

Title	Trade Union Behavior in the Philippines
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Brief Introduction	<p style="text-align: center;">Foreword</p> <p>Historians and social scientists, philosophers such as Karl Marx, revolutionaries in the line of Vladimir Lenin, religious leaders from the early English Methodists down to Pope John Paul II, have over the past hundred years tried to understand the reality of labor unions and labor movements. Why do working men and women organize themselves into unions? What do they seek? To what needs do these unions respond? What are their "real" objectives? What are their consequences, for their members and for society?</p> <p>These questions were first addressed to the labor movements of Western Europe and North America, and the classical theories were attempts to answer them in those contexts. After the Second World War they took on new forms as attention shifted to the less developed nations; there labor movements, often highly political in orientation, were found in places where industrialization—earlier assumed to be the seed-ground of unionism—had hardly begun.</p> <p>In the present work, Dr. Leopoldo J. Dejillas pursues the task of understanding and interpretation begun by the classic theorists of the labor movement. Building particularly on the synthesis worked out by Mark Perlman, Dejillas develops his own model and applies it to the Philippines and to three major Philippine labor groups—the FFW, the KMU, and the TUCP.</p> <p>The fundamental question on which his model and his analysis focus is the following: How explain the differences in the behavior of labor groups <i>which are faced by the same external circumstances</i>—in the Philippine case by the Marcos regime and martial law, followed by the Aquino regime, as well as by low wages and widespread unemployment? As a first step toward understanding, he makes use of M. Perlman's five ways of looking at labor unions: as revolutionary organizations, economic institutions, moral or ethical institutions, institutions participating in society's democratic processes and power struggles, and as defensive reactions to early industrialization. These categories are not all mutually exclusive, yet it is instructive to see them "tried for size" on the FFW, the KMU, and the TUCP. Moreover, they help to detect shifts in the orientation of a particular group over time and in response to changing external circumstances.</p> <p>In attempting to categorize the three labor groups, Dejillas has sifted through an immense amount of material ranging from public statements to notes taken at meetings, to recollections of his own involvement with the FFW, to interviews with labor leaders and ordinary mem-</p>

bers, to records of strikes, rallies and demonstrations. These serve as indicators of the issues with which each organization has concerned itself, and the type of action which it has promoted—which in turn are taken as indicative of the category to which the federation or center belongs. Finally, in order to understand why each federation or center has taken the positions and adopted the strategies which it did take and adopt, he looks at the origin of each, its ideology, its leadership, and finally its membership and organizational structure. He regularly takes a comparative perspective, arranging the three cases in tabular form.

Questions will inevitably be raised about the author's objectivity in sifting through an immense amount of data. In such a situation one must decide which data are relevant and which can safely be passed over, and one's biases—recognized or unrecognized—may determine his or her selection. The histories of the organizations themselves are in some cases stormy, and rife with personal conflicts; thus much may depend on which protagonist in a controversy one chooses or is able to interview.

In all probability no one of the groups studied will be happy with the analysis done by Dr. Dejillas, since no one of them comes off unscathed. The FFW will perhaps be most unhappy, for as a former staff member he has an insider's view of the organization and a greater awareness of sensitive issues. The KMU, on the other hand, might have objected to the analysis which links its positions to those of organizations of the political far left—except that the recent splits in the KMU which closely parallel those in the Communist Party and its front groups seem dramatically to verify Dejillas's findings.

In the end, this type of analysis can be verified only by open discussion, confrontation of fact with fact and interpretation with interpretation. Dr. Dejillas has, in my opinion, made a major contribution by the construction of a theoretical model for the study of labor movements and by trying out his model on three "real life" cases. His work is worthy of study and debate by informed individuals, particularly those most involved in the three cases studied but also social historians and students of the Philippine labor movement. It is possibly not the last word on the subject, but it can be a very stimulating first word.

Finally, Dejillas's analysis does point to both strengths and weaknesses in the three organizations on which it focuses, and thus may point the way toward a more effective labor movement in the future—one which will not only promote the welfare of the working man but contribute also to the building of a more just and stable society in the Philippines.

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