

MESSAGE FOR SINGAPORE TRACTION COMPANY EMPLOYEES
UNION'S SUARA

1958 is likely to be an eventful year in the life of Singapore. It is also likely to be an eventful one for the Trade Union movement. For it is the politically conscious and political active working class movement which will decide the destiny of Singapore. Last year's left wing election victories for the City Council elections is an indication of the vigour of the urban workers and dwellers of Singapore city. This year, the outcome of the Legislative Assembly elections will be decided both by the city and the rural dwellers. But we can safely say that the position for the whole of Singapore island is more or less the same as that of Singapore city.

But let us never forget that the destiny of Malaya will not be decided by what happens in the cities alone, where the workers are politically conscious are active. The destiny of Malaya will be decided mainly by the large numbers of our people who do not live in the cities or towns. And it is the duty of the politically conscious and active working class in the cities like Singapore to so do the things that will make the working class movement gain the sympathy and support, and finally the participation of the farmers and peasants in the country.

What do we mean by this? Simply this: that in the towns and cities the Chinese and Indians predominate and in the country the Malays predominate. If the working class movement in the cities is to win the sympathy and support of the farmers and peasants it must not be a purely Chinese-Indian working class movement. This everyone understands. But not everyone understands the full significance of this. Not everyone is prepared to modify and moderate, and if necessary change the policy of the working class movement, and the tempo of the movement to allow active participation by and also joint assumption of leadership of the Malays together with the Indians and Chinese.

So it was that last year 1957 saw some disturbing communalistic disagreements in the Union. Some members even went so far as to ask for communal representation in the Governing Council and Executive Committee of the Union. This is wrong in principle and bad in practice. But whose fault was it that started this? It cannot be denied that it was the intolerance and the attitude of superiority of a few that precipitated these disagreements. Such "activists" must learn that their attitude of superiority derived from their feeling that they know more and worked harder than the rest, in fact conceals their ignorance of the bigger and larger problems of racial harmony, national solidarity. A truly Malayan working class movement must be led by a truly Malayan leadership, which must be actively shared or even led by the Malays, before the Socialist

cause can even succeed in Malaya. And Malaya includes Singapore.

So let us all resolve in 1958 never to allow the foolish mistakes of the past to be repeated. Let us in a spirit of tolerance patience and perseverance forge ahead to greater unity and solidarity in 1958.

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