World History · GS - I

What problems are germane to the decolonization process in the Malay Peninsula?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2017	GS - I	World History

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Colonial legacy; ethnic diversity; Malay-Chinese-Indian relations; citizenship debates; communist insurgency; Malayan Emergency; economic inequalities; constitutional negotiations; regional integration

Model Answer

Introduction

The decolonisation of the Malay Peninsula, culminating in the independence of the Federation of Malaya in 1957, involved complex political, ethnic, economic and security challenges.

Major Problems

1. Ethnic Diversity: Malays, Chinese and Indians had different historical experiences, political aspirations and economic positions. Creating a common national identity was a major challenge.

2. Citizenship and Representation: Disagreements over citizenship rights, political representation, and the position of Malay rulers complicated constitutional negotiations.

3. Communist Insurgency: The Malayan Communist Party's armed struggle led to the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960), creating serious security challenges during the transition.

4. Economic Inequalities: Colonial economic structures concentrated different communities in different sectors, contributing to disparities and intercommunal tensions.

5. Constitutional Arrangements: Negotiations had to reconcile representative government, the role of traditional Malay rulers, minority rights and the special position of Malays.

6. British Strategic Interests: Britain sought to protect economic interests and maintain regional influence while managing the transition to self-government.

7. Regional Challenges: The formation of Malaysia in 1963 and Singapore's separation in 1965 reflected continuing challenges in regional integration.

Conclusion

Decolonisation in the Malay Peninsula required more than the transfer of power. It demanded political compromise, management of ethnic diversity, economic restructuring and the development of stable national institutions.

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