

The Silberstein & Fluss Correspondence: Early Letters

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I have destroyed all my notes and letters accumulated for 14 years, all scientific abstracts and manuscripts of my work; only some family letters have been spared. All my old friendships and relations presented themselves again and silently took the deadly blow. . . I cannot mature and cannot die, worrying about who will lay their hands on my old papers. The biographers should work it out somehow, we don't want to make it too easy for them. S. Freud letter

As with virtually every aspect of Freud's life, when we turn to examine the details of Freud's early correspondence we encounter contradictions, misquoted text, and conflicting chronologies. These cannot be accidental occurrences, but are strictly regulated in conformance to a plan C a plan requiring the collaboration of "unknown hands" whose emendations and distortions betray a knowledge of Freud's nature and crimes.

Freud's early letters, especially those to Silberstein (and to a lesser extent to Fluss) are especially important to the thesis presented in this work as they encompass the period of time when it is claimed Freud murdered his half-brother John. This being the case, it is imperative that every effort be made to clearly penetrate into Freud's early background C especially that time immediately preceding and succeeding the hypothesized murder of John Freud.

The murder of John would almost assuredly have occurred sometime between 1873 and 1875. Therefore, given Freud's inveterate habit of letter writing, his compulsion to express himself and his garrulous nature, it is highly unlikely that, if he did indeed murdered his brother John, in the indicated period, evidence of the event could not be totally hidden from view. A close examination of Freud's early letters should, then, provide substantive evidence of the dark event in the form of direct statements, concealed or censored passages, distortions of chronology, and veiled allusions to the crime. And, we should not only find these elements in Freud's early letters, but we can also anticipate finding further indications that Freud was homicidal even before the murder of John. The Silberstein correspondence, in particular, then, affords a unique opportunity to affirm or negate the thesis presented in my work: that

Freud was a homicidal maniac and that he murdered his half-brother, John Freud sometime between the age of 17 and 19.

Background To The Silberstein Correspondence:

Eduard Silberstein (1856 C1925) was probably Freud's closest boyhood friend. Evidence indicates that they had become friends at least as early as 1870. According to the translator of the correspondence, Eduard attended the same high school as Freud, Leopoldstadter Real C und Oergymnasium, and matriculated in 1874, one year after Freud. Silberstein's father owned a business in Brailia, Romania and Eduard lived in Vienna in order to attend school there. Most of the early letters, then, were written in the summers when Eduard returned home to Bralia. Concerning his family little is known but they appeared to be close family friends. In a letter of 1883 Freud referred to Eduard's father as "half mad."

Freud's first letters and notes to Silberstein begin in 1871. A few brief notes were written in the non-summer months on the occasion of Freud being sick and requesting Silberstein to visit, or other such matters. Otherwise the letters were written during the summer months of their separation. In a letter allegedly written immediately after his return from England (i.e., 1875), Freud mention "John whom you know already" C indicating, perhaps, that he had met him in 1870 when John was supposed to have visited in Vienna. Despite the fact that Sigmund and Eduard were writing to each other in Spanish as early as we know (i.e., 1871) Freud informed Silberstein in a post card allegedly from England that John could read and write some Spanish. Other than these references there are no other known references to John in any of the extant correspondence.

Eduard, upon graduation, enrolled in the law curriculum and studied for a year in Leipzig before returning to Vienna in the winter of 1875. He graduated with a degree in law in 1879. From their earliest years they shared an interest in politics, languages, and literature. They wrote to each other frequently in Spanish with occasional smattering (phrases or single words) of other languages such as Latin and Greek. Together they formed a secret society, of which they were the only members. The secret organization was called the Academia Castellana (Castilian Academy) which was originally referred to as the SSS. Freud's own letters to Silberstein reflect his intense, if not passionate, attachment

to his friend; he often speaks of his "longing" for him and asserts that Silberstein is "wedded" to him through their common interests.

The translator of Freud's letters in keeping with the conventional barrage of propaganda observes: "both friends were accomplished linguists." Yet he himself repudiates an a literal translation of Freud's letters as such an approach would reduce, Freud letters to that of a "stammerer." This is due we are told to Freud's ungrammatical use of the Spanish language, to the degree it is often impossible to even know what he means. Talking out of both sides of his mouth, Boehlich says that to translate Freud directly would reveal him as a stammerer, because, he stated, "Freud never wrote anything like correct Spanish." The inability to write correct Spanish C to the extent great liberties had to be taken in construing Freud's meaning would hardly qualify him as an accomplished linguist. The issue is not a slight or insignificant one when we must scrutinize and interpret various of Freud's specific uses of language bearing upon our thesis. In any case, highly questionable translations of Freud's letters are often freely and even perhaps necessarily used, precisely because he was not an accomplished linguist.

In any case, Freud and Silberstein gave each other secret names, developed journals and a correspondence, and shared their infatuations with each other and created a shared "mythology" of the A.C. (Castillian Academy) in which Freud invariably referred to himself as the "dog of Seville." Though very close in their early years, they drifted apart as time when on. By 1879 communications dropped off radically and only intermittent messages exchanged. In one letter of 1876, Silberstein, it can be inferred, had noticed a great change that had come over Freud. It is not improbable that this change, which Freud himself refers to as a "complete transformation of mood" accounted for the distance coming between the two close childhood friends.

Silberstein's First Wife Is Killed At Freud's Home/Office at the House of Atonement

Strangely, as with a great many of those whom Freud greatly loved and greatly hated, tragedy came into their lives through the auspices or direct hand of Freud. On May 4th, 1891 Silberstein's first wife apparently committed suicide at Freud's house while she was in therapy with him. Suffering from

"melancholia," she went to Vienna to receive treatment from Freud. The editor of the Silberstein correspondence tells it this way. "When she arrived she told her maid to wait downstairs, and instead of going to the consulting rooms, threw herself to her death from the third floor [American fourth floor] without having seen Freud."

Boehlich presents the tragic event as though the woman had just arrived, and *before seeing Freud*, killed herself. According to Silberstein's granddaughter, however, this was not the case. In a brief essay included in the Harvard edition, "Biographical Notes On Dr. Eduard Silberstein," Silberstein's granddaughter, Rosita B. Vieyra, specifically states that Freud had "unsuccessfully treated" Silberstein's wife, whose name, interestingly, was Pauline C the same name as Freud's half-sister in England:

He [Silberstein] fell deeply in love with Paula (or Pauline) Theiler, a young girl from Jassy. Sadly, their marriage was a short one. She soon became mentally ill, was treated unsuccessfully by his friend Sigmund Freud, and threw herself from a window in Freud's apartment building. This tragedy was corroborated by Anna Freud, who invited me to visit her in 1982, a few months before her death.

Pauline died May 14, 1891, Fleischl's death was admittedly "hastened" by Freud in 1891 and six months previous to the death of Pauline Freud had killed Mathilde with "inappropriate" injections of a sexual hypnotic, as an experimental cure for Graves's disease C a pet theory of his at the time. During this period (i.e., 1890 -1891) Freud was advertising his mistaken, if not insane, conviction that neurosis was the result of sexual secretions and that hysteria, ironically, was not curable by therapy (p.282).

In view of all this we may understand Boehlich's wanting Freud not to have even seen Pauline before she jumped or was thrown out the window. The question then remains, for how long did Freud treat her before she allegedly committed suicide? And of further interest is the question, why has no other biographer of Freud's ever mentioned this highly pertinent point C why was it suppressed?

Silberstein: A German Nationalist

During World War I, Silberstein worked for the enemy occupying German forces and was tried by his countrymen for "treason," but was "completely exonerated," according to his granddaughter. The Silberstein correspondence nonetheless clearly documents that Silberstein was an adherent of the German national socialist movement, even in his early school days, and frequently contributed to the social democrats. C Freud refers to Silberstein contributing to their "secret war chest." In one letter, Freud even warns Silberstein not to mention the German *reich* lest others be offended. Indeed, in one letter (Jan. 30, 1875) Freud wrote: "If that should be followed by one or two semesters spent together in the capital of the New German Reich C which, it would seem, need not be considered a complete impossibility C then we should have achieved the ideal, idyllic state of the A.E. we envisaged two years before our Styrian tour."

In any case, a brother of Silberstein's committed suicide C at what age we do not know C and it was later feared by Silberstein's second wife that he would do the same: "There was a time when my grandmother Anna feared that he would follow his brother's example." Eduard died in Braila in 1925. Silberstein's granddaughter relates that he was a kindly and gentle man, contributed to the welfare of his people, without sharing in their religious beliefs, and was a socialist in that he was for "workers' rights and the common man." From this accounting of him we can easier accept his taking a different path from his childhood friend Sigmund Freud.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the Editor of this collection of letters stated that for the transcription he "relied mainly on photographs." Whether these were photographs of the original letters is uncertain.

Note On The Fluss Letters

Emil Fluss, the other childhood friend with whom Freud corresponded was a family and personal friend from earliest years. The Fluss's and Freud's were apparently friends from the days when the Freud's resided in Freiberg. Emil's father was the prosperous owner of a weaving mill and had some five children, three brothers and two sisters...