

FAMOUS MALACCANS

TUN TAN SIEW SIN (1916 – 1988)



Tun Tan Siew Sin

Tan Siew Sin was born in Malacca on May 21, 1916, and was educated in Malacca High School and in Raffles College, Singapore. He then read law in England and was forced to return home when the Second World War began in Malaya.

Siew Sin along with his father Tun Tan Cheng Lock, another prominent figure in Malayan politics, left the country for India during the Japanese Occupation.

In India, Siew Sin worked with the Ministry of Economic Warfare that allowed him to travel the country and opened his eyes to the suffering of the Indians under the British rule.

When the war ended and Siew Sin and his family returned to Malaya. He then began to take an interest in politics after learning about the struggles of Ghandi and Nehru in India.

However, his father felt that Siew Sin was too young to be involved in politics and wanted him to focus on the family business.

Siew Sin was initially in the Independence Malaya Party (IMP) but he later joined the Alliance coalition and was its treasurer from 1958 to 1965.

When the British agreed to grant independence to Malaya, Siew Sin proposed to the Umno leaders that non-Malays be granted citizenship and the proposal was accepted.

After serving as the Minister of Commerce and Industry, he was appointed as Finance Minister in 1959 and has led the country's delegation to many international forums and meetings.

Siew Sin was the first foreigner in British history to be made chairman of a constitutional commission when he was appointed chairman of the Electoral Review Commission for Seychelles.

He also succeeded his dad as the president of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA).

Tun Tan Siew Sin passed away on March 18th, 1988 at the age of 71.