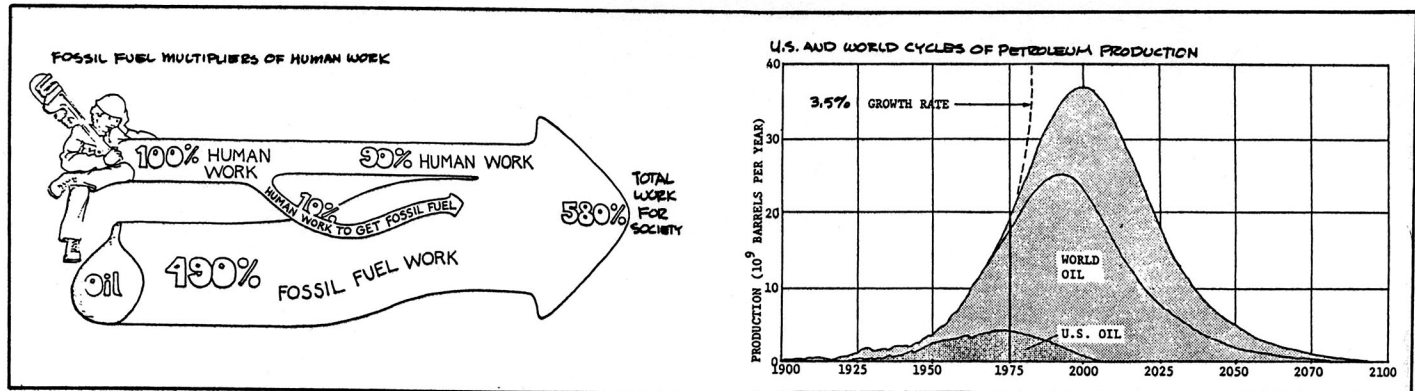


Cost of Energy Slaves



A lot of our present wealth has come from the great amount of work done for us by fossil fuels, which until recently have needed very little of our own effort to obtain. For the work we've spent obtaining fossil fuels, we've been getting back fifty times as much work done for us by those ancient fossils. When we figure that we spend about ten percent of our own work to obtain such energy, we realize that fossil fuels have had the effect of temporarily increasing our "work force" by almost SIX TIMES!

Being able to do so much work cheap—with so little expenditure of our own effort—has had another effect . . . the massive exploitation of other people who don't have cheap energy slaves to work for them. They have had to compete with their own labor against the cheap work of our fossil fuels. As a result, they only get paid the pittance we have to pay for fossil fuels. When we combine this human exploitation with the increased work those fuels do for us directly and our rapid consumption of material resources on a global basis, we should seriously wonder why we aren't richer than we seem!

If we look further, however, and compare how fast we are using up our fossil fuels to how fast the rest of the world is using up theirs, we might have second thoughts about our extravagant lifestyle and spendthrift use of energy. We have been using up our petroleum and coal resources much faster than the rest of the world, and if we keep on as we are we will exhaust them while other countries still have cheap and plentiful energy slaves.

We have enjoyed a powerful worldwide economic and political dominance built upon our energy base and should be wary of similar future dominance by others. It would seem wise to save some of our wealth and the energy it is based on for our future rather than to see how rapidly we can use it up. Reducing our demands now and becoming less reliant upon any use of energy saved from the distant past can ensure us a more positive future. In addition, improving the energetics of our production processes and foreign trade, conversion to income energy use, and realistic appraisal of evolving global political and economic balances are necessary to protect ourselves from costly economic and political errors.