



Dario Azzellini (ed.)

## If Not Us, Who?

Global workers against authoritarianism, fascism, and dictatorships  
A publication by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

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**Short text:** Encouraging insights in the face of global turmoil: case studies from five continents illustrate the central role of organized workers in struggles against authoritarianism, fascism, and dictatorships.

### Inhalt & Leseprobe:

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Across the world, authoritarianism is on the rise, as a look at Donald Trump, Recep Erdoğan, Jair Bolsonaro, Viktor Orbán, and a host of other heads of government makes clear. In Latin America, coups are becoming commonplace again and finding international acceptance, just like in Egypt too. In multiple countries throughout the Arab world, protest movements in response to the post-2008 crisis have been suppressed with brutal violence. However, heavy-handed state violence is also being used against protestors in countries such as France and the USA. The effects of the crisis trickle down repressively to the most vulnerable, while the redistribution of wealth flows increasingly towards those at the top.

In struggles for democratization, workers continue to play a central role: from the new, class-conscious feminism to the mass protests that have erupted in countries such as Chile, Lebanon, and France. How have workers historically fought against fascism, dictatorships, authoritarian regimes, and repressive tendencies in society, and how are they doing so today? And how do they organize themselves within and outside of trade unions?

Featuring contributions from some 30 authors on the new class-conscious feminism and labour struggles during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as stories from France, the USA, Germany, Japan, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Israel, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, the Philippines, Russia, Argentina, Spain, Indonesia, South Korea, the former East Germany, Tunisia, Egypt, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

### The editor:

**Dario Azzellini** is a professor in the development studies doctoral programme at the Autonomous University of Zacatecas, Mexico, and a visiting scholar at the Latin American Studies Program at Cornell, USA. For over 25 years he has been researching processes of social transformation. In 2018, VSA published his book *Vom Protest zum sozialen Prozess: Betriebsbesetzungen und Arbeiten in Selbstverwaltung*.

“This book is an absolute must read not only for activists in the global class struggle but for everyone concerned with understanding the full weight of the world capitalist system and the forces of resistance that are being mobilised against it. This comprehensive and well-edited collection of articles on the diverse dimensions and different regional contexts of the global class struggle is a tour de force.”

**Henry Veltmeyer**, research professor in development studies at the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas (Mexico).

“This much-needed collection of studies of workers’ struggles against authoritarianism around the world demonstrates their diversity as well as their centrality to organized resistance today. A crucial resource for building the coalitions and movements we need.”

**Jodi Dean** is the author of numerous books including *Crowds and Party* and *Comrade*

“‘Globalization’, the ideology of ‘free markets’, and the rise of ‘illiberal democracies’ have severely enfeebled many traditional labour movements. But this splendid, wide-ranging collection of crisp essays reveals that things may not be as gloomy as they seem. Class conflicts have not diminished, social struggles have frequently intensified, and social protests have grown in all regions of the world. *If Not Us, Who?* suggests that new workers’ movements are

taking shape, combining labour militancy, feminism, anti-racism, and ecological awareness.”

**Marcel van der Linden**, International Institute of Social History

“If Not Us, Who? is an indispensable collection of empirical and theoretical alternatives to imperialist frameworks for understanding the autonomy, agency and strategic organizing of workers globally. It brings paradigmatic balance to existing English-language scholarship long-dominated by neoliberal conceptualizations of democracy and authoritarianism, as well as the contestations between workers and states.”

**Tamara L. Lee** is an Assistant Professor of labor studies and employment relations at the Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations.

“In this powerful and truly internationalist edited volume, Dario Azzellini once again reminds us that workers’ struggles are, and have always been, at the front and center of resistance to the repressive forces of globalized capitalism. A tour-de-force through time and space, this book is a must-read for anyone interested in understanding the multiplicity of strategies and tactics deployed by workers and the trade union movement across the globe.”

**Lara Monticelli** – Assistant Professor and Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow, Copenhagen Business School. Co-founder of the research network “Alternatives to Capitalism” at the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics.

“This truly global mapping of workers’ past and present resistance to authoritarianism convincingly debunks the myth that workers support authoritarian rule and belies the prevailing focus on male, industrial workers in the Global North. A compelling plea for the relevance of class to understanding today’s world that will make essential reading.

**Manuela Boatcă** is Professor of Sociology and Head of School of the Global Studies Programme at the University of Freiburg, Germany.

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