

Social Movement Unionism:
A New Type of Trade Unionism

Trade unionism in the Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs)¹ is in crisis: low rates of industrialization, state opposition or co-optation, incompetent or self-serving leadership, poor participation by the membership; the list goes on and on. Meanwhile, countries are manipulated by the multinational corporations into competing for a limited amount of investment, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are restructuring economies for the purposes of increasing exploitation and powerlessness, capital is making high rates of profit, workers are exploited, and the living standards for all who must sell their labor to survive continues to decrease.

In most LEDCs, the trade union movement is limited to a small proportion of the work force. Workers who are lucky enough to get employment in a unionized factory are often seen by the unorganized as being some sort of "working class elite" or "aristocracy," and thus separate and above the large masses of people. This is not to claim that these unionized workers are overpaid, or that their higher rates of pay have made them passive, but that their interests are seen as differing from those of the large majority of the working class and peasantry. As a result, rather than uniting the poor and dispossessed, quite often the trade unions are seen as separating their members from the rest of the working people.²

At the same time, trade union members are often quite unhappy with their leaders. Unions are traditionally organized in a hierarchical manner, with decision-making confined to those at the highest levels and most removed from the day-to-day life of the workplace. Accordingly, the interests of the leaders and the members usually differ considerably. And while some leaders are able to

increase members' rates of pay, they are almost never able to resolve the problems of oppression and alienation among workers, which are inherent whenever those who control production are not those doing the work.

There have been arguments made that survival of trade unions in the LEDCs is dependent on their developing different roles and strategies than ones relied upon traditionally. I think it depends a lot on which unions one is talking about--in industry or in more traditional sectors of economies such as railroads, ports and mines--and what is meant by survival. Very possibly, industrial unions may reach the point of no longer existing, particularly as economies restructure under IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programs. But many industrial unions may die anyway as companies decide to relocate away from them if they are able to effectively serve their members. But I think it's very unlikely that the "traditional sector" unions will be threatened--their positions in the economies are just too central and major battles with these unions are probably perceived by most government leaders as being more trouble than they are worth.

But, on the other hand, if trade unions are going to maintain or expand what power they currently have--i.e., if they want to be a vibrant and powerful force for social justice in the affairs of their respective country, and for all working people and not just their own members--then I believe they must develop different roles and strategies. Some have suggested that new strategies might include placing emphasis on recruiting women workers or trying to include agricultural workers into the unions. But I find the potential of these and similar ideas as solutions very limited, for I believe the larger issue, which I feel must be confronted before any other, is deciding the model of trade unionism which unions will follow. The traditional models, while they may work for some members, require that the unions remain subordinate and basically accept whatever the leaders of the country decide, whether it is supportive of the unions' interests or opposed. Thus, I see no real future in the

traditional models for working people.

However, in a small but growing number of countries, new roles and strategies are being developed which I feel do offer a real future for working people. In countries as disparate as Brazil, the Philippines, South Africa and South Korea,³ labor movements have emerged which have taken a qualitatively different approach to the problems of the poor and dispossessed in their respective societies: they are creating autonomous, militant, class conscious unionism which sees the situation of the unionized workers as being intimately connected with the situation of working people throughout their country. Accordingly, they have been using their power within the production-distribution-exchange process to both fight to improve the wages and working conditions of their members and to fight for the improvement of the situation of all working people in the society, which means they are fighting for improvement of conditions for the majority of people in the society. However, this extends beyond issues of wages, working conditions and employment security--traditionally considered "economic" issues--to include engaging in "political" struggles for democracy and human rights, and against class, racial and national minority, and gender oppression. These new unions are organized democratically, with the leadership responsive and responsible to the membership. At the same time, these new unions have also developed a larger perspective pertaining to their country and its relations to other countries within the world economy. Thus the conditions in the workplace are seen as being intimately connected with the national situation; therefore, in order to change the conditions at the workplace, the society's relationship with the world's political-economic system must be changed.

To understand this new type of unionism, I must first consider the different types of trade unionism in the United States, and then relate those to different types of trade unionism internationally. Once this is accomplished, I must then discuss how this new type of unionism differs

from those conceptualizations, and discuss the ramifications of choosing this new type of trade unionism for confronting the situation faced in the LEDCs. Presentation of a case study, of the Kilusang Mayo Uno Labor Center (KMU) of the Philippines, will show how one labor center has developed--and it strongly supports the theoretical development of this new type of trade unionism.

Traditional Models of Trade Unions

Before discussing the concept of social movement unionism, it is important to present at least some basic understanding of traditional models of trade unionism. Because I am arguing that social movement unionism is a different model, to have some understanding of how it differs, I must compare it to traditional models.

Cella and Treu (1987: 197) report, based on Clegg's 1976 book, Trade Unionism Under Collective Bargaining, that there is no systematic theory of trade unionism or of national labor movements. With a fairly good survey of labor movements, particularly in the more economically developed countries, they put forth a sophisticated typology of five different trade union models, which they call "opposition, business (or domestic), competitive, participation, state-sponsored" (221). They conclude that,

short of establishing precise cause-effect relationship, it can be said that the most decisive variables affecting models of unionism are union density, workplace organization, relations with political parties and with the political context of industrial relations (Cella and Treu: 223).⁴

However, this typology is insufficient in my opinion. Each of these types of trade unionism, including "opposition unionism" as I understand their conception, is based on acceptance of the status-quo in their respective society, regardless of how the union movement chooses to relate to and influence that. There is no conception of a unionism--whether Leninist, nationalist or any other--which challenges the status-quo. Nor do they address the international activities of at least some of the labor movements in the MEDCs--eg. the US-based AFL-CIO, the British TUC, the German DGB--which have opposed "challenging" types of trade unionism,⁵ nor do they address the international activities of the unions in state socialist social systems.

Lambert and Webster (1988), after briefly mentioning Richard Hyman's conception of "optimistic" and "pessimistic" traditions of trade unionism, and obviously generalizing from South Africa, discuss three types of trade unionism: "orthodox," "populist" and "political, or social movement" unionisms. They define "orthodox" as:

a form of trade unionism which concentrates almost exclusively on workplace issues; fails to link production issues to wider political issues; and finally encourages its members to become politically involved without necessarily engaging itself in the wider political arena, believing that this is best left to other organizations more suited to the task. The political content of such unionism varies widely, but in each instance, what is common to this orientation is an accomodation and absorption into industrial relations systems, which not only institutionalizes conflict, but also serves to reinforce the division between economic and political forms of struggle so essential to the maintenance of capitalist relations in production, in the community and in the state (Lambert and Webster: 20-21).

They define "populist" unionism as

unionism in which trade unionism and struggles in the factory are downplayed. The latter is a tendency that neglects struggles over wages, supervision, managerial controls at the workplace and job evaluation. It places in its stead a political engagement that only serves to dissipate shop floor struggles (footnote omitted) (Lambert and Webster: 21).

And "political, or social movement unionism" as

attempts to link production to wider political issues. It is a form of union organization that facilitates an active engagement in factory-based, production politics and in community and state power issues. *** ... it does not negate the role of a political party, but rather asserts the need for a co-ordinating political body that is democratic in its practices and therefore able to relate to political unionism in a non-instrumental manner (Lambert and Webster: 21).

Lambert and Webster's conceptions are, in my opinion, much more useful for understanding different approaches to trade unionism than are Cella and Treu's because they include "challenging" models of unionism in their typology; however, like Cella and Treu, they do not address international activities of the unions in their models.

However, I have several differences with Lambert and Webster. I disagree with their "orthodox" model when they say that this type of unionism doesn't necessarily engage itself in the wider political arena--this certainly isn't true of the British TUC nor, for that matter, is it true of the AFL-CIO (and it probably isn't true of any trade union movement in the world in one way or the

other). Both labor centers are very actively engaged in electoral politics, while accomodating to and being absorbed within their respective industrial relations systems. I generally agree with Lambert and Webster's "populist" model, although I would suggest that these unions are controlled by or subordinate themselves to political parties, and to which they give primary loyalty instead of to the immediate interests of their members. And in cases where these unions exist within a state socialist social system, they can and sometimes engage in international labor operations which are designed to support unions affiliated with political parties which are allied with their dominant party. And I will discuss my conception of social movement unionism below.

In response to Lambert and Webster's models, I suggest that there are three general models of trade unionism, although I would call them "economic," "political" and "social movement"--and I use these terms differently than do Lambert and Webster.

I would define "economic" unionism as being unionism which accomodates itself to, and is absorbed by, the industrial relations system of its particular country; which engages in political activities within the dominant political system for the well-being of its members and its institutional self but generally limits itself to immediate interests; and which can and sometimes does engage in international labor activities which are largely but not totally designed to help maintain the well-being of its country's current economic system, ostensibly for the well-being of its members, and these international activities are usually opposed to any type of system-challenging trade unionism.

I would define "political" unionism as unionism which is dominated by or subordinated to a political party or state, to which the leaders give primary loyalty--and this includes both the Leninist and "radical nationalist" versions.⁶ This results in generally but not totally neglecting workplace issues for "larger" political issues. These unions can and sometimes engage in international labor operations which are designed to support unions affiliated with political parties/states which are allied

with their party/state.

And again, I will leave my discussion of social movement unionism to below.

But the key aspect to recognize in both economic and political unionism is that they do not link production issues with issues of political power.

Reflections on the Debate Over "Social Movement Unionism"

In response to a request from people involved in labor studies and struggles in the Philippines, Peter Waterman (1988) tried to develop the concept of social movement unionism, as an effort to assist their understanding of labor struggles in their country. Acknowledging the use of this concept in the works of Webster (1987), Lambert (1988), Lambert and Webster (1988) and Munck (1988), Waterman particularly focused on Lambert and Webster's use of the term "social movement unionism," in which he wondered if this term was nothing more than a substitute for the earlier term "political unionism."

Waterman wanted to ensure that this concept was theoretically developed so that it would be much more than a substitute:

I am concerned that the term be defined in such a way that it provides both a new theoretical tool and suggests a new political norm. In other words, that it be distinguished both from traditional terminologies and from traditional practices (Waterman, 1988: 1).

In his paper, Waterman stated the necessity of relating this social movement unionism to social movements, and then discussed the development of what he calls "movementist," or social

movement, theory.

Comparing social movement unionism to the old concept of political unionism, Waterman notes, "We are talking not simply of a different union model but a different understanding of the role of the working class and its typical organization in the transformation of society." He goes on to point out that this new concept is a product of the newly emerging social movements and a new type of unionism (Waterman, 1988: 6-7).

It was within this orientation that the discussion has taken place.

Waterman's Conception

Waterman's conception is by far the more developed of the two conceptions. However, this does not mean it is clearer.

I think there are three main points in Waterman's conception: one, he sees social movement unionism as being not only a different model of trade unionism but based on a different understanding of the working class and its organization in the struggle to transform society; two, he thinks this model is--and must be--radically different than the Leninist conceptualization of trade unionism; and three, he sees social movement unionism as necessarily being linked with other social movements. I will discuss each of these three points.

I think the first point is the clearest. It is based on theory coming from Laclau and Mouffe, 1981, based on their understanding and surpassing of Gramsci. The concept of social movement unionism understands workers' struggles as being just one site of political struggle, and not the only or even primary one.⁷

Therefore, social movement unions use their strategic position within society's production-distribution-exchange system to fight for the "dispossessed" and "powerless" of the society--all workers, the poor, women, students, children, ecologists, peace activists, etc., etc.--in alliance with and in conjunction with both these people organized in their own organizations and those who are not. The important factor is being ready to join together on an equal basis with those who are struggling for power to change the world and particularly their respective society, and joining them when the opportunity presents itself.

Because of this different approach, it follows that this new understanding does not confine workers' struggles only to the workplace nor does it limit workers' struggles to only being carried out by industrial workers. In fact, it does not even confine its definition of "worker" to those in the formal sector, to those who are waged, or even to those who are employed.⁸ Therefore, I think this model is a qualitatively different understanding of the working class⁹ and its organization in the struggle to transform society.

Waterman's second point--that the concept of social movement unionism is and must be different from Leninist conceptions of trade unionism--is supported by this different understanding of the working class and its organization to transform society. However, in my view, Waterman's

conceptualization of Lenin's work led him to make some unsupported--and to date, unsupportable--conclusions about the KMU which he used as an example.

Lenin had two conceptions of trade unions, depending on which stage of the struggle they were located in: in the pre-revolutionary stage, and in the post-revolutionary stage. In the pre-revolutionary stage of "What Is To Be Done?," Lenin saw trade unions as being able to only fight "economic" struggles and that it was only with the intervention of 'Social Democrats' (!) that these struggles could be developed into "political," and thus more advanced, struggles. In other words, workers alone were seen as being incapable of struggling for more than economic demands.¹⁰ It was left to the vanguard party to fight for political changes. In the post-revolutionary stage, the trade unions were seen as "transmission belts" from the vanguard party to the working class. So, when using Lenin, one must be careful to locate the conceptualization used in the particular period.

While I feel that Waterman is generally correct in his understanding of Lenin's distinction between economic and political struggles (although he doesn't locate this conceptualization in the pre-revolutionary period which I think must be done), and generally correct in noting that Leninists have developed a two-stage model of revolution, he makes a gigantic conceptual leap and thereby assumes that because an organization--in this case, the KMU--has a two-stage strategy for social change that it therefore must be Leninist (Waterman, 1991: 5)! This position is supported neither by logic nor facts.¹¹

The bigger problem with Waterman's position on this issue--in addition to being supported neither by logic nor facts--is that his position in and of itself has not surpassed that of the Leninist: he

apparently does not believe that workers can create any new type of trade unionism without the "leadership" or "guidance" of an external agent; i.e., a communist party.

However, Lambert, in contrast to Waterman, is quite clear about the issue of the relationship between economics and politics:

... the primary task of social movement unionism is the transcendence of the bourgeois separation of politics and economics which needs to be understood in the light of the relationships between economy, civil society and the state. The greater the containment of unionism within the collective bargaining system, the greater the social stability of capitalism. That is why new forms of workplace organization and practice that transcend the divide and lock into civil society and the state in new ways pose a threat to capitalist dominance... (Lambert, 1989: 6).

In other words, in opposition to both "bourgeois separation" and to Lenin's conception of trade unions during the pre-revolutionary period, social movement unionism transcends the artificial economics-politics separation. It is this issue, and not whether an organization has a two-stage strategy, which distinguishes social movement unionism from Leninism.

The third point of Waterman is that social movement unionism must be linked with other social movements. I think there are three levels to this: conceptual, ideological and empirical. Conceptually, I don't think there is any problem, since the very understanding that workers' struggles are just one of many engaged in efforts to qualitatively change society at least suggests, if it doesn't demand, that workers' struggles be joined with other struggles. Ideologically, anyone who is fighting

against domination and oppression would be the ally of those also fighting domination and oppression.¹² But empirically, there is a potential problem: while desiring to ally with other social movements, what happens if there are none developed or are not yet ready to ally with the workers' movement? Does that mean that a unionism built on this new understanding and which challenges the artificial separation between economics and politics, and which desires to ally with other social movements, does not fit the category of social movement unionism? Does lacking this one feature so radically change its complexion that it must be reconceptualized? I don't think so--and here I think that until Waterman separates the issue into different levels, he is engaged in conceptual overdeterminism.

Lambert's Conception

Rob Lambert also picked three areas which he felt were critical in the definition of social movement unionism: organizationally transcending the traditional political-economic divide, attempting to form structured alliances with social movements, and third, engaging in national campaigns of resistance against the state.

As stated above in considering Waterman's conception of social movement unionism, Lambert considers that transcending the political-economic divide to be the key aspect of social movement unionism. I think that is crucial. However, I don't think Lambert goes far enough in his understanding.¹³

I think Lambert's understanding is limited by his traditional conception of the working class. I think he uncritically adopts a Marxist conceptualization and while he tries to surpass its Leninist revision, he does this without challenging the original conceptualization, which I think is a critical flaw. This is evident in at least two ways.

One, although he and Webster recognize the development of alliance politics in South Africa (Lambert and Webster, 1988: 26-39), they do not suggest any change in their conception of the "working class" because of that. Lambert and Webster also ignore the theoretical developments of Laclau and Mouffe (1981), which sees struggles at the workplace as being neither the only or even primary point of struggle.

Lambert continues to use the traditional conception of the working class in his papers discussing social movement unionism--and this working class exists overwhelmingly at the workplace or, when there is a community-located conception, it is only in regard to consumption issues. Yet without reconceptualizing "working class," a politics based on alliance merely becomes a case of "adding" two subjects rather than merging both into a higher level of understanding and action.

Two, Lambert ignores thinking about how working people identify themselves.¹⁴ By ignoring the understanding of multiple identities, he limits working class struggles to those of the workplace and of distribution and consumption issues. This precludes working people from questioning the production sphere of society as a whole--such as what does a society need to produce to sustain itself and how can it be done with minimal environmental damage?--and power relations within the society and among working people both within the workplace and beyond.

But from looking at Lambert's understanding of the need to transcend the economic-political separation, we must look at his second point: the need to develop structured relations with social movements. I disagree with Lambert on this point. Again, just as I criticized Waterman's formulation on this relationship, I think Lambert is over-emphasizing the role of the relationship between the unions and the social movements. I can understand the logic so as to why he does this: he thinks it's necessary for trade unions to reconceptualize their factory organization, ideological input and the nature of collective action, and that he feels this is only possible within a structured alliance with the social movements, and that "spontaneously generated, non-permanent links" with social movements do not necessarily result in fundamental organizational and ideological change which he thinks is necessary.

While he doesn't specifically say that this organizational and ideological change is impossible without a structured alliance with the social movements, he comes very close. He strongly implies it is because of this relationship that the unions make these fundamental changes. Again, I don't think it is true--and evidence from the Philippines which I will present below will contradict this claim.

The third point, engaging in national campaigns of mass-based resistance against the state, follows very much the second. It implies the unions cannot be transformed into social movement unions without this national struggle. First of all, I don't think it's true. Second of all, it ignores the various power relationships, and doesn't ascertain if the unions (and other social movements) have the power to struggle against the state in a nation-wide campaign and to be able to withstand any repression which might logically result, or not. If the unions can't take on that level of struggle at a

particular time, but are moving toward being able to do so, are they not social movement unions? If it's a matter of power, and they don't have it at a particular stage of development, does this mean we have to reconceptualize their existence? And again, I don't think so.

Having presented the main points of the discussion, and discussed each of them, I will now put forth my conception of social movement unionism. After that, I will present a case study of the KMU Labor Center of the Philippines which will provide evidence for of the power of this conception.

New Conceptualization of Social Movement Unionism

My conception of social movement unionism incorporates the strengths of both Waterman's and Lambert's conceptions--and is enriched by my experiences as an industrial worker, labor organizer and labor researcher--and goes beyond them:

Social movement unionism is a model of trade unionism which differs from the traditional forms of both economic and political unionism. This model sees workers' struggles as merely one of many efforts to qualitatively change society, and not either the only site for political struggle and social change or even the primary site. Therefore, it seeks alliances with other social movements on an equal basis, and tries to join them in practice when possible, both within the country and internationally.

Social movement unionism is trade unionism democratically controlled by the membership

and not by any external organization, which recognizes that the struggles for control over workers' daily worklife, pay and conditions is intimately connected with and cannot be separated from the national socio-political-economic situation. This requires that struggles to improve the situation of workers confront the national situation--combining struggles against exploitation and oppression in the workplace with those confronting domination both external from and internal to the larger society--as well as any dominating relations within the unions themselves. Therefore, it is autonomous from capital, the state and political parties, setting its own agenda from its own particular perspective, yet willing to consider modifying its perspective on the basis of negotiations with the social movements with which it is allied with and which it has equal relations.

This conception recognizes that social movement unionism as being not only a different model of trade unionism, but is based on a different understanding of the working class and its organization in the struggle to transform society. It transcends the traditional economic-political divide of society, which is common to both the bourgeois and the Leninist conceptions. It is based on democratic control by the membership within the unions, rejecting any external control. And it is willing to ally with social movements on the basis of equal relations, and even consider modifying its particular perspective through negotiations. Additionally, its conception of internationalism is built on solidarity relations.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) of the Philippines: A Case Study¹⁵

The KMU is only one of five different labor formations in the Philippines--the others are a

group of federations affiliated with the Soviet-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the Federation of Free Workers (FFW), the Lakas Manggagawa Labor Center (LMLC) and the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP). While the WFTU-affiliated federations are considered by the KMU to be politically "progressive," the FFW and LMLC are considered to be "moderates," while the TUCP is "conservative." In addition to these, there are independent unions arrayed across the political spectrum. And while these political designations are often collapsed into the categories of "genuine" and "yellow" by the KMU--the former progressive and the latter reactionary--the different formations will sometimes unite tactically on different issues, particularly regarding economic wage demands, while remaining politically opposed to each other.

Why did the KMU develop? What were the conditions which caused workers to create it?

What has enabled it to survive and grow?

There were three reasons to found the KMU. First, workplace conditions were terrible. Second, the traditional unions had sold out workers. And third, there was a clear need for a workers' organization which would organize against foreign domination; as long as the country remained subservient to foreign interests, it would be unable to develop and confront the problems that faced its people.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno

KMU, which translates to May First Movement, was founded on May 1, 1980, during the dark days of the Marcos Dictatorship. The seven founding union organizations had 35,000 members under collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) at the time, with an additional 15,000 as members but without CBAs.¹⁶ After 10 years, there were 350,000 members under CBAs, and another 400,000 workers which were under the KMU but without CBAs.¹⁷

But there is obviously more to the KMU than just size or even membership growth. How did the KMU survive the repression of a dictator--including the arrest and detention of its chairperson, general secretary and almost 100 top leaders? How could the organization continue after the assassination of its subsequent chairperson, facing massive human rights violations and almost total opposition from the military and the ruling class? Where did the KMU find the strength to be able to lead and win its second national general workers' strike within nine years of its founding?

Part of the KMU's power to endure is related to its basic principles of being genuine, militant and nationalist. A top leader interviewed in 1986, who did not want his name used, explained what these principles mean to members of the KMU:

By "genuine," we mean that the KMU is run by its members. The members are given all information and decide the policies which run the organization. By "militant," we mean that the KMU will never betray the interest of the working class, even at the risk of our own lives. The KMU believes workers become aware of their own human dignity through collective mass action. By "nationalist," we believe the wealth of the Philippines belongs to the Filipino people and that national sovereignty must never be compromised. The KMU is against the presence of the U.S. bases

(quoted from Scipes, 1987: 12).

In other words, the KMU is class conscious, believes that workers learn more from mass struggles than from leaders cutting back room deals, and is determined that Filipinos should control the Philippines.

The statement about never betraying the interests of the working class, even at risk of KMU leaders' own lives, is not hyperbole; many KMU organizers, leaders and members have been arrested or killed. The assassination of KMU Chairperson Rolando Olalia in November 1986 demonstrated the risks involved in being a genuine trade unionist even for those highest in the organization.

Another key aspect to the KMU's survival and growth is the organization's political concept of "genuine trade unionism." Genuine trade unionism (GTU) extends the scope of trade unionism beyond mere relations in the workplace; it also includes struggles over the political economy of the nation and its internal social relations. KMU-affiliated unions have developed this concept to the greatest extent in the Philippines, although it is not limited to them.

Genuine trade unionism opposes domination from without; it is against imperialist interference in the Philippines from particular nations such as the U.S. or Japan, as well as from institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the AFL-CIO.¹⁸

It is this involvement in the debate over the future direction and shape of the nation--together with the KMU's increasing ability to interfere with economic production due to its position in the nation's workplaces--that makes the KMU such an important subject for examination and understanding.

Further organizational strengths are to be found in the internal processes within KMU-affiliated organizations: the KMU is committed to union democracy and accountability of its membership. It requires sacrifices from leaders and fights internal corruption. The KMU is controlled by its membership and not by any other organization from the left or the right.

Along with being genuine, militant and nationalist, developing genuine trade unionism and being democratically controlled, the KMU has developed because of three other factors.

Organizational Structure

The first factor has to do with the particular structure in which the KMU is organized. The KMU is organized both "vertically," with centralized national federations, and "horizontally," by workers' alliances. This organizational grid overlays the entire organization.

Eleven national federations--similar to national or international unions in North America--are affiliated with the KMU. These are hierarchical organizations, with decision-making at a higher level superceding that made at lower levels.

These federations have a general membership; they organize any workers they can, although most federations seem to concentrate on one or two particular "industries." The National Federation of Sugar Workers-Food and General Trades (NFSW-FGT) concentrates on sugar workers. Ilaw at Buklod ng Manggagawa--translated as Light and Unity of the Workers--(IBM), is concentrated among employees of the San Miguel Corporation, a giant beer and food conglomerate. GLOWHRAIN, the Genuine Labor Organization of Workers in the Hotel, Restaurant and Allied Industries, focuses on workers in hotels and restaurants. The Drug and Food Alliance of the Philippines (DFA) is in pharmaceuticals. The Alliance of Nationalist and Genuine Labor Organizations (ANGLO) emphasizes garments and textiles, while the United Workers of the Philippines (UWP) is in garments and shoes, as is ADLO, the Alliance of Democratic Labor Organizations. The Southern Philippines Federation of Labor (SPFL) focuses on mining and the wood industry, while the National Federation of Labor Unions (NAFLU) is in mining and longshoring. The National Federation of Labor (NFL) concentrates on the service industry and banana plantations, and OLALIA, the Organized Labor Association in Line Industries and Agriculture, is concentrated among agricultural workers. This situation results in some duplication but it also gives local unions a choice of federations to affiliate with, ensuring more responsive leadership.

Each federation provides legal assistance, orientation, directions for education and plans of action--in coordination with KMU--to their local union affiliates. In particular, federations give crucial assistance in workers' struggles to form local unions. They also help to gain recognition through winning certification elections and successfully completing collective bargaining agreements.

Local unions can affiliate with a federation by one of two different ways. A previously organized local union may join a federation "indirectly." A group of workers seeking help in organizing may join "directly." George Aguilon, Secretary General of NAMAHEMIN, explained the difference as follows:

In reality, there is no big difference. The only difference is that if you have indirectly affiliated, you can [leave the federation] at any time; if you are directly affiliated, you must wait until the CBA expires before you can disaffiliate.¹⁹

The large majority of local unions are directly affiliated, meaning they must remain with their chosen federation throughout the life of the contract. Since passage of the Herrera Law (RA 6715) in March 1989, this is a five year period.

Besides additional membership, status and, therefore, power, affiliation brings in dues for the federation. For example, before it disaffiliated from the United Lumber and General Workers of the Philippines (ULGWP), the union at Greenfields was the ULGWP's largest local union. Greenfields is a garment factory in Metro Manila, with 2,500 union members and another 500 workers paying agency dues for the union's representation of them with management. At Greenfields, workers were paying monthly dues of 10 pesos, three of which went to the local and seven to the federation. In addition to these dues, the federation won a P10,000 a month education fee in the contract, which the company paid to the federation. From this one factory, the federation was receiving P31,000 a month, over one million pesos over a three year period.²⁰

However, despite the hierarchical organization of these federations, they are decentralized

as much as possible. Federations are broken into island-wide and region-wide groupings, with the power to make decisions delegated to the lowest possible level of the organization.

This decentralized structure diffuses power throughout the organization. Immobilizing the top leaders will not stop the organization. Marcos' effort in 1982 to cripple the KMU by arresting 69 key leaders, including the chairperson and secretary general, failed because of the KMU's decentralized organization.

Besides the hierarchically-structured federations, there are the alliances. Alliances are "horizontal" coalitions of workers from different workplaces and unions, and are organized on the basis of geography, industry or company ownership.²¹ The goal of each alliance is to unite workers for economic gain; provide self-defense from military harassment; win political demands outside the workplaces; and give "genuine trade unionism" education to all members.

Alliances are a totally new development in Filipino trade unionism, having just been established in 1982. The first alliance, AMBA-BALA, was created by the overwhelmingly female workforce in the Bataan Export Processing Zone (BEPZ) in response to military repression against strikers at the Inter-Asia Company during June 1982. A report of an interview with Flor Collantes of AMBA-BALA described events which led to the creation of that KMU provincial alliance and which were reported thusly:

The workers had gone on strike to protest intensification of their work; previously each worker operated four machines in the textile plant; management increased this to six. The military

intervened against the strikers, using fire trucks, truncheons and mass arrests in an effort to break the strike.

Although strikes in the Zone were illegal, other workers realized that if they allowed the military to break that strike, then the military could break any strike. Further, they realized that BEPZ was a key component of the IMF/World Bank/Marcos development strategy for the country, and thus union organization there would have a much greater importance than in less economically strategic areas.

The women organized clandestinely on the job, in the company-provided dormitories and in the community. Workers in every factory in the zone were mobilized. On June 4, 1982, 26,000 workers walked out in support of the nine union organizers that had been fired by Inter-Asia and the 54 arrested picketers.

This was the first general strike in any export processing zone in the world and it was successful: the strike was won, the union organizers reinstated, the people in jail released, and the first alliance, AMBA-BALA [literally meaning "bullet"], was born (quoted from Scipes, 1988).

Each type of alliance organizes differently. Geographical alliances combine unions on the basis of locality and are the most powerful; these alliances can be formed on national, island, regional, province, city or even district levels. Industrial alliances unite unions located in the same industry, such as health care, transportation or mining. Conglomerate alliances join unions in multi-site workplaces owned by the same company. The industrial and conglomerate alliances focus more

on workplace issues, while geographical alliances tend to focus on larger political issues--but transportation alliances have always been very involved on the political level as well. Additionally, while most alliances are affiliated with the KMU, each alliance often includes unions from outside the KMU.

Education

In conjunction with an innovative organizational structure that reinforces its member unions, the KMU has one of the most developed trade union education programs in the world. It serves as perhaps the key component in leadership development.

Known by the general name of "genuine trade unionism," the KMU education program is composed of three different courses: PAMA, GTU and KPD.

PAMA is a one day introductory course, which is short enough that organizers can give basic educational training even on picketlines. In this course, workers are taught not only trade union rights and responsibilities, but political economics as well. Surplus value is explained in a way all workers can understand. The term "imperialism" is demystified and shown to be a key explanation for the economic degradation and poverty of their country. Gaining national sovereignty is clearly shown to be an important part of workers' struggle for liberation.

The three day Genuine Trade Unionism course, GTU, goes into greater detail. Workers

discuss the problems of labor. They examine and analyze the differences between genuine trade unionism on one hand, and "yellow" unionism--whether of the "bread and butter/rice and fish" version or its more collaborationist form--on the other. They focus on the history of the Filipino labor movement and previous efforts to develop genuine trade unions. And workers discuss the struggle for national and working class liberation.

The third course, KPD, propagates the national democratic program.²² Originally part of the GTU course, KPD has been further developed on its own. This focuses attention on the struggle for national democracy, which includes joining with different political forces fighting for national sovereignty. The goal of national democracy is the establishment of a truly independent country and a national democratic coalition government, based on the various sectors of society such as peasants, workers, fisherfolk, women, urban poor, students, etc.²³

Though these courses were formally developed in Metro Manila at the Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research (EILER), a Church-based organization, they were created in response to the high priority placed on member education at the KMU's founding congress in 1980. These courses were developed in the field--on picket lines and at union meetings--and brought back to Manila for integration and development at EILER. They were then taken back into the field, tested and then further modified when necessary.

Education centers have been established throughout the country. Each KMU federation has an education department, as do most KMU geographic alliances. Making information available and accessible to workers is their goal.

This information is not just for KMU members. In Bataan, workers demanded that all members of the provincial alliance--even unions affiliated with other labor centers--be given genuine trade unionism education. This seems to be the case in most alliances. Also, in some areas independent education programs have been established, such as the Visayas Institute for Research and Trade Union Education in Cebu, which serves any union in the Visayas region.

This education process is one of the main differences between KMU organizations and those controlled by other labor groupings. The KMU tries to develop workers' understanding in order to get them involved in confronting their problems and the problems of the country. It uses every opportunity to educate workers, whether trying to win certification elections during respective "freedom periods" or helping workers take control over their own union to make it militant.

Key to this education process is the way it is run. Rather than just telling workers what they should think or do, KMU educators have developed curricula which enables workers to share their thoughts on various issues and discuss alternatives. It is through open discussion and input from the instructors that workers educate themselves and each other.

The importance of this education simply cannot be exaggerated. It brings workers together, away from the work site. It allows them to think about and discuss what they want and how they can best achieve their goals. It also allows them to interact with one another, building solidarity within the organization.

The most important result is the general empowerment of workers. Once workers have been through an education course, they get a real sense of themselves and what they are doing. While this sounds abstract, it comes through concretely in their determination in their particular struggles; maintaining 24 hour picket lines for over a year during a strike is not uncommon.

These courses also encourage workers to develop their own courses. For example, the IGMC Workers' Union in the Bataan Export Processing Zone developed a course for their members on the capitalist relations of production in their firm. Why is production arranged in the manner it is? What is the company trying to do? How are they able to do it? What can the union do to strengthen itself? Those are some of the questions that their course focused on. The union had put all of its 700+ members through the course by early 1986.

Relations with Other Sectoral Organizations

In the Philippines, national democrats within each sector of society--such as workers, peasants, fisherfolk, women, urban poor and students--have developed organizations to meet their people's specific needs. These are known as sectoral organizations.

Joining with sectoral organizations to fight for demands that would benefit the entire population of the Philippines and refusing to limit KMU's interests only to workers and their problems is another key factor in the KMU's development. Benefitting from this cross-sectoral unity, the people of the Philippines have been able to develop a tactic called a welgang bayan, or "people's

strike," which is even more powerful than the almost-mythic "general strike" in industrialized countries.

A welgang bayan includes a general workers' strike, but it is much more. In addition, all public transportation is stopped, all shops and stores are closed, and community members set up barricades to stop still-operating private vehicles or they join workers on their picket lines.

The first welgang bayan took place in Davao City on Mindanao in 1984. The concerted actions of the people paralyzed most significant economic activity in response to increased military operations and brutality on the island. Two more island-wide people's strikes were launched during 1985, again protesting the militarization of the island. The third people's strike was so successful that when the island's military commander asked the leaders to call it off after one day, they refused. "We'll call it off when we reach our objectives," a leader told him.²⁴ The welgang bayan lasted three days.

How did this tactic develop? Erasto "Nonoy" Librado, Secretary General of KMU-Mindanao, explained that leaders from different sectoral organizations had noticed very little response to their efforts to win their particular demands; and they began talking to see if together they could all be more successful. Their efforts paid off with a tactic that, while difficult to mobilize properly, was incredibly powerful when launched.²⁵

In May 1985, the various sectoral organizations, including the KMU, organized into a national alliance called BAYAN, or New Patriotic Alliance. BAYAN, which means "people" or "country" is

organized on a national level and it has local chapters in most major urban areas throughout the country.

The next significant people's strike took place in Bataan Province against the Westinghouse-built Bataan Nuclear Power Plant in 1985. This power plant, built on the side of a volcano in an active earthquake zone, was intended to supply electricity to the U.S. military bases, Clark and Subic, and to the export processing zone in Mariveles. The welgang bayan was described:

Several major protests have been launched against the plant. The largest was the three-day province-wide strike in June 1985. Eight towns were brought to a standstill. All banks, shops, schools, public transport, private businesses and government offices shut down. Even fishing boats in the local port refused to put out to sea. Workers from the industrial free trade zone, where the factories of the multinationals are located, marched for two days to join the protests. Workers blocked all roads to the nuclear power plant and grappled with armoured cars sent to clear a way through (quoted from Watts and Jackson, 1986).

The first nationwide welgang bayan was launched in August 1987 in response to an oil price hike by the government. Although called off early in response to a military coup attempt, the effort had immobilized 95% of the country beforehand. Interestingly, the next military coup attempt took place after plans for another nationwide people's strike had been announced but before it could be launched in December 1989.

Welgang bayans are evidence of a recognition by progressive Filipinos that they can gain

much more together than they can alone. Welgang bayans also show KMU's recognition that labor must be involved in national issues that affect other sectors because these issues also affect workers as well.

International Solidarity Work

International solidarity is an area in which the KMU has placed much emphasis and the result is that KMU is quite advanced in this work.²⁶

From the beginning, the KMU has seen itself as part of the international labor movement, not separate. This can be seen through its regular publications which always include stories about workers' struggles in other countries; the international travels of high ranking officers; the convening of a European-wide labor conference in February 1986; and the establishment of foreign support groups such as the Philippine Workers Support Committees in the United States and the Trade Union Committee of Britain's Philippine Support Group. These efforts provide venues for the KMU to propagate its program and have it challenged internationally. They are meant to seek new forms of international workers' solidarity.

The KMU has recognized the importance of international linkages. For the KMU, these networks serve as a source of funds for the organization and provide "legitimacy," moral support and some protection from repression. On the other hand, foreign labor movements have provided massive funding for labor organizations opposed to the KMU; the Trade Union Congress of the

Philippines, for example, received over \$5.7 million from the AFL-CIO between 1983 and '88,²⁷ and it and its affiliates have also received considerable amounts of money from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the West German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

The international solidarity work of the KMU has been built on seeking recognition from and building linkages with foreign labor movements, while challenging the international "legitimacy" and funding of its opponents. To date, the KMU has won especially strong support from the national labor centers in Australia, New Zealand and Ireland, and from the CGIL in Italy and the CGT and CFDT in France, and numerous local unions in Europe. This is in addition to its close ties with COSATU in South Africa, CUT in Brazil and the KTUC in South Korea.

The KMU maintains regular communications with its supporters around the world through monthly publications. Originally, KMU Correspondence was published 10 times a year and KMU International Bulletin, which was much more detailed, was published twice a year. However, in 1988, the KMU dropped the International Bulletin and began producing Correspondence on a monthly basis. This journal has improved with time, and is quite informative and well laid out. It keeps its readers informed of the current situation in the country and KMU's positions on national issues.

However, KMU's conception of international solidarity is not just urging support for itself. In almost every issue of KMU Correspondence, there is information and calls for solidarity with workers in countries around the world.

Perhaps the KMU's major effort to build international solidarity is through hosting its International Solidarity Affair (ISA). As far as I know, the ISA is a unique effort. Every year since 1984, the KMU has invited workers and labor leaders to travel to the Philippines and experience first-hand the situation of Filipino workers through a 10 day program. This experience does not show visitors how wonderful conditions are in the Philippines, but it gives them an accurate understanding of the situation in which the KMU operates.

I participated in the 1988 ISA, along with workers and labor leaders from Australia, New Zealand, England, France, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Canada and the United States. (There were also Japanese workers there, but, because of translation needs, they had a separate program.) Some of the "delegates" were officially representing their organization, while some were there on their own initiative.

Preparation was extensive. Prior to traveling to the Philippines, most people received an orientation program which acquainted them with the country, and suggested what they would experience and what they might take with them. The KMU solicited each delegate's preferences for where he or she wanted to travel and what specific interest each delegate had. In addition, each delegate received information about how to act when in workers' communities, what type of clothing was appropriate, and how to donate money to an organization should they desire to do so.

Once in the Philippines, the delegates received a tremendous amount of additional information. The KMU had prepared "orientation packets" for each delegate, in which each person was given an overview of the national situation and the KMU's position on specific national issues

such as the U.S. bases, and specific information on the region he or she would visit.

The importance that the KMU placed on the International Solidarity Affair was evident. There was an impressive opening celebration in which some of the foreign delegates actively participated. Senator Wigberto Tañada was the keynote speaker. Speeches were also given by KMU Chairperson Crispin Beltran and other leaders. The event was covered in the national media. And throughout the entire 10 day program, delegates had extensive access to high-level KMU leaders.

After the formal ceremonies, the delegates were informed where they would be visiting. The group was divided by destination and the guides gave their charges a "situationer" (situation report) for the area in which they would be traveling. I was traveling to Mindanao with Philip Statham, an Australian trade union official, and we were given a three hour situationer by the Deputy Secretary General of KMU-Mindanao, Joel Maglunsod, which was extremely useful.

Early the next morning, we left for Mindanao. Over the next three days, we visited a number of workplaces, picket lines, and a banana plantation. We talked with the wife and son of Peter Alderite, who had been hacked to death with bolo knives by right-wing vigilantes in front of the union office on the plantation the year before. We talked with workers at each site, and had numerous conversations with high-ranking KMU leaders. We met with the presidents of the 40 KMU local unions in the regional alliance. And after being invited to a press conference announcing upcoming Labor Day activities--where we were both interviewed for TV, radio and newspapers--we returned to Manila.

On May Day, we marched in the streets with approximately 150,000 Filipino workers.

The International Solidarity Affair is a model for successfully building international solidarity on a rank and file basis. The program removes labor solidarity from the hands of the labor bureaucrats and allows workers to learn first-hand about conditions facing workers in another country. Because of the cost--plane fare to and from the Philippines, \$350 for the basic ISA program plus air transport within the country, as needed--it is limited to workers and officials from more economically developed countries, although the KMU has made special appeals at different times to raise money for delegates from "Third World" countries.

The concept, however, of workers visiting other workers and learning about their specific situation, seems like one which could be carried out by labor organizations in any country. It also serves to let workers in the "host" country know that they are not alone, that workers in other countries are interested in their struggles and are willing to spend time and money to learn more about the situation facing the host-country workers.

It is the time, energy and money put into building international solidarity that has made the KMU's international work so extremely well done.

Critique of KMU

However, there are several issues which need to be raised, both to help point out weaknesses and to suggest areas needing additional attention in order to further strengthen the

organization. In this section, comments will be made on KMU's ideology and the charges that it is a front for the Communist Party of the Philippines, on the position of women within the organization, and on its lack of an anti-bureaucratic focus. These comments are not considered to be exhaustive, but are meant as introductory remarks on these various issues.

KMU's Ideology

The KMU has been repeatedly charged with being a front for the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). By labeling it as a front, violence and repression against the KMU is therefore "legitimized" within the middle and upper classes in a society which, like that of the United States, is strongly anti-communist.

Despite the charges, no one has ever proven that the KMU is controlled by the CPP; even Ferdinand Marcos, with all his powers and having a subservient judiciary at his disposal, could not prove this allegation. The KMU has repeatedly denied it is a front for the Communist Party of the Philippines. A number of KMU leaders have been arrested and detained on charges of "subversion" and "rebellion," which are in reality charges of belonging to the CPP and, as far as this author knows, the charges have never been sustained against them in a court of law. KMU leaders have been investigated time and again by government agencies, and have not been shown to be members of the party. KMU Chairperson Crispin Beltran also has stated specifically this is not true.²⁸

On the other hand, the Aquino government has been dealing with the KMU as a responsible

party and includes the KMU in its Labor Advisory and Consultative Council.

Yet the charges of being a communist front keep getting made. These charges could lead people to believe that there must be something there, despite the fact that no credible evidence has been presented, on the belief that "where there's smoke, there's fire."

I have thoroughly researched this issue over the past five years, in his efforts to ascertain whether the KMU is one development of a new kind of trade unionism or whether it is a product of a very sophisticated communist party. I have talked with workers, union activists, organizers and top leaders of the KMU, leaders of anti-KMU unions, academics, Church activists and clergy, community organizers, as well as journalists; some singly and others in small groups. I have read material by the KMU--as well as the excellent GTU: Course on Genuine Trade Unionism, developed by the Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research, which the KMU uses as its basic educational document--and have evaluated claims by people politically from both the left and right of the KMU.

In addition to this, in conversations with KMU leaders, I have specifically inquired about the organizational decision-making processes and development. Both of these factors are key to gaining insight as to how an organization functions internally.

From this research--which has also included attending local union and regional federation-wide meetings--I have found that the KMU is run democratically. Union meetings which I've attended have been well attended and debate was vigorous, thoughtful and critical. Relationships between leaders and members have appeared open and respectful.

There are a range of politics among the various federations, and debates within and among them seem quite lively. Unions have the right to abstain from major campaigns, although obviously, abstention is discouraged. In at least one major case in which the evidence seems quite clear and resulting positions are known--the case of political interference by the International Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)²⁹--the National Federation of Labor (NFL) was not forced to withdraw from the IUF even though the three other federations did withdraw and this appeared to be a major attack on the existence of the KMU itself. Additionally, the NFL publically disagreed with the initial KMU analysis of the massacre at Tienanmen Square, and was not forced out of the organization. The KMU is not controlled by "democratic centralism."

Another factor which has been ignored by KMU critics is the way in which the KMU has developed--a substantial number of organizations and leaders within the KMU came from political positions to the right of the KMU. Out of the 11 federations which are now members, three of them are considered yellow at earlier points in their history, as was the United Lumber and General Workers of the Philippines (ULGWP) before it withdrew; in fact, Ilaw at Buklod ng Manggagawa (IBM) only left the TUCP in 1987 to join KMU. AMA-SUGBO, the alliance of Cebu, initially was comprised of nothing but TUCP-affiliated unions. And there is at least one high-ranking KMU leader who once was a regional officer within the TUCP; and I assume there are other formerly high-ranking leaders of yellow organizations now working within the KMU. Especially because of the controversial position of the KMU, it would seem extremely unlikely for these organizations or leaders to move from the right to the left as they have done without seriously investigating the charges against the KMU, and deciding that the KMU was an autonomous organization.

In addition to all of this, the KMU's concept of genuine trade unionism--where the issues of the factory are seen as an integral part of the national situation, meaning that the economic aspect of the struggle cannot be divorced from the political--is radically different from that developed under Leninism. When one reads Lenin's classic "What is to be Done?", in which the communist theory of trade union organization in the period preceding seizure of state power is most developed, the reader discovers that Lenin's concept is that trade unions cannot develop beyond the economic aspect of the struggle; to go further, workers must join in revolutionary organizations.³⁰ Genuine trade unionism specifically denies this dualistic separation of aspects of the struggle for liberation. Once this distinction is understood, then it seems clear that the KMU is not a communist front.

From the evidence I've seen, I have concluded that the KMU is controlled by its membership and not by any outside organization, whether of the left or right.³¹ The positions it takes are a result of political struggle within the organization, not from outside; the strengths and weaknesses of the KMU should be attributed to the organization itself and not to any outside forces.

Although this author is convinced that the KMU is controlled by its membership and not by any outside organization, it appears that the KMU's ideology gives its enemies a hook to hang their hats on.

There is no question that the KMU wants radical change in Philippine society. The KMU is very clear about the need for the national democratic program to be implemented, ending foreign domination and, based on mass democracy, instituting a coalition government made up of

representatives of the various sectors of society. The purpose of the government will be to meet the needs of the Filipino people overall, and not only the needs of the elite or the elite's foreign "associates." By definition, that would mean giving priority to the interests of peasants and workers.

But many in the KMU want to go beyond the national democratic program; they want to achieve socialism. And although they generally want to see workers and peasants running the society, they have yet to concretize what they mean by this.

Like most people in the world who want to see the dispossessed and the disempowered in each society running things, KMU leaders looked at the "socialist" countries--the Soviet Union, Eastern European countries, China, Cuba, Vietnam, Angola, Nicaragua, and others--as possible models for the Philippines. And also, like most who want to "turn the world upside down," KMU leaders seem to have accepted uncritically the statements made by the governments of these various countries as to the true state of affairs within these countries. Accordingly, claims that the working class was running the respective countries, that unemployment, hunger, and inadequate housing had been totally eliminated, and that the countries were democracies were all accepted to greater or lesser extents, and these situations were viewed by KMU leaders as being very positive as they should have been if they were true.

And, in a country where approximately 70% of the people live in poverty, where workers and peasants have been mistreated all their lives, where national needs have been repeatedly sold out to foreign interests and whose Filipino partners have become incredibly wealthy, these visions were all the more attractive.

Combined with this, Filipino workers and peasants noted that the governments attacking them and making their lives even more difficult were the same ones who were attacking the "socialist" countries. For example, it has been the U.S. Government, which has dominated affairs in the Philippines for so long and which had made things so bad for workers and peasants, that was leading the attack against the "socialist" countries. So, if their enemy was saying such bad things about these countries, then these attacks must be nothing but lies.

Unfortunately, as events throughout 1989 and '90 conclusively showed, the visions presented by the so-called "socialist" countries were not only false, but they were overwhelmingly rejected by their own peoples. "Socialism" as presented was shown to be a code word for repressive societies, run by communist party hacks, which could not even meet the physical needs of the people for ample food, adequate housing, quality goods and services, and a clean environment. Nor could these societies provide their members with power over their lives; the "people's democracies" were anything but democracies.

Recognizing the true situation of the "socialist" societies, however, does not mean that capitalism is superior. Every capitalist society which has provided many of these basic needs for its population--the industrialized countries of the "West"--has been built on the backs of people of color, whether in the "Third World" and/or in internal colonies. This situation cannot be overstated. In addition, workers in industrialized countries from the dominant culture--whites everywhere but in Japan--have themselves been tremendously oppressed by the capitalist production process; they have accepted the situation in exchange for a higher standard of living. The maintenance of a

differential standard of living has required the further exploitation of people of color, labeled "inferior" by ruling class ideologists. And for people living in the United States today, capitalism is no longer able to meet even the basic economic needs of a vastly increasing proportion of the population.

Additionally, capitalism has failed to meet the needs of the vast majority of people in every country in which it exists but which has not had another people to exploit. Capitalism in the "Third World" has been a overwhelming disaster.

The writings of Marx, Lenin and their followers presented an alternative vision to the dispossessed. Marx argued that the motorforce of history was class struggle between the oppressed and their oppressors and that, because the oppressed of his time was the proletariat, the working class, its efforts to liberate itself were the key to liberating each society. Accordingly, the interests of the working class were seen as being superior to all others.

Lenin further developed Marx's line of thought. Lenin thought that an organization of the most advanced elements of the working class was needed to lead that class to liberation. He developed the concept of a communist party, which he helped create in Russia and eventually helped to lead to "victory" in 1917. However, regardless of what Lenin's initial concept might have been of a post-capitalist society, what happened in the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik Revolution was that the Communist Party consciously destroyed or replaced the organizations of governance created by workers, monopolizing power in society over everyone else.³²

It was this concept of the "vanguard" party which led to much confusion around the world.

Communist parties presented themselves in power as being the "party of the proletariat," of the working class. In reality, workers did not control anything; all power was confined to each communist party, of which most of the top leaders did not even come from a working-class background. And, while different communist leaders around the world have adopted Marx and Lenin's writings to their own specific situations--for example, Mao recognized the central role of the peasantry in China--the one commonality is that, in every case, power in the post-capitalist society has been confined to the revolutionary organization which captured state power.³³

So, although communist parties have consistently denied power to workers and peasants, a group which advocates that workers and peasants should run society is still labeled "communist."

The KMU has not emphasized how its vision of a new society differs from that of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) or of traditional communist efforts. I believe that the KMU sees the CPP as being part of the pro-people forces and has not emphasized its differing vision because it does not want to give its enemies a tool with which to attack the national democratic movement. Along with that, the KMU has not been clear on its own conception of socialism.

It was this lack of political clarity, in this author's opinion, that led to the KMU's initial support of the Chinese government's suppression of the students and workers at Tienanmen Square in Beijing in June 1989. The process leading up to issuing the statement was flawed, as KMU Chairperson Crispin Beltran related.³⁴ The statement was repudiated by the KMU upon receipt of condemnations from the KMU's international supporters. But, I believe that more fundamental than these considerations was the KMU's prior acceptance of the Chinese government's claim that it was

socialist: because of this, any opposition to the government was seen by KMU leaders as an attack on socialism.

Observation of the KMU over the past six years, throughout the researching of my book and before, has left me convinced that the KMU's vision of any new society is based on mass democracy and empowerment of the oppressed. Quite frankly, it seems clear that the KMU would have not developed to the point that it has, much less continued to exist at all, without this direction. In my opinion, if workers did not believe this to be the case, they would have been unwilling to stand up to the level of repression that has been directed against them. And the allies which have joined with the KMU would have been unwilling to stand with the labor center.

In my experience, workers are unwilling to risk their lives to build a new society unless they think it will be qualitatively better than the one they now have, and they have seen that their leaders practice the equality, honesty and simple living they preach. Workers have seen that from KMU leaders.

This suggests a way forward. First of all, KMU needs to develop a conception of the new society--whether it is called socialism or something else--that is anti-capitalist and based on mass democracy and empowerment of the oppressed. Included in the economic portion of this vision, in my opinion, must be answers to the following questions: 1) What must this society produce in order to assure its members an adequate standard of living and how can that be done with minimal environmental destruction?; 2) How is this production to be organized--will it be boss-on-top, worker-on-bottom as currently exists, or will it be decentralized and egalitarian?; and 3) How can this

production be most equitably distributed among people?

Yet addressing economic concerns is obviously not enough. Issues of relations around politics, kinship and family, the environment and international relations, as well as relations between Christian Filipinos, Muslims and Tribal Filipinos all must be considered and addressed. However, to do all of this, which this author deems essential, requires that the interests of workers and peasants, while important, be seen as no more or no less important than these other areas.³⁵

Along with this, it seems important that the KMU publicly present its position vis-a-vis the Communist Party of the Philippines. There is unity in that both are ultimately anti-capitalist. That would seem to be of primary consideration. However, there also seem to be qualitative differences: not only does the KMU oppose changing the system by force of arms, but its conception of political power in the new society seems radically different. In my opinion, these differences can be and need to be propagated, discussed and debated, which can be done without attacking the CPP. In fact, it seems that the KMU can put out its differences with the CPP while opposing efforts to split the national democratic movement: the CPP is a legitimate member of the national democratic movement and further efforts to repress it or to split it from the national democratic movement must be opposed.

It seems that by directly developing its own ideology, and publicly discussing differences between the KMU and the CPP, the KMU would make another significant contribution to the national democratic struggle in the Philippines.

The Position of Women Within KMU

The KMU has been increasing its efforts to incorporate women into leadership positions. In a country where male chauvinism is so strongly engrained in the culture and society, despite a formal equality unique in Asia, a growing number of women are reaching positions of considerable responsibility. The elections of Lucena Flores as president and Beda Villanueva as secretary general of the United Workers of the Philippines are important steps forward, as are the elections of women as chairpersons of various alliances and KMU chapters around the country.

Despite this genuine progress, there are still two things which need to be said: (1) the increased sensitivity of KMU leaders to women's issues is due overwhelmingly to the efforts of women workers and particularly to those women in the KMK; and (2) KMU leaders, while not opposing women's taking leadership positions, are not doing nearly enough to ensure the development of women leaders.

Part of this "blindness," in addition to the traditional sexism of the society, is that the society conceives "worker" as male. It is the man who is the breadwinner, and the woman who takes care of the work at home; the latter without pay, of course. This ignores the fact that most families in the Philippines cannot survive on just one income. In addition, younger women are increasingly refusing to be economically dependent on anyone; their emerging self-concept, especially for women in the cities, includes being an economically-contributing member of a household. Of course, single mothers have few choices but to work to support themselves and their families. The end result is

that a worker is as likely to be female as male.

Yet a look at the KMU's basic education manual, GTU: Course on Genuine Trade Unionism, reveals that of the very few women represented in the illustrations as being "working-class," each one is presented with several more men around her or in a domestic setting. Women are not presented as inherently economically-active people. And while this may be the KMU artist's own blind spot, the fact that this belief gets propagated in such a key document tends to indicate that the blind spot belongs to more people than just the artist.

Another place where this issue emerges as an organizational weakness is among the KMU's National Council and its National Executive Council. Out of 51 members of the National Council, fewer than 10 are women; out of 21 National Executive Council members, there are 4 women. And these are the guiding organizational bodies. There is no way that this ratio adequately represents the number of women within the KMU or their contributions to the organization. And unfortunately, there does not seem to be enough recognition of the importance of addressing this imbalance.

On the one hand, these observations could be challenged on the basis that no labor movement in the world has done a qualitatively better job of incorporating women into leadership positions. And, as an American and former trade unionist, the author would be totally unwilling to hold up the AFL-CIO as a shining example on this issue. On the other hand, an organization radically challenging the current structure and decision-making process of society needs to address this promptly and thoroughly.

One of the key methods KMU has used to develop political consciousness among its membership has been its education programs. However, there is nothing within the GTU book on the oppression of women workers, or on women's contributions, or on the oppression of women in society. This is in contrast to a wide range of other issues presented, such as the movement for national democracy, genuine land reform and industrialization, international trade, and national, popular and scientific education and culture. One important place to start incorporating women's issues and women's contributions is into the education courses, and particularly within the education documents: PAMA, GTU and the KPD courses need to include women's issues at the core of each course.

Along with this, women must be sought out for leadership development programs. Implementing assertiveness training programs in general, and public speaking and instructors' training specifically, is of vital importance. Fighting for a larger number of company-paid union positions in collective bargaining agreements, to be filled with women as "apprentice" leaders, would enable more women to assume greater levels of responsibility through "on the job" training. And setting "affirmative action" quotas for women leaders that equal or exceed the proportion of women members in the particular organization would focus organizational attention on increasing women's leadership.

But it's not enough to support for women's leadership in the union or labor organization. There is still the family relationship: most Filipinas get married in a very patriarchal society. Several issues must be confronted within the family. Women's work both inside and outside the house must be recognized as an important contribution to the well-being of the family and the society. Husbands

must be taught that women's participation in union affairs--and any other efforts deemed important by the wives--is important and should not be limited or restricted. And, in addition to recognizing the importance of this participation, husbands must be taught to carry their share of housework and childcare responsibilities so that their wives can participate. One way to effectively raise and confront these issues, according to KMK organizer Ofelia Ballesta, is in education sessions where both husband and wife participate.

In short, the promise conveyed to the nation's workers by the KMU must be specifically amended to include women workers. This has not been done, except through the KMK. This weakness is considerable and needs to be addressed as a priority.

Bureaucracy Within KMU

A unique situation currently exists in the KMU: occupying a leadership position is not seen as a goal for careerists. Leaders are very exposed and their lives are always in danger. These are not positions for the weak at heart.

However, what has happened is that once a leader attains a position, that leader usually maintains that position unless requested to fill another one, or he or she decides to give up that position due to family pressures or other considerations, or dies or is killed.

And along with that, many leaders fill two jobs, in what Filipinos call "double tasking." For

example, in one case, the deputy secretary general of an alliance is also the regional representative of a federation. This is not uncommon.

And again, because of the security situation and the precarious financial position KMU organizations face, it is understandable that strong, capable leaders are retained in key positions and that they handle as much responsibility as they possibly can. It may be that the KMU cannot develop the leadership or the financial stability to do otherwise for the foreseeable future.

Nonetheless, down the road, when becoming a labor leader is no longer putting one's life on the line and when the organization can support sufficient personnel to cover all necessary positions of responsibility, the issue of bureaucratization will need to be confronted internally.

Bureaucratization of a labor organization results from two different sources. First of all, because of the oppressive and alienated nature of most work under capitalism, becoming a full-time labor leader is often seen as a desirable route out of the day-to-day grind. The work generally is much more interesting and the labor official has much more control over his or her day-to-day work than do most workers. In addition, leadership is seen as having more status, and within an organization such as the KMU, it certainly is seen as a "legitimate" thing to do.

The other source is internal: workers and other labor leaders desire to have the most qualified and dependable people in key positions. Generally speaking, once a person successfully fills a job, he or she continues in that position because he or she does it well. Or, another thing that happens is that when a person makes himself or herself seen as indispensable to a higher-up, they

also stay in that position. Obviously, having a well-qualified person in a particular position is far preferable to having a "suck ass." Nonetheless, when the same people continue in office, others are prevented from having the chance to develop their own leadership capabilities; and this is especially true of women leaders.

There are several ways that the tendency toward bureaucratization can be combated. The organization can establish limits on the length of term of office. It can also limit the amount of time that any leader can stay out of the workplace and still be an officer. And while specific procedures can be adopted so as not to deprive the organization of an extraordinary leader, controls need to be established so that these cases are seen as truly exceptional.

Another way to combat this problem relates to the importance of re-organizing production in the new society: as workers redesign their work processes and gain power over them, they will feel less alienated from their work. Less alienation reduces the pressures to escape and become labor bureaucrats.

Thirdly, leadership development programs should prepare workers to take on leadership responsibilities. Training people and then rotating them through various leadership positions gives them a chance to develop their knowledge and skills, provides the organization with a large supply of trained leaders, and teaches workers about the responsibilities and problems of leadership.

It would seem worthwhile to lay the groundwork now for confronting this situation before it actually becomes a problem.

Summing Up

The men and women of the KMU have built a strong and powerful organization. This labor center is based on a philosophy of being genuine, militant and nationalist and from that philosophy, workers have developed the concept of genuine trade unionism. Coupled with this has been a democratic decision-making process, a structure of federations and alliances that is mutually reinforcing, an elaborate and emphasized education program, and alliances with other sectoral organizations.

The KMU has unified organizations at a number of different levels into a national labor center. And it has survived for over 10 years, something no previous radical labor center has accomplished in the Philippines.

As a result, during its first 10 years, the KMU led two nationwide general workers' strikes and constituted a major force in a nationwide welgang bayan, while continuing regional and provincial efforts. These national efforts have been a combination of KMU unions, unions from other labor groupings, and sectoral organizations.

It is clear that social movements, united in BAYAN, are a key force in the future development of the Philippines. And central to BAYAN is the KMU.

At the same time, the KMU has some problems it must address. It must get clear on its political ideology and its vision of the future, and it must differentiate its vision from that of the CPP. It must become much more sensitive and active in tackling women's oppression, within the unions, the society and the general culture. And it must confront the problem of bureaucracy within its ranks.

But in criticizing the KMU, the question must be asked if the labor center has developed a organizational process by which these problems can be addressed. It seems quite clear that it has, and I expect substantial progress to be made in regard to these issues in the up-coming period.

Evaluation of the Case Study

There are three important factors to come out of this case study. The most important is the different conception of working class organization and the transcending of the separation between economics and politics, both which are integral to the KMU's conception of genuine trade unionism. There is no doubt that the KMU conceives itself as fighting for the well-being of all Filipino working people, and it has joined as an equal with other social movements to change society. This can be seen with its participation in welgang bayans (people's strikes) and its membership in the national alliance, BAYAN. But it also understands that it must fight domination of the country from outside, whether from particular nations, international institutions and/or reactionary foreign labor movements.

Another key factor is its autonomy from capital, state and political parties, and the internal processes within the organization. The KMU is controlled by its membership and not by any

organization from the left or the right. The KMU is committed to union democracy, and the leadership is held accountable to the membership. The organization is decentralized as much as possible.

Another important factor is the importance placed on formally educating the rank and file through the PAMA, GTU and KPD education courses. Most trade union education, when there is any, overwhelmingly focuses on elected leadership and in some unions, shop stewards--the KMU not only educates these key people but insists on educating the rank and file. In 1986, I was told by Serge Cherniguin, who at the time was the Secretary General of the National Federation of Sugar Workers, that all 80,000 of the NFSW's members had completed the one day PAMA course. This is all the more impressive when one understands this was under great repression, and that a large number of the sugar workers are basically illiterate.³⁶

It seems clear that the KMU is a new type of trade union, and that reflecting upon its example and experiences can help develop the concept of genuine trade unionism.

Conclusion

A number of points were made in this paper. I advanced the traditional conceptions of trade unionism, and then argued that the concept of social movement unionism is qualitatively different.³⁷ I discussed the development of this concept, seeking out the most important parts of the conceptions put forth both by Peter Waterman and Rob Lambert. I suggested a new definition of social

movement unionism which both surpasses the contributions of Waterman and Lambert and strengthens the conceptualization. This was joined with a case study of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) Labor Center of the Philippines, which provides evidence of the power of this new conception.

It seems clear that this concept of social movement unionism is a powerful one and can be applied at least to unionism as practiced by the KMU in the Philippines. Evidence suggests it also can be applied to unionism in Brazil, South Africa and South Korea., and perhaps elsewhere.

But even if this is an accurate rendition of the labor movements developing in these four countries, does it mean it can develop in other countries? I don't see why it cannot, although obviously only time will suggest a more detailed answer to this question. However, among the four countries of Brazil, the Philippines, South Africa and South Korea, there is a wide range of social situations and cultures: these countries are at differing levels of industrialization, with different social histories, with different colonial histories, and with differing cultures and religions. They do share somewhat the commonality of increasing industrialization under period of dictatorships--and that includes apartheid, although dictatorship did not exist for the whites in that country. These wide variations do appear suggestive, but whether social movement unionism can develop in Islamic countries, for example, or Sub-Saharan Africa, we will have to see--although my guess is that the answer to the question is more dependent on the particular development of the labor movements than any larger cultural or industrial issues.

Nonetheless, trade unionism based on this model has a chance to address some of the problems and issues facing workers in the LEDCs in particular and, I believe, in at least some of the

MEDCs as well.³⁸ I don't see other models providing a way forward. So while the risk of repression is great, social movement unionism does offer a way forward, against the subjugation and passivity common to workers throughout much of the "Third World."

Endnotes

⁷ Unfortunately, most of the social movement theory that has been developed has been developed in Europe and has ignored workers' struggles. In other words, workers' struggles have gone from being the site or the primary site, as particularly in Marxism, to being ignored in social movement theory. Basically the discussion about "social movement unionism" has been an effort both to understand the recent developments in workers' struggles, and to re-insert the workers' struggles as one site of political struggle among all the social movements, such as women's, peace, students, etc.

⁸ Some might argue that this "understanding" completely invalidates the concept of "worker" by being so broad. I don't think so. Workers are people who must sell their labor to survive--either as an individual, a family unit or an entire grouping in society--and who have relatively little power against those who dominate the individual business, the production and ideological realms of society, the state or the ruling class, at least until they have organized themselves, built mutually-reinforcing alliances with other groupings of people, and have struggled to take power away from or negate the power that the more powerful have.

However, the Marxist tradition in particular has assumed that just because a person sells his or her labor power, that he or she identifies herself as a worker. What this ignores is that most people have a number of personal identities--ways they conceive of themselves, such as worker, lover, parent, citizen, etc.; that a person can choose any one of these identities to identify him or herself at any time; and that one can change identities at one's will. Therefore, extremely few people, if any, would identify themselves solely as a worker, although they may prioritize their identity

as a worker. (For more on this, see Mouffe, 1988: 89-90.)

My understanding of social movement unionism is based on understanding the existence of multiple forms of identity among people--I think it's a much more sophisticated and accurate understanding of people than any who understand people only as "workers," "women," "person of color," whatever.

⁹ Because of the understanding that I have of workers, and people in general, which I described in footnote ⁸, I no longer accept the concept of social class--in either its Marxist or its bourgeois sociological conception. I think the concept is inaccurate and much too limited. I use it here because to explain my viewpoint on the organization of society is beyond the scope of this paper. For my understanding of the structural organization of society, see Scipes, 1991: 8-12.

¹⁰ It is important to note here that Lenin separated economic and political struggles in his conceptualization.

¹¹ Waterman believes that the KMU is controlled by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), and has stated this on numerous occasions, both privately and publicly. He has also told me that he developed his concept of social movement unionism to specifically exclude the KMU because of its being controlled by the CPP. However, he has presented no evidence that a knowledgeable person on the situation of the KMU and of the Philippines would accept. And this is despite his making one trip to the Philippines, although he never left Metro Manila which is a completely different situation than what exists in much of the rest of the country.

What he apparently has done is used his experience as a former WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions) functionary and remembered how the Communists functioned wherever they went, and then assumed that because there was a Communist Party in the Philippines, it also functioned in the traditional manner; i.e., that it controls the radical wing of the labor movement. As I stated above, he has presented no credible evidence that this is true. And he certainly cannot show the process by which this supposed control operates. At best, he can present a limited number of situations where the KMU's position was similar to that of the CPP, from which he claims supports his position, although he cannot show that they were imposed by the CPP. This is by no means sufficient.

Not only is his approach unsupported by specific evidence, but Golden's research in Italy has showed that even where a Communist Party is legal, institutionalized and has mass electoral support, it "is difficult for the party to control organized labor to the extent that Communist unionists are themselves heterogeneous in their policy orientations and effectively act against their own party" (emphasis added) (Golden, 1988: 245). It is much more unlikely to have as much or more control in a situation in which the Communist Party is illegal and where public accusations of being a "communist" can often result--and unfortunately, have resulted--in the accused being killed.

But the key weakness in Waterman's argument is that where the Leninist conception separates the economic and political, the KMU's conception of genuine trade unionism unites them.

This issue will be elaborated further in the case study.

¹² This raises the crucial point of democracy in movements, and it seems very critical in trying to

consider the relationship between communist, vanguard parties and other social movements. Ideologically, communist parties are the allies in fighting capitalist domination and oppression; in reality, they are merely trying to replace the capitalists with their members and/or supporters. And with a system which is based on hierarchy and authoritarianism--democratic centralism--any "post-revolutionary" system of power in which the communists are dominant would itself be dominating and oppressive, and thus opposed to the social movements.

This suggests a strategy, since most people would agree that the domination and oppression of the existing system is of more immediate concern than the possible domination and oppression of a future system, although future possibilities cannot be ignored: that while the communists are challenging the current system they should not be conceived as enemies, but that social movements work with them only when chosen by the social movements and only when and as long as the communists are willing to work with the social movements on the basis of equality and mutual respect. Social movements should also be working to establish structures and processes within each social movement which challenge domination and oppression within the social movement itself--and perhaps the main form of this would be bureaucratization, although I wouldn't limit it only to this. At the same time, the social movements should publicly put forth their values and ideology, and argue that their conception of the future is much superior to any based on domination and oppression. Thus while challenging the present domination and oppression, the social movements would also be fighting any potential domination and oppression of a "post-revolutionary" system.

¹³ This point was suggested by Peter Waterman in response to an earlier draft of this paper.

¹⁴ See footnote 8.

¹⁵ Although I examine the KMU in this paper, and suggest it provides evidence for this model of social movement unionism, this is a theoretical conception I am using to understand the KMU and not a term that the KMU has adopted to describe itself. Therefore, I bear all responsibility for any application of this concept to the KMU.

¹⁶ Interview with KMU Chairperson Crispin Beltran, May 2, 1990 in Manila. All interviews were conducted by me and, unless otherwise stated, will appear in my forthcoming book.

¹⁷ Interview with a member of KMU's International Department on April 16, 1990 in Manila.

¹⁸ An extensive survey of the literature documenting this point is included in Scipes, forthcoming.

¹⁹ Interview with George Aguilon, April 28, 1988 in Davao City. NAMAHEMIN is a geographical alliance covering Davao City, and Davao del Sur and North Cotabato provinces, all on the island of Mindanao.

²⁰ Interview with Lucena Flores and Beda Villanueva, President and Secretary General respectively, of the United Workers' of the Philippines, June 21, 1989, in Manila. Villanueva was also the President of the Greenfields Workers' Union.

The leadership of the ULGWP had unilaterally and illegally disaffiliated from the KMU,

without the permission of the National Executive Council. The majority of local unions then left the ULGWP, reunited into the United Workers' of the Philippines, and reaffiliated with the KMU in early 1989.

²¹ There is also an organization of women workers, the KMK or Kilusanng Manggagawang Kababhaihan, which is affiliated with KMU and which is generally another type of alliance. The KMK has 20,000 members. It has specifically been challenging women's oppression within the workplace, society and the unions. In 1989, its program focused on winning greater maternity leave benefits for all women, establishing day care facilities in workplaces, ending sexual harassment, and solving health problems of women workers in the factories. For an interview with Cleofe Zapanta, Secretary General of the KMK, see Scipes, 1990b.

²² "National democracy" is generally seen as a stage preceeding socialism. The national democratic movement includes both legal and illegal organizations, with the KMU and the other social movements comprising the legal wing, and the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front comprising the illegal wing. And although these groups are politically seeking similar goals, they are not organizationally united. Additionally, neither of these groupings or "wings" is a monolithic unity, but comprises a wide range of politics and outlooks within each wing and within each organization.

²³ One of the interesting things about the KMU's conception of a national democratic coalition government is that it is based on social sector--peasants, workers, women, etc.--representation and not by political party. When I asked Primo Amparo, Chairperson of the AMBA-BALA alliance in

Bataan whether or not the Communist Party of the Philippines would have any representation in their conception of government, he replied, "If they are in the sectors. [There] will be no party; it must be sectoral representatives." Interview with Primo Amparo, April 14, 1990, in Mariveles, Bataan.

²⁴ Interview in Manila in January 1986, with a person who requested I not use his name.

²⁵ Interview with Erasto "Nonoy" Librado, April 30, 1990 in Davao City.

²⁶ The KMU's international work has focused on building solidarity with workers in the "south" and "west" of the world; because of its previous acceptance of "socialism" in the "east"--see the section below on "KMU's Ideology"--it has concentrated on building solidarity with various labor organizations in "socialist" countries instead of with workers. Obviously, this situation can no longer be rationalized. It will be interesting to see how the KMU works to build solidarity with workers in Eastern Europe.

These comments are limited to the KMU's efforts to build solidarity with workers in the south and west.

²⁷ International Labour Reports. 1989. "National Endowment for Democracy: Winning Friends?"; International Labour Reports, May-June: 7-13.

²⁸ Interview with Crispin Beltran, May 2, 1990 in Manila.

²⁹ A former officer of the National Sugar Workers Federation/KMU who had left the NFSW and had helped establish a rival union, Joe Tampinco, was assassinated in July 1988. Dan Gallin, Secretary General of the IUF, believing the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was behind the assassination, charged the NFSW with "moral complicity" in the killing. He justified this by claiming that since the NFSW was controlled by the CPP, it shared the burden of the assassination. (However, Gallin admitted to International Labour Reports in a February 1989 interview that he did not even have substantial circumstantial evidence to support his claim.)

In response to the IUF attack, which was the latest in a string of controversial issues, three of the four KMU-affiliated unions which were also affiliated with the IUF withdrew from the IUF, claiming that the IUF had politically intervened in their internal affairs, discriminated against them and tried to split their organizations.

³⁰ V.I. Lenin, 1953. See particularly Chapter III, "Trade-Unionist Politics and Social-Democratic [Communist] Politics": 259-308.

³¹ There are communist party members in the KMU, just as there are members of almost every political organization in the country who are also members of the KMU. The essential question is whether members of these external organizations can force the KMU to take positions or carry out activities in opposition to the interest and activities of KMU members as a whole. As stated, I do not think any group within the KMU is strong enough to override the organization, and I've seen no convincing proof that this has been done.

In addition, my personal experiences as an industrial worker, union member and labor-community activist in many organizations over a 20 year period make me very sceptical that one organization can "take over" another without destroying the one taken over. This seems especially unlikely in a situation such as that faced by the KMU, whereby organizational survival is so dependent upon membership participation.

It seem incumbent that should anyone claim that the KMU is controlled by an external organization, besides confronting the issues specifically raised in the text, they also show how the KMU is controlled by this external organization over time. In other words, it is not sufficient to claim that "Organization X" set up this or that organization, or that a member of "Organization X" is in this or that position, but the claimant must show how this has been used to force the KMU membership both to accept "X" leadership against its own interests and to maintain its participation.

³² Many people who are leftists claim that Bolshevik Party domination over workers took place under Stalin and not under Lenin; in other words, the problem was not the system established by the Bolsheviks under Lenin but merely a deformation of what was inherently a good system.

Other leftists accept that the problems occurred under Lenin, but blame them on the conditions of civil war in the country when 33 allied nations invaded the new Soviet Union.

In an excellent article which examined the various writings on the subject, Don Fitz conclusively showed that the problems were of the system established and carried out by the Bolsheviks under Lenin, and not because of the civil war or of Stalinism. "... the groundwork for

undermining workers' self-management was laid by the end of 1917, less than eight weeks after the Bolshevik seizure of power and six months prior to the beginning of the civil war" (emphasis added).

Don Fitz, 1990: 38.

³³ The situation in Nicaragua, whereby the ruling Sandinista party transferred state power after losing national elections in early 1990, is the exception. And obviously the U.S. war by Contra-proxies was a factor in this. Nonetheless, the Sandinistas held power for almost 11 years.

³⁴ Interview with Crispin Beltran, May 2, 1990 in Manila.

³⁵ For one attempt to theorize a society along these lines, although focusing on the United States, see Michael Albert, et. al., 1986. I think the overall approach would be suggestive for the KMU and others trying to analyze their respective societies.

³⁶ Although I place great importance on the education program of the KMU, and while I've seen some excellent material produced in South Africa for COSATU unions, I don't know how systematic or central the educational process is in the unions outside of the Philippines. Therefore, until we have additional research, I'm not willing to apply it to my conception of social movement unionism. However, should education programs be systematically integrated in these other labor movements, I would definitely include its requirement in my conceptualization.

³⁷ One issue which I have not confronted is Offe and Wiesenhal's 1985 "theory of opportunism," in which they suggest a dynamic model by which to understand the development of trade union

struggles (213-220). First of all, I don't think it is applicable to social movement unions because it does not understand this different conception of trade unionism; i.e., it would seem relevant to my "economic" and "political" conceptions, but not to social movement unionism.

But even if it were relevant to social movement unionism, I don't think it accurately describes the development of social movement unions at least in the period before the establishment of a "pro-people" (or in the case of the Philippines, a national democratic) government. Stage 1, which includes "relatively small-scale, militant conflict" (215), certainly does not describe the widespread, mass social conflict which these social movement unions have been engaged in, whether in Brazil, the Philippines, South Africa or South Korea.

But where the theory of opportunism is qualitatively deficient is in the description in Stage 2, whereby it assumes that "concessions are likely to be made not because members have struck, but in order to prevent a strike" (216). This assumes a recognition and legitimization of the unions by individual firms. While this is sometimes true, it is not always true: for example, in the 1987-89 struggle at Atlas Mines in Cebu, central Philippines, the employer joined with opposing trade unions, vigilantes (death squads), the Philippine Constabulary and the local government to combat the established KMU-affiliated union in a recognition election. (Despite these opponents, and in an election certified by the Department of Labor and Employment, the KMU union won 69% of the vote in an election in which it was only 1 of 13 competing unions!) (Scipes, 1990a). This theory does not take into account ideologically opposed employers, the military or the state, with which these unions are almost constantly faced. Additionally, even where a particular firm does accept the union, the periodic campaigns in which the KMU engages with other social movements ensures that workers'

militancy is not held in check but is mobilized to support larger political campaigns beyond the firm. In short, the KMU does not rest on its laurels but is constantly trying to further develop workers' collective identities through social struggles for a more just society.

However, this may change upon the coming to power of a pro-people's government, at least as long as that government continues to support and represent the aspirations of the people. The KMU certainly was willing to work with the Aquino government after the downfall of Marcos, despite serious misgivings of some its leadership. However, as Aquino's position shifted from being pro-people, the KMU began challenging its policies and eventually the government itself (Scipes, forthcoming). This experience suggests the necessity of social movement unions being autonomous from every type of government, and not just obviously reactionary ones--government policies can change, and unless the unions maintain their capability for struggle, they can lose much of what they have previously won.

³⁸ This might not be as pressing an issue in the social democracies of Northwestern Europe, or in Japan, but it certainly is appropriate in my opinion for the United States. However, the experience of Britain under Thatcher certainly warns that dependence on any "social pact" with a government can be violently overturned and in a relatively short period of time.

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1 Like many others, I am frustrated with the terms developed to date which are used to differentiate the more economically developed countries--often referred to as "industrialized" countries--from the less economically developed countries, which are often referred to as the "Third World." (I am ignoring at this point in time the so-called "Communist" or "formerly-Communist" countries.) Unfortunately, I have not come up with an alternative conception myself with which I am satisfied with.

However, I reject the term "less developed countries" or "LDCs" because they specifically incorporate levels of economic development as being representative of historical or cultural development as well, which is very "Western"-centric (and here I'm caught by terminology again because I include Japan), if not racist. One shudders to think of, for example, the United States being more historically or culturally developed than the societies of China, India, Egypt or those of the Mayans and Aztecs of Latin America. Therefore, because there is a difference in economic development--obviously a product of imperialism--I will use the terms "more economically developed" and "less economically developed" countries.

2 I use the term "working people" to signify a much more inclusive conception than "working class," which is an inadequate concept as far as I am concerned. (See Scipes, 1991: 8-12, for discussion of this point.) I include in this "working people" conception all people who must sell their labor power to survive and who are relatively powerless as far as the overall operation of their respective workplaces are concerned.

3 I served for five years as the North American representative for the British-based journal International Labour Reports. During this time, from reading the articles published in ILR as well as other material--particularly Transnationals Information Exchange (1984), MacShane, Plaut and Ward (1985), Asian Labour Monitor (1987), and Munck (1988)--and from my experiences with the KMU in the Philippines, I saw that new labor movements were emerging in these countries that were obviously different from traditional unions. The specific labor centers in these countries which I refer to--CUT (Central Unica do Trabalhadores) in Brazil, KMU (Kilusang Mayo Uno) in the Philippines, COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) in South Africa and KTUC (Korean Trade Union Congress) in South Korea--are ones which, as I argue in this paper, should be conceptualized differently than traditional trade unions. These experiences, I suggest, provide the basis for the development of a concept of "social movement unionism" and serve as a model to rejuvenate trade unionism in particularly the LEDCs (and at least in some MEDCs such as the United States).

However, I do not confine the possible development of social movement unionism to just these countries; it is the experiences of these labor centers, however, which are the clearest and thus the strongest bases for any new model. Certainly, the experiences of Solidarnosc in Poland should be considered, and Solidarnosc probably fits this conception at least during 1980-81--Lambert and Webster include Solidarnosc their conception of social movement unionism, although in general and not limited to any particular time period (Lambert and Webster, 1988: 39, FN #3). However, I'm not so sure what happened during the martial law period, and evidence I've seen is contradictory--obviously, much more research needs to be done. Munck (1988: 121-22) writes of some local forms of social movement unionism in India. Personal reports on the UNTS in El Salvador suggest it might be another social movement unionism-type labor center, but more detailed information needs to be acquired. I've heard some interesting reports on new unions in Mexico. I assume there are also other experiences along these lines taking place in other countries, although they haven't yet been reported. In short, I believe this concept of social movement unionism fits a range of unions beyond those which I specifically refer to.

4 Miriam Golden, in her study of union responses to austerity programs in Italy in the late 1970s-early 1980s, took a different approach. She tried to explain different policy orientations of organized labor, using political, sociological, economic-industrial and organizational typologies. She found each of these insufficient, if not "patently inaccurate." She argued that "a more adequate account of union policy orientations should instead be actor-centered, focused on union officials, themselves conscious agents who evaluate situations and issues according to their goals and preferences and on that basis respond to structural constraints--business conditions, the extent of organizational centralization, the pressures from friendly or unfriendly political parties and governments" (Golden, 1988: 5-6). And although this doesn't solve the problem of a lack of theory of trade unionism or of national labor movements, to me it suggests a much more interesting approach than that suggested by Cella and Treu.

5 The best source on international activities of the British TUC remains Thomson and Larson, 1978. For a report on international activities of the German political foundations, see Pinto-Duschinsky, 1991. The DGB operates through the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (foundation).

There has been extensive reporting and discussion of AFL-CIO activities over the years, of which the most comprehensive listing is in Scipes, 1989, FN #2. For a more recent overview of the AFL-CIO's foreign operations, see Sims, 1991. However, most of the analysis is, in my opinion, incorrect, blaming factors and organizations external to the AFL-CIO, rather than looking for factors internal to the AFL-CIO for its imperialist foreign policy. For a detailed look at the roots of AFL-CIO foreign policy, focusing on internal factors, see Scipes, 1989.

6 Jon Kraus claims that the most important factor regarding performance of the labor movement in "populist" or "radical nationalist" societies--and he examined the labor movements in Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanzania--is the experience and institutionalization of the labor movement prior to the regime's coming to power. In a case such as Ghana, where the labor movement had the most experience and longest institutionalization of the four countries, he argues that "the primary commitment of most union leaders remained to their unions..." (Kraus, 1988: 182).

However, Kraus presented no evidence of the unions in Ghana systematically challenging the differing populist or radical nationalist governments and their respective organization of society. That suggests that those unions which did not give their primary loyalty to the regime were themselves economic unions under my typology, rather than political unions.