

leader and a famous credit to his people. This, I declared, is how the truly venerable behave.

As the 1960s and seventies rolled by, Bayard increasingly lost ground in the so-called civil-rights community. He was, in the days of "burn, baby, burn," too wedded to non-violence, and in the days of black power, too wedded to building coalitions with the rest of America's needy. He was too

friendly to the Jews. He was too anti-Communist. He was loyal to the labor movement. He was opposed to black studies. He was opposed to racial quotas. He kept urging his fellow blacks to eschew the self-indulgences of professional victimhood and to behave like serious men after serious power. He exhaled no fire and engaged in no blackmail—and it cost him.

When his seventy-fifth birthday came around and his friends threw him a banquet, he had long since left the

company of those whom liberal politicians found it necessary to butter up. Here's who did not make an appearance at the dinner: Governor Cuomo, Mayor Koch, Senator Moynihan. They sent messages via flunkies. Not even the president of the New York City Council was there—he, too, sent a flunky. Such, such, are the rewards of bravery, decency, and honor.

But Bayard's reward in the end was of a kind that all the careless and calculating politicians of this world can

never imagine, let alone aspire to. He sang to us that night—he used to sing at the drop of a hat—and he had never sung more beautifully in his life. And as he had on his sixtieth birthday, he whispered to me one of his unforgettable consoling secrets. He said, "Do you know what I want engraved on my tombstone? 'This black man had fun!'"

For the rest of us, things will never be so much fun—or feel so safe, so much to be trusted—again. □

THE PUBLIC POLICY



SECRETS OF THE AIRLINE CRISIS

by Anne Applebaum

Airports had reached the saturation point. Air control technology was on its way to obsolescence. An unexpected air controller shortage created fear and uncertainty. As the sense of emergency heightened, the President addressed the Congress, proclaiming that "years of neglect have permitted the problems of air transportation in America to stack up like aircraft circling a congested airport." Congress took action, establishing a new trust fund to take care of the problems. The country breathed a sigh of relief.

The summer of 1987? Wrong. The spring of 1969. Screaming headlines to the contrary, the air scare has happened before, and the legislative mechanisms originally meant to solve congestion problems are already in place. The most notable of these was the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, earmarked for capital improvements adequate to projected air industry growth. Since its establishment in 1970, revenue from passenger ticket and aviation fuel taxes has been placed directly into the fund, and targeted for projects like airport expansion and new traffic control equipment. Ticket taxes were even increased from 8 percent to 8.5 percent in 1982. But somehow, all of this extra money was never used. In fact, it was never allocated. The trust fund now has a balance of over \$9 billion, of which \$5.6 billion is surplus. Were it not for new legislation now being rushed through Congress, it would continue to grow.

Anne Applebaum is a reporter-researcher at the New Republic.

No one is so far willing to take full responsibility for the past history of the unspent money. The Federal Aviation Administration says that the surplus arose because Congress simply refused to allocate it. FAA spokesman Robert Donahue claims stiffly, "We efficiently and properly spend all the money appropriated to us." Members of Congress point fingers the other way, noting that the FAA always asked for less money than could have been provided, and was suspiciously content simply to siphon its operating costs off of the fund without devising productive ways to use it. A penalty provision was added to the 1982 version of the aviation act explicitly to prevent this from happening, and insure that the bulk of the fund goes toward new projects. Now, when appropriations from the fund fall below a certain level, the amount of money which goes to these everyday expenses must be cut proportionately. This clause has been in effect for three of the last five years, and House aviation subcommittee chairman Norman Mineta (D-Calif.) has accused the Administration of purposefully invoking it, in order to make the federal deficit appear smaller.

Yet while Congress did appropriate less money than provided in three of the last five years, the money was withheld because the FAA could not prove that the bigger projects it was sponsoring were up to standard. Its eleven large-scale programs—known as the major systems acquisitions of the National Air Space Plan (NASPLAN)—were anywhere from one to eight years behind, and were already projected to

run \$6 billion over budget. Although the technology they require is not unusual or unique, they had run into enough technical difficulties to persuade Congress that further funding would not help them along. The projects, which include new weather radar, air traffic control computers, and improved landing systems, are exactly the air crisis remedies so many are now calling for, and are precisely the type of program the aviation trust fund was set up to support.

But neither was the fault the FAA's alone. National air traffic projects can be—and these were—similar in scale to large Defense Department programs. Delays led to further delays, creating what Jack Lowenstein, who oversees NASPLAN for the FAA, calls a "chicken-and-the-egg phenomenon." There was lots of discussion every year on the technical maturity of projects and whether or not to proceed with them. So the FAA requested less money, and Congress appropriated less than originally planned. But whether it was the technical problems or the lower appropriations which perpetuated the delays—that's unclear even to me." While the FAA could have exercised more oversight, one congressional staffer pointed out that "the FAA is not the Pentagon. It's a tiny agency. It's not necessarily true that they could have moved the projects faster." Why wasn't the money spent, in the meantime, on hiring more safety inspectors or improving controller salaries? Because these were considered FAA operating expenses, and were therefore under the jurisdiction of the congressional penal-

ty clause. So the fund grew larger and larger with every airline ticket purchased.

The saga of the unused aviation fund could be chalked up as another minor government gaffe were it not for the dangerous state of airports and air traffic control systems. The details are by now well known, but the relation of the air scare in the newspapers to past incompetence on the part of the FAA and Capitol Hill has somehow escaped notice. Almost anyone knowledgeable on the subject, from industry spokesmen to Hill staffers, agrees that the current spate of delays and near-misses is mostly attributable to the lack of spending on air industry infrastructure. Delays, for example, can be linked directly to the new "hub-and-spoke" airline connection system (pioneered by People's Express and Newark airport) which puts enormous strains on outdated, overworked hub airports and air traffic control systems, in turn disrupting the entire national system. When it rains in Chicago, planes are delayed first in Atlanta, New York, and Dallas. Then they are late in Greensboro, Green Bay, and Sacramento. They usually never catch up. Theoretically, improvements or additions to O'Hare airport could halt the entire process.

In a similar vein, one congressional staffer asks, "How could near misses not be the fault of the control system and the controllers?" The air traffic control system tracks planes, gives them their flight instructions, and (sup-

posedly) ensures that their paths do not cross. Of course it is difficult to know whether to blame the outdated equipment, which NASPLAN is meant to replace, or the paucity and perhaps insufficient training of the controllers themselves. While the number of air passengers has escalated by 52 percent, the number of controllers has declined by more than 4,000 since the majority were fired in 1981. Those who remain are still plagued by the same bad conditions as those who left—although their salaries could be raised and their training paid for by the aviation trust fund. Again, the penalty clause Congress placed in the aviation appropriation bills prevented the money being spent for this purpose.

One indication of the air industry's desperate need for money is the number of requests for it. Since 1982, there have been more than \$10 billion worth of legitimate airport grant applications submitted to the FAA. All were rejected because of lack of funding: the aviation trust fund doesn't cover airports, only air traffic systems. The FAA's Lowenstein asserts that "twelve new airports would need to be built to overcome the [airplane] delay problem," adding that one new airport would cost between \$11 and \$12 billion. Airport and air traffic repair may be one of the few areas of the economy where an influx of properly spent money—collected directly from consumers—could radically improve the efficiency of an entire industry. Of course not all improvements would have to be made by the federal government. Many states and localities have refused to expand old airports or build new ones (even where local tax money is available) because of the space they require and the noise they create.

The connection between the mismanaged trust fund money and the number of delays and near-misses must also be underlined in light of the many recent calls for re-regulation of the air industry. Rep. Glenn English (D-Oregon), a former deregulation advocate now sponsoring a bill to re-regulate the airlines, says that "In my 12 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, without question that [vote for airline deregulation] is the worst vote I have cast." Other politicians have joined him, especially those from rural areas who claim their districts are now being neglected by the airlines. At least six bills, in addition to English's, calling for all or partial airline re-regulation—restrictions on scheduling, curbs on numbers of flights—have been proposed in the House, accompanied by more in the Senate. Even the Department of Transportation has begun

mumbling about "voluntary" and "required" restrictions on scheduling. The calls for an end to deregulation may even be spreading into other industries, since the problems of breaking up government-regulated trucking, railroad, and even telephone monopolies have also caused a backlash among economists and "consumer advocates" alike. Gene Kimmelman of the Consumer Federation of America told the

Congressional Quarterly in a typical comment: "Maybe we've gone too far with the theory without looking at the practical consequences."

But no matter how enticing the prospect of government-determined schedules and rates, too much demand—not too little regulation—is the primary cause of the present tur-

bulence in the air industry. Airplanes, traditionally the province of a well-heeled elite, have only now become the preferred form of popular transportation. The air industry is booming. Deregulation allowed this to happen, even if it also puts strains on an infrastructure built for a smaller number of consumers and a less prosperous industry. With responsible management of air passenger tax money, these prob-

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WHAT SHOULD ECONOMISTS DO?

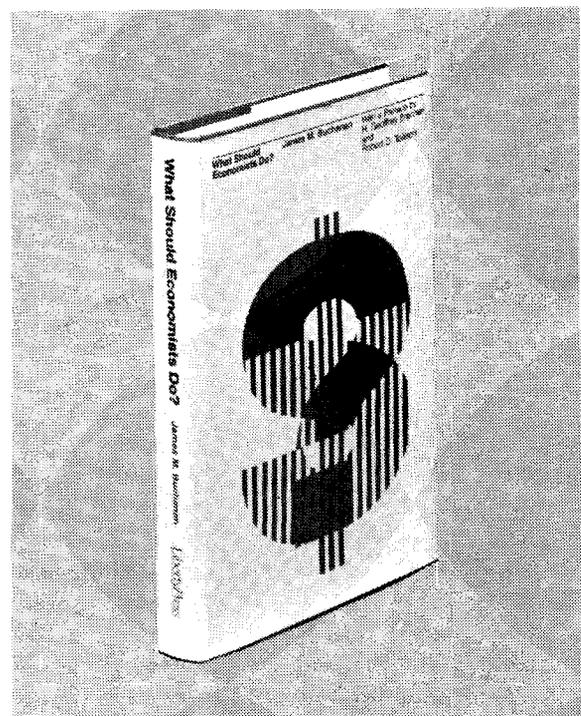
By James M. Buchanan
Preface by H. Geoffrey Brennan and Robert D. Tollison

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Dr. Buchanan is General Director of the Center for the Study of Public Choice and Harris University Professor at George Mason University. Among his other books are *The Limits of Liberty* and, with Gordon Tullock, *The Calculus of Consent*.

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lems could be mitigated: deregulation should not imply an end to all government involvement. Congress can rewrite legislation to insure that money collected is usefully spent on safety inspections and minor improvements if major projects are not ready. States should stop balking at the prospect of new or expanded airports, which can

create jobs and improve local commerce, simultaneously paying for themselves and improving air traffic flow nationwide.

Finally, future administrations should not hesitate to impose anti-trust rules where they ought to be imposed. For the greatest threat to the air industry is probably not mid-air colli-

sions, but the mergers and anti-competitive practices which are slowly ending the brief spate of low fares and multiple routes. Since 1981, thirty-eight mergers have left eight carriers in control of 94 percent of the American air business. Individual airlines are now capable of controlling flights in and out of entire cities, a handful are in

control of the computerized reservation system, and prices are rising again. This should surprise no one. If the story of the aviation trust fund has any greater importance, it is to prove that larger organizations—like the federal government—are poorly equipped for responsible, consumer-oriented management. □

THE NATION'S PULSE



THE IOWA HUSTINGS NOW

by William Mueller

For the record, I have never voted in an Iowa caucus. In that respect I am representative of 85 percent of eligible voters in my state—a remarkable percentage, considering that the Iowa caucus, held a week before New Hampshire's primary and several weeks before Super Tuesday, has arguably become the most important event in our presidential campaigns.

The great majority of Iowans divide into those who know little about the caucus or how they could join with it; and those who do know and so steer away for precisely that reason. Caucus regulars gleefully point out the obstacles placed in the way of attending. In subzero weather, they will be gathering with family, friends, or neighbors. If it is a large group, say over twenty people, participants are asked to stand in appropriate corners for delegates of their choice. If it is a small group, you may rearrange yourself on the couch. The caucus draws attention to the people who attend it, and while nearly every Iowan clearly loves to debate politics in some forum that allows for quick egress, such as a cafe or barber shop, the thought of taking a formal position in a public place is terrifying.

As this little reaffirmation of faith has grown in national significance, tens of thousands of nonresidents have examined the ritual with the disdain of Christian missionaries. Political writers gnash their teeth, half of them wondering if the rustics are up to the responsibility at hand, the others pointing out that the caucuses do not draw typical Iowans and so are some sort of fraud. But what do the pundits want? If all their discussion took place out of ear-

shot of the natives, who would then be allowed to execute their local customs quietly, I certainly wouldn't mind. What is disturbing this time around is that the original point of the Iowa caucus has been lost on the squads, platoons, and divisions of outsiders now using Iowa as their sound stage.

Iowa's rise as a political phenomenon has been relatively recent, beginning in 1972 but not truly manifesting itself until Jimmy Carter exploited the opportunity here in 1976. It was an Iowa political leader, Cliff Larson, who made sure in the '72 campaign that Iowa would keep the first-in-the-nation caucus status, but some credit must go to the media for soliciting caucus results. A very private process in which Iowans determine their delegates became a kind of election. And in this transformation both sides—Iowa on the one hand, and national politics on the other—have struggled to make best use of the caucuses.

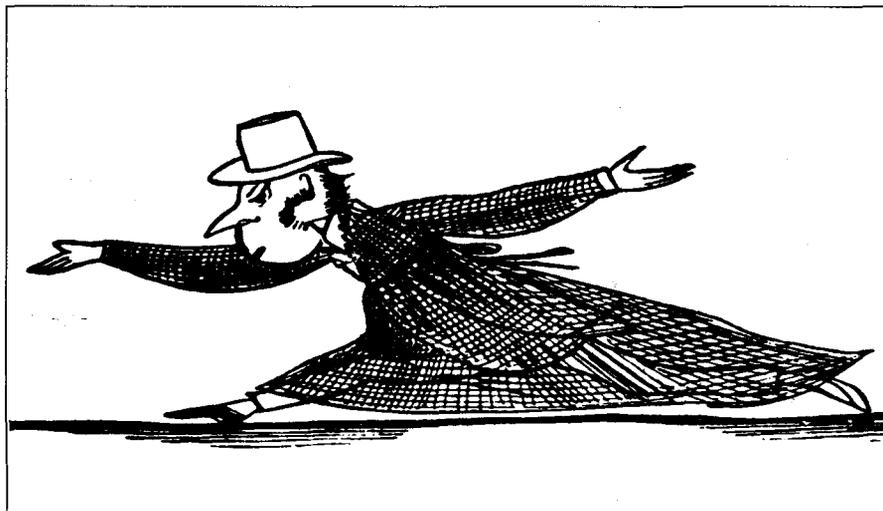
The Republican caucus has been most convenient for national campaigns. The Republicans do not pro-

duce actual delegates on caucus night, but do so discreetly at some fairly obscure future date. What they do at caucus, which is enough to catch media attention, is conduct an initial straw poll of those attending on their presidential choice. That done, people are free to go or sit and chat. Over at the Democrats', however, a long night of wrangling is ahead before they will even say how many delegates have declared for which candidates. For the caucus to work, as the Democrats see it, serious candidates have to cover every precinct to make sure some of their own will show up in the 2500 living rooms, church basements, school gyms, and civic centers on caucus night. That's the sort of attention the caucuses can promote.

Electronics seems to be aiding the outsiders this year to an unprecedented degree. Richard Gephardt made Iowa political history in April when he hired a satellite uplink truck to follow him throughout a day of campaigning. Not only did he beam a three-minute

spot to 700 C-SPAN stations; at 6 p.m. he paused in the study of a Marshalltown couple's home to hold a live Q & A with network anchors. The typical Iowa attitude of holding politics in its place bumps against this reliance on media technology. When Gephardt squared off with Michael Dukakis in a recent Iowa debate, for example, the event was broadcast live in New Hampshire but not here—it took place on Saturday morning, and local stations went with their cartoons. TV also brought us the first ever gathering of First Ladies-to-be on the Democratic side, who aired their views before a largely media audience.

All of this gets planned with less reliance on Iowa people, be they the audience, or local organizers, or loyal rank and file accustomed to grilling candidates. Before his untimely demise, Gary Hart enlisted many Iowans at all levels, which undoubtedly explains why 65 percent of Iowa Democrats supported him. The others, the Seven Dwarfs, have not really made the local contacts necessary for winning delegates across the state. After Hart pulled out, there was a sudden scramble to find local organizers, but perhaps an even more dramatic influx of national people who plan to park out in the wilderness until February. Loreen Gephardt, mother of Dick, now has an apartment in west Des Moines. Paul Simon gave daughter Sheila and future son-in-law Perry Knop the wedding present of a trip to Iowa where he will be talking up Dad while she organizes. Nearly every candidate has banished some family member to Iowa at one time or another; and Al Gore, Sr. has vowed to bring to the state several of his prize beef cattle with which he hopes to snatch a few state fair ribbons.



William Mueller is a writer living in Ely, Iowa.