

PENANG SANGAM HIGH SCHOOL
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LESSON NOTES

School: Penang Sangam High School

Year/Level: 13C

Subject: History

Strand	Change and Continuity in the Pacific and Beyond
Sub Strand	Decolonization
Content Learning Outcome	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Understand the term decolonisation and its nature in specific case studies.Discuss the involvement of the UN in the process of decolonisation in the various pacific islands.

Week:12

Case Study 2

Decolonisation – Vanuatu

- Vanuatu is an archipelago of 83 islands. The capital, Port Vila is on Efate Island. The word Vanuatu means “ Our Land Forever” in one of Vanuatu’s Melanesian languages. Today Vanuatu’s population is about 266,937 with the official language are English French and Bislama. 70% of the population is Protestant and 25% belonging to the Presbyterian Church.
- The Flag of Vanuatu chosen at the time of independence. Prior to the independence Vanuatu was known as New Hebrides a name given by its British colonial masters. Vanuatu is unique because it had **two colonial rulers at one point in time**. This arrangement was referred to as a condominium- **British and the French to share control of the islands.**

Figure 3.45 Vanuatu Flag



(Source: graphicmaps.com)

- The Vanuatu archipelago is a chain of islands in the shape of a Y, so this is represented on the flag by the black horizontal Y. The yellow line inside the black “Y” is symbolic of **sunshine and Christianity**; the green is symbolic of the **fertile lands**, red symbolic of the **blood shed** for freedom and black represents the **Melanesian people that originally settled the islands 3500 years ago**. In the black triangle there is a boar tusk and two crossed fern leaves, a traditional symbol of prosperity.
- **Condominium/Pandemonium**
- Condominium – joint dominion, especially joint sovereignty by two or more nations.
- Pandemonium – the type of rule that causes a lot of confusion because people are excited, frightened or angry.

- From 1906 to 1980 France and Britain jointly ruled Vanuatu for 74 years. This method of joint rule was also adopted in Samoa, foreign powers such as Germany, Britain and USA controlled from 1889-1899. That form of rule was called the “Tripartite administration”. **Three superpowers controlling a territory at the same time.**
- The Anglo-French Condominium, or the joint administrative power, which meant, two languages, two education systems and two police forces. At times this method of joint rule causes a lot of confusion and complicating situations for the locals. Consequently, missionaries and traders competed with one another in these islands to earn the favour of the indigenous people.
- **The Decolonisation Process**
- As the result of the unusual joint rule in New Hebrides the pathway for independence in these islands was slightly different as compared to previous decolonisation process in the Pacific. Due to the 1960 UN Declaration states that all colonial people had the right to be freed from any foreign rule perhaps to gain independence. On the other hand, Vanuatu was not ready enough to accept self-rule because the locals are foreign to administer their own country. People are not ready for taking full control of their own affairs even to run a government.
- Opposition to Independence**
- Nagriamel was a political movement based in the Northern islands of New Hebrides during the late 1970's. Nagriamel, demanded for a focus on the traditional, village-centred way of life for the Ni-Vanuatu people. It was referred regarded a cult, led by John Frum dominated his compound in the Fanafo area of upland Espiritu Santo. Nagriamel, believed that the New Hebrides was not ready for independence and the pace of change caused by modernisation. The pro-Nagriamel were mainly French supported the movement for its continuation in the islands. Nagriamel delayed the process of decolonisation. Approaching independence, Nagriamel declared a separate nation of the island of Santo but in 1980 the government led by Vanua'aku Party approved to squash the Nagriamel's short-lived “Republic of Vemerana” and arrested its leader Jimmy Stevens.
- **View of the Historians**
- The transfer of power from colony to independent nation is a field of study within History called by a Historian, Dietmar Rothermund “a voluminous historiography”. Various interpretation the cause of decolonisation was:
- - “Triumph of Nationalism” for colonial territories the agency of elites and new leaders emerging in the colonies
- The push for independence from within the colonial power
- International pressure eg UN Declaration of 1960
- - Economic costs of colonies was too high.
- Local interpretation (Fr Walter Lini)
- “The French and the British did not do anything for us. In fact, they waited, waited and waited until we saw ourselves how we should begin to move to get to self-reliance, no self-government, and independence. It was not them forcing us, but our people demanded it from them”
- **Early Devastating Exploitation and Curious “Condominium”**
- 1825, Sandalwood was over cultivated
- - Hundreds of islanders were bullied, killed and dragged away to slavery in Australia by disreputable leaders.
- - Missionaries arrived in 1839, brought smallpox, influenza, pneumonia and other diseases.
- - land purchasing by Chinese and Pacific French despite objections.

➤ **Independence 1980**

- The arrival of the Americans during WWII with their informal demeanour began in the early 1940's. The belief in a mythical messianic figure named John Frum was the reason of the indigenous cult movement (a movement attempting to obtain industrial goods through magic) promising Melanesian deliverance. He was very influential found himself both the religious and political leader with two members in parliament. The first political party was established in 1970's and was called the New Hebrides National Party (NHNP). One of the founders was Fr Walter Lini, who later became the Prime Minister. His party Vanua'aku Pati in 1974 pushed for independence in 1980 Republic of Vanuatu was created.

Summary

The decolonisation process in Vanuatu was rapid, starting in the early 1970's to 1980. Freedom to push for independence was driven by the UN Resolution of 1960, the returning of overseas students who had attained the idea of obtaining freedom to former colonial subjects. Comparing decolonisation process for Vanuatu with other neighbouring nations, it could be certain in Vanuatu there was a rapid transfer of power.

Definitions

Decolonisation	process in which colonies regain their independence
Condominium	rule over a colony shared by two foreign powers
Foreign rule	rule by a foreign power causing a loss of independence
Self-determination	the right to govern your own nation
Empire	the possession of overseas territories by a colonial power
Archipelago	a discrete group of islands
United Nations	World organisation for making decisions about global issues

Activity

1. 1. Write a short definition of these terms:

Decolonisation _____

Condominium _____

Secession _____

Protestant _____

Ascendancy _____

2. In your own opinion did Vanuatu undergo the same series of steps as, say Fiji, in the process of decolonisation leading to independence? () YES () NO Now explain your choice:

3. In the Vanuatu flag, list five symbols and what they suggest about the aspirations of the new nation:

SYMBOL MEANING _____

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. Is having 115 languages in a population of 270,000 an obstacle to good governance, good decision making, development and national unity? () YES () NO Now explain your choice:
