Karl Marx’s famous call to action still promises an effective means of winning human rights in the modern global economy, according to economist Richard P. McIntyre. Currently, the human rights movement insists upon a person’s right to life, freedom, and material necessities. In democratic, industrial nations such as the United States, the movement focuses more specifically on a person’s civil rights and equal opportunity.

The movement’s victories since WWII have come at a cost, however. The emphasis on individual rights erodes collective rights—the rights that disadvantaged peoples need to assert their most basic human rights. This is particularly true for workers, McIntyre argues; and theorists who treat them as autonomous beings ignore reality. By reintroducing Marxian and Institutional analysis, he reveals the class relations and power structures that determine the position of workers in the global economy. The best hope for achieving workers’ rights, he concludes, lies in grassroots labor organizations that claim the right of association and collective bargaining.

Richard P. McIntyre is Director of the University Honors Program and Professor of Economics at the University of Rhode Island.

About the Book

“Workers of the world, unite!”

Praise

"An important, timely, and needed contribution to our understanding of worker rights." ---Patrick McHugh, George Washington University

"An important contribution to the interdisciplinary study of labor. McIntyre's book will challenge the debate over labor rights on all fronts." ---Michael Hillard, University of Southern Maine

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