

## The situation faced by Japan in 1941

- War with China was proving to be a huge drain on Japan's **resources**
- Shortages of **oil, tin, iron ore and rubber** were particularly acute
- Without these strategic resources, it would be **impossible** for Japan to carry on fighting in China forever
- However, to withdraw from China would be a **major humiliation** for the Japanese government

# 1939: War breaks out in Europe

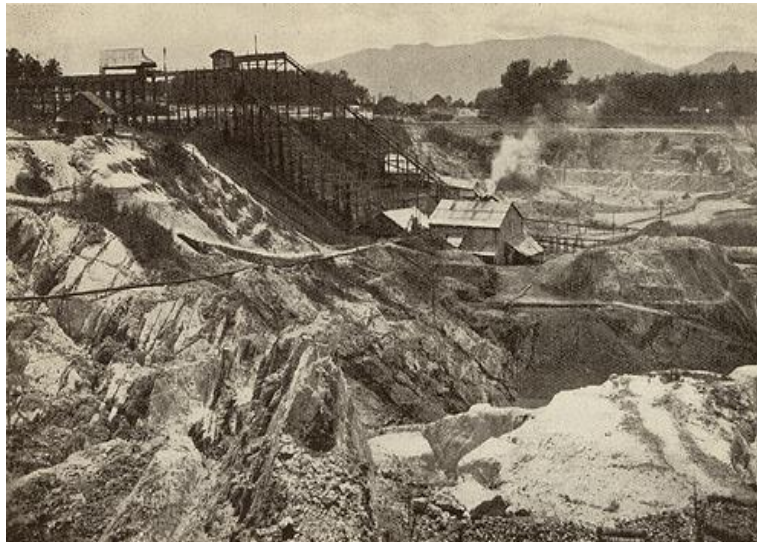
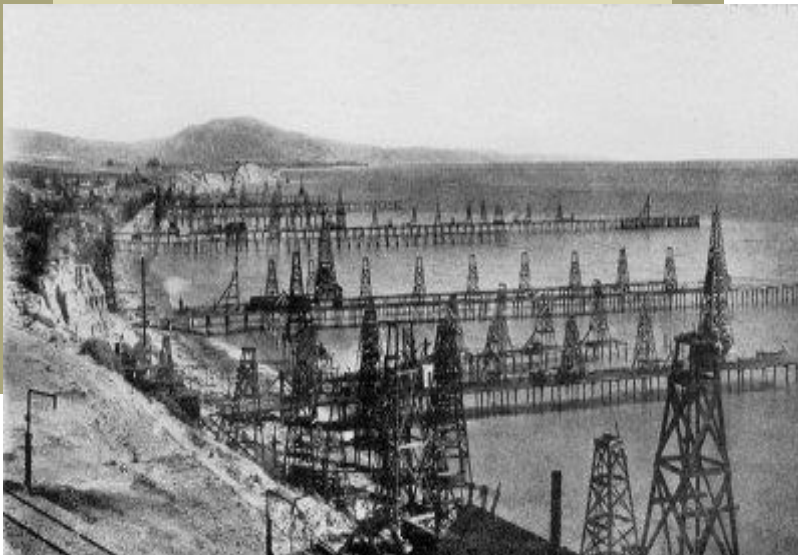
- 1939: Nazi Germany invades Poland, triggering the start of World War 2 in Europe.



- British and French defences in Asia-Pacific were weakened and depleted.
- European powers were preoccupied in Europe → Southeast Asia was left defenceless.

## Japan's solution to its problem

- Conquer Southeast Asia in order to obtain its **rich resources**
- This had to be done rapidly, whilst the Western Powers (Britain, France, USA) were distracted fighting Germany
- Singapore had to be taken due to its role as a **strategic British naval base at the centre of Southeast Asia**








# Attack on Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941



## Japanese conquests in Southeast Asia

- Thailand (allied to the Japanese) 
- French Indochina 
- Malaya 
- Singapore 
- Dutch East Indies 
- Borneo, Sumatra and other islands 
- British Burma 
- The Philippines 

# Why did Japan invade Southeast Asia in 1941?



1. Dire need for raw materials to finish the war in China
2. Belief that war was the only way for Japan to become a great power in the face of a consistently condescending attitude of the Western Powers towards Japan
3. Strong influence of Japan's military leaders in the Japanese government