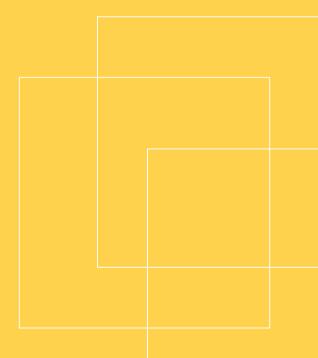


Trade unions and the global crisis

Labour's visions, strategies and responses



Edited by Melisa Serrano, Edlira Xhafa and Michael Fichter

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FOREWORD

Four years after the Great Recession, a catastrophe has been avoided, but few real lessons have been drawn and nothing has been fixed. Indeed, in many cases the crisis is being used as another opportunity to subordinate individual workers, governments and entire societies to the sway of unaccountable global capital markets. After a short revival of corporatist social dialogue in some countries, more workers are being pushed into precarious employment, and austerity packages are making working people, their families and pensioners pay for the crisis. Trade unions are at a crossroads, and the status quo is no longer an option.

Turning the tide is as much a battle of ideas as it is a question of mobilizing public protest. *Trade unions and the global crisis* looks at both: alternative ideas as well as strategies of mobilization and resistance against employer unilateralism and market-driven fundamentalism. While the volume does not claim to provide all the answers, it rejects self-defeating pessimism and nostalgic reminiscences of a golden age of post-war capitalism. It looks at a wide range of trade union initiatives, debates and struggles that give priority to human dignity, workers' rights, productive work and solidarity as opposed to abstract notions such as market efficiency, perfect competition and general equilibrium.

Researching, studying and debating the challenges for labour policies in the age of globalization is the motivation for the Global Labour University, a partnership of universities, trade unions and the ILO. This book is the product of this worldwide network committed to an open debate on the future of labour.

We are grateful to the Berlin School of Economics and Law, in particular Hansjörg Herr, Trevor Evans, Birgit Mahnkopf, Eckhard Hein, Miriam Klessen and Harald Kröck, for hosting and organizing last year's Global Labour

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University conference, at which drafts of the contributions here were presented and discussed. Special thanks go to the contributors, as well as to Melisa Serrano, Edlira Xhafa and Michael Fichter for their superb editorial work. Thanks are also due to the anonymous peer reviewers for their invaluable feedback, and to Chris Edgar at the ILO for his professionalism in overseeing the production of this volume.

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