



The Ideology of Environmentalism

by John Hendrickson

President Barack Obama's presidency has been associated with the continuation of policies that originated in the early 20th century with the Progressive Movement. The Progressive Movement, which contained both Republicans and Democrats, was a diverse group of individuals whose goals included more federal regulation of the nation's economy. The progressive presidential administrations of Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson, among others, were pivotal in creating not only the administrative state, but also the social welfare entitlement state. President Obama and the Democrat Party are pushing a similar progressive agenda today with an increase in regulations, massive government stimulus spending, and universal health care.

In addition to pushing all of these policies, President Obama's administration is also advocating an environmental policy agenda, which has resulted in more regulation by federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The environmental aspect of the progressive policy agenda argues that more "green" alternative energy sources are needed to combat global warming and more environmental regulations are needed to force the economy to adopt pro-green energy solutions to reduce the nation's carbon footprint. The argument is also used that a more "green" economy will result in expanded job creation, which will reduce the 9.1 percent unemployment. All of these points can be debated, including the science of global warming and the use of environmental stimulus spending to create jobs, which has led to the Solyndra scandal that is currently under investigation.

Marita Littauer Noon, who is Executive Director of the Citizens Alliance for Responsible Energy, has recently written *Take Away Energy, Take Away Freedom: Know, Understand, Influence the Role of Energy in Your Life and How Environmentalists Control its Use*. Corresponding to her book, Noon has also recently written "Environmental Utopia: What Would Life be Like if the Environmentalists Were in Charge?" which was recently published as a Policy Study by Public Interest Institute.¹ In *Take Away Energy*, Noon provides a readable overview of energy policy and some of the consequences of radical environmental ideology. In fact, part of her book discusses the utopian ideas of the environmental movement and she explores what would possibly happen if the movement achieved all of its goals.²

Her intent in writing the book is "to imbue you [the reader] with energy awareness," and she is "writing for the person who is newly politically engaged out of concern for the direction America is heading."³ In addition, she urges caution when the term "green" is used in discussing environmental policies and concerns:

Anything or anyone who can label one's self as 'green' has a perceived marketing advantage. Without fully understanding the implications of 'green,' people support the 'green' concept as generally being better for the environment. Without a specific universal

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definition of ‘green,’ products as diverse as political candidates, diapers, and cars proudly sport the moniker...Blind adoption of concepts labeled ‘green’ may imprison America for the next twenty years or more. Resources, which America needs to move forward, to balance out our trade deficit, and to remain a super power, are being locked up.⁴

The environmental resources that Noon refers to “are energy, specifically oil, gas, coal, uranium — the essential ingredients that fuel America.”⁵ These are in addition to other resources such as copper, sulfur, lead, lithium, and others that not only power our nation, but provide the materials for much of our life’s necessities. “While most people only think of gasoline and/or electricity when they think of energy, if they think about it at all, there is much more involved,” writes Noon.⁶

Throughout the book Noon addresses environmental policies relating to transportation, health, housing, and other areas of policy. She also warns about the increase in environmental regulations and higher tax rates that usually accompany the “green” agenda. Noon argues that the bureaucracy often defers to “supposed intellectuals to impose higher taxes and more stringent regulations on energy producers while government subsidies pour into building underdeveloped technologies — electric cars, solar and wind ‘farms’.”⁷ “Solar and wind technologies are far from being able to carry the energy load for large industrial countries,” noted Noon.⁸

Noon also defends the use of nuclear energy as a reliable and realistic option for providing energy to a modern economy. “Our energy needs continue to grow and only nuclear power — successfully operated by the U.S. Navy without incident for nearly sixty years — has the ability to truly power the U.S.,” and she argues that “cost-effective, available energy, coupled with ingenuity and industry, has been the power that has made America great.”⁹

The thesis of Noon’s book is that if energy is taken away by an extreme environmental agenda, then freedom will also be lost in the process.¹⁰ *Take Away Energy, Take Away Freedom* provides a citizen’s guide to energy policy and the objectives of the environmental lobby in trying to create their utopia. All citizens interested in learning more about environmental policy issues and the environmental movement from a free-market perspective will benefit from Noon’s endeavor.

Endnotes:

¹“Environmental Utopia: What Would Life Be Like if the Environmentalists Were in Charge?” can be viewed at Public Interest Institute’s Website at <<http://www.limitedgovernment.org/publications/pubs/studies/ps-11-6.pdf>>.

²Marita Littauer Noon, *Take Away Energy, Take Away Freedom: Know, Understand, Influence the Role of Energy in Your Life and How Environmentalists Control its Use*, Intermedia Publishing, Peoria, Arizona, 2011, p. 13-14.

³Ibid., p. 14.

⁴Ibid., p. 7.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 8.

⁷Ibid., p. 62.

⁸Ibid., p. 63.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 150.

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