

Teo Soh Lung

BEYOND THE BLUE GATE

Recollections of a Political Prisoner





BEYOND THEBLUEGATE



Copyright © 2010 Teo Soh Lung (sohlung@function8.org)

First published in 2010 by

Strategic Information and Research Development Centre

No. 11, Lorong 11/4E, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Email: sird@streamyx.com

Website: www.gerakbudaya.com

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purpose of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Teo, Soh Lung

Beyond the blue gate . recollections of a political prisoner Teo Soh Lung.

ISBN 978-967-5832-01-7

1. Women political prisoners—Singapore. 2. Political prisoners—Singapore.

3. Human rights—Singapore. I Title.

365.45095957

Printed by Utopia Press Pte Ltd

61 Joo Koon Circle, Singapore 629074

The Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (SIRD) is an independent publishing house founded in January 2000 in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. The SIRD focuses on Malaysian and Southeast Asian Studies, Economics, Gender Studies, the Social Sciences, Politics and International Relations. Our books address the scholarly community, students, the NGO and development communities, policymakers, activists and the wider public.

SIRD also distributes titles (via its sister organisation, GB Gerakbudaya Enterprise Sdn Bhd) published by scholarly and institutional presses, NGOs and other independent publishers. We also organise seminars, forums and group discussions. All this, we believe, is conducive to the development and consolidation of the notions of civil liberty and democracy.

Teo Soh Lung

BEYOND THE BLUEGATE

Recollections of a Political Prisoner

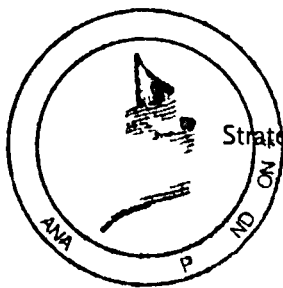
PUSTAKA PERDANA



1008715

SIRD

Strategic Information and Research Development Centre,
Petaling Jaya



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to Anthony Paul Lester QC, Francis T Seow, Roslina Baba, Patrick Seong Kwok Kei, George Lim and all my lawyers who took on my case knowing the complications and danger they would encounter and the courage and stamina required to see it through. They paid heavily for their conviction and dedication.

My deepest appreciation and thanks to Yash Ghai for writing the Foreword, Ian Buruma, Peter Carey and Alvin Tan for their encouraging comments and Alfian Sa'at for going through the draft and giving insightful suggestions. I also thank my friend, who wishes to remain anonymous, for the interest shown in my first draft. Without their contributions, comments, suggestions and questions, this book would not have seen the light of day.

I am also indebted to my wonderful, courageous and loyal former staff – Roslina Baba for being the tower of strength to the team comprising Quek Lee Huah, Sushila Chitty, Ean Lee and the Late Mrs Lau nee Cho Gim Hong, our great cook who ensured that everyone was not only fed but fed well. Together they held the firm of Teo Lai & Lee till the very end. They freely gave of their time, often working past midnight and against all odds.

I am thankful for my good friends, Lai Maylene, Christopher Tremewan, David K Eiteman, Stanley Yeo, Shelley Wright, Lin Chew, my fellow detainees and their families and so many others whom I cannot name, for their unwavering friendship, assistance and support. Without their relentless campaigns and their singing at the blue gate, I would not have survived imprisonment.

I thank the Emergency Committee for Human Rights in Singapore (NZ), European Committee for Human Rights in Malaysia and Singapore (KEHMA S), Law Association for Asia and the Western Pacific (LAWASIA), The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) and the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), The Association of the Bar of the City of New York, International Bar Association (IBA), Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights (New York), American Bar Association (ABA), Amnesty International (AI), Asia Watch, Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM), Aliran Kepercayaan (ALIRAN), International Young Christian Workers, HK and other human rights organisations which I may have omitted to name for championing my cause. I owe my freedom to their hard work.

Finally, without the strong and unshakeable faith of my mother, Lim Geok Lian, my brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, I would never have survived the ordeal. Not once did they doubt my innocence. They did everything possible to secure my release.

In memory of
Lord Robert Alexander of Weedon QC,
George de Souza,
J B Jeyaretnam,
Lai Kim Fah,
Mrs Lau nee Cho Gim Hong,
Aileen Lau Guek Lin,
Juliet Tan Guek How,
Tan Kheng Sun and
Teo Poh Seng

CONTENTS

	Foreword	9
	Preface	14
	PART ONE: 21 May 1987 to 26 September 1987	
1	Arrest at Dawn	18
2	Interrogation	23
3	Guilt by association?	29
4	Sleep at last	36
5	Appearing on television	41
6	Detention orders and more arrests	47
7	Back to the cold room	49
8	Making use of the Law Society?	53
9	Representations before Advisory Board	58
10	News and prison life	65
11	Before the Advisory Board	70
12	<i>Habeas corpus?</i>	73
13	Musings	78
14	Regrets	82
15	Free at last?	84
	PART TWO: 19 April 1988 to 1 June 1990	
16	A fugitive in my country	88
17	The making of a joint statement	100
18	Brave deed	110

19	Back to Whitley	114
20	First visits	128
21	A tougher regime	131
22	More arrests and releases	134
23	Investigation into ill treatment	141
24	Before the advisory board again	144
25	<i>Habeas corpus</i>	150
26	Enough of the rat hole	159
27	General Election	164
28	Before the Court of Appeal	167
29	Incidents	173
30	Taming the prisoner	179
31	Rubbish the judgement	184
32	Is there justice?	190
33	Paper justice	194
34	Anger's freeing power	202
35	Kangaroo court	207
36	Christmas 1988	211
37	Changing the law and before the advisory board again	214
38	Challenging the state again	221
39	Lunar New Year 1989	225
40	Harassment of Queen's Counsel	228
41	Challenging the amendments	232
42	The coward and the bully	240
43	A stormy month	247
44	Waiting for the judgement	250
45	Hurdles	256
46	Significant events in 1989	260

47	Meaning of national security	267
48	Family and the ISD	277
49	Prison life	280
50	My little toad	285
51	Prison routine	293
52	Hope of release	297
53	The final appeal	304
54	No two ways out	318
55	No singing at the blue gate	328
56	Justice delayed again	334
57	Trouble with lizards	341
58	The final judgement	349
59	A visit to the specialist	352
60	Not the end of my troubles	354
61	Home at last!	362
Appendix 1	Detention Order	370
Appendix 2	Grounds for Detention	371
Appendix 3	Representation to Advisory Board	372
Appendix 4	Letter of support from Chairman of Criminal Legal Aid Scheme	386
Appendix 5	Letter of support from the Law Society of Singapore	387
Appendix 6	Suspension direction	389
Appendix 7	Revocation of suspension direction	390
Appendix 8	Statutory Declaration	391