



FQS changed country's labor landscape

Event poster

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
SCHOOL OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
in cooperation with the
UPD OFFICE FOR INITIATIVES IN CULTURE AND THE ARTS

**PUBLIC FORUM ON
FIRST QUARTER
STORM & LABOR**
UP Diliman Month Theme: "Makita kang sakdal laya"

**ANG KONDISYON NG
MANGGAGAWANG
PILIPINO**
Photo courtesy of Nagkakaisa Labor Coalition

**November 14, 2020
(SATURDAY)
2:00 - 4:00 PM
via ZOOM**

Registration is now open!
This forum is open to the public (no registration fee)

- FQS and Labor — Overview**
Dr. Romaldez A. Asuncion, Dean
- Recurring militancy in the Philippine trade union movement**
Dr. Rene E. Ofrenea, Professor Emeritus
- Labor unrest and labor at rest—the logic of union renewal**
Dr. Melissa R. Serrano, Professor
- The Philippine Airlines (PAL) labor conflict — a microcosm of worker militancy**
Prof. Benjamin B. Velasco, Assistant Professor

Invited speakers / commentators:

SILVESTRE W. BELLO III Secretary, DOLE	SERGIO R. ORTIZ President, EODP	KA ELMER 'BONG' LABOG Pangulo, Kilusang Mayo Uno	JOSHUA MATA Secretary General SENTRO
KA RENE E. MAGTUBO Partido Manggagawa (PM)	ATTY. JOSE SONNY MATULA Nagkakaisa Labor Coalition	REP. RAYMUND DEMOCRITO C. MENDOZA President, Trade Unions Congress of the Philippines and TUCP Party List	

REGISTRATION LINK: <https://forms.gle/ejFPwrorkVimJrcL6>

The First Quarter Storm (FQS) proved to be an eye opener not only for the students but also for the Philippine workforce and has contributed to changing the landscape of the labor movement in the Philippines.



Asuncion

This was FQS' significance to the Philippine labor industry, said the Dean of the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations (SOLAIR) Prof. Ronahlee S. Asuncion, PhD, in her lecture at the webinar "First Quarter Storm and Labor" on Nov. 14, 2020.

Asuncion said FQS had a spill-over effect in industries "kasi ang mga student activist na nagtrabaho sa iba't ibang industriya dala-dala nila ang kanilang pagiging nationalist."

"The students were good organizers. They were able to organize continuously and they helped form and organize unions and community-based organizations," she said.

FQS was a period of civil unrest that began on Jan. 26, 1970 and ended on Mar. 17, 1970. The period saw a series of demonstrations, marches and protests in the 1960s and in 1970 brought by the country's economic crisis, increasing poverty and the increasing debt of the government.

"Of course, nandoon din noon ang issue ng imperialism, fascism and feudalism, the presence of US bases, the US economic intervention, political intervention," Asuncion said.

In aligning with the labor force, the students saw that they were raising the same issues and the same demand from the government for changes and improvement in the lives of Filipinos.

The Philippines in the 1960s and 1970s faced problems of low wages, unemployment, underemployment, and workers with no overtime

pay even when people worked beyond eight hours, among others.

The students who participated in the FQS aligned themselves with peasants and workers, and with the students' teach-ins, discussion groups and immersions, "they were able to raise the consciousness among workers of their human rights," and thus "strengthened the labor movement," Asuncion said.

FQS changed the students and saw them being more involved in the concerns of their respective communities. Some students made radical choices of abandoning their studies and instead learn from the people.

"Merong programa na 'Go to the Barrios' and learn from the people. The students became outright activists or became responsive to the issues. Iyong iba nga po hindi na itinuloy ang kanilang pag-aaral," Asuncion said. "Ang mga estudyante na hindi na tumuloy sa pag-aaral umuwi po sa kani-kanilang probinsya at tumulong po mag-organisa (unions and community-based organizations)," she said.

FQS' influence was not exclusive to wage-earner workers, farmers and peasants, but also with professionals.

In the 1960s to 1970s, teachers, especially those in private schools, had problems with payment of salaries, work overload, had difficulty in getting tenure and faced suppression of union organizing.

"Ang influence ng student activism ay hindi lamang limitado sa mga factory, sa mga jeepney driver or sa mga peasant. They also encouraged workers to form unions, even professionals have movements. Ito na nga po ang Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN). Nagkaroon din po ng associations of scientists, progressive doctors and even businessmen," she said.

Asuncion said FQS further strengthened the student movement and produced known progressive labor lawyers like Enrique Voltaire Garcia and Hermon Lagman.

Ending her lecture, Asuncion said the influence of FQS on labor movement in the country continues to this day.

"Hanggang ngayon ay patuloy pa rin natin isinusulat ang kasaysayan (until now we are still writing history)," she said.

The webinar "First Quarter Storm and Labor" was part of the UPD Arts and Culture Festival 2020 celebration themed "Makita kang Sakdal Laya," a four-month series of events commemorating FQS' 50th anniversary.