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History 133B - Source Exploration

The Korherr Report: The Math Behind the Final Solution

Richard Korherr, *The Statistical Report on the "Final Solution" known as the Korherr Report*, March 23, 1943, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, Record Group 238, Entry 174, Box 90, NO-5194; reprinted in John Mendelsohn, ed., *The Holocaust: Selected Documents in Eighteen Volumes*. Vol. 12, New York: Garland, 1982, pp. 224-40. https://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=2484

The Statistical Report on the "Final Solution" known as the Korherr Report, was written by Richard Korherr, born 30 October 1903 and died 24 November 1989, at the request of Heinrich Himmler, a leading member of the Nazi Party. This report is a 16 page document that depicts the decline of the population of Jews in Europe largely due to the policies of Hitler's Nazi party. This document is said to have greatly impacted the Final Solution and helped propel the Holocaust. It was created in March of 1942 and was not officially published at the time, but rather was a report that went directly to Himmler and later Hitler. We know it was never officially published during the war due to correspondence between Korherr and Himmler, but this document came to light during the Nuremberg Trials¹. You can now find the document online at Germany History in Documents and Images, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1533.

Richard Korherr was a German statistician in Nazi Germany, who earned the title of the Inspector of Statistics and the rank of SS-Sturmbannführer. He first earned his degree in 1926 and worked for the Reich Statistical Office before Hitler came to power. He would eventually be called to work for the Reichsführer-SS office at the request of Heinrich Himmler, to track the progress of resettlement of Jews for him.² After the end of World War II, Korherr was able to obtain a position in the West German Ministry of Finance until 1961 when he was dismissed from his position due to the publication of Gerald Reitlinger's book *Die Endlösung [The Final*

¹ "Statistical Report on the 'Final Solution,' Known as the Korherr Report (March 23, 1943)." German History in Documents and Images. https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1533.

² Wikipedia contributors. 2023. "Richard Korherr." Wikipedia. September 28, 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Korherr.

Solution], in which it was revealed how important the Korherr Report was in the creation of the Final Solution.³

As mentioned above Korherr's *Statistical Report on the "Final Solution"* was written in March of 1942, and then updated every three months from 1943 to 1944, at the request of Heinrich Himmler. This 16 page document calculated the number of Jews that remained in Europe, which included the number of Jews in concentration camps, how many Jews had died a natural death, and how many Jews were evacuated to the eastern territories.⁴ With this, the Korherr Report used officially approved terms, like the "transportation of the Jews from the Eastern provinces to the Russian East" or the "sifting of the Jews through the camps" to cover up the horrors of the Final Solution and what the Nazis were truly planning and implementing.⁵ In 1961 at his trial of Adolf Eichmann he testified that this document made his job of implementing the Final Solution much easier.⁶

The first section of the Korherr Report is labeled "Introduction" and describes the accomplishments made so far to the Jewish Question, and how this report is the first made that properly reports on the Jews left in Europe. The second part is called "Balance Sheet for the Jews in Germany," which is exactly what it says it is, namely calculations of how many Jews were in Germany starting from 1933 and going until 1943 when the document was written. Part three, "Weakness of the Jewish Volk" describes the decline of Jews being born and the increase of Jewish deaths. The fourth part, labeled "The Emigration of the Jews from Germany," describes the number of Jews who have immigrated to either different countries in Europe or to other continents like North or South America. Part five, "The Evacuation of Jews," describes the number of Jews who were "evacuated" from Reich territory. Part six "the Jews in the Ghettos" and part seven "The Jews in the Concentration Camps" respectively describe the number of Jews in ghettos and concentration camps in 1943. Part eight, called "Jews in Penal Institutions" calculates Jews in penal institutions. Part nine labeled "The Work Deployment of the Jews" calculates those who were in war-essential work deployment. The final section of this

³ "Statistical Report on the 'Final Solution,' Known as the Korherr Report (March 23, 1943)." German History in Documents and Images

⁴ Wikipedia contributors. 2023a. "Korherr Report." Wikipedia. August 25, 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korherr_Report.

⁵ "Compiling the Estimates on Numbers Exterminated." n.d. Copyright 2024. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/compiling-the-estimates-on-numbers-exterminated>.

⁶ "Statistical Report on the 'Final Solution,' Known as the Korherr Report (March 23, 1943)." German History in Documents and Images

devastating document labeled, “Balance Sheet for the Jews in Europe” reduces all Jews down to simple numbers and calculates how many Jews are in each country in Europe.

Annotated Bibliography in Chronological Order

Reitlinger, Gerald. *The Final Solution : The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945*. London: Vallentine, Mitchell, **1953**.

Reitlinger was the first to expose Korherr for his contributions towards the creation of the Final Solution. After this book was published, Korherr was dismissed from his job in the West German Ministry of Finance, as it showed that Korherr had played a vital role in the killing of Jews in Europe.⁷ Reitlinger uses the Korherr report extensively in his book in order to describe and correctly portray the events of the Holocaust. In the last section of this book labeled, “Statistical Summary of the Final Solution” he goes over the statistics of Jews in every country in Europe before, during, and after the Final Solution and he heavily relies on the Korherr Report as the source for this evidence.

Seltzer, William. “Population Statistics, the Holocaust, and the Nuremberg Trials.” *Population and Development Review* 24, no. 3 (1998): 511–52. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2808153>.

This article by Willaim Seltzer looks at how statistics were used by the Nazis in planning and then implementing the Holocaust. To do this it looks at one of Korherr’s earlier work from 1927 called "Geburtenrückgang" [The decline of the birth rate] as well as the Korherr Report itself. The article describes the Nuremberg trials and how the use of the “perpetrator-generated Holocaust mortality data and other estimates of Jewish losses presented” helped propel the trials. It finally goes over the present-day implications of the statistics used in the Final Solution.

Roberto. 2009. “The Korherr Report - Axis History Forum.” <https://Forum.Axishistory.Com/>. **2009**. <https://forum.axishistory.com/viewtopic.php?p=2097&sid=e1c472e6de9afcd87ee33c811089e651>. Accessed March 2024

⁷ “Statistical Report on the ‘Final Solution,’ Known as the Korherr Report (March 23, 1943).” German History in Documents and Images

This forum was in the notes of the Wikipedia page. It has both the long version of the Korherr Report delivered to Himmler, and an abridged version that was delivered to Hitler. It also includes correspondence between Himmler and Korherr. The author of this forum, cites at the bottom of the page that he found the abridged version from the *Nazi Archive, Documents on National Socialism*. These documents were originally in German on the website but have the option to be translated to English via Google Chrome's translation feature. This archive then cites the John Mendelsohn edition of *The Holocaust, Selected Documents in Eighteen Volumes* as the source of the abridged version.

Webb, Chris. 2009. "The Richard Korherr Report." [Http://Www.Holocaustresearchproject.Org/](http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/).
2009. <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/holoprelude/korherr.html>.

This article by Chris Webb goes into more detail about how Himmler was involved in the Korherr Report. This article claims that Himmler was ecstatic about Korherr's report as it could later "serve as camouflage" for the horrors of the Final Solution, but at the time of the creation of the report did not want it circulated. The article describes how Himmler wanted to receive short monthly reports from Korherr. This article does not specify where this information directly comes from, but at the bottom of the page the sources Webb lists are holocaust archives as well as the book *The Holocaust and the Neo-Nazi Mythomania* by Dr. Joseph Billig and Georges Wellers, written in 1978. It can be found in numerous libraries as well as purchased on Amazon currently. This book delves into the "launch" of the Final Solution, the use of gas chambers during the Holocaust and the number of victims. The reviews found online discuss how this book is outdated and does not display the correct information that we now know.

Pew Research Center. 2020. "Europe's Jewish Population." May 31, **2020**.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2015/02/09/europes-jewish-population/>.

This article explains that over the seven decades since the Holocaust there has been a steady decline of the population of Jews in Europe. In 1939 there were 9.3 million Jews living in Europe, and in 2010 there were only 1.4 million. Compared to the global

population of 14 million, which has been increasing, however, this number is still smaller than it was before the Holocaust.

“Compiling the Estimates on Numbers Exterminated.” n.d. Copyright 2024.

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/compiling-the-estimates-on-numbers-exterminated>.

This site describes how Korherr worked with Adolf Eichmann and camp commanders to gather information and the statistics to deliver to Himmler for his report. It also describes how even in the report to Himmler he was not supposed to “spell out the facts in black and white.” This means he had to replace the phrase “special treatment of Jews” to "transportation of the Jews from the Eastern provinces to the Russian East" or the "sifting of the Jews through the camps" which were approved terms. Himmler wanted to cover up the fact that they were planning the mass execution of Jews in Europe. At the bottom of the webpage, it cites the Nizkor Project as its source of information. This is a database regarding the Holocaust that has around 4000 documents.

“European Holocaust Research Infrastructure - Richard Korherr: Statistical Report on the Final Solution to the Jewish Question.” n.d. EHRI Consortium 2024.

<https://portal.ehri-project.eu/units/gb-003348-wl526>.

This website delves into Korherr's work before the war. It cites that it received this information from the Wiener Holocaust Library. In 1928 Korherr came to the Reich Bureau of Statistics, where he was later appointed by the chancellor as chairman of the *Reich und Heimat*, a government-sponsored society. He wrote a book in 1936 that was well received and joined the Nazi party in 1937. The documents on this website are housed in the London Wiener Library.

“Korherr, Richard (1903-): Statistical Report on ‘the Final Solution to the Jewish Question’ and Other Papers (Microfilm) - Archives Hub.” n.d.

<https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/c25593b6-5809-3d95-b5b9-524a4fb4013f>.

This archive goes over the several versions of The Korherr Report and his work after the war trying to prove his innocence. This site also adds that the report was updated every three months from 1943 to 1944. After the war Korherr spent time in Allied custody, but

was the first to be released. He went unpunished during the denazification process. This archive specifically references Retlinger's book on the Final Solution, and how Korherr was upset with his portrayal in the book. The only citation on this website is Retlinger's book cited above.