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הרכבת

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78:01. For once, not a train in sight - but the pillars reaching upwards to the heavens have an almost Classical effect; Or is it a Temple under way? A viaduct on the line to Jerusalem under construction.
Photo by Jeremy Topaz.

EDITORIAL.

The effects of Paul Cotterell's sudden death are still keenly felt. It remains wholly unclear who, if anyone, will be in a position to take over even a part of his work at the Museum and the Archives in Haifa. As is so often the case, one never realizes just how much work goes into behind-the-scenes coordination and the making of contacts and the 'arranging' of acquisitions until the sole person responsible is no longer there.

However, although we include a couple more articles from his hand (with thanks to Chen Melling) we have decided in this issue to catch up on some of the positive news from Israel Railways as a modern and expanding rail system, with a little less of the historical material. In addition there remains a lot to report from other railways in the region, so much that some material is already held over for issue 79, including lengthy reports on the Hedjaz and Lebanon. (Chen has been able to retrieve several articles from Paul, but some refer to photographs and maps which are not yet available.)

Progress on the 'www.Harakevet' website continues with further old issues gradually being added. Many thanks to Jeremy Topaz for this laborious work, which will make material already published more easily accessible to a new generation of readers.

The Editor.

78:03. *A viaduct on the Tel Aviv - Jerusalem line under construction.*
(Photo Jeremy Topaz).



NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(a). EILAT LINE PROPOSAL AGAIN?

On 18.06.2007 the following appeared on e-mail. "Mofaz Studies Linking Eilat Port with Railway (Israel.com). Transportation and Road Safety Minister Shaul Mofaz has visited Eilat to study plans for developing the port city and linking it with a rail network. Linking Eilat with the long-awaited railway will cost about \$75 Million and would allow goods to be shipped by rail to northern ports. The port of Eilat is Israel's southern gateway to the Far East, South Africa and Australia without having to pass through the Suez Canal."

(b). COLLISION CONSEQUENCES.

On 18.06.2007 Aharon Gazit wrote: "The Southern District Attorney announced this week his intention to accuse senior officers of the Railways and the Olitzky construction company with negligence, thus causing the two severe train/lorry collisions which happened in June 2005 at Revadim and in July 2005 at Ahuzam (both on the Tel-Aviv - Beer-Sheva line), as a result of which 8 died and hundreds were injured.

According to the Attorney, the railways are not less guilty than the lorry driver, because the latter was hauling construction materials for nearby Toll Highway No. 6, under construction at the time, and the railway administration had to take care that at least at unprotected level crossings, the train drivers should have been instructed to slow down until works were completed; this had not been done, and in addition to the two tragic collisions there were dozens of near-collision cases which could have been avoided.

These two cases do not refer to the present General Manager Mr. Linchevsky, who took up his post only in 2006, about a year after the two collisions.

Meanwhile, today, near Ashkelon, a double-deck train en route to Tel-Aviv collided with a lorry, the driver of which had crossed the rails against red lights and became

stuck there; this case ended without casualties or damage; the police found that the lorry driver did not have a license; neither did the lorry carry an identification number plate! The police, however, say that for some reason the watchman did not report to the train driver about the stuck lorry, while the train driver himself was not available by phone or any communication instrument."

A different report, circulated through the 'Pasim' Listserv, was worded:-

"Rail Officials to be Indicted for Negligent Homicide. The Southern District Attorney has drafted indictments against those responsible for the two train accidents in 2005.

In the first accident. A south-bound train to Beersheva crashed into a truck crossing the tracks near Kibbutz Revadim, killing 7 and leaving 200 injured. Three weeks later, near Moshav Achuzam, 64 people were wounded in another train accident. The District Attorney is indicting all the suspects for criminal negligence. Those who were also involved in the Revadim accident are being charged with negligent homicide. The first indictment will be served against IR and several high-ranking employees, stating that they did "not take reasonable steps to prevent an accident at the crossing".

(c). PIETY AND PRIORITY.

On 19.06.2007 it was reported: "Breakthrough Seen in Rail Service for Chareidi Sector.

Chareidi MK's, [Members of Knesset. Ed.] mayors and public officials met recently with senior IR officials and were assured that everything possible would be done to make rail service available to the Chareidi sector. MK Rabbi Shmuel Halpert noted at the meeting that most Chareidim live in peripheral towns, do not own cars and stand to benefit enormously from an accessible train service to the large cities.

Yael Naaman, deputy director of IR's Economic Department, said that IR is expanding at an unprecedented rate, with 87 new train cars to arrive in the coming months and a tender for several hundred more soon to be issued. She added that IR wants to work with the committee to bring more Chareidi passengers onto the train.

Rabbi Yaakov Cohen asked for a train line linking the chareidi community of Arad to larger Chareidi centers. The train officials said they would allocate funding for the initial planning. Yechiel Tubul of IR's Passengers Department listed the train lines that presently serve Chareidi populations in Jerusalem, B'nei Brak, Beit Shemesh, Ashdod & Elad (via Rosh Ha'ayin). He spoke of plans to bring train lines to other chareidi areas, such as Modi'in, Netivot, Sderot & Ofakim as well as train lines di-

rectly to Chareidi areas in Petach Tikvah and (further in the future) Arad.

The Mehadrin Committee raised the issue of the problematic seating arrangement on modern trains, in which seats face each other.

IR said that it would appoint a liaison to the Chareidi community and that it would begin steps for the establishment of shuttle lines to link Chareidi communities to train lines, with the project to begin with pilot programmes in B'nei Brak & Beit Shemesh."

This report caused some hefty reactions. "Charedi" is the term - not always complimentary - used for the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish segment of Israeli society, which has already organised some separate bus lines - or partitioned buses - to ensure total 'modesty' during travel. "Mehadrin" also prefers to those who are very, very, very strict in their interpretations of traditional Jewish law. In this case, it appears that the so-called "religious community" is being identified as a potential niche market - the idea being that each member should occupy his (or her) own niche well away from anyone else, separated from the rest of the passengers.

(d). GRADE SEPARATIONS AT REHOVOT.

From a press release of 20.06.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"The Transport and Roads' Safety Ministry, together with Isra-Rail Co. Ltd. and the Municipality of Rehovot last week agreed how to share the costs of two grade separations in the city; these are at level crossing No. 139 where Herzl Street (the city's main thoroughfare) crosses the double-track line adjacent to the railway station, and at level crossing No. 141 where Gad Feinsein Street crosses the same double-track railway line.

In a meeting with the participation of the Railways' General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky, the mayor of Rehovot Mr. Yehosua (Shuki) Forer, and a Senior Deputy General Manager for Infrastructures in the Transport and Roads Safety Ministry Mr. Issac Zuchmann, it was agreed that the railways will finance the grade separation at Gad Feinsein Street at a cost of \$17.65 Million, while the Ministry will finance the grade separation at Herzl Street adjacent to the railway station at a cost of \$21.18 Million.

At the end of the meeting, the Mayor of Rehovot Mr. Yehoshua Forer said: "I'm blessing you for the decision and thanking on behalf the citizens of Rehovot; after years of common effort the works will be implemented; it is an historic moment for the city!"

A few months ago, the Ayalon Roads Company (building roads in central Israel), published a tender for the grade

separation at Herzl Street, and chose a winning sub-contractor; an additional tender for the grade separation at Feinsein Street has also been published and the sub-contractor is soon to be chosen.

The first stage of opening the grade separations replacing the level crossings is expected to be completed towards the end of 2008, to be followed immediately by widening of the bridges.

Additionally, works are currently being carried out on the third grade separation in Rehovot by the National Roads Company (formerly Public Works Dept.) at the entrance to Kfar-Gabirol, to replace level crossing No. 143 on the double-track Rehovot - Yavne line.

Due to the this agreement, the Ayalon Roads Company will soon be able to start works on the two grade separations.

(Note: The lines passing through Rehovot are among the most popular in Israel; However, due to the severe bottlenecks caused by the level crossing there are often cases of passengers missing their trains, thus affecting the railway service; The grade separation will by no means solve this problem!)

(e). COMMUTER SAVINGS.

A calculation made by a company called Kheshev ('Calculation') prepared especially for the most popular Israeli newspaper 'Yediot Aharonot' ('Latest News'), reveals that upon the opening the line between Tel-Aviv and Modi'in on 31.08.2007, commuters may save between \$148 and \$266 monthly; According to their calculations, a commuter using a combined monthly-free ticket for rail and public transport in Modi'in, plus public transport services in Tel-Aviv, will incur a monthly expense of \$139, whereas using his car he would incur \$288, thus saving the aforementioned sum of \$148; if he has also to pay for parking at his workplace he would reach a total of \$406, hence the saving of \$266.

The calculation also unveils that time savings by rail will be 30 minutes daily; it means also financial savings due to avoiding 10 hours monthly on bottle-necks."

(f). HAIFA CENTRAL RENAMED.

On 09.07.2007 Haifa Central station was renamed - as previously mentioned - in honour of the eight I.R. employees killed in a missile attack on the diesel unit maintenance depot at Haifa East. It now bears a sign "Tachanat Haifa Merkaz haShmoneh" - which translates as "Station Haifa Central - the Eight."

(g). BEIT SHEMESH ACTIVITIES.

Sybil Ehrlich reports: "Great confusion at Beit Shemesh station on Thursday 2nd. August. I was there to catch the 08:48.

A train had broken down (some high-up official was mighty rude when I asked for details, but to be fair he had never set eyes on me), the station staff were tearing their hair out, the Jerusalem and Tel Aviv trains switched platforms (normally the Tel Aviv trains use Platform 1 and the Jerusalem trains Platform 2). There was a THIRD train in platform 3, and a FOURTH train outside the station in the direction of Jerusalem. All IC3s. While I was running up and down trying to get a decent picture of three trains in the station, the fourth train moved into platform 2 and was coupled to the set already there, making a two-set train to Tel Aviv (yes, I did wonder how the summer holiday crowds on the platform would fit into three coaches!)"

(h). NEW I.R. TIMETABLE.

A new timetable originally supposed to start from July 21 and postponed to August 4 was reported in mid-August as being (maybe...) starting September 1!!! Which it did. A fuller review will follow in the next issue.

(i). ROAD PLANNING AND RAILWAYS.

Aharon Gazit wrote on 02.08.2007: "Somebody in the government Ministries of Transportation & Roads' Safety and Finance has perhaps forgotten the railways again; some years ago this happened on the line between Tel-Aviv and Rishon-Le-Zion West, which runs in the median of the Ayalon Highway (road No. 20), and involved a huge investment in changing the infrastructure (the person responsible for this mistake was the then-Ayalon Roads Co. General Manager Ing. Dan Holzman who explained that "due to the enthusiasm of creativity he had forgotten the land strip for the railway"! Ironically he is now the responsible person for the line - perhaps he will not repeat the mistake.) Now history seems to repeating itself: On the alignment of the transverse highway No. 431 which runs between Modi'in and Rishon-Le-Zion, due to open in the second half of 2008, and in the median of which a futuristic railway line is planned to run, no grade separations have been built - although a strip of between 18 to 22 m has been secured for two tracks.

The railways Deputy General Manager for Planning and Development Ing. Ilya Volkov has sent a letter unveiling these facts to the two Ministries.

In his letter he explained that after opening the highway it will be very difficult, very expensive, and in some places even impossible to build the grade separations; an immediate budget of \$23 Million is urgently needed as a rescue!

The response of both ministries was surprise; they claim that the railways

took an active part in the planning and until the aforementioned letter they never raised this subject; they added that the railway line has no priority and is neither included in the present 5-Year Plan nor in the next one, and therefore it is entirely not clear if such an investment has any justification.”

(j). HUMAN BARRIERS AT LEVEL CROSSINGS.

A lot has been written about the unique phenomena of the Israeli watchmen at level crossings; the Railway administration intend to get the Transport & Roads' Safety permission to eliminate this job, which was initially recommended by General (Reserves) Joseph Peled who was the head of the committee which investigated the accidents at level crossings.

The Railway administration claims that, in addition to the cost of \$10.5 Million annually, it has been proved that they are not efficient and are even sometimes endangering train drivers by forcing them to stop the trains unnecessarily; some of them are so dedicated that they block the track with their own body!

The Railways' safety consultant Dr. Moshe Becker fully supports the Railways' position, claiming that Israel "does not have to re-invent the wheel" and if such a job does not exist elsewhere in the world it is not needed in Israel either.

The traffic police, on the other hand, claim that they have proof that the watchmen avoided accidents, and that as far as money is concerned, the collision at Beit-Yehoshua alone cost the railways \$15 Million. The Transport & Roads' Safety General Manager Mr. Gideon Sitterman will have to make a decision soon.

(k). LAND DEVELOPMENT FEES.

The Supreme Court has recently decided that the railways do not have to pay development fees on lands along the tracks which belong to the railways; This put an end to a long-running discussion with the municipality of Lod, which had demanded such fees.

(l). OPENING OF MODI'IN LINE.

From 'Ha'aretz', by Tamara Traubmann: "The new Tel Aviv - Modi'in rail service will start operating on September 1, connecting the large town to the business heartland of greater Tel Aviv.

It is expected to be heavily trafficked by thousands of commuters escaping notorious traffic jams. However, commuters may find themselves stuck in a new traffic jam on their way back - on the road from the railway station to their neighborhoods. Construction on the road has been delayed for over a year.

The railway line, whose construction began in March 2003, will allow Modi'in residents to reach Tel Aviv in just 20 min-

utes - as opposed to the typical hour's drive in rush hour.

Modi'in's first railway station will be situated on the outskirts of town, near the commercial area. Another underground station will open in about a year in the shopping mall currently under construction on Modi'in's main drag.

Israel Railways predicts that 1.2 million passengers will use the line in its first year and some 2 million every year after that. A feasibility test conducted for the Finance Ministry found that the line would save an estimated NIS 11 Million a year in pollution and noise costs. The overall savings in car operation expenses was estimated at some NIS 50 Million a year.

Israel Railways CEO Ofer Linczewski says that operating a railway line in a town for the first time will be a "test case for public transportation." Israelis will always prefer to use their private cars unless they have a significant incentive to take public transportation, he said.

Road 431, leading from the railway station to Modi'in, is still under construction and may cause a new traffic jam for commuters returning on the train, Linczewski and Modi'in Mayor Moshe Spector say. This road, which at present has only one lane in each direction instead of the planned two, has recently been transferred from the auspices of the Construction and Housing Ministry to the Ayalon Highway company.

The Transportation Ministry stated: "The project is advancing as quickly as possible. However, it appears that when the railway line opens, a temporary traffic load will be created in the area."

Israel Railways has asked transport authorities to give priority in junction traffic lights to drivers returning from the rail station until the new road is completed. But Spector says it is impossible to give priority only to drivers from this road due to the heavy traffic in the area.

A 320-space parking lot has been built near the station, but this is not nearly enough. The municipality plans to add some 350 parking spaces, Spector says.

Such lines should encourage migration from city to suburbs. A recent housing ministry study indicated that a new suburban rail link could increase relocation from a city by 0.4 percent. Trains are scheduled to arrive in Modi'in 58 times a day, Israel Railways says. A University of Haifa study on the effect of railway links on real estate prices in 1992-2002 found that housing prices rise by an average of 0.4 percent per additional train arrival per day. The study was based on the assumption that advanced train services contribute to direct savings in travelling time in each direction. They also increase the jobs and wages available to commuters, by reducing travel costs

to destinations with potentially higher wages."

(m). MODI'IN OUTSKIRTS OPENS.

From a press release of 26.08.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"On Saturday night, 01.09.2007, the new station named Modi'in Outskirts will open together with the introduction of the long-awaited rail services between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv; at the same time, the new timetable will be introduced. The first train will depart for Tel-Aviv at 21:22..

Modi'in Central station, located 6 km eastwards, is to be opened at the beginning of 2008. It will take 20 minutes between Modi'in Outskirts and Tel-Aviv Hahagana stations, including a halt at Ben-Gurion International airport; services will start at 05:30 and end at 23:15; at peak hours there will be 2 trains/hour each direction.

According to the traffic forecast, useage will reach 1 Million passengers in 2008, rising to 1.2 Million in the years to come, giving a figure of more than 4,000 daily.

The fare will be about \$3.00 between Modi'in and Tel-Aviv, while a monthly free ticket is to be introduced by the railways at \$79.00, in addition to a monthly free combined rail/bus ticket at \$88.00 enabling the use of the 3 Connex bus services to and from the station of Modi'in, coordinated with the railways' timetable."

From a press release of 04.09.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"Today was the ceremony of the official opening of Modi'in Outskirts station, as well as the line between this station and Tel-Aviv through Ben-Gurion Airport.

The Prime Minister Mr. Ehud Olmert, Transport and Roads' Safety Minister Mr. Shaul Mofaz, and the mayor of Modi'in Mr. Moshe Spector arrived by a train from the airport; also participating was Finance Minister Mr. Bar-On, but he gave his greetings before their arrival as he had to leave due to an urgent meeting at the Knesset.

The first train had arrived at the new station already on Saturday night, 01.09.2007 at 21:14.

Mr. Olmert said: "I was very glad to be among the first passengers who travelled this morning from the airport; all I can do is to admire the fast and pleasant journey, and the huge investments in the infrastructures, which show that something essential has happened regarding this issue. Boarding a train at Modi'in and arriving within 20 minutes at Tel-Aviv and soon at Jerusalem, is a revolution that does not end with this line, but will continue to other Israeli cities. Isra-Rail Co. Ltd. are comparable with European railways in terms of service and safety levels, and enable a fast, safe,

efficient, and inexpensive means of traveling”.

Minister Mofaz said: “It is a real celebration day for Modi’in and a milestone for the future as far as investments in infrastructures are concerned. Unfortunately, the recent cuts in the infrastructures budget are endangering some of the projects; Nevertheless I’m determined to bring three projects to implementation: the line between Akko and Carmiel, the revival of the Hedjaz line between Haifa and Afula, and the LRV project between Haifa and Nazareth. We also have to make all efforts to ensure the development of the Negev (southern Israel) and the Galilee, otherwise this will remain as mere slogans.”

Mr. Linchevsky said: “Already yesterday, 03.09.2007, 4,000 passengers used the new station, while the daily forecast for the first year of operation will bring it to 1.2 Million annually; however, if the demand continues at this rate, the first year’s traffic forecast will be easily exceeded; this tendency will continue even further at the beginning of 2008 with the opening of Modi’in Central station, which will be accessible to a much larger proportion of Modi’in’s citizens”.

(Aharon Gazit adds: This ceremony was the last one in which Mr. Linchevsky participated as the General Manger; he will leave his job towards the end of this month.

It should be mentioned that the new station is suffering from a shortage of parking places, as well as from a narrow road access and an inconvenient service of Connex buses; however, due to the poor overall bus services of this company - including the competing lines to Tel-Aviv - people prefer to do everything possible to use the train, with the additional advantage of service to the airport, which is not provided by any non-railway service except special taxis, the price of which may reach \$18.00 at least!)

(n). OFER LINCHEVSKY HANDS IN HIS NOTICE.

Breaking news: from a press release of 06.08.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

The Railways’ General Manager Mr. Ofer Linchevsky, today announced to the Transport and Roads’ Safety Minister Mr. Shaul Mofaz, and the Isra-Rail Co. Ltd. Directorate, that on 01.10.2007 he will leave his job!

He has been offered a senior job as manager of Afi-Europe; a subsidiary of Africa-Israel (which is also the leader of the MTS group building the Tel-Aviv LRV/ Metro).

Linchevsky’s appointment took place on September 2005, and during these two years in the post, he made major efforts to promote the railways’ 5-year

plan of expanding the network, building new stations, increasing the budget from \$4.7 to \$6.13 Billion, new technologies were introduced, the railways signed the contract with Siemens for the supply of up to 585 single-deck push/pull train cars, passenger traffic rose to 30 Million during 2006, and recently \$354 Million were allocated for grade separations.

Mr. Linchevsky (39) has a Bachelor title as Advocate and Economist and a Masters in Business Management; both from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Before his present post he was Deputy General Manager for Finance and Business Development of Egged Holdings (a subsidiary of Egged Buses Company - Israel’s biggest), and later as the company’s General Manager.

His original job was as manager of the Transportation sub-department of the Finance Ministry’s Budget Department.”

Aharon adds: “So far the announcement; the truth behind that is the fact that Minister Mofaz was looking long ago to appoint one of his own people, and the police decision which made Mr. Linchevsky responsible as General Manager for the tragic collision at Beit-Yehoshua - and therefore liable to be put to trial - convinced Mr. Linchevsky to look for the first opportunity to find another job, and leave the railways - in which he still believes very much. It is a pity that such a skilled person, who is one of the few - if not the only - non-political appointment, has to take this step, and all that remains is to wish him success in his new job, and to hope that his successor will be at least as good as he and stay in his job a little bit longer!

At the moment there are not even rumours about any candidate, and from the moment he leaves his job, the railways will have neither a Chairman of Directorate nor a General Manager!”

On 16.09.2007 Aharon Gazit noted: “Due to Mr. Linchevsky’s announcement regarding his leaving his job at the end of this month, the Directorate has published a tender for a General Manager. As expected, the requirements are for a skilled, highly educated person with degrees in economics, engineering or business management, and experience of at least 12 years as a manager of a consortium with an activity in excess of at least that of the railways. Latest application date: 25.09.2007.”

(o). NEGEV REALIGNMENT OPENS.

From a press release of 14.08.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

“A new 2 km long alignment on the Kiryat-Gat - Beer-Sheba line (between Kfar-Menakhem and Kiryat-Gat) is to be opened for traffic on Sunday morning 26.08.2007 at 04:00. Starting on 20.08.2007 at 10:00,

the whole line between Lod, Kiryat-Gat, Lehavim-Rahat, Beer-Sheba, and Dimona will be temporarily closed for passenger services.

The new section is part of the \$429 Million project for double-tracking and upgrading the line to Beer-Sheba which, when completed, will result in improved levels of punctuality and safety, as well as reduced congestion, and travel time cuts.

The new section, laid almost straight, runs alongside toll highway No. 6 (also under construction at these sections), and is fully grade separated; it involved building a special overhead bridge for road vehicles near the agricultural settlement (kibbutz) of Kfar-Menakhem.

The section replaces a tortuous section (laid during the mid-1950’s on a WWI alignment of the line to Beer-Sheba built for the Ottoman Sultan by the legendary German Ing. Meissner, mainly for military needs, but used also by civilians), which will be dismantled immediately after opening the new section; consequently, the level crossing on the old section will be demolished.

(p). LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT.

From a press release of 14.08.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

“A passenger train consisting of an IC3 Flexiliner dmu departed the station of Dimona towards Beer-Sheba at 06:00; at around 06:15 the train driver identified a car stuck on the track near the Beduin village of Aroer; despite applying the emergency brakes it was impossible to bring the train to a standstill without collision, but fortunately there were no casualties.

There were 16 passengers on the train (who needs to operate an EU 6 Million dmu of 180 seats and 160 km/h capability on such a lightly-used line with speed restrictions to 120 km/h; why not a rail-bus? A.G.), who were evacuated 20 minutes later and transported by taxis to Beer-Sheba North/University station.”

Both the railways and the police initially suspected that the stuck vehicle (which belonged to an Aroer citizen) with some diesel fuel tanks on it, was intended for a terrorist event, but concluded that this was not the case; Instead it was found that the driver, who crossed the track at a very dangerous and unprotected point - the bank is very high - had decided to leave his vehicle in order not to be hit by a train, and perhaps to try later to tow it out. The line was re-opened for traffic around 10:05.

(q). NOISE POLLUTION PREVENTION AT KIRYAT MOTZKIN.

An appeal to the Transport and Roads’ Safety, and the Environment Ministries, with the back-up of the Mayor of Kiryat-Motzkim (10 km north of Haifa) Mr.

Haim Zuri, paid itself off for 440 owners of apartments located adjacent to the main line to Nahariya; they claimed that during recent years the increased train traffic together with almost 24-hour traffic (the service to Ben-Gurion airport which starts at Nahariya is stopped only between 02:00 and 04:00 a.m.), brings them an insufferable life in terms of noise and air pollution; most of them are of a low social economic class and can't afford themselves to purchase air conditioning.

The two Ministries recognized their needs and instructed the railways administration to finance both air conditioning systems, and noise-sealed windows.

(r). BUDGET CUTS.....

The government decided in August to cut the 2008 budget, which as far as railways are concerned, means that the budget for electrification has been halved, the design of the line to Eilat - for which \$47.6 Million had been allocated by the former government - has been cancelled, and the revival of the Hedjaz line has been put on hold. This did not pass without a response; the Manager of the port of Eilat, Mr. Moshe Mitz, said that the port will be hurt and will never be part of the long-awaited land bridge; Minister Mofaz himself left the meeting in anger, claiming that the reduced budget will cause more accidents (the roads budget was also cut at the same rate); he also added that the revival of the Hedjaz line could later connect this with Bagdad - 900 km in total - which would be the shortest link from Iraq to the Mediterranean Sea. The full effect of the budget's cuts are not known for the present.

(s). LEVEL CROSSING RADAR AT HAIFA.

From a press release of 21.08.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"At the end of the week of 25.08.2007 a radar system for detecting obstacles on the tracks between the barrier arms and stopping the train automatically, which has been installed near Haifa Bat-Galim station on Dolphin Street level crossing, will become operational. It should be mentioned that this busy crossing has already had for some years an under-track road passage, however there are two passing lanes for emergency use (should the regular passage be flooded in winter), and two surface pedestrian lanes, so the radar will be used for back-up. It joins six other locations where such systems have been installed and are operated."

(t). INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS ON MAIN LINE.

From a press release of 28.08.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"During the coming weekend the

railways will perform infrastructure and safety works at four different sites along the Tel-Aviv - Haifa main line between Netanya and Nahariya, to be carried out by track machines and dozens of workers until Friday afternoon and from Saturday night until the morning of Sunday 02.09.07.

On the morning of Thursday 30.08.07, the line between Haifa and Nahariya will be closed for traffic; all trains to the north will terminate at Haifa Bat-Galim (west); an additional line section to be closed from Thursday night is that between Netanya and Binyamina, which will cause most of the trains coming from the south to terminate at Netanya; some will terminate at Herzliyya.

On Saturday night, 01.09.07, traffic will return on the section between Netanya and Binyamina but not between Haifa and Nahariya; all traffic will return to regular service on Sunday, 02.09.07 at 04:00 according to the new timetable to be introduced on 01.09.2007."

[P.S.: it should be mentioned that the long-awaited grade separation at Beit-Yehoshua, where a collision between a train and a lorry occurred, with passengers killed and injured, is to be opened on this weekend. A.G.]

(u). BEIT SHEMESH IMPROVEMENTS.

From a press release of 28.08.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.: "A significant improvement will be introduced within the new timetable starting on 01.09.2007: Passengers travelling between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv and vice-versa, will have to spend only 4 minutes at Beit-Shemesh station for changing trains, compared with 45 minutes needed in the former timetable!"

Aharon adds: "As already reported, the former timetable was based on splitting the service at Beit-Shemesh due to the fact that only the Bombardier IC3 Flexiliner dms are able to reach Jerusalem because of the curved track, and low demand, while between Beit-Shemesh and Tel-Aviv double-deck trains are operated. The change of trains remains, but the travelling time (which is still much longer than by road) will be cut by 41 minutes; a real relief!"

Sybil Ehrlich adds: "A big improvement at Beit Shemesh station. Only four minutes to wait for onward connection now, and in case you are wondering (as I was) how all the crowds would get down the underpass and up on the other side in only four minutes, it's now a cross-platform connection as the trains to and from Tel Aviv use platform 2 and the Jerusalem trains use platform 3."

(v). BINYAMINA ROAD BRIDGE.

From a press release of 09.09.07 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.: "The railways have started works on the long-awaited over-

head road bridge at the southern part of Binyamina, as a grade separation to replace the dangerous level crossing near the railway station; This has been enabled thanks to the intervention of Mr. Mofaz with the Haifa District planning office of the Internal Affairs Ministry, where it had been stuck for 9 years due to statutory factors!

The bridge will cost \$8.30 Million to build. Works started immediately after the first stage of land expropriation had been completed; it will take 14 months to complete the bridge."

These works are part of the \$317 Million project of building grade separations which will be completed until 2009. Both Minister Mofaz and Mr. Linchevsky stated that everything must be done in order that safety will overcome bureaucracy, and the case of Binyamina shows that by being determined enough, this is possible!

(w). PASSENGER STATISTICS JULY/AUGUST 2007.

From a press release of 10.09.2007 by Isra-Rail Co. Ltd.:

"The railways report today a new record of passenger traffic during July and August 2007; 5.6 Million persons travelled, the highest ever during these months; in July, 2.78 Million used rail, rising to 2.81 Million in August; the daily traffic level reached 120,000.

The lines with the heaviest traffic during the 2 months are:

Tel-Aviv - Haifa: 1.12 Million;
Tel-Aviv - Ashkelon: 0.97 Million;
Tel-Aviv - Nahariya: 0.6 Million;
Tel-Aviv - Netanya: 0.56 Million;
Tel-Aviv - Beer-Sheva: 0.47 Million;
Tel-Aviv - Kfar-Sava and Haifa - Nahariya: 0.4 Million each.

From the beginning of 2007 20.6 Million used rail compared with 18.6 Million during the same period of 2006; 11% more. (However, we must remember that during these months of 2006, the railways were paralyzed in the Haifa area for a month due to the war in Lebanon, so the real picture will only be clear at the end of 2007; A.G.)

Towards the Jewish holydays it is expected that daily traffic will reach 150,000, particularly on the line to the airport.

Mr. Linchevsky said that "the introduction of the former timetable in December 2006 has contributed to the growth, and this tendency will be much stronger in the last quarter of 2007 after the new timetable has been introduced on 01.09.07, as well as with the opening of three new stations (already included in the new timetable); Kiryat-Arie at Petah-Tikva and Ganei-Aviv at Lod at the end of 2007, and

Modi'in Central at the beginning of 2008".

(x). LEHAVIM STATION RENAMED.

The Transport and Roads' Safety Ministry has changed his mind - after the municipality of the Beduin town of Rahat had appealed to the courts - and instructed that the recently opened station of Lehavim (north of Beer-Sheva), should be renamed Lehavim-Rahat.

78:05.

TENDERS

(i). Tender No. HN/KB/02/07: Infrastructure for the Tel-Aviv - Rishon Le-Zion West line on the section Yosseftal - Moshe Dayan. Works include: preparatory works, earthworks, roadbeds, drainage, concrete, infrastructure works for signalling and communication cables, purchasing and installing electro-mechanical equipment for pumping station at Moshe Dayan railway station, etc. The tender includes the following structures:

Structure 01: Infrastructure for tracks, communication, and concrete structures.

Structure 02: A pumping station for drainage at km. 106.800.

Structure 03: Komemiut passenger railway station.

Structure 04: Traffic arrangements. Implementation time: 27 months. Latest bidding date: 23.07.2007.

(ii). Tender No. HN/RC/05/07: Proposals for placement of four moveable structures (to be used by the Permanent Way Dept.) at the railway stations of Kiryat-Gat, Beer-Sheva, Lod, and Netanya. Latest bidding date: 18.07.2007.

(iii). Tender No. NO/RC/01/06. For a Passenger Information System for I.R. - Tender extended to 24.07.2007.

(iv). Tender No. NO/RC/02/06. For Automatic Ticketing Fare Collecting system for IR. Tender submissions postponed to 10.07.2007.

(v). Tender No. HN/RC/01/07. For Manufacture and Supply of an Ultrasonic Rail Flaw Detection Track Vehicle. Bids by 26.07.2007.

(vi). Tender No. MT/RC/01/07. For Manufacture and Supply of Reach-Stackers for IR. For two vehicles of 45 and 50T respectively. Bids by 31.07.2007.

(vii). Tender No. BN/KB/06/07: Rebuilding an access road at the railway complex of Lod. Works include: earthworks and pave-

ment, asphalt, concrete wall, and fences. Implementation time: 2 months. Latest bidding date: 20.08.2007.

(viii). Tender No. BN/KB/05/07: Installing traffic lights at the access road to Petakh-Tikva Kiryat-Arie station. Implementation time: 2 months. Latest bidding date: 21.08.2007

(ix). Tender No. MS/RC/2007/21: Permission to operate convenience stores - to include catering, pharmaceutical products, games, discs, fancy goods, and newspapers - at the stations of Hadera West, Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv Hashalom, Tel-Aviv Hahagana, Petah-Tikva Kiryat-Arie, Modi'in Central, Rehovot, and Beer-Sheva Central. The contract is for 5 years with optional extension of an additional 5 years. Latest bidding date: 31.10.2007.

(x). Tender No. TH/MT/26/06: Frame agreement for surveying and measuring services according to specific requirements. The contract is for 24 months with optional extension by additional 24 months. Latest bidding date: 15.10.2007.

(xi). International Tender No. No. MC/RC/01/07. For Manufacture and Supply of Wheelset Assembly Press. By 28.10.2007.

(xii). International Tender No. MC/RC/03/07: For Manufacture and Supply of Type U5N Buffers and Rubber Spring sets for Buffers. By 01.11.2007.

78:06.

LIGHT RAIL PROJECTS.

A. JERUSALEM.

Lots of Controversies here!

(i). From 'Jerusalem Post' of 02.07.2007, By Etgar Lefkovits: "Jerusalem's long-awaited light rail project has been set back nearly six months behind schedule due to construction blunders and a shortage of workers, officials said Sunday. They confirmed that about 100 metres of tracks installed incorrectly on a main thoroughfare near the Mount Herzl Military Cemetery had to be ripped out and redone.

The first line in the city's light rail system was expected to be running in 2009, but is already five months late due to insufficient manpower on the ground by the private conglomerate, City-Pass, which is charged with the work, the officials said.

The NIS 3.2 Billion project is the first of its kind in Israel. City-Pass spokesman Itsho Gur attributed the delays in the work both to its novelty in Israel and that the procedure to attain permits in each stage was "complicated." "We are negoti-

ating with the State of Israel on the issue, and to set a new date for the light rail's operation," he said.

Gur said a routine inspection of the track - in an area where, much to the distress of neighborhood residents, work has been under way for more than a year - revealed certain problems with the tracking that were "liable to hurt the longevity of the structure." Due to safety concerns, the tracking was removed, causing delays in the work.

Jerusalem Municipality spokesman Gidi Schmerling said Sunday the city would view "gravely" any delay in the running of the light rail system, which he said would be both a breach of contract and an injury to the public. Finance Ministry officials could fine the conglomerate - made up of three Israeli and two French companies - for any delay in the work, officials said.

When it finally gets off the ground, the project will ease traffic congestion, allow better access and reduce smog. The inaugural line, the nearly 14-kilometre "red line," will run from the northern Jerusalem neighbourhood of Pisgat Ze'ev to Mount Herzl via the city center, with 23 stops along the way."

(ii). From "www.HaAretz.com" July 5, 2007:

Jerusalem Rail on Disaster Track; By Avi Bar-Eli

"The Jerusalem light-rail project looks to be in more trouble than previously thought. TheMarker has learned that the state is expected to reopen the project's financing agreement, and is considering introducing amendments to the franchise agreement as well after experts at the treasury said the project is suffering delays of up to about 18 months.

TheMarker also learned that the concessionaires, the City Pass consortium, have recently asked Bank Hapoalim and Bank Leumi to consider increasing loans to the project. The treasury, consortium members and the banks are in talks on the difficulties, and are expected to agree action plans within a month.

The franchisees have yet to achieve a single milestone in the project, and as a result have not received any part of a state grant of NIS 1.4 Billion, although they have already invested an estimated NIS 500 to 600 Million.

About two months ago TheMarker reported that Accountant General Yaron Zelekha and his deputy Avi Dor had visited light rail work sites to inspect the rate of progress following assessments that the project had suffered delays lasting months.

City Pass representatives noted that delays were taking place during the first-ever use of the Appitrac system for laying tracks, which allows the work to be com-

puterized and requires trial runs prior to operation. Some consortium members have accused the Jerusalem Municipality of delays in issuing construction permits for areas designated for the rails.

The Municipality, however, rejected this and said the process used to lay the rails required careful scrutiny. Only last week the franchisee was forced to replace a 100-metre concrete strip next to Mount Herzl because cement was found to be damaged. The state has decided not to set any fines at this stage and made suggestions to improve and speed up the process.

It appears that while construction on the rails began in December 2006, only 1 kilometre has been laid so far. City Pass is due to hand over the project on February 15, 2009, but current forecasts see the completion in mid-2010.

Jerusalem's mass-transit project includes eight lines. The tender was issued for the length of the first line, totalling 13.8 km, which runs from Pisgat Ze'ev through Jaffa Road to Mount Herzl. The route will be extended at a second stage to Neveh Yaakov in the north and Hadassah Hospital in the south.

The Jerusalem light rail is a "Build/Operate/Transfer" (BOT) project in which the franchisee is to construct the line, receive a concession to operate it and charge users for 30 years.

The cost of the project is estimated at NIS 1.9 Billion, including the state grant of NIS 1.4 Billion. In 2002 City Pass won the tender for building and operating the line, outbidding the Passim group which included Africa Israel and Germany's Siemens. The City Pass consortium includes Ashrom (27.5 percent), Polar Investments (27.5 percent), Harel (20 percent), and France's Alstom (20 percent) and Veolia (5 percent).

The financing agreement was signed, after five delays, in February 2005, with Bank Hapoalim and Bank Leumi providing City Pass with 280 Million Euros in a short-term loan and \$100 Million in a long-term loan. The state grant is paid out in milestone-linked increments, as is the credit from the lending banks.

City Pass has approached the financing banks, requesting that their credit be increased. The banks, however, are not obliged to provide further credit at this early stage, and are likely to demand that the group continue with its own financing.

The Treasury responded that in accordance with the concession agreement, a review is currently being conducted, and will take about a month."

(Thanks to Gary Pickholz for this.)

(iii). Tracklaying Problems.

From the 'Jerusalem Post' 'Metro' supplement of 17.08.2007:- By Rory Kress Aug.

16, 2007 (and originally with photos by Sybil Ehrlich):

"As we leave the CityPass office to begin our tour of the light rail site, spokesman Itcho Gur realizes he's forgotten something: two shiny yellow hard hats with not a spot of construction grit on them. He scoops the hats up off his desk in his sleek office in the Jerusalem International Convention Center and stows them under his arm. "Just in case," he says, even though there is little chance of encountering dangerous construction work.

The CityPass consortium is carrying out the much-delayed, often hapless Jerusalem light rail project, which has been plagued by construction woes, endlessly closed streets and a projected completion date that keeps moving further into the future.

The latest incident involves sophisticated track-laying machinery imported from France that has simply failed to function properly. The device, called the Appitrack, should be able to lay tracks at least four times faster than human hands. On average, a team of workers can lay 20 to 30 meters of track per day, while the machinery should be able to lay up to 170 metres a day. The technology that should be laying track at an admirable rate throughout the city works via a twofold process. First, the SlipForm machine - a concrete spreader - tightens a secondary layer of wet cement. Second, the Appitrack machine rolls over the wet cement and sticks in the pins and plates like candles into birthday cake. When the cement dries, the pins are in place and the rails can be laid accurately and efficiently.

So what went wrong?

According to light rail spokesman Shmuel Elgrabli, this is the first light rail project in the world to decide to use the Appitrack device. It was built in France and tested in the factory there, but never used before on an actual urban track. CityPass dug up the street along Sderot Herzl all at once since it thought it could lay the track in a couple of days. But lack of experience, different conditions from France and "growing pains" meant delays, as the concrete below the tracks was wobbly in some places, and 250 metres at the beginning point at Mount Herzl had to be removed after it was laid down. As a result, there have been six months of delays, during which nothing has been done.

"It has to have a clear corridor to get these figures," says Nadav Meroz, acting director of the Jerusalem Transportation Masterplan (designers of the light rail system), explaining that sporadic archaeological findings as well as the process of clearing streets of buildings and other obstacles preclude the ability of the machines to run at all.

Problems with new, untested machinery are not the only factors contributing to delays. "Two weeks ago, it was very hot and very humid," says Gur, pointing to a long strip of deserted track before us, the machinery in question nowhere to be seen. "[The heat] is a problem for the cement because there is a higher probability of it cracking."

Aside from the "concrete" physical realities of laying track in Jerusalem, administrative and bureaucratic technicalities have bogged down the project again and again - particularly the process of applying for permits and licensing which Gur describes as being "much more complicated than we'd thought it would be. It has taken more money than we thought."

These uncertainties on the part of the multinational CityPass consortium are no surprise to the Jerusalem Transportation Masterplan. Says Meroz, "They knew when they put their bid in for the project what the complexities would be. This is [CityPass's] problem - not the Ministry of Transportation's problem, not the [Jerusalem] municipality's problem. Complaints should go to the commissioner, not us. I believe that at the outset, [CityPass] did not understand the complexity of the project."

According to Meroz, CityPass did not budget for enough workers to be used in the project and "only in the last few months did we see the commissioner recognize his mistake." CityPass's errors are, in part, a result of the steep learning curve for a country that has never before been able to implement a similar system. Laying urban track, which is mostly submerged under asphalt, is very different from laying track over the ground for inter-city trains, where Israel has much experience.

The plans for a light rail in Jerusalem are not new. In the 1990s, Jerusalem saw a decline in the number of passengers taking public transportation. The city center was a mess of traffic congestion and businesses began a mass exodus. At that point, investors interested in funding a light rail system for the city couldn't be found.

"Here in this building we heard the explosions - it was not a good time to establish the light rail," says Meroz of the Jerusalem Transportation Masterplan's initial delay of the project.

Meroz has major plans for Jerusalem, perhaps the most ambitious of which is his plan to close Jaffa Road from City Hall to Mahaneh Yehuda, allowing only the light rail to pass through what will effectively become a pedestrian mall similar to that of Rehov Even Israel. In a move that Meroz believes will make transportation in the city center easier, in order to cross Jaffa Road from north to south by car, a driver will have to completely circumnavigate the city center, leading him all the way around the

closed-off section of Jaffa before he can turn around to go to the other side.

Meroz is also enthusiastic about some European municipalities that have installed cameras in their city centers to monitor the comings and goings of local vehicles in order to charge a permit fee to drive in the city itself. No such plans are currently on the table for Jerusalem.

"Of course our proposal isn't attractive," he says of the infrastructure overhaul it would take to implement his plans, "[Jerusalemites] don't see 2010, they only see today."

In spite of public discontent about the project, Meroz still feels that now is the best possible time for the light rail and the municipal revitalization that will come with it.

According to Elgrabli, there are currently negotiations among the municipality, CityPass and the Treasury on delays (the last deadline was January 15, 2009 but, it will not be met) and who will pay for them. Now, he says, the company knows how to use the Appitrack properly, and he believes work can be resumed in a few weeks, to be supervised by the Israel Standards Institute.

Still, the future of a light rail seems very far away. Leaving aside the issue of the tracks, there remains the fact that there are only two light rail cars currently in Israel - the full-scale project requires 64.

By the end of our tour along the tracks, Gur admits that "we know it's impossible to open in 2009, of course - [but] we thought it's a very important project for the city."

Despite it all, Gur feels there may be a silver lining in all this, at least for some: "It's a very unique project. We lack experience - all of us, all of the bodies involved. It will be easier in Tel Aviv when they decide to create a light rail because they will learn from our mistakes."

But things are not always so simple!

(iv). From www.haaretz.com, 16.09.2007:- **Jerusalem light rail to arrive even later?** By Avi Bar Eli. "The state may be forced to pay millions of shekels to the City Pass group, the franchisee of the Jerusalem light rail project, due to delays, TheMarker has learned. An external examination of the progress of the project found that the main culprit in the delays was the Jerusalem municipality. The treasury and City Pass are now negotiating the amount of compensation, but it has already been agreed that the project will be completed another 14 months behind schedule, in April 2010. The delays stemmed from bureaucratic demands by city hall as well as statutory requirements set out by the city. The treasury responded that negotiations are underway, and no decision has been

made yet about compensation. City Pass said that negotiations were in progress, and that it hoped they would finish as soon as possible. The Jerusalem municipality said that the city was not willing to compromise on quality in building the project, and insists on meeting international standards."

(v). BRIDGE PROGRESS.

From a press release of 13.08.07 by the project management: "At the end of last week, an additional part of the Calatrava suspension bridge mast was erected. The mast reaches now a height of 40 m out of 118 m full height; the erected part weighs 110 tons; at the horizontal part of the bridge - the steel roadbed, 140 m out of the full length of 160 m have already been assembled; the bridge's full length will be 360 m."

B. TEL AVIV.

(i). Aharon Gazit noted that works on the LRV/Metro Red line project were commencing in early August in building the first sunken section at Petakh-Tikva Jabotinsky Road.

(ii). Metrorail Group, which had appealed to court against M.T.S., has finally withdrawn from the appeal.

On the other hand, it has been recently found that mistakes made by the State while managing the tender may cost the taxpayers an additional \$60 Million; the reason is that the underground alignment runs through an area severely contaminated for years by different factories which were and still are there.

At the end of 2006 the Infrastructures' Minister Mr. Benjamin Ben-Eliezer (Fuad) instructed his office to check the whole issue thoroughly, and found that the Tenders Committee "forgot" to consult with the Water Authority regarding the problems that may be caused by water treatment and the contaminated ground; in the tender, the pre-condition was that the concessionaire will pay \$595,000 if such problems are found; a check made by the former Water Commissionaire, claimed that costs will reach \$9.5 Million, but the current Water Commissioner Prof. Uri Shani said that it will reach \$60 Million; these costs are in addition to the \$1.69 Billion cost of the project.

He added that his authority has not been involved at all, and an early consultation with them could have caused the concessionaire to participate in much higher sums; according to Prof. Shani, the check was based on partial data only!



78: 07

A general view on the Kiryat-Arie station platforms under construction, looking west towards Tel-Aviv; photo by Aharon Gazit

OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. IRAN.

(a). GERMAN LOCO SALE AT LAST?

From 'Lok Magazin' April 2007, p.29. "20 members of the Class 232 [Co-Co], currently in the 'Strategic Reserve' at Mukran, are to be brought imminently to the workshops at Cottbus and prepared there for their future service in Iran. A General Inspection and technical adaptations to Iranian operational conditions are planned. It remains to be seen whether, this time, a sale to Iran really takes place. Already in the early 1990's 20 locos of the Class 231 were about to be sold to Iran - but this deal fell through because of the high price demanded by the then-DR. About two years ago it was reported that locos of Class 218 should be sent; however, in view of their relatively low power and hydraulic transmission, these did not meet the Iranian requirements."

(b). METRO PROJECTS.

From Table of "Urban Rail Projects under construction in Asia", p. 20, Railway Gazette International, Metro Supplement, p. 20:-
Esfahan. Metro. 12.5km. Line A: Kaveh - Azadi Square - Soffeh.
Mashad. Light Metro.- 19.0 km. Torgabeh - Ghadirc.
Tabriz: Metro: 3.0 km. First line under construction.
Tehran. Metro. 18.8km. Line 2: Baharestan - Dardusht.

In 'Zukunft', which is a free propaganda news-sheet issued by the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland, for 29th. June 2007, p.1 is an article "No Transrapid for Iran" - the Zentralrat is appalled at German involvement in the planned construction of a new rail line for the 'Pilgrim Train'.

"German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) has decisively spoken out against German involvement in a Transrapid line in Iran. "I consider German help for the construction of a Transrapid in a country, whose President constantly announces his intention to destroy Israel, as fully unacceptable."

Earlier the Zentralrat (Central Council of Jews in Germany), the US Foreign Ministry and foreign policy experts of the CDU/CSU party in the Bundestag [Note the order!] had also sharply criticised the project.

The planned construction of a Transrapid line in Iran, with the support of German companies, had aroused deep worries in the President of the Zentralrat, Mrs. Charlotte Knobloch. "With a view to the nuclear ambitions and the inhuman statements of the Iranian leader, it is scandalous to carry out business with this regime", said Knobloch. "The economic cooperation between Germany and Iran sends a fatal political signal", she added. No business should be transacted with people who deny the Holocaust. "Especially Germany should not engage in economic interests at the expense of its democratic self-awareness", said Knobloch.

The Vice-President of the Zentralrat, Salomon Korn, has also spoken out against the delivery of a Transrapid to Iran. "It cannot be so that, on the one hand, the President of this state announces the elimination of a fellow member state of the UN from the world map, and on the other hand Germany acts as though one can continue on a normal daily political basis. Before this deal can be struck, Germany must make clear what the Iranian position really is, whether one is dealing here just with the opinion of one individual or whether this is general Iranian policy, which I personally find hard to believe, since the opposition in Iran is relatively strong."

Iran plans the building of an 850km. line for the transport of millions of pilgrims. The München engineering consultancy firm 'Regierungsbaumeister Schlegel' has, it announced, received the contract for a feasibility study for this project a few weeks ago.

The magnetic train could take pilgrims from the capital Teheran to Maschhad, more than 800km. away, in the north.-west of the country. According to the engineering firm the Iranian Government has budgeted 1.1 Billion Euros for initial development costs. The project was initiated during a visit to Iran by the former Bavarian Economics Minister Otto Wiesheu some three years ago."

B. LEBANON.

"WITH THE RAILWAY CEMETERY ATTENDANTS IN BEIRUT". (From "Fern Express" 1/2007 pp.32f. By Hermann Neidhart.)

"Whenever tourism seems about to re-start, there comes a blow - or several, one after another - and then no-one comes voluntarily here, and certainly no-one takes a holiday in Beirut. Trains have not gone this way for a long time.

These days - this report dates from April 2005 - one can indeed travel from München via Istanbul - and with the Taurus Express as far as Aleppo - and then to Damascus - a journey of about 80 hours. However, the last 120 km. from Syria's capital to Beirut one must travel by road (unless one manages to catch one of the very occasional museum trains that head in the

direction of the border.)

Beirut's Station "Mar Mikhael" - Gare St. Michel.

"Which is the way to the station?"

Only at the Ministry of Tourism is there any answer to this question - and an "Open Sesame!" in the form of a handwritten note in Arabic, addressed to the station administration. At the Gare St. Michel one has to apply again for a written, stamped and franked photographic permit, which has to be signed by the responsible official and again by his highest superior, each time with more stamps. In the meantime tea is served and we converse in French.

The former station main building bears witness to a western-European stone architectural style of the 19th. Century. For the "Société Concessionnaire du Chemin de Fer Damas-Hama et Prolongements", founded in 1892, was a French company which received from the Ottoman government the concession to build and operate the Beirut - Damascus line.

The railway official responsible for showing me around (he introduced himself as Monsieur Toni) explained something of the varied history of the country and its railways. In 1895 the 144km. long line (around 80km. of which was on Lebanese territory) French-built Lebanon railway from Beirut to Damascus was opened. It therefore became the connection to the Hedjaz railway. [sic. - in fact the Hedjaz was built later, to connect with this line! WLR.] With a gauge of 1050mm it was built as a rack railway (Abt system) to cope with the steep ascent of the mountains, since it had to climb more than 1,500 metres of altitude from the sea to the Dahr el Baidar Pass.

St. Michel was once an important station; from here came and went trains to Aleppo and Baghdad [sic!] In addition Beirut was once for a short while a station on the important through route for steam trains from Europe to Africa (Berlin - Istanbul - Aleppo - Beirut - Haifa - Cairo.) [M. Toni is clearly mixing up his Bagdadbahn and his H.B.T. histories. Ed.]

The Syrian section of the "Chemin de Fer du Hejaz" (CFH) was taken over in 1924 by the French company "Damas - Hama et Prolongements (DHP). In the Bekaa valley the Lebanon railway formed a junction at Rayak with the standard-gauge line via Baalbek to Homs in Northern Syria.

By Decree No. 6479 of 14th. April 1961 the Lebanese railways were placed under State control and since then have been known as the "Office des Chemin de Fer et du Transport en Commun de Beyrouth et de sa Banlieu". (CEL).

Since the Lebanese Civil War Nothing has Run. When the civil war broke out in Lebanon in 1975, around a half-dozen locomotives and maybe twice as many coaches and wagons were standing in this station - and here they have stood for the next 30 years. It would look a lot less romantic if there hadn't been such a growth of vegetation over them. At least the four rotting steam locos that stand in the open are in a dreadful condition - they were at the time simply left standing where they were. The oldest is from SLM in Winterthur, built in 1894.

In the meantime the locos have not just severely rusted, they have been robbed of significant parts - even some wheels are missing and also of course the builders' plates (although M. Toni has rescued two of them and they lie in his office; one comes from an English Westwood Baillie & Co, from 1882.) The coaches also look very bad. In the loco shed and in the workshops one could think oneself to be on the set of a horror film; one must be careful not to fall into a hole, and the roofs are fully fragmented.

M. Toni reports that during a short episode in 1991/92 a daily train did once again traverse the 10 kilometres between Beirut and Jounie. There were however too many accidents, which no insurance was prepared to cover. Further, people took time getting used again to this means of transport. Moreover, new construction along the line was often so close to the track that it hindered the rail traffic. Rubbish was dumped on the tracks. Cars parked partially on the tracks, so that the rail traffic was drastically affected. In 1992 the project was dropped again.

A Museum for Steam Veterans?

After the visit to Gare St. Michel a second Beirut railway cemetery was sought out, that from where the trains to Northern Lebanon once departed. Even less remains of this than of the former main station; one can recognise it really only through the two long rows of goods wagons, that do indeed look halfway useable, but are nevertheless pretty well useless here.

No future for the railways in Lebanon can currently be perceived - not even really for a Museum, in which the steam locos and coaches currently decaying at Gare St. Michel and elsewhere could be displayed. French railway enthusiasts did some years ago carry out a survey and produced a brochure - ("Le Patrimoine Ferroviaire Libanais") - but apart from this, it seems, nothing else has happened."

[An intriguing report. The history is dodgy but the contemporary scene seems quite tragic. And how does an English plate from a vehicle built ten years before the line come to be in an office in Beirut? Is there any way this might come from the Syria-Ottoman railway Co.? Ed.]

C. EGYPT.

"I am delighted to introduce the new website from Hassoun Media, called "The Independent Guide to Egyptian Railways," dedicated to all aspects of rail travel in Egypt and the Arab World, past, present and future..

* For the first time, the current full Egyptian national timetable is available - free online

* Also available is a range of products intended to bring this long neglected area to life

All available at
www.egyptianrailways.com
<<http://www.egyptianrailways.com/>>
Also coming soon!

* A new message board solely for news and views about rail and travel in Egypt.

* Material and contributions from technical and historical experts
I hope you will find it useful, now and in the future!

Gary Goldfinch
PO Box 344, Deal, Kent, CT14 9YF
07900 648176."

D. TURKEY.

(a). ETR-500 Test Train.

Various entries on the TurkRail listerv referred to the arrival in mid-April of an Italian ETR-500 high speed test train on TCDD to start testing on the new high speed lines. Photos on the Croatian-language "zeljeznice.net" site showed this being towed through Zagreb main station (Glavni Kolodvor) behind an HZ electric loco and with a Trenitalia diesel Bo-Bo attached. The set power cars were numbered Y2-A and Y2-B, and one of the coaches (the livery did not quite match that of the power cars) was branded "RFI - Treno Prova Alta Velocità" - i.e. High Speed Test Train.

(b). ON RAILS THROUGH ISTANBUL AND TURKEY.

An article by Ciril van Hattum. From the Dutch magazine 'Op de Rails' 2007/2. pp. 67ff. Thanks to Marc Stegeman for the photocopy. Translation from Dutch by the Editor.

"How it all Began and Ended for the Tram in Istanbul.

During the peak period for tramways, Turkey was not overly blessed with this form of transport. Electric trams ran only in the European and Asiatic parts of Istanbul, and in Izmir. In both towns these were preceded by horse tramways, which also ran in Bursa and Konya. It is clear that the current capital of Ankara was, at this time, not important or large enough to be considered for a tramway. This overview is not complete - in both European and Asiatic parts of Turkey there must have been other municipal tramways, but they do not all within the purview of this article.

On 3rd. September 1863 Sultan Abdul Aziz granted to the City Council of Istanbul the concession to operate tramlines in the European part of the city. For this purpose the "Société des Tramways de Constantinople Société Anonyme Ottomane" was established in August 1869.

This was a Belgian-Turkish enterprise with its seat in Istanbul. In 1871 the first horse trams traversed the standard-gauge tracks; there were three in Stamboul, the historic name for the old city, and one in Pera to the north of the Golden Horn. The stock comprised closed 4-wheel cars, later there were also open and double-deck cars as well. The trams were always hauled by at least two horses; lines through hillier terrain, such as in Pera, were served by trams pulled by four horses. At some spots where visibility was difficult a man stood to blow a horn to warn pedestrians of the approaching tram.

The standard gauge soon appeared to be unpractical in the narrow streets, so later lines were built to metre-gauge. There were no route numbers, but the twelve lines now ran from Yedikule, Topkapi and Edirnekapi at the city wall in the west to Bebek and Mecidiyeköy in the north-east. The horse trams - by now more than a hundred in number - conveyed 4.5 million passengers per year by the end. Due to the First Balkan War, when almost all horses were requisitioned by the army, almost no trams could run at all during

1913.

Because Sultan Abdul Hamid II had a higher opinion of horses than of electricity, it was not until 1914 - by which time he had been deposed - that the tramway was electrified. In this year a new Belgian-Turkish company, the "Tramways Electricité de Constantinople S.A.", replaced the former. The Belgian influence was great; a tram driver in Turkey is still called a "Vatman" [i.e. Watt-man" - the Belgian slang term.] On 21st. February 1914 the first electric tram ran between Sishane - the centre of Pera - and Harbiye in the north-east. This was combined with the necessary ceremonies, whereby several sheep lost their lives. Very quickly now the electric traction superceded that of the horse tram lines, the last of which was given a ceremonial farewell in 1916.

On average there were around 15 lines now in use, some of which also ran with an A or B added or a diagonal stripe through, to indicate that shorter runs on the main route or diverging branches were being served. The majority of lines traversed the Galata Bridge, upon which up to ten trams at a time could often be seen. For the first line 15 4-wheel double-ended tramcars had been ordered (Nos. 1 - 15), with six windows per side and with closed ends. After this there followed in stages deliveries of 160 pretty much identical cars with three large windows per side (Nos. 16 -175). In the 1930's some longer cars were added (Nos. 176 - 210), fitted with automatic folding doors. These were then also fitted to a number of the older cars. Most of the trams had Brill trucks, with electrical installations by AEG and SSW (Siemens Schuckert Werke) and were built by Franco-Belge, MAN, Hawa, Van der Zijnen & Charlier, and Sächsische Waggonfabrik Werdau, where amongst others the trailers 411 and 418 were built. 410 was also originally a trailer. The 'Istanbul Elektrik Travay ve Tönel İşletmeleri' (IETT) did not possess many of these; there were estimated to be around 60, all numbered over 400. .

The trams had First and Second Class. The main colour of the 1st.-class cars was red and of the 2nd-class a grey-green, both with cream around the window frames. Motor cars that had a first and second class section were cream. Later the class distinction was abandoned.

There were three depots, in Sisli, Besiktas and Aksaray. IETT gradually took over operations from the private companies and by 1939 had a monopoly on the European side. The trams travelled around 14M. kilometres per annum and in the top year of 1956 carried some 108 M. passengers.

It was only on New Year's Day 1928 that the first electric tram ran in Asiatic Turkey. For this the 'Üsküdar - Kadıköy ve Havalisi Halk Tramvayları Türk Anonim Şirketi' (ÜKHT) had been established in the previous year. The first line linked Üsküdar, formerly known as Scutari, with the TCDD station at Haydarpaşa. Six further lines followed. Tramcars were ordered centrally through the Government. ÜKHT received 90 of the same type as the IETT's 16-175 series. In 1935 a further 20 steel 4-wheel trams with central entrance and vestibule only were delivered, built by Waggon und Maschinenfabrik AG, the former Busch in

Bautzen, with electrical equipment from SSW. The system had its own numbering system. There were depots at Hasanpasa and Baglarbasi. Most routes departed from Kadiköy. Only the lines 6 to Fenerbahçe and 12 to Üsküdar conveyed trailers. 1st. class cars were here painted in a yellow ochre, and 2nd. class light green. In 1955 IETT took over the transport activities of ÜKHT in Asiatic Istanbul and renumbered the trams. The 90 original cars became 210-300, while the central-vestibule cars received numbers from 301.

After the abandonment of several routes, in 1961 the tramway was totally closed in European Istanbul. On 12th. August of that year tramcar 128, decorated with flowers and with a banner reading "Farewell dear passengers" performed the last trip on Line 17. Immediately thereafter IETT commenced the erection of overhead for a trolley-bus network. In 1962 and 1963 the trolleybuses entered service on approximately ten routes.

For these services a hundred buses were purchased from Alfa Romeo/Fiat, numbered 1 - 100. Trolleybus 101 was home-built. Through the introduction of a one-way system in the inner city and the construction of a bridge over the Bosphorus it was soon necessary to alter or abandon routes. The last trolleybus ran in 1982, and from this point on all urban transport was in the form of diesel buses. IETT transferred some of those trams in better condition over to the other side, in order to replace there vehicles in poorer condition. These were then parked on the track at the terminus of route 8 at Hasanpasa and in all probability shortly thereafter scrapped.

At the beginning of the 1960's Line 20 to Moda in Asiatic Istanbul was abandoned and also the lengthy extension out to Bostanci. There remained only line 4(Striped), which ran no further than Feneryolu.

Approximately 13 M. passengers per year were carried. On 31st. December 1966 the trams ran in Asiatic Istanbul for the last time. Here there were no trolleybuses as replacement, but there did occur something that was, for this period, pretty unusual. IETT wanted to hold onto the memory of the tram and so brought several items into the 'Museum Depot' at Hasanpasa. Here was a replica of Horse Tram 85 - complete with horse, driver, stableman and passengers. From Bautzen/SSW was 1st. Class Tramcar 35 with central vestibule from 1935, bearing markers for line 20 (Kadiköy - Moda) - notable as the route that was closed first, although since 2003 it is once more possible to see a tram with this number. This was IETT car 303 that had been returned to its original ÜKHT livery and identity. There were a further five or so motor and trailer cars, more or less of the type that ran through the Independence Street, and four works vehicles, including a rail grinder wagon. The most attractive exhibit in the museum is the complete steam power room from the old tunnel railway and both rope-hauled cars that seem to be emerging from a tunnel. In order to achieve this effect a sort of fake tunnel was built onto the museum depot into which the cable cars could be pushed.

In front of the museum the non-op-

erational tramcar 131 was stood to catch attention. From 1975 rides for the public around the depot, on tracks which formerly ran around it, were operated during opening hours, using cars 35 and 193. Alas, the museum had to close its doors in 1985. The contents were fortunately not lost but have been partially transferred to the Technical Museum Rahmi M. Koc, named after a Turkish industrialist. The rest remains in storage in one of the garages of the city buses. The rather run-down Hasanpasa depot shed is now used as accommodation for the Fire Brigade - although the built-on 'tunnel' section remains on the rear side.

The Express Tram.

Mention was made earlier that a new Express Tram network existed in the western part of Istanbul. This is officially known as "Hafif Rayli Sistem" or 'Light Rail System'. This is the result of a process that began in 1982, as the city authorities realised that public transport was being used less and less and the growing number of private cars and minibuses were forming a problem.

The TCDD line in European Istanbul runs along the coast of the Sea of Marmara and not through the centre and is not therefore suitable to fulfil a local function in urban transport. An underground metro would be far too expensive to build in this expansive town. The only remaining alternative was therefore a largely-overground fast tramway. Of the five foreign bidders, the project was granted to the Swedish ASEA, that later combined with the Swiss Brown-Boveri under the name ABB. The Göteborg type M21 vehicle was taken as a basis. SGB in Austria assisted in the construction of 105 vehicles. This is a substantial number and calculated on the basis of the construction of further express tramlines. The Turkish contractor Yapı Merkezi took over the civil construction and tracklaying work.

The conventional single-articulated standard-gauge tramcars have a carrying bogie in the middle. Nos. 501-570 have a driving cab whereas Nos. 101-135 have none and are therefore always marshalled in the middle of the trains, which normally comprise four coaches. Each car is 2.65m wide, 23.5m. long and offers room for 46 seated and 198 standing passengers. In 1998 some ran trials on line 8 in Göteborg, following which further tests took place over six months in Istanbul before the public were allowed to ride the express tram from 3rd. September 1989. The 8.5km. line runs from Aksaray in a north-westerly direction to Kartaltepe.

The first section with three stations is built underground, then it goes on its own alignment mostly at ground level further. In the following years the line was extended bit by bit from Kartaltepe to the current terminus at Havaalani, the airport of Istanbul, which was reached by tram in 2002. The line has therefore grown to a length of 20km, has 18 stations and the line is traversed - with a maximum speed of 80 km/h - in half an hour.

The line is operated by the "Istanbul Ulasim Sanayi ve Toicaret AS" transport concern, a semi-governmental organisation. Ulasim is operated from 06.00 to 01.00 at an interval varying from 5 to 7.5 minutes. A token of 1.10 Lira gives access through the turnstiles to the platforms. The depot and workshops at Esenler

is - at 85,000 sq. m. - also planned with a view to future expansion. The complex is situated at the end of a branch on which one train set shuttles from Otzogar (bus station) on the main line.

The only extension which was envisioned from the outset, and which is currently being worked on, is that from Aksaray underground for 700m to Yenikap in the coast. Here in 2008 the fourth underground station will open. A 7.5km. long above-ground extension from Esenler with five stops to Mahmutbey could also be ready by 2008.

New City Tram.

Apart from these suburban systems, the tunnel line, the old trams and the express trams, Istanbul acquired in July 1992 yet a further form of public transport in the form of the standard-gauge urban tram in the streets of the Old City, known in Turkish as the 'Cadde Tramvay' - 'Street Tram'. Ulasim began operation from Aksaray, the initial point on the express tram. Here a reversing balloon loop was built, but it is not normally used in regular service by the double-ended vehicles, though it serves as siding space when required. The tram line is laid along the main streets of the old city and passes on its way to the terminus by Sirkeci station essentially all important tourist sights - the Great Bazaar, the Blue Mosque, the Hagia Sophia and the Topkapi Palace. Expansion took place first in a westerly direction - in 1994 the current terminus of Zeytinburnu was reached - and then eastwards, one stop further to Eminönü by the Galata Bridge over the Golden Horn (1996). Only in March 2005 did the tramway cross this bridge to reach Findikli. From 29th. June 2006 this was extended further to the provisional terminus at Kabatas by a ferry harbour. Now at 14km., this line has acquired some stature. It is also noticeable that even on sections where the line runs on its own formation, grooved rail has been laid.

Ulasim had problems with the purchase of the rolling stock, so that in 1992 there was no alternative but to use the Express Tram stock - there were enough available but they had to be adapted for use on this line. 16 of the 70 cars with driving cabins were fitted with protective skirts at front and side for the sake of safety in the city. Later another 32 vehicles were 'rebuilt', necessary due to the extension of the line. The halts received a raised platform, as the vehicles had no steps fitted. And so initially eight rakes, each comprising two cars, rolled through the city - it was not a very appropriate sight. One consolation was that the profession of Conductor, selling tickets, had long since died out in Istanbul, and so the public was able to make free use of these trains! Doubtless it was this that made the line so popular that later problems emerged....

From 2003 the line was used by proper tramcars, Nos. 701 - 755 delivered by the Viennese works of the Bombardier concern. They had also run trials on the Viennese city system. These are bi-directional trams with air-conditioning and a 70% low floor. They show great similarities with the Stockholm A32 type which work lines 12 and 22 there, and with those of the RijnGouweLijn. The raised platforms disappeared from the tram stops, which were then fitted with fences

and turnstiles. At each stop an employee sits and sells tokens for 1.10 Lira, the same as for the Express Tram. This man, often assisted by other employees, also has the function of ensuring passengers do not board clandestinely.

Trams operate in pairs from 05.30 till midnight. Line 39 covers the whole line from Zeytinburnu to Kabatas, approximately every ten minutes; Line 37 runs at the same frequency to Eminönü, so that as far as here there is a tram every five minutes. In peak periods there are also trams that only traverse a part of the line, and route numbers 45, 46 and 47 are kept for these. Then 25 tram sets are under way, the maximum possible. Even outside the peak periods the trams are always full - they transport 160,000 passengers a day, and thus this line has become in a very short time perhaps the busiest in all Europe.

The Turkish habit of boarding and disembarking at the same time causes some congestion. Only at the terminus at Zeytinburnu is there a rail link to the express tram system, which the trams must use to get to the workshops at Esenler. The city tram itself has neither an own depot nor an own workshop. Only in the vicinity of the Pazartekke stop is there the facility for minor maintenance at the Topkapi bus garage. At the end of service the trams simply stand on the street, in the loop at Aksaray or wherever. Luckily Istanbul does not yet have any graffiti artists.

For an extension further westwards, there were not enough trams. The extension from Zeytinburnu to Bağcılar, a station on the express tramway, would therefore have to be operated separately. A few of the reserve supply of vehicles, still fitted with their skirting, have been newly painted and placed in service from 14th. September 2006 on this 5.6km. long stretch, where the stops have been equipped with raised platforms. From Zeytinburnu one sees an impressive tramway viaduct rise up with a curve, until it vanishes amongst the houses. Further on the trams have their own alignment separate from the road traffic. The line is partially planted with grass. On the north side the line is extended a further 1.4km. (two stops) to Bedsiktas. Adjacent to the penultimate stop at Dolmabahce is the last palace of the Sultans. With the city tram it should then be possible to reach all the top attractions.

Work is also under way on a totally new 16km. long line from Beyazit, past the university to the old city wall at Edirnekapi and further to Eyüp and Sultansiftligi.

It is clear that due to the great success of the city tramline, and the later extensions, 55 vehicles are not enough to cope with the transport demand. Ordering additional trams is, however, not so simple. Allocation of funding for new large projects, such as a new tram set in a town or an extension, is centrally controlled in Turkey by the government. To ask for a few million extra for the purchase of some additional tramcars is difficult. In consequence Ulasim began to build its own tramcars at its workshops at Esenler, with help from foreign suppliers such as Siemens and Kiepe. Four prototypes have been built, which were also placed in service for a brief period. At the end of 2005 this project was however halted - probably the quality

of the home-made items did not meet the demanding requirements. So negotiations are currently under way with Korean firms. The four prototypes await their uncertain future stored outside in the depot yard.

Metro.

In the same year that the new city tram began operations, 1992, work began in the north of the city on the construction of a true underground metro line. This was opened to the public by Ulasim on 16th. September 2000. The route runs from the Taksim Square, terminus of the old tram, to Levent 4, some 7.3 km. to the north. In this terminus the provisional depot and workshops is located; above this is the terminus of a trolley-bus line. There are four intermediate stations. The ride lasts 12 minutes and also costs 1.10 Lira, payable with the same tokens as the tram and Express Tram. The 32 vehicles were built by Alstom in 1999 in three varieties : 1501-1516 are driving motor cars; 1301 - 1308 are motor cars without a driving cab, and 1101-1108 are non-motorised intermediate trailer cars. Trains run in fixed formations of four vehicles, for example 1501 + 1301 + 1101 + 1502, and so forth. Six of these trains are required at any one time, with a train running every five minutes. Current supply at 750V is by third rail. The driver has little more to do than ensure that the automatic systems are functioning correctly.

The stations are built deep, are modern, attractive and roomy. Escalators and travelers make things as easy for the passengers as possible. Cameras and fire alarms ensure safety. In addition there are security men on duty at each station.....

Although already some 140,000 passengers use the line daily, it won't really become a means of mass transport until the extension to the centre is ready. As well as a 3.6km. long extension northwards to Ayazaga, where the permanent depot will also be situated, it is planned to extend southwards 5.2km. to Yenikapi in the old city, which means the line's length will be more than doubled. And almost wholly underground - though the Golden Horn will be crossed by a bridge."

p.44. "Istanbul Expansion schemes lead a growing urban rail market".

By Ilgaz Candemir, Head of Construction Et Track, Izmir Metro AS.

"The spark which ignited the growth of urban rail transport in cities across Turkey was provided by the opening of Istanbul's first light metro line in 1989. Istanbul now has three commercial urban rail networks, plus two tourist-oriented tram routes, whilst further projects are being developed in the city and across the country.

The most impressive of the schemes currently underway is Marmaray, the US\$2.913bn. high-capacity commuter link beneath the Bosphorus, which is expected to open in spring 2010. The heart of the 76km. of new and upgraded tracks will be a 1,357m. immersed tube tunnel between Europe and Asia, with 12.2km. of bored approach tunnels housing three underground stations. A further six rail projects are under construction in Istanbul to accommodate the continuing growth of the city, and all of these are expected to open during 2007.

The metro is being extended 5.2km. southwest from Taksim to Yenikapi. A 15.8km. tram line is to be built from Vezneciler to Sultanciftligi, and the existing tramway is being extended 2.8km. east across the Golden Horn from Eminonu to Kabatas, and 5.8km. west from Zeytinburnu to Bağcilar. The Hafif light metro is being extended 0.7 km. from Aksaray to Yenikapi. Not to be forgotten is the Taksim - Kabatas funicular, which will provide an important link when it opens in 2007.

City transport operator Ulasim AS has further plans for the medium term, and bidding is currently under way for a contract to extend the metro northwards by 3.6km. from 4 Levent to Ayazaga. Tenders have been called for a 7.5 km. light metro extension from the bus station to Bağcilar, and also for a 20km. light rail line on the Anatolian side of the city to link Kadiköy with Kartal.

Ulasim's longer-term strategy is focused on further metro extensions, including a proposed 10km. line from Yenikapi to Bağcilar, and a 17km. west to east line between Uskudar, Umraniye and Dudullu in Anatolia. The light metro may be extended from Bakirkoy to Beylikduzu, which would add no less than 23.3km.

Ankara.

Turkey's capital city is also growing rapidly, and three metro extensions are in prospect. The most important of these is the 10.5km. western extension of automatic metro line M2 from Kizilay to Cayyolu 2, paralleling the road to Izmir. There have been construction difficulties between Kizilay and Sogutozu, and the section from Umitkoy to Cayyolu 2 is still some way from completion.

The planned US\$ 151M Line M3 will be longer than M2 at approximately 17.8km., and will serve 12 stations between Batikent and Torekent-OSB. Also proposed is line M4, which will have nine stations and run for 7.9km. between Tandogan, Ulus and Kecioren.

Izmir.

Last July, Izmir Metro signed a US\$ 68M contract with civil engineering contractor Bayindir AS for a 5.5km., six-station extension of the 11.6km. light metro in the country's third-largest city.

NATM is being used for the underground extension from Ücöl to Fahrettin Altay, and around 10% of the tunnelling is complete. Electrical and mechanical contracts are still to be placed, and opening of this second phase is now expected in mid-2008.

Planning is now underway for further extensions to serve the bus station and university areas, in conjunction with the city's bid to host the 2015 World Expo. Greater Izmir municipality hopes to complete 38km. of metro lines in the next decade, and will develop north-south commuter rail services by 2008.

These commuter services will an existing TCDD line, running between the refinery and ship yards of Aliaga and Izmir Adnan Menderes Airport in Cumaovasi to the south. Feasibility studies suggest this corridor could carry an average of 500,000 passengers per day.

In 2005 TCDD and the city authority formed a partnership to study electrification

and re-signalling of the 80km. route to increase capacity. Work began in April on a 2.5km. tunnel at Karsiyaka, and a 1.5km. tunnel at Akincilar is being planned to provide strategic increases in capacity. The municipality is contributing US\$200M to the scheme, and the work is expected to take 24 months.

Other Cities.

Lying 150km. south of Istanbul, Bursa opened its BursaRay light metro in August 2002. There are two lines, totalling 17.5km. with 17 stations. By the end of this year work is expected to be underway on the 5.0km. line B2 to the coach terminal and Line C to Uludag University.

Konya operates second-hand German trams on an 18km. line which opened in 1992 and was extended in 1996. Serving 20 stops, the line has been successful in reducing city-centre traffic, and the city has long been planning to build a second route. At the end of 2005 the local authority called tenders to construct the 16.6km. Line 2 between 500 Evler Siteleri, Vatan Cad and Elmaci, but budgetary constraints have prevented further progress.

Since 1999 the holiday resort of Antalya has a single 5.1km. tram route, built by Turkish company Yapı Merkezi AS. This is now carrying 20,000 passengers/day, using former Nürnberg trams acquired from Antalya's twin city.

Eskisehir has a new-generation metre-gauge tramway, with two lines forming an X-shaped network, which opened in 2004. Estram's low-floor trams serve 26 stops on the 10.6 km. Line 1 and 6.8km. Line 2. Extensions of Line 1 southwest to the Ankara Road industrial estate and northwest to Bursa Road are planned.

Another crowded city is Kayseri, which signed contracts with Yapı Merkezi last year for construction of the KayseRay tram project, and placed a \$50M order with AnsaldoBreda for 22 Sirio trams. The 17km. line will run between Mimar Sinan and an industrial zone, serving 30 stops.

Earlier this year the municipality began the process to obtain \$89M in funding from BNP and NIB, and expects to open the line in late 2009.

The story of the metro project in the southern city of Adana is like a never-ending symphony. Construction began in 1999, and the initial 13.3km. line between Akincilar and Hastaneline was once scheduled to open in 2002 at a cost of US\$ 340M, but budgetary problems have repeatedly prevented progress on the 13-station line. In April 2005 the mayor negotiated a further US\$ 98M from the Government Planning Committee to continue work on the project, but the city still needs more than US\$ 194M. Subject to government approval of further funding, the opening date is now estimated as mid-2009.

The Black Sea city of Samsun has a population of 635,000, and the transport authority began a tram feasibility study in 2001. In 2003 designs were produced for a 16km. line with 15 stops between Hukümet Konagi Arkasi and Korfez. This US\$156M line will be funded by central government and foreign banks. Construction work could now begin in 2007, with the aim of opening in 2010.

There is no doubt at all that the current generation of Turkish urban rail systems offers the potential to reduce many of the country's traffic problems and cut city-centre pollution, especially in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara.

These pioneering projects have demonstrated that urban rail can do much to cut the cost and increase the comfort of travel, and I have no doubt that we will be working on many other new lines and network expansion projects over the next decade."

Line 20.

One can reach the Asiatic side of Istanbul with one of the many ferryboats, fare a token costing 1 Lira, and come to Kadiköy. Here the IETT has operated since 1st. November 2003 a tramline whereby the city, built on seven hills, has also acquired its seventh form of public transport.

The destination blinds are marked "20 Kadiköy - Moda", the same as the former tramline which served roughly the same route. Why this line was built remains a bit of a mystery. It is as relaxed and calm here as it is hectic and crowded at the old tram in Beyoğlu. Probably it is simply that Asiatic Istanbul also desired an historic tramline through one of its busiest shopping streets, the Gen. Asim Gündüz Caddesi, which is currently being renovated. The line is operated in ten minutes, whereby two of the four tramcars available are required. These are metre-gauge 4wh. Gotha and Reko cars from the former DDR, ex-Jena 102, 138 and ex-Schöneiche (near Berlin) 75 & 77 (now renumbered 201 - 204.) IETT has repainted all four in the same red and cream livery as those on the other side of the Bosphorus.

Line 20 traverses in one direction only a 2.6km. long loop line from Kadiköy Meydani via the aforementioned shopping street to the Moda district. Returning via a different route the tram is back at its starting point after 20 minutes. There are ten stops. Near Ido Iskele there is a small shed for two trams - the other two overnight in the open air in front of the door. The driver has a stool and can operate the doors with air from this position. The trams work on weekdays from 07.00 to 20.00, at weekends beginning later. A ride costs 90 kuruş, but almost all passengers use their Smartcard.

In 2006 a further four tramcars were acquired from Jena - Nos. 104, 110, 112 and 115. A track is to be laid next to the shed on which to store these. Apparently their role will be merely to provide a source of reserve parts. At the moment they are standing at the depot at Esenler.

As well as this 'toy' Tramline 20 there are serious plans for four modern express tram lines in this part of Istanbul. The first of these, from Kadiköy to Kartal, 20km. with 15 stations, is under construction and should come into operation in 2009. After this will follow Üsküdar - Ümraniye, work on which begins in 2007.

Taksim - Kabatas Tüneli.

The large and busy Taksim Square, with the Atatürk Monument in the centre, is well-served on the northern side by the metro. On the city side there was, apart from buses,

only the old tram with its very limited capacity. The city council did not want just to sit and wait a long time until the metro could be extended further southwards. In 2004 work began on digging a tunnel from Kabatas on the Bosphorus to the Taksim which is at a much higher level. In this tunnel, with a gradient of 22%, Ulasim has been operating since 29th. June 2006 a second funicular, of approximately the same length as the existing Tünel - which continues to operate but is now less congested. The construction time was underestimated, with the result that the two trains delivered by CWA of Olten, Switzerland, spent a year in store at the Esenler depot area. The four dark-blue with black vehicles are roomy and of modern appearance, have a stepped floor and are coupled in pairs. The ride lasts 2 minutes and there is an estimate of 15,000 passengers per hour. On the same day, 29th. June, the city trams were extended to Kabatas, offering travellers the possibility of an easy interchange to the Taksim-Kabatas Tüneli."

(c). METRO & TRAM PROJECTS.

From Table of "Urban Rail Projects under construction in Asia", p. 20, 'Railway Gazette International', Metro Supplement, p. 20:-

Adana. LRT. 13.3km. Akincilar - Hastane.

Ankara Metro 18.9km. M2 : Kizilay - Cayyolu.

Ankara. Metro. 17.7km. M3: Batikent - Sincan -Torekent - OSB.

Bursa. LRT. 4.0 km. Sehrekustu - Yildirim.
Izmir. Light Metro. 5.2km. Sage 2: Ücöl - Fahrettin Altay.

(d). ISTANBUL NOTES.

From 'C.R.J.' 150 Summer 2007, p.177 "In February 2007, most of the 20-minute interval passenger service from Sirkeci to Halkali was being worked by the original French-built 25kV electric units, the 8000 series of 1955/62 vintage, along with a few of the 14000 series dating from 1979, most of which work out of Haydarpasa on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. The units are in a blue and white livery lined with red; interiors of the old stock are lined with sage green and marbled grey formica, and the sliding door mechanisms are getting shaky. There are no graffiti on the railway here. It is an interesting ride to Halkali, taking about 55 minutes. The old steam shed buildings at Yedikule are still standing. The flat fare, in common with all metro/tramway lines in the city, is 1.30 YTL (New Turkish Lira) - at present the equivalent of about GBP 0.50 Pence!

Regrettably there was no sight of any of the three original electric locos, E4001-3 (Jeumont 1955). They were photographed by our reporter at Halkali in 2001, but may have already been withdrawn by then. The subsequent 1971 series, E40001-15, which resemble the SNCF BB 1700, are apparently also withdrawn; latterly they worked the Haydarpasa - Adapazari service. Main line trains on the European side are hauled by the E52501 series Bo-Bo built by Koncar of Zagreb and understood to be on hire from Bosnia & Herzegovina Railways. Also seen was one of the Japanese-designed E4300 series Bo-Bo-Bo."

(e). PRESERVATION.

"At Haydarpasa, 2-4-0 23004, unfortunately without tender, is in a fine position for photographs on the station forecourt. At Sirkeci 0-4-0T 2251 is in a shady corner surrounded by railings and spreading bushes. At Halkali, a 4-8-0 presumed to be 46018 looks fairly presentable, with motion complete, despite having been in the open outside the electric train depot for some years; nearby are two old German-style coaches, evidently for special or departmental use, one of them repainted in blue livery."

E. SYRIA.

(i). NEW MULTIPLE UNITS. (From 'Lok Magazin' 05/2007 p.30):

"The Syrian State Railways CFS is receiving as part of a modernisation of its long-distance stock ten five-car diesel multiple units from Rotem of Korea, a firm known in Europe for their work on the stock for the Athens Metro. Each of the three centre cars has a Cummins engine of 560 kW, which drives both forward axles through a Voith hydraulic gearbox. Deliveries are extended from September 2006 till May 2007. The trains are placed in service, after a brief introductory check, in the scheduled services Aleppo - Damascus and Aleppo - Latakia. The trains each have 283 seats, of which 222 (!) are First Class. Top speed of the trains is 160km/h, although at the moment 120km/h is the top speed allowed in Syria."

An accompanying photo by Thomas Meyer-Eppler shows the units to be finished in stainless-steel with red stripes at cantrail level and along the lower side.

See Item (h) below.

(ii). RAILCAR HISTORY.

In 'Today's Railways Europe' No. 140 p. 60 is an article on a restored Bulgarian bogie railcar 19.001, formerly 29.01 (until re-numbering in 1988). "In 1960 and 1961 SGP built two prototypes with a view to obtaining an order from ÖBB for a new generation of DMU's. These were four-axle vehicles with two engines. The two prototypes had different interiors and bogies. 5047.01 (not to be confused with present ÖBB Class 5047) was a classic branch line DMU with 80 seats and a maximum speed of just 90 km/h, while the other - ABmot 10 - was designed for luxury medium distance travel. 5047.01 was tested by ÖBB from 1960 to 1966, but ABmot only worked private charters for travel agencies. In 1964 SGB sold ABmot 10 to BDZ as salon railcar 29.01. Based on this design SGB later sold seven similar vehicles to Syria."

F. DUBAI & ABU DHABI.

(i). PALM MONORAIL From 'Railway Gazette International' 'Metro Report 2006' Supplement, p.20.

"A 5.5km. monorail is under construction to serve the distinctive Palm Jumeirah development in Dubai and this will link with the two automatic metro lines which are now being designed in detail but which will use more conventional technology.

Nearby Abu Dhabi is developing its own metro proposals. It is reported that a

committee has been appointed to study a metro in Kuwait, but even if approval is obtained work is not expected to begin for some time."

From C.R.J. No. 150 Summer 2007 p.173: "Construction of this 5.4km. long automatic monorail commenced in March 2006 and completion is scheduled for December 2008. The line will run from Gateway, at the trunk of the Palm Jumeirah, to Atlantis, on the crescent, with intermediate stations at Trump International Hotel & Tower and at Village Centre. Initially there will be four driverless trains each comprising three cars, capable of carrying 2400 passengers per hour in each direction. This will rise to a maximum of 6000 passengers in nine vehicles. Construction is in the hands of Nakheel and the Marubeni Corporation, with technical support from Osaka Monorail Co. Ltd."

(ii). DUBAI METRO. From 'C.R.J.' No. 150 Summer 2007. p.173:

"Construction of a two-line light metro system commenced in 2005. Work is well on schedule with the first route, the Red Line, which will run from Rashidiya to Jebel Ali Port, a length of 52km. with 29 stations, including four underground and 24 elevated and all fully air-conditioned. The driverless trains are expected to start operating on September 2009. Construction of the Green Line, from Al Qusais to Jadaff, will follow immediately afterwards."

On 21.06.2007 it was reported:- "Dubai Roads and Transport Authority has selected Serco, Britain, as its preferred bidder for a contract to operate and maintain Dubai's first two metro lines. The five-year contract, worth up to £400 million, covers operation and maintenance of the Red and Green lines, which will both open in September 2009. The contract also includes pre-launch consultancy and planning, and a further five-year extension may be awarded when the contract expires in 2014. Serco will run the operations control centre for the automated metro, and provide train attendants and stations staff, as well as rolling stock, track, and station maintenance."

(iii). ABU DHABI STADTBahn.

The Deutsche Bahn distributed on 20.07.23007 a 'free newsheet' called 'Mobilaktuell', in which appeared an article "Abu Dhabi discovers the Railways."

"The whole world speaks about Dubai - but there are wonderful new worlds springing into existence elsewhere too, for example, in Abu Dhabi. There, Sheikh Chalifa I is creating a wholly new city out of the desert sands, which will have 120,000 inhabitants. Al Raha Beach will also have the first railway in Abu Dhabi - a 13-kilometre long Stadtbahn with 14 stations. This project, exotic for Arabia, is being planned by experts from the DB. Engineers from DB International are providing the necessary Know-How for the Emirate, known for its oil and gas reserves. "We are keeping well to schedule, our client is very satisfied" said Peter Haaks, DB International Regional Director for the Middle East. The first trains should roll in 2011. This DB subsidiary

has 650 employees and is currently supervising 27 railway projects on four continents."

(iv). GULF STATES MONORAILS.

In "Eisenbahn Kurier" 8/2007 is an article on the 'Transrapid' Magnetbahn, which includes a little more information (p.65) on possible exports to the Middle East.

"Apart from China, Magnetbahn projects are being considered in numerous other countries, for example in the USA, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and recently also in Iran. Iran is considering building an 850km. line, to carry between 12 and 15 Million pilgrims per year in just three hours from Tehran to Maschhad. A Munich engineering consultancy is working on a feasibility study. The Iranian government has, according to this bureau, made around \$1.5 Billion (around €1.1 Billion) available as initial financing for the project. Iran's plans have led to conflict within the German political system, one which goes through and not along the party lines. Whereas some see the transport of pilgrims in Iran as a project which should not be affected by any political boycott measures, others see the need to have no business whatsoever with Iran as paramount, so long as Tehran denies the Holocaust and wishes to remove Israel from the world map. For the same reasons there is opposition from Israel and from the Central Council of Jews in Germany."

[The Editor notes: There are often problems when what is meant to be the religious representative body of German Jews gets involved in secular politics - something it often does. At the same time we should not forget the thwarted sale of DB hi-tech tilting trains to Iran, which had nothing to do with this issue and a lot to do with military fears of a transfer of technology that could be applied to weapons systems.] The article is accompanied by a computer-generated impression of a monorail train on the planned 800km. line from Qatar to the UAE.

G. HEDJAZ.

(i). VIDEO REVIEW.

In "Railfan and Railroad", a U.S. magazine, November 2006 p. 19 is a review of a video on the Hedjaz that may be of interest to readers. Produced by Revelation Video, P.O. Box 129, Tallmadge, Ohio 44278, or www.revelationvideo.com. 90 minutes, available as DVD-R or VHS at \$27.00. An excerpt from the review, in American style and with a few slight misunderstandings:

"News coverage of the Middle East conveys mere morsels of reality, since behind the daily images we see are many people making their societies work. Why, they even run railways, ranging from modern operations using General Electric U-boats to steam photo charters powered by a very few and often cantankerous oil-fired beasts from Japan, Britain, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland. This video, shot on a UK-sponsored tour early in 2006, offers samplings of the unique railroads of Jordan and Syria as the core subjects. Revelation's semi-travelogue style gives nice overviews of the region's transportation, natural and political histories through historical narration, old black & white still pictures, shots of the ruins of ancient civilisations and looks at

today's cities..... The rail action starts in Jordan at the phosphate/potash operation at the port of Aqaba on the Red Sea. We watch train movements in the main yard, ride the cab of one move, and visit the control room. Next is a charter with a very handsome Japanese 4-6-2 pulling a few freight cars and two passenger cars on a steep grade in and around Amman. Multiple runbys are presented along with flashback coverage of prior year trips, each with multiple runbys over the signature, arched viaducts. Next day, a 2-8-2 powers our train on a different line with various runbys. Moving to Syria, flashback video supplements coverage of this trip, which suffers at first from a 0-4-4-2T that fails, replaced by a German 2-8-0T [sic] rushed in from Damascus. Our photographically productive trip this day ends near the Israeli border on a scenic line that crosses various bridges, transits tunnels and rolls along ledges. We ride the cab back to Damascus. Additional time is spent with a couple of other steam engines in the Damascus area, visiting some railway shops (a few local fans are cosmetically restoring some of the derelict engines), a look at the old main station under restoration as a library and a final charter with a 2-6-0T on a very short run done twice....."

(ii). CHINESE SPARKS.

From "Times Online" for 21.05.2007:-

"A century after its opening by the Ottoman Sultan, the Hejaz Railway, the line blown up repeatedly by Lawrence of Arabia, is to be rebuilt as an intercity express.

A £180 million contract to reengineer the world-famous narrow-gauge line as a standard-gauge railway was signed by the Jordanian Government in the margins of the World Economic Forum that ended yesterday at the Dead Sea.

A private Chinese company, Infrastructure Development, in tandem with Pakistani contractors, is to start work in 2009 to transform a short stretch of the neglected line, creating a light commuter railway between Amman and Zarka in the northeast. There are plans then to rebuild the line all the way to Damascus.

The proposed new electrified railway would link the Syrian and Jordanian capitals with an express taking only two hours. All customs and border formalities would take place in the terminals at each end. At present a little-used diesel-operated service runs twice a week, but takes at least eight hours. Many of the rails have not been changed since the line was built, and still bear the Ottoman crest.

The Chinese consortium has been granted a 30-year contract to run the line before handing it over to the Jordanian Government. Jordan will pay a third of the cost, with the Chinese contributing the balance.

The railway marks one of China's most ambitious projects in the Middle East and is likely to give China a visible presence in the region, just as the TanZam Railway, built in the 1960s from landlocked Zambia to the Tanzanian coast, gave it in Africa.

The project has thrown into doubt the continued existence of the historic 1,050mm-gauge line, which is seen widely as one of the most romantic and skillfully engineered railways in the world.

Abu Feilat Abdul Razzak, the director of the Jordan branch of the Hejaz railway, hopes that a way can be found to relay the narrow-gauge line inside the new track so that trains can still run from Damascus to Aqaba on the Red Sea.

Built by German engineers, the line was originally used to transport pilgrims from across the Ottoman Empire to Medina and Mecca. The train journey took 70 hours – far quicker than the 14 days by sea or about 40 days by camel. The line was also seen by Abdul Hamid II, the Turkish Sultan, as a way of consolidating his hold on the restless Arab provinces in the south, and a strategic route to Arabia that could not be blockaded by European naval powers.

In 1900 the Ottomans appealed to the Muslim world for donations to build the line through the inhospitable desert terrain. Construction began in 1901 and the route was opened, with great ceremony, in 1908.

Barely eight years later it became the prime target for Colonel T.E. Lawrence and his army of Beduin, who, with British support, had risen in revolt against Ottoman rule. The line was dynamited, blowing up several Turkish troop trains.

After the war the southern section from Maan, near the Saudi border, south to Medina was abandoned. Ancient steam locomotives are still marooned in isolated stations along the

route. Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia agreed to reinstate the line in 1963, but although British contractors were engaged, the project made no headway.

In the 1970s German contractors built a new spur through the precipitous mountains around Wadi Rum, Lawrence's desert hide-out, to Aqaba, to allow the export of phosphates from mines in central Jordan. The southern section of the line was renovated but is now used only for freight.

All three countries have recently begun to see the huge tourist potential of this famous line. The new line to Zarka will be double-track and electrified. Mr Abdul Razzak said that it would be completed in 2½ years. "But I think the Chinese may finish it in 1½."

Like several Arab countries, Jordan is looking again at railways as a way of relieving its crowded roads and improving public transport for its burgeoning 5.5 million population."

H. SAUDI ARABIA.

ROMANIAN CONNECTION.

A note in 'Today's Railways Europe' No. 140 p. 54 suggests that the State-owned firm 'Electroputere' at Craiova, Romania, is likely to be sold - "It is reported that a 62.8% share is to be sold to 'Al-Arabb Contracting Company' of Saudi Arabia, belonging to the MADA group of companies, which are involved in massive railway projects in that country."

I. ERITREA.

From 'Railway Gazette': "Eritrea's government has provided 1,000 soldiers to work on rehabilitation of the 124 km. of the 950mm gauge Eritrean Railway west from Asmara to Agordat.

Continuing a further 109 km. from Agordat would take the line to Biscia, thereafter to Tessenei and the Sudanese border, and railway Chief Executive Amanuel Ghebreselassie is pushing ahead with plans to extend the line to Kassala in Sudan.

Rehabilitation of the 117 km. section between the port of Massawa and Asmara was completed in 2003, despite mountainous terrain and the lack of resources. As yet there is no scheduled passenger service east of Asmara, but requests for special trains are fulfilled using Italian-built steam locomotives."

78:09.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). NO RAILS TO PALESTINE. From 'C.R.J.' 150, Summer 2007, p. 178.

"TEXAS STATE RAILROAD. The Railway is actually a Texas State Park and as such does not run as a profit-making company. Up to \$50 million will be required for maintenance over the next ten years, which the State is reluctant to invest. Instead it has decided to turn the railroad into a static museum, a decision which has proved highly unpopular with the local communities of Palestine and Rusk. Efforts are being made to find a private operator for the line, with a view to taking over from the proposed closure date of 231st. August 2007."

(b). BEIT SHEMESH AND WADI SURAR MAPS.

Sybil Ehrlich asked me about the provenance of the maps on pages 16 and 17 of Issue 77:

"Oh, how I wish I could ask Paul these - and many other - questions... I assume the note on page 17 "The map is from the book "The Palestine Campaign" by Col. A. P. Wavell" refers to the map on the same page. And as for the map on page 16, what on earth

happened to the line north of Junction Station, in the direction of Na'an? It somehow got miraculously straightened out??!! You don't say where this map came from."

My response: "The big map on p. 16 is simply anonymous, it's in colour, I have it in a plastic wallet, nothing on the back, someone has written '1760' on the bottom but that hardly helps us. So I cannot answer your question! I have still a file of things from Paul and often, as you know, he would send an envelope with stuff and then an accompanying text or the text by e-mail..... "

To which she replied, tongue in cheek:- "Obviously 1760 is the date of the map! You know of course that the single-track railway to Beit Shemesh is mentioned in the Bible... I Samuel 6:12. It's the story of the Ark

of the Covenant being brought from the land of the Philistines and drawn by the cows. 'Veyisarna haparot baderech, al derech beit shemesh, bemesila ahat....' That's the line taken by the Queen of Sheba with her very great train. "

This leads us to light-hearted musings on other great Biblical texts that clearly prophesied the coming of the railways. The Queen of Sheba, as noted, (I. Kings 10 or II. Chronicles 9) entered the Temple "with a very long train - and the Temple was filled with smoke." Isaiah 40:3 refers to the building of a levelled and graded 'Mesilah' in the wilderness of the Aravah - maybe the Eilat line will after all come to being, in the messianic times.... Does anyone have further suggestions?

(c). REHOVOT NARROW GAUGE.

Sybil found this in 'Palestine Weekly', August 12, 1921 "New Rail. The narrow gauge railway that will join the colony [Rehovot] to the main railway station is expected to be completed next week, and will bring many advantages to this and neighbouring colonies."

She adds: "There is no sign of any such animal on the 1935 1:100 000 map. Paul would have loved this...."

(d). FROM HOLLAND TO EGYPT.

From 'Op Oude Rails' 1991 (?) p. 16. When the tramway company 'Oostelijk Groningen' ('Eastern Groningen') was closed in 1949, a trading company in Nijmegen was able to sell the rolling stock in all directions. Of the locomotives, the Verhoop-types went to Egypt, whereas coaches went to Liberia and Switzerland."

Marc Stegeman adds: "These were locos designed by Verhoop, a mechanical engineer, for improved efficiency. They were built by Henschel and were quite successful. Nevertheless, after World War 2 and the temporary revival of the tramways, it was obvious that buses would soon take over. Our Ministry of Economic Affairs tried to promote the sale of new and used railway equipment abroad to improve the difficult financial situation. This trading company from Nijmegen went a long way to make contacts!" The 'OG' was of 1067mm gauge - 3' 6".

(e). FROM ISRAEL TO TIBET.

From 'Railway Gazette':- The Israeli firm NICE Systems and Smarton Technology have won a contract to supply real-time distributed digital video content analysis equipment to monitor the security of tracks and stations in Tibet.

(f). JAFFA STATION RESTORATION.

Benny Attar notes:- "Work is under way to restore the original train station in Jaffa which has not been used since 1949 and was part of the Ministry of Defence administrative compound until last year. Two ex-Palestine Railways carriages, built in Britain in the 1920s have been placed in the compound. They were used as stores and offices at Kishon loco works from the '60s to the 80's and are in miserable condition. I understand that when work is complete the old railway station will be open to the public. There should be pictures on the net somewhere.

The original line to Jerusalem was built by the Turks and ran from Jaffa. It was built to narrow gauge. After the war of independence the line from Jaffa through Tel-Aviv was closed and trains later ran from a new station in southern Tel-Aviv. The service was gradually reduced to one train a day and the station was closed in the early 90's (1992 I think). Since then the trains to Jerusalem by-passed Tel-Aviv and ran east at Bnei-Brak, until the line from Tel-Aviv was extended south in parallel with the main highway."

Jeremy Topaz adds:- "There is a very good slide show about the Jaffa Station restoration project, with some good historical pictures of the line, done by Henia Melichson. It is in Hebrew, but for those who know the language, it is accessible at < www.mytelaviv.co.il > under the heading of downloads from Henia Melichson."

78:10

ACQUISITION BY DECEPTION.

By Paul Cotterell.

On 14th April 1952 the manager of Haifa Port wrote a neighbourly letter to inform his opposite number on IR that he had "a number of [Decauville] wagons of different sorts from Mandate days" lying in his scrapyard. Was the Railway "in need of these wagons and did they belong to you?" Enquiries were made and, I fear, at least one pair of eyes lit up in the green glow of greedy anticipation. Israel Railways were about to break the Tenth Commandment.

The IR Chief Engineer, appraised of the matter and apparently having sent scouts to spy out the land, memoed his GM: "In the Port scrapyard are 21 Decauville wagons and 105 Decauville rails, all in good condition. I cannot say for certain that they belong to the Railway. Maybe they were brought to the Port in Mandate days. In any event I would suggest that the Stores Superintendent should receive this material as Railway property and that it be sent to our stores". Regrettably the IR General Manager colluded in this fraud. Writing to the Port Manager he noted smoothly: "We enquired into the matter and it is evident that the wagons under discussion...are Decauville wagons of the Railway that were transferred during the Mandate from Nur esh Shams to the Port". (There was a large quarry at Nur esh Shams, 5 kilometres east of Tulkarm, which had a 60cm gauge hand-worked internal railway for moving stone.)

In July the Stores Superintendent agreed with an unsuspecting Port Manager that the wagons, rails and steel sleepers "are Railway property and that you are willing to return them", also that the Port would make a crane available to load the material. However, IR would graciously provide the necessary manpower.

The Port did have one request. It asked that "some 20 Decauville rails" be left behind as "these are urgently required by us for a variety of work". In the circumstances it would have been worse than churlish to refuse, and the IR General Manager quickly acceded to the request. The transaction was evidently completed in September 1952.

One wonders what possible use IR could have had in mind for this 60cm gauge equipment, or perhaps the temptation of grabbing something for nothing was simply too great. Details of this skulduggery can be found in File Peh/79/49 at the IRM Archives.

78:11.

TROLLEYS ON P.R.

- MISC. NOTES FROM THE MINUTES OF THE P.R. OFFICERS' MONTHLY MEETINGS.

The issue of how many trolleys operated on P.R, together with who ran them (military or civilian staff), for what purpose, (crew transport, patrolling, escorting), how they were numbered, etc., continues to throw up sources of confusion. Here are some references from the P.R Officers' Monthly Meetings, 1945-1948.

1/4. (12th. Dec. 1944). Abstract A.

"The General Manager referred to the heavy cost of working the HR. The position was disturbing in spite of assurances that the utmost had been done to achieve efficiency. The HR was much the same as it was ten years ago, in that it was well constructed and relatively cheap to maintain. Yet in 1944 there were 12 gangers and 103 platelayers as compared with 10 and 81 respectively in 1938. The Chief Engineer said that this was due to the whole line having come to life. [Poss. referring to the Tulkarm-Nablus section etc.] The General Manager pointed out that this was not true of the present position, in that the traffic was now at about the same level as before the war. Why had not the maintenance been reduced to the 1938 level?

The Chief Engineer asserted that this could be done if there were means of getting about. [Aha, an excuse.] He referred to a Drewry car being out of action, and added that if one cannot move about to the places required, one must live at one of the places. He further stated that if he had two good trolleys he could reduce to the 1938 level. The General Manager could not follow this because the position regarding motor trolleys appeared to be no different now from what it was in 1938."

"The General Manager asked the Chief Engineer to state as soon as possible to what extent he could reduce below the 1938 level if provided with motor trolleys, and stated that immediate steps must be taken to reduce

to 1938 level. It appeared to the General Manager that as 13 gangers and 108 platelayers were still employed, insufficient effort had been made towards reduction in expenditure, despite the continual pressure from the Management to reduce the deficit on the HR. [PR was of course only operating the HR, which was a drain on its resources.]

1/14. "In regard to two trolleys promised earlier to the Chief Engineer, it was agreed that spares should be obtained from derelict armoured trolleys for this purpose. The Acting Chief Mechanical Engineer pointed out that most of the required parts could be obtained otherwise only from the black market."

9/40. (16th. Jan. 1945). Allocation of Rail Cars and Trolleys.

The General Manager ruled that, normally, trolleys should be for use of the Engineering Branch, and that if any other Branch required one for use in extraordinary circumstances application should be made to the Engineering Branch. It appeared from the figures submitted that Traffic officers were using trolleys for normal inspection duties, whereas the ordinary train services should suffice. The General Manager directed that the Chief Engineer have control of all trolleys forthwith on the basis of 6 for SG and 2 for NG (to be increased to 5 in future if possible). The Chief Mechanical Engineer's maintenance to provide for these numbers being in service. To be reported upon in 3 months' time.

3/66. (27th. Feb. 1945.) Allocation of Rail Cars and Trolleys.

The Acting CME will have available for service 7 G and 6 NG trolleys, of which 6 and 5 will be handed to the Engineering Branch, leaving one spare of each gauge to ensure 6 and 5 being continuously in service. The ACME was given the GM's permission to use other derelict trolleys as source of spare parts when these have been surveyed and written off.

4/97. (27th. March 1945.) Allocation of Rail Cars and Trolleys.

The Acting CME stated that the number of trolleys required on the SG were now available but that one further trolley, for use on the NG, was yet to be made available.

5/135. (26th. April 1945). Allocation of Rail Cars.

The Acting CME stated that one SG trolley in numerical excess of the Chief Engineer's requirements had been made available and all NG trolleys required would shortly be available. Trolleys had been allocated, as a temporary measure, without regard to type required, but adjustment to suit the Chief Engineer's requirements would be effected as early as possible. The Chief Engineer's requirements of special trolleys would also be met as far as possible.

6/155. (7th. June 1945).

Abstract A. Saving LP 3,928. The Acting CME drew attention to the fact that expenditure in respect of maintenance and operation of trolleys, the number of which in operation had been increased, was debita-

ble to locomotive expenditure. It was agreed that a separate sub-head for this item should be included in the Estimates in future.

Staff. The attention of the Acting CME was drawn to the fact that staff employed in the Mechanical Branch was still above the estimate. The Acting CME stated that the question of staff reductions continued to be kept under review. He also drew attention to the fact that he would require running staff for 13 trolleys instead of 6, as provided for in the Estimates

6/157. Allocation of Rail Cars.

With reference to a request from the Chief Engineer for the provision of an additional 'long distance trolley' and light gang trolley, the Acting CME stated that out of the existing stock of trolleys, the numbers required by the CE would be provided and also, as far as possible, the types.

The Acting CME again drew attention to the fact that he was being called upon to meet expenditure for 13 trolleys whereas his estimates had been framed on the basis of 6 only. The trolleys now provided were being very extensively used and if this continued, it would be necessary to engage additional drivers. In addition, it would add greatly to the work of the I.C.E. maintenance staff and it might be necessary to engage additional staff for this work. The Acting CME also referred to reports that trolleys were being used unnecessarily and for private purposes.

The GM considered that the overexpenditure likely to be occurred... would be comparatively small and that the existing maintenance staff should be sufficient for the maintenance of the additional trolleys in use. If the full number of trolleys was necessary for the maintenance of the track and services, they must be maintained. Every effort should, however, be made to keep the use of motor trolleys to a minimum, particularly so far as their use by Traffic officers is concerned.

The General Manager instructed that the CE, Acting CME and SotL should cooperate to ensure that running is kept at the lowest possible level and that a check is maintained on vehicle log books, to ensure that excessive or improper running is not occurring.

The matter would not be discussed at future meetings.

7/189. (19th. July 1945). Allocation of Rail Cars.

The Acting CME stated that in May the Chief Engineer had asked for six rail cars suitable for long distance working. By taking parts from other rail cars in poor condition, the Acting CME had provided the number required, but, in view of the lack of spares, he could not guarantee to keep them in service. No spares could be obtained from the Army. Ford V8 engines were now standard for all heavy trollies.

The Chief Engineer stated that... the trollies now available would meet requirements but if extensive failures occurred it would probably be necessary to obtain two new vehicles. The use of such trolleys was restricted as far as possible, taking into consideration the economies effected in other directions by their use.

The General Manager was of the opin-

ion that many journeys now undertaken by trolley can be made by goods or passenger trains but agreed that, although the maintenance and running of trolleys was expensive, their use was justified if expenditure could be balanced by savings in other directions. The position should be reviewed after experience of the use of the trolleys now provided. If 75% of these could be maintained in a condition fit for use the position would have improved over that obtaining hitherto. The General Manager requested the Chief Engineer to submit details of trolleys in use prior to the disturbances.

8/903. (6th. Sept. 1945). Allocation of Rail Cars.

The allocation of rail cars, available for use by Branches, as stated to be as follows, in comparison with the position in 1937/39:-

SG 1937/9:	4.	1945:	7.
NG 1937/9:	3.	1945:	5. (in each year, one trolley used for tourists and other parties.)

It was observed by the General Manager that the position in regard to trolleys was better than had previously been the case. The District Traffic Supt. confirmed that the use of trolleys by Traffic Officers had been stopped. Reference was made by the Chief Engineer to the frequent use of trolleys by the Palestine Police Railway Division personnel, to the detriment of Engineering Branch requirements.

The Acting CME stated that a request had been made by the Palestine Police Railway Division for eight trolleys to be provided. This could not be done, but the ACME, by taking spares from other trolleys, had undertaken to provide six, of which four were ready. It would not be possible to provide spares. The Palestine Police Railway Division had now requested that certain alterations be carried out. Not only would the proposed alterations make the trolleys too heavy, but it was impracticable to carry them out.

[Maybe this refers to installation of concrete flooring?]

Application had been made by the Police for Army trolleys to be made available, but it had been stated that no armoured trolleys were available. The Acting CME was aware that Army trolleys were available, but that they were being kept out of use. [!]

The Acting CME also reported that Police drivers had yet to be trained in Railway Rules and Regulations.

The General Manager instructed that the Chief Engineer communicate with the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Palestine Police Railway Division, to ensure that the utmost economy in the use of trolleys by Police personnel is exercised. In the meantime, representations would be made to the Army regarding the release of military trolleys.

9/919. (11th. Oct. 1945). Allocation of Rail Cars.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that action had been taken by the D.S.P. Railway Police Division, to restrict the use of rail cars by police personnel. The Acting CME emphasised that no spares were available for police trolleys but that the D.S.P. had under-

taken to assist in obtaining spares, if they were required for repairs. The General Manager confirmed that, if necessary, the Acting CME should engage additional staff for the maintenance of Police trolleys and debit the cost to the Security Suspense Account.

10/242. (13th. Dec. 1945). Allocation of Rail Cars.

The Chief Engineer reported that the position would be satisfactory with the acquisition of the two rail cars provided for in the 1946/47 Estimates. Rail cars were being satisfactorily maintained.

11/264. (12th. March 1946). Allocation of Rail Cars.

The Chief Engineer reported that the position was satisfactory and requested that priority be given to rail car repairs, as it was necessary for considerable patrolling to be done during the present rainy weather.

The Locomotive Engineer stated that the position was largely governed by the question of spares. Arrangements had been made for headlights to be fitted to trolleys.

15/410. (17th. June 1946). Alternative Warning Device for Rail Trolleys.

Arising out of a collision at a level crossing there appeared a need to improve the type of warning device on our rail trolleys, to avoid confusion with those of other forms of transport.

The CME had managed to borrow a good electric siren and the Electrical Dept. was copying it. It was thought that this would give satisfaction.

16/438. (8th. Aug. 1946). Warning Device on Rail Trolleys.

The CME said he was having a good siren copied, which would work off the railcars' batteries.

17/464, (17th. Sept. 1946). Warning Device for Trolleys.

The CME wished to stop experimenting locally and to order suitable devices from England, the Acting General Manager referred to his experience of whistles working off exhaust gases and it was agreed that the Crown Agents should be approached for details of any suitable device on the market.

The Principal Assistant to the GM informed the meeting that in connection with the accident which had given rise to this subject, although the Railway Committee of Enquiry had exonerated the driver of the trolley, the Police had decided to prosecute him on a charge of negligence.

18/491. (24th. Oct. 1946.) Warning Device for Trolleys.

The CME said he would provide a request to the Crown Agents, asking them to recommend a suitable device or devices for rail trolleys.

19/504. (26th. Nov. 1946.) Warning Device for Trolleys.

It was stated that a request had been made to the Crown Agents for advice as to the most suitable device and as to the prospect for delivery.

23/577. (18th. March 1947.) Availability of Motor Trolleys.

The Chief Engineer referred to the lack of a trolley for his branch in the Lydda District owing to the time Ford Trolley No. 53 had been under repair. As the CME could do nothing to assist by way of a temporary replacement, the Chief Engineer decided he would have to redistribute the trolleys operated by his branch, probably diverting one trolley from Haifa to Lydda.

78:12

Progress in erecting the Jerusalem LRV Calattrava suspension bridge mast; courtesy of the project's management



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78:13

First passenger train ever at Pa'atey Modi'in station. From Sybil Ehrlich:

"A great way to spend a morning! The train (7247, 7447, 7047) left Ben-Gurion Airport station with about 50 people on board at 9:18 a.m. We trundled along fairly slowly, with crowds stuffed into the driver's cabin."