



## REMINISCING

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo  
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas  
B.S. Medical Technology

When I was still employed by a major telecommunications company, I experienced how the labor union concept worked. The company had been acknowledged for having a highly-unionized workforce, where grievances could be immediately given ample time and a secure arena to be heard and considered. There were no unjust lay-offs or terminations. Every rank and file employee could expect generous income raises every year. Promotions happened after thorough appraisals of work performance and corresponding examinations for higher job grades. Bonuses were assured to be received by everyone, regardless of work location, job specification or grade.

Despite all these, there were still whispers of inequality in work promotions. Such talk consisted of there being favorites for superiors. I had not experienced being discriminated against in any way during that particular phase of my career. Fortunately, promotions were made based on merit in the particular department where I belonged to. This was why leaving the company after merely ten years was a huge loss for me. Although it was normal to have daily intrigues and competition on getting the boss' attention, our immediate superiors managed to show everyone that we were all equal. Being composed of a purely female workforce, our department succeeded at being the last such department to get migrated and transitioned to the country's major city. The memories that my fellow co-employees and I shared during our years with the company were all good.

Those who have stayed in the business office, which is the department that has survived to this day, have had their good and bad days. Everything has still remained equal, but the workload has increased for them. This is especially difficult for those who've been with the company for a long time. Younger personnel have been brought in, but they have mostly been on contract basis or sourced through contracting agencies. The manpower agencies supply personnel and take a substantial amount from the hires' income. The company has found that this set-up is a cheaper alternative to directly hiring regular employees. Who can blame the company? It doesn't have to deal with cases of unjust termination and other grievances coursed through a labor union. It has effectively eradicated the labor union. Employees work for its continued growth and expansion and not for their security of tenure. Because of the dearth of good jobs, there will always be applicants for whatever job vacancy there is with the company.

How I wish things could go back to the way they were in the company. My loyalty still lies with the company. It is still one of the best-paying firms there are today. If only things were still as good as they once were during our time, where everyone enjoyed equality in all aspects-promotions, salary grades, work loads-then I would still choose to work there.

End of daydream.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What would make you want to stay working in a company?
2. How do companies disregard their employees' rights?
3. Would you want to join a labor union in a company? Why or why not?
4. How can a company effectively trample equality?
5. What is the specific company you dream of joining? Why?