

Danish Schiller Institute's Maglev Proposal Sets Debate

by Michelle Rasmussen

The Schiller Institute in Denmark's proposal for the national section of a future, fully-developed Eurasian Land-Bridge, using magnetic levitation (maglev) technology, has made a splash in the Danish media. It has garnered coverage in numerous Internet publications, as well as major print media, during late March.* The press has highlighted the proposal to construct a direct maglev link between Denmark's two largest cities: Copenhagen, the capital, located on the island of Zealand; and Århus, located on the Jutland Peninsula, separated by the Kattegat Sea. The prospect of reducing the current three-and-a-quarter hour trip to only 25 minutes, has ignited the excitement of people all over the country.

There is a real potential for Denmark to adopt the Schiller Institute program. In the joyous period after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, when plans for infrastructural union between East and West were being talked about, including LaRouche's "Productive Triangle" proposal, far-sighted Danish politicians decided to finally build three great projects, conceived as a package, which had been dreamed about for a long time.

Two of them are now in use: the Great Belt Bridge (between the Danish island of Funen, and the Jutland Peninsula to the west), and the Öresund Bridge (between Copenhagen, Denmark, and Malmö, Sweden). These infrastructure projects were among the very few which were actually built in Europe after 1989, and have become a source of cultural optimism in the Danish population, and enhanced nationwide economic productivity. Denmark has also been pressuring Germany to agree to build the third proposed project, a connection between Denmark and Germany, across the Fehmarn Belt in the Baltic Sea. As Lyndon LaRouche has observed,

* See the Schiller Institute in Denmark's homepage, in Danish and English, at: www.schillerinstitut.dk.

"The Danes want to teach the Germans to 'play bridge!'"

With the proven success of the great project concept, the Schiller Institute is now calling for Danish politicians to lead the way in Europe, and take the next leap into the future—the maglev future.

The Schiller Institute (SI) will testify before the Danish Parliament's Traffic Committee later this month. A written proposal has already been submitted for consideration, available on the parliament's homepage, as an official document.

A Mass-Based Campaign

The mass-circulation of the SI national maglev plan in campaign newspapers, has shown the ability to introduce great ideas to the general population through this method. The article "Denmark and the Eurasian Land-Bridge," outlining the plan, was contained in the SI's first mass-distribution campaign newspaper of July 2006. It was handed out to 50,000 people, comprising 1% of the Danish population of 5 million, mostly in Copenhagen and Århus, over the following couple of months.

The circulation of these ideas helped to create the environment in which the mayors of Denmark's six largest cities proposed a plan, in November 2006, to improve the travel time between their cities. This would bring the transport time between Copenhagen and Århus down to two hours.

In December, the second SI campaign newspaper was published, also in 50,000 copies, with a headline article, "From Crusaders to Bridge Builders," urging quick acceptance of a proposal to construct a bridge/tunnel across the Fehmarn Belt between Denmark and Germany—currently the subject of dragged-out, negotiations between the two governments.

In February, the SI sent their two campaign newspapers and a letter, stressing the importance of adopting the included

FIGURE 1

The Proposed Copenhagen to Århus Maglev Line



Schiller Institute/Poul E. Rasmussen

infrastructure proposals, to all of the 98 mayors of Denmark’s newly redistricted municipalities. Positive, written responses were received from several of them. On March 19, *Jyllands-Posten (JP)*, Denmark’s largest newspaper, had banner headline coverage of traffic researcher Uffe Jacobsen’s proposal, to drop the proposed Danish-German Fehmer connection, due to hesitation on the German side, and to build an internal Danish connection across Kattegat Sea instead.

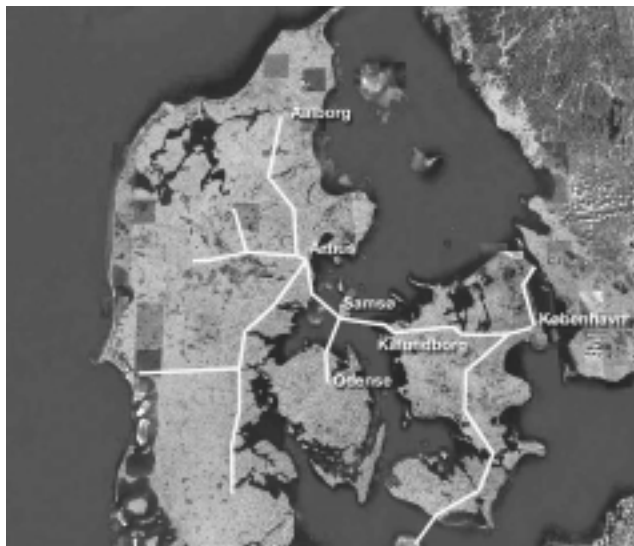
Then, the next day, *JP* online published an interview with the chairman of the Schiller Institute in Denmark, Tom Gillesberg, highlighting the SI’s proposal to build a 25-minute Copenhagen-Århus maglev link, with the Kattegat connection. *JP* included a picture of the SI’s proposed “Maglev Danmark” timetable. Regarding the Fehmer connection, the SI has argued for constructing both projects, including maglev tracks. It has called on the German government to realize that such a future-oriented investment, will allow economic benefits that outweigh the costs, through increased transportation efficiency.

A follow-up article in *JP*, on March 21, included a positive response to the maglev idea, from Nicolai Wammen, the Social Democratic mayor of Århus, who stated, “It will give great flexibility in relation to, for example, living in Århus and working in Copenhagen. If the travel time is brought substantially down, whole new possibilities are created, in connection with meetings, education, family visits, cultural experiences and shopping, between the two Danish growth centers. It will have colossal significance.”

Since then, the story has been picked up in numerous other media. *Berlingske Tidende*, a major Danish daily, interviewed SI’s Gillesberg, and included his call for financing

FIGURE 2

The ‘Great H’ Maglev Route



Schiller Institute/Poul E. Rasmussen

the project through a state capital budget investment, to be spread over 50 years. *Ing.dk*, the Internet version of *Ingeniøren* (Engineer) wrote, “The SI’s vision doesn’t stop with a single connection between Århus and Copenhagen. The dream is a European network of maglevs, and Denmark should lead the development.” *Berlingske Tidende* included a quote from the SI’s second campaign newspaper, “ ‘Denmark should, just like future American governments, establish strong ties to Germany and the Eurasian countries, and join in building up the Eurasian continent. We should act as bridge-builders, and offer engineering troops, instead of fighting troops.’ ” They identify the SI as “an international political movement, which closely cooperates with the American economist, and former Democratic Presidential candidate, Lyndon LaRouche.”

The National Maglev Proposal for Denmark

The SI proposes that Denmark build a national maglev network, using technology similar to the Transrapid, designed by the German company Thyssen, ironically, now only in commercial use in China, from Shanghai to the Shanghai Airport. The 30 km trip takes only 7 minutes and 20 seconds, with a top speed of 431 km/hour. The speed could even be increased to 500 km/hour with existing technology.

The Danish government ought to take the leap to maglev, and introduce this future-oriented technology, which can shift transportation from the highways, to public mass transportation, by making it much faster, cheaper, and more convenient than travel by car. The SI suggests starting with a passenger/freight connection between Denmark’s two largest cities—Copenhagen-Århus, across the Kattegat Sea, by way of the island of Samsø (**Figure 1**). An express train would only take

25 minutes! This would cause the greatest non-linear, phase-shift in the nation's physical economic density, by creating a single cohesive metropolis, and would integrate the Danish economy to a degree unmatched by any other industrial national economy today.

The line would then be continued to the northern Jutland city of Aalborg, resulting in a 43-minute trip from Copenhagen to Aalborg. Thereafter, the other major Danish cities would be linked up, resulting in a "Great H" formation, with around 635 km of double maglev tracks (**Figure 2**). This would make a trip across country, shorter than a current trip from Copenhagen to the suburbs. The North-South line on the Jutland mainland, would go from Aalborg, southwards, through Århus, past the southern Danish border, to Hamburg, Germany. The North-South line in the eastern part of Denmark, would become the gateway to the other Nordic countries. From Copenhagen, it would go north to Helsingør (known around the world as Elsinor, from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*), through a new Helsingør, Denmark-Helsingborg, Sweden tunnel, to be divided into two routes—one to Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, and the other to Oslo, the capital of Norway. South of Copenhagen, the line would continue across the projected Fehmer Belt connection to Hamburg, Germany, with a connection to Berlin. This would result in travel times of only a little more than an hour, between inner-city Copenhagen, and the three other capitals! Fast intra-European connections, would make the maglev much more convenient than travel by air.

Capital Budget Financing

The project should be financed along the lines of LaRouche's capital budget concept. The costs to build the project, should be distributed over a 50-year period. A Danish Maglev Corp. would be established, along the lines of the public corporations which built the Great Belt and Öresunds bridges, with one important exception. The major portion of the construction costs ought to be paid through the national budget, not user fees, in order to insure ticket prices low enough to encourage widespread usage. This would, in turn, save maintenance costs for the highways and regular train network, by transferring as large a percentage of traffic to the maglev as possible. Low prices would cause the greatest increase the national physical economic density, by bringing the country closer together, thereby producing the greatest economic benefit.

Denmark could take the initiative in Europe, to start what could become a European-wide network, to be linked to the Eurasian Land-Bridge, a concept developed by Lyndon and Helga LaRouche, starting from the already existing maglev line in China, and its projected extension. Here is the chance for a small country, with 5 million people, together with a large country, with over 1.3 billion people, to join hands across the entire Eurasian continent, to realize Leibniz's idea of a "Grand Design."