**Robert A. DeGray, Ph.D.**

**Edmund Husserl**

**A Very Short Introduction to**

**his Phenomenology**

**(1859-1938**)

**(www.Prague-Humanities-Institute.com)**

*In Memory of My Teacher:*

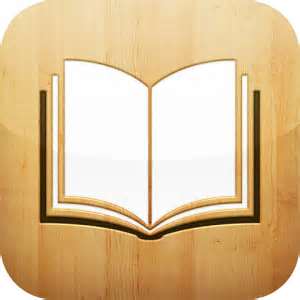
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*(Martin Heidegger Seminar,*

*Winter Semester, 1990)*

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to provide the reader with a very short introduction to the life and work of Edmund Husserl the father of phenomenology. The article is intended for the beginning to advanced student as well as the seasoned Husserlian scholar who would like to have a brief historical introduction to the life and work of Edmund Husserl and his phenomenology.

Moreover, throughout this article I have tried to touch upon some of the most decisive phases of Husserl’s phenomenological development beginning with: 1) his early student years; 2) Husserl’s life and work in Vienna; 3) the impact of Franz Brentano upon Husserl’s thought as a former teacher and friend; as well as introducing the reader to the various “periodizations” of Husserl’s intellectual evolution as exhibited by, 4) the Halle period; 5) the Göttingen period; 6) the Freiburg period; and 7) the later “Jewish Retirement” period of his phenomenological development.

Also, in this very short introduction to Husserl ‘s thought we have attempted to rounded off this present study by taking the student on a “guided tour” to Husserl’s personal residence (along with his family members) located at No. 40 Lorattostrasse, in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany by way of W. R. Boyce Gibson’s personal diary and article entitled: “From Husserl to Heidegger: Excepts from a 1928 Freiburg Diary” which provides the reader with a personal “bird’s-eye-view” of Husserl’s “later” Freiburg period of development from a personal standpoint of view.

At the conclusion of our study we also touch upon the controversial subject-matter of Husserl’s appointment of Heidegger as his successor to the Chair of philosophy, the Husserl-Heidegger break, the rise of Adolf Hitler and the “Nazification” of Germany, the Nazi book-burning ceremonies, Husserl’s subsequent forced “Jewish Retirement” period, as well as, the rescue of Husserl’s *Nachlass* fromNazi-Germany, in 1938, by Father Hermann Leo van Breda.

These will be some of the major themes and topics presented in my article on Edmund Husserl: A Very Short Introduction to his Phenomenology.

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**Edmund Husserl**

**A Very Short Introduction to**

**his Phenomenology**

**(1859-1938**)

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**EDMUND HUSSERL**

**A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION TO HIS PHENOMENOLOGY**

**(1859-1938)**

*By Robert A. DeGray, Ph.D.*

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“I attempt to guide, not to instruct, but merely to

show and describe what I see. All I claim is the right to speak

according to my best lights – primarily to myself and

correspondingly to others – as one who has lived through a

philosophical existence in all it seriousness.”

**Edmund Husserl**

*(The “Krisis” of the European Sciences, Husserliana, VI.)*

Edmund Husserl was a famous German philosopher and mathematician. He lived from 1859 to 1938 and his work is important because he discovered a new science called transcendental phenomenology within the field of continental European philosophy. Husserl’s discovery of the new field of pure phenomenology as an eidetic science led him to acquire a huge intellectual following both inside of Germany as well as outside of Western Europe. Moreover, as Husserl’s idea of a pure phenomenology began to spread like wildfire across central Europe, his thinking slowly began to spark other new important phenomenological and existential movements in philosophy both inside and outside of Germany which eventually



Edmund Husserl

The Father of Phenomenology

(1859-1938)

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developed and penetrated into such nearby or neighboring countries as France, Italy, Belgium, England, Spain, and finally, to America. From these new flowerings and

sprinklings of Husserl’s phenomenology, there slowly began to emerge an international and worldwide phenomenological movement which today recognizes and celebrates Edmund Husserl as being the true father of phenomenology.

**§ 2. LIFE AND WORK**

Where was Husserl born? What schools did he attend? What types of subjects did he study? What was his influences? These are basic questions and considerations which presuppose a more intimate philosophical portrait of Edmund Husserl the man who lived and studied in both Austria and Germany.

Moreover, even though we lack personal contact with Edmund Husserl the man who is one of the most important historical figures in twentieth-century German phenomenology, we can still get a philosophical glimpse or “pulse” of Husserl’s personality and character by examining “excerpts” from letters he wrote as well as from personal recollections and memories on philosophical walks that he took with some of his closest associates while living in Vienna, especially his former friend and teacher, Franz Brentano.

In this very short introduction our task will be to provide the reader with a brief philosophical portrait of Edmund Husserl’s life and work in order to develop some historical background material in order to begin our study.

According to tradition, Husserl was born in Possnitz, Moravia, on April 8th, 1859, which was then part of the Austrian Empire at the time of his birth (as the second of four children). Thus, contrary to popular belief, our famous, twentieth-century

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German phenomenological thinker, Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl, appears to have been an Austrian by birth and not a German citizen as one might otherwise expect. Moreover, the fact that Husserl was Austrian by birth meant that he grew up living in a rich intellectual and cultural tradition which greatly contributed to Husserl’s early educational experience. To add to this rich intellectual development, it should also be mentioned that Husserl frequently travelled “outside” of his native Austria to Germany where he studied at the universities of Leipzig and Berlin before completing his doctoral degree in mathematics in the faculty of philosophy at the University of Vienna (1883).

**§ 3. EARLY STUDENT YEARS**

What was Husserl’s early school years like as a young man? What did he study? What knowledge do we have of Husserl’s earliest school days and intellectual evolution during his early student years?

As far as his early primary school development is concerned, it should be pointed out that Husserl completed his early elementary education in Austria around the age of 10 and then went to Vienna to begin his secondary school education as a pupil initially at the “Realgymnazium” in Vienna, and then finally to the “Stattsgymnazium” in Olmutz, before entering the University of Leipzig in Germany.

It was at Leipzig that Husserl studied both astronomy and mathematics from the years 1876 to 1878. However, during this same year, for academic reasons, Husserl was forced to transfer, once again, by moving from the city of Leipzig to the Friedrick Wilhelm University in Berlin in order to study pure mathematics under Karl Weierstrass and Leopold Kronecker. These early “mathematical” influences upon

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Husserl’s intellectual evolution and development at this time undoubtedly helped to set the philosophical stage, so to speak, for his later so-called “pre-phenomenological” period of development in philosophy at the University of Halle between the years 1886 to 1900 (which we shall discuss in just a moment) in this short introduction; however, before doing so, let us first briefly turn to Husserl’s early student years at the University of Vienna (1881-85) and the role Franz Brentano’s thinking exercised upon Husserl’s philosophical development.

**§ 4. THE UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA**

In the year 1881, (due to Karl Weirstraus’ illness), Husserl transferred from Berlin to the “University of Vienna” in order to complete his “doctoral studies” in the field of pure “mathematics” under Leopold Konigsberger; it was while studying at Vienna that Husserl began to slowly “shift” his academic and intellectual interests away from the field of pure mathematics to the field of “philosophy” under the careful direction and “watchful eye” of his former teacher and friend, Franz Brentano, (a Catholic priest), whose philosophy classes Husserl had attended with great interest and excitement while studying in Vienna. The greatest impact upon Husserl’s thinking during this time came directly from Brentano’s “theory of intentionality” (*Psychologie der empirischen* *Standpunkt, 1874*), as well as Brentano’s “descriptive psychology” which led Husserl to develop his own “phenomenological method” of investigation from Brentano’s philosophy in attempting to lay the foundations for his phenomenological thinking; nevertheless, at the conclusion of his studies at the “University of Vienna”, Husserl received his “doctor of philosophy” degree in 1883; he had completed his work under Leopold



Late 19th Century Europe

(at the time when Husserl studied under Brentano

in the University of Vienna)

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Konigsberger and had written his doctoral dissertation thesis under the title: *“Beitrage zur Theorie der Variationsrechnung”* (“Outlines Concerning the Theory of Calculus Variations”) before leaving Vienna for Halle where he became a research

assistant under Carl Stumpf in psychology (1886-87) and eventually became a Privatdozent (1887-1901) in philosophy at the University of Halle.

**§ 5. THE IMPACT OF FRANZ BRENTANO ON HUSSERL**

Moreover, as we noted just a moment ago, Husserl slowly began to “shift” his academic and intellectual interests away from the field of pure mathematics to the field of “philosophy” under the careful direction of his former teacher, Franz Brentano, whose philosophy classes Husserl had attended with great interest while studying with Brentano in Vienna. Likewise, it should also be pointed out at this time that it was precisely Brentano’s lectures (Winter semester / 1884-85, Summer semester, / 1886), which became the deciding factor in Husserl making one of the most important decisions of his lifetime, that is, by deciding to turn away from the field of pure mathematics in order to devote all of his attention to the field of philosophy as the goal and aim of his life’s work.

Says Husserl:

“At a time when my interest in philosophy was increasing and I was vacillating

between staying in mathematics and devoting my life to philosophy, Brentano’s lectures were the deciding factor. I went to them at first merely out of curiosity, to hear the man who was the subject of so much talk in Vienna at that time, the man

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whom some people respected so highly and admired so much, but whom others (and not so very few) derided him as a Jesuit in disguise, as a rhetorician, a fraud, a Sophist, and a Scholastic. My first impression of him was rather striking. This lean

figure with the powerful head framed by curly hair, the manly, prominent nose, the expressive lines in his face which bespoke not only of mental toil but deep spiritual conflict as well – these lay wholly outside the scope of common life. In every

feature, in every movement, in his soulful, introspective eyes, filled with determination, in his whole manner, was expressed the consciousness of a great

mission….” 1

“In spite of all my prejudices, I could not resist the power of this great personality for long. I was soon fascinated and then overcome by the unique clarity and dialectical accuity of his explanations, by the so to speak, “cataleptic power” of his development of problems and theories. It was from his lectures that I first acquired the conviction that first gave me the courage to choose philosophy as my life’s work, that is, the conviction that philosophy too, is a field of serious endeavor, and that it too can – and in fact must – be dealt with in a rigorously scientific manner.” 2

Moreover, this was the profound impact which Franz Brentano had exercised upon Edmund Husserl as a young man and as a student of philosophy at the University of Vienna as well as upon many other young men and pupils who became philosophy students of Franz Brentano’s at this time which includes such original minds as: Alexius Meinong (*On The Theory of Objects*), Anton Marty (*On Being and Truth*), Kasimir Twardowski (*On Content and Object*), Christian von Ehrenfels (*On the* *Theory of Gestalt*), Carl Stumpf (*On Tone Psychology*), as well as many others, including Edmund Husserl himself, (*On The Idea of Phenomenology*).

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Franz Brentano, S. J.

The University of Vienna

(1838-1917)

**§ 6.** **CARL STUMPF AND FRANZ BRENTANO** 10

Moreover, like Husserl himself, Carl Stumpf tells us in his memory of his former teacher and friend, Franz Brentano, that, like Husserl himself, he too had also fallen under the great “spell” of his former teacher’s “powerful” personality (Cateleptic power) which exercised a strong and “lasting influence” upon him as well as a young man, so much so, (as he tells us from his memories and recollections of Franz Brentano) that he was even considering even entering the “Jesuit seminary” and following Brentano into the “Catholic priesthood” during his early development under the guidance of his former teacher and friend, Franz Brentano, in Vienna. In his memories and recollections of Franz Brentano, Carl Stumpf also paints a “spiritual portrait” of his former teacher, Franz Brentano, in the following way, when he writes:

“The power that Brentano exercised over susceptible students is shown by the ‘metamorphosis’ that he produced in me. After a few weeks my interest in law began to wane, and before Christmas I sought him out to inform him of my intention of choosing philosophy and theology as my life’s work. I even wanted to follow him into the ‘priesthood’, so much of an example had he set for me. To be sure, I had been religious from childhood, but being always of a cheerful disposition. I had never thought of renouncing the world, and nothing of this sort had happened in my family as far back as we can remember…” 3

“Brentano advised me, as was his duty, to undergo a long period of contemplation and examination but from then on I accompanied him more and more

frequently on his walks…and enjoyed his personal concern and care of every further

phase of my personal spiritual development.” 4



Edmund Husserl and Carl Stumpf

(probably 1928/29)

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Moreover, this was the lasting influence which Franz Brentano exercised

upon Carl Stumpf and Edmund Husserl as well as upon many other philosophy

students who attended Brentano’s philosophy lectures at the University of Vienna during this time and who were greatly influenced by him.

In the light of this above influence, what, if anything, it should be asked, was Franz Brentano like as a real existential human being or as a man? How does Edmund Husserl, the father of pure phenomenology describe his former teacher and friend Franz Brentano from personal walks they took together in Vienna and St. Gilgen as well as from other recollections which Husserl sketches out for us from personal letters of his memories of Franz Brentano? In this brief introduction of Husserl’s life and work I wish to exhibit briefly some “excerpts” taken from key passages written by Husserl himself that reflect his own personal memories of Franz Brentano on personal walks they took together in St. Gilgen as well as from memories of their philosophical relationship together in Florence, Italy in order to help throw light on Edmund Husserl the man as well as his personal relationship to his friend and former teacher Franz Brentano.

**§ 7. ST. GILGEN**

Says Husserl, “in St. Gilgen Brentano liked to join in his wife’s portrait-painting, she being an able painter, and he would make improvements or even completely take over her pictures in progress, although it is true that she then had to lend a helping

hand and do some things over again correctly. This is the way he and his wife together painted me in 1886: ‘an amiable picture’ says Theodor Vischer, the discriminating art historician. With equal zeal Brentano spent afternoons in St.

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Gilgen playing boccia (in the ‘garden’ which was a little piece of land behind the rented the rented cottage near the lake). He was not at all enthusiastic about hiking in

the mountains and liked only short walking trips. He lived very simply both in St. Gilgen and in Vienna. One really did not need to know him to observe his living habits for long to realize the ridiculousness of the talk that was going around about his having married his first wife for her money. He had no taste for the pleasures of wealth, and he ate and drank in moderation without really being aware of the differences in food or drink. I was often at his house at mealtimes and I never heard or noticed any reaction from him about food or drink that would indicate that he enjoyed it with any special pleasure. Once when we arrived in St. Gilgen before his wife did and had to eat in a rather bad restaurant, he was quite satisfied, simply not noticing the difference, for he was always occupied with his thoughts or conversation. And he allowed himself only the simplest foods, just as, when he travelled alone on the train, he was satisfied to travel the lowest class. The same was true of his clothing, which was exceedingly simple and often threadbare. Thrifty as he was in all these respects as far as his own person was concerned, he was nonetheless generous when he could do a good turn for someone else.” 5

**§ 8. STUDENTS**

“In his personal behavior toward younger people he was, on the one hand dignified, to be sure, but on the other hand extremely gracious and kind, constantly

concerned not only with furthering their intellectual development, but with their ethical personality as well. You could not help but surrender yourself completely to this higher guidance, and you felt its ennobling power constantly, even when you

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were far away from him. Even in his lectures, someone who had once succumbed to him would be very deeply moved, not only on a theoretical level by their content; but by the pure “pathos” of his personality. And how he gave himself personally! The quite summer evenings’ walks along the Wolfgangsee, when he would often let himself go and speak freely about himself, are unforgettable to me. He had a kind of childlike openness, as indeed he had in general that childlike quality often found in geniuses.” 6

§ **9. ‘PHILOSOPHY OF ARITHMETIC’ DEDICATION**

“I have never corresponded very much with Brentano. To the letter in which I asked him to allow me to dedicate the *“Philosophy of Arithmetic”* (my first philosophical writing) to him, he wrote back and thanked me warmly but tried to dissuade me; he said I should not invite the wrath of his enemies down upon my own head. I dedicated the book to him anyway, but when I sent him the dedication copy I received no reply. It was not until fourteen years later that Brentano noticed that I actually had dedicated the book to him, and then he thanked me in kind and heartfelt terms; he had obviously not looked at it closely, or had, at most, skimmed through it. Of course I had too high a regard for him, and I understood him too well to be really hurt by this.” 7

“There were deeper reasons why no active exchange of letters developed. At the beginning I was his enthusiastic pupil, and I never ceased to have the highest regard

for him as a teacher; still it was not to be that I should remain a member of his school. I knew, however, how much it agitated him when people went their own

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way, even if they used his ideas as a starting point. He could often be unjust in such situations; this is what happened to me, and it was painful. Also, the person who is driven from within by unclarified and yet overpowering motives of thought, or who seeks to give expression to intuitions which are as yet conceptually incomprehensible and do not conform to the received theories, is not inclined to reveal his thoughts to someone who is convinced that his theories are right – and certainly not to a master logician like Brentano…. My development was like that and this was the reason for a certain ‘remoteness’, although not a personal estrangement, from my teacher, which made close intellectual contact so difficult later on. Never, I must freely admit, was this his fault. He repeatedly made efforts to re-establish scientific relations. He must have felt my great respect for him had never lessened during these decades. On the contrary, it had only more to value the power and impulses I received from him.” 8

**§ 10. HUSSERL AND BRENTANO IN FLORENCE, ITALY**

“I did not see Brentano again until the year 1908, in his apartment, magnificently situated on the Via Bellosguardo in Florence. It was only with the greatest emotion that I remember those days. How moving it was when he, almost completely blind, stood on the balcony and described to me the incomparable view of Florence and the surrounding landscape, or guided my wife and me on the prettiest routes to see the two villas that Galileo had lived in, and showed us around. His external appearance, I found, had actually changed very little except that his hair had turned grey and his eyes had lost their gleam and earlier expression. Yet even then, how much those eyes

spoke – what radiance and hope in God they expressed. Naturally we talked a great deal of philosophy. That too was sad. How it did his heart good to be able once

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again to express himself in philosophical terms. He to whom great effectiveness as a teacher had been a necessity of life had to live in isolation in Florence and was not in a position to exercise his personal influence. He was happy just to have someone come down from the North occasionally who could listen to him and understand him. During that visit it seemed to me as though the decades since my student days in Vienna had been nothing but a faint dream; once more I felt like a shy beginner before this towering, powerful intellect. I preferred to listen rather than speak myself. And how great, how beautifully and firmly articulate, as the speech that poured out. Once, however, he himself wanted to listen, and without interrupting me with objections, he let me speak about the significance of the “phenomenological method” of investigation and my old fight against “psychologism”. We did not reach any agreement. And perhaps some of the fault lies with me. I was handicapped by the inner conviction that he, having become firmly entrenched in his way of looking at things, and having established a firm system of concepts and arguments, was no longer flexible enough to be able to understand the necessity of changes in his basic intuitions which had been so compelling to me.” 9

**§ 11. AURA OF TRANSFIGURATION**

“Not even the slightest discord marred these lovely days. His second wife, Emilie, who cared for him in such a kind and loving way during his later years and fitted so beautifully into his way of life at that time, was extremely kind and friendly to us. He wanted to be with me as much as possible; he was clearly aware that my

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gratitude for everything his personality and the vital power of his teaching had meant to me was inextinguishable. In old age he had become even more charming

and gentle; I did not find an embittered old man who had been denied the support he deserved in both of his homelands and who had been rewarded for his great gifts with ingratitude. He lived constantly in his world of ideas and for the perfection of his philosophy which, as he said, had undergone a great development in the course of the decades. There was about him a slight “aura of transfiguration”, as though he no longer belonged entirely to this world and as though he already half lived in that “higher” world he believed in so firmly, and the theistic philosophical explanation of which occupied him so much during these later years. This last impression of him in Florence has etched itself deeply into my mind and this is how he lives on in my memory – as a figure from a ‘higher world’.” 10

**§ 12. THE PERIODS OF HUSSERL’S DEVELOPMENT**

In light of our discussion of Franz Brentano’s impact on the development of Husserl’s early thinking we have attempted to briefly outline for the reader (through ‘excerpts’ from letters) some of the major influences Franz Brentano exercised upon the early development of Husserl’s life and work. However, our brief analysis concerning these early initial phases of Edmund Husserl’s philosophical development would be largely incomplete if we did not include at least some preliminary discussion and analysis regarding the general “periodizations” into which Husserl’s philosophical thinking falls (as distinguished from Franz Brentano’s philosophical development). Hence, we must ask ourselves, in this short introduction,

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what if anything, are the basic academic periods into which Husserl’s philosophical thinking falls as a whole?

In attempting to answer this above question I wish to place Husserl’s philosophical thinking (in contrast to Brentano’s thinking) into the following four academic periods of evolution below in order to provide the reader with a basic time line outlining Husserl’s intellectual development. Thus the four periods into which Husserl’s phenomenological thinking falls is:

1. The Halle Period, (1886-1900)

2. The Göttingen Period, (1901-1916)

3. The Freiburg Period, (1916-1928), and

4. The “Jewish Retirement” Period, (1929-1938) 11

**§ 13. THE HALLE PERIOD (1886-1900)**

What exactly are the basic characteristic features which make up Husserl’s Halle period of development? To answer this question it should be pointed out that Husserl actually began his academic career in philosophy at the University of Halle in the year 1886 as an academic “research assistant” under Carl Stumpf before he was appointed to the University of Göttingen, in September, 1901, as ‘*Extraordinarius* *professor*’ in philosophy. The historical background of the Halle period indicates that Husserl left the University of Vienna for Halle during the winter term 1886/87 in order to become Carl Stumpf’s personal assistant in the field of psychology, that is, in order to gain a deeper knowledge and wider understanding of the field of

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“experimental psychology” under the direction of Carl Stumpf. (*Tonpsychologie,* 2 vols. 1883/90).

According to Marvin Farber, (*The Foundations of Phenomenology*, 1968), Husserl made the following comments concerning his “Halle period” of philosophical development in a “personal letter” to him at Harvard University, when he writes: “really, my course was already marked out in the *‘Philosophy of Arithmetic’* (Halle, 1891) , and I could do nothing other than proceed further.” 12

Moreover, the chronological list of Husserl’s writings for the Halle period of philosophical development (1886/1900) exhibiting his major publications in the field of philosophy have been documented by Marvin Farber *(The Foundations of* *Phenomenology, 1968)* as follows:

‘ “Philosophie der Arithmetik” (Halle, 1891), first volume alone being published; “Psychologische Studien zur elementaren Logik” (1894); the “habilitation” thesis submitted to the University of Halle in order to qualify for an instructorship, “Ueber den Begriff der Zahl” (1887), was printed, but was not placed on sale (it was incorporated into the “Philosophie der Arithmetik”….’); Review of Schroder’s “Vorlesungen uber die algebra der Logik” (1891); “Der Folgerungscalcul und die Inhaltslogik” (1891); Controversy with Voigt (1893); the first logical survey, “Bericht uber deutsche Schriften zur Logik aus dem Jahre 1894” (1897); and the “Logische Untersuchungen”, first edition, (Halle, 1900-1901),…” . 13

In contrast to Marvin Farber, *(The Foundations of Phenomenology, 1968),* Rudolf Bernet, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach, in the “appendix” to their excellent work” *(“An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology,” 1993)*, provide the following detailed chronological development outlining Husserl’s life, work and teaching for the Halle period as follows:

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. ‘Winter term 1886/87: summer term 1887, University of Halle a.S:

Lectures with Carl Stumpf with whom Husserl studied for his *Habilitation* at

the recommendation of Brentano.

. 1886-1895: Studies mainly in areas of formal mathematics and formal logic.

. 1887: Marriage with Malvine Steinschneider (6 August).

. Fall: Printing of the *Hibilitationsschift Uber der Begriff der Zahl*, *Psychologische Analysen*

(“On the Concept of Number, Psychological Analysis).

. Acquisition of philosophical books during years of studies (selection):

. 1880: Schopenhauer, Spinoza, 1884: Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geists*; H. Spencer,

*Grindlagen der Philosophie.* 1886: E. Mach, *Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen*. 1887:

G. Frege, *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik.*

. 1887-1901: As *Privatdozent* in Halle.

. 1887: Inaugural lecture “Die Ziele und Aufgaben der Metaphysik” (“Aims and Tasks of

Metaphysics”) (24 October).

. 1891: *Philosophies der Arithmetik. Psychologische und logische Untersuchungen*; review of

Schröder’s *Vorlesungen uber die Algebra der Logic*.

. 1900: *Logische Untersuchungen, Erster Teil: Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*.

. 1901: *Logische Untersuchungen, Zweiter Teil: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und*

*Theorie der Erkenntnis*.

. 1901: First Meeting of Max Scheler with Husserl.

. Early September appointment at Göttingen, which had been pending for one year. 14

Moreover, while these above chronological timelines outlining Husserl’s life, work and teaching for the Halle period of philosophical development as documented by Marvin Farber *(The Foundations of Phenomenology, 1968),* as well as Bernet, Kern, and Marbach *(“An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology, 1993)* are vitally important to us, (insofar as theyhelp throw valuable light on the Husserl’s evolution during this historical period of time)*,* nevertheless, their work should be compared and contrasted with Karl Schuhman’s definitive work and study entitled: (*“Husserl-Chronik Denk und Lebensweg* *Edmund Husserls,” 1977),*

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which thoroughly and completely outlines as well as summarizes Husserl’s entire intellectual career and development from A to Z and remains the “Bible” on the field in terms of contemporary Husserlian scholarship today.

**§ 14. THE “HALLE CRISIS” and ‘PSYCHOLOGISM’**

Moreover, one of the specific reasons why Husserl came to the “University of Halle’ to study “experimental psychology” under Carl Stumpf in 1886 was precisely because he wished to overcome his “intellectual crisis” and “struggle” with the problem of “psychologism” during his early philosophical studies at this time. Accordingly, the doctrine of “psychologism” (as represented by Husserl’s fight and struggle with the problem of “psychologism” during his so-called “early” Halle period), is precisely the belief that formal “logic” has its “absolute ground” and ultimate basis in “empirical psychology” and not in philosophy.

Furthermore, “psychologism” was the thesis held by both Theodor Lipps as well as the “early” Edmund Husserl at the University of Halle who defended the above thesis of “psychologism” in the first publication of his work on: *“The Philosophy of Arithmetic”* (Halle, 1891). However, after Husserl’s position was rigorously attacked and criticized by Frege (in his review of Husserl’s work), Husserl, in response to Frege’s “criticism,” completely “reversed” himself and changed his philosophical position and thesis in the first and second volumes of his “Logical Investigations”

(1900-1901) by criticizing the doctrine of “psychologism” (along with Frege) as being a form of psychological “relativism”.

Thus according to Husserl, the “absolute foundations” of pure “logic” rests on the discovery of a new “presuppositionless” science which he now calls

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“transcendental phenomenology” and which represents a radically new and revolutionary “breakthrough” into the “Idea of a Pure Phenomenology” which is to be completely distinguished from “empirical psychology” as such.

**§ 15. THE GÖTTINGEN PERIOD (1901-1916)**

Moreover, as distinguished from Husserl’s “Halle period” of philosophical development the “Göttingen period” represents, without doubt, one of the most productive periods of Husserl’s philosophical life precisely because the Göttingen period of development, (which is situated historically between the “Halle” and “Freiburg” periods), reflects Husserl’s initial scientific “breakthrough” into his idea of a ‘pure phenomenology and a phenomenological philosophy,’ that is, as distinguished from his earlier “logical studies” as reflected by the earlier “Halle period” of development (1886-1900).

That is to say, Husserl’s “Göttingen period” of evolution represents one of the most creative and productive periods of his philosophical career within the newly emerging field of ‘transcendental phenomenology’. This is evidenced, for example, by the fact, that from April 26th to May 2nd, 1907, Husserl developed a series of “five lectures” on “The Idea of Phenomenology” at the University of Göttingen (1907) in which he first attempted to introduce to the world for the first time his

revolutionary idea of a ‘pure phenomenology and a phenomenological philosophy’.

Moreover, in Husserl’s “five lectures” on “The Idea of Phenomenology” (1907), delivered at Göttingen, he provides the reader with a brief outline or thumbnail sketch of some of the most basic phenomenological themes which he develops

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throughout his phenomenological thinking on such basic topics as: the pure cogito, the epoché, the transcendental and phenomenological reductions, immanence and transcendence, intentionality and constitution, the problem of intersubjectivity, inner time-consciousness, and so-forth, as these basic themes and topics begin to spring out of each other and become integrated as a whole in Husserl’s “five lectures” on “The Idea of Phenomenology” (1907) which he delivered to students in Göttingen.

Similarly, Husserl’s “five lectures” on “The Idea of Phenomenology” (1907) may also be compared and contrasted with his “earlier” lectures and “genetic” coursework he presented on “The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness (1905) and which was delivered as part of a lecture course at Göttingen that compliments his “later” five lectures on “The Idea of Phenomenology” (1907) together with its basic themes. Thus it is from these two creative and productive texts on “The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness” (1905), and “The Idea of Phenomenology” (1907), which, when taken together, provides the reader with a “bird’s eye view” and synopsis of some of the most important and essential phenomenological themes relating to his idea of a pure phenomenology and a phenomenological philosophy.

Then there is “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science,” (1911) which precedes Husserl’s major creative and productive work of the “First book” of “Ideas” (Ideen

I, 1913), which first appeared in Husserl’s famous: *“Jahrbuch fur Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschuungen”(1913),* which is complimented and preceded

by his “Second Book” of “Ideas” or the so-called, “pencil manuscript” of 1912, (edited by Husserl’s personal “Göttingen assistant,” Edith Stein), which has now

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come down to us posthumously as being: the “Second Book” of “Ideas” (Ideen II, 1912); “*Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen*

*Philosophie. Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zu Konstitution”(Husserliana 4, 1952).*

Moreover*,*  the “Second Book” of “Ideas,” is considered as the ultimate “textural source” for Husserl’s creation of Ideas III; *“Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie*

*und phänomenologishen philosophie. Drittes Buch: Die Phänomenologie und die Fundamente der Wissenschaften,”(Husserliana 5, 1971),* which was written by Husserl between the years 1900-1916, in Göttingen.

Thus it is from these various creative and productive texts exhibited above that we find the mind of a great thinker and genius at work creatively producing ideas which seem to “overflow” to richness during Husserl’s so-called “Göttingen period” of philosophical development (1901-1916).

The chronological survey for Husserl’s Göttingen period of evolution as documented by Rudolf Bernet, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach *(“An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology, 1993)* outlining Husserl’s life, work and teaching for the Göttingen period of development is as follows:

. 1901-1916: The Years at Göttingen

. 1901: (September) Apppointment as “Extraordinarius Professor.”

. 1902: J. Daubert’s first visit to Husserl in Göttingen: discussion on the *Logische*

*Untersuchungen.* As a result of this meeting relations between Theodor Lipps’s students

In Munich and Husserl begin.

. (May) Visit to Munich: meeting with Th. Lipps and his students (J. Daubert, A. Pfander, etc.,)

. (March) Visit to W. Dilthey in Berlin. In a letter of 1929 to G. Misch, Husserl wrote “that a few

discussions in 1905 with Dilthey in Berlin (not his writings) provided the impulse which led from

the Husserl of the *Logische Untersuchungen* to the one of the *Ideen*.”

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. 1906: Appointment as *Ordinarius* Professor.

. 1906: (December) Visit by the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal to Husserl.

. 1907: Visit to Franz Brentano in Florence.

. 1907: (Summer term) Foundation of the “Göttinger Philosophische Gesellschaft: by Th.

Conrad.

. 1909: (October) Visit by P. Natrop to Husserl.

. 1910: (January) Husserl agrees with H. Rickert to collaborate as editor of the newly founded

journal *Logos.*

*.* “Philosophy as Rigorous Science” in *Logos, volume 1.* (1910/11).

*.* 1911: Correspondence between Dilthey and Husserl in connection with the *Logos* paper.

. 1913: Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologischen Philosophie. First Book: “A General

Introduction to Pure Phenomenology”. The work was published in *Jahrbuch fur Philosophie*

*und* *phänomenologische Forschung,* volume I, founded in 1912 by Husserl as chief editor

together with Moritz Geiger, Alexander Pfander, Adolf Reinach, and Max Scheler.

. 1913: Visit by Karl Jasper’s to Husserl.

. 1914: Participation in the 6th Congress for Experimental Psychology in Göttingen (15-18 April).

. 1916: (5 January) Appointment to Freiburg as successor of, and on the recommendation by

Heinrich Rickert, beginning 1 April.

. 1916: (8 March) Husserl’s son Wolfgang is killed near Verdun. 15

§ **16. THE GÖTTINGEN CIRCLE**

Moreover, in her unfinished *“Autobiography”,* (1891-1916), in

contrast to Husserl’s creative and productive philosophical activities at Göttingen, Edith Stein, paints a “living portrait” of her personal memories of Göttingen (as Husserl’s personal assistant), surrounding the so-called “Göttingen Circle” or “The

Göttingen School of Phenomenology,” as she defines it; that is, as represented by such leading and key philosophical figures as: Adolf Reinach, Hans Theodor Conrad,

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Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Theodor Lipps, Moritz Geiger, Max Scheler, and others, in the following way,

Says Edith Stein:

Dear Göttingen! I do believe only someone who studied there between 1905 and 1914, the short *“flowering time”* of the *“Göttingen School of Phenomnology”,* can appreciate all that the name evokes in us. I was twenty-one years old and looked forward full of expectation to all that lay ahead….So, finally, in a round about way, I came to the essential topic – the one which has led me to Göttingen:*“phenomnology”* and the *“phenomenologists”.* In Breslau, as (Georg Moskiewicz) had instructed me, *“When one gets to Göttingen , the first place to go is to Reinach; he arranges all the rest.”*Adolf Reinach was “privatdocent” in philosophy.He and hisfriends, HansTheodor Conrad and Moritz Geiger, and a few others, had originally been students of Theodor Lipps in Munich. When the *“Logische Untersuchungen”* appeared, they had insisted that Lipps discuss the work with them in his Seminar. After Husserl was called to Göttingen, they had come there together in 1905 to be initiated into “the secrets” of this “new science” by the master himself. So the “Göttingen School” was founded. Reinach was the first of the group to be “habilitated” in Göttingen and was now Husserl’s right hand; primarily he was the link between him and the students since he had a gift for dealing with people whereas Husserl was rather helpless along those lines. By this time, Reinach was about thirty-three years old. 16

Some of the students who made up the so-called “Göttingen Circle*”* or

“The Göttingen Philosophical Society” as mentioned by Edith Stein in her *“Autobiography”* were actually former students of Theodor Lipps’ group in Munich



Edith Stein, Husserl’s Göttingen assistant

(1891-1942)

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(The “Munich Circle”) who came to study under Husserl in Göttingen. They were: Adolf Reinach, Johannes Daubert, Moritz Geiger, Theodor Conrad, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Hedweg Conrad-Martius, Max Scheler, and others. Similarly, there were also many other students who came to Göttingen as “transfer” students as well as

“visitors” in order to study with Husserl, such as: Alexander Koyré, Jean Hering, Roman Ingarden, Fritz Kaufmann, as well as Edith Stein.

Again, says Edith Stein:

I will never forget how, during one intense discussion, Hans Lipps knocked the ash of his cigarette into the silver ‘sugar-bowl’ until our laughter startled him.

None of the founders of the ‘Philosophical Society’ were present at meetings at that time. Reinach stopped attending after his becoming a lecturer and his marriage. Conrad and Hedwig Martius were

living alternatively in Munich and in Bergzabern (in the Palatinate) since their marriage. Dietrich von Hildebrand had gone to Munich; Alexander Koyré, to Paris. As Johannes Hering wanted to take the

state boards the following summer, he had withdrawn to his hometown, Strassbourg, to study without being disturbed…. 17

Moreover, this is how Husserl’s personal assistant Edith Stein describes the “Göttingen Circle” as well as the philosophical scene surrounding the social gatherings of “The Göttingen Philosophical Society” at this time in Germany in her *“Autobiography*”. This special group of phenomenologial thinkers, were composed of “visitors” as well as members of both the “Munich” and “Göttingen” groups who were actively and creatively engaged in analyzing and discussing Husserl’s phenomenology.



**The Göttingen Philosophical Society**

(l.r.) Johannes Hering, (?) Schroder, Adolf Reinach, Hans Lipps, Theodore Conrad (eyes only), Max Scheler, Alexander Koyré, Siegfried Hamburger, Hedwig Martius (wife of Theodore Conrad), Rudolf Clemens, Gustav Hubner, and Alfred von Sybel.

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§ **17. THE FREIBURG PERIOD (1916-1928)**

Apart from our considerations of the “Göttingen Circle” what was Husserl’s “Freiburg period” really like exactly? How does it compare to his earlier “Halle” or “Göttingen” period of philosophical development? That is, how is Husserl’s so- called “Freiburg period” of philosophical evolution to be distinguished from his two earlier preceding periods of thought? As we shall see, one of the distinguishing

characteristics of Husserl’s later Freiburg period of development is precisely the fact that Husserl soon began to travel outside of Germany and was frequently invited as a

guest speaker to give public lectures on his idea of a pure phenomenology to many different types of international audiences of people who gathered in various capitols

throughout central Europe in order to listen to him speak about his idea of a pure phenomenology and a phenomenological philosophy during the later Freiburg period.

That is to say, what makes Husserl’s “later” Freiburg period “stand out” from his two “earlier” preceding periods of philosophical development at the Universities

of “Halle” and “Göttingen”, is precisely the fact that Husserl, “took to the road”, so to speak, by attempting to give public lectures in phenomenology at other European capitols outside Germany, such as London (1922), Amsterdam (1928), and Paris

(1929), for example, in order to deliver ‘advanced lectures’ in philosophy on his idea of a pure phenomenology to an international audience of people who were very

‘sympathetic’ to his cause and who were eager to listen to him speak about the newly emerging field of “transcendental phenomenology” during his Freiburg period of evolution.

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Moreover, in the year 1922, as illustrated below, Husserl travelled from Freiburg, Germany to London, England for the first time, in order to deliver his first

“London lectures” on June 6th, 8th, 9th, and 12th, (1922), on his idea of a pure phenomenology and a phenomenological philosophy to a British audience at the University of London, on Gower street, in London. Thus part of the historical ‘transmission’ and ‘spread’ of Husserl’s phenomenological philosophy, to be sure, came directly by way of the master’s own “public lectures” which he gave and delivered (in London) on the idea of a pure phenomenology during his later Freiburg period of development. The “Syllabus” for Husserl’s “London lectures” (1922) has been historically documented by professor Herbert Spiegelberg in his monumental study and work: *(“The Phenomenological Movevment”,* *2 vols. 1960)*, exhibiting both the German and French phases of the phenomenological movement.

Moreover, while Spiegelberg’s historical work remains a philosophical classic and milestone in modern phenomenology and existential philosophy today it has been widely felt among scholars within the field that a new updated version of this “groundbreaking” work is long overdue in the academic world and that a new version of *The Phenomenological Movement* needs to be undertaken by Husserl scholarship within the field today in order to expand upon some the recent philosophical developments not covered by Spiegelberg’s work, such as, the *“end of century”,* and early *“twenty-first century”* developments in phenomenology which are not covered by this truly valuable historical work for future generations of scholars. Thus, apart from Husserl’s “London lectures” which were delivered at the University of London, (1922), to a British audience of professors, students, and

members of the general public, at large, the rest of the bulk of Husserl’s other key philosophical writings, between the years (1916-1929), consists of some the following key major works in his system of phenomenology as indicated below:

(Syllabus)

**University of London**

Advanced Lectures in

**Philosophy**

A COURSE OF FOUR LECTURES

on

**“Phänomenologische Methode und**

**Phenomenologische Philosophie”**

WILL BE GIVEN BY

**PROFESSOR EDMUND HUSSERL**

(Professor of Philosophy in the University of Freiburg)

**University College, London**

(Gower Street, W. C.)

on

**June 6th, 8th, 9th, and 12th, 1922, at 5:30 p.m.**

**Lecture I. - June 6th**

**(Chairman: Professor G. Dawes Hickes, M.A., Ph.D., Litt. D.)**

“The general Aims of Phenomenological Philosophy; The “Cartesian Way” to the Thinking “Self” and the Method of the “Phenomenologial Reduction”.

**Lecture II. - June 8th**

**(Chairman: Professor James Ward, M.A. Sc. D., F. B. A.)**

“The Realm of Phenomenological Experience and the Possibility of a Phenomenological Science; Transcendental Phenomenology as a Science of “Transcendental Subjetivity”;

**Lecture III - June 9th**

**(Chairman: Professor H. Wildon Carr, D. Litt., J.P.)**

“Transcendental Phenomenology and the Problem of Possible Society; possible Science; and possible Objective Entities and Worlds.

**Lecture IV - June 12th**

**(Chairman: Dr. G. E. Moore, Litt D., F.B.A., [Editor of Mind]**

“The Subjective Idea of a Scientific Theory as a system of real Entities. The Concrete and Phenomenological Philosophy of the future.”

The lectures, which will be delivered in German, are addressed to advanced students of the university and to others interested in the subject. A syllabus (in English) of the lectures will be obtainable in the lecture room.

**ADMISSION FREE, WITHOUT TICKET**

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Erste Philosophie (1923/23) *Erste Teil. Kritische Ideengeschichte.( Huserliana 7, 1956); First philosophy (1923/24).* *First Part: Critical survey of History* *of Ideas****;*** Erste Philosophie. (1923/24) *Zweiter Teil. Theorie der phänomenologischen Reduktion. (Husserliana 8, 1959);* *First philosophy, (1923/24). Second Part. Theory of the Phenomenological Reductions;* Phänomenologische Psychologie. *Vorlesungen Sommersemester,* (1925), (Husserliana 9, 1962); *Phenomenological Psychology,*

*Lectures form Summer Semester,1925;* this work contains Husserl’s lectures on “Phenomenological Psychology”, during the Summer Semester, 1925; Analysen zur

passiven Synthesis. Aus Vorlesungs und Forschungsmanuskripten, (1918-1926), (Husserliana 11, 1966); *Analysis of Passive Synthesis:* *Lectures and* *Research Manuscripts, 1918-1926;* the above research manuscripts presents Husserl’s lectures on both “Active and Passive” Constitution, (1918-1926)**;** Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. *Texte aus dem Nachlass.* *Erster Teil.* (*1905-1920), (Husserliana 12, 1973); On the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity, Part 1* (1905-1920) ; presents Husserl’s analysis of the problem of intersubjectivity; Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität.*Texte aus dem Nachlass. Zweiter Teil. (1921-28), (Husserliana 14, 1973); (On the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity*, Part 2. (1921-1928); contains Husserl’s analysis of the problem of intersubjectivity; Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. *Texte aus dem* *Nachlass.* *Dritter Teil. (1929-35), (Husserliana 15,*

*1973); On the Phenomenology of* *Intersubjectivity.* Part 3, (1929-1935) ; presents Husserl’s analysis of the problem of Intersubjectivity**;** Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge, (1929), (Husserliana 1, 1973); *The Cartesian Meditations and*

*Paris Lectures (1929);* this work contains Husserl’s analysis of the problem of intersubjectivity and the problem of the “I-Other” relation as reflected in Husserl famous “fifth” Cartesian Meditation.

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The chronological survey for Husserl’s Freiburg period of evolution as documented by Rudolf Bernet, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach *(“An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology, 1993)* outlining Husserl’s life, work and teaching for the Freiburg period of development is as follows:

. 1916-1928: As Ordinarius Professor in Freiburg

. 1917: (April) Husserl’s son Gerhart lies wounded in the military hospital at Spyer.

. 1917: (3 May) Inaugural lecture “Die reine Phänomenologie, ihr Forschungsgebiet und

ihre Methode” (Pure Phenomenology, its Research Domain and its Method”).

. 1917: (July) Death of Husserl’s mother.

. 1917: (8-17 November) Three public lectures on Fichte’s ideal of humanity as part of

the University courses for war participants (repetition 14-16 January 1918; repetition on 6, 7

and 9 November 1918 for the Academic Staff of the Philosophical Faculty).

. 1918/19: Foundation of the *“*Freiburger Phänomenologische Gesellschaft.”

. 1919: Publication of Husserl’s “*Erinnerungen an Brentano”*.

. 1919: (October) Husserl signs Roman Rolland’s appeal “Fur die Unabhängigkeit des Geists

(“For the Independence of the Spirit“) sent out by the League for the Advancement of

Humanity.

. 1922: (June) Public Lectures at the University of London: “*Phänomenologishe Methode und*

*Phänomenologische Philosophie“; stay in Cambridge at the home of G. Dawes Hicks;*

*meeting with J. Ward, G.F. Stout, G.E. Moore.*

. (December) Election as “corresponding member“ of the Aristotelian Society.

. 1923: Publication of “Erneuerung. Ihr Problem und ihre Methode“ (“Renewal. Its Problem and

its Method“) in the Japanese Journal *“Kaizo.“*

. Publication of the other two *Kaizo papers: “Die Methode der Wesensforschungen“ (“The*

*Method of Edetic Inquiry“) and “Erneuerung als individidualethisches Problem“ (“Renewal*

*as Problem of the Ethics of the Individual“).*

*.* 1924-25:R. Carnap attends Husserl’s advanced seminar.

*.* 1924:(September) First visit of Dorion Cairns to Husserl.

. 1925: Publication of a meditation “Über die Reden Gotamo Buddhos“ (“On Buddha’s

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Teachings”) on the occasion of Karl Eugen Neumann’s translation into German.

. 1926: (8 April) Heidegger presents Husserl with the “dedication” of “*Sein und Zeit.”*

. 1927-28: Work with Heidegger on the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on Phenomenology.

. Publication of Husserl’s *“Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins”*

(“Lectures on the Phenomenology of Inner Time-Consciousness”) edited by Heidegger in

volume 9 of the “Jahrbuch” *(Jahrbuch fur Philosophie und Phenomenologische Forschung).*

*.* 1928: (31 March) Emeritus professor. 18

Now that we have briefly touched upon the Halle, Göttingen, and Freiburg periods of Husserl’s philosophical development in this brief introductory study let us now proceed to discuss the fourth and final phase of the evolution of his thinking which I have designated as being Husserl’s later “Jewish Retirement” period.

**§ 18. THE “JEWISH RETIREMENT” PERIOD (1929-1938)**

What was Husserl’s “Jewish Retirement” period like?

Historically, the “Jewish Retirement Period” has both a “happy” and a “sad” story to it. The “happy story,” of course, is precisely that this above period of time (1929-1938) represents one of the most creative and productive periods in Husserl’s philosophical life and career as far as his evolution is concerned.

That is to say, the “Jewish Retirement Period” produced many fresh and creative ideas surrounding Husserl’s project for a ‘pure phenomenology and a

phenomenological philosophy’, which, to be sure, includes Husserl’s last great work on “The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology” which he “subtitled”: “An Introduction to Phenomenology” in its own right. It is precisely this “unfinished status” of Husserl’s “late work” on the “Krisis” (which he was working on at the time of his death in 1938), which makes his “last great work” on

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“The Crisis of the European Sciences” so very interesting (because of the incomplete status as Husserl’s late work).

Let us turn to the “sad” story first.

Moreover, while the happy story begins at Husserl’s official residence at 40 “Lorettastrasse”, in Freiburg im Breisgau, it must be contrasted with the “sad story” about what factually happened both politically and historically during Husserl’s later

“Jewish Retirement” period; that is to say, regarding the “Nazification of Germany” (in 1933) as well as the rise of Adolf Hitler who come to power in Nazi Germany at a time when both Husserl and his entire family were certainly living witnesses to Hitler’s rising dictatorship as well as the “anti-Jewish” sentiment which was spreading like wildfire across Nazi Germany during Husserl’s “Jewish Retirement” period.

**§** **19**. **THE HEIDEGGER QUESTION**

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that, on the academic side of the issue involving Edmund Husserl’s “Jewish Retirement” period and the “Nazification of

Germany” is the “alleged” posting by Martin Heidegger of the Nazi “Anti-Jewish” Decree Order (Nazi ‘Anti-Jewish’ legislation) barring Husserl and other Jews from the grounds of the “University of Freiburg” as well as its library by

the Nazi party (which Heidegger claims he specifically “prohibited” from being posted as “Rector” of the “University of Freiburg” (in his famous “Der Spiegel” Interview); not to mention, of course, the subsequent death of one of Husserl’s most beloved and closest Göttingen and Freiburg assistants, Edith Stein, (Sister Teresa

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Benedicta of the Cross), who perished in the Nazi concentration camps in Auschwitz-Birkenau, on August 9th, 1942, along with thousands of other people who died there during World War II at the hands of Hitler’s Nazi-regime.

This is the “sad” story.

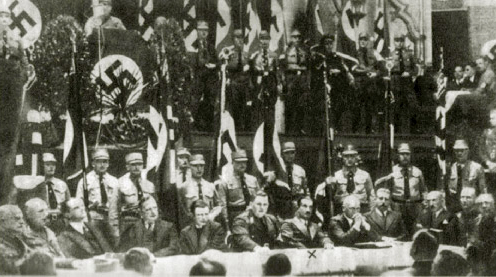
Moreover, before turning to the “happy story” of Edmund Husserl, I wish to first try to “set the record” straight in this section concerning the extent of the political activities of Husserl’s former colleague, Martin Heidegger, (the “successor” to

Husserl’s Chair in philosophy) during Husserl’s so-called “Jewish Retirement” period; that is to say, regarding Heidegger’s relation to the “Nazi party” as well as the role Adolf Hitler’s dictatorship played in the *“Nazification Germany”* in 1933 and the persecution of all German Jews.

Also, during Husserl’s “Jewish-Retirement Period” we should like to take a closer look at some of the political rumors which were circulating and deliberately being fabricated against Edmund Husserl’s former colleague, Martin Heidegger, (the author of *“Sein und Zeit,”*1927), by academic “insiders” (philosophical enemies) as

well as political “outsiders” (members of the “Nazi party”) in order to attempt to try to “discredit” Heidegger both intellectually and politically while he held the key

academic position and post of “Rector” at the “University of Freiburg” during Husserl’s so-called “ Jewish-Retirement Period” (1929-1938).



Martin Heidegger (2nd left)

at a “Nazi” ceremony in Freiburg University where he refused to post the

required “Anti-Jewish” Decree Order against “Jews”

as demanded by Hitler’s Nazi regime

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Moreover, part of the allegations or rumors which were falsely circulated and leveled against Martin Heidegger during this above period of time between the years 1933 to 1936 (strictly for political reasons as a form of *character assassination*) by his philosophical “opponents” and political “enemies” involve some of the following allegations and accusations:

*1) that Heidegger illegitimately “collaborated” with the Nazi Party as “Rector” of the University by having the “Anti-Jewish” Decree Order “posted” at Freiburg University; 2) that Heidegger allegedly “banned” Edmund Husserl (and other Jews) from the grounds of the University as well as “forbade” them to use the library; and 3) that as “Rector” of Freiburg University Heidegger illegitimately “authorized” the so-called “book burning” ceremony in front of the main university building.*

All of these above “allegations” are completely “false” and are categorically “refuted” by Martin Heidegger for the record in his famous *“Der Spiegel Interview”* with Rudolf Augstein and Georg Wolff conducted on September 3rd, 1966, in an exclusive interview ten years “before” his death (Heidegger died on May 26th, 1976).

Nevertheless, in order to help clear this matter up (during Husserl’s so-called “Jewish Retirement Period” 1929-1938), I now wish to turn to some “key passages” or brief philosophical “excerpts” taken from Heidegger’s “Der Spiegel interview” with

Rudolf Augstein and Georg Wolff, (on September 3rd, 1966), in order to try to help throw light on what Heidegger has to say about all these “false” political allegations (in the “smear-and-run-campaign” against him) at this time (1933) by critics and opponents of his philosophy (Sein und Zeit), in order to help set the record straight

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surrounding the key role he played as “Rector” at the “University of Freiburg” (under the Nazi regime in 1933) as well as the chosen successor to Edmund Husserl’s Chair of philosophy (chosen by Husserl himself) during the so-called “Jewish retirement period” (1929-1938).

**MARTIN HEIDEGGER’S – ‘DER SPIEGEL INTERVIEW’** 19

**§ 20. (ON ADOLF HITLER)**

**DER SPIEGEL**: ….The Führer himself and alone is the present and future German reality and its law.

**HEIDEGGER**: These sentences are not to be found in the “rectoral address”, but only in the local “Freiburg student newspaper”, at the beginning of the winter semester 1933/34. When I took over the “rectorate”, it was clear to me that I would not get through it without making compromises. Today I would no longer write the sentences you cited. Even in 1934, I no longer said anything of the kind.

**§ 21.** **(ON BOOK BURNING)**

**DER SPIEGEL**: ….You have been accused, for instance, of having participated in “book-burnings” organized by the students or by the Hitler Youth.   
  
**HEIDEGGER**: I “forbade” the “book burning” that was planned to take place in front of the main university building.

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At a Nazi Book-Burning Ceremony

Organized by the Hitler-Youth in Nazi, Germany.

(Probably around 1933)

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**DER SPIEGEL**: You have also been accused of having books written by “Jewish” authors “removed” from the “university library” or from the philosophy department’s library.

**HEIDEGGER**: As the director of the department, I was in charge of only its library. I did not comply with “repeated demands” to remove books by Jewish authors. Former participants in my seminars can testify today that not only were “no books” by “Jewish” authors “removed”, but that these authors, especially Husserl, were quoted and discussed just as they were “before” 1933.   
  
**DER SPIEGEL**: We will take note of that. But how do you explain the origin of such rumors? Is it maliciousness?

**HEIDEGGER**: From what I know about the sources, I am inclined to believe that. But the motives for the “slander” lie deeper.

**§** **22. (ON EDMUND HUSSERL)**

**DER SPIEGEL**:Another similar question: You were a student of Edmund Husserl, your Jewish predecessor in the chair of philosophy at the University of Freiburg. He recommended you to the faculty as his “successor” as professor. Your relationship to him cannot have been without gratitude.

**HEIDEGGER**: You know the “dedication” in “Being and Time”.

**DER SPIEGEL**: Of course.   
  
**HEIDEGGER**: In 1929 I edited the “festschrift” for his “seventieth birthday”, and at the “celebration in his house” I gave the speech, which was also printed in the “Akademische

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Mitteilungen” in May 1929.

**DER SPIEGEL**: Later, however, the relationship did become strained. Can you and would you like to tell us what this could be traced back to?

§ **23. (ON THE HUSSERL-HEIDEGGER BREAK)**

**HEIDEGGER**: Our “differences” of opinion on philosophical matters had intensified. In the “beginning of the thirties”, Husserl settled accounts with Max Scheler and me in public. The clarity of Husserl’s “statements” left nothing to be desired. I could never find out what persuaded Husserl to set himself against my thinking in such a “public” manner.

**DER SPIEGEL**: On what occasion was this?   
   
**HEIDEGGER**: Husserl spoke at the University of Berlin before an audience of “sixteen hundred”. Heinrich Mühsam reported in one of the big Berlin newspapers on a “kind of sports-palace atmosphere.”   
   
**DER SPIEGEL**: The argument as such is uninteresting in this context. It is only interesting that it was not an argument that has to do with the year 1933.   
  
**HEIDEGGER**: Not in the least.

**DER SPIEGEL**: That has been our observation as well. Is it incorrect that you “later” left the “dedication to Husserl” out of “Being and Time”?



Max Scheler

(Probably 1933/34)

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**HEIDEGGER:** No, that’s true. I clarified the facts in my book “On the Way to Language”. 17 The text reads: “To counter numerous, widely spread, incorrect allegations, let it be expressly stated here that the “dedication” to “Being and Time”, mentioned in the text of the dialogue on page 16, was also placed at the beginning of the book’s fourth edition in 1935. When my publisher thought that the printing of the “fifth edition” in 1941 was “endangered”, and that the book might be “banned”, it was finally agreed, following “Niemeyer’s proposal” and wish, that the dedication should be “left out” of the “fifth edition”. My condition was that the “footnote” on

page 38, in which the reasons for the “dedication” are actually given, “should

remain”. It reads: “If the following investigation has taken any steps forward in disclosing the ‘things themselves,’ the author must first thank E. Husserl, who, by providing his own incisive “personal guidance” and by freely turning over his “unpublished investigations”, familiarized the author with the most diverse areas of phenomenological research during his student years in Freiburg.”

**DER SPIEGEL**: Then we hardly need to ask whether it is true that you, as rector of the University of Freiburg, “forbade” the “emeritus professor Husserl” to enter or to use the university library or the philosophy department’s library.

**HEIDEGGER**: That is slander.

**DER SPIEGEL**: And there is no letter in which this prohibition against Husserl is expressed? How did this rumor get started?

**HEIDEGGER**: I don’t know either; I don’t have an explanation for it.

§ **24.** **(ON HUSSERL’S FUNERAL)**

**DER SPIEGEL**: You did not attend Husserl’s funeral in 1938. Why not?

**HEIDEGGER**: Let me say the following about that: The “accusation” that I had “broken off” my relationship to Husserl is “unfounded”. My wife wrote a letter in both our names to “Frau Husserl” in May 1933. In it we expressed our “unchanged gratitude,” and we sent the letter with a “bouquet of flowers” to their house. Frau

Husserl answered briefly in a formal "thank you" note and wrote that the relations between our families were broken off. It was a human failure that “I did not” once again “attest to my gratitude” and my “admiration” at Husserl’s “sickbed” and “after” his death. I apologized for it later in a letter to Frau Husserl.

**DER SPIEGEL**: Husserl died in 1938. You had already resigned from the rectorate in February 1934. How did that come about?

**HEIDEGGER**: Yes, I refused to take part in the ceremony of the change of rectors.   
  
**DER SPIEGEL**: Was your successor a committed Party member?

**HEIDEGGER**: He was a member of the law school. The Party newspaper Der Alemanne announced his appointment as rector with the banner headline: “The First National Socialist Rector of the University.”

**DER SPIEGEL**: Did you have difficulties with the Party afterward, or what happened?

**DER SPIEGEL**: Husserl died in 1938. You had already resigned from the rectorate in February 1934. How did that come about?

**HEIDEGGER**: Yes, I refused to take part in the ceremony of the change of rectors.

**DER SPIEGEL**: Was your successor a committed Party member?



Edmund Husserl

(probably 1929 / 1933)

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**HEIDEGGER**: He was a member of the law school. The Party newspaper Der Alemanne announced his appointment as rector with the banner headline: “The First National Socialist Rector of the University.”

**DER SPIEGEL**: Did you have difficulties with the Party afterward, or what happened?

§ **25.** **(ON SURVEILLANCE)**

**HEIDEGGER**: I was constantly under surveillance.

**DER SPIEGEL**: Do you have an example of that?

**DER SPIEGEL**: How did you find out about that?   
  
**HEIDEGGER**: Because he came to me himself. He had already received his doctorate

and was a participant in my advanced seminar in the winter semester of 1936/37 and in the summer semester of 1937. He had been sent here to Freiburg by the SD (Sicherheitsdienst; Security Service) to keep me under surveillance.   
  
**DER SPIEGEL**: Why did he suddenly come to you?   
  
**HEIDEGGER**: Because of my seminar on Nietszche in the summer semester of 1937 and because of the way in which work was done in the seminar, he “confessed to me” that he could not continue with the task of “surveillance” assigned to him. He wanted to inform me of this situation in view of my future activity as a teacher.

**§ 26. (ON TROUBLES WITH THE PARTY)** 50  
  
**DER SPIEGEL**: Otherwise you had no difficulties with the Party?   
  
**HEIDEGGER**: I only knew that my works were not allowed to be discussed, for example the essay “Plato’s Theory of Truth.” The lecture I gave on “Hölderlin” in the “Germanic Institute in Rome” in the spring of 1936 was attacked in the Hitler Youth magazine “Wille und Macht” in a most unpleasant way. Those who are interested should read the polemics against me that started up in the summer of 1934 in E. Krieck’s magazine “Volk im Werden”. I neither belonged to the German delegation to the international philosophy conference in Prague in 1934 nor was I even invited to participate. I was also supposed to have been “excluded” from the international Descartes conference in Paris in 1937. This seemed so strange to those in Paris that the head of the conference (Professor Brèhier at the Sorbonne) asked me why I did not belong to the German delegation. I answered that “the organizers” of the conference should inquire at the “Reich Ministry of Education”

about this case. After a while, I received an “invitation from Berlin” to “belatedly join” the delegation. I refused. The lectures “What Is Metaphysics?” and “On the Essence of Truth” were sold under the counter in dust jackets “without titles”. Shortly after 1934, the “rectoral address” was taken off the market at the “instigation” of the Party. It was only allowed to be discussed in National

Socialist teachers’ camps as a subject for the Party’s political “polemics”.

§ **27. (ON DIGGING TRENCHES)**

**HEIDEGGER**: In the last year of the war, five hundred of the most eminent scholars and artists were “exempted” from any kind of military service. I was not one of those who were exempted. On the contrary, in the summer of 1944 I was ordered to “dig trenches” over near the Rhine, on the Kaiserstuhl.   
  
**DER SPIEGEL**: On the other side, the “Swiss side”, Karl Barth dug trenches.



Martin Heidegger at his vacation home

in *Todtnauberg* on the edge of the Black Forest

(Probably 1968/70)

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**HEIDEGGER**: The way in which it happened is interesting. The rector had called the entire faculty into the Lecture Hall. He gave a short speech to the effect that what he would now say was in agreement with the National Socialist district leader and the National Socialist Gauleiter leader. He would now divide the entire faculty into “three groups”: first those who were completely “dispensable”, second those who were “partially dispensable”, and third those who were “indispensable”. First on the list of the “completely dispensable” came Heidegger, later G. Ritter. In the winter semester 1944/45, after I had finished work on “the trenches” near the Rhine, I gave a lecture course entitled “Poetry and Thinking” (Dichten und Denken), in a certain sense a continuation of my *Nietzsche seminar*, that is to say, of the confrontation with National Socialism. After the second class, I was conscripted into the “Volkssturm,” the oldest member of the faculty to be called for service.

That is Heidegger’s major defense and critique to all the “false” accusations and allegations which have so far been leveled against him by his detractors and critics alike concerning his philosophical and political activities as “rector” of the University of Freiburg. These above answers may not prove convincing to everyone; however, in our judgment, Heidegger provided us with some very honest answers to some very

“tough questions” which were posed to him by Rudolf Augstein and Georg Wolff

in his famous “Der Spiegel” interview in 1966; that is to say, regarding exactly what happened both politically and historically when Adolf Hitler came to power and led millions of people down the road to war beginning with the “Nazification of Germany” in 1933 during Husserl’s so-called “Jewish Retirement” period.

All this, of course, is the “sad story,” as we all know it, whichnevertheless, must be contrasted along with the “happy story” if the truth is to be revealed to us historically and the record is to be set straight concerning Husserl’s later “Jewish retirement” period.

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Let us now turn to the “happy story”.

**§ 28. HUSSERL’S RESIDENCE AT 40 ‘LORRETTOSTRASSE’**

“The happy story” begins after Husserl left Göttingen where he and his family soon took up residence at 40 ‘Lorettostrasse’ in Freiburg-im-Bresgau first as *Ordinarius* *Professor* (1916-1928)and later as *Emeritus Professor* (1928-1938) . The “happy story” begins, of course, with the warm hospitality shown by Malvine and Edmund Husserl to all those who were guests in their home. The Husserl’s especially liked to entertain guests at various social and academic gatherings inside their private residence. That is to say, the social gatherings in their home were usually filled with lively dinners, wine, laughter, and good conversation.

Moreover, these above social gatherings were generally prepared for students, professors, and friends who were invited guests to Husserl’s home at 40 “Lorettostrasse”. The social gatherings might include a simple invitation for students

from a “cup of tea” to a more elaborate “evening meal” (“abendessen”) for guests depending on the special occasion.

According to W. R. Boyce Gibson, (the English translator of Edmund Husserl’s “First Book” of Ideas: A General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology” (1913), ) he provides us with a family portrait of Malvine and Edmund Husserl’s warm hospitality from excerpts from his 1928 “Freiburg diary” surrounding the reception of guests at 40 ‘Lorettostrasse’ in the following way:

**Diary entry May 8th, 1928, W. R. Boyce Gibson:**

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Have seen the great Husserl this morning at 12 o’clock. (40 Lorettostrasse). He had only arrived from Holland at 10, after travelling all night. He has been lecturing in Holland during Easter vacation. (Gave 4 lectures in London 1922, was also later a guest at the Aristotelian Society.) He was most

cordial and pleasant in his greeting, and gave me one-half hour or more of most interesting and inspiring conversation. 20

Again he writes:

**Diary entry May 20th, 1928, W. R. Boyce Gibson:**

Husserl invited his ‘*Uebungs’* class to “afternoon tea” at his house, Loretta strasse 40, at 4:30. I arrived at the same time as 4 Japanese and a Lithuanian student (Emmanuel Levinas). We all

trooped in and Frau Professor very graciously received us. We students were introduced to each other and talked. Then we sat down in groups to afternoon tea – I sat at the foreigners’ table with a Dutch lady student, Fraulein Stomps, next to me from Amsterdam (a theological student who found she needed phenomenology to help her through her doctor’s Thesis on the “Psychology of Faith”). The Lithuanian, the Japanese, Kneale of B.N.C. were at the same table. Frau Profesor and Herr Professor alternatively sat at the head and kept the conversation going wonderfully. Frau Prof. told us interesting things about the life and work of her husband.

The “Logische Untersuchungen” had taken him 10 years to write. During those 10 years as Privat-dozent, Husserl gave no lectures. They were years of continuous research on logical studies. He gave up concerts, theaters, social pleasures, and they just managed to *“live through”* the time by force of strict economy….

While at tea a student brought to us the news of Scheler’s death, - I think at Frankfurt where he was doing his professional work. I wish to set on record here how immensely I am impressed with Husserl’s personality. He is wonderfully good to his students, takes endless trouble to make things clear to them. He is full of the significance of his work, but with nothing petty about him… 21

Elsewhere he states:

**Diary entry June 15th, 1928, W.R. Boyce Gibson:**

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Went to the Husserl’s for dinner (Abendessen) at 8. A large party of about 16, including Professors of Greek, Oriental languages, Geography, Economics, etc. Excellent dinner but very

sensibly done. *Only* two courses. The first was a composite dish containing roast beef, sausages, maccaroni, horse-radish and every variety of vegetables. The second strawberry tart and cream. In each case the dish returned a second time, and guests were expected to take two helpings of each. Wine in bottles along the center of the table. Guests took it when they wanted. At end of meal we all got up, gentlemen escorted their ladies to the next room, and the interminable handshaking started, centering on the hostess. After some general conversation men and woman separated into two lots, and remained so till the end of the evening. Beer, lemonade and cakes handed around, and a lot of smoking. I had some words with Husserl from which I gathered the following: In next *Jahrbuch* there will be a short article on Time by Husserl, something he wrote 20 years ago. I think. But Heidegger has in hand an important MS. On Time-Consciousness by Husserl, about 150 pages, but Heidegger

insisted that Husserl should leave the publishing to him, so that Husserl dosen’t know when it will be forthcoming or how. [Possibly, I should imagine it will appear in a volume dediated to Husserl; and containing articles by all his disciples, but that’s only a guess, as Husserl said nothing about it Heidegger’s own *2te Halfte* of “Sein und Zeit” will not be appearing for some little time, I regret to say. Husserl told me that Edith Stein was an old Gottingen pupil of his who had been his assistant at Freiburg for 2 years (holding the place Landgrebe holds at present). She had had access to all his MSS. She was a Catholic and [is] now in a Convent. 22

**Diary entry October 19th, 1928, W. R. Boyce Gibson:**

Have just come back from Abendessen with th Husserl’s who also had as guests ‘Van der Hoop’ and his wife. Van der hoop was Husserl’s host in Amsterdam. He is a psychoanalyst on phenomenological lines. He has written a book on “Character and the Unconscious” in the Intl. Lib. Series.

A lovely evening, both the Prof. and his wife being goodness and amiability itself. Husserl is a great man!

He has lent me the MS. of his original article to Encyl. Brit. This was 7,000 words long, and had to be reduced to 4,000 by Salmon who translated it. Also gave me a copy of his “Ideen” with the words on the flyleaf which I shall greatly cherish. 23



A Gathering of “The Husserl Family” with Friends

(The photo is taken probably between

the years 1920-1929)

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Moreover, this is part of the “happy story” involving Husserl’s philosophical and social life concerning students, professors, friends, and guests who visited Malvine and Edmund Husserl’s lovely home for various academic and social gatherings during the “Freiburg” and “Jewish Retirement” periods.

The picture that W. R. Boyce Gibson paints for us in his famous “excerpts” from a 1928 “Freiburg diary” remains unforgettable. The above diary entries provide the reader with valuable insight as well as help to throw philosophical light on Edmund Husserl “the man” who comes to life before our eyes, both colorfully and vividly in these Diary entries and who is seen by students and colleagues as being absolutely devoted to his “mission in life” as a philosopher as well as being completely devoted to his students as a teacher and professor.

In addition, the 1928 “Freiburg diary” entries also paints a “lasting picture” of Malvine Husserl “the woman” as being a devoted wife and everlasting supporter of her husband’s professional life, teaching and work. This is precisely how students, professors, friends, and guests saw the Husserl’s in their home at 40 “Lorrettostrasse” which have been recorded for posterity and have now come down to us in the form of personal “memoirs” written by W. R. Boyce Gibson the English

translator of Husserl’s “First Book” of Ideas as “excerpts” from a 1928 “Freiburg diary” during Husserl’s so-called “Jewish retirement” period.

Moreover, the chronological survey for Husserl’s “Jewish-Retirement” period of evolution as documented by Rudolf Bernet, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach *(“An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology, 1993)* outlining Husserl’s life, work and teaching for the above period is as follows:

. 1928-1938: As Emeritus Professor

. 1928: (April) Trip to Berlin on the occasion of the 80th birthday of C. Stumpf.



A Gathering of the Husserl Family

(Probably 1920-1922)

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. 1928: (April) Public Lectures in Amesterdam: *“Phänomenologie und Psychologie.*

*Transzendentale Phänomenologie“;* Husserl is introduced to the mathematician L.E.J.

Brouwer and to Leo Schestow on visit from Paris.

. 1928: (April) Husserl is asked by the Ministry of Public Worship and Education to hold the

professional chair of philosophy during the summer term 1928, Heidegger’s appointment as his

successor being only possible from 1 October.

. 1928: (August) Ludwig Landgrebe receives a grant in order to continue working for Husserl;

Eugene Fink takes over his post and thus begins his collaboration with Husserl.

. 1928/29: Writing of *Formale und transcendentale Logik* in a few months.

. 1929: (February) Public Lectures in Paris; Husserl is introduced to L. Lévey Bruhl, E. Meyerson,

A. Koyré, J. Hering, and E. Levinas.

. 1929: (8 April) Presentation of the *Festschrift* on the occasion of Husserl’s 70th birthday by

Martin Heidegger.

. 1929: (July) Publication of *Formale und transzendentale Logik* in volume 10 of the Jarhbuch

and at the same time an offprint.

*.* 1929: (Summer term) H. Marcuse and wife study with Husserl.

. 1929/30: Husserl withdrawls his lecture announcement.

. 1930: Publication of “*Nachwort zu meinen ‘Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und*

*phänomenologischen Philosophie,”*, in volume 11 of the Jahrbuch.

. 1931: (June) Lecture tour in Germany: Husserl talks at the Kant Society in Frankfurt,

. Berlin (to an audience of 1,600 people) and Halle on “Phänomenologie und Anthropologie.”

. 1933: (6 April) Suspension by decree Nr. A 7642; (20 July) annulment of the decree.

. 1933: (November) Husserl is offered a chair at the University of Southern California in

Los Angeles.

. 1934: (Around 1 August) Husserl is invited by the Prague Congress to take a position in a letter

regarding the present task of philosophy; (30 August) Husserl writes a letter to the Prague

Congress of Philosophers.

. 1934: (October) Plan of Archives for Husserl’s manuscripts.

. 1935: (March) Negotiations with Prague in view of of delivery of Husserl’s manuscripts; L.

Landgrebe arrives in Freiburg to establish a detailed inventory.

. 1935: (7 May) Public Lecture before the Kulturband in Vienna: “Die Philosophie in der Krisis der

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europäischen Menschheit“ (repetition on 10 May).

. 1935: (November) Public Lectures in Prague on “Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften

und die Psychologie.”

. 1936: (15 January) Withdrawal of teaching license as of the end of 1935.

. 1936: (24 January) Dispatch to Prague of first part of *Krisis* for print in the first issue of the new

journal *Philosophia, e*dited by A. Liebert in Belgrade.

. 1936: (25 January) The Ministry of the Reich for Science, Education and Popular Education

compels Husserl to withdraw from the philosophical organization founded by Liebert in

Belgrade.

. 1937: (8 June) Rejection by the Ministry of the Reich of Husserl’ request to be allowed to

participate in the 9th International Congress of Philosophy in Paris.

. 1938: (27 April) Husserl dies at age 79 years. 24

**§** **33. HUSSERL’S “CONVERSION” TO CHRISTIANITY**

Did Husserl believe in God or not as a philosopher and as a phenomenologist?

This is a very simple and reasonable question to ask ourselves. Any answer on this subject-matter deserves a straightforward and honest reply to the reader who may be wondering at this point about what type of faith or religious conviction

Husserl actually held as a philosopher concerning the idea of God in his phenomenology? In light of these facts, I wish to allow Husserl to “speak for

himself” on this point regarding the specific relationship between Christian theology and philosophy.

Says Husserl,

‘ “SEE MY NEW TESTAMENT?” he said. More than once to favorite students. “It is always on my desk, but I never open it. I know once I open it and read it, I

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shall have to give up philosophy”. 25 Husserl made is admission to students during his later so-called “Jewish retirement” period of development (1929-1938).

Moreover, as far as Husserl’s conversion from Judaism to Christianity is concerned, it should be pointed out that his personal faith in Jesus Christ (as a Jew) to the body of Christ (in the form of the Christian church) came at around seventeen years of age when Husserl was still a young man during his first semester of study at the University of Leipzig.

This is to say, upon the advice of Thomas Masaryk, a personal friend, at the University of Leipzig, (and the former first president of Czechoslovakia), Husserl went through a long period of spiritual meditation and self-examination before converting from “Judaism to Christianity”; that is, once his inner convictions had ripened into faith he simply approached the minister of his church, with his “New Testament” in hand, and said:

*“On the basis of this book, I should like to be baptized”* 26

Thus, in light of his faith, Husserl wished no further interpretation of the Christian scriptures. No further explanations of his faith. No further interpretation of

theology or philosophy. But solely on the basis of his own “inner spiritual” convictions did he ask to be allowed to be received into the Christian church as a “Jewish convert” to Christianity through his personal and existential faith in Jesus Christ.

In this fashion was Husserl baptized into the Christian church (on the basis of his “faith” and “spiritual convictions”) and he remained firmly anchored in the Christian faith right up until the end of his life, when he died, in Freiburg, Germany,

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on April, 27th, 1938. These are the “outward” circumstances of Husserl’s “conversion” to Christianity as a Jewish convert. The “inner” side of this above

conversion can be found running throughout all of Husserl’s writings (as the soul’s journey back to God) in the form of a phenomenology “Spirit” which overlap with the spiritual questions of theology.

**§** **34. THE DEATH OF EDMUND HUSSERL**

Moreover, since Husserl held a deep faith in God he certainly had no fear of death and was prepared to die for the “spiritual convictions” which he believed in as a member of the body of Christ and His invisible church (without four walls) to which he was a spiritual member. Nevertheless, on April 27th, 1938, Husserl fell ill with pluersey and died.

“On Holy Thursday, 1938, feeling death approaching, he asked, his nurse: “Can one really die well?” ‘Yes, in perfect peace,’ she said. ‘But how’? asked Husserl, ‘Through the grace of our Savior, Jesus Christ,’ said the nurse, and read him the psalm: ‘The Lord is my shepherd. ‘ ” 27

“When she came to the words: ‘Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for Thou art with me,’ Husserl interrupted her: ‘Yes, that is what I mean! I want Him to be with me. ‘ ” 28

Again, “when he awoke the next morning, his wife greeted him: ‘Today is Good Friday.’ ‘What a wonderful day, Good Friday! he said. ‘Yes, Christ has forgiven us everything.‘ 29

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“For days Husserl lay in a light slumber, silent even during his waking hours. But on April 27th, 1938, he suddenly turned to his nurse: and said, *‘I HAVE SEEN SOMETHING WONDERFUL’.* *‘Write it down quickly!’* 30

“When the nurse returned with the notebook, Husserl was dead.” This is the way Husserl’s life ended following “Good Friday”, on April 27th, 1938. 31

**35.** **THE RESCUE OF HUSSERL’S MANUSCRIPTS FROM NAZI-GERMANY**

What happened to Edmund Husserl’s writings after his death? Were they safe? How did Husserl’s “unpublished manuscripts” surrounding his idea of a pure phenomenology and phenomenological philosophy end up “surviving” the Nazi purges, the Nazi confiscations, and the Nazi seizures of all Jewish property by Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime? That is to say, at a time when the Nazi persecution of the Jewish people was occurring on a daily basis inside Nazi-Germany by 1938. Was Edmund Husserl’s *Nachlass* in danger of being completely destroyed by Hitler’s Nazi regime because he and his wife were both Jews? And if so, how did Malvine Husserl (the widow of Edmund Husserl) attempt to deal with this “crisis” and political situation inside Nazi-Germany at the time? That is to say, concerning the danger of the possible seizure or confiscation of her late husband’s writingsby Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime after Husserl died on April 27th, 1938, in Freiburg?

In attempting to answer some of these above questions I wish to briefly turn to the story of the rescue and salvage of Edmund Husserl’s unpublished manuscripts by Father Hermann Leo Van Breda in Nazi-Germany at the time when Adolf Hitler’s political machinery or Nazi regime were on the verge of confiscating and completely destroying all of Husserl’s unpublished worksif his *Nachlass* was not immediately

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moved outside of Nazi-Germany to a “safer location” beyond the German borders for safe keeping. Thus the story of the salvage and rescue of Husserl’s *Nachlass,* begins with the very first visit by Father Hermann Leo Van Breda to Mrs. Husserl in Freiburg, Germany on August 29th, 1938.

Says Father Van Breda:

During my first visit with Mrs. Husserl, on August 29th, 1938, I was first able to grasp the

the astonishing quantity of philosophical documents that Husserl had left to the world. Eugene Fink, his loyal and knowledgeable assistant during his last years, was also in attendance. Already at that moment, he stressed the capital importance of Husserl’s posthumous work. Deeply stirred, I let my gaze scan the impressive row of folders, comprising some 40,000 pages of stenographic material that has been handwritten by Husserl, as well as around 10,000 pages of typed or hand written transcriptions. The transcription work has been done by Husserl’s successive assistants, namely, Edith Stein, Ludwig Landgrebe, and Eugene Fink….

Mrs. Husserl and Fink then showed me the extensive philosophical library that Husserl had collected between 1880 and 1938. It consisted of over two-thousand-seven-hundred volumes, including a remarkable collection of two-thousand offprints. 32

However, prior to coming to visit with Mrs. Husserl, Fr. Van Breda had written to her earlier in advance about his *“Leuven proposal”* surrounding the rescue and salvage of Husserl’s *Nachlass* from Nazi-Germany which he was prepared to discuss with Mrs. Husserl and Eugene Fink during their first visit together.

Throughout this first guided tour of this significant bulk of documents, I was mentally preparing myself for the discussion of Leuven’s edition proposal. I was in fact hoping to close my first meeting with Mrs. Husserl with a discussion of this proposal. However, I was somewhat taken aback when, immediately after a detailed inspection of all the documents in question, Mrs. Husserl asked me about the “Leuven proposal” hinted at in my letter. 33

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While Fr. Van Breda informed Mrs. Husserl and Eugene Fink that the realization of the “Leuven proposal” would involve the approval of his “superiors” back in Leuven, Belgium, nevertheless, Fr. Van Breda indicated to Mrs. Husserl and Eugene Fink during his first visit that he had put together a “secret plan” in order to try to rescue Husserl’s entire *Nachlass* from the destruction of Hitler’s Nazi regime. The “secret plan” which Fr. Van Breda devised was to try to smuggle all of Husserl’s *Nachlass* (40,000 pages of manuscripts) out of Nazi-Germany through the Belgian diplomatic service; that is, by having the whole corpus Husserl’s entire *Nachlass* and personal library declared official Belgian “diplomatic” property by the Belgian government (Foreign Ministry office) and transported outside of Nazi-Germany to Belgium. The contents of Husserl’s *Nachlass* and library would be placed inside diplomatic pouches and “sealed” at the Belgian embassy in Frankfurt; once this first step occurred, the pouches would then be sent directly from Frankfurt to Brussels in order to avoid any official border inspections byNazi customs officials at the “border crossings” between Germany and Belgium. This was Father Van Breda’s “secret” plan. The question was, of course, would it work?

**§ 36. A BENEDICTINE NUN – SR. ADELGUNDIS JÄGERSCHMIDT**

However, Father Van Breda’s initial plan failed on its first attempt. That is to say, after going to the Belgian embassy in Frankfurt Father Van Breda was initially informed by the Belgian counsel there that only the ambassador himself (at the Belgian embassy in Berlin) had the power to authorize any such plan in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry Office in Brussels. Father Van Breda would have to go to the Belgian embassy in Berlin in order to realize his plans.

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Meanwhile, the verge of World War II was now imminent and threatening Europe and Fr. Van Breda (now back in Freiburg) along with Mrs. Husserl, and Eugene Fink, all “feared the worse” at this point, namely, that Husserl’s entire *Nachlass* was completely unsafeand in serious danger of being captured at any moment by the Nazi’s in Freiburg; therefore, Husserl’s *Nachlass*, it was agreed, had to be immediately be moved to a “safe-house” location outside of Freiburg if his manuscripts were going to survive being confiscated or seized by Hitler’s Nazi regime. Thus, as political pressure began to mount by the day and the Nazi’s were busy rounding up innocent Jews inside the Reich for immediate deportation from Germany (as well as the seizure all their property), this left little time for Father Van Breda, as it were, as the Husserl family could easily become the next victim of Adolf Hitler’s Nazi purge of all Jews now living in Freiburg.

This is exactly the moment when sister Adelgundia Jägerschmidt, a Benedictine nun from the “Convent of Lioba” (a former student of Husserl’s in Freiburg) stepped into the picture and proposed an alternative plan. Her short term alternative plan was simply to take Husserl’s writings across the German border from Freiburg, Germany into Switzerland (just four kilometers away) in order to deposit all his unpublished manuscripts at the “Convent of Lioba” for temporary safe-keeping; that is to say, until Father Van Breda had a chance to travel to Berlin in order to make all the necessary arrangements in advance with the ambassador at the Belgian embassy there in order to have Husserl’s *Nachlass* transported safely out of Nazi Germany to Leuven (via diplomatic pouch). Hence, by accomplishing this above plan they would be able to save all Husserl’s unpublished manuscriptsfrom beingcompletely destroyed at the hands of the Nazi regime. Again, the question was, would Sister Adelgundis’ alternative plan work?

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As it is easy to see, the plan put forward by Sister Adelgundis did not restrict itself to relocating the manuscripts to a safer region in Germany. It equally offered a solution to the sticky problem of getting the documents across the border. I have to admit that upon first considering this proposal I had serious doubts about it. Moreover, I believe that the “international situation” would shortly lead to the “closure of all borders”, thereby incurring the “risk” of having to “break off” the operation half way. I could not conceal these concerns during our meetings. However, I did add that even though I could not quite envisage the manuscripts being moved to Swiss territory in this fashion, I was convinced that this nearly providential opportunity was to be seized upon and that the manuscripts were to be taken from Freiburg to Konstanz. 34

Again, the alternative plan proposed by Sister Adelgundis failed.

It was decided on September 19th, 1938, Sister Adelgundis would travel to

Konstanz and take the manuscripts with her. That Monday, as I dropped off the three heavy suitcases containing over 40,000 handwritten pages in Sister Adelgundis’s train compartment, it was clear that the time of exodus and parting had come for the Husserlian *Nachlass.*

What Sister Adelgundis reported upon her return only confirmed my suspicions regarding the transport of the manuscripts to Switzerland. It was apparent that any such plan would undoubtedly fail. On Tuesday September 20th, 1938, only one day after her departure, she told us that the nuns at the monastery in Konstanz unhesitatingly declared their willingness to keep Husserl’s writings safe. However, they thought that smuggling the documents into Switzerland in these troubled times was an extremely dangerous undertaking. While the act of smuggling a mass of texts may not have been impossible outright, it was so dangerous that no one of sound mind would risk it.

During my meeting that took place at Mrs. Husserl’s house on the night of September 20th, 1938, I clearly stated my position in the matter. Sister Adelgundis and Eugene Fink also took part in this meeting. Following a thorough assessment of the current situation, everyone endorsed my opinion. Mrs. Husserl thus asked me to go to the Belgian embassy in Berlin as soon as possible, so that I could take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of her late husbands *Nachlass* and their transport abroad. Before making my way to Berlin, I would first have to go to Konstanz to retrieve the manuscripts. In this way, if my measures at the embassy were to be successful, I could at once deposit the documents there. 35

**§ 37. FR. VAN BREDA TRAVELS TO THE BELGIAN EMBASSY IN BERLIN**

However, before leaving for the Belgian embassy in Berlin certain legal documents had to be “signed” and “countersigned” between Mrs. Husserl and Father Van Breda; that is, by giving him exclusive “power of attorney” over all of Husserl’s manuscripts as a Belgian citizen in order to officially transport the entire *Nachlass* and *personal library* of Husserl’s from Germany to Belgium. Once the above legal documents were formally signed, Father Van Breda was prepared to “countersign” a an additional “secret” legal agreement between Mrs. Malvine Husserl and himself stating that the first legal document they had just “signed” was purely “fictitious” and that all exclusive rights to Husserl’s *Nachlass* and *personal library* would remain the property of Mrs. Husserl and her family. This is the situation which presented itself to them at their final meeting together in Freiburg.

….Mrs. Husserl issued me with a document “certifying” that she had bestowed

upon me her “powers of attorney” regarding her husband’s manuscripts. I should immediately add that such a document, carrying all the hallmarks of complete “authenticity”, was never meant to be binding for either Mrs. Husserl or her family. It was simply meant to establish the legal situation necessary to achieve a common goal.

To be sure, as soon as I realized the need for such a legal document, I composed a “second document”. This last stipulated that the “act of donation” was purely “fictitious” and that all rights pertaining to the manuscripts would rest with the family once the documents crossed the border.

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Moreover, on Thursday September 22nd, 1938, Fr. Van Breda returned to the “Convent of Lioba” near Konstanz in order to collect his three suitcases containing Husserl’s *Nachlass* (40,000 pages of shorthand manuscripts) and then travelled overnight by train from Konstanz, Switzerland, to Berlin, Germany, directly to the

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Franciscan monastery at Berlin-Pankow where he then temporarily deposited and left his three suitcases containing Husserl’s *Nachlass* before paying an official visit at the Belgium embassy to the Consul General there in order to make all the necessary arrangements for the transport of Husserl’s *Nachlass* from Nazi Germany to Belgium.

Thus, everything was ready for my trip to Berlin. On Thursday September 22nd, I set off for Konstanz by train to collect the suitcases with the manuscripts. I spent that night traveling from Konstanz to Berlin. On Friday, September 23rd, 1938, after leaving the manuscripts at the Franciscan monestry in Berlin-Pankow, I secured an appointment with two Belgian diplomats for that afternoon. I first spoke with the consul general, Mr. Halleau (?). He told me that the ambassador himself was responsible for all the decisions concerning the deposit of Belgian property at the embassy as well as the inclusion of non-official items in the diplomatic pouch. Since the ambassador was out of Berlin at the time, only his secretary could see to my request. 37

Elsewhere, Fr. Van Breda says,

Viscount J. Berryer was the secretary to the ambassador in Berlin in 1938, in what would prove

to be an early stage of a brilliant diplomatic career. In those memorable circumstances, the warmth of his welcome was exceptional. Even to this day, I am still astonished by the total confidence that he placed in me. The immediate sympathy and energy shown by this refined man, especially at the most serious and decisive time for the fate of Husserl’s work, undoubtedly deserves special mention.

With great attentiveness, he listened to the remarkable story of what had happened to me. He immediately gave his consent for the deposit, the very next day, of the manuscripts at the embassy.

Furthermore, he assured me that from that moment on they would remain safely out of Nazi reach. For greater protection, he would place them in the embassy’s massive safe. 38

Moreover, at this point in time Father Van Breda’s task was now completely over. He had saved Husserl’s unpublished manuscripts from destruction by the Nazi regime.Husserl’s *Nachlass* was now safe under the official protection of the Belgian

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embassy in Berlin*.* However, Father Van Breda wouldstillneeded return to Freiburg in order to inform Mrs. Husserl and Eugene Fink of these above favorable circumstances surrounding the fate of Husserl’s manuscripts. After returning to Freiburg to meet with Mrs. Husserl and Eugene Fink there was nothing left for Father Van Breda to do except to return back to Belgium. Their mission had been accomplished. However, Father Van Breda still needed to secure the final approval from the Foreign Ministry Office in Brussels for permission to place Husserl’s *Nachlass* into sealed diplomatic pouches in Berlin in order to transport his manuscripts and personal library out of Nazi-Germany and safely back to Catholic University, in Leuven. Thus, after securing this “final approval” from the Foreign Ministry Office in Brussels (after his return) all that was left for Father Van Breda to do at this point was simply wait for official word of the arrival of Husserl’s *Nachlass* by the Foreign Ministry Office.

My trip to Freiburg on September 25th, 1938, and the subsequent journey from Freiburg to Leuven two days later seemed like two segments of a single rushed escape. I could no longer bear the tension and longed to be with my friends and family in Leuven. While Mrs. Husserl was overjoyed at the news of my successful trip, she completely understood my longing to be back in Belgium.

As a matter of fact, she realized that, on the one hand, there was no longer anything requiring my presence in Germany and that, on the other, my return to Belgium would actually be conductive to the effort of transporting the manuscripts across the border.

Upon leaving Mrs. Husserl, the thought of finally escaping the police surveillance of Hitler’s regime was a happy one. However, the decision to leave this noble lady to her fate weighted heavily upon my heart. Although she was moved to tears on my departure, she once again demonstrated exceptional bravery in the period that followed. 39

Moreover, on July 12th, 1939, on the verge of the outbreak World War II, Father Van Breda received official word from the Foreign Ministry Office in Brussels that

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Husserl’s entire *Nachlass* and *personal library* had arrived safely from Nazi-Germany to Brussels. This above date and the time, without doubt, marks the historic beginning of the genesis and birth of the “Husserl-Archives” at Catholic University, Leuven, Belgium under the direction of Father Van Breda. Now that Husserl’s entire *Nachlass* had arrived safely from Nazi-Germany, the hard part would have to begin; that is, the next stage of development in Father Van Breda’s project would be to physically set-up the “Husserl-Archives” in the philosophy department at Catholic University in order to allow scholars to begin transcribing and editing Husserl’s unpublished transcripts. This task would be achieved with the professional appointment of two highly qualified Husserl scholars, namely, that of professors Ludwig Landgrebe and Eugene Fink who would complete the task by transcribing and editing Husserl’s *Nachlass* for future publication.

**§ 38. FR. HERMANN LEO VAN BREDA AND THE HUSSERL ARCHIVES**

As we have seen the rescue of Husserl’s unpublished manuscriptsled tothe founding of the “Husserl-Archives” by Father Hermann Leo Van Breda at Catholic University, Leuven, Belgium in 1939. Today the “Husserl-Archives” ‘contains not

only Husserl’s manuscripts, but also his philosophical library, letters, and numerous transcriptions in longhand of manuscripts previously written in shorthand form. Among the some eight-thousand (8,000) works housed at Leuven are many publications dedicated to Husserl by renowned philosophers and scientists. Also at Leuven are the unpublished manuscripts left untouched after Husserl’s death and

now being transcribed; they comprise approximately forty-thousand (40,000) pages

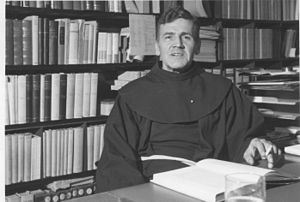
Lugwig Landgrebe Eugene Fink

Edmund Husserl’s Assistant Edmund Husserl’s Assistant

(Probably 1979/80) (Probably 1969/70)

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of shorthand set down by Husserl in the *“Gabelberg system”* of shorthand*.* And in addition to the extensive collection of letters and diaries there are more than seven-thousand (7,000) pages of longhand transcriptions of Husserl’s original shorthand manuscripts that his assistants, Edith Stein, Ludwig Landgrebe, and Eugene Fink worked out before 1938. Since 1939 the task of transcribing these manuscripts has been continued by Fink, Landgrebe, Strasser, Walter and Marly Biemel, and Rudolf Boehm. 40



Father Herman Leo Van Breda (founder)

“The Husserl Archives”

‘To date, more than 60 per cent of the manuscripts have been typed in fivefold. Moreover, copies of the manuscripts are forwarded to the five cooperating centers: Paris (Ecole Normale Supérieure), Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany), Cologne

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(University of Köln), Pittsburg (Duquesne University), and New York (The New School for Social Research). At these locations the texts are studied further and, in consultation with the “Husserl-Archives” at Leuven, are prepared for publication.’ 41

‘By 1962 nine volumes in the *Husserliana* series totaling some four-thousand pages in the *Nachlass* have been published; (today over forty-one volumes of the *Nachlass* have now been published in the *Husserliana* series by the Archives).’ 42

Moreover, ‘since 1958 there have been a *supplement* to these publications

entitled *“Phanomenologica”* consisting of philosophical studies written by scholars

who think in the phenomenological tradition. In 1964 the series had reached eighteen volumes,’ (today the *“Phenomenologica*” series now has well-over one-hundred and fifty volumes). 43

Finally, ‘since its inception, the “Husserl-Archives” has organized three important international congresses for phenomenology: *Brussels* (1951), *Krefeld* (1956), and *Royaumont* (1957).’ 44 However, since this time there have been a total of sixty-two international congresses on Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology worldwide.

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**Endnotes**

1. *Husserl: Reminiscences of Brentano* (“*Erinnerungen an Brentano)”* translated by Linda McAlister and Margarete Schättle, in *“The Philosophy of Franz Brentano”,* edited by Linda L. McAlister, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1976; pp. 47-48.

2. Ibid; p. 48.

3. Carl Stumpf: *“Reminiscences of Brentano”,* translated by Linda McAlister and Margarete Schättle, *in “The Philosophy of Franz Brentano”,* New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1976; p.12;

4. Ibid; p.13.

5. *Husserl: Reminiscences of Brentano* (“*Erinnerungen an Brentano)”* translated by Linda McAlister and Margarete Schättle, in *“The Philosophy of Franz Brentano”,* New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1976; pp. 52-53;

6. Ibid; p. 53.

7. Ibid; p. 53.

8. Ibid; p. 53.

9. Ibid; p. 54.

10. Ibid; p. 54-55.

11. As far as I am aware, I am the first writer to designate Husserl’s “Jewish-Retirement Period” (1928-1938) as being a forced “Jewish-Retirement” at the “University of Freiburg” (after 1935) precisely because Husserl’s “teaching license” was officially “revoked” or “suspended” by Hitler’s “Nazi regime” at the end of the year in 1935, (and then reinstated) and then at the beginning of 1936, (on January 15th, 1936, his teaching license was permanently revoked); this means Husserl’s “Jewish-Retirement Period” (after the year 1935) at the University of Freiburg, was a politically motivated or forced “Jewish Retirement” effected by the Nazi party precisely because Husserl was a Jew and was now being systematically persecuted by Hitler’s “Nazi regime” at this point in time (in 1936) along with millions of other Jews inside Nazi-Germany who were illegitimately “stripped” of their professions within the Fatherland because of their race and religion; hence, the designation: “The Jewish-Retirement Period” is completely justified in this above context based on these historical facts.

12. Marvin Farber, *“The Foundations of Phenomenology: Edmund Husserl and the Quest for a Rigorous Science of Philosophy”.* Albany: State University of New York (SUNY) Press, 1968. p.17.

13. Ibid; p. 21.

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14. Rudolf Bernet, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach, *“An Introduction to Husserlian* *Phenomenology,”* Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993, pp. 235-236.

15. Ibid; p. 237-238.

16. Edith Stein, *“Life in a Jewish Family”, (1891-1916): An Autobiography”;*

*The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume 1.* (Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Discalced Carmelite). Translated by Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D. Edited by Dr. Lucy Gelber. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1986, p. 239.

Edith Stein was one of the most “gifted” Jewish German woman of twentieth-century phenomenology. She became Edmund Husserl’s Göttingen assistant (at the age of twenty-five) and wrote her Ph.D. thesis work under Husserl (as the founder of phenomenology) in Göttingen in the year in 1916. Her doctoral thesis entitled:*“Zum Problem der Einfühlung”* *(On the Problem of Empathy)* explores Husserl’s “Second Book” of Ideas (Ideen II) on the “Soul-Body” relationship in Husserl’s phenomenology. Edith Stein experienced a remarkable “conversion” in her life from “Jewish atheism” to “Roman Catholicism” upon visiting Adolf Reinach’s wife after his death. She later entered the Catholic church in order to became a Carmelite nun.

Upon her capture by the Nazi “Gestapo” SS troops, in Echt, Holland, during World War II (at the Carmelite convent of Echt), she was soon transported to the East and perished in the Nazi concentration camp gas chambers (along with her sister Rosa) at Auschwitz-Birkenau (along with thousands of other Jews) on August 9th, 1942. She was “beautified” (1987) and later “canonized” (1998) as a “Saint” in the Roman Catholic church by Pope John Paul II (who is himself a phenomenologist) .

17. Edith Stein, *“Life in a Jewish Family”, (1891-1916): An Autobiography”;*

*The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume 1.* (Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Discalced Carmelite). Translated by Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D. Edited by Dr. Lucy Gelber. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1986, p. 253.

18. Rudolf Bernet, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach, *“An Introduction to Husserlian* *Phenomenology,”* Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993, pp. 241-242.

19.*Der Spiegel Article*(Only a God can Save Us). English translation by Maria Alter and John Caputo. *Philosophy Today*, Vol. 20. (Winter 1976), pp. 267-284.

20.W.R.Boyce Gibson, *“From Husserl to Heidegger: Excerpts from a 1928* *Freiburg Diary”,* (Journal of the British Society of Phenomenology), JBSP,Volume 2. No. 1. 1972**.** p. 63.

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Professor W. R. Boyce Gibson was born on March 15th, 1869 in Paris, France and was educated at the Kingswood School, Bath, England; he later studied at the Universities of Oxford, Jena, Paris and Glasgow; he was sometime lecturer in Logic, Psychology and Ethics, and Moral philosophy at Regents Park Colleges (1898 – 1909) and in addition, he was sometime lecture in Philosophy at the University of Liverpool (1910-1911), as well as being Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Melbourne, Australia, (1912 -1934). He married Lucy Judge Peacock (1898), and had five sons, two of which (Alexander and Quentin), later become professors of philosophy.

21. Ibid; p. 64.

22. Ibid; p. 65.

23. Ibid; p. 66.

24. Rudolf Bernet, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach, *“An Introduction to Husserlian* *Phenomenology,”* Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993. pp. 243-244.

25. John M. Oesterreicher, *“Walls are Crumbling: Seven Jewish Philosophers Discover Christ.”*

New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1952. p. 50. ‘Private communications from Dr. Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Munich, and Sr. Soror Adelgundis Jaegerschmidt, O.S.B., St. Lioba-Kloster, Freiburg im Breisgau.’

26. Ibid; p. 50.

27. Ibid; p. 95.

28. Ibid; p. 95.

29. Ibid; p. 96.

30. Ibid; p. 96.

31. Ibid; p. 96.

32. Herman Leo Van Breda, *“The Rescue of Husserl’s Nachlass and the Founding of the Husserl-Archives,”* In: *“The History of the Husserl-Archives.”* Dordrecht: Springer Publishing. 2007.

33. Ibid; p. 44.

34. Ibid; p. 55.

35. Ibid; pp. 55-56.

36. Ibid; p. 56.

37. Ibid; p. 57.

38. Ibid; p. 57.

39. Ibid; pp. 57-58.

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40. Joseph J. Kockelmans, *“Phenomenology:* *The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and its Interpretation.”* New York: Doubleday, 1967. pp. 20-21.

This present writer had the great privilege of meeting Husserl’s Freiburg assistant the legendary Ludwig Landgrebe at a *“Husserl-Conference”* held at Ohio University in the year 1979 in the United States . Dr. Landgre gave a conference paper at this occasion on: *“Historicity and the Problem of the Life-World)* . The conventor of the conference was Dr. Algis Mickunas (a former student and friend of Dr. Landgrebe’s at the University of Köln); I asked professor Landgrebe to sign a copy of my *“Experience and Judgment”* which I handed to him at the conference (in the library) which he gladly signed for me as an undergraduate student in the philosophy department at Ohio University. This was the height of my joy in philosophy.

41. Ibid; p. 21.

42. Ibid; p. 21.

43. Ibid; p. 21.

44. Ibid; p. 21.

Appendix I

From Husserl to Carmel:

SISTER TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS

(1892-1942)

**§ 1. ON THE CONVERSION OF EDITH STEIN**

In light of our discussion in section § 33 of Husserl’s conversion in to Christianity it should also be pointed out that many of Husserl’s friends and colleagues such as Max Scheler, Adolf Reinach and Edith Stein, like Husserl himself, also “converted” from Judaism to Christianity in the course of their philosophical development.

However, the beginning Edith Stein’s conversion from Judaism to Christianity begins with her personal visit to Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Theodor Conrad at their home in the Bergzaberg where they picked fruit by day and discussed philosophy by night during their summer holiday’s together.

As the story goes, one day Hedwig Conrad-Martius and her husband Theodor Conrad, had to leave the Bergzaberg quite unexpectedly and asked Edith whether or not she would like to pluck any favorite books off the library shelves of their private library to read them while they were gone? According to Edith Stein’s testimony of this above episode in her *Autobiography* she says she picked off their library shelf a large volume of St. Teresa of Avila’s *“The Life”* to read.

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Says Edith Stein,

I picked at random and took out a large volume. It bore

The title: *“The Life of St. Teresa of Avila”,* written by herself.

I began to read, was at once captivated, and did not stop till

I reached the end. As I closed the book, I said, “That is the

truth.” 1

Moreover, Edith became so spiritually moved by St. Teresa’s *“The Life”* that she felt led to go into town to buy a *missal* and attend a Catholic Mass for the first time in her life. After the Mass, she says, she calmly followed the priest into the “Sacrasity” of the church and asked to be *baptised*. The priest arranged the baptism for her on New Years Day, 1922, with Hedwig Conrad-Martius as one of her co-sponsors.

**§ 2. THE BRIDE OF CHRIST -- FROM HUSSERL TO CARMEL**

However, the high point of Edith Stein’s conversion and from Judaism to Christianity on her spiritual journey from Judaism to the Roman Catholicism took place at the Carmel chapel in Cologne, Germany, on April 15th, 1934, some twelve years “after” her baptism into the Catholic Church.

According to Sr. Teresa Renata Posselt, the Novice Director, and Mother Prioress of Edith Stein at the Cologne Carmel, she provides us with a living portrait and personal recollection of Edith Stein’s “conversion” from “Judaism to Christianity” as

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a Carmelite nun at her “Clothing Ceremony” in the Carmel chapel in the *Autobiography* of Edith Stein:

Says Teresa Posselt,

‘On April 15th 1934, Good Shepard Sunday, Edith Stein was clothed in the habit of “Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel” and received a name that she herself suggested, Teresa Benedicta a Cruce. (Sister Teresa Benedicata of the Cross). It was a feast such as the Cologne Carmel had never seen. The generous “bouquets of flowers” given by many friends and acquaintances lent the little church a most marvelous beauty’. 2

‘An hour before the ceremony began she left the enclosure as a “Bride adorned for her Husband” to receive guests of honor in the reception room… ’ 3

‘After High Mass the celebrant delivered an address that again severely tried the humility of our unassuming Bride of Christ. Then her Carmelite superior, Fr. Theodore, moved toward her, and there followed a dialogue that has remained unchanged for centuries:’ 4

‘Are you resolved to persevere in the Order, until death?’ 5

‘Thus do I hope and desire, through the mercy of God and the prayers of the Sisters.’ 6

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With the closing blessing, ‘May the Lord who has led you to us divest you of your former “self “ together with all its works’, her superior left her side.” 7

*“Edith Stein rose, took the lighted candle in her hand and approached the convent door as it opened before her. Awaiting her inside the enclosure were the veiled nuns standing in two ranks, each of them holding a lighted candle. One of the Sisters, stepping forward, held up the crucifix, Edith sank on her knees before it and kissed it. She crossed the threshold and the door closed behind her.”* 8

‘While the congregation now passed toward the wide-open grille in the church and the Sisters threaded their way through the cloisters singing ‘O gloriosa Domina’ (O glorious Lady; a hymn in honor of the Virgin Mary), Edith Stein hurriedly removed her secular adornment. Over her shoulders was laid the course habit. The bridal veil and myrtle-wreath gave place to the nun’s habit and helping hands changed her pretty shoes for a pair of rough sandals. When the procession drew into the choir at the last verse of the hymn, the transformation was complete and she and the Reverend Mother came in together, the last pair in the procession.” 9

‘The novice knelt on the carpet before the grille lying on a footstool nearby was the rest of her Carmelite habit. 10

‘May the Lord clothe you with the “new self”, created in God’s image, in justice and holiness of truth.’ 11



Edith Stein’s “Clothing” Ceremony

(April 15th, 1934)

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‘The Mother Prioress, standing on the novices’s left, took the leather cincture, handed one end of it to the novice-mistress standing on the right, and together they fastened it round her waist.’ 12

‘When you were younger,’ said the provincial, (reminding her of her absolute obedience, ‘you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you shall be old, another shall gird you’. 13

‘In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’ Taking the blessed scapular, the Reverend Mother, together with the novice-mistress, laid it on the shoulders of the kneeling novice’. 14

‘Receive the sweet yoke of Christ and His burden that is light…’ 15

The clothing ceremony was now over.

**§ 3. HUSSERL’S REACTION**

Meanwhile, back ‘in Freiburg, Husserl, “the dear old Master” was waiting for a report about Edith Stein’s “clothing”, that he had not attended. On May 3rd, Sister Adelgundis, O.S.B., also one of his pupils, visited him and read him a letter from their mutual friend Maria Merz who had attended the ceremony. Husserl listened to it attentively and with devotion. Now and then he would interrupt her to ask some

questions about the Church’s established practices and customs. It afforded him real satisfaction that Edith was also esteemed in the Church and in the Order. This way

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he gave the impression of an anxious and yet proud father whose daughter – after all, he used to call her his best pupil – is marrying into a new family. ‘With genuine paternal pride he exclaimed: ‘I do not believe that the Church has any “Neo-scholastic” of Edith Stein’s caliber. Thank God she will be permitted to

keep up her scholarly work at the Cologne Carmel. Subsequently, he expressed regret at not having travelled to attend the “Clothing Ceremony” in Cologne. He said, innocently, ‘After all, I would have been entitled to be the ‘father of the bride’. Then after a thoughtful pause, ‘it’s possible to be personally fond of one another, even if one has changed one’s ‘world view’, as in the case of Edith.’ 16

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Appendix II

ON THE NAZI PERSECUTION

AND MARTRDOM OF EDITH STEIN

AT AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

(August 9th, 1942)

(The Life and Death of Edith Stein)

**§ 1. THE WAY OF THE CROSS**

Edith Stein was “baptised” on New Years’s Day, 1922. Hedwig Conrad-Martius was one of her religious sponsors or witnesses to this dramatic event in her life. On April 15th, 1934, Edith entered the Carmelite Order to become a nun which culminated in her final religious “conversion” from Judaism to Christianity.

However, on August 2nd, 1942, some eight years “after” Edith Stein took her religious vows as a Carmelite nun in Jesus Christ at the Carmel at Cologne, she was arrested and picked up at the *Echt Monastry*, (along with her sister Rosa where they had fled from Cologne) by two SS guards and taken directly to Gestapo headquarters for questioning before being transported to the East to be gassed (along with millions of other Jews) in the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau on August 9th, 1942.

Says John Oesterreicher, 87

It was at five in the afternoon of that bitter and bright August 2, 1942,

that Edith Stein was taken prisoner. The community was assembled in the

choir and she was reading aloud what they would meditate on the next

morning, when two SS-men rang the bell. “In ten minutes Sister Stein has to

leave the house,” was their command. While the Prioress protested, to no

avail, Sister Benedicta returned to the choir, prayed for some moments

and then went to her cell, where several Sisters helped her pack the few

belongings – a blanket, cup, spoon, and food for three days, were all

the SS-men thought she needed! First she begged the Sisters to pray for her,

then that they notify the Swiss consul; and for the rest she was silent

the Sisters from Echt recall, as if her spirit were not in the cell but

elsewhere. Meanwhile, crowds had gathered in the street, so that she and her

sister Rosa were led to the patrol wagon amid clamor against the Nazi

tyranny. They and all other prisoners were taken first to the camp of

Amersfoort, then the camp of Westerbork, both in Holland… There were

about twelve hundred Catholic Jews at Westerbork, of whom fifteen were

religious. 1

**§ 2. THE FINAL LETTERS**

The stay of the twelve hundred Catholic Jews at the *Westerbork*

*camp* lasted from August 5th to the night of August 6-7, 1942, at which time Edith Stein, and her sister Rosa, as well as all the rest of the prisoners, to include: priests, nuns, brothers, sisters, and all other remaining Catholic Jews were finally transported to the East to the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau to be exterminated. During the deportation process Edith Stein was able to write down her final requests to her superiors in letters or notes which were then given to messengers

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(who had brought articles to them at *Westerbork camp* for her) to be delivered to the “Convent of Echt” before their final deportation to the East.

**Letter to Mother Ambrosia Antonia Engelmann, OCD, Echt**

Original in Convent Archive of Beek Carmel.

Drente-Westerbork, Barracks 36, August 4, 1942.

Dear Mother and Sisters,

During the past night we left the transit-station A. (Amersfoort)

and landed here early this morning. We are given a friendly reception here. They intend to do everything possible to enable us to be freed or at least that we may remain here.

All the Catholics are together and in our dormitory we have all the nuns (two Trappistines, one Dominican), Ruth (Kantorowicz), Alice (Reis), Dr. (Lisamaria) Meirowsky, and others are here. Two Trappist Fathers from T. are also with us. In any case, it will be necessary for you to send us our personal credentials, our ID cards, and our ration cards. So far we have lived entirely on the generosity of the others. We hope you have found the address of the Consul and have been in touch with him. We have asked many people to relay the news to you. The two dear children from Koningsbosch (Annemarie and Elfriede Goldschmidt) are with us. We are very calm and cheerful. Of course, so far there has been no Mass and Communion; maybe that will come later. Now we have a chance to experience a little how to live purely from within. Sincerest greetings to all. We will probably write again soon.

*In Corde Jesu, your –* ***B***

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When you write please do not mention that you got this.

(From Rosa)

Sincere greetings to all. We are very sorry not to have seen Mother Ottilia any more. In this brief time we have experienced a great deal; one lives together with the others and everywhere people help each other. We have slept very little, but we have had a lot of good air and much traveling. Many greetings to Sophie, Marie (Delsing) too, and to everyone; they were so upset; we not at all.

*In Corde Jesu* *we all find ourselves in graditude.*

Rosa 2

**Letter to Mother Ambrosia Engelmnann, OCD, Echt**

Original in Convent Archive of Beek Carmel

Drente-Westerbork, Barracks 36, August 5, 1942.

My dear Ones,

A. R. C. nurse from A. (Amersfoort Camp) intends to speak today with the Consul. Here, every petition (on behalf) of fully Jewish Catholics has been forbidden since yesterday. Outside (the camp) an attempt can still be made, but with extremely little prospect. According to plans, a transport will leave on Friday. Could you possibly write to Mére Claire in Venlo, Kaldenkerkeweg 185 (the Ursuline Convent) to ask for our (my) *manuscript* if they have not already sent it. We count on your prayers. There are so many persons here who need some consolation and they expect it from the Sisters.

90 *In Corde Jesu, your grateful*

**B.** 3

**Letter to Mother Ambrosia Antonia Engelmann, OCD, Echt**

Original in Convent Archive of Beek Carmel

Drente-Westerbork. Barracks 36. August 6, 1942.

Dear Mother,

A Mother Superior from one of the convents arrived

last evening with some suitcases for her children and now offers to take some short letters along. Early tomorrow a transport leaves (Silesia or Czechoslovakia?).

What is most necessary: woolen stockings, two blankets. For Rosa all the warm underwear whatever was in the laundry; for us both, towels and washcloths. Rosa also has no toothbrush, no cross and no rosary. I would like the next volume of the Breviary (so far I have been able to pray gloriously.) our identity-cards, registration cards (as Jews) and ration cards.

*A thousand thanks and greetings to all,Y.R.’s grateful child,*

**B.**

(PS) 1 Habit and aprons, 1 small veil. 4

**§ 3. EYEWITNESS REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS**

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Edith and Rosa Stein along with all their brothers, sisters, priests, nuns, as well as all other “Jewish Catholics” (who were arrested by the SS men in Holland and transported to the Amersfoort camp and then shipped to the Westerbork camp for final deportation to the East); all perished together as Christian martyrs in the Nazi gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau on August 9th, 1942.

That is to say, of the 1,200 persons sent by transport from the Westerbork camp to Auschwitz, only 200 hundred persons (from eye-witness accounts) were ever considered fit enough for work by the Nazi ‘selection’ officers at Auschwitz. The other remaining persons, one-thousand to be exact, including Edith and Rosa Stein, were all sent to the gas chambers directly upon their arrival by at the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp.

Says Doctor Lenig:

**Response to a Cologne Carmel inquiry letter sent to Dr. Lenig on March 27th, 1947.**

Reverend Mother Prioress,

At the request of my dear friend, Professor Max Budde of Gelsenkirchen, I have the honor to inform you as follows….

I met Sister Teresa Benedicta a Cruce, known in the camp as Edith Stein, on August 2nd, 1942, in the transit camp at Amersfoort, in barracks no. 9, if I am not mistaken. On that Sunday all Catholics of Jewish, or partly Jewish, ancestry were arrested by the German hangmen’s helpers as a “reprisal” for a “pastoral letter” that had been read from the pulpits of all Dutch churches the previous Sunday. They

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were taken away and at first assembled at Amersfoort before being deported from there to the gas chambers and creamatoria…

Some of these night transports went to the death camps at Drente and others went straight to Auschwitz. Mothers were permitted to request baby carriages from home for their infants and to take them along as far as the baggage car, that, alas! was always left behind. I never heard anything more of any of them…

Among the first to be carried off by night was your lamented Sister, Edith Stein. Like all of them, she went calmly to her death, fully assured of rising again to eternal life. It is impossible for me to say definitely whether the night of deportation was on either August 4th or 5th, 1942. May God be merciful to her and all the victims of (Nazi) German “Race-Christianity”; may He grant them eternal peace and may His eternal light shine upon them. Amen.

With my respectful regards,

Yours,

LENIG 5

Moreover, a former “female prisoner” from the Ravensbruck-Auschwitz camp, (prisoner No. 2790), a lady from Berlin, states:

“Having read about Edith Stein, I feel duty bound

to give the following information. From the end of March

1942 (to be precise, March 27th, 1942) about a thousand

Jewish woman used to come into the camp every day. The

first transport came from Slovakia, Czechoslovakia and

Hungary. Until the beginning of 1943, they came mainly

from these countries. Afterward from Holland, Belgium,

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France, Greece.”

“Not until the middle of 1943, did we get mixed Jewish

transports (i.e., a mixture of German and others). The vast

majority of these transports came from the camp of

*Theresienstadt”.*

“According to my calculations, therefore, it is impossible that

Edith Stein came to Auschwitz as early as 1942. If she had

come to Auschwitz in 1942, it would be known for certain,

since “the writer of these lines” was a prisoner in the woman’s

camp of Auschwitz from March 26th, 1942 until January

18th, 1945. And was working in the “Prisoners Bureau at

Auschwitz”, and later also at Auschwitz-Birkenau. All the

prisoners were registered there, and Edith Stein would have

stood out “immediately” upon being asked about her

denomination, if, as a Jew she would have stated she was a

Catholic.”

“Moreover, there was a very active “resistance” movement

in the woman’s camp at Auschwitz. They used to take almost all

the “German Jewish woman” upon arrival to barracks distant from

Birkenau, where they would be in less danger. Those who survived

in this way would be able to testify to that. I’m certain Edith Stein

was not one of them.” 6

The question this above testimony raises is precisely whether or not Edith Stein and her sister Rosa ever arrived at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp from the Westerbork camp in Holland by train at all? If they did not arrive by transport then where could they have gone to? Were they sent to a different concentration camp instead of Auschwitz? Or, on the contrary, did they escape? And, if so, why were they never heard from again? This above account does not seem to be a very creditable report in light of these facts.

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**§ 4. THE LAST NEWS OF THE NETHERLANDS RED CROSS**

While the Camelite nuns in Cologne attempted to search in vain for any traces of Edith Stein or her beloved sister Rosa Stein through published records, newspaper stories, eyewitness accounts, or any other such existing documents, they could find nothing to “verify” or give any real concrete and empirical “proof” whatsoever concerning the whereabouts of the Stein sisters or even of their deaths. Finally news from the “Netherlands Red Cross” arrived through the “Bureau of Affairs” which provided an official report by attempting to provide the “last word” on Edith Stein’s death at Auschwitz-Birkenau on August 9th, 1942.

Moreover, below is the final “Netherlands Red Cross” report which was prepared by the “Settlement Bureau of Jewish Affairs” in order to legally confirm the death of Edith Stein at Auschwitz-Birkeneau. The document reads as follows:

**BUREAU OF INFORMATION OF THE NETHERLANDS RED CROSS**

9 Jan Ewverts Street, ‘s-Gravenhage

‘s-Gravenhage, 2 June, 1958

Dossier No. 108796

Your letter of May 16, 1958.

CERTIFICATION

The Undersigned, Chief of the Settlement Bureau for Jewish Affairs of The Netherlands Red Cross Beureau of Information Confirms Hereby That According to The Papers Kept in our Archives



*Jewish Mothers and Children arriving at Auschwitz-Birkenau*

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Edith Teresa Hedwig STEIN

Born on: October 12, 1891, in: Breslau

Last Residence: Monastery of the Carmelite Nuns,

Bovenstestraat 48, Echt (Holland)

For Reasons of Race, and Specifically Because of Jewish Descent

On 2 August, 1942, Arrested in Echt, via K.L. [Concentration Camp]

Amersfoort (Holland)

On 5 August, 1942, Handed Over in K.L. Westerbork and

On 7 August, 1942, Deported from K.L. Westerbork to K.L. Auschwitz.

The above named person is to be considered as having died on 9 August,

1942 in Auschwitz.

Notice to this Effect is Given on 15 February, 1950, in Echt

…[conditions are given regarding legal procedures]…

(Signed, official seal applied by Chief of the Bureau) 7

Can this above “official document” on the life and death of Edith Stein satisfy everyone who reads it?

The fact of the matter is that we will probably never know with absolute certainty what ever happened to Edith Stein and Rosa’s transport and whether or not they ever made it to from Westerbork, Holland, to their final destination point at Auschwitz-Birkenau as exhibited by the “Netherlands Red Cross” report.

However, there is one “final piece” of corroborating evidence in this saga of the life and death of Edith Stein that I wish to present to the reader which absolutely convinces me that Edith Stein (along with her sister Rosa) died at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp on August 9th, 1942, by way of a “creditable” report by a man who claims to have seen Edith Stein and to have spoken with her briefly at the

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“train station” in her home town of Breslau where their transport briefly stopped on its way to Auschwitz.

**§ 5. THE FINAL EYEWITNESS REPORT**

By way of a “postscript”to the foregoingdiscussion I wish to conclude this “appendix” of the life and death of Edith Stein with a timely newspaper article that appeared in the *“Kölner Rundschau,”* a local Cologne newspaper, which I believe helps throw valuable light on the “Netherlands Red Cross” document reflected above as well as to help corroborate “eyewitness reports” that Edith Stein’s transport, did in fact,actually go to *Auschwitz-Birkenau* as its final destination point from the Westerbork camp in Holland which should conclude the final speculation surrounding the whereabouts of Edith and Rosa Stein.

The story below, appeared in 1982, and is now published in volume one of Sister Josephine Koeppel’s excellent translation of Edith Stein’s *“Autobiography”* with the following details:

“On the 40th anniversary of Edith Stein’s death, August 9th, 1982, a story in the “Kölner Rundschau,” a Cologne newspaper, adds a poignant postscript. This account cannot be verified, but there are so many details that make it creditable that one finds it difficult to dismiss. What a distressing thought – Edith’s route to the East may well have taken her by way of the very places most dear to her.”

“The trip from Holland must have been by rail line south, past Cologne, since we have Fouquet’s testimony for the stop at “Schifferstadt” which is but a few miles from *Spyer* where she taught. Then Johannes Wieners’ story provided the final vignette.”

“As a postal employee in the Cologne branch of the federal postal system, Wieners had been inducted with seventeen other men, three of them officers, to form a mobile postal unit. He was

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required to report June 15th, 1942, for six weeks of military training. They were being sent to the eastern war zone where the Sixth German Army was fighting the Russians. He was assigned a large truck as a mobile postoffice; they were being transported East by train.”

“On the 7th of August, 1942, he and the others in his unit were standing in the

Switching area of the railroad depot in Breslau since their engine had been uncoupled for servicing.”

“A freight train pulled into the station on the track next to theirs. A minute or so later, a guard opened a sliding door on one of the cars. With dismay, Weiners noticed it was packed with people who were jammed together, cowering on the floor. The stench coming from the car almost overpowered the men standing outside.”

“Then a woman in nun’s clothing stepped into the opening, Weiners looked at her with such commiseration that she spoke to him: ‘It’s awful. We have nothing by way of containers for sanitation needs.’ ”

“Looking into the distance and then across town, she said, ‘This is my beloved hometown. I will never see it again.’ ”

“When he looked at her questioningly, she added, very hesitantly: ‘We are riding to our death’.”

“He was profoundly shocked and asked, in all seriousness: ‘Do your companion prisioners believe that also?’ ”

“Her answer came even more hesitantly, ‘It’s better they do not know it.’ ”

“Weiners’ companions were irritated that he spoke to a Jewess and berated him for it. But one of them who had overheard the conversation joined him; the two men discussed quietly in the face of their angry comrades the possibility of doing anything for the people.”

“Edith had overheard the objections, when they asked her if they could get her anything and her companions anything to eat or drink, she replied, ‘No thank you, we accept nothing.’ ”

“The markings on the car made it plain that it had come from Holland.

By this time, the boiler on their engine had been refilled, and the locomotive recoupled. The men had boarded their train which then left Breslau station.”

“Johannes Wieners served for a time and then was taken a prisoner of war. When much later, he was back in Germany, he saw a picture of Edith Stein, accompanying an article about her. He was sure she was the nun he had seen on August 7th, 1942. It may be God’s plan that we continue to learn more about her thoughout the years.

This will bring her story to its last page.” 8



Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross

(1891-1942)

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Appendix III

On The Rescue of Edith Stein’s Nachlass

By Father Van Breda

**§ 1. THE RESCUE OF EDITH STEIN’S NACHLASS**

What ever happened to Edith Stein’s “unpublished manuscripts”? That is to say, which include her personal letters as well as all her posthumous writings which she was forced to leave behind at the “Convent at Echt” after she was arrested and picked up by two Nazi “Gestapo” SS guards and then deported to the East? What ever became of them? Were they lost? Did anyone attempt to “collect” or preserve Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross’ *Nachlass* for the sake of posteriety or not?

To help answer some of these above questions, I wish to briefly turn to the story of the “rescue and salvage” of Edith Stein’s *Nachlass* by Father Hermann Leo Van Breda from the ruins of a tiny convent located near the town of “Herkenbosh,” in Holland after the Nazi-occupation and bombings which nearly totally destroyed this small convent during the Second World War.

Thus, the story of the salvage of Edith Stein’s writings begins with Father Van Breda’s efforts to try to collect and preserve her “unpublished manuscripts” or *Nachlass* for posterity by the “Husserl Archives” immediately after the Second World War.

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In order to achieve this goal he would begin with an extensive search at the convent of Echt in order to try to locate Edith Stein’s lost manuscripts in Holland.

Thus, shortly after Edith Stein’s death, Fr. Van Breda travelled from Leuven, Belgium to Echt, Holland in March 1945, by military vehicle, along with the “Carmelite Prior” of Geleen in order to attempt to locate Edith Stein’s *Nachlass* which had been lost during the Nazi occupation and bombings there.

Their task was to try to rescue Sr. ‘Teresa Benedicta of the Cross’ writings.

Once in Holland, they met with Sisters Pia and Sr. Francisca who had just returned back to their *Echt convent* after the Nazi occupation of Holland. Again, the purpose of Fr. Van Breda’s visit was strictly a search and rescue mission. That is to say, it was an attempt to try to locate Edith Stein’s lost manuscripts, personal letters, and other documents in order to try to preserve them in the interest of posterity for scholarly purposes at the Husserl-Archives.

Did they ever find Edith Stein’s unpublished manuscripts?

At first they found nothing in their search of the convent of Echt where “Sister Benedicta had kept her manuscripts in her cell before two Nazi “Gestapo” SS guards knocked at the door of the *Echt convent* and demanded that she pack and leave (in ten minutes) before arresting her and her sister Rosa.

However, after driving on a little further ahead by military vehicle to the small town of “Herkenbosh” (in bitter ice-cold weather), they searched a tiny convent

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there which lay in total ruins from the German bombings of this town; it was here that Fr. Van Breda found over three quarters of Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross’ manuscripts, personal letters, and documents which were heavily soiled, torn, and scattered throughout the ruins of the tiny convent. They had found the *Nachlass* of Edith Stein.

Says Sr. Teresia Renata Posselt,

All contacts with the Carmel in Echt were broken off, as Holland was occupied by the Allies.

Earlier, the Sisters in Echt had suffered a great deal during the defense of the town by German troops, and had to abandon their convent for a short time. Fortunately, they had previously put the papers

left by Sr. Benedicta into good order and stored them away. Thus everything remained insafety *until*

*the sisters were suddenly forced to flee from Echt on January 6th, 1945, before a wave of retreating troops.* All of them were taken to “Herkenbosh” in Germany military vehicles. *But three days later* *several Sisters managed to return to Echt to salvage some things.* *At that time they brought Sr.*

*Benedicta’s writings back with them in two bags.*

We wanted to hide them in the cellar of the little convent, that resembled a house of cards and that had given us shelter, Mother Antonia recounted, but the *Prioress* did not permit it due to lack of space. *So the bags were left upstairs.* We asked at the Franciscan house in Vlodrop whether we might store them there, but *severe shelling* prevented the request from getting attended to for three weeks. Long before this, we ourselves had been driven out of “Herkenbosh,” and although Sister Pia was left behind to look after Sister Francisca, *who was wounded*, she could do nothing. *Danger and* *destruction were everywhere.* Once we were in “Leinarden”, communication with the South was disrupted for months. We were powerless.

Eventually, in March 1945, a military vehicle, carrying Professor Father Hermann Van Breda, O.F.M. director of the “Husserl-Archive” and the Carmelite Prior of Geleen, went from Leuven to Echt, where Sr. Pia and Sr. Francisca had returned. There they searched for the manuscripts. Since they could find nothing, they drove on to “Herkenbosch” in ice-cold winter weather. There they

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searched the tiny convent that was by now nothing more than a ruin, and they found, soiled, torn and scattered, about three quarters of Sr. Benedicta’s papers. 1

Moreover, in light of Fr. Van Breda’s rich find, these above unpublished manuscripts, personal letters, and other documents of Edith Stein’s *Nachlass* have been entrusted by him to Dr. Lucy Gelber at the “Husserl-Archives” in Leuven for the purposes of restoration and scholarly study as well as for the careful editing of all of Edith Stein’s works for future publication*.*

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*Endnotes to Appendix I.*

SISTER TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS

(1892-1942)

1. Teresia Renata Posselt, O.C.D.*“Edith Stein the Life of a Philosopher and Carmelite.”*

Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies (ICS), 2005. p. 63.

2. Ibid; p. 142.

3. Ibid; p. 143.

4. Ibid; p. 143.

5. Ibid; p. 144.

6. Ibid; p. 144.

7. Ibid; p. 144.

8. Ibid; p. 144.

9. Ibid; p. 144.

10. Ibid; p. 144.

11. Ibid; p. 144.

12. Ibid; p. 144.

13. Ibid; p. 144.

14. Ibid; p. 144.

15. Ibid; pp. 144-145.

16. Ibid; p. 154.

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*Endnotes to Appendix II.*

ON THE NAZI PERSECUTION

AND MARTRDOM OF EDITH STEIN

AT AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

(August 9th, 1942)

1. John M. Oesterreicher, *“Walls are Crumbling: Seven Jewish Philosophers Discover Christ.”*

New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1952. p. 369-370.

2. Edith Stein, *“Self-Portrait in Letters: 1916-1942”.* (The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume five), edited by Dr. Lucy Gelber. Translated by Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D. Washing D.C.:

Institute of Carmelite Studies (ICS), 1993. pp. 350-351.

3. Ibid; p. 352.

4. Ibid; p. 353.

5. Teresia Renata Posselt, O.C.D.*“Edith Stein the Life of a Philosopher and Carmelite.”*

Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies (ICS), 2005. p. 228-230.

6. Ibid; p. 233.

7. Edith Stein, *“Life in a Jewish Family: An Autobiography”.* (The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume one), edited by Dr. Lucy Gelber. Translated by Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D. Washington D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies (ICS), 1986. p. 432.

8. Ibid; p. 434.

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*Endnotes to Appendix III.*

On The Rescue of Edith Stein’s Nachlass

By Father Van Breda

1. Teresia Renata Posselt, O.C.D.*“Edith Stein the Life of a Philosopher and Carmelite.”*

Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies (ICS), 2005. pp. 224-225.

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