

Acknowledgements

There are so many people to thank for the making of my biography of S. Rajaratnam that it is hard to know where to begin. Perhaps a good way is to start with those who enabled me to embark on it in 2004 as Mr Rajaratnam's authorised biographer: First, the trustees of S. Rajaratnam's estate – then president S.R. Nathan, Professor Tommy Koh and Dr V.K. Pillay.

Next, Singapore's founding prime minister Lee Kuan Yew, who gave the project unstinting support from the very beginning. Besides giving me several interviews, Mr Lee, who had known me since I was a journalist in the 1990s, gave his permission for me to access government papers. He also generously autographed 25 "special edition" copies of *The Singapore Lion* to help raise funds for volume two, which were entrusted to the publisher the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.

K. Kesavapany, who was then the institute's director, was a pillar of support throughout, and proved an admirable midwife to the birth of the first volume in 2010. I thank his successors for their continued support – in particular, current director Mr Choi Shing Kwok for seeing the book through the last mile with much grace, understanding and wisdom.

The book's progress has been followed with kindly interest by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who officiated the launch of *The Singapore Lion*. My deepest gratitude to the PM for being a source of encouragement throughout, and for helping to ensure that this biography is as accurate and authoritative as possible, so as to do justice to the memory of Mr Rajaratnam. It was most kind of him to write the Foreword to *The Lion's Roar*.

This book is being published at a time of political transition. Indeed, even as we were finalising the manuscript for print, PM Lee announced

on 15 April 2024 that he would hand over the reins to Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong on 15 May. I would like to thank Mr Wong – who, in March, had readily accepted our invitation to launch the book – for his gracious support and endorsement of Mr Rajaratnam's legacy.

More than 200 people graciously gave me their time in interviews. Their invaluable insights informed the narrative of this book. They ranged from former prime minister Goh Chok Tong, Mr Rajaratnam's domestic helper Cecilia Tandoc and his nephew S. Jothiratnam, to his one-time pro-communist adversary Fong Swee Suan, his Malaysian counterpart Ahmad Rithaudeen and his personal friends Dennis Bloodworth and Tan Hwa Luck. It was exceptionally good of Lee Chong Giam, then MFA deputy secretary, and Bernard Baker, MFA director of public affairs, to help gather more people for me to interview. In some cases, I have not referred to the interviews directly but weaved them into the narrative as background information.

My research has been greatly helped by the generosity and expertise of numerous archivists, librarians and researchers from the National Archives of Singapore, the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Library and the Singapore Parliament. The list is too long for me to name everyone individually, but the following deserve special mention: Pitt Kuan Wah, Julia Chee, Ng Yoke Lin, Liang Shuang, Gene Tan, Yang Soh Bee, Cheah Sait Poh, Larry Tan, Goh Lai Heng, Lim Bee Leng, Lim Puay Ling, Fiona Tan and Joanne Yip. Lim Nghee Huat and Liang Shuang kindly helped with the translation of some newspaper articles in Chinese, while Sundari Balasubramaniam helped with those in Tamil.

I am also deeply grateful to those who read some chapters or, in a few cases, the entire manuscript. They include Sonny Yap, Albert Chua, Tommy Koh, Bilahari Kausikan, Barry Desker, Kishore Mahbubani, Terence Chong, Lee Boon Beng, Janadas Devan, Judith d' Silva, Julia d' Silva, Chua Huck Cheng, the ISEAS peer review committee, and various desk officers at MFA. Some went out of their way to alert me to inaccuracies and to offer other useful details in the areas they were familiar with.

More thanks than I can ever express go to Leslie Koh, who skilfully and patiently copy-edited the manuscript. He has gone above and beyond on this project, and never once complained about my constant “tweakings” (as I described them). The same goes to the indefatigable Stephen Logan of ISEAS Publishing for his scrupulous copy-editing, expert typesetting and production of the final manuscript, and to Ng Kok Kiong for his professionalism in seeing the manuscript to print. Certainly, I would not have been able to reach the finishing line without their help.

I wish to express my gratitude to the National Archives of Singapore, Singapore Press Holdings, and the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute for giving me generous access to their photograph collections. Special thanks to Yit Chin Chuan from NAS, Prahlad Kunalan from SPH and Liang Shuang from the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute for their timely and courteous assistance with my numerous requests for photos. Every attempt has been made to trace the original owners of all images used in this book where relevant. If any copyright has inadvertently been infringed, copyright holders should write to the publishers with full details upon copyright being established. A correct credit will be incorporated into future editions of the book.

Last but certainly not least, heartfelt thanks to my husband, Graham, who has stood by me through all my travails, absences, agonising and doubt.

To all of these people, and many more than I have space to mention – sadly some departed – I owe a great debt in producing this book. Where the book succeeds, it is in large part due to them. But its mistakes are all my own.

Irene Ng
16 April 2024

