



Post-Capitalist Society

By Peter F. Drucker

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Post-Capitalist Society provides an analysis of the transformation of the world into a post-capitalist society. This transformation, which will not be completed until 2010 or 2020, has already changed the political, economic, social, and moral landscape of the world. The book reviews and revises the social, economic, and political history of the Age of Capitalism and of the nation state. It argues that the real and controlling resource and the absolutely decisive 'factor of production' is neither capital, nor land, nor labor. It is knowledge. Instead of capitalists and proletarians, the classes of the post-capitalist society are knowledge workers and service workers.

This book covers a wide range of topics, dealing with post-capitalist society; with post-capitalist polity; and with new challenges to knowledge itself. The focus is on the developed countries—on Europe, on the United States and Canada, on Japan and the newly developed countries on the mainland of Asia, rather than on the developing countries of the Third World. The areas of discussion—Society, Polity, and Knowledge—are arrayed in order of predictability.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Drucker's vision of a "post-capitalist society"--one in which knowledge is the basic resource and nation-states compete with transnational, regional and tribal structures--is hardly original. What is new in this invigorating essay is his far-reaching analysis of the economic crisis of militarized, wasteful "megastates" like the United States and the former Soviet Union, which have failed to bring about a meaningful redistribution of income. Improving American productivity, he writes, will require investment in human resources and infrastructure (as Japan, Germany, Korea and Taiwan have done) and a drastic restructuring of organizations, including the elimination of most management layers. The federal government, Drucker asserts, should contract out tasks in the social sphere, confining itself to the role of policymaker. Among his other provocative proposals: jettison military aid to other countries; create a public audit agency to eliminate pork-barrel deals and special-interest politics; and hold schools accountable for students' performance. He also urges the creation of transnational institutions to cope with the environment, terrorism and arms control. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Drucker, the leading guru of management (*Managing the Nonprofit Organization* , HarperCollins, 1990), argues that we are in the middle of a great social transformation, akin to the Renaissance, which is symbolized by the computer. The primary resource is no longer capital, land, or labor but knowledge (hence "post-capitalist"). Knowledge has become the means of production and creates value by "productivity" and "innovation" through its application to work. The new class of post-capitalist society is made up of knowledge workers and service workers. (In a similar vein, Robert B. Reich's *The Work of Nations* , LJ 3/15/91, terms knowledge workers "symbolic analysts" and service workers "routine producers" and "in-person servers.") The economic and management challenge is to make both knowledge and service workers more productive. The social challenge is to preserve the income and dignity of service workers (who lack the ability to become knowledge workers but constitute the majority of the work force) and prevent class conflict between the two. This is a provocative book that synthesizes much of Drucker's oeuvre. It will be in demand in both academic and public libraries.

- *Jeffrey R. Herold, Bucyrus P.L., Ohio*

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From Kirkus Reviews

Perceptive takes on the "postcapitalist" era, which, according to Drucker (*Managing for the Future*, 1992, etc.), got under way shortly after WW II. Every few centuries, the author notes, the West undergoes a convulsive transformation that, within 50 or so years, ushers in a whole new world. Identifying the Renaissance and Industrial Revolution as prior turning points, he asserts that the Global Village is in the midst of another watershed makeover that has already caused substantive changes in its economic, moral, political, and social landscapes. Drucker argues, for instance, that the same forces that put paid to Marxism as an ideology and Communism as a social system are making capitalism obsolete as well. In other words, knowledge (not labor, land, or other forms of capital) has become the planet's primary resource. The emergence of so-called "knowledge workers" able to put their specialized learning and/or competencies to use, he says, suggests that employees now own "the means of production." Although the author concludes that markets will remain the effective integrators of economic activity, he believes that the implications of the ongoing shift will prove increasingly significant for the management of commercial enterprises and other key institutions. The same holds true for what Drucker designates "the post-capitalist polity," in which transnational, regional, nation-state, even tribal structures compete and coexist. As concerned with

prescription as description, the author doesn't shy away from calls to action that could make the unstable new world he envisions more productive and peaceable. He advocates, for example, the encouraging of environments that permit corporations to focus on their core responsibilities via partnerships or alliances, and the nurturing of autonomous nonprofit organizations that will restore the bonds of community as well as deliver grass-roots services. A thinking person's guide to the challenging world ahead. -- *Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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