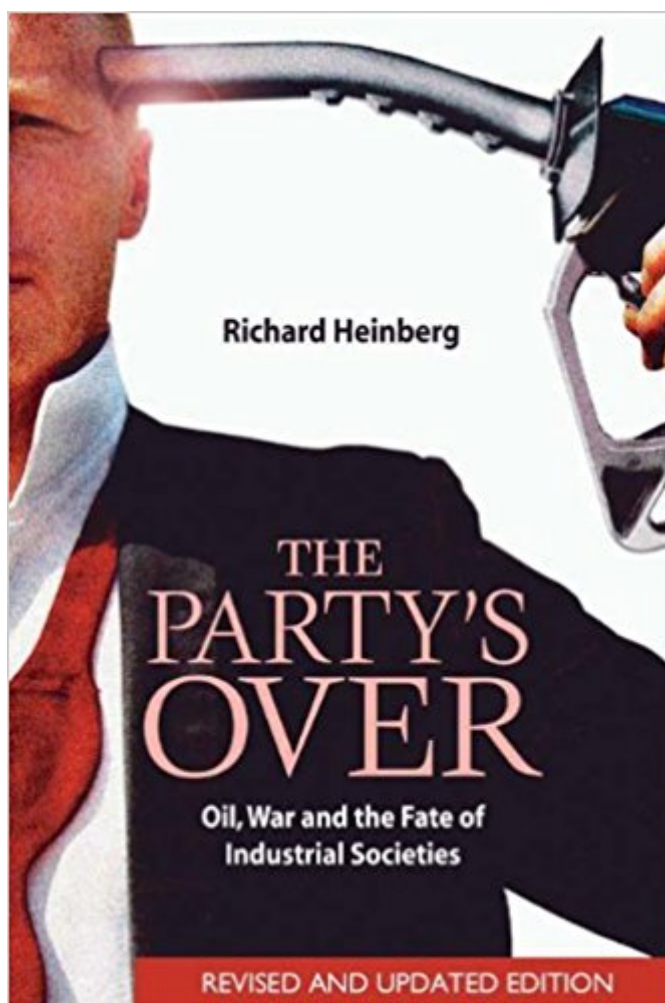


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The Party's Over: Oil, War And The Fate Of Industrial Societies



Synopsis

The world is about to run out of cheap oil and change dramatically. Within the next few years, global production will peak. Thereafter, even if industrial societies begin to switch to alternative energy sources, they will have less net energy each year to do all the work essential to the survival of complex societies. We are entering a new era, as different from the industrial era as the latter was from medieval times. In *The Party's Over*, Richard Heinberg places this momentous transition in historical context, showing how industrialism arose from the harnessing of fossil fuels, how competition to control access to oil shaped the geopolitics of the twentieth century and how contention for dwindling energy resources in the twenty-first century will lead to resource wars in the Middle East, Central Asia and South America. He describes the likely impacts of oil depletion and all of the energy alternatives. Predicting chaos unless the United States – the world's foremost oil consumer – is willing to join with other countries to implement a global program of resource conservation and sharing, he also recommends a “managed collapse” that might make way for a slower-paced, low-energy, sustainable society in the future. More readable than other accounts of this issue, with fuller discussion of the context, social implications and recommendations for personal, community, national and global action, Heinberg's updated book is a riveting wake-up call for human-kind as the oil era winds down, and a critical tool for understanding and influencing current US foreign policy.

Book Information

File Size: 1597 KB

Print Length: 321 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 0865715297

Publisher: New Society Publishers; 2nd edition (June 1, 2005)

Publication Date: June 1, 2005

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B004FPZ3DK

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #486,620 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #46

inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Petroleum

#267 inÃ Â Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Energy Production & Extraction

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Customer Reviews

It is very informative. It is worth it. It is very intellectually stimulating. One of the best books on peak oil.

Very solid grounding in the issues facing modern western civilisation and its dependence on cheap oil. Heinberg convincingly argues the case with a dispassionate and reasoned style using available evidence. He cites current and historical examples to support his thesis. I wish our political leaders would read this book and act for the benefit of the majority rather than listening to the propaganda from the fossil fuel industries.

I have now read this book several times and have enjoyed it every time, though the information in it is now becoming somewhat dated -- especially with the advent of the Canadian tar sands and the Keystone XL pipeline. Also, the picture doesn't look nearly as bleak now as it did in 2006-2008. Hopefully Heinberg will release an updated version.

It totally reinforced my view that the mathematics, and the laws of physics, do not suggest a happy ending for our society which has become hopelessly dysfunctional on a diet of "must have" gadgets and machines. When your glass is half full and you drink half of the contents your glass is no longer half full but there are plenty of clowns who are prepared to argue otherwise. Well done Richard !

Surprisingly its not about the rising cost of the energy that you personally use. Its about the whole economy that has been built on using a non-replenishable energy supply. You know how those economists always count on the 3% growth in the GDP. Well the book argues that this long term growth is fundamentally driven by our long term growth in energy usage, which everyone knows will have to turn around at some point. The other surprising fact is that the turning point is long before you run out of oil. Heinberg shows data that indicates that half of the oil is still left in the ground

when the returns start to diminish. And it appears that that we are within a few years of reaching that point. So we've used up about half the "available" (i.e. feasible to extract from an energy perspective) oil. Now oil production starts to decrease. What happens next is anyone's guess, but Heinberg presents some detailed discussions on the possibilities. Don't assume that a coal, nuclear, or "hydrogen" economy are going to be as easy and profitable as the petroleum economy we are leaving behind. I've read lots of books about energy and the environment, and this is definitely one of the best.

There are other books that I consider to be better at the over-all challenge of "connecting the dots" among cheap oil, drugs and drug money gladly laundered by U.S. banks, and war profiteering, but this book must be considered one of the finest underlying reference works that support the more speculative conclusions of others. This book provides both a solid history of how we got to where we are and why we continually dismiss the known future consequences of not providing for energy conservation and alternative energy; and it also provides a very finely presented review of what the author calls the "banquet of consequences" across transportation, food and agriculture, heating and cooling, the environment, public health, information storage and transmission, and the over-all geopolitics of oil. Had we all read this book, *The Long Emergency*, and *Crossing the Rubicon* prior to Dick Cheney's taking us to war in Afghanistan and Iraq, we would have realized that invading and occupying those two countries is about the oil catastrophe and Wall Street's need for drug money to provide liquidity (a point made in *Rubicon*, not in this book). Cheap Oil has been the Fool's Gold of this era. Unhappily, the fools (We the People) have ended up with our pocket's picked, and Wall Street and a few very large immoral organizations have ended up with the Gold. The party is indeed over. The only question that remains is: can we repossess the Commonwealth from those that have stolen it using profits from cheap oil?

This book is simply revolutionary. Great insight into the problems we face with energy in our society. If you really want to be informed about the reality of energy and the potential crises we face with diminishing resources this book is for you. A must read for everybody and I mean everybody.

If anything can get us out of the delusional straitjacket that is conventional political 'thinking', this book will do it. Richard Heinberg's sober assessment is a vital wake-up call. Another, highly recommended book is "The Energy of Slaves" by Andrew Nikiforuk, who shows with frightening clarity how cheap energy has corrupted us.

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