***Rise of Nazism: Background Reading***

***Essential Question:*** *How did the Rise of Nazism lead to the Holocaust?*

After World War I, a democratic government called the Weimar Republic took hold in Germany. Unfortunately, this government faced huge problems. Germany’s people and its economy suffered heavily after Germany was forced to pay reparations to countries devastated by World War I due to the **Treaty of Versailles**. Millions of Germans could not find jobs, there were riots in the streets; Germans did not believe their leaders could improve the situation.

A political party named the **Nazi Party** began to attract the attention of dissatisfied Germans, largely through powerful speeches by its leader, **Adolf Hitler**. While in prison, Hitler wrote a book called *Mein Kampf (My Struggle),* where he described his ideas to strengthen Germany, his belief that Aryans (Germans) were the “master race” and his racist feelings against Jews, Slavs, gypsies, and blacks. The Nazis believed in **fascism**, where a strong central government is controlled by the military and run by a dictator. Shortly after Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933 as Chancellor (head of German government), he turned Germany into a one-party dictatorship and used the police to enforce Nazi policies. Freedom of speech, press, and assembly were abolished.

Hitler and Nazis used **propaganda** to help promote their ideas though various forms of media such as, newspapers, brochures, and posters. Propaganda is biased (one-sided) or misleading information that is used to influence, promote, or publicize a specific political causes or point of view. Due to his many years of public speaking, Hitler was very good at getting people to listen to what he said, and he was successful in influencing Germans to support the Nazi ideology (belief system). Hitler showed his people strength by publicly going against the Treaty of Versailles by violating terms by increasing their military and promising to take back lands lost. This propaganda was used to maintain power, implement policies, and justify the murder of millions of Jews and other minorities.

Hitler hated the Jews. This fit with Europe’s long history of **anti-Semitism** (hatred or prejudices against Jews). Once in power, the Nazi government passed laws discriminating against Jews. For example, they could not fly the Germany flag. They had to wear a badge, a yellow star, to identify themselves as Jews. The Germans first limited the number of Jews who could attend public schools and then banned them entirely. They used registration lists of Jewish people that they would later use to round them up.

**Review Questions:**

1. **What challenges did Germany face after the end of World War I?**
2. **How would a “fascist” government help Hitler and the Nazis create a country they wanted?**
3. **What is an example of propaganda?**
4. **What skills helped Hitler accomplish his goals?**
5. **Did Hitler create the idea of anti-Semitism? Where did it come from?**
6. **How did Hitler use people’s anger and frustration to his advantage?**

**Nazis Grew in Power Because…**

**\*Offered cures to economic problems**

**\*Appealed to German nationalism by calling for increase in armed forces and violation of Treaty of Versailles  
  
\*United German’s anger by blaming Jews for Germany’s problems**

**\*Convinced Germans that they could protect them against enemies (Soviets)  
  
\*Organized private armed groups to terrorize anyone who opposed them**

**Vocabulary Examination**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** was the official end to WWI and put many strains on Germany’s economy.   
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the hatred of Jews which has existed in Europe for centuries.   
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was used to promote Nazi ideas through multiple forms of media.   
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has a strong central government that places ultimate power in the hands of a dictator.  
  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was the leader of the Nazi party.