

# AIR AND SMOKE SCREENS

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facing pollu- e nation. Now their counter- model for the ems is massive l waters from npanies had to ey might be a over our land state attorney o do after the en he tried to nies, he found to protect the s strongest sup-

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together and set y Area Air Pollu- CD). Read the es and you'll see ollution by vigor- rancisco or Oak-

nd, especially on a sunny, calm day, and your es, nose and lungs tell a different story. What kind of policies does the BAAPCD fol-? For one thing, it's very tolerant of indus- pollution. According to BAAPCD regula- ns, when pollution control devices in factories ve breakdowns, companies can be excused for lluting the air. One study found that the Shell Oil refinery in arby Martinez reported "breakdowns" on 84 t of 111 days!



The BAAPCD likes to play down air pollution om big industries. They set their standards so w that they don't even conform to state health andards. This way, industries can pollute all ey please and still brag to the public, "We're sponsible! We're within the safety standards!" The BAAPCD makes big claims about how it winning the battle against air pollution. It tells e public how it cut air pollution "34.3%" in 67 alone. It doesn't confess that this impres- ve figure really refers to the amount of air ollution it claims to have prevented. But to ut r pollution is increasing. "At least things are tting worse a little less quickly" is what the AAPCD really means.

Things weren't always done this way. Back in 61, a man by the name of Benjamin Linsky as the main enforcement officer for the AAPCD. He ordered a series of studies and en concluded that autos were causing only 25% f local air pollution. Mr. Linsky was quietly sed out of office. His replacement was D. J. ud) Callaghan, a former PG&E executive. ithin a short time, the BAAPCD decided that ars, not industry, were the worst offenders of

What kind of ecology-minded people give policy advice about air pollution to Jud Calla- nan and the BAAPCD?

One man works for Standard Oil. Another orks for Dow Chemical. A third draws pay- ecks from the Pacific Gas and Electric Com- any, one of the major air polluters and land- olders in the area. Three of the "advisors" are ctually paid consultants for the Bay Area

League of Industrial Associations, an organiza- tion put together by big companies like Stan- dard Oil and PG&E to apply "friendly pressure" on public officials and tell the public what a great job industry does.

The wolves are the shepherds. And California is no exception. It is even considered to have the strictest pollution con- trols in the nation!

In Eugene, Oregon, there was a filter stoppage in the huge Weyerhaeuser wood-pulp plant. Rather than shut down the plant, the company decided to continue operations, even though they were dumping untreated chemical pollu- tion—sheer poison—into the river 100 yards up- stream from the city water intake. The company continued production for the two days it took the filter to be fixed, and then paid a small fine for its pollution.

In Tacoma, Washington, the American Smelt- ing Co. paid the grand total of \$3,750 for one year of poisoning the area with lethal, stinking sulfur dioxide. The company is now building an 1100 foot high smokestack to spread the poison over an even wider area—and in doing so it gains legal freedom from pollution prosecution!

All over America, penalties and fines like these are nothing but a license for companies to pollute. Check out your own area. If you have a pollution control board, you'll see that people who live near the big, messy factories don't sit on it. Nowhere are the people who are most affected by industrial poison given the chance to control it. Everywhere government works with industry to save them the expense of cleaning up, and to convince us that something is being done.

And if this is how government tackles pollu- tion, it's not hard to guess what industry does.

## INDUSTRY'S SOLUTION

Many companies take a "cosmetic" approach to pollution. If you can't see it, then it's not there.

They mix steam with the crud belching out of their smokestacks so that the plume looks white, and clean, and harmless. Companies that emit too much filth to disguise often do their dirty work at night—an even better ploy.

Oil companies come out with big ads showing how their "special additive" gasolines make car exhaust so clean that a balloon can be filled with exhaust and remain nearly transparent. This is supposed to mean it's no longer dangerous pollu- tion. A better test would be to stick an oil company executive in the balloon along with the fumes for a few minutes, or pump that exhaust through the company board room while a meet- ing is in session.

Other companies prefer to juggle statistics. And there are companies, slightly more blatant than most, that revert to outright lies:

If you read *Life*, or *Look*, or *Time*, you've probably seen full-page ads showing crystal-clear rivers flowing through green, unspoiled forests. The Georgia-Pacific Lumber Co. places these ads and tells us how much it believes in conserva- tion. That same company, reported a Portland, Oregon, newspaper, sent letters to its workers attacking conservationists because they were "trying to limit the workers' right to cut trees!" They're also spending huge sums of money

pushing for the Timber Supply Bill.

It's a good story to remember next time some big corporation tries to tell you how concerned it is about our environment.

What big corporations are really concerned about is money. That's why they go to so much trouble to be sure the government—and even the public—won't tip the applectart. Because the balance sheet is very one-sided about who prof- its from pollution versus who pays for it. It reads as follows:

In 1969, American corporations spent ap- proximately a billion dollars on pollution control, while amassing after-tax profits of \$66 billion. They spent only 1.5% of their profits cleaning up their own mess!

Even these figures are deceptive. The fed- eral and state governments give big tax breaks to corporations for their pollution- contro' expenses. For every million dollars companies spend, they get back over \$700,000. The public pays 70% of their costs. Their break is our burden.

Not only do we quietly pick up the tab for business' own expenses, but the bill for government anti-pollution programs also fails on our shoulders.

The government wants the public to pay over \$10 billion for municipal treatment plants over the next five years, while asking industry to spend only \$3 billion (tax- deductible) on its own waste water. But industry uses—and dirties—two-thirds of America's water, and farmers account for most of the rest.

The icing on the cake is the simple fact that 40% of all the wastes handled by public water plants come from industry! There's another \$4 billion we pick up for them.

It's the same story with air pollution. What companies pay they save on tax deductions, or else they raise prices and pass the costs on to us. We pay extra for smog control devices on our cars, and for modified gasoline.

And garbage: the cost of handling all the trash from industry, and all the consumer products which can't be disposed of, will be over \$40 billion during the next five to ten years. Forbes Magazine, a businessman's journal, tells us very clearly just what this means: "Little wonder that businessmen and Wall Streeters alike are drooling . . . The taxpayer had better steel himself to pay the tab."

In other words corporations want us to pay for their own pollution, while making big profits out of pollution itself. Pollution control is becoming a Big Business. Some of the big companies that rank among the worst of all polluters are buying up pollution control companies. They want to have their cake and eat it.

There should be no doubt now why the Bigwigs tell us that "People Pollute." "Let the public pay!" is their real message.

They get away with it because the role of industry shapes the role of government. All across the nation, big corporations have friends on planning boards, in legislatures, and on pollu- tion commissions. They sponsor the research of university experts. Their interests are well repre- sented. Who represents the interests of the people?

But what if more of them did? Suppose there were lots of dedicated politicians, and suppose corporations agreed to cooperate. Then could they stop pollution? How would they do it?