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The International Labour Organization and the Quest for Social Justice, 1919-2009

Gerry Rodgers, Eddy Lee, Lee Swepston, and Jasmien van Daele

This book tells the story of the International Labour Organization, founded in 1919 in the belief that universal and lasting peace goes hand in hand with social justice. Since then the ILO has contributed to the protection of the vulnerable, the fight against unemployment, the promotion of human rights, the development of democratic institutions and the improvement of the working lives of women and men everywhere. In its history the ILO has sometimes thrived, sometimes suffered setbacks, but always survived to pursue its goals through the political and economic upheavals of the last 90 years.

The authors have between them many years of experience of working in and studying the ILO. They explore some of the main ideas that the ILO has developed and championed, and tell how they were applied, and to what effect, at different times and in different parts of the world. There are chapters on rights at work, the quality of employment, income protection, employment and poverty reduction, a fair globalization and today's overriding goal of decent work for all. The book ends with reflections on the challenges ahead in a world where the present economic crisis underlines the urgency of global action for social justice.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This book has four authors, three of them long-serving former ILO officials, with a total of over 100 years of experience working in the ILO, the fourth an academic who has looked at the ILO from the outside. Gerry Rodgers and Eddy Lee, economists, have researched and published widely in employment; Lee Swepston, a human rights lawyer, now teaches international labour law; Jasmien van Daele is a young historian who has studied the origins and early history of the ILO.

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