Unit 4: The New Order in Europe
Lesson 4:1: The New Order in Europe

Background:
By launching World War II, the Nazi regime sought not only to regain territory, but also to unite all ethnic Germans (people of German ancestry) under one flag and to impose Nazi German ideology throughout Europe. As the war spread across the continent, the Germans established occupation regimes that set out to achieve these goals. Some countries, such as Italy, Hungary, and Romania, were members of the Axis powers and allied with Nazi Germany from the early years of World War II. Later in the war, Germany occupied some of its allies. In addition to the Jews who were ultimately marked for death in each country occupied or allied with Germany, millions of non-Jews – known as gentiles – came under German rule or influence. The severity of the occupation was often determined by where an ethnic or national group fit within the Nazi racial hierarchy. In Poland, for example, where the people were seen as inferior, the Germans terrorized the civilian population and tried to destroy Polish culture. In Denmark, however, the Germans took a more lenient approach because they saw the Danes as part of the Aryan race.

Video Running Time: 14:00

Goal:
Describe how the New Order in Europe was established through a war of territorial expansion and conquering countries in Eastern and Western Europe, creating German-occupied territories to support the German economy by creating a self-sufficient Nazi state.

Essential Questions:
- How did the presence of German soldiers support the reordering of government structures and resources in occupied countries?
- How were citizens of occupied countries affected by Nazi occupation?

Learning Goals:
- Students will explain the timeline of occupation of Poland and Western Europe by Nazi Germany between 1939 and 1941.
- Students will assess the impact of German occupation on governments and citizens.

Success Criteria:
- Students will explain German rule in occupied Europe, including the timetable of German invasion of European nations.
- Students will explain how ethnic cleansing and racial hierarchy influenced German rule in occupied territories.
- Students will be able to explain the difference between German occupation in Nordic versus Slavic countries.

- Students will be able to explain how Germany treated population groups they considered to be "racially inferior."

Topics For Further Discussion:

- Why was the invasion of the Soviet Union considered a turning point for Nazi Germany?
- How did the Axis Powers (Italy and Japan) use their military to expand their territory?

Recommended Background Reading from How Was It Possible? A Holocaust Reader

Unit 4 – Lesson 4.1
Chapter 4

- Introduction to **Chapter 4: The New Order in Europe**
- **"**Rearranging Populations" from *Architects of Annihilation* by Goetz Aly and Suzanne Heim
- "Racial War in the East" from *Bloodlands* by Timothy Snyder
- "Plunder, Individual and Governmental" from *Hitler's Beneficiaries* by Goetz Aly

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Question	
What was the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact?	
What was the official beginning of WWII?	
What were the first countries in Western Europe Germany occupied?	
How was France divided?	
What was the Tripartite Pact and its goal?	
How were Soviet Prisoners of War treated?	
What was Operation Barbarossa, and what was its goal?	

Why was the invasion of the Soviet Union a turning point in the war?	
What were the goals of German occupation?	
How did Nazi racial policies affect occupied countries?	
How were the governments of occupied countries reorganized?	

Answer Key

Question	Possible Answers
What was the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact?	• A non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union • Commitment to last 10 years • Paved the way for the invasion, occupation, and division of Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union (Slide 3)
What was the official beginning of WWII?	• Germany invaded Poland September 1, 1939 (Slide 4)
What were the first countries in Western Europe Germany occupied?	• France • The Netherlands • Belgium • Luxembourg (Slide 6)
How was France divided?	• Germany occupied Northern and Western France • Southern France, known as Vichy, was under indirect German control through a puppet government (Slide 6)
What was the Tripartite Pact and its goal?	• A defensive military alliance among Germany, Italy, and Japan, which were known as the Axis Powers • Their goal was territorial expansion at the expense of their neighbors (Slide 7)
How were Soviet Prisoners of War treated?	• Nazi Germany inhumanely treated Soviet POWs • Most would die from starvation, inhumane treatment, and use as slave labor for the German war effort (Slide 8)

What was Operation Barbarossa, and what was its goal?	- It was a plan to invade the Soviet Union - To conquer the western Soviet Union and repopulate it with Germans - To exploit the people and resources for German benefit through forced labor, starvation, and mass murder (Slide 9)
Why was the invasion of the Soviet Union a turning point in the war?	- The German army considerably stretched its supply lines - The terrain and climate were hostile - The Soviet army was a formidable enemy - Germany failed to conquer the Soviet Union quickly - With the failure to capture Moscow by December 1941, the Germans found themselves increasingly on the defensive and subject to the harsh weather of the Russian winter (Slide 9)
What were the goals of German occupation?	- Ethnic cleansing - National treasuries, museums, and art galleries were plundered - Jewish property was stolen - Germany wanted to create an autarky, a self-sufficient and independent national economy (Slide 12)
How did Nazi racial policies affect occupied countries?	- In Eastern Europe, where these populations were considered to be racially inferior, German soldiers freely used force and violence to pillage and take personal belongings for themselves or to send home to Germany - Human and material resources were ripped from occupied communities to directly benefit Germany - Western Europe and Nordic countries were treated better as these populations were considered to be higher on the Nazi racial hierarchy (Slide 13)

How were the governments of occupied countries reorganized?	• Governments of occupied countries were reorganized politically, determined by local economic conditions, and influenced by Nazi notions of racial hierarchy • In Poland, the entire government was dissolved, and the area was either annexed directly to the Reich or was run by the Germans as an occupied territory • The government of the Netherlands was not dissolved; it remained intact but was reorganized and was assisted by local Nazis who willingly collaborated with the Germans; the Dutch civil service was still allowed to function • Dutch administrators and policemen fully cooperated with Nazi officials in the removal of Dutch Jews and deportation to concentration and death camps (Slide 15)

Unit 4: The New Order in Europe
Lesson 4:1: The New Order in Europe

Slide 1 – The New Order in Europe
Welcome to Lesson 4.1 of *How Was it Possible? A Holocaust Curriculum For and By Teachers™*, from The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous. This presentation will give you an overview of the topic "The New Order in Europe." This lesson was prepared by Mindy Walker, who teaches social studies and Holocaust Studies at Holt High School in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Slide 2 – The New Order in Europe
The photograph on this slide captures a sense of The New Order in Europe. Adolf Hitler celebrated the German victory over France with a tour of Paris on June 23, 1940, the day after France surrendered to Germany in the same railway car in which Germany surrendered to the Allies in World War I.

Here we see Hitler in front of the Eiffel Tower. After briefly touring the city, Hitler left Paris, having spent about three hours in the city.

Slide 3 – Prelude to War
Let us look at this editorial cartoon by Herb Block. We see a combined "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Goldilocks," representing "Poland," startled at finding "The Big Bad Wolf" as Hitler, representing "Nazi Germany," and one of the "Three Bears," representing "Soviet Russia," in bed waiting for her. This cartoon was published in August 1939, days before the start of World War II.

In a 1933 speech, Hitler had alluded to the need to expand German territory, so-called *Lebensraum*. In August 1939, Germany signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. This agreement of convenience was in two parts: the publicly announced part was a non-aggression commitment to last ten years. The secret part was a protocol to establish German and Soviet spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. This paved the way for the invasion, occupation, and division of Poland in September, precipitating World War II.

Slide 4 – World War II Begins
World War II officially began when Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.

On September 3, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced that "Britain is at war with Germany."

Most of the Polish army was defeated in less than a month. The Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east on September 17, 1939. The Germans met the Russians at the city of Brest-Litovsk and shook hands, alluding to a form of peace between the two countries, and celebrating their

success in conquering the nation of Poland and marking the beginning of Germany's brutal occupation of that country.

Slide 5 – World War II – The Western Front
In this photograph we see German soldiers marching victoriously through Paris. As the Germans conquered and annexed territory after territory, the presence of occupation authorities would not only reorder governmental structures and institutions, but in addition, the priorities for resources and supplies would be focused on meeting German needs at the expense of the local citizens.

Slide 6 – Invasion of France and the Low Countries
After completing the invasion and occupation of Poland, Germany turned its attention westward. This timeline illustrates how quickly the German army conquered and occupied countries in Western Europe.

On May 10th, 1940, France and the Low Countries – the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg – were invaded by Germany.

Five days later, the Netherlands surrendered.

Thirteen days after that, Belgium surrendered.

Less than a month after Belgium, France surrendered and signed an armistice with Germany.

France was divided into two zones – northern and western France was under direct German occupation, and southern France, which was known as Vichy France after the name of its administrative center in the city of Vichy, was under indirect German control. Vichy France was a puppet state, which is a government controlled in fact, if not in law, by another government and subject to its orders.

Slide 7 – Nazi Germany's Allies – (Axis Powers)
In September 1940, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact, which was a defensive military alliance. They were known as the Axis Powers and their goal was territorial expansion at the expense of their neighbors.

In a short period of time, a number of other nations joined the Axis Powers. Each European Axis ally of Germany contributed to the persecution and murder of Jews during the Holocaust.

Slide 8 – World War II – The Eastern Front
Let us look at the Eastern Front and Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union.

In this photograph, we see a German soldier sitting on a gun platform guarding thousands of Soviet prisoners of war in Ukraine, August 14, 1941.

Soviet prisoners of war were treated terribly by Nazi Germany. Most died from starvation, inhumane treatment, and use as slave labor for the German war effort. It is estimated that up to 3.3 million Soviet POWs died in German custody during the war.

Slide 9 – Germany Invaded the Soviet Union: Operation Barbarossa – June 22, 1941
Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, under the code name Operation Barbarossa. It was the largest military operation in history.

The goal of Operation Barbarossa was to conquer the Soviet Union and repopulate it with Germans, and to exploit the people and resources for German benefit through forced labor, starvation, and mass murder.

The invasion of the Soviet Union is considered the turning point of the war for Nazi Germany. By invading the Soviet Union, the German army considerably stretched their supply lines; the terrain and climate were hostile, and the Soviet army was a formidable enemy. These factors contributed to Germany failing to conquer the Soviet Union quickly, and with the failure to capture Moscow by December 1941, the Germans found themselves increasingly on the defensive and subject to the harsh weather of the Russian winter.

Following the German army into the Soviet Union were the *Einsatzgruppen*, special units of the security police and SS intelligence service, often referred to as mobile killing squads.

Slide 10 – Germany Laid Siege to Russian Cities
The Wehrmacht laid siege to three major cities in the Soviet Union: Leningrad, Moscow, and Stalingrad. As a result, citizens suffered from mass starvation in all these locations. Eventually, the German army would retreat, because the vital resources needed to keep their armed forces functioning were depleted. The siege of Leningrad, (today, Saint Petersburg), lasted almost nine hundred days and cost more than a million Soviet lives, including soldiers and civilians.

Slide 11 – German Rule of Occupied Europe
This is a photograph of Hitler observing his troops at Prague Castle on March 15, 1939, when Germany occupied Czechoslovakia.

It serves as a symbolic representation of the complete political, economic, and military takeover of countries like Czechoslovakia.

Slide 12 – Goals of German Occupation
Germany's occupation goals were specific to each location it occupied.

The first goal focused on creating a racially pure population in each occupied territory, what we would call today "ethnic cleansing." Anyone not meeting the Aryan standard would be removed from public life, and some might be forced into slave labor or murdered. According to the Nazis, Aryan referred to white, non-Jewish people, especially those of northern European origin,

typically having blond hair and blue eyes. Aryans were regarded as a supposedly superior racial group.

National treasures, museums, and art galleries would be plundered, and civilian property, especially Jewish property, would be stolen.

One of Nazi Germany's goals was to create an autarky, where the Nazi state would be a self-sufficient and independent national economy.

This photograph shows General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander in the West, accompanied by General Omar Bradley, and Lt. General George S. Patton, inspecting stolen art treasures hidden in the Merkers salt mine, Merkers, Germany, April 12, 1945.

Slide 13 – Impact of German Occupation
Occupied countries such as Denmark and Norway experienced better treatment from the Germans because according to Nazi racial hierarchy these were Nordic countries, whereas Poland and the Soviet Union suffered tremendously because these were Slavic countries and therefore considered racial and ideological inferiors. Slavic countries occupied by Germany were left in ruins, while their human and material resources were ripped from their communities to directly benefit Germany.

In Eastern Europe especially, German soldiers freely used force and violence to pillage and take personal belongings for themselves, or to send home to Germany. In fact, in the invasion of the Soviet Union, the army's plan was to supply itself largely from what it could requisition or steal from the local population.

The civilian population was not only impacted by having personal belongings taken, but they were also subject to harsh restrictions on personal freedom, with curfews, arrests, and executions. Jews especially would be excluded from society and either forced into slave labor or eventually deported to concentration camps and death camps or murdered by Germans and local collaborators near where they lived.

Slide 14 – Impact of German Occupation
Millions of citizens of occupied countries were sent to Germany as forced laborers. Some children who were considered to be of "good racial stock" were kidnapped and sent to Germany to be raised by German families as racially pure Germans. This was called the "*Lebensborn*," or "Fount of Life," program.

Germany also relocated ethnic Germans, whose language and culture had German origins but who did not hold German citizenship, into occupied areas, especially in Eastern Europe. The intention was to repopulate these "cleansed" areas with racially acceptable citizens.

Slide 15 – German Administration of Occupied Countries
Pre-war governments of countries occupied by the Germans were reorganized politically. The nature of this political reorganization varied among countries and was determined by local economic conditions and influenced by Nazi notions of racial hierarchy.

In Poland, the entire government was dissolved, and the area was either annexed directly to the Reich or was run by the Germans as an occupied territory. The Polish people had to deal with laws and regulations that had a brutally repressive intent.

In comparison, the governmental organization in the Netherlands was not dissolved; it remained intact but was reorganized and was assisted by local Nazis who willingly collaborated with the Germans. The Dutch civil service was still allowed to function, and Dutch administrators and policemen fully cooperated with German officials, especially when it involved the removal of Dutch Jews from society and deporting them to concentration camps and death camps. Approximately 75% of Dutch Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, the highest mortality rate of Jews in any Western European country.

Slide 16 – Summary – The New Order in Europe
The New Order in Europe was the political order Nazi Germany intended to impose on the conquered territories of Western and Eastern Europe. Germany intended to accomplish this by a war of territorial expansion and conquest, which proceeded rapidly in Poland and Western Europe, then slowed considerably in the Soviet Union.

As soon as Germany occupied a country, the territory would be reorganized in order to directly benefit Germany. German occupation administrations would facilitate the confiscation, possession, and then transportation of local goods back to Germany. Resources plundered from occupied countries were used to support the German economy and provide consumer goods to the home front. The Nazi regime was thus able to function, for a time, as a self-sufficient state, or autarky.

Aggressive territorial expansion was intended to be consolidated through colonization and the physical annihilation of local Jewish populations and other groups deemed racially inferior. This was accomplished through expulsion, enslavement, and murder.

Thank you for joining us today as we learned about "The New Order in Europe." Please continue your educational journey with us. This concludes our presentation of Lesson 4.1 from *How Was it Possible? A Holocaust Curriculum For and By Teachers™*. On behalf of The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, thank you.

Name:

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Circle the correct answers below.

1. What event officially began World War II?
    a. Russia invaded Poland
    b. Germany invaded Poland
    c. Britain announced they were at war with Germany
    d. Vichy France announced they were allies with Germany

2. Which of the following countries in Western Europe was NOT conquered by Nazi Germany after the invasion of Poland?
    a. Spain
    b. Belgium
    c. Netherlands
    d. Luxembourg

3. Why was the invasion of the Soviet Union a turning point in the war?
    a. The *Einsatzgruppen* led Germany to a slow victory
    b. Soviet civilians and prisoners of war banded together to support Germany
    c. Germany failed to conquer the Soviet Union quickly and was increasingly on the defensive
    d. By invading the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany was able to secure supplies for their military

4. What was a goal of German occupation?
    a. To create governments that treated all people fairly
    b. To help newly acquired territories become independent
    c. To create a racially pure population through ethnic cleansing
    d. Redistribution of Jewish property to support the elderly Jewish population

5. Which of the following was not a consequence of German occupation?
    a. The occupied population was required to learn German
    b. Governments were politically reorganized
    c. National treasuries were looted
    d. National museums had their art stolen

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Lesson Quiz with Answers Highlighted and Bolded

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Link to Google Form Quiz (Instructions Available in the Appendix)
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1dWo49CHBqzBItATm5OhfY8MmcJhyPHa94Tp8bk4kw9U/copy

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Slide 1 - Yevgeny Khaldei via Getty Images
Slide 2 - National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD
Slide 3 - A 1939 Herblock Cartoon, © The Herb Block Foundation
Slide 4 (left) - Evening star. [volume] (Washington, D.C.), 01 Sept. 1939. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1939-09-01/ed-1/seq-45/
Slide 4 (right) - The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous
Slide 5 - Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1994-036-09A / Fotograf(in): o.Ang, https://www.bild.bundesarchiv.de/dba/en/search/?yearfrom=&yearto=&query=146-1994-036-09A
Slide 6 - The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous
Slide 7 - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD
Slide 8 - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD
Slide 9 (Top) - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Philipp Merillat
Slide 9 (Bottom) - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Claranne Bechtler
Slide 10 (Top) - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Slide 10 (Bottom) - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD
Slide 11 - Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-2004-1202-505 / Fotograf(in): o.Ang, https://www.bild.bundesarchiv.de/dba/en/search/?yearfrom=&yearto=&query=Bild+183-2004-1202-505
Slide 12 - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD
Slide 13 - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, collection of Julien Bryan
Slide 14 - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of G. Howard Tellier
Slide 15 - Image Bank WW2 - NIOD