

**ELIZALDE & CO., INC., DOING BUSINESS UNDER THE NAME
“HACIENDA VALENCIA,” PETITIONER, VS. ALLIED
WORKERS’ ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, BAIS
CHAPTER, AGRICULTURAL SECTION (AWA)...**

G. R. No. L-20792. May 31, 1965

Ponente: ZALDIVAR. J.

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ZALDIVAR. J.:

Certiorari to review a resolution of the Court of Industrial Relations, in its Case No. 198-MC-Cebu (Allied Workers' Association vs. "Hacienda Valencia" Business Enterprises and Elizalde & Co., Inc.), asserting its jurisdiction over the case.

The Allied Workers' Association of the Philippines, Bais Chapter, Agricultural Section, a labor organization with Permit No. 3296-IP from the Department of Labor, had petitioned the Court of Industrial Relations for a certification as sole and exclusive representative of all the employees of the "Hacienda Valencia," owned and operated by petitioner Elizalde & Co., Inc. The latter filed a motion to dismiss, claiming that the petitioning workers were all agricultural workers of the "Hacienda Valencia," an enterprise dedicated solely to the planting and cultivation of sugar cane; and that, as decided in the case of Santos vs. C.I.R., L-17196, December 28, 1961, controversies between capital and labor in agricultural lands under any system of cultivation are within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of Agrarian Relations and not within that of the Court of Industrial Relations. The motion to dismiss was granted by the hearing judge; but upon appeal to the court en banc, the latter, by majority vote, reversed the resolution, holding that it has "exclusive jurisdiction over all cases that pertain to the union rights of the employees, agriculture workers being included therein by virtue of section 27 of Republic Act 2263."

Hence this petition for certiorari.

The question of jurisdiction over conflicts between landowners and laborers engaged in agricultural work is not new, and has been repeatedly passed upon by this Supreme Court. The case of Victorias Milling Co. vs. C.I.R. and Free Visayan Workers, G. R. No. L-17281, decided on March 30, 1963, is particularly relevant, being almost on all fours with the present case. There a union of laborers working in the sugar cane haciendas of the Victorias Milling Co. had charged the company with unfair labor practice in the Court of Industrial Relations. The latter's jurisdiction was impugned before this Court, and it was held that:

"The members of respondent Union are merely agricultural laborers in petitioner's haciendas, the principal work of which is planting and harvesting sugar cane and other chores incidental to ordinary farming operations. They are agricultural workers, and in the supposition that the milling company had committed unfair labor practice upon them, the Court of Agrarian Relations has jurisdiction over the case."

It was also ruled in Hacienda Esperanza, et al. vs. C.I.R., et al., G. R. No. L-18708, Nov. 28, 1962:

"An unfair labor practice case involving agricultural laborers engaged in agricultural pursuits are within the jurisdiction of the Court of Agrarian Relations."

a ruling reiterated in *Camus vs. Court of Agrarian Relations*, L-18225, June 30, 1964.

The rationale of these rulings was set in the preceding case of *Santos vs. C.I.R., et al.*, G.R. No. L-17196, December 28, 1961, in that—

"not only because an agricultural laborer does not come with" the purview of the word "employee" defined in Section 2(d) of R.A. 875 but also because any matter that may pertain to the relation of tenant and landlord come under the Agricultural Tenancy Act (R.A. No. 1199 as amended by Republic Act No. 2263) and any controversy that may arise between them as an incident their relationship comes under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of Agrarian Relations created by Republic Act No. 1267."

The Court of Agrarian Relations, expressly created for the "enforcement of all laws and regulations governing the relation of capital and labor on all agricultural under any system of cultivation" (See 1, R.A. 1267), was given exclusive jurisdiction over the entire Philippines consider, investigate, decide and settle all questions, matters, controversies, or disputes involving all those relationships established by law which determine the varying lights of poisons in the cultivation and use of agricultural land where one of the parties works the land" (Sec. 7, R.A. 1267), and that jurisdiction is certainly enough to include disputes over union representation of agricultural laborers and other workers that were given, by Section 27 of Republic Act No. 2263, the right to form, maintain and expand their unions and organizations, prohibiting landholders from discouraging, initiating, dominating, assisting or interfering with such unions or organizations.

The appealed resolution of the respondent court argues that there would be no penalty imposable for violation of the laborer's rights conferred by section 27, Republic Act No. 2263, except by applying the Industrial Peace Act, R. A. 875. This is a mistake. That section was an amendment to Republic Act 1199 (Tenancy Act), and, therefore, Us violation would be punishable under section 57 of the latter Act, penalizing with a fine not exceeding two thousand pesos or imprisonment not exceeding one year or both any violation of its provisions; as well as under the contempt power conferred by section 8 of Republic Act No. 3267 on the Agrarian Court.

Nor are we impressed by the consideration that the Court of Industrial Relations already has the machinery to deal with questions of union representation. There is no reason why the Court of Agrarian Relations may not set up its own organization to deal with cases within its jurisdiction as circumstances may require, making use of its rule-making power or by calling upon the opposite government offices, as its organic law empowers it to do.

Respondent AWA calls attention to the fact that Republic Act No. 809 and its provisions refer to the persons engaged in the "sugar industry." Nothing in said Act, however, indicates any legislative intent to convert the agricultural laborers into industrial employees; the term "sugar industry" in said Act refers to sugar millers, planters and laborers as a whole, and has no bearing on the issue now before the Court.

Wherefore, the resolution under review is reversed, and the petition for certification is ordered dismissed, without prejudice to petitioner's seeking relief in the proper courts. No costs.

Bengzon, C. J., Bautista Angelo, Barrera, Regala, Makalintal, Bengzon, J. P. and Zaldivar, JJ., concur.

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