



The Working Class Majority: America's Best Kept Secret (ILR Press Book)

Michael Zweig

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The United States is not a middle class society. Michael Zweig shows that the majority of Americans are actually working class and argues that recognizing this fact is essential if that majority is to achieve political influence and social strength. "Class," Zweig writes, "is primarily a matter of power, not income." He goes beyond old formulations of class to explore ways in which class interacts with race and gender. Defining "working class" as those who have little control over the pace and content of their work and who do not supervise others, Zweig warns that by allowing this class to disappear into categories of middle class or consumers, we also allow those with the dominant power, capitalists, to vanish among the rich. Economic relations then appear as comparisons of income or lifestyle rather than as what they truly are: contests of power, at work and in the larger society. Using personal interviews, solid research, and down-to-earth examples, Zweig looks at a number of important contemporary social problems: the growing inequality of income and wealth, welfare reform, globalization, the role of government, and the family values debate. He shows how, with class in mind, our understanding of these issues undergoes a radical shift. Believing that we must limit the power of capitalists to abuse workers, communities, and the environment, Zweig offers concrete ideas for the creation of a new working class politics in the United States.

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