

Internationally, governments are now committed to include more nuclear and/or renewable energy sources in their energy programmes. EE Publishers is therefore pleased to announce the launch of its new book on the past, present and future of nuclear and renewable energy on Friday, 11 May. This book is important reading for all who will need training in nuclear and renewable energy, or those wanting to know the implications of energy choices.

Is Chernobyl Dead?

Essays on energy - renewable and nuclear

by C M Meyer, technical journalist

For a summary of the contents of the book: [Click here \(4,1 MB PDF file\)](#)

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[Is Chernobyl dead? Essays on energy - renewable and nuclear](#) is a fascinating new book, breathtaking in its scope and gripping in its coverage.

The 302-page book has 51 easy-to-read chapters (essays), each one essentially self-contained and extensively referenced, woven together to form the whole. There are also over 100 figures and pictures, many of them rare and retrieved from international archives, with significant historical interest.

Part 1 of the book covers the development of nuclear energy in an era of gung-ho engineering, initially for military use in fission and fusion bombs, submarines and aircraft carriers, and then in abandoned efforts to develop nuclear powered aircraft and space rockets. The development of nuclear power reactors for electricity generation in the USA, USSR, UK and China, leading to the Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and Fukushima accidents, is also extensively covered. Interspersed with this are chapters on aspects of the South African nuclear power programmes for both military and peaceful use, including a unique essay with new insights by Prof. Waldo Stumpf, CEO of the Atomic Energy Corporation in the “total onslaught” era of PW Botha, Magnus Malan and Armscor.

Part 2 of the book covers the development of renewable energy from its early beginnings - including the strange story solar water heating, and the even stranger story of solar updraft towers for electricity generation. The history, trials and tribulations of wind power and concentrating solar power - both tower type and trough type - are also extensively covered, as is the development of solar cells and solar photo-voltaic power generation. The book also deals comprehensively with the background, economics and use of “good” and “bad” biofuels.

Perhaps the conclusion and bigger energy picture we face is best illustrated in the book through a cartoon by the German-based multinational energy company E-ON, the world’s largest investor owned energy service provider. The message is refreshingly clear, and deceptively simple:

On seeing the bigger picture

THERE ARE MANY
SOURCES OF ENERGY,
BUT NOT ONE OF THEM
IS THE SOLUTION.



THERE ARE MANY
SOURCES OF ENERGY,
AND THAT IS
THE SOLUTION.

What energy experts are saying about the book

“This collection of essays on the nuclear and renewable energy sectors makes easy and fascinating reading. The pros and cons of the technologies are clearly discussed, as is the wisdom and folly of the politicians, researchers and entrepreneurs that have promoted specific choices. The extensive referencing encourages the reader to delve deeper into aspects of particular interest.” Brian Statham, chairman of the South African National Energy Association (SANEA)

“The author presents a fascinating insight into the history of nuclear energy. The chapter on Chernobyl is of particular interest to me as I have had the privilege of visiting the facility. The chapters on renewable energy cover both benefits and challenges in moving to a low carbon future.” Dr. Chris Cooper, corporate planner at the Central Energy Fund (CEF Group)

“The book puts a complex and controversial topic into layman’s language. It is easy to read and grasp, and will, in my view, contribute to broadening the debate on energy systems of the future. It is well written and lucid, and should appeal to the educated public here and abroad.” Tony Britten, corporate consultant at Eskom

About the author

Chris Meyer first began writing popular articles about science and technology when he joined the National Chemical Research Laboratory of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in South Africa as its information officer in 1983. The history of technical things, especially science and technology, has always fascinated him, and resulted in Meyer writing a steady stream of popular scientific articles and technical press releases during the nine years he spent at the CSIR. Prior to working at the CSIR, he completed a BSc Honours in Chemistry at Stellenbosch University in 1976. While teaching high school mathematics and science for three years afterwards, he discovered his vocation lay in explaining technical concepts through writing. After leaving the CSIR at the end of 1992, he subsequently worked as an editor of a technical journal and a technical publicity specialist at the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), before accepting a post as technical reviewer there in 2011. While this is Meyer’s first book, he is also well-known for his popular historical articles on the big game hunters of yesteryear.

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