

Americans requested the publication. Secretary of Transportation Drew Lewis called the book "anti-industry" and withdrew the unpaid public-service messages on radio and television announcing its availability. In August, Lewis decided not to reprint the book when the current supply was exhausted, making it clear that in addition to opposing the government setting stricter auto safety standards, he has no interest in providing consumers with the information they need to make the free market work.

Some publications managed to slip through the moratorium. One of them was the Defense Department's glossy brochure "Soviet Military Power," which is of limited interest to the average taxpayer. An even more egregious violation of the moratorium occurred in August, when the Commerce Department issued a guide for businesses interested in exporting energy technology to Soviet bloc countries. The guide was issued even as the Administration was pressing West Germany not to expand its energy trade with the Soviet Union through the financing and construction of the Siberian natural gas pipeline. Asked about the guide, a Commerce official said: "Is there a moratorium on new publications?" Closer to home, Nancy Reagan's sixteen-page program on the Easter festivities at the White House also eluded O.M.B.'s watchful eye.

Now, O.M.B. has issued a directive requiring all agencies to submit pamphlets and periodicals to Budget Director David Stockman for approval. Those not approved will be canceled by March 15.

The shortsightedness of clamping down on most government publications is obvious, particularly in a time of budgetary cutbacks. These publications are among the most cost-effective of all government activities, for they empower citizens to use the laws themselves. They help prevent consumer disputes that otherwise might have to be settled by government agencies.

Government information programs are particularly vulnerable to assaults by the budget slashers. There is no organized constituency or lobbying group that will speak up for them. Who, for instance, lobbies for the Government Printing Office? Who will challenge the staggering increases in the prices of various government publications the Reagan Administration has proposed—among them an increase in the cost of an annual subscription to the *Federal Register* from \$75 to \$200?

But the Administration's efforts to limit, and in some cases to cut off, the flow of government studies, documents, pamphlets and other material affects everyone. As the Administration is well aware, only the most powerful gain when government turns off the lights. That is the real waste and fraud in its anti-information policy.

The advocates of secrecy, suppression, censorship and sky-high pricing are blocking the public's right to know, and thus its right to participate in government decisions. A government out of reach becomes a government controlled by the few—and the best vehicle for carrying out the authoritarian philosophy of Reagan's corporate state. It can only be stopped if the media, scholars and all citizens who believe in open government join in opposing it. □

■ ENVIRONMENT

Pollution is Our Most Important Product

JAMES RIDGEWAY

If it were guided by history, the Reagan Administration, with its concern for a more productive economy, would embrace the goals of the environmental movement.

The environmental movement originated in the sanitation reforms proposed by business during the Industrial Revolution. The reforms were intended to improve public health and reduce disease, thereby increasing the productivity of workers. Sir Edwin Chadwick, Britain's most dogged proponent of sanitation in the nineteenth century, argued that wastes should be recycled for productive uses (sewage, for example, could be converted into fertilizer).

At the turn of the century, President Theodore Roosevelt argued that conservation resulted in greater economic efficiency. In the mid-1930s, Representative Karl Mundt, a conservative Republican from South Dakota who went on to serve in the Senate, joined with such groups as the Izaak Walton League in pushing for a strong Federal water-pollution control program as part of a comprehensive system of national waterways. The Democrats, fearful of hurting small industries still staggering from the Depression, opposed the regional approach and defeated it.

In short, environmentalism has never been a socialist or "radical" concept. It was an invention of business, and its aim was increased productivity. Its proponents today generally claim to favor free enterprise, competition and localism; conservative by temperament, they are mainly white and belong to the middle class. The movement, which succeeded the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1950s and 1960s, enjoys widespread popularity. Fifty-one percent of the people interviewed in a recent Harris poll favored keeping the Clean Air Act in its present form, while another 29 percent wanted to make it even tougher. Only 17 percent thought the present law was too strict.

A recent study by Data Resources Inc., a private research organization, concluded that pollution control legislation would create 524,000 jobs between 1980 and 1987; it would also stimulate investment and cause an average annual consumer price increase of only 0.4 percent.

Nonetheless, the Reagan Administration remains opposed to environmental regulations and to the environmentalists. It believes that the "free market," not the government,

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should allocate capital resources. Conservative politicians are out to defeat the dwindling band of moderate Republicans whose ideas and policies probably best embody the spirit of modern environmentalism.

The Administration has joined battle on several fronts. First, there is a move to eviscerate the Environmental Protection Agency. The President has proposed a 60 percent reduction in the E.P.A.'s real spending (that is, budgetary cuts of 42 percent plus the losses from a 15 percent to 20 percent inflation rate during the 1982 and 1983 fiscal years), and that 40 percent of the agency's staff be fired. These cuts and staff reductions come at a time when the agency's workload has doubled. During the next two years, the E.P.A. must enforce standards on toxic chemicals that Congress mandated in 1979.

The budget reductions also mean that funding for research to develop standards on permissible exposure to toxic chemicals will be eliminated. The projected cuts in Federal grants to states will curtail environmental programs at the state and local level.

According to William Drayton, Assistant Administrator for Planning at the E.P.A. under Jimmy Carter: "Right now, the E.P.A. should be hiring the soil hydrologists, toxicologists and other skilled technicians it needs to determine whether or not the hazardous waste disposal sites it must certify are safe or not. If the E.P.A. can't hire the staff it needs to do the job, who will? Few towns or states could afford such people even before Proposition 13 and Reagan cuts in Federal aid. Consequently, this country and the E.P.A. will mistakenly certify unsafe sites—hurting affected citizens and communities, running down the E.P.A.'s technical credibility and eventually making it less and less likely that communities will accept any disposal operations."

In addition to gutting the E.P.A., the government has moved in Federal District Court in Washington, D.C., to delay the implementation of water-quality standards. The action is directed against a plan setting standards for the discharge of effluents containing sixty-five known toxic chemicals, many of them carcinogens. Industry wants the Federal District judge to throw out the standard-setting procedure and has already managed to delay its enforcement. Now the government is asking for a further delay, until 1983. At the same time, it is seeking to transfer the responsibility for setting standards to the states and industry. This represents a regression to the states' rights approach to water-pollution control of the late 1950s, which was notoriously ineffective. The government offers budgetary hardship as the reason for delay and points to projected cuts of 20 percent to 25 percent in funding and personnel at the E.P.A. division charged with settling effluent guidelines. But the cuts, of course, are the Administration's own doing. And beyond all this, the E.P.A. insists that even if standards are set, compliance will not be expected until well into the 1990s.

Since mid-June, the government has drafted five sets of "improvement" amendments to the Clean Air Act, which expires this year, and each successive draft is more crippling.

The Administration proposes to weaken virtually every control in the act. The draft legislation would repeal the duty of the Federal government to designate the air pollutants for which standards must be set. The government would be given considerable "discretion" in setting ambient air standards, and the use of cost-benefit analysis would be permitted. The draft law would eliminate existing regulations in places where the air is now clean and increase the dangers posed by acid rain by permitting higher amounts of pollution from automobiles and electrical generating plants. It would reduce public participation in the standard-setting procedure and make enforcement difficult. For example, the requirement that air-quality monitoring data be made available to the E.P.A. and to the public would be eliminated, and the Federal and state governments would be given complete discretion to set deadlines for complying with standards. In sum, the Administration's draft amendments to the Clean Air Act would render the law meaningless.

Meanwhile, all manner of industries are yelping for a relaxation of the standards affecting them. One of the biggest polluters, the auto industry, is behind a bill to relax emission standards that is being supported in the House by John Dingell, Democrat of Michigan, and also has the backing of the United Automobile Workers. If enacted, which seems unlikely at this time, the bill would reduce the price of a new \$10,000 car by \$80 to \$350, but add untold medical costs due to increased pollution.

The Clean Air Act will probably not be renewed until next year, if then. But cuts in the E.P.A. budget and staff mean that scientific research and the implementation of standards will be severely curtailed. The enforcement of standards will be left largely to citizen groups challenging violations in the courts. But such groups are few and generally lack funds and expertise.

Thus, the Reagan Administration proceeds on several fronts, deliberately dismantling the environmental control apparatus built up since the 1950s. The result will be a rise in diseases related to environmental pollution; there will be more Love Canals and increased danger from acid rain. More than a century and a half after the height of the Industrial Revolution, the economic and human costs of pollution have not changed. In the nineteenth century, however, business advocated improving public health through environmental controls as a step toward widening markets and productivity. That vision apparently has been lost. Instead, industry and government are now joined in a belief that the American economy can prosper through a growing epidemic of environmentally-related diseases. That is the bottom line of the attack on the environmentalists.

As Governor Jerry Brown of California pointed out during the 1980 Presidential campaign, if you make \$10,000 a year, you will contribute \$30,000 to the Gross National Product in three years. But if environmental pollution gives you cancer, the cost of your medical treatment will add \$100,000 to the G.N.P. in just one year. Shorn of rhetoric, that is precisely the kind of economic growth Reagan seeks and will probably get as a result of his attack on regulations intended to clean up the environment. □

ARTICLE.

LIBYAN LETTER

The View from the Shores of Tripoli

ELIZABETH COLTON

Tripoli

All the saber rattling since the assassination of Anwar el-Sadat has caused much concern here in Libya's capital. Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi has blamed the United States for the heightened tensions, insisting that it, along with Egypt and the Sudan, is preparing for war against Libya. While repeating his offer to talk over differences between his country and the United States, Qaddafi said he was not afraid to fight, even if it meant that all of his people must die "defending their land." "We are preparing ourselves for war against America, because we believe America is preparing for war against us," he said.

Colonel Qaddafi and the Libyans are not the only ones here who accuse the United States of fomenting a crisis. Many diplomats representing U.S. allies and Americans working for the oil industry and agriculture have expressed similar sentiments. "The U.S. policy of confrontation with Libya is disastrous," said one European diplomat, who, like others I spoke to, did not want his name used. "But as in Europe, the American government pays no attention to our views."

The American manager of an agricultural project here charged, "It is our own government that is causing us trouble, not the Libyans. . . . I constantly have to calm my relatives in the States because all they hear are scare stories. We have had no problems from the Libyans." An American oil worker added, "The United States has frankly shirked its responsibilities to its own citizens. Now the government is trying to get us out of Libya just so they can feel safe attacking it, but we've refused to go so far."

Some Western diplomats opine that the large number of Britons and Americans working at the oil refineries near Sidra have frustrated U.S. plans for an attack. The State Department has repeatedly tried to persuade the approximately 2,000 Americans working in Libya to leave. In early 1980, a few months after its embassy had been stormed by a mob, the United States pulled out all of its diplomats. In February 1980, the French Embassy was extensively damaged by a similar attack, but the French are still here, carrying on business as usual, and the Libyan government is rebuilding their embassy. A European ambassador said, "The United States is making a big mistake. I do not believe they had any real grounds for leaving Libya. Certainly worse happened to the American Embassy in Pakistan in

Elizabeth Colton is a producer for ABC News in Libya.

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