

British military administration in singapore



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The British Military Administration, or simply BAM, was the governing authority in Singapore after Japanese surrendered (1945-1947). Immediately after the war, many issues arose, such as the lack of food, poor sanitation, and the people's lack of money. The BAM was only 'successful' when it resolved or reduced many of these issues. I believe the BAM is 'unsuccessful'. Firstly, the people of Singapore possessed no money to purchase their needs. Immediately after the war, the Japanese currency of the Banana money was no longer legal tender.

Most people only have this form of urinary, and when the only legal tender currency was changed to the British Straits dollar, people have no money to purchase things to satisfy their needs, such as food, clothing, and rents.

They have to borrow money from those little handful of people who kept the Straits dollars before the Japanese Occupation. To help the people, the BAM issued relief grants to them. Each man could receive \$5, each woman \$4, and each child \$2.

However, the total per family could not exceed \$20, and large families still could not make ends meet, as food and other prices after the war, was nearly 10 times or more than the pre-war prices due to inflation as a result of disrupted trade. People took up odd jobs or became street peddlers, selling whatever they got their hands on, in order to have higher income to survive. The BAM decided to help those who need jobs. The BAM started the Labor Exchange, where it helped by matching the unemployed people with employers, based on the unemployed people's skills and talents to ensure that they could cope with their jobs.

This helped 60000 people in the first few months. With more income, many people could lead a better life, and even more food. The employers could also have enough workers to reset up their business or rebuild their factories. Secondly, there is a lack of food. During the war, the port is damaged. Ships that were docked that were destroyed by bombs and explosives, blocking the entrance to the port, ships carrying food could not bring food into Singapore for the people to consume. The warehouses were also damaged, and as a result there is no place to store the food.

The scarcity of food created a black market, where people sell their food, and other immediate necessities at a sky-high price to earn profits during this opportunity. People could not afford food for themselves and their family, and many people suffered from malnutrition. The BAM helped in this case by providing children under 6 with free meals, ensuring that most children will have at least a meal a day. Also, the BAM gave each family some food if there were enough to spare. In September 1945, everyone received some sugar and salt from the BAM. Children were also provided with a tin of milk every week.

The BAM tried to regulate prices of essential foodstuffs, such as sugar, salt, fresh fish and vegetables, by imposing a huge fine on those profiteers. The BAM imposed food rationing. However, due to the limitations of high price and little availability of food, people were still unable to obtain sufficient food. The BAM opened the People's restaurants and Family restaurants across the island, where food and meals were offered at a cheaper price compared to those in the black market. The British also cleared the port, repaired and rebuilt the warehouses, allowing more food to be brought into Singapore.

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Lastly, there is the problem of poor sanitation of the living imaged many reservoirs. The pot holes became breeding ground of mosquitoes, which is capable of spreading diseases like malaria. The damaged reservoirs also lead to spreading of waterborne diseases like cholera. Lastly lack of food made people weak and more susceptible to the diseases, like smallpox, when they did not have a powerful immune system. The living condition was made worse by the lack of proper health care services. Hospitals were short of equipment, medicine, furniture, bedding and some even manpower. This lead to the high death rates.

In 1945, the death rate is twice as high as the pre-war level. To tackle this issue, the BAM filled up as many pot holes as possible, set up free vaccinations, for example, to prevent smallpox and tuberculosis, and medical services island wide. The British also import chlorine and treat water with these chlorine to kill the bacterial that spread diseases, and clean up water sources. Prisoners-of-War were also sent to fix the damaged infrastructure island wide, such as the reservoirs. The various policies and actions taken by the BAM was successful and unsuccessful in various aspects.

The BAM effectively made use of the Poss. to fix and repair many infrastructures damaged and destroyed, such as the ports. This helped the people of Singapore in various ways. People now have access to food as the ports are cleared and food imports can resume, for example. However, the Beam's actions and policies were also unable to resolve many issues especially the social issues, for example the lack of Jobs. Although the Labor Exchange did helped many people, but that was only the tip of the iceberg.

Many people were still unemployed due to the large and constantly, rapidly growing population, and the competition that arose from it.

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The issues of poor sanitation were also left unsolved, as many people were unaware of the availability of these free medical services, or just did not want or trust these services. The large population also hindered the effectiveness and efficiency of the services due to the various limitations, including manpower and resources. In conclusion, although the BAM was able to solve some issues, but there are much more to be done. Partly due to the short period of time in power, but mainly as a result of the large population.