

# The Korherr Report

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English German

On 18  
January  
1943,  
Heinrich



**Himmler** instructed the chief inspector of the statistical bureau of the SS, Dr Richard Korherr, to prepare a report on the progress of the "Final Solution of the Jewish question". Although comprehensive statistics were maintained by **Adolf Eichmann** in department IVB4 of the **RSHA**, **Himmler** had reason to doubt their accuracy. He was under pressure from **Albert Speer**, Minister of War Production, and General **Friedrich Fromm**, Chief of the Replacement Army, who colluded to express to **Adolf Hitler** their concern about the rapidly disappearing pool of Jewish labour, and the number of potential soldiers lost in guarding concentration camps. The implication was that the SS was not fully disclosing the extent of its inroads into human resources.

**Himmler** was thus faced with a dilemma, for on the one hand he wished to provide evidence of his achievements to **Hitler**, yet on the other he needed to couch those achievements in a manner discrete enough to camouflage the slaughter. Korherr's credentials for this task were unimpeachable, since he was a professional statistician, had only been a Nazi party member since 1937 and was not a member of the SS.

The report that Korherr produced and its supplement are among the most important surviving Nazi documents. The main report of 23 March 1943 summarized the position as at 31 December 1942. The supplement detailed the events of the three months to 31 March 1943. **Himmler** was generally satisfied with the report, apart from Korherr's use of the code word for murder, *Sonderbehandlung* (special treatment) to describe the treatment of the Jews. Instead he demanded the use of the word *durchgeschleust*, variously translated as "sifted", "processed" or "dragged through." By 1943 the true meaning of *Sonderbehandlung* was so well understood that it could not appear in a document intended for presentation to the *Führer*. In fact, Korherr omitted to remove a later use of the word in his report. A summary of the report, typed with special large lettering in **Eichmann's** office for presentation to **Hitler**, is believed to no longer exist. No final summary was prepared in 1944 or 1945, although the statistics of new deportations continued to be collected in department IVB4.



Himmler

**Himmler** wrote to **Ernst Kaltenbrunner**, head of the Sipo-SD:

"I regard the report as general purpose material for later use and extremely good as camouflage. At present it must neither be published nor communicated to anyone. I shall continue to be informed through the short monthly reports of the *RSHA* how many go and how many remain behind."

Most of Korherr's statistics came from the *RSHA*, and specifically from **Eichmann's** office. Although he did not at first mention Korherr by name, during his interrogation in Israeli captivity **Eichmann** recalled discussions with a statistician about camps and how many Jews had been killed by **Odilo Globocnik** in the *Generalgouvernement*, as well as the number of Jews killed by the *Einsatzgruppen*. Korherr also consulted with the **WVHA** about registered Jewish inmates in **Auschwitz**, **Majdanek** and other camps.

During his trial in **Jerusalem**, **Eichmann** stated that he had subsequently used the report in



post in 1961 following the publication of **Gerald Reitlinger's** book "The Final Solution", in which the Korherr Report featured prominently.

The significance of the Korherr report lies as much in the irrefutable evidence it contains of the Nazi's genocidal policies as in its wealth of statistics. Whether or not, as Korherr alleged, the *Einsatzgruppen* did overstate the number of their victims (and as already indicated, the number killed by the *Einsatzgruppen* as contained in the report is clearly understated), the Korherr Report abundantly demonstrates a concerted, continent-wide strategy of government sponsored annihilation. As such, it remains a pivotal document for our understanding of the Holocaust.

Sources:

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Gutman, Israel, ed. **Encyclopedia of the Holocaust**, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1990

Reitlinger, Gerald. **The Final Solution – The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939-1945**, Jason Aronson Inc, Northvale, New Jersey and London, 1987

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