



ANG MO KIO SECONDARY SCHOOL
SECONDARY 2 HISTORY
CHAPTER 6 – LIFE UNDER THE JAPANESE IN SYONAN-TO (1942-1945)

Name: _____ () Class: _____ Date: _____

By the end of this chapter, you should know:

- ☐ What did the people in Singapore experience during the Japanese Occupation
- ☐ How the Japanese tried to control the population in Syonan-to

Introduction/Background

- After the British surrender, Singapore fell under Japanese rule on 15 February 1942.
- The Japanese renamed Singapore “Syonan-to”, which meant “Light of the South” and went on to adopt different methods to control the population in Singapore.
- Under Japanese rule, the people’s experiences varied. While many were forced to obey Japanese rule, there were others who chose to collaborate with the Japanese for other benefits.

What do I <u>know</u> about the Japanese Occupation?	What do I <u>want to know</u> about the Japanese Occupation?	What have I <u>learnt</u> about the Japanese Occupation?

Let’s Explore!

Look at the following historical sources to find out more about life in Syonan-to: a.
Illustrations by Liu Kang about the Japanese Occupation in Singapore



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Based on the sketches by Liu Kang,

- (i) What do you think life was like for the locals in Syonan-to?

(ii) How do you think the Japanese treated the locals in Syonan-to? (iii)

Why do you think the Japanese treated them in this manner?

b. Newspaper article published in *The Syonan Times*, 16 March 1942

Saturday, 14 March, brought to a close the first month of Japanese rule over Syonan-to. A complete transformation had taken place, and we now see a smiling, clean looking city, looking forward to a greater period of prosperity under Japanese rule. Indeed, there was no doubt that Syonan-to was benefiting under the Japanese Greater East-Asia Co Prosperity Scheme. The greatest benefit to Syonan people during the month has been the continuation of the electric light and water services and supplies. Today, we are free and equal members of a new government which offers freedom and equal opportunities to all.

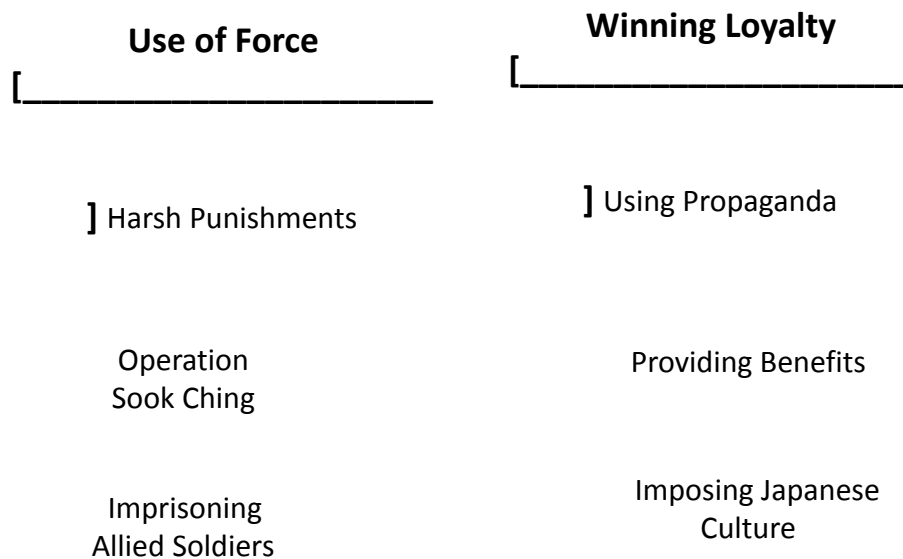
(i) What does the newspaper article tell you about life in Syonan-to?

(ii) What is different between the newspaper's account and Liu Kang's account of life in Syonan-to?

(iii) Why do you think this newspaper's account is different from Liu Kang's account?

How did the Japanese establish control over the people living in Syonan-to? METHODS

USED BY THE JAPANESE TO CONTROL THE POPULATION IN SINGAPORE



a) Use of Force

WHAT IS THE FACTOR & WHAT IS IT ABOUT? [STATE + DESCRIBE]	SO WHAT? [EXPLAIN]
The Japanese used force to control the people of Singapore by <u>meting out harsh punishments</u>. • The Japanese punished those who were caught for looting/stealing by chopping and displaying their heads/hands in public places • The Japanese Military Police, known as the Kempeitai, arrested and tortured those who were suspected of being Anti-Japanese	By meting out harsh punishments, the Japanese was able to control the population because: □ People felt scared/afraid that they may be punished by the Japanese, so they will not dare to go against the Japanese rule
The Japanese used force to control the people of Singapore by <u>imprisoning the Allied soldiers</u>. • The Japanese imprisoned the Allied troops (those who had fought for the British against the Japanese, including women and children) as Prisoners-of War (POWs) and forced them to march in public	The Japanese controlled the people in Singapore by imprisoning the Allied soldiers because: □ Japanese wanted to <u>dispel the myth of "White Man Superiority" by showing they had control over the British</u> and make the locals support Japanese rule □ Japanese wanted to <u>warn</u> the locals to not resist Japanese rule as they would be punished otherwise
The Japanese used force to control the people of Singapore by <u>carrying out Operation Sook Ching</u>. • The Kempeitai conducted Operation Sook Ching ("cleansing") where Chinese men aged 18 to 50 were examined by the Japanese and their informants, and those who were suspected to be involved in anti-Japanese activities would be taken away and killed	Operation Sook Ching allowed the Japanese to control the people in Singapore because: □ People were <u>afraid to identified/seen as anti-Japanese as they do not want to be killed</u> □ People did not trust anyone and chose to keep to themselves and obey the Japanese rule

b) Winning Loyalty

WHAT IS THE FACTOR & WHAT IS IT ABOUT? [STATE + DESCRIBE]	SO WHAT? [EXPLAIN]
The Japanese tried to win loyalty by using propaganda to brainwash the people. • The Japanese tried to convince people that they wanted to free Singapore from colonial rule to create “Asia for Asians”, and help Asia to prosper under a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” • The Japanese promised to help to free India from the British by helping to set up the Indian National Army (INA)	Through the use of propaganda, □ Japanese tried to brainwash the locals to make them think that the Japanese rule would help to improve their lives □ People will thus be more willing to support the Japanese rule
The Japanese tried to win loyalty by providing benefits to the locals. • Free housing, education, textbooks • Rice, sugar, salt distributed to the less fortunate during Hari Raya Puasa • Indians and Malays charged lower fees than Chinese for crossing causeway	By providing benefits to the locals, □ Locals will be more willing to support Japanese rule to receive rewards/ better treatment during the war
The Japanese tried to win loyalty by teaching the Japanese language. • Schools taught students to speak and write Nippon-go (Japanese language) instead of English • Competitions, extra rations, salary increments were used to encourage adult to learn Nippon-go through regular lessons in the newspapers	By imposing the Japanese culture, □ Locals are made to think that Japanese culture is superior/better, and start to be more willing to accept Japanese rule □ Locals taught to behave like a Japanese be proud of the Japanese identity, and support Japanese rule
The Japanese tried to win loyalty by cultivating the Japanese spirit. • Daily mass exercises were conducted through the radio broadcasts to instil discipline and fitness among masses • Students had to sing the “Kimigayo” (Japanese National Anthem) and bow to the picture of the Japanese	

Life & Experiences in Singapore

| During Japanese Rule |**Struggle for Survival**

- There was a shortage of food and essential items as the Japanese channelled these resources for their war efforts
 - Japanese used ration cards to control and limit the amount of food (such as rice) and essential items that the locals could buy
 - Black markets (where goods were bought and sold illegally at extremely high prices) flourished as people were desperate to obtain food and goods for survival
 - Prices of goods increased rapidly over time, causing drastic inflation
 - Banana notes were printed freely, and eventually became worthless
 - People lived in poor conditions and suffered from diseases and death
 - People were often malnourished due to the limited amount and variety of food
 - Many suffered and died from beriberi (a disease caused by lack of Vitamin B)
 - Cramped living conditions with poor sanitation allowed diseases to spread easily
 - Changi Prison held 5000 prisoners even though it was only designed for 600 prisoners
 - infectious diseases such as pneumonia and dysentery spread easily and caused many deaths

Leisure & Entertainment Activities

- Japanese allowed some leisure and entertainment activities to reduce the stress of wartime conditions and maintain the image of a happy society in Singapore
 - Japanese movies and documentaries available in cinemas
 - Free open-air screenings of propaganda shows
 - Sports activities like baseball, boxing, badminton, football matches were advertised in newspapers almost daily
 - Cultural activities like police band performances happened in Botanic Gardens
 - POWs organised and participated in social and religious activities like church services and painting murals

Collaboration



Resistance

• Some worked together with the Japanese to receive better treatment ○ Malays were given duties such as policing and reporting hostile acts ○ Chinese informants helped to weed out anti-Japanese elements	• Some actively resisted the Japanese rule ○ Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) distributed anti Japanese posters and newspapers and launched sabotage attacks ○ Force 136 gathered information about the Japanese for the British and launched sabotage attacks
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