

The Ferenczi Archives in London - the story of a real life psychoanalytical road movie.

The files of the Ferenczi Archives landed in London on the 19th of May 2012. They travelled in a private car from Paris in the morning, crossed over the Channel in the afternoon so that they could be welcomed and taken care of by the Freud Museum personnel in the evening .

“Ferenczi finally arrived home to Freud’s house not like a son, but as an equal partner” said Michael Molnar summing up a long and gripping journey with episodes of high tension: insecurity, escape, emigration , the quest for settling down... returning, disappearing and being found again... The vicissitudes of these files truly reflect the lives of their creators .The times they lived in , the fights they fought , their friendships , respect , collegiality and readiness for cooperation which paved their way to overcome persecution, rivalry, mistrust and suspicion. To help them survive and find a safe place enabling their voice to be heard, their ideas understood, appreciated and carried forward.

Sandor Ferenczi, a dynamic driving force behind the creation of the International Psychoanalytical Association, Honorary Member of the British Society – working from Budapest, the "second capital" of the new science in the early days - devoted his life to the theory, technique and practice of psychoanalysis.

“He made all analysts his students” – wrote Freud about Ferenczi in 1933 – and indeed the list of such names is very substantial. Ernest Jones, Melanie Klein, John Rickman , Franz Alexander, Sándor Radó, Géza Róheim, Clara Thomson, István Hollós, Imre Hermann, Margaret Mahler, René Spitz, the Bálints (of course), Vilma Kovács, Otto Rank... just to mention a few analysts of the first generation most closely related to Ferenczi and the Budapest School. His analysts (a term also coined by Ferenczi) and students have taken his ideas along with themselves well beyond the borders of Hungary.

Ferenczi died before his sixtieth birthday in 1933. Soon after his death, the development and continuity of the psychoanalytic movement was forcefully interrupted: history interfered. Elaborating the resultant traumatisation became the psychic task for generations to come.

The archives were donated to the Museum by Judith Dupont, psychoanalyst, editor and author of international fame on the sole condition that they be made accessible to everybody interested in the life and work of Sandor Ferenczi and other contemporary analysts related to the Budapest School.

Judith Dupont, born in Budapest in 1925 emigrated to France with her family in 1938. Her father, Ladislaus Dormandi was a writer/editor in Hungary who published among other works, *Thalassa* by Sandor Ferenczi and the writings of Alice Balint. Her mother, Olga, born Szekely-Kovacs, was the daughter of Vilma Kovacs and the younger sister of Alice Balint. Olga was a painter - who also created the caricatures for ‘a Future Galerie of the Founders of Psychoanalysis’ and the images of the Object Relations Test (!). Judith Dupont studied medicine and undertook her psychoanalytic training in Paris.

At the request of Gizella Ferenczi’s two daughters she took over from Balint the role of literary representative for the work of Sandor Ferenczi.

Recalling breathtaking moments from the history of these documents Judith remembers:

“ ... after the death of Anna Freud, nothing and no one came in the way of the publication of the Freud-Ferenczi correspondence. The correspondence was in possession of Enid Balint, in a bank vault. The letters Freud had written to Ferenczi were originally in the care of Ferenczi’s widow Gizella, who asked Anna Freud to give her the letters from Sandor to Freud. Anna agreed to do this.

When Michael Balint left Hungary for England in 1938 Gizella gave this correspondence to him to take along and find a safe place for the letters there. Balint died in 1970 and the letters

changed hands again; now it was Enid Balint who looked after them. When it came to finding the funds to publish this correspondence and identifying the right people to decipher and comment on it, a group was formed in London around Enid Balint: Mark Paterson representing Freud copyrights, Rosenthal, representing Harvard University Press, Ilse Grubrich-Simitis from Editions Fischer, Andre Haynal publishing supervisor, and myself, literary representative of Ferenczi.

Enid had to fetch from the bank the famous black case which should have contained the correspondence. We solemnly opened it, but the correspondence was missing. Enid Balint telephoned the bank to ask if there was another black case, but the employee on duty (it was a Sunday) said no. She then phoned the various libraries where Michael Balint might have placed the correspondence without talking to her first, but nobody knew anything. We looked at the contents of the case. There was a manuscript chapter of Totem and Taboo, sent by Enid Balint to John Balint, which was donated to the Freud Archives. There was the "lost" chapter of 'Metapsychology', which Ilse Simitis-Grubrich asked to take away to consult. She subsequently published this. As for the rest, there were various letters and documents, which Enid entrusted to me. I brought them to Paris and I used them wherever possible: publication in the Coq-Heron journal, facsimiles in the panels of an exhibition on the History of Psychoanalysis in Hungary. "

The other black case containing the Freud-Ferenczi correspondence was eventually found in another vault of the bank...

Judith Dupont has now donated Ferenczi's original Clinical Diary and a manuscript notebook of Ferenczi's to the Freud Museum, as well as a number of articles and some notes and fragments that were forwarded to her as literary representative.

During the past months the museum archivist had prepared a list of items in the Ferenczi files which can be seen in the Freud Museum archives. Among them there are documents linked to Freud, Anna Freud, Jung, Melanie Klein, Otto Rank, the Balints, Vilma Kovacs, - just to mention a few names.

Reading these letters, professional correspondence and other documents of the pioneering years, one can't help being drawn into the pictures of a not-so-unfamiliar but mostly forgotten past. The linkages cover the whole territory of human existence and reach far and deep. An obvious message of these documentary memories is that psychoanalysis was created by an expanding circle of thinkers and practitioners who not only practised but "lived" psychoanalysis. Without understanding the true nature of their ideas and controversies, without acknowledging and integrating the elementary contributions they made, the picture of our professional past would be found fragmented and wanting.

In the last year, "Ferenczi and His World-rekindling the spirit of the Budapest School" and "Ferenczi for Our Time - theory and practice" were published by Karnac Books and "Sandor Ferenczi-Ernest Jones – correspondence 1911-1913" will appear early this year as part of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the foundation of both the British and the Hungarian Psychoanalytical Societies in 1913.

They reflect the spirit and generosity of Judith Dupont and likeminded colleagues of different generations who keep, preserve and share basic knowledge and experience of the past and bring alive ideas and intuitions of great figures like Sandor Ferenczi – in order to rediscover our professional past and restore basic trust in our common future.

Judit Szekacs

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