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THE LETTERS OF SIGMUND FREUD TO JEANNE LAMPL-DE GROOT, 1921-1939

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND POLITICS IN THE INTERWAR YEARS



Edited by GERTIE BÖGELS
Translated by Kenneth Kronenberg



"Gertie Bögels makes accessible 76 carefully annotated letters written by Sigmund Freud to Jeanne Lampl-de Groot between 1921 and 1939. They show him as a colleague, a helper, a scientist, and a critical observer of the current political situation. Unfortunately, Lampl-de Groot had her letters to Freud destroyed. Nonetheless, the book deftly places her personality and the details of her life in historical context, and the reader will get to know her as a young woman making a place for female identity, not only in psychoanalytic theory but also as an active participant in the political debates within the international psychoanalytic movement of the time."

– **Stephan Hau (Psychoanalyst, IPA), professor for clinical psychology, Department of Psychology, Stockholm University**

"What a beautiful book! It introduces us to an elderly Freud captivated by a young, ambitious Dutch woman who becomes a noted analyst and one of his confidantes. I was particularly impressed by Freud's creativity and grandfatherly cordiality as he works tirelessly on into old age while bearing the pain and complications of his cancer with dignity."

– **Marc Hebbrecht, MD, psychiatrist, training analyst of the Belgian Society of Psychoanalysis**

"Over his lifetime, Sigmund Freud wrote thousands of letters to important contemporaries, colleagues, and friends, including more than 70 letters to Jeanne Lampl-de Groot. These letters give us a vivid glimpse into his relationship with a promising young doctor, who later became a close friend of the Freud family, and a female Nestor of the Dutch Psychoanalytic Society. The letters also reflect the cultural and political upheavals that marked the interwar years."

– **Suzy Schipper, psychoanalyst; clinical psychologist; member, Dutch Psychoanalytic Society**

"Bögels' beautifully and expertly edited and annotated book *Sigmund Freud: Letters to Jeanne Lampl-de Groot 1921–1939* presents for the first time Sigmund Freud's correspondence between 1921 and 1939 with the renowned Dutch psychoanalyst Jeanne Lampl-de Groot. This major contribution to the psychoanalytic literature shows a personable, supportive, and deeply engaged Freud, who as Jeanne's psychoanalyst, friend, and mentor also provides astute commentary on psychoanalytic developments and societal issues, including the rising Austrian/German anti-Semitism. Additionally, Bögels introduces Jeanne Lampl-de Groot through her intelligent, passionate letters to her parents, and we learn how her innovative conceptions on female psychosexual development influenced Freud."

– **Rita Teusch, Ph.D. training and supervising psychoanalyst, Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute**



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The Letters of Sigmund Freud to Jeanne Lampl-de Groot, 1921–1939

Freud wrote 76 letters to the Dutch psychoanalyst Jeanne Lampl-de Groot between 1921 and 1939. These letters are personable, lively, and compassionate and convey his respect and caring for Jeanne, who was his patient, pupil, and eventually his esteemed professional colleague. The letters are sociohistorical documents that contain Freud's thoughts about pertinent issues in psychoanalysis and the interwar sociopolitical situation in Vienna and Germany.

Jeanne Lampl-de Groot was an internationally known psychoanalyst who published extensively on psychoanalytic theory and practice. She regularly wrote long letters to Freud when residing outside of Vienna, seeking his advice on personal and professional matters and discussing with him her evolving ideas about psychoanalysis, including her disagreement with Freud about female sexual development. It is unfortunate that Jeanne had her letters to Freud destroyed because it sometimes makes Freud's somewhat elliptical responses difficult to place in context. For example, it is quite probable that she wrote detailed descriptions of her husband's emotional issues, which Freud then merely alluded to. Because we don't know the specifics of what she wrote, his responses remain ambiguous, and therefore problematic to translate. Nonetheless, Freud's responses do reveal a great deal about Jeanne and her passion for psychoanalysis. The book also includes several of her letters to her parents, which allows the reader to get to know Jeanne's intelligent, thoughtful voice, her thoughts about the evolving science of psychoanalysis, her experience during her psychoanalysis with Freud, and her concerns about the rise of anti-Semitism in Austria and Germany.

This book introduces to its readers a very personable Freud and provides insight into his thoughts about the development of critical psychoanalytic concepts such as the death drive, masochism, lay analysis, and his changing views on the length of a psychoanalysis. We also hear about historical events in the 1920s and 1930s as we witness Freud and Lampl-de Groot move through their personal and professional lives with dignity and perseverance.

Gertie Bögels is a former psychiatrist at the Nijmegen University Medical Center and former co-editor of the Dutch *Tijdschrift voor Psychoanalyse*. Her publications include works on biography and psychoanalysis, narrative and imagination, child analysis, and intergenerational symptomatology.

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Translated by Kenneth Kronenberg

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For Edith and Robert Berkovits-Lampl, in friendship



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Series Editor's Foreword

The Letters of Sigmund Freud to Jeanne Lampl-de Groot, 1921–1939: Psychoanalysis and Politics in the Interwar Years

The Publications Committee of the International Psychoanalytic Association continues the series “Psychoanalytic Ideas and Applications” with the present volume.

The aim of this series is to focus on the production of significant authors, whose works are outstanding contributions to the development of the psychoanalytic field, and to set out relevant ideas and themes generated by psychoanalysis throughout its history that deserve to be known and discussed by present day psychoanalysts.

The relationship between psychoanalytic ideas and their applications needs to be highlighted from the perspective of theory, clinical practice, and research in order to maintain their validity for contemporary psychoanalysis.

The Publications Committee's objective is to share these ideas with the psychoanalytic community and with professionals in other related disciplines so as to expand their knowledge and generate a productive interchange between the text and the reader.

The IPA Publications Committee is pleased to publish the English translation of *The Letters of Sigmund Freud to Jeanne Lampl-de Groot, 1921–1939: Psychoanalysis and Politics in the Interwar Years*, by Gertie Bögels. The present volume is an expanded edition of a book published in 2012, in Dutch, in the Netherlands, and also published in 2017, in German. It contains 76 letters written by Freud between 1921 and 1939 to the well-known Dutch psychoanalyst Jeanne Lampl-de Groot.

Dr. Bögels was close to Lampl-de Groot, who in fact was her supervisor during her analytic training. Her appreciation for Lampl-de Groot led her to invest considerable time and energy to obtain the letters and find additional information regarding her personal and family life. Dr. Bögels requested Freud's letters from the Library of Congress in 2009. This volume makes the 76 letters written by Freud to Lampl-de Groot available in English for the first time. Unfortunately, Lampl-de Groot's letters to Freud were destroyed by Anna Freud at her request.

Dr. Bögels' book begins with biographical information about Jeanne Lampl-de Groot. The richness of her description poignantly brings her character alive. One learns of the death of two sisters and the long mourning process that marked her life. We learn about her great interest in music and literature, her passion for psychoanalysis, and her substantial contributions to psychoanalytic theory. Lampl-de Groot's work focused on Freud's theory of the sexual development of women, paying particular attention to the role of the mother. She published several papers on this topic, one of the best known being "The Evolution of the Oedipus Complex in Women."

The second chapter, entitled "My Dear Jeanne," presents Freud's letters. Dr. Bögels' footnotes and comments, which greatly enrich those letters, include sociopolitical and biographical information about all of the persons and events mentioned in the letters, and provide a social, political, intellectual, and personal background to Freud's correspondence. In reading the letters, one is struck by Freud's evident affection and respect for his most gifted student and esteemed colleague. The letters convey personal exchanges and commentary about the development of psychoanalysis, and also about the rise of the Nazi regime and anti-Semitism, which eventually forced both Freud and Lampl-de Groot to flee. In this respect, the letters are a window into these difficult historical times.

Dr. Bögels' third chapter provides excerpts from letters that Lampl-de Groot wrote to her parents between 1921 and 1923, which evince a remarkable writing talent. They convey the quality of her relationship with her parents and her interest in sharing her experiences in Italy and Vienna with them. In the absence of her letters to Freud, these excerpts also give us insight into their relationship. They include references to the letters she received from Freud, including his response to her request to start psychoanalysis with him. She also told her parents about her first sessions with Freud and her impressions of him. Dr. Bögels skillfully chose excerpts from these letters that shed light on the development of psychoanalysis at that time, including theory, technique, training models, and psychoanalytic organizations. These fragments enable the reader to appreciate the milieu, and the conditions in which psychoanalytic life developed.

This book is an important contribution to understanding Freud's relationship to Lampl-de Groot, and more generally to the history of the psychoanalytic movement, and to the struggles it faced during those most difficult years in Europe. It is a testament to the meaningful contributions that Jeanne Lampl-de Groot made to psychoanalysis. We are indebted to Dr. Bögels and to the translator Kenneth Kronenberg for making this exceptional volume available to an English-speaking readership.

Gabriela Legorreta

Series Editor

Chair, IPA Publications Committee



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Introduction

Introduction

“a small piece of emigrant misery beside the large.”

The article “Freud als Briefschreiber” [Freud as letter writer] in *Jahrbuch der Psychoanalyse* begins with this quotation from a letter from Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, to Jeanne Lampl-de Groot, Freud’s last analysand. She went on to become an internationally recognized psychoanalyst and the Nestor of Dutch psychoanalysis. But in 1938 both of them had had to flee Nazi terror in Vienna. Freud had taken his family to London; Lampl-de Groot, her children, and her Jewish husband Hans Lampl made their way to the home of her parents in The Hague. The author of that article, Gerhard Fichtner, held a chair in the History of Medicine, at Tübingen University, where his research specialty was the history of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. He was the editor of numerous collections of Freud letters and co-edited the “bridal letters” (*Brautbriefe*) from Freud to his future wife, Martha Bernays. That 1938 letter to Lampl-de Groot demonstrates Freud’s ability to portray one of the most dramatic periods in world history from the perspective of his family’s current situation, an example of social history *avant la lettre*. It is well known that Freud wrote thousands of letters, including the above-cited bridal letters, to colleagues and prominent contemporary authors such as Karl Abraham, Eugen Bleuler, Max Eitingon, Carl Jung, the Greek princess Marie Bonaparte, Arnold and Stefan Zweig, Lou Andreas-Salomé, and Thomas Mann.

Once it became clear to me from this Freud letter’s reception that there must be other letters to Lampl-de Groot, in 2009 I ordered a copy of this correspondence from the Library of Congress, in Washington, D.C. The trove consisted of 76 letters, although access to two of them had been restricted until 2008. I also found that the letters were written in Sütterlin, the old German script, which I found difficult to decipher. Thanks to Joachim Danckwardt, I made contact with Fichtner, who offered to transcribe them

2 Introduction

for me on the condition that I cite him in future publications. Until his death, on January 4, 2012, he was very helpful to me in elucidating unclear passages and Austrian colloquialisms. Only once was I able to correct an error of his: it related to the word *Selecta*, which Fichtner had thought was the name of a medical journal. My own Internet research identified it as a brand of cigars. Fichtner was quite amused: how could he have missed that one! After all, cigars were a recurrent preoccupation of Freud's, and the delivery of Dutch cigars came up frequently in his correspondence with the Lampls.

Jeanne's daughter Edith Berkovits-Lampl and her son-in-law Robert Berkovits generously provided me with further information and correspondences. Among other things, they had a copy of the numbered list of the Freud letters and several short notes handwritten by Jeanne Lampl. The list was prepared on November 8, 1986, in London, on the occasion of Jeanne Lampl's official handover of the 76 letters and postcards to the then president and vice president of the International Psychoanalytical Association, Robert Wallerstein and Joseph Sandler. The transfer was witnessed by the American psychoanalyst Charles Mangham.¹

Edith Berkovits-Lampl was able to obtain information about the two restricted letters from the Freud archive in Washington even before 2008. They were thus able to gain access to them despite the restriction; however, they contained nothing of particular interest, a circumstance well known from other archived correspondences.²

1 The original letters are housed in the Library of Congress, in Washington DC, in the following collection:

SIGMUND FREUD, GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE
Box 36 Folder 4 (Lampl-de Groot, Jeanne 1921–1925)
Box 36 Folder 5 (Lampl-de Groot, Jeanne 1926–1929)
Box 36 Folder 6 (Lampl-de Groot, Jeanne 1931)
Box 36 Folder 9 (Lampl-de Groot, Jeanne 1932, Jan – May)
Box 36 Folder 7 (Lampl-de Groot, Jeanne 1932, June – Dec)
Box 36 Folder 8 (Lampl-de Groot, Jeanne 1933)
Box 36 Folder 10 (Lampl-de Groot, Jeanne 1937 – 1938)
Box 36 Folder 2 (Lampl, Hans + Lampl-de Groot, Jeanne 1938 – 1939)

2 Edith Berkovits was surprised that the library had looked at the letters even though they were restricted. The then curator of the Sigmund Freud collection, Science Manuscript Specialist Dr. Leonard C. Bruno, responded to my query about whether the restriction actually concerned these two letters in particular:

The two letters from Freud (Dec. 29, 1938 & Apr. 3, 1939) came with other material to the Library in 1960 from Dr. Kurt Eissler, Sigmund Freud Archives (the source of much of our Freud holdings) and it was restricted by the donor. It would have been unusual if Dr. Eissler had not placed some restriction on the donation, as it seems to have been his practice to err on the side of extreme caution. Although the letters in question were closed until 2008, in fact, the Library vetted them for patient names some time before that and, per its usual policy, made copies and placed them in the open part of the

As far as the letters from Jeanne to Freud are concerned, these were destroyed by Anna Freud at Jeanne's request. In a letter to Jeanne dated December 31, 1939, Anna Freud noted from London: "I immediately looked for and destroyed your letters because I know that this is what you wanted."

It should be noted that letters or texts in a decedent's estate are frequently saved despite the author's expressed desire. We can only guess why Anna Freud complied with Jeanne's request.

The Berkovits-Lampl archive from the period of the Freud-Lampl letters also contains a photograph of Dr. Wagner-Jauregg, the professor of neuropsychiatry in Vienna, under whom Jeanne received her psychiatric training at the same time as her psychoanalytic. The handwritten dedication reads: "To Dr. De Groot for assistance rendered. Vienna June 6, 1924, Wagner-Jauregg."³

Gertie Bögels, Maarn, The Netherlands 2022

collection (leaving the originals in the closed section until their open date was reached). Presently, there are no longer any Lampl de Groot materials in the Freud papers that are not open, so you have received all there is. I can understand your puzzlement as to why the letters were ever closed, and your reaction is that of many a researcher who, upon finally gaining access to something previously restricted in the Freud papers, finds they are often disappointed or at least underwhelmed.

3 "Frau Dr. De Groot für geleistete Hülfe. Wien 6/VI 1924 Wagner-Jauregg"

Jeanne Lampl-de Groot

October 16, 1895 to April 4, 1987

Biographical notes

Jeanne (Adriana) Lampl-de Groot often made a point of noting that she had been analyzed by Freud. The extent to which this determined her life and her position in the psychoanalytic movement became manifest through her correspondence with Freud conducted over a period of almost 20 years. More than 70 letters from that correspondence written by Freud are now being made available in English for the first time.

Jeanne Lampl had been raised in a cosmopolitan and humanistic atmosphere. Her family, which had acquired considerable wealth, loved the arts, played music, and was socially engaged. Her mother, Henriëtte Dupont (1864–1951), was the daughter of a physician in Rotterdam. Jeanne's father, Michael Coenradus Mari de Groot (1860–1935), was the eighth of 13 children of a Catholic distiller, who later became a commission agent in the alcohol industry. In a memorial dedicated to him, he was described as engaged in city politics and having a nonconformist personality.¹ Over the course of his life, he rid himself of dogmatic religious beliefs and became increasingly engaged around social issues, especially relating to the "development of the working class." At about the time Jeanne was born he founded the Volkshaus, where general education courses, lectures, and musical performances were held. A few years later, he provided the financial means for founding a local public library. He became heavily involved in organizing various interest groups to address the impoverishment resulting from the closure of small distilleries.² One of her father's brothers was a professor of sinology at the University of Leiden, prior to that a professor in Berlin.

Jeanne was born in Schiedam on October 16, 1895, the third of four daughters: Jo, who was four and a half years older; Miek, two years

1 Kedde, B. (1972). *Herinneringen aan een groot Schiedammer* [Recollections of a Great Schiedammer]. Schiedam: Drukkerij de Eendracht.

2 According to the newspaper *Schiedamsche Courant*, 1891–1917. See <http://scyedam.delinea.nl/kaleida/pagina.php?id=221> (last accessed May 9, 2021).