

23 MAY 1992

Release No.: 38/APR

16-0/92/04/24

92-07C-4

**SPEECH BY MR ONG TENG CHEONG, NTUC SECRETARY-GENERAL
AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE STAFF UNION OF NTUC
RESEARCH UNIT AT 6.00 PM ON FRIDAY 24 APRIL 1992
AT THE STUDIO, NTUC CLUB (SHENTON WAY)**

Trade unions have been around in Singapore for some 50 years. In the 1950s and 60s, they were militant for good reasons. Today, both unions and managements have changed. Employers are generally considerate and enlightened; unions, on the other hand, have responded by being cooperative and responsible.

2 Many major organisations, both in the public and private sectors, are unionised. But there are still employers who feel uncomfortable about unions. If they could help it, they would rather not have unions in their enterprises.

3 The law in Singapore is very clear on the issue of union membership. No one can force a person to join a union. Neither can anyone stop a person from joining a union. This is in line with the Principle of 'Freedom of Association' which is adopted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

4 NTUC believes in freedom of association. We let workers themselves decide whether they want to join unions. No employers should employ scare tactics to

4 make them decide against their will.

5 Why do workers want to join unions? They do so because they want to safeguard their interests as much as to enjoy the many benefits that come with union membership. So employers must understand the reasons and let workers join unions to enjoy the welfare benefits, recreational facilities and other services. With their needs satisfied, workers would be able to put their hearts and minds to their work and thus be able to give their best to the company.

6 NTUC welcomes the formation of the Staff Union of NTUC Research Unit (SUN for short). Although you have been enjoying all the NTUC Club benefits when you were members of the NTUC Staff Welfare and Recreation Committee, it is better that you formalise your ties with the NTUC Club by being union members.

7 In SUN, there is no distinction between junior and senior staff for union membership. All can join the union; all can stand for election for union office, with the exception of senior officers who are responsible for the recruitment, promotion and benefits of workers. We maintain that there is no conflict of interest between management and workers if supervisors and executives join unions. We lead by example. Our message to employers is clear.

8 At this stage, I wish to congratulate those of you

who have volunteered to serve in the Protem Committee. You have done well. So far, 234 out of 243 or 96% of potential members have signed up.

9 The groundwork has been completed. It is now up to those elected as leaders to come to grips with the more challenging task - of running a union.

10 As a union within a union, you will come under close scrutiny - by observers of the industrial relations scene. If you succeed, you will not just advance the interests of your members, but also the cause of the trade union movement in the country.

11 Let me wish you every success.

oooooooooooooooooooo

From: INFORMATION5 (8812:GVT224)
Subject: [Inaugural Meeting of NTUC Research Unit Staff Union]
Delivered: Tue 28-April-92 19:05 SING (50 lines)

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASES

DISTRIBUTION LIST

1	Mr Yatiman Bin Yusof, Parliamentary Secretary (Foreign Affairs)	GVT 047
2	Mr Lim Boon Heng, Senior Minister of State (MTI)	GVT 090
3	Dr Yeo Ning Hong, Minister for Defence	GVT 200
4	Mr Ch'ng Jit Koon, Senior Minister of State (Community Development)	GVT 234
5	Dr Ahmad Mattar, Minister for Environment	GVT 080
6	BG George Yeo, Second Minister for Foreign Affairs	GVT 049
7	Mr Harun A Ghani, Political Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs	GVT 710
8	Library Officer, Auditor-General Office	GVT 370
9	Library. Ministry of Education	GVT 036
10	Mr Lee Chiong Giam, Chief Executive Director (PA)	GVT 615
10a	Mr Soon Low Boon, Library (PA)	
11	Library, Parliament House	GVT 251
12	National Archives	GVT 237
13	Mr Aziz Champion, Ministry of Law (PS's copy)	GVT 125
14	Budget Division, Ministry of Finance	GVT 052
15	Mrs Elain Swinn-Tan, Head, Public Relations, MOL	GVT 168
16	Economics Dept, MAS	GVT 721
17	PSD, Ministry of Finance	GVT 111
18	The General Manager, Board of Commissioners of Currency	GVT 611
19	Library, Ministry of Community Development	GVT 235
20	Commissioner for Lands, Land Office, Ministry of Law	GVT 463

21	Library, Jurong Town Corporation	GVT 390
22	Public Relations Dept, Ministry of Home Affairs	GVT 137
23	Resource Centre, Ministry of Trade & Industry	GVT 091
24	Public Relations Dept, VITB	GVT 480
25	Registry Supervisor, Ministry of National Development	GVT 240
26	The Chairman, Singapore Institute of Standards and Industrial Research	GVT 325
27	Librarian, NTUC Research Unit	GVT 351
27a	PA to Mr Ong Teng Cheong, Deputy Prime Minister	
28	Mindef Library	GVT 207
29	Director, Community Relations Dept, Ministry of Community Development (Kindly make copies and distribute to all the secretariats)	GVT 470
30	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence	GVT 560
31	Dr Lee Boon Yang, Minister for Labour & Second Minister for Defence	GVT 205
32	Dr Tay Eng Soon, Senior Minister of State for Education	GVT 030
33	Mr Wong Kan Seng, Minister for Foreign Affairs	GVT 044
33a	Mr Peter Ho, DS (SEA) Min. of Foreign Affairs	GVT 044
34	Dr Richard Hu, Minister for Finance	GVT 017
35	Mr Yeo Cheow Tong, Minister for Health & Minister for Community Development	GVT 172 GVT 230
36	Mr Sidek Bin Saniff, Minister of State for Education	GVT 680
37	Mr J. A. Nathan, Globalink, TDB	GVT 817