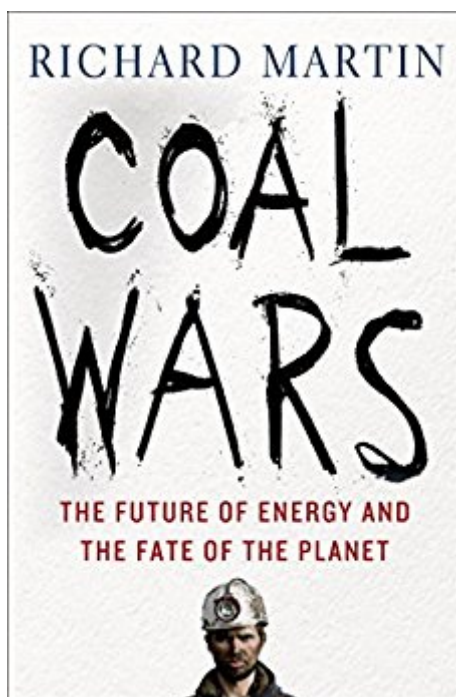


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# Coal Wars: The Future Of Energy And The Fate Of The Planet



## Synopsis

Since the late 18th century, when it emerged as a source of heating and, later, steam power, coal has brought untold benefits to mankind. Even today, coal generates almost 45 percent of the world's power. Our modern technological society would be inconceivable without coal and the energy it provides. Unfortunately, that society will not survive unless we wean ourselves off coal. The largest single source of greenhouse gases, coal is responsible for 43 percent of the world's carbon emissions. Richard Martin, author of *SuperFuel*, argues that to limit catastrophic climate change, we must find a way to power our world with less polluting energy sources, and we must do it in the next couple of decades—or else it is "game over." It won't be easy: as coal plants shut down across the United States, and much of Europe turns to natural gas, coal use is growing in the booming economies of Asia—particularly China and India. Even in Germany, where nuclear power stations are being phased out in the wake of the Fukushima accident, coal use is growing. Led by the Sierra Club and its ambitious "Beyond Coal" campaign, environmentalists hope to drastically reduce our dependence on coal in the next decade. But doing so will require an unprecedented contraction of an established, lucrative, and politically influential worldwide industry. Big Coal will not go gently. And its decline will dramatically change lives everywhere—from Appalachian coal miners and coal company executives to activists in China's nascent environmental movement. Based on a series of journeys into the heart of coal land, from Wyoming to West Virginia to China's remote Shanxi Province, hundreds of interviews with people involved in, or affected by, the effort to shrink the industry, and deep research into the science, technology, and economics of the coal industry, *Coal Wars* chronicles the dramatic stories behind coal's big shutdown—and the industry's desperate attempts to remain a global behemoth. A tour de force of literary journalism, *Coal Wars* will be a milestone in the climate change battle.

## Book Information

File Size: 832 KB

Print Length: 284 pages

Publisher: St. Martin's Press (April 14, 2015)

Publication Date: April 14, 2015

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00LKR7TEM

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #211,929 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #3 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Energy Production & Extraction > Fossil Fuels > Coal #17 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Petroleum #28 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Energy & Mining > Natural Resource Extraction

## Customer Reviews

To state that the coal industry, from mining to coal powered power plants is dead would be a massive over statement of the truth, but to state that the continued use of coal is on its way towards extinction would not be an exaggeration. While there will never be a time when some coal is not in use for some purpose (particularly metallurgical coal), the amount of coal mined and utilized is currently on a serious downward spiral and the end of it as a common product in power generation may occur in our lifetimes. The author took a long look at the status of the coal industry around the world to see what is true and what is false about the use of coal as a power generation substance. The author also evaluated the state of coal mining around the world and where it might be headed. To say that the future of coal mining and use is bleak would be an understatement. The author begins the journey by looking at the Tennessee Valley Authority and it's history of coal use. The TVA started using coal because it was in need of additional power to supply the territory in its original charter. Without the ability to add hydro electric capacity, coal was the best option at the time. And they added a serious portfolio of coal fired power plants, which are now slowly being decommissioned. The old plants are expensive, dirty, in need of massive upgrades and it is much cheaper to retire them, erect new gas fired power generation and move on. And that is what they are doing. Following the TVA, the author traveled to coal mines in the Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia areas to see what the state of coal production is. The answer you will receive certainly depends on who you speak with. If it is the executive of a large coal producer (Peabody, Arch, etc.

I have been interested in coal mining since seeing the movie Matewan by John Sayles and reading the book and later seeing the movie Rocket Boys By Homer Hickam. These works dealt more with the people mining the coal and less with its effect on our nation and the world. Coal Wars looks at

the people in the coal industry in the United States and Asia with a focus on the dangers coal poses to the people in the nations that mine it as well as the planet as a whole. Rather than this being a dry scientific argument that coal does bad things to the people who mine it, those who use it, the environment and to the planet itself, this is a book about the people and the companies in the industry and how coal continues to do bad things to the people who mine it, those who use it, the environment and to the planet itself. By interviewing people and letting the reader hear their stories, this book takes on a personal tone that makes it very readable and very effective in making its argument. The book looks at the rise of coal use in the United States and its eventual decline because of environmental concerns and the use of natural gas as well. Unfortunately, the author argues, coal mining has grown in China, which is seeing the negative environmental effects, and is growing in Europe in countries like Germany and England as well. The author makes an effective argument that aside from local environmental issues coal is responsible for approximately 44 percent of the world's carbon emissions. The author states in the prologue that it does not matter how many houses are covered with solar panels: unless big coal is shut down the battle against global warming is lost. I tend to be somewhere in the middle when it comes to global warming.

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