What effects did the Great Depression that started in 1929 have on Japan and the world?

From Taisho to Showa

On December 25, 1926 (Taisho 15), Emperor Taisho passed away. Crown Prince Hirohito, who was already serving as regent, assumed the throne, and the era name was changed from Taisho to Showa.

The Great Depression and Showa Depression

The United States, which had the world's largest economy after World War I, fell into recession after experiencing a dramatic crash of stock prices on the New York Stock Exchange on "Black Thursday", October 24, 1929. Many corporations and banks collapsed. The cities overflowed with the unemployed, who numbered one out of every four workers. Once the aftershocks of the economic downturn had spread throughout the world, it became known as the Great Depression.

The Japanese economy, which was dependent on exports to the United States, was also hit hard. Businesses closed or went bankrupt, one after another, and unemployment skyrocketed. In Japan, this was called the Showa Depression. In rural areas, bountiful harvests in the year 1930 pushed down food prices and sent farm incomes plummeting. By contrast, the cold snap of 1931 caused catastrophic crop failure in northern Japan. Indentured servitude of children, especially the young daughters of farmers who could no longer feed them, emerged as a major social problem.

Economic blocs and the New Deal

The nations of the world adopted a variety of countermeasures to mitigate the effects of the Great Depression. The governments of Great Britain and France retreated to economic spheres comprised of their own home countries and their vast colonial territories that stretched over every continent. They took steps towards achieving self-sufficiency, at least where important goods were concerned, within these spheres by raising tariffs to shut foreign goods out of their national markets. Through these protectionist policies, they formed economic blocs. The USA likewise protected its domestic industries with high tariffs, which served to further deepen the global depression. Under President Franklin Roosevelt, the USA also instituted the New Deal, an ambitious program of fiscal stimulation, putting the unemployed to work on public projects such as dam construction. Nonetheless, the slump in industrial production was severe and the US economy was slow to recover.
The London Naval Conference and rising prestige of the militarists

In 1930 (Showa 5), the representatives of the great powers, including Japan, met at the London Naval Conference to discuss limitations on auxiliary ships, including all naval vessels that were not battleships, battlecruisers, or aircraft carriers. Opposition politicians, such as Inukai Tsuyoshi, and some military officers strongly denounced the government of Prime Minister Hamaguchi Osachi for having allegedly signed an unfavorable deal at the conference. After Hamaguchi was seriously wounded in an assassination attempt, his cabinet collapsed.

Military personnel were forbidden from directly meddling in politics under the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors. Even so, some of the military officers who had seen firsthand the plight of rural villagers formed independent groups to discuss political policy. These men blamed the depression on the corruption and incompetence of Japan's financial elites. In the midst of the social unrest caused by the Great Depression, ordinary Japanese also lost faith in party politicians who wasted time on partisan squabbles while taking money from the wealthy elite. Instead, over time, many civilians began to pin their hopes for the future on the military.

*1=The Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors was a written directive issued in 1882 (Meiji 15) that expounded the proper mindset of military personnel in the voice of the Emperor. It strongly warned Japan's soldiers and sailors against speaking any untruth or acting selfishly. Military personnel were denied the right to vote to keep them from participating in politics.

**Topic 73 Recap Challenge! – Explain the responses to the Great Depression adopted by (1.) Great Britain and France, (2.) the United States, and (3.) Japan.**
Self-sufficiency was possible for European countries like Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands with many colonies, as well as the large, resource-rich United States. These were the privileged "have nations" that constituted economic blocs in response to the crisis of the Great Depression by erecting high tariffs against foreign products.

On the other hand, Japan was a "have-not nation", with few reserves of natural resources. Instead, the Japanese economy relied on imports of raw materials from other countries, which were processed into finished products and exported. Therefore, when the other great powers shut out foreign goods behind massive tariff barriers, Japan lost the export markets it needed to fuel its economy. In response, Japan attempted to emulate the strategy of the Western powers and create its own economic bloc in East Asia.
What were the differences and commonalities between communism and fascism, two of the twentieth century’s most consequential ideologies?

Two totalitarian trends
Two political ideologies, both emanating from Europe, expanded worldwide during the 1920s and 1930s. One was communism, an extension of Marxism and the ideology that brought about the Russian Revolution. The other was fascism, which manifested itself in Germany and Italy. At their core, both ideologies denied individual freedom and prioritized the aims of the entire country or race. For this reason, they have both been described as forms of totalitarianism. Totalitarianism inspired revolutions in many countries and, when successful, installed one-party dictatorships and unique political systems placing the party in control of the nation. Totalitarian movements were responsible for some of the greatest human tragedies in twentieth-century history.

The rise of communism
The ideal espoused by communist theory is the formation of a classless society through a process of uniting the working class and launching a revolution to liquidate the capitalists and operate a planned economy. The means of realizing this goal was to be a one-party dictatorship concentrating all authority in the hands of the communist party.

As a result of the Russian Revolution, the Soviet Union was governed by a dictatorship of the Communist Party. After Lenin’s death, power was seized by Joseph Stalin, who championed the development of heavy industry and the collectivization of agriculture. To consolidate his rule, Stalin had many political opponents sent to concentration camps or shot by the secret police.

The creation of the Comintern
The Soviet Union served as the focal point of the global advance of the communist movement. In 1919, the Soviet Union created the Comintern, an administrative organization dedicated to spreading the revolution by organizing communist parties in the rest of the world. Each of these communist parties were designated as branches of the Comintern and sought to destabilize their national governments in accordance with the instructions of the Moscow headquarters.
The Comintern and World Communism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of communist organization</th>
<th>Date of establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Russia</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comintern</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Spain</td>
<td>1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Germany</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of China</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of France</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Japan</td>
<td>1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Vietnam</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers' Party of Korea</td>
<td>1945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1=Comintern was an abbreviation of the organization's full name, the Communist International. The USSR dissolved the Comintern in 1943 during World War II for the sake of wartime cooperation with its allies Great Britain and the USA.

*2=Once Japan had normalized diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1925, concerns were raised about the spread of subversive activities within Japan. Consequently, the Japanese government passed the Peace Preservation Law to suppress individuals or groups seeking to abolish private property or the monarchy. Other countries enacted similar laws around the same time.

The threat of fascism

In Italy, the people were angered at having been denied their fair share of the spoils after World War I. Exploiting this discontent, Benito Mussolini's Fascist Party rose to power on a wave of popular support in 1922, but soon turned Italy into a dictatorship.

*3=The term "fascism" derives from the name of Mussolini's political movement, to describe dictatorial political systems similar to the one he founded.
Burdened by massive reparations and beset by hyperinflation, Germany was also seething with fear and resentment in the wake of World War I. The stage was set for the ascendency of the Nazi Party led by Adolf Hitler, who promised the German people more jobs and the restoration of their race to its former glory.

*4=Nazi is the abbreviation of the party's official name, the National Socialist German Workers' Party. The German nation under Hitler's rule is commonly referred to as Nazi Germany.

The Nazi Party became the largest party in the German parliament in 1932 (Showa 7) and took the reins of government the following year. Once appointed as chancellor, Hitler moved quickly to install a dictatorship through use of naked violence and police power. He outlawed the Communist Party of Germany, promoted a policy of rearmament, and persecuted German Jews in the name of defending the purity of the German race. Like Stalin, Hitler set up concentration camps and a secret police to slaughter his political opponents. Even though these two totalitarianisms were bitter rivals, they learned the techniques of wielding absolute power from one another.5

*5=Under Stalin, the network of concentration camps known as the Gulag was an important instrument of the Communist Party’s political control. Hitler took note of this and set up his own concentration camps across Germany to hold Jews and political prisoners.


* Topic 74 Recap Challenge! – Give three traits that the ideologies of communism and fascism shared in common.
The anti-Japanese movement in China

By the start of Japan’s Showa period, China was in a state of civil strife, its territory having been carved up by rival warlords and their private armies. In 1919, the Chinese Nationalist Party was founded by Sun Yat-sen, who was later succeeded by Chiang Kai-shek. Aspiring to unify the country, Chiang commenced a military campaign against the warlords known as the Northern Expedition. In 1928, Chiang captured Beijing and achieved his goal. The movement to unite China also reached Manchuria, where Japan had many vested interests, but local warlords remained in place there and chaos reigned.

Over the same period, anti-foreign feelings were rising in China towards Japan and the Western countries that had gained rights and interests in China through unequal treaties. This trend was partly motivated by the nationalist sentiment that foreign control over Chinese property was a humiliation to the Chinese people. However, it was also influenced by revolutionary communism, which had marched to power in the Soviet Union at the point of a gun, and soon assumed a radical character. An anti-Japanese movement, which arose in reaction to a growing Japanese presence in China, also gained momentum. Japanese goods were boycotted and Japanese citizens attacked.

*1=In 1925, anti-British riots broke out in Shanghai, and the violence even extended to Hong Kong. In March 1927, Chiang’s forces attacked consulates and foreign-owned factories and residences. Many foreigners, including Japanese citizens, were killed or wounded.

*2=In May 1927, Japan dispatched troops to China’s Shandong Province in the name of protecting the lives and property of Japanese residents. This was the first of three such deployments within the next year, referred to as the Shandong Expeditions. The history of the anti-Japanese boycott movement in China dates back to the presidency of Yuan Shikai.

The failure of cooperative diplomacy

Shidehara Kijuro, who served as foreign minister in two successive party cabinets, advocated a policy of "cooperative diplomacy" that dealt sympathetically with China’s rising nationalism. While working with Britain and the USA to uphold treaty obligations, Shidehara also backed
China's demand for restoration of its tariff autonomy. And yet, anti-Japanese activity in China showed no sign of abating. Japanese people then grew weary of Shidehara's policies, particularly military officers who denigrated them as "weak diplomacy".

The question of Manchuria

Due to its victory in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan gained a lease on Kwantung in the southern Liaodong Peninsula of China as well as the right to operate the railway that Russia was constructing in Manchuria south of Changchun. Once completed, Japan named it the South Manchuria Railway. By the start of the Showa period, there were already more than 200,000 Japanese settlers living in Manchuria. A 10,000-man military unit called the Kwantung Army was also stationed there to protect the settlers, garrison Kwantung, and guard the South Manchuria Railway.

In 1928 (Showa 3), Japan dispatched an army to Shandong Province on the pretext of protecting Japanese residents, and the Kwantung Army made a bid to tighten its sway over Manchuria by assassinating Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin. In response, anti-Japanese sentiment in China boiled over, leading to an eruption of terrorist incidents and railway sabotage by Chinese attackers. The safety of the Japanese settlers was in danger. Indeed, the entire region was faced with the twin threats of Soviet pressure from the north and the advance of Chiang's Nationalist forces from the south. In this context, some officers of the Kwantung Army began preparing a plan to safeguard Japan's interests by occupying all of Manchuria and driving out anti-Japanese elements.

Shidehara Kijuro's Appeal to China for Prudence

Shidehara Kijuro (1872-1951) served as foreign minister in the Kato Cabinet, First Wakatsuki Cabinet, Second Wakatsuki Cabinet, and Hamaguchi Cabinet. The following is an excerpt from his address to China.

"When Japan was suffering the ignominy of the unequal treaties and seeking their abolition, we blamed ourselves more than any foreign power. Rather than clamoring for the defeat of imperialism, we started by calmly turning our attention to the reform of our domestic politics. Our predecessors endured unimaginable suffering during the age of imperialism, but when Japan's modernization had been accomplished, the Western powers readily agreed to conclude equal treaties with us. Even when foreigners enjoyed extraterritorial rights on our soil, Japan did not curse Western imperialism, but instead concentrated on national progress... We are not necessarily insisting that China follow Japan's example, but since China is eager to achieve equality with the West, I must advise her government and people to exercise prudence."

John MacMurray's Views on the Situation in China

John MacMurray (1881-1960) was an American diplomat and an authority on China who served as US Envoy to China between 1925 and 1929. The following is an excerpt from a memorandum he wrote on the China problem that was published in the book *How the Peace Was Lost*.

"The Chinese, in their resurgence of racial feeling, had been willful in their scorn of their legal obligations, reckless in their resort to violence for the accomplishment of their ends, and provocative in their methods; though timid when there was any prospect that the force to which they resorted would be met by force, they were alert to take a hectoring attitude at any sign of weakness in their opponents, and cynically inclined to construe as weakness any yielding to their demands... Friends of the Chinese would urge that persistence in a course of antagonism and bad faith toward foreign nations must sooner or later drive one Power or another to assert itself against an intolerable situation."
**Topic 76 – The Manchurian Incident and foundation of Manchukuo**

**How did the Manchurian Incident start and what was the world’s reaction to it?**

**From the Manchurian Incident to the foundation of Manchukuo**

In September 1931, members of the Kwantung Army dynamited the rail lines of the South Manchuria Railway at Liutiao Lake in the suburbs of Mukden (now Shenyang). Claiming this to be a Chinese attack, the Kwantung Army swiftly overran all the cities adjacent to the railway. In Tokyo, the leaders of Japan's government and military desired to keep the Manchurian Incident contained. However, the Kwantung Army ignored their wishes, expanded its combat operations, and soon had captured every strategic site in Manchuria.

The actions of the Kwantung Army were enthusiastically supported by most Japanese citizens, who were fed up with the failure of their government’s diplomatic policy to deal with anti-Japanese violence in Manchuria. The Japanese Army received a swell of private donations. Eventually, the Japanese government yielded and sanctioned the Kwantung Army's occupation of Manchuria.

After the Manchurian Incident, some Manchurian warlords struck deals with the Kwantung Army concerning their mutual interests. In March 1932 (Showa 7), the Kwantung Army rechristened Manchuria as the new nation of **Manchukuo**, and installed the last emperor of China's Qing dynasty, Puyi, as its Chief Executive. Later, Puyi was crowned Emperor of Manchukuo. However, it was the Kwantung Army that wielded de-facto control over Manchukuo.

Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi, leader of the Friends of Constitutional Government Party, tried to resolve the Manchurian problem through negotiations. However, he was assassinated on May 15, 1932, by a group of young naval officers. This event is known as the **May 15 Incident**. His death put an end to the eight-year period during which all of Japan’s cabinets were party-based. Thereafter, the post of prime minister was filled by military officers or bureaucrats.

**The Lytton Commission**

Other nations, including the USA, denounced Japan for having provoked the Manchurian Incident. The League of Nations dispatched the **Lytton Commission**, headed by the Earl of Lytton, to investigate conditions in Manchuria. The Lytton Commission report acknowledged the
legitimacy of Japan’s interests in Manchuria and the danger that had been posed to the interests and safety of Japanese settlers in the region.

Regardless, it did not endorse the foundation of Manchuko by Japanese forces, recommending instead that Japan withdraw its troops from the territories they had occupied and transfer authority over Manchuria to an international body. The Japanese government, which by then had already recognized Manchuko’s independence, rejected these recommendations and withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933 (Showa 8).  

*1=By 1939, Manchuko’s independence was recognized by about twenty countries, including Germany, Italy, and Spain.

Japan and China later concluded a truce. Manchuko, which was promoted as a “righteous paradise” based on “harmony among the five races”, achieved high rates of economic growth thanks to Japanese investment in heavy industry. Even so, there continued to be frequent outbursts of Chinese resistance to Japanese rule.

The February 26 Incident

In the early morning of February 26, 1936 (Showa 11), a group of young army officers and more than 1,400 men under their command stormed the Prime Minister’s Official Residence and the Metropolitan Police Department, occupied the area around the Diet Building, and murdered key government officials, including a cabinet minister. This was known as the February 26 Incident.

The motivations of the ringleaders were to oust Japan’s party politicians, financial elites, and elder statesmen, who the rebels blamed for political corruption and the impoverishment of rural villages during the Great Depression, and to inaugurate a new political system of direct imperial rule. However, Emperor Hirohito made clear his strong opposition to the rebels’ objectives. The attempted coup was defeated within three days, but its suppression helped to increase the clout of Japan’s military leaders.  

*2=After the incident, an old system that allowed only active-duty military personnel to serve as Army or Navy Minister was revived. This meant that it would be impossible to form a cabinet without the support of both the army and navy.
Topic 76 Recap Challenge! – Sort the following events that arose from the crisis in Manchuria into chronological order: (1.) the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident, (2.) the appointment of the Lytton Commission, (3.) popular support in Japan for the occupation of Manchuria, (4.) the foundation and development of Manchukuo, (5.) Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations, (6.) the May 15 Incident.

Summary of the Report of the Lytton Commission
(September 1932)

According to the Lytton Commission, Japan's interests in Manchuria had to be respected both due to their historical legitimacy and their importance to the Japanese economy. The attacks on Japanese property in Manchuria and the numerous boycotts of Japanese goods had thus done serious damage to Japan's economic interests. The report of the Lytton Commission acknowledged that these incidents, including illegal acts, had been systematically organized by the Chinese Nationalist Party, though they were also buoyed by popular nationalist sentiment among the Chinese people.

Nevertheless, the Lytton Commission insisted that the foundation of Manchukuo was not an acceptable solution to the problem, instead advocating that China's sovereignty be recognized and that a government capable of maintaining law and order be installed in Manchuria.
The Comintern’s plan for world revolution

The Comintern hoped to touch off a world revolution by overthrowing the capitalist nations of Europe in a single stroke. However, the revolutionary struggle that the Comintern waged after World War I in Europe, particularly in and around Germany, ended in its defeat. In response, the Comintern sought to find another method to bring about the revolution.

The Comintern’s plan for world revolution was to protect socialism in the Soviet Union while agitating in the colonies and dependencies of the Western nations and Japan. Communists based in China increasingly made Japan their target.

The Xian Incident

China descended into a bloody civil war between the Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalist Party led by Chiang Kai-shek. After the numerically inferior army of the Chinese Communist Party had been driven to the brink of annihilation, they appealed to the nationalists to join forces with them against the common enemy, Japan. However, Chiang refused to alter his policy of first destroying communism within China before dealing with the external threat posed by Japan.

*1* At the 1935 World Congress of the Comintern, the communists embraced a new policy of rallying together a broad range of anti-fascist groups. They called it the "people's front" or "united front" strategy. Pursuant to this strategy, the Chinese Communist Party decided that rather than challenging the nationalists, it should fight alongside them against Japan.

*2* This policy was called *annei rangwai* in Chinese, which means, "first internal pacification, then external resistance".

After Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin was killed in 1928 (Showa 3) when his train was dynamited by Japanese agents, he was succeeded by his son Zhang Xueliang. Zhang Xueliang was ordered by Chiang Kai-shek to suppress the Chinese Communist Party, but he privately supported their call to resist Japan. Because of this, he detained Chiang in the city of Xian in
1936, and he forced him to cease hostilities with the communists and form a united front with them against Japan. This is referred to as the Xian Incident.

With that, China turned its attention towards the coming confrontation with Japan.

### Why Were China and Japan Unable to Avert War?

The Marco Polo Bridge Incident that occurred on July 7 was only a minor skirmish. Neither the Japanese military nor the Chinese forces on the scene had any intention of extending the fighting to other battlefields. Four days after the initial affair, both sides signed a local ceasefire under which China apologized to Japan and promised to control the provocations of “communist elements” in order to prevent another such incident. By contrast, the Chinese Communist Party cried for war with Japan soon after the first shots were fired.

On July 11, the cabinet of Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro announced that Japan would send military reinforcements to northern China. Then, on July 17, Chiang Kai-shek delivered a speech at Lushan endorsing all-out war with Japan. Chiang’s determination to fight Japan was hardening with time.

The Japanese government tabled a compromise offer to Chiang Kai-shek called the Funatsu Peace Initiative. One of its provisions even proposed that Japan abandon the rights and interests it had acquired in China since the Manchurian Incident. Unfortunately, Japanese sailors were shot dead in Shanghai on the same day that the first round of negotiations was supposed to have started. The negotiations were immediately called off.

Of course, not all the Japanese people, nor all Chinese people, wanted a war, but as the range of the fighting expanded, the possibility of reaching a peace agreement became more and more remote.

### The start of the Second Sino-Japanese War

Japan engineered the establishment of pro-Japanese governments in the regions of northern China bordering on Manchuria. This was a measure intended to secure resources and defend southern Manchukuo, but it also served to heighten Sino-Japanese animosity. On the night of July 7, 1937 (Showa 12), Japanese soldiers doing training exercises near Marco Polo Bridge on
the outskirts of Beijing were fired upon by unknown assailants, leading to a clash the next day between Japanese and Chinese army units. This is referred to as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. Neither of the armies involved in the incident wanted to escalate the hostilities, and, four days later, they concluded a local ceasefire. In spite of this, Japanese Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro decided to send reinforcements to China on the very same day, and the Chinese side committed numerous provocations, including attacks on Japanese citizens. Japan and China were veering towards all-out war.⁴

*3=After the Boxer Rebellion, Japan stationed five thousand soldiers near Beijing according to the terms of the Boxer Protocol, a treaty that China signed with Japan and several of the Western powers.

*4=A pro-Japanese government was created in the city of Tongzhou east of Beijing. On July 29, when the Japanese garrison was absent, its Chinese military units attacked the Japanese residential zone, murdering 223 of the 385 Japanese inhabitants, including women and children. This is known as the Tongzhou Massacre.

As tensions between Japan and China mounted in the month of August, two Japanese military personnel were murdered in Shanghai, a city dominated by foreign properties and concessions. On August 13, fighting broke out between a massive Chinese force and the Japanese soldiers guarding the Japanese residential area. This was the Battle of Shanghai. Japan dispatched reinforcements, which were forced into a fierce engagement with elite Chinese units.⁵ By November, 40,000 Japanese soldiers had been killed or wounded.

*5=Japan had had little regard for China's combat capabilities, even though the Chinese Army had been greatly strengthened by weaponry and military training provided by Germany. In return for German military aid, China supplied Germany with the rare metal tungsten to sustain Adolf Hitler's arms buildup.

This brutal conflict, the Second Sino-Japanese War, was to drag on for eight long years. At the time, it was referred to by the Japanese government as the China Incident. The Japanese military was convinced that Nationalist China would surrender once its capital, Nanking, was conquered. Though Japan did occupy Nanking in December, Chiang simply transferred his capital to Chongqing deep in the heartland of China and continued his resistance.

**Topic 77 Recap Challenge!** – Explain the circumstances that led to the Second Sino-Japanese War using the following key terms: (1.) Comintern, (2.) Xian Incident, (3.) Battle of Shanghai.

### HISTORICAL KEYWORDS

**Incident**

The Japanese government utilized the word “incident” (jihen) to mean a disturbance or upheaval that could not be suppressed with police force, but did not reach the level of being a war. Since the Japanese government never declared war on China, it designated the Second Sino-Japanese War as the “China Incident” (shina jihen). Moreover, the United States was officially forbidden, in accordance with its Neutrality Acts, from selling any material used for military purposes to nations at war. Because Japan was dependent on natural resource imports from the USA, it had special motivation to avoid uttering the word "war". Though the Chinese side also did not issue a declaration of war, the “China Incident” was in reality a war in all but name.
How did US-Japan disputes over China originate and why did they intensify?

The quagmire of the Second Sino-Japanese War
Once hostilities in mainland China had begun, the Japanese economy enjoyed a wartime boom. Employment and consumer spending rose. However, as the fighting dragged on, it was unclear how or when Japan could extricate itself. Japan had hoped to conclude the war early on, formulating numerous peace plans. Even so, none of them came to fruition due to lack of coordination between the Japanese and Chinese governments.

Chiang Kai-shek continued the war with aid from the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. As a result, Japanese forces were sucked deeper into the Chinese interior, and the war turned into a quagmire with no end in sight. In 1940, Diet member Saito Takao of the Constitutional Democratic Party asked the Diet the question, "What is the objective of this war?", but the government was unable to give a clear answer.

The national mobilization regime
As the struggle with China continued to be prolonged, the Japanese government passed the National Mobilization Law in 1938 (Showa 13) to rally the whole country behind the war effort. This law gave the government the authority to mobilize resources and labor without the consent of the Diet. In 1940, rationing was introduced for daily necessities such as rice, miso, sugar, and matches. Japan's citizens were gradually obliged to adopt austere lifestyles under the slogan "Luxury is the enemy!" The censorship system was also tightened.  

Since the Great Depression, the idea of a controlled economy under state guidance, similar to the systems in place in Germany and the USSR, gained popularity in other nations, including Japan. In 1940, Japan's political parties disbanded in the name of national unity and merged into the Imperial Rule Assistance Association.
Strains in the US-Japan relationship

In 1938 (Showa 13), Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro proclaimed the institution of a “New Order” in East Asia. The objective of Konoe’s “New Order” was the creation of an independent economic bloc in East Asia centered on Japan and also comprising the nations of China and Manchukuo.

The United States, which was still suffering from the effects of the Great Depression, strongly protested Konoe’s declaration as a violation of the Open Door Policy and equality of opportunity, refusing to recognize Japan’s plan for a new economic bloc. Though the United States had until then maintained at least outward neutrality in the Second Sino-Japanese War, from around this time on, it came to openly favor China. The seeds of war between the USA and Japan had been sown. Then, in 1939, the United States announced that it would not renew the Japan-US Treaty of Commerce and Navigation. This decision thrust Japan, which relied on imports of petroleum and many other commodities from the United States, into dire economic straits.

The Northern Expansion Doctrine, the notion that Japan should advance northward to counter the threat presented by Russia, had traditionally been the grand strategy preferred by the upper brass of the Japanese military. Now, the trend increasingly favored the Southern Expansion Doctrine, which held that Japan should advance southward to seize control of Southeast Asia’s reserves of natural resources, especially petroleum. However, an invasion of Southeast Asia, where Great Britain, the United States, the Netherlands, and France all had colonies, would certainly mean war with those countries.

*2=German citizen Richard Sorge (1895-1944), who worked as a Soviet spy, was connected to an advisor to the Konoe Cabinet and informed the USSR early on that the policy of the Japanese government had shifted from northern expansion to southern expansion. It is believed that the leaders of the USSR were relieved to receive this intelligence, as it allowed them to concentrate their military power on the European front.

Topic 78 Recap Challenge! – Write in their proper order the events that caused the deterioration of the US-Japan relationship.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type of assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>900 aircraft / 200 tanks / 1,500 trucks / 150,000 guns / 120,000 shells / 60,000,000 bullets (under the Sino-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>$150,000,000 in aid / Soviet pilots who participated in combat operations covertly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1927-1941</td>
<td>$420,000,000 in aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>50 state-of-the-art fighter planes / 1,500,000 bullets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>100 fighter planes / 300 trucks / 500 B-17 bombers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>£10,000,000 loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>£10,000,000 loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>F150,000,000 loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>F96,000,000 in aid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Nazi Germany and the war in Europe**
Under its leader, Adolf Hitler, Nazi Germany made a bid to win back lost territories in Europe and acquire new ones through military aggression. After signing a non-aggression pact with its former rival, the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany used blitzkrieg tactics to defeat Poland in September 1939 (Showa 14). Germany and the Soviet Union then partitioned Poland under the terms of a secret protocol. France and Great Britain responded by declaring war on Germany in accordance with the mutual assistance agreements they had signed with Poland. World War II had begun. In 1940 (Showa 15), German forces invaded Western Europe, captured Paris, and compelled France to surrender. Next, they launched a series of intense aerial bombardments of the British Isles.

The Tripartite Pact and Japanese-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact
Impressed by Germany’s victories, Japan opted to conclude a military alliance, the Tripartite Pact, with Germany and Italy in 1940. However, an alliance with two countries so distant from Japan proved to be of little practical value. Worse still, the agreement made it unlikely that Japan could reconcile with the United States, which was supporting Great Britain.

In April 1941, the Japanese-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was ratified by Japan and the USSR. Japan expected to utilize these two pacts as leverage to extract concessions from the United States, but this carefully-laid scheme fell through in June of the same year when Germany invaded the Soviet Union, leading the Soviets to align themselves with the Allied Powers.

Japan in the grip of an economic blockade
In search of a new supplier of petroleum, Japan approached the Netherlands about obtaining oil from Indonesia, its colony, but was rejected. Now Japan was being put under economic pressure by the Americans, British, Chinese, and Dutch simultaneously. Japanese newspapers adopted the acronym "ABCD encirclement" to describe this international embargo.

*1=The Netherlands was at war with Germany, Japan’s ally, and, after being prodded by America to refuse to provide Japan with oil, decided that it was better off making common cause with the USA and Great Britain.
Negotiations to break the impasse in Japan-US relations opened in Washington DC in April 1941, but they ended in failure. In July, Japanese soldiers carried out the occupation of southern Indochina by marching into the city of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in French Indochina. This move was intended to pressure the Netherlands into supplying Japan with petroleum, as Saigon was a militarily strategic location that could serve as a staging point for a possible invasion of the Dutch colony of Indonesia. The United States immediately retaliated by freeing Japanese assets in the USA and, most seriously of all, by completely prohibiting the export of petroleum to Japan. In August, the leaders of the USA and Great Britain met in the Atlantic Ocean and announced the Atlantic Charter, which laid out both nations’ war aims and plans for the postwar world. According to the Atlantic Charter, the USA and Great Britain would respect the right of all peoples to self-determination and would not seek any territorial gains or changes in national borders.

*2=French Indochina was a French colony composed of the modern-day countries of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

From the Hull Note to the decision for war
As Japan’s economy neared the breaking point, the Japanese government worked strenuously to avert war with the United States. The Japanese government continued the negotiations with the US, but had decided to declare war in the event that no agreement could be reached. The turning point came in November when the US abruptly presented Japan with a set of hard-line proposals, including a demand for unconditional withdrawal of all Japanese forces from China and Indochina. This was called the Hull Note, after US Secretary of State Cordell Hull. The Japanese government took the Hull Note to be an ultimatum, and resolved to go to war with the United States.

Topic 79 Recap Challenge! – State the two major events that provoked the definitive breakdown of US-Japan relations.
### Excerpt from the Hull Note
(November 26, 1941)

"3. The Government of Japan will withdraw all military, naval, air and police forces from China and from Indo-China.

4. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will not support - militarily, politically, economically - any Government or regime in China other than the national Government of the Republic of China with capital temporarily at Chungking."

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### The Japanese People Who Saved the Lives of Persecuted Jews - Higuchi Kiichiro and Sugihara Chiune

In March 1938, a group of Jewish refugees who had fled persecution in Nazi Germany made their way via the Trans-Siberian Railway to Otpor Station near the Soviet-Manchukuo border.

News of their plight reached Major General Higuchi Kiichiro, the head of the Japanese Special Service Agency in Harbin. Japan enjoyed cordial relations with Nazi Germany at the time, but Higuchi took inspiration from the principle of "harmony among the five races", one of Manchukuo's founding ideals, and treated the matter as a humanitarian crisis. Even though the Jewish refugees had no visas, Higuchi arranged for the South Manchuria Railway Company to send in relief trains and transport the refugees safely to Shanghai and other cities.

As soon as Germany learned of this, an official protest was lodged with the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Nonetheless, Tojo Hideki, the Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army, supported the decision of his subordinate Higuchi and ignored the German objections, retorting that, "Japan is not a satellite of Germany." Thanks to their actions, the lives of 11,000 Jews were saved.

In July 1940, after the outbreak of World War II, Jews who had fled the German Army began gathering outside the Japanese consulate in the Baltic nation of Lithuania in the hopes of reaching a safe country via Siberia and Japan.

Though the Japanese Foreign Ministry was eager to maintain friendly ties with Germany, diplomat Sugihara Chiune decided that he had to help the refugees escape to Japan. Day and night, Sugihara wrote up one visa after another until his hand had swollen up. As a result, six thousand Jews were able to legally escape through Japan and survived the Holocaust.

After the war was over, the government of Israel paid homage to Higuchi and Sugihara for their courageous acts.
**Topic 80 – The Greater East Asian War (Pacific War)**

**How did the Greater East Asian War unfold?**

**The attack on Pearl Harbor**

On December 7, 1941 (Showa 16), the Japanese Navy launched a surprise attack on the US naval base of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, almost completely annihilating the naval and air forces stationed there. The objective of this operation was to achieve naval superiority in the Pacific Ocean by preemptively destroying the main American fleet. On the same day, units of the Japanese Army landed in the Malay Peninsula, defeating the British forces there and marching rapidly towards Singapore.

When Japan declared war on Great Britain and the United States, it asserted that the war, which it called the Greater East Asian War, was a just fight for the "self-preservation and self-defense" of the nation. Germany and Italy also declared war on the United States, expanding the conflict into a struggle of truly global scope pitting the Axis Powers of Japan, Italy, and Germany against the Allied Powers of Great Britain, the USA, France, the USSR, and China.

*1=The postwar US occupation prohibited the use of the term "Greater East Asian War", and so the term "Pacific War" came into common use instead.

*2=Because the prior alliance between Germany and Italy was referred to as the "Rome-Berlin Axis", Germany, Italy, and Japan came to be collectively known as the Axis Powers.

Most of the people of Japan, who learned about the outbreak of the war through the news media, were elated by reports of victory after victory. On the other hand, the US government told the American people that the attack on Pearl Harbor was a devious "sneak attack", because it had taken place before Japan had given notice that it intended to discontinue peace negotiations. Though the attack on Pearl Harbor was a military success, it served to unite the American people, who had previously been opposed to war, behind the rallying cry, "Remember Pearl Harbor!"

*3=Pearl Harbor was not intended to have been a sneak attack. Though the Japanese government planned to send notification to the American government just before the attack that it was breaking off the negotiations, the procedure was bungled and ultimately the notification was not sent until after the attack.
Japan's sinking fortunes

Japan achieved spectacular victories during the first six months of the war. On the southern front, the Japanese Army landed in Malaysia on December 7 and captured the British stronghold of Singapore on the southern tip of the peninsula a mere seventy days later. Through a series of equally bold advances, Japan soon occupied the entire vast region of Southeast Asia.

However, Japan's winning streak ended in June 1942 (Showa 17) when its Combined Fleet was defeated by the US Navy in the Battle of Midway at the cost of their aircraft carriers and many naval personnel. Consequently, the United States gained the initiative. Having failed in its bid for naval supremacy, Japan was now at the mercy of US submarines that cut off Japan's supply routes by repeatedly attacking transport ships. The gap in productivity between Japan and the USA became increasingly stark as the war progressed. Faced with shortages of weapons and ammunition, Japanese soldiers experienced unimaginable suffering. In Europe as well, Japan's allies were losing the upper hand. In 1943, Italy surrendered, and Germany retreated from Paris the next year.

*4=In Europe, the Axis Powers initially held the advantage, but after 1942 the Allied Powers began to counterattack. In 1943, the German Army's attack on the Soviet city of Stalingrad ended in a disastrous defeat.

Topic 80 Recap Challenge! – Arrange into chronological order the following major events that transpired within the first six months of the Greater East Asian War: (1.) the attack on Pearl Harbor, (2.) Japan's defeat at the Battle of Midway, (3.) Japan's occupation of the whole of Southeast Asia, (4.) the fall of Singapore.
The rise of new hopes for independence in Asia

Japan's early victories inspired the peoples of Southeast Asia and India, suffocating under foreign colonial domination, and awakened their hopes and dreams of winning independence from the white peoples of the West. Indeed, the dramatic advances made by the Japanese military had been possible only thanks to the cooperation of local Asian people. The Japanese military was aided by the Thai Army, whose government was allied with Japan, and by the Indian National Army, which was created primarily from Indian soldiers serving in the British Army who had been taken prisoner by Japan. Pro-Japanese military units were also organized in Indonesia and Burma under Japanese guidance, and they would later form the core of their post-independence national armies.

The Greater East Asia Conference

Since before the war, many Asian independence activists had lived in exile in Japan and gained widespread support from the Japanese people. After the outbreak of the Greater East Asian War, the Japanese government asked them to support the war effort in the former Western colonies under Japanese occupation. The peoples of Asia answered Japan's call in the hopes of achieving independence in the future. As a show of solidarity, Japan hosted the Greater East Asia Conference in Tokyo in November 1943 (Showa 18).

The conference promulgated the Greater East Asia Declaration as a response to the Allied Powers' Atlantic Charter. According to the declaration, the objective of the war was "the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere".

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*1=In 1943, Japan granted independence to Burma and the Philippines, and recognized the Provisional Government of Free India, whose representatives also attended the Greater East Asia Conference. In 1945, Japan granted independence to Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos.
Excerpts from the Greater East Asia Declaration

"The countries of Greater East Asia will ensure the fraternity of nations in their region, by respecting one another's sovereignty and independence and practicing mutual assistance and amity."

"The countries of Greater East Asia will cultivate friendly relations with all the countries of the world, and work for the abolition of racial discrimination… and contribute thereby to the progress of mankind."

The nations of Asia and Japan

The purposes of Japan's southward advance were to acquire the natural resources that it needed to prosecute the war and to promote the foundation of a new economic bloc of independent nations under Japanese leadership. Though Japanese forces claimed to act in the name of "Asian liberation", they inflicted considerable harm on the people of China and Southeast Asia where the war was being fought.

Japan placed its occupied territories under military administrations, which built new elementary and vocational schools and used the education systems to encourage a national awakening among the masses. The leaders of local independence movements supported Japan's military administrations as a means to liberate their countries from the yoke of the Western powers.

On the other hand, local people strongly resisted attempts by the military administrations to demand worship at Shinto shrines and impose Japanese-language education. A number of anti-Japanese guerrilla insurgencies sprang up with the backing of the Allied Powers. The Japanese military brutally suppressed these guerrillas, resulting in the deaths of a huge number of Asian people, including civilians. In the late stages of the war, as Japan's fortunes ebbed and food supplies ran low, the Japanese military also frequently forced the local population to do hard labor.

*2 The "terrorist" attacks of guerrillas who did not wear military uniforms or openly carry weapons were prohibited under the international laws of war. Therefore, it was believed that captured guerrillas were not entitled to the protections afforded to POWs under international law.
Immediately after Japan had surrendered and Japanese soldiers had withdrawn from Asia, the Western powers of Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands tried to reassert control over their Asian colonies, but local nationalist movements rose up against the return of colonial rule and, one after another, won independence for their countries. The course of these independence campaigns was heavily influenced by the policies that had been implemented by Japan's wartime military administrations. Furthermore, many Japanese military personnel stayed behind in various parts of Asia even after the war was over in order to fight alongside the local people in their struggles for independence.  

*3=In Indonesia, about one thousand Japanese soldiers stayed behind and fought for four and a half years in the Indonesian War of Independence alongside PETA, a pro-independence army formed under the Japanese occupation. About seven hundred Japanese were killed in action during the war.

**Topic 81 Recap Challenge!** – Check which colonial powers controlled the modern-day nations of India, Myanmar, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and the Philippines at the start of the Greater East Asian War.

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**The Indonesians Who Welcomed the Japanese Military as Liberators**

In Indonesia, which endured 350 years of Dutch colonial rule, there was an old legend passed on by word of mouth about a prophecy made by one of the country's last monarchs. When his small kingdom on Java was destroyed by the Dutch invaders, he foretold that, "Before long, the yellow-skinned giants will descend from the north to drive out our oppressors, but when the corn ripens, they will depart. Then, we will be free."

When Indonesians saw the Strait of Malacca packed with the fearsome warships of the Russian Baltic Fleet during the Russo-Japanese War, they had little faith that Japan could defeat it. However, as the news spread that the Japanese, a yellow race like themselves, had annihilated the Russian armada in the Sea of Japan, many Indonesians were convinced that the Japanese were the very yellow-skinned giants of the north predicted by the old legend. In secret, these Indonesians eagerly anticipated their arrival.

When Japanese forces marched into Indonesia in 1942, they were welcomed by crowds of cheering people lined up along the streets. The Japanese soldiers were the long-awaited liberators who had freed them from Dutch rule. Though Japan continued to occupy Indonesia for the next three and a half years, it instituted numerous political and social reforms that laid the groundwork for future independence. These reforms included the popularization of a common Indonesian language, expansion of secondary education, and the training of an army called Defenders of the Homeland, better known by its Indonesian acronym PETA. On the other hand, the Japanese military also conscripted Indonesians to labor under harsh conditions near the end of the war when food was scarce, and the Japanese military police were guilty of a number of abuses.

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**How Japan’s Actions Inspired the Peoples of Asia**

Raja Datuk Nong Chik, a leader of the Malaysian independence movement and former member of the Malaysian Senate, discussed Japan's impact on colonial Asia as follows in his book, "Thank You Japan!"

"Japanese soldiers drove out the Western powers that had ruled the nations of Asia as their colonial fiefs for generations. This astonished the Asian people, as we had long since given up any hope of defeating the white man, and filled us with a new sense of confidence. It awakened us from our long slumber, and convinced us to make the nation of our ancestors our own nation once again. We cheered the Japanese soldiers as they marched through the Malay Peninsula. When we saw the defeated British troops fleeing, we felt an excitement we had never experienced before."
What was life like in the final years of World War II for civilians living in Japan?

The mobilization of the nation

World War I ushered in the era of total war where wars were waged not only by soldiers on the frontlines, but by every citizen of the combatant nations, whose lives, education, and culture it engulfed. As soon as the Second Sino-Japanese War erupted, Japan also instituted a general mobilization system under which the government managed every aspect of life, including commodities, the economy, industry, and transportation.

Due to wartime shortages in Japan, formerly familiar products made of cotton, wool, leather, and rubber disappeared from daily life. The Japanese government organized the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement to urge the citizenry to consume less and save more.

As Japan's military position worsened, government control tightened even further. Because so many young men had been conscripted to fight overseas, the Japanese government resorted to impressment of civilians to fill the labor shortfall. Even schoolchildren became subject to labor mobilization, as were unmarried women, who were put to work in factories as part of the Women's Volunteer Corps. Under the new policy of student conscription, Japanese university students lost their draft deferment privileges and were sent to the battlefield.

*1=The National Impressment Ordinance, introduced in 1939 (Showa 14), compelled civilians to do paid labor in munitions factories and other industries related to war production.

Supplies of every sort of resource eventually ran so short that anything made of metal, including even temple bells, was donated to the war effort. The people were forced into lives of extreme deprivation. And yet, most citizens continued to work hard and fight bravely in the hopes of achieving victory.

After the onset of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the government of Japanese-ruled Korea introduced the so-called "Name Change Policy", known as soshi kaimei in Japanese. Soshi, literally meaning "create a family name", required Koreans to adopt a family name to write on their census forms. Kaimei, literally meaning "change your personal name", gave Koreans the option of adopting a Japanese-style personal name.
Late in the war, military conscription and labor impressment were extended to Japanese-ruled Korea and Taiwan. Many Koreans and Taiwanese were killed toiling under dangerous conditions in Japanese mines and other war-related industries.

Devastation wrought by air raids
The war situation deteriorated even further in 1944 (Showa 19). Japan’s desperately outnumbered military resorted to having its pilots and midget submarine crews undertake suicide attacks in which they deliberately crashed their own vessels into enemy ships. These were called Special Attack Units, better known as the kamikaze.

Finally, the horrors of war descended directly upon ordinary civilians in Japan. In July 1944 (Showa 19), Saipan, one of the Japanese-held Mariana Islands, fell to US forces, putting the Japanese mainland within range of American bombers. Later that year, US B-29 bombers commenced indiscriminate air raids over cities across Japan. The evacuation of schoolchildren was undertaken to keep children out of harm’s way by sending them away from home to rural temples and other remote locations.

*2=The Mariana Islands were a Japanese-governed League of Nations mandate territory. Certain territories that were not yet ready to become independent as nation-states were placed under mandate status by the League of Nations and were administered by other countries under the supervision of the Council of the League of Nations.

On March 10, 1945 (Showa 20), about 100,000 citizens lost their lives in a single night during the Great Tokyo Air Raid. In subsequent months, two hundred major cities were bombed, resulting in the deaths of 500,000 civilians.

Topic 82 Recap Challenge! – Using bullet points, give three or more ways in which the general mobilization system affected the lives of Japanese civilians.
The samurai of Japan traditionally had both a clan name and a family name, whereas Koreans had only a clan name. About 250 different clan names were in use in Korea at the time that Korea’s Japanese administration implemented the "Name Change Policy", which comprised two parts, *soshi* and *kaimei*.

Under the policy, all Koreans were required to decide on a family name (*soshi*) and register it on the next Japanese census. However, no one was forced to take a Japanese-style name.

In addition, Koreans were henceforth permitted to select a Japanese-style personal name (*kaimei*) upon payment of a fee. Unlike *soshi*, *kaimei* was purely voluntary, but eighty percent of Koreans ultimately did choose to adopt Japanese-style names.
From Yalta to Potsdam

The eventual victory of the Allied Powers looked increasingly certain in both Europe and Asia. In February 1945 (Showa 20), the Soviet Union hosted the Yalta Conference in the Crimean city of Yalta, where the leaders of the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain met to discuss the Allied Powers' plans for the postwar world. US President Franklin Roosevelt requested that the Soviet Union join the war against Japan to help relieve the burden on American forces. Roosevelt and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin worked out a secret arrangement whereby the USSR would declare war on Japan three months after Germany was defeated in exchange for the Japanese territories of South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. This agreement was a violation of the Atlantic Charter's assertion that the Allied Powers sought no territorial aggrandizement.

When Allied forces entered Berlin, Hitler committed suicide and the German government collapsed. In May, the German military surrendered unconditionally.

The Battle of Okinawa, atomic bombings, and Soviet invasion

In late-March, the US military launched an assault on Okinawa. The Battle of Okinawa caused tremendous loss of life not just among soldiers, but among the residents of Okinawa as well. Japan's soldiers fought doggedly and were often assisted by the civilian population. Meanwhile, the top-ranking officials in Japan held several meetings to discuss ending the war. They decided to ask the neutral Soviet Union to serve as an intermediary between Japan and the United States in negotiating a peace deal. However, when British, American, and Soviet leaders met in Potsdam, Germany, the Potsdam Declaration was announced on July 26 to lay down the terms for Japan's surrender on behalf of the USA, Great Britain and China.

*1=Rear Admiral Ota Minoru, Japan's naval commander during the Battle of Okinawa, described the selfless heroism of the people of Okinawa and the terrible tragedies that befell them in his final telegram to Japan before committing suicide. The last lines of his telegram read, "This is how the people of Okinawa have fought. Therefore, I request that the Okinawan people be given special consideration by future generations."
The fierce fighting in Okinawa is estimated to have cost the lives of over 180,000 soldiers and civilians, including about 94,000 of the inhabitants of Okinawa. Okinawa was occupied by the US Army on June 23.

The Soviet Union initially made no comment on the Potsdam Declaration due to its non-aggression pact with Japan, but did join after breaking the pact.

Excerpts from the Potsdam Declaration

"Following are our terms… (1.) There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest… (2.) Until there is convincing proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth. (3.) Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine. (4.) The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives. (5.) Stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people… (6.) Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy… but not those industries which would enable her to re-arm for war. (7.) The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government. (8.) We call upon the Government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all the Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction."

When the Potsdam Declaration was issued, Prime Minister Suzuki Kantaro and the leading members of his cabinet noticed that it was a request for conditional surrender and were inclined to accept it. On the other hand, Army Minister Anami Korechika opposed accepting the Potsdam Declaration on the grounds that it contained no guarantee that the status of the emperor would be preserved. Anami insisted on fighting a decisive battle on the Japanese main islands. The Japanese government continued to hope that the Soviet Union would respond favorably to its
request to serve as an intermediary, unaware that Stalin had already decided to go to war with Japan.

*4=Japanese army officers were determined to preserve the kokutai, which can be translated as “national constitution” and refers to the unity of the Japanese people under the Emperor of Japan since the country’s foundation. They feared that acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration would mean the dissolution of Japan as a nation.

On August 6, the US dropped the first atomic bomb in history on Hiroshima. Now, the Japanese government had no choice but to sue for peace as quickly as possible. In accordance with the secret agreement struck at Yalta, the USSR breached the Japanese-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact and declared war on Japan on August 8. Soviet forces invaded Manchuria on August 9 and, on the same day, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki.

**Emperor Hirohito's decision**

Late at night on August 9, top government officials held an Imperial Conference in the presence of Emperor Hirohito to discuss whether to accept the Potsdam Declaration. The opinions of those assembled were evenly divided and the conference was deadlocked. At 2:00 AM on August 10, Prime Minister Suzuki approached the Emperor and requested that he pass judgment on the matter. At a second Imperial Conference convoked on August 14, Emperor Hirohito gave his "sacred decision" that Japan would immediately surrender to the Allied Powers under the conditions of the Potsdam Declaration in order to avoid further loss of life.

At noon on August 15, Emperor Hirohito delivered the Jewel Voice Broadcast, informing the Japanese people by radio that their long war was over and Japan had been defeated. It was Japan's first defeat since the start of the modern era. Japan's surrender marked the conclusion of World War II.

**The “Sacred Decision” of Emperor Hirohito Excerpted from the Testimony of Chief Cabinet Secretary Sakomizu Hisatsune**

"Given the current situation, I am terribly worried about the outcome of a decisive battle waged on Japanese soil. It is entirely possible that every single Japanese person will be killed. If so, how would we be able to hand down the nation of Japan to our descendants? If we save the lives of as many Japanese as possible, so that they may rebuild our country in the future, only then will we have a country to hand down to our descendants... I know that you are all concerned about what might happen to me after the surrender, but I am not at all worried about myself. I have given the matter much thought and have resolved to end this war immediately."

**Topic 83 Recap Challenge! – List in chronological order six or more major events in the final year of the Greater East Asian War that led to the end of the conflict.**
JAPAN AS SEEN THROUGH FOREIGN EYES

The Greater East Asian War and the Independence of Asia

Though Japan lost the war that it fought in the name of Asian liberation, Asia did manage to throw off the shackles of colonialism and achieve independence.

The impact of the Greater East Asian War

Asserting that the war was necessary for national survival, Japanese forces seized Dutch and British colonial territories in Southeast Asia at the outset of the fighting in order to take control of their resources.

By then, most of Asia was suffering under the white colonial domination of Western nations. For this reason, Japan’s impressive victories during the initial stages of the war raised hopes for independence among the peoples of Asia.

Nevertheless, it is also true that the fierce battles fought by the Japanese Army as it marched through Southeast Asia exacted a heavy toll on local peoples. In the Philippines especially, countless civilians were embroiled in the brutal fighting with the US Army and became casualties of the war. Likewise, many Chinese people were killed due to the Japanese military's actions in China.

The Japanese military and Indian independence

India was a British colony for generations, but by the twentieth century was home to a lively independence movement led by such well-known figures as Mahatma Gandhi. Another Indian independence activist was Chandra Bose, who believed that the movement needed to constitute a government with its own army. Thanks to the backing of the Japanese military, he was able to realize this plan. At the time that Japan captured the British military base at Singapore, many Indian soldiers serving in the British Army were taken prisoner. Japan persuaded 13,000 of them to join the Indian National Army and fight for Indian independence.

Then, in October 1943, the Provisional Government of Free India was established in Singapore under Bose’s leadership. When the Japanese Army advanced into their homeland of India, the soldiers of the Indian National Army marched right alongside it while shouting "To Delhi!"

In spite of their efforts, the campaign into India ended in failure. After the war was over, the British attempted to put the leaders of the Indian National Army on trial for treason as a means
to reassert their colonial rule over India. In response, the Indian people promptly rose up as one to demand their freedom. Finally, Great Britain was forced to recognize India's independence.

The wave of independence that swept Asia

Once Japan had surrendered to the Allied Powers, they returned to regain control over their colonies that Japan had occupied, including Burma (Myanmar), Malaya (Malaysia), and Indonesia.

However, the people of these nations, including groups that had been armed and trained by the Japanese military, fought back valiantly and succeeded in foiling the bid by the Western powers to re-colonize Asia. Though Indonesia had not been granted independence during the Japanese occupation, many Japanese soldiers remained there after the war to support the Indonesian people in their struggle for freedom.

During the war, the Japanese military occupied French Indochina, which was composed of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, with the permission of the French government. Here also, many Japanese troops stayed behind in order to fight alongside the local people in their war for independence.

How the world saw the Greater East Asian War

Ba Maw, who attended the 1943 Greater East Asia Conference in Tokyo as the representative of Burma, became the first prime minister of his home country. In his book, Breakthrough in Burma, he wrote the following about Japan’s role in the liberation of Asia:

“Tai’s case is indeed tragic. Looking at it historically, no nation has done so much to liberate Asia from white domination, yet no nation has been so misunderstood... Had her Asian instincts been true, had she only been faithful to the concept of Asia for the Asians that she herself had proclaimed at the beginning of the war, Japan’s fate would have been very different.”

While criticizing the tyrannical acts and plunder of resources perpetrated by the Japanese military, Ba Maw still praised Japan's positive contributions towards liberating Asia from colonialism.

Moreover, Kukrit Pramoj, who became prime minister of Thailand, recalled the Greater East Asian War as follows in a newspaper article entitled “December 7th”:

|
| 1943年 | フィリピン | アメリカ |
| 1947年 | インド | イギリス |
| 1948年 | ビルマ（ミャンマー） | イギリス |
| 1949年 | インドネシア | オランダ |
| 1950年 | ラオス | フランス |
| 1955年 | カンボジア | フランス |
| 1948年 | ベトナム | フランス |
| 1954年 | マレーシア | イギリス |
| 1953年 | シンガポール | イギリス |

第二次世界大戦後独立したアジア諸国

バム・マウは1943年の東京五カ国首脳会議でオーストラリア、イギリス、アメリカ、カナダ、中国を代表して出席。彼は、日本のアジアへの貢献を称え、日本がアジアの独立に貢献したと主張しました。

タイのククリット・プラモード元首相は「12月8日」と題して、次のように大東亜戦争を回想しています。

「タイは、アジアに貢献したが、日本は理解されていない。日本はアジアの独立を支持し、アジア固有の国家を創設し、アジアの将来を守った。12月8日は日本が独立を求める日である。」
"It was thanks to Japan that all nations of Asia gained independence. For Mother Japan, it was a difficult birth that caused her great pain, and yet her children are growing up healthy and strong. December 7th was the date on which Mother Japan made the momentous decision to risk her own life for our sake. Furthermore, August 15th was the date on which our beloved mother lay bedridden. Neither of these two days should ever be forgotten."

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</table>
Throughout our long history, human societies never stopped waging wars against one another due to conflicting national or ethnic interests, and these wars always occasioned horrible atrocities. Consequently, the idea came about to set international standards on how wars could legally be conducted. These rules are known as the international laws of war. One of the most influential treaties on the international laws of war was the Hague Land War Convention, signed in the Netherlands in 1907 (Meiji 40).

The killing or wounding of non-combatant civilians and mistreatment of soldiers taken prisoner are designated as war crimes and therefore illegal under the international laws of war. In addition, it is prohibited to arm civilians and have them participate in fighting without military uniforms. If non-uniformed combatants are captured, it is permissible to punish and even execute them as spies or guerrillas following legal proceedings.

The greatest war crime of the twentieth century

Unarmed civilians were targeted and slaughtered en masse in both the Battle of Okinawa and the indiscriminate bombing of major Japanese cities. It has been said that even one of the US B-29 pilots had questioned his commanding officer about whether the proposed Great Tokyo Air Raid of March 10, 1945 (Showa 20), was a violation of international law. During this attack, 100,000 people were burned alive in a single night. As for the atomic bombings, the number of people killed totaled over 200,000 in Hiroshima and over 70,000 in Nagasaki, and these victims were ordinary citizens. Whether measured by their human or material devastation, the atomic bombings could be fairly described as the greatest war crimes of the twentieth century.

The Siberian Internment

On August 9, Soviet forces overran Manchuria and Sakhalin in violation of the Japanese-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. They were responsible for innumerable incidents of pillage, murder, and rape against Japanese civilians. Even after Japan's surrender, the Soviet invasion continued. It was in September that the USSR completed its conquest of the Northern Territories, an integral part of Japan. What's more, though the Potsdam Declaration stipulated that all Japanese prisoners were to be repatriated in short order, the USSR blatantly disregarded this condition and transported more than 600,000 Japanese civilians and POWs to sites in Siberia where they were
made to do brutally hard labor and denied adequate meals. Among those Japanese interned in Siberia, the officially recorded deaths alone exceeded 60,000 people.

Because the Allied Powers were the victors of the war, none of their war crimes were prosecuted.

The war crimes of the Japanese military
The Japanese military was also responsible for the mistreatment and unlawful killing of captured enemy soldiers and unarmed civilians within the areas it occupied over the course of the war. The Allied Powers dealt severely with Japanese war criminals, sentencing nearly one thousand of them to death. However, there were some cases of Japanese soldiers having been wrongfully convicted and executed for crimes that they had not committed.
CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY:
SUMMING UP THE MODERN PERIOD (PART 2)

Hiroki asks his brother about the periodization of modern history...

The following is a dialogue between Hiroki, a Japanese middle school student, and his elder brother.

Hiroki: In this period, the wars went on non-stop. I read that even kids like us had to fight!

Hiroki’s brother: Yes, we call that “total war”. Unlike earlier wars that had been fought by soldiers alone, in a total war, the entire population of the country has to support the war effort. For example, women and children worked in munitions factories and supported the front by making bullets.

Hiroki: A lot of ordinary people were killed too…

Hiroki’s brother: New technologies of war like tanks and bombers were developed, and even urban areas where ordinary civilians lived became targets to be destroyed.

Hiroki: But why couldn’t the United States and Great Britain get along with Japan?

Hiroki’s brother: Once the Great Depression began, every country was just desperate to survive. The “have nations”, which already had many colonies, made it through the depression by forming economic blocs. “Have-not nations” like Japan tried to export their goods abroad, but unfortunately found no buyers due to the high tariff walls raised by the economic blocs. US-Japan relations eventually got so bad that Japan was not even allowed to import raw materials like oil and iron from the USA. As a way to survive the crisis, Japan planned to rely on Europe’s colonies in Asia as a market for its goods and a rich source of natural resources.

Hiroki: Japan didn’t have many resources. We imported materials from other countries, made them into products, and shipped them out again, right?

Hiroki’s brother: Free trade is so universal now that I guess it’s hard for us to imagine how things were back then. We can only understand what really caused the war by putting ourselves into the shoes of the people who experienced it firsthand.
**Comparing historical periods**

Compare each set of the following topics and jot down the key differences and similarities.

1. World War I versus World War II.

2. Communism versus fascism.

3. The modern period (Part 1) versus the modern period (Part 2)

*An essay *"in a word"

(1.) What did you find most interesting about Japan's modern history (Part 2)? Give one topic.

*In a word, the Taisho and early Showa periods were the era of __________.*

In the blank, insert the topic that you think best fits and write a short essay of between 100 and 200 words on it.

**Examples:** war, totalitarianism, national independence, etc…

(2.) Now let’s consider all one hundred years of the modern period of Japanese history.

*In a word, the modern period was the era of __________.*

In the blank, insert the topic that you think best fits and write a short essay of between 100 and 200 words on it.

**Group discussion work**

Read the section entitled "The Greater East Asian War and the Independence of Asia" and let everyone share their own opinion on it.
### World War I
1914 – 1918
The first truly global war. It began in Europe when the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne in Sarajevo sparked a confrontation between two rival camps, the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. It quickly escalated into a total war causing unprecedented loss of life in Europe.

#### Twenty-One Demands
1915
Demands issued by Japan against China during World War I following Japan’s military victories over Germany in Asia. They included recognition by China of Japan’s control over Germany’s former interests in China and extension of Japan’s leases in southern Manchuria. Though they were later reduced to sixteen demands, they contributed to the rise of anti-Japanese sentiment in China.

#### Russian Revolution
1917
The revolution that overthrew the Russian monarchy and brought the Communist Party to power. Lenin and his supporters led an armed revolt to install a government based upon councils of laborers and soldiers (known as soviets in Russian). Later, Lenin established a one-party communist dictatorship.

#### Treaty of Versailles
1919
The treaty drawn up at the peace conference held in Paris after the end of World War I. It was signed by the defeated Germany and the "Big Five" victor powers: the United States, Great Britain, France, Japan, and Italy. The treaty imposed harsh reparations on Germany that played a role in the future outbreak of
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<tr>
<th>Event/Period</th>
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<tr>
<td>Taisho Democracy</td>
<td>1912 –</td>
<td>The trend towards democracy and internationalism that prevailed in Japan immediately following World War I. A variety of dynamic social movements sprang up, including labor activism, agrarian movements, and even a campaign for women's suffrage led by Hiratsuka Raicho.</td>
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<td>Washington Conference</td>
<td>1921 – 1922</td>
<td>A conference bringing together nine nations, including Japan, mainly to discuss the issues of naval disarmament and relations with China. Its purpose was to balance the interests of the powers involved and promote a stable international system in East Asia. The conference also dissolved the twenty-year-old Anglo-Japanese Alliance at America's urging.</td>
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<td>Totalitarianism</td>
<td>1920 –</td>
<td>Two political ideologies originating in Europe. The first form of totalitarianism, called communism, inspired the Russian Revolution. The other form of totalitarianism, called fascism, had its greatest impact on Italy and Germany. Communism and fascism each manifested unique political systems in the totalitarian mold and played decisive roles in the course of twentieth century world history.</td>
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<td>Great Depression</td>
<td>1929 –</td>
<td>A global economic depression that started with the collapse of the stock market in the United States, the world's largest economy. The Japanese economy, which was dependent on exports to the US, was dealt a devastating blow. Many businesses closed or went bankrupt and the unemployment rate skyrocketed. It was known in Japan as the Showa Depression.</td>
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<td>Foundation of Manchukuo</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>The Kwantung Army, the Japanese military unit posted in Manchuria, occupied all the major Manchurian cities in a bid to put them under Japanese control. The Kwantung Army then founded the nation of Manchukuo, installed the last Qing emperor Puyi as Chief Executive, and implemented a program of economic development. However, the ensuing international outcry induced Japan to leave the League of Nations.</td>
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<td>February 26 Incident</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>An attempted coup d'état led by a group of young army officers with the aim of destroying Japan's party politicians, financial elite, and elder statesmen and installing a military dictatorship under the Emperor's guidance. The rebels attacked key government facilities such as the Prime Minister's Official Residence and the Metropolitan Police Department, murdered leading officials including a cabinet minister, and occupied the vicinity of the Diet. However, the coup was soon defeated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Sino-Japanese War (China Incident)</td>
<td>1937 – 1945</td>
<td>A conflict between China and Japan that started with a clash at Marco Polo Bridge in 1937, but escalated into all-out war after the Battle of Shanghai. Peace efforts fell through, the scope of combat operations grew broader, and the fighting dragged on for many years.</td>
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<td>World War II</td>
<td>1939 – 1945</td>
<td>History's second war of global scale. It began with Great Britain and France declaring war on Germany in response to Germany's invasion of Poland. It evolved into a contest between the Allied Powers of the USA, Great Britain, France, China, and the USSR versus...</td>
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the Axis Powers of Japan, Germany, and Italy. The Allied Powers ultimately emerged triumphant.

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<tr>
<td>Tripartite Pact</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>A military alliance that Japan signed with Germany and Italy in response to Germany's victories in Europe. The alliance was actually of little effect due to the great geographic distance between Japan and its two allies, but it did do irreparable damage to Japan's relationship with the United States, which was supporting Great Britain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater East Asia Conference</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>A conference held in Tokyo that brought together representatives from a variety of Asian nations, including India, Thailand, and Southeast Asia. The purpose of the conference was to prove Japan's solidarity with the peoples of Asia and request their cooperation in winning the war. The conference issued the Greater East Asia Declaration and upheld the liberation of Asia as Japan's war aim.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potsdam Declaration</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>The declaration of the Allied Powers enumerating the conditions that Japan would have to accept in order to end the war. The declaration was released on July 26 in the name of Britain, the USA, and China, at a meeting of the leaders of Britain, the USA, and the USSR in Potsdam, a city in the suburbs of Berlin. At the Imperial Conference of August 14, Japan agreed to accede to the Potsdam Declaration.</td>
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