

East Asia and the Twentieth Century

BIG PICTURE: East Asia was divided in its responses to the West in the twentieth century.

- **Japan** undertook an aggressive foreign policy that led to World War II and afterward developed one of the most successful economies in the world.
- In contrast, **China** underwent two revolutions, established a Communist regime, and struggled to industrialize.

Why Did a Communist Revolution Happen in China? - Part I

I. *Why Was There a Revolution in China in 1911?*

- A. The Qing Dynasty collapsed because of natural disasters and imperialism.
 1. Natural Disasters: floods, drought, famine
 2. Corruption and Foreign Invasion: Qing government, economy and central control weakened from imperialism (Opium Wars, Taiping Rebellion, Boxer Rebellion, Japanese 21 Demands).
- B. A modern revolution occurred in 1911.
 1. Some Chinese saw the collapse of the Qing dynasty as traditional dynastic change and supported the Chinese military (Yuan Shikai and later Chiang Kai-shek [aka Jiang Jieshi]) trying to enforce some unity on China.
 2. Others wanted a new government based on modern ideas of a nation-state (Sun Yatsen and later the Chinese communists including Mao Zedong).

II. *China's search for order*

- A. The republic, after 1911
 1. 1911 revolution did not establish a stable republic; China fell into warlords' rule
 2. Through unequal treaties, foreign states still controlled economy of China
- B. Growth of Chinese nationalism
 1. Chinese intellectuals expected Paris Peace Conference to end treaty system
 2. Instead, Paris treaties approved Japanese expansion into China
 3. May Fourth Movement: Chinese youths and intellectuals opposed to imperialism
 4. Some were attracted to Marxism and Leninism; CCP established in 1921
- C. CCP (Chinese Communist Party) and Guomindang (The Nationalist Party)
 1. CCP leader Mao Zedong advocated women's equality, socialism
 2. Guomindang leader Sun Yat-sen favored democracy and nationalism
 3. Two parties formed alliance, assisted by the Soviet Union, against foreigners
- D. Civil war after death of Sun Yat-sen, 1925
 1. Led by Jiang Jieshi, both parties launched Northern Expedition to reunify China
 2. Successful, Jiang then turned on his communist allies
 3. 1934-1935, CCP retreated to Yan'an on the Long March, 6,215 miles
- E. Mao emerged as the leader of CCP, developed Maoist ideology
- F. Guomindang drive for control of China was interrupted by the Japanese.

III. *Imperial Japan*

- A. Japan emerged from Great War as a world power
 1. Participated in the League of Nations
 2. Signed treaty with United States guaranteeing China's integrity
- B. Japanese economy boosted by war: sold munitions to Allies
 1. Prosperity short-lived; economy slumped during Great Depression
 2. The depression had caused great suffering as markets for Japanese products disappeared -- Labor unrest, demands for social reforms
- C. Political conflict emerged between internationalists, supporters of western-style capitalism, and nationalists, hostile to foreign influences

- D. The Japanese leadership turned to fascism and militarism to maintain its control of Japan.
 - 1. Japan sought an East Asian sphere of influence to deal with the nation's crises of overpopulation, overproduction, and the lack of markets and natural resources.
 - E. The Mukden incident, 1931, in Manchuria
 - 1. Chinese unification threatened Japanese interests in Manchuria
 - 2. Japanese troops destroyed tracks on Japanese railroad, claimed Chinese attack
 - 3. Incident became pretext for Japanese attack against China
 - F. Military, acting without civilian authority, took all Manchuria by 1932
 - G. The Japanese invaded China in 1937.
 - 1. Chiang Kai-shek, the Communists, and the warlords joined in their efforts to drive out the Chinese.
 - 2. China suffered 15 years of invasion and occupation.
 - H. Stalemated in China, the Japanese turned its attention to Southeast Asia and in 1941 attacked the United States in Hawaii and the Philippines.
- IV. *How did the Guomindang (KMT) (Nationalist Party), which overthrew the Qing Dynasty, lose its mandate to rule China?*
- A. Urban Centered
 - 1. The Nationalist government was unable to control the warlords / governors who controlled the rural areas.
 - 2. The Nationalist government was unable to stop the Japanese from taking over northern China in 1937.
 - B. Dependent on Foreign Support
 - 1. The ties between Chiang Kai-shek and the United States were based on his wife's American college education, and the fact that much of the Nationalist government leaders were educated in American missionary schools in China
 - 2. Some Nationalist leaders were seen as abusing the foreign aid coming from the United States and other Western countries during WW II.