

CHAPTER 28
SECTION 5

Section Summary
HITLER AND THE RISE OF NAZI GERMANY

READING CHECK

What was the purpose of the Nuremberg Laws?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *regime* mean in the underlined sentence? Circle the words in the sentence that refer to the phrase "the new *regime*." What do you think is the meaning of *regime*?

READING SKILL

Identify Main Ideas Reread the last paragraph in the Summary. Write the main idea of that paragraph on the lines below.

After World War I, German leaders set up a democratic government known as the Weimar Republic. The Weimar constitution established a parliamentary system led by a **chancellor**. It gave women the right to vote and included a bill of rights. However, the new republic faced severe problems. When Germany could not make its war reparations France seized the coal-rich **Ruhr Valley**. Government actions led to inflation and skyrocketing prices. The German mark was almost worthless. Many middle-class families lost their savings.

Many Germans believed that energetic leader Adolf Hitler would solve Germany's problems. As head of the Nazi party, Hitler promised to end reparations, create jobs, and rearm Germany. He was elected chancellor in 1933, and within a year he was dictator over the new fascist state in Germany.

To appeal to nationalism and recall Germany's glorious past, Hitler called his government the **Third Reich**. To combat the Depression, Hitler launched public works programs. In violation of the Versailles treaty, he rearmed Germany. Hitler relied on his secret police, the **Gestapo**, to root out opposition. He organized a brutal system of terror, repression, and totalitarian rule. A fanatical anti-Semite, Hitler set out to drive the Jews from Germany. In 1935, the Nazis passed the **Nuremberg Laws**, which deprived Jews of German citizenship and placed severe restrictions on them. The Nazis indoctrinated German youth and rewrote textbooks to reflect Nazi racial views.

Hitler also limited women's roles and encouraged "pure-blooded Aryan" women to bear many children. He sought to purge German culture of what he believed were corrupt influences. Nazis denounced modern art and jazz, but glorified German artists and myths. Hitler despised Christianity as "weak." He combined all Protestant sects into a single state church. Although many clergy either supported the new regime or remained silent, some courageously spoke out against Hitler's government.

Like Germany, most new nations in Eastern Europe slid from systems of democratic to authoritarian rule. Economic problems and ethnic tensions contributed to instability and helped fascist rulers to gain power. The new dictators promised to keep order, and won the backing of the military and the wealthy. They also supported the growth of anti-Semitism.

Review Questions

1. What were the basic features of the Weimar constitution?

2. Why did many Germans support Hitler?
