

# Geopolitics and Energy: Historical Perspectives and Reflections

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# Coal import dependence, 1900

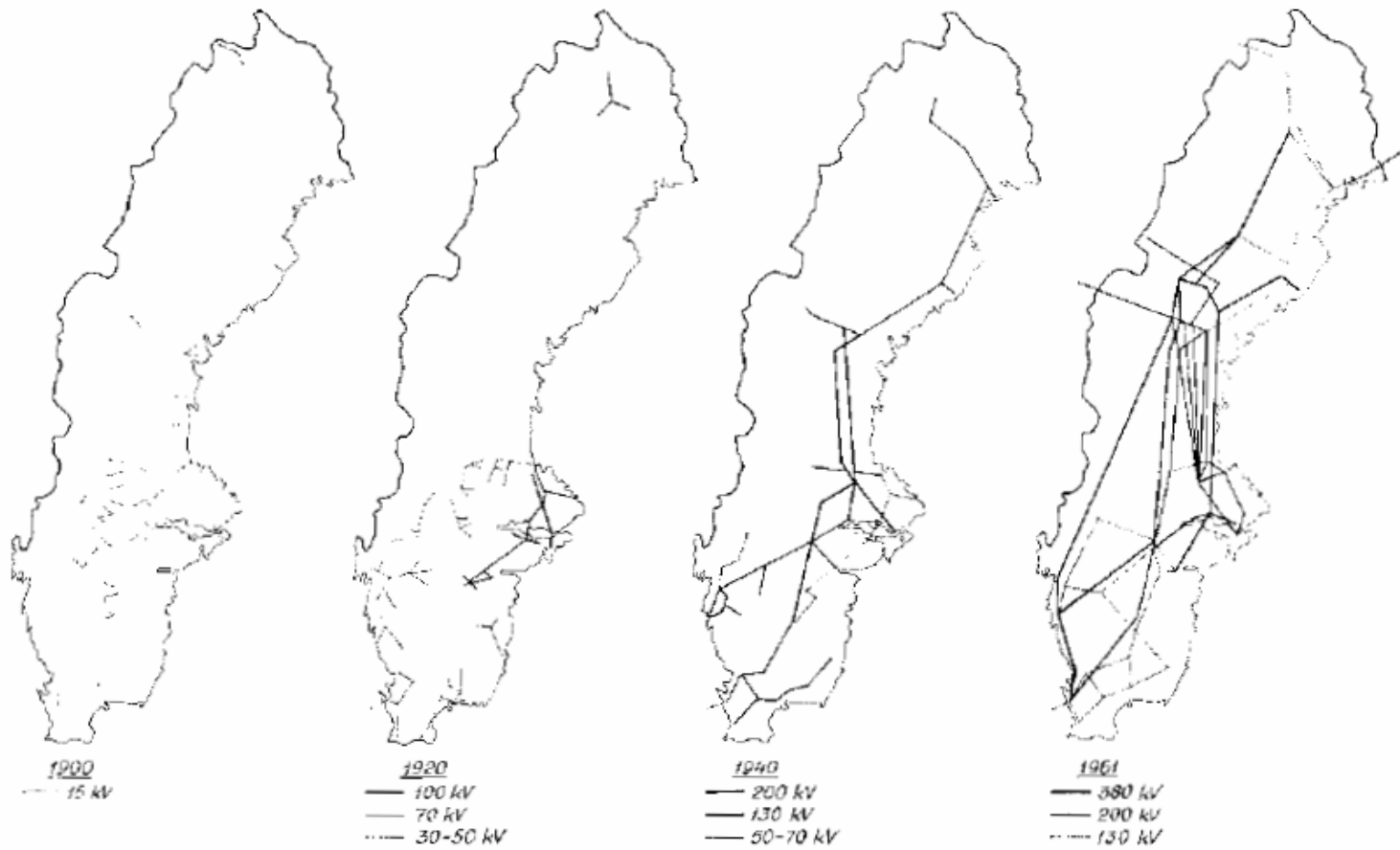
“Our industry, our communications, our floating defence are ... dependent on imported coal. In case of war, with a blockade of our harbours, ... our defence and our industries would face the most utter difficulties due to lack of fuel. ... Our country’s entire independence and economy thus has a Damocles sword constantly hanging over it.”

(Swedish parliamentary motion, 1900)

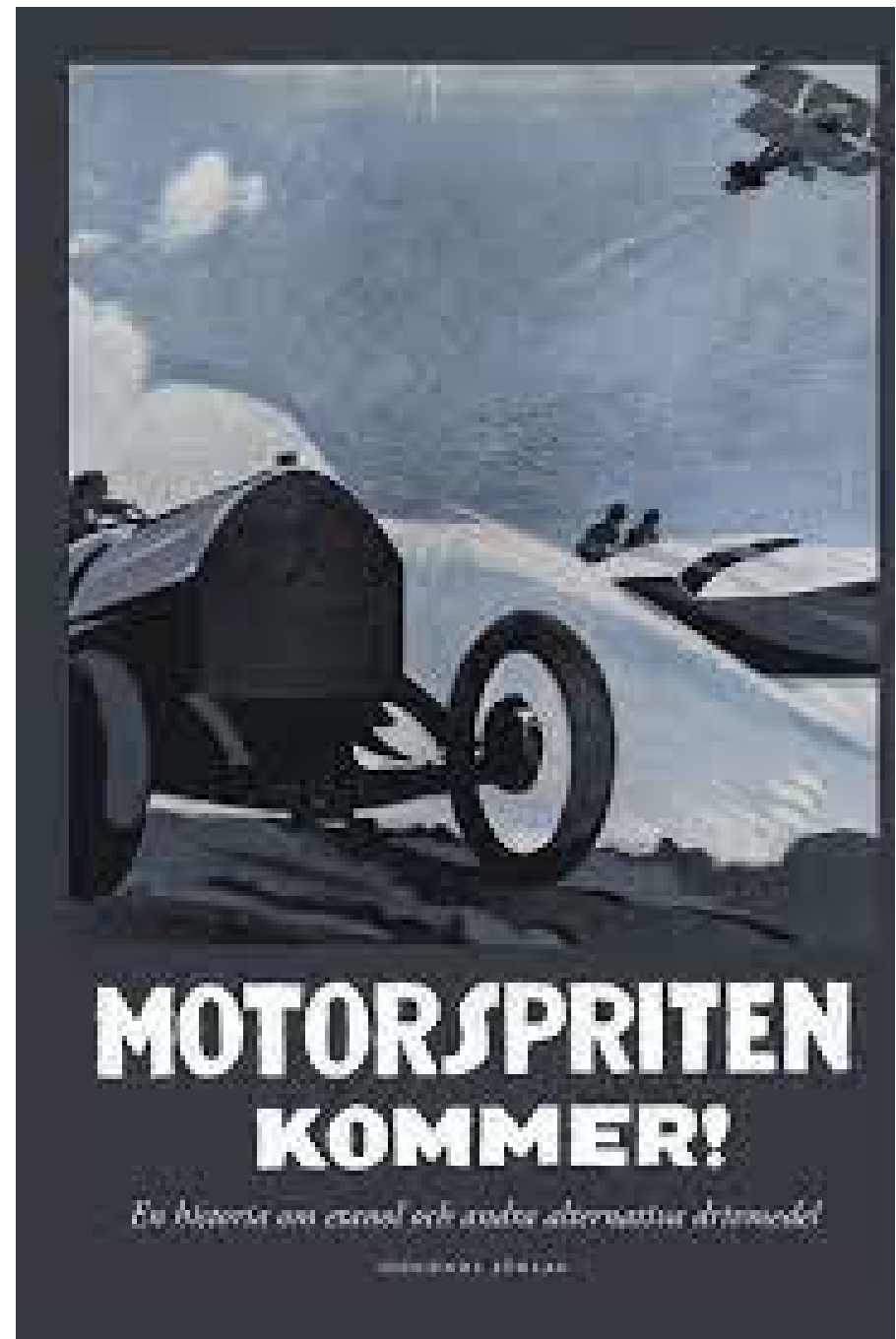
# Sweden's failed transition to domestic peat

- Peat in drained wetlands as fuel reserves
- From 1890s large-scale peat visions as an alternative to imported coal
- Growing peat burning during World War I
- Peat School in Markaryd, created in 1922
- Collapse of the domestic peat industry by 1925 – Swedish peat was unable to compete against imported coal

# Much more successful: Sweden's transition to hydropower, the "white coal"



Sweden's failed transition from oil to biofuels in transport (from the late 19th century to today's E85 ethanol failure)



# Transition from oil to wood during WWII: a temporary, expensive and environmentally destructive success



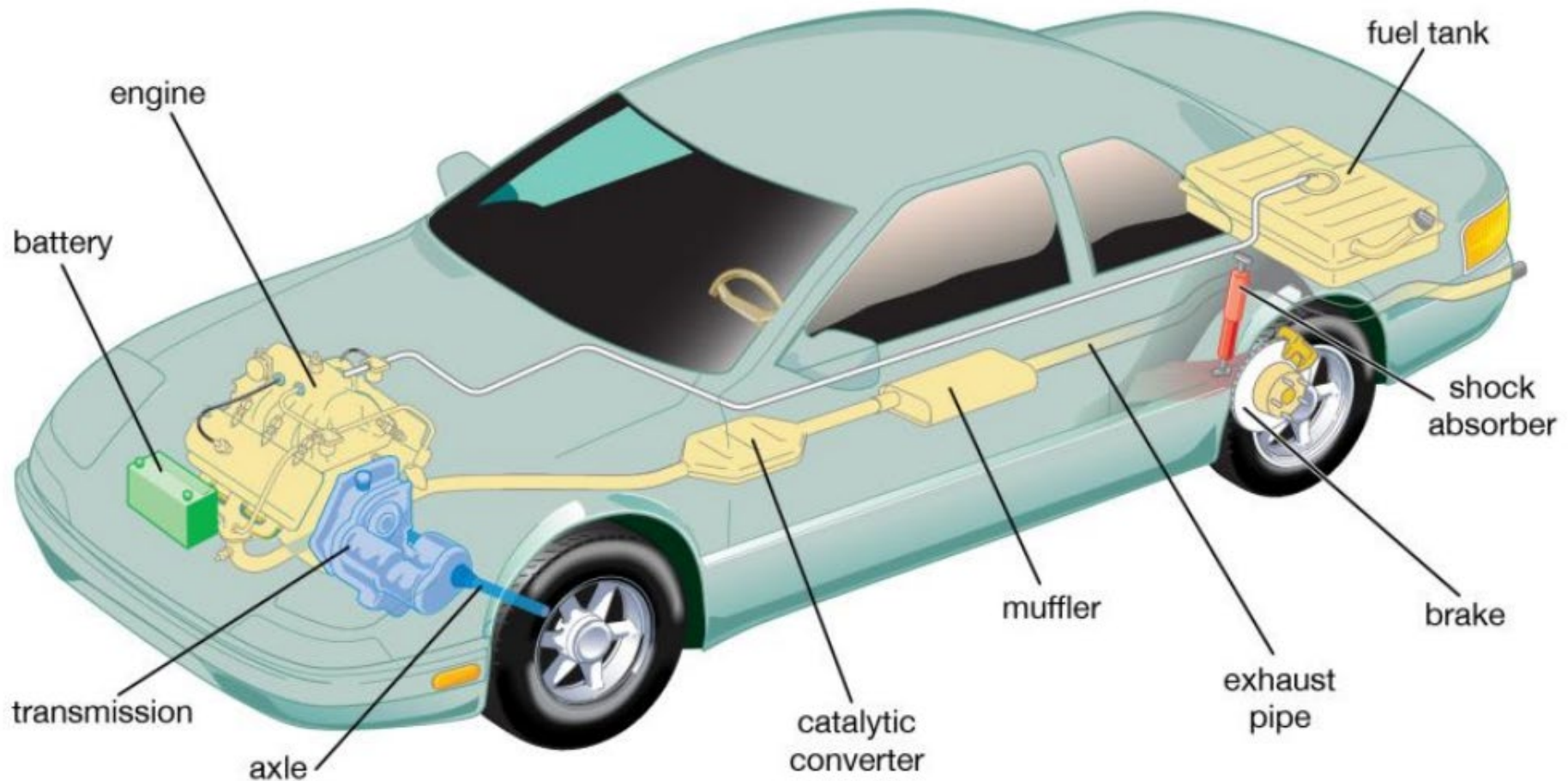


# Too eager to invest – in the wrong technology

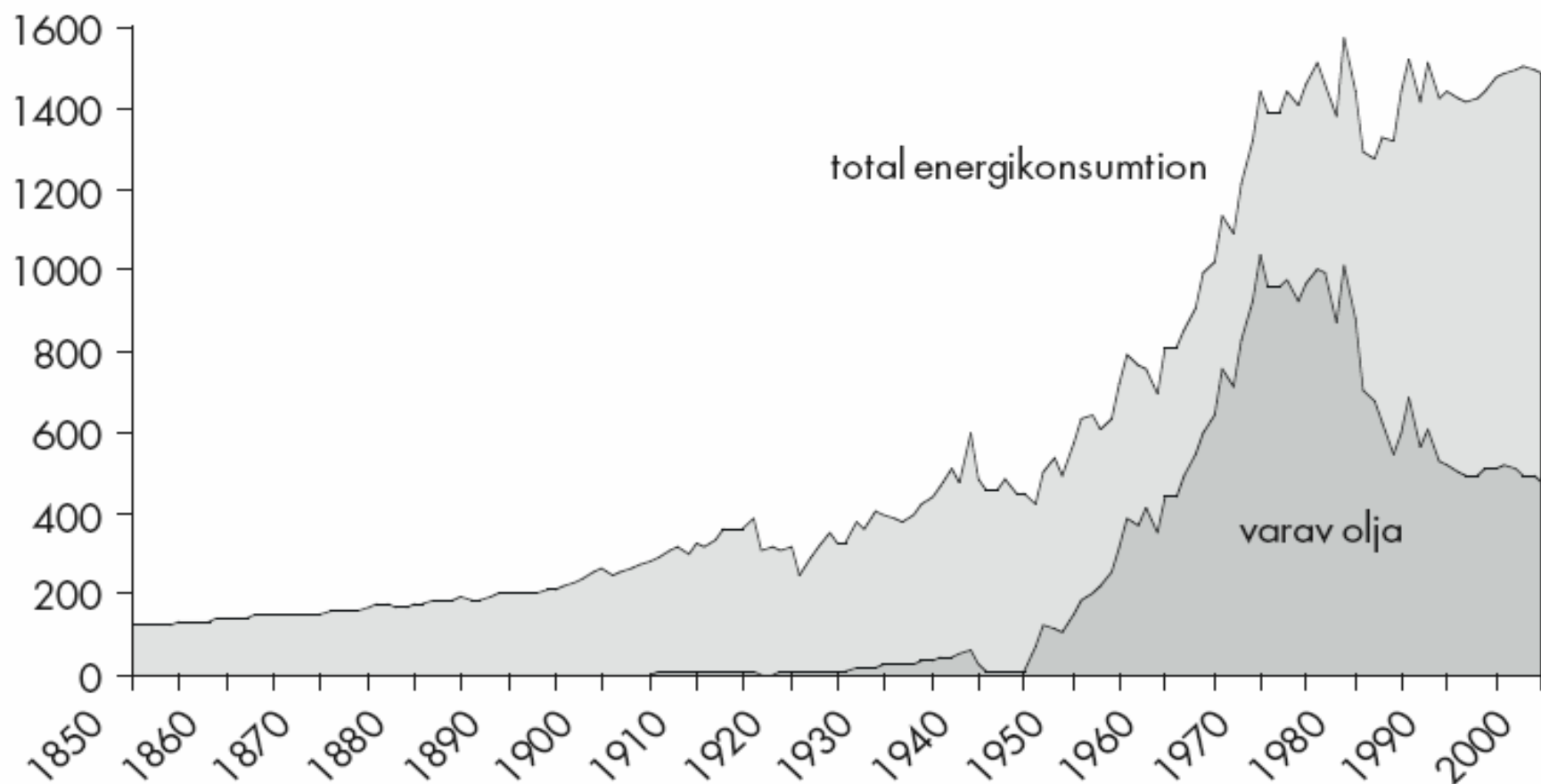
- Coping with fossil fuel dependence by betting on heavy-water nuclear technology and domestic uranium mining
- A nightmare case of state initiative in R&D
- From 1964: Light-water technology (based on imported uranium) totally disrupts the "Swedish line" in nuclear engineering



# Catalytic converters instead of transition to electric-driven vehicles



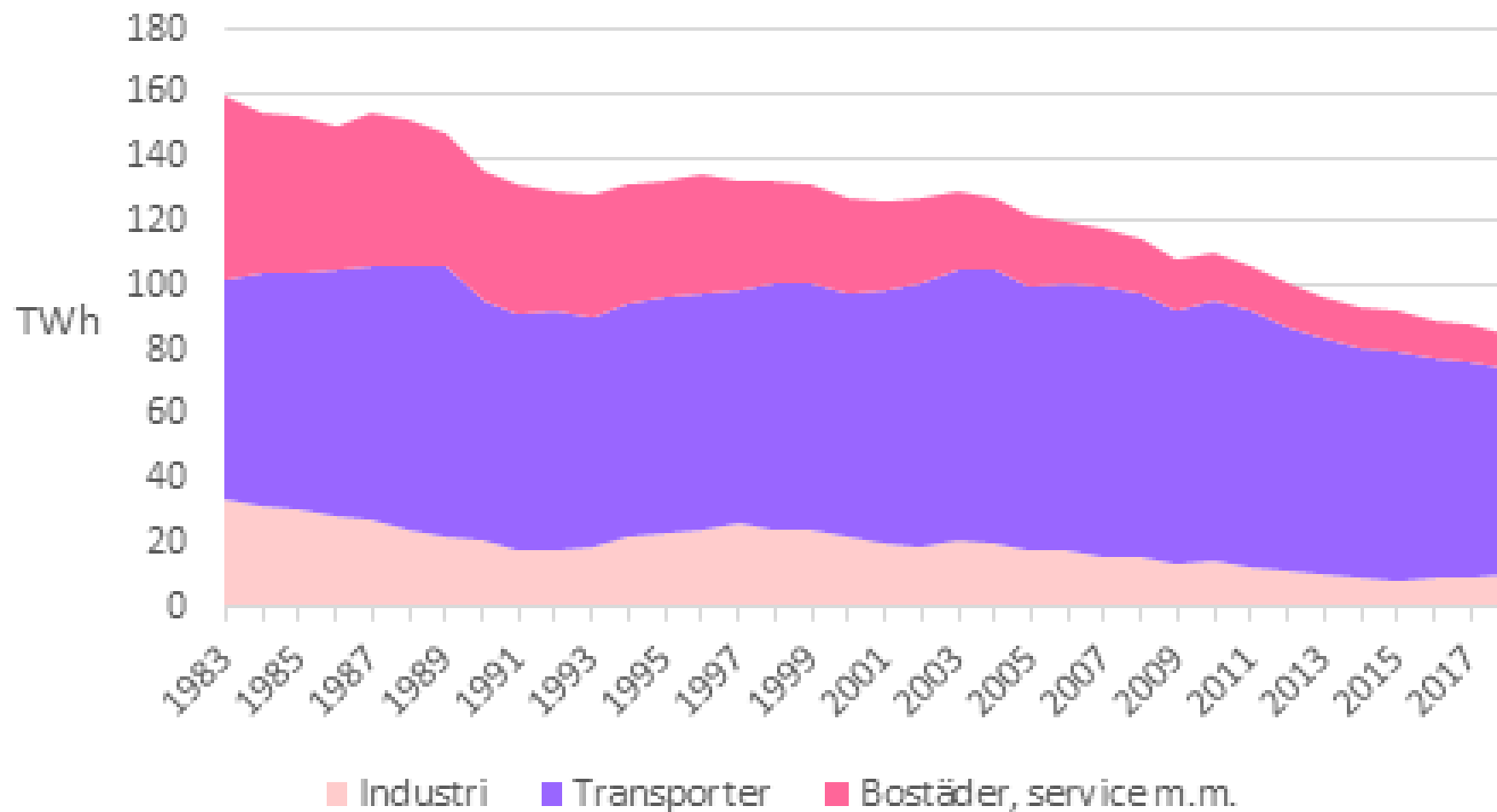




**Figur 3.3.** Total energikonsumtion och oljekonsumtion i Sverige, 1850–2000 (PJ).

*Källa:* Baserat på historiska data och beräkningar i Kander (2002), s. 219–228.

## Slutlig användning av fossila oljeprodukter







SSAB's coke ovens  
at Oxelösund, built  
in 1952



Today's enormous  
uncertainty: Will the  
transition to "green  
steel" succeed?





