

## Reading 9A

### OUTLINE: THE “FINAL SOLUTION”

#### III. The “Final Solution” to the “Jewish Problem”:

The “Final Solution” was the annihilation of the Jews. It began to take form with the invasion of Poland in 1939 and the institution of ghettos in 1940. Its last stage began in June 1941, when Germany broke the Nazi-Soviet Pact and invaded the Soviet Union, establishing six death camps in Poland.

##### A. Inefficient Methods:

##### 1. *Einsatzgruppen*:

##### a. Responsibility:

##### b. Secret Directive:

##### 1) Executive Measures:

##### 2) Code:

##### c. Tasks:

##### 1) Gas Vans:

##### a)

##### b)

2) **Mass Shootings:** *Einsatzgruppen* rounded up Jews, made them dig mass graves and shot them so they would fall into the graves they had dug.

a)

b)

c)

2. **Results of the Secret Directive and the *Einsatzgruppen*:**

B. **Efficient Methods:**

1. **The Decisive Order:** Just after the invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler Ordered the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question.”

a. **Text:**

“I hereby charge you with making all necessary preparations with regard to organizational and financial matters for bringing about a complete solution to the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe. Wherever other government agencies are involved, they are to cooperate with you.”

b. **Importance:** This was a turning point in history. All government agencies, all military forces, all the branches of the state were to participate in the pursuit of the annihilation of a specific group.

## 2. The Perpetrators:

### a. Bureaucrats:

1)

2)

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

The aim of the efficiency experts and bureaucrats was to get the victims to the killers as quickly as possible and with the least number of difficulties.

b. **Creation of Death Camps:** In 1942, the construction of six death camps, in Poland began. The main purpose of these camps would be the killing of Europe's Jews. The camps were located at Chelmno, Treblinka, Maidanek, Sobibor, Belzec and Auschwitz (see map, p. 120).

1)

2)

**c. Steps toward Extermination:**

**1) Registration:**

**2) Deportation:**

a)

b)

c)

No Jews knew about the death camps. In 1942, many Germans were also unaware of the program of murder the bureaucrats had devised.

**d. Railroads:**

**1) Scheduling:**

a)

b)

(1)

(2)

(3)

c)

2) **Cost:**

a)

b)

(1)

(2)

(a) The SS was given excursion or group rates by the official state travel agency (the MITTLE-EUROPÄISCHE REISEBÜRO or Middle-Europe Travel Bureau), which continued to handle tourist groups going to beaches in France or Greece while sending Jews to gas chambers in Poland.

(b) All such “special trains”—the vacation trains as well as the death ones—received excursion rates and were directed by the same bureaucrats. Children under ten, on vacation trains or death trains, rode half-fare and children under four rode for free.

Deception was maintained at every step. The “Final Solution” was to be kept a state secret. Those among the German bureaucracy and SS who knew about the death camps were sworn to secrecy upon penalty of death. Yet, eventually, news of the train transports and Auschwitz, many knew that the camps were places where Jews were mistreated, poorly fed, worked to exhaustion and killed. The scope of the atrocities and death, however, was not even imagined—not by Jews, Poles or most Germans.

3) **Business as Usual:** almost all the railroad workers were aware of the “cargo” and destinations of the death trains. Yet, each focused *solely* on the narrow task of his job.

a)

b)

c)

d)

Millions of law-abiding citizens, concerned with their careers and the lives of their families, continued their routine jobs. Many of those jobs and those citizens were now in the service of the destruction process, the murder of the Jews of Europe. Business as usual made the Holocaust possible.