

World War II**Lesson 5**

Europe and Japan in Ruins

Key Terms and People

Nuremberg Trials trials of Nazi leaders charged with crimes against humanity, held in Nuremberg, Germany

demilitarization removing armed forces and weapons of a country

democratization process of creating a government elected by the people

Before You Read

In the last lesson, you read about how the war ended.

In this lesson, you will learn about the war's effects on Europe and Japan.

As You Read

Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast conditions in postwar Europe and Japan.

DEVASTATION IN EUROPE**How did the war change Europe?**

The war had left Europe in ruins. Almost 40 million people were dead. Hundreds of cities were reduced to rubble by constant bombing and shelling. The ground war had destroyed much of the countryside. Displaced persons from many nations were trying to get back home. Often there was no water, no electricity, and little food. Hunger was constant.

Agriculture had been disrupted. Most able-bodied men had served in the military, and the women had worked in war production. Few had remained to plant the fields. With factories destroyed or damaged, most people had no earnings to buy the food that was available. Also the small harvests did not reach the cities because the transportation system had been

destroyed. Suffering continued for many years in Europe.

1. What conditions existed in Europe after World War II?

POSTWAR GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICS**Who did the Europeans blame for the war?**

Europeans often blamed their leaders for the war and its aftermath. Once Germany was defeated, some prewar governments—like those in Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Norway—returned quickly. In Germany, Italy, and France, the old fascist governments had disappeared. At first, the Communist parties grew strong in France and Italy.

Lesson 5, *continued*

People who opposed Communism grew alarmed. They voted leaders from other parties into power. Communism lost its appeal when the economies of these lands improved.

During efforts to rebuild Europe, the Allies held the **Nuremberg Trials** in the German city of Nuremberg. There, captured Nazi leaders were charged with crimes against humanity. They were found guilty, and some were executed.

2. What were the Nuremberg Trials?

**POSTWAR JAPAN; OCCUPATION
BRINGS DEEP CHANGES**

What changes were made in Japan?

The defeat suffered by Japan in World War II had devastated that country. Two million lives had been lost. The country's major cities were in ruins.

The U.S. Army occupied Japan under the command of General MacArthur. He began a process of **demilitarization**, removing the Japanese armed forces. MacArthur also paid attention to **democratization**, or creating a government elected by the people. His first step was to write a new constitution. It gave all power to the Japanese people, who voted for members of a parliament that would rule the land. All Japanese over age 20—including women—were given the right to vote. In 1951, other nations finally signed a formal peace with Japan. A few months later, U.S. military occupation ended.

3. How did the government of Japan change?

Lesson 5, *continued*

As you read this lesson, fill out the chart by writing notes to describe conditions in postwar Europe and Japan.

Postwar Europe:	
1. Note three ways war affected the land and people of Europe.	
2. Note three political problems postwar governments faced.	
3. Note one way the Allies dealt with the Holocaust.	

Postwar Japan:	
4. Note two effects of Allied bombing raids on Japan.	
5. Note three ways U.S. occupation changed Japan.	
6. Note three provisions in Japan's new constitution.	