

Document Section

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<TITLE>**‘I LONG TO GET TOGETHER WITH ALL OF YOU ... ’: A LETTER  
OF SABINA SPIELREIN-SCHEFTEL (ROSTOV-ON-DON) TO MAX  
EITINGON, 24 AUGUST 1927<sup>1</sup>**

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<T>The life of the Russian-Jewish psychoanalyst and doctor Sabina Spielrein (1885–1942) has by now been well researched over much of its span. Besides official documents from government departments, the civil service, universities and such like, there are above all the numerous diaries that Sabina first began writing as a schoolgirl during the autumn of 1896, in her hometown of Rostov-on-Don. Parts of these diaries (1909–1912), together with the correspondences between Sabina Spielrein and Sigmund Freud (1909–1923), and Spielrein and C.G. Jung (1908–1919), were published in 1986 by Aldo

<sup>1</sup> The letter published and annotated at the end of this introductory text was discovered by Michael Schröter among the Max Eitingon Papers (File No. 2972/9, Israel State Archives, Jerusalem) and offered to the author for publication. First published: *Luzifer-Amor. Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Psychoanalyse*, 21(42), 2008: 65–74. English translation by Michael Molnar.

Carotenuto in *A Secret Symmetry* (Spielrein, 1986, 2003). This book made an important contribution towards rescuing Sabina Spielrein's life, and increasingly also her work, from oblivion (Spielrein, 1987; Ovcharenko, 1999, 2004; Ljunggren, 2001; Etkind, 1996; Richebächer, 2000, 2005, 2008, 2009a, 2009 b). Further correspondences between Spielrein and leading psychoanalysts of her time such as Otto Rank, Emil Oberholzer and Wilhelm Stekel exist, stored in a Geneva private residence, along with hundreds of pages of extensive correspondence with her parents, Eva and Nikolai Spielrein, and with her brothers Jean, Isaak and Emil Spielrein, all three of whom became successful scientists, making their careers in the young Soviet Union.

<NP>This extensive primary documentation ends abruptly in the early summer of 1923. Spielrein returned to Russia, and from September 1923 on she worked at the State Psychoanalytic Institute, Moscow, and in the Russian Psychoanalytic Association (RPA). Something of her varied professional activities at the Moscow Institute can be learned from the staff files of the authority responsible for it, Narkompros (the Peoples' Commissariat for Education), and from the RPA reports that regularly appeared in the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse (IZ)*. She sat on all the important committees as well as giving lectures and classes. In early April 1924, she took part in a meeting of the RPA for the last time – as Chair. Shortly afterwards she left Moscow to return to her home town of Rostov-on-Don. In the increasingly sparse reports of the RPA she appears in the membership listing up until the 1930s under the address: 'Rostov-on-Don, Pushkinskaya 97' (final reference *IZ* 1937, p. 593) – this refers to her parents' old address, which had long since been converted into communal flats. But when Spielrein wrote to Eitingon in August 1927, the sender's address she gave was 'Dmitrievskaya 33' (below, p. <Set AQ here: Author to supply page range.>). After years of separation she was once again living together with her husband Pavel Sheftel in his previous family home. Hence the addresses of Russian members in the *Internationale Zeitschrift* were no

longer up to date, for contact with Russia had become more difficult for the psychoanalytic authorities. In 1933 the laconic statement appears: ‘In recent years no news has reached us from Russia. Probably psychoanalysis does not figure in the Five Year Plans which so utterly absorb all the energies of this peculiar form of government’ (*IZ* 1933, p. 260). Meanwhile Soviet reality had already exceeded such impressions, for this was the year when psychoanalysis was banned in the Soviet Union (Miller, 1998; Klooke, 2002.).

<NP>For her entire final period in the Soviet Union, from summer 1923 to her death in August 1942, no personal notes or any other writing by Spielrein have been found. For this reason, the thirteen page handwritten letter that she wrote to Max Eitingon on 24 August 1927 during the run-up to the 10th International Psychoanalytic Congress (1–3 September, Innsbruck) was a particularly welcome discovery. It is written in a lively, expressive style, and it reports professional news; above all Spielrein’s personal attitude towards the public disputes on the relation of psychoanalysis to Marxism in the Soviet Union is, for the first time, made explicit in a private context.

<NP>From its very beginning in Russia psychoanalysis was referred to by the name of its founder – as ‘Freudism’; its adherents were termed ‘Freudists’. Trotsky had come into contact with psychoanalysis during his exile in Vienna and, thanks to his protection, Freudism enjoyed a brief and spectacular flowering during the early 1920s (Etkind, 1996 [1993]). In international terms, this connection to power was peculiar to Russian psychoanalysis. It was a singular phenomenon to have the support of the official Bolshevik line in cultural politics, and this would, in part, arouse fierce criticism from proponents of psychiatry. From the outset the RPA and the State Psychoanalytic Institute were exposed to the tensions of political and ideological controversies and were vulnerable to shifts in power relations within the ruling ideology. That can be seen, for example, in the debates around the psychoanalytic children’s home/laboratory in

Moscow, founded in 1921, which continued for the entire duration of its existence (Klooke, 2002; Etkind, 1996).

<NP>Psychology in the Soviet Union was a sensitive, ideologically charged field, and its proponents – psychologists and psychiatrists – found themselves lacking legitimacy in the face of the ruling Marxist ideology, when it came to the conflict between the interests of an open, pluralistic fellowship of researchers and the ideological requirements of a political line that was increasingly demanding solutions to the theoretical problems of the new Marxist behavioural sciences (see Lobner & Levitin, 1978; Richebächer, 2005). As in the West, in the circles of such left-wing psychoanalysts as Otto Fenichel and Wilhelm Reich, in the Soviet Union there were likewise attempts by psychoanalysts themselves to clarify the relationship between Freudism and Marxism, and to make it productive for both. Alexander Luria, whom Spielrein mentioned in her letter to Eitingon, began the process in 1922 with his talks on ‘The current state of psychoanalysis’ (*IZ* 1922, p. 523) and ‘On contemporary trends in Russian psychology’ (*IZ* 1923, p. 114f).

<NP>When a young Bolshevik philosopher, Bernard E. Bykhovskii, published an article ‘On the methodological foundations of Freudian psychoanalytical theory’ in late 1923, in the Russian journal *Pod znamenem marksizma* [*Under the Banner of Marxism*], it set in motion a lively public discussion. With Lenin’s death in January 1924 and Stalin’s rise to personal domination and leadership of the USSR, the ‘Judas’ Trotsky fell into disrepute and psychoanalysis lost its protection (see Nakhimovsky, 1992, p. 28). The debate over psychoanalysis and Marxism became more heated. Its consequences became more serious and wide-ranging. In the spring of 1925, psychoanalysis was harshly criticized in a discussion on ‘Psychoanalysis and marxism’ that took place in the Moscow Press Centre. Shortly afterwards, the ‘liquidation’ of the children’s home/laboratory was decreed. In August 1925, the State Institute for Psychoanalysis was also abolished, by a decree of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Russian Federation (RSFSR).

<NP>In the very first issue of the German-language edition of *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus* [*Under the Banner of Marxism*] (1925), V. Yurinetz launched a rabidly polemical all-out attack on Freudian psychoanalysis, with its ‘bourgeois aestheticism’, its ‘ad hoc manufactured Wagnerianism’ and its ‘restored idealism’ (Jurinetz, 1970 [1925], pp. 66, 69). Besides Sigmund Freud, one member of the RPA was mentioned by name and personally attacked – Sabina Spielrein (ibid., p. 97). Hence she was someone of note, someone who had to be taken into account.

<NP>Some contemporary writers, including the Russian Alexander Etkind, interpret Spielrein’s move from Moscow to Rostov as a retreat, implying she had no interest in taking part in the debates of her Moscow colleagues on ‘Freudism’, ‘reflexology’ and ‘scientific Marxism’ (Etkind, 1996, p. 213). The letter published here conveys a different message. As she writes: ‘Finally I myself felt the necessity of giving a lecture in the local Society for Neurology and Psychiatry on reflexotherapy and psychoanalysis’ (p. [Set AQ here: Author to supply page range.>](#)). For Spielrein the relationship of psychoanalysis to Marxism was very much in evidence and, together with Luria, A.R. Reisner and Moshe Wulff, she was among those leading Soviet psychoanalysts of the time who saw a link between psychoanalysis and Marxism as desirable or, at least to some extent, as useful. In her letter to Eitingon, Spielrein concludes: ‘the teachings of Freud and Marx do not need to exclude each other and can perfectly well co-exist’.

<NP>It is also by no means the case that Spielrein only began concerning herself with socialist and Marxist thought and theory on her arrival in the Soviet Union. She had already belonged to a revolutionary youth organisation as a schoolgirl at the Catherine School in Rostov, and her name is on a list of girls in possession of illegal revolutionary literature (see Movshovich, 2006). Furthermore, one can also trace a development in her theoretical work from an early, radical concept of transference, as used in ‘Destruction as

the cause of coming into being' (2002 [1912]), to more socio-psychological and paedagogical formulations.

<NP>Rostov-on-Don was over a thousand kilometres from the centre of the power struggles in Moscow. For the time being, Spielrein's activities continued to be varied. She worked in the Rostov prophylactic school out-patient clinic as a pedologist (pedology being a praxis-based interdisciplinary science of child development, founded on pedagogical, psychological, psychohygienic and psychoanalytic concepts). At the psychiatric polyclinic she treated children and adults. Her enthusiasm for research continued. In lectures, courses, publications and at congresses she established herself as a committed proponent of psychoanalysis in the increasingly embittered controversy over the relationship between the sciences of Freudism and Marxism. As the letter below shows, despite all her professional and private burdens and problems, her faith and belief in the prospects and value of her own work and in the capacity of psychoanalysis to survive remained unbroken.

<NP>The letter also discussed private topics. It was not hitherto known that Spielrein was a victim of malaria. Writing to Eitingon, she connects this with a reactive depression from which she had suffered during the entire preceding year, a year in which she had, moreover, a baby to care for – on 18 June 1926 Sabina Spielrein and Pavel Sheftel had had their second child, Eva. She presented her conflict as being that she could 'neither leave here nor bring with me' this child. Her little daughter was the main obstacle preventing her from taking part in the approaching congress. So her 'brief account of psychoanalysis in the North Caucasus area' was intended to establish links with her colleagues in the West and to help the writer out of her painful isolation: 'I long to get together with all of you ...'

#### <A>SABINA SPIELREIN'S LETTER

<T>24.VIII.27

<T>[Dear]<sup>2</sup> Doctor,

<T>If only you knew how sorry I am that I will not be able to see you all at the Congress on 1–3 September!<sup>3</sup> The main obstacle is my second child, my sweet one-year-old little daughter whom I can neither leave here nor bring with me. Yet I owe our Association some account of our activities here in the North Caucasus region. – Interest in psychoanalysis is very widespread here, but superficial. One has ‘no time’ to devote oneself to the subject, because more essential ‘practical’ interests stand in the way. The official representative of the psychiatric clinic in Rostov-on-Don<sup>4</sup> is able to value the achievements of psychoanalysis – but warns against ‘exaggerations’ in the sphere of sexuality. The assistants at the clinic practise analysis on their own account – at the same time they are all actually against analysis.

<NP>It is the fate of analysis – understandably from the viewpoint of drive theory – always to arouse resistance where we display the greatest passion. So in Russia we face a completely unjustified resistance that is totally unknown abroad; it is the fear that psychoanalysis, ‘product of the capitalist system’, goes against the interests of the working classes. Psychoanalysis is accused of tracing everything back to sexuality and thereby denying the achievements of Marx, who, as is known, derives everything from socio-economic conditions. There is a great mistake here that cannot be clarified in a couple of lines: the teachings of Freud and Marx do not need to exclude each other and can co-exist perfectly well. A number of our colleagues such as Prof. Reissner,<sup>5</sup> the

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<sup>2</sup> [Translator’s note]: The transcript reads ‘Sehr Herr Doctor’: the gap implying that ‘geehrter’ [‘Dear’] was to be inserted.

<sup>3</sup> The 10<sup>th</sup> International Psychoanalytical Congress took place in Innsbruck from 1–3 September 1927.

<sup>4</sup> The person in question could not be identified.

<sup>5</sup> Mikhail Andreevich Reissner (1869–1929), as a lawyer and philosopher of law and government, concerned himself primarily with social psychology and the sociology of religion. He belonged to the Communist Party. In 1927 he became a member of the RPA.

young Prof. Luria,<sup>6</sup> the late Dr. Rosenthal<sup>7</sup> and others have already spoken and written about this. A second accusation is that psychoanalysis includes much that is subjective and mystical; hence it contradicts the demands of the biological trend in recent Russian psychology, known as ‘reflexology’ (Leningrad) or ‘reactology’ (Moscow). This viewpoint has even gained support among the great figures of Russian science, so that we also have to contend with such opponents as Prof. Bekhterev<sup>8</sup> in Leningrad, Prof. Hackebusch<sup>9</sup> in Kiev, amongst others. Prof. Wulff<sup>10</sup> and Prof. Luria had a fierce battle to fight. Finally I myself felt the necessity of giving a lecture in the local Society for Neurology and Psychiatry on reflexotherapy and psychoanalysis. In it I showed how little there is of the subjective or mystical in Freud’s teaching and how a good part of Freud’s teaching found confirmation in biological psychology or ‘reflexology’.

<NP>This winter I was put in charge of two courses on ‘The Significance of Psychoanalysis for Child Studies’. These courses were aimed at perfecting the scientific education of school and kindergarten doctors, one for doctors of the city of Rostov, the other for those of the North Caucasus region in general. Each of these courses had a six-hour theoretical part, followed by a practical one. In the practical part I demonstrated how I would carry out psychoanalytically based psychological tests of children in school day clinics, schools and kindergartens. As far as the time permitted, I also carried out Jung’s association experiments on the doctors taking part in the course.

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<sup>6</sup> Aleksandr Romanovich Luria (1902–1977), a psychologist from Kazan, moved in 1923 to Moscow where he became a member of the RPA. For several years he was committed to psychoanalysis, but then withdrew from it. Afterwards Luria studied medicine and pursued a second career as an internationally recognized neurologist and neuropsychologist.

<sup>7</sup> Tatyana G. Rosenthal (1885–1921: death by suicide) studied medicine in Zurich. From 1911 to 1921 she was a member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. After her return to her native city of St Petersburg she first worked as a psychoanalyst in private practice, then Bekhterev put her in charge of the polyclinic for the treatment of psychoneuroses.

<sup>8</sup> Vladimir Mikhailovich Bekhterev (1857–1927), psychiatrist and neurologist, from 1918 to 1927 the Director of the Institute for the Study of the Brain and Mental Functions in St. Petersburg/Leningrad.

<sup>9</sup> Prof. Hackebusch taught at the university psychiatric clinic in Kiev. For a time his attitude towards psychoanalysis was benevolent (see *JZ* 1924, p. 115; 1926, pp. 227–229). However, he soon distanced himself from it and openly criticized it (Kloocke, 2002, p. 83, n. 152).

<sup>10</sup> Moshe Wulff (1878–1971) studied medicine in Berlin, where he encountered psychoanalysis. From 1911 to 1921 he was a member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. In 1914 he returned to Russia and was among the founders of the RPA, of which he was voted President in 1924. In 1927 he travelled to the IPA Congress in Innsbruck and did not return to the Soviet Union. He went first to Berlin and in 1933 emigrated to Palestine (Kloocke, 2002).



<NP>The lectures and demonstrations aroused great interest. In spite of that I did not escape the usual reproaches that one encounters when one does not wish to keep strictly to the Binet-Simon type of intelligence scale. It is not worth telling you more here about the test methods I use, since in a few days I shall submit a work which should be appearing shortly.

<NP>It is now over a year since I received the friendly invitation to engage in a literary collaboration with Dr Cronbach from America.<sup>11</sup> Until now I have left his letter unanswered, because for a long time I was suffering badly from malaria and could not trust myself to take anything on. But I have tacitly accepted his suggestion: I have collected the necessary material, worked on it and given a lecture on it at the pedagogical society of the North Caucasus University at Rostov. The lecture is entitled: 'The results of an investigation into the animistic ideas of children from 3 to 14 years old in Moscow and Rostov-on-Don'. I am not having the lecture printed here as I wish to rework the results of the investigation in a study for Dr. Cronbach.<sup>12</sup>

<NP>If you should see Dr Cronbach at the congress, dear Doctor, please be so good as to communicate this to him. I will write to him soon. But for the time being I send him my apologies and a promise to submit the work to him for publication as soon as possible (the honorarium to be credited to the psychoanalytical journal. Should it be too late, then it can go into one of our analytical journals.)

<NP>Unfortunately I still have nothing to report about my colleagues in Rostov. I am still the only trained analyst here and this is connected with my sickness that has prevented any undertaking. I have no material means of signing up to our journals or other literature, so that we are extremely poor on literature here. I got close to ordering

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<sup>11</sup> Abraham Cronbach (1882–1965), son of an immigrant from Germany, was a rabbi in Ohio and Indiana and gained a reputation as a teacher, pacifist and author of numerous works, including *The Psychoanalytic Study of Judaism* (Cronbach, 1931–2). He corresponded with such analysts as Ernest Jones, Wilhelm Stekel and Fritz Wittels. No correspondence with Sabina Spielrein or her brother Isaak survives among his papers (Abraham Cronbach Papers) and none is mentioned anywhere (according to an inquiry of 7 February 2008 to the Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati).

<sup>12</sup> This sentence was subsequently inserted at the foot of the page. The study mentioned has not yet been found.

the literature for the North Caucasus prophylactic out-patient clinic. But then I was too hopelessly depressed as a result of my illness and did not trust myself to take on the post offered to me at this clinic. The post was thereupon given to an assistant ('junior doctor') of the local psychiatric clinic. He has no respect for psychoanalysis. In his lecture course he did speak of psychoanalysis too, but only in order to take contemporary events into account. He sees getting hold of the literature as totally pointless. – As we are so poor in literature, I would be very grateful to any colleague who might want to send me an off-print of their work.

<NP>Now I am healthy again and, despite all the difficulties, my mood is consequently no longer so pessimistic. I think I will manage to get work in the university at Rostov too, as in Moscow, and that if I want I will be granted a lecture course on psychoanalysis. The main obstacle to that is that our professor of psychiatry,<sup>13</sup> who knows me well, is travelling abroad the day after tomorrow and only returning in November. If I don't have success at the university soon, I don't even know whether it's a matter for regret: I will still have the opportunity of teaching psychoanalysis privately to a few capable people and also to offer them a practical introduction according to all the rules of the profession. Once we have more colleagues, then my recommendations on the literature will have more success.

<NP>My report on the state of psychoanalysis in Rostov deals with this winter semester. I sent the due formal report at the time on the previous working period to Dr, now Professor, Wulff.

<NP>As you also know Russian, Doctor, I recommend you to read a book entitled: 'V.N. Voloshinov: Freidizm. Kriticheskii ocherk. Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo 1927'.<sup>14</sup> You will see there how little we have been understood so far and

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<sup>13</sup> Prof. A. Yustchenko (1869–1936) held the Chair for Nervous and Mental Diseases at the University of Rostov, later the Chair for Psychoneurology at the North Caucasus University. Apart from that he was Director of the psychoneurological clinic, and from 1927 to 1929 also the Chair of the North Caucasus Pedagogical Society (see Movshovich, 2006)

<sup>14</sup> Voloshinov (1927) [*Freudism: A Critical Essay*. Moscow-Leningrad: State Publishing House, 1927].

with what stupid objections we still have to contend. My husband<sup>15</sup> brought me the book yesterday. With this I will close my brief account of psychoanalysis in the North Caucasus area. Would you communicate it in some suitable form together with the reports from the branch societies?<sup>16</sup>

<NP>Apart from that I have another request of our colleagues: I would very much like to have uncomplicated dreams with representations of

a) car b) aeroplane c) sun or stars d) weather e) spiders f) shoes g) telephone, telegraph or radio h) hat i) thread or stitching –

<NP>It is important for me to collect as many dreams of this type as possible; preferably written down by the dreamers themselves before analysis. In addition a short analysis would of course be desirable. Together with the dream details I would like the age, sex, profession and a very short account of the dreamer's personal situation. Where that is not possible – just details of the age, sex and profession will suffice. I would also like to have the name and address of the person sending the dream.

<NP>Why this collection of dreams? – it is difficult to explain this in a few words: I am interested in how individual objects are represented by different dreamers. Many thanks in advance.

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<T>And now the personal part.

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<sup>15</sup> Pavel Naumovich Sheftel (1881–1937) came from Kiev. He was a doctor and paediatrician in Rostov-on-Don, where he met Sabina Spielrein in the winter of 1911–2, during one of her visits home. On 1 June 1912 they were married by the rabbi in Rostov. The first child, Renata, was born on 17 December 1913. From January 1915 onwards the couple lived separately – she in Switzerland, he in Russia. In 1923 Spielrein returned to Russia. In 1924 she arrived back in Rostov and continued her marriage with Pavel Sheftel (see Richebächer, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> In fact, in his chairman's report at the Innsbruck Congress, Eitingon made little mention of the situation of psychoanalysis in Russia, and none at all of that in the North Caucasus region (see *IZ* 1927, p. 486).

<NP>I am longing to get together with all of you – that may be why I am extremely inhibited about writing. It was curious: as soon as I found out that Prof. Freud was seriously ill – I could not say a word to him. I felt a desolation around me and was as if fettered. Now I know that Prof. Freud is well again<sup>17</sup> and yet feel a certain hesitation about finding out that he has, even so, perhaps deteriorated physically, perhaps is also mentally downcast. Nevertheless – how is Prof. Freud?

<NP>Neither could I react to the news of Dr. Abraham’s death.<sup>18</sup> It is too terrible. What could I say, so many thousands of miles away from everything and yet sharing your feelings so intensely?

<NP>I conclude with my best wishes to all participants in the congress and with my heartfelt hopes that our association will flourish. May this congress be particularly successful!

<T>Dr S. Spielrein-Scheftel.

<T>at present: Rostov-on-D. Dimitrievskaya 33<sup>19</sup>

<FIG 1 + 2 NEAR HERE>

#### <A>**AFTERWORD**

<T>At the time when Sabina Spielrein wrote this letter, contact between Russian psychoanalysts and the West was already limited. Russian psychoanalysts could only travel to the West in exceptional cases and with special permission from the authorities. Moshe Wulff, the President of the RPA, and Vera Schmidt, previously Director of the Moscow children’s home/laboratory, travelled to the Innsbruck Congress – Wulff remained in the West.

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<sup>17</sup> I.e. after his operation for cancer in Oct–Nov 1923.

<sup>18</sup> Abraham died on 25 December 1925 at the age of forty-nine.

<sup>19</sup> The street is now called Shaumyana. This address was Sheftel’s three-room apartment in which his mother had previously lived.

<NP>During the winter of 1928, Sabina Spielrein gave a lecture to the Pedological Society at North Caucasus University, Rostov. This gripping lecture, with numerous illustrations and examples from case studies, was published in German in 1931 under the title 'Children's drawings done with open and closed eyes. Investigations of subliminal kinaesthetic ideas' in *Imago* (Spielrein, 2002 [1931]) and also, at the same time, an abbreviated version of it appeared in *Zeitschrift für psychoanalytische Pädagogik* (pp. 446-459): this was the last work of Spielrein's to be published in the West. She presented, among other things, her varied research methods and reported the results of an experimental investigation into the influence of kinaesthetic experiences upon the structure of child and adult thought. She also detailed various psychoanalytically-orientated models of treatment that she employed in the context of the tightly regulated working conditions in the Soviet Union. At the very beginning of her report she explained that she would confine herself to the customary psychological terminology (i.e. customary in the West), since, though not exhaustive, it was at all events more suitable than the reflexological terminology of the school founded by Ivan P. Pavlov and Bekhterev.

<NP>As the acceptability of psychoanalysis diminished in the Soviet Union and political pressure increased, on the whole even the psychoanalytically-orientated psychiatrists tended to adapt themselves, theoretically and technically, to the demands of the time. In 1925 G.A. Skal'kovskii und Leonid Drosnes, one-time member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, published a book entitled *Foundations of Milieu-determined Individual and Collective Developmental Processes. Doctrine of the Homofunction*. Here the authors presented themselves as convinced Marxists and attempted to reinforce their 'doctrine of the homofunction' with conclusions derived from Pavlovian reflexology. At the First Conference of Psychiatrists and Neuropathologists of the North Caucasus Region in 1929, Spielrein made use of a critical discussion of Skal'kovskii und Drosnes'

'homofunction' to elucidate her own conception of the sources of neuroses and social maladjustment (Spielrein, 2002, 335–344). 'Freud's teaching is more far-reaching than the teachings of all his opponents and their followers', she announced (*ibid.*, p. 337) – a risky declaration!

<NP>Spielrein moved towards a foregrounding of the culturally critical aspect of Freud's work. Decades earlier Freud had referred to neuroses as 'inexpedient behaviour' (*S.E.* 16, p. 378), an unsuccessful attempt to establish contact with one's milieu. In her thinking, insofar as she published it, the transferential aspect fell into the background. According to Freud, the fate of the drive depends not only on the biogenic and physiogenic factors, but also fundamentally on sociogenic circumstances, or, more precisely, on the influence of socio-cultural demands on the child's family environment. Spielrein was now describing departures from normal development in a terminology influenced by Alfred Adler, but also betraying the influence of Russian theoreticians such as Georgii V. Plekhanov (1856–1918).

<NP>By means of such socio-psychological concepts Spielrein was moving in a similar direction to the young psychoanalysts of the second generation in the West, whose orientation was socialist or communist, and who made various attempts at theoretically connecting Freud and Marx – for example the work of Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, Otto Fenichel and Wilhelm Reich. When Spielrein's 'Children's drawings done with open and closed eyes' (1931) appeared, Otto Fenichel drew the attention of the left-wing Freudians in particular to this work, in the 'Geheime Rundbriefe' (see Fenichel, 1998: 319f, 795).

<NP>In 1930 in the Soviet Union, debate began on the introduction of Marxism-Leninism into the sciences. In parallel to this there was a wave of repressive measures against scientists, engineers and cultural workers (artists). In January 1930 at the 1<sup>st</sup> Union Congress for Psychology in Leningrad, 'Freudism' was officially denounced as a particularly reactionary theory. In July the Russian Psychoanalytic Association was

disbanded; in 1933 psychoanalysis was totally banned. In 1936 the Party passed a resolution against *pedological distortions* in education, which led to Spielrein losing her job as a pedologist. She was able to work part-time as a school doctor, which hardly sufficed to earn a living. Her brothers Isaak, Jean and Emil Spielrein were arrested in the Stalinist purges of 1937–8, shot and thrown into mass graves.

<NP>In the Second World War Rostov-on-Don acquired strategic significance as the ‘Gateway to the Caucasus’. During ‘Operation Barbarossa’ it was twice occupied by German troops. In the summer offensive of July 1942 German forces took control of the town. During the period from 11 to 14 August, Sabina Spielrein and her two daughters Renata and Eva, together with all the other Jews in the city, were driven out into the Snake Ravine [*Zmiyevskaya Balka*] in front of the city gates by SS Sonderkommando 10a under Obersturmbannführer Heinz Seetzen, and there they were murdered and buried in mass graves.

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#### <A>ABSTRACT

<T>Sabina Spielrein (1885–1942), Russian-Jewish pioneer of psychoanalysis, was highly esteemed by Sigmund Freud, and later by young left-wing analysts like Otto Fenichel, for being a creative thinker with a talent for stimulating new questions and original research (notably in ego psychology, child analysis, linguistics and neuropsychology). When she returned to her home country in 1923, however, her traces largely disappear. For this reason, the thirteen-page handwritten letter, which Spielrein wrote to Max Eitingon on 24 August 1927, in the run up to the tenth International Psychoanalytic Congress, is a particularly welcome discovery. She reports on professional and private matters, and above all we learn for the first time something about Spielrein's position in the disputes over the relation between psychoanalysis and Marxism in the Soviet Union. Spielrein's spirited engagement in the increasingly acrimonious debate over 'Freudism' and Marx-influenced behavioural science is sketched in the context of the development of Russian psychoanalysis, from its brief flowering under Trotsky's protection to its crushing under Stalin.

<T>*Key words:* Sabina Spielrein, psychoanalysis, Russia, Freudism, Marxism, Max Eitingon

#### <CAPTIONS FOR FIGURES>

Figure 1: First page of the original letter, beginning 'Sehr... Herr Doktor, wenn Sie wüssten, wie leid es mir tut'.

Figure 2: Fourth page of the original letter, beginning 'Prof. Wulff und Prof. Luria hatten einen heißen Kampf zu kämpfen'. See p. <Set AQ here: Author to supply page range.> of the translation.

