

cepts that enable the citizen to understand real, physical economics. “The two accumulations of physical capital which are . . . overlooked or greatly underrated,” writes LaRouche, “are governmental contributions to the development of basic economic infrastructure, and the development of . . . artistic and scientific cultural development of the members of society”—measured by education meeting the standards of Classical culture.

The society has to invest in crash programs of infrastructure reconstruc-

tion, at higher technological levels and with scientific breakthroughs, not just to create jobs—but, so that the cognitive productivity of the workforce, its real technological understanding, rises enough to pull a shattered economy above breakthrough. This was the effect of the mobilization for World War II in the United States, which was qualitatively different from the effect of the programs of the New Deal. This is the qualitative effect LaRouche demands in an infrastructure credits and jobs program—from the construc-

tion of new continental Land-Bridges, to the use of a revived space colonization program as an infrastructural model. And, the report spells out the U.S. role in the Great Projects needed on every continent—nowhere more than in the broken-down economies of North America.

This is the only economic recovery program going in American politics—from the only political leader willing to tell the truth about the “worst global depression in living memory.”

—Paul Gallagher

The Transcontinental Engine of Development

Between 1863 and 1869, the United States, even while engulfed in a war to defeat the British- and Hapsburg-sponsored Southern secessionist insurrection, launched and completed the most stunning engineering and economic feat in modern times. With the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad on May 10, 1869, the United States was consolidated as a continental republic. A series of technological revolutions had been achieved along the way, including the construction of the first-ever rail tunnel through a mountain range.

Noted historian Stephen E. Ambrose brings this Transcontinental Railroad project to life in his absorbing book, *Nothing Like It in the World*. Although Ambrose does not demonstrate a self-conscious understanding of the American System of Political Economy, which was the basis for the transformation of the United States into the greatest agro-industrial power on the planet in the hundred years following the American Revolution, he can be easily forgiven, as his book tells the story of the American System *in practice* (and hence, incidentally, “warts and all”). For that reason alone, the book is must reading for anyone serious about understanding what Lyndon LaRouche calls the “American intellectual tradition.”

Lincoln’s Railroad

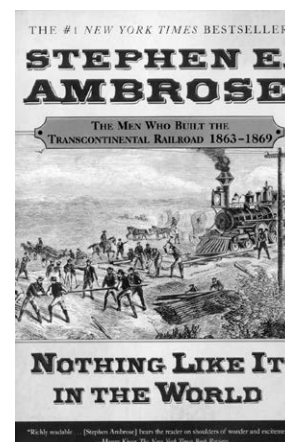
One stunning fact stands out among the many wonderful stories contained in Ambrose’s account of America’s “Great-

est Project”: the architect of the Transcontinental Railroad, beginning in the 1840’s, was none other than Abraham Lincoln. Before Lincoln ever had the opportunity to ride the rail, he had conceptualized the strategic significance of a continental railroad to join together the entire republic from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He became America’s leading railroad lawyer, before he entered the United States Congress.

When the War of Southern Secession erupted early in his Presidency, Lincoln did not flinch in his commitment to launch the Transcontinental Railroad project—even as the Union prosecuted the war, even in the darkest moments of combat.

Other leaders of the effort were likewise heroes of the Civil War: General William T. Sherman was one of the leading Californians in the pre-Civil War period to promote the importance of the Transcontinental. He and his brothers invested their personal fortunes in the Union Pacific. General Ulysses S. Grant was another vital promoter, both as soldier, and later as President.

Less known, but equally heroic in the effort, was Gen. Grenville Dodge, described by Ambrose, probably accurately, as “America’s greatest railroad builder.” General Dodge was the head of Gen. Sherman’s “pioneer corps” of 1,500 engineers, who rebuilt bridges and rail lines that had been



Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863-1869

by Stephen E. Ambrose
New York, Simon & Schuster, 2000
431 pages, paperback, \$16.00

destroyed by the Confederates as they retreated south during the Western campaign. He was under immense pressure from the leading investors in the Transcontinental Railroad, to quit the Army and become chief engineer of the Union Pacific, before the war ended. He refused—even after he was seriously wounded on the eve of Sherman’s occupation of Atlanta. Dodge stayed in the Army, leading the effort to suppress Indian uprisings in the West, until the peace had been

secured. Then he went to work at the UP.

A Republic Transformed

There are many extraordinary stories embedded in the Transcontinental Railroad saga. Chinese immigrants were integrated into the American system by playing a vital role in the UP construction. Their role is vividly conveyed by Ambrose. Railroad construction provided one of the greatest sources of jobs for veterans of both the Union and Confederate armies, immediately following Lee's surrender. The Transcontinental not only provided decent paying employment for the armies of unemployed vets, but was the kind of project that helped heal the wounds of civil war, literally integrating the young men of the North and South in a way that no other "healing process" could have.

Ambrose also deals, in excruciating detail, with the machinations of the men who financed the railroads—from the bedrock patriots, typified by the Shermans, to the crassest speculators. Although Congress passed a succession of laws that provided loan guarantees, land grants, and other regulations and incentives, the project was almost exclusively privately financed.

In his Epilogue, Ambrose beautifully

sums up how the Transcontinental transformed America: "Of all the things done by the first transcontinental railroad, nothing exceeded the cuts in time and cost it made for people traveling across the continent. Before the Mexican War, during the Gold Rush that started in 1848, through the 1850's, and until after the Civil War ended in 1865, it took a person months and might cost more than \$1,000 to go from New York to San Francisco.

"But less than a week after the pounding of the Golden Spike, a man or woman could go from New York to San Francisco in seven days. That included stops. So fast, they used to say, 'that you don't even have time to take a bath.' And the cost to go from New York to San Francisco, as listed in the summer of 1869, was \$150 for first class, \$70 for emigrant. . . .

"Freight rates by train were incredibly less than for ox- or horse-drawn wagons, or for sailboats or steamers. Mail that once cost dollars per ounce and took forever, now cost pennies and got from Chicago to California in a few days. . . .

"Together, the transcontinental railroad and the telegraph made modern America possible. Things that could not be imagined before the Civil War now became common. A nationwide stock

market, for example. A continent-wide economy in which people, agricultural products, coal, and minerals moved wherever someone wanted to send them, and did so cheaply and quickly. A continent-wide culture in which mail and popular magazines and books that used to cost dollars per ounce and had taken forever to get from the East to the West Coast, now cost pennies and got there in a few days."

Spread Knowledge and Virtue

Ambrose quotes from an October 1868 issue of *Putnam's Magazine*, which extolled the railroad revolution that, in a span of 15 years, enabled the U.S. population to increase by 90 percent, and production to jump by 230 percent. The transcontinental railroad, *Putnam's* wrote, had "lightened human toil, made men richer in blessings and in leisure, increased their activity, shielded them from tempest and famine, enlarged the area available for man's residence and subsistence, enabled him to do more in the same period of time, and spread knowledge and virtue over all this earth."

That is as fair a summary of the "American intellectual tradition" and the American System of Political Economy, as one could muster.

—Jeffrey Steinberg

The 'Chickenhawks' Take Aim

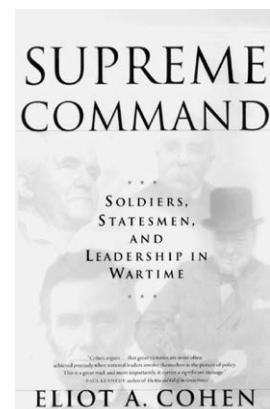
Professor Cohen is part of the interlocking directorate of neo-conservative institutions,— including the American Enterprise Institute, the Project for a New American Century, and the Defense Policy Board,— in which perhaps two dozen individuals populate about that number of boards and "think-tanks," all funded by the same foundations, and all selling the same policies in the same words, like so many communist fronts of yesteryear.

In this bestseller, allegedly read by the President, Cohen sketches a few wartime vignettes, supposedly to

demonstrate a scholarly thesis that war requires intervention by civilian leaderships into military affairs. But, wasn't that already well-known for the case of the modern nation-state? Shouldn't every high-school student know the "Commander-in-Chief" clause of our Constitution?

Indeed, the thesis only exists at all, within the Alice-in-Wonderland world created by Cohen's teacher, crazy Sam Huntington, in his book *The Soldier and the State* (1957).

What is Cohen really driving at? Most obviously, of course, he argues for his right, with his mentor Paul Wol-



**Supreme Command:
Soldiers, Statesmen, and
Leadership in Wartime**
by Eliot A. Cohen
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