

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## World War II and the Holocaust, 1939–1945

### Lesson 4 The New Order and the Holocaust

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

*Why do political actions often lead to war? How does war impact society and the environment?*

#### Reading HELPDESK

##### Academic Vocabulary

**ethnic** relating to people who have common racial, religious, or cultural origins

**occupation** the military force occupying a country or the policies carried out by it

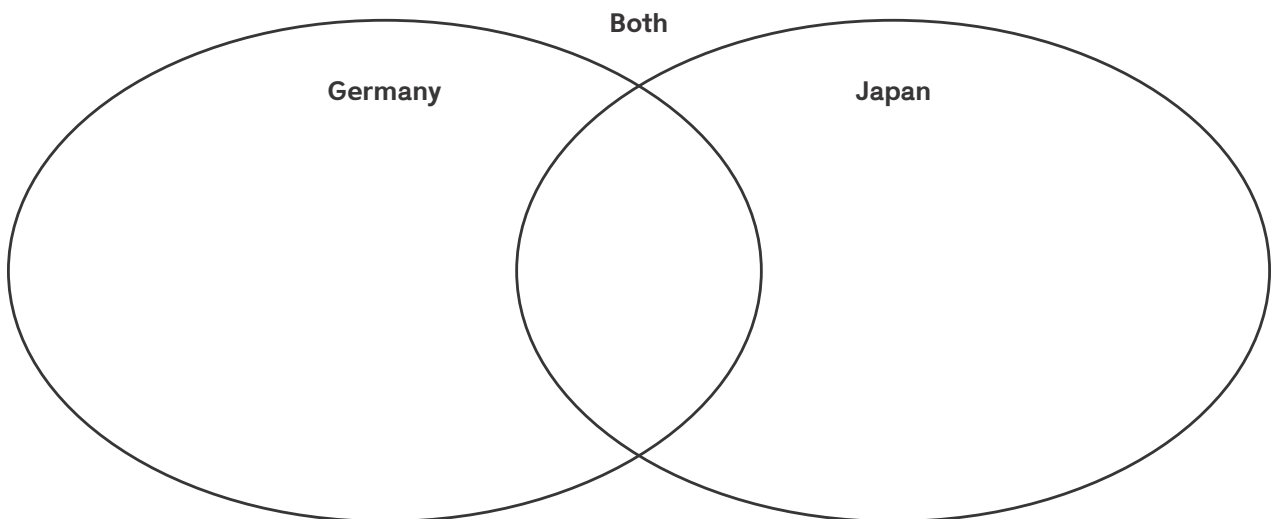
##### Content Vocabulary

**genocide** the deliberate mass murder or physical extinction of a particular racial, religious, political, or cultural group

**collaborator** a person who assists the enemy

#### TAKING NOTES: *Comparing and Contrasting*

**ACTIVITY** As you read, use a Venn diagram like the one below to compare and contrast the New Order of Germany with the New Order of Japan.



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The logo for 'networks' features the word in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. A stylized graphic of intersecting lines forms a starburst or network pattern behind the letter 'o'.

## World War II and the Holocaust, 1939–1945

### Lesson 4 The New Order and the Holocaust, *continued*

#### IT MATTERS BECAUSE

As World War II continued, Japan used the resources of the nations it had conquered. In Europe, the Nazis began a terrible genocide, or systematic killing of groups of people. Nearly two out of every three European Jews died in the Holocaust.

#### The New Order in Europe

**Guiding Question** *How did Germany establish a New Order in Europe?*

In 1942 the Nazi regime controlled continental Europe from the English Channel in the west to the outskirts of Moscow in the east. The Nazis regime ruled mainly in two ways. One way was to annex, or add, areas such as Poland to Germany. They turned these areas into German provinces. Another way was to occupy areas. Most of occupied Europe was run by German military or civilian officials. Local people who worked with the Nazis helped these officials.

Nazi officials were especially cruel in the conquered lands to the east. These lands were viewed as the new “living space” for German expansion. They were populated by Slavic peoples whom the Nazis considered racially inferior. Hitler’s plans for an Aryan racial empire were extremely important to him. In fact, the Nazis began to put their racial program into effect soon after they took over Poland.

Heinrich Himmler, the leader of the Nazi Secret Service, or SS, was in charge of German resettlement plans in the east. Himmler’s task was to move the Slavic peoples out and replace them with Germans. Slavic peoples included Czech, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Slovene, and Ukrainian. The resettlement policy was first applied to western Poland. One million Poles were uprooted, or taken away, from their homes. They were moved to southern Poland. Hundreds of thousands of **ethnic** Germans were then brought in to colonize, or settle, the German provinces in western Poland.

The Nazis were even more excited about German colonization (take-over of another country) after their invasion of the Soviet Union. Hitler planned a colossal project of social engineering, or management of major changes in society, after the war. Many people in Eastern Europe, including Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians, would be removed and become enslaved. German peasants would move to the abandoned lands and “Germanize” them.

By the summer of 1944, over 7 million Europeans were forced to work in Germany. They made up about 20 percent of Germany’s labor force. Another 7 million people were forced to work for the Nazis on farms, in industries, and in military camps.

The use of forced labor caused many problems for Germany. The workers came from occupied countries, and the loss of so many workers hurt industrial production in the occupied countries. Also, Germany was brutal, or cruel, in recruiting foreign workers. This brutality led more and more people to resist the Nazi **occupation** forces.

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## World War II and the Holocaust, 1939–1945

### Lesson 4 The New Order and the Holocaust, *continued*



#### Reading Progress Check

**Analyzing** How did resettlement contribute to the goals of Hitler's New Order?

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## The Holocaust

**Guiding Question** *How did Adolf Hitler's views on race influence the New Order?*

The most terrifying aspect of the Nazi New Order was the deliberate attempt to exterminate, or completely destroy, the Jews. Racial struggle was a key part of Hitler's ideas. He saw racial struggle as a conflict between clearly defined opposing sides. On one side were the Aryans. According to Hitler, they created and developed human culture. On the other side were the Jews, whom Hitler blamed for Germany's defeat in World War I and for the Great Depression, the economic crisis of the 1930s.

Himmler and the SS shared Hitler's ideas about race. The SS was responsible for the Nazis' "Final Solution" to what they called the Jewish "problem." The Final Solution was **genocide**—the mass murder—of the Jewish people.

### The *Einsatzgruppen*

Reinhard Heydrich was head of the SS's Security Service. He had the task of managing the Final Solution. Heydrich created special strike, or attack, forces called *Einsatzgruppen*, to carry out Nazi plans. After the defeat of Poland, these forces rounded up all Polish Jews. In many Polish cities, they put the Jews into areas called ghettos. Conditions in the ghettos were horrible. Families were crowded together in unsanitary housing. The Nazis tried to starve residents by allowing them only minimal amounts of food. In spite of their suffering, the Jews carried on. Some even organized resistance against the Nazis.

In June 1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* were given the new job of acting as mobile killing units. These SS death squads followed the regular army's advance into the Soviet Union. Their job was to round up Jews and to execute them. They then buried their victims in mass graves.

### The Death Camps

The *Einsatzgruppen* probably killed more than one million Jews. As shocking and horrifying as that was, the killing was too slow by Nazi standards. They decided to kill the European Jews in specially built death camps.

Six extermination centers were built in Poland for this purpose. The largest was Auschwitz (OWSH-vihts). Beginning in 1942, Jews from countries occupied by or sympathetic (showing agreement with) to Germany were gathered together. They were packed into freight trains and shipped to Poland.

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About 30 percent of the people arriving at Auschwitz were sent to labor camps. There many starved or were worked to death. Most of the remaining people went to gas chambers—rooms in which people were killed by poisonous gas. Some prisoners were subjected to cruel and painful “medical” experiments.

By the spring of 1942, the death camps were in full operation. The people in Polish ghettos were the first to be killed at the camps. By the summer of 1942, Jews were also being shipped to the camps from France, Belgium, and Holland. While the Allies were winning the war in 1944, Jews were being shipped from Greece and Hungary to the camps. The Germans often gave the Final Solution priority over Germany’s desperate military needs. Late in the war, when Germany faced complete defeat, railroad cars were used to ship Jews to the death camps instead of carrying supplies to the armed forces.

### The Death Toll

The Germans murdered approximately six million Jews. Over three million were killed in death camps. Concentration camps were not designed specifically for mass murder, but large numbers of inmates died in them. People in the concentration camps were worked to death or subjected to deadly medical experiments. Almost 90 percent of the Jewish populations of Poland, the Baltic countries, and Germany were killed. Nearly two out of every three European Jews died during the Holocaust.

The Nazis also shot, starved, and overworked as many as nine to ten million non-Jewish people. The Nazis considered the Roma, who are sometimes known as Gypsies, to be an alien race. About 40 percent of Europe’s one million Roma were killed in death camps.

The leading citizens of the Slavic peoples were arrested and killed. An additional 4 million Poles, Ukrainians, and Belorussians lost their lives as slave laborers. Finally, at least 3 to 4 million Soviet prisoners of war were killed.

This mass slaughter of European Jews is known as Shoah, which means “total destruction.” Many Jews tried to resist the Nazis. Friends and strangers helped some Jews. They hid them or smuggled them to safe areas. A few foreign diplomats saved Jews by issuing exit visas. The nation of Denmark saved almost its entire Jewish population.

Some people did not believe the accounts of death camps. During World War I, allies had greatly exaggerated German atrocities, or cruel actions, to increase enthusiasm for the war. Most often though, people pretended not to notice what was happening. Even worse, **collaborators** (people who help) helped the Nazis hunt down Jews. The Allies knew about the concentration camps and death camps. However, they chose to focus on ending the war. Only after the war did people realize the full extent of the horror and inhumanity of the Holocaust.



#### Reading Progress Check

**Explaining** What was the role of the *Einsatzgruppen*?

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### Lesson 4 The New Order and the Holocaust, *continued*

#### The New Order in Asia

**Guiding Question** *What characterized the New Order in Asia?*

Japan needed its new possessions in Asia. They helped to meet its growing need for raw materials, such as tin and oil, and they served as markets for its manufactured goods. Japanese leaders organized these possessions by including them in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. This economic community was supposed to provide mutual, or shared, benefits to the occupied areas and to Japan.

The Japanese conquered Southeast Asia under the slogan “Asia for the Asiatics.” Japanese officials in occupied territories promised that local governments would be established under Japanese control. In fact, real power rested with Japanese military authorities in each territory. In turn, the Army General Staff in Tokyo controlled the local Japanese military command. Japan used the economic resources of its colonies to support the war. In some cases, these policies brought severe problems to the Southeast Asian peoples. In Vietnam, for example, over a million people starved in 1944 and 1945 when Japanese officials forcibly took their rice and sold it abroad.

At first, many Southeast Asian nationalists believed Japanese promises. They agreed to cooperate. Eventually, the nature of Japanese occupation policies became clear. As a result, public opinion turned against Japan. Japanese officials openly showed their contempt for local customs. Like the Germans, Japanese military forces often had little respect for the lives of their subject peoples. To help their war effort, the Japanese used the forced labor of prisoners of war and local peoples.

Many nationalists faced a difficult choice as a result of Japan’s actions. They did not want the colonial powers to return, but they did not like what the Japanese were doing. Some turned against the Japanese. Others simply did nothing. Some nationalists tried to have it both ways. Indonesian patriots pretended to support Japan while actually sabotaging the Japanese administration.



#### Reading Progress Check

**Assessing** As part of its New Order, how did Japan treat the peoples it conquered?

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