

HOMEWORK: POSTWAR GERMANY AND JAPAN

**Directions:** Using the reading below, complete the Venn diagram on the back of this page.

## GERMANY AND JAPAN TRANSFORMED

Both Germany and Japan had been physically and socially devastated by the war. The victorious Allied powers occupied the two countries.

Germany was divided into four zones of occupation. Britain, France, and the United States occupied the three zones in western Germany. The Soviet Union controlled eastern Germany. The United States alone occupied Japan.

### *Democracy in West Germany*

Germany's armed forces were disbanded, and the Nazi party was outlawed. Nazi war criminals were tried in the Nuremberg trials, and some were executed. In western Germany, the Allies helped set up political parties. Germans wrote a federal constitution. This constitution set up a democratic government and was approved in 1949. In that year, West Germany also regained self-government as the Federal Republic of Germany.

Germany's constitution included an article that guaranteed political asylum for people who were persecuted for political reasons. **Asylum** is protection from arrest or from the possibility of being returned to a dangerous political situation. For many years, Germany's asylum policy was the most liberal in Europe. Germany's recognition of its role in the persecution of Jews and other groups probably led to this constitutional guarantee. In the late 1990s, Germany began to restrict this right after large numbers of asylum seekers came to Germany for economic rather than political reasons.

**THE LESSONS OF THE HOLOCAUST** Germany was deeply shaken by the experience of the Holocaust. Germans wanted to be sure that such a thing could not happen again. Today, Germany's relationship with the nation of Israel is very friendly. Germany and Israel have strong diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties. There has also been an attempt to compensate financially some of the victims of the Holocaust.

### *Democracy in Japan*

Like Germany, Japan was occupied after World War II by Allied troops, most of whom were American. Japan's armed forces were disbanded. Trials were held to punish people who had been responsible for wartime atrocities, and some of these people were executed. General Douglas MacArthur was the supreme commander of the American military government that ruled postwar Japan. The American government wanted to end militarism and ensure democratic government in Japan.

**JAPAN'S NEW CONSTITUTION** In Germany, a German council had written the new constitution. Japan's constitution, on the other hand, was drafted by MacArthur and his advisors.

- It created a constitutional monarchy that limited the power of the emperor.
- It promised that Japan would not use war as a political weapon.
- It set up a democratic government. Representatives were elected to the Diet, the Japanese parliament.
- Women gained the right to vote.
- Basic rights, such as freedom of the press and of assembly, were guaranteed.

The Japanese government accepted this new constitution and signed a treaty that took away Japan's overseas empire. In 1952, the Allied occupation officially ended.