been racing to complete the bridge: They've removed the yellow support pillars that have propped up the 2,600-ton bridge, converted the construction site below into a public piazza paved with mosaic patterns of Jerusalem stone and completed the glass pedestrian walkway.

But two critical elements remain missing: the tracks for the light rail and the tram cars. Given that the light rail is not scheduled to become operational until October 2010, why dedicate it now? Why is the project nearly five years behind schedule? And why has the cost to the taxpayer ballooned from NIS 500 Million to NIS 1.2 Billion?

Jerusalem Municipality deputy spokeswoman Tal Marom-Malovec explained, "This isn't about the dedication of the Bridge of Strings but rather a

ceremony marking the completion of work on a place which isn't just a bridge but a monument leading to Jerusalem." Light rail project spokesman Shmuel Elgrabli said: "It's been a long day of study. We're in a good position [now] after a delay of a year-and-a-half."

From his perspective, the landmark bridge built by the municipality's Moriah Company is no longer his headache. In August, Moriah will turn over the completed structure to the international consortium CityPass, which will lay the tracks, install the electricity and operate the light rail, explained Elgrabli.

As for the sleek, bullet-proof tram cars, five of the 46 have already arrived in Israel, Elgrabli noted, including two stored at the Pisgat Ze'ev depot. The cars are arriving from their French manufacturer at the rate of two per month, he added.

Elgrabli is confident the endless delays are finally behind him, and is now turning to a feasibility study of Jerusalem's second light transit line. Its location will depend on financial considerations, Elgrabli said. Just as the 13.8-km. Red Line was laid out to attract a maximum number of both Jewish and Palestinian riders, the route of the future second line will be determined by where it will garner the greatest ridership, he explained. In February CityPass notified the Finance and Transportation ministries that it had agreed to accept the NIS 100M. in compensation for lost revenue caused by the government's delays in building the tram line. The deal also includes NIS 50M. for engineering and design upgrades requested by the government, said Elgrabli. A last-minute dispute over NIS 23M. in VAT led to yet another month's setback.

The initial phase of the long-delayed light rail transit system has undergone countless revisions over the last decade of planning and fitful construction. Initially slated to begin operating in March 2006, it was delayed until January 2009, and is now set to begin operations in 28 months.

Elgrabli noted that 9 km. of tracks were either under construction or have been completed. Work is now proceeding along Jaffa Road and Rehov Hatzanhanim beside the Old City, he added. Most of Jaffa Road will be shared by pedestrians and the trams, transforming the nature of central Jerusalem, he said. The recent 61st State Comptroller's Report lambasted the government's conduct in the Jerusalem light rail project. State Comptroller Micha Lindenstraus found that the government incorrectly estimated the public sector's investment in the NIS 3.4 Billion project."

(d). TERROR ATTACK DURING CONSTRUCTION.

On Wednesday 02.07.2008 yet another terrorist incident took place in Jerusalem - almost bizarre in its form. From the Magen David Adom website:-

"Magen David Adom personnel raced to the scene of a terrorist attack in the center of Jerusalem this afternoon, treating 66 victims - seven of them critical - and sending the wounded to four Jerusalem hospitals. Three women were killed and at least 66 more people were injured when a bulldozer driven by a Palestinian resident of east Jerusalem trampled over pedestrians and vehicles and plowed into two buses in down-

town Jerusalem at around noon Wednesday. Magen David Adom reported on casualties on Rashi, Jaffa and Sarei Yisrael Streets in the area near the Central Bus Station, leading towards Mahane Yehuda.

The driver, who reportedly had a criminal record and was the holder of an Israeli (blue) identification card, was shot dead by a SWAT officer near the old Shaare Zedek Medical Center. The terrorist was identified as 31-year-old Hossam Dawiath, a father of two from the village of Tzur Baher. The two buses hit by the bulldozer - from Routes 13 and 60 - were rammed as they were traveling toward the Mahane Yehuda market. The 13 bus was carrying 35 passengers and the other bus had 15 people on board. The drivers and some passengers were among those injured and evacuated to hospitals.

According to an assessment by the Gaza Strip organizations, as well as by sources in the Palestinian Authority, the Jerusalem attack was an independent act carried out by the driver alone, however both Hamas and Islamic Jihad issued statements praising the act. AFP had a report from Ramallah from 14.51 on a German Yahoo website.

Sybil Ehrlich, who works at the nearby Jerusalem Post building, confirmed initially that the man was employed on the tramway construction works, though in later conversation she said that this was not necessarily the case, that he was working for a private contractor on another project. nevertheless, we report this incident here 'for the record'. Tramway projects in other countries do not have to confront such possibilities.

Of course this raises all sorts of personal thoughts, apart from the normal anger and sorrow. Once again terrorists have broadened the scope of conflict; just as a civilian aeroplane is now necessarily perceived as a potential weapon, so is every construction vehicle one encounters on the road. Whether Dawiath's action improves the chances of young Palestinian men gaining employment in construction projects is also moot.

(e). JAFFA ROAD.

City Pass and the Jerusalem Transportation Master-Plan team commenced on 04.08.2008 the works towards tracklaying in the central and eastern part of the main street, Jaffa Road. Works involve re-routing bus lines into nearby streets (not more than 150m walking distance from the normal route); The street will remain open for traffic on one lane in one direction during all the stages prior to the final track-laying; further, access to businesses, as well as services such as garbage removal or postal delivery, will also be provided throughout the working period.

When completed, Jaffa Road will become a pedestrianised area paved with granite stones, as well as 500 new trees which will be planted. Only pedestrians and the LRV (and maybe service vehicles?) will have access.

Meanwhile, on the western section of Jaffa Road concrete casting is under way. City Pass is currently working on almost 11km. of the 14km. of the line's overall length. On about half the length tracks have been completed; 17 of the 46 trains ordered are now already parked at the depot near French Hill; works on the depot construction are almost completed.

Yair Ma'ayan, the Municipality's General Manager said "The beginning of the final works on the Jaffa Road are an important stage in the LRV project. The Municipality is carrying out cultural events in the city centre during the works, in order to maintain it as a central point in the city's commercial, cultural and economic life, whilst emphasising the recently-upgraded public spaces. A steering committee has been recently created in order to attract the public to the city centre."

Nadav Meroz, who has been appointed by both the Government and the Municipality as the project manager, said, "The tracklaying works, as well as creating the pedestrianised area, are an important stage in the completion of the project as well as the revival of the whole city centre. As happens anywhere in the world, the actual works cause disruption and inconvenience to citizens, but due to the faster rate of work possible and particularly when they see the results, it will be a real compensation for their troubles. The same happens in Europe - it is difficult in the beginning, but it provides drastic positive changes for cities."

(e). RESIGNATIONS.

On 01.09.2008 City-Pass announced the resignation of Mr. Jacob (Kuki) Edri, its General Manager. In addition Mr. Yekhiel Lavi, General Manager of Moriya, the urban development company responsible for many construction works on the LRV project as well as the Jerusalem Central station, has resigned - the two moves are probably connected but no reasons were initially given.

(f). MORE DELAYS AND COMPLAINTS.

A story by Etgar Lefkovits appeared in the Jerusalem Post, 11.09.2008 "The Jerusalem Municipality on Wednesday acknowledged that severe disruptions, delays and other problems are plaguing construction of the capital's light rail system, and faulted the City Pass conglomerate carrying out the work.

The Municipality, in a letter sent to the Finance Ministry on Sunday, cited the lack of an updated, stage-by-stage working plan, limited working hours and insufficient manpower and construction equipment. "A compilation of data over the last two weeks indicates that the work is being carried out slowly, with multiple delays... in most of the sections," reads the letter sent by Mayor Uri Lupolianski's adviser on the light rail, Yuval Weitenberg, to Deputy Accountant-General Avi Dor. "Moreover it emerges that in entire sections [of streets] closed off to traffic for the work to be carried out, no work is being carried out at all for long periods of time, and during the time when work is performed it is carried out slowly and with limited manpower and equipment."

The letter, which was sent to the deputy head of the Finance Ministry's allocation department, also reported a lack of inspection and supervision on the part of City Pass, as well as a lack of coordination between the company and its contractors.

City Pass comprises three publicly traded Israeli companies: Ashtram Properties Ltd., Polar Investments Ltd., and Harel Insurance Investments and Financial Services Ltd., as well as two French companies, Alstom SA and Veolia Environnement SA.

The harsh condemnation of the delays in the project - which comes two months before the mayoral election - follows a recent boisterous city hall protest by merchants who say the infrastructure work on Jaffa Road is destroying their livelihoods. The Jaffa Road work is scheduled to continue for nearly two years. According to the city's letter, the work in the area has been ending at 4:30 p.m., even though it is licensed to continue until 7 - and in certain stretches of the street through 11 p.m. "This is administrative failure and the mayor's direct responsibility," said Jerusalem opposition leader and mayoral candidate Nir Barkat in a statement. "It is regrettable that only after the city [centre] gets paralyzed does Lupolianski remember to send his assistant to hurry up those carrying out the work."

The City Pass conglomerate placed the blame right back on the Municipality. "We were stunned to receive the city's letter, which displays a lack of knowledge regarding the relevant facts," a spokesman said in a statement. "The city has delayed issuing building permits for many long months, and is delaying issuing work permits and thereby delaying the work." "We are making every effort to meet the deadline or even be done in advance despite the delays, which are not under our control, and are a result of issues connected with the Jerusalem mayoral race."

The spokesman declined to explain why work was ending at 4 p.m. instead of 11.

The NIS 4.2 billion project is being jointly funded by the Transportation Ministry and the municipality. After years of delays, the first line is now scheduled to begin running in September 2010. The inaugural line, the 13.8-kilometer "Red Line," will run from the northern Pisgat Ze'ev neighborhood to Mount Herzl via the city center, with 23 stops along the way. The construction problems included incorrect tracking installed on the line on Herzl Boulevard that has since been ripped out and redone.

In a recent report, State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss found the government incorrectly estimated the public sector's investment in the project, which soared from NIS 500 million in 2000 to NIS 1.3b. as of the end of 2007, 160% above projections. Last year, Barkat called for the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry into the repeated delays in the project, but his proposal was never taken up by city or state officials."

82:07.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). APOLOGIES.

A couple of apologies by the Editor to start off - first, the article on Rakevet HaEmek was based on material supplied by Tomer Chelouche of Haifa, Israel, and it was incorrect to describe it as a 'press release'.

And Amit Ben-Shalom wrote: "You made an error while attaching the pictures to my article about Atlit! Picture number 1 was taken from Industrial Railway Record No. 124; Instead, you entered a picture of the Hunslet of the Silicate Brickworks, which was published in 80:11! Alas, he is right, and I still haven't resolved the technicalities of getting the correct photo in.

Marc Stegeman commented on this also:- "Our Dutch NG specialist commented on the picture top right of item 81:11 He recognised this NG locomotive as O&K-H1 (not Ruston).

He added:- "[The Dutch enthusiast group] NVBS intends to travel by train from Holland to Aqaba, and back (October 6-24th. 2008) and I hope to join the party."

(b). A JERUSALEM TRAM IN VIENNA?

No - not yet. But Klaus Matzka informs us that Vienna tram Type E No. 6600 has been repainted (or covered) with advertisements for Israel and carries 'Jerusalem' in the destination blind! It is actually then used for public relations and distributing information from the Israeli Embassy! This is based on an idea by Dan Ashbell, the Israeli Ambassador in Vienna. Wiener Linien Tram Type E No. 6600 was built 1959 as E 4402, one of the initial prototypes, and has been in use as a 'Werbewagen' since 2001.

(c). KUWAITI INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA.

It is noticeable that financial institutions based in the Gulf States are now interesting themselves in railway development. This does not mean 'Middle East Railways' as such but deserves nevertheless to be noted and commented.

In 'C.R.J.' No. 154 p. 356: "C.F. Djibouti-Ethiopian. On 23rd. January 2008 it was announced that talks had begun with the Fuad Algarim group, a Kuwaiti company, regarding a 20-year concession to operate the railway. The South African company COMAZAR had earlier been negotiating with Ethiopia and Djibouti for three months but a deal could not be struck....

(d). RE. 79 :07(c) - SECOND HEBREW LOCOMOTIVE?

Amith Ben-Shalom has written: "The vague speculation about the wagon at Gan-Shmuel, that it might be a second 'Hebrew' locomotive, is in fact baseless. A mechanical expert who has looked at the wagon has produced a very logical assumption about the function of each component in that complex apparatus: It was all used to trim the wagon to an exact point, where it is being loaded or unloaded with material.

Using the "sailor-wheel" it was very easy to move the wagon slowly and accurately to the necessary point. The other component was used to lock the wagon with an anchor (in the wall?), to prevent movement of the wagon."

A pity - it was a good idea while it lasted!

(e). RUDI WEISSENSTEIN PHOTOS.

The 'Prior' photo shop in Tel Aviv is run by the grandson of Rudi Weissenstein, a well-known photographer of Palestine and all things to do with the land and people over several important decades. A recent visit enabled the Editor to look through several albums and order prints. Alas, very few have railway themes! Here are some.

File 5. No. 2334. 'IPC Batei Zikut' (i.e. fuel tanks) - shows a bit of track in foreground only.

File 7, 'Krayot'. Nos. 1491, 1492, 1493, 1518.
The Opening Ceremony of Tel Aviv North station, 3rd. Nov. 1954.
Nos. 24036, 24037, 24038, 24042, 24043 - all show platforms and tracks; also Nos. 24021, 24022, 24023, 24024, 24025, 24026, 24027, 24028, 24029, 24030, 24031, 24032, 24033, 24034, 24035 cover this event, showing various dignitaries.
The Opening Ceremony of Tel Aviv Darom station, February 1955.
Nos. 24788, 24789, 24790, 24791, 24792, 24793, 24795.

(f). DGE ISRAEL RAILWAYS TOUR CANCELLED.

Tomas Meyer-Eppler wrote on 08.09.2008 that he had with regret had to cancel the proposed Tour in November - at the cut-off date only eight people had registered and he required a minimum of ten. Possible reasons include of course the lack of an opportunity to ride an 'Historical' train, preferably steam-hauled! However, the idea is not dead, and maybe next year it could be tried again, combined with a Hedjaz steam-train tour as well.

(g). INNOTRANS.

Every two years this massive Railway Trade Fair is held in Berlin and the Editor was able this year to attend (for once it didn't clash wholly with Jewish festivals) and visit some of the stands. Though interesting, there was, alas, very little of Middle East interest available. The Greenbrier Wagon Construction stand (American-owned, factory in Poland) explained how they had constructed 140 bogie flat wagons for Iraq in 2005/6. Hyundai-Rotem had brochures on many of their products, but not the diesel units sold to Syria; Wagon-Pars of Iran had one brochure with small photos of the SGP-designed four-car d.m.u.'s and information on carriages and wagons; they informed me that they had built 70 of the 100 Alstom diesels now on IIRR. Of the d.m.u.'s, Siemens had built two and the rest of the forty should come from Wagon Pars. Maybe 150 former DB coaches had been serviced. Of the Krauss-Maffei centre-cab diesels, Krauss-Maffei had built two, the other eight came from Wagon Pars. The Chinese Railway Industries section could tell me that, yes, they had exported to Iran, but no, they had no real information.... Chinese technology had been used on the Iran Metro. And so on - titbits but telling us little new.

82:08.

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. TURKEY.

From 'Railways Africa' newsletter: "Director-General Süleyman Karaman of Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Demiryolları (TCDD - the Turkish State Railway) formally accepted the first of 12 diesel multiple-unit sets from South Korean rolling stock manufacturer Hyundai Rotem in Seoul on 22 May 2008. Featuring air-conditioning, video, radio and internet access, and capable of 140km/h, the two-coach units are to be used on the routes Ankara-Kirikkale, Adana-Mersin, Kütahya-Eskisehir and Denizli-Izmir. Funding was arranged with a loan from the European Investment Bank."

Mostly it looks as if they replace older DMU's, but where will they go now?

B. SAUDI ARABIA.

From 'Op de Rails' 2-2008, p. 61. (Translation by Editor).

"Alstom has announced several details concerning the laying of the high-speed line in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This will involve a line between the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and the harbour city of Jeddah on the Red Sea. The train must cover the 444km. in one and a half hours. The link is intended specifically for pilgrims; according to estimates some 500 double-deck carriages will be required. The climatic conditions means that a strong air-conditioning must be installed with sufficient capacity, and the motors must be well protected against sand. It is not intended that freight trains should use this line."

C. DUBAI.

From 'Technisch Weekblad' 01/12/2007. (Translation from Dutch by the Editor). "Dubai has grown in the last thirty years from a fishing village to a metropolis of some 1.6 Million inhabitants. By 2020 this number is expected to rise further to 5.5 Million! In order to keep pace with this growth, the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) is expanding public transport across the waters there and is also currently building four Metro lines. Royal Haskoning, commissioned by the RTA, is developing a water transport system across the creek of the Old City, including four terminals where the ferry will connect with metro, bus and taxis. The first phase of this should become operational in 2008; in later stages the ferries will be extended along the entire coast. "In the first year we expect 2M passengers, but in a few years this must grow to 25M", said an RTA spokesman.

One of the terminals to be served by the ferries will be the Eye of Dubai; Royal Haskoning won the contest for designing this transport interchange. "The concept is the mother of all transport hubs" says architect Syb van Breda. The Eye of Dubai is a building 600 x 200m long in the sea, connected to the land by bridges, and the 'eyeball' is a shopping centre. Around this are piers for ferries and cruise ships and on the roof will be a helicopter platform. Underground is space for a garage for 10,000 cars and a metro station."

D: GULF TO TURKEY LINK?

'Railway to link gulf with Europe'. From The Jerusalem Post, 03/09/2008. The Media Line News Agency/ Yaniv Berman.

"A rail link between Turkey and the six member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is cur-

rently being studied by regional engineers, The Media Line has learned.

The idea was first suggested by Bahraini King Hamad Bin 'Issa Al Khalifa during his recent visit to Turkey, where he met with President 'Abdullah Gul. Regional observers said that although the suggestion came as a surprise to the Turkish side, the timing was nevertheless "perfect" to start working on such a project, thanks to the developing economic and political relations between the GCC and Turkey.

The GCC countries - Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman - are currently carrying out a feasibility study on a proposed \$6-billion rail network linking all six countries. "The GCC countries will receive in December a cost estimate for the railway project," an informed source in the GCC told The Media Line. "Then, the countries will have five months to respond to the proposal. If and when the project begins, it will take approximately four years to complete. Meanwhile, we are beginning to study the new proposal to link this rail network to Turkey."

If the project is authorized, the planners will have to decide the route of the railway. One option is to connect the GCC countries with Turkey directly through Iraq. However, the chaotic security situation in Iraq may hinder such an option, paving the way to a more plausible one: directing the railway through Jordan and Syria. In any case, most of the railway is expected to run through Saudi Arabia, with the King Fahd Causeway being an integral part of either option.

The GCC states signed an agreement to establish a free trade zone with Turkey in May 2005. Negotiations are currently expected to begin in order to implement the agreement, the Bahraini news agency reported.

News of the proposed rail project has been met with considerable cynicism by many Bahrainis. "These projects come a dime a dozen," said one company CEO. "Other rail networks have been proposed in the past but never came to fruition," he added. The businessman also pointed to the case of an aborted proposal for a Bahraini tram system."

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FROM THEN TILL NOW

(PART 20):

Noted in reading by Paul Cotterell (z.l.) from Baruch Katinke's book 'Me'az v'ad Hena'; see earlier installments in 11:22, 13:17, 16:15, 19:19, 20:15, 24:11, 30:21, 38:15, 46:12, 59:15, 61:9, 63:11, 64:9, 66:13, 68:13, 69:10, 71:08 and 77:09. This is the chapter entitled 'Abdullah imprisons, Abdullah releases' on pp. 235-236 of that book.

Following a short time as a prisoner of war Katinke escapes, returns to Jerusalem, and then decides to enlist in the Jewish Brigade of the British army. However, his qualifications ensure that he is drafted into the "engineering force", for service on the railway, and he is sent to Damascus. Now read on:

"In the last stage of the First World War the English advance on Medina and Mecca slowed down, but northwards, in the direction of Syria and Iraq, the English advanced swiftly. Each day large areas fell into their hands. Syria and Lebanon, in which was a strong Turkish force, soon fell without a shot being fired. At the head of the Turkish army there stood an Arab general from Damascus, Ali Reza Harkabi Pasha, who surrendered to the British without any attempt at resistance in return for the reward of being appointed military governor of Syria and Iraq, and a prize of 300,000 Pounds Sterling, and an acknowledgment of thanks from General Allenby.

According to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, Syria and much of Palestine were to pass to the control and influence of France. But the British having entered Syria and Lebanon were in no hurry to withdraw from them.

On my arrival in Damascus I presented myself to the military director of the railway, Colonel Holmes (who was later General Manager of Palestine Railways for many years) [see Note at end of article], and after he had checked my credentials I was appointed to a similar post to that which I had with the Turks – chief mechanical inspector in the area stretching from Damascus to Samakh. In Damascus I met with Mouchly. He also entered railway service with the English and he was given supervision of the central railway workshops at Cadem and the area of the railway from Damascus to Homs, Aleppo and Beirut. Days of quiet and routine work began once more. My wife and two children joined me in Damascus and we settled down in a comfortable apartment in the European quarter. In Damascus I learned that my comrades in captivity had been transferred to Singapore and only I had escaped that fate.

One day I was called by the management. I was told that the pump house at Dera'a station had stopped working and that there was no water for the locomotives. I was to go there, see why the work had stopped, and do everything necessary to operate the pump house. I left for Dera'a and learned from the station master there that the Emir Abdullah (later King of Jordan and murdered in the Old City of Jerusalem), who then ruled in Dera'a as military governor under the British occupation, had yesterday passed the pumping station and saw the operator and his assistant sitting and eating beside the pump house. Since this happened in the month of Ramadan, the Moslem month of fasting, he was angry at this breaking of the holy fast and ordered that the workers be jailed. The operator and his assistant were imprisoned and the work halted.

I went into the Emir's office and found him murmuring by the table, a book of the Koran open in front of him. He told me that I had to send another operator and assistant to the pumping station immediately. I answered that I would of course do my best to fulfill his demand, but that the thing was not easy since I had no spare operator, and even if I did find one it would take several days for him to become accustomed to the work there.

On leaving his office I contacted the head management in Damascus and explained to them the reason for the breakdown. The Englishman, Major Cotching, head of the Mechanical Department with whom I talked by telephone, told me that I had answered Abdullah well and that we would not hurry to fulfill his request as there was no room on the railway for religious scruples. Incidentally, at the station I learned that the palace and harem of the Emir also received their water from our pumping station and that they were not pleased about the lack of water.

The next day, when leaving Dera'a by train for Samakh, I met with Abdullah who was strolling around the station. He called me and asked how the matter was progressing. I told him that I had not yet found a suitable replacement operator. I asked if it was not possible for him to postpone the jailing of the operators. That same day, a few hours after our meeting, the operators were released and returned to their work."

Note: Colonel R.B.W. Holmes, OBE, RE, went on leave at the end of June 1929 and retired as General Manager of PR on 30th September the same year due to ill-health, presumably without returning to his post. (P.C.)

SIGNALLING AT AIN HAROD HR STATION.

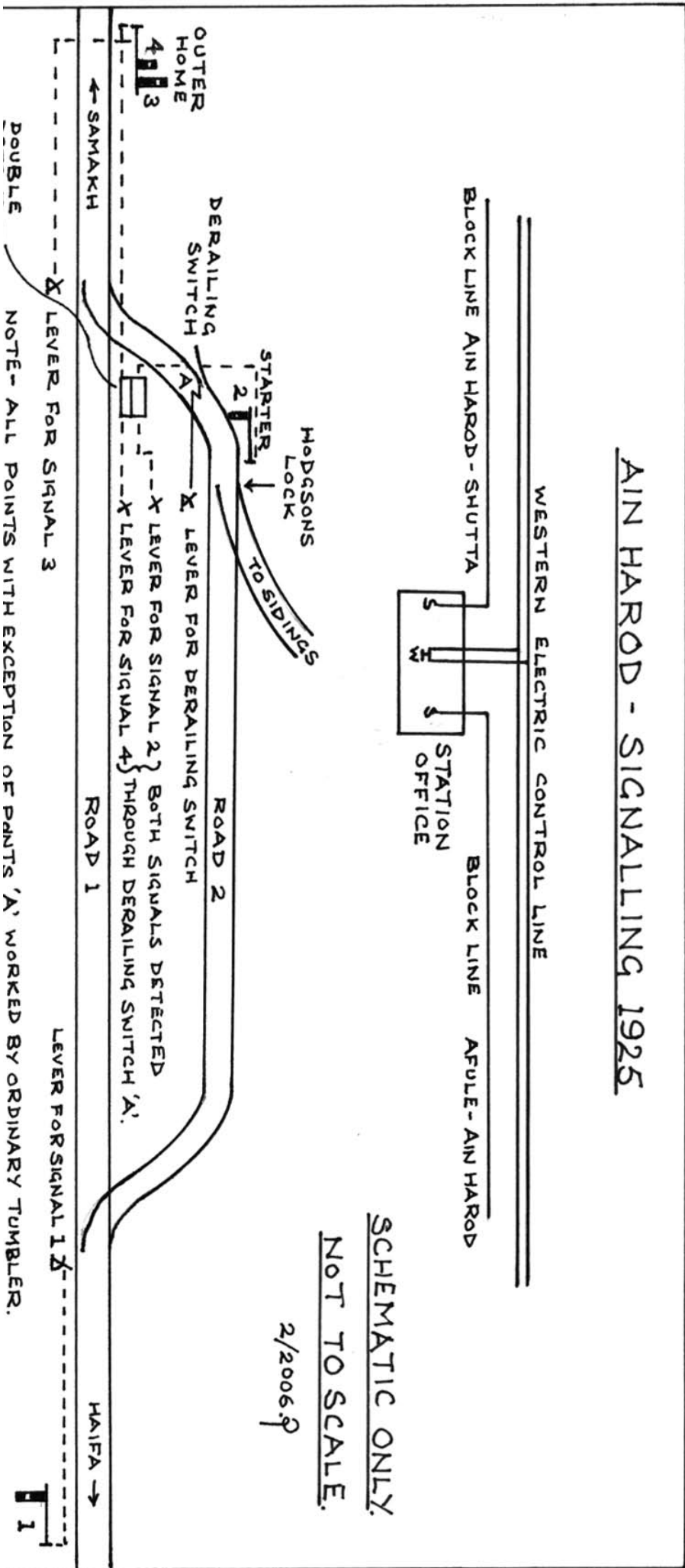
By Paul Cotterell.

The subject of signalling arrangements along the Valley Railway remains very obscure. Documentary evidence is sparse and photographic evidence scarcer still. However, the accompanying sketch from the IRM Archives provides a detailed look at one Hedjaz Railway station in Palestine. Ain Harod was not an original HR station. It was built in 1922 at Km 45.716 from Haifa, or perhaps Km 45.717, or even Km 45.684 - it all depends on which official source you consult! The present sketch is schematic, as is the original S&T (Signal & Telegraph) Department diagram number N/102/A of 11/9/1925. The S&T people needed only to record their own equipment and were not much concerned with other aspects of the layout. For example, the siding shown here appears to head straight for the station office but, in fact, it went round the back of the station building and not through the middle of it.

There is the usual problem with descriptions of the signals. That at the east entrance (ie. the Up signal) with the double arm is shown as an Outer Home (if so, where is the Inner Home?) while the (Down) Home signal (1) at the western entrance is not described at all.

The Hodgsons Lock was a clamp to ensure that the siding point was normally locked shut and did not present a danger to trains entering or leaving Road (Track) 2. The Derailing Switch (A) was an extra safeguard to prevent runaways entering the main line and colliding with something approaching the station. This required an interlocking arrangement with the Starter signal (2) and the lower semaphore arm (4) of the Outer Home signal which indicated entrance to Road 2. The Double Detector was a casting in which were located longitudinal and transverse slides, both fitted with notches. Simply put, these notches had to engage so ensuring that the relevant signals could be pulled off only when the interlocked point relating to those signals, in this case Derailing Switch (A), was correctly set and locked. Presumably the main line points were operated from an adjacent ground level lever, though none is indicated, and there does not appear to have been any interlocking of these points with the Home signals. One thing's for certain, the station master or signalman (if there was actually a signalman, which I doubt) would have had plenty of exercise walking smartly (it was forbidden to run) backwards and forwards from one end of the station to the other whenever trains crossed at Ain Harod. I feel sure that the Rules & Regulations of the time required that only one train be accepted into the station before the second was allowed in. As can be imagined, this procedure would further slow operations considerably when two opposing trains arrived simultaneously. But folk weren't in such a tearing hurry then.

The electrical circuits in the station office were pretty basic. There was a Western Electric telephone line connecting to Control in Haifa. This would have been an omnibus circuit, allowing 'party' (simultaneous) conversations with other stations as well. The separate Block Lines were for the Single Line Block system



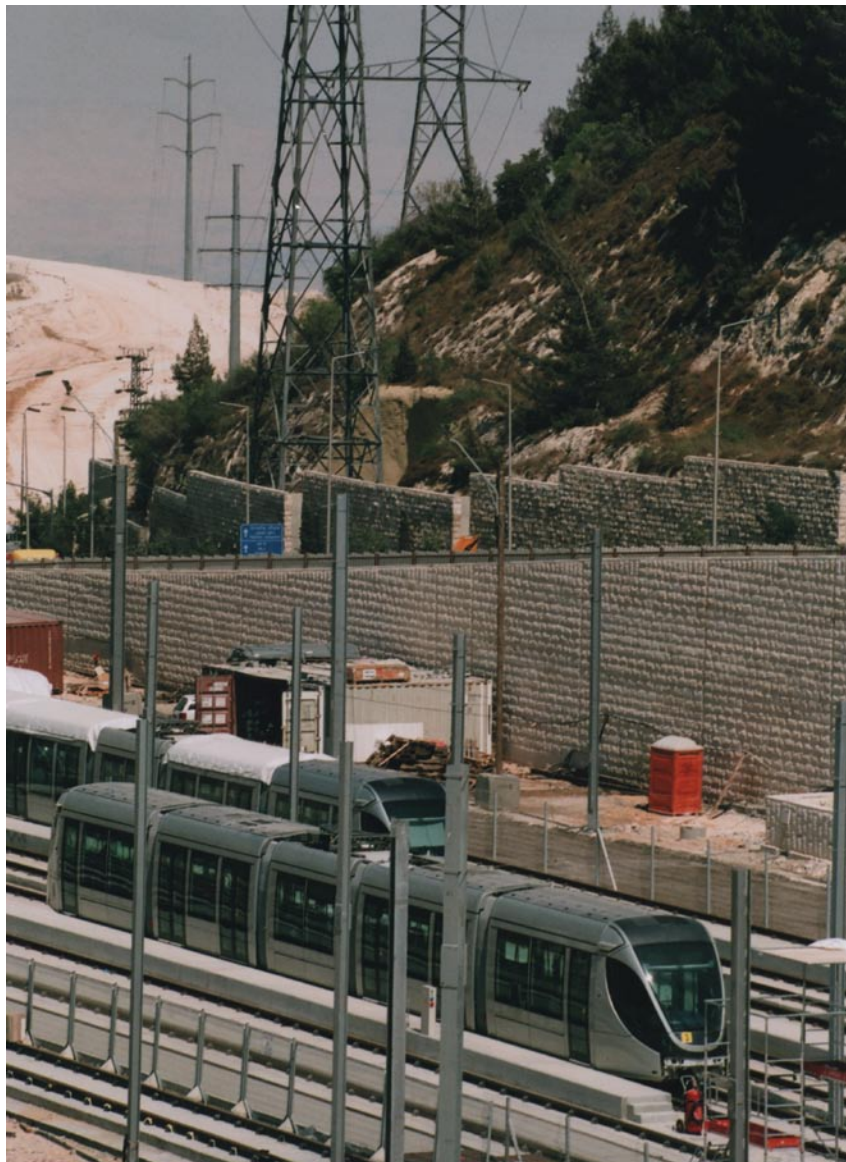
of working used in conjunction with train staffs for the sections to the adjacent stations at Shutta (sic) and Afule (sic).

It is known from documentary evidence that many fixed signals along the 'Valley Railway' were removed in World War Two for use in the Sinai Desert where extra crossing places had to be provided to cope with the greatly increased wartime traffic, and this further complicates the whole subject of signaling on the HR in Palestine. Presumably, once the semaphore signals had been taken down, a reversion was made to the use of Written Orders in conjunction with the Block System for getting trains out of stations. Flagmen/pointsmen would have been positioned on the approaches to a station, where the Home Signals had once stood, to operate the points and manually flag a train forward into the station. (Incidentally, I remember being told by the late Max Seidenberg a long time ago that, even in the early days of IR on the standard gauge, a flagman was required, in addition to the Starter semaphore signal, when a train departed from a station loop line. If so, I do not know the reason for this and have never come across anything to confirm it. Or perhaps my memory is unclear and Max was referring to trains entering a station loop. Either way it seems an unnecessary extra precaution unless full interlocking was still lacking and the flagman was also the pointsman).

It may not be out of place to mention that the original station building at Ain Harod was constructed of wood. There is a fairly well known photo (in Hebrew publications at least) showing a passenger train for Haifa approaching the station behind a Hartmann 2-8-2 in December 1925 (ie. contemporary with the diagram) and part of the wooden building, with its corrugated roof and bargeboards along the eaves, can be seen. Also visible in the photo are the siding Starter and Up Outer Home signals, both lower quadrant, lattice-post semaphores. From a distance they appear to have been of Railway Signal Company design. The original station building is reputed to have burned down in 1936 (though I cannot confirm this with documentary evidence) and was eventually replaced by a small shelter made of breeze blocks which, I'm told, was demolished by Kibbutz Geva in 2006.

82:11
Line being doubled
north of Kiryat Motzkin,
view northwards.
Photo Aharon Gazit

Below: (82:11a)
further views on the
Jerusalem line



82:12

THE FIRST STATION AT PARDESS HANNAH.

By Paul Cotterell.

For years, when traveling along the main line, I used to wonder about a single derelict platform on the east side of the track at approximately Km 44.500, just below the summit of the climb between Binyamina and Hadera. The curious thing about this platform was its location well away from the line itself. There was nothing on the platform either; by which I mean no building or sign, nor anything else for that matter. In fact, it was almost entirely hidden under a mound of rubbish. Practically the only thing still visible was the platform edge itself, made of concrete. It took me a long time to get around to asking about this strange anomaly but Ya'akov Abutbul, former IR Traffic Manager, recalled events and finally put my mind at rest.

Back in the 1950s the residents of Pardess Hannah asked the railway to provide them with a station, and IR agreed to do so. The site chosen was quite a way from town, but the locals were appeased. It had been intended to lay a station loop line and the platform was built some metres back from the main line so that the loop could easily be inserted. But it never was. Trains stopped here for a while, until folk got sick of having to schlepp across the ballast and clamber up on to the platform, and took the bus instead. The platform remained, isolated and slowly disappearing under the rubbish dump. The trash has gone now, but you can still see remains of the old platform edge, unless a bulldozer has since cleared them away. They are immediately to the south of the down platform at the new Pardess Hannah/Caesarea station. (These, by the way, are the 'proper' spellings of the names in English).