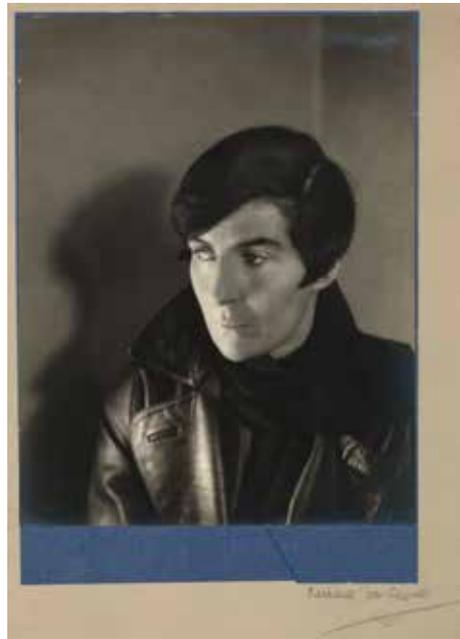


Happy
in
BERLIN?

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The Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute

The Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute (BPI) was set up in the early 1920s as a place to propel, and at times challenge, the ideas of Sigmund Freud. The BPI had an open-door policy. It delivered regular lectures and training as well as treatment. A local polyclinic also offered free psychoanalysis sessions to poor Berliners. Many BPI analysts were keen to research the political and social implications of psychoanalysis. Some also collaborated with the Institute for Sexual Science, or exchanged ideas with practitioners from other psychological schools (e.g. Gestalt). During this period, psychoanalysis became a popular subject in film and literature.



Alix Strachey,
Photograph by Barbara
Ker-Seymer, 1930s
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One famous analyst at the BPI in the 1920s was Melanie Klein, who later became an influential figure in British psychology. Sigmund Freud's English translator Alix Strachey was trained there, as were important British analysts including Sylvia Payne and James Glover.

Many of the analysts who worked at the Institute in the 1920s had Jewish heritage and were forced into exile when the Nazi Party came to power. The British writer Bryher undertook psychoanalysis with Hanns Sachs at the BPI in the 1920s. In this paragraph of her memoir, *The Heart to Artemis* (1962), she discusses the development of the psychoanalytic community.

Read the extract and discuss the questions.

Analysis must have no morals, only mirrors, and yet if I have a criticism of it, it is that most analysands* become drearily good, adaptable citizens. Afterwards it helped my history because I was able to watch the story of many ancient political and religious movements taking place within a circle that I knew. The gay excitement of the early days died with the founders, the second generation was engaged in obtaining official recognition, they aspired to become part of “the Establishment.” They succeeded and yet because in the deepest way they thus betrayed some of their leader’s ideas, they tended in compensation to make laws of what Freud had suggested were points worth investigation.

* people who undertake psychoanalysis

Questions

- 1. What does Bryher mean by “Analysis must have no morals, only mirrors”?**
- 2. What does Bryher’s history of the psychoanalytic circle suggest about how political and religious movements develop over time? Do you agree? Why?**
- 3. Why do you think psychology was so popular in Weimar Berlin?**

Extension: Research psychoanalysis in the 1920s. What would an average session look like?
