

## Why London fears the Eurasian railway project

by Rainer Apel

At a summit meeting on May 30 in the French city of Mulhouse, French President François Mitterrand and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl issued a recommendation to put a priority on the expansion of the western European part of their railway connections within the framework of the European Union's infrastructure program. The political significance of the move cannot be underestimated. True, they still made no mention of the idea of a *magnetically levitated* railway, since for the time being the two governments are sticking with extending the traditional, but high-speed, rail system toward eastern Europe. Also, the German and French governments' ideas on financing the project are still oriented toward the ideology of what is "do-able in times of slim budgets." Nevertheless, this is the first time since 1991 that two European leaders have openly advocated the construction of a more ambitious railway project.

Put together with Russian President Boris Yeltsin's recent proposal in Stuttgart, to link Moscow with Berlin and Paris, via high-speed rail connections, we are seeing the emergence of a kind of Franco-Russo-German alliance for the railway; and that is precisely what is ringing alarm bells among London geopolitical circles and their friends in East and West.

Meanwhile, the German and French state railway companies, Deutsche Bahn and Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer, have given the go-ahead for the construction of the TGV-East. (TGV stands for *Train à Grande Vitesse*, or high-speed train.) The go-ahead coincides with the political promotion of the rail project by the Mulhouse summit.

The route of the adopted high-speed rail line will run from Paris through Châlons-sur-Marne and Pont-à-Mousson, whence it will branch out on the one side toward the north, to Forbach and Saarbrücken, Germany; and on the other side

toward the south, to Sarrebourg and Strasbourg, and from there, on to Offenburg in Germany.

From Saarbrücken, the TGV will be able to run on the German high-speed rail grid to Berlin, via Mannheim, Frankfurt, Fulda, and from Berlin to Warsaw, Minsk, and Moscow—once the respective tracks for high-speed trains are completed east of Berlin.

The TGV-East line marks the southern leg of the Paris-Berlin-Vienna Productive Triangle development and integration concept, which was proposed by American economist and statesman Lyndon LaRouche in the fall and early winter of 1989, as the Berlin Wall came tumbling down. Crossing mountainous eastern France, which presently turns rail trips between Paris and Frankfurt into a seven-hour jaunt, the projected line will hook into the southern German Danube watershed lines, which open up traffic into the Balkans and the littoral of the Black Sea. Yeltsin's proposed high-speed line marks the extension into Russia's capital city of the northern side of LaRouche's Triangle proposal.

Construction work on the TGV-East project is to begin 1996, and the project is to be completed in two segments, in 2000 and 2003. By that time, the still-missing German links for high-speed trains from Saarbrücken to Mannheim and from Offenburg to Stuttgart and on to Munich, are to be completed. The project as a whole, involving construction of about 600 kilometers of new special tracks for the French TGV and Germany's high-speed Inter City Express (ICE), will cost about 25 billion deutschemarks.

At the same time, GEC-Alsthom and Preussag announced that GEC-Alsthom, maker of France's TGV, will take control of the Preussag subsidiary Linke-Hoffman-Busch, the Salzgitter, Lower Saxony company which has been involved in the construction of Germany's ICE.

## Geopoliticians' nightmare

This is all happening, regardless of the fact that the Paris-Berlin-Moscow project is actually only in its very beginnings, and that neither its construction schedule nor the crucial question of financing has been settled. But the very idea of such a thing is a red flag to all the geopoliticians, especially since during the last week of May, when the Chinese government, following discussions in Beijing with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, proposed to expand the trans-Asiatic route along the ancient "Silk Route" for use by modern, fast passenger trains as well as freight carriers.

In LaRouche's design, prefigured in his October 1988 Berlin proposals for integrating the economies of then-East Germany and Poland with the west in light of the imminent potentials for German reunification, the densest area of economic activity in the world would become the powerhouse for a world economic recovery, extending through modernized transport, energy, and water grids into the eastern half of the Eurasian land mass, and southward into the Middle East and Africa.

The prospect of such a recovery has the geopoliticians and their Thatcherite friends worried sick. On May 24, the *Wall Street Journal*, which apparently had a premonition that Yeltsin's proposal would be taken up at the Franco-German summit meeting, attempted to smear just-ended German-Russian talks as a step toward a new "Berlin-Moscow axis," which would allegedly have devastating consequences for the West and for Europe. Already back in 1990, the article's author, the Englishman John Laughland, spoke out against the reunification of Germany, claiming that Kohl's policy was the continuation of Hitler's striving for domination over all Europe.

Frank Gaffney from the neo-conservative Center for Security Policy in Washington likewise referred in a commentary on the recent German-Russian negotiations, to the "unfettered economic and trade relations" between Moscow and Berlin, and compared the current level of contacts with those at the time of the 1922 Rapallo Treaty. Gaffney's outburst is an indication of the growing fears among Anglo-American circles that more independence on Germany's part, and a greater orientation of German industrial interests toward the East, could seriously endanger the hitherto well-functioning external control over Bonn's foreign policies—just as Rapallo posed a threat to the post-World War I Versailles system.

As might be expected, Henry Kissinger and Britain's own queen have given a lead to this crew. And we should not neglect to mention the English queen, who, at the recent dedication of the English Channel Tunnel, expressed her skepticism about this railway project (which still is a long way from completion on the British side), saying that one "musn't artificially put together what nature has separated." That is to say: England is an island which has nothing to do with the European continent, and shall remain so.

One might acquiesce in such a point of view, were it not

for the fact that London's geopoliticians also believe that France and Germany are "by nature" separated and are thus fated to remain arch-enemies, as is also supposed to remain the case between Russia and Germany. And whoever acts to disrupt the functioning of this alleged "nature," is promptly hit by a declaration of war from the British side. Such views are frequently expressed by British commentators. Norman Stone, for example, who is a close adviser of former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, recently pointed to the building of railways and the concomitant industrialization of Germany in the 19th century, as the true cause of World War I.

## No concessions to London!

We can expect that London will put up bitter resistance against the Paris-Berlin-Moscow railway project, and will attempt to pull every lever at the European Union Commission in Brussels and utilize all its "friends" in the continental European and Russian policy bureaucracies, in order to kill the project.

The task now, however, is to ensure that the declarations in Stuttgart and Mulhouse result in concrete measures which will assure the French and the Germans that the schedule for constructing the TGV-East will be kept, so that this crucial part of the Eurasian rail connection can go into service by the year 2000.

Furthermore, the plan for eastward extension of combined *infrastructure corridors*, as was agreed upon in mid-March at a conference in Crete as part of an All-European Transportation Program, must be quickly realized, with a special priority on two corridors:

- Berlin-Poznan-Warsaw-Minsk-Moscow; and
- Berlin-Wroclaw-Katowice-Krakow-Lviv-Kiev.

At the very latest by the opening of the European Union summit meeting in Corfu on June 24 (to which Kohl and Mitterrand also want to invite Yeltsin), it must be settled that the projects will be carried out without further delay and will receive the appropriate financing. A long, drawn-out debate over the project's merits, as London diplomats and their like-minded budget-cutting ministers would prefer, must be headed off by Bonn and Paris. Likewise, silly discussions must cease over whether to seek private funding for the projects, in a grander-scale repeat of the idiocy which prevented the Channel Tunnel from being built to high-speed specifications, because it "cost too much," or over European Union loans, or whatever.

If anything is to be cut for lack of funds, the first thing to go ought to be the European Union's funding for English sheep breeding in their colony on the Malvinas Islands (Falklands), and the "England rebate" which Brussels granted to the Thatcher government for a thorough study of the matter. It is impermissible that the continual sabotage against the European Union by London's geopoliticians be subsidized forever with millions out of the pockets of continental European taxpayers.