

Nazi Persecution of the Jews

For many centuries, Jews had been disliked and persecuted in Europe. This pre-existing prejudice against Jews is called **anti-Semitism**. When Hitler took power, thousands of Jews lived across Germany. Many people, including Hitler, blamed the Jews for high unemployment and other economic problems in Germany.

Dangerous Ideas

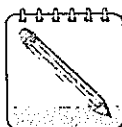
Hitler and the Nazi Party believed that white Germans were superior to all other races including Jews, Slavs, gypsies, and blacks. The Nazis called their white "master race" the Aryans. In his autobiography *Mein Kampf* (which means "my struggle"), Hitler described his ideas to strengthen Germany. Part of his plan was to eliminate all races he considered inferior.

When Hitler took power in 1933, the Nazis planned to exterminate all the Jews in Europe, beginning with those in Germany. To start, Hitler hurt the Jews economically by ordering Germans to boycott Jewish businesses. Then he took away the Jews' German citizenship and voting rights. Jewish children were turned away from public schools, too. The Nazis used **propaganda** such as posters, radio programs, and movies to turn ordinary Germans against their Jewish neighbors. Germans citizens responded by rioting and destroying Jewish shops, homes, and synagogues.



"Satan Has Taken Off His Mask"

Courtesy of German Propaganda Archive



Reading for Information

L6-8RH2

Use what you have read to answer the questions.

1. Jews were widely disliked in Europe before the rise of Nazism. **True False**
2. Hitler believed that white Germans were part of a "master race" called _____.
3. What did Hitler plan to do to the Jews and other races of people he considered inferior?

4. Based on context clues, which is the best definition for the word "propaganda"?
 - a) media that emphasize unbiased facts
 - b) media sources intended to entertain
 - c) media intended to influence people's way of thinking
5. The poster on this page is an example of German propaganda in WWII. The star on Satan's forehead is the Star of David, one of the leading symbols of Judaism. What statement is this poster making about Jewish people?

