

Staying on The Highway

"The Highway Revolution That Wasn't" by Jonathan Walters, in *Governing* (May 1995), 2300 N St. N.W., Ste. 760, Washington, D.C. 20037.

Despite its ungainly name, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 was supposed to usher in a new era of flexibility and creativity in American transportation. No longer would federal aid go overwhelmingly to highway construction. Now there would be more bike paths and public transit, fewer superhighways. It has not worked out that way, reports Walters, a senior writer at *Governing*.

In 1991, according to the American Public Transit Association, \$3.3 billion in federal aid was spent on public transit and \$15.1 billion on highways, a ratio of \$1 to \$4.60. In 1995, \$4.6 billion went for public transit and \$19.9 billion for highways—a ratio of \$1 to \$4.30. Hardly a revolution, Walters points out, especially when one considers that 1992 marked the official end of construction of the interstate highway system.

ISTEA (pronounced "ice tea" by those in the know) emphasized planning and local control, and gave states great flexibility in spending federal transportation aid. But very few states, Walters says, have taken advantage of that to shift funds from highways to bike lanes or rail service. Out of a total of more than \$15 billion appropriated for ISTEA's Surface Transportation Program for its first four fiscal years, states tagged only about \$400 million for such "alternate transit."

ISTEA has not lived up to its backers' dreams, Walters argues, because most Americans, including most state and local transportation officials, do not share those dreams. "Despite the best efforts of environmentalists, pro-transit forces, land use planners, preservationists, and bike and greenway proponents," he writes, "Americans still love roads, love cars, and love to drive." They roll up 250 million miles a year on their odometers—twice as many as they did two decades ago. "Americans don't like taking the bus. They view cycling to work as highly impractical. They want to drive. Alone." The 1980 census showed that 64.4 percent drove solo to

work; the figure a decade later was 70 percent.

In a few states, ISTEA is being used along the lines that its supporters envisioned. Maine is putting together a statewide transportation plan that calls for enhanced public transit and envisions moving truck freight onto rail, establishing bike lanes on the shoulders of highways, and perhaps expanding passenger rail service. But ISTEA did not turn the state around, Walters notes. One month before ISTEA was signed into law, Maine's voters—by a margin of nearly three to two—rejected a bond issue to fund the widening of the Maine Turnpike, and they went on to approve a new transportation policy. "The people of Maine wanted change," says the former head of the state's transportation department. But for now at least, it seems that—ISTEA or no ISTEA—most of the rest of the country does not.

The Charlatan And the Scholar

"Levin, Jeffries, and the Fate of Academic Autonomy" by Nathan Glazer, in *The Public Interest* (Summer 1995), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

To the federal courts, the cases of Leonard Jeffries and Michael Levin looked very much alike. Both men were tenured professors at the City College of New York (CCNY), both had either written or said things that many, on campus and off, found offensive and false, and both had had actions taken against them by the college. For the courts, First Amendment issues were paramount in both cases. Yet there were profound differences between the two, contends Glazer, the noted Harvard sociologist. The college's failure to recognize them is a cause for alarm.

Jeffries, chairman of CCNY's black studies department, gave a 1991 speech on multicultural education in which he characterized his critics as Jews hostile to blacks, and attacked Jews generally for their roles in the slave trade and in Hollywood portrayals of blacks. On other occasions, Jeffries advanced his theory that blacks are superior "sun" people and