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Following the death of Francisco Franco in 1975, the long repressed Spanish labor movement faced two challenges: to contribute to the transformation of the national political system, and to use newly achieved freedoms to build its own organizational presence. Focusing on areas of potential conflict between these two broad objectives, Robert Fishman here traces the development of the complex political role and organizational development of the Spanish workers' movement in the transition from dictatorship to democracy. Drawing on rich empirical data including interviews with 324 plant-level labor leaders, Fishman examines the interplay between various unions' efforts to organize labor and to deal with national politics. He shows how the workers' movement, long an advocate of a ruptura or clear break with the Francoist past, came to support a process of negotiated reform and mobilizational restraint. Labor leaders' belief in the legitimacy of the democratic state, Fishman demonstrates, can serve as a key predictor of their willingness to support negotiated wage restraint. In emphasizing the crucial role of plant-level labor leaders in national political processes, Fishman offers an innovative methodological approach to the analysis of the collective efforts of labor. Political scientists, sociologists, historians of labor movements, and observers of contemporary Western Europe and Latin America will read it with interest.

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