

To what extent is it true to say that western educated elites posed a greater cha...



A challenge to colonial rule would be defined as an act against the establishment of colonial rule in the hopes of undermining it or toppling it over. In the early Nineteenth century, the countries in Southeast Asia were colonized by the European empire. The colonial powers exploited the countries natural resources for their own economy and neglected the countries needs and problems. Eventually this led to the rise of several groups that opposed the colonial rule. One of them was the western educated elite. These were the ones who received western education from overseas or institution in their own country.

They posed challenges to the colonial master as they sort to achieve independence from their rule. Others include traditional nationalist movements and revolutionary/communist movements. However the western educated elites did pose a greater challenge than other group. This essay will examine why the western educated elites posed such a challenge to colonial rule and how the other nationalist groups challenge colonial rule.

The western educated elites posed such a great challenge to colonial rule simply because of the fact that they had knowledge of the system of government that their colonial masters implemented in their own countries and attempted to emulate that system. By assimilating in that way the colonial masters can hardly fight against a group of people who clearly want to follow in their footsteps and gain independence for themselves. In Burma, the GCBA are a perfect example of a group of western educated elites who successfully challenged colonial rule. These nationalist leaders who were given western education in Britain or India organized a student strike. They

<https://assignbuster.com/to-what-extent-is-it-true-to-say-that-western-educated-elites-posed-a-greater-challenge-before-wwii-to-colonial-rule-than-any-other-group/>

demanded separation from India, self-rule and eventual independence. The British soon buckled under the pressure and implemented a dyarchical system of governance for Burma. Although Burmese ministers only got small positions in the cabinet (such as department of agriculture, education and health) the GCBA enjoyed a measure of success as they had taken a step towards self-government.

The GCBA's actions also gave Burmese nationalists hope that self-governance can be a reality. In Vietnam, Phan Boi Chau, a prominent scholar patriot who was exposed to western ideas was a major figurehead for many anti-colonialist movements. He wrote the first ever Vietnamese work on nationalism and established the Modern Society which, with the aid of Prince Cuong De, managed to raise an army to carry out an armed revolt against the French. The planned revolt that followed was a failure as the French had been forewarned. A second attempt also failed due to French spies amongst Phan Boi Chau's followers leaking the secret beforehand. Phan Boi Chau also established the Dong Kinh Free School which marked the beginning of Vietnam to Western theories including nationalism. Thus despite repeated failure, Phan Boi Chau managed to challenge the colonial masters by introducing the Vietnamese to the idea of nationalism and true enough after his death many carried on his cause and further challenged colonial rule.

Therefore in the case of the GCBA and Phan Boi Chau, the two have taken the first few steps towards attaining independence and were vital in paving the way for other nationalist movements.