

Leo Strauss Chronology

1899: Leo Strauss was born to observant Jewish parents in the German town of Kirchhain, near Marburg, in the province of Hesse.

C. 1916: At the age of 17, Strauss was converted to “straightforward, political” Zionism.

1917: Strauss began his university education, but it was interrupted by his conscription for military service as a translator in occupied Belgium.

1919: Strauss resumed his university education at the University of Marburg.

1920: Strauss first met his three lifelong friends Jacob Klein, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the emigré Russian, Alexander Vladimirovitch Kojevnikov (1902-68), later known as “Kojève,” who had just left Russia to study under Karl Jaspers in Heidelberg.

1921: Strauss received his PhD. His dissertation, which praised the irrationalism of F.H. Jacobi, was supervised by Ernst Cassirer, the successor of Hermann Cohen as leader of the Marburg neo-Kantian school. By then, Strauss has also studied at the Universities of Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, and Hamburg. Later, Strauss said that Nietzsche so dominated and bewitched him between his

22nd and 30th years, that he literally believed everything that he understood of him.

1922: Strauss studied under Martin Heidegger, who impressed him deeply.

1920s: Strauss researched and wrote principally on Jewish topics. He also met several times with Vladimir Jabotinsky, the fascist leader of “revisionist” Zionism, whom David Ben-Gurion later called “Vladimir Hitler.”

1925-31: Researcher and writer for the Academy for the Science of Judaism in Berlin. Between 1925 and 1930, Strauss wrote his first two books, which were on Spinoza.

1931: Applied for a Rockefeller Fellowship. Strauss’ research on Thomas Hobbes brought him in contact with the future “Nazi Crown Jurist,” Carl Schmitt. Schmitt was shown Strauss’ unfinished book on Hobbes. Strauss wrote a review of Schmitt’s little book, *The Concept of the Political*, which so pleased Schmitt that he got it published in the same journal which published the book. Schmitt’s recommendation obtained for Strauss a Rockefeller Fellowship to study in France and England.

1933: In Paris, Strauss married a recently divorced German Jewish woman, Marie (Mirjam) Bernsohn, whom he had met in 1930, and acquired a stepson.

1934: Strauss and his family moved to London. He studied Hobbes in the British Museum.

1937: Appointed Research Fellow in the Department of History at Columbia University, New York, Strauss left his family behind in Britain.

1938-48: Brought onto the graduate faculty of the New School in New York, on the basis of a strong recommendation, and a subsidy, from Harold Laski. Strauss’ family joined him in New York in 1939.

1948-73: Hans Morgenthau, acting chairman of the Political Science Department at the University of Chicago, brought Strauss over to President Robert Hutchins’ office. Half an hour later, Hutchins had appointed Strauss a full professor, with a salary greater than anyone else in the department.

1953: Strauss was visiting professor at Berkeley. Offered a tenured position there, he declined.

1954-55: Visiting professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Visited Germany.

1956: Strauss suffered a heart attack.

1967: Strauss retired from Chicago at the end of the academic year.

1968-69: Professor of political science at Claremont Men’s College in California.

1968-73: Until his death, Strauss was Scott Buchanan Distinguished Scholar in Residence, St. John’s College, Annapolis, Maryland.