

Another look at the proposed Eurasian railway system

In its July 17 issue, EIR featured Jonathan Tennenbaum's proposal for the creation of a fully integrated railway system which would finally make it possible to readily transport passengers and freight from one end of the Eurasian land mass to the other—a continuous network from the Strait of Gibraltar to Osaka, Japan. Unfortunately, because of a hasty production schedule and other factors, some of the maps provided with the feature contained numerous errors in the specific rail routes proposed. In an effort to rectify this, as well as to give new inspiration for this glorious project, on the following pages we present a much-improved, detailed map showing each major stopover in the Eurasian main trunk routes and subsidiary routes, plus the proposed African transcontinental routes. In order to make the map comprehensible to new readers and subscribers who may not have the July 17 issue at hand, we reprint the relevant portions of Mr. Tennenbaum's original article.

The Eurasian infrastructure network outlined here might be compared to the circulatory system, with its arteries, veins, and capillaries, which maintains the functioning of the body's tissues. This article will concentrate on the major railroad arteries, whose location and speedy construction is a matter of vital strategic interest to the whole Eurasian "organism." . . .

The infrastructure arteries of Eurasia are defined chiefly by waterways and railways. On the one hand we have the corridors defined by the great rivers, such as the system of navigable rivers—above all the Seine and Rhône, Rhine, Elbe, Oder, and Vistula, the Dniepr and Volga, the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra, the Mekong, the Yangtze, and Huang Ho—together with man-made canals, ports, and coastal shipping routes. . . .

Here we focus on the second main component, the "artificial rivers" constituted by a proposed network of high-speed railroad trunk lines, each averaging between two and six electrified tracks in each direction. Various power transmission lines, fiber optic and other modern communications lines, and pipelines for water, gas, and oil, etc., will be built up within the rail and major waterway corridors. The regions adjacent to the trunk lines (e.g., 50 km on each side) constitute "development corridors," areas in which modern agriculture and industry, and high population densities, can be supported with relatively the lowest real economic cost for

supply of essential power, water, transport, and communication services.

As mentioned, the majority of the indicated routes already have rail lines of some sort. The proposal here is not simply to fill in missing links in existing lines—which in any case are generally unsuited to the higher speeds of modern rail transport. We propose to build additional, new facilities, using as much as possible existing rights of way, but utilizing state-of-the-art technology and the European normal gauge of 1,435 mm as the uniform gauge throughout. This permits a fleet of standardized, high-technology locomotives and rolling stock to be used throughout the system. Automated facilities will permit containerized freight to be quickly transferred between "through" lines of the Eurasian system, and the various national rail systems utilizing other gauges.

The backbone of the system consists of three basic trunk lines "A," "B," and "C" (routes described below) running mainly east and west across the Eurasian land mass. The total geographical length of these basic routes is approximately 60,000 km. The area of the corresponding development corridors is 6 million square kilometers, or about 11% of the total land area of Eurasia. But within those corridors live nearly 25% of the population and an estimated more than 70% of the urban population. The mean population density within these development corridors is approximately 150 inhabitants per square kilometer, or 15,000 inhabitants per kilometer of the trunk line.

Some 60 cities of 1 million or more inhabitants are located directly on the main trunk lines. These constitute the majority of major cities on the entire land mass. Over 200 million people live in major urban centers (over 200,000 inhabitants) serviced by these lines.

The main trunk line routes, as traced from the central European area of the "Productive Triangle," are projected as follows:

Line A: ("Transcontinental") Paris-Berlin-Moscow-Osaka/Beijing: This line runs along the northern leg of the "Productive Triangle" from Paris through the industrial region of Lille-Charleroi-Brussels, through the Ruhr region in Germany, to Berlin, and continues from there to Poznan, Warsaw, Minsk, and Moscow. From Moscow the trunk line runs over Gorky and Kazan to the industrial region around Yekaterinburg (formerly Sverdlovsk) and Chelyabinsk in the Urals, and then follows essentially the route of the present

Trans-Siberian railway to Omsk, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Ulan Ude, Chita, and Khabarovsk, where it connects to a second branch going to Vladivostok and via Manchuria to Beijing. From Khabarovsk, the Transcontinental runs northward along the Amur River, over new bridge-tunnel connections to the island of Sakhalin, down the length of that island and across to Hokkaido. Hokkaido is already being connected to the main Japanese island of Honshu, and thereby to Tokyo, by the longest tunnel in the world (54 km); from Tokyo finally to the industrial and science center of Osaka.

The second branch of the Transcontinental, which separates from the branch running to Tokyo and Osaka at Khabarovsk, runs along the existing Trans-Siberian Railroad route from Khabarovsk to Vladivostok, and from there inland into Manchuria, to the industrial metropolis Harbin, and via Changchun to the major industrial region of Chengjiang-Fushun, Benxi and Anshan, and from Anshan to Beijing, where it meets the Sino-Indo-European Line coming up from India and Southeast Asia.

Line B: (“Sino-Indo-European”) Frankfurt-New Delhi/Frankfurt-Beijing: This branched trunk line runs from the Rhine-Main-Neckar industrial belt in Germany over Dresden into the Silesian industrial region (Katowice-Krakow) to Lviv, Kiev, the high-technology center Kharkov, and the Donbass mining and steel region in Ukraine; and then via Rostov on the Don into the Caucasus. The main Transcaucasian route runs along the eastern coast of the Black Sea through Sochi and Sukhumi in Georgia, and then into the Georgian capital Tbilisi; from Tbilisi the line proceeds via the Armenian capital Yerevan to Tabriz and Teheran in Iran and via Mashhad to the Afghan city of Herat. A smaller alternate route runs from Rostov via Stavropol to Makhachkala on the western bank of the Caspian Sea, from there to Baku and back to Tbilisi rejoining the main route. From Herat the trunk line splits into two lines, one running through central Asia into China and the other southward to India and Southeast Asia, and back northward through Vietnam into China, meeting the first line again at Jinan. These two routes will run approximately as follows:

B1) “New Silk Route”: This line restores one of the great trade corridors in history, a meeting-point of European, Chinese, Arab, and Indian cultures, and one Britain’s targets in its “Great Game.” For various reasons we choose the northward route into Xinjiang via Alma Ata and Urumqi, rather than a path through the infamous Taklamakan Desert. This “New Silk Route” runs from Herat to Samarkand, the historic birthplace of Ibn Sina, to the cities of Tashkent and Alma Ata in Kazakhstan, and then through Xinjiang via Urumqi to Yumen, Lanzhou, and Xian, to Zhengzhou and Jinan on the Huang Ho river, where it meets the South Asia Line coming up from southern China.

B2) “South Asia Line”: This line runs southward around the mountains from Herat to Kandahar, and across the border

to Quetta in Pakistan, and from there via Sukkur into Punjab, from Lahore to New Delhi, and then along the densely populated Ganges River valley down to Calcutta; continuing from Calcutta into Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam via Dakka-Chittagong-Rangoon-Bangkok-Ho Chi Minh City-Da Nang-Hanoi to Nanning in South China. From there to Guangzhou (Canton)/Hong Kong, then inland via Changsha to Wuhan, and eastward from Wuhan to Nanjing and Shanghai. From Nanjing the line runs northward via Xuzhou, Jinan and Tiajin to Beijing, where it meets the Transcontinental Line coming down through Manchuria.

Line C: (“Ecumenical”) Paris-Vienna/Rome-Istanbul-Yerevan/Baghdad/Jerusalem-Cairo: This line revives the famous “Orient Express” as well as the “Baghdad Railroad” project which London once declared to be a *casus belli* against the British Empire. The line runs along the southern leg of the Productive Triangle, from Paris via the industrial region of Alsace-Lorraine and Strasbourg to Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Munich, Salzburg, Linz, and Vienna. From Vienna then southward to Budapest, Hungary, and via Novi Sad, to Belgrade. There it joins with a second, southern European “feeder” line coming from Zagreb; this line runs from Paris to Lyon and into the Lombardy industrial region via Turin-Milan-Verona, with connection in Milan to the main line from Rome, and from Verona via Trieste to Ljubljana and Zagreb. From Belgrade the “Ecumenical” runs via Nis, Sofia, and Plovdiv to Istanbul and Ankara. The continuation runs from Ankara to Kayseri, splitting there into:

C1: Kayseri-Adana-Aleppo-Damascus-Amman-Jerusalem-Cairo.

C2: Kayseri-Sivas-Erzurum-Yerevan, connecting to the Sino-Indo-European line.

C3: Kayseri-Sivas-Malatya-Diyarbakir-Mosul-Baghdad, with connections further to Basra and Kuwait.

Supplementary north-south lines

The following north-south routes are to be developed as complements to the Lines A, B, and C outlined above:

NS 1: Gdansk-Katowice-Ostrava-Bratislava-Vienna

NS 2: Riga-Minsk-Kiev

NS 3: St. Petersburg-Moscow-Kiev

NS 4: Kasan-Kuybyshev-Orsk-Aralsk-Ksyl

Orda-Tashkent

NS 5: Irkutsk-Ulan Bator-Beijing

NS 6: Chita-Harbin

NS 7: Chengjiang-Pyongyang-Seoul-Pusan

NS 8: Zhengzhou-Wuhan

NS 9: Lanzhou-Chengdu-Chongqing-Guiyang-Nanning

NS 10: Bangkok-Pinang-Kuala Lumpur-Singapore-Palembang-Tanjungkarang-Jakarta, by way of new tunnels across the Strait of Malacca to Sumatra, and across the Sunda Strait from Sumatra to Java.

NS 11: A new north-south trunk line from New Delhi to South India, with connection to Bombay.

The Eurasian rail system: locomotive for development and peace



