

IN NOVEMBER 1969 the
Singapore National Trades Union
Congress held a special SEMINAR on
MODERNIZATION OF THE
LABOUR MOVEMENT.

Delegates from all the N.T.U.C.'s affiliate unions concluded that the Republic's labour movement must modernize or perish.

The N.T.U.C. immediately set up special committees to implement the SEMINAR'S recommendations for modernization.

FORWARD WITH LABOUR is a series of N.T.U.C. pamphlets to summarise the need to

modernize and the main recommendations of the SEMINAR.

CO-OWNERS OF INDEPENDENT SINGAPORE is the fourth in the series.

## LABOUR IS A CO-OWNER OF INDEPENDENT SINGAPORE

How often do we remember this?

Yet it is a vital truth.

It is the kind of truth that can remake our world.

If we are conscious of it If we remind ourselves of it If we ACT on it

We shall give ourselves the DYNAMIC IMPETUS with which to MODERNIZE the Labour Movement, and

JUSTIFY OUR CO-OWNERSHIP OF OUR SOCIETY

"It is the consciousness of our being co-owners of the new society we are creating that provides the drive for fulfilment."

These are the words of our Prime Minister, Mr. LEE KUAN YEW, when, on November 16, 1969, he opened the NATIONAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS SEMINAR on the MODERNIZATION OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT.



CO-OWNERS OF PROSPERITY: EACH WITH

### WHY ARE WE CO-OWNERS OF SINGAPORE?

#### **BECAUSE:**

WE ARE its citizen-workers

WE FORM the bulk of its voters

WITHOUT OUR SKILL, effort and co-operation, the economic development and modernization of Singapore will fail, MUST fail.

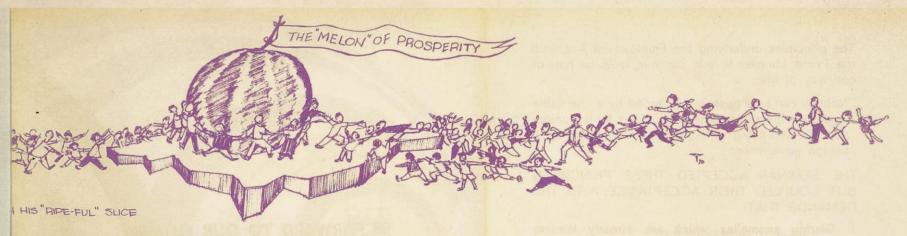
"I cannot conceive of the successful modernization of Singapore — politically, economically and socially — without the participation of active and strong trade unions."

These are the words of our Minister for Labour and Foreign Affairs, Mr. S. RAJARATNAM, when he spoke on the second day of our Seminar, on November 17, 1969.

WE, THE WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONISTS OF SINGAPORE, AS MUCH AS GOVERNMENT, AS MUCH AS EMPLOYERS, ARE CO-OWNERS OF OUR NEW SOCIETY.

THIS IS a proud and responsible position.

It is a position we must STRENGTHEN.



## HOW DO WE STRENGTHEN OUR POSITION AS CO-OWNERS?

THE SEMINAR on the MODERNIZATION OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT answered loud and clear:

- RECOGNISE our full responsibility, co-equal with government and management, for the survival of our country.
- 2. RE-ORGANISE, RECRUIT, RETRAIN and RE-VITA-LISE OUR TRADE UNIONS BY:
  - ABOLISHING "50-cent" unionism and creating new, massive, millionaire financing through CO-OPERATIVE SCHEMES executed on a NATION-WIDE BASE and operating from BLUEPRINTS which have proved highly successful in West Germany, Sweden and Israel;
  - RAISING the money to start these new schemes by increasing union subscriptions on a graduated scale to a flat rate of 1% salaries.
  - MAKING the N.T.U.C. independent of government subsidies by increasing affiliation fees to 25% of total subscriptions;
  - TRANSFORMING the structure of trade unions in many ways: organising them on an industrywide base, amalgamating small (less than 1,000 members) unions wherever possible, setting up

a strong executive corps of full-time officials to service the unions, starting a Development Fund from which needy unions may be assisted, more and intensive education, building a Workers' College and beginning a high-powered recruitment campaign among the four out of five workers waiting to be organised.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT ACT?

ONE delegate complained at the Seminar that after the passing of this Act, membership of his Union began to decline.

OTHER delegates pointed out that the membership of their Unions was 90% before the Employment Act, and remains 90% after the Act, and that their employers are just as co-operative now as before.

A SEMINAR paper showed that between 1966 and 1967 — BEFORE the Employment Act — there was a substantial drop of 18,000 in NTUC Unions' membership; whereas AFTER the Act — between 1968 and 1969 — the movement lost about 2,000 members.

IT IS CLEAR that, whether there is an Employment Act or not, WHAT REALLY MATTERS IS THE EXISTENCE OF STRONG, DEMOCRATIC AND RESPONSIBLE TRADE UNIONS.

The principles underlying the Employment Act, said the Prime Minister to our Seminar, must be part of our way of life.

"Nobody can be a passenger, carried by a charitable employer, his short-comings shielded by his union, and his well-being and security guaranteed by a benign government."

THE SEMINAR ACCEPTED THESE PRINCIPLES BUT COUPLED THEIR ACCEPTANCE WITH THE DEMANDS THAT:

- Glaring anomalies which are already leading themselves to abuse be removed from the Act, and
- Productivity be rationally measured and equitably shared.

Finally, study these very important words of our Prime Minister to the Seminar. He said:

"Legislation can prohibit and punish abuses and malpractices, but it cannot give that positive urge to work and to achieve. This urge can come only from the conviction of a people that they must and want to give of their best. IT IS THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF OUR BEING CO-OWNERS OF THE NEW SOCIETY WE ARE CREATING THAT PROVIDES THE DRIVE FOR FULFILMENT."

# CO-OWNERSHIP! A NEW VISION! A NEW PATTERN OF LIFE!

- THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW TRADE UNION AND LABOUR MOVEMENT!
- THIS IS HOW WE CAN BECOME FULL AND EQUAL CO-OWNERS OF THE NEW SINGAPORE!

THIS IS THE PRICELESS CONTRIBUTION WE, THE WORKERS OF SINGAPORE, CAN MAKE TO THE FUTURE SECURITY, LIBERTY AND PROSPERITY OF OUR INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC!

- FORWARD TO OUR FUTURE!
- FORWARD WITH LABOUR!
- MAJULAH SINGAPURA

AFTER YOU HAVE READ THIS PLEASE PASS IT ON TO YOUR FRIENDS.

