

# World war ii on the decolonization effect history essay

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Decolonization is the contrary of colonialism, this is the process whereby one nation establishes itself independent and separate from the state it had emerged from. The term refers particularly to the dismantlement, in the years after World War II, of the Neo-Imperial empires established prior to World War I throughout Africa and Asia. World War II affected the world in many ways. One major result of the World War II was the chain reaction that it had started. This chain reaction was the start of the decolonization process which although originated from one region, found its way to another. World War II not only gave birth to this event but also acted as a catalyst and pioneered the entire process. The reasons why decolonization process took place are numerous in quantity and quality; some are even more complex than the others, varying widely from one country to another of course. There were in fact three key elements that played a huge role in this decolonization process. First of all was the colonized peoples' hunger for independence, secondly was the Second World War itself which demonstrated that colonial powers were no longer invulnerable, and thirdly was the new focus on anti-colonialism in United Nations. In this paper of mine I will be specifically talking about the effects World War II had on the process of decolonization. I will keep my focus solely on the effects of World War II on the decolonization process.

### **Colonial world dominance in 1939:**

Before the World War II, most of the world's population was living under the authority of a colonial power. For most areas it was the Europeans.

Europeans were particularly very impressive in Africa and the level of control was truly admirable.

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## **World War II undermines the colonial system:**

The rule and authority of colonial powers such as European's and British's were seriously challenged by the outbreak of the World War II.

## **Accelerated decolonization after 1945:**

The decolonization process which had started during the World War II quickly gained speed and rhythm after the war and many regions quickly gained their Independence.

## **Decolonization of India, Pakistan, Burma and Malaya due to British triumph:**

Some people in history may argue that World War II was mainly just a push for this inevitable process and analyzing everything, I must say they would not be wrong too. The colonies of the crescent were nevertheless on the peak of change. It was all due to corrupt British officials who unintentionally powered such movement for freedom. The authors of *Forgotten Armies*; a fall of British India, 1941-1945 demonstrated in their book that how the temperament of the population was wearing thin and the forces of nationalism were beginning to gain strength. The authors of this book labeled these forces as the 'forgotten armies' and praised their art of work. Authors went further to explain the phenomena by quoting the example of India at that time. In British India, the Indian politicians were furious by the treatment of British with Indian soldiers. They were angered by the decision of sending Indian soldiers to British War without even consulting them.

Indians considered their land to be holy and called it motherland. Leaving motherland under any circumstance was considered a very ill move. Things started to take a downturn when even after the Atlantic Charter pledge;  
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there was absence of any type of power in India's government. Due to this reason, Indian National Congress from 1916 onwards got all fired up and blindly and full heartedly demanded self government; this was the moment when the most ferocious layer of nationalism came into the hearts of billions of residents of India. At that moment in time the Japanese wanted to pose themselves as the leader of Asia and wanted to make "Asia for Asians". The Japanese took this wave of nationalism in British Asia to their advantage and used Aung San's Burma Independence Army and Indian National Army commanded by Subhas Chandra Bose to take down British control in Malaya and Burma. This success of Japanese was solely due to the reason that British were unprepared and mismanaged rather than due to Japanese technicality in battle and war. This strategy of Japanese worked brilliantly and gave a huge blow to the British. It annihilated British control in the region of Malaya and Burma as all the British controlled Indian army felt on its knees by this attack. This was the sucker punch that dealt a huge blow at the imperial prestige of the British, with the help of which British so proudly had ruled for the past few years. Racial attitudes only further worsened the situation, as British people who lived in these areas cowardly tried to camouflage themselves with the local and common man in their hopes of escaping the Japanese dominance over the area. The Japanese were adamant on wiping out any British power from the area and so started cleaning out British officials but sometime later they hit the brakes. The reason for this seemed a mystery but later it was realized it was just a simple case of not knowing whether they wanted to push into India or not. Whatever the situation was, one thing was very clear to the Japanese; the

bad pounding of British by the hands of the Japanese had hurt British moral very badly and now British could do very little to dismantle the Japanese. India at that time was caught in its own mess. The Indians were unwilling to cooperate with the British, and also were ill-will to stand for the British in the War. Wave of nationalism had hit India and was lead by Mohandas Gandhi and Nehru, two personnel who wanted nothing but self-government for India. This wave quickly turned into Quit India Movement. Also at that moment in time, Bengal was in terrible conditions. Natural disaster, war injuries and damages, and corrupt efforts of British Raj truly brought out frightening conditions of Bengal. Japanese rule also could not improve Bengal. In the regions of Burma and Malaya, strategies were being thought off for overthrowing Japanese rule. Japanese could not tackle this and eventually they had to leave the area. This showed how much the environment of the World War had changed the region. It was in this rule of Japanese that Burma declared its independence and sometime later in the years, Malaya declared Independence, but only the World War II is to be attributed for this decolonization. Now the British were most vulnerable. Clement Attlee, the Labor Prime Minister who replaced Winston Churchill in July 1945, soon realized that independence for India was inevitable, but disagreements among the Indian politicians made the negotiations very difficult. After Attlee's announcement of partition, 3rd June Plan came into existence. It was the 3rd June plan that made way for Indian Independence Act of 1947. The aftermath of this act as we all know was the partitioning of India and birth of Independent Pakistan.

## **Independence for the Indonesian Archipelago:**

A direct consequence of Japan's occupation of Dutch East Indies during the Second World War was the emergence of wave of nationalism in Indonesia. The Dutch did not find this one bit amusing and were very much against it. Indonesia of today was previously known by the name of Dutch East Indies. It was after World War II that Dutch East Indies was decolonized and became Indonesia. Start of the 20th century was the time when Dutch reached the peak of greatest territorial stretch. Region which forms Indonesia of today was one of the most golden European colonies under the rule of Dutch Empire. It contributed heavenly to Dutch spice trade and crop trade in late 19th century to early 20th century. Everyday interaction of the society lied on the basis of strict racial profiles and social order. Although Dutch high class lived separately from the lower class yet they maintained a strong link to their native subjects. It was in the early 20th century that the seed of independence was planted into the hearts of many by a group of many astute minds, who were adamant on making Indonesia a free nation. This small group set the platform for the Independence movement which Indonesia was about to witness. It was Japan's World War II occupation that had damaged and cursed much of the Dutch colonial state and their circulation of wealth and commerce. Soon when Japanese forces could not cope with the locals, they surrendered making way for Indonesian nationalists to fight for their independence during the subsequent Indonesian National Revolution. The work of these nationalist bore fruit as in 1949 at the Dutch-Indonesia Round Table Conference, Nederland recognized Indonesia as a separate state and entity. At first Nederland did not give away New

Guinea to Indonesia but it was not long before they did in 1963, cede it to Indonesia under the rules of New York Agreement.

### **Independence for Indochina:**

Following the war, France tried to reestablish them in the region of Indochina, now known as the islands of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos by dissolving the 1938 Franco-Siamese Treaty. Unfortunately for them, the Viet Minh did not appreciate this move of French and so a conflict was seen between the French and the Communist and Indochinese Nationalists, lead by Ho Chi Minh. The failure to create an Indochinese federation in 1946 as part of the French Union led to a long war of independence. Ho Chi Minh took advantage of the Japanese occupation of Indochina during the World War II to launch the Viet Minh Independence Movement. Throughout war Viet Minh was aided by the Americans for resisting the Japanese. This particular herd of people was in power of the countryside since March 1945, when French gave way to them. American President Roosevelt and General Stilwell openly made it very crystal that the French were not going to assert their power on Indochina and will not be having Indochina after the World War II was over. It is stated by some historians that Roosevelt himself offered Jiang Jieshi, the political and military leader of Chinese, the entire Indochina to be his and of the Chinese people. It was said that Chiang Kai-shek replied, " Under no circumstances!" After the World War II, almost two hundred thousand Chinese troops under the command of Chinese General Lu Han was sent by Chiang Kai-shek to invade north of Indochina, and to accept the surrender of Japanese forces having command there. They did so and remained there till late 1946. The Chinese used the VNQDD, to strengthen their power in

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Indochina and put pressure on their opponents. Chiang Kai-shek is thought to have threatened the French with war, when he was informed of French plan to put a seed of mistrust between him and Ho Chi Minh, therefore French had no other option other than to come to a peace agreement. Chiang Kaishek's other valuable contribution to Independence of Indochina was when he forced the French to surrender all of the French gain of power in China and demolish their territorial privileges in exchange for allowing French troops to reoccupy the region starting in March 1946. After persuading Emperor Bảo Đại to rule in his favor, President Ho declared independence for the Vietnam on 2nd of September 1945. But before September could end, a combination of British and French soldiers, along with captured Japanese troops, reestablished French control in the region. After a period of ferocious fighting, it was in 1950 when President Ho again declared an independent Vietnam, which was recognized by the Communist governments of China and the Soviet Union. Fighting lasted until May 1954, when the Viet Minh won the decisive victory against French forces at the grueling Battle of Dien Bien Phu.