Asia during the Interwar Years
Chairman Mao (1893-1976)

-Mao Zedong, the son of a well-to-do farmer, worked as an assistant librarian at the University of Peking while attending classes there after WWI

-In 1921 Mao joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

-He soon became one of the Party’s leaders

-In 1923 the Communist Party allied itself with Sun Yat-sen’s Kuomintang Party (or Nationalist Party, aka the KMT) in an effort to fight Chinese warlords

-After Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, Jiang Jieshi (aka Chiang Kai-Shek) took over the KMT

-In 1926, Jiang Jieshi and the Nationalists attacked the Communists in Shanghai; within a year, China was plunged into a civil war
The Chinese Civil War

- The civil war was complicated by the fact that throughout this period – from approx. 1911 to 1949 – the central government was very weak.

- Initially, in 1911, when the last Qing emperor abdicated, Sun Yat-sen had attempted to create a democracy in China but was unable to do so because of the lack of a strong middle class in China.

- China was also very backward economically; most Chinese were poor peasants who were unable to read or write.

- China also had very little industry.

- Even though the main parties fighting each other in the civil war were Communists and Nationalists, much of the country was dominated by warlords who changed sides when it benefitted them.
The Long March

- Forced to abandon their base in Kianxi (Jianxi) province, Mao’s Communist forces (known as the People’s Liberation Army (or PLA)) began their Long March in Oct. 1934.

- Chased by the KMT, the Communists walked approx. 6,000 miles over the next year until they reached a new base in Yunan province.

- Many Communists died on this march but Mao and 10,000 others survived.

- The survivors were able to renew the civil war with Jiang Jieshi and the Nationalists after WWII.

- The Japanese invasion of China in the mid-1930s caused the Communists and the Nationalists to agree to a truce so as to fight the Japanese invader.
Japanese invasion of Manchuria

For almost 15 years, the Japanese controlled much of the northeastern part of China.
In the Middle East after WWI, there were many changes

- The League of Nations granted France the right to rule Syria and Lebanon as mandates.
- The League of Nations also gave Great Britain the right to rule Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq as mandates.
- Great Britain had previously declared its intention, in the Balfour Declaration (1917), to give the Jews a homeland in Palestine.
- In Saudi Arabia Ibn Saud (1880-1953), a leader of the strict Wahhabi movement, drove out the remnants of Ottoman rule in the early 1920s and established the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.
Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938)

- Kemal Ataturk was an Ottoman Turkish army officer who gained fame for his success in repulsing the British and Australian landing at Gallipoli during WWI.
- After WWI, Kemal Ataturk resisted the efforts of Greece to expand its territory into western Asia Minor.
- As a result of this new war, the Greco-Turkish War (1921-1922), many ethnic Greeks (e.g., those living in Smyrna (now called Izmir)) were forced to flee Asia Minor.
- Kemal Ataturk seized power in 1923. Once in office, he embarked on a series of westernizing reforms.
  - The army helped Kemal Ataturk institute a new, more secular identity for Turkey.
  - Men were forced to stop wearing fezzes and women were encouraged not to wear veils in public.
  - Laws based on religion were eliminated.
  - The Ottoman script (based on Arabic) was abandoned in favor of a Latin script.
By forcing its people to change their clothing, can a government change the ideas its people have?
The Greco-Turkish War of 1921-1922
Armenian refugees

- In addition to dealing with the Greeks, the Turks had problems with other ethnic minorities still living in what was left of the Ottoman Empire, including the Armenians and the Kurds.
- Many Armenians had died during WWI, according to some because of an effort by Turkish nationalists to eliminate them as a distinct people with a unique culture and language.
- To this day, many Turks reject the claim that the death of so many Armenians was genocide.
Reza Khan (1878-1944)

- The **Qajar** Dynasty had ruled Iran for over 125 years (from 1794-1925); its leaders had granted the Iranian people a constitution in 1906.
- In 1921 Reza Khan, an army officer, seized control of the government.
- In 1925 he deposed the last Qajar ruler and declared himself **shah**, or emperor.
- His new dynasty was called the **Pahlavi** dynasty.
- Reza Khan was a modernizer; he favored Western-style education.
- He tried to do in Iran what Kemal Ataturk had done in Turkey; like Kemal Ataturk, he encountered opposition from Muslim traditionalists.
- During WWII Reza Khan favored the Germans, in part because they could serve as a counterweight to the British and Russians, who since the 19th century had tried to establish spheres of influence in Iran.
- As a consequence, the Allies conquered Iran in 1941 and forced the shah to abdicate in favor of his son **Muhammed Reza Pahlavi**.
- By the mid-20th century, Iran’s large oil resources were attracting considerable interest in the West.
Iran (aka Persia) had for centuries benefitted from its strategic location. However, its location at the crossroads of important trading routes meant that other countries wished to control, if not conquer it. After Reza Khan’s death in 1944, Iranian nationalists deposed his son and successor; later, in 1951, Mohammed Mossadeq, a secularist loosely allied with the Soviets, was elected prime minister. Mossadeq threatened to nationalize western-owned oil fields and facilities in Iran. As a result, the U.S. removed Mosadeq from power in a CIA-backed coup d’etat in 1953 and restored Reza Khan’s son, Muhammed Reza Pahlavi, to the throne.
Mohammed Reza Pahlavi (1919-1980)

- The Shah was pro-Western and anti-communist.
- He tried to modernize his country.
- To do so, he changed many traditional practices (women, e.g., were granted the right to vote).
- The Shah’s efforts antagonized many traditionalists, however, esp. Muslim Shi’ite leaders.
- The Shah’s regime also generated opposition because of its corruption and brutality.
- In 1979 a radical fundamentalist leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini, took power as the result of a revolution against the Shah, who was forced to flee.
- The U.S., because of its long support for the Shah, was demonized as “The Great Satan” and fell victim to a 444-day takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran lasting from 1979 to 1981.
The British Raj in India

- The British had dominated India since the mid-18th century
- India was the “Jewel in the Crown”
- By the 20th century, many Indians wanted self-rule
- The British resisted such efforts until the end of WWII, when Lord Louis Mountbatten (see his picture on the right), the British viceroy in India, oversaw the transition to independence
Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948)

-Gandhi was born a Hindu in India
-He studied law in England and later moved to South Africa, like India a British colony
-He lived in South Africa for approx. 20 years and became very conscious of racial discrimination while there
-Later he returned to India and joined the Indian National Congress Party
-He led protests against British rule
-The Amritsar Massacre in 1919, caused many Indians, including Gandhi, to turn against the British
-Gandhi, however, was an advocate for peaceful non-cooperation (or Satyagraha), not violence, as the best way to oppose the British
-Gandhi led boycotts of British cloth as well as the Salt March of 1930
Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964)

- Like Gandhi, Nehru was a member of the Indian National Congress
- He helped Gandhi protest British rule
- Like many Indians, he at first desired autonomy within the British empire but later sought complete independence
- In contrast to Gandhi, Nehru was a westernizer
- After Great Britain granted India its independence in 1948, Nehru became India’s first prime minister
- He soon obtained a military alliance with the USSR even if India remained a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (i.e., it was neither pro-Communist nor pro-Capitalist)
- In India Nehru supported democracy and sought to industrialize his country; he also helped pass India’s 1950 Constitution, which made caste discrimination illegal
Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948)

- Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the leader of most of the Muslims in India
- Originally he was a member of the Indian National Congress
- Later, he led the Muslim League
- During the transition to Partition and Independence, he became the governor-general of Pakistan (1947-1948)
Partition was very controversial but perhaps necessary.

In general, Hindus moved from majority-Muslim areas and (to a lesser extent) Muslims moved from majority-Hindu areas.

After Partition, Pakistan was primarily Muslim.

India, for its part, was primarily Hindu although it still retained a substantial Muslim population (particularly in Kashmir, which would become the scene of further conflict).

India also had a large Sikh minority (esp. in the Punjab, an area just south of Kashmir).

The two parts of Pakistan (East and West Pakistan) would remain divided geographically but united politically until a civil war in 1971, which led to the independence of East Pakistan (now called Bangladesh).
The Partition of India

- Partition in 1947-48 was very traumatic
- The exodus of so many people created much hardship; resettlement meant the need to find new housing and new jobs
- Over one million people died because of violence between different religious groups
- Famine was also a problem
More on Partition

Hindu and Sikh refugees going from Pakistan to the Punjab (in India) in 1947