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Herausgegeben von Michael Giefer, Ludger M. Hermanns, Rainer Herrn und Michael Schröter
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Redaktion
Michael Giefer, Höhestr. 34A, 61348 Bad Homburg. m.giefer@web.de
Ludger M. Hermanns, Roscherstr. 17, 10629 Berlin. redaktion-hermanns@luzifer-amor.de
Dr. Rainer Herrn, Institut für Geschichte und Ethik in der Medizin, Charité-Universitätsmedizin
Berlin, Thielallee 71, 14195 Berlin. rainer.herrn@charite.de
Dr. Michael Schröter, Taunusstr. 12, 12161 Berlin. redaktion-schroeter@luzifer-amor.de

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Our biographical research about Max and Mirra Eitingon\(^1\) has had an intriguing by-product: a substantial challenge to the conventional image, in psychoanalytic literature, of a hitherto elusive figure in the movement’s early development. This is Dr. Sara Neiditsch – with whom the Eitingons’ life stories were intertwined for nearly 40 years.

Most of Neiditsch’s few and sparse profiles in the psychoanalytic literature state correctly that she was born in Pinsk, then in the Russian Empire (now in Belarus), in 1875; that she studied medicine in Zürich from 1905 and completed her MD in Berlin; and that she published three pioneering papers about the development of Freudian thought and psychoanalytic practice in her native country. The last of these, a much-quoted obituary of her friend and co-student Tatiana Rosenthal after the latter’s suicide in Petrograd, 1921, gave Neiditsch’s by-line as “zur Zeit Berlin.” It is unclear on what basis “zur Zeit” (at present) was interpreted to mean that “in the spring of 1923 Sara Neiditsch went back to Russia,” and she is grouped under “women psychoanalysts in Russia.” The implied assumption that from then on “she lived in Russia” has been copied even in the most recent studies (though for the most part only as footnotes to discussions of Rosenthal).\(^3\) But it is admitted that “her name did not appear in the membership lists of the Russian Psychoanalytic Association that was founded in 1922,” and no other subsequent mention of her there was recorded. The date of her death is left in question, which would hardly have been unusual among her colleagues and others in the

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\(^1\) A lengthy summary of this paper, omitting all references, was translated into German and printed in issue 66 of LUZIFER-AMOR. – Documents in the Israel State Archive (ISA) are identified by box/file. All are in division P. The authors thank Helena Vilensky for her assistance at the archive.


USSR. But we can begin by filling in this blank: “Mlle. Dr. Sarah Naiditch” was buried on 26 September 1966 – not in the Soviet Union, but rather in Paris, France. Together with numerous appearances in the Eitingons’ correspondence and other sources, this now calls for reassessment of her entire biography and legacy.

Why were these sources overlooked, though most of them have been readily accessible for decades? This can be attributed, at least in major part, to a “perfect storm” of several causes. Sara’s surname appears in numerous spellings, in Cyrillic and Latin as well as Hebrew characters, in differing orthographies among the languages that used each alphabet. There are, for instance, at least 10 variations in German, French and English alone – many of which appear in the citations below. As for first names: Jews, especially in Eastern Europe, customarily had several of them. Everyone had one or more Hebrew names that were given at birth and used in ritual. But there were also Yiddish cognates for daily secular use, and in addition the person’s own choice of one or more European-language names for convenience in general society. Our subject Max Eitingon was thus formally Mordechai, in Yiddish Mordukh, and called himself also Mark or Marcus. The typically large families of Russian Jews – ten siblings or more were common – and the custom to name children after deceased forebears meant that the same given names recurred frequently in the same generation of a clan. There were even identical combinations of name and patronymic – the form by which people were referred to or addressed, omitting the surname, by fellow Russian-speakers at certain levels of familiarity. Therefore, in some of the most intimate and revealing sources, Dr. Neiditsch appears only as “Sara Adolfoowna,” or even just “S.A.” Fortunately for this inquiry, it was not complicated further by replacement of maiden names at marriage, as with most women of the time. But the other difficulties were sufficient to obscure some sources and to misinterpret others.

To fully evaluate the evidence that came to light when the above factors were accounted for, a broader view is necessary of both the Neiditsch and Eitingon families. The “Matrikel” of “Sarra” Neiditsch, born 1875, who enrolled at the University of Zürich for the summer semester of 1905 gives the

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4 The above quotations are from “Sara Neiditsch (1875-19?)”, in: https://www.psychoanalytikerinnen.de/russland_biografien.html#Neiditsch.
5 Burial registry of Cimetière de Bagneux, Archives de Paris, BAG_RA19661966_01.
address of her “parents” in Moscow as “Armjanerstrasse bei Konstantinoff.” But her parents were by then deceased, and the address of this “J. Neiditsch” at 7 Armjaner is actually recorded in Russian directories as the domicile of Sara’s older brother Jitzchak (Isak or Isaac) who by then was the dominant head of the family. His next-door neighbor at number 9 was Mendel-Mikhail Eitingon, Max’s first cousin. Both were among the small community of privileged Jews who were permitted to reside in Moscow after the anti-Semitic crackdown of 1891, when many were expelled from cities outside the “Pale of Settlement” to which most Jews were limited in Tsarist Russia. Mikhail Eitingon gained this right as the son of a banker who was named “honorary citizen” for services to the empire; Isak Neiditsch as a merchant of the first “guild” (rank) and industrialist in alcohol and textile products. Max’s father Chaim-Efim Eitingon was expelled from Moscow in 1891 as his fur-trading business had gained him only second-guild status. Isak Neiditsch is recorded to have taken up domicile in Moscow only in 1898, after Max’s parents had already settled in Leipzig. But the branches of the Eitingon tribe remained in close contact even after the expulsion separated them. Max’s later assertions that “Sara Adolfowna” and her younger sister “Olja” (Olga, born 1891) were “like sisters” to him appear to reflect acquaintance before he and Sara met as students.

The Neiditsch clan in its native, majority-Jewish shtetl of Pinsk (within the Pale) was typically extensive. One relative, Blume Neiditsch, would be the mother of future Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir. Israel’s first president, Chaim Weizmann, was born in a nearby village and went to school in Pinsk where he befriended Isak Neiditsch, launching a lifelong partnership in Zionist activism. Sara was one of five sisters and as many brothers who were born to the “merchant” Yehuda-Adolf and Bracha-Bertha Neiditsch. When their parents died, Sara cared for her youngest sister Olga in Pinsk until they moved to the imperial capital St. Petersburg, to join Isak who had gained domicile rights there as a successful businessman; then they moved with him to Moscow. Mikhail Eitingon’s son Vladimir described his parents’ home there as frequented by the Jewish and Zionist elite of Moscow, in which Isak Neiditsch had established a prominent position by the time Sara began her

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6 https://arc.familyspace.ru/archive/Moskva_1917_1/p562.
academic studies overseas. Like many aspiring young Jewish women, she went abroad for lack of access to Russian universities, having taken external examinations for the equivalent of a seven-grade girls’ gymnasium certificate, since (as she noted in a cv for her MD thesis) “I received my first schooling in a private boarding school.”

This “Lebenslauf” is the only, and hitherto unnoticed, source that she actually began medical studies at “Halle a. S.” (an der Saale, Saxony) in 1901—the year that Max Eitingon spent a semester there between his first two semesters at the university of his neighboring hometown Leipzig. Like him, Sara continued through a series of universities; while Max went on to Heidelberg and Marburg, she attended Bern University before they met again in Zürich, 1905. In the small and tightly-knit circle of Russian-Jewish students there, as related by another member, Aron Perelman, Sara would certainly have met Max Eitingon anyway. But the family connection and previous acquaintance presumably was an added factor in the relationship.

As a student of clinical medicine, Sara was not affiliated with the Burghölzli mental clinic where Max was a volunteer intern. It can only be speculated that following Eitingon’s first visit with Sigmund Freud in January 1907, it was he along with Rosenthal who interested Sara in psychoanalysis. What is certain is that after an “interruption” in her studies from November 1907, when she evidently returned to Russia and acquainted herself with the early stirrings of Freudian thought there, it was Eitingon who connected her with his superior at Burghölzli, Carl Jung.

In June 1909, in the midst of preparations for Max’s long-deferred MD examinations, Jung wrote to him “Dear colleague, many thanks for sending Miss Neiditsch’s manuscript” – her groundbreaking report on the development of Freudianism in Russia. What Sara told Max in person, in addition to the paper, apparently encouraged him to make his first and only trip back to Russia after 20 years to explore (unsuccessfully) the prospect of starting a psychoanalytic practice there.

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7 Clifford Chanin, interview with Vladimir M. Eitingon. New York: American Jewish Committee Oral History Library, 1977. The authors thank the AJC librarian, Charlotte Bonelli.
9 Jung, Käschnitt to Eitingon, Sils Maria, Engadin, 10 June 1909, ISA 2970/6.
10 Max Eitingon, Berlin to Mirra Biren, Badenweiler, 21 May 1912, ISA 3234/4.
In contrast to Jung’s sarcastic and dismissive attitude toward Eitingon himself, he welcomed the contribution from “Fräulein Neiditsch.” Her own follow-up letter to Jung went unanswered, as it arrived while he was in the United States with Freud. But when Max inquired about it, Jung replied that she should “complete the previous paper, which I could then publish in the next issue of the yearbook.” Jung requested, though “but as legibly as possible!!” – which judging by our sole, much later example of Sara’s handwriting was quite understandable (not that Jung’s own script was much better). He did indeed include the paper in the second volume of the 1910 Jahrbuch, which he edited. It was signed “[Jeanne] Neiditsch,” leading even a recent thesis to suggest that there were two Neiditsch sisters studying at Zürich.\(^1\)

But only “Sarra” was registered there, and the Eitingon-Jung correspondence confirms the conventional attribution of this paper to her. The choice of “Jeanne” as a pen name might perhaps be explained by the “Latin-school level certificate in French and natural sciences” for which she took the test after getting the gymnasium certificate. But Sara is not known to have used “Jeanne” ever again, even in France.

Moreover, the yearbook gives Jeanne’s locale as Berlin – not Zürich. Jung’s postcard to Eitingon about the paper in April 1910 ended with “best regards to you and Miss Neiditsch.” It was addressed to him in Berlin, where he had decided to settle after finally earning his doctorate in Zürich and giving up on a return to Russia.\(^2\)

A month before, Sara had defended her MD thesis at Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität in Berlin. It is dedicated “to my brother,” as Isak must have sponsored her studies. A copy of this rare imprint is among the books from Max Eitingon’s collection at the Israel National Library, so they were clearly in close contact in Berlin too.\(^3\) There, before in Zürich or both, Sara was evidently visited by her sister Olga, then becoming an accomplished mezzo-soprano and pianist, though according to her daughter “she had neither the discipline nor the hunger for a career. She was a beautiful, spoiled and very


\(^2\) Jung, Küschnacht to Eitingon, Berlin, 18 April 1910, ISA 2970/6.

emotional young woman.”14 Her intensifying emotional troubles would play a central role in Sara’s subsequent life and career.

During Max Eitingon’s foray in Russia, a prospective patient was referred to him: an actress who went by the stage name Mirra Birens. In addition to lung disease, she was suffering depression after her brief peak of stardom at the Moscow Art Theater ended due to a new anti-Semitic crackdown and her own advancing age, two years younger than Sara. Mirra was initially unimpressed by the “ordinary Jew” Eitingon. But when their acquaintance became a passionate romance three years later, she became jealous of Max’s real or suspected previous flames, including his visits and gifts to Sara and, especially, his near-contemporary “Olja.”

Married at age 20, Olga still occasionally came to stay with Sara during bouts of marital trouble, along with her first daughter, Eva-Yvette who was born in January 1911.15 Max was hard put to reassure Mirra that he was just “giving this wife and mother something back that she gave me as a poetic child” and her “little daughter is getting only toys. Olja [and] Sara N. are like sisters to me now. … You can calm yourself, animae meae anima.”16

Mirra may not have been entirely reassured: when in a postscript to one of Max’s love letters two weeks later he added, in Russian, that “S.N.” had sent a photo of herself with Olja, Mirra kept the letter but the picture is missing – regrettably, as no other image of Sara has so far been found.17 Max took no chances: on the way to a tryst with Mirra in Switzerland, he decided to forgo a contemplated rendezvous with the Neiditsch sisters, who were there – and told her so: “should I not go to Olja’s? I don’t think I will either. I actually want [just to know] what is going on with her, and especially with Sara.”18

What was going on with Sara? After earning her degree, she is conventionally held to have practiced psychoanalysis “temporarily” alongside Rosen-
thal in St. Petersburg before 1914. But her eulogy of Rosenthal quotes a statement that Tatiana made to her during their joint studies in Zürich back in 1906. Though the article attributes much of the development of psychoanalysis in St. Petersburg to Rosenthal’s activity after her return there in 1911, it notes that “unfortunately, there are currently no documents to tell how far she came in her work” – reflecting a subsequent lack of communication between them.

Indeed, “Sarah Naiditch” – identified unmistakably as “from Pinsk, Russia” – is registered as a (presumably postdoctoral) medical student at the University of Geneva from summer 1909 at least through winter 1912-3. In November 1913, she was again in Berlin – as Max Eitingon wrote to Mirra: “last night the Neiditsches from Moscow were here, with Sara. They are going to [the Alpine resort] Merano early this morning, because of Aron’s sick boy. [I] saw them at Hotel Adlon” (the best in town). Mirra was then in Russia to visit her family after marrying Max in April, so evidently out of caution lest Tsarist censorship intercept the letter he avoided going into detail when adding: “they are very worried about Aron’s thing, but don’t believe that anything will come of it.” Sara’s brother Aron Neiditsch (born 1882), had also figured in the Eitingons’ circle of Russian students. The nature of his affairs which concerned Isak and Sara thus remains unclear, but he would get into further trouble soon.

Sara continued working through 1914 at the University of Geneva’s ophthalmology clinic, and produced a research paper, in the oncological field like her doctoral thesis, that was published there in 1916. Whether or not she was stranded in neutral Switzerland by the outbreak of World War I, if Sara returned to Russia shortly before or after the revolution – more plausibly, to attend family affairs than to practice – she did not stay there long. Unlike Rosenthal (whom she memorialized as a lifelong communist who dreamed of blending Freud with Marx), Sara, – whatever her own political sympathies – had good reason to avoid the Bolshevik regime.

21 Max Eitingon, Berlin to Mirra Eitingon, Ekaterinodar, 5 November 1913, ISA 3234/4.
Her family head, elder brother Isak, was not only a successful capitalist and Zionist leader; during the war, he even served as a representative of the Tsarist government for the alcohol trade with Western Europe. He fled Moscow in the summer of 1918 for the “white” held south, was evacuated in April 1919 from Odessa to Constantinople, and proceeded from there – through Italy – to France. Olga escaped with her husband, a “very conservative” mining engineer, from Lugansk in Eastern Ukraine; as she told it, he hijacked a locomotive at gunpoint and drove it through the lines of the civil war. They settled in Berlin till 1930. Sara’s younger brother Aron was arrested by the Cheka (secret police) in 1919. He evidently was released, as Max would meet him in Paris in 1934. But with such a background, returning to Soviet Russia or staying there would have been extremely risky, if not suicidal, for Sara.

Isak’s close associate, the prominent Jewish advocate Israel-Oskar Gruzenberg, had preceded him on the same migration from Odessa to Paris via Constantinople in mid-March 1919. He recalled in a subsequent letter to Isak that he was accompanied on the Black Sea voyage by the latter’s unnamed “lovely sister.” This might well have been Sara (if indeed she had returned to Russia at all), but possibly another of the Neiditsch sisters: Ida, who also settled in France. Whether or not this was Sara’s route, by December 1920, Freud’s Secret Committee was informed by its Berlin members Karl Abraham and Hanns Sachs that “Miss Dr. Neiditsch from Russia has just arrived.”

In his report on the Berlin Polyclinik for 1920-2, Eitingon stated that in addition to the establishment’s seven practitioners, “this year our Russian colleague Miss Dr. Naiditsch [sic] also came,” with no indication – as of June

27 Oskar Gruzenberg to Isak Neiditsch, 15 January 1920, Neiditsch papers, Geneva Jewish Community archive. The authors thank Francine Bengui and Yves Chicheportiche. “Gruzenberg on way to Paris” from Odessa, jiddisches Tageblatt, New York, 19 March 1919, p. 1.
28 Kloocke, Mosche Wulff, p. 194, citing "Die Rundbriefe des 'Geheimen Komitees.'"
1922 – that her work was temporary. It was only now, at Eitingon’s recently endowed institution, that Dr. Neiditsch received formal psychoanalytic training. Another, more advanced trainee of Russian-Jewish origin at Eitingon’s institute was Fanny Lowtzky, nee Schwartzmann, roughly Sara’s contemporary (born 1873), who had already begun psychoanalytic training and analysis in Geneva with Sabina Spielrein. She introduced both Eitingon and Neiditsch to her brother, the philosopher Lev Shestov, now based in Paris, who became a close friend and frequent house guest of the Eitingons in Berlin and a perennial beneficiary of their largesse.

If nonetheless the description of Sara in 1921 as “zur Zeit Berlin” signified an imminent return to Soviet Russia, as is conventionally held, it was not for long. Isak Neiditsch soon re-established himself in France as an alcohol and sugar industrialist as well as a prominent Zionist activist, financier, and Mæcenas of Hebrew culture. The stabilization of the German mark after the hyperinflation of the early 1920s also rendered Germany less affordable to those who depended on foreign-currency remittances, as did many Russian expatriates, and their center moved to France. Isak gathered several family members around him in Paris, including Sara. On 16 January 1924, Shestov wrote to Eitingon: “yesterday S.A. Neiditsch visited us. I invited her to hear Remizov – I think she greatly appreciates him.” In May-June 1925, “Dr. (Mlle) S. Naiditch,” with no institutional affiliation, was listed among the “membres adhérents” of “médecins aliénistes et neurologistes de France et des pays de langue française” at the organization’s 29th Congress in Paris. Her address is given as 11, rue Théodule-Ribot, a stately belle-époque edifice near the Arc de Triomphe in the upscale 17th Arrondissement.

31 Shestov to Max Eitingon, 16 January 1924, in Russian. Khazan, Istseleut’ dlya neistseleynkh, p. 53. Aleksey Remizov (1877-1957), a Russian folklorist and satirist who passed through Berlin before settling in Paris in 1924, was also a beneficiary of Eitingon’s.
From here on, through the 1930s, multiple references in the Eitingons’ correspondence place Sara among the Paris-based “Neiditsches.” Most of these references are in the context of caring for Mirra’s younger sister Leah-Elizaveta (“Lelja”) Raigorodsky, whose wellbeing became a central concern for the Eitingons for the rest of their lives.

Lelja’s husband Leonid Nikolayevich Raigorodsky had been a businessman of sufficient standing in their hometown, Ekaterinodar in the Kuban region of Southern Russia, to serve as acting mayor during the last occupation of the city by “white” forces in the civil war that followed the revolution. The bloody horrors they experienced as the city changed hands several times left the beautiful and previously vivacious Lelja permanently affected, physically and mentally, after they too escaped through Constantinople. In July 1920, Max wrote to Freud: “a sister of my wife, coming from her native country which is still haunted by the Bolsheviks, has arrived with sad and hardly encouraging news.”33 By January 1921 at the latest the Raigorodskys were settled in Paris. Like Sara, Mirra too now had an attractive but unstable younger sister as a constant demand on her attention, resources – and her husband’s professional knowledge and connections as well as material support. If Mirra retained any grudge against the Neiditsch sisters, they were soon put aside.

Olga Neiditsch, now known by her married name Ajzenberg/Eisenberg, settled with her husband in Berlin, where her second daughter, Fay, was born in 1926. But the marriage was increasingly stormy and Olga frequently lodged in Paris with Sara. In 1930 both the Ajzenbergs moved to Paris, where Isak employed Olga’s husband as director of a sugar plant. In Paris in September 1934, on his way back from the International Psychoanalytic Association’s Congress in Lucerne to his new home in Jerusalem, Eitingon stopped in Paris and consulted a top authority about prospects in his new country. He wrote to Mirra that he had “a long, very interesting and good talk with Isak Adolfowitsch about Palestine. He is a very fine mind.”34 A few days later, he joined a family gathering with “the Neiditsches, Isak Adolfowitsch and Sara, Aron, the Eisenbergs.”35

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34 Max Eitingon, Paris to Mirra Eitingon, Jerusalem, 9 September 1934, ISA 3234/3.
35 Max Eitingon, Paris to Mirra Eitingon, Jerusalem, 12 September 1934, ISA 3234/3.
But Olga and her husband still had recurring periods of separation, as she was now increasingly neurotic, a compulsive spender who under financial stress resorted to Isak’s generosity amid fits of screaming and suicide threats. From age nine (that is, about 1935), their daughter Fay found stability and support with her aunt, who became her mentor. Fay’s memoir features this singular and glowing portrait:

My freedom to be on my own was nearly total, thanks to Mother’s sister, Sara. Sara was a Freudian psychoanalyst who had a small practice. She [...] had taken care of Mother when she [was] orphaned. [...] She did not marry. [...] Sara was very independent and understood my need for freedom. She persuaded mother to let me travel on my own through Paris to visit her at any time. [...] I saw her nearly every week. She taught me how to analyze my feelings honestly, and how to explain my wants and needs convincingly to my parents. We loved and respected each other. And I learned how to use the freedom that I gained through Sara.  

Fay thus credited her aunt for the force of character that enabled her to overcome the gender barrier and other obstacles, to excel and pursue a distinguished career as one of the few female nuclear physicists in the United States. This coincidentally mirrored the course of Mirra’s son, by her previous marriage, Yuli Khariton, in the USSR -- where he became “father of the Soviet atomic bomb.” In both cases, readily accessible sources associated with such fields as physics appear to have been overlooked by psychoanalytic researchers due to narrow disciplinary focus.

Much of the Eitingons’ contact with Sara about Lelja was conducted through Fanny Lowtzky, who had also moved to Paris. But a scribbled note signed only “Sara” on hotel letter paper from an Alpine resort in August 1938 -- the only sample of her handwriting that has been preserved -- shows that their relationship was not limited to professional consultation; rather, it remained a close friendship. The note appears to indicate that Max missed a planned meeting with Sara after he fell ill in Paris following the IPA Congress there on 1-5 August. “Since last night, dear Max,” Sara wrote, “I am awaiting apologies from you but they are not coming. I am concerned, ... just want to know about you, where you are and how you are doing. Had I known that

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36 Their addresses were some 4 km apart.
37 Ajzenberg-Selove, Matter of Choices, pp. 16-17.
38 “It was a minor angina pectoris attack that I had the night after the congress.” Max Eitingon to Marie Bonaparte, 24 August 1938, Library of Congress MB 2-17,
you were in ex-les-bains [sic], healthy and resting, I would even have been glad. Calm me down and write a few words, Sara.”

Twelve days later, Fanny Lowtzky reported to Max, who had already returned to Jerusalem, that Lelja “feels well and is holding up. Sarah Adolfovna claims that this is due to the effect of psychoanalysis, and that she [Lelja] could never have held up so well” without it. Réne Laforgue wrote to Eitingon in March 1939 about the opinion he had formed in Lelja’s case “following the testimonies of Mme Neiditsch and others, that it is impossible for your sister-in-law to reestablish herself in the ambiance created for her by her husband, who – it seems – makes her continual scenes of unbelievable violence … Being unable to make a decision, she has fallen ill again.” Laforgue then washed his hands of any further involvement “unless you decide to bring her close to you.” By this time Sara Neiditsch had become the Eitingon’s main if not sole channel of contact with Lelja. About her, Fanny Lwotzky wrote, “I know only from Sara Adolfovna, with whom we discuss her every day. L.N. [Leonid Nikolayevich] does not want to meet me but consults S. A. about everything.” Max went to great lengths for years to look after Lelja, but he drew the line at the suggestion that he take charge of her in Palestine. By the late 1930s, he was objecting to Mirra’s long sojourns in France to attend Lelja, which apparently she justified by pointing to Sara’s dedication to her sister – or rather, sisters.

Fay Ajzenberg’s memoir reveals this otherwise unrecorded facet of Sara’s life: “In addition to her work, she took care of another sister, Fania. Fania was

39 Sara [Neiditsch] to Max Eitingon, 18 August 1938, on notepaper of Hotel Beausejour, Pralognan-Vanoise, Savoie, in Russian, ISA 2974/12. She misspelled, in French, the nearby resort Aix-les-Bains.

40 Fanny Lowtzky, Paris to Max Eitingon, Jerusalem, in Russian, 30 October 1938, ISA 2972/12.

41 Réne Laforgue, Paris to Max Eitingon, Jerusalem, in French, 3 March 1939, ISA 3239/3. Eitingon had been consulting Laforgue about Lelja since his first meeting with her in 1933: Laforgue, Paris to Max Eitingon, Berlin, 8 July 1933, ISA 3239/3.

42 Fanny Lowtzky, Paris to Max Eitingon, Jerusalem, in Russian, 13 April 1939, ISA 2934/12. Leonid’s preference for Sara might be explained in part by a remote family connection: his brother Yakov was among the Jewish activists in the regional metropolis Rostow-am-Don who listed by the Tsarist police during the abortive revolution of 1905 among businessmen suspected of revolutionary sympathies – along with Naftal’ Spielrein, the father of Sara’s colleague and analyst Sabina. M.A. Gontmakher, Evrei na Donsoj Zemle. http://www.e-reading.link/bookreader.php/136075/Gontmaher_-_Evrei_na_Donskoi_zemle.pdf, p. 159.
a tiny, somewhat feeble-minded woman. Even that care was not undertaken in a traditional way – Fania lived in a small apartment of her own.”⁴³ This appears to clarify a cryptic remark of Max Eitingon’s in a letter to Mirra in 1937: “Sara Adolfoowna is of course not an example for you at all ... she is a different person with a different life.”⁴⁴

As Max clearly held Sara in the highest esteem, in what respect was he advising his wife not to emulate her? He was making great efforts to enlist additional friends besides Fanny Lowtzky to share the burden of caring for Lelja, to hire help, or to get Lelja admitted to a sanatorium – either of which he could hardly afford – so that Mirra could accept his pleas to entrust her sister to others and come home. How, then, did he consider Sara’s situation different from Mirra’s? Was it because Sara was professionally qualified? Because her home was near Fania’s? Or because Sara was unmarried?

The passage from Fay’s memoir asserts that Sara not only cared informally for family and friends, but ran “a small practice.” The comments from Lowtzky and Laforgue indicate that she remained a staunch proponent of psychoanalytic therapy. The question arises, then, why no mention of this practice has yet been found – not only in the Freudian literature, but also in general directories of Paris or in the French popular press of the time. This was presumably another contributing factor to the erroneous assumptions that she was in the Soviet Union. Sara ostensibly might have concentrated on clinical work rather than theoretical research and writing, but this does not explain her absence from professional associations. Her registration in 1925 in “médecins aliénistes et neurologistes” was not repeated, and she was never listed among the members of the Société psychoanalytique de Paris that Marie Bonaparte and Laforgue (who clearly appreciated Sara’s professional opinion) founded the year before (with Eitingon’s support).⁴⁵ The two groups developed a rivalry, but in 1925 Laforgue and other founding members of the SPP were still members of the venerable association too.⁴⁶ Eitingon refrained from

⁴³ Ajzenberg-Selove, Matter of Choices, p. 16.
⁴⁴ Max Eitingon, Jerusalem to Mirra Eitingon, Nice(?), 1 January 1937, ISA 3234/5. Ellipsis in original.
⁴⁵ Revue française de Psychanalyse, v.7 (1934), pp. 166-7; v. 10 (1938), pp. 149-50; v. 11 (1939), pp. 161-2.
⁴⁶ Angelo Hesnard, “Ce que la Clinique française a retenu de la Psychanalyse,”. La Clinique no. 240 (February 1935). Hesnard, an early advocate of Freudianism in the association, had attempted to overcome the “hostility” that psychoanalysis encountered there. At the
mentioning Sara in dozens of letters to Princess Marie, whom he cultivated for other motives. Moreover, despite his frequent and intimate contact with Sara, he never mentioned her in his voluminous correspondence with Freud. It would require further research to determine whether because of personal or doctrinal issues between the fiercely independent Sara and the psychoanalytic establishment, Eitingon felt obliged to segregate the two relationships.

He also did not include Sara among the numerous Jewish colleagues for whom he endeavored to find refuge from the Nazis. After the German invasion of France in 1940, Isak and most of the Neiditsch clan managed to get out and ultimately to reach the United States. Sara was among those who remained in Paris – perhaps because of Fania’s condition. Their niece Fay visited them in 1947 after finding out that “Sara and Fania had survived in Paris, never stepping out of their hiding place for four years. ... They were frail and sad.” Fania apparently died soon after and this must have been attributed to her wartime ordeal, as her name is inscribed on the Holocaust memorial wall in Paris, along with her sister Ida and brother Max. Sara lived for another 20 years at a more modest address, 4-bis rue de la Grande Chaumière in the 6th Arrondissement. Already aged 70 when the war ended, it is unclear whether she continued any practice.

*Actes de décès* in the Paris city archive usually include the degrees and other distinctions of the deceased as provided by their next of kin. But when Sara’s nephew, the artist Wolf-Vladimir Naiditch (Isak’s son, among the family members who returned from America) reported on 16 September 1966 that she had died at home, she was entered as “sans profession” with no mention of her MD. This may have been due partly to inattention by the registration clerk, who also took down Sara’s birthplace as Minsk instead of Pinsk, so that the birth date entered, 1883, is presumably less reliable than the one she

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30th congress in 1926, he presented a joint paper with Laforgue. His efforts failed, and he also joined the separate “Société psychoanalytique de Paris” when it was founded by Bonaparte and Laforgue.

47 Except for a single exchange in 1926 about Rosenthal’s work on Dostoevsky, which just mentions Sara’s obituary as a source. Schröter, *Briefwechsel*, v.1, pp. 485n, 489. Eitingon’s use there of “Naiditsch” illustrates the variety of spellings even from the same writer.


49 Photo at https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/32084301/fanny-naiditsch/photo#view-photo=15646580.
gave upon enrollment at the University of Zürich 60 years before. By the time of her burial, Sara’s doctorate was noted. But as Vladimir signed the inaccurate acte de décès, it appears that her life story had already been blurred even in the memory of her own family, to which she had been so devoted – as it has been in the annals of psychoanalysis.

Summary: Dr. Sara Neiditsch appears in in the psychoanalytic literature mainly as the author of three seminal articles on the early development of Freudian theory and practice in her native Russia that appeared between 1909 and 1921. But it was assumed that she returned there, and her subsequent life is unknown – leaving even the date of her death in question. Research into the biography of Max Eitingon has proved that Dr. Neiditsch actually resided and practiced in France from the early 1920s until her death in Paris, 1966. This paper explores both the insights into her personality and career that are provided by new sources and the reasons why they were overlooked. Among other aspects, this information reveals her devotion to her family, especially two sisters who needed her care, and her remaining in Paris with one of them throughout the German occupation. Some new questions are opened, in particular why there is no evidence of any connection with the psychoanalytic organizations in France, some of whose leading members knew her.

Isabella Ginor and Gideon Remez are Associate Fellows of the Truman Institute, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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50 Archives de Paris, 1966, Décès, 06, 6D282, p. 10.