

today in an American public school system that fundamentally undermines the very greatest of traditionally American ideals: individual freedom, free enterprise, excellence honed to a fine edge on the whetstone of free competition.

Without benefit of Blumenfeld's research and an understanding of his conclusions, it is impossible for the average citizen today even to begin to comprehend the depth of fallacy and deception behind the tortured rantings of the National Education Association,



Samuel Blumenfeld

Shanker, the Department of Education (which Reagan has not disbanded), and others. Yet it is still possible to correct our course. But if the correction is to put us on target, liberty and not statism will be the magnet for our ideological compass.

Blumenfeld's history book is in fact as contemporary as bloated public school budgets and frightening illiteracy rates. His title, like his book, is right on the money. Blumenfeld himself gives the best answer to the question he raises.

Is public education necessary? The answer is obvious: it was not needed then, and it is certainly not needed today. Schools are necessary, but they can be created by free enterprise today as they were before the public school movement achieved its fraudulent state monopoly in education. Subject education to the same competitive market forces that other goods and services are subject to, and we shall see far better

education at much lower overall cost. Instead of a "crusade against ignorance" to reform the world, we shall have schools capable of performing the limited and practical functions that schools were originally created to perform.

The failure of public education is the failure of statism as a political philosophy. It has been tried. It has been found sorely wanting. Having learned from our mistakes, would it not be better to return to the basic principles upon which this country was founded? Education was not seen then as the cure-all for mankind's moral diseases. But it was on that premise that the reformers built the present system. They were wrong. The system cannot work because in a free society government has no more place in education than it does in religion. Once Americans grasp the full significance of this idea, they will understand why the return of educational freedom is essential to the preservation and expansion of American freedom in general.

The next time you observe some CBS hack obsequiously interviewing Albert Shanker (as Bill Kurtis did during the July 1982 NEA convention) or the next time you read Shanker's \$5,000-plus per Sunday ad in the *New York Times* "Ideas" section (of all places), run out and get a copy of Sam Blumenfeld's book. It's an oasis of sanity in the statist wasteland created by the government's education system.

Frank E. Fortkamp is an educator, writer, and long-time advocate of separation of school and state.

Roadblocks to Efficient Transportation

Autos, Transit, and Cities.

By John R. Meyer and

Jose A. Gomez-Ibanez.

Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press. 1981. 360 pp. \$20.00.

Reviewed by Mary Gingell

After reading *Autos, Transit, and Cities*, I am convinced that the authors are not free-market economists per se. In other words, they do not recommend a free-market solution to a public policy problem because they personally believe that the free market is the most equitable method for allocating resources. Instead, they rigorously analyze as much data as possible, trying,

without any preconceived notions, to determine the most efficient and effective way to solve the questions under study.

The questions? Should automobile use be encouraged or discouraged? How can the automobile be improved so as to better serve urban transportation needs? How does transit policy affect land use? How can aesthetic values be balanced with progress? How can traffic congestion be relieved? How can the transportation needs of the poor, elderly, and handicapped be met? In analyzing these areas, the authors debunk many long-standing myths of the effects of US transportation policy since World War II and develop a comprehensive set of alternative policies.

The authors first review the history of governmental policies in the areas of urban roads and public transit. For example, the federal government built highways with tax money in the 1950s and early 1960s in order to reduce auto congestion. But the public responded by buying more autos and moving farther away from the central city—creating a need for still longer and wider highways. Congestion increased, and in the late 1960s policymakers switched their focus and their funds to mass transit in an attempt to get people out of their cars. Finally, in the 1970s environmental issues such as air pollution came to the fore, and the government channeled tax dollars to the EPA to try to solve that problem.

Meyer and Gomez-Ibanez conclude, first of all, that the federal government's attempt to solve only one problem at a time was too simplistic an approach and that a "sustained, systematic, simultaneous effort on many fronts" is really needed. Second, they conclude that more realistic pricing to reflect the true cost of services used must be a key element in any new approach to the urban transportation problem.

The authors then suggest some specific changes. Costs of conventional mass transportation could be reduced through improved productivity. Service could be enhanced by making better use of the various forms of paratransit, such as dial-a-ride, taxis, jitneys, and car pooling.

However, certain roadblocks to implementing these changes exist. Labor productivity can be improved by using part-time drivers for other tasks during off-peak hours, substituting capital for labor, and contracting out certain tasks. But this could be done with much greater

flexibility if federally mandated labor protection clauses that now burden most transportation systems were removed. Route structures can be oriented toward consumer demand by removing resources from low-ridership routes and concentrating efforts on high-density corridors—but only if local governmental controls over route changes and line abandonments are eased. Paratransit, such as taxis or jitneys, would be available to supplement conventional 40-foot buses if regulation over entry and competition in these industries were eased.

Changes in prices for transit services are currently subject to similar local government constraints.

In the authors' discussion of the various policy issues mentioned earlier, some interesting facts emerge. For example, federal mileage standards are not the cause of recent mpg improvements in cars. The authors marshal data showing the market price of gasoline effectively encouraged energy conservation through better mileage regardless of what was ordered by the government.

Meyer and Gomez-Ibanez also say

that, for various reasons, the automobile is here to stay as the major urban transportation vehicle. Tolls, parking fees, and other peak-period pricing schemes are examined as potential ways to charge consumers for their part in increasing congestion on highways and downtown streets during times of heaviest usage. While the authors seem to favor such approaches because they help consumers realize the full costs of their road usage, they acknowledge that it is difficult to convince local politicians to accept such plans for a publicly operated highway, unless a plan can be designed that would seemingly benefit all constituents (so that no votes are lost).

If the authors were full-fledged laissez-faire adherents, they would have pointed out at this juncture a major difference between public and private roads. When highways are run by governments, the political incentives are overwhelmingly against economically sensible policies. The peak-load pricing proposals that they discuss have been recommended for decades by economists. Nothing mechanical, technological, or budgetary really prevents their adoption on public

Book Hints

*a selective mention of
books received for review*

The development of nuclear energy promises to remain one of the most controversial issues of the 1980s. In *Nuclear Reactor Safety: On the History of the Regulatory Process* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981, 370 pp., \$29.50), David Okrent provides both a history of lightwater reactor safety and an informative discussion of the regulatory process that governs nuclear reactor safety. An attempt at objectivity regarding the merits of nuclear energy appears in *Nuclear Power in Perspective* (New York: Nichols Publishing, 1982, 214 pp., \$25.00) by Eric Addinall and Henry Ellington, both experts in the field of nuclear energy. *The Necessity for Nuclear Power* (London: Graham and Trotman, 1981, 250 pp., US distribution by Crane, Russak & Co., New York, \$19.00), by Geoffrey Greenhalgh, offers an unequivocally positive assessment of nuclear power. Of particular interest is Greenhalgh's discussion of nuclear power in relation to developing countries and communist states, as well as the United States and Western Europe.

Another book written from an international perspective is Bertrand Goldschmidt's *The Atomic Complex: A Worldwide Political History of Nuclear Energy* (La Grange Park, Ill.: American Nuclear Society, 1982, 479 pp., \$31.00/\$24.00), in which the author, a strong advocate of nuclear energy, relates the historical-political interplay that resulted in the development of nuclear energy. Goldschmidt, once an assistant to Marie Curie, eventually became chairman of the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency, eminently qualifying him to disclose the intimate details of the struggles to develop nuclear power. Also written from an international perspective is William C. Potter's *Nuclear Power and Nonproliferation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1982, 281 pp., \$25.00/\$9.95), which provides an analysis of the historical, technical, economic, and political components of the nuclear power and proliferation debate.

Russian Roulette (New York: New York Times Books, 1982, 248 pp., \$14.95) presents a unique dialogue between the author, Arthur M. Cox, and Georgy Arbatov, the foremost Soviet expert on the United States and a close advisor to Brezhnev, regarding the nuclear arms race. The author argues that there is no such thing as survival in the event of a superpower nuclear war and proposes a negotiation format to which the Soviet expert responds.

For those interested in other aspects of the Soviet Union, two monographs should be noted. The Institute of Economic Affairs has published an essay by Philip Vander Elst, *Capitalist Technology for Soviet Survival* (London, 1981, 63 pp., distributed by Transatlantic Books, \$5.95 paper), in which the author argues that technology from Western capitalist countries accounts, in large measure, for whatever meager economic progress the Soviet Union has made. In the other monograph, *The Peace Movement and the Soviet Union* (New York: Orwell Press, 1982, 57 pp., \$1.25 paper), Vladimir Bukovsky, a leading Soviet dissident now living in England, contends that peace is impossible while 400 million people in Eastern Europe remain enslaved.

On an entirely different note, those eager to explore the moral issues surrounding the treatment of animals by human beings might wish to pick up Tom Regan's *All That Dwell Therein* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982, 249 pp., \$15.95). Regan is the best of the lot writing on this topic, though one might take issue with his predilection toward animals as a kind of altruistic extremism. Regan has also coedited with Donald VanDeVeer *And Justice for All: New Introductory Essays in Ethics and Public Policy* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1982, 310 pp., \$29.50/\$10.85), which covers a variety of ethical questions concerning, among other things, paternalism, reverse discrimination, genetic engineering, human rights, and justice. Libertarian thought is explicitly addressed in several of the essays, though the assessment is critical.

—L. S.

HEALTH & WELFARE

(Continued from p. 50)

centration, reaction time, and attention. Taking the vasopressin can partially compensate for the mental and physical deficits created by alcohol. Unless you are drinking to forget, vasopressin does not interfere with the relaxation and euphoria induced by alcohol. Cannabis (marijuana), well known for causing a decrement in short-term memory (especially in novice users), also inhibits vasopressin release.

One of the brain's messengers that stimulates the release of vasopressin is acetylcholine. The action of this substance contributes to our understanding of the effects of such nutrients as choline and lecithin, which are chemically converted by the brain into acetylcholine and have also been reported to improve memory and learning, as we discussed in our September column.

A list of scientific literature on this topic is available through REASON. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope and ask for H&W references, November.

Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw are consulting scientists and authors of the current bestseller Life Extension (Warner Books).

highways. But they have not been adopted. In contrast, on privately owned highways, the natural effect of commercial incentives would lead directly to the adoption of these policies. Meyer and Gomez-Ibanez fail to make this point, and it is one of the drawbacks of this book that the virtues of a regime of private property are largely neglected.

Even when all other arguments are rebutted, publicly subsidized transit is still defended by some on the grounds that society has a responsibility to provide basic transportation to the poor, elderly, and handicapped. But Meyer and Gomez-Ibanez examine the results of many public transit projects that were justified on these grounds and conclude that this argument is essentially a red herring. Few of these people actually benefit from the transit systems being

provided, and many could be better off if, for example, competition were allowed to flourish in the taxi industry.

Having analyzed key policy areas in detail, Meyer and Gomez-Ibanez draw an overall conclusion that the marketplace can respond to transportation needs. The key to reducing transportation costs and problems, they note in their final paragraph,

is achieving disciplined use of the different transportation modes—having each do what it does best. In Western societies, market prices conventionally perform this discipline or allocative chore. The central public policy issue is whether society wishes to use market prices to a greater extent for this purpose or to proceed on the historical path of using arbitrary government allocations instead, with all the attendant waste of resources that almost surely will ensue.

There are two necessary ingredients in a full solution to the transit problem. One is a public that is aroused and upset by government-created crises in transportation and other areas and seeks to restore liberty and private property in order to end these crises. The other is knowledge and confidence among professionals, specialists, and opinionmakers that the market works. *Autos, Transit, and Cities* shows that the market can work in urban transportation if it is allowed to. Although the proposals in the book fall considerably short of full privatization of America's urban transportation system, implementation of the book's recommendations would be a significant step in the right direction.

Mary Gingell received her M.B.A. from Harvard in 1981. She is manager of commuter services for the Southern Pacific Transportation Company.

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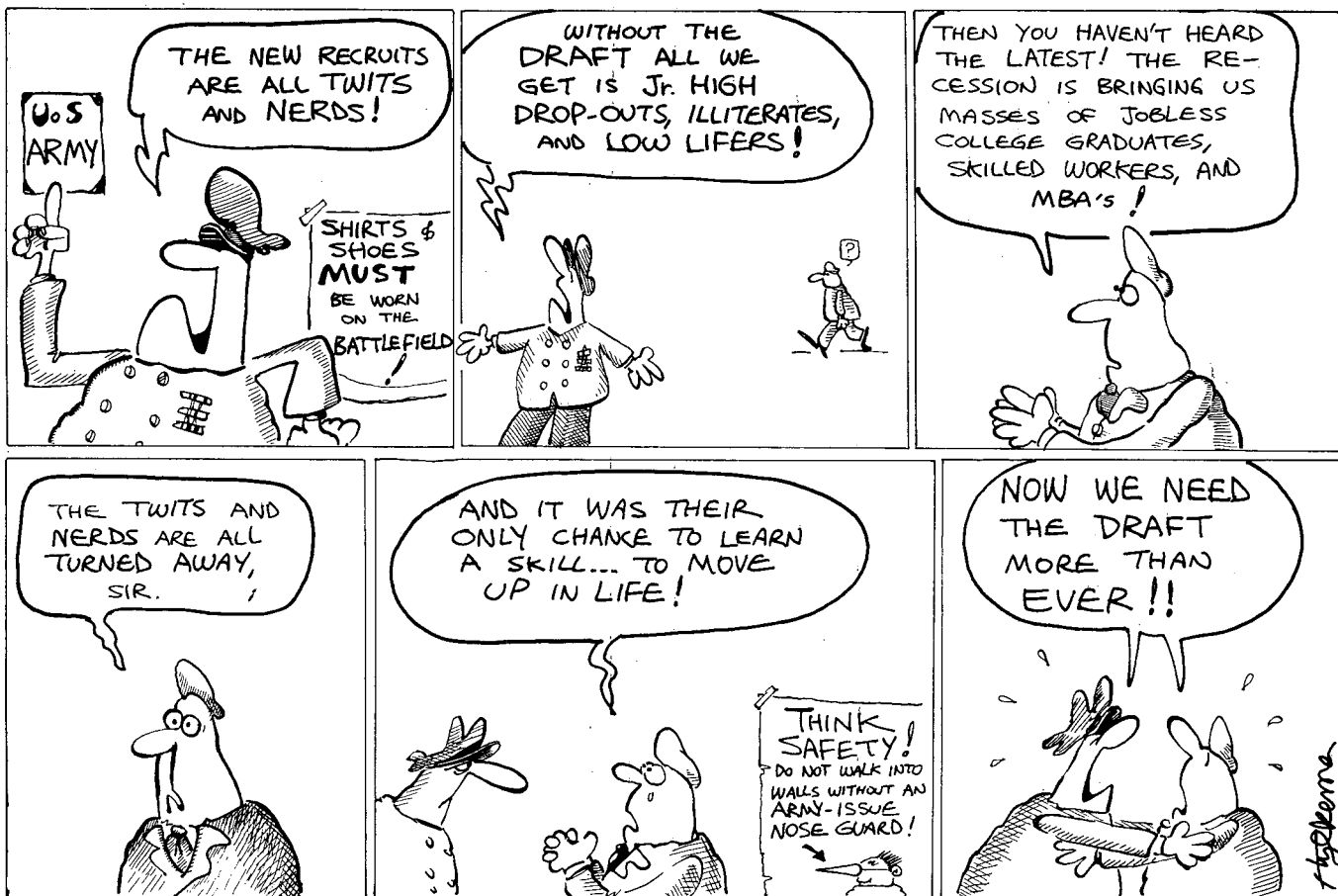
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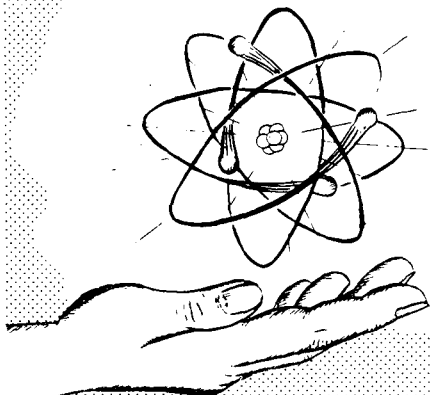
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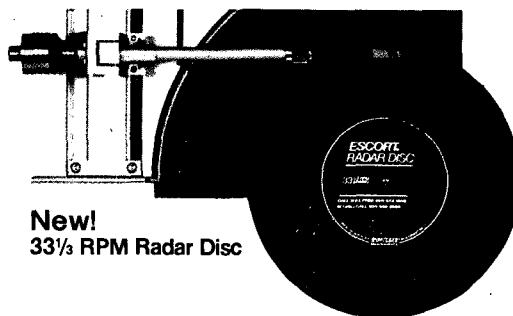
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