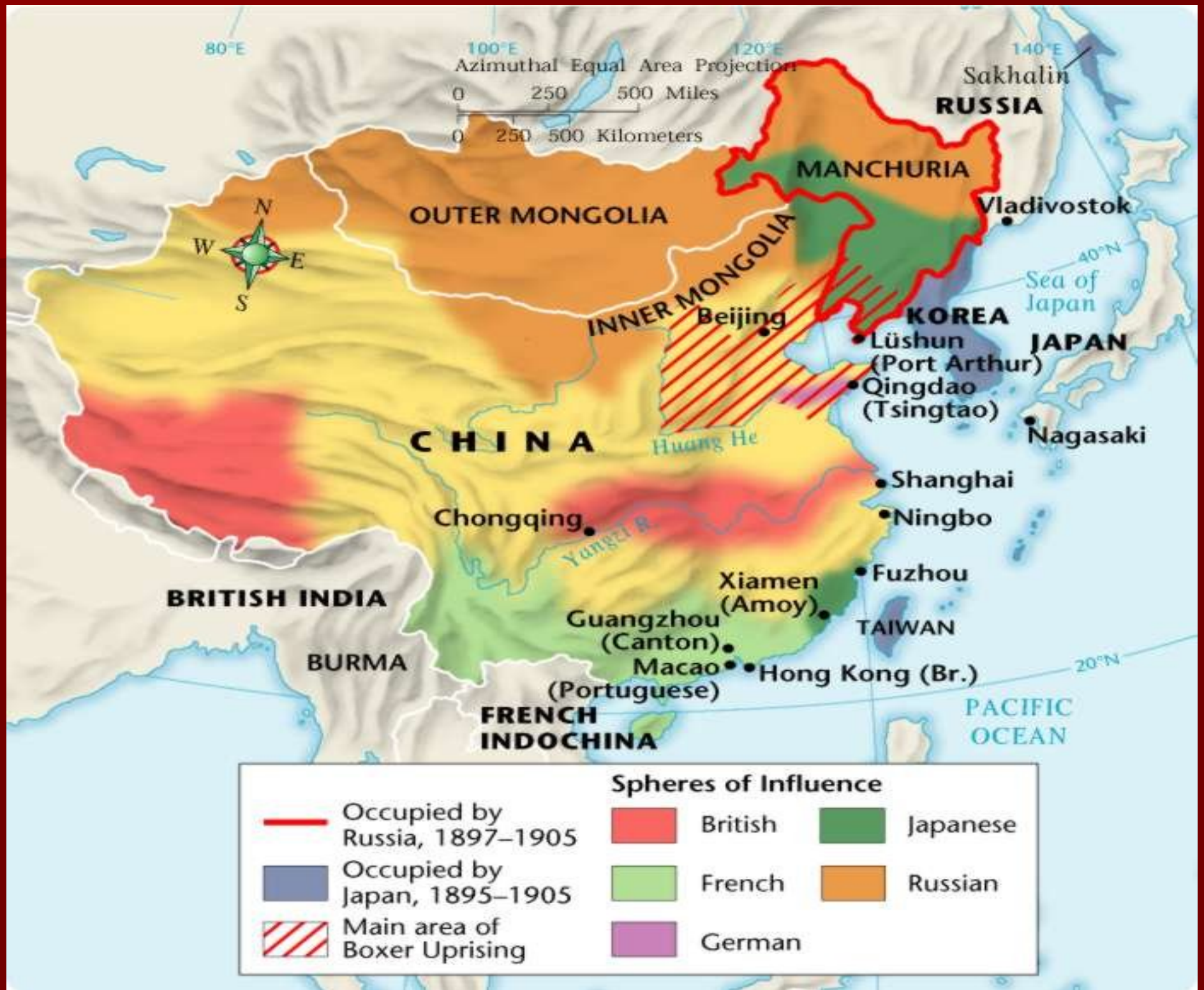




**The Chinese Revolution:  
From Imperialism to Communism**

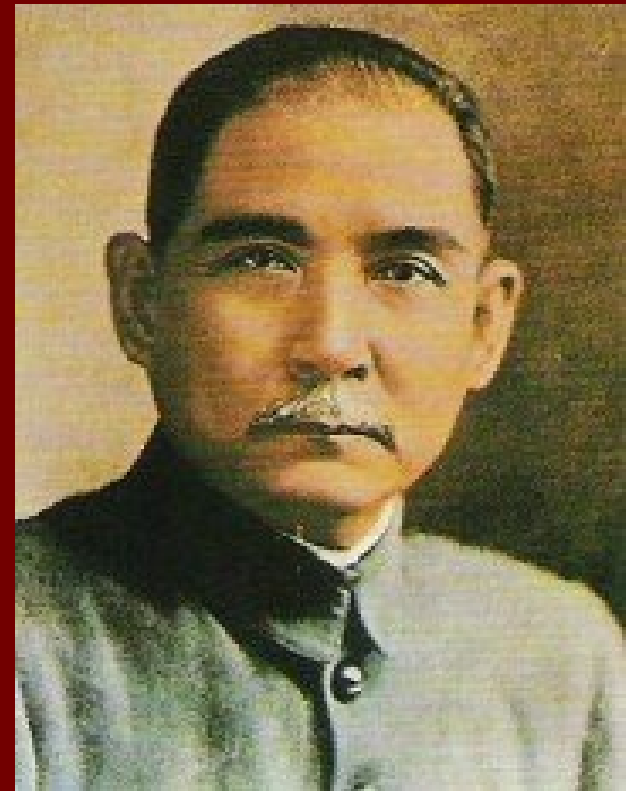
# China Ripe for Change

- Early 1900s:
  - Foreign countries controlled China's trade and economic resources
  - Many Chinese believed that modernization and nationalism held the key for survival
  - They wanted to build up the army and navy
  - They wanted to construct modern factories and reform education



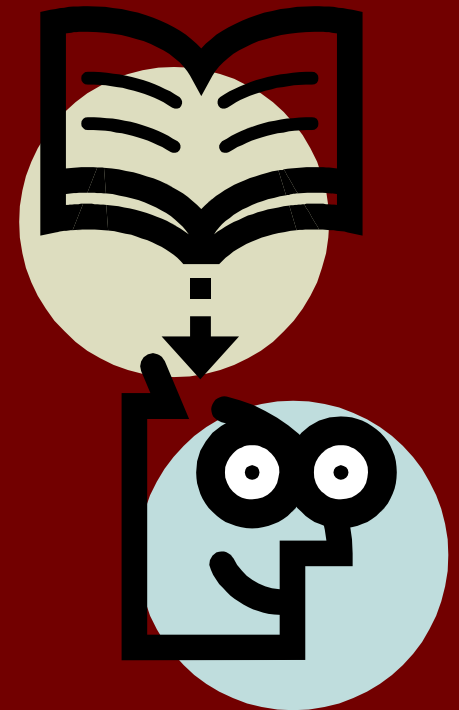
# Nationalists Overthrow the Qing Dynasty

- Guomindang  
(or Kuomintang)  
→ ***Nationalist*** Party
- Sun Yat-sen (or Sun Yixian)
- In 1912, Sun and his followers overthrew the Qing Dynasty
- He then became president of the new Republic
  - He only held the post for 6 weeks



# The New Republic

- Sun had studied widely in his years abroad as a young revolutionary
- He was greatly influenced by Western ideology as well as by Marx's writings and Russian communism
- Sun based his government around the "Three Principles of the People"



# Three Principles of the People

- 1. Nationalism – and end to foreign control
  - 2. People's rights – democracy
  - 3. People's livelihood – economic security for all Chinese
- 
- Sun did not have the leadership skills to bring the millions of Chinese under his leadership. He passed power on to Yuan Shikai.

# A Dictator Rises



- Yuan quickly betrayed the democratic ideals of the revolution
- By 1913 he was ruling as a military dictator
- His actions sparked local revolts. Even Yuan's rebels refused to fight put down the revolts
- When Yuan died, Sun's Guomindang party was powerless

# Chaos Reigns

- Civil War broke out as Sun tried to reorganize his Guomindang
- Real authority though fell into the hands of provincial warlords
- They ruled territories as large as their armies could conquer
  - *Where are warlords a problem in the world today in weakening national unity?*



# Chaos Reigns



- The reign of the warlords was terrible for the Chinese peasantry
- Roads and bridges fell into disrepair, crops were destroyed. Famine took the lives of millions
- The warlords pillaged and looted at their whim



- This was China while the European powers were fighting their "Great War"

# The Chinese Role in WW I

- The Chinese declared war on Germany, hoping the Allies would reward them for their support by giving China back to the Chinese
- **INSTEAD** → the Treaty of Versailles gave Japan the territories and privileges in China that had previously belonged to the Germans



# Outrage at the Treaty

- May 4, 1919 – 3,000 angry students gathered in the center of Beijing “Down the with the European Imperialists!”
- Mao Zedong was a young school teacher who studied at Beijing University and supported the student protestors.
- The *May Fourth Movement* spread to other cities and exploded on the national scene. Workers, manufacturers, shopkeepers and professionals joined the cause

# No Revolution Yet

- These demonstrations merely showed the Chinese desire to establish itself as a strong, independent, modern nation.
- Sun and members of his Guomindang party shared these views but the people were not supportive of his Western philosophies and began to turn to Russian Communism instead
  - *Why would they not like Western philosophies?*

# The Beginnings of Communism

- 1920 – small groups of young intellectuals were meeting in Shanghai and Beijing to discuss Marx's revolutionary beliefs.
- They saw the Soviet Union as a model for political and economic change
- 1921 – they met to officially establish the Communist Party.
- Mao Zedong was one of the founders

# Guomindang vs. the Communists

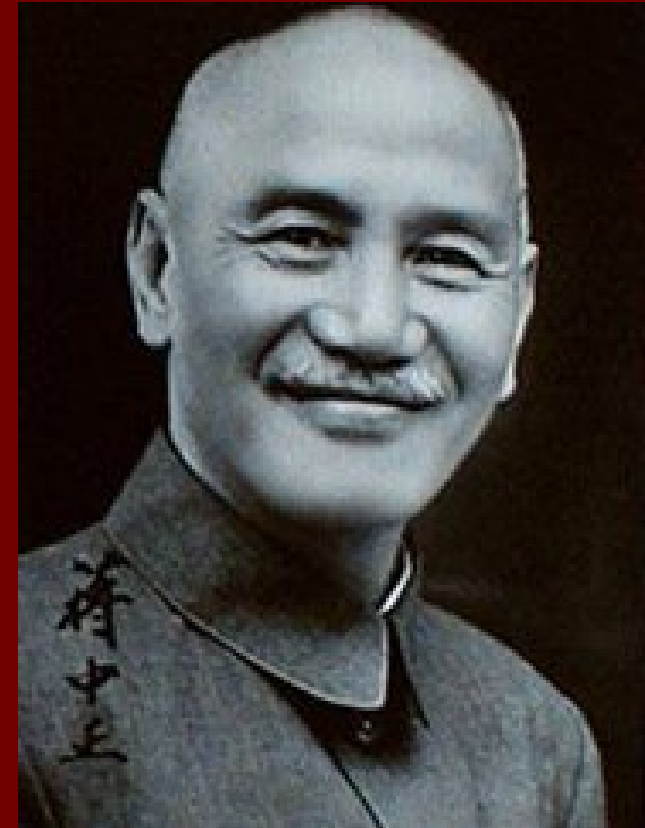
- Sun and his nationalist party set up a government in South China.
- They had also become disillusioned by Western democracies that had turned their backs on them
- Sun decided to ally himself and his party with the Communists
- Lenin offered military advice and equipment to the Nationalists in return for joining the Communist Cause → “World Revolution”

# The Chinese Struggle

- Two forces were at play in China at this time:
  - 1. the strong nationalist movement to push the foreign merchants and capitalists out
  - 2. a strong worker/peasant movement to liberate the people from oppression by their own leaders and business people
- Sometimes these forces could work together but eventually they divided the independence movement

# Nationalists and Communists Clash

- Sun died in 1925 leaving a power vacuum in his wake.
- Chiang Kai-Shek (or Jiang Jieshi) took control of the Guomindang. He was upper middle class and supported by bankers and business men. He and his supporters had no interest in a communist revolution





# The Nationalist Struggle turns into a struggle for Workers' Rights

- Yet the power of the Guomindang was built on the basis of workers' struggles.
- It was the mass strikes and boycotts launched by the CCP-led trade unions, culminating in a 12-month general strike in Hong Kong, which enabled the Guomindang to establish its first power-base in Guangdong province.
- And when in 1926 they launched the Northern Expedition to conquer the rest of China from the warlords, it was peasants' struggles in the villages which enabled the army to advance so rapidly across southern China.



# The Nationalist Struggle turns into a struggle for Workers' Rights (2)

- Workers' militias patrolled the streets of Guangzhou (Canton) and blockaded Hong Kong. Strikes over wages, hours and conditions spread to workers employed by *Chinese* capitalists. The nationalist revolution was becoming a workers' revolution.

# The Nationalist Struggle turns into a struggle for Workers' Rights (3)

- During late 1926 and early 1927 a wave of peasant insurrections spread across Guangdong, Hunan and Hubei provinces.
- Landlords were dispossessed, money-lenders driven out of the villages, and co-operatives were set up for food production and distribution to ensure that no one went hungry.
- Social evils that had been accepted for hundreds of years also came under attack: the sale of women and children into prostitution, the binding of women's feet, opium-smoking and religious rituals were abolished in many villages.

# The Nationalists Turn on the Workers

- The landlords fought back with unimaginable cruelty and viciousness – and with the full support of the Guomindang.
  - *For the Guomindang represented the aspirations of Chinese capitalists and landlords to become a ruling class on equal terms with the rest of the world.*
- BUT they needed mass struggle to achieve this

# Communist Prophecy

- Trotsky prophetically argued:

*“The Chinese bourgeoisie is sufficiently realistic and acquainted with the nature of world imperialism to understand that a really serious struggle against the latter requires such an upheaval of the revolutionary masses as would primarily become a menace to the bourgeoisie itself.”*

# The Coalition is Torn Apart

- As the menace became ever more apparent, so the Guomindang turned increasingly against the workers' movement
- April 1927 – Chiang marched his troops into the Communist stronghold of Shanghai
- They killed many Communist leaders and union members in the city streets.
- The Nationalists nearly wiped out the Chinese Communist Party
- The few survivors went into hiding





# The Workers Unite!

- The workers quickly realize Chiang's (and the Nationalists') abandonment of them and throw their full support behind the betrayed and badly beaten communists
- Chiang did nothing to improve their lives  
→ he just replaced the European capitalists with Chinese ones
- The Communist party however offered hope

# Mao's Communism

- Communist leader Mao Zedong survived the massacre of April 1927 and fled to the countryside to develop his own version of communism
- Lenin had proven that a Marxist revolution could take place in a rural/agricultural country with the intent of forcing industrialization
- Mao envisioned a different communist paradise

# Mao's Communism

- Mao believed the peasants could be the true revolutionaries:

*"The force of the peasantry is like that of the raging winds and driving rain. It is rapidly increasing in violence. No force can stand in its way. The peasantry will tear apart all nets which bind it and hasten along the road to liberation. They will bury beneath them all forces of imperialism, corrupt officialdom, village bosses and evil gentry."*



# USE YOUR BRAIN!! (Yikes!?!)

---

- How are Mao's and Lenin's Communist goals the same?
- How are they different?

# Civil War Rages in China

- By 1930, the Nationalists and Communists were fighting a bloody civil war.
- Mao and other Communist leaders established themselves in the hills of South-central China. "The Red Base"
- He recruited peasants to join his Red Army. He then trained them in guerilla warfare.
- The Nationalists established themselves in Beijing and the major cities

# The Long March

- Attack after attack on the Communist strongholds forced Mao to retreat, this became known as the Long March
- For those who survived it, the Long March was an epic story of human endurance.
  - Between 80,000 and 90,000 people set out on the March in October 1934; about 4,000 completed it a year later.
  - Some marchers were left along the way to start new guerrilla bases, but more than 50,000 of them died on the March.
  - The survivors had travelled between 6,000 and 7,000 miles.
- About half-way along the route, Mao became undisputed leader of the CCP.

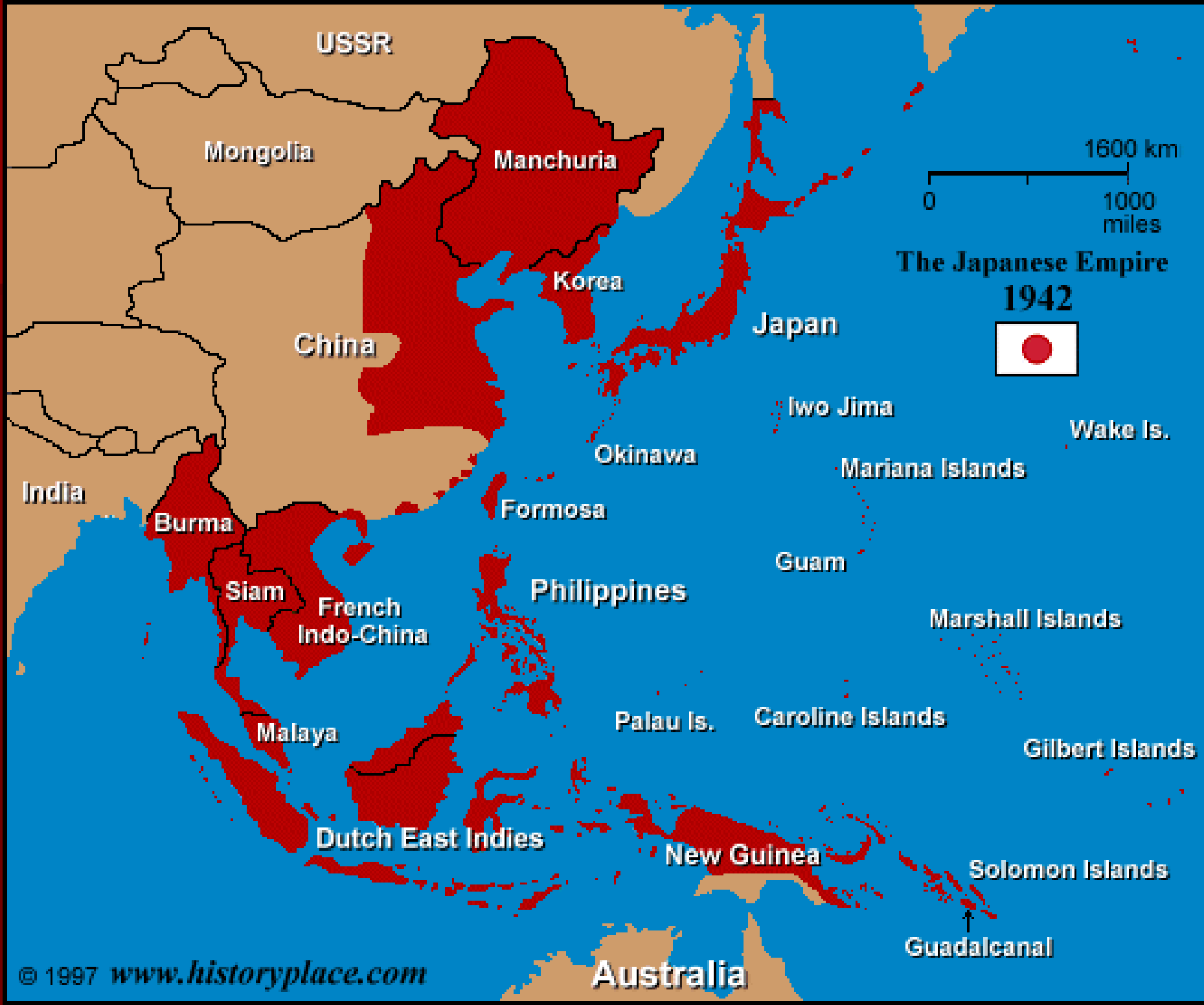


- What could possibly have inspired people to endure such hardships? The main answer lies in the conditions in the Chinese countryside in the 1930s.
  - Most peasants lived lives of desperate poverty, trapped between the landlord and the money-lender, sliding deeper and deeper into debt every year. Famine and drought were regular occurrences.
  - Come what may, the landlords insisted on their rents being paid; even death merely transferred the debt to the next generation.
  - As the landlords were also the local magistrates, their word was literally law.
- The Red Army promised an end to the power of the landlords, and the land to the peasantry. The mere fact that they treated the peasants as human beings, in contrast to the casual brutality of all other Chinese armies, made it possible for the peasants to believe them.



# Meanwhile . . .

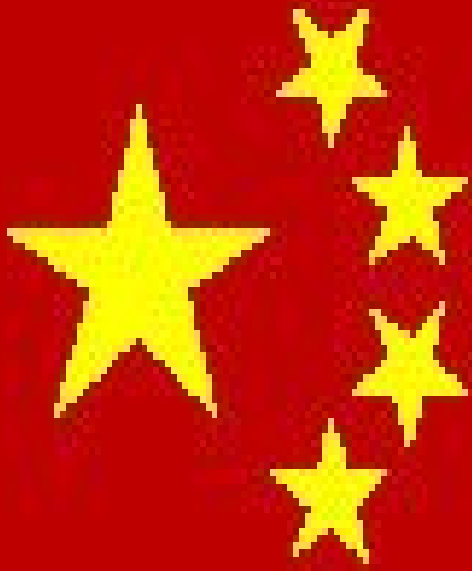
- In the midst of the Chinese Civil War – Japan took its imperialism to the mainland once again by invading China from the North (from Korea through Manchuria)
- This foreign attack forced the Chinese Nationalists and Communists to unite to save China



- It was the anti-Japanese war which turned the CCP into a force capable of challenging for power.
  - In 1937 they had some 30,000 members, and the Red Army was 40,000-strong.
  - By 1940 these figures had risen to 800,000 and 500,000 respectively, with hundreds of thousands more peasants organized in small guerrilla bands.
  - The lessons in guerrilla warfare that had been learned on the Long March were applied brilliantly on the north China plain and in the hills.
- It was thus on nationalism that the CCP built its power base → BUT they also retained their popularity among the peasantry, by breaking the absolute power of the landlords



- The war with Japanese showed the weaknesses of Chiang Kai-Shek's government and the strength of Mao's Communists.
- Mao now had the peasants as well as nationalist support and the weak, corrupt government of Chiang Kai-Shek admitted defeat in 1949 and removed itself to Taiwan



# RED CHINA

As we go through the next few slides,  
consider similarities / differences with  
Soviet Russia

# Red China

- In an attempt to break with the Russian model of Communism and to catch up with more advanced nations, Mao proposed that China should make a "Great Leap Forward" into modernization.
- He began a militant Five Year Plan to promote technology and agricultural self-sufficiency. Overnight, fertile rice fields were ploughed over, and factory construction work began.
- Labor-intensive methods were introduced and farming collectivized on a massive scale.
- The campaign created about 23,500 communes, each controlling its own means of production.
- But former farmers had no idea how to actually use the new factories and what was once fertile crop land went to waste on a disastrous scale.
- The Great Leap Forward was held responsible for famine in 1960 and 1961. Twenty million people starved, and Mao Zedong withdrew temporarily from public view.

# Red China

The *Iron Rice Bowl* is a Chinese idiom referring to the system of guaranteed lifetime employment in state enterprises.

- Job security and level of wages were not related to job performance → but adherence to party doctrine played a very important role.
- Under Mao Zedong's regime, all Chinese workers were under state control, with Communist Party and government officials controlling their social, political, and economic behavior.
- Workers in each work unit or *danwei* were under party members known as cadres. They controlled the allocation of housing, grain, edible oil, and cotton rations; the issuance of permits to travel, to marry, and to bear or adopt children; and permission to enter the army, party, and university and to change employment.



# Red China

- The Great Proletarian *Cultural Revolution* was a ten-year political campaign - a social experiment aimed at rekindling revolutionary fervor and purifying the party.
- The Revolution based itself almost entirely on the concept of the "Socialist Man": individuals were organized to denounce family members, factory bosses, teachers, professors, and all others who had voiced or advocated "counter-revolutionary" ideas.
- These denounced individuals were required to publicly confess their mistakes, usually by marching in mass demonstrations with their "mistakes" written on a placard worn around their neck.



# Red China

- Mao Zedong and his wife, Jiang Qing, directed popular anger against other members of the party leadership. While others were removed from office, Mao was named supreme commander of the nation and army.
- Ideological cleansing began with attacks by young Red Guards on so-called "intellectuals" to remove "bourgeois" influences.
- Millions were forced into manual labor, and tens of thousands were executed. The result was massive civil unrest, and the army was sent in to control student disorder. In 1977 the Cultural Revolution was officially declared over.