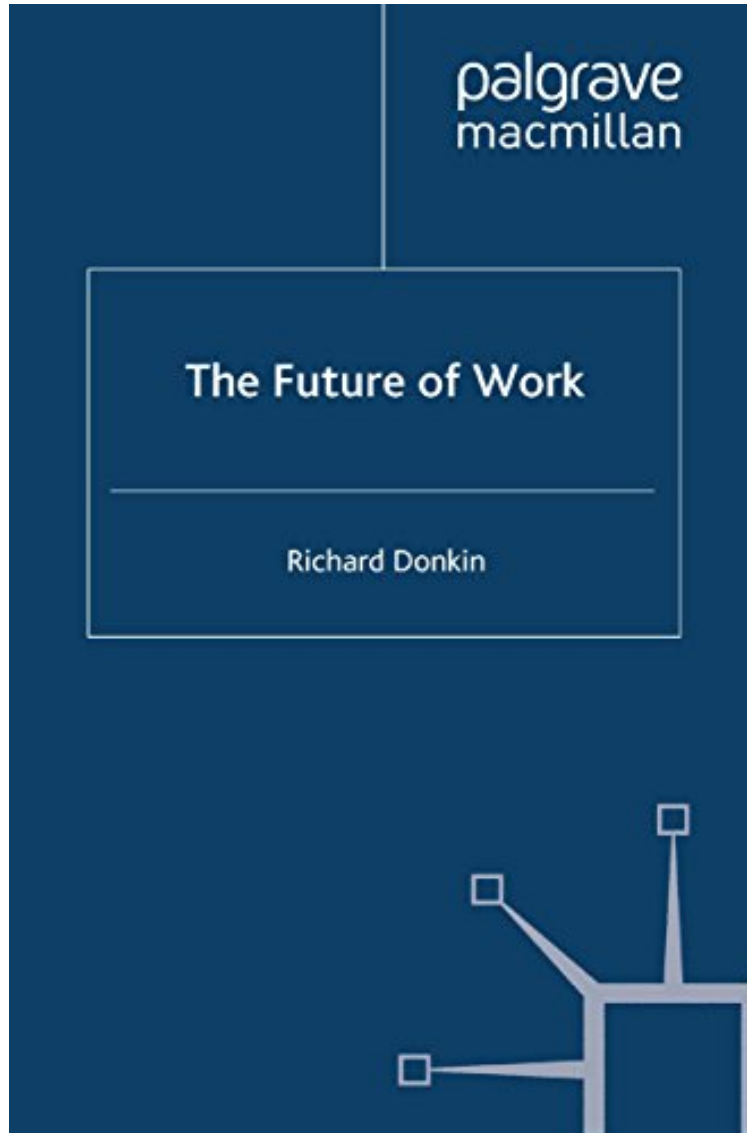


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The Future of Work

R. Donkin

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R. Donkin : The Future of Work before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Future of Work:

6 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Interesting but flawedBy Peter Durward HarrisCustomer review from the Vine(tm) ProgrammeI am unemployed and have been since my last redundancy in December 2002, if one excludes the two New Deal placements. Officially, they count as employment, but I know the reality. I am seemingly unlikely at my age ever to find genuine employment again, because I am over-qualified for menial jobs, my skills are out of date for good jobs, employers prefer younger workers, etc, etc. Anyway, being unemployed gives me a

particular interest in the future of work, whether or not I myself am part of that future. I hoped that this book would at least try to be objective. After all, it's hard enough trying to predict the future anyway, but if you start by deciding how the world of work ought to be, it becomes difficult to do serious analysis. Whether because of the timing of the book (during a crisis of capitalism) or his own political beliefs, the author takes the opportunity to attack the capitalist system and the materialistic society in which we live. Yes, there is a lot wrong with both of these, but the limitations of socialism were exposed in the twentieth century. I remember the industrial strife of the seventies even if the author doesn't. The lesson from all of the various crises is that if either socialism or capitalism are pursued as an objective in themselves, the results are disastrous. The world can only work if a balance is struck between the social needs of the people and the needs of business - a judicious mix of capitalism and socialism, if you like. Of course, that still leaves plenty of scope to argue about what the respective proportions should be. By making his political allegiances obvious (albeit not as blatantly as some authors and journalists I could name), the author immediately arouses my suspicions. Nevertheless, the author at least confirms some of the stereotypes that I am up against in my apparently futile quest for paid work. Ageism is discussed, but here again, the author is guilty of distortion - this time of statistics. He says that the baby boomer generation includes 76 million Americans, then says that the next generation includes only 30 million Americans, which is nowhere near enough to replace the baby boomers as they retire. But wait - the 76 million covers a 19-year period, while the next generation only covers 12 years. So there was a drop in the birth rate, but nowhere near what the author's statistics suggest. The author covers a lot of aspects, some of which I can certainly relate to. Topics include women at work and the perennial debate about their desires (in some cases) for both career and family, technology that is simultaneously a curse and a blessing, the issues around leadership and teamwork, as well as a variety of other issues. This book is definitely something of a mixed bag, but despite my reservations, I'll refer back to it from time to time.

The forces that are shaping the future of employment are examined in this new book. The author presents a cohesive argument for a fundamental change in attitudes to work, both from policymakers and employers if we are to create a healthier society capable of meeting the expectations and concerns of a developing economy.

'Richard Donkin's book on the history of work managed to be both groundbreaking and universally admired - it is a neat development that he has now turned his attention to the future of work. No one is better suited to steer managers and workers to a realistic view of the future and he does so with all his usual insight, readability and fair-mindedness.' - Will Hutton, Executive Vice-Chair, The Work Foundation 'Donkin's purpose in writing this book is to "make sense of work." He does so, and does it so masterfully and comprehensively that I can compare it only to the writings of the three giants of the last century: Veblen, Berle and Means, and Daniel Bell, who tackled the same issue. What I have to say about this extraordinary book will sound like a cliché but until someone invents a better phrase than "instant classic," I suppose that will have to do.' - Warren Bennis, University Professor, University of Southern California and author of *On Becoming a Leader*. 'Few journalists in the world are as insightful or as knowledgeable as Richard Donkin on a question that matters to us all how the world of work is changing for us, and for our children.' - Robert Peston, Business Editor, BBC 'Donkin orchestrates an in-depth look at one of the world's and businesses' next challenging milestones - the intersection of technology, work, culture and human nature. He does an excellent job of balancing his own personal experiences with the philosophy and history of work, and his insight into how we view ourselves, our jobs and our role in world is enlightening, entertaining and futuristic. Donkin brings to the table a deep understanding that today's technologies will help to usher in new, more intelligent management processes to link people and their management teams to success.' - Lars Dalgaard, Founder and CEO of SuccessFactors, 2007 and 2008's Fast Growing Publicly Traded Software Company 'Richard has written one of the best histories of work and now repeats the trick looking forward at the future of work. Separating popular myths and dogma from the truly transforming trends in the workplace, he ably reveals what is, will and should be happening at work in response to key environmental, social and business changes. Essential reading for executives with any responsibility for people in work and for all those of us trying to plot our own way successfully through this shifting employment landscape.' - Duncan Brown, Director, HR Business Development, IES 'Richard Donkin has written a serious book on the subject of work...It is an incredibly important topic, and this is a thoughtful and worth-while contribution.' - Management Today 'Donkin presents a cohesive argument for policy reform...' - Finance Management Faculty 'Richard Donkin is a humane, thoughtful writer who has spent years considering the changing shape of work.' - Financial Times About the Author RICHARD DONKIN is one of the UK's leading thinkers on employment. For fourteen years he wrote a weekly column on work and employment in the Financial Times that became required reading for human resources professionals and recruiters. Today he works as an author, commentator and presenter on management and employment issues. Alongside regular commitments, that include a monthly column for Human Resources Magazine, he writes on travel, fishing and sailing. Donkin undertakes regular speaking engagements and consultancy work. He is a former adviser to the Future Employment Working Group of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and an honorary visiting fellow in the faculty of Management at Cass Business School. Donkin is the author of the widely

acclaimed book 'Blood Sweat and Tears - The Evolution of Work'.