

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

PUBLICITY DIVISION · MINISTRY OF CULTURE · CITY HALL SINGAPORE 6

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SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE, MR HOWE YOON CHONG,  
AT THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION ON CRIME AND DRUG  
ABUSE PREVENTION AND RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEER PROBATION  
AND AFTERCARE OFFICERS CAMPAIGN AT THE MACRITCHIE  
PRIMARY SCHOOL ON SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 1979, AT 4 P.M.

Singapore is at the crossroads of East and West. People of Singapore will therefore be influenced by mass communications like radio, TV, newspapers and films which bring in news and happenings from other parts of the world. Such foreign influences good or bad are bound to affect our people. We should be sensible and practical about them and since we cannot keep them away we must be prepared to live with them.

For the last 20 years the government has made it a policy to improve the livelihood of the people of Singapore through industrialisation and modernisation. With industrialisation there are bound to come changes to our way of life. More people will go to work in factories rather than stay at home to mind their shop or to look after their children. The normal family unit will undergo a change as the young people become wage earners, improved their family income and set up small family units of their own. The development of more and more high rise apartments by the HDB has also contributed to the break-up of the older and bigger families. The fact that both parents become wage earners is now widely accepted. This leaves the children very much dependent on our schools for proper education, discipline and upbringing. Unfortunately during during the last 20 years, the education programme has expanded so fast that more and more teachers were recruited in order to staff the new schools that were being built. The expansion of our schools at such a rapid rate can only mean that younger people were being trained to become teachers and since these teachers were less experienced and more students were put into each class the amount of time that the teacher can devote to each child would be less. In every case therefore the vast social transformation that has

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taken place in Singapore over the last 20 years has resulted in a dilution of the quality of training, supervision and discipline in the families and in the schools; the consequences of which are now being seen in the number of people who have difficulty fitting in with the society.

Today's exhibition is on the prevention of crime and drug abuse. The purpose of this exhibition is to focus the attention of people to the evils of crime and drug abuse. It is also hoped that as a result of this exhibition it will be possible for the Ministry of Social Affairs to recruit more volunteer probation and aftercare officers who will provide support to the campaign and who will help reduce crime and prevent drug abuse.

The organisers of this exhibition are to be commended for their efforts in this very public-spirited venture. This exhibition is organised jointly by the Potong Pasir Crime and Drug Abuse Prevention Exhibition Committee, the Singapore Anti-Narcotic Association, the Probation and Aftercare Service of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Crime Prevention Unit of the Toa Payoh Police Station. To all these organisations and to those people who have contributed to this exhibition we should offer them a warm hand of applause.

Crime and drug abuse can be found in every society. Their incidence becomes greater in societies which are developing themselves through modernisation and industrialisation. Since Singapore is paying more and more attention to industrialisation, it is unavoidable that the incidence of crime and drug abuse will increase. Our job is to make sure that it will not increase to such an extent as to be difficult to control. Many studies have been done to establish the cause of crime and drug abuse and many basic reasons have been advanced as being the causes of crime and drug abuse. There is however no doubt that much of the crime and drug abuse can be traced back to poor family background where there had been lack of supervision, lower education, large numbers of children and poverty and ignorance. It is also true that many who have taken to crime and drug abuse have mixed **with** wrong company or have refused to accept discipline or who do not accept regular employment and have much time on their hands. Many of those who are attracted to crime and drug abuse are

probably weaker ....3/-

probably weaker characters and could not resist the pressures of bad company or who once they are hooked on drugs could not resist the efforts of drug pushers.

One way to eradicate crime and drug abuse is to try to re-establish a better family cohesiveness. When each member of the family can look after the welfare of the other members or where the elders can provide better supervision, guidance and example for the young and where everybody in the family works towards the improved welfare of the other members, they will not be idle and they will not have time on their hands to resort to crime or drug abuse. With better family cohesiveness, better discipline, proper education and employment, it is likely that even weaker personalities in the family can have wiser or stronger members of the family to lean on who can guide them where necessary and thus prevent them from going astray. In this way the chances of our young people being led down the path of crime and drug abuse can be lessened.

Organisations like the Central Narcotics Bureau and the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association with the support of the police and the many volunteer associations in Singapore can do much to prevent crime and drug abuse. Volunteer aftercare and probation workers can offer advice to those who are hooked on drugs and try to retrieve them and rehabilitate them to be useful members of our society. Let us hope that this exhibition will enable young people to realise the futility of crime and that crime does not pay. Let us also hope that all who visit this exhibition will accept that there is no substitute for hard work and if they are to achieve the goals that they have set for themselves, they must work hard. This exhibition will bring to those who visit it the realization that drugs are to be avoided and that those who are hooked on drugs should seek advice and guidance as soon as possible. The cooperation between the police and the people, between the Central Narcotics Bureau and the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association in giving guidance and advice and in rehabilitating those who are hooked on drugs will go a long way to prevent crime and drug abuse in the Potong Pasir constituency. To all those who have had a hand in the organisation of this exhibition, may I once again say thank you. I wish this exhibition every success.

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