

Series 29 No. 4

Issue No. 111 December 2015

הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
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111:01

How the Bagdadbahn used to be. On 1st. Sept, 1975 Keith Chester took this shot demonstrating the sort of landscape the engineers had to tackle.

111.02:

EDITORIAL.

Is it just “more of the same”? In some respects, yes. In Israel there is a mixture of good news (further line openings in the south, further progress towards Jerusalem, towards Carmiel, along the Jezreel and new plans that will transform Haifa) and bad (more violence – which will never end until the pragmatists take over from the ideologists.) In recent months the grim collapse of the former states of Syria and Iraq has continued, as this Editorial is being prepared there is further violence in Lebanon and Turkey has just come through a new election and quite frankly no-one seems to have a clue as to what is really happening and who is fighting whom and why and what they really expect to win in the end – the only certainty is that a large proportion of those who wish to escape the whole mess and live relatively normal lives have made their way to an unprepared and panic-stricken Europe and more would like to follow. In the meantime the war has reached Europe too.... Railways, requiring as they do a fixed infrastructure and a degree of order (so that there is fuel or electricity available) suffer especially at such times.

Elsewhere in the region work continues in the Arabian Peninsula and in Ethiopia so there is constructive news as well. If only there were more!

The Editor.

111.03.



Progress on the Valley Line: Aerial and ground views of Afula station and an underpass under construction.



NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(i) THE HIGH HOLY DAYS.

Barely had the last issue gone to press and the Editor could theoretically start making preparations for the High Holy Days when news came of Israel Railways' preparations and announcement of a special timetable during the September and October Jewish holidays, reflecting not only religious observances but traffic flows as people head for home or work (and bases) or enjoy school holidays:

“On Sunday 13.09.2015, the eve of the New Jewish Year, trains will operate as on Fridays.

On Monday 14.09.2015 & Tuesday, 15.09.2015, the New Jewish Year, trains will not operate; traffic on Tuesday night will operate as on Saturday nights.

On Wednesday 16.09.2015 trains will operate as on Sundays.

On Monday 21.09.2015 trains will operate as on Thursdays.

On Tuesday, 22.09.2015, the eve of Yom

Kippur, the Jewish holiest day, trains will operate as on Fridays.

On Wednesday 23.09.2015, Yom Kippur, trains will not operate; traffic will resume on Wednesday night after midnight with the exception of train 7001 departing from Nahariya for Ben-Gurion airport which will operate as usual.

During the eight days of Sukkot holidays - 27.09.2015 to 06.10.2015 - trains will operate as follows:

On Sunday, 27.09.2015, the eve of the Sukkot holidays, trains will operate as on Fridays.

On Monday night 28.09.2015 trains will not operate; traffic on Tuesday night will operate as on Saturday nights.

On Tuesday 29.09.2015 trains will operate as on Sundays.

On Wednesday 30.09.2015 trains will operate as on Mondays.

On Thursday 01.10.2015 trains will operate as on Thursdays.

On Friday 02.10.2015 trains will operate as on Fridays.

On Saturday night 03.10.2015 trains will operate as on Saturday nights.

On Sunday 04.10.2015, the eve of the last day of Sukkot holidays, trains will operate as on Fridays.

On Monday night 05.10.2015 trains will operate as on Saturday nights.

On Tuesday 06.10.2015 trains will operate as on Sundays."

(ii). MORE ON CROATIAN LOCOS.

Ovadia Syr  sent the following link of the new/refurbished GM Co-Co's in their very attractive and stylish new IR livery on a test run at and near Sisak in Croatia on June 27th. 2015. It shows what look like temporary number stickers on 710T (2 063 012) and 711T (98 78 2 063 011-7). They show enormous acceleration even with a fairly heavy test train, and flashing headlights when approaching a level crossing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzQ6m7kcfD4>

(iii). NEW PASSENGER RECORDS.

The railways have reached a new record in passenger service during August 2015 with 4.8 Million passengers; 18% more than in August 2014.

From the beginning of 2015 passenger traffic reached 11.5% more than in the same part of 2014; this figure of 35.4 Million for only part of the year is equal to the total annual traffic for each of the years 2009, 2010 and 2011!

It is estimated that passenger traffic will increase in the coming months thanks to starting services on 19.09.2015 over the whole length of the Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line (with the exception of Ofakim station to be opened towards the end of 2015), test running on the Valley Line (Hedjaz) in 2016, and the tariff reform ex-

pected during 2015.

There is no doubt that works on the Tel-Aviv LRV which affected the roads convinced many to use rail which they "suddenly discovered" and which also added to the rise of traffic.

(iv). SANDSTORMS.

Aharon wrote in September: "This week was one of the worst regarding the weather; all the country is covered with sand and dust as well as high temperatures and it caused very poor visibility; the railways suffered as well and speed restrictions reduced punctuality to around 85%; now with slow improvement in weather the punctuality is also rising slowly.

(v). LATE SERVICE EXTENDED.

Israel Railways announced on their website that from 20.09.2015 onwards train 56 departing from Beer-Sheva Central at 22:59 between Sunday and Wednesday (inclusive) will terminate at Netanya at 00:50 (instead of at Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central at 00:20) calling additionally at Tel-Aviv University at 00:26, at Herzliya at 00:34 and at Beit-Yehoshua at 00:43.

(vi). OPENING OF ASHKELON - BEER SHEVA LINE.

From a press release of 17.09.2015 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry:

"Prime Minister Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz, Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafir, Israel Railways Ltd. Chairman of Directorate and Senior Accountant Mr. Hussam Bashara and other VIPs were today (17.09.2015) on a special inaugural train on the 70 km double-track Ashkelon - Beer-Sheva line prior to service starting on 19.09.2015.

The 70 km are covered in 50 minutes - including calling at Sderot and Netivot (and from December 2015 at Ofakim too) giving an average speed of 72 km/h; Sderot - Beer-Sheva is covered in 32 minutes; Netivot - Beer-Sheva in 23 minutes; Ashkelon - Sderot in 13 minutes; Ofakim - Ashkelon 30 minutes; Ofakim - Beer-Sheva 15 minutes. There are 25 trains/day in both directions; 2 trains/hour at rush hours. The line has already become a success since the opening of the first section - Ashkelon - Sderot and later Sderot - Ofakim, during the last months enjoying a monthly traffic of more than 90,000 passengers.

Prime Minister Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu and Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz have agreed with Finance Minister Mr. Moshe Kakhlon that until the end of 2017 the people of Sderot, Netivot, Ofakim, and surroundings will enjoy a 50% reduction on tickets to everywhere in Israel.

Israel Railways Ltd. General Man-

ager Mr. Boaz Zafir, Israel Railways Ltd. said: "Today we continue implementing the Zionist vision by networking the Negev (southern part of Israel) with new lines and modern trains."

(vii). SUBSIDENCE IN THE AYALON LINE.

On 16.09.2015 works on the Tel-Aviv LRV/METRO Red Line south of Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central station caused the collapse of a section of one of the two tracks between Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central and Tel-Aviv Hashalom stations which brought some chaos to traffic; passengers had to change trains both at Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central and Tel-Aviv Hahagana stations in order to relieve traffic pressure on the single operational track. Direct trains from both Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central and Tel-Aviv Hahagana stations operated regularly. Punctuality on that day was down to 75%; traffic resumed on 17.09.2015 with punctuality back to well above 90%.

(viii). MODI'IN - JERUSALEM SPUR - DELAYS AND WORKS.

The railways had planned to lay turnouts and tracks at Anava junction to link the Tel-Aviv - Ben-Gurion Airport - Modi'in line with the A1 link to Jerusalem on Friday 18.09.2015 (i.e. to form a triangle); the works had to be postponed.

Then on 14.09.2015 it was reported: "On Friday, 16.10.2015 from 15:00 the stations of Modi'in Central and Modi'in Outskirts will be closed due to laying turnouts at the Daniel (Anava) junction to link the A1 with the Ben-Gurion Airport - Modi'in line; this shows that works on the A1 are in a progressive phase.

As a result, train Nos. 6117, 6119 and No. 6125 regularly arriving at Modi'in Outskirts at 15:09, 16:09, and 16:38 and at Modi'in Central at 15:19, 16:19 and 16:46 respectively will terminate at Ben-Gurion Airport.

Train No. 6120 regularly departing from Modi'in Central to Nahariya at 15:11 and calling at Modi'in Outskirts at 15:17 will start at Ben-Gurion Airport at 15:28; traffic will resume on Saturday night, 17.10.2015."

The next stage: "Due to infrastructure works to be carried out at Anava junction to link the A1 with the Modi'in - Ben-Gurion airport line (mainly laying turnouts) the line will be closed from 00:01 on Friday 06.11.2015. As a result, the train departing at 21:48 from Nahariya on Thursday, 05.11.2015 will terminate at Ben-Gurion airport. The railways will provide alternative bus shuttle services between Ben-Gurion airport and Modi'in. Services will resume on Saturday night 07.11.2015. These works form now the second stage out of three required for connecting this spur to link the new line to Jerusalem with what

will become a 'branch' to Modi'in.

(ix). TRAIN FAILURE CAUSES DISRUPTION.

On 21.09.2015 an Alstom push/pull single-deck train became stuck at Tel-Aviv University station due to a technical failure. As happened on 16.09.2015 this caused chaos and reduced punctuality to 70% due to only a single track being operational. However, the line was cleared after two hours, though punctuality did not reach even 90% even by the evening.

(x). SUBURBAN TRAFFIC HOLDS THE LINE....

Some better news: despite the panic which the media tried to create regarding the expected traffic jams in Tel-Aviv due to the Red Line works, there are no special traffic problems (meaning that the regular daily bottlenecks continue.); as far as rail traffic is concerned, there are reports of growing traffic through suburban stations like Petakh-Tikva Kiryat-Arie and others where many commuters "discovered" rail potential.

(xi). SHABBAT ISSUES.

"THE ECONOMIC MINISTRY BANS INTERCITY TRAIN CONSTRUCTION ON SHABBAT" - a story from the 'Times of Israel' 25th. Sept. 2015:

"Economy Minister Aryeh Deri [note: officially an Orthodox Jew with a colourful past] has ordered all construction on the Jerusalem – Tel Aviv high-speed train line be halted on Shabbat, in a move that Israel Railways said would delay the project by two years.

Meanwhile Israel Railways also announced that the last train to depart late Friday afternoon as well as the first trains on Saturday night have been cancelled due to their proximity to the Jewish day of rest, which begins at sunset Friday and lasts through nightfall Saturday.

Construction on the express railway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, originally set to be completed by late 2017 or early 2018, will come to a standstill starting this weekend, as per the directive of the ultra-Orthodox minister. According to Army Radio, the decision was the result of a dispute between the Economy Ministry and the Transportation Ministry. The Economy Ministry maintained the railway had to obtain special labour permits from the Transportation Ministry to work on Shabbat. The Transportation Ministry, meanwhile, said that the permits fall under the sole jurisdiction of the Economy Ministry. The Economy Ministry defended the decision, telling Ynet news website that Israel Railways was bound by law to seek special Shabbat permits and had not done so.

The railway authority said the move effectively sets back the NIS 6 Billion

(\$1.5Bn.) project – which began in 2001 – until 2020. Avigdor Lieberman, leader of the opposition Yisrael Beyteynu party, slammed the decision, and urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to intervene. "This is illogical and intolerable and cannot exist in a normal country. The prime minister must intervene and immediately order the reinstatement (of the construction) to its former state," Lieberman said.

In August Deri penned a letter to Netanyahu threatening to pull out of the coalition in protest at what he says was the desecration of Shabbat by construction work to remove rubble from a demolished Tel Aviv overpass. "The next time there is an unnecessary and outrageous desecration of Shabbat to work on the Tel Aviv light rail or any other state project as happened on this Shabbat, which was not necessary for life-saving reasons, the Shas faction I head will not let this pass," Deri wrote in the letter, widely published in the Hebrew media.

Earlier this month a ban was imposed on Israeli soccer leagues from playing on Shabbat as part of a convoluted labour dispute. The soccer crisis began when labour Court judge Ariella Glitzer rules that organising or participating in soccer matches on Shabbat was technically illegal, and ordered the Israel Football Association to obtain a work waiver from the Minister of Economy, who is also in charge of enforcing labour laws. Deri, from the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, was not prepared to sign such a waiver. Glitzer made her decision after hundreds of players petitioned the IFA, refusing to play games on the Jewish day of rest. In their letter, the players claimed that requiring them to play on Shabbat violated Israel's Work and Rest Hours law, a largely-ignored 1951 piece of legislation that prohibits employees from working on the Sabbath without a special dispensation from the Economy Minister. Following a request from Culture and Sports Minister Miri Regev, Attorney-General Yehuda Weinstein said he saw no reason to change the long-standing policy of non-enforcing the law in this case. The IFA, which had threatened to halt all games, announced that weekend games would continue without change."

[Note by Editor: We see here examples of the problems Israel faces as a modern industrial country attempting at the same time to live by the Jewish calendar and Jewish ethics. Unfortunately this divergence is brought into coalition politics where 'religious parties' have their own agenda. In theory the Shabbat is a day of rest and time for personal and family issues – no-one should be forced to work. In practice it is the only day when there is no heavy commuter traffic and so ideal for infrastructure works that involve disrupting roads or railway lines. (I cannot see the loss of 52 days a year really extending construction work by two years.) We also see

that sports events can take place on days when there is no public transport allowed to bring or return fans!]

(xii). NEW ROAD UNDERBRIDGE AT BEIT SHEMESH:

Between Monday, 12.10.2015 and Wednesday 14.10.2015 there are no rail services between Tel-Aviv, Lod, Ramla, Beit-Shemesh and Jerusalem, due to creating an under-track grade separation between road No. 38 (now being widened from 2 to 4 lanes) and the entrance to the nearby Beit-Shemesh station; this will thus replace the old level crossing which caused severe road bottle necks.

As a result, the stations of Beit-Shemesh and Jerusalem will be closed; the railways will provide alternative bus services between the stations of Beit-Shemesh, Ramla and Lod; traffic will resume on Thursday 15.10.2015. The work is carried out by Israel Ways.

(xiii). POWER CABLE WORKS.

"Due to high voltage works to be carried out by the Israeli Electrical Company (IEC) along the Tel-Aviv - Ben-Gurion Airport line between Sunday 18.10.2015 and Monday 19.10.2015 the following changes in rail traffic will take place:

On Sunday 18.10.2015 between 22:30 and 00:00, trains starting at stations south of Tel-Aviv will terminate at Lod station; trains starting north of Tel-Aviv will terminate at Tel-Aviv Hahagana.

On Monday 19.10.2015 between 00:01 and 05:00 night trains to/from Ben-Gurion Airport will start/terminate at Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central; shuttle bus services will be provided between Ben-Gurion Airport and Tel-Aviv Savidor/Central.

Services between Hod-Ha-Sharon and Beer-Sheva, through Holon, Bat-Yam, Rishon-Le-Zion West, Yavne West, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Sderot and Netivot will run regularly on both directions."

(xiv). NEW BULK FREIGHT CONTRACTS.

From a press release of 15.10.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways have signed a contract with the Israeli earthworks subcontractor "Elyakim Ben Ari Ltd." to haul sand from Tzefa (in the Negev desert in the south) to the centre and north, as well as hauling waste materials from Bnei-Brak cargo terminal to the Tzefa cargo terminal.

The expected revenues in 2017 may reach \$15.6 Million (NIS 60 Million); the contract is for five years from 01.01.2016 till 31.12.2021 and there is an option for extending it by additional five years as per mutual agreement.

The railways have recently signed another contract with "A.D. Idan Khadash"

('New Times' in Hebrew) for hauling rocks from Na'aman terminal (near Acre) to the port of Ashdod to be used for constructing the new port there; the foreseen revenues are around \$2.3 Million (NIS 8 Million) annually, and haulage is to start within few weeks.

Note: this is a repetition of the haulage of rocks in the beginning of the 1960's from a quarry near Tirat-Yehuda (on the Lod - Rosh Ha-Ayin line) to Ashdod to build the old (then new) port of Ashdod; the encouraging point is that the railways have returned to this sort of haulage after absence of more than 50 years!

The new contracts are an integral part of a total move led by the cargo department headed by its Deputy General Manager Mr. Uri Sharir and the railways' management to increase cargo haulage efficiency, to significantly increase haulage volume, improve customers' service quality, thus to reduce the number of lorries and improve environment.

For these purposes, the railways have been purchasing new freight cars and locomotives at a cost in excess of \$36.44 Million (NIS 140 Million).

The railways' General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "After a strict and deep staff work regarding service destinations, operation, reliability, and punctuality, and due to the positive operational results of the cargo department, and the contracts signed recently, there is a forecast for increased haulage to/from the existing customers, both of containers and ores; we're currently harvesting the fruits of the heavy investments in cargo haulage; we'll keep further developing the railways as a meaningful factor in cargo haulage."

(xv). NEW EXTRA SUBURBAN TRAIN.

The railways have recently added a train daily between Sunday and Thursday, departing at 07:23 from Yavne West towards Tel-Aviv and Hod-Ha-Sharon.

(xvi). WORKS FOR CONNECTING THE JEZREEL VALLEY LINE.

From a press release of 21.10.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"During the past six months the railways have carried out large works to connect the Valley Line (Hedjaz) with the Haifa - Nahariya line between Lev-HaMifratz station and Zevulun Junction at Paz bridge. Works included laying a temporary alternative track which enabled train movements - though with restricted speed - during the works.

Next week the connection will be completed; trains will return to regular speeds and timetable and towards the end of 2016 the Valley Line will be alive again for the first time since its closure in 1952, though on a new alignment in many sections.

Works are to be completed on

Saturday night 31.10.2015, which also means the return of suburban trains between Nahariya and Hof-Ha-Carmel at an hourly frequency in each direction with the exception of between 06:00 and 08:00 when frequency will be every half an hour each direction.

Towards the completion of works the following changes in train traffic are to take place: Between Saturday night 24.10.2015 and Sunday 25.10.2015 the line section between Kiryat-Motzkin and Nahariya will be closed will be closed for traffic; the stations of Kiryat-Motzkin and Nahariya will be closed; trains regularly departing from/arriving at Nahariya will instead start/terminate at Kiryat-Motzkin; bus shuttle services Kiryat-Motzkin and Nahariya will be provided.

Between Monday 26.10.2015 and Friday 30.10.2015, works will be extended and the whole section between Haifa Central the 8 and Nahariya will be closed; as a result, the stations of Lev-HaMifratz, Hutzot-Ha-Mifratz, Kiryat-Hayim, and Kiryat-Motzkin will be closed; trains regularly departing from/arriving at Nahariya will instead start/terminate at Haifa Central the 8."

(xvii). WINTER TIME STARTS.

On Saturday night 25.10.2015 the summer time will end and winter time will start; the changes to the timetable affect only Fridays and Saturday nights.

(xviii). OFAKIM PROJECTS.

From a press release of 27.10.2015 by Israel Railways Ltd. and the Ofakim Municipality (north-west of Beer-Sheva):

"During a visit of Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz, Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir and the Mayor of Ofakim Mr. Yitzhak Danino, it was proposed that the railways together with Ofakim Municipality will lead social and rail projects in the city. It has been decided between the partners to promote the following projects:

Students' residences:

The arrival of train services to Ofakim in January 2016 makes the city especially attractive for students who study at the area; the city will be only 18 minutes' travel to Ben-Gurion University of Beer-Sheva and the Sapir College nearby; there are already 500 students living in the city and its mayor anticipates a significant growth in the demand for students' residences soon.

Adopting Minister Katz's initiative, the railways and the municipality have started to investigate the idea of building the residences near the railway station, which in addition to their location will be attractive due to low taxes as well as low rental and cost of living there.

The College for Railway Professions:

As a result of Minister Katz's initiative, the railways together with the municipality will build near the railway station the College for Railway Professions which will contain the world's most advanced driving simulators now being purchased for training rail drivers and additional professions. The college is to be opened in 2017 and will be used by future as well as existing employees to keep up their professional skills. The construction will be implemented both by the railways and the economic society for Ofakim.

The Employment Fair:

The growing demand for new railway employees has created an additional fruitful cooperation between the railways and the municipality: Creating an employment fair for the Ofakim citizens; the city has suffered during the last year from unemployment which is double that in other parts of Israel; such a fair, to be organized by the railways who recruit about 250 workers each year, and which is to take place at the city, may significantly improve the employment there.

Transport Minister Mr. Katz said: "The vision turns into reality; we continue to link the south with the centre by rail lines; trains bring not just passengers, but employment, education and area development; we pave the way for the next generations and do our best to minimize the negative emigration of the young generation from the area by developing and improving means of transportation; this is good news for the citizens of the south".

Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir said: "Israel Railways Ltd. are economical, social, belong to the citizens and contribute to the society; we're happy to be part of national and social projects to strengthen cities as well as to contribute to the people, also activities that are not the railways' core business - railway professions studies, joining populations of all levels, making friends and getting to know the people better.

The co-operation with the Ofakim municipality and other cities in the south and north of Israel, as well as moving the railway management to Lod, are projects that use the railways' revival and growth, and we'll be active in similar projects at other parts of Israel".

The Mayor of Ofakim, Mr. Yitzhak Danino said: "The rail link between Ofakim and Beer-Sheva and with Ashkelon is not just another railway station; the three combined projects mean a trust in Ofakim as a city with potential; I have to thank Transport Minister Mr. Katz and Israel Railways Ltd. General Manager Mr. Boaz Zafrir for their, vision, initiative and cooperation and expect that other governmental and private companies will invest in Ofakim.

(xix). EXTRA BEER-SHEVA TRAIN.

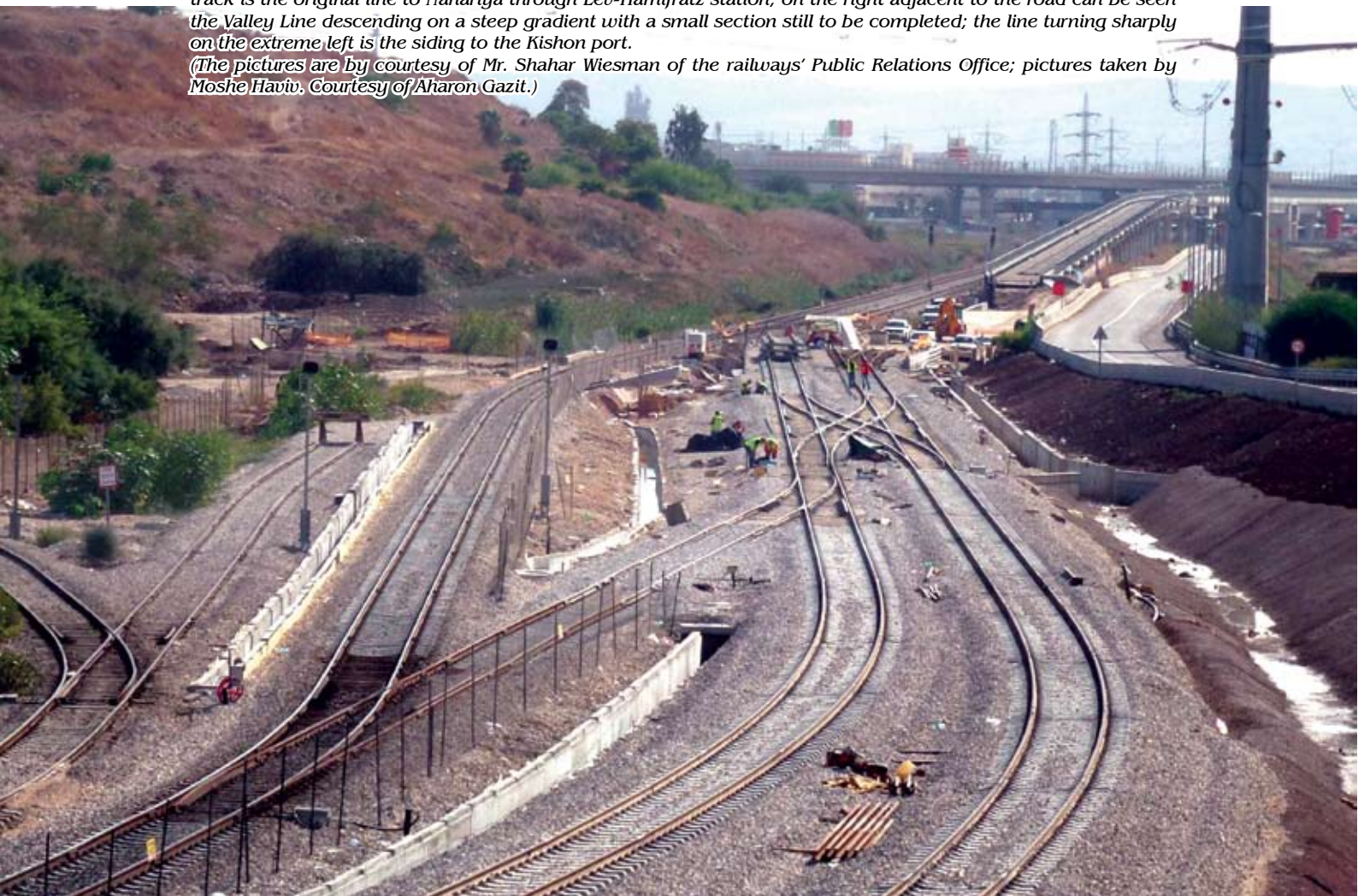
Progress on the Valley Line



Two views looking north of the almost complete connection of tracks between the Haifa - Nahariya line and the rebuilt 'Valley Line' to Afule and Beit Shean - between Zevulun Junction and Lev HaMifratz station, in October 2015

The temporary track can be seen running between the two signal posts towards Lev-Hamifratz station; the double-track is the original line to Nahariya through Lev-Hamifratz station; on the right adjacent to the road can be seen the Valley Line descending on a steep gradient with a small section still to be completed; the line turning sharply on the extreme left is the siding to the Kishon port.

(The pictures are by courtesy of Mr. Shahar Wiesman of the railways' Public Relations Office; pictures taken by Moshe Haviv. Courtesy of Aharon Gazit.)



In the new timetable to start on Saturday night 31.10.2015 there is an additional morning train between Ashkelon and Beer-Sheva departing from Ashkelon station at 06:42 and arriving at Beer-Sheva Central at 07:37

(xx). PEAK HOUR PUNCTUALITY ISSUES.

Although the railways are doing their best to keep punctuality higher than 90%, and despite the fact that linking the Valley Line with the Haifa - Nahariya line is completed, meaning that speed restrictions were removed, the punctuality between 08:30 and 09:30 as well as between 16:00 and 18:30 is often as low as 80%; the railways' authorities claim that this is caused by operating four trains/hour between Beer-Sheva, Ashkelon, Tel-Aviv, and Hod-Ha-Sharon in each direction during these hours; it is reported that these trains are becoming particularly popular for those wishing to arrive at Tel-Aviv thus avoiding traffic jams; both trains and parking facilities are over-crowded; suddenly people have "discovered" rail!

(xxi). FOOTBALL SPECIALS.

The railways have added the following trains to the football game this evening - 03.11.2015 - at 21:45 between Maccabi Tel-Aviv and Porto teams at the Sami Ofer stadium located near Haifa Hof-Ha-Carmel station. The additional trains will depart from Tel-Aviv Hahagana station at 18:50, 19:08 and 19:30 arriving at Haifa Hof-Ha-Carmel at 19:52, 20:14 and 20:36 respectively. The first two trains will call at Tel-Aviv Hashalom, Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central and Herzliya. The train of 19:30 will call also at Netanya and Hadera West.

After the game there will be two trains to Tel-Aviv to be operated in the "Fill-up and go" system, which will call at Binyamina, Hadera West, Netanya, Beit-Yehoshua, Herzliya and all Tel-Aviv stations terminating at Tel-Aviv Hahagana station. There will be one train to Ashkelon calling at Binyamina, Hadera West, Netanya, Beit-Yehoshua, Herzliya and all Tel-Aviv stations, Bat-Yam Yoseftal, Rishon-Le-Zion West (Moshe Dayan) and Yavne West, terminating at Ashkelon. Additionally, the regular train of 00:52 from Haifa Hof-Ha-Carmel to Ben-Gurion airport will call at all Tel-Aviv stations and will continue to Modi'in Outskirts and Modi'in Central.

(xxii). THE LINE THROUGH HAIFA TO GO UNDERGROUND!

From a press release of 03.11.2015 by the Haifa Municipality: "The municipality approved this evening - 03.11.2015 - the financing agreement of \$336 Million (NIS 1.3 Billion) with the Finance Ministry to turn the Haifa downtown rail section into an underground and sunken one, thus enabling construction of 7,700 apartments in various areas and making the western part of the port accessible for the public with new hotels and entertainment areas to be added as well.

The project includes building a new underground station (not metro) adjacent to the custom house for use by a lot of workers and citizens who need the services of the government offices located on the side of the road, avoiding the need either to walk half a mile from Haifa Central station or taking a bus; the station location will be a 5-minute walk from Israel's only operational metro so far, the 'Carmelit'.

(xxiii). CASINO ROYALE.

On 26.10.2015 Sybil wrote: "Just heard a report on the TV news that some IR employees have been running a private casino on railway property. Management is hauling them over the coals."

111:05.

TENDERS.

A. Tenders Issued.

(i). Israel Railways Ltd. tender No. 11519: Providing Repair, Maintenance, and Rebuilding services for the Track Machinery and rolling stock:

The railways have divided the tender into the following 10 'service baskets' to be provided both in the northern and southern parts of the network:

Basket No.1 - locksmith and welding services.

Basket No.2 - machining and scraping/polishing services.

Basket No.3 - glass work services.

Basket No.4 - repair services for track machinery computer systems.

Basket No.5 - services of rebuilding and maintaining of track auxiliary equipment.

Basket No.6 - hydraulic systems maintenance services.

Basket No.7 - pneumatic systems maintenance services.

Basket No.8 - services of rebuilding and maintaining of air condition systems.

Basket No.9 - services of an authorized inspector for lifting equipment.

Basket No.10 - services of repair of track machinery electronic systems.

The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 60 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 03.11.2015.

(ii). RFP ('Request for Proposal') No. 41505 For the Supply of a Load Box for Diesel Engines.

Extracts: Prerequisites: Bidder must be the supplier of the proposed Load Box and from 2012 and up to Final Submission Date ... must have supplied two portable Load Boxes for diesel engines between 1,000 to 4,000 hp. The supply of the Load Box, including but not limited to, the price, terms of payment, scope of liability, responsibility and all other general and legal terms for the engagement with the supplier, shall be governed by the terms and conditions of the frame agreement attached...as 'Appendix C' ('the Agreement') The terms of supply and delivery shall be 'EXW' "Ex-Works" as that term is defined in Incoterms 2010, International Rules for the Interpretation of Trade, ICC Publication No. 715 at ISR's site.... ISR intends to issue a Purchase Order for one (1) Load Box... within three months from the effective date of the agreement.... Without derogating from its warranty obligations as detailed herein and in the Agreement, the Bidder shall undertake in its proposal that in the event of being elected as the winning bidder, the Load Box ordered by ISR will be delivered with spare parts sufficient for one (1) year of operation, at no extra cost. In addition, the winning bidder will undertake that during the Agreement Period and thereafter until seven (7) years from the end of the Warranty Period... it will supply ISR with all spare parts and tools necessary to maintain and repair the Load Box..... Following such seven (7) years period, if a spare part is no longer available in the market the Supplier will offer ISR an adequate substitute at a comparable price...."

[Ed. comments: And so forth for 17 pages. It looks like a lawyer got there before an engineer did. I am reminded of a sign I once saw at a disused car dump in Tel Aviv not far from what later became the Ayalon highway and railway - "Spurious Parts"!]

Proposals were to be submitted by 2nd. Sept. 2015, later (on 9th. Sept.) extended to 7th. October!

(iii). Request for Information: Concerning Horizontal Balancing Machines for rail wheel sets.

(iv). Tender No. 21521: Providing electrical checks and testing of the entire railways' electrical equipment: The intention is to select 2 winning bidders; one for the northern rail area and the other for the southern area. Latest date for submission of proposals: 27.10.2015.

(v). Tender No. 11531: Providing cleaning services for the railways' rolling stock fleet: The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 05.11.2015.

(vi). Ministries of Finance and of Transportation: Tender 19/15: Monitor-
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ing Heavy Rail Projects.

"Eligible to submit proposals in this Tender are Companies which conduct at least 80% of their activity outside of Israel or any Joint Venture or Partnership between two Companies, of which at least one conducts 80% of its activity outside Israel.

Bidder must present experience in at least four heavy rail transportation projects, the value of each being at least USD 250M. and of which at least two are operation for at least 12 months prior to May 1, 2015.

Project Manager must be a Civil Engineer with at least 15 years of relevant professional experience outside of Israel, in the construction and/or planning and/or management and/or monitoring aspects of civil engineering in the field of land transport projects, of which at least 7 years in the construction ... (etc.) of HRT projects, of which at least one is operational.

Deputy Project Manager – must demonstrate at least 15 years of relevant professional experience in planning and/or construction and/or managing and/or monitoring of Land Transport Projects in Israel.

Team Members – proposed Core Team Members must present at least 10 years of relevant experience....

Presence in Israel: Project Manager must be present in Israel at least 5 working days out of every month and no less than a total of 24 working days out of every Annual Quarter. Deputy Project Manager must be reasonably accessible in Israel at all times.....

Bids by 11th. Nov. 2015."

[Ed comments: This looks like another micro-managed tender document so specific that probably only one or two firms or individuals can fulfil all requirements. And it looks like the civil servants want to keep an eye on what the railways are building, using people independent of too many Israeli contract commitments !]

(vii). Israel Railways Ltd. tender No. 21529: Building a pedestrian bridge over the tracks of Lod station: The purpose of the project is to create a safe passage for pedestrians (both passengers and railways' employees) from the existing platforms to the depot on the station's west area and to the railways' training centre (active) and the railways' management building (under progressive construction phase) on the east side; the bridge will also serve the new platforms to be built as part of a planned combined transportation centre. Latest date for submission of proposals: 12.11.2015.

(viii). Tender No. 11528: Purchasing and maintenance of an automatic storage system for the railways: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 01.12.2015.

(ix). Tender No. 21524: Performing maintenance, construction, and rebuilding subcontracting works at stations, offices, and other sites all over the network: Latest date for submission of proposals: 12.11.2015

(x). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 21525: building a preparatory platform at the Lod depot for maintaining electrical trains: Latest date for submission of proposals: 01.12.2015.

(xi). Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 21518: Frame agreement for providing design and architecture services for railway stations, building and facilities: Requirements: designing of railway stations and other structures including control buildings, business and offices, depots, air conditioning and ventilation systems, rebuilding and upgrading of stations and buildings, access roads, traffic and parking, drainage, promoting standardized design of stations and building parts, and any engineering and architectural design as per the railways requirements.

The intention is to select up to 12 winners in 2 categories:

6 winners for category A for services of up to \$3.1 million (NIS 12million).

6 winners for category B for services of more than \$3.1 million (NIS 12million).

The contract is for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Latest date for submission 06.12.2015

(xii). Tender No. 41508: For the Supply of Road/Rail Pick-Up Vehicles ("Tender"). The Bidder shall be the supplier of the proposed vehicles and from 2012 should have supplied at least six road/trail pick-up vehicles to railway companies. Submissions by 17.12.2015.

B. Tenders Postponed.

Israel Railways Ltd. Tender No. 41502 – for Manufacture and Supply of Various Types of Turnouts. Latest date for submission of proposals postponed from 21.09.2015 to 19.10 and then to 02.11.2015.

C. Tenders Awarded.

The railways have announced that the winner of ₪185,000 tender No. 41501 for Manufacture and Supply of Brake Testing Devices With Automatic Testing Procedure is EKA D.O.O

111:06.

LIGHT RAIL.

A. TEL AVIV.

(i) See photos on next page.....

(ii). TEL AVIV LRT GROWTH DEBATE.

From 'Tramways and Urban Transit' Nov. 2015 No. 935, p.432. "Conflict between Finance and Transport Ministries over future construction.

Israeli financial media has reported that the nation's Ministry of Finance is considering stopping construction work on all but the Red Line of Tel Aviv's light rail project, due to likely project overruns and out-of-date projections. Work on the 24km (15-mile) Red Line which runs from the central railway station in Petah Tikva to Bat Yam – 11km (6.8 miles) of which will be underground – began in early August and is expected to take six years.

Daily financial news outlet 'Globes' reports sources in the ministry who claim the demand for public transport is much higher than forecast. "The intention is not to cancel the lines, but to adapt them to a reality that has changed. The light rail project was planned decades ago, and so is not appropriate to today's demands. In any case, it will take NTA six years to complete the Red Line, so there is plenty of time to plan the other lines anew. This has to be done right first time, or not at all."

Two months ago, the plan for the central part of the Green Line was approved. This is the longest of the eight planned lines at 39km (24 miles), 4.5km (2.8 miles) of which will be underground.

In response, the Minister of Transport Yisrael Katz told 'Globes': "The light rail project in Tel Aviv will be carried out as planned. No-one can stop it... It will be operational in 2021 as planned and the rest of the lines planned for the Tel Aviv metropolitan area will be built exactly in accordance with the timetable set down."

The Ministry of Finance denies the accusations, and says that what is on the agenda is a substantial expansion of the existing project."

(iii). NTA tender No. 0174/2015: Providing media crisis management services and media consulting: The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 60 months. Latest date for submission of proposals: 02.11.2015

(iv). Tender No. 0165/2015: Providing management for designing the LRV Green Line:

Latest date for submission of proposals: 28.10.2015. Note: the planned Green Line will connect the southern parts of the Tel-Aviv Greater Metropolitan Area (city of Holon and Rishon-Le-Zion Outskirts) and northern parts (city of Herzliya) with the cen-

Some pictures of worksites on the LRV Red Line:

photo 1



Photo 1 shows the same place as photo 3 but with one distinctive detail: the platform, which, together with the Custom House are the only station remains.

Photo 2 - works near Tel-Aviv Savidor-Central station.

Photo 3- works as seen from the Custom House towards Jaffa; the street on the right is Yehuda Halevy after which the underground station is to be called.

Photo 4 - works on HARAKEVET str. (irony of fate - it means Railway Street); the building in the background carries the sign Custom House - all that remained from the Tel-Aviv (later Tel-Aviv South) station;

photo 5 the same place in a more progressive phase of works.

Photo 6 - works on Jabotinsky Road at Petakh-Tikva.

All pictures are from the internet.

photo 2



photo 3



photo 4



photo 5



photo 6



tre of Tel-Aviv. It will consist of three parts:

The southern part between Rishon-Le-Zion Outskirts and Holon with Tel-Aviv new central bus station; it will be 17 km long with 26 stations, a depot at Holon, and a 200 m bridge over Road No. 4. (Jeremy Topaz comments: One of three parts of this bridge was built. The Sign said one of the other two was for "the Light Rail".)

The central part starts at Tel-Aviv new central bus station as an underground section, it crosses Carlebach station of the Red Line (under construction) and runs underground until crossing the river Yarkon on a bridge as well as Rokach Ave and ends at Sde Dov local airport at the northern part of Tel-Aviv. This part is 5.9 km long of which 1.6 km are on the surface and 4.3 km underground, 7 stations of which 3 are surface and 4 underground, as well as 2 bridges, one of 200 m over river Yarkon and the other of 320 m over Rokach Ave.

The northern part starts at Sde Dov local airport and runs in two arms, one towards the Tel-Aviv University and the high-tech areas east of it and the other along the coast until it reaches the high-tech area of Herzliyya. This part is 17 km long, with 30 stations and 2 bridges, one of 560 m over the Ayalon river and the other of 320m over Pinchas Rosen street.

(v). Tender No. 0130/2015: Providing management and monitoring services for designing the B.R.T. Blue Line: This B.R.T. line is to link between cities of Holon, Rishon-Le-Zion, Nes-Ziona, and Rehovot. It will have an overall length of about 20 km; the number of stations not yet defined. Latest date for submission of proposals: 12.10.2015.

(vi). Tender No. 0183/2015. Procurement and Implementation of a 'cloud-based' Electronic Document Management System. Bids by 17.13.2015.

B. JERUSALEM.

(i). The Jerusalem LRV is now four years old and carries 145,000 passengers/day - more than any public transport mode. The Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team has introduced a short film (unfortunately in Hebrew only) regarding this subject; it can be watched through the link <https://vimeo.com/135793698>

(ii). SUKKOT HOLIDAYS.

"The city's Transportation Master Plan Team has announced that during the Sukkoth holidays - between 27.09.2015 and 05.10.2015 - there will be special traffic arrangements due to more than half a million Jewish pilgrims expected to arrive; Egged bus line 111 will serve between Jerusalem Malkha railway station and the Western Wall in the old city, coordinated with trains arrival and departures.

Those using the LRV will be able to buy tickets manually and on board; unlike the need to buy it through vending machines on regular times."

(iii). PROBLEMS.

Alas, this period was also filled with violence in the Old City of Jerusalem, centred upon the Temple Mount but spilling out elsewhere. Several unarmed Israeli pedestrians and motorists were murdered, several Palestinian attackers shot or wounded by security forces. In consequence 'Ha'aretz' had to report that services north of Ammunition Hill / French Hill onward to Pisgat Ze'ev were suspended.

(a). From a public announcement of 18.10.2015 by the Transport and Roads' Safety Ministry: "From today - 18.10.2015 - Israel Defense Army soldiers have joined the security forces of public transport in Jerusalem - including the LRV - due to the deteriorating situation." And this report:

(b). On 07.09.2015 from 'Israelnational-news.com' :

ARAB ROCK TERROR LIMITS JERUSALEM LIGHT RAIL

A mere 16 out of 23 trains remain operational due to repeated rock attacks, leading to lessened frequency of transport for the capital. By Yesdya Ben-Or and Ari Yashar.

The constant terrorism of rock throwing in Arab neighbourhoods of Jerusalem is becoming an increasing threat, not only for Jews who happen to pass near such neighbourhoods but for the residents of all parts of the capital city. CityPass, the company operating Jerusalem's light rail system, announced Sunday morning that 'due to continued and repeated rock throwing that inflicts damage on the trains, this morning we only have 16 operable trains out of 23. What that means is that fewer than needed trains are active on the line, and the frequency of trains throughout the line will be affected,' added CityPass, noting on the long-term effects of the rock terror that has decommissioned nearly half of the trains.

CityPass has been complaining for a while that their train cars have been turned into a target for Arab terrorism, a fact which prevents smooth transportation service to residents of the capital. The rock terror, which has often targeted Jewish children, has prevented residents of the northern neighbourhood of Pisgat Ze'ev from using the light rail for several weeks, given that the rail passes from there through Beit Hanina and Shuafat, areas of heavy rock attacks. In early July as Arab riots flared in Jerusalem over the death of an Arab teen.... violent Arab rioters destroyed three light rail stations, inflicting enormous financial damage to the system. The light rail was restarted for service in the area later in July, skipping stops in the Beit Hanina and Shuafat areas, but as noted residents

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of Pisgat Ze'ev remained unable to take the trains due to attacks on them in the area."

(iv). GOOD NEWS.

On 26.10.2015: The Transport Ministry and Jerusalem Light Rail have won the prize in the category of contributing to the environment and sustainability, from among 80 light rail contestants around the world.

At a ceremony in London, attended by about 300 light rail providers around the world, former British transport minister Norman Baker said "The Jerusalem Light Rail project has made a significant change to transport in Jerusalem and changed the face of the city."

The judges said Jaffa Road has been transformed from its previous crowded and polluted state into a green and pleasant boulevard. Cafes and restaurants are filled with residents and tourists enjoying the clean air. The level of pollution in the street has dropped 85%, and the environmental development is felt along the entire length of the route. In addition, it was noted that about 15% of light rail passengers change to the light rail from their private cars, using the park-and-rides. "This is one of the most impressive light rail projects in the world," the judges said.

More to this: From a press release of 21.05.2015 by the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry, the National Authority for Public Transport, Jerusalem Municipality, and Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team:

"In an impressive ceremony which took place in London several days ago, the Transport & Roads' Safety Ministry and the Jerusalem Municipality through the Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team, have been awarded with the 2015 Oscar prize in the category of contribution for the environment and existence.

The prize has been given by the International LRV Association for excellence and innovation regarding LRV, and it is remarkable taking into consideration that 80 projects from all over the world - including large and experienced systems such as London Transport, Dallas (Texas), Nottingham, Manchester, Midland, Dockland, Ireland, RATP (Paris) etc. - participated in the competition for one of the most important categories.

During the ceremony, in which 300 LRV operators from all over the world participated, the former British Transport Secretary Mr. Norman Baker said: "The Jerusalem LRV has brought a significant change into the city's transportation system and changed the city centre".

The reasons for the prize given by the jury are: "The city's main street - Jaffa Street - which was for more than a century highly congested and polluted, turned - thanks to the LRV - into a nice and green avenue; the cafes and restaurants are full

of guests and tourists (unfortunately not in the last weeks.) enjoying from a much cleaner air; the air pollution has been reduced by 85%; the environmental development is felt everywhere along the line; 15% of the passengers came from private car owners, while many use park and ride facilities along the Red Line alignment; finally, we say that this one of the world's most impressive LRV projects".

The jury consisted of five judges, all with world-level reputations in LRV specialty, among them the former London Rail General Manager Mr. Iain Brown and Mr. Paul Rayan, the Chairman and Founder of the LRV Parliamentary Group.

Transport Minister Mr. Israel Katz said: "It is an important honourable mission for the Ministry, for the Jerusalem Municipality, and for the Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team, but first of all to the State of Israel; it is an impressive achievement, mainly due to the fact that we speak about Israel's first LRV line; we'll keep promoting the Jerusalem public transport, and I'm convinced that the Tel-Aviv LRV/METRO will also do its important contribution to the people and environment".

The Mayor of Jerusalem Mr. Nir Barkat said: "The Jerusalem LRV is the first step of turning Jerusalem into the Israel's most advanced city regarding public transport infrastructures; the first line (the Red Line) already running successfully for some years, and the other lines which are in progressive design stage, will turn Jerusalem into an accessible and advanced city, which will enjoy from a comfortable transportation, providing a solution to its citizen, while being non-pollutant; Jerusalem is on the right way, and together with the government offices and the additional partners, we'll continue developing the city's overall transportation systems".

On behalf of the Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan Team, Mr. Zakhi Strasser-Chief of Engineering Department and his deputy Mr. Simkha Orenstein, had the honour to receive the prize.

(v). (a) TWO ARAB BOYS STAB JERUSALEM LIGHT RAIL GUARD:

From 'Times of Israel' 10.11.2015.

"Two Arab youths stabbed a security guard for the light rail in the north-eastern Jerusalem neighbourhood of Pisgat Ze'ev on Tuesday, police said. Minutes later, a stabbing attack was thwarted near Damascus Gate. The security guard, who was moderately wounded in the attack, managed to fire his weapon towards the two attackers, wounding one, a 12-year old boy.

Passenger on the light rail subdued the second attacker, who is 14, until police officers arrived at the scene and took him into custody.

According to Palestinian sources, the two attackers were cousins, Moawiyah and Ali Alkam. One is from the Shuafat refugee camp and the other from nearby Beit Hanina. The victim suffered stab wounds to the upper body, according to the Magen David Adom first-aid service.

'I saw that the train had stopped and on the scene there were large number of police officer and security guards,' David Dalfan, an MDA paramedic, said. 'A young man, approximately 24 years old, was lying on the ground next to the curb. He was fully conscious with superficial stab wounds. We quickly gave him first aid and loaded him onto an ambulance,' Dalfan said. The guard's condition was stable, according to the paramedics on the scene. He was evacuated to the city's Shaare Zedek Medical Center for further treatment.

The attacker who had been shot by the guard was also treated by paramedics before he was evacuated to Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital, police said. He was in serious condition, unconscious and on a ventilator, the hospital said.

The two assailants were residents of East Jerusalem, one from Beit Hanina and the other from Shuafat, police spokeswoman Luba Samri said.

'The swift and determined response by the light rail guard and the passengers prevented the injury of other innocent people,' said Avi Cohen, the captain of the nearby police station...."

(b). The following day, from Times of Israel 10.11.2015:

"Uncle of Light Rail Stabbers: They were set up.

The uncle of the two Palestinian children who stabbed a light rail guard in Jerusalem on Tuesday said he does not believe they were involved in the attack. "We heard that they were part of the stabbing attack but I will tell you the truth, we have no faith in the police. We have already seen in other cases, in Hebron and even in Jerusalem, they make up stories and even killed a Jew they suspected of being an Arab." Sheikh Abdullah Alkam said on Tuesday afternoon, referring to the shooting death of a yeshiva student during a confrontation with troops last month. "Maybe they planted a knife on them, I don't know. We want to first check what happened. I'm their eldest uncle and I want to check everything carefully."

He said the boys studied at the same school and gave their ages as 11 and 13. Palestinian sources named the two as cousins Moawiyah and Ali Alkam. One is from the Shuafat refugee camp and the other from nearby Beit Hanina, both in East Jerusalem.

While expressing doubt that they were the stabbers, the uncles seemed to justify attacks by young Palestinians living in poverty in East Jerusalem. "They see

how soldiers act at checkpoints, they see how nice it is in Pisgat Ze'ev and French Hill," he said, referring to two Jewish neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. "And what do they have? There isn't even a garbage truck. The streets look like hell. A hundred thousand people without normal services living in harsh conditions."

The security guard, who was moderately wounded in the attack in Pisgat Ze'ev, managed to fire his weapon towards the two attackers, wounding the 11-year old. Passengers on the light rail subdued the second attacker until police officers arrived at the scene and took him into custody. The guard suffered stab wounds to the upper body, according to the Magen David Adom rescue service...."

C. SKYTRAN.

"skyTran demo set for next year, companies say. Media reports notwithstanding, a test of the magnet-powered transportation system will likely take place next year, not this week. By David Shamah. In 'Times of Israel' October 27, 2015,

SkyTran, the US company that is developing a Jetsons-style elevated pod powered by magnetic levitation, will not be holding a demonstration at the campus of Israel Aerospace Industries, as had been widely reported. IAI, which partnered with Mountain View-based skyTran to develop the technology for the urban transportation market, "is aiming for early 2016" for the demonstration, said a spokesperson in the IAI public relations office. "Once we have the demo we will have a very big event," the spokesperson said. For that to happen, however, the elevated magnetic "track" that the pods are supposed to run across need to be built first, and that has not yet taken place either, she said. Media reports had said that the demo would take place at the end of October.

In a follow-up e-mail, a company representative confirmed that there was currently no demo scheduled, although "work on the Test Track (a.k.a. "Technology Demonstration System One or TDS1) in Tel Aviv is proceeding fine."

IAI, for its part, said it is "very excited" to be working with skyTran. The two companies entered into an agreement to build the demo trackbed for the "magnetic levitation" (maglev) transportation system in June 2014. Yosef Melamed, director of IAI's Lahav Division, said: "We are proud to be part of this exciting moment in transportation history and to host the first skyTran system in our grounds. The evaluation process will incorporate IAI's advanced capabilities in the areas of engineering, robotics and control."

The system, said the companies, is meant as a replacement for ground transportation. It consists of a network of computer-controlled, 2-person "jet-like"

..Continued at foot of page 12

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. TURKEY.

(i). TIMETABLE CHANGES.

From the TurkRail website: TCDD Timetable September 2015.

Description : Significant update to TCDD services from 01 September 2015. YHT services recast, with connecting services affected. Pamukkale Express and Toros Express (DMU) both retimed. No passenger services east of Elazig until further notice. (Sivas) - Kalin - Samsun closes on 28 September 2015 until end 2017 (approx).

(ii). TRAIN CRASH.

On 6th. Sept. Jeff Hawken reported on TurkRail: "A crash has occurred in the outskirts of Elazig between a westbound freight train originating from Muratbagi, and a set of passenger coaches which appears to have run away from Elazig station. The photo in the accompanying article shows "banger" stock, so presumably the coaches off the Tatvan mixed service which is currently suspended.

This report refers to the driver of the passenger train being injured, but other reports state it was just empty coaches which ran away. The (unidentified) loco of the freight train is reported to be damaged."

(iii). SAMSUM ORDERS DÜRMAZLAR TRAMS.

From R.G.I. 07.10.2015: "Samsun Metropolitan Municipality announced on October 1 that it had awarded Durmazlar a 12.3M contract to supply eight trams. These are required to augment the current fleet of 21 for the opening of the 14km extension of the route from Gar to Tekkeköy to the south-east of the city. The trams will be 31.8m long, 2.650m wide and 3.3m high with capacity for 290 passengers. They will contain six LCD passenger information screens and LED lighting."

(iv). KONYA OPENS TRAM EXTENSION.

From R.G.I. 07.10.2015: "A 1.8km section in the historic city centre has no overhead wires. The Skoda ForCity Classic 28T trams operating the route are fitted with roof-mounted nano-lithium-titanium batteries that enable catenary-free operation for up to 3km, and are recharged through the pantograph. Konya procured 12 of these as a follow-on order from 60 trams purchased from Skoda Transportation in 2013. Earlier this year Sarajevo acquired 20 of the ex-Köln DUEWAG trams that formed the fleet when the initial section of the Konya tram network opened in 1991."

...continued from page 11

vehicles employing state-of-the-art passive Magnetic Levitation (MagLev) technology, designed to "move passengers in a fast, safe, green, and economical manner," said the company, adding that the system "will transport passengers above the surface traffic and without stopping at other people's stations. skyTran intends to revolutionize public transportation and, with it, urban and suburban commuting."

The test demo is crucial to the expansion and extension of the technology, IAI said. The demo, when it takes place, will be a full-featured one, testing the pods in real-life conditions – at high speeds, with full payloads, and levitating and moving along the magnetic tramway. The demo system, said the company, "will enable testing, refinement, and validation of skyTran's technology in a controlled environment."

Speaking after completing the agreement with IAI on the demo system, Jerry Sanders, skyTran CEO, said "the support afforded by IAI is a breakthrough for skyTran. IAI, as a world-class designer of aircraft and avionics, is the perfect partner to take skyTran from concept to construct engineering, robotics, and control.

(vi). IZMIT ORDERS DÜRMAZLAR TRAMS.

From 'R.G.I.' 12.10.2015: "Kocaeli municipality signed a 19.7m contract with Durmazlar on October 6 for the supply of 12 trams for the Akcaray line in Izmit.

The trams will be 32m long, 2,650mm wide and 3.3m high with capacity for 300 passengers. They will have a maximum speed of 70km/h, with their average operational speed expected to be 20km/h. Deliveries are due to take place within 17 months. The city's first tram line will run from Sekapark in the west to Otogar in the east with 11 stops. The end-to-end journey time on the 7.2km route is expected to be 24 min. Services are due to start in 2017." From 'Op de Rails' comes additional information: The trams will be articulated in 5-parts, low-floor. Izmit has 300,000 inhabitants.

(vii). SIEMENS TO OPEN TURKISH TRAM FACTORY.

From 'R.G.I.' 04.11.2015: "Siemens announced on October 20 that it is to build a tram factory in Gebze near Istanbul at a cost of 30M. According to Siemens, by localising manufacturing and the supply chain in Turkey, the company expects even better chances for winning tenders as well as substantial cost advantages for international orders. The company [said] it would like to use the 'local know-how and expertise' of Turkish suppliers, but it is not seeking a partner in the construction of the factory. It had previously worked with Bursa-based manufacturer Durmazlar on the Silkworm tram, now in service in Bursa, for which Siemens provided traction equipment.

The first vehicles to be produced in Gebze are expected to roll off the production line in 2018. The news coincides with an announcement by the Turkish Science, Industry & Technology Ministry that the country expects 6,500 urban rail vehicles to be procured by Turkish cities over the next eight years."

(viii). STEAM TOUR REPORT.

In 'Lok Report' 11/15 pp.48f is a brief illustrated article by Andreas Tonn entitled 'The Last Chance – Five Minutes to Twelve' describing in part a steam-hauled railtour over parts of the legendary Bagdadbahn on 6 – 9th. September 2015.

"What is currently the last operational steam loco in Turkey, 56 548 (an old class 52, Floridsdorf 16882/1944) had to be brought over 750m from Usak together with the necessary personnel, for operations and repairs. That this is possible was demonstrated by the same personnel three years ago, when the special with their loco reached even as far as the Euphrates Valley – quite a few kilometres further on!!

A brief historical review - At the

end of the 19th century it was intended to bring modern railway technology to the Ottoman Empire. The Deutsche Reich used this opportunity to strengthen its influence in the region. In 1899 the Deutsche Bank and the Ottoman Empire agreed on the construction of the Bagdadbahn from Konya to Bagdad. In April 1903 a company was formed, headed by the Deutsche Bank; already in July 1903 construction work began under the leadership of Philipp Holzmann AG.

The first 200km were ready by October 1904 but then construction hit obstacles. In July 1911 the line finally reached Ulukisla and a year later, in April 1912, Yenice was linked to the southern section with the Mersin – Tarsus – Adana Railway. The works through the Taurus mountains proved to be a major challenge. Construction of over 30 tunnels, numerous bridges and several viaducts proved time-consuming and difficult. To speed up the works 60cm.-gauge Feldbahnen were built to link sections already completed. But the section through the Taurus mountains was only completed in standard gauge in October 1918 – too late to play any strategic role in the First World War.

The end of the War changed everything and after many political and other obstructions, creation of new borders, different realms of interest and further inefficient waste of resources the line finally reached through to Baghdad in July 1940! But by this time the Second World War was already raging and once again new borders were drawn. One must nowadays effectively conclude that through operation of the Bagdadbahn was never really possible, even though it was one of the most extensive infrastructure projects of the time.

The section through the Taurus is nowadays used mainly by freight trains which link the interior with the Mediterranean. There are still some express passenger trains, but their operations are approaching an end. It remains a single-track line through the mountains. On the 132km stretch between Adana and Uluskila there is a height difference of 1,398 metres! The gradients therefore reach 25 per thousand – so this line can indeed keep pace with other famous mountain routes in Europe – a technical masterpiece.

The Future.

Due to the rapid reconstruction of the most important main lines in Turkey the chances for such steam-hauled trains are getting fewer. The Taurus line from Kayseri to Mersin/Adana is already equipped with electrical signalling and this means one has to take account so far as possible of the lineside cables, which are not always laid underground in buried channels. From the south the electrification masts have reached almost reached Hacikiri. Only on the section of line we had

chosen were they not yet to be seen, an indication of the difficulties the constructors had with the topography and the difficulties of accessing the route.

And so we could use the most important and most impressive section, including the impressive Warda Viaduct near Hacikiri. Ah yes, the Warda Viaduct. Even though it is not electrified. Since it appeared in the James Bond film 'Skyfall' it has become a beloved object for photography for all sorts of people, especially wedding couples, and a touristic highlight of the country. Next to the provisional café and tea-stands there will soon be a modern café as well. For now the sound of two diesels droning their way uphill remains.”

(ix). T.C.D.D. SERVICES IN EUROPE.

TCDD has recommended at least some services in Thrace, i.e. The European side of Turkey. On 12.11.2015 the following report appeared on the TurkRail site, by Jeff Hawken.

“A day trip out to Cerkezkoy, to sample the recently (re)introduced services in Thrace (European Turkey). 08:00 Bus from Istanbul Otogar to Cerkezkoy railway station, journey time approximately 90 minutes. There are at least three different operators on this route, each offering a coach every hour or so.

E68 015 was on train 81721 07:10 Kapikule – Cerkezkoy. On arrival the loco was cut off and ran forward on to the small depot, where E68 006 was also stabled. Then E68 011 arrived light engine from Alpullu, hauling DE24 345 dead. On arrival the E68 dropped straight onto the stock of the 11:10 to Uzunkopru, and the DE24 was started up and set about some local shunting duties.

E68 011 then worked the following trains: 81726 11:10 Cerkezkoy – Uzunkopru 81725 14:45 Uzunkopru – Cerkezkoy 81724 19:18 Cerkezkoy – Kapikule

Other locos seen included: DE33 031 stabled on freight at Cerkezkoy; DE24 368 stabled on freight at Cerkezkoy; DE33 023 stabled on ballast train at Corlu. None of the locos seen bore the correct regional allocation of [10] on the cabside. Instead they each had the tatty remains of their previous allocation, variously [20], [40] and [70]. The section from Pehlivan koy to Uzunkopru was taken at a very gentle pace, about 20 – 30 kph, as the signalling is not commissioned, and some of the level crossings don't work (but curiously some do). This results in a time loss of about 20 minutes.

The same set of stock (load 3 air-conditioned) worked trains 81721 / 6 / 5 / 4. Passenger loadings on the Uzunkopru run were 30 – 40 as far as Pehlivan koy, then down to about 10 – 15 to Uzunkopru. A shuttle bus connects with the train at Uzunkopru to take passengers to the town

centre, which is about 5 km from the station. The return journey from Cerkezkoy to Istanbul took about 2 hours, with the extra time due to motorway congestion.”

B. EGYPT.

ALEXANDRIA TRAMS.

Well, actually Copenhagen ones. In 'Strassenbahn Magazin' 9/2015 p.70 in an article is mention of how Copenhagen sold its Duewag 6-axle trams to Alexandria but in 2001 a museum society repurchased cars 815 and 890 and now runs them on the museum tramway at Skjolrenesholm near Ringsted.

From 'Tramways and Urban Transit' Nov. 2015 No. 935. p.447: "Iskandariya. (Alexandria). Ramleh line double-deck tram 221 has been fitted out as the Lemon Café on the top deck, entering service on 23 September to mark Ed al-Adha.”

and p.448: "Potsdam: Tatra KT4D 123/124/141/142/144/146/147/162 and 246 have been sold to Alexandria in Egypt and were shipped from Hamburg in September.”

From NVBS 'Op de Rails' magazine, 10-2015 p.497: is added: "The Alexandria tramway was supplied with following Tatra trams from Germany: apparently 16 KT4D and 14 T6-B6 combinations from Berlin, and 9 KT4D trams from Potsdam. All these have been out of use for some time. The present Alexandria trams are some dozens of Duewags from the original 99 they got from Copenhagen.”

C. SAUDI ARABIA.

(i). PASSENGER TRAFFIC.

From 'FCN' p.20f.: "Passenger trains are increasingly popular and in the meantime some 1.5M people travel by train each year between the cities of Riyadh, Hofuf, Abqaiq and Dammam – this forming a market share of some 15% of the total traffic between these places. There are six daily train pairs (one less on Fridays). One train pair is still using older rolling stock but still offers the same three classes as the other trains. Fares are between €14 and €31 depending on class for the entire 480km route, which is, considering the general state of the economy in the country, considered very good value. The subsidised fares are intended to encourage the population to use their private cars less, for with the very cheap petrol a journey over this distance would on average cost only €10.”

(ii). THE HARAMAIN 'TAV' (HIGH SPEED TRAIN): PROGRESS.

“The infrastructure for the 440km long high-speed line 'Haramain' Medina – Jeddah – Mecca are completed and test running has been taking place since June

2015. In the first days there were problems with current collection which meant that the set, delivered at the end of 2014, frequently remained standing along the line. New train sets arrive each month. Each train consists of thirteen carriages and two power cars. They are fitted with special air-conditioning equipment which is intended to handle dust by filtering it from the air, as well as coping with temperatures of over 55°. The exterior paintwork is intended to be resistant to the effects of sand during sandstorms. The interior furnishings of the thirty-five train sets is similar to that of the Spanish Talgo of the 112 Series with the 'Turista' and 'Preferente' classes. Only the 36th. train is specially fitted out, for this belongs to the Saudi royal family and in consequence few details have been published.

Tests with the first set were to be completed by autumn 2015, and then each of the following trains will be subjected to similar testing before regular passenger traffic commences at the beginning of 2017."

(iii). NORTH - SOUTH LINE.

"This is the name used for the 2750km network from Riyadh towards the north, to Al Hadetha near the area where Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq meet, and including also branches to the mines of Hazm Al Jalamid (near the Iraqi border), the agricultural development area of Al Besitas and a line to the harbour, currently under construction, at Ras-el-Zour on the Persian Gulf. In addition there will be a short branch to bauxite mines in the Al Qasim region. By the end of 2014 the main line was basically complete, including the passenger stations at Riyadh, Majma'a, Qassim, Hail, Al-Jawf and Al-Qurayyat. However, missing still was the track linking to the station at Riyadh, as various road-building works in this area was causing delay. The station of Riyadh is itself however already finished. Along the line several sites for stations have been pre-prepared for further settlements and development areas, but these will only be brought into use when the relevant projects have been completed. The branches will not for now carry any passenger traffic. Works are still continuing on the branches.

Passenger traffic was originally envisaged to start in 2014 but according to local press reports this has now been moved to the end of 2016 or the beginning of 2017. Operator of this line will not be the State Railways SRO but instead a specially-formed Saudi Railway Company SRC. In a later phase the lines in Riyadh and Ras-el-Zour will be linked to those of the SRO."

(iv). TRAINS DELIVERED FOR NORTH-SOUTH LINE.

From 'R.G.I.' 23.9.2015: "The

first of six trainsets being supplied by CAF for passenger services on Saudi Railway Co.'s North-South line is undergoing trials on the 1,130km route between Na'ariyah and Riyadh, with entry into service planned for early 2016.

The passenger fleet is being supplied under a 533M Riyal contract signed in March 2012. The order includes the diesel-electric locomotives which top-and-tail the trains, and business and economy-class coaches, sleeping, dining and restaurant cars, luggage vans and car-carrying vans which can be formed in various ways to produce nine-car day or 13-car night trains. The vehicles are designed for 200km/h operation in temperatures up to 55°C.

The passenger service is intended to promote commercial and urban development in the cities linked by the North-South Railway, helping to draw industrial investment to the area.

Under a separate contract CAF has supplied four similar train sets to Saudi Railways Organisation for use on the Riyadh – Dammam line, taking the total value of its rolling stock orders in Saudi Arabia to more than 400M."

(v). RIYADH METRO.

From 'Railway Gazette' 02.09.2015: "L&T Construction's Railway Business Unit has announced a major breakthrough railway order for the construction of 62.86 km of ballastless double track on Riyadh metro lines 1 and 2. The 40-month contract worth US\$161.4M was awarded by design and build contractor BACS, a consortium of Bechtel, Almbani General Contractors, Consolidated Contractors Co. and Siemens. Indian group L&T said the track contract was won against stiff international competition and would support its strategy of expanding its railway activities into the Middle East."

'Tramways and Urban Transit' Nov. 2015 No. 935. p.429 added:

"L&T Construction has been selected to build 63km (39 miles) of double-track for Riyadh metro lines 1 and 2 The six-line metro project is being delivered by the BACS consortium, and is expected to be finished in 2018."

(vi). LANDBRIDGE DESIGN CONTRACT EXTENDED.

From 'R.G.I.' 09.09.2015: "The Public Investment Fund has extended Italferr's contract to undertake design work for the planned Landbridge.

The Landbridge project comprises a 950km double-track mixed traffic line running from the Port of Jeddah to Riyadh, where it would connect with the existing railway which would be upgraded to complete a 1,300km corridor linking the Red Sea with the Persian Gulf.

Announcing the signing of the latest 20-month contract on August 20, Italferr said that once electrified the proposed line would enable passenger trains to run at up to 350km/h.

Along with local partner Arabian Consulting Engineering Centre, the engineering consultancy subsidiary of Italian national railway group FS was awarded an initial 14-month design contract in 2013. This covered environment studies and track, structures, ETCS Level 2 signalling and telecoms."

(vii). SULPHUR WAGONS ORDERED.

From 'R.G.I.' 09.10.2015: "Greenbrier Companies has won a contract to supply approximately 1,200 tank wagons of three types to Saudi Railway Co. The wagons will be used to carry molten sulphur and phosphoric acid on the North-South railway for mining company Ma'aden's, to its plant Wa'ad al Shamal Industrial City. They are to be built by Greenbrier's Wagony Swidnica subsidiary in Poland, to US standards and on production lines certified by the Association of American Railroads. Deliveries are scheduled to run from the second half of 2016 to 2018.

Greenbrier said it envisages strong demand for wagons in the Gulf Cooperation countries over the next decade, and is to open offices in Saudi Arabia with an on-site country manager supported by project managers in Riyadh and Wa'ad al Shamal. Chairman and CEO William A. Furman said Greenbrier intends 'to hire and train Saudi employees who will create a sustained base of operations in Saudi Arabia.' 'Our recent expansion into Brazil and Saudi Arabia extends our geographic reach into new international markets and further diversifies our business,' said Furman. 'Production facilities now include major factories in Mexico to serve North America and Latin America; Brazil which can reach African and Latin American export markets; Poland for Europe, Near East, Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries, as well as our flagship factory, Gunderson, in the United States. Greenbrier received orders for 2,900 wagons valued at \$740M in the three months to August 31, including the Saudi Railway Co. Order. 'Our diversified backlog of 41,300 units valued at \$4.71Bn as of August 2015 is near all-time highs, giving us visibility well into 2016, 2017 and beyond,' said Furman."

D. OMAN.

From 'R.G.I.' 09.10.2015: "Oman Rail has received eight bids from companies or consortia interested in the contract to operate and maintain the first phase of the future national network. Proposals were received from:

- Aurizon Operations
- FS Italiane, Almbavia, Al Madina Logistics,

Cavarail and Menarail Transport Consultant.

- Freightliner Group, Oman Investment Corp. and Network Rail Consulting.
- Rites and Konkan Railway
- Al Bahja Construction, Advanced Rail Technologies and GB Railfreight.
- Ubar & Swiss Railway Systems, Transnet SOC and Barbican.
- Assignia Infrastructuras Oman, Asesoria Integral Ferrovaria, FGC and Zubair Corp.
- Grindrod Mauritius.

Oman Rail had invited expressions of interest in May, saying it was seeking 'international rail operators with extensive technical and commercial experience combined with local market knowledge.' The selected partner would initially support the development of local skills and institutional capabilities in Oman, and advise on the needs of the future rail network's potential customers. It would then be responsible for infrastructure management and freight operations on the first phase of the rail network, running 170km from Sohar to Al Buraymi and scheduled to open in 2019."

E. ETIHAD (GCC)

ETIHAD RAIL TO START COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS SHORTLY.

From 'R.G.I.' 02.10.2015: "UAE: Regulatory approval for the start of full commercial freight operations on Phase 1 of the national rail network is expected 'shortly', developer Etihad Rail announced on September 28. The 1,200km network is being built in three phases. Construction of the 264km Phase 1 between Shah, Habshan and the Port of Ruwais began in 2010, with test services between Habshan and Ruwais starting in September 2013.

Etihad Rail's operating partner Etihad Rail DB is now running daily trial trains. Over the past 12 months more than 2 million tonnes of granulated sulphur has been transported from Shah and Habshan for Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. replacing more than 66,000 lorry journeys and volumes are expected to increase significantly in 2016.

Etihad Rail says it is in advanced negotiations with prospective customers including DP World, ESI and Arkan, and has signed more than 54 memoranda of understanding with companies in industries including petrochemicals, agriculture, aggregates and waste.

Etihad Rail currently has a fleet of seven EMD SD70ACS locomotives and 240 sulphur hoppers supplied by CSR Yangtze. "Transporting more than 2 million tons of sulphur in the past year during our testing and commissioning and trial operations is a very proud achievement for Etihad Rail, our operating partner ERDB and the UAE as a whole as it clearly demonstrates Etihad Rail's unique value proposition as a reliable, safe and environmentally friendly

mode of transport," said Etihad Rail CEO Faris Saif Al Mazrouei. "Going forward, we will continue to build on this success as we move towards our target of transporting more than 7 million tonnes of sulphur every year once we enter into full commercial operations."

The 628km Phase 2 will extend the railway to Mussafeh, Khalifa Port and the port of Jebel Ali, as well as to the Saudi border through Ghweifaf and the Omani border through Al Ain as part of the future GCC Railway. The 279km Phase 3 would serve the north of the UAE."

F. IRAN.

(i). OPENINGS.

From 'FCN' No. 53 p.25: Passenger services commenced between mid-2014 and mid-2015 from Haft Tapeh to Shüshtar, from Torbat-e-Heydariah to Khaf and from Arak to Malayer.

(ii). IRAN – AFGHANISTAN.

From 'Fahrplancenter News' p.21:

"Progress on the line to Afghanistan. Construction of the line from Torbat-e-Heydariah to Afghanistan continues at a fast pace, following several delays which, unfortunately without any explanation from the Iranian media, had led to several interruptions. From around the beginning of 2015 a train ran every two days from Teheran through Torbat-e-Heydariah to Khaf. This is an extension of the daily service Tehran – Torbat-e-Heydariah. On the new line it serves also intermediate stations at Sangan (ca. km. 30 from Torbat), Rashtikhar (km. 52) and Salami (km. 97) before reaching Khaf at km. 123. (These kilometre numbers are approximate). Freight traffic has operated already since 2007 and is pretty busy, as it serves the Sangan ore mines some 24km. south-east of the station of Khaf. All the stations are situated some distance outside the places they serve but at the same time this means that they can serve a wider area. The line also helps the development of various agricultural projects in the region.

The formation for the line further on to the border is in the meantime almost ready and rails have been laid for some 30km onwards from Khaf – the border is some 25km. further on. Then the line will have to traverse some very mountainous terrain which will demand construction of several tunnels. However, due to the strategic nature of this railway, few exact details have been published. From the border the line will run north-eastwards and over valleys and mountains through the Afghan region of Rebat-e-Tork – whereby it seems bridges have already been built over many of the dried river beds and in places the formation is already at the stage where ballast and rails can be laid. Access points to the line are only to be built at a very few

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points. Around half-way between Tebat-e-Tork and Gaza the buildings for a crossing station have been built. In the area north of Ghourian the fertile valley of the Hari Rud river is reached. According to details from the Afghanistan Railway Authority (AfRA) the border station should be called Chahi Surkh. The most important intermediate station between the border and Herat will however be in Rahzanak, only a few kilometres south of where the Hari Rud river will be crossed. Iranian engineers are currently planning the bridge project. According to AfRA information the line from the border to Herat will be 150km long and should be in operation by mid-2018 at the latest.

The link to Herat is based on a project dating from the 1950's, although at that time a border crossing was envisaged rather to the north in order to lead the line directly from Mashaad to Herat."

(iii). TABRIZ METRO OPENS.

From 'Railway Gazette' 27. Aug. 2015. "The first phase of Tabriz Metro line 1 opened for rail passenger services on August 28, with free travel offered for an initial three months. The 7 km route runs northwest from El Goli to Ostad Shahryar with four intermediate stations, including three in a tunnel excavated using TBM's. Services are operated with coupled pairs of five-car trainsets. When complete, the east-west Line 1 will run for 17.2 km. from El Goli to Nur with eighteen stations. This is intended as the first phase of a four-line network."

(iv). ESFAHAN METRO OPENS.

From 'R.G.I.' 15.10.2015: "The first metro line in Esfahan opened on October 15. The first phase of Line 1 runs for 11km from Quds in the northwest to Shohada via Kaveh long-distance bus terminal. There are ten stations.

Construction started in 2001 but was subject to delays. The next phase would extend the line south from Shohada to the Soffeh long-distance bus terminal; in the longer term extensions are planned at both ends. An east-west line is also envisaged."

G. AFGHANISTAN.

Stretching the concept 'Middle East' a little but as noted this country and its railways are being connected to the region.... Also from 'FCN' p.22:

"The Afghan government is doing all it can to provide the country with a railway network to enable development, for it has been decided that it is only with better economic and social development that peace can be brought to the land. The government, with the state-owned Afghan Railway Authority (AfRA) has therefore worked on several projects simultaneously.

At present there following lines

are under construction:

(a). Charman (Pakistan) – Spin Boldak. This is an extension of the line from Pakistan, in order to transfer goods transport to rail. In essence the tracks lead almost to the border already but have to be completed for the 3.2km from the Chaman station to the border, followed by a further 11.2km to the station of Spin Boldak. This line will be constructed in 1676mm gauge (as in Pakistan = 5' 6"); in Spin Boldak a transfer station to standard gauge will be built in the future. The line should be ready for operation in November 2017 and it is assumed that by this date Pakistan Railways will also have carried out improvements to the line between Quetta and Chaman.

(b). Towrgondi – Herat. This line will begin at the existing station at Towrgondi and run a further 124km to Herat. Towrgondi is already reached by freight trains from Turkmenistan. Construction of this line begins in September 2015 and should be completed within 24 months.

(c). Herat – Herat Airport. This section belongs to the new line being constructed from Iran and should come into operation in May 2017.

(d). From the existing station at Mazar-e-Sharif two lines have been under construction since May 2015: eastwards via Khulm and Kunduz to Shirkhan Bandar on the border to Tajikistan and westwards via Shiberghan and Andkhai to Aqina on the border to Turkmenistan. The line to Shirkhan Bandar is classed as extremely important, since China has begun to build its own line via Kashi in the extreme west of China towards Tajikistan (Dushanbe) and Afghanistan is interested in a good access to China for economic reasons. Both lines from Mazar-e-Sharif will total 640km and will be financed partly by China and partly by Turkmenistan. They will open for Turkmenistan a route to China which avoids transiting Uzbekistan.

The two systems in the north, from Herat and around Mazar-e-Sharif, are to be linked with the line Shiberghan – Maimana – Kushki – Herat (total 551km) which will however be constructed in stages from April 2018 and is to be opened around 2022 to 2023.

The southern network is to be delayed further for security reasons and it will be 2017 at the earliest before sections of the axis Bamiyan – Kabul – Kandahar – Delaram – Zaranj and the branch from Spin Boldak to Kandahar can be constructed. To some extent even the detailed planning will be postponed till 2017. In consequence the capital of Kabul will, according to current planning, not receive a functioning railway link until mid-2015 [sic – possibly 2025 is meant. Ed.] The two networks will also not be linked before the second half of the 2020's.

Existing Railways.

The State Railways AfRA is very satisfied with its existing network. In total AfRA operate the 75km line from the border bridge to Uzbekistan – Hairatan – Mazar-e-Sharif, plus 31km of secondary lines (including the lines in Towrgondi to the Turkmenistan border); between December 2011 and December 2013 more than 7M tons of freight were conveyed, including industrial, agricultural and fuel products.

For the security of the railway 16 security posts have been built, that not only control level crossings but also have a military significance, in order to prevent possible attacks upon the railway. For the moment all the wagons used still belong to Uzbekistan and AfRA has rented a large diesel loco from the Uzbekistan Railways. In 2015 own machines for track maintenance were acquired in order to be able to perform these tasks independently."

H. ETHIOPIA.

(i). From 'R.G.I.' 24.09.2015.

"The first light-rail line in Addis Ababa was opened for revenue service on September 20, following several months of test running. Hundreds of residents queued for hours ahead of the opening to sample the new service. Designed to relieve growing road congestion as the city's population passes 5 million inhabitants, the 34km two-line network serving 39 stations has been constructed by China Railway Engineering Corp. At an estimated cost of US\$475M. The project has been 85% funded by loans from Export-Import Bank of China.

The first route to open is the 16.9km north-south Blue Line linking Menelik Square to Kaliti, serving 23 stations. The 17.4km east-west Green Line from Ayat to Tor Hailoch is expected to follow within the next month. The two routes share tracks for 2.7km in the city centre between Lideta and Meskel Square.

The network is operated by a fleet of 41 three-section 70% low-floor trams supplied by CNR Changchun. With trams running at up to 70km/h, the two routes are designed to carry up to 15,000 passengers in each direction.

Services are initially operating between 06.00 and 22.00 each day, with Chinese contractors providing both the drivers and the maintenance staff. The Chinese will also be responsible for maintaining the tramway's independent power supply network which includes four substations with a total rating of 160MW.

Transport Minister Workneh Gebeyehu said the country was 'very proud' to have the first light rail network in sub-Saharan Africa. He described it as 'a sign of modernity' which would 'well serve the capital city of Africa' – Addis Ababa is the home of the African Union, for which a new headquarters building was built by the

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Chinese in 2012. Insisting that the light rail is not for commercial purposes, Gebeyehu explained that ticket prices would be 'very cheap' in order to 'serve people with low incomes.'

(ii). From 'Tramways and Urban Transit'

Nov. 2015 No. 935. p.428:

Addis Ababa opens first Sub-Saharan LRT line.

"Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, celebrated the official opening of the first light rail line in sub-Saharan Africa on 20 September when it inaugurated passenger service on Line 1 of its 34km (21-mile) system. This is a 16.9km (10.5 mile) north-south link from Menlik II Square to Kaliti with 23 stations. Line 2, a 17.4km (10.8 mile) east-west line from Ayat to Tor Hailoch was to follow in October.

The system is segregated and partly elevated; there is one subway station. The two lines share a common 2.8km (1.7 mile) section between Lideta and Stadium. Service is provided 06.00 – 22.00 daily.

China Railway Engineering Corp. Began infrastructure construction in December 2011, with Chinese vehicle manufacturer CNR Changchun delivering a fleet of 41 28.8m three-section 70% low-floor trams. Trams are painted green or blue, with the latter eventually operating line 1 and the green ones line 2. The vehicles were built with special attention paid to ultraviolet light, which is strong in the city 2400m above sea level, and have tinted windows. Some of the 136 tram drivers were trained in China.

Chinese banks have financed 85% of the US\$474M project and the Ethiopian government the remained. CREC and Shenzhen Metro Group have a US\$116M five-year contract to maintain the standard-gauge system, operated by Ethiopian Railways Corporation."

(iii). HUNGARIAN COMPANY BUILDS TRAM FOR AFRICA.

From 'R.G.I.' 04.11.2015. " A prototype tram for the African market has been delivered to Addis Ababa by Hungarian company Dunai Repülőgépgyár. DR intends to carry out series production in Ethiopia using Hungarian components, and is in talks with Ethiopian state-owned Metals & Engineering Corp. about constructing a test track. It is also negotiating with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. Meanwhile, the prototype is being kept at Metals & Engineering Corp.'s site.

The prototype was originally built in 2010 and intended for use in Szeged. The two end sections are rebuilt ex-Rosstock Tatra B6 cars, with a low-floor middle section added. Styling is by Artifex Stúdió.

The 35% low-floor tram is 33.8m long and weighs 63.4 tonnes. It has 50 seats, with a total capacity of 233 passengers at 5/sq.m. or 278 passengers at 8/sq.m. There are eight axles, each driven by

a 90kW motor, giving a maximum speed of 70km/h. The tram is equipped with regenerative braking and vehicle control software.

DR has sent staff to Addis Ababa to co-ordinate production and train local workers. It intends to launch similar projects in other African countries, following an announcement from the Hungarian government that Kenya has shown interest in the vehicle.

The first light rail line in Addis Ababa, which opened for revenue service on September 20, uses a fleet of 41 three-section 70% low-floor trams supplied by CNR Changchun."

I. QATAR.

In 'Lok Magazin' 07/2015 p. 11 is a brief note: "The DB is helping prepare a passenger and freight network in Qatar. The project company DB International is advising and supporting the state railways. DB Engineers should assess the demands to be made upon the network and formulate the tenders for construction."

J. KUWAIT.

KUWAIT METRO AND RAIL PROCUREMENT TO BEGIN NEXT YEAR.

From 'R.G.I.' 09.10.2015. "Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects says that it has appointed new advisers for the planned Kuwait City metro and expects it to start procurement in the first quarter of 2016.

Plans for a metro were first announced in 2006. Expressions of interest were invited in 2012, but the project was subsequently put on hold. The 160km network with 68 stations is to be built in five phases. The first would be the Red Line, running from the GCC rail freight terminal to Kuwait City centre via Kuwait International Airport.

The total network, of which 60% would be underground, is expected to cost \$US7bn to build. Work is to be split into four infrastructure packages and a systems and rolling stock contract, all of which would be PPPs.

Procurement for the national heavy rail network is also due to begin in the first quarter of 2016. The \$US10bn, 574km network would consist of a north-south line and an east-west line. The first phase is to be the north-south route from Ain Nuwaisib on the Saudi border to the freight depot, with a branch to the passenger station at Kuwait City, where interchange will be provided with the metro Red Line. The north-south line would subsequently be extended to the Iraqi border."

K. DUBAI

From 'Tramways and Urban Transit' Nov. 2015 No. 935 p.450:

"The start of Friday metro service was moved from 13.00 to 10.00 from 2 October. On the tramway the Marina loop service was withdrawn, reducing the running time from 54 to 45 minutes and boosting the frequency to eight minutes."

L. JORDAN.

TRAVELS IN JORDAN AND WEST BANK, 2015.

In 'Lok Report' 7/15 pp.53 -57 is "Middle East Journey 2015: Part 2, Jordan and the West Bank" by Torsten Schneider. (Translation by the Editor - and we shall split this into two sections.)



The former station at Jenin, February 2015. (Photo by Torsten Schneider.)

JORDAN.

"I travelled into Jordan from Israel via the southern border crossing Eilat/Aqaba, and returned to Israel over the northern crossing at Sheikh Hussein Bridge/Beit She'an. Two railway companies operate in Jordan, the Jordan Hedjaz Railway (JHR) and the Aqaba Railway Corporation (ARC). The JHR, formerly the Hedjaz Jordan Railway (HJR) is one of the successor companies to the legendary Hedjaz Railway. This was built before the First World War in what was then the Ottoman Empire to the gauge of 1050mm, amongst other reasons to take pilgrims from Damascus to the pilgrim sites in Medina (and Mecca). Operations ceased in the Saudi Arabian section as early as 1924 and in Syria traffic has been suspended since the beginning of the civil war. In Jordan a few years ago the entire freight traffic and the last scheduled 'International Train, actually a mixed train, were withdrawn. Long rows of goods wagons stand in some of the stations.

Since then the JHR operates only charter trains from the capital Amman southwards to Al-Jiza and occasionally further to Qatrania or northwards to Mafraq. The trains can be hauled by Diesel or steam locos depending on the wallet of the charterer. Three Diesel locos of type

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GE UM10 are available as well as the two steam locos 52 (in reality probably the 53) and 71 whose number is also carried by 72 after the cabs were swapped! Two other UM120's are hired to ARC and are in Ma'an and Aqaba. Ten further steam locomotives of different classes stand in the large station, Museum and Depot areas in Amman. Three HJR/JHR steam locos are plinthed in the country's universities, at the University of Jordan (in Amman), in Mu'tah (south of Karak) and in Mafraq. Since I must "by pure coincidence" visit colleagues in exactly these three universities there is no problem for me to enter these fenced and guarded grounds and so to photograph. In

the station of Wadi Rhum the ARC has stable steam loco 85 with some passenger carries. This can best be photographed in the mornings. The set is used occasionally for charter

trips and driven backwards and forwards for a few kilometres. Since the locomotive is not operational, diesel loco 955 of the ARC is used as the actual motive power. The steam loco just makes a bit of smoke and produces artificial noises from a loud-speaker.

On the Saturday during our visit to Jordan an excursion train really did run from Amman to Al-Jiza and back hauled by the Diesels 40210 and 40212. We followed it southwards in a hired car and with a local driver to get some photographs and travelled back to Amman on it. The classic cityscape with one of the best-known images, the big viaduct in Amman, is rather spoiled by the big 'Mega Mall' which looks rather like a bunker. Nevertheless there are nice images and angles in the station at Amman and along the line. Due to the fast-growing urban sprawl photos in the open countryside are only possible after Libban.

South of Qatrania the line is still lying complete or is being fully rebuilt, but traffic runs regularly only between Al-Hiza, Ma'an and Batn al-Gul, operated by the ARC. The lines south of Batn al-Gul to the Saudi-Arabian border have long disappeared once more under the sand. In Saudi Arabia several steam locos are known to

be still standing along the line and at the former terminus at Medina a railway museum with operating steam locomotives. A planned branch line from Ma'an to Aqaba on the Red Sea was completed by the Allied forces during the Second World War only as far as Naqb Ashtar and was thereafter only in use for a year or so. The line was to have served as a diversion round the Suez Canal, should the German Wehrmacht have succeeded in blocking the Canal to traffic. Since the German Army had to retreat following its defeat at El Alamein at the end of 1942, further construction was suspended.

The Aqaba Railway Company (ARC) was formed in 1979 and serves the transport of phosphate from loading installations near Wadi al-Abyad, Al-Haza and Aqaba Hejaz to the harbour of Aqaba on the Red Sea. During the period of our visit the loading station at Al-Haza was used almost exclusively and much more frequently than usual. Following heavy snowstorms in the preceding week the output at the mine at Aqaba Hejaz, that otherwise provides almost the entire freight traffic on the line, had not yet been able to resume normal production. All three loading installations are situated on short branches linked to the main Hedjaz line. A line of a good 100 kilometres linking Batn al-Gul and Aqaba was opened in 1975, of course also in the same 1050mm gauge. The detour to Aqaba via Batn al-Gul is topographically easier as the line mentioned earlier from Ma'an which would have been shorter but remained unfinished. Railway enthusiasts should be grateful to the decision makers of the time, for the line now runs through the grandiose desert and mountain landscape by Wadi Rhum which, along with Petra and Gerasa (Jerash) is one of the three main attractions of Jordan.

The main offices of the ARC, the wagon workshops and a small operational depot for locomotives is in Ma'an. The main workshops are at Aqaba. From here the line continues down to the old harbour. Some years ago a new harbour was built for the phosphate exports, but until now it served by lorry and not by rail. This is another reason why at present only some three train pairs operate daily, instead of an average of twelve pairs per day a few years ago. It can be pretty frustrating simply to go to the line and wait and hope for a train to come past, and of course also from the direction offering the best light and composition conditions, if one has no prior knowledge of the schedules. Although we were regularly kept informed of train times by telephone we decided not to head for the most interesting sections of landscape, which are hard to reach by car, and instead to concentrate on following the trains in a rented car and with a local driver along the asphalted road far as Al-Disa, and later on the Hedjaz Railway section between Ma'an

and Batn Al-Gul. Along here some old Turkish stone bridges and the loading silos at Aqaba Hedjaz make good subjects.

Despite the low level of traffic we were able during our two days of visiting to see all operational ARC locomotives and photograph them, mostly on line duty or at least shunting at the depot at Aqaba. Some further vehicles stand on the scrap line at Aqaba. Of the former ten and three locos of the older classes GE U17C and U18C with the operating numbers in the 900 and 400 ranges we found operational only 955 (in Aqaba for the tourist train in Wadi Rhum) and 963 together with 412 at the loading installation at Aqaba Hedjaz. For the rest the line services were operated in double traction by the GE locos built in Brazil, the seventeen originally of type U20C and the four C24 delivered in 2006 with the 300 and 700 number series. On the steep harbour link line at Aqaba two locos are used at each end of the rake. Some of the U20C have already been modified so as to be able to work in double traction with the C24s. Recently newly rebuilt after an accident was 315, whilst No. 305 was still being worked upon. Her old cab and other parts of the bodywork lay on flat wagons on the scrap line.

The land between the station and the old harbour at Aqaba, including the railway formation and an unloading installation in the harbour installed only a few years ago, were recently sold to foreign investors as part of a project to build a new part of the city. In consequence the phosphates will soon no longer be transported along this current line to the coast and there loaded onto ships. Since the long steeply-falling line from the mountains down to Aqaba is also not unproblematical for the heavy phosphate trains, one hears all sorts of rumours concerning the future of the line. These include the construction of a new line around Aqaba to the new harbour, the construction of a continuous conveyor belt from Umran north of Aqaba to the new harbour, which would involve abandoning rail operations south of Umran apart from for access to the workshops, or indeed the complete closure of the line. In addition one hears of plans to build a new standard-gauge line all the way down through Jordan to link Syria with Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless we found no concrete plans nor evidence for any of these things during our stay in Aqaba. On the other hand the basic structures of the first buildings of the new quarter were ready. It was good, that we got there this year!

WEST BANK.

There were once further railways of 1050mm gauge in Palestine west of the Jordan river. Following the First World War and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire Palestine was placed under British Mandate authority. This included the current area of

the State of Israel and also the Palestinian Autonomous Area and the Gaza Strip. At the end of the British Mandate the West Bank was initially absorbed by Jordan in 1949. Since the Six Day War in 1967 it is under Israeli military administration. In 1995 in the framework of the so-called Oslo Agreements it was divided into three Zones: In the area of Zone A the Palestinians have full control. In Zone B authority is divided between Israel and the Palestinian Autonomous Authority, and Zone C is controlled by Israel.

In the current West Bank there were two railway lines. One branched off in Afula (in what is now Israel) from the secondary Hedjaz line from Dera (in Syria) to Haifa, heading southwards and went via Jenin and Massudiyeh to Nablus. The other joined this in Massudiyeh, went initially westwards to Silat, to Tulkarm and then further southwards to what is now southern Israel. Both these lines were constructed by the Ottoman military administration in 1050mm gauge. At the time of the British Mandate they were part of the Palestine Railways, formed in 1920 (PR). The British rebuilt the section south of Tulkarm to standard gauge and extended the line northwards as a future north-south main line to the Mediterranean. The lines in the West Jordan Land were in contrast not regauged but in 1936/38 partially and in 1946 finally closed. Since the station of Tulkarm and a short section of the north-south line were east of the cease-fire line in 1949 and therefore now on Jordanian territory, Israel built a nine kilometre long by-pass line on its own territory. With this ended all railway traffic in the land west of the Jordan. In Tulkarm incidentally was stranded the last steam locomotive on the territory of the modern West Bank, a standard-gauge Stanier 8F. Its remains were scrapped only after the occupation of Western Jordan following the Six Day War in 1967. In 1996 the Palestinian Railways were indeed re-established as the railway company for the Autonomous Area, but in neither the West Bank nor the Gaza Strip does it possess any tracks or vehicles.

The former railway formations can still be easily made out over long distances and even a tunnel and some of the five stations still exist. I had been made aware of some of the relics of this line already some years ago through Sybil Ehrlich on the Internet describing her exploratory tour in 1999. Sybil, an Israeli railway enthusiast, is no longer able to visit towns such as Tulkarm, Jenin, Nablus and all other places in Zone A, and large road signs make this clear. (A photo shows one such red sign with: "This Road leads to Area 'A' Under the Palestinian Authority. The Entrance for Israeli Citizens is Forbidden, Dangerous to Your Lives And is Against the Israeli law.")

For me, too, entry into the West

Bank was combined with some obstacles. I had deposited my rucksack in the hotel in Haifa in the North of Israel and was kitted out with satchels with photo equipment and enough personal items for two days and travelled by train to Netanya, then in a regular bus along Road 57 eastwards to within a kilometre or so of Tulkarm. Continuing on foot I crossed the bridge over the motorway 6 and came eventually to the border wall and the guard post. On the other side of the crossing a previously-arranged hire car was waiting for me with an English-speaking driver. I did not however even get to the barrier but was first ordered to stand still. Following a check of passport and my bags and an explanation of my wishes it was explained to me that this crossing is only permitted for Israeli citizens; I would have to go to a different crossing at Jubara some way to the south. Also the former station was not the building I had assumed it to be and pointed to, right behind the crossing point, but was also further to the south. I was shown great understanding for my plans and everyone was friendly, but rules are rules and they had to be kept to, whether they made sense or not. Almost exactly as with us at home!

Along the border wall it was only about three kilometres as the crow flies to the next crossing point. I preferred however to take the road and walked and needed a good hour for this. Even on approaching the crossing point I saw that it was indeed signposted for Tulkarm but also had signs designating it a 'Cargo Crossing Point'. So, again, no luck. A Palestinian taxi, whose driver had a permit to pass the Demarcation line, finally brought me a few kilometres further to the real crossing point of Jubara. Here the next surprise awaited me. In the direction of Israel there were indeed controls, but heading eastwards we came through without a stop; and on Road 557 we travelled ever further away from Tulkarm, as I could see on my road map. Finally we came to the junction of the 557 and the 57, to which my taxi driver had summoned the other driver by telephone, and I could get into my hired car!

Once more on Road 57 we headed back to Tulkarm. Suddenly the area looked very familiar to me, for we passed the first control point, only allowed for Israelis, but this time on the eastern side. I even saw the Israeli officer who had earlier turned me away. So for about 50 metres I had required a 30km detour and over three hours.

But I was not under any time pressure, I felt myself at my destination and wanted to experience personally how things are for the locals. We drove on Road 444 right alongside the border wall southwards and reached soon after the 'Cargo Crossing Point'. My driver had planned I should get out here and go west of the wall

on foot to the station whilst he waited for me. I had not informed him that this wouldn't work. That the station was in any case west of the wall, which in this point has been built east of the 1949 cease-fire lines, i.e. on Palestinian territory, was something of which I had been unaware. At Sybil's visit in 1999 the wall had not been there and on the Googlemaps satellite pictures of Israel the quality is so poor that one can barely make out details. So in the end my photo was taken of the station building seemingly inaccessible beyond a wall. Older readers of 'Lok Report' as well as I will be reminded of similar problems much closer to home by this description. An irony of history – at that point I was still unaware of the article 'Sinai Railway: Now and Then' on flickr. Otherwise I would have known that I could have approached the former station with no problems from the western side. Next time! Even though normally old railway relics are not of such great interest to me.

The rest of the day and the following day continued absolutely unspectacularly with visits to the former stations in Massudiye and Jenin, the former formation by Silat, the area of the former station at Nablus now serving as a car park, as well as 'normal sights of this historical area formerly known as Samaria such as the Old City and the Jacob's well at Nablus. In Nablus there still stands the typical Turkish oval stone-built lower portion of the water tower, albeit these now support two gigantic advertising posters for a well-known brand of shampoo rather than the water tank. Next to it a lonely metal sleeper sticks out of the ground, last relic of a former fence made of such sleepers which was replaced some years ago. On the afternoon of the second day I went via Jubara and back to Netanya and so back to Haifa. The border crossing at Jubara was not critical. I was not even asked concerning the Pakistan visa in my passport, as by my three other entries into Israel.

CONCLUSION.

The journey had been worth it in all respects. I never felt threatened, not in Jordan, nor the West Bank and certainly not in Israel. Thomas had informed me before the trip that in Ma'an occasionally black IS flags are displayed and some of the mosques are dominated by Al-Qaeda which is moderate in comparison with IS. The Army however has the situation under control and in any case the station is situated outside the city. That really comforted me! On thinking the matter over however I wondered how many IS- and Al-Qaeda supporters or similar persons ready for violence and extremists and hooligans of all sorts and colours actually live in Germany, whether we had in recent times simply avoided any deadly attacks simply due to coincidence and chance, and why I leave my home every day so casually... Whatever, I experienced from the people in all three countries I visited simply friendly reactions. Germans and Germany enjoy a high status in Arab countries, even if sometimes for the wrong reasons. In fact 'he' had his origins in Austria! Street criminality is also low in comparison with Germany. I see therefore under these circumstances no reason to warn against any travelling to these countries. The general atmosphere in Jordan was however pretty stressed after a pilot of their air force who had crashed in Iraq at the beginning of the year and fallen as prisoner into the hands of IS had been burned alive. In Israel and the West Bank in contrast most people were more concerned about the coming election in Israel. In the meantime it is clear that the results mean nothing good for the general situation.

My thanks to all who helped me in the preparation and duration of the journey. Further details to the railways and stock seen can be found under <http://internationalsteam.co.uk/internet.htm> or the postings by Thomas Kautzor."

111.10



A super advert for the newly-opened line from Ashkelon through to Beer Sheba.

WITH THE BAGHDADBAHN THROUGH KURDISTAN: ALONG THE TURKISH-SYRIAN BORDER IN TRAIN 62951

This article by Hermann Neidhart appeared in 'Lok Report' 11/2011 pages 50-53 and describes a journey through an area which was always a 'difficult' one politically and militarily, but in the past two or three years has become even more so. Such a journey is no longer possible.

"The old 'Bagdadbahn', whose construction began over a hundred years ago in the former Constantinople, has a legendary reputation to defend, and it has not lost this in spite of the many periods of war and unrest. But nowadays this historical stretch of line cannot be fully traversed even within Turkey. Nevertheless, a journey along the 330km long section from Nusaybin to Gaziantep, mainly along the Turkish – Syrian border, succeeded in November 2010, including a military escort on the train.

In the time when the Taurus Express still existed....

Here, initially, a brief look back: to the times when the 'Taurus Express', the most famous train on the Baghdad line, linked Istanbul-Haydarpara direct with Aleppo at least once per week in around 35 hours. At this period train travel in Turkey was a fine affair. Even the connection from München to the Bosphorus (to Istanbul-Sirkeci) functioned in a pretty uncomplicated manner in 40 hours. In less than four days of actual travelling time one could travel from Bavaria through the Balkans and through Turkey to Northern Syria and in this manner cover some 3,500km of railway line. This was for example still possible in Spring 2005 with the 'Toros Ekspres' (with a connection to Damascus). Today this historic train, which once rattled its way over the Anatolian Plateau and through the Taurus mountains into the Orient, no longer runs.

So this time, in autumn of last year [i.e. 2010] the journey to the Near East was performed mainly by sea and by road. Only the sections München – Venice, Corinth – Athens and Tarsus – Adana were managed with the railway. But even ferries can be a pleasant means of transport, for example that from Venice via Corfu to Patras, from Piraeus to Rhodes and from there to Marmaris (not to forget the diversion from Tascu to Girne in Northern Cyprus.) There are, as is known, no railway lines along the Turkish Riviera, but instead a large number of bus connections as well as a steady supply of individual and group

taxis. In such a manner several weeks can pass before one reaches the region of Turkish Kurdistan. Nevertheless the Eastern Mediterranean has many sights worth seeing at any season, even when the days are relatively short in late autumn.

Adana – Gaziantep : No Way!

It is a good feeling to arrive in Adana again in 2010, lying on the old Bagdadbahn line east of Mersin. At the station of Tarsus one is greeted by a conspicuously-displayed, over eighty years old steam locomotive, in front of which excursionists let themselves be photographed and over which the kids play. At the ticket counter however there is disappointment; the official can sell me a ticket to Adana, but not onwards to Gaziantep. Is this section of the line still or indeed once again out of action?

In Adana this information is confirmed: To Gaziantep one can travel only with the Dolmus or the Omnibus. Only from there should there still be some rail service direction eastwards – Inshallah ('If God so wills it.'). When the Bagdadbahn was constructed Adana was an important centre and junction, for from here went the lines not only to Aleppo and to Iskenderun on the Mediterranean but also to Mersin and of course through the Taurus mountains in the direction of Konya and Istanbul.

In the pretty empty station building of Gaziantep – known by the locals just as Antep – the office of the station master, the only office occupied, is accessible only by the rear door. The question concerning the next train to Nusaybin is answered (in writing!) with: 'Friday 10 o'clock'. This does not match what the timetable says ('Thursday 07.00') but it comes at least from someone who should know, at first hand. The next day it transpires that a train does indeed depart at the given time – although not to Nusaybin! Irritating, for there is now nothing more in that direction for another three days.

For better or worse there is now no alternative to taking a bus and a joint taxi in the direction of Nusaybin – hopefully at least on the way back it will be possible to ride this stretch of line. At least by taking the road there is the possibility for deviations to see famous places like Urfa (Abraham's birthplace), Midyat with

its half-dozen churches and Mor Gabriel, where the Turks have been trying to take the famous cloister

from its Christian inhabitants for years.

To Turkish and Iraqi Kurdistan.

Since at this point in 2010 the political climate is relatively calm, there is even the possibility of considering a further journey onwards into northern Iraq. It is only about 200km. from the border to Erbil, the capital of the Autonomous Province of Kurdistan. But no train goes here either. In earlier times the Bagdadbahn had regular passenger services from Nusaybin to the Syrian border town of Qamishli and further on to Mossul – but that was a long time ago.

Silopi in the Turkish Kurdistan would be an isolated, forlorn, unimportant nest, were it not for the Gulf War at around the turn of the century, which gave it the opportunity to exploit its convenient position on the transit route into Iraq. There are a pair of simple hotels on the main through road, which are quite acceptable for a single night. In the small town there stand a relatively large number of taxis, whose drivers are only too willing, for a substantial sum of money, to convey travellers across the nearby State border.

Without the help of local taxi drivers the border crossing would barely be possible. For on the Turkish side there is a helpless, indescribable chaos. The apparent sluggish inactivity of the officials drives especially the Kurdish drivers into deep anger and often leads to outbreaks of physical violence. The Turkish passport-stamping and baggage-checking ceremony lasts for ever, whereas on the Iraqi side everything seems to pass quickly and without problems (actually one had expected the opposite.)

Via Zakho and Dohuk an overland taxi takes us to the Kurdish capital of Erbil. At a military checkpoint shortly beforehand the traffic forms a queue an hour long, whilst the other Police and Army control points are passed quickly. In the suburb of Ainkawa a former Bundeswehr soldier who had served in Afghanistan runs a German restaurant (with pork Schnitzel, Bockwurst, Kartoffelsalat and Thuringian beer on the menu!) The Citadel and the Old City and the Bazaar are then once again pure Orient. And the return journey, often near the Iranian border, goes pretty unspectacularly, albeit

with about two dozen security checks.

Nusaybin – Currently the End of the Bagdadbahn,

There is space in the wide station layout at Nusaybin for many train movements, but nothing is moving. Only one obsessive official tries to prohibit photography. His colleague indeed tries to assure us that there are no passenger trains to Gaziantep. This is now a matter for the Station Master! He speaks English and gives accurate and friendly information. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 14.15 passengers as well as freight are transported to Antep.

This is very welcome information, for it means that there is a regular train service westwards along the old Bagdadbahn line! And with the Chief's permission I may also take many photographs. There follows an exchange of postcards, badges and other railway souvenirs. Nearby, in the office of the Goods Department chief, there is in addition to more information the obligatory tea with much sugar. The chief even summons food – pittot, onions, peppers and lentil soup – which tastes delicious.

On the return to the city centre of Nusaybin the collective taxi goes close to the border crossing at Qamishli, the station on the Syrian side of the Bagdadbahn. Over there, there is also no passenger service by rail at present, only occasional freight trains. The barbed wire fences and the watch towers provoke one to ask whether Turkey and Syria are currently in a pre-war or post-war relationship with each other. The Kurdish driver expresses himself rather negatively about the Arab neighbours.....

There is plenty of time before the departure of the mixed passenger and freight train at the station of Nusaybin. Time to talk to the staff, who in the early afternoon are already in the mood for ending the day's work; time to explore the location. One of the staff even speaks German, he had lived in Germany for a decade and also lets a colleague get us some tea. About an hour before the departure time the military escort unit arrives – half a dozen soldiers, armed with guns and loaded with equipment. They have a relatively flexible NCO who also speaks some English.

Beware – Stonethrowers and a Photography Prohibition!

In the meantime about thirty vehicles (of which only three are passenger coaches) have been shunted backwards and forwards along the tracks, until the Diesel locomotive couples on at the front of them. Many now want of course to be photographed in front of this, especially

the engine driver. It is good that the results can be shown to people digitally straight away. Finally Train 62951 is ready for departure shortly after 14.00.

One of the escort now gives me instructions. Beware of stone throwers! Do not take position too close to the window! Best to stay sitting on the seats in the compartment! Do not photograph! (Oy veh!) A big hole in one carriage window shows where a direct hit was suffered on a previous trip.

Half of the soldiers take up their positions in the next compartment. A gun leans next to the sliding door. The question is: Is one being guarded or watched here? It does seem as though extreme care should be exercised when photographing (in fact it would be better to use a second camera that one can if necessary do without.) And yet, although it does not seem as though much is happening outside the main villages, the line is by no means uninteresting. For the tracks run immediately along the Turkish-Syrian border, and for several hundred kilometres! The line runs between two barbed-wire fences; immediately behind one of these lies Syria, behind the other one Turkey. On the Turkish side there is in addition a military road, and then follows another fence. Behind that one can see State road No. 400 heading to Gaziantep. On the untarred road Jeeps, military lorries and also an ambulance of the Red Crescent can be seen travelling. Roughly every kilometre there stands a watchtower – an attractive albeit also threatening subject for a photo, and it reminds me of DDR times. However, it seems that only every tenth tower or so is manned by a soldier.

At the station of Senyurt it is already turning to dusk at 16.00. The light for photography gets worse – now, when the soldiers seem to have got used to the clicking (at least, there has been no objection made so far!). At the following station the six soldiers get out and trot away, but their replacements – the same number – get in. The new escort check the few compartments and write out the details of the passengers from their identity papers.

There is not however much to check. As far as one can tell there are barely ten passengers travelling with me. The other passengers are railway officials or soldiers. At least two military or railwaymen for every paying passenger. The income for the Turkish State Railways must be very modest; 10 Lira per person (about 5 Euros) – altogether then about 50 Euros revenue. Why don't more people travel, if it is so cheap? Perhaps because of the late arrival time at our destination, in the middle of the night?

Late at Night through 'Wild Kurdistan'.

On walking through the three coaches it becomes clear that one of them is unlit and empty, and only a few passengers are sitting in the other two. However the six-person compartments in this train that rumbles its way through 'wild Kurdistan' on its way "to Bagdad or Stamboul" (as Karl May would say) are actually quite clean. In Ceyanpınar, where the journey into the night continues at 17.30, several people get in with cartons and crates. In Alcakale we wait for half an hour for a goods train to pass in the opposite direction.

Now it is really time for the dinner that the landlord in Nusaybin had packed in a plastic bag; chicken pieces, rice, pitta bread, salad – and even a fork, serviettes and a hygienic bag with a toothpick. All this, together with lunch and drinks there, had cost less than 10 Euros. In contrast the taxi driver who took me the few kilometres from the restaurant to the station wanted to really sting me (though he didn't quite succeed in his aim.)

The train is meant to arrive at Gaziantep soon after midnight. But at 00.30 it is still in Karkemis on the Euphrates, where it turns north-westwards away from the Syrian border. Here the escort soldiers end their duty and leave their compartment. No-one else gets in. After a further almost three hours the outer districts of our destination come into sight - here and there lit houses and a few street lamps.

The night porter at the hotel in Gaziantep is accustomed to late arrivals of the train. He had asked me for a call so that he could send a taxi to the station for me. Indeed this is standing ready for me at 3.20 in the morning! A great service, in the middle of the night. And this journey costs (including tip) less than that to the station at Nusaybin.

After around 13 hours of night-time train travel through south-eastern Turkey it is actually very pleasant next afternoon to continue the journey by road – over the border by Killis – to Aleppo (since once again no train is heading here.) From Aleppo to Damascus there should however be several daily trains – hopefully a convenient one will be found there. But right now the aim is to overnight at the 'Hotel Baron' in Halab, where the writer Agatha Christie lived for several days in 1928 and later, before she continued her journey to Mossul or Istanbul and Europe ('Murder in the Orient Express'). "

HAIFA HARBOUR.

From 'The Engineer' Nov. 3rd. 1933, pp. 426-428.

The harbour works at Haifa on the coast of Palestine, the construction of which was begun in 1929 by the Government of the Mandated Territory were formally inaugurated by the High Commissioner for Palestine, Lieut.-General Sir Arthur Wauchope, on Tuesday, October 31st. We published in our issue of July 1st. 1932 a short account of the works then in progress, and we are now able to supplement it by a more detailed description. Herewith and on p. 432 will be found a series of views of the harbour, some of which show the works in their completed state. As far back as 1922 the Crown Agents for the Colonies commissioned Mr. - now Sir - Frederick Palmer, K.C.M.G. to report on the question of the construction of a harbour for Palestine, which has a coast line of about 150 miles. The surveys and investigations made under his direction definitely indicated Haifa as the most suitable site for a harbour in preference to any other of the sites that had been suggested, including Jaffa.

Mr. Palmer's report was made in 1923, but it was not until June 1927 that his recommendations to construct a harbour at Haifa, at an estimated cost of 1,000,000 Pounds, was adopted, and Messrs. Rendel, Palmer and Tritton were appointed consulting engineers for the work. The plans prepared, after a detailed survey of the site and borings had been made, included works estimated to cost 1¼ million pounds. In February 1929 it was decided to construct the harbour works by direct administration under the supervision of the engineers, and the Haifa Harbour Works Department was organised for that purpose. Preliminary work was begun in April 1929 and the first train load of stone from the quarries, which had, in the meantime, been opened out at Atlit on the sea coast some 10 miles south of Haifa, was despatched to the harbour in October of that year.

The town of Haifa is situated on the southern shore of the Bay of Acre and the roadstead, in which vessels lay at anchor before the construction of the harbour works, was well protected from the south and south-west by Mount Carmel, the western extremity of which rises rapidly to a height of nearly 1000 ft. The northern slope of the mountain falls more gradually towards the bay, and on it stands the town with the railway skirting the shores.

TRADE OF HAIFA

Haifa is the only harbour on the Palestinian coast, and in the past the absence of harbour facilities has been one of the hindrances to the development of the shipping trade of the country. At Jaffa,

which, from the days before the rise of the Roman Empire, has been regarded as the port of Jerusalem, vessels still have to lie in the open roadstead, and both goods and passengers are conveyed to and from the shore in lighters and boats. Haifa is the headquarters of the Palestine railways, and, since the British mandate, has developed into a busy industrial town. The terminal at Haifa of one branch of the Iraq oil pipe line is now assured, and is expected to have a capacity of 2,000,000 tons annually. A site for an oil dock was provided for when designing the harbour, at the south-east end under the shelter of the lee breakwater, and work on it and on the east reclamation, which will be made concurrently with the oil dock, has begun.

A concession for the abstraction of salts from the Dead Sea is now being developed, mainly with capital from Jewish sources, and an annual export through Haifa of 100,000 tons of potash is expected. The fruit trade of Palestine is growing rapidly, the Jaffa orange being one of the principal exports of the country at the present time. Estimates based on the acreage of orange groves, which have or are being planted, show a possible development from the present maximum annual export from Palestine of four million cases to over nine million cases within ten years. The major part of this increase might have to be dealt with at Haifa, and, should such estimates be realised, some further development of the harbour may become necessary within a short time. Provision has been made for the development of the western part of the harbour, within the breakwaters by the construction of additional quays....

BREAKWATERS

The sheltered area of the new harbour is protected by two breakwaters - the more important, known as the main breakwater, is about 1½ miles long and is thrown out in an easterly direction from the shore near Ras-el-Kerum, the northern extremity of the Carmel headland. The breakwater is roughly parallel with the town frontage. The second, or lee breakwater, forms a seaward prolongation of the previously existing railway jetty at the east end of the town. It is about half a mile long and runs out in a northerly direction. The tidal rise at Haifa is insignificant, rarely exceeding 1 ft., with a maximum range of about 3ft. The maximum exposure of the works is from about north-west on a line oblique to the face of the main breakwater. The lee breakwater and the inner works of the harbour are, therefore, well sheltered from storms. The sea bed over the harbour area is for the most part compact firm sand, forming an excellent foundation for the rubble mounds which constitute the

breakwater and the rubble base for the quay walls.

MAIN BREAKWATER.

The main breakwater constitutes the largest item of cost in the works. It is formed of natural blocks of quarried stone, graded according to size, the largest stones up to 15 tons weight being placed on the seaward face. The core or hearting material of the breakwater is of small stones from the quarries ranging in size from a few pounds each up to 1 cwt. The structure has a width of about 23m at mean sea level, and the upper part of the rubble mound has a slope on the sea bed of 1 in 4. The settlement of the rubble in the sand of the sea bed has, it is believed, been relatively small. The head of the breakwater is situated close to the 12m contour and the average depth of water in the site of the breakwater is between 8m and 9m. Throughout its entire length the breakwater is constructed with a concrete capping and parapet laid in situ, the top of the parapet being 4m above datum (mean sea level at Haifa).

.....At intervals of about 33m along the middle portion of the breakwater are set heavy cast steel mooring bollards These are bedded in masses of concrete keyed into the rubble mound. Some of these bollards are designed to take a pull of 200 tons and others of 150 tons. The mooring system adopted at Haifa provides for stem-on mooring of ships to the breakwater bollards, vessels dropping their head anchors when berthing.... The main breakwater contains about 1,100,000 cubic yards of stone rubble; the maximum quantity deposited in one month being 60,000 cubic yards. The stone, all of which came from Atlit, is a sandstone of medium hardness, which is capable of being quarried in large masses. All of it was hauled from Atlit over the Palestine Railways. Some of the stone of the smaller grades, forming the core of the breakwater mound, was deposited from hopper barges up to a level which would permit of discharge by this means. The remainder was placed in position by a specially designed pillar crane.... capable of hauling a load of 15 tons at a radius of 65ft. All but the largest stones were tipped from steel tray skips.... The crane ran on two 4ft. 8½ in gauge tracks connected to the service tracks for the trains of stone trucks. All the tipping in advance of the formation level was done 'end-on' by the crane, no staging being used. The crane was supported on six bogie trucks very fully articulated to provide for inequalities of level in the rail tracks.

[a photo] shows the bogies and twisted rails after a very heavy storm in January 1931. This storm is said to have been the most severe experienced at Haifa for over thirty years, but caused no damage to the

permanent works, even in their unfinished state.

The whole of the concrete capping and parapet of the breakwater was constructed on the return journey of the temporary crane and as the wagon rails were lifted. The side walls of the capping serving as shuttering are of rough random sandstone masonry set in cement mortar and built in so as to fill the voids between the underlying masses of large stone. Timber shuttering was used only for the concrete coping. The stunt ends of sections of the mass concrete were also built up of rough masonry. This method of construction was found to be both more suitable and more economical than fitted forms. The concrete was gauged and mixed on a lighter.... moored alongside the breakwater, by a transporter, also mounted on the lighter. The cement, aggregates, and water were brought to this floating concrete plant from the shore by supply lighters. The concrete aggregates used were crushed limestone from a privately owned quarry in Mount Carmel, and sand from the foreshore at Athlit.

LEE BREAKWATER.

The lee breakwater, which, as we have already said, is formed by prolonging the old railway jetty, contains about 230,000 cubic yards of stone. It is of less massive section than the main breakwater, its top width being only 5m. The outer slope of the mound is 2 in 3 and the harbour slope 3 in 4. The commencement of the construction of the lee breakwater was retarded in order that it should have the protection of the main breakwater during the winter storms..... The lee breakwater was provided with bollards, similar to those on the main breakwater, for temporary use as 'stem-out' moorings, pending the decision, now taken, to construct the oil dock under its shelter. The method of construction adopted for the lee breakwater was the same as for the main breakwater and the plant employed was of similar character, except that the crane used on the former was of 12 tons capacity and the stone rubble used in facing the slopes is in general of smaller dimensions than in the main structure.

QUAYS

On the landward side of the water space enclosed by the breakwaters an area of land has been reclaimed along the outer edge of which quays have been constructed for the accommodation of cargo steamers and lighters. The deep-water quay, or main wharf, about 1400ft. long, provides accommodation for three or four steamers. An extension of this quay towards the south-east and east provides quayage, 800ft. long, for lighters, the depth of water in the berths varying from 9.4m to about 5m. The steamer berths in front of the deep-water quay are dredged to 9.4m below mean sea level. The quay walls are constructed of concrete blocks, generally 5 to 7 tons in weight, capped with mass concrete. For the most

part the block work has been set on the slice-work principle..... The block work is founded at a level of 10m below mean sea level on a rubble base, which has a minimum thickness of 1m. The rubble base was deposited from hopper barges, in a trench dredged in the sea bed, consisting of sand, clay, and some conglomerate. The construction of the quay walls was begun at a central abutment of horizontal coursed blocks, from which the sliced work was continued in both directions by two 8-ton cranes travelling on the wall itself. Horizontal block work was also employed for the western terminal of the quay wall and at the angle in the lighter quay. All the quay walls are backed by stone rubble placed in position before the sand filling was deposited.

RECLAMATION.

Where the reclaimed area is not bounded on the harbour side by quay walls, it is retained by rubble stone dykes. Both the western and the eastern dykes have been completed and about 90,000 cubic yards of stone was used in their construction. The material for the reclamation has been dredged from the deep-water area formed between the breakwaters, the land so reclaimed being about 91 acres. The sand filling was pumped ashore at suitable points or on the quay walls and dykes, and is forming an excellent and firm foundation for roads and buildings.

TRANSIT SHEDS &c.

Two single-storey steel-framed transit sheds, supported on piled foundations, have been built behind the deep-water quay. One is so constructed as to permit of the addition of a second storey if this should be found necessary for the orange traffic. The walls of the transit sheds, as well as some of the other buildings erected in connection with the harbour, are constructed of Winget concrete blocks made on the site. The doors of the sheds are steel-framed, filled in with reinforced concrete panels.....

DREDGING.

In the initial stage of the harbour development, now completed, about 175 acres have been dredged; about 100 acres to a depth of 11.3m below mean sea level, and the balance to 9.4m or over. It was decided to carry out the whole of the dredging by contract. The trench dredging for the quay walls was done by N.V. Baggerwerken de Vries and Van den Bosch, of Utrecht. The main dredging contract was placed with the Tilbury Contracting and Dredging Company (Egypt) Ltd. Over 2,000,000 cubic yards of material, mainly sand, have been removed in deepening the harbour and reclaiming the areas on its south side.

QUARRIES

In view of the large quantities of stone used on the work, the quarries have formed one of the most important sections of the operations. As we have said, quarries

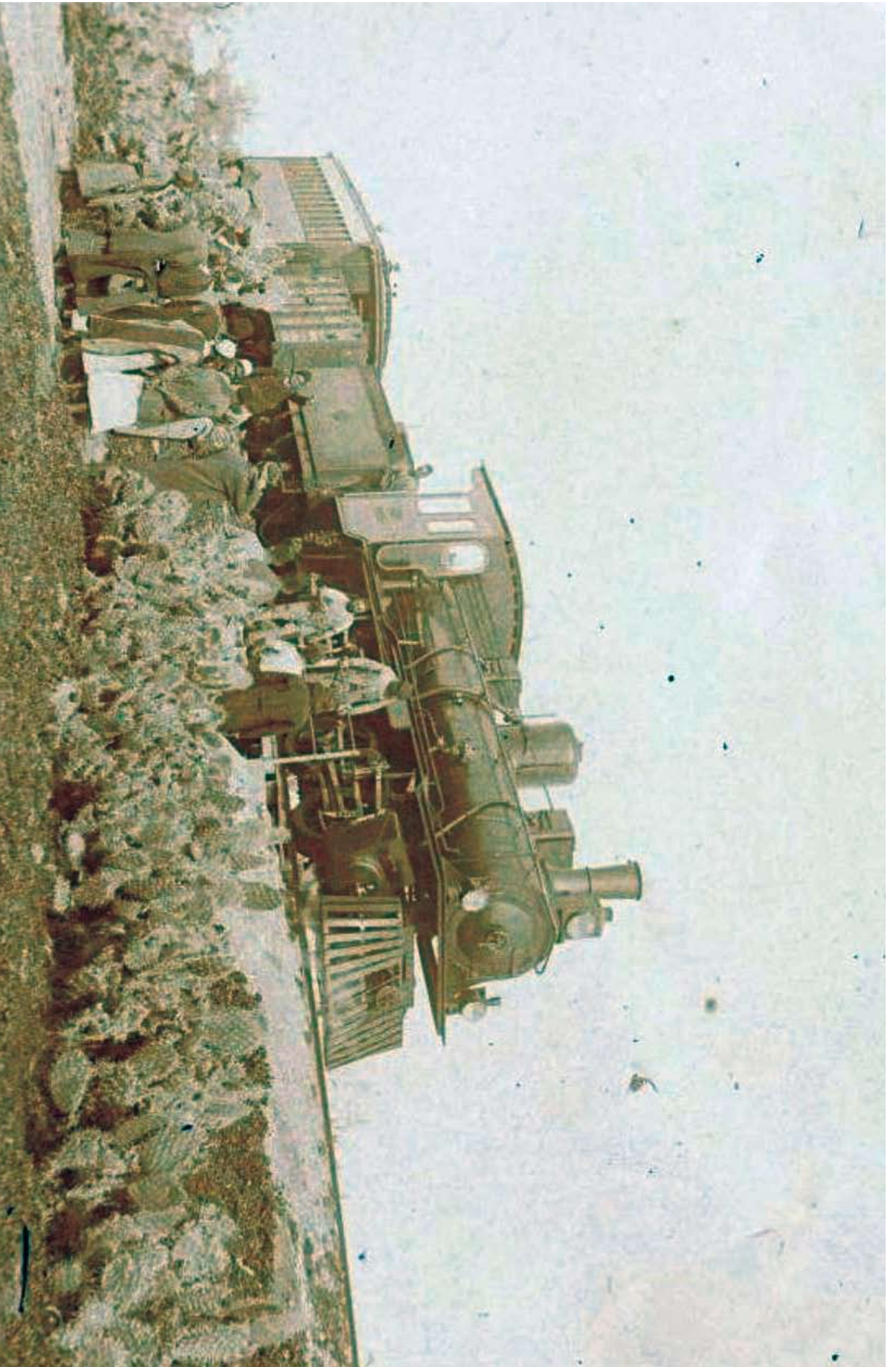
were opened at Athlit on the sea coast, 10 miles south of Haifa. The stone from these quarries is a sandstone, which, although of somewhat low density and not of great hardness, is homogenous in character and thus renders possible the quarrying of natural blocks of large dimensions. A stone of greater density and hardness is obtainable close to the site of the works, but this is not homogenous, and is laminated and much fissured, making the quarrying of blocks of sufficient size impracticable. This hard stone was, however, used as crushed material for concrete aggregates. Five quarrying units were worked at Athlit, each unit comprising one 13-ton derrick crane and two 5-ton travelling cranes. Quantities up to 5,000 tons of stone have been removed daily. The quarries were closed down, except a face for maintenance, towards the end of 1932. The Portland cement used on the works was manufactured by the Neshet Cement Company, a local company, whose works are situated a few miles east of Haifa, close to the Hejaz Railway.

FUTURE EXTENSIONS.

The site of the oil dock, to which reference has already been made, is at the south-east end of the harbour. Berthing jetties for two oil carriers and two lay-by berths are to be provided. The oil dock will be closed by a floating fire boom over 300ft. in length. When this boom is withdrawn for the purpose of passing a vessel in or out of the dock it will be placed alongside the jetty on the north-east side of the dock entrance. A commencement has already been made with the construction of the oil dock, which will have a depth of about 10m. The harbour proper can accommodate liners of about 30,000 tons register. Such vessels call at Haifa during the tourist season, and are able to disembark their passengers within the shelter of the breakwaters. A liner berth can be built if required to enable passengers to land direct, and a site will be reserved for a maritime station, which will, when built, in addition to serving local requirements act as the terminal for the proposed Haifa - Baghdad Railway, should the latter be constructed.

The area of sheltered water inside the breakwaters is approximately 300 acres, but will be reduced to about 250 acres when the reclamation at the western end of the harbour and the future extensions of quays have been carried out. The total expenditure on the harbour works of about 1¼ millions includes all the works with the exception of the future reclamation; the oil dock and its accessories, and the east reclamation now in progress. The post office, general office and Customs House, which, except for the foundations, were built under the direction of the Palestine Public Works department, are covered by the expenditure of the 1¼ millions...."

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*"How it used to be..... A metre-gauge Borsig 0-4-4-0 near Ramle before World War I - it is unclear what sort of mixed train it is hauling and why the men are here - it could be a works train for some track repairs. The loco crew seem to be inspecting a culvert. Photo courtesy of Alon Sitor.
(photo Jaffa Jerusalem Rly)*