

# Life in Europe 1945-1949

14-16 years

## Student Material: Table of characters and countries.

Name of person	Passport in 1945-49	Summary of the story	In World War Two	After World War Two
Leticia Benini	Italy	A young girl in northern Italy living in a village with a family struggling to survive in the post-war world and very cut off from events.	Italy was an ally of Germany until 1943, when it was occupied. It was then a battleground and fully liberated by the end of April 1945.	Italy became a democratic republic and one of the founder members of the European Community.
Mireille Berengar	France	Daughter of a butcher from the South of France who lived through Liberation and the setting up of the French 4 <sup>th</sup> Republic.	France was invaded by Germany in 1940. The country was then divided between an occupied zone in the north and a collaborating French state in the south. France was liberated in 1944.	France founded the democratic 4 <sup>th</sup> Republic and became one of the founder members of the European Community.
Emilia and Augusts Berzins	USSR (Latvia)	Emilija and Augusts, rich peasants, were collaborators during the Second World War. Both together built and developed a large farm and because they collaborated with both Communists and Nazis. After the war they lost 90% of their land but kept all of the buildings.	Latvia was occupied by the USSR in 1940. The USSR was an ally of Germany until the German invasion of 1941. The Soviet army pushed back the German army to defeat by the spring of 1945.	Latvia remained a part of the USSR until 1990.
Mara Burka	USSR (Latvia)	As a very little girl she survived famine and avoided deportation in early years after war. She experienced collectivisation and communist propaganda.	Latvia was occupied by the USSR in 1940. The USSR was an ally of Germany until the German invasion of 1941. The Soviet army pushed back the	Latvia remained a part of the USSR until 1990. It joined the European Union in 2004.



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John Chillag	Hungary	A Hungarian Jewish Holocaust survivor who returned to Hungary and then had his property seized by the communists so he became a displaced person and left for Australia.	Hungary was an ally of Germany until 1944, and then occupied by Germany. By the end of 1944 it was occupied by the USSR.	Hungary remained part of the Soviet sphere of influence until 1989. A Hungarian communist dictatorship was set up in 1949. It joined the European Union in 2004.
Cecília Csölle	Hungary	A young woman who lost her fiancé in the war and who was a Red Cross nurse in Germany. She found herself alone in Soviet occupied Hungary after the war. Meanwhile, her family were living as part of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia.	Hungary was an ally of Germany until 1944, and then occupied by Germany. By the end of 1944 it was occupied by the USSR.	Hungary remained part of the Soviet sphere of influence until 1989. A Hungarian communist dictatorship was set up in 1949. It joined the European Union in 2004.
Heinrich Grüber	Germany	A Lutheran priest who helped Jews to emigrate in WW2. He survived concentration camps, and negotiated with both sides for humane treatment to individuals during and after the war.	Germany is widely held to have started the Second World War. The country was totally defeated and occupied by Britain, France, the USA and USSR by May 1945.	Germany lost territory to other countries in the east. The rest of the country was divided into four military zones. In 1949 these became the Federal Republic (democratic/capitalist) and the Democratic Republic (dictatorship/communist).  The Federal Republic became a founder member of the European Community.
Finn Hjort	Denmark	A teenage boy who was part of the Danish resistance and was tortured. After the war he worked in various parts of Europe and then went back to education and won a scholarship to the University of Cambridge, UK.	Denmark was invaded by Germany in 1940 and liberated in 1945.	Denmark once again became a democracy; a constitutional monarchy. It joined the European Community in 1973.

Jo Jansen	Netherlands (ex-pat Indonesia)	Interned as a young girl in a camp in the Far East. The family's reunification was delayed and they then moved back to The Netherlands.	The Netherlands was invaded by Germany in 1940 and fully liberated in 1945.	The Netherlands once again became a democracy; a constitutional monarchy. It became a founder member of the European Community.
Hermine Kersten	Germany (Upper Silesia)	Fled as a refugee with her family, at first to East, and then to West Germany. Relatives helped them to set up a new life in the west.	Germany is widely held to have started the Second World War. The country was totally defeated and occupied by Britain, France, the USA and USSR by May 1945.	Germany lost territory to other countries in the east. The rest of the country was divided into four military zones. In 1949 these became the Federal Republic (democratic/capitalist) and the Democratic Republic (dictatorship/communist). Silesia became part of Poland.
Janis Kurelis	USSR (Latvia)	A resistance leader and organiser of the Latvian forest brothers who had to flee the advancing Soviets and escape to the British zone of defeated Germany.	Latvia was occupied by the USSR in 1940. The USSR was an ally of Germany until the German invasion of 1941. The Soviet army pushed back the German army to defeat by the spring of 1945.	Latvia remained a part of the USSR until 1990. It joined the European Union in 1994.
Inés Lapeña Fernández	Spain	A young girl more touched by the impact of the Spanish Civil War than that of World War Two. She endured hardship and migration within Spain.	Spain had a civil war between 1936 and 1939. The leader, General Franco, was an ally of Hitler. However, Spain did not take part in World War Two.	General Franco was the rightist dictator of Spain until his death in 1975. Spain then made the transition to a constitutional monarchy and joined the European Community in 1986.
Tomas Marzagon	Spain	A young man who worked with the inmates in a labour camp in Spain (because of the Civil War). He moved to Germany and then Belgium.	Spain had a civil war between 1936 and 1939. The leader, General Franco, was an ally of Hitler. However, Spain did not take part in World War Two.	General Franco was the rightist dictator of Spain until his death in 1975. Spain then made the transition to a constitutional monarchy and joined the European Community in 1986.
Mary Marples	UK (England)	The mother of young children in a blitzed city, whose husband came back from a German	Britain was not occupied in World War Two. The country bankrupted itself	Britain's constitutional monarchy survived and democratic elections were resumed in 1945 after a

		prisoner of war camp in 1945.	fighting between 1939 and 1945.	period of wartime coalition government. Britain joined the European Community in 1973.
Ingeborg Motz-Witzel	Czechoslovakia (German)	Ingeborg was born in the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. She was forcibly deported to Germany in 1945 and the family settled in Eisleben, Soviet zone of occupied Germany. She then fled to West Germany as a young adult.	Czechoslovakia was occupied by Germany in 1938 and 1939. It was liberated from Germany control by the USSR in 1945.	Czechoslovakia remained part of the Soviet sphere of influence until 1989. A Czechoslovak communist dictatorship was set up in 1948.
Margarita Nelken	Spain	A socialist intellectual and campaigner for women's rights, who became a communist in the Spanish civil war. Exiled in Mexico, she lost a son in WW2 and failed to find a home in post-war Europe.	Spain had a civil war between 1936 and 1939. The leader, General Franco, was an ally of Hitler. However, Spain did not take part in World War Two.	General Franco was the rightist dictator of Spain until his death in 1975. Spain then made the transition to a constitutional monarchy and joined the European Community in 1986.
Lev Netto	USSR (Estonia)	A Soviet POW in Germany drafted into the Red Army after 1945 and then convicted of espionage early in the Cold War and sent to Siberia.	Estonia was occupied by the USSR in 1940. The USSR was an ally of Germany until the German invasion of 1941. The Soviet army pushed back the German army to defeat by the spring of 1945.	Estonia remained a part of the USSR until 1990. It joined the European Union in 1994.
Rachel Price	UK (England)	A young woman who worked in an office in London during and after war.	Britain was not occupied in World War Two. The country bankrupted itself fighting between 1939 and 1945.	Britain's constitutional monarchy survived and democratic elections were resumed in 1945 after a period of wartime coalition government. Britain joined the European Community in 1973.
Olga de Ruiter	Netherlands	A collaborator with the Nazis and leader of women's branch of the Dutch fascist party (NSB).	The Netherlands was invaded by Germany in 1940 and fully liberated in 1945.	The Netherlands once again became a democracy; a constitutional monarchy. It

		She served time in prison after the war.		became a founder member of the European Community.
Alexander Skillen	UK (Northern-Ireland)	A man who was a printer who went to war and returned to civilian life in 1946. His family survived the bombing of Belfast, but lost their home. The family were reunited in a new house and began life together again.	Britain was not occupied in World War Two. The country bankrupted itself fighting between 1939 and 1945.	Britain's constitutional monarchy survived and democratic elections were resumed in 1945 after a period of wartime coalition government. Britain joined the European Community in 1973.
Igor Slavec	Yugoslavia (Slovenia)	A young man conscript into the German army who survived and had to rebuild his life.	Slovenia was occupied by Germany, Italy and Hungary in World War Two.	Slovenia once more became part of communist Yugoslavia. It became independent in 1989 and a member of the European Union in 2004.
Irena Slipets	USSR (Ukraine, former Poland)	A woman whose family experienced hardship after the war and Stalinistic collectivisation. Her Polish town became part of Ukraine in 1945.	The Soviet Union and Germany divided Poland between them in 1939. At the end of the war, part of Poland became Soviet.	The Soviet Union was the communist Cold War superpower. Ukraine became independent from the USSR in 1991.
Solidad Solano	Spain	Woman who lived in rural Spain in the Civil War and survived the post-war period partly by smuggling. She also moved to Barcelona and then Valencia.	Spain had a civil war between 1936 and 1939. The leader, General Franco, was an ally of Hitler. However, Spain did not take part in World War Two.	General Franco was the rightist dictator of Spain until his death in 1975. Spain then made the transition to a constitutional monarchy and joined the European Community in 1986.
Corrie Tendeloo	Netherlands	A woman who fought for legal rights for women as a lawyer in private practice and in the Dutch parliament. She attended the 1948 Hague Europe conference.	The Netherlands was invaded by Germany in 1940 and fully liberated in 1945.	The Netherlands once again became a democracy; a constitutional monarchy. It became a founder member of the European Community.