



Mains Practice Question

Q. The Second World War gave a great stimulus to nationalist movements in colonies. Comment. (250 words)

02 Mar, 2020 GS Paper 1 History

Approach

- Briefly explain the link between rise of nationalism and second world war.
- Give examples.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

- Second World War had a major impact on the process of 'decolonisation'. This gave rise to several nationalist movements.
- Decolonisation was the withdrawal of colonial powers from colonies and the acquisition of political or economic independence by such colonies.

Body

Factors behind the nationalistic movement rise following WWII were:

- **Principle of national self-determination:** This principle, upheld by the charter to the UN and grants the freedom to decide the best government for themselves to inhabitants of the land. The principle was given a boost by the rising the nationalistic sentiments in colonies that were inspired by the same ideologies motivating European powers to fight for their cause in WWII.
- **To contain rising communist influence:** United States exhorted European colonial powers to grant independence to colonies, lest they would fall under communist influence.
- **Economic and political instability in colonial power:** One of the ramifications of WWII was the ascendancy of United States and USSR as two superpowers and fall of former colonial powers who suffered heavily in WWII. They were more concerned with their national reconstruction and thus couldn't rule in colonies at the same time.

National Movements in colonies

- **Africa:** The freedom struggle in African Colonies adopted different means. i.e., from gradualism or peaceful transition in Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah to violent struggle in Kenya under Jomo Kenyatta.
- **India:** Indian National Congress launched the Quit India movement in 1942 and gained independence on 15th August 1947.
- **South-East Asia**
 - **Vietnam:** An Indo-French colony, gained independence following victory in 'Battle of Dien Bien Phu' (1954)
 - **Indonesia** gained independence, following the surrender of Japan in August 1945.
 - **Cambodia** gained independence from French imperialism in 1953.

Conclusion

Post-WWII, almost everywhere, colonial exploitation was challenged by powerful nationalist movements. Hence, the war gave a great stimulus to nationalist movements in colonies.

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