



The Tyranny of Oil: The World's Most Powerful Industry--and What We Must Do to Stop It

Antonia Juhasz

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“Juhasz bravely and expertly exposes the inner workings of an industry and a government riddled with secrets, lies, and deception.”

—Daniel Ellsberg, author of *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers*

In the tradition of the Academy Award-winning documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, Antonia Juhasz’s *The Tyranny of Oil* offers a chilling exposé of the modern American oil industry and its dire abuse of power. A leading international trade and finance policy expert and the author of *The Bush Agenda*, Juhasz presents eye-opening truths about a potentially catastrophic global energy crisis that only promises to get much worse in the coming years—and provides possible solutions for meaningful change. Terry Tamminen, former Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency, calls *The Tyranny of Oil* “a bold blueprint for ending the madness,” and the *Christian Science Monitor* tells us, “a good first step toward true energy independence is to read this insightful book.”

The Tyranny of Oil: The World's Most Powerful Industry--and What We Must Do to Stop It Details

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From Reader Review The Tyranny of Oil: The World's Most Powerful Industry--and What We Must Do to Stop It for online ebook

Rob Prince says

Very well done - especially the shift in Global Oil these past decades (mergers of the big companies into mega companies, shift back to domestic production) with an excellent and easily understandable section on the oil futures market and how it influences oil prices. I'm impressed

Cheers. Rob P.

Ben says

http://www.sfbg.com/printable_entry.p...

Speed Reading

The Tyranny of Oil: The World's Most Powerful Industry -- and What We Must Do to Stop It

By Ben Terrall

The Tyranny Of Oil: The World's Most Powerful Industry — And What We Must Do To Stop It

By Antonia Juhasz

William Morrow

480 pages

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In responding to an attack on her book in the Washington Post, Antonia Juhasz explained, "My goal in writing The Tyranny of Oil was to offer an analysis that has been sorely missing in U.S. literature since the 1975 publication of Anthony Sampson's classic book, *The Seven Sisters*: an unapologetically and vitally necessary in-depth and serious critique of the current state of the U.S. oil industry which also raises the voices of those not regularly heard on nightly news programs, television commercials, and in books."

Juhasz succeeds in that aim and then some. *The Tyranny of Oil* is a tightly-written overview of the rise of Big Oil, from its origins in the 19th century power grabs of John D. Rockefeller and his ilk, to the era of the petroleum megacorporations busily destroying what's left of our biosphere via oil wars and Godzilla-sized carbon footprints.

The book opens with a section on pioneering investigative journalist Ida Tarbell and her early 20th century crusade against Standard Oil. Tarbell's exposé generated public anger at the Standard trust and contributed to legislation which eventually led to Standard Oil's breakup in 1911. The separate components of the trust were later reconstituted; nonetheless, Juhasz presents the successful grassroots campaign Tarbell helped

spark as an instructive example for today's activists.

Wednesday May 6, 2009

Tim says

Long before the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Oil has been a problem. More specifically, Big Oil has been a big problem.

In Antonia Juhasz's must read, 'The Tyranny of Oil: The World's Most Powerful Industry and What We Must Do to Stop It' – just released in paperback – the author reveals numerous secrets of the oil business; secrets that are having a profound effect on our environment, global economies and the prospect of never-ending wars in hot zones across our planet.

Everyone knows Big Oil is trouble, but 'Tyranny' is a book that rips the cover off the ball in explaining just how we got into this mess, how vast the problem is in relation to world economies and what can be done to curtail the influence of what is arguably the number one devastation factor facing the earth as we know it.

Rather than sounding alarm bells, Juhasz ('The Bush Agenda') explains the factors that got us to this very unusual place on our history; the early conglomeration of oil interests that was John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Trust of the late 1800's, to the break up of the company via the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890, to the re-emergence of a virtual monopoly (again) of the business as all the pieces of that former company have now been reassembled through the government approval of over 2,400 mergers and acquisitions resulting in the so-called 'Seven Sisters' of oil. (i.e. ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, Chevron, Total, ConocoPhillips, Valero; not to mention state owned firms like Saudi Arabia's Aramco, Brazil's Petrobras, etc.)

Along the way, tales of political corruption (particularly of the Republican party), arduous lobbying, the influence of administrations from Reagan to Bush II, the 'necessity of war' to protect vital petroleum interests around the world, particularly in the Middle East, and the oil companies' lip-service to developing truly alternative energies are all uncovered in the book.

Oil is the lifeblood of the planet and 'Tyranny' shows just how far the powerful (7 of the world's top 10 companies are now oil companies) will go to wring every last drop from the earth (onshore, offshore, federal lands, and even the radically environmentally destructive extraction of 'shale oil'). Political overthrows, explosions, the hundreds of deaths of drilling rig operators and severe pollution are mere inconveniences in the path of Big Oil's goals. The quotes, records and other documentation will make your skin crawl.

Given the precarious state of our environment, our economy and our politics, 'The Tyranny of Oil' is both a must-read – and will be among our finalists for Book of the Year. Get it, read it, pass it on.

C. Scott says

Equal parts informative and outraging, Juhasz lays out the history of the oil industry and the ebb and flow of

its incredible power in world economics and politics. It's hard not to feel completely overwhelmed by the money and influence this industry wields - especially to anyone who might consider challenging it.

This book first came to my attention through Telesur's Empire Files which featured the author in a segment on oil. I was immediately hooked by what Juhasz said about the history of Standard Oil. In her view the entire trust busting phenomenon at the beginning of the 20th century happened because the United States couldn't control the power of Rockefeller's company. One corporation was basically more powerful than the US government and something needed to be done to cope with that reality. Thank goodness we fixed all that and business will never be able to subvert the will of the people ever again. (Rueful chuckle.)

Juhasz follows the history of Standard Oil through the trust busting breakup years to the modern day merger mania which has basically seen the chunks of Standard Oil regroup like a terminator T-1000. She lays out some of the conflicts between big oil and the environmental movement as well as the symbiotic relationship that oil shares with banking and the military industrial complex. My only small complaint is that the author never really spoke too much about petro-dollars and how they fit into the broader scheme.

Overall this was very good, highly informative, and thankfully ended on a hopeful note.

Alex says

Ever wondered why the US government spends trillions of dollars to launch massive wars against Middle Eastern nations that have never attacked us, but refuses to do absolutely anything about the ongoing climate crisis? This book is for you.

The Tyranny of Oil is an exposee of "Big Oil", meaning Exxon-Mobil, Chevron, BP, ConocoPhillips, and Royal Dutch Shell, the largest oil corporations in the world (and some of THE largest corporations in the world). The book exposes how these enormous oil octopi have gained virtually total control over the US government, and use their money and political power to make big profits at the expense of the public and the planet. (For example, Exxon Mobil in 2003 posted the largest profits of any corporation in history, then proceeded to beat that record each of the next 5 years).

It all starts with the origin of Big Oil, the mother, Standard Oil. Juhasz stresses the importance of monopolies and corporate mergers, in a sense missing the deeper analysis of capitalism, but nevertheless we come to understand how enormous companies wielding enormous profits can and do undermine democracy.

The book progresses to tell a story about Big Oil's development and control over the government agencies that are supposed to be regulating it, and finally Big Oil's plans for the future (War and Trashing the Planet, basically), before an inspirational chapter on What We Can Do. (There's also a shoutout to SDS here and to our No War No Warming action in DC last year! Cool!)

This is essential reading for all US citizens, because if you aren't familiar with the concepts she lays out, you frankly have no understanding of the country you live in. Environmental racism, corporate lobbyists and corrupt government agencies, the criminal behavior of Cheney's Energy Task Force, deregulation and Enron-style fraud, tar sands, and the list goes on.

My only major complaint of the book was the virtual silence on the looming and imminent reality of Peak Oil and how this will transform everything. Juhasz does recognize the scarcity of oil and the likelihood of oil peaking, but chooses to essentially overlook its importance, instead blaming oil companies and speculators for driving up the cost of oil.

This is not just a minor quibble, because the BIG TRUTH is that we're not just in a struggle against Big Oil, we're in a struggle against capitalism, and it's a fight that is reaching perhaps its final act. Peak Oil will challenge the dominant for-profit institutions of power, and can create an opening for social justice activists and organizers to push for much more radical change than appears possible within the current system. Nevertheless, this is probably a subject for another book (mine!), and Juhasz treads on steady ground by appealing to a more mainstream audience and demonizing the oil companies exclusively. This is a very effective book, highly recommended!

Finally, my favorite quote (pg. 325):

"As Paul Wolfowitz said in 1991, 'The combination of the enormous resources of the Persian Gulf, the power that those resources represent - it's power. It's not just that we need gas for our cars, it's that anyone who controls those resources has enormous capability to build up military forces.'"

Jenika says

Ms. Juhasz has detailed how our government politically uses war and invasion as a tool to control countries and rob them of their natural resources. She traces Big Oil's tactics from Rockefeller to the current oil crises/war in Iraq. She does this in a readable way that never is beyond our comprehension. She takes no prisoners but names names that are frighteningly current. This is a book to re-read as the future is also written into this credible epic of the Tyranny of Oil.

Loren says

The author goes out of her way to grind her axe against big oil. It would have more interesting to be a little more even handed. She wants to "stop" big oil from doing something but doesn't really make clear what she would "stop". Except maybe them making money! Her alternatives are also weak and by the end she sounds pissed off that gas is costing her 4.00/gal and that's why she wrote the book.

Timothy says

This book is insightful. Juhasz does a great job at giving info and facts on the tactics of big oil and how they play a big part in governmental policy. What this book lacks however is the 2nd half of the title what we must do to stop big oil, she doesn't really expand on that topic or bring any ideas or thoughts as alternatives to "stop big oil".

Diane says

This book described the oil industry from its inception, John D. Rockefeller's monopoly, its breakup, and how the industry has regrouped to gain, once again, a monopoly over this energy resource. Juhasz explains how the industry works: how oil prices get set (not based on oil availability), the oil industry from exploration, drilling, refining and transportation, and the new sources of oil and how they damage the

environment (tar sands in Canada, shale oil in Montana, off shore drilling) Particularly galling to me was her descriptions on how pervasive the Big Oil companies (including Exxon-Mobil, Chevron, BP) have used their wealth and power to manipulate local, state, and federal governments so they can continue to get wealthier, all the while destroying our environment, ignoring safety precautions at their facilities, and leading us into wars in their efforts to grab what is left of the world's oil reserves. (Yes. The Iraq war was all about oil.) This book was published in 2008. Seven years later we are having to deal with the environmental effects of BP's disastrous oil spill off the Gulf Coast, Obama has vetoed the Keystone XL Pipeline, and the Obama administration has negotiated with Iran to eliminate the ban on their oil exports. *The Tyranny of Oil* provides background information on these issues, but it also provides me with dread, knowing how easily it is for Big Oil to influence our Government officials. They contribute heavily to our government representatives and their wealth allows them to litigate successfully in the courts. Juhasz' book provides plenty of details, most I probably won't remember, but after reading her book, I'm more apt to see the world's issues differently than I had before.

Neil says

so far not too compelling....like a college research paper...arghh...I think I might have to skim the rest...this gal is a little over the top.....fizzled out...i got bored ...skimmed it then let it die a slow death on my night stand...arrggghhh

Thom Dunn says

I have trouble understanding how one can be both an American Patriot and a Free-Market Advocate when the largest players in that market are these megalopagazilla leviathans.

Brian says

Simply superb. Juhasz, who also wrote *The Bush Agenda*, here brilliantly exposes the pernicious effects of the oil industry and its disproportionate effect on American democracy. Juhasz explains--clearly, with ample evidence--that our country's addiction to oil is hardly "accidental," but the result of decades of deliberate control and exploitation of the need for reliable energy sources.

Juhasz offers substantial evidence throughout, and this is a great source book for that reason, for discussions, educational outreach, etc.

Blog on Books says

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Tariq Mahmood says

A very average book that primarily meant for academics interested in the history of oil companies in the US. For someone new to the oil industry it was tough going.

Hans Hoffmann says

It really lays into the oil industry as a greedy not moral group of people. However it disusses in detail the roel of industry in the lobbying process, In light of the recent decision by the supreme court of campaign funding by corporations, I would be very worried. This makes already powerful corporations even more so. It also discusses the history og big oil in the US - from Rockefeller on. It is a compelling read.
