

Decolonisation in Asia

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Decolonisation in Asia

The colonised peoples of South-East Asia were the first to demand the departure of the Europeans and to claim independence. In the space of a few years, all the colonies, except the Portuguese possessions of Goa and Timor, became independent.

In February 1947, the British decided to leave India. Some months later, India gained its independence, although it was subjected to a partition which created the new state of Pakistan. In 1948, the United Kingdom also granted independence to Burma and Ceylon, and in 1957 to Malaya.

Meanwhile Indonesia endured four years of military and diplomatic confrontation with the Netherlands before the Dutch Government recognised the independence of the Dutch East Indies in December 1949.

France also had to cope with demands for independence from its colonies. In 1946 it became embroiled in a colonial war in Indo-China. Eight years later the conflict ended with the victory of the Viet Minh (League for Independence of Vietnam) over the French forces, which were obliged to leave the country. Laos and Cambodia also gained independence.