

The Burke Library Archives
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

**Finding Aid for
Dietrich Bonhoeffer Primary Sources, 1926-2004**



Dietrich Bonhoeffer - Union Theological Seminary Application Photo

Finding Aid prepared by: Elizabeth Russey, March 2003
Revised with additions by R. Tonkiss Cameron, 2005, 2008, 2009,
Rebecca Nieto and Ruth Tonkiss Cameron 2016

Summary Information

Creator: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1906-1945, and various
Title: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Primary Sources
Inclusive dates: 1926-2004
Bulk dates: 1930-1946
Abstract: Correspondence, photographs, administrative papers covering Dietrich Bonhoeffer's year as a student at Union Theological Seminary, 1930-1931 and briefly as visiting lecturer in 1939. Translations of Bonhoeffer's sermons; Copies of correspondence between Emmi Bonhoeffer and Julia Braun-Vogelstein; Papers by or about Bonhoeffer including copies of the Paul Louis Lehmann Collection, Manuscript collections of the National Lutheran Council, Papers of Samuel S. Grey, Jr. and of Herbert Jehle. Correspondence from Dietrich Bonhoeffer to Richard Ern and family, 1930-1931; books inscribed by Bonhoeffer, Bethge and a Memoir by Paul Büsing.
Size: 9 boxes, 2.5 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** The Bonhoeffer Primary Sources Collection was artificially created from the collections of Union Theological Seminary administration and donations from outside sources, in particular through the International Bonhoeffer Society.
The books in Series 6 were purchased from Esther Shreeve, daughter of Franz Hildebrandt in July 2008. In March 2009 the Paul and Erika Büsing documents were donated by Erika Büsing.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible
[Burke Library staff](#) is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research. Access restrictions: This collection is unrestricted. However for preservation reasons the fragile items in Series 1 box 1 may only be consulted from surrogate copies.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, UTS1: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Primary Sources, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, along with his twin sister Sabine, was born on February 4, 1906, in Breslau, Germany. Later a student in Tübingen, Berlin, and at Union Theological Seminary in New York, as well as a participant in the European ecumenical movement, Bonhoeffer became known as one of the few figures of the 1930s with a comprehensive grasp of both German and English language theology.

He wrote his dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio*, at the end of three years at the University of Berlin (1924-1927) and was awarded his doctorate with honors. *Act and Being*, his Habilitationsschrift, or qualifying thesis allowing him to teach at the University of Berlin, was accepted in July 1930. The following year, 1930-1931, Bonhoeffer spent a postgraduate year at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He assumed his post as a lecturer in theology at the University of Berlin in August 1931. In the winter semester 1931-1932 Bonhoeffer presented the lectures that were published as *Creation and Fall*. His final lecture courses at Berlin, published as *Christ the Center*, along with a seminar on the philosopher G. W. F. Hegel, were taught in the summer of 1933. His authorization to teach on the faculty of the University of Berlin was finally withdrawn on August 5, 1936.

Bonhoeffer served as a curate for a German congregation in Barcelona during 1929-1930. Following his ordination at St. Matthias Church, Berlin, in November 1931, he was to help organize the Pastors' Emergency League in September 1933, prior to assuming the pastorate of the German Evangelical Church, Sydenham, and the Reformed Church of St. Paul in London. During his sojourn in England, Bonhoeffer became a close friend and confidant of the influential Anglican Bishop, George Bell. After the Confessing Church was organized in May 1934 at Barmen, Germany, Bonhoeffer returned from England in the spring of 1935 to assume leadership of the Confessing Church's seminary at Zingst by the Baltic Sea, a school relocated later that year to Finkenwalde in Pomerania. Out of the experiences at Finkenwalde emerged

his two well-known books, *Discipleship* and *Life Together*, as well as his lesser known writings on pastoral ministry such as *Spiritual Care*. His work to prepare pastors in the Confessing Church continued all the way to 1939.

Bonhoeffer's early travel to Rome and North Africa, his curacy in Barcelona, and his post-doctoral year in New York (including regular work at Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, as well as travel to Cuba and Mexico), opened him to the ecumenical church.

Bonhoeffer's theologically rooted opposition to National Socialism first made him a leader, along with Martin Niemoeller and Karl Barth, in the Confessing Church (Bekennende Kirche), and an advocate on behalf of the Jews. Indeed, his efforts to help a group of Jews escape to Switzerland were what first led to his arrest and imprisonment in the spring 1943. His leadership in the anti-Nazi Confessing Church and his participation in the Abwehr resistance circle (beginning in February 1938) make his works a unique source for understanding the interaction of religion, politics, and culture among those few Christians who actively opposed National Socialism, as is particularly evident in his drafts for a posthumously published *Ethics*. His thought provides not only an example of intellectual preparation for the reconstruction of German society after the war but also a rare insight into the vanishing social and academic world that had preceded it.

He was hanged in the concentration camp at Flossenbürg on April 9, 1945, one of four members of his immediate family to die at the hands of the Nazi regime for their participation in the small Protestant resistance movement.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Primary Sources Collection consists of primary source material related to the life and activities of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran theologian, professor, and member of the German resistance. Although this collection is not extensive, it contains some unique material related to Bonhoeffer's year-long residence at Union Theological Seminary in 1930-1931, including transcripts, correspondence, and Bonhoeffer's "Deceased Alumnus file," a collection of material maintained by the UTS Alumnae/i Office. Minimal information through correspondence is available relating to his brief visit to UTS in 1939.

The collection was enriched in 2004 by the donation of a collection of the mainly handwritten correspondence of Dietrich Bonhoeffer with Richard Ern and his family during the years 1930 to 1931.

The bulk of the collection consists of copies of material located at other repositories, including Princeton Theological Seminary and the National Lutheran Council. The collection also includes correspondence, newspaper clippings and other manuscripts from Bonhoeffer's friends and family that eulogizes his life. For a far more extensive listing of the collected and occasional works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, see the *Bonhoeffer Bibliography: Primary Sources*.

The collection is divided into seven series:

- **Series 1: Union Theological Seminary, 1929-1976 (2 boxes, 0.5 lin.ft.)**

The first box of Series 1 contains correspondence, administrative files, newspaper clippings, and other material related to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's tenure at Union Theological seminary in 1930-31 as a student and his subsequent visit to New York as a visiting lecturer in 1939. The series includes correspondence with Henry Smith Leiper, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Samuel Cavert; Bonhoeffer's application to Union Theological Seminary; and his transcripts from the University in Tübingen, Berlin and Union Theological Seminary.

This series also contains Bonhoeffer's "deceased alumnus file," a collection of clippings, correspondence, and other material maintained by the Union Alumnae/i office. The majority of the material in this series is original and some correspondence is written in German. Arrangement is by document type and then chronological.

The first box of this series is **RESTRICTED** because of the fragility of its contents. However box 2 of the series contains copies from the original fragile materials in the first box which enables researchers' access.

- **Series 2: Writings, 1926-1999(1 box, 0.25 lin.ft.)**

This series contains copies of fragments of Bonhoeffer's writing, including some translations into English and a photocopy of a portion of the unfinished novel and drama, which he began in prison. The bulk of the contents are within 1926-1944.

- **Series 3: Remembrances, 1944-2004 (1 box, 0.5 lin. ft.)**

Series 3 contains material written after Bonhoeffer's death in 1945. It includes correspondence and other documents which recount the activities of Bonhoeffer and remembrances from his friends and family. Included here is a petition seeking Bonhoeffer's inclusion in Yad Vashem by Stephen Wise. Much of the material is copied from other manuscript collections at Princeton Theological Seminary, and the files of the National Lutheran Council. This series also contains some material related to Samuel S. Grey Junior, the post-liberation administrator of the Flossenburg Concentration Camp, where Bonhoeffer was hanged.

Series 3 also contains a series of correspondence in German between Emmi Delbrück Bonhoeffer and Julia Braun-Vogelstein between 1965 and 1970. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is only briefly mentioned, and there are only several passing references to the Bonhoeffer family. The significance of this correspondence is in the insight it gives into the lives of these two women, particularly in how they addressed Germany's cultural and political legacy as survivors of the German resistance. Original letters written by Braun-Vogelstein are included in this series. This series also includes typewritten transcripts of both the Braun-Vogelstein and Bonhoeffer letters, along with an overview of the correspondence written by Victoria Barnett. This series also contains photographic copies of letters written by Emmi Bonhoeffer to Julia Braun-Vogelstein.

Arrangement is alphabetical by creating institution/creator. A listing of the exact locations of original material held by other institutions is located in the accession file. For more information, see a member of the archival staff.

- **Series 4: Photographs, [194?] (1 box, 0.25 lin. ft.)**
This series contains photographs of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Flossenburg Concentration Camp. Arrangement is alphabetical.
- **Series 5: Richard Ern's Papers, 1930 – 1977 (bulk 1930-1931) (1 box, 0.25 lin.ft.)**
This series contains a collection of correspondence donated to the Bonhoeffer Archive by Richard Ern through Roger L Shinn. It consists mainly of letters and cards from Dietrich Bonhoeffer to Richard Ern as a child and covers the period of Bonhoeffer's car journey to Mexico in 1931. The series also contains photographs of Bonhoeffer, Richard and his sister from 1930-31. The arrangement is chronological.
- **Series 6: Signed Books (2 boxes, 0.5 lin.ft.)**
Series 6 contains published books by Bonhoeffer with inscriptions, some of which were formerly the property of Franz Hildebrandt. Two are inscribed and dedicated by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and two inscribed by Eberhard Bethge, one of which includes a manuscript note by Sabine Leibholz. Also included in this series is the book which was given by Bonhoeffer to his friend at Union Frank Fischer.
- **Series 7: Paul Büsing Papers, [199?] - 2004, (1 box, 0.25 linear ft.)**
Series 7 contains the account by Paul Büsing of his life in Germany from 1917-1936 covering the period of his contact with Bonhoeffer and his study at the Finkelwalde Seminary. In addition the published family history tells Erika Büsing's story, including excerpts from Paul Büsing's memoir.

Processing

The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Primary Sources Collection was artificially created, meaning that no original order could be maintained. The collection is arranged, therefore, loosely by creating body.

Folded materials were flattened. Newspaper clippings were photocopied on acid free paper. Staples, rubber bands, and metal clips were removed and replaced with plastic clips. All materials were placed in acid-free folders and boxes.

Contents List

Series 1: Union Theological Seminary

Series Box Folder Contents

1	1	1	FRAGILE RESTRICTED Correspondence [1929-1931, 1939]
1	1	2	FRAGILE RESTRICTED Alumni Deceased file [1930-1964]
1	1	3	FRAGILE RESTRICTED Union Theological Seminary Records: Dietrich Bonhoeffer [1930-1936]
1	2		Accessible Copies of Series 1 Contents

Series 2: Writings

2	1	1	Review of Old Protestant Eschatology, 1926, Translated by D.H. Manrodt
2	1	2	Church and Eschatology, 1926, Translated by D.H. Manrodt
2	1	3	Psalms: Prayer Book of the Bible, Translated by Sister Isobel Mary SLG, 1999
2	1	4	Finkenwalde Sermons, Translated by M. Corcoran for Ulrike Lieder, 1976
			Unpublished
2	1	5	Portion of <i>Romanversuch</i> , Tegel, 1943 - 1944, pp14, 23-34, 37- 40, 44-47, 84-Copy from Originals in Possession of Susanne Dress-Bonhoeffer (Bonhoeffer's Sister)-Annotations by Larry Rasmussen.
2	1	6	Portion of <i>Dramafragment</i> , Tegel, 1943, pp 10- 12, 15-18 [provenance as f5]

Series 3: Remembrances

Emmi Bonhoeffer

3	1	1	Correspondence-Emmi Bonhoeffer to Julie Braun-Vogelstein, 1965- 70 Photographic Copies
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Julia Braun-Vogelstein

3	1	2	Correspondence to Emmi Bonhoeffer, 1965-1970
3	1	3	J. B-V Correspondence Transcriptions by Victoria Barnett, [199?]

Samuel S. Grey, Jr.

3	1	4	Dear Martha-Correspondence and Photographs, April -Dec 1945-Collected and Transcribed by S. Grey, 1999
3	1	5	Dissent, Protective Custody, and Concentration Camps, by S. Grey, [199?]
3	1	6	Das Konzentrationslager Flossenbürg, Gegründert für Sogenannte Asoziale und Kriminelle, by Toni Siegert, in <i>Bayern in der N-S Zeit</i> , ed. M. Broszat and E. Fröhlich, 1979
3	1	7	Concentration Camp Flossenburg by T. Siegert-Translated by A. M. Shantz for S. S. Grey, 1982

Hitler Plot

3	1	8	Articles, Reports, World Council of Churches Press Releases, 1944-45
			Commission for Designation of Righteous at Yad Vashem, Israel
3	1	9-10	Petition for Recognition of D. Bonhoeffer, Correspondence, Petition Copy, Exhibits, by Stephen Wise, 1997-2004

Series 3: Remembrances (Cont'd)

Series Box Folder Contents

Herbert Jehle Papers

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|---|---|----|---|
| 3 | 1 | 11 | <p>Copies of H. Jehle Papers, 1930-34
 Notes by Clifford Green and Victoria Barnett, March 2004
 Bonhoeffer, D. Concerning the Christian idea of God, [1930/31]
 Correspondence, 1932-3
 Gebete für das Jahr der Kirche, Christmas 1933-Title Page and Inscription by Bonhoeffer to Jehle
 Bonhoeffer, D-Church and World of Missions, Kirche und Volkerwelt -Copy of Paper Delivered at Oekumenische Konzil der Christlichen Kirchen, Fanø, Denmark, Aug 1934
 Bonhoeffer, D-Die Kirche und die Welt der Nationen (Zur Theolog. Grundlegg.Der Arbeit des Weltbundes.)- Copy of German Thesenpapier [1934?]</p> |
| 3 | 1 | 12 | <p>Death of Julie Bonhoeffer and Funeral Address by D. Bonhoeffer, Jan.1936
 Studienreise des Predigerseminars der Bekennenden Kirche zu Finkelwalde in Pommern nach Dänemark und Schweden vom 29.2-11.3.1936
 Memorandum zu Einem Austausch von Kandidaten und Studenten der Theologie Zwischen der Bekennenden Kirche und Ausländsichen Kirchen, [Before Feb, 1937]
 Brief Aus Finkelwalde Oct - Dec 1936</p> |
| 3 | 1 | 13 | <p>Burns-Chalmers, A. Caring is the Christian Thing, <i>Fellowship</i> 7(8), Aug 1941
 Correspondence- Franz Hildebrandt on Death of Bonhoeffer, 1945
 Maria von Wedermeyer, 1952
 Eberhard Bethge 1954, 1968
 Signed Circular Letter on Peace and Ecumenical Movement by H. Jehle, [after 1978?]</p> |

Jean Lassere

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|---|---|----|--|
| 3 | 1 | 14 | Remembrances of Dietrich Bonhoeffer [at Union] by Jean Lassere, 1981 |
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Paul Louis Lehmann Collection (Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries)

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|---|---|-------|--|
| 3 | 1 | 15-18 | Copies of Correspondence, 1931- 1969, 1987 |
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Sabine Leibholz

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| 3 | 1 | 19 | Sabine Leibholz: Copies and Correspondence Transcripts, 1932- 67 |
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Bonhoeffer Film Project-No Greater Love

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|---|---|-------|--|
| 3 | 1 | 20-21 | National Lutheran Council, Lutheran World Action Collection-Bonhoeffer Film Project-- Copies of Correspondence and Documents 1939-78, 1946, 1980 |
|---|---|-------|--|

Tafel Family

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|--|
| 3 | 1 | 22 | <p>Copies-Tafel Family Tree [Linked to Bonhoeffer's family]
 Articles- Johann Friedrich, Immanuel Tafel, Louis Herman Tafel, Johann Friedrich Leonhard Tafel</p> |
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Series 4: Photographs**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

4	1	1	Negatives
4	1	2	UTS Application Photograph and Enlargements
4	1	3	Statues [195?.]
4	1	4	Emmi Bonhoeffer[195?.]
4	1	5	Bonhoeffer Portrait at Tegel [1944]
4	1	6	Flossenburg Concentration Camp [1945]

Series 5: Richard Ern's Papers

5	1	1	Correspondence-Donation of R. Ern's Papers 2004-2005
5	1	2	Photographs-Bonhoeffer with Richard Ern, Scarsdale [c.1930] Photograph -Richard and Sister [c.1927?]
5	1	3	Correspondence-D. Bonhoeffer to Richard and Parents 1930 –1931 1. Letter from UTS, Oct 14, 1930 2. Letter from UTS, [Oct 15?] 1930 3. To Richard Ern-Letter, Nov 6, 1930 4. To Richard Ern-Card from NY, Jan 15, 1931 5. To Richard Ern-Card from NY, Jan 22, 1931 6. To Richard Ern-Card from NY, Feb 11, 1931 7. To Richard Ern-Card from NY, Mar 5, 1931 8. To Richard Ern-Card from NY, Mar 18, 1931 9. To Richard Ern-Card from NY, Mar 26, 1931 10. To Ern Family-Card from Fort Worth, May 14, 1931 [11. Color Photocopy of 8 and 10] 12.To Ern Family-Card from Portland, PA, Mt Tammany- Comment by Paul Lehmann, May 7 1931 13. To August Ern-Card from Laredo, May 18 1931 14. To Richard Ern-Card from Piramide de Teopanzolco, Jun 5 1931 15. To Ern Family-Card from Wytheville, Va.,ms, Jun 12 1931 16. To Richard Ern-Letter from Berlin, Dec 13 1931 17. To Mrs L Ern-Western Union Telegram from NY, Jun 17 [1931]
5	1	4	Correspondence-Eberhard Bethge to Richard and Frances Ern, 1976-77 Opening of Bonhoeffer Archives, Union Theol. Seminary, March 4, 1977 Post-War German Commemorative Postage Stamps-Photocopy of Panel -- Dem Deutschen Widerstand zum Jahrestag des 20.Juli.1944/1964 Stamp Commemorating Death of Bonhoeffer, 9.IV.1945 Bonhoeffer and Bethge-Newspaper Clippings

Series 6: Signed Books**To Franz Hildebrandt signed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

6	1	1	<i>Akt und Sein</i> , 1931-Dedication by Bonhoeffer
6	1	2	<i>Gemeinsames Leben</i> , 1939-Dedication by Bonhoeffer

Series 6: Signed Books (Continued)

6 1 3 *Aug dem Wege zur Freiheit*, 1946-Dedication by E. Bethge
Note by Sabine Leibholz

Signed by Eberhard Bethge

6 1 4 *Die Mündige Welt I*, 1955, *Die Mündige Welt II*, 1956- Inscription by
E. Bethge

To Franklin Fisher

6 2 1 *Deutschland*, 1930-Dedication by Bonhoeffer

Series 7: Paul Büsing Papers, [199?] - 2004

7 1 1-2 *Memoirs of Paul Büsing, 1917-1936*-Copy of Manuscript, Typescript [199?]

7 1 3 *Journey through the Century: Stories of a Family*, ed. Jocelyn Patten, 2004