

**PRUDENCIO JALANDONI, JOSE LIANSING, ANTONIO ADVINCULA
AND NUMERIANO OROCEO, PETITIONERS, VS. THE HONORABLE
DEMETRIO G. VINSON, JUDGE OF THE COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE,
12TH JUDICIA...**

G.R. No. L-22180. October 23, 1974

Ponente: FERNANDO, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/d25654667a57/>

FERNANDO, J.:

It was the failure of respondent judge to reconsider an order resulting in the issuance of a preliminary injunction in favor of private respondent Elizalde & Company, Inc., restraining what was termed "squatting on, making demonstration in or otherwise occupying any portion of three of its haciendas"[1] as well as acts of picketing, notwithstanding its jurisdiction having been assailed as the matter in dispute was properly cognizable by the Court of Agrarian Relations, that resulted in the filing of this certiorari petition. A perusal of the pleadings reveals that the objection raised is well founded. Respondent Judge, therefore, ought to have granted the motion of petitioners for a dissolution of the writ of preliminary injunction reiterated in the answer, which in effect would seek the dismissal of the complaint of private respondent for damages, allegedly arising from the imputed unlawful acts of petitioner, arising from such labor trouble. Only last month, in *Ferrer vs. Villamor*,[2] there is a reiteration of the well-settled principle that a dispute between farm laborers and management is beyond the competence of a court of first instance. We have to grant certiorari.

The controlling facts are undisputed. Petitioners are officers of the National Sugar Workers Union (PAFLU), a legitimate labor organization, including among its members farm workers in three haciendas of La Carlota owned by respondent Elizalde & Company. There was a strike accompanied by picketing by such farm laborers on October 29, 1963, with a complaint already filed with the Court of Agrarian Relations in Bacolod City, Philippines, attributing to respondent Elizalde & Company, acts of undue discrimination and dismissals due to union activities. Then on October 30, 1963, respondent Elizalde & Company filed a complaint for damages before respondent Judge, praying among other things for the issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction against the petitioners the members of the labor union of which they are officers, as there was picketing as a result of the strike. Respondent Judge acted affirmatively on such a plea, the very next day, October 31, 1963, no hearing being accorded petitioners before the issuance of such writ of preliminary injunction. There was on November 2, 1963 a motion for the dissolution of such writ, based on the lack of jurisdiction, it being alleged that such competence is lodged exclusively with the Court of Agrarian Relations involving as it did a dispute between farm workers and private respondent. It was all to no avail. The answer of petitioners stated with even greater clarity that the matter was beyond his jurisdiction. Again, respondent Judge did not budge from his position. Hence this petition.

As mentioned at the outset, petitioners are entitled to the writ prayed for.

As was clearly set forth in the aforecited *Ferrer* decision, as far back as 1949, in *Ojo vs. Jamito*,[3] this Court has

been committed to the principle that there is no legal impediment to the vesting of exclusive jurisdiction in an agency other than regular courts to take sole charge of agricultural disputes. In the same year, in *Infante vs. Javier*,^[4] the then Justice, later Chief Justice, Bengzon emphasized that such transfer of authority arose from the police power of the State to regulate relations between landowner and tenant and between labor and capital in industry and in agriculture. It could have been added that precisely such a step was taken in view of the constitutional mandates for social justice and protection to labor. Thereafter, in 1956, in *Marcelo vs. De Leon*,^[5] the same jurist noted that three years earlier, the relationship between farm laborers and management should be governed by tenancy statutes and not by the Civil Code. Justice Padilla, in *Militar vs. Torcillero*,^[6] a 1961 decision, stressed that such competence of the Court of Agrarian Relations, created as far back as 1955, extended to the hearing and determination of actions for recovery of damages. That same year, in *Espiritu vs. David*,^[7] the then Justice, later Chief Justice, Concepcion, speaking for the Court, stated: "With respect to defendants' alleged voluntary submission to the jurisdiction of the court of first instance, which is not a fact, suffice it to say, that jurisdiction over the subject matter is determined by law and cannot be conferred by the will of the parties."^[8]

At the time, therefore, of respondent Judge assuming jurisdiction in the action for damages and acceding to the plea for the issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction, there was no question whatsoever that if, as was alleged by petitioners not once but twice, the controversy arose from a strike and picketing, there being a labor dispute between the farm workers and the management, ordinary prudence ought to have cautioned respondent Judge to at least hear evidence on the question. If such indeed were the case, then he ought to have desisted from taking any further step on the matter it being clearly outside the sphere of his authority. It is worth noting that in *Derecho vs. Abiera*,^[9] the matter involved being one of a leasehold tenancy, this Court, through Justice Teehankee, reiterated the controlling principle: "We hold that when the factual question of the existence of a leasehold tenancy relation between the parties is raised, in an ejectment case, which if true, would vest original and exclusive jurisdiction over the case in the court of agrarian relations and not in the municipal court, it is essential that the court of first instance, hold a preliminary hearing and receive the evidence solely on the facts that would show or disprove the existence of the alleged leasehold tenancy. On the basis of such evidence, the court would then determine whether or not it has jurisdiction, and summarize the facts in an order upholding its jurisdiction and that of the municipal court or declaring the lack thereof."^[10] Had there been, therefore, due deference to authoritative precedents, respondent Judge would have acted otherwise and a petition of this character could have been avoided. As it is, his failure to keep within the limits of the power the law allows him is undeniable.

WHEREFORE, the writ of certiorari is granted and the order of respondent Judge of October 31, 1963, to the effect that upon the filing of a bond with sufficient sureties in the sum of P5,000.00 the Clerk of Court of his sala would issue the writ of preliminary injunction prayed for, which writ or preliminary injunction was indeed issued on the very same day, as well as his order of November 4, 1963, denying the motion of petitioners to dissolve the writ of preliminary injunction, are nullified and set aside, such writ of preliminary injunction being declared to be of no legal force and effect. The preliminary injunction issued by this Court on December 11, 1963, enjoining the enforcement of such orders of October 31, 1963 and November 4, 1963, are hereby made permanent. In addition, respondent Judge or anyone taking his place as the Judge of the Court of First Instance of the 12th Judicial District, is hereby ordered to dismiss the complaint of private respondent dated October 30, 1963 on the ground of lack of jurisdiction. Costs against Elizalde & Company, Inc.

Barredo, Antonio, Fernandez, and Aquino, JJ., concur.

[1] Order of Respondent Judge, Annex B, Petition.

[2] L-33293, September 30, 1974.

[3] 83 Phil. 764.

[4] 84 Phil. 614.

[5] 105 Phil. 1175.

[6] L-15065, April 28, 1961, 1 SCRA 1124.

[7] L-13135, May 31, 1961, 2 SCRA 350.

[8] Ibid, 356.

[9] L-26697, July 31, 1970, 34 SCRA 58.

[10] Ibid, 64.

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at <https://batas.org>

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.