

# Y3 IS Exam Essays

## Summary of Points

### 1. Western Colonisation

1. Malaya - Good: **Political, Economic**, Social
2. Phillipines - Good: **Political**, Economic
3. Vietnam - Bad: **Economic**, Social
4. Indonesia - Bad: **Economic**

### 2. Japanese Occupation

1. Malaya/SG - Bad: **Economic, Social**
2. Indonesia - Bad: Economic, **Social**
3. Indochina - Bad: **Economic**, Social
4. Phillipines - Bad: Economic, **Social**
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6. Malaya/SG - Good: **Political**, Social
7. Indonesia - Good: **Political**, Social
8. Indochina - Good: **Political**, Social
9. Phillipines - Good: Political, **Social**

### 3. Decolonisation

1. Vietnam - Violent: First and Second Indochina War
2. Indonesia - Violent: End Military Attacks or Stop Marshall Aid, Indonesia repays colonial debts
3. Malaya - Peaceful: Federation of Malaya, Malayan Emergency Crushed, 1955 Elections, 1957 Independence
4. Phillipines - Peaceful: CIA supported Ramon Magsaysay > Corrupt Quirino

## Western Colonization was GOOD

### Acronym:

Malaya, PEACE/STABILITY, INDUSTRY  
Phillipines, EDUCATED/OFFICIALS/LEADERS  
Vietnam, RICELAND  
INDONESIA, RESOURCES/CASHCROP

### PIERC

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Colonisation in Southeast Asia occurred from the 1600s to 1800s, where western powers established control over the territories and people. Indonesia and Vietnam were cruelly exploited by their colonial masters, but Malaya and Phillipines mainly benefitted. This essay states that western colonisation in SEA was good to a larger extent.

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Firstly, in Malaya, colonialism brought many political benefits. When the British set up the Residential System, a stable administration was established in the Malay states. There was no corruption due to enforcement of the rule of law. British policies created a stable environment for creating wealth for the nation. For example, Chinese secret societies no longer fought over tin mines due to proper demarcation of land and water resources by the British, and relocation into different townships. The British provided strong defenses against external and internal threats. This helped promote greater political stability as the locals were less likely to challenge a government that was backed by the British.

Firstly, in Malaya, colonialism brought many economic benefits. The tin and rubber industries became the pillars of the Malayan economy, ranking among the top producers in the world at the time. Malaya became export-oriented, supplying cash crops and raw materials to the world. This provided work that can sustain a good standard of living and an environment to attract investors to establish industries which build the wealth of the state. Transportation, railway and public utilities were built in the Federated Malay States. This rapid growth in communications infrastructure included interstate roads, a railway line from Penang to Singapore, and Port Swettenham. This created more job opportunities. Railways connected tin mines and rubber plantations. Hence, Malaya only grew its economy to such a scale with the help of British.

Firstly, in Malaya, colonialism brought many social benefits. The Malay ruling class and Chinese community leaders could receive western education and

get jobs in the colonial administration. The people now had better access to education, housing, healthcare and nutrition. It also attracted Chinese and Indian immigrants to come to Malaya, leading to a diverse society. Economic growth led to the expansion of towns and the creation of new cities. KL was just a village before the tin mining activities led to its growth into a major city. Hence, the British greatly improved the lives of the locals through education, jobs, diversifying society, and urbanisation.

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Secondly, in the Philippines, colonialism by the Americans brought about many social and political benefits. After conquering the Philippines, 600 teachers from the United States were sent to provide free elementary education. The University of the Philippines was established, and Filipinos were encouraged to run the government, so 4 Americans and 3 Filipinos were appointed to the Committee of the Philippines. State governors and state committees were elected by direct referendum. Following this, high-ranking official roles were even given to the Filipinos. Hence, it can be seen that the colonial masters involved the locals in politics since the beginning, bringing in an education system to prepare them, greatly benefitting their governance.

Secondly, in the Philippines, the economy became strongly dependent on the United States, focused on mining and exporting cash crops like pineapples. After the United States took over the ownership of the Philippines, a lot of gold mines were discovered and these became an important industry of the Philippines. The country was also abundant in iron, bronze and chrome but they did not have enough technology to refine them to be final products. The economy stagnated because of reduced desire to invest in the territory because of the extent of local governance. However, following the Great Depression, US Congress decided to give the Philippines independence by 10 years time, and the first Philippine local president was elected. Hence, it can be seen that the Americans stimulated the Philippines economy and prepared them for independence to emerge as a stronger economy.

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However, in Vietnam, the French caused misery and suffering of the people through their economic exploitation. The French took over the land and some Chinese exploited the farmers with high interest rates and took over the land when the farmers could not pay them back. The number of landless peasants increased as high rents and cost of seeds left many peasants poor and in debt while the land owners and traders prospered. This caused many Vietnamese families to become landless peasants. In Vietnam, foreigners owned most of the land while tenant farmers worked on it.

Demand for rice was high, so the French moved Vietnam from subsistence farming to cash crop farming and replaced bartering with currency. The French

colonial government stipulated that no other crop could be grown besides rice and that left Vietnam dangerously exposed to crop failures or price fluctuations. During the Great Depression, rice was still exported while the locals went hungry. The price of salt also tripled as the French monopolized this trade and made huge sums off the Vietnamese and whilst opium was banned in France it was sold by the French in Vietnam, generating huge revenue.

Hence, the French exploited the Vietnamese people and land for cash crops and to collect large wealth while the peasants suffered, only bringing about misery to many locals.

\*Note: All education was in French, so very few went to school, so illiteracy rates high. Transport infrastructure built to benefit French using peasant labour. Forced labour in coal mining and rubber plantations. French monopoly of import and export.

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In Indonesia, colonialism was also a curse to the people as it brought about much economic suffering. Economic resources were transferred from local to Dutch rulers. The Dutch exploited Indonesia for the cash crops it provided: sugar, coffee, tobacco, pepper, and resources like rubber, tin, oil. The Dutch forced the locals to grow these crops (causing famine also) and sell it back to them for fixed prices, which they would then sell for huge prices in Europe. This accounted for huge portions of Dutch revenue and helped it pay the debt from the Java War. Following this, private companies became free to invest in Indonesia and Royal Dutch Shell arrived for the petroleum found in Borneo. This did not end the exploitation of the Indonesian people as most of the profits went to Dutch investors and foreign plantation owners. Hence, Dutch colonialism only exploited the resources to bring large profits back to Europe with no benefit to locals.

\*Note: Aceh supplied half the world's supply of pepper, so when Aceh looked to achieve independence, the Dutch government was alarmed and started a war lasting thirty years, nearly bankrupting the Dutch and killing thousands of Acehnese.

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In conclusion, colonisation was beneficial to a larger extent. Although Indonesia and Vietnam were cruelly exploited by their colonial masters, Malaya and Philippines benefitted greatly economically, politically and socially. Ultimately, this issue is complex because of the inter-play of forces which subjugated millions of people and imposed decades of suffering on them - it can be said that their economies all grew, but that growth was dependent on their colonial masters and came by force.

## Decolonization was VIOLENT

### Acronym:

Vietnam: Indochina War

Indonesia: Money

Malaysia: Federation/Emergency/Election

Phillipines: Magsaysay

### IMFEEM

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Decolonisation refers to a colonial power withdrawing from its colonies such that the colonies acquire independence. In Malaya and Philippines, it was relatively peaceful and orderly as powers of government was gradually transferred to the locals by the American and British colonial rulers after WWII. In Vietnam and Indonesia, independence was achieved only after prolonged fighting between the nationalist groups and European colonial powers. This essay states that decolonization was violent to a larger extent.

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Firstly, the decolonisation of Vietnam was a long and violent effort. After WWII, France was in ruins and no longer had the financial and military capacity to hang on to their vast territories. Ho Chi Minh was a nationalist leader who negotiated with the French to recognise the Viet Minh Government and give limited independence by 1949.

Tension between the independence-seeking Viet Minh and returning French colonial forces led to the First Indochina War in late 1946. (Because Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam independent lol). The Viet Minh supported by communist China, had superior numbers but lacked the weapons and technology of the French, supported by American aid. Many civilians were killed and raped by both sides, with the war only ending in 1954 when the Vietnamese won after a long and cruel war.

Vietnam was left divided into North and South Vietnam. Fearing the spread of communism, the Americans increased military and economic aid to help fight the communists, leading to the Vietnam war from 1955-1975, a war which only ended when American forces pulled out due to american protests. Vietnam was finally unified in 1976.

It can be seen that Vietnam went through 2 wars, over a chaotic 30 years, to finally achieve independence, a powerful testament to the resilience of the Vietnamese people in their pursuit of self-determination, showing that decolonisation was extremely violent.

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Secondly, the decolonisation of Indonesia was also violent. After Japan left Indonesia, Indonesia declared itself independent from the Dutch, and the Americans supported the nationalists and independence forces. The Dutch government were also aware that its international image was being tarnished, so even though the Dutch wanted Indonesia back, they opened negotiations. They reached an agreement that the Dutch would recognise the Republican government in Java and Sumatra, and promised to cooperate in establishing the United States of Indonesia - Java, Sumatra, Madura, Kalimantan, and the Great Eastern State. They also agreed to settle by arbitration all disputes that could not be resolved by joint consultation

However, the Dutch were extremely keen to recapture Indonesia, so they aimed to find a federal state made up mostly of moderate and pro-Dutch elements, who would allow them to continue colonial exploitation of the land. Operation Product and Crow were aggressive attempts to capture valuable plantations, oil plants, ports, and cities, and imprisoned the republican leaders.

Again, tens of thousands of people, civilian or military were killed. The Dutch at the time were highly dependent on American Marshall Aid, and were threatened with the end of this aid, ending Dutch military action. The Americans pressured Indonesia to accept taking on the colonial debts, paying back the costs of the Dutch military struggle against Indonesia. Indonesia paid billions of dollars, a huge burden on the young Republic, but a big stimulus to the Dutch post-war reconstruction.

Indonesia was essentially forced to repay their colonial masters for their attempt to reconquer them. How stupid does that sound?

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However, the decolonisation of Malaya was relatively peaceful. After WWII, the British proposed the Malayan Union Scheme, where all the Malay States would come together under a central government, with the sultans only controlling religious matters. All non-malays would be offered citizenship as long as they were born in the area. This was not popular among the malays, so UMNO was formed to lead the nationwide protest.

Due to strong Malay opposition, the British declared the formation of the Federation of Malaya granting the sultans governing powers, while the non-Malays had to go through more stringent qualifications for citizenship.

Although there were communist attacks during the Malayan Emergency, they were hiding in the jungles and never numbered more than 8000 insurgents. Furthermore, the British resettled villages near the jungles and urged the communists to surrender and promised amnesty.

In 1955, the alliance party consisting of UMNO, MCA and MIC won 81% of total votes. The cooperation of the different communal political parties assured many British officials that Malaya could be given independence. Finally, in 1957, Malaya became independent, and Tunku Abdul Rahman became the first head of state.

Hence, there was little violence in Malaya's road to independence from the British, as the British were committed to grant self-determination to its colonies.

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Phillipines is also another of peaceful decolonisation. In 1946, Manuel Roxas signed the treaty of Manila, transferring power and recognising the independence of the Phillipines. Manuel Roxas was replaced by Quirino, and Quirino won the corrupt 1949 elections against Jose Laurel.

This corruption within the government and low military morale made it difficult to crush the communist guerilla rebellion. Ramon Magsaysay helped to crush them by increasing morale of the military, arresting the Communist Party's politburo, and ensuring the 1951 congressional elections were free of fraud using the army.

He won the 1953 presidency with the help of the CIA who provided his funds, wrote his speeches and influenced the press. Magsaysay was a popular president.

The US continued to dominate the Philippine economy, having preferential trade rights to do business, acquire land, and import goods with no import duties. The US is still the Philippines largest trading partner. Defence agreements also enabled the US to retain huge military bases, a essential part of American Cold War policy, while handling Phillipine national defence.

Hence, there was also little violence in Phillipines journey to independence since the Americans were keen to grant independence to Phillipines once the war was over.

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In conclusion, decolonisation was violent to a larger extent. In Vietnam and Indonesia, a violent struggle was needed to achieve independence while Malaya and Phillipines were handed freedom. It appears that some degree of violence was always needed to stamp out the communists.

Decolonisation became complex when communist elements that were helpful in the resistance against the Japanese, began to express nationalist sentiments, such as in Vietnam, leading to the protracted Vietnam war. It can be said that this complexity fueled the violence in decolonisation.

OR

The western return to Southeast Asia also created ambiguity in that it was uncertain how long they were going to stay and if it was another excuse for modern colonialism, which led to tension and eventually violence between colonial powers and nationalist groups.

## Japanese Occupation was NEGATIVE

Negative - both, ses

Singapore - INDUSTRIES/BLACK, ETHNIC/DIVISION/HARSH/RULE

Indonesia - RAILWAY/LABOUR

Vietnam - FAMINE/FAKEMONEYBONDS

Phillipines - FAMINE/RICE/MARCH/HARSH

Positive - ppps

Singapore - SHATTERED/MalayGovtRoles/ChineseMPAJAForce136

Indonesia - RISEofPoliticalLeaders/Youth

Vietnam - SHATTERED/VietMINH

Phillipines - LANGUAGE

### No acronym

**1-Economic:** Malaya's rubber and tin industries declined. Import and export trade was further disrupted due to the Allied attack on Japanese forces. Tin -mining equipment and rubber-processing machinery were all destroyed by the British to prevent falling into the hands of the Japanese. Many people were unemployed and lack of skilled personnel like engineers, technicians, etc. Buildings, properties, bridges, docks and warehouses were destroyed.

Food shortages caused prices to soar. People were compelled to cultivate their own food, such as tapioca or risk starvation. The Japanese currency had little value and basic consumer goods were scarce. There was overprinting of the worthless paper money. Licensing system and monopolies by the Japanese banks and corporations controlled more than 800 over consumer food items. This led to massive corruption and the emergence of black market where only a few could afford to trade in. Japanese decided to implement a food growing campaign. In Malaya, rubber plantations were cleared and locals were sent there by force to plant food crops such as tapioca, sweet potatoes and yam.

**1-Social** Malay: Japanese stored equipment, served non-halal food and drank alcohol within mosque premises. They took bath in water used for ablutions and Tokyo time was enforced with conflicted with the Muslim prayers. The dates of fasting were fixed by each Japanese governor without regard to Muslim practices.

Chinese: Overseas Chinese Association (OCA), has to raise 50 million dollars towards the Japanese war fund. Sook Ching. Death railway also.



Indians: Military bases, ports. Death railway also.

120,000 allied prisoners of war were taken by the Japanese in the Malayan campaign – paraded openly in the streets to humiliate the British. Japanese soldiers terrorized locals at will with violence, rape and torture. Decapitated heads impaled publicly on spikes as a warning. Notorious Kempetai continued to strike fear in society.

**2-Social** The Totok Dutch were put into prison while the Chinese and Eurasians faced harassment and intimidation. Indonesians were shipped to work for Japanese forces in New Guinea. Java, with its huge population, was particularly ideal venue for the forced recruitment of civilian labour to build railways and other infrastructure that the Japanese needed for their war. Death railway between Siam and Burma, many died working on it. All sorts of dutch material was banned, replaced with japanese material. Radio contact with Europe was forbidden.

**3-Economic** Vietnamese forced to export rice which they did not even have enough for their own families. At a ridiculously low price, leading to a famine at the end of 1944. One million Vietnamese starved to death, rivers full of corpses. Anger, grief. Blatant and insensitive economic policies of the French colonial government. Important resources like sugar, oil, coal, completely controlled by French. Sent to Japan for worthless bonds/goods. Rampant inflation. Viet Minh entered northern villages, seized the granaries that were storing rice for landlords or for the Japanese army and distributed the rice to hungry villages.

**4-Social** 80000 POWs forced to undertake the notorious Bataan Death March to a prison camp 105 kilometers to the north. 10000 men died before reaching their destination. Bataan was the final stronghold that fell to the Japanese. By November 1943, the shortfall in rice in Manila reached alarming levels – starving and dying littered the streets which became a regular sight in the city of Manila. More violence and rape, shoot whoever defies them. All sorts of English material was banned, replaced with japanese material. Japanese used as language of instruction.

## **1-Political**

- Shattered myth of western superiority
- Malay government roles
- MPAJA/Force136
- Basically rise in nationalist sentiment

## **2-Political**

- Sukarno/Hatta/Sjahrir
- Mobilisation of Youth in political and military
- Government roles also (for malays)
- Basically rise in nationalist sentiment

## **3-Political**

- French give in to Japanese demands, eventually Japan physically invades:  
Shattered myth, exposed weakness
- Ho Chi Minh founded Viet Minh that has its own army
- USA and China send Viet Minh arms to resist Japan
- Basically rise in nationalist sentiment

**4-Social/Political** Please don't write this. Japanese did not do any good in Phillipines.

## ASEAN is a SUCCESS

1. Good Stuff
  1. Political-Security Community
    1. **AHA and Disaster Management Centre**
    2. Military/Medical Exercises
    3. Nuclear Free Zone Declaration
  2. Social-Cultural Community
    1. Rural Development and Poverty Eradication
    2. **Transboundary Haze Pollution Prevention**
    3. SEA Games
    4. **COVID-19**
  3. Economic Community
    1. Many Free Trade Agreements
    2. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)
    3. Initiative for ASEAN Integration and Narrowing the Developmental Gap (CLMV States)
    4. **ASEAN Open Skies**
2. Bad stuff
  1. Political-Security Community
    1. **South China Seas Dispute**
    2. **Rohingya**
  2. Social-Cultural Community
    1. **Human Trafficking**
    2. **Drug Trafficking**
  3. Economic Community
    1. **Economic Nationalism**
    2. Diverse Economies (Extra-Asean Trade » Intra-Asean Trade)