

Title: A Nation Awakes: Frontline Reflections

Editor: Tan Jee Say

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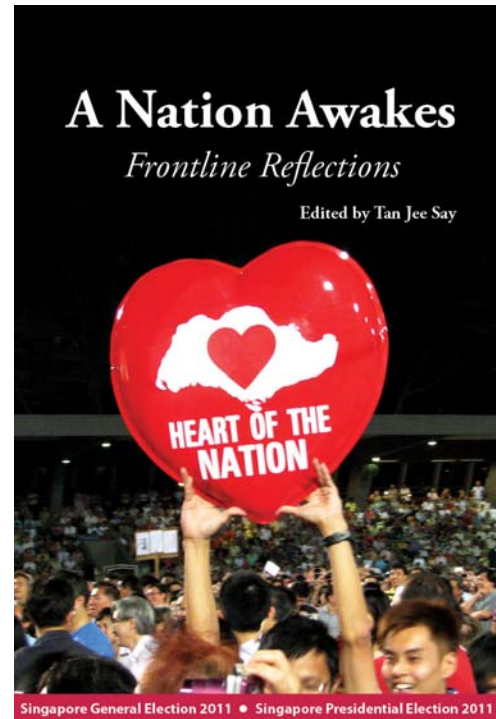
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About the Book

Few nations if any, have ever held two national elections in a span of four months. Fewer still are key players who took part in both. This book is the story of extraordinary men and women who fought Singapore's 2011 General Election in May and the Presidential Election in August. Together with their loyal and dedicated supporters, they displayed great courage and conviction, and in so doing changed the political landscape forever.

The writers of this book represent a broad spectrum of Singapore society - student, teacher, university researcher, social worker, doctor, economist, lawyer, advertising, media and IT personnel, blogger, housewife and retiree. They cut across all age groups from their twenties to their sixties. They have come together in this book to relate and share their personal journey with Singaporeans. Unlike most post-election commentaries written by third-party observers, this book is unique as it allows readers to hear from the horse's mouth how in four short months, Singapore's single dominant party system has given way to the emergence of a politics of diversity with positive implications for the country's future system of government.

What others say about the book

“The courageous spirit and vision of Tan Jee Say and other bravehearts from Singapore’s opposition parties and civil society in the 2011 elections resembles a collective ‘Singa’s roar’ which continues to reverberate across this city-state in Southeast Asia. The ‘Singa’s roar’ resonates with other popular movements striving for democracy in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and around the world.”

- Associate Professor Lily Zubaidah Rahim, Department of Government and International Relations, University of Sydney. She is an author of several books on Singapore and Southeast Asia.

“I met Jee Say in Singapore a few months after his historic candidacy for the presidency, nearly forty years after we had been students together at University College, Oxford. The ideals of fairness and justice of his youthful days had clearly survived a very distinguished career in the public service and in finance, along with passion and courage.”

- Professor Rajiva Wijesinha, Member of Parliament and adviser on national reconciliation in Sri Lanka; he contested the presidency of Sri Lanka in 1999. He is currently the Chairman of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats.

“This book brings out the robust and diverse nature of Singapore, and these attributes are positive for the development of Singapore as a financial centre.”

- Tim Tacchi, Senior Partner, TT International, a global fund manager with its head office in London.

“It gives me great pleasure to introduce and commend this fascinating and stirring book about Singapore’s recent presidential and general elections....By revealing the feelings, thoughts and motives of a diverse group of hard-working professional Singaporeans..., this book is testimony to the vital importance and benefits of active citizenship, vigorous democracy and public-spirited leadership. Many of the individual accounts of involvement in the elections are a moving reminder of the personal sacrifices that people are willing to make to further their vision of a better society. To support an opposition candidate in a country accustomed to continuous single-party rule is to risk job security, business prospects, family life, personal privacy and social acceptance. Although the contributors to this book would never make the claim themselves, they are all modest heroes.

....The founder of the modern Olympics said that “the most important thing is not winning but taking part”. This is the message that shines out from the contributors to this book. The presidential election was one of those elections in which the official winner was in many ways the loser and the official loser was in many ways the winner. By showing that it was possible to launch a major challenge against the dominant party, Jee Say Tan and his friends and supporters bestowed a great service to the people of Singapore, not only this year but for the future. ”

- Extract from the Foreword by Sir Ivor Crewe, Master of University College, Oxford. He has published and broadcast extensively on British and American politics mainly in the subjects of elections, parties, public opinion and public policy.

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