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הרכבת

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76:01.

CFS Loco 751 at Damascus, 26.10.2002.

(Photo by G. Riedl, courtesy of Thomas Meyer-Eppler).



הרכבת



EDITORIAL:

This issue was delayed partially by another of the Editor's visits to Israel - during which he managed to visit for the first time the new stations at Kfar Saba and Ashkelon, sample the controversial service to Jerusalem (with break of journey at Beit Shemesh), observe various automated level crossings with little huts where, despite the expensive automation, a man can sit and pass the time all day, experience the deserted magnificence of Jerusalem Malha station, and more besides. But due to the delays, a fuller report will be held over until the next issue. The "News from the Line" incorporates however much material on these themes - as usual, the issue of what to do about car drivers who are unable or unwilling to follow the rules, and who should bear the consequent costs, has occupied many minds and column-inches; likewise the sometimes-bizarre timetable practices of Israel Railways.

However, the bizarre practices of Austrian railways in relation to Iran - a country much in the news at present - also deserve inspection. And - with apologies for the delays - we incorporate here some of the items from Paul Cotterell which have been lying 'on file' for some time.

Jeremy Topaz of Rehovot is now working - in his spare time - on establishing a website entitled "Harakevetmagazine.com" on which certain items from back issues will eventually be accessible. ("Harakevet" itself had been registered by persons unknown!) There are also websites for other groups of enthusiasts, including for Turkish railways. This is clearly a growing field for those of us with wider interests.

Enjoy!

The Editor.

76:03. *A picture which symbolises the bitter and the sweet of railway preservation in Israel. At the Haifa Railway Museum, Paul Cotterell has repainted the former "P"-class tender, formerly used as a mobile bridge testing weight, in original colours, and it looks magnificent. All that is missing is..... the loco to go with it! This tender, and a sister at Qishon, is in fact the sole remaining relic of standard-gauge steam locomotives in Israel. (Photo:*



NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). MORE ON LEVEL CROSSINGS.

Two Israel Railways level-crossing guards were arrested on Thursday 25.01.2007 in Beit Shemesh for using drugs on the job. The two suspects, who are in their 20's, were apprehended in a pre-dawn police raid with 20 grammes of hashish in their possession. They were arrested not far from the train crash in which a train rammed into a bulldozer that was stuck on the tracks, injuring 31 passengers. (Noted in 'Jerusalem Post').

It should be noted that there are hardly any manually-operated level crossings left any more - just on some obscure freight sidings, such as to the Haifa Oil refinery. The task of these men is not to lower the barriers but to watch out for bad drivers.

From "Ha'aretz" 05.02.2007: "Police are expected to recommend shortly that the Director General of Israel Railways, Ofer Linczewski, be indicted for his role in a train collision near Beit Yehoshua in June that killed five and injured dozens. As the police investigation of the accident nears its end, it appears that police will recommend that Linczewski be charged with

c a u s i n g death by negligence.

The accident took place when a Tel Aviv-Haifa passenger train collided with a pickup truck stuck on the tracks near Beit Yehoshua, south of Netanya. Police are due to recommend that the truck driver, Y o n a t a n Vadya, also be indicted for his role in the accident. He was found to have been

under the influence of drugs at the time of the collision. He escaped from the crash unharmed.

A prosecutor has been keeping tabs on the months-long police investigation, over the course of which dozens of witnesses have been questioned. Investigators have recently begun summarizing the findings of the inquiry, which has unearthed many flaws in the Israel Railways safety procedures.

Less than two hours before the accident, an Israel Railways lookout left the crash site due to light train activity at that time of day, the railway has said. The site is one of Israel Railways' most active areas, with 300 trains passing through daily.

At first, police suspected that Linczewski had only indirect responsibility for the accident, and sought to discover his role in setting Israel Railways' safety policies. Linczewski told police that the procedures were in place long before he became director general, and investigators attempted to find out which regulations he may have altered and whether he knew about existing flaws but failed to do anything to fix them. By the later stages of the investigation, the police and prosecution found that there were many safety flaws at Israel Railways that contributed to the Beit Yehoshua crash, and that Linczewski and other senior railway officials did not do enough to prevent the accident.

Police were surprised to hear that Linczewski would be speaking about train safety in Israel at a transit conference taking place Wednesday, calling this a cynical move meant to present his own defense in light of a possible trial."

The following day, 06.02.2007, "Ha'aretz" had a hard-hitting Editorial:-
"Yesterday the papers reported that the police investigation into the train wreck on June 12, 2006, near Beit Yehoshua, is continuing. The accident had been one of the worst in Israeli history involving a train: five were killed. After the tragic affair, the Transport Ministry set up an inquiry headed by Yossi Peled, a general in reserves. One of its recommendations was to employ observers, armed with MIRS cellphone/communicators, at train-road crossings, so they could warn an approaching train if a car got stuck on the track even if the barrier had come down. Placing observers would cost NIS 35 million a year.

With five bodies and a police

investigation into who was responsible for the accident, nobody queried that recommendation, which has no parallels in any country in the world, including ones that have been running trains for twice as long as Israel's been around.

There is good reason why nobody the world wide has suggested placing observers at train-road crossings: when the crunch comes, the observers can't be trusted. They will panic. They will get confused. They will react slowly and, in short, too late. That is why. Yet observers were hired and here are the results: no less than four accidents at train-road crossings manned by these observers.

Off the record, experts say that placing observers as a precaution is simply pulling the wool over the public's eyes. It is a pure waste of NIS 35 million. But the experts won't say that on the record. What government official would dare challenge a recommendation designed to increase the public's safety, even if the recommendation is patently ludicrous? What government official would dare to discuss frugality, when the threat of a police investigation hangs over every train wreck?

So the experts are silent, though they know the price of their silence. It is not money, either. Five were killed in train wrecks in 2006; the year before ten people were killed, in Israel Railways' worst year. Seven of them died in the horrible accident at Revadim.

The last two years were bad ones for train travelers, in short. The number of dead in train wrecks was equivalent to 1% or 2% of the number of people killed on the roads, in an average year. Remember that number, and now factor in that Israel Railways allocated NIS 1.3 billion to building bridges and tunnels, specifically for the purpose of abolishing meeting points between roads and rails. (Either the train goes over the bridge, or the road does: the point is, they don't meet).

No question about it, abolishing the crossings is the best way to prevent cars and trains from colliding. That is how to achieve zero accidents. But then one realizes that one is allocating more than a billion shekels to preventing 1% to 2% of all fatal road accidents in Israel.

And the figures look even worse when comparing Israel with the rest of the world. Even though train traffic here is much thinner than in the west, Israel has the world's highest proportion of crossings converted into bridge/tunnels. Not only that, it's also a world

record holder for the number of crossings governed by a barrier and traffic light. No less than 88% of Israel's crossings sport that protection, compared with 43% in the U.S., 21% in Canada, 30% in Britain, 58% in Sweden and 20% in Finland. Only Italy, where drivers are roughly as wild as their Israeli counterparts, has a proportion approaching Israel's: 74% of the crossings are protected with barriers.

To sum up, Israel already over-invests in protecting drivers from colliding with trains, going by world standards. Now add that NIS 1.3 billion spent on building tunnels and bridges. Israel can fairly boast that it's the safest country in the world, by a considerable margin, at least when it comes to train-road crossings systems. In fact, the margin is so considerable that it cannot be economically justified, especially given that Israel is also a record-holder in deaths on the road.

If Israel is over-investing in train-crossings safety and under-investing in road safety, one might think that it should divert budgets from securing train crossings, to the roads. That NIS 1.3 billion being invested in building tunnels and bridges to cross train tracks could have saved those five to ten people killed in a bad year. But if the money had been invested in improving roads, it could have saved twice as many people.

So where should the money go? Seems obvious, doesn't it, but it ceases to become obvious when you note that road accidents are reported at the bottom of page 17 in the papers. Train accidents are front-page news. No wonder why Transport Minister Shaul Mofaz hastened to set up an inquiry over the Beit Yehoshua accident, and hastened to adopt the panel's ridiculous recommendation of placing observers at crossings and to invest more more in building tunnels and bridges, at the expense of perpetuating the carnage on Israel's roads.

The Transport Ministry commented that Israel has among the highest number of separation systems in the world, which it views as a mark of excellence in handling road safety. As for dangerous roads, it said, they are handled in parallel and with the same seriousness, at an investment of hundreds of millions of Shekels. "The use of observers is indeed unique to Israel; it is a pilot project that is still being studied," the ministry added."

On 18.03.2007 Isra-Rail Co. issued two tenders for grade separations, at a total cost of \$39M:-

- Tender HN/KB/09/07 for grade separation at level crossing No. 156A on the Ashdod-Ashkelon line, which includes a railway bridge over Road No. 4 and a road bridge over the railway strip.

- Tender HN/KB/07/07, for two grade separations on Road No. 38 at Beit Shemesh (near the railway station), replacing level crossings Nos. 223 and 224. This will eliminate the bottle-neck near the station and release the railways from the danger of collisions with cars. Both projects involve earthworks, concrete, lighting, development works and roads, water and sewage pipe lines, irrigation and gardening. Both projects to be completed within 18 months, bids by 18.04.2007.

(b). BRIEFING ON ROAD ISSUES.

Transport and Road's Safety Minister Mr. Shaul Mofaz, briefed the members of the Knesset Committee for the Economy on 05.02.2007 about the situation, and said that due to the archaic structure of both his own ministry and the Finance Ministry, many budgets for crucially important projects are stuck because of the bureaucracy which requires many signatures for each small expense. This has led to freezing the double tracking of the section between Kiryat-Motzkin and Nahariya, and construction of the lines to Carmiel and to Afula and Beit-Shean (on the former Hedjaz line).

He added: "There are assets more important than money only; if everything is measured only by money, the state of Israel would not have been founded!"

Mr. Mofaz added that, after nine months in his job, he has learned that as far as transportation infrastructures are concerned, Israel is 25 to 30 years behind while the cars and trains themselves are very modern.

Dr. Moshe Becker from the Haifa Technion, a Knesset and Isra-Rail Co. Ltd. safety consultant, said: "While car ownership in Israel is 310 per 1,000 people, which means that it is not only lower even than in East Europe - (in Poland it is 380; in Germany it is 647) - the roads congestion is 345 cars per km of road; almost 3.5 times more than in Germany and 8 times more than in France! This congestion has severe influences on the car drivers: after suffering for hours from bottle-necks on the roads, they then try to get back the lost time by driving at high speeds and wildly, thus violating all

laws and causing accidents.

But even if they should want to reach their destinations by public transport, the alternatives by rail - despite the high investments during the last 15 years - are limited, thus the roads are clogged both by private cars and by buses which use the same roads; not less severe is the fact that most freight is hauled by lorries instead - at least when this is worthwhile - by rail; here again, on clogged roads, when nerves fail, any collision between a lorry and private car is catastrophic.

Another subject raised by Dr. Becker was the insufficient public urban transport, which again causes people to arrive at Tel-Aviv with their cars; here he blames the municipality, which for years preferred to impose high parking charges rather than to develop public transport; this will hopefully change soon due to the LRV/Metro to be built and as a result the whole bus network is to be re-organized".

Aharon Gazit adds: "In the first week of February a collision between a military lorry and a works train occurred at a level crossing between Binyamina and Zikhron-Yaakov on the main Tel-Aviv-Haifa line (where road No.4 crosses the line). It would hardly be worth mentioning the case, in which there is no doubt that the driver ignored the red lights and the army is guilty, were it not for the fact that grade separation at this point has not yet been implemented, despite the fact that the District Council approved the design and building a long time ago, and a budget was allocated!

The simple reason for the delay is the disagreement between the National Roads Company (formerly Public Works Dept.) and other factors. The first claim that it is unreasonable to carry out the grade separation as long as Road No. 4 is not widened from 2 to 4 lanes simultaneously; perhaps somebody is waiting for casualties!"

On 11.02.2007 Isra-Rail Co. Ltd. issued a press release, revealing data concerning violent car drivers at level crossings according to Israel Police reports from May to December 2006, as well as violations recorded by police cameras installed at three level crossings. The Police reported 4,349 violations, in which 920 driving licenses were taken away from the drivers for 30 days; the cameras installed at Ramla, Ashdod Ad-Halom and between Binyamina and Zichron Ya'akov documented 1,921 violations of drivers crossing on red lights and after the

barriers were down! This data is additional to the reports from watchmen posted at the level crossings, published a month ago, according to which, between August and December 2006, 800 drivers crossed on red lights and when the barriers were down, while in 618 cases the drivers broke the barrier arms!

On 19.03.2007 a Conference was held of 800 senior transportation safety officers from all over Israel, on "Safety at Rail / Road level crossings". These officers will pass a course on the subject and will then be responsible for training between 80,000 and 100,000 car drivers.

(c). JERUSALEM STATION SHELTER.

The Moriya Company, which is building the new 80m.-deep railway station in Jerusalem, has decided to fit it out as an ABC shelter for 3,000 people; This was due to the request of General Yitzhak Gershon the Commander of the Civilian Hinterland.

According to Moriya's General Manager Mr. Yekhiel Lavie, the additions to the stations will include: blast-resistant and gas-sealed doors, ventilation and filtering systems, showers for ABC purification, an independent electricity system, a water reservoir, a mini hospital, a control room and a food store.

The change, according to Mr. Lavie, will not cause any delay in the date of opening, due at the beginning of 2011, but the current cost of \$51 million will definitely be higher.

(d). PROPERTY PRICES.

And much better news: Research by Mrs. Ronit Yahav-Sharir, conducted by Prof. Benjamin Bental, both from the Economics Faculty at Haifa University, reveals that an increased number of train calls at suburbs contributes directly to increased Real-Estate values there. They checked 2 cities Netanya and Rehovot, both 25 minutes from Tel-Aviv. The data about trains' calling patterns they received from the railways, while prices of apartments have been received from Real-Estate agencies.

The research covers 10 years between 1992 and 2002; they checked prices of 2,070 apartments in Netanya and 1,389 apartments in Rehovot; they

built a model which neutralizes the influence of the price index, inflation, and other factors, thus leaving only the trains' influence.

The results show that at Netanya, where the number of trains calling there daily grew from 28 in 1992 to 81 in 2002, each additional call raised the apartments value by \$530, while in Rehovot, where the number rose from 10 daily in 1992 to 70 in 2002, the apartments value rose by \$511 by each additional call.

There is no doubt that with today's timetable these values are much higher!

(e). OFAKIM STATION.

From an IR press release of 02.01.07: "Today IR laid the corner stone for the Ofakim railway station, located on the Ashkelon - Beer Sheva line; participating were the Transport & Roads Safety Minister Shaul Mofaz, IR General Manager Ophir Linchevski and the Mayor of Ofakim Avi Asraf. Mofaz said "This is an historic day for the people of Southern Israel and for the people of Ofakim in particular, as the railways are the driving force for development, with an improved quality of life perceptible wherever the railways pass through."

Linchevski said "If the State of Israel wishes to develop economically cities like Ofakim, then a critical mass of infrastructure must be created in order to make these peripheral cities accessible by high.frequency services." Within 30 months Ofakim will enjoy fast rail services to Tel Aviv and Beer Sheba; annual [sic] traffic forecast is more than 800,000. We will continue to develop these peripheral lines until the very term 'periphery' becomes a thing of the past!"

The 63km. line starts north of Beer Sheva and runs through Ofakim, Netivot, Shderot, Yad Mordechai and Ashkelon. The cost of the line will be \$400 Million, of which Ofakim station itself costs \$4.7 M. The line is planned to open in the 3rd. quarter of 2009.

On site, works have already started on the sections Ashkelon - Yad Mordechai and Beer Sheva - Ofakim, while statutory approval is still awaited for the Yad Mordechai - Ofakim section.

Five sub-contractors and 5 designers and multitude of project managers are occupied on the project. Service frequency will be two trains per hour in each direction at peak periods; it will take 87 minutes from Tel Aviv to

Beer Sheba via Ashkelon, 69 minutes from Tel Aviv to Ofakim, and 10 minutes from Ofakim to Beer Sheva. The station will have a parking area for 180 cars, cars for the disabled, taxis and buses; there will be a waiting hall and two platforms of 300m each."

(f). SERVICE CUTS?

In mid-February there was a sudden flurry of reports that IR was planning to cut services rather than expand them. The 'Jerusalem Post' of 11.02.2007 carried the following article by Sheera Claire Frenkel: "Knesset members prepared to go head to head with Israel Railways Monday over the company's decision to cancel the train lines between Tel Aviv, Beersheba, and Jerusalem. MK's Moshe Kahlon (Likud) and Gideon Sa'ar (Likud) prepared to take Israel Railways before the Knesset Finance Committee to keep the train lines running, and even add new lines, rather than cancel the project. Last month, the railroad company announced that it was cancelling several lines, and limiting others, due to insufficient public interest and profits. "The Finance Committee will put its whole weight behind this issue in order to better the situation of tens of thousands of train riders from the periphery," said Kahlon. The MK explained that the train lines are vital to people living in periphery communities who need to commute to jobs in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

A committee spokesman said that the train line had not been given enough time to prove its profitability, and that recent construction on the line had added 30 minutes to the scheduled journey between Tel Aviv and Beersheba, discouraging many from using the line."

What on earth was going on? Gary Pickholz, a keen observer and trenchant critic of I.R. foolishness, noted on 'Pasim' on 12.02.07:- "IR added almost a half-hour to the Beer Sheva run, in part by looping it though the airport and in part by mandatory speed reduction due to safety and construction. The result is that the train once again is substantially slower than the nonstop buses to Beer Sheva, and costs double. The inevitable precipitous drop in ridership was almost immediate. Now I.R. is saying that, given the nose-dive in ridership on the Negev route, they are considering a dramatic cut-back in service, which would guarantee the death knell for the route as any viable commuter service, or even as competition for the buses. Just a year

ago the Israeli PR machine was talking about double tracks, running 125 kph commuter trains to Beer Sheva. Now they are pushing for a dramatic reduction of service - while 3 new stations are literally under construction on the line for non-existent ridership."

As already noted, the separation of Tel Aviv - Beit Shemesh and Beit Shemesh - Jerusalem services, combined with the ridiculous idea of a 48-minute "connection" in an hourly service, has badly hit surviving commuter traffic on the Jerusalem line. We have always wondered why a massive four-platform station was required at Malha at the end of a single-track line.....

On 08.02.2007 a lengthy and informative article by Orit Arfa appeared in 'Jerusalem Post' on the issue of commuting by train, bus and car. Excerpts:-

"It's 9:45 on Monday morning. The parking lot outside the Malha railway station is only one-quarter full. There is no line at the entrance security check, and travelers leisurely stroll up the escalators to an empty hall to buy their tickets from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. The train leaves at 9:59 a.m., on schedule. There are about eight seats per passenger, and the train chugs away through Jerusalem brush-filled mountains and rough, golden terrain.... The scene outside the window is tranquil and soothing, but behind the scenes, the road to making the Jerusalem - Tel Aviv line profitable and effective has been rough, jerky and, critics say, has led nowhere. "The decision to renew the line was faulty to begin with," says transportation consultant Dr. Moshe Hirsh, who was part of an expert team that advised the government as it checked the possibility of renewing the line. "It went against professional opinion."

Israel Railways operated the same Tel Aviv-Jerusalem route until it was discontinued in 1998. Under Ariel Sharon the government decided to renovate the track in 2001 as a less expensive, interim solution to train transport between the capital and the metropolis, while Israel Railways began to build the costly high-speed line. The train re-launched in April 2005 from the newly built station in Malha, and stopped at Beit Shemesh, Lod and Ramla before reaching the Hagana Station in Tel Aviv. Hirsh was part of the team that simulated the ride to forecast its travel time and cost. "The [experts] said that the length of the ride after the renovation would be 85 min-

utes and not the 55 minutes Israel Railways predicted." In addition, they warned that costs would be much higher than anticipated. Today, costs have reached NIS 600 million. "Either they didn't believe our report, which turned out to be correct, or they thought, perhaps, that they needed to build the line for the public good, to connect Jerusalem with other cities."

Maly Cohen, Israel Railways spokesperson, explains that profit wasn't the only motivating factor. "The railway system is for the public benefit. Trains in Israel, like trains all over the world, are not all built for economic feasibility or for profitable turnover, as is the case with public transportation in general. The assumption was to invest money in infrastructure because it has a general benefit in the prevention of traffic, accidents, and air pollution." Given the length of the ride (about 85 minutes) as well as the peripheral location of the Malha Station, the train wasn't considered by many Jerusalem-Tel Aviv commuters as a desirable alternative to cars and buses. The numbers speak for themselves: only some 1,000 people used the train for daily travel between Israel's two major cities in 2006. Egged declined to give out 'classified business' information on the number of daily Jerusalem-Tel Aviv bus commuters, but a look at its Web site timetable reveals that Egged operates over 130 direct buses daily from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. They start a little before 6 a.m. and run about every 15 minutes. Each bus has a standard seating capacity of 51 - the average number of passengers on each Jerusalem-Tel Aviv train.

Adi Cohen, a resident of Ramat Hasharon who works at the Jerusalem Technological Park right across the street from the Malha station, expresses the popular public complaint with the train. "At the time I was very glad they opened it because it seemed the most convenient," he says. "It has advantages - you can read, do other things you can't do in a car - but the time it took didn't make it feasible." He now carools to Jerusalem, cutting the round-trip by one hour total. Jerusalem resident Shelly Halachmi-Sussman, who also works at the Technological Park, decided to try the train recently for the first time to attend a meeting in Tel Aviv. Just getting to the central bus station would have taken her an extra 20 minutes. "Once in a while it doesn't bother me", she says, not long after waking up from a pleasant nap while riding the train. "It's like a trip". But she says she wouldn't use it regularly.

At the end of 2006, in response to the low ridership among Jerusalem-Tel Aviv commuters, Israel Railways changed the service pattern so that trains from Jerusalem now terminate at Beit Shemesh, where passengers transfer to a Tel Aviv-bound train. At some times of day there is no connecting train, and passengers from Jerusalem have to wait up to 48 minutes at the Beit Shemesh Station. The move followed the basic laws of economics: increase supply with demand. "An analysis of the demand reveals that the Beit Shemesh-Tel Aviv line is used three times more than the Beit Shemesh-Jerusalem line", reads a statement from the Israel Railways press office. "In addition, the demand for the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv line is three times lower than the demand of Beit Shemesh residents."

Some passengers complained the split wasn't publicized properly. "When they opened up the Malha train station, a big deal was made. When they shut down the direct service, it was on the quiet," says Esther Singer, a Tel Aviv resident who says she suffers from the split. Now she rides the bus to her job in Jerusalem, which takes her up to five hours total daily. A few days after the change, some 70 passengers signed a petition expressing their dissatisfaction with the transfer at Beit Shemesh and asking Israel Railways to reinstate the direct line. "The halting of direct service between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv makes it very difficult for commuters between the two cities", reads the petition. It lists their complaints as follows: The length of the ride is unbearable (90 minutes from Malha to Tel Aviv's Hagana Station); passengers must go down stairs and through a small tunnel to transfer trains, re-exposing them to bad winter weather; the train experiences unnecessary delays, a symptom, the petition charges, of inefficient timetable management. Even though she owns a car, Jerusalem resident Leah Rosen, one of the instigators of the petition, saw the train as the best option for commuting to her job at Tel Aviv University. "I live in the southern part of Jerusalem, and it's easier to get to the Malha railway station than to the Central Bus Station. It's easier on the train to concentrate, get work done." Since the change, she has been actively seeking other options, like forming a carpool. "If you claim that commuters from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv don't deserve a railroad, that they could take their cars and buses, then I think a value decision is being made here. You're leaving the

people from Jerusalem in the lurch. You're saying these people aren't important." She thinks the lack of immediate, effective commuting options may cause people to leave the city. "Does the mayor want people to leave Jerusalem?" she wonders. When asked what the city is doing to improve commuting options between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Gidi Schmerling, Jerusalem Municipality spokesman, offered the following statement: "The municipality works with the government in order to improve transportation to and from Jerusalem, including the new railway line and road number 9." However, he explained that the government is responsible for most inter-city transport projects.

In a telephone interview, Avner Ovadia, spokesman of the Ministry of Transportation, responded to the complaint made by Jerusalem train commuters: "You have to provide a solution for the majority." Serving Beit Shemesh, he clarifies, was a top factor in the decision to upgrade the line in the first place. "It was supposed to give an answer to Beit Shemesh and Tel Aviv in addition to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv," he says. "It's important to connect the capital of Israel to other cities. Once you connect it to Beit Shemesh, you connect it to the rest of the chain." He adds that the upcoming high-speed line will not provide a solution for Beit Shemesh commuters. Transportation consultant Hirsch sympathizes with the reasons behind the split. But, he adds, the train may have defeated its original purpose - to connect Jerusalem with Beit Shemesh. "Now it's easier for Beit Shemesh residents to travel to Tel Aviv. Once they would have come to Jerusalem."

The train arrives in Beit Shemesh on time at 10:38 a.m. It's not rush hour, so the transfer goes smoothly. Passengers walk through a short tunnel to reach the next platform, where the train is waiting. The carriages are fuller, with a ratio of about four seats per passenger. Jay Haberfield of Ramat Beit Shemesh is among them. He happened to have taken the off-peak train to his job at a bank in Tel Aviv. A few minutes into the ride, he fiddles with some paperwork, and shares his pleasure at the Israel Railways move to split the journey at Beit Shemesh. "We were experiencing constant delays", he explains. "Before this change Beit Shemesh riders depended on trains coming from Jerusalem, and they constantly came in late five to 15 minutes every day. On top of that, inbound Jerusalem trains

couldn't always accommodate all Beit Shemesh passengers since the winding tracks from Jerusalem and Beit Shemesh could only service trains with a limited number of cars. Now, at peak hours, the Beit Shemesh-Tel Aviv line runs double-decker trains".

So far no statistics are available regarding any hike in the number of Beit Shemesh-Tel Aviv commuters as a result of the split. Any increase, however, has already come at the expense of some Jerusalem residents, rendering the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv line even less frequented. "I sometimes took the train until they stopped having the direct train," explains Benji, a commuter. "Now I'd have to take the train that leaves at 6:59 a.m. To do that, I'd have to leave my house a little after 6:30 a.m. and I'd get to the train station in Tel Aviv at around 8:30 a.m." Since he doesn't own a car, he opted for the bus. Riding the bus now, he says, cuts the ride to Tel Aviv by about a half hour. "The train would have been an option had they met their schedule before they made the split in Beit Shemesh. I would have taken the train much more often. At that point the extra five, 10 minutes made the time even longer, much too long."

A variety of factors affects commuters' decision to choose between train, bus, or car: economics, scheduling, location of residence in Jerusalem and location of Tel Aviv destination. But unless commuters live right near the start or end point, the length of the ride from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv is likely to reach three hours round-trip door to door, no matter which method is chosen.

Talpiot resident Hillel traveled via bus to, and a train from, his job at an insurance company in Tel Aviv. "The bus took about 80 to 90 minutes, sometimes a bit more. In the rain it took two and half hours, which was crazy. The train coming back always took 80 minutes, but I haven't taken it since they changed it. I couldn't bear to go now that you have to change trains." Fortunately, he received a company car, whose relative value is deducted from his salary, not long before the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv split. But driving a car, he warns, is fraught with its fair share of annoyances. "It's too expensive to drive every day from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and it's a nasty ride - it's long, dangerous and tiring." His experience reveals that during rush hour, a driver is likely to sit in traffic for a minimum of 90 minutes. To avoid a long car ride, he makes a point to travel off-hours, but is now considering moving to Beit

Shemesh, Modi'in or Ra'anana when his lease is up. "If I move to Beit Shemesh I'll take the train every day so I could make productive use of the time, for davening [praying] or working - and meeting people." But some train commuters, like MBA student and Jerusalem resident Temima Taragin, aren't bothered enough by the split to give up on train transport. She still travels via train to her job right near the Hashalom Station. "What I like about the train is that it's very quiet and I like doing my school work. This way I'm not distracted by other things at home - television, shopping. If you're there you might as well make the most of it."

(g). GRAFFITI ATTACK.

On 29.01.2007 the Plasser & Theurer track recorder No.832 was being cleaned of painted graffiti at the Engineering Department mechanical equipment depot right by the Museum at Haifa East. It had been left unattended overnight at Tel-Aviv HaHaganah station and the vandals had descended upon it. Unlike other countries this is not a pronounced anti-social activity in Israel which would probably explain the very crude technique and puerile style displayed by the local louts. Needless to say though, the cleaning process left the track recorder looking disreputable. (P.C.)

(h). JUMBO GRAINS.

On 07.02.2007 G26CW Co-Co 602 was noted on the early trip working to the Dagon grain silo at Haifa Central. This is the first time a 'Jumbo' has been seen on the humble Dagon trip, but the signalman on duty at Haifa East stated that one or two G26CW locos had been so used recently. 602 was recently painted in the multi-coloured mid-1980s livery with black diagonal chevrons/stripes, and was in a particularly clean condition. The loco sported a very large running number in white paint on the cabside, and the number was duplicated (in blue paint!) on the upper corner at the long end of the hood. These number styles had obviously only just been applied, but it is not yet known if this is to become a standard livery alteration. On 08.02.2007 'Jumbo' 604 working freight 315 was also noted at Haifa East in the mid-80's livery with large white cabside number repeated smaller in blue numerals at upper front corner of

long hood. So maybe this is a new standard livery. (P.C.)

(i). RAILWAY 2000

- taken from the www.israrail.org.il website:-

Israel Railways is concentrating all efforts on developing the rail network in the country and improving efficiency. Budgetary allotments to the company have been used to repair tracks, renovate existing equipment, and add the most up-to-date models in rail coaches. The accent is on improved service. At the same time, the Ports and Railways Authority has drafted an ambitious development plan - "Railways 2000" - designed to revolutionize the travelling habits of the Israeli public. When the plan is fully implemented, Israel will join the countries in which railways are the major transportation service - handy, low-cost, efficient, comfortable, and safe. The master plan for rail service development encompasses the twin areas of passengers and goods. The target for 2010 is transportation of 40 million passengers and 15 million tons of goods.

Passenger service - The plan aims to effect a substantial change in Israel's railway system, to integrate it into the public transport system as a whole. Up-to-date rail technology will be combined with public and private motor transport. Most importantly, the plan is based on the improvement of the existing rail network linking Nahariya, Haifa, Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem, and on operating commuter lines in Haifa and the Dan conurbation.

The plan calls for an environmentally-friendly, electrically operated rail system. The first stage of electrification will be on the commuter lines, and the rest of the system will follow.

"Railways 2000's" crowning achievement will be the introduction of metropolitan lines, focused on the central Dan area and on Haifa in the north.

The metropolitan system in the center of the country will be comprised of lines to Netanya, Herzliya, Petach Tikva, Rosh Ha-Ayin, Hod Ha-Sharon, Kfar Saba, Lydda (Lod), Rehovot, Ashdod, Rishon Le-Zion, Ben-Gurion International Airport, and Modi'in.

The northern metropolitan system will have lines to the Haifa Bay area, Acre, and Nahariya; and, going south, to Carmel Beach and Tirat Ha-Carmel.

"Railways 2000" also includes plans to build, together with private entrepreneurs, a multiplex chain of railway platforms, bus and taxi stations,

large parking facilities (operating on the park-and-ride system), shops, business premises, restaurants and cafes. All these will transform railway stations into modern transport centers, attracting shopping and leisure activities.

Bulk freight transportation - The plan rests on the assumption that Israel is entering an era of peace with her neighbors. In a peace-time situation, this country's place on the economic map of the region is on a vital crossroads. Obviously, a prime necessity will be a first-class rail system for transporting goods, with links to ports and to other transport systems at the national, international and regional level."

(j). STATISTICS.

It's always a good question, what one believes and what one wants to believe. But the following is taken from the Israel Railways Website:-

"In 2006 the passenger statistics exceeded 30 Million for the first time. This means a sixfold rise over just ten years. A further rise up to 110 Million is planned by 2017! This rapid expansion will be led by massive investment in the rail network and trains. The number of stations is also constantly rising.

By the end of 2010 the reconstruction of the Israeli rail network from a system based mainly on the Mediterranean coast to one reaching widely into the peripheral areas of the country will be largely completed. This will especially mean the construction of further east-west lines. In the North this means the Trans-Galilee line from the Haifa conurbation to Carmiel; somewhat to the south of this is the so-called Valley Railway linking Haifa with Beit Shean and the Jordan Valley. In the centre of the country Jerusalem will get its new fast link - to complement the slower, barely-used existing line - with the metropolis of Tel Aviv. In the South the Negev desert has already received a rail link in recent years, but the rail network will be further expanded.

The expansion will lead also to a great extension of the length of the rail routes. According to information from Israel Railways at the end of 2006 the network comprised 984 km. - 909 km. main line tracks and 75km. sidings. By 2011 this should rise by around a half to around 1,500 km. (Double-track lines are here counted double.) In 2006 the length of double-track line was 347 km. In the current programme certain lines are not being extended but

doubled. The traffic density on the network is likewise rising. In 2012 there should be 600 trains per day. This would be more than a doubling of the number in 2005, in which on average 290 trains were operated per day. Through the expansion of the system the number of stations will also rise - by the end of the decade it is envisaged ten more stations will be opened.

At the same time the Railway is concerned to improve Punctuality. In the first half of 2006 a punctuality rate of 90% was attained - equivalent to that in Germany. However, the results should be improved even further. To this end the Railway is investing in modern Information and Signalling technology. The increased number of trains should also help to reduce chronic overcrowding and thereby add to improved punctuality statistics.

Here are some passenger statistics from certain years, 1997 - 2017 - in Millions.

1997:	5.6
2000:	12.7
2003:	19.8
2006:	30.3
2010:	65.0 (Planned)
2017:	110.0 (Planned)."

(k). NEW PLANS FOR A HAIFA - NAZARETH LINE.

During his visit at Isra-Rail Co. Ltd. on 29.01.07, Transport and Roads' Safety Minister Mr. Shaul Mofaz instructed the railways' administration to promote the construction of an LRV line between Haifa and Nazareth, to be financed by the private sector.

According to the plans of the Ministry, the Railways, and the National Roads Company, the LRV alignment will run in the median of Highway No. 79, to be built during the next 5 years at a cost of \$179 million.

The promotion of the project by the Railways is in accord with Minister Mofaz' instructions to develop railway services in the Arab sector (in this case in the Galilee) within investments in transportation infrastructures in the North of Israel.

The line will start at Haifa Lev-Ha-Mifratz station, and run through Kiryat-Ata, Kiryat-Byalik, Shefaram, Birel-Makhzur, Reina-Mashhad, with an additional 6 stations to be built at the areas of Nazareth and Upper Nazareth; the line is planned to serve a population of 250,000 people.

The line, to cost about \$238 Million, is not included in the budget

of the Railways' development plan, and therefore the intention is to encourage its construction by the private sector and external financing to be managed by Yefe-Nof Company, which is responsible for the Haifa Transportation Master Plan.

Due to the topography, and the original plan for a heavy rail service, the last station was supposed to be located outside Nazareth; therefore, the LRV (eventually a train/tram) was selected; this is the first time in the Israeli rail history that a combined heavy rail/train/tram project is to be carried out!

Minister Mofaz said: "The new rail link will bring a huge contribution both to the Arab sector and to the North of Israel, as well as for whole of Israel".

(l). COMPENSATION FOR POOR SERVICE FOR PASSENGERS.

The following is a translation of an article in the Israeli most popular newspaper 'Yediot Aharonot' ('Latest News') dated 20.02.07 written by Mr. Benny Barak, their correspondent for transportation and with the newspaper's permission.

The article's headline "The citizen who fights against railway stations" may mislead; it deals mainly with the railway delays, which have recently become an epidemic!

Mr. Israel Peles (58) is a commuter on the line to Beer-Sheva; he leaves his home at the village of Shoham (near Ben-Gurion airport) every morning, rides by car to the station of Lod, boarding a train to Omer (a settlement near Beer-Sheva) where he is the manager of a high level village for old people.

As he describes it, trains - at least on this line - are systematically late between 10 to 26 minutes, particularly after the introduction of the new timetable. Mr. Peles, who has documented all the delays, complained to the railways' administration, but the responses were something between an attempt to get rid of a bothersome passenger or to show that they were fulfilling their bureaucratic duty. Two responses in particular made him angry :

Once a train was suddenly cancelled, and when he told the Station Master that he was stuck with his railway monthly season ticket, it was suggested he take a bus; as a special step he was offered a single free ticket, but he refused, explaining that he couldn't utilize the season; at which point the

Station Master offered to sell him the ticket!

The other complaint was that there are not always public announcements about train departures, and people often board the wrong trains.

He appealed to the Court, demanding compensation of \$711 for the accumulated delays. The Railways from their side did not sit silently, claiming that announcements are not compulsory but are only a good will gesture for the passengers; they added that on most trains, the electronic boards clearly indicate the destinations, so he should take notice. And regarding compensation for delays, the railways claimed that they are committed only from 30 minutes and onwards. But the judge did not have any doubt who is right. In his decision he strongly criticized the railways and their regulations regarding compensations for delays:

"A passenger who goes by train organizes his day according to the timetable; if trains are often late, all the passengers' activities go wrong and should be compensated, even if delays are not exceeding 30 minutes; besides, it seems that the only accurate thing on the railways are the stations' clocks!" Regarding the compensation rules for the monthly free ticket, it was unacceptable that this would be the same for monthly free ticket holders and for single ticket users; the judge did not accept Mr. Peles complaint about cancelling a train suddenly, mentioning the fact that cancellations - particularly due to works on the lines - are announced clearly in the media prior to the date.

The judge finally decided that the railways should compensate Mr. Peles with \$474.

Thus far the article; a consumers' organization called "On the Platform" which represents the railways' clients reports the following:

20% of trains arrive at up to 3 minutes late; 40% at up to 10 minutes; 30% at up to 20%, and the remaining 10% at more than 20 minutes. The railways speak about a punctuality of almost 90%, while even in Europe up to 5 minutes' delay is considered 'On Time'.

Trains are overcrowded particularly on Sundays and Thursdays, when many soldiers are travelling to and from home; the railways promised that delays and overcrowding will be improved once the 86 push/pull coaches ordered from Siemens arrive.

Regarding station stopping patterns, because of the new timetable,

the definition of some trains changes from 'Fast' to 'Pickup', and train drivers (who themselves are confused) forget to stop at stations!

Regarding timings (and changing trains); since the service between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv was split - an IC3 working from Jerusalem to Beit-Shemesh and then a double-deck train to Tel-Aviv passengers have to wait up to 25 minutes, which makes the already long journey even longer!

Although the Railways admit that the new linking of the Beer-Sheva line with the Ben-Gurion airport added 10 minutes to the former journey time between Tel-Aviv and Beer-Sheva, in fact the delays reach 20 minutes; besides which, many complain about the 'punishment' of having to pass through the airport when this is not needed. They don't like the Railways' answer, that this is only a pilot service.

Other complaints refer to the fact that many stations are located outside cities, thus making the passengers dependent on bus services, the operators of which are not always fulfilling the agreements signed between them and the railways; also catering services on board do not currently exist, due to disagreement with the subcontractor, and it is unlikely that this service will be reintroduced soon.

The positive point seen by the consumer organization is the building of grade separations, which will significantly improve safety.

Although the truth may be (in the best case) somewhere in the middle, it seems to be an alarm bell for the railways, who have greatly increased their share in the passenger market, particularly in a country like Israel where the awareness for rail services was almost nil until 17 years ago; It is still very fragile and the public remains loyal only as long as they get a proper service. One hopes that the railways are constantly learning these lessons.

The judge also investigated further the legislation as it applies to railway passengers, and was surprised to find out that the insurance cover for passengers is less good than that for road travellers - though the IR do in fact pay out at the same level as for road victims.

(m). MORE WORRIES & BIDS ON THE NEW JERUSALEM LINE.

On Sunday 11.03.2007 Israel TV Channel 2 announced that the Min-

istry of Transport and Road Safety had decided to stop all works on the A1 route until they had checked the costs. According to this source, at issue was even whether the rebuilt old line to Jerusalem should be checked once again as a possible alternative to the entirely-new line! A quick check with the IR Administration revealed that the Ministry's General Manager Mr. Gideon Siterman had indeed asked for a general re-check, but had been quickly convinced that the whole idea was not realistic.

Only three days later, on 14.03.2007, Israe-Rail Co. Ltd., announced the following in a press release:-

"The Railways have completed the stage of receiving offers from the competing groups for implementation of Section C of the A1 fast link to Jerusalem. The Pre-Qualifying stage had been completed already in March 2006, when the following five groups were selected:-

1. Denya-Sibos of Israel with China Railway Construction Corporation, Beijing, China.
2. Minray of Israel and China Railway First group Co. Lts. of Xi'an P.R. China.
3. Solel Boneh of Israel and E.D. Zublin AG of Albstadtweg, Germany and E. Phil & Sons AS, Denmark.
4. Shafir Engineers of Israel and Alpine Mayreder Bau GmbH of Grees, Germany.
5. Arensen of Israel and Zachokke Construction Ltd. of Switzerland.

In May 2006 the Railways transmitted to these five competitors all the detailed data required for their bids.

Group 5 went out of the game immediately; the other groups submitted their bids and on 13.03.2007 the tenders' box was opened.

The A1 line is in general one of the most complex and expensive infrastructure projects ever carried out in Israel. It will cost \$950M, including the new Jerusalem rail station 80m. under the surface - the upper stages are already under construction. 20km. of double tunnels and 10 bridges, most of which are already complete or nearing completion. Section C is the most complex one and includes Tunnel No. 2 of 1.2km., tunnel No. 3 of 11.6km. and bridge No. 8. On Section B, between Latrun and Shaar-HaGai (Babel-Wad) the Prequalifying is completed.

After checking the offers made by the four competing groups, the Railways will publish the winner. The estimated date for works beginning on section C is in the 3rd. quarter of 2007."

(n). SHERUT TAXIS AS PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

The Association of Taxi drivers has requested that the Railways include them in the unique smart-card programme, claiming that they are operating the so-called 'Service Taxis' ('Sherut') which are in reality mini- and micro-buses and therefore should not be discriminated against.

(o). JEZREEL VALLEY LINE.

The Government has finally decided to start laying track along the Jezreel Valley (now called the 'Peace Valley Line') between Haifa and the Jordanian city of Irbid. This is in addition to construction of a new international airport north of Eilat for the common use of both countries. Both projects will enjoy international financing.

76:05.

TENDERS.

(i). Tender No. TH/SR/06/07: A frame agreement for providing NDT (Non-Destructive Tests) services for rail weldings. The contract is for 36 months, plus optional extension of additional 36 months. Latest bidding date: 26.02.07.

(ii). Tender No. BN/KB/03/07: Installation of a fire fighting line at Hadera West station. Works include: Purchasing and supply of pipes, measuring and marking, pipes assembly, including pipes laying and connections. Implementation time: 30 days. Latest bidding date: 15.02.07.

(iii). Tender No. MC/RC/02/07: Supply of various types of fork-lifts for spare parts store at Haifa Kishon Works. Bids by 28.02.2007.

(iv). Tender No. RC/RS/01/07: An annual framework agreement for current supply of refreshments for the railways offices at Haifa, Tel Aviv and Lod. The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to additional 48 months.

(v). Tender No. HN/KB/06/07: Building a grade-separation at Level crossing No. 53 between road No. 8510 and the Akko - Nahariyya line. The

works in two parts:-

- Structure 11. Design and building the Akko-North level crossing 53.

- Structure 12. Development work at Akko-North level crossing 53. Implementation time 14 months. Bids by 11.03.2007.

(vi). Tender No. HN/KB/20/06: Infrastructure works and laying communication channels at Tel Barukh Junction, on the Tel Aviv-Haifa line. Works include: Preparation and dismantling, earthworks and paving, roadbeds and infrastructures, asphalt works, communication infrastructure works, drainage, temporary entrance for lorries from Ayalon highway at Glihot roads junction, etc. To include the following:-

- Structure 1. Infrastructure works and laying communications channels.

- Structure 2. Laying tracks.

- Structure 3. Direction of works. Implementation time, 5 months; Bids by 14.03.2007.

(vii). Tender No. TH/RC/01/07: A frame agreement for manufacture and supply of dolomite-type crushed stone ballast. The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to additional 36 months. Bids by 15.03.2007. (Later extended to 21.03.2007)

(viii). Tender No. MS/RC/2007/3: Permission to introduce a kosher refreshment stand (ice creams, cold drinks and natural juices) at Tel Aviv Savidor Station. The contract is for 12 months with optional extension of up to an additional 24 months. Bids by 12.03.2007.

(ix). Tender No. TK/KB/01/07: Frame agreement for communication works at grade separations.

Works include: supply and laying of copper wires and optic fibres for communication and signalling, digging channels, installation of concrete channels, pipes, ditches, under-track passages, regie works, etc. The contract is for 36 months with optional extensions of up to additional 12 months. Latest bidding date: 22.03.07.

(x). Tender No. HN/KB/05/07: Building the Tel-Aviv Hahagana station phase 3; including rebuilding of Ayalon river bed. Works include: enlarging the station with construction of steel skeleton, completion of platforms, escalators, elevators, rebuilding the

Ayalon river bed including earthworks, concretes, etc. The works consist of 3 structures:

Structure 01: Hahagana station building phase 3.

Structure 02: Rebuilding the Ayalon river bed between Hashalom and Hahagana stations.

Structure 03: Rebuilding the Ayalon river bed between Exhibition Centre (University station) and Savidor (Central) station.

Implementation time: 16 months in stages. Latest bidding date: 21.03.07.

(xi). Tender No. HN/KB/37/06: Building a grade separation on the road between Kfar-Habad and Tzafariya at level crossing No. 202 on km 12.573 (from Tel-Aviv Savidor station) of the Tel-Aviv-Lod line. Works include: design and implementation of an overhead road bridge, preparatory works and treatment of environment, earthworks, roadbeds, pavements and paintings, drainage, culverts and draining channels, water and sewerage, area rebuilding, lighting, regie, etc.

The works consist of 2 structures:

Structure 11: Design and implementation of the bridge at level crossing No 202.

Structure 12: Development works at level crossing No. 202.

Implementation time: 13 months. Latest bidding date: 20.03.07.

(xii). Tender No. BT/SR/08/07: Frame agreement for providing guards, security services, and security checks at all the railway sites to be provided according to railway needs. The contract is 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Latest bidding date: 19.03.07.

(xiii). Tender No. BN/KB/01/07: Frame agreement for weed cutting and removal services along all railway lines and at all railway sites to be carried out according to railway needs at certain times. The contract is for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 13.03.07.

(xiv). Tender No. NO/RC/01/06. Passenger Information System for I.R. - Postponement of Proposal Submission Date - to 01.05.2007.

(xv). Tender No. NO/RC/02/06. For future Automatic Ticketing Fare Collection Systems for I.R. Amendment to Pre-Requisitions and Postponement of Proposed Submission Date - to 01.05.2007.

76:06.

LIGHT RAIL PROJECTS.

(xvi). Tender No. CA/SR/02/07. Frame agreement for Classification of Manpower candidates for the Railways.

Contract to run for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Bids by 01.04.2007.

(xvii). Tender No. CA/SR/04/07: Framework agreement for Implementation of the Manpower candidates, as clarified above.

Contract for 12 months, optional extensions for up to additional 48 months. Bids also by 01.04.2007.

(xviii). Tender No. MS/RC/2007/06. Permit for introducing a kosher coffee and refreshments trolley at Tel Aviv Universita Station.

Contract for 12 months, with optional extensions for up to additional 24 months. Bids by 29.03.2007.

(xix). Tender No. MS/RC/2007/1. Permit for using a Structure of 478 sq.m. plus an area of 4350 sq. m. at Tel Aviv Savidor (Central) station,

for one of the following services:-

Supermarket or Super-Pharmacy or any similar shop.

Car Rental and Leasing.

Restaurant or Café.

Travel Agency / Camping Equipment.

The contract is for 36 months, plus 45 days for organising, with additional extensions of up to additional 36 months. Bids by 18.04.2007.

(xx). Tender No. MS/RC/2007/5. Permit to use an area of 3537 sq. m. at Haifa Bat Galim station for open car parking only.

Contract for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 24 months. Bids by 19.04.2007.

(xxi). Tender No. MC/RC/01/07. Frame agreement for supply of oils, lubricants and greases for the railways at all sites from Haifa to Dimona.

Contract for 24 months with optional extensions of up to additional 60 months. Bids by 08.05.2007.

(xxii). Tender No. BT/RC/03/07. Erecting 6 mobile buildings at Haifa Bat-Galim and Lod stations.

Bids by 18.04.2007.

(xxiii). Tender No. TK/RC/04/07. Frame agreement for supply of electrical equipment and spare parts.

Contract for 12 months with optional extensions of up to additional 48 months. Bids by 18.04.2007.

A. TEL AVIV Metro/LRV project:

(i). The Tel-Aviv District Court has rejected the claim of the local Council for Design and Building and of NTA (project management) against land owners at Jaffa, to hand over their lands which are on the LRV planned alignment; while the Council said that the land strip is urgently needed for the project, the judge accepted the position of the defenders, claiming that the project's requirements are exaggerated. NTA will now appeal to the Supreme Court.

(ii). The winning group MTS has appointed Mr. Johanan Or as its General Manager. He was formerly responsible for Toll highway No. 6 and a new road No. 431 (currently under construction between Modi'in and Rishon leTzion).

(iii). MTS announced that it had already invested more than \$20M prior to winning the project; this was in response to a court appeal by the competing Metro-Rail grup, which lost.

B. JERUSALEM.

From a press release of 14.03.2007 by the Jerusalem Municipality: Today the Mayor, Mr. Uri Lupolianski, drove the first complete LRV train at Alstom's plant at La Rochelle, France. Together with him were the General Manager of City Pass, the winning concessionaire, Mr. Jacob (Kuki) Edri, the company's Chairman Mr. Yair Hamburger and the municipality's General Manager, Mr. Eitan Meir. The mayor said that Jerusalem is "on the rails, starting today; the LRV will not only improve transportation in Jerusalem, it will also be a model for other cities." So far, around 400m. of track have been laid on Sderot Herzl.

(On March 18th. the Editor was able to see progress along this road - in some sections rails are laid, in some a concrete trackbed has been laid, in some there is no sign of any works at all. Sgements of the bridge and some massive cranes showed that work on the bridge at the entrance to the city is progressing. On the "Kvish 1" road up towards French Hill a short section on the west side of the road showed where trackbed was being prepared. In the city centre itself there is no obvious sign of works, though presumably underground services have been moved in preparation.)

76:07.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL WAGONS.

On 26.01.2007 a G10 goods van that had been standing in the grounds of a Berufschule at Verden-Davelsen, near Bremen, since November 2003, was set on fire - a day before the Holocaust commemoration day. Photos show the metal framework intact but all wood charred or gone. An arson-attack by right-wing extremists is suspected. (The same fate was met by an S-Bahn coach with an exhibition plinthe near Anhalter Bahnhof in Berlin a few years ago, and also one of the original barracks at Sachsenhausen Concentration camp. There are clearly some people still around who don't want certain things to be remembered.)

(b). SOME WW2 LOCO QUERIES. By Paul Cotterell.

File 100/15/44-45 in the IRM Archives is entitled "Budget Estimates 1944-45", but it also includes extraneous happenings which had an influence on these estimates such as some memos headed 'Floods, Accidents and Derailments'. One would not expect to encounter mention of such incidents in a file dealing with budgets but this is explained by a remark in one memo to the effect that the "small token sum in the estimates for 'Floods and Accidents' has already been exceeded ten times", and special arrangements were being requested to cover further such mishaps. Among the incidents listed the following particularly caught my attention.

1. On 9/4/1944 "Engine 9777" and two wagons derailed at "the Bet Nabla [sic] Quarry Siding". There is no problem with No.9777 which was a War De-

partment ROD 2-8-0 later (11/44) renumbered 70777, but I am surprised that one of these engines was sent down the Bet Nabella branch along which eight-coupled locos are not known to have been permitted (see 47:11).

2. On 14/4/1944 "engine No.2720" and two oil tank wagons derailed "on D.G. Points Oil Zone Haifa". I can think of no loco numbered 2720 on PR but the reference to dual gauge (D.G.) might suggest a typing error and thereby provide a solution. If so, then the loco would be HR La Meuse 2-6-2T No.2420 captured in WW1. I have an undated shot taken about the end of WW2 showing this loco minus its front buffer beam and wonder if the derailment noted here might have caused the damage.

3. "Diesel Engine No.6562" was noted as having derailed over "S.G. [standard gauge] turnout No.191 in Loco Yard at Haifa" on 3/4/1944. After some perplexed thought I realized this must be one of the Whitcomb diesels, so turned to the chapter on these locos in the encyclopedic "Allied Military Locomotives of the Second World War" by Rick Turret. As I understand it from a daunting but unavoidable mass of numbers, this loco was originally WD 1562, becoming MEF [Middle East Forces] 6562 and then WD 71562. It is recorded as one of those which went to Italy at the end of the war.

4. No query here but, since they are rarely mentioned in despatches, it is worthwhile recording from File 100/15/44-45 that War Department USA/TC 0-6-0Ts 1267, 1270 and 1297 were all working in and around Haifa during April-May 1944, and all three were involved in minor derailments!

(c). INNOTRANS.

The next major Innotrans exhibition in Berlin will be September 23 - 26th. 2007 - between Yom Kippur and Sukkot.

(d). Re 74:06:g. LAST GASP ON THE VALLEY RAILWAY.

Happen I'm really flogging the proverbial dead horse now, but it just might be worth noting that those governmental "enquiries" of 1952 may have caused a drastic, though temporary, rethink (as governmental "enquiries" are apt to do) among IR management concerning closure of the HR Haifa branch. An unnumbered Hebrew language file in the IRM Archives throws light on this. The title translates literally as 'Survey on turning the Narrow Gauge Railway (1.05m) Haifa - Tzemach to Standard Gauge (1.435m)' and dates from 1955. The file was compiled by Z. Nachmani, Manager of the Technical Office [sic], who was instructed by the GM at the end of 1954 to carry out an "initial investigation" that would enable a general idea only to be gained of the amount and type of work and estimated expenses needed for relaying 'The Valley Railway' to standard gauge "should this be agreed to at a later stage". All very vague of course. Nevertheless, and without going into any detail here, it is pertinent to point out that Mr Nachmani approached his mission with all due gravity and ably carried out his instructions, leaving behind a most professional record of his findings that is clearly presented, surprisingly detailed, and of practical use to historians. Too bad nothing came of it. (P.C.)

76:08.

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. IRAN.

WIENER SCHNITZEL.

This item has only peripherally to do with Iran, but is included as an indication of the dangers of believing any news one hears at all! Many thanks to Klaus Matzka for a copy - it was noted in "Eisenbahn", a magazine which appears in three versions - Austria, Switzerland and Europe. This was in the 'Austria' edition 2/2007, pp. 62f. Some lengthy context is required in this excerpt. (Translation by the Editor).

"The name Alexius Vogel first became prominent some ten years ago. He came from Steyr and was employed in the Construction Dept. of the ÖBB. Some ten years back the Construction office was moved from Vienna West Station to St. Pölten - and he simply refused to move! The office was consequently emptied of everything except for one desk and one chair, and from this time on his main occupation was watering his pot plants. Since it appeared impossible to find any other activity for him within the ÖBB, and there seemed to be no effort made to

end his employment [as a 'Beamte' one is employed for life and it is very hard to be dismissed! Ed.] The appearance of this unoccupied person soon became limited to the collection of his monthly, and not insignificant salary.

For lack of anything better to do Vogel took up activity as a hobby cabaretist and prepared various programmes with themes such as "The Thoughts of a Maverick", "Austria's most Pitiful Citizen" or "All Idiots Together." The television became aware of him and dedicated a programme to this railwayman who had no work to do. Vogel began to feel himself increasingly ignored and as a 'political victim' he offered his services to the "Party of the Oppressed", the FPÖ ['Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs', a right-wing party, Ed.] and became active in the local branch at Donaustadt as well as the FPÖ-associated Trades Union AUF.

This comfortable existence, awaiting the day he could start drawing his pension, came to a close after the change of government in 2000. The FPÖ Transport Minister clearly recognised the enormous intellectual potential of his fellow party member Vogel and entrusted the fellow with some major tasks. In September 2005 Vogel was appointed Manager of the ÖBB subsidiary Austrian Rail Consulting and Construction (ARCC). He had already, in 2004, founded a company for risk-assessment in Transport, with the name 'Risk Assessment Alexius Vogel GmbH.'

With these conditions in place Vogel began various business activities in Asia, which somehow also seemed to have a propaganda link with trips by his fellow FPÖ-politicians from back home, who could then on return boast of the business contacts and contracts that had resulted from the trip. So at the end of 2005 ARCC ordered from the firm 'Nuc' in China a giant X-Ray machine, at a cost of 3.5M. Euros. This should be able to check for suspicious items in railway wagon loads. However, it then transpired that this massive machine was not built in accordance with Austrian norms and was therefore unusable for the ÖBB. The Railways are now attempting to back out of the contract, however the Chinese are warning of an initial payment of 1M Euros being now due.

An additional project "The Silk Road" was worked out, for "the highest railway in the world" in Kirgisien, for which the ÖBB was to deliver the know-how. Vogel developed especial activities in Iran, where he appeared as a sort of ÖBB General Contractor for

provision of railway technology, and amongst others worked on a project "Gorgan - Mashhad" for 4.2 Billion Euros. Eventually there were a total of eleven railway projects under consideration and being planned, and the higher levels of ÖBB management either had no idea of these or were only superficially informed. The final straw was provided by a contract which Vogel apparently signed for the construction of a 780 kilometre Fast Urban Railway in the Greater Teheran area, known as 'Karaj II', and worth \$US 850 Million.

It is unclear whether this deal was struck with the knowledge or toleration of the higher ÖBB management. Right now no-one will admit to having known anything. There is however a letter in existence which indicates that the Board Chairman Martin Huber had already been informed on 2nd. August 2006. It is also known that Vogel had complained to Huber about Alfred Zimmerman, the Manager of the Infrastruktur Bau AG, who as the responsible Manager had refused to countersign and approve the contract. Zimmerman had however approved the purchase of the massive scanner, and this, together with other accusations made against him, led to him being excluded on a vote of No Confidence by members of the Board of Infrastruktur AG on 6th. December. Zimmerman was thereupon immediately sacked by Huber - a move which is, however, only legitimately allowed following a full disciplinary procedure.

The reason why the leadership of ÖBB should react so massively to a construction activity abroad that was previously hardly unknown is perhaps to be found in the political changes following the election of 1st. October 2006. Through these political changes the matter clearly became too hot for certain members of the highest ÖBB management. It became clear that it was now necessary to create as much personal distance as possible from any involvement in this business, for which heavy payments would soon become due and then issues of blame and responsibility would become open for discussion.

The leadership of the ÖBB therefore applied the emergency brake. Apart from the fact that the 850 Million Dollars was well beyond anything anyone had considered, the ÖBB declared itself uninterested in investing at all in this politically-sensitive region. After rumours spread of liability to a sum of 3M. Euros as a cancellation fee, the contract which Vogel had signed was declared as only a prelimi-

nary expression of interest and invalid as Vogel was not authorised to sign such binding contracts of this volume, since this could only be approved by the general Management of the ÖBB. Further, it was ARCC's job simply to stay involved in research projects; it was not meant to be building new railways in Iran.

ÖBB's Manager Huber commenced an internal review and investigation and promised a full and transparent explanation of all that had happened and the persons responsible for these business deals. Vogel's contract with ARCC, which expired on 30th. September 2006, was not renewed. Vogel was taken once more into the personnel of the ÖBB and immediately suspended. A disciplinary procedure will decide upon his future activities and fate with the ÖBB."

The article continues to debate other ramifications of this political scandal and what the various parties and ministers and managers may decide to do!

B. TURKEY.

(i). Drilling Under the Bosphorus.

From Marc Stegemann comes an article in Dutch by Bart Stam, "Fugro explores the bottom of the Bosphorus", from the 'Technisch Weekblad' of 27th. June 2003, translation by the Editor.

"Two road bridges link the European and Asiatic parts of Istanbul, but that has no effect on rail traffic. As far as rail is concerned, the Bosphorus forms a major barrier, and until now train passengers have had to cross by ferry from one station to the other.

The Turkish General Directorate for Construction, a part of the Ministry for Transport and Communications, has now evolved a plan to lay a tunnel for two kilometres under the famous waterway. This tunnel shall be partially bored and partially formed in the middle of sunken pre-formed segments. One interesting detail is that the bored section will begin where the Orient Express used to terminate.

It will require several years still until the construction is ready. Nevertheless, already at the beginning of this year Fugro Engineers have begun an extensive geotechnical and seismic inspection for the chief contractor Avrasya. This is a consortium formed from the Yuksel Proje Uluslarasi AS Engineering Bureau, Pacific Consultants International, and the Japanese Railways Technical Service. The Japanese involvement can be easily explained by the fact that this country has

much experience in boring tunnels through rock formations.

"The Turkish authorities would like to know how firm the ground is, and the sediment layers, and also what sort of earth stability would remain with an earthquake", said Project Leader Frank Gozeling of Fugro Engineers. "Since there has been human activity in this region for thousands of years, there is already a thick layer of rubbish on the seabed. Even before recorded history began there was copper and iron smelting, and they dumped a fair amount of rubbish into the sea. In the middle is a layer of eighty metres. As well as polluted mud there is also sand and gravel that has been deposited.

In January and February the Fugro's Research Ship "Bavenit" made extensive probes along the line of the future railway tunnel. Over a length of 1.6km. the Dutch engineering consultants bored a total of ten holes with advanced geotechnical measuring apparatus, such as a 'cone penetrometer' and a hydraulic system for taking samples. These can then be analysed directly in the laboratory on board.

The average depth of water in the Bosphorus is fifty metres. "That is not so much for the 'Bavenit', which we normally used for deep-water research for offshore companies, up to 300 metres deep, such as in the Gulf of Mexico, the Mediterranean and the ocean off West Africa. Nevertheless the small depth did not mean that this was a simple project. We had to take constantly into account the very heavy marine traffic and the heavy current of four knots", said Gozeling.

The Fugro team on board the 'Bavenit' found a wide variety of geological states. "The deposits varied a lot but were deepest in the middle. Probably before the tunnel is laid a large proportion will have to be dredged away, but that will have to be established when we finalise the analysis."

According to Gozeling the Turkish authorities already knew a lot about the approximate thickness of the sediment layers along the banks, due to tests carried out in 1985 and 1986, but their knowledge of the situation in the middle was limited. "The advantage of the 'Bavenit' is that in just two and a half weeks we can get a lot more knowledge of the constitution of the seabed as well as the chemical characteristics of the sediment, such as the major concentration of heavy metals in the top layers."

As a part of the tests Fugro also had to carry out seismic exploration -

not an unnecessary luxury in a part of the world which is regularly affected by earthquakes. Fugro carried out the project with a total of fifty men on board - as well as the crew, these comprised fifteen geotechnicians and geologists from Fugro Engineers, two workers for Fugro Survey and a staff member from Fugro Milieu (Environment)."

(ii). RAILTOUR CANCELLED.

We have noted in the past that the chances for successful steam-hauled railtours in Turkey are becoming extremely limited. On 25th. January Jim Colley sent us a sad e-mail which demonstrates that other forms of traction can be just as difficult:- "I am sending this mail to everyone who expressed an interest in the Turkey Diesel Tour. Unfortunately, after being let down twice at the last minute by TCDD I decided enough was enough for the time being. I have now got a nice itinerary for a Diesel tour of Ukraine in our own Private train visiting Narrow gauge and Broad gauge lines. We will visit depots and have runpasts and some linesiding. Full details are on my website: <http://www.easteuroperailtours.com>."

(iii). TURKISH RAILWAYS LISTSERVE. Uri Ben-Rehav has drawn my attention to a Listserve Turk-Rail@yahoogroups.com from which the following notes on expansion and alignment works is taken.

"New Malikoy Flyover. When did the new Malikoy flyover open (Between Sincan and Temelli and on to Polatli)? I was unable to get any train to Istanbul late last week: The internet service showed no information, and hence seat availability, for any train. At Sirkeci station there were prominent notices referring to Ankara line trains over several days, but as they were in Turkish I merely assumed that something was happening. I was able to book a seat on Tuesday's Baskent from Haydarparasar and all went well until Eskisehir when E52516 came off and a DE22 and a power car came on. I then noticed all trains arriving from, or departing to, Ankara, were diesel hauled, with power cars. There is always a line-up of locos, each with a power car at Eskisehir. The train was one and a half hours late from Eskisehir to Ankara as there are many, many works under way. Flyovers under construction, a new deviation opened just west of Polatli, and the newly opened Malikoy deviation.

So, today I drove out and cruised the Temelli-Malikoy section and

was rewarded with the 'Dogu Express', DE24-class hauled and Istanbul bound, coming down off the flyover. Photography is interesting as there are concrete overhead poles everywhere. Malikoy station looks like a bomb site. It is completely fenced-off and there are excavations in the old yard. By excavations I mean loaded tip-truck-deep trenches where the new line will run. Presumably there is a foundation issue. I noticed the same works just to the East of Eskisehir. By the look of the Fast Train lines, the silos at Malikoy will have to be demolished. The line does not quite fit past! I then drove to Temelli, again, and had a chat and tea with the crew of a ballast van in their bogie crew van. They were very friendly indeed. The train had run to Temelli, the engine went to the other end, and waited for another train to cross and then headed back towards Malikoy.

For diesel enthusiasts, the Ankara - Eskisehir line is of great interest. I have placed a movie of the DE22 and ballast train on You Tube. Brian Dunn."

(iv). TRACK MEASUREMENT.

The TCDD has purchased a track measurement train from the south-Italian firm Mer-Mec. This is for use on the new high-speed lines and will be used initially on the Istanbul-Ankara line due to be opened in 2008, and which is planned to have a top speed of 250 km/h. ('Lok Magazin' 03/2007 p. 30.)

C. SYRIA.

The DGEG organised a railtour of Syria (already mentioned in earlier issues) - here are some preliminary reports. A fuller report will appear in C.R.J. and no doubt elsewhere in due course. From Richard Bowen:-

"The three standard gauge steam locomotives mentioned on page 223 of C.R.J. Autumn 1992 are still extant - but with detail differences

- One G8 is amongst the scrap at Jibrin (presumably 040-452).

- The G8 outside the railway offices in Aleppo (presumably 040-460) is still present.

The locomotive in the station forecourt at Latakia bears works' plates and a number on the tender only (030-109 Esslingen 2490 1891 - which correspond. There is a 9 or 19 in the motion. But there were Esslingen 2105 1891 plates as well. It was Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie "19".

(The two surviving G8s are of the batch of 25 that went to Syria as

040-451 to 040-475 after 1944. But they do not seem to correspond with the DHP numbers 040 401-448. Has anyone a translation table from DHP numbers to CFS numbers?)

Four of the apparently six Uniloks supplied were seen - but none close enough to photograph or inspect. We noticed three of the SGP railcars supplied for a prestige service in 1967 (two derelict (T5 and T6) at Jibrin and one without windows (T3) at Madan Ekbez.

Four of the CEM locomotives from Ma'an in Jordan are on flat trucks at Jibrin workshops. Oddly Jibrin state that they are not responsible for the maintenance of the similar French 650hp locomotives.

The five-car DMU's from South Korea are arriving - we saw at least 6 and possibly seven; and seven is the number that are stated to have landed. The central three cars are powered and they already have advertised and popular workings to Latakia and Damascus from Aleppo (calling at the goods station at Hama not the main station).

We noticed at Latakia the two service coaches constructed from Hedjaz Railway bodies on standard gauge flat trucks.

Both the Syrian and the Turkish railways have closed or will close sections of the Istanbul - Aleppo route (for serious repair). The Syrian section is subjected to a 40 kph speed restriction at present. We did see one long freight come in from Turkey, the locomotive was towing a crew van around as well.

We were told that there was one (public) train a month to the Iraq border - but details were hard to establish. The station at El Yaroubien is full of trains waiting to get across - one with sugar water running out of it.

Although we made a very successful trip round the works at Jibrin there were no depot visits - though it would have been possible at Aleppo and Latakia and possibly Damascus as well within the given time frame. We also missed some interesting photographs at crossing stations - due to lack of information of what to expect - our Syrian hosts were well geared up for tourism but were not versed in railway matters. I particularly regret not getting an empty phosphate train leaving for the desert with a passenger coach at the head."

D. ERITREA.

From "C.R.J." No. 149, Spring 2007, p.114: "During 2006 four enthusiast groups visited Eritrea, three

from England and one from Germany. The Railway Touring Company group, visiting between 2nd. and 7th. November, found no changes in the motive power. Three Mallet 0-4-4-OT's, 442.54, 442.55, 442.59 were in daily use and 0-4-OT 202.004 performed demonstration shunting on 7th. November at Asmara. At Massawa the track has been reinstated into the dock area, so that the panoramic shot from the roof of the Dahlak Hotel (temporarily closed for complete renovation) is again possible. Drewry 0-6-0D 97 was standing at Mai Atal station in serviceable condition, possibly in connection with the proposal to revive the commuter service at Massawa."

E. DUBAI.

(i). METRO.

From Innotrans Newsletter: "Innotrans 2006 received high-ranking visitors from the Emirate of Dubai, who came to gain an insight into the latest developments in railway technology. "We only learned about this event three weeks beforehand, and then made a quick decision to send a delegation of 30 people", said His Excellency Sheikh Mattar Mohammed Al Tayer, Chairman of the Board and Executive Director of the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) set up just one year ago.

Railway transportation in the small Gulf state is still in its infancy. Dubai's first two metro lines are scheduled to enter service in 2009-10 The delegation was particularly interested in the interiors segment of the trade fair, because in terms of fittings and comfort the new Dubai Metro is intended to set completely new standards both on the trains and at the stations. It was not least with this in mind that the delegation also paid a visit to the new Berlin Central Station.

"The Dubai Metro will be the world's longest driverless metro system", Sheikh Al Tayer announced, with special VIP coaches as one of the highlights. He did not want to reveal at this stage exactly how they would look inside; one would have to wait and see. RTA has commissioned a consortium lead-managed by Mitsubishi to build the new Dubai Metro. The Japanese consortium managed to beat off strong competition from Europe and North America.

In addition to the first two metro lines, further rail projects are already being planned, including a line from the Jebel Ali airports to Dubai that would enter service in 2012. Talks are also under way at central government level in the United Arab Emirates on cross-border rail links."

(ii). MONORAIL.

In C.R.J. No. 149 p.100 - "A 5.4km. monorail is under construction in Dubai with assistance from Osaka, Japan."

F. ETHIOPIA.

Marc Stegeman wrote:-

Our (Dutch) Ministry of Economic Affairs wrote:

"The only railway in Ethiopia runs (681 km) from Djibouti to Addis Abbeba for mixed transport. In 1998 Djibouti and Ethiopia decided to revive this century-old railway; since then Ethiopia has been carrying out repair works."

G. SAUDI ARABIA.

Also from Marc Stegeman and the Ministry website:

"Saudi-Arabia has a very extended infrastructural network, but its logistical sector is inaccessible for foreign companies. Opportunities can be found in projects such as new railroad lines and exporting (second hand) means of transport. The main railway connections are Damman to Riyadh via Al-Kharj and Harah (571 km), and Hofuf to Riyadh (322 km), both by Saudi Government Railroad Organisation (SGRO). See saudirailexpansion.com/index.htm for information on extensions: From 2009, the new "Saudi Landbridge" Jubail via Damman (King Abdul Aziz Port, 115 km) via Riyadh Dry Port to Djedda (Jeddah Islamic Port, 950 km) will improve freight transport between the east and west coasts to take 18 hours (currently 4 days by ship). The existing line Riyadh-Dammam will be improved, including a link with the above-mentioned new lines. For passenger transport (an increasing numbers of pilgrims) the holy towns Mekka, and Medina will be rail connected to Djedda, with a branch line to Janbu. The Saudi Arabian Mining Company (MAADEN) and Saudi Oger Contractors have planned to build a rail connection to the aluminum ore area north of Riyadh."

Marc adds: "Another "Fundgrube" is the archive of saudiaraworld.com on the internet, with free subscription to a beautiful magazine. In their search engine try looking for Railway, Hedjaz, Orient, Express, Trains and their photographic collection linked to those articles. Nice to have a read (if you've got some time to spare)... But HaRakevet readers might be interested."

76:08a

Ex ESR G16 Co-Co 163 at the Railway Museum on March 9th 2003 with ballast wagon 25001 behind. At right ex-PR coach 322 & 3-arm semaphore signal is from Na'an.

Photo P Cotterell.



THE HAMENIA LOCOMOTIVE - AMAZING DISCOVERIES!!! MYSTERIES SOLVED!!!

Paul Cotterell.



This, the only loco known to have been designed and built from scratch in Palestine and Israel, was first featured in *Harakevet* issues 46:21, 47:1 and 47:5:k. The little locomotive was believed lost without trace long ago, **but has now been found!** The story is intricate but, I feel, well worth the telling. So let's go right back to the beginning.

It all started last century, in the early 1990s as I recall. Walter had been researching the papers of Rupert Scrivener who, as we all know, was Chief Engineer of Palestine Railways throughout the Mandate period. Scrivener's papers are in the care of St Antony's College at Oxford University (a general listing of these has appeared quite recently on the Internet). While shuffling through the documents Walter came across a photograph of a very small narrow gauge internal combustion loco hauling a trainload of citrus fruit boxes in an orchard. Nothing was recorded on the print and neither Walter nor I were able to identify the distinctive little loco. And there matters rested for a few years.

The next breakthrough came when Benny Haspel, Archivist at Tel Aviv University, gave me an old Hebrew language magazine published in April 1938, the title of which translates as *Technics & Science*. This issue had a short article and two grainy photographs of a tiny locomotive newly built by the firm of Hamenia in Tel Aviv (this, by the way, is the official transliteration of their name), and the loco illustrated in *Technics & Science* was quite obviously of the same make and type as that in the print which Walter found in the Scrivener papers. The article noted that the loco had gone to Gan Hadar, a location which evaded identification. Now we were getting somewhere!

There were already enough details to hand to write a few notes on the subject for the *Industrial Railway Record*, an article which has yet to be published (and which, in view of recent discoveries, will need instant revision when it does eventually see the light of day!)

Another year or two went by until I came across an illustration of the Hamenia loco in an advertisement in the *Anglo-Israel Trade Journal* of November 1960. This was too good to put on hold any longer, so I wrote up a few outline details in the hope of getting the ball rolling again and these appeared in *Harakevet* 46:21. Uri Ben-Rehav was quick to answer my challenge and he was able to provide another photo and more information in 47:1 and 47:5:k. But then the trail went cold again and no more progress was made for another five years. Not even a long discussion with Ze'ev Engler in the spring of 2005 at the IRM Archives added much to what was already known. Ze'ev is the Managing Director of Hamenia Pumps Ltd and the son-in-law of Meir Kolodny who built the locomotive, and was as anxious as I to find out more.

However, in the meantime, a memo had been turned up in File 123.6/392 at the IRM Archives, the relevant extracts of which are as follows:

On 9th July 1937 the PR Commercial Manager wrote to the Chief Engineer:

"In connection with the export of oranges from Niana Station the 'Yakhin' Agricultural Contracting Co-operative Association Ltd. of Tel Aviv have asked for the following:-

- 1). Lease of two rooms in the station building for storing orange boxes.
- 2). Permission to run a decauville railway from their ground to the station yard...

As regards (2), the decauville line will, I understand, be clear of our lines and there is no objection to the request..."

Next day the Chief Engineer replied:

"Niana falls within the category of 3rd class station in so far as classification for land rental is concerned and the rate at which rent should be paid for land occupied by a decauville line is £P.7.500 mils per 100 square me-

tres per annum... I suggest the use of the formula:- Length of decauville track on Railway property - including any loop or turnout multiplied by twice the width of a decauville wagon such as the company intends to use".

And that is all the correspondence on the matter in the file. Not much to go on, though there are some useful hints of procedure. I did not place any particular importance on the above details and there was certainly nothing to relate them to any possible connection with the Hamenia loco. I had not heard of such a proposed Decauville line before and, in the absence of any corroborating evidence, doubted that it was ever laid. But it was definitely something to file away at the back of my mind for future reference, and I even prepared a tentative article for *Harakevet* on the subject.

Then, in October 2005, came **The Big Breakthrough** and, as sometimes happens, it was caused by the slightest of coincidences. It happened during a tour of the 'Valley Railway', yet another trip along the old HR Haifa branch to seek out and view and discuss the many remains to be seen. It was just a chance remark, purely fortuitous, but it rang a bell loud and clear. One of the group casually mentioned Kibbutz Na'an which is just to the west of the original PR Niana station (once known as Na'aneh in Hebrew). Did she, I asked, know anything about a little railway there? She did not but suggested I speak with Akiva Ronen, another participant in the tour who had once lived on Kibbutz Na'an. He, too, was unable to give any details of a narrow gauge line there but promised to make enquiries. A couple of months later he came good on his promise. I should contact Chava Enoch, the archivist at Na'an. I did so immediately. Yes, there had indeed been a little railway there, and she kindly e-mailed me a selection of old photos to prove it. These showed that the line, of 60cm gauge, had been laid between an orchard and the main line station of Niana - thus proving that my doubts about that 1937 PR memo in the IRM Archives, quoted above, were unfounded. The photos also showed that the line had been operated by three

different types of motive power. In some of the prints a single loaded flat wagon was being manhandled, in others a light train of one or two loaded flats was hauled by a mule. But other prints showed that longer and heavier trains were powered by a little loco. **It was the Hamenia locomotive!!**

I had barely recovered from the rush of a d r e n a l i n brought on by this discovery

when I opened another e-mail sent by Ilan Ucko, also of Kibbutz Na'an, who had been alerted to my interest. There was, he informed me, a little locomotive and a few wagons on display in the kibbutz. The loco had been considerably altered from its original appearance, he added, and was just an outdoor attraction for the kibbutz children. Another large dose of adrenalin! Could this possibly be the Hamenia loco? There was, of course, only one way to find out. Several phone calls later a visit had been arranged and on 20th December 2005 Evyatar Reiter picked me up at Ramla station and off we drove, full of anticipation and nicotine (the latter to counteract too much of the former, you understand), to Kibbutz Na'an.

The loco had acquired a dummy steam outline, buffers, artificial front pony axle and cowcatcher/pilot, but it was the Hamenia locomotive alright. It was even possible to make out some details in the gloomy confines of the 'boiler' which, with the added cab, had helped to preserve the remains of the actual loco underneath in good condition. There was an engine casing with the notation in large letters: ORIGINAL SLAVIA = RAPID (the article in *Technics & Science* described the engine as of 1 hp [sic!] and fuelled with petrol or paraffin). On the gear box cover Evyatar made out a Chevrolet emblem and we were just able to discern the number 590328 as well. Evyatar later searched the Web for more information on these findings and told me that Slavia had been taken over by Skoda, but was unable to discover more about



The Hamenia loco with a heavy train on the way to Niana station.

Photo: Kibbutz Na'an archives

any Chevrolet connection. When Meir Kolodny began building his loco (possibly as a private joint venture with M. Amitai or more likely in response to a firm order from the 'Yakhin' Co-operative) he is reputed to have scavenged suitable spare parts from the British army base at Sarafand (Tzrifin), and the unlikely conjunction of the Slavia and Chevrolet names tends to bear this out.

Having photographed and inspected the loco from all angles (see rear cover) we took ourselves off to the kibbutz archives where Chava pulled out a cardboard box containing some thirty old photos of the Decauville line. Another rush! They are a quite amazing collection, giving a comprehensive insight into the line's operation and include some cracking shots taken at Niana station (the main building of which is still standing, though somewhat altered from its original appearance and now derelict). These photos show that the 60cm gauge end-of-track was laid between the station building and the standard gauge main line, and that there was a small wagon turntable installed on the station premises which gave access to a short siding adjacent to the north end wall of the station building.

While the photos were pored over, and some copies made, Chava phoned around to a couple of other veteran kibbutznikim who were able to add some background information, though memories had faded by now. The narrow gauge line was said to be less than two kilometres long; *Technics & Science* gives about 4½ kilometres. It had

stopped working around 1945 was one opinion. No, it was still in use after 1948 was another. There was general agreement, however, that the loco had been dumped in local woodland before being extracted for eventual display at the kibbutz, but a date for this was not forthcoming. Chava herself was able to clear up one mystery. Gan Hadar was the name of a nearby neighbourhood, so now we knew the location mentioned in *Technics & Science* and could solve the queries on the matter posed in 46:21 and 47:5:k. (Gan means garden, park or orchard. Hadar has several disparate meanings, but in this context would almost certainly mean citrus fruit).

News of the discovery spread at lightning speed and, just the day after our visit to Na'an, Amith Ben-Shalom and Ze'ev Engler arrived breathlessly to view the loco. I am told that Ze'ev was much moved and eager to secure it for renovation and possible public exhibition somewhere. Amith has since followed up on the Slavia/Skoda angle and found some general background information. He also tells me that further contact with Kibbutz Na'an, and a concerted search by folks there, has even resulted in the discovery of a short clip of 8mm home movie showing the light railway at Gan Hadar!

So that, in concise outline ("on one leg" as they say in Hebrew), is the story up to early 2006. Doubts and queries remain of course. A couple of photos strongly hint at the presence of at least one line of noticeably less than 60cm gauge laid between the rows of fruit trees in the orchard along which

the freshly picked fruit in open boxes was pushed by hand on some sort of tiny trolley or flat wagon (hidden under the pile of boxes) to a small packing station nearby. Here the fruit was repacked into closed boxes labeled SUNLIT and then taken by mule or the Hamenia loco to the PR station for hand-loading onto a main line train for onward transport. Scrutiny of layout plans at the IRM Archives, along with maps and aerial photos at Kibbutz Na'an, has failed to find any trace of the narrow gauge route from Gan Hadar to Niana station. One particular lingering doubt concerns the reference in 47:5:k to the Hamenia loco being acquired for the Kalmannia farm near Kfar Sava. I find it very difficult indeed to imagine the loco having worked in two quite widely separated locations, and all the available evidence points to it only being at the Gan Hadar orchard. Could the Kalmannia legend be a muddled account and the mention in it of the Berl-Katznelson Foundation be a red herring? It might be relevant to note here that there is a Bet Berl at Na'an. Unless, just possibly, there were **two** Hamenia locos, one going to Kalmannia and the other to Gan Hadar/Na'an. There is absolutely no known evidence for such a scenario, but perhaps someone might like to try his luck in this direction?

For now it remains to thank all the people named here (and some who are not) for their contributions towards the most remarkable discovery of the Hamenia loco and the obscure little line on which it worked. It has taken nearly fifteen years to get this far - and there may well be yet more details to uncover methinks.

Note: In the opening sentence I described the Hamenia loco as the only one to have been designed and built from scratch in Palestine and Israel, but there is a possible problem of definition here. The Palestine Potash Ltd at Sodom on the Dead Sea assembled something weird and wonderful for their 60cm gauge railway. Theo Pelz first put me on to this many moons ago - a home-built Caterpillar powered loco he called it. I eventually came across a poor quality photo in the Central Zionist Archives of what I assume to be this contraption. It shows a bulky and cumbersome looking vehicle, but part of its front end is cropped out making identification difficult. I do not think, however, that this could properly be described as being built from scratch, still less designed, though I cannot define it precisely either. Some sort of



One horsepower locomotion for one loaded flat wagon of citrus fruit arriving at Niana station from Gan Hadar. The standard guage main line of PR is glimpsed at bottom of picture.

Photo : Kibbutz Na'an archives

'bitsa' (ie. bits and pieces) perhaps: it looks as though a large engine, presumably Caterpillar, has been mounted on a wagon and a crude transmission (chains probably) rigged up. The Hamenia loco also seems to have been put together at least partially from available bits and pieces, but the article in *Technics & Science* stated that it had been built in conjunction with the "technical office" of M. Amitai of Tel Aviv (rather than merely cobbled together) and was intended to be a progenitor of larger and more powerful diesel engined examples which, in the event, were evidently not built (the outbreak of WW2 may have halted further building). This suggests at least some measure of design work which, I feel, makes the Hamenia loco unique.

The Technics & Science article: In order to make this item as complete as possible it is necessary to include a translation of this article which appeared in the issue of April 1938. The Hebrew, particularly technical terms, is often outdated and difficult to translate with precision.

A PALESTINE-BUILT PULLER FOR A NARROW RAILWAY.

76:10

Ing. M. Strauss.

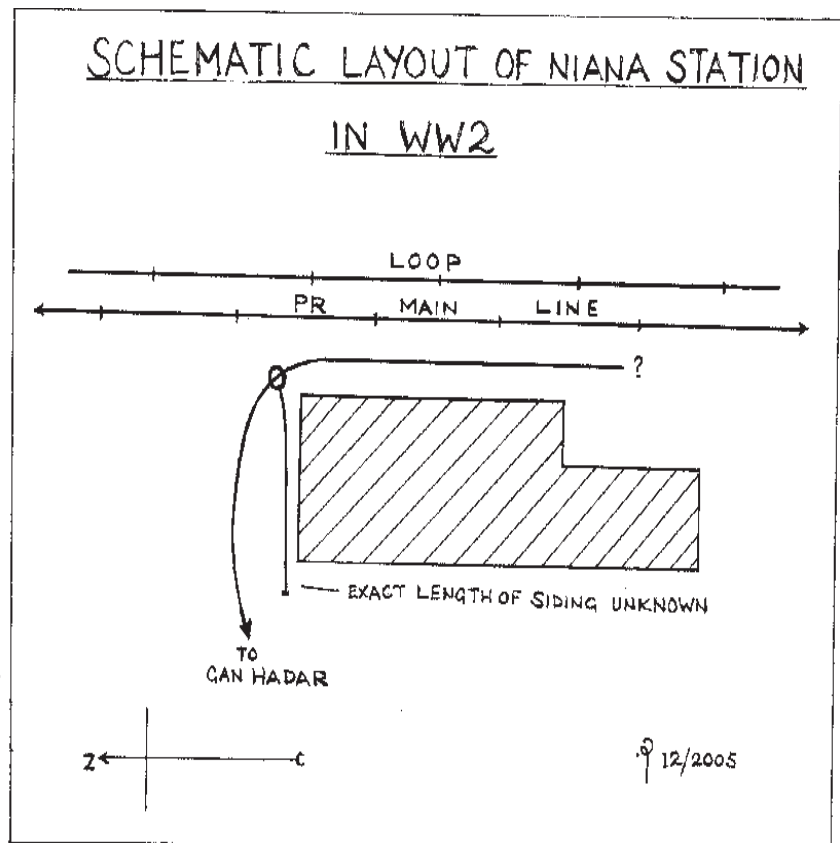
In large orchards the transport of fruit or of packed cases to and from the packing station swallows up a high percentage of the expenses. In order to ease transportation the system of narrow gauge rails has already been introduced to orchards, with the wagons being pulled by horse power or by labourers pushing them by hand. Efforts have been made lately to mechanize the work in this branch, similar to the citrus fruit industry abroad, including the transportation.

The question of the puller [sic], or the "locomotive" as is usual to call it, is especially important for our orchards because of the narrow space left vacant for movement [between the rows of trees] and because of the layout of rails already existing in most of the orchards, where light rails are laid with curves of small radius suitable only for slow and light [loads] movement. Last year the technical office of M. Amitai, in partnership with "Hamenia" in Tel Aviv, began constructing a vehicle (puller) that would suit requirements in the country. It was received for trial in the Gan Hadar orchards (cultivated by "Yakhin"), where the rails are laid in the manner described above which is not ideal for vehicular transport. It was feared that the puller together with the wagons loaded with fruit would not pass

through the narrow curves. In fact the trials were entirely successful and the puller passed over the whole route (about 4½ kms), which is partly uphill and has numerous curves, in a most satisfactory manner. The vehicle [sic] was purchased by the owners of the orchard and it is working there successfully.

... A framework of metal girders and a thick metal plate are used as the base for the complete vehicle. The parts are: the engine, transmission, gear box and gear wheels [lit. toothed-wheels] for changing the direction of travel. Drive is by chains to both pairs of driving wheels, and the whole weight of the vehicle is carried on 4 strong springs mounted above the wheel axleboxes. The gear box allows 4 speeds in forward and in reverse, so there is no need to turn the vehicle when it reaches its destination. The driver sits in the middle of the vehicle facing across the vehicle and sees the railway in both directions. All the necessary controls are within reach... At his right is the speed control stick [regulator], to his left the stick for changing direction [reverser], in front of him the wheel for the brakes which operate on all 4 driving wheels, under his right foot - the transmission pedal [clutch] which, together with the gear box, operates as in an ordinary vehicle (automobile). The vehicle's axles are all equipped with roller bearings. The puller is fitted with a "Slavia" petrol [or paraffin] engine of 1hp [sic!] which rotates at 1500[rpm]. Fuel consumption is at the rate of 2½-3 gallons of petrol every 8 hours. The engine is equipped with an automatic rotation arrangement [sic - a governor?], and the driver is relieved of monitoring the engine speed. Total weight of the vehicle is 1 and a quarter tons and maximum speed is 8½ kms per hour. Minimum speed is 1½ kms per hour. At maximum speed the puller hauls 6 wagons loaded with fruit on a straight and regular [sic - presumably level] line, ie. about 8 tons.

The builders of the puller described are now also planning the construction of larger and more powerful vehicles for narrow gauge rails, with diesel engines (instead of petrol engines), which will be suitable for industrial requirements as well.



76:11:

KIRYAT HAROSHET HALT.

Paul Cotterell.

Sabo Yona.
Kiryat Haroshet.
Haifa.

19.8.1936.

"Railway Administration,
Haifa.

Dear Sirs,

I request from the Railway Administration, Haifa, to give the permission to build on your land a restaurant, with the dimensions [sic] of 4x4 meters, and a waiting room also of 4x4 metres. I also desire to be given the right to sell railway tickets, if the Administration will allow to do so. The place for which I am requesting this is Kiryat Haroshet.

All the residents of the colony Kiryat Haroshet desire to have a station and a waiting room, where there is no sun or rain. In other words, my request is the request of the residents of "Kiryat Haroshet".

I shall build the waiting room for the passengers on my own account.

I hope that the Railway Administration will fulfil my application.

Yours Faithfully,

Sgd./ Sabo Yona.
Kiryat Haroshet."

This disingenuous little letter surfaced all alone at the IRM Archives, without benefit of a file. I do not think that PR would have agreed to such private enterprise on its property, even if it were getting something for nothing. A halt was eventually built at Kiryat Haroshet, on the narrow gauge HR line south west of Haifa, and not too long after this letter received. So perhaps Sabo Yona, while probably having his request turned down by the heartless and faceless Railway Administration, could take comfort in the knowledge that he may have kick-started PR into building a very modest shelter at his local 'colony'. And he would doubtless be gratified to know that the shelter is still there. Too bad about the trains, though."

THE DESERT RAILWAY.

by Brendon Judd. pub. Penguin Books (New Zealand) 2004.

The role played by railways in the Second World War still tends to be somewhat overlooked. Good historical arguments can be made for the catastrophic German defeat in the Soviet Union being the result of inadequate planning and provision for the rail transport of supplies, reinforcements, wounded and others so that the initial successes became bogged down in a hopeless defensive position from which there was no way forward - only back. There were not enough lines, locomotives were unprepared for the local conditions - the cold, the water supplies, the fuel supplies, the lack of servicing and repair facilities - and by the time these problems were officially acknowledged and addressed, it was already too late. The Trans-Persian Railway provided a vital 'Back Door to Russia' for a steady stream of military supplies from the Persian Gulf to the Soviet border. And without the Western Desert Railway and its Extension Railway along the North African coast, it is doubtful whether the British 8th. Army would have been able to halt Rommel and his Afrika Korps. The result would have been a German invasion of (a willing) Egypt, severance of the Suez Canal, probably a sweep up through Palestine and Syria and Turkey to link up with the Wehrmacht in the Ukraine - and a very different war indeed.

But the fact was that, thanks to improvisation and determination, railwaymen were sometimes able to turn the tide of war, delivering the vital goods at the right time and to the right place. And this book is (as its subtitle states) a tribute to the men of the New Zealand Railway Group. It grew out of an MA thesis produced at Massey University by a serving NZR Railwayman, who was given all possible assistance by members of the "Desert Railway Committee", themselves survivors of this military group who, within the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force, served from 1940 to 1943 in this theatre. The result is an historical overview of academic quality, backed up by first-hand accounts and with a railwayman's eye for details of operations - a magnificent combination.

When the war started Britain requested from New Zealand several railway survey, construction and operating units - Judd details the complexities and the sequence of these units and

includes important information, usually lacking in such histories, of the way their military service affected the men, their families and their subsequent careers - so often those who stayed at home benefited professionally whilst those who served overseas lost out in terms of seniority. Indeed, throughout the account, clearly based on personal memoirs, there is much detail on pay, leaves, transports, recreation, incidents of discipline (and indiscipline), relations with the Egyptians, and more - all from the perspective of the serving soldiers.

The Railway Group comprised the 16th. and 17th. Railway Operating Companies, and a Construction & Maintenance Company - a total of 40 Officers and 1368 Other Ranks, all volunteers. Since they were occupied in essentially their civilian occupations they were classed as 'Non-Divisional' and not directly under the 2NZEF HQ. In August 1940 they left Wellington for Egypt, arriving at the end of September for training at Maadi Camp. This included learning the idiosyncratic ways of the Egyptian State Railways, as well as construction and demolition methods. The 10th. RCC started active service by building pillboxes rather than railway lines - the 'Rabone Line' named after their commander - before surveying the Extension Railway from Similla, near Mersa Matruh to Belhamed, near Tobruk. This involved surveying a climb up the coastal escarpment with curves and gradients easy enough for the unbraked ESR stock. Work began on 4th. October 1940, hindered by inter-tribal rivalries between the various Egyptian labourers employed. The 16th. ROC was then deployed to El Dabaa for a period, and the road journey through Cairo and Alexandria is described in detail. They operated the El Dabaa - Mersa Matruh section (86 miles) and initially there were political problems involving the ESR, Egypt itself being technically not at war with the Axis, so the NZ troops had to 'shadow' ESR staff. Other operating problems were of course water supplies and constant enemy air attacks, again described in some detail, the need to ensure relieving engines were punctually prepared and available, and the Khamsin wind and accompanying sandstorms.

The 17th. ROC then began operations from Burg el Arab, some 40 miles west of Alexandria. A chapter is devoted to the issues of locomotive water requirements, before the British

advance to Tobruk, Benghazi and beyond of December 1940 - at which point some of the NZ men were detailed to operate the narrow-gauge lines to Sollum and Barce. The WDER was used for transporting thousands of Italian POW's, some of whom were killed in accidents or 'friendly fire' from attacks from their own side.

Rommel arrived in Tripoli in January 1941 and in March began the counter-attack. Benghazi fell and the narrow-gauge lines had to be destroyed by the RAF, and some of the NZ men, operating the port, became a part of the besieged Tobruk garrison.

A chapter is devoted to some of the air attacks and tragedies suffered by the railwaymen - such as on 7th. July 1941 when a train of troops heading on leave was raked with machine-gun fire, the ESR crew and NZ fireman killed, the NZ driver severely wounded. On 25th. October a freight train hit an unlit petrol train stabled on the main line near Fuka, another railwayman being killed. Both were initially buried at Maaten Baggush, their bodies being later transferred to the El Alamein military cemetery. Later in October German aircraft attacked two trains, one of petrol and one of ammunition, standing at Fuka station, both being totally destroyed and the line requiring major reconstruction. Many other examples of bravery and devotion to duty whilst under attack are described. A survey party was caught up in the Greece debacle of April 1941, and the 17th. ROC were then moved back to Geneifa to work in the Suez Canal area, with a detachment continuing to Afula to work on the former Hedjaz. lines in Palestine.

From May 1941 the 10th. RCC. with Indian Pioneers began serious construction of the "Extension" Railway from Similla for 92 miles to Misheifa, 'the oven of the desert', via Mohalifa and 'Charing Cross', where Major Anderson developed the 'balloon loop' type of depot, to minimise risk of extra damage from air attack. Up to seven trains a day carrying 4000 tons of supplies could be brought to this new rail-head - the transport of tanks from Suez alone saved an enormous amount of tank transporters, fuel, rubber and general wear and tear.

Construction continued, despite vagaries of supply of track components, not all of which were compatible. During a typical working day 2000 sleepers were laid, 350 rails laid onto them, thousands of holes were drilled, 8000 dog spikes driven and 1400 bolts inserted. Some 400 tons of track materi-

als needed to be brought daily from the supply dumps. Nevertheless, in a 12-hour shift the line could be advanced 2 miles a day. Misheifa was reached on 5th. November 1941 though other works were required to make the line fully operational - nevertheless it was ready in time for the 'Crusader' campaign. Dummy railheads were also built as decoys, attracting maybe 80% of the German bombs, and a poignant message scrawled onto one unexploded bomb revealed that slave labourers in German munitions factories had managed to sabotage a proportion of them.

In November the line was pushed forward further towards Fort Capuzzo - operations being further hindered by khamsin and aerial attacks, and a rudimentary form of signalling had to be developed and installed, much improvisation being called for. From April 1942 work started on the 72 miles from Capuzzo to Belhamed (reached on 31st. May). The Luftwaffe continued concentrated attacks, on occasion Fieseler Storch planes even landed and demolition experts attacked the tracks! It was clear what value the Germans perceived in this supply line.

In May 1942 Rommel attacked again and the British were pushed back along their own line; the New Zealanders were now responsible for doing their best in the time available to evacuate what they could and make the tracks and equipment unusable for the Germans. Tobruk finally fell on 21st. June. The Construction Co. was now sent north to the Levant to help construct the Haifa-Beirut-Tripoli line whilst the 17th. ROC was held at Amariya awaiting the next swing in the War's progress. During the 'Flap of '42' when it seemed as though Cairo would fall the railwaymen were switched to security duties as Egyptian sabotage was feared. But as plans were laid for a counter-offensive the importance of the railway for supplying the 8th. Army became once more significant. (And Italian frogmen tried to sabotage it!) In October the Battle of El Alamein saw the start of the counter-push, with a breakthrough on 2nd. November into Western Egypt and Libya. Construction gangs repaired the line and the operating crews got the trains running again, through the hundreds of miles littered with burnt-out wreckage, temporary graves and unburied corpses. Now American Whitcomb diesel locomotives also became available, plus inexperienced American railwaymen! With Tripoli captured in mid-January 1943 and available as a port, the pressure on the railway line eased off considerably, and 16th. OC were relieved by the Indian 115th. ROC, returning to Maadi Camp. 17th. ROC remained in the desert until after the winter, being then relieved by the British 193 Rly. Optg. Coy. RE. in March 1943. By this time manpower shortages back in New Zealand were creating major difficulties - with 27% of the railway staff in military service - and there was pressure to disband and return these units to New Zealand. The German surrender at Cap Bon in Tunisia on 10th. May 1943 formally ended the North African campaign, and from June onwards the men were shipped back home.

There is a full listing of all men who served in these units, plus a listing of those who died on active service, and the book serves as a worthy memorial to them and their efforts. In fact, the only thing really wrong with this book is the cover. Amazingly, Penguin has taken a map of Palestine, Sinai and North Africa, nicely superimposed with an 8F, but it is a pre-war map which does not show the Western Desert Railway, the Western Desert Extension Railway and the Haifa-Beirut Tripoli Railway!! (Such a map does appear on p.64). The map of 'Railways in Palestine in 1939-1945' is also rather fanciful, even if some of the imaginary lines are at least described as 'abandoned'. There is an Index and Bibliography.

In short - well worth purchasing, for the insights it gives into military railwaying in difficult times, and the men who performed what had to be done. ISBN 0 14 301915 5, 328 pages.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO P CLASS LOCOS

by Paul Cotterell.

This is the working title to File Kaf/27/40 in the IRM Archives. The file is very thin but does throw up an apparent shortcoming of the P Class 4-6-0s which, seemingly, was only addressed late in their careers. Evidently in March 1952 (the file is confused on this and other points) a suggestion was made to add "safety valves" to front and rear of the cylinders of the P Class, following "many instances" of the "main rod" buckling when water had collected in the "piston". The Hebrew phrasing in the memos for the different parts of the locos is not clear, but my understanding is that cylinder drain cocks were being suggested as water build-up in the cylinders had caused the connecting rods to bend. The suggestion was immediately accepted and the work carried out (on all the P Class?) by 19/2/53, the date of the last memo in the file.

It seems difficult to argue with the evidence of File Kaf/27/40, vague though it be, but were the P Class really built without cylinder drain cocks? Surely these would be standard fittings for main line engines of the mid-1930s. The photo on page 53 of my book shows what appears to be rodding under the cylinder which I presume was used for operating drain cocks, and the shot on page 54 shows plenty of steam escaping from beneath the cylinder, indicating the presence of cocks. Perhaps the IR alterations were a conversion following persistent troubles with the original drain cocks layout.

Whatever the actual facts of the matter, this alteration would have been of short duration. The P Class only worked for a few years on IR. As a class they were among the last returned to service after 1948, and were the first steam locos to be withdrawn as the diesels were introduced and quickly took over their passenger duties.

Postal problems

Due to problems with postage, - many items mailed to Israel seem to disappear, and costs are increasing - we should like to offer as an alternative, an "electronic subscription" to Harakevet. If you choose this method, the magazine will be mailed to you as a .pdf file. If you are interested in this possibility, please contact

Steve Waldenberg on:

cpsairedale@ntlworld.com

with your e-mail address and of course your name and address.

EGYPTIAN LOCOS ON ISRAEL RAILWAYS.

Paul Cotterell.

Evyatar Reiter has gone through some files at the IRM Archives which contain Incident/Accident Reports concerning relatively minor breakdowns with locomotives at work in the late 1950's, towards the End of Steam on IR. These reports are entirely routine, but several of them do allow us a unique insight into the Egyptian locomotives captured during the Sinai Campaign of 1956 and put to work on Israel Railways. Building details of these ex-ESR locos can be found in 'The Railways of Palestine and Israel'. I have extracted the pertinent points of each relevant Report, and present them below, loco by loco. Steam Locomotives.

Loco 546.

(a): 12/12/1957. Rehovot station shunting loco 546 broke down in the station at 10.50 hours, repaired at 11.20 and failed again at 11.30. At 11.55 the driver reported he was unable to continue shunting work. Arranged with Lod shed that 546 would return to Lod with the trip train and that another shunting loco be sent to Lod. [Reason for failure is given as "Shever shel Zenur haHapachah" - I have been unable to discover what haHapacha means, but it was a broken pipe or tube of some description.]

(b): 17/2/1957. At 18.30 the driver of shunting loco 546 at Rehovot reported the loco a failure, and was unable to continue shunting, and requested an assisting engine. [SAFB diesel] 103 was sent from Lod at 19.00, left with the trip train at 19.50, failed loco sent with train 156. [Reason for failure of 546 given as leaking tubes.] [An insight into how quickly a diesel could be prepared and sent out in an emergency. Ed.]

(c). 13/10/1957. Driver of train 202 reported from Tel Aviv Darom that his train had stood at Km. 5 because of lack of steam. He arrived at Tel Aviv arrival platform at 09.22 and loco failed again for the same reason. Train arrived at station at 09.30. Replacement loco [8F 2-8-0] 70308 worked passenger train 201. [It seems obvious that train 202 was a passenger working. If so, this is the first documentary evidence that these ESR locos hauled passengers in Israel.]

Loco 577:

(a): 11/2/1957. Shunting loco 577 failed at Lod station. [No further details recorded.]

(b): 2/5/1957. Trip working Tel Aviv Tzafon [Benei Berak] - Lod from 1/5/57 left Rosh HaAyin at 01.45 was delayed by loco trouble and arrived Lod 04.15, 115 minutes late. The trip working was operated by loco 577 hauling 52 [axles ?]/462 tons. [No further details recorded.]

Loco 613:

30/12/1957. At 21.00 the Petah Tiqva shunting loco 613 failed at Tel Aviv Tzafon [Benei Berak] with blocked oil feed pipe and was unable to haul the trip working to Lod. The second trip was cancelled and the loco sent dead with the first trip.

Diesel Locomotive.

Loco 4239 ('Abdul Nasser').

21/1/1957. A bad day for 4239.

At 11.00 shunting loco 4239 stopped working in the oil zone because of lack of fuel. Assisting loco [LMS 8F 2-8-0] 70388 left Haifa at 11.48 and returned at 12.00 with the disabled loco. 4239 was refuelled and returned to the Operating Dept. at 14.00.

It was soon in trouble again.

At 23.20 the marshalling yard shunter 4239 failed with an air brake problem and went on to the loco shed for repairs being replaced by [USA 0-6-0T] No. 22.

[In Addition: A short accident report has been turned up at the IRM Archives which throws a brief ray of light on another of these engines. The report was among unnumbered files labelled 'Engineering Diary' and translates as follows:

"Subject: Derailment on Army Siding at Tzrifin [Sarafand] on 30/12/1958.

As steam loco No. 550 propelled an empty wagon into track no. 10 on the supply base siding at Tzrifin, and the loco was about 40 metres from the siding gate, both the leading wheels of the tender derailed."

No. 550 was North British Locomotive Co. works number 23687 of 1928. Noteworthy is the date of the derailment: just a couple of months before the official end of steam working in Israel. This is also the only glimpse we have seen so far into movement at the Tzrifin/Sarafand army base.]

Notes:-

Not a great deal can be concluded from the above extracts, but they do show that at least three of the captured ESR steam locos were employed by IR for a time. One gets the impression that they were in pretty poor shape and were being used until a major fault happened, when they would probably have been dumped. There is no known evidence of them being overhauled at Qishon Works and, in view of the run-down of steam on IR, I doubt that they were given more than minor repairs and routine maintenance on shed. I have a photo, evidently taken soon after the Israeli occupation of the Sinai Peninsula in 1956, showing one of these ESR 2-6-0's (either 550 or 607) badly shot-up by cannon-fire. It would undoubtedly have been considered not worthwhile to repair it for further very limited use on IR."

76:15.

THE BEERSHEBA STATION AIR RAID OF 1917.

Previous mentions of this raid, its tragic results and the plaque on the old (Turkish) station at Beersheba have been made. Now a very comprehensive and informative article by Oded Israeli and Josef Grinboim has appeared in 'Eretz Magazine', June/July 2004, p. 41-44. (We have mostly retained the American orthographic style.)

"On a small plot opposite the old cemetery of Beersheba stands a large concrete bench with an inscription on its side that reads: 'Common grave of people who who were killed at the time of an aerial bombardment in the world war, 20th. of Tevet, 5677, 1917.' Nine names are listed on the bench: Devora Kermin, Haim Kermin, Yehiel Kvitnik, Avigdor Miller, Michael Kermin, Shmuel Gross, Yona Friedman, Reuven Sorokin, and Sarah Dina Brodtkin.

Deciding to find out more about this incident, we had no trouble obtaining general information. The following account, for example, appears in 'Forty Years of Jewish Settlement

in Gaza and Beersheba and the Founding of the Ruhama Farm', by Mordechai Elkayam, son of Rabbi Nissim Elkayam, who plays a large part in this story:

'On Tuesday, January 15, 1917 [that date actually fell on a Monday - note by authors], after all of the contractor Katinka's laborers had finished their work, and had begun to go back to their homes, only a group of 30 people, who were supposed to leave the following day, remained in Beersheba. To warm themselves from the night chill, they gathered in one of the railway cars and played cards by the light of a small lamp made of an oil-filled can containing a cotton wick. They apparently did not heed the contractor's warning to [cover] the opening of the railway car [so that the light would not be seen from above.] The light helped [a] squadron of British planes to locate the railway car and hit it. Sixteen laborers were killed, others were wounded, and the rest were fortunately not hurt. The contractor Katinka, who had gone to drink tea at the home of the Gordon family, was not hurt at all.... The dead were people from Jerusalem and the Tel Aviv area.

Turkish army observers usually managed to detect airplanes when they were on their way and telegraph the railway station before the slow-moving planes arrived. A siren would be sounded and all of the locomotives would immediately be dispatched from the station, together with railroad cars full of military supplies and equipment.

The Jews called the bombs 'kazans' (Russian for kettles). In those days, bombs were made of an iron drum equipped with an ignition fuse and full of explosives and iron chips; the bombs weighed approximately 20 kilograms each and were dropped from the plane by hand.

According to another account of the incident, which was written by Ilan Gal-Pe'er and appeared in a 1987 publication of the Beersheba field study centre [which now uses the station area. WLR], one of the bombs fell between Katinka's office and the parked railway car, causing heavy damage to both. The railroad car was destroyed, as was the office beside it. Of the people who were sitting in the car, 11 were killed and 5 were seriously injured.

After the bombing, burying the dead proved to be a difficult matter. There was no Jewish cemetery in Beersheba at the time and the deceaseds' friends were unwilling to bury them in the Muslim cemetery. Two friends set out on horseback for Jerusalem and two more travelled to Jaffa, to ask the 'hevra kaddisha' (burial society) in each town to send representatives to bury the dead. In both cities, they were told that conditions made it impossible to move the bodies such a long distance. The only option was to ask Rabbi Nissim Elkayam in Ruhama, in the northern Negev, to bury the dead in Hebron or Gaza, where there were Jewish cemeteries.

The friends arrived back in Beersheba on Thursday, and when they told the mayor of their plight, he sent an Arab messenger to Ruhama. There, the messenger learned that the rabbi was at his home in Gaza, and so, after travelling for a total of 14 hours, the messenger finally reached the rabbi's house on Friday night.

Upon hearing the story, the rabbi mounted his horse and set out for Beersheba, explaining that according to Jewish law, the duty of saving a life overrides the Sabbath laws. His mission in Beersheba was not only to bury the dead but also to help ensure proper medi-

cal treatment for the injured who were in the Turkish military hospital - at the time, being treated in a Turkish hospital meant almost certain death. At dawn he reached the home of his friend, Sheikh Ali el-Ata'una.

In Beersheba, it emerged that the bodies could not be moved, having swelled up from the heat. The friends had no alternative but to transport the bodies to a burial plot in northern Beersheba that was designated by the governor of the city as a Jewish cemetery. The rabbi did not find any document attesting to the fact that the site was a Jewish cemetery. Fearing that the owners of the property would plow up the site and destroy the grave, Elkayam, according to his family, took advantage of his status as a subject of the Ottoman Empire and purchased the property with his own money. According to other sources, he paid the mufti and the mayor 20 gold coins for protection of the site.

Elkayam and members of Beersheba's Jewish community buried the dead in a common grave. The bodies were placed in two parallel rows: the eight people from Jerusalem in the western row and the eight from Jaffa in the eastern row. Each person was buried with his feet pointing eastward, toward Jerusalem, and with a sealed bottle under his head; the bottle contained a note bearing the person's name, in the event that it was decided to move the bodies elsewhere.

A rock was placed between the two rows, bearing the notation that these were the people killed in the bombing. Later, the bodies of those who subsequently died of their wounds were added to the end of one of the rows.

There was a surprising and poignant sequel to the incident. Less than a month later, an English airplane was shot down and the pilot survived. Identifying himself as Lord Sashin (or Sahin), a Jew from London, he asked, 'What damage did I do to the Turk about a month ago when I bombed the railroad track in Beersheba?' He was certain that if a railroad car was standing beside the track, it contained ammunition. When he learned that he had killed 16 Jews, he was beside himself with grief.

In the summer of 1929, the Jewish residents of Beersheba, aware of the slaughter of the Jews of Hebron and other attacks, were afraid to remain in the city. They were evacuated on August 29, 1929, and eventually sold their property in Beersheba. When things calmed down, the bodies of the eight Jerusalemites and one Jaffa resident were moved from the cemetery in Beersheba to Jerusalem, so that the families could visit the graves more easily.

The remains of the other victims from Jaffa were left in Beersheba. Devora Kermin (Haim's mother and Michael's wife) objected to the moving of her loved ones northward. 'Beersheba is the Land of Israel, too', she said. The Jews from Jaffa who are buried in the common grave include two women whose names did not appear in the funeral list that we found in the archive: Sarah Dina, daughter of Haim and Toiveh Brodtkin, and Devora, listed as the daughter of Rabbi Gershon Kermin (but who was actually his mother.) Usually, women are not buried together with men in Jewish common graves, and so we were especially curious about these two people.

Bat Zion Kermin, who was married to Devora and Michael's son Yosef, gave us further information. We learned from here that Michael was born in the town of Homel in Russia,

where he became one of the first members of Hovevei Zion. In 1905, he emigrated to the Land of Israel, with Devora. The couple had eight children.

Michael was a talented carpenter whose works included the domes on the roof of the old Technion building in Haifa. In 1916, at the age of 37, he was drafted into the Turks' forced-labour brigade, together with his eldest son Haim, who was 17 at the time. They worked in Beersheba with other Jews, installing the railroad tracks.

Bat Zion provides yet another account of the tragedy. On the morning of the bombardment, a group of about 15 people entered one of the railway cars to say their morning prayers. The bomb hit them in the course of the service. Michael was killed immediately. Haim was seriously injured in his legs and taken to the military hospital in Beersheba. His mother managed to get to Beersheba from her home on the edge of Jaffa after one of the survivors brought her the bad news. Since Haim had lost his legs and did not want to be a burden to his family, he asked his mother to let him die. He died about 10 days afterwards, and was buried a bit north of the row of deceased from Jaffa. Devora was left alone with five children.

When the Jews left Beersheba in 1929, Moshe Reichuk, who married Ada Kermin, paid an Arab who owned neighbouring lands to keep an eye on the grave. At the beginning of Israel's War of Independence, when the Egyptian forces captured Beersheba, the burial plot was destroyed.

When the Israelis captured Beersheba, Michael (Micha) Natanzon, Michael Kermin's grandson, was among the fighters. He rushed to search for the graves of his grandfather and uncle, but found only ruins in the cemetery. Natanzon summoned his relatives and together they dug for a long time, eventually finding the bottle containing the note with Michael Kermin's name. They repaired the shattered tombstone and posted a sign on which they had written in large letters: 'Jewish Cemetery'. Later, at the initiative of the families, a joint tombstone was erected - the bench that stands there to this day.

Devora Kermin died in 1964, and in accordance with her request, she was buried beside her husband and son in Beersheba, next to the common grave.

We found no information about Sarah Dina Brodtkin in any of the archives we searched. One day, we happened to see a family booklet written by Yehuda Leib of Kibbutz Dalia, where we found the missing part of the mosaic. The booklet mentions a Sarah Dina Brodtkin from Neve Zedek (on the edge of Jaffa). During World War I, the booklet relates, she prepared kosher food for the Jewish soldiers and workers in Beersheba. According to the booklet, when everyone was waiting for a train so that they could go home to celebrate a holiday, an English plane bombed the station. Sarah Dina Brodtkin was injured by shrapnel and later died of her wounds. She was buried at the southern end of the row of Jaffaites."

The magazine notes that the two authors, from Rehovot and Kiryat Haim, research old tombstones as a hobby. A further note adds the information that "The bereaved families received a great deal of support from the Jewish community. Meir Dizengoff, head of the Tel Aviv council, took the families under his wing, and David Tidhar initiated a drawing whose proceeds were to be used to help the families. The prize was a sack of flour, a

very valuable commodity in those days, and the raffle brought in a total of 600 gold coins. Tidhar, preferring to use the flour to bake bread for the orphans and widows, kept the flour and announced a fictional raffle winner, with the agreement of the elders of the community. [!] With the money from the raffle, Tidhar purchased cloth so that some of the widows could earn a living from sewing, and bought food for the families. He also found jobs in grocery stores for several of the widows."

[A quite remarkable variety of versions - from the pious saying of prayers to the profane playing of cards. It also seems strange that the British were trying night raids - one wonders how they navigated, though the 20th. Tevet was not that long after full moon - and that a captured pilot should volunteer information that he had been involved in an earlier destructive raid. Katinka is described as a 'contractor', whereas in his own memoirs he has a somewhat higher status. (See 46:12 for the full version from "From Then Till Now", pp. 179-181. He wrote that 41 were killed, and dates the raid to just before Pesach 1916! But he also states the workers were Jewish carpenters, conscripted to labour for the Turkish Army, and that they were playing cards, not saying prayers). We see that the poor Devora remained a widow for almost fifty years. WLR.]

A Reader's Letter in the following issue adds more, sometimes contradictory information: - "I read your article about the common grave in Beersheba ("Caught in the Cross Fire," ERETZ 94), with great interest. I am the son of Devora and Michael Kermin and would like to add a few details that might interest readers.

The old cemetery is located opposite the new one. The World War I aerial bombardment, however, actually killed 38 people, who had been standing outside a railway car and saying the morning prayers, and not 16 as was written in the article.

There was no cemetery in Beersheba at the time. The Jerusalem hevra kadisha (burial society), with the assistance of the Jerusalem chief rabbi, agreed to move the bodies of 30 of the victims to the Mount of Olives, the main Jewish cemetery in Jerusalem at the time. The bodies of the other eight victims remained in Beersheba, as you wrote.

My mother put the bottles bearing each victim's name under his or her grave. This was covered with a 10-centimeter layer of cement. Since the burial site was outside the city limits at the time and was owned by an Arab, Rabbi Nissim Elkayam did indeed buy the land as you wrote. During the War of Independence, when the Egyptian forces were in Beersheba, they destroyed the grave, leaving only a pile of rocks there.

When Devora Kermin died in 1964 she was buried at the site, along with her husband and son, with the permission of the mayor of Beersheba. The inscription on her gravestone is correct - her father's name was Gershon and I, her son, am named after him.

Micha Natanzon and Ami Abrovsky, who were among those who liberated Beersheba in the War of Independence, discovered the pile of rocks at the burial site. They posted a sign at the site that read, "This is an old Jewish cemetery."

In 1950, the son of Reuven Sorokin, who is buried there, and I put up the gravestone that is currently at the site and fenced it off. We have visited the graves of our parents every year since.

Gershon Kermin, Ramat Gan."



The Hameniya loco at Kibbutz Na'an, 21/12/05. Ze'ev Engler sits with his hand on the brake wheel and the transmission can be glimpsed behind. Photo: Amith Ben Shalom