



(1945-1959) Name: _____ () Class: _____ Date:

By the end of this chapter, you should know:

- How did the British deal with post-war problems in Singapore
- How did external developments in the post-war period affect Singapore
- How did the locals respond to British rule in the post-war period
- How Singapore eventually attained full internal self-government in 1959

Introduction/Background

- After the heavy casualties and damage from the atomic bombs, Japan officially surrendered to the Allies on 2 September 1945, marking the end of World War II (WWII).
- From 5 September 1945 to 31 March 1946, Singapore and Malaya came under the rule of the British Military Administration (BMA).



Life & Experiences after World War II in

| Post-War Singapore |

After the Japanese surrendered, many welcomed the return of the British. There was hope that Singapore would return to prosperity and stability under the British. The British set up a provisional government known as the British Military Administration (BMA) to improve the situation in Singapore between 5 September 1945 to 31 March 1946, before it would be returned to civilian rule. However, there were mixed reactions towards the British rule as the British were not entirely successful in meeting the peoples' demands.

WHAT PROBLEMS/ISSUES DID THE PEOPLE FACE? [STATE + DESCRIBE]	WHAT DID THE BRITISH DO TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE? [STATE + DESCRIBE]
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<p>People in Singapore continued to experience <u>food shortages</u> after the Japanese surrendered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice-producing countries like Thailand could not produce enough rice to sell • Rice could hardly enter Singapore as the harbour was blocked by the sunken merchant ships • Few warehouses available for rice to be stored and stocked up • People suffered from malnutrition 	<p>The British Military Administration made efforts to address the food shortages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Harbours were cleared</u> to allow ships to enter the port • Prices of essential food supplies such as vegetables, fresh fish, salt and sugar were controlled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ However, Black Markets continued to thrive • Free meals given to children below six
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<p>WHAT PROBLEMS/ISSUES DID THE PEOPLE FACE? [STATE + DESCRIBE]</p>	<p>WHAT DID THE BRITISH DO TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE? [STATE + DESCRIBE]</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>People's Restaurant</u> and People's canteen was set up to provide food at <u>affordable prices</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There were 10 People's Restaurant by the end of 1946
<p>People in Singapore experienced <u>economic hardship</u> after the Japanese surrendered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banana notes used during the Japanese Occupation was no longer accepted • Those who did not keep Straits dollars from before the war had no money • There were insufficient jobs as many companies had closed down 	<p>The British Military Administration made efforts to reduce the economic hardships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special grants were issued to help the people who did not have enough money <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ However, many were still unhappy with the BMA as the grants were often not enough for large families • <u>Ports were repaired</u> to allow Singapore to re-establish its status as an important trading centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volume of trade increased to even higher than pre-war levels, due to an increase in global demand for tin and rubber ○ <u>Jobs were created</u> for the people

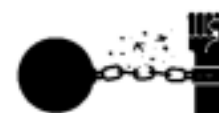
<p>People in Singapore experienced <u>schooling disruptions</u> after the Japanese surrendered • War had disrupted schooling for many</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some did not attend school during the Japanese Occupation ○ Learning materials like textbooks and blackboards were destroyed <p>• Needy families could not afford to send their children to schools</p>	<p>The British Military Administration made efforts to manage the schooling problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools were reopened for children of schooling age, and those who were overaged but received little education during the Japanese Occupation • Grants and fee waivers were given to children from needy families
<p>People in Singapore experienced <u>housing shortages</u> after the Japanese surrendered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singapore’s population grew rapidly due to the post-war baby boom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Singapore had one of the highest birth rates in 1940s and 1950s • War had destroyed many housing spaces in Singapore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People had to live in increasingly overcrowded spaces such as slums 	<p>The British made efforts to manage the housing shortage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Singapore Improvement Trust (SIT)</u> <u>accelerated</u> its building program to build <u>low-cost housing</u> for the locals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SIT was established in 1927, but its efforts to build and provide low cost housing was disrupted by war ○ From 1947 to 1959, SIT built about 1742 houses per year, but the population required about 10,000 new units each year

<p>WHAT PROBLEMS/ISSUES DID THE PEOPLE FACE? [STATE + DESCRIBE]</p>	<p>WHAT DID THE BRITISH DO TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE? [STATE + DESCRIBE]</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many continued to live in cramped conditions

<p>People in Singapore had unsatisfactory <u>working conditions</u> and took part in <u>industrial unrest</u> in post-war Singapore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers went on strikes to demand for immediate changes and improvement to their working conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1947 was known as “The Year of Strikes” as there were over 300 strikes in Singapore that year, involving almost 70,000 workers Many workers who participated in the strikes were members of the trade unions 	<p>The British made efforts to manage the industrial unrest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laws were passed to <u>control trade unions</u> as British suspected that the <u>communists</u> were inciting anti-colonial feelings and instigating the strikes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 1947, trade unions had to be registered with the government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government could monitor their membership and clamp down on communist threat Trade unions no longer allowed to use funds to organise strikes and protests against government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade unions continued to be active Strikes and industrial unrests continued in the 1950s
<p>People in Singapore wanted more <u>political rights</u> in post-war Singapore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locals wanted to be in control of their own fate and felt that they should have more say in the country’s matters They were also influenced by the global wave of <u>decolonisation</u> and wanted independence from colonial rule 	<p>The British made efforts to allow more local political control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The British embarked on a process of <u>political tutelage</u> to prepare Singapore for self-government and independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1948, people were given rights to <u>vote</u> for <u>locals</u> to represent them in the government Under the Rendel Constitution, the number of local representatives in the government <u>increased</u> from 6 in 1948 to <u>25</u> in 1955

External Developments

and its impacts on Post-War Singapore



<p>WHAT IS THE FACTOR & WHAT IS IT ABOUT? [STATE + DESCRIBE]</p>	<p>SO WHAT? [EXPLAIN]</p>
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<p>One external development that affected post-war Singapore was the weakening of colonial rule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around the world, people were increasingly <u>dissatisfied with colonial rule</u> and wanted to <u>control their own fate</u> • After World War II (WWII) ended, many countries rose up against their colonial masters and fought for <u>independence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In 1947, India gained independence from British rule ○ In 1949, Indonesia became free from the Dutch ○ In 1954, Vietnam overthrew their French colonial masters 	<p>Singapore also experienced the effects of the weakening of colonial rule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The locals in Singapore felt <u>betrayed</u> and lost trust in the British after the British surrendered Singapore to the Japanese during the war □ The locals believed that they should be in control of their own fate and wanted to be <u>free</u> from British rule
<p>One external development that affected post-war Singapore was the growing influence of communism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After World War II (WWII) ended, USA and USSR emerged as superpowers and fought in the Cold War • USA & USSR had opposing ideologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ USA practiced <u>democracy</u> – where people could <u>exercise their freedom</u> to <u>vote</u> for their government, as well as <u>capitalism</u> – where people are <u>allowed</u> to own private properties and businesses ○ USSR practiced <u>communism</u> – where people had to <u>give up</u> their freedom of choice to be governed under a <u>dictatorship</u> that <u>did not allow</u> people to own private properties and businesses • USA & USSR believed that their ideology was better and wanted to spread their ideology to the world while preventing the other from spreading 	<p>The British were strong allies of the US and did not want Singapore to turn communist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The Malayan Communist Party (MCP) that had a lot of support from the people in Singapore and Malaya tried to kick the British out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ British were <u>worried</u> about Singapore turning communist □ The British became <u>more hesitant to grant independence</u> to Singapore and Malaya



Road to Independence

Achieving Internal Self-Government (1948-1959)

Increasing Local Political Participation, 1948-1955

- The British was worried about the threat of communism and decided to gradually prepare Singapore for independence
 - In 1948, the British held a limited election and allowed 6 local representatives to be elected into the Legislative Council
 - In the 1955 elections, in line with the Rendel Constitution:
 - People were allowed to elect locals to control certain areas of the government
 - 6 local ministers (1 Chief Minister & 5 Ministers) were given the control of: education, health, housing, trade and industry
 - 3 British ministers controlled the more important areas: law, finance, external affairs, external defence and internal security
 - The number of local representatives increased from 6 in 1948 to 25 in 1955

David Marshall as First Chief Minister, 1955-1956

- In the 1955 Elections, the Labour Front (LF) led by [David Marshall](#) won a minority vote and formed a coalition government with other parties
- David Marshall became the first Chief Minister of Singapore, but the British saw him as a mere [figurehead](#) and did not give him much support
- 1955 Hock Lee Bus Riots
 - The new Marshall government had to deal with the many strikes and industrial disputes organised by the Communist Movement that spread from Malaya to Singapore.
 - On 23 April 1955, the workers from Singapore Bus Workers Union went on strike for better pay and working conditions. In response, the Hock Lee Bus Company dismissed 229 of them. As the strike wore on, more workers from other companies joined in. Over 10,000 students from the Chinese schools also joined in to provide their support.
 - Despite Marshall's best efforts, tensions escalated and reached a climax on 12 May 1955. Riots broke out after the crowd started to attack the police with bricks, stones and bottles. The situation worsened when 20 lorries full of students arrived earlier to add to the mob. The riot ended at 3 am the next day, forever to be remembered as 'Black Thursday' in our history books.
 - The British saw Marshall as a [weak and incapable leader](#) who did not take strong actions against the communists when he should have. However, Marshall had decided not to arrest the students and rioters because he was sympathetic to their demands.
 - The British became [more fearful of Singapore falling to communism](#) after witnessing how communist ideas from Malaya can spread so easily into Singapore and rally so many people to rise up. The British were also unsure if the Singapore government could deal with the communist threat.



| Road to Independence |

Achieving Internal Self-Government (1948-1959)

Failure of the First Merdeka Talks, 1956

- In April 1956, Marshall led a delegation to London to push for greater local political control and discuss internal self-government for Singapore
 - Marshall had declared before his departure that he would resign if his negotiation for internal self-government fails
 - In London, Marshall demanded that the British grant full internal self-government for Singapore by 1957, including greater local control over defence and external affairs • However, the British had little confidence in Marshall's ability to deal with the communist threat and was not willing to let Singapore take control of internal security, external defence and finance
- Marshall returned to Singapore empty-handed and stepped down as Chief Minister

Lim Yew Hock as Second Chief Minister

- Lim Yew Hock took over David Marshall as the Chief Minister in June 1956, when the communist influence in Singapore was growing
 - Lim Yew Hock was a staunch **anti-communist** and clamped down hard on the communist movement
 - 1956 Chinese Middle School Student Riots
 - In September 1956, Lim Yew Hock banned the Singapore Chinese Middle School Students' Union (SCMSSU) to control the growth of the communist movement. He also arrested four student leaders from the Chinese High School and Chung Cheng High School and expelled 142 students on the grounds of political subversion.
 - The Chinese students retaliated by camping at Chung Cheng High School and Chinese High School for two weeks.
 - On 24 October 1956, Lim's government tried to get the parents to persuade the students to return home, but the students refused. On the same day, workers joined the students in their demonstration after their meeting with pro-communist leader Lim Chin Siong.
 - On 26 October 1956, Lim Yew Hock decided to take decisive action and called for the police to enter the school to clear the students. Forced out of the school compounds, the students started to riot, heading for the city. They threw stones and bottles, overturned cars and damaged traffic lights.
 - The police imposed a curfew to try to curtail the violence, but the situation only worsened. Lim's government called in the army and also set up road-blocks to prevent large crowds from gathering.
 - The riots lasted for three days and only ended when all the union leaders, including Lim Chin Siong and Fong Swee Suan, were placed under arrest.
 - The riots resulted in 13 deaths and over 100 injured.
- The **British were pleased** with Lim Yew Hock's decisive action against the

communist □ The locals were upset as they felt that Lim's government were like "running dogs" who were too eager to please their British masters

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Road to Independence

Achieving Internal Self-Government (1948-1959)

Success at the Second Merdeka Talks, 1957

- In 1957, Lim Yew Hock led another delegation to London to negotiate for internal self government for Singapore again
- Lim's proposal was based on Marshall's proposal, demanding control over all internal matters of the government (including internal security)
 - However, unlike Marshall, Lim was willing to compromise on the issue of internal security as he understood that the British were still concerned about communism
 - Lim also agreed to leave external affairs and external defence to the British □ The Second Merdeka Talks was a success and in 1958, Singapore was converted from a British colony to a state with control over all domestic issues, except internal security

1959 Elections

- On 30 May 1959, Singapore held its first fully democratic election and voters from the 51 different constituencies voted for their representative
- Compared to the 1955 elections, there were three times more voters (about 525,000) as voting was made compulsory and registration was automatic
- Political parties campaigned using radio, newspapers, pamphlets, vehicles with loudspeakers and rallies
- The People's Action Party (PAP) led by Lee Kuan Yew nominated candidates to contest all 51 available seats and eventually won the election by securing 43 out of 51 seats
- The Labour Front, renamed Singapore People's Alliance (SPA), having lost much support from the Chinese voters, only managed to win 4 out of the 39 seats they contested
- Lee Kuan Yew became the first Prime Minister of Singapore, marking the successful achievement of full internal self-government for Singapore.

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