

Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu (President March 1958 – July 1959)



Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu was born in Penang on May 28, 1919 and received his secondary education in Penang Free School. In 1937, he was a King's scholar at the Edinburgh University and graduated in 1944 with a medical degree.

In 1951, he was appointed to the Penang Local Council and in 1955, he was appointed a member of the Federal Legislature.

In the March 1958 party elections, he challenged Tun Tan Cheng Lock and won the presidency with a majority of 22 votes.

After the victory, he called an extraordinary general meeting to amend the Constitution consolidate the power of the Central Committee. This was met with strong resistance by Tun Tan Siew Sin and his supporters.

Although the proposal was passed with a single-vote majority, the move left the Party splited. At the same time, the MCA under Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu also had severe political differences with the then Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman.

The crisis worsened especially on the eve of the 1959 general elections when Tun Dr Lim demanded 40 parliamentary seats and also wanted to make Chinese an official language.

The Tunku increased the seats allocated to MCA from 28 to 31 but this was rejected and their relationship worsened.

During the one-year period when the MCA was under Tun Dr Lim, the party was under tremendous pressure from within and outside. In December 1960, Tun Dr Lim left the MCA and in 1962, he formed the United Democratic Party. Dr Cheah Toon Lock became the Acting President with the resignation of Tun Dr Lim.

He was one of the founder members of the Opposition Party Gerakan before the 1969 General Election. The formation of Gerakan has thrown the Chinese into a dilemma, weakened their political strength and above all, eroded the political representation of the MCA as the only party for the Chinese community. Gerakan joined the ruling Barisan Nasional after winning the Penang State Government in 1969.

Tun Dr Lim passed away peacefully on the night of 24 November 2010 in his home in Tanjung Bungah surrounded by his family and close friends.