

Maglev Launch in China Revives Germans' Plans

by Rainer Apel

The spectacular maiden voyage of the Sino-German maglev train in Shanghai on Dec. 31 has created a positive shock of much-needed technological optimism in Germany, where the Transrapid super-high-speed train was developed. The Shanghai launch has had an immediate, visibly remoralizing impact on the movement for magnetic-levitation rail corridors, in German politics, industry, and science; plans for a number of corridors in Germany and from Germany to the East, all of which had been killed by budget austerity dictated by the European Union's Maastricht Treaty, have been revived with the lightning-fast construction, and success, of the world's first commercial line in China.

For example, leading politicians of all parties—except the ecologist Greens—in Hamburg and Berlin called for the revitalization of the original maglev project between the cities; it had been prepared for the start of construction work in the Spring of 2000, but was abandoned by the German government in February of that year. The chairman of the Christian Democrats' group in the Hamburg city-state parliament, Michael Freytag, has begun to work on the formation of an all-party appeal from Hamburg, for the reinstatement of the maglev project to Berlin. What makes this debate among Hamburg Social Democrats particularly interesting is that not only are these members of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's own party, but the national party manager of the Social Democrats, Olaf Scholz, supports that maglev initiative, as well.

Among the Christian Democrats, the other major party, Matthias Wissmann, who was German transport minister from 1993-98, issued a call for a "large-scale European maglev line," that should extend eastward from the Hamburg-Berlin project. Wissmann said that in view of the European Union's expansion to the East, and towards closer cooperation with Russia, "the most modern transport infrastructure" should be given a priority emphasis—therefore, maglev routes from Berlin should be built to Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, and Moscow. Wissmann's remarks indicate again, that the broader, Eurasian Land-Bridge scope of the LaRouche movement's proposals has had an impact on the thinking of some political leaders in Germany.

Adding to these calls, the minister of economics and transport of the state of Hesse, Dieter Posch, a Free

Democrat, called for the revival of the Hamburg-Berlin project and proposed in addition, a line between the airports at Frankfurt and Frankfurt Hahn, with an extension, later on, to Luxembourg and Brussels.

Federal Credits, Sino-German Cooperation

Along with other proposed lines, political support exists in Germany, already now, for about 1,200 kilometers of maglev railroads. They could be realized within a few years utilizing Lyndon LaRouche's concept for long-term, low-interest loans for infrastructure development, which Helga Zepp-LaRouche's recent campaign for the Bundestag (parliament) pushed into the national debate during the elections (see her *Commentary*). That will work, whereas other approaches to mobilize funds from private banks, or out of tax

FIGURE 1
Maglev 'Ring-Road' Around Germany



A map headed "German Magnetic Railroad" shows the "maglev ring-road" around Germany, made up of a number of proposed lines which were killed by budget-cutting before. They are being demanded again after the Shanghai breakthrough.

Land-Bridge Essential for Germany

Wahl said that he thinks that China will be a world leader in the construction and operation of high-speed maglev railways, noting: “If other countries—including Germany—want to build high-speed maglev railways, they may have to invite managers and engineers from China to undertake the projects.”

For Germany, intensified cooperation with China in pioneer areas of science and technology, such as maglev transportation systems, makes sense: China has surpassed Japan, historically the number-one importer of German high-tech goods, during 2002. For 2003, German industry expects exports to China to be 14 billion euros, visibly overtaking German exports to Japan, at 11 billion. Take into account, too, that new foreign markets are all the more important for the Germans, whose export dependence is now at 35% of GDP. This is far greater than the United States and Japan, with only 10% of GDP each; and it also leaves behind the other two major European exporting nations, France and Italy, with 28% of GDP each. Having access to the Asian growth markets via intensified cooperation with China, is a matter of life or death for the export-oriented German industry, and for Germany’s economy to break out of depression.

Commentary: Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Germany Must Build Eurasian Land-Bridge

Helga Zepp-LaRouche spoke to a forum in Peru on Dec. 27, 2002, on the promise of Lyndon LaRouche’s concept of the Eurasian Land-Bridge. We excerpt from the portion of her remarks, which are immediately relevant to the potential of Germany, as the first designer of the magnetic levitation train, in answering the question she began with: “Will the present historic crisis end up in a tragedy, or will this crisis be used as a chance?”

Then, you have German collapse: I can only tell you, the “German economic miracle,” which used to be world-famous, it is about to disintegrate. Many old firms, which took 100 years or more to build—over six, seven generations—are just vanishing! It is unbelievable how quickly the economic collapse in Germany is taking place.

Now, that has created a very interesting situation. Because, the present Schröder government only was voted in on Sept. 22, and he won the election because he made a shift in the last months, on two issues. He totally, 100%, opposed

German participation in any war against Iraq. And that expressed exactly the sentiment of the German population, who do not want to have this war. And, he took one important element of the BüSo program—that is the program of the party I represent—namely, to use a German national bank, called the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, or the Credit Bank for Reconstruction, which played a crucial role in the post-war reconstruction in Germany; to use that to fight unemployment today, which is exactly what we have been campaigning on for a long time.

Unfortunately, when he came into the government, because of the “Red-Green” coalition [of the Social Democrats and the Green Party], the finance minister announced a very dramatic, brutal austerity package. And then, one other leading former Social Democrat accused the Schröder government of having the same policy as the Chancellor Brüning, who was the third-to-last Chancellor in the Weimar Republic, before the National Socialists took over; or Hitler got appointed, and then basically made a “cold coup,” with the Reichstag Fire. Now, to accuse the present Social Democratic government of making the same brutal austerity program, which everybody associates with that that is what led to Hitler—because the unemployment then was 6 million, and that made it very easy for the Nazis to capitalize out of the situation—that has caused a complete freakout in Germany, especially among the Social Democrats, but, you know, it’s unfortunately also true! Because austerity under conditions of mass unemployment and depression, is the worst you can do.

It is very interesting, because the other major thing which happened, is, that an economics professor, who used to be a complete liberal, picked up one of our arguments: Namely, that if you would have changed the economic policy in the ’30s in time, you would have eliminated the social conditions which allowed Hitler to come to power.

The Lessons of German History

Now, I want to tell you very briefly this historical background, which you may not know, because it’s from German history. In the early ’30s, between 1930-31, there was a group of economists, both from the trade unions, from the General German Trade Union Association—a guy called Woytinsky, who, when the unemployment, because of Brüning’s austerity measures, became worse and worse and worse, demanded in a very elaborated, beautiful program, an international program to combat the Depression, through the increase of the buying power of the population. And, he said, the way to do that, is we have to have a European-wide infrastructure program, to create more productive jobs, and increase the buying power of the population; and that way, we can get out of this crisis [see *EIR*, April 11, 1997]. . . . There is presently a debate in Germany, saying, “If these policies would have been followed, then Hitler would not have come to power.”

On the so-called “conservative” side, there was also a group of people, among them, Wilhelm Lautenbach, and oth-