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POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL MOVEMENTS IN EDITH STEIN'S LIFE

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Abstract: This chapter explores some of the political, social and cultural movements that took place in Germany and had an impact on Edith Stein's life at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. A woman, philosopher, convert to Catholicism, teacher and politically active, Stein lived through a period of transformation, from the end of World War I, through the Weimar Republic, to the Nazi regime, when she was murdered in the gas chamber at Auschwitz-Birkenau. We intend to analyze how Stein's experiences were influenced by these political, social and cultural events, highlighting her search for identity and truth in an environment of growing anti-Semitism and political repression.

Keywords: Edith Stein, Politics, Culture, Woman.

INTRODUCTION

Edith Stein left an intellectual legacy through her works, her correspondence and her conferences in Germany and abroad. All of Stein's intellectual output influenced her contemporaries and still influences today's intellectuals, not only in the field of philosophy and phenomenology, but also in studies and research on women, pedagogy and, more recently, in the field of psychology and psychoanalysis.

Stein was committed to social-political movements and groups that invested in women's education and defended women's rights in a male-dominated society. Furthermore, Stein's active participation demonstrates not only her personal belief in equality between men and women, but also her understanding of the barriers faced by women in their quest for academic and cultural opportunities.

ASPECTS OF EDITH STEIN'S BIOGRAPHY

Edith Hedwig Stein, the name given to her by her parents (Siegfried Stein and Auguste Courant), was born on October 12, 1891, in the city of Breslau, now known as Wrocław, Poland. Most of Stein's relatives were of Jewish origin from the eastern provinces of Germany, especially Silesia (STEIN, 2018)

From the time Stein entered elementary school in 1897 until she began her university studies at the University of Breslau in 1911 and Göttingen in 1913, we can see her dedication to finding answers to questions about truth, politics and the formation of the human being.

On April 27, 1911, Stein began her university studies at the University of Breslau. Throughout her studies, she not only attended courses, but was also active in the *Pädagogische Gruppe* (Pedagogical *Group*), founded by Hugo Hermsen, and made up of students who had a social commitment to training educators (STEIN, 2018).

The members of the *Pedagogical* Group, including Stein in 1911, also belonged to the *Verein der Reformpädagogik* (Association for School Reform), which was part of the German General Federation for Education and Teaching. According to Tenorth (1994), the sphere of educational policies and practices and reform pedagogy supported the rights acquired in 1890. It was during this period that the education system opened up schooling to all children and young people, regardless of gender and social class, a goal supported by the association, contributing to the emergence of a reformist pedagogical movement in Germany between 1890 and 1933,

At the end of her fourth semester at the University of Breslau, Stein began to receive influence from Georg Moskiewicz about the philosophical studies carried out in Göttingen. Moskiewicz, known among his university colleagues as Mos, knew Professor Edmund Husserl and had been his student at the University of Göttingen. Moskiewicz was part of Stein's circle of intellectuals during her time in Göttingen, but also maintained contact after her studies (NOVINSKY, 2014).

Edmund Husserl was an important philosopher, mediator of an intellectual culture, who contributed to and influenced university development, as well as helping to build the foundations of Stein's thinking, especially on phenomenology (ALES BELO, 2010).

At the age of 21, Edith Stein arrived in the city of Göttingen and in her autobiography tried to describe the new city in contrast to her hometown. She defined Göttingen as a true university town, with around 30,000 inhabitants, mostly immigrants, which made it a plural city (STEIN, 2018). After her years of studies at the University of Göttingen, Stein completed her doctorate with a thesis entitled: *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* (On the Problem of Empathy) and achieved the final result *"summa cum laude"* (STEIN, 2018).

From 1923 to 1933, Edith Stein taught students at the *Mädchenlyzeum und Lehrerinnenbildugsanstalt der Dominikanerinnen von St. Magdalena (High School and Girls' School* for Young Women *in St. Magdalen - 1923-1931) and then teachers* at the *Deutsches Institut für wissenschaftliche. Magdalena* (High School and Girls' School for Young Ladies for the Training of Teachers of St. Magdalena - 1923-1931) and later for teachers at the *Deutsches Institut für wissenschaftliche Pädagogik* (German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy - 1932-1933) in the city of Münster (MÜLLER, 2013). These were important periods in Stein's life and intellectual production within the Catholic movement, since she had converted to Catholicism in 1921 and was baptized on January 1, 1922, in the Church of St. Martin in Bergzabern (ACUÑA, 2013).

Thus, in addition to her intellectual legacy, Stein's life also reflects the complexity and challenges faced by individuals in times of social and political upheaval, being marked by the turbulent environment of the Weimar Republic, followed by the rise of the National Socialist Party and the growing persecution of Jews. Thus, the political repression imposed by Hitler's government had an impact on Edith Stein's life, leading her to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, where she was murdered in the gas chamber on August 9, 1942.

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL INFERENCES IN GERMANY

Germany has been a land of contradictions and profound reflections, whose ideological and philosophical boundaries have always echoed beyond geographical limits. After all, it was the cradle of important intellectual production that revolutionized philosophy, science, the arts and education, and it was also fertile ground for the emergence of innovative ideas that transcended borders and shaped paradigms. Germany's history is intertwined with armed conflicts and devastating events that have left indelible marks over the decades.

From 1740, when Frederick the Great conquered Prussia, the city of Breslau, according to the Geographical Guide (2024), belonged to the region of Silesia, under the rule of the German Empire (Second Reich) from 1871 until the end of World War II. The German Empire, founded on January 18, 1871, existed until the November Revolution (Bayern) of 1918 and then culminated in the advent of World War II in 1939 (GIODARNI, 2012). Thus, Edith Stein was born in imperial Germany under the rule of William II.

William II, Emperor of the Second *Reich*, wanted to assume power independent of the government advisors, thus establishing an absolutist government. When Wilhelm II took over the empire, Otto von Bismarck was the current chancellor and had served for almost the entire reign of Wilhelm I, the new ruler's grandfather. However, Otto was forced to resign in 1890 because of personal differences with Emperor William II. Thus, in the year Edith Stein was born, Leo von Caprivi was Chancellor of the German Empire, a position he held until 1894.

Between the 1850s and 1860s, there was a strong migration of people from the rural countryside to the urban environment, which led to the emergence, already in the German Empire, of a considerable increase in various associations and social movements to cater for the growing number of workers for the industries. In addition, this period saw the expansion of education, the spread of faith in science and progress, and the birth of a large number of cultural and educational institutions such as museums, zoos, theaters and art galleries (FULBROOK, 2016).

According to Santana (2016), another historical fact that drew attention was the population increase in Germany, which jumped from 41 million in 1871 to 61 million in 1910. This population swelling directly interfered in the growth of production, as well as in the development of the steel and chemical industries and also in the evolution of the means of transportation, which was marked by the advance of the railroads, which tripled their lines connecting Germany to other European countries.

The effervescence of political, social and cultural issues at the end of the 19th century was important for a change in thinking and the advancement of German social class relations. In this sense, we can see that the period of Stein's academic training was marked by significant traumas, such as the loss of her father when she was a child, political changes in her country's government, from the German Empire to the Weimar Republic to the totalitarianism of Nazism, the struggle for the place of women within the university field, scientific advances and the rapid growth of the industrial field

Fulbrook (2016) points out that the horrors of the two great wars emanated from German soil, redefining borders, altering geopolitics and casting a painful gaze on humanity's destructive capabilities. In addition, the German nation faced the scars of the Holocaust, a dark chapter that testified to the depth of prejudiced and appalling attitudes.

The antisemitism that existed in Europe was not born with the outbreak of World War II, but had already existed since the 18th century. Anti-Jewish violence often erupted in the form of physical conflicts, popular persecution and murder. Both the Christian churches and the state became cultural influencers projecting in the minds of the population an aversion to Jews, that is, as enemies of Christianity and an intruder in the lives of citizens.

In addition to the churches and the state, other groups and movements emerged, such as the *Wandervögel* (Migratory Birds), which was formed by young people and which Stein visited once during his university studies in Breslau. According to Fulbrook (2016), the movement was founded in 1895 by Karl Fischer, and aimed to protest against the industrialization and consumerism that was dominating Western Europe at this time. The movement's internal ideology emphasized a return to nature and the search for a simpler, more authentic life, combating the growing advance of industrial policy and the process of urbanization. Members of the movement went hiking and did other outdoor activities, promoting a communal and self-sufficient life.

However, under the influence of Hitler's youth, especially in the 1930s, the movement began to nurture a spirit against the presence of Jews in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, these groups and movements grew stronger in a radical nationalist spirit, moving closer to Adolf Hitler's movement.

This radicalization led to an increase in anti-Semitic ideology among the movement's members, and, fueled by Nazi propaganda, these young people began to express hostility towards the presence of Jews in Germany, strengthening the political dimension that was called the "Jewish question". According to Elias (1997), after 1930, many other youth movements joined Adolf Hitler's force against the Jews.

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The struggles of the Semitic movements for emancipation, to be accepted as Jews by local and national communities, meant that the beginning of the 20th century was considered a time of a certain Jewish freedom in Western Europe. In Germany, at the end of World War I, Jews were among the important politicians who contributed to the reconstruction of the nation. Gilbert (2010) and Giordani (2012) recall that it was Hugo Preuβ, a Jew and Secretary of State for the Interior in the new republican government installed after the First World War, who led the preparation of the preliminary draft of the Weimar Constitution, considered one of the most democratic in the history of Europe after the First World War.

On the other hand, after Germany was defeated at the end of World War I, the Jews were blamed for the humiliation the country had suffered as a result of the embargoes imposed by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Thus, anti-Semitic demonstrations grew in Germany, especially with the emergence of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers' Party), the NSDAP, which later became known as *Názi* (GILBERT, 2010).

In the German landscape at the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century, various intellectuals not only challenged the cultural and social conventions of their time, but also passionately defended a cause that had profound repercussions on the way society, politics and culture are understood today.

Veblen (1980, p. 1) states that "the emphasis on class antagonisms, the condemnation of monopoly and economic power, the attacks on corrupt parties and politicians, the denunciation of universities, churches and newspapers as instruments of economic interests - these themes divided intellectual circles in Europe and the United States in the last three decades of the 20th century".

Since the middle of the 19th century, we have seen a conflicting growth of ideas and thoughts, as this period can be considered one of the most important for culture, especially in Western Europe (CHARLE, 2000). It was in these historical circumstances, recalls Charle (2000), that philosophical, literary and political movements emerged which were at the basis of the great transformations of the 19th century and which exerted a lasting influence on the 20th century, such as romanticism, socialism, liberalism and nationalism.

FREEDOM IN DISGUISE: THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

The period of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) was marked by significant transition and transformation in various aspects of society, such as politics, economics, academia and religion. In the midst of political and social upheaval, the cultural climate of the Weimar Republic differed remarkably from previous eras, raising questions about the influence of these changes on individuals' beliefs and identities.

According to Elias (1997), the limits of national borders in the Weimar Republic were decided during the negotiations at the conclusion of World War I, and only ratified on June 28, 1919 in the Treaty of Versailles, which was signed by the German *Reich* and 27 allies.

In this way, the former kingdoms of the German Empire were replaced by the 17 states that made up the Weimar Republic at that time: Anhalt, Baden, Bayern, Braunschweig, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Lippe, Lübeck, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Oldenburg, Prussia, Saxony, Schaumburg-Lippe, Thüringen and Württemberg (HEISOHN, 2018).

The so-called "Golden Years of the 1920s were an expression of the advance of modern mass culture, which was facilitated by the influx of foreign capital between 1924 and 1929, as a result of relative domestic calm and a slight economic recovery." (LÜCKEMEIER,

2009, p. 61) However, this German strengthening proved to be only an appearance, as political and social conflicts began to occupy the newly created government, causing political and economic instability.

Pre-World War II Germany was already marked by social and political transformations, and antisemitism was intrinsically linked to nationalist and xenophobic narratives. The idea of a supposed racial superiority contributed to the dissemination of these prejudices, still in a tenuous way, but which found an echo in various spheres, from academia to common social interactions (GILBERT, 2010).

According to Heisohn (2018), the new democratic constitution of Weimar provoked political and social changes, and the creation of groups in favor of the new political way of governing, but on the other hand, it also generated the strengthening of national extremist networks. In light of this, we realize how important Stein's relationship is with this entire political and social dimension of Germany, which enables us to understand not only the development of ideas throughout her intellectual production, but also the complex interactions between Stein's thought and political and social groups, thinkers and movements.

Edith Stein had an active attitude towards the political dimension of Germany. The idea of homeland and nationalism was not translated into Stein's life in an extremist way, but as a search to understand the action of valuing the dignity of the human being in an integral and egalitarian way, especially striving for the formation of women, so that they could develop an active life within the German public sphere.

The Democratic Constitution of the Weimar Republic, established in 1919, was a progressive constitution within that historical context, as it equalized men and women in civil society, which gave rise to growing female participation in politics, society and academic life.[1] In this context, Stein was a figure who emerged prominently, demonstrating a unique feminine strength by occupying spaces previously reserved only for men, especially the numerous invitations to her conferences in various places in Germany and beyond.

According to Elias (1997), German nationalism, which emerged with force after the First World War, found fertile ground in a society marked by severe economic turbulence such as widespread unemployment, growing public debt, galloping inflation and widespread poverty among the working classes, which generated a climate of despair and an unbridled search for culprits.

In this context, the Jewish population became a convenient scapegoat for the National Socialists, who channeled popular discontent and the frustrations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, not only by convincing themselves of this guilt, but also by spreading this propaganda among the German people. Therefore, the anti-Semitic propaganda, widely disseminated by the Nazis, consolidated the idea that the Jews were responsible for the problems of the German nation, corroborating the increase in prejudice, persecution and violence against the Jews

For Souza (2023), the narrative elaborated by the Nazi elite during this period placed the blame squarely on the Jews for the nation's tribulations, constructing them as enemies of the state in the midst of the Weimar crisis. In response to the worsening crisis, the nationalist and extremist ruling classes in Germany launched an attack on Weimar democracy, further fueling social unrest and discontent with the current government.

Other changes also took place within the

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1. Article 22 of the Constitution of the Weimar Republic reads: "Members of Parliament shall be elected by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage by men and women over twenty years of age, in accordance with the principles of proportional representation. Election day must be a Sunday or a public day of rest. The details shall be determined by the Reich Electoral Law" (UNIVERSITÄT WÜRZBURG, 1919, art. 2).

religious scene during this period of the Weimar Republic, which was marked by significant conflicts between various ideological groups. According to Cury (1999) reformist Marxists, liberals and Christians were involved in fundamental disagreements over property rights, personal freedoms and religious beliefs, creating a diverse and controversial atmosphere within society.

According to Heisohn (2018), the Weimar Republic represented a complex mix of political, economic and religious dimensions, which contributed to the rise of extremist groups. Politically, the new republic faced chronic instability, with frequent changes, coup attempts and polarization between groups with antagonistic thoughts. This confluence of Weimar crises led to a weak state of government, culminating in the strengthening of violent groups that promised to restore Germany's political and economic order.

Moreover, the political rulers of the Weimar Republic were themselves divided along religious lines, with different groups and movements opposing each other on crucial issues, further increasing the political and cultural tensions of the time. A remarkable transformation occurred in the demographic distribution of the Jewish population during this period, i.e. unlike the previous predominance of Jews in villages and small towns in the 19th century, the majority of Jews in the Weimar Republic were now concentrated in large urban centers, signifying a remarkable shift towards urbanization.

Furthermore, according to Cury (1999), during the period of the Weimar Republic, the religious scene was mainly dominated by the Catholic and Lutheran Churches, which held significant power in various aspects of society. For example, these institutions had the authority to veto appointments to public denominational schools, indicating their role in defining educational culture and policies within the Republic. Consequently, religious individuals were often used for optional services in the army, hospitals and penitentiaries, showing the integration of religious practices and beliefs into different spheres of public life.

In Germany, this period in the first half of the 20th century witnessed a growing phenomenon, namely Jewish conversions to Catholicism and Lutheranism. These conversions were present in Edith Stein's network of intellectuals. Religious conversion is a phenomenon that is not limited to a single, instantaneous event, but involves a gradual process that follows a path of spiritual transformation and a change of worldview.

Stein's religious life went through several phases. Initially, she was brought up within Jewish traditions, especially through the influence of her mother. However, Stein later questioned her faith and moved away from her family's religious beliefs and practices. Thus, the Jewish traditions that marked Stein's childhood were fundamental to the formation of her identity, but it was in Catholicism that she found spiritual and intellectual fulfillment, which also later influenced her academic production.

EDITH STEIN'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL WORK

The political action undertaken by Edith Stein needs to be understood within the historical context in which it took place, that is, after the abdication of Emperor William II on November 9, 1918, the Second German *Reich* came to an end, giving way to the Weimar Republic, inaugurated with the votes of the National Assembly on January 19, 1919. This period therefore marked the end of the 19th century and the beginning of important gains in women's rights, including women's suffrage. Faced with this situation and driven by a deep sense of social responsibility, Stein considered it essential to devote special attention to shaping a public-social dimension for women, which had been repressed for many centuries.

Consequently, Stein's life was not only limited to academic, philosophical and pedagogical issues, but she was also actively engaged in humanitarian causes, such as her work with the Red Cross during World War I (STEIN, 2018). In addition, his activity as a teacher in Speyer and Münster, his lectures and intellectual production, reinforced his commitment to the social-political dimension of his time

Stein was involved in service to the state, through her work as a teacher, and to the people, reflecting on and debating women's rights and education. In addition, she had a very clear conviction about the state, which she reported in her letter to Roman Ingarden on February 20, 1917, saying: "[...] we can become aware of our relationship to everyone to whom we belong [...] and we can voluntarily submit to them. The more vivid and powerful this consciousness becomes in a people, the more it forms itself into a 'State' and this formation is its organization. A state is a self-conscious people that disciplines its functions" (STEIN, 1917).

After Stein left her job as secretary to Professor Edmund Husserl in 1918 and after her encounter with the horror of World War I, she became one of the first members of the *Deutsche Demokratische Parte i - DDP* (German Democratic Party), a left-wing liberal party that supported the Weimar Republic.

Stein was among the founding members of the new liberal party, which took place in the city of Breslau on November 22, 1918. In addition to Stein, the following intellectuals were also part of the founding group: Max Weber, Alfred Weber, Walther Ratheaus, Theodor Heuß, Hugo Preuß, Ernst Cassirer, Harry Graf Kessler, women's rights advocate Helene Lange and Marie-Elisabeth Lüders (MROZOWSKA; OKÓLSKA, 1997). The idea of founding the new party was also supported by Professor Albert Einstein, who also signed the party's official initiation document (LEMO, 1919).

According to Mrozowska and Okólska (1997), the DDP slogan was based on essential principles, including: decent housing conditions, ensuring that everyone had access to adequate and safe housing; enhanced protection of individual liberty, promoting personal freedom and protecting against any form of oppression; fairly distributed taxes, advocating an equitable tax system, a Church in a free state, guaranteeing religious freedom, support for the League of Nations, an international organization dedicated to promoting peace and cooperation between countries, and, equal rights for all, ensuring that men and women had the same rights and opportunities. This was a desire that Stein already had during her time at university in Breslau, when she became involved in the defense of women's suffrage in the *Preußischer Frauenrechtsverein* (Prussian Association for Women's Rights).

Stein's concern for social responsibility led her to enter the political field, especially in defense of women. In her autobiography, she says: "[...] I also resolutely committed myself to women's right to vote. This was not obvious at the time, even within the women's civic movement" (STEIN, 2018, pp. 234-235).

As a result, we can see that Stein's political and social life was not superficial, but maintained a consistent commitment, not only while she was within the DDP, but also in her political concern in the field of pedagogy, especially on the issue of women's education

According to Mrozowska and Okólska (1997), Stein gave a number of political speeches in Breslau and the surrounding towns, four of which were documented in the *Breslauer Zeitung* (Breslau Newspaper). On January 2, 1919, the newspaper reported that Stein was going to give a speech on the topic: "*Die Frau in der National-Versammlung*" (Women in the National Assembly), but this event was canceled without any justification. On January 6, 1910, she gave a speech entitled: "*Warum müssen sich die Frauen der Deutschen Demokratischen Partei anschließen* (Why women should join the German Democratic Party)

in the *Saale des Lessing* Lessing Hall) at Adalberstraβe, number 10. Later, on January 9, 1919, she acted as moderator at a *Gesellingen Abends* (Social Evening) and, on January 10, 1919, she gave another political speech at the *Saal des Kindergarten-Vereins* Kindergarten Association Hall), located at Maltheserstraβe.

According to Mrozowska and Okólska (1997), in Stein's speeches on the political issue, she not only promoted women's right to vote, but also presented the aims of the new party and denounced the mistakes made by the previous policy, stating that the members of the DDP should overcome class division and the power of domination.

At the same time, Stein was appointed to the 16-member board of the DDP's youth organization, working in the *Jugendbildung* (Youth Education) working group within the DDP, as well as in the *Abteilung für Religion und Weltanschauung* (Department of Religion and Worldview). In addition to Stein, other members who took part in this work were Heinrich Scholz, Julius Stenzel and Konrat Ziegler.

However, according to Arranz (2021), Stein's commitment to the DDP lasted only a few months, because in the second half of 1919, she realized that she lacked the necessary tools and content to continue along this political party path. However, Stein's withdrawal from party politics did not exempt her from her continued political and cultural activities, but she continued her political concerns as a teacher and lecturer, a profession she held until 1933.

After her political speeches, engagement in the DDP's working groups and after publishing an article on February 10, 1919, in the party newspaper called: *Der Volkstaat* (The People's State), under the title: *Zur Politisierung der Frauen* (On the Politicization of Women), Stein began to wind down her active participation within the DDP and devoted herself to her qualification so that she could work as a teacher.

According to Arranz (2021), in her article: *Zur Politisierung der Frauen*, Stein (1919) reiterated that, after the new Weimar Constitution was established, there would no longer be a professional, economic or cultural relationship that didn't essentially depend on politics. In this publication, she denounced the dangerous existence of an overabundance of political propaganda, which could damage the parties and their relations with the electorate. In addition, Stein also recalled respect for the particular mission of women, especially now through their vote and their presence in the political and administrative decision-making of the state.

For Stein (1919), women could now make a significant contribution to the democratic goal of achieving and consolidating the unity of the people by balancing opposing power relations, but this would only be possible when women were politically and socially trained. Furthermore, Stein (1919) identified the link between the personal, public and professional spheres of each citizen as a fundamental reason for beginning to understand politics as a means of attending not only to the problems of the state, but also to the affairs of each individual.

In this way, politics, for Stein (1919), meant adopting a new position that would involve social reality, that is, the expression for talking about a new vision of education aimed at fostering politics in each individual, and in particular women. In view of this, "Edith Stein would find the way to develop this process through a pedagogical approach based on philosophical and theological anthropology, supported by psychology and sociology, in order to promote the improvement of the person with the help of external agents, starting from the internal configuration and taking into account the personal, social and transcendental dimensions" (ARRANZ, 2021, p. 92).

In this sense, according to Arranz (2021), Stein was aware of the danger of falling into formative extremes, in which, on the one hand, individual rights would be provided for

over those of the community, or, on the other hand, the value of the person would be denied due to their ability to make an effective contribution to the whole, which is why Stein opted for an educational proposal that fostered a balance of interests between the individual and the community.

Thus, for Stein (2018), the socio-philosophical work was a preparation for the political activity that consumed him for several months between 1918 and 1919, and which was not out of his horizon, even after his departure from the DDP.

During her time in Münster and on the trips she still made to give her lectures, the confrontations against Jews became increasingly offensive. In the face of this anti-Semitic violence, according to Novinsky (2014), Stein's reaction to anti-Semitism was to emphasize her Jewish origin, even in the face of her conversion to Catholicism, which is why she always used the pronoun "we" when discussing the "Jewish question".

Thus, her political action in defense of women's suffrage was based on her interest in establishing an intrinsic relationship between politics and education, allowing women to proactively insert themselves into German public life, but also to be widely educated and to acquire knowledge, which for a long time had been inaccessible to women. For her, the step taken since the Weimar Republic meant not only external action, but also an internal movement aimed at developing social awareness and responsibility.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Edith Stein became an important figure at the beginning of the 20th century, both because she was a woman and because she was Jewish and later converted to Catholicism. She lived in an era of great political, social and cultural upheaval in Germany. Her personal and intellectual trajectory was shaped by the historical events of her time, from the Weimar Republic to the rise of the Nazi regime, which culminated in her murder in a concentration camp.

Born into a Jewish family, her conversion to Catholicism and subsequent entry into monastic life represented a deep search for meaning and truth amid the turbulence of her time. The impact of Nazi anti-Semitic policies also highlights the brutality and inhumanity faced by many during this dark period in German history.

Edith Stein's contributions to philosophy, politics and culture continue to be relevant, providing valuable *insights* into the human condition, and how each human being relates to these movements in the face of their historical context. Her life and work bear witness to intellectual and spiritual resistance in the face of oppression. In times of polarization and conflict, his story offers a profound reflection on the importance of dialogue, understanding and empathy. Navigating the political, social and cultural movements of her time, Stein left a legacy that transcends time barriers, still inspiring generations today.

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