



## Edward Phelan and the ILO

### The life and views of an international social actor

This book is a remarkable portrait of Edgard J. Phelan (1888–1967), a man who dedicated his life to social justice and whose views and actions guided the work of the ILO for decades.

Phelan was one of the main architects of the ILO Constitution, drawn up as part of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. This led him into the ILO as the first international civil servant, where he worked closely with the key figures of the organization's early years, Albert Thomas and Harold Butler. Phelan became the ILO's fourth Director-General in 1941 until his retirement in 1948.

Phelan's personal memoirs, long unpublished, are brought together in one volume along with a biographical essay by labour historian Emmet O'Connor, texts by Brian Cowen TD, Seán Lemass TD and former ILO Director-General Wilfred Jenks, and a selection of Phelan's lesser-known writings on the ILO's later development, offering a unique perspective on key episodes in the history of the ILO.

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