

Tunku abdul rahman



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Who is Tunku Abdul Rahman

Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Alhaj was born on February 8 1903 at Istana Pelamin, Alor Setar, Kedah. He was the twentieth child and seventh son of Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah, the twenty-fourth Sultan of Kedah. 1 His mother on the other hand, Paduka Seri Cik Manjalara was the daughter of a Siamese nobleman, Luang Noraborirak.

In 1909, Abdul Rahman received his early education at a Malay Primary School before being transferred to the Government English School, which is currently known as the Sultan Abdul Hamid College. Following that, he was sent to the Debsirin School in Bangkok. A Kedah State Scholarship awarded to him in 1920 took him to England to further his studies. In England, he read History and Law at St. Catherine's College, Cambridge. He successfully obtained his Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1925.

While studying at England itself, his flair for leadership was made apparent due to the lack of representation of Malay students at the institution by any clubs or organisations. Abdul Rahman remedied the problem by establishing the Kesatuan Melayu Great Britain (Malay Association of Great Britain). He held the post of Secretary.

Upon his return to Malaya, he served the Kedah Civil Service as a cadet in the Legal Advisors Office. Following that, he served as a District Officer in Kuala Nerang, Langkawi, Sungai Petani, and finally in Kulim. 2 Abdul Rahman was the only Malay District Officer at that time. This made him widely unpopular amongst many British officials. However, no action was taken by the British Administration in Kedah, as he was of royal lineage.

Unfortunately, his attempt at completing his legal studies at the Inner Temple in England came to a halt due to the outbreak of World War II. He resumed his studies at the Inner Temple soon after and qualified for the Bar. On his return to Malaya, he was appointed as a Deputy Public Prosecutor. During the nationalistic battle against the Malayan Union, Tunku Abdul Rahman joined the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). He proved to be very popular amongst party members and was later on appointed as Chairman of UMNO Kedah in 1948.

On August 26 1951, Tunku became the UMNO President. Following that, he formed a political alliance with the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA). This political alliance was later joined by the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) in 1955. This political alliance was called the Alliance Party. That same year, the Alliance Party won the first federal general elections. Tunku Abdul Rahman was elected as the first Chief Minister of Malaya.

In 1955, Tunku led a delegation to England to negotiate with the British government for the independence of Malaya. This led to the signing of the Independence Treaty at Lancaster House in London on February 8 1956. On the 31st of August 1957, the British flag was lowered in Kuala Lumpur and the Malaya flag was raised in its place. Tunku Abdul Rahman led the crowd at Dataran Merdeka in announcing “ Merdeka!” (Independence). This will forever remain a historical moment in Malaysian history.

It cannot be argued that one of Tunku’s greatest achievements was the formation of Malaysia, comprising of the Federation of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, and Singapore. However, due to several political issues, the

federation of all these states, excluding Brunei was formed on the 16th of September 1963. Tunku Abdul Rahman was restyled as Prime Minister of Malaysia. 4

Unfortunately, the racial factor only worsened with the inclusion of Singapore, raising the Chinese population close to 40%. 5 On August 7, 1965, Tunku Abdul Rahman announced to the Malaysian Parliament to vote 'yes' on the resolution to remove Singapore from the federation. Singapore officially achieved independence on 9 August 1965.

Following the racial riots of May 13, many UMNO leaders were critical of Tunku Abdul Rahman's leadership and an emergency committee, MAGERAN took power and declared a state of emergency. On 22 September 1970, Tunku Abdul Rahman was coerced into resigning as Prime Minister and was succeeded by Tunku Abdul Razak. Following that, he then resigned as UMNO President on June 1971 amidst severe opposition from the 'Young Turks', comprising of Mahathir Muhammad and Musa Hitam. 6

Aside from the formation of Malaysia, Tunku also had a many other achievements. Other than making Islam the state religion in 1960, he also established the Islamic Welfare Organisation (PERKIM), an organisation helping newly converted Muslims adjust to their lives as Muslims. 7 Tunku also helped establish the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), of which he was also the Secretary General.

An avid sportsman, Tunku was a huge fan of football. This led him to become the President of the Football Association of Malaya, President of The Asian Football Confederation and President of the Asian Badminton Confederation.

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He also supported Semangat 46, a splinter group of UMNO led by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah. 8

Tunku Abdul Rahman passed away on 6 December 1990 at the age of eighty-seven. He was laid to rest at the Langgar Mausoleum at Alor Setar.

FOOTNOTE

1. Wikipedia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, URL : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunku_Abdul_Rahman, accessed 17 March 2010.
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3. Perdana. Org, Tunku Abdul Rahman, URL : http://www.perdana.org.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=184&Itemid=124, accessed 17 March 2010
4. Prime Ministers of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Alhaj, URL : <http://www.primeministersofmalaysia.net/1.php>, accessed 17 March 2010
5. Wikipedia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, URL : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunku_Abdul_Rahman, accessed 17 March 2010.
6. Wikipedia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, URL : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunku_Abdul_Rahman, accessed 17 March 2010.
7. Network Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, URL : <http://www.networkmalaysia.com/subtitle/people/TunkuAbdulRahman.htm>, accessed 17 March 2010
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8. State University. Com, Tunku Abdul Rahman (Putra Alhaj) – Early life, Early political career, Road to independence, Prime Minister, Involvements in Islam, Later life, Family, URL : <http://encyclopedia.stateuniversity.com/pages/22669/Tunku-Abdul-Rahman-Putra-Alhaj.html>, accessed 18 March 2010.