



DUNMAN HIGH SCHOOL  
HUMANITIES AND ARTS PROGRAMME

YEAR 3 History Unit 1  
Argument Map Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Class: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2022 3ei - PRACTICE

“British colonial rule was a boon for the people of Malaya.” How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

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#### UNPACKING THE ARGUMENT MAP

#### **What is the historical debate about? (Issue)**

The issue is about the British rule of Malaya. (1874-1941)

### HOW TO WRITE AN INTRODUCTION - Revised 1

#### **UNPACK THE STATEMENT**

This statement suggests that British colonial rule was beneficial to Malaya. This means that the British government had introduced changes and policies that ultimately benefited the lives of the locals and migrants in Malaya.

#### **AGREE PERSPECTIVE**

For this to be true, it means that the British colonial government brought in positive changes such as creating **political stability** and boosting **economic growth for Malaya**, both of which benefitted Malaya.

Under British colonial rule, there were growths and developments leading to a modernized Malaya. The growth of tin and rubber industries had increased revenue to develop Malaya. (Premise 1 of GP).

-British administration also introduced a modern system of transportation and communications in the Malay States to improve the standards of living. (Premise 2 of GP).

#### **OPPOSING PERSPECTIVE**

On the other hand, it could be argued that British colonial rule was a bane as there were political losses due to loss of power and prestige for the rulers and chiefs and social tensions created by the massive arrivals of Chinese and Indian immigrants.

### **CRITIQUE THE PERSPECTIVE YOU DISAGREE WITH**

**Even though there were racial tensions, one has to bear in mind that British rule also brought economic prosperity and social progress to Malaya.**

**The British government compensated the rulers by ensuring they had authority over religion and customs.**

**They also introduced the Malay land reservations system to protect the indigenous Malays.**

### **STAND**

In this essay, my view is that British colonial rule benefitted Malaya politically and economically even though there were some damages to the social structure, making the impact rather uneven throughout Malaya.

## **BODY PARAGRAPH**

### **AGREEING PERSPECTIVE**

#### **POLITICAL STABILITY**

##### **POINT**

The British helped to achieve peace & stability in the Malay states by resolving the succession disputes and the conflicts between the tin miners.

##### **EVIDENCE (SUCCESSION DISPUTES)**

- The Malay States experienced frequent conflicts due to succession disputes. These disputes caused tensions and conflicts that drove a state into chaos.
- In the case of Perak, the succession disputes erupted into a civil war which disrupted trade.
- The power struggles between the Malay chiefs intensified when combined with the disorder of the secret societies in Perak.
- The British sometimes had to intervene in order to deal with the chaos created by local conflicts which greatly disrupted trade.
- The British examined the local conditions and took steps to resolve the conflicts. In the Pangkor Treaty in 1874, they installed Raja Abdullah as the Sultan of Perak and appointed a resident to be his advisor.

##### **EVIDENCE (LARUT WARS - FROM TIN MINERS)**

- At times, the power struggles between the Malay chiefs intensified when combined with the problems from the Chinese Secret Societies.
- In Perak, the Larut Wars among the tin miners was one example of a chaotic situation that required intervention. As there was no proper land survey to demarcate the various tin mines, the Ghee Hins and the Hai Sans Chinese miners often fought fiercely over control of tin mines and water courses. As there was no proper land survey to demarcate the various tin mines, the Chinese miners often fought over control of tin mines and water courses.

##### **EXPLAIN WHAT THE BRITISH DID**

- When the British intervened, they restored political stability and enforced law and order.
- The British helped to draw political boundaries to control disputes and acted as peacemakers between rival chiefs.
- Soon the riots were controlled and trade was protected with British intervention.
- With peace established, the miners could concentrate on their business in a stable and safe environment.
- There was a greater standardization of laws and a better organization of local defence forces to keep peace in Malaya.

##### **LINK**

**Hence, British rule was a boon to Malaya as the stable political situation increased businesses and investments which led to economic progress. British policies had created a peaceful and stable environment for creating wealth for Malaya.**

#### **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

## **POINT**

- The British colonial rule transformed Malaya's subsistence-based economy to become an export-oriented economy, supplying cash crops and raw materials to the world.
- The British invested in tin and rubber industries which resulted in economic prosperity to Malaya.
- Tin & rubber industries became the pillars of the Malayan economy bringing in most of the revenue.

## **TIN**

### **EVIDENCE**

- Large companies were in the hands of European entrepreneurs who had large sums of capital to purchase the latest and most sophisticated equipment such as the tin dredge which enabled large amounts of tin to be excavated.
- In addition, smelting plants which were set up in Spore & Butterworth, provided work for the growing population.

### **EXPLAIN**

**-Hence British control of the tin states created the conditions ideal for the development of the tin industry. Under British rule, European capital and Chinese labour transformed Malaya into the world's largest producer of tin by 1898.**

## **RUBBER**

### **EVIDENCE**

- Like tin, the rubber industry was funded by European capital and grew rapidly.
  - By 1918, over 2.5 million acres were used for rubber cultivation and Malaya was producing half of the world's total consumption.
  - The large plantation estates were managed by European planters while the work of rubber tapping was usually carried out by Indian labourers.
  - The rubber industry provided the largest single source of revenue to the Malayan government.
- The British played a major role in technical knowledge, the capital resources and the enterprises to promote it.
- They also had the active encouragement and support of the British administration.
  - Funded by European capital, rubber surpassed tin as Malaya's most profitable export by the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **EXPLAIN**

**-British rule benefited Malaya as they created stable conditions and employment opportunities for Malaya, bringing in large revenues to finance the building of roads and railways and later social facilities like hospitals and school.**

## **LINK FOR TIN & RUBBER**

**-Therefore, British rule brought about economic progress which in turn led to social progress for Malaya.** From the economic point of view, mass migration into Malaya was in fact rewarding for the people of Malaya because this increased the volume of trade and economic vibrancy in the different Malay states, creating more job opportunities. The revenues earned were used to develop the country and improve the

standard of living. **The people gained in terms of work and steady source of income. The growth of the economy led to greater revenue that could sustain a decent standard of living in Malaya with access to health care & nutrition & development of infrastructure such as new roads, bridges, harbours and railways. Life was indeed good under British rule compared to the past.**

#### **Premise 2:**

The British also improved transportation and developed an inter-state communication system to facilitate ease of movement for people and goods.

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Thus, these transportation networks made possible increased connectivity and convenience for the people of Malaya. They were able to reach previously inaccessible locations. It was certainly cheaper, faster and easier for the people to move from one place to another and to communicate with each other. In this way, Malaya was able to develop and modernize quickly under British rule.

### **OPPOSING PERSPECTIVE**

#### **HOWEVER, BRITISH RULE WAS NOT ALL THE TIME BENEFICIAL...**

One could argue, however, that the large-scale immigration of Chinese and Indians into Malaya had created social tensions, which disadvantaged the society.

#### **POINT**

British rule was socially, a bane for Malaya because it resulted in the creation of a plural society and the marginalization of indigenous Malays.

#### **EVIDENCE**

-Under British rule, more Chinese came to Malaya to join the earlier immigrants in the mining towns and cities.

-Immigrant workers from southern India also came seeking job opportunities in Malaya.

-With the influx of both Chinese and Indian immigrants into Malaya (mass migration), the Malays who were supposed to be the dominant race in Malaya were outnumbered by their Indian and Chinese counterparts. They became the minority ethnic group.

#### **EXPLAIN**

-The indigenous Malays felt that they were falling behind as the British welcomed the Chinese and Indian immigrants to work in the tin and rubber industries.

-It was socially detrimental to the Malayan society because they were racially outnumbered and there were social tensions which led to social disorder due to the divisions along racial lines.

**Malaya became a country with a plural society**, due to British colonial rule. The failure of the new immigrants to integrate into Malayan society caused this and led to racial tensions. The **Chinese tended to live mostly in towns, the Indians in plantations and**

estates and the Malays mostly in the rural areas. Since schooling at this time depended on individual communities setting up their own schools and teaching in the vernacular, lack of a common education sharpened the divisions between the communities. The different races also set up their own political and social associations. Already divided in lifestyle, language, custom and religion, these associations segregated the lives of the people even more.

The polarization of Malayan society into three separate nationalities was one of the major consequences of 19th Century immigration. This was disastrous as colonial rule left a long-term social impact as the social segregation perpetuated for a long time and laid the foundation of Malay Special Rights which would later flare up into racial riots in the 20th century.

#### LINK

**Hence, the racial enclaves in Malaya made the social fabric extremely fragile and as such, British rule was more a bane than a boon for the people of Malaya in view of negative social impacts brought to the community.**

#### COUNTER-ARGUMENT

-Whilst it is true that the racial tensions were rather disastrous, one should also bear in mind the political and economic progress that the British colonial rule brought into Malaya. The presence of the Chinese and Indian immigrants provided the much-needed labour to open tin mines and rubber plantations. The revenue generated from their labour also contributed to the development of towns and cities that came with modern facilities which improved their standards of living. Thus, the significant increase in population due to the waves of immigration had positive outcomes as it resulted in the urban development of colonial towns and cities which improved the quality of life of the local people.

-To protect the rights & privileges of the Malays, the British implemented the Land Reservations System to support the Malays who felt marginalized by the racial imbalance. This system defined lands which were reserve for the Malays and could not be sold to non-Malays. This was meant to ensure the Malays did not lose all their land.

-The British also accord importance to the Malay rulers by letting them be in charge of Malay customs and religion. Some of them were employed by the British to help out in state administration where government policies such as those dealing with tax collection and currency reforms were initiated in Malaya for the first time.

-The ruler's sons also received special education and training to enable them to take up administrative posts in the government.

-From the economic point of view, mass migration into Malaya was in fact rewarding for the people of Malaya because this increased the volume of trade and economic vibrancy in the different Malay states, creating more job opportunities. The revenues earned were used to develop the country and improve the standard of living.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the impact of British rule must be seen within a larger context.

The advantages of British rule far outweigh the disadvantages. The British restored law and order and brought about an efficient system of administration to Malaya. With an efficient government, there was peace and security which brought wealth and economic development especially the tin and rubber in Malaya. However, there were also disadvantages such as loss of power for the rulers and chiefs and marginalisation of the indigenous Malays. Thus, it would be more accurate to say that the impact of British rule was uneven but was very beneficial for Malaya in the long run.

In conclusion, over time it can be seen that British colonial rule was uneven for a number of reasons as it impacted Malaya differently at different times, and for different people. So to say that the governance of the British was a “blessing” is clearly inaccurate and false, instead it would be far more accurate to say that the impact of British colonial rule was a mixed blessing even though over time, the benefits have stayed while the curses have somewhat softened.

In conclusion, although British rule in Malaya had divided the people and reduced the powers of the rulers, it also heralded a period of modernization especially in the economy, transportation and communications which provided much revenue and ease of movements for further growth and development. The effects of British rule were not limited to simply its negative impacts but also positive ones that benefited the people. There was prosperity and higher standards of living in a modernized and well-developed Malaya. Therefore, although the given statement does contain some truth, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the impacts of British rule were uneven and could well be beneficial for many people in Malaya in the long run.

THE END