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Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures

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2007

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### Recommended Citation

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# Creating a Maidservant Community through Newspapers: The *Berliner Dienstboten-Zeitung*, 1898–1900

Julia Karolle-Berg

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While the *Berliner Dienstboten-Zeitung* (Berlin Servants' Newspaper) has been cited frequently in research on maidservice in Berlin at the turn of the century, the development of the paper between 1898 and 1900 and its role in organizing female domestics have been largely overlooked. This essay analyzes how the editor of the *BDZ* created a feeling of community among his readers and ultimately inspired them to organize. Unlike other publications for and about servants around 1900 that tended to preserve traditional bourgeois values and interests without reference to servants' own issues and concerns, the *BDZ* was unique in that it revised its representation of maidservice in response to its readers. Though the *BDZ* and its community of readers were never able to effect significant social or political change, the newspaper nevertheless played a crucial role in raising social and scholarly awareness of maidservants' issues. (JKB)

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## Introduction

As the pearl who lived only to serve her master's family or the temptress who seduced the young master of the house, as a vestige of feudal order in a nascent capitalist society and a groundbreaking force in the evolution of the urban working woman, the maidservant played a significant role in the life of the German urban bourgeoisie from the 1890s to the 1920s. Since the 1960s, as scholars increasingly devoted their attention to phenomena of everyday life and previously neglected populations, the maidservant has re-emerged as a subject of study for scholars of history, sociology, women's studies, and literature.

In early research on maidservants in Germany, scholars such as Rolf Engelsing, Heidi Müller, Uta Ottmüller, and Selke Schulz have explored

the social and economic context of maidservice, laying invaluable groundwork by considering servants' origins, their relationship to labor organizations, and their lives after service. As Karin Pauleweit has observed, the 1980s witnessed a proliferation of texts that focused on gender issues surrounding maidservice (1). Such studies recognized the significant role of maidservice in the urbanization of female labor during Germany and Austria's transition from traditional, agrarian forms of production to modern industrialism and capitalism, and thus look at domestic service as a particular site of conflict.<sup>1</sup> Increasingly, scholars of the 1980s and 1990s returned to primary sources, analyzing servants' letters, their autobiographies, and servants' newspapers, often focusing on questions of representation.<sup>2</sup> The character Rosa Havelka, inspired by Tichy's analysis of servants' letters to maidservant newspapers in Vienna around 1900, was even fictionalized in Lilian Faschinger's 2001 novel, *Vienna Passion* (*Wiener Passion*).

Some of the most frequently cited primary sources in research on maidservants from all of these periods have been periodicals targeted at this population. While these papers have provided scholars with the details of domestic service, little research has focused on the documents themselves, leaving questions about their narrative construction and their role in defining a servants' community largely unaddressed. Ruth Goebel's overview of servants' periodicals, which analyzes their position on the "Servants' Question" ("Dienstbotenfrage," usually understood as the shortage of good servants), numbers among the few scholarly contributions in this area.

The *Berliner Dienstboten-Zeitung* (Berlin Servants' Newspaper, in this essay *BDZ*)<sup>3</sup> is one newspaper frequently cited in research on maidservants, including Goebel's study. Debuting in 1898, this weekly periodical is one of the earliest known publications targeted specifically at servants in Berlin and one of the first in the German-speaking area overall.<sup>4</sup> While scholars have recognized that Editor-in-Chief of the *BDZ*, the journalist Emil Perlmann,<sup>5</sup> initiated the servants' movement at the turn of the century (Walser, *Dienstmädchen* 98),<sup>6</sup> they have often underestimated the significance of the *BDZ* in creating a maidservant community in Berlin in general. Some scholars, for example, overlook the fact that the *BDZ* appeared for several months *before* becoming the party organ of a servants' organization in Berlin, and only after this organization allowed women into its ranks.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, while scholars frequently conclude that the formation of maidservants' organizations produced little change in working conditions (Orth 117; Ottmüller 123; Walser, "Dienstmädchen" 75), Perlmann's mass meetings in the summer of 1899 were not without effect.

Following claims by scholars Bob Hodge and Benedict Anderson that newspapers can create a feeling of community among readers, I argue that, given maidservants' isolation from each other around 1900, Perlmann's newspaper marked an essential first step toward organizing. Through the *BDZ*, the editor created a feeling of community among his readers, of sharing a common history and identity and therefore deserving a collective future. This successful community-building at the turn of the century led to the formal organization and data-collection on maidservants, and attracted unprecedented social and scholarly attention to the occupation.

To analyze Perlmann's use of the *BDZ* to encourage maidservants to organize, I employ Richard Tyler's concise description of "community":

In the tactics of our strategic relations, our daily micro-relationships, we constantly seek alliances, in order to control the conduct of others, or to avoid being controlled. [ ... ] We can identify three aspects of the power relations in these loose alliances, or communities. They originate of course in *social networks*. Individual relationships (the grounds of power) interconnect, and these connections proliferate as a network of relationships. [ ... ] Such networks, in order to be sustained (to maintain their power) develop typical forms of behaviour, or *social norms*. Interests and values and practices are shared within the network. [ ... ] Finally, the participants devise *social sanctions* to maintain these norms. Approval is accorded to those who sustain them well, disapproval to those who do not. (25–26)

I adapt Tyler's three components of community—*social networks*, *social norms*, and *social sanctions*—to the maidservant context as *identifying members*, *social and linguistic discourses on maidservice*, and *narratives of appropriate or inappropriate behavior*. While documents produced by the group itself would be ideal sources for examining these aspects of communal identity construction, materials produced by maidservants are scarce from this period. Turn-of-the-century maidservants infrequently documented their experiences first-hand (Zull 7, 9; Pauleweit 14), and autobiographies of former servants and other workers only gained currency after 1900, fueled by increased self-awareness of and general interest in workers' lives (Pauleweit 7).

Works generated by the bourgeoisie specifically treating maidservice were also of limited scope before the turn of the century. Publications addressing the "Servants' Question" usually amounted to commentary by the bourgeoisie on the shortcomings of servants, with little regard for servants' social inequality (Zull 5). Groundbreaking about the *BDZ*, then,

was Perlmann's attempt to create an image of maidservice for maidservants that reflected the interests of the laborers themselves. Not until several years later would servants' organizations have the wherewithal to publish their own newspapers and thus determine for themselves how they defined community; when servants broke ranks with Perlmann in 1901, publication of the *Hausgehilfin* (The Domestic Assistant), the final instantiation of the *BDZ*, also appears to have ceased. A weekly newspaper published for and by the Berlin servant community did not debut until 1908.<sup>8</sup>

The paucity of other sources on maidservice at the turn of the century and the crucial role that Perlmann played in organizing maidservants both point to the *BDZ* as an integral source for understanding these issues. Though the *BDZ* cannot provide first-hand impressions of maidservice at the turn of the century, it offers a compelling example of how a socially committed member of the bourgeoisie cast and recast notions of gender and class in an attempt to appeal to this group of laborers. Perlmann's willingness to revise his position in response to servants' concerns is a particularly striking aspect of the *BDZ*. While political parties or the Catholic Church sponsored other servants' periodicals at the time,<sup>9</sup> Perlmann claimed nonpartisanship ("Erwiderungen"). And although some have noted little change in the content of the paper during its two-year run,<sup>10</sup> a closer reading reveals how constructions of social networks were transformed, as well as the discourse used to describe the social norms of the community.<sup>11</sup> Though servants' contributions never predominated in the paper's content and Perlmann always maintained editorial control,<sup>12</sup> the *BDZ*'s representation of the maidservant community evolved as its members asserted themselves. Perlmann's ability to gain the trust of the maidservant community suggests he celebrated some successes in this undertaking.

Another characteristic element of Perlmann's community-building efforts was to place expectations on potential members. While Anderson's reading of newspaper-based community construction suggests that ritual, collective consumption can secure a feeling of membership—"Each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident" (35)—Perlmann encouraged servants to engage actively with the paper's content and ultimately the maidservants' organization. Before presenting an analysis of these points, I offer a brief introduction to maidservice in Berlin around 1900.

For many young rural women at the turn of the century, domestic employment provided entree into the modern urban labor force (Walser, *Dienstmädchen* 51). Indeed, three quarters of all servants came to urban centers from rural communities or smaller towns (Wierling 26). Young women who entered service predominantly came from the petite bourgeoisie (Wierling 27),<sup>13</sup> leaving their families after completing compulsory education at approximately age fourteen (Orth 22). For most women, maidservice was not a life-long career; as Barbara Franzoi has observed, working women in the nineteenth century often moved between various forms of work, including “a period in the factory, a time in domestic service, and in domestic industry” (257), though others left domestic service due to marriage, pregnancy, or criminality (Wierling 223).<sup>14</sup>

Despite the frequent use of gender-neutral terms such as *Dienstbote* (“servant”) to describe urban domestic workers at the turn of the century, most were female (Schulz 21; Zull 7). According to *Statistik des deutschen Reiches* (Statistics of the German Empire), 1.3 million servants were employed in the German Empire in 1895, of whom 98.2% were female. By 1907, the number had decreased slightly to 1.2 million, with women still making up 98.8% of that population (qtd. in Wierling 11). In the Berlin of 1895, approximately 98% of the 60,000 servants employed were female, thus making up one of the largest classes of working women in the capital city (Orth 7, 12). The number of servants in Berlin households was already decreasing by 1900. By 1925, domestic service had declined significantly; the rural exodus had slowed, and daughters of urban families were unwilling to fill these vacant positions (Wierling 292). By the 1920s and 1930s, housework was more likely to be paid hourly, and so the maidservant was ultimately replaced by the bourgeois housewife herself, assisted instead by an army of appliances (Wierling 292–93, 296).

Leaving their rural towns and villages to come to Berlin, maidservants often did not have much of a social network in the metropolis. In the search for fellow servants with whom they could spend their free Sundays, some young women placed ads in servants’ newspapers (Wierling 172).<sup>15</sup> Maidservants’ isolation was compounded by limited free time,<sup>16</sup> a lack of female coworkers (Orth 43), and high employee turnover. It is likely that most female servants spent much of their free time alone in the space allotted to them in the master’s household (Orth 88). At work, servants sought contact with the outside world through greengrocers, mailmen, deliverymen, workers, tailors, and hairdressers (Wierling 169).<sup>17</sup>

Scholars have offered insight into why, when other professions were organizing and unionizing, maidservants did not. Women in general tended to organize less than men (Schulz 30), and like workers engaged in cottage industries who did not have contact with other workers (Franzoi 260), maidservants lacked solidarity with other servants (Zull 133). Other reasons may be that maidservants were, on average, young and therefore did not think about their futures (Schulz 32), and their proximity to their masters made public criticism difficult (Schulz 35). Unions in general were slow to target women workers (Frevert, *Women* 100), and did not bring maidservants into the fold until these women had taken the first steps toward organizing themselves (Zull 130). Recruiting servants to organize was, after all, inefficient; each household only employed one or two servants, whereas hundreds of women could be reached in a single factory (Zull 133).

Though before 1898 no maidservant newspaper in Berlin had run for more than a year, maidservants were notorious for being voracious readers, most often of pulp fiction (Müller 230–31). By the turn of the century, a handful of options were available to maidservants who sought reading materials. While their meager wages prohibited the purchase of expensive books (Pauleweit 10–11), these young women frequently bought serialized novels from colporteurs,<sup>18</sup> and in other parts of the country could subscribe to Catholic maidservant newspapers (Zull 47; Müller 239–42) or avail themselves of the professional guidebooks that gained particular currency around 1900 (Zull 50).<sup>19</sup> Given maidservants' isolation and their interest in reading, albeit mostly entertaining fare, an affordable newspaper that appealed to maidservants' professional interests and desire for entertainment seems likely to have had market appeal.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, in the inaugural issue of the *BDZ*, Perlmann linked these professional and recreational objectives. The paper would provide helpful professional information, inform servants of community news and upcoming events, reward faithful servants, and provide wholesome entertainment ("Was bietet"). As the content of the *BDZ* gradually revealed, these modest goals all contributed to the realization of the larger vision of raising the social value of maidservice, drawing others to the profession, and creating a professional organization.

### The Social Network: Identifying Community Membership in the *Berliner Dienstboten-Zeitung*

The preceding historical overview points to a few factors that maidservants had in common: gender, background, and type of labor. When working to create what Tyler calls the "social network" of a community

(26), Perlmann initially disregarded these factors, though they ultimately proved decisive. When he first launched his newspaper, the editor imitated contemporary publications that aimed to organize women to work together for educational, social, economic, and/or political equality. As in the inaugural issues of papers such as *Die Frau* (Woman, 1893), *Die Frauenbewegung* (The Women's Movement, 1895), and *Die Arbeiterin* (The Working Woman, 1891; Frederiksen 46–66), Perlmann identified a core audience of readers among male and female servants, but called for membership to be expanded to include those also committed to the cause—in this case, domestic employees with higher social standing. Likely factoring into Perlmann's decision was a determination to act as a nonpartisan mediator between master and servant, but also his desire to raise the status of domestic service and to secure a regular base of subscribers. Thus, Perlmann consistently claimed to speak for more than just the common maidservant. In its opening issue, the *BDZ* promised to provide indispensable information for governesses, wet-nurses, and housekeepers ("Was bietet"). Perlmann's appeal to these women was a particularly radical move, for they claimed higher social standing in the household than the common servant and would not likely look favorably upon this association (Wierling 159). In the earliest issues of the paper, Perlmann also used language that reached across gender lines. The first title of the paper, *Berliner Dienstboten-Zeitung* (Berlin Servants' Newspaper), implies that both male and female servants were being addressed, though most articles specifically focused on female servants.<sup>21</sup> As the paper established itself, however, community building focused increasingly on organizing the core audience, traditionally defined maidservants, with fewer appeals to male servants and governesses.<sup>22</sup>

Because Perlmann's original concept was to create a forum for nonpartisan mediation between master and servant, he exhorted housewives to read the *BDZ* ("Erwiderungen"; "An unsere Leser"), calling as well to those committed to women's rights to include servants in their discussions ("Dienstbotenfrage"; "Dienstboten-Congreß") and those sympathetic to the cause of maidservants to become the founding members of this ideological community.<sup>23</sup> The appeal to bourgeois housewives to engage in dialogue with maidservants about how to solve the "Servants' Question" was no small demand, for the bourgeois women's movement was fundamentally opposed to allowing maidservants to organize for better working conditions (Frevert, *Women* 147).

If Perlmann initially premised his paper on the belief that collaboration across classes was possible, by May 1899 he had become disillusioned. When public attempts at rapprochement with the bourgeoisie were received coldly, the editor assumed a more defensive position:



Even those who serve demand human rights, and if heads of households do not want to grant them that, they will try to gain them for themselves. If housewives demand that I take their wishes into consideration, as a non-partisan person I must also support the wishes of those serving. [ ... ] Housewives can't bear the thought, and thus serving people have to try to eliminate the calamity themselves by uniting together [ ... ]. ("Ja, so sind sie")<sup>24</sup>

By February 1900, Perlmann reported that bourgeois women's organizations had taken up the "Servants' Question," but he doubted that they would be able to effect change ("Zahlen beweisen") and his appeals to middle class housewives disappeared from the paper. The relationships Perlmann focused on developing were now among servants themselves, and his own role changed from mediator to advocate.

Perlmann's construction of a social network was also affected by progress made toward organizing. Already in 1898, the editor had expressed interest in founding an organization for maidservants ("Dienstboten-Congreß"). In January 1899, when women were extended equal membership to Friedrich Schröder's Unterstützungsverein der Dienerschaft Deutschlands (Support Club of the Serving Class of Germany; "Vereins-Nachrichten" 15 January 1899), Perlmann began reporting on their meetings. Membership of female servants in the Unterstützungsverein represented a crucial development in the consolidation of the maidservant community. In the same month, however, Perlmann changed the title of the paper to *Unser Blatt* (Our Paper). This name change was a direct response to complaints that subscribers were not receiving their papers on time, ostensibly because third parties were undermining delivery ("Briefkasten" 1 January 1899). This name change seems to suggest Perlmann's realization that as maidservants were starting to see themselves as a discrete group, the population at large was still not ready to accept their attendant right to a specialized publication.

The last phase of Perlmann's paper marked a final delimiting of the social network as maidservants organized. By summer 1899, the paper noted remarkable success in expanding its readership and thus the interests of servants in Berlin ("Es ist erreicht!"). Perlmann announced that he, Friedrich Schröder, and his sister-in-law, Meta Schlesinger, would be holding public meetings around Berlin in order to promote servants' issues. The meeting drew approximately 400 attendees ("1. öffentliche"), and attracted both serious as well as derisive attention from the bourgeois press ("Dienstboten-Organisation"; "Neuigkeiten" 30 July 1899). Three additional public meetings followed in July and August, the last of which more than 600 people were reported to have attended ("Vereins- und Versammlungsberichte" 20 August 1899). As the summer

drew to a close and masters returned to the city, maidservants lost the freedom of movement of the summer months, and the public meetings ceased (Ottmüller 108). These meetings in summer 1899 nevertheless had a positive effect on maidservant identity construction. Besides attracting the attention of the bourgeois press, they swelled membership in Schröder's *Unterstützungsverein*.<sup>25</sup>

In the wake of these advances, Perlmann encountered difficulties working with Schröder. By the fall of 1899, disagreements led Perlmann to leave the *Unterstützungsverein* ("Ein 'uneigennütiger' Vorstand"). Perlmann helped found the *Hilfsverein für weibliches Hauspersonal* (Assistance Club for Female Domestic Personnel) in October of that year, and the club's officers were exclusively women and its members exclusively maidservants; Perlmann himself was appointed an advisor and his paper named the official party publication ("Vereins-Nachrichten" 22 October 1899). One of few instances where the paper directly thematized the different experiences of men and women in domestic service appeared in defense of the newly founded women-only *Hilfsverein*:

Although both *male* and female servants are subject to a "law for hired hands" ["Gesindegesetz"] the professional duties and the wages of these two groups are very different. We are therefore of the opinion that male and female servants must have individual clubs that reflect the wishes of all involved. ("So mußte es kommen")<sup>26</sup>

This passage suggests an about-face from Perlmann's original position in 1898, when he argued for transcending gender and class in the pursuit of community construction.

In January 1900, Perlmann reported that, likewise motivated by the public meetings of the previous summer, the independent scholar Oscar Stillich was conducting a survey of servants' conditions in Berlin for which Perlmann distributed the questionnaires in *Unser Blatt* ("Zahlen beweisen"). The findings of Stillich's survey, published in 1902, were sympathetic to servants' interests, motivating renewed attacks from the bourgeoisie and inspiring other surveys in cities across the German-speaking area (Zull 216–17). To date, Stillich's *Lage der weiblichen Dienstboten in Berlin* (The Status of Female Servants in Berlin), though problematic (Zull 148), numbers among the most frequently cited primary sources on maidservice at the turn of the century. Thus, while Perlmann did not achieve significant social or political change through his newspaper, he clearly influenced how the maidservant community would be historicized. In June 1900, after it appeared that *Unser Blatt* would fold for "personal and financial reasons" ("An unsere verehrten Leser!"),

it reappeared one month later as *Die Hausgehilfin* (The Domestic Assistant). Though the paper was obviously financially imperiled, the editor now felt comfortable identifying the female maidservant as a group with a specialized publication, a risk he had notably not been willing to take in January 1899. *Die Hausgehilfin* appears to have run until 1906 ("Hausgehilfin"); however, no issues of the paper have been preserved after December 1900, and it is unclear if the paper continued publication beyond the close of the calendar year (Goebel 45). If Perlmann's most enduring contribution to the construction of a maidservant community was his support of Stillich's survey, it was also his last. In 1901, the Hilfsverein broke off ties with Perlmann (Susmann 1190). Ottmüller notes that Perlmann's wife had opened an employment agency for servants, which may have compromised Perlmann's credibility among the ranks (111), though no further details are available.<sup>27</sup>

While the evolution outlined above suggests a major shift in the implied social network of the *BDZ* (in other words including male servants, governesses, and housewives), the actual readership of the paper throughout this period was likely the traditionally defined maidservant. News items, responses to readers' letters, and main articles all suggest that female servants were the primary target audience for the paper's entire run, with male servants and sympathetic bourgeois masters and mistresses constituting only a peripheral readership. More dramatic during the run of this newspaper was the change in the language that Perlmann used to appeal to servants and their perceived allies.

### Social Norms: Establishing a Discourse for Talking about Maidservice

In considering how communities maintain their power, Tyler posits that the group establishes "typical forms of behaviour, or *social norms*" (26). In the context of the *BDZ*, these social norms were reified through the development of an appropriate social and linguistic discourse for maidservice in Germany. In the face of dramatic social transformation, nostalgia for the patriarchal household gradually yielded to more capitalist metaphors for describing labor. From the Enlightenment to the turn of the last century, a solution to the "Servants' Question" was often seen in the education of servants; by the mid-1800s, this education was expanded to include basic professional training (Zull 117). In addition to linking domestic service to Christian sacrifice and morality, analogies between service and statesmanship were drawn very early in literature directed at servants.

Perlmann did not echo the well-established Christian metaphors from earlier literature targeted at maidservants, yet he did emphasize the

linkage between faithful service to one's nation and individual master. Examples used to illustrate this relationship ranged from citing Bismarck's gravestone, which remembered him as "a faithful German servant" ("Erwiderungen"),<sup>28</sup> to a poem from mother to child:

You serve your mistress and your master,  
The state is the master of the man with the star,  
A servant of the King is the proud officer  
Believe me, child, we all serve here. (Hildebrand)<sup>29</sup>

In his overtures to the bourgeoisie, Perlmann echoed an emerging rhetoric in the nineteenth century in which good health among the lower classes, including sound housekeeping practices, would guarantee economic growth and diminish the threat of political change (Frevert, "Civilizing" 324). In the pages of the *BDZ*, maidservants were similarly presented as indispensable resources in state building. As the foundation of the modern state, a content bourgeoisie contributed to a stable nation:

If we want a content middle class, above all we must train capable housewives; women in the household are the "best pillars" of the state—female servants also make up women in the household and the more we have of them, the more capable housewives will be available and will mold the middle class into a content one. ("Die brennende Frage")<sup>30</sup>

While Perlmann's nationalism underscores the utility of domestic service for the bourgeoisie, his appeals to servants themselves focused less on national issues and more on personal gain: a maidservant was more likely to secure a good husband than a woman without experience in the household. Perlmann made his case with humor, yet the consequences of bad housekeeping were no laughing matter:

If, for example, a girl who has been working for years in factories gets married, only then will it become evident that she has no idea how to run a household. The housekeeping is disorderly, the budget is always tight, and so the husband goes back to his old pub to eat a proper meal and in response to his buddies he says: "God knows, I can't choke down the meals that the old woman makes." Strife, alcoholism, unhappy marriages are the results of an improper career choice for young girls. ("Beruf")<sup>31</sup>

In these stern warnings, Perlmann echoed the sentiments of nineteenth-century reformers like Friedrich Erismann, who linked poor management

in working-class households to drunkenness, marital strife, and lower productivity (qtd. in Frevert, "Civilizing" 109). From this standpoint, domestic service not only protected young women from the moral degradation of factory work ("Dienstbotenfrage"),<sup>32</sup> it also ensured marital bliss and affirmed women's natural place in the order of human existence.

On the one hand, Perlmann's metaphors of maidservice bolstered nostalgia for a patriarchal relationship between master and servant common during this period by envisioning a world in which domestics would once again be recognized as members of the household ("Die brennende Frage").<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, Perlmann embraced values promoted by conservative women's organizations of the time, including the role that women's education and women's work played in preserving civilization.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, Perlmann consistently supported educational opportunities for servants in his reports.

These attempts to fuse traditional and progressive ideals reflect a trend at the time to find a "third way" for solving the "Servants' Question," one that would reconcile differences between the bourgeois women's movement and religious organizations (Zull 123). This "third way" proved elusive, however. Perlmann increasingly sympathized with the workers' movement, stating in June 1899 that he looked forward to the day when the master-servant relationship would be "purely professional" ("Drang").<sup>35</sup> In the last stage of the paper's production, servants were described as *Arbeiterinnen* ("female workers"; "Dienstpflicht") and new allies sought among fellow laborers ("Von Unterwegs"). A new metaphor likewise entered the editor's language: "Our compatriots, condemned by the paragraphs of special laws ["Sondergesetzen"], are considered slaves. The class of domestic and farm hands with its special laws ["Gesinde-Ordnungen"] turns thousands upon thousands of German citizens into slaves without rights" ("Aristoteles").<sup>36</sup> Here Perlmann specifically attacked the laws governing rural and urban domestic service, which *de facto* tolerated corporal punishment. And while in February 1899 Perlmann called upon his readers to fight these antiquated laws by improving the reputation of maidservice through diligent work ("Kontraktbruch"), by late 1900 his tone had changed. Now he demanded simply that the law be changed.<sup>37</sup> One can argue that Perlmann's choice of metaphor betrays resignation; while his readers may have previously believed they could effect change through individual good behavior, now their liberation depended on the actions of distant and unknown lawmakers. In such a scenario, the claim that servants could become agents of their own destiny seems antithetical.

Related to the issue of appropriate metaphors was the challenge of finding a vocabulary for speaking affirmatively about maidservants.

Initially, Perlmann showed no interest in engaging in such a debate. When a servant took issue with the original name of the newspaper because she did not like describing herself as a servant, Perlmann scolded, "The name servant, butler, domestic hand is an honor for all of those who earn their keep in these positions in a respectable manner through honesty, industriousness and ambition" ("Erwiderungen").<sup>38</sup> Central to this debate was whether servants should employ traditional terms to describe themselves and their labor or devise their own. In their efforts to bestow a sense of authority and expertise on their employment, maidservants frequently downplayed the subordinate and physical aspects of their positions, preferring *Gehilfin* ("assistant") and *Personal* ("personnel") to connote skilled workers, and they appropriated office and factory terms for "employee" such as *Angestellte* and *Arbeitnehmer* (E.W., "Allerlei Kundgebungen"; "Stütze der Hausfrau"). Despite the editor's initial hard line, he ultimately conceded. Whereas traditional terms such as *Dienstboten* and *Gesinde* ("hired hand") appeared in early issues, they were later replaced with the more fashionable *Hausgehilfin* ("domestic assistant"), which lent the paper its name in 1900.

The linguistic dilemma documented in the *BDZ* betrays deeper social and cultural tensions generated by domestic employment. Perlmann's ultimate yielding reflected a push at the time toward self-designation, realized fully in 1918 when maidservants began being labeled "Hausgehilfinnen" (Schulz 230). Writing in 1961, Selke Schulz reflects on the significance of this change: "Without a doubt what was at issue was not just a change of a professional designation, but rather the complete revision of a professional and social situation and a break with the spirit of a time gone by" (5).<sup>39</sup> Schulz suggests here that by taking charge of the terminology used to describe their profession, maidservants determined how domestic work should fit into the emerging capitalist society. While significant, this linguistic gesture did not effect radical change. Schulz observes that maidservant organizations ultimately achieved little political influence, seeing instead the accomplishments of these groups in raising public awareness of the servant's plight, or her "legal, economic, and social disadvantage" (228).<sup>40</sup>

### Social Sanctions: Comparing Positive and Negative Plotlines of Maid-service

Tyler refers to the third component of community as "social sanctions," by which he means that the community rewards or punishes members who maintain or disregard social norms (26). In the *BDZ*, fiction and non-fiction narratives provided examples of appropriate and

inappropriate behavior and their outcomes. While the earliest serialized novels in the *BDZ* were stories of crime and romance in which servants appeared only as minor characters, later stories increasingly featured domestic workers, usually "better" servants such as governesses. One of the most striking instances was a short story that appeared at Christmas in 1898, "Mein letzter Weihnachtsabend als Köchin" (My Last Christmas as a Cook). Inspired by a reader's letter, Perlmann's piece featured a narrator reflecting on her last Christmas in service before she married. Other fictional pieces, such as Ortman's "Ersehntes Glück" (A Long-Desired Good Fortune) and Schlesinger's "Blinde Liebe" (Blind Love) and "Fesseln" (Fetters), similarly depicted hard-working servants rewarded with socially advantageous marriages. Despite the programmatic shift of the paper, the motif of marriage consistently remained the quintessential happy ending and ultimate reward for faithful service.

In addition to these fictional pieces, Perlmann featured accounts from the community in the column "Von hier und dort" (From Here and There; later renamed "Neuigkeiten" or "News"), where he instructed his readers more concretely on how to improve their lives. By selecting certain news items and increasingly commenting on their content, Perlmann established and reinforced fundamental community values. In a survey of approximately fifty editions of the paper, items that most often qualified as newsworthy were successful or attempted suicides, stories of professional interest, awards and bequests, criminality, human interest stories, swindled servants, and work-related injuries. As this informal survey suggests, many of the news items in "Von hier und dort" contained negative representations of servants in contrast to the generally positive ones in fictional representations. In initial editions of the *BDZ*, these columns appeared with little commentary, yet Perlmann increasingly made use of the rubric to explicitly condemn certain behaviors that compromised the community. Most often he reiterated his position on fundamental occupational and social issues, such as warnings about dangers in the city and household, which ranged from fortunetellers to flammable liquids. The net effect was to reinforce community norms among current readers and enable new subscribers to assimilate.

Perlmann's commentaries clarified for his readers what befell those who had yet to join the community: their community-inappropriate behavior (succumbing to marriage swindlers, burning themselves) marked them as outsiders. In one such item, the editor availed himself of a common plot: the maidservant meets a man at a dance hall only to be abandoned when she becomes pregnant.<sup>41</sup> Here Perlmann demonstrated how organizing could meet servants' social needs without endangering them morally. This news brief described a young man who kept three lovers simultaneously. When the three of them—one of them pregnant—

confronted him together, the young man attempted suicide. This commentary followed: "Once again, this case shows that servants are exposed to many moral dangers by visiting public dance halls and therefore servants as well as masters should encourage household employees to attend the entertainment nights of the Assistance Organization for Female Domestic Servants" ("Neuigkeiten" 3 December 1899).<sup>42</sup> The storyline of the pregnant maidservant abandoned by her dance-hall boyfriend was established well enough among the *BDZ*'s readership that the editor did not even need to state explicitly that the polygamist met his girlfriends in a dance hall, which Perlmann's censure implies.<sup>43</sup> More important was to show servants that by changing their thinking and habits they could break out of these tragic plotlines.

While calls to organize likewise appeared in Perlmann's lead articles, citing concrete instances of servants' misfortune in "Von hier und dort" reinforced general assertions and appealed to servants on a personal level, and thus linked community life to their own. Accounts of events that unfolded in Berlin often explicitly identified characters, imparting to the reader a feeling that one could potentially know the actors. In the case of masters who treated their servants poorly, naming the perpetrator was a practical matter of benefit to the readership: abusive masters could face blacklisting.

Through commentary on the stories included in "Von hier und dort," Perlmann sought to offer positive alternatives to the negative circumstances with which maidservants were already well acquainted. On the other hand, the sheer quantity of alternate plotlines—of servants leaving the profession because they won the lottery or killed an illegitimately born child—must have inevitably destabilized the messages Perlmann conveyed elsewhere. "Von hier und dort" could therefore also be seen as a counter-narrative to the meta-narrative of the servants' community presented in the *BDZ*, the former pointing to the mitigating circumstances that prevented the community from effecting significant political or social change.<sup>44</sup>

### Membership in the Maidservant Community

For Perlmann, it was not enough for maidservants to conceive of themselves as part of a larger community; he also had to persuade them to organize. To this end, the editor had to establish himself as a legitimate person to lead them. Such legitimacy could only be borne from a balance of two factors: authority to speak on the issues and solidarity with the developing community. As mentioned above, Perlmann initially sought to establish authority in his newspaper by creating a forum in which all



stakeholders, including servants, masters, and other bourgeois contributors, could present their positions and debate the issues. The editor perceived it as essential, at least in the early issues of the paper, to assert this nonpartisanship in order to appeal to both masters and servants (“Erwiderungen”; “An die geehrten Hausfrauen”). Yet, the editor never surrendered control of the paper’s content even as he encouraged others to contribute. Instead, he increasingly commented on the items he included, ensuring that readers extracted the desired message from these contributions.

In his analysis of newspaper discourse, linguist Tony Trew describes newspaper editors’ “two-way process” of deciding what voices to include in order to maintain credibility with their readers: “The newspaper expresses certain forces—but at the same time the credibility of the newspaper with its readers also depends on which forces it gives expression to, or more formally which organizations and institutions and public figures it takes as valuable sources of information and comment” (140). Perlmann wanted to maintain such a “two-way process” in his paper to legitimate his cause to readers both inside the profession and out. The challenge came, however, when these “valuable sources of information and comment” did not deliver the desired content. As the following examples show, Perlmann’s desire to maintain credibility among his core readership ultimately came at the expense of imposing some limits on who could participate in the conversation.

In the first year of publication, Frau Henke, wife of the head district attorney, had contributed musings on nutrition, cleaning, and shopping, and her menus routinely appeared under the rubric “Was kochen wir in dieser Woche?” (What Are We Cooking This Week?). But in an article from September 1899 that, according to its title, was supposed to provide tips on moving a household, Henke overstepped a boundary by offering servants advice on starting a new position:

How is it possible that the mutually positive disposition [between master and servant] only lasts a short while? After many years’ experience and hearing a hundredfold examples from my circle of acquaintances, I must, with conviction, unfortunately assign the greater fault to domestic workers. (“Umziehtag” 301)<sup>45</sup>

Anticipating protest from his readership, Perlmann issued a disclaimer introducing Henke’s article, a measure he had notably not taken with other pieces before hers. This precautionary step proved to be inadequate, for in the next edition of the paper, all ties were dissolved with “this lady”:

We would like to make a few follow-up observations on the article "Moving Day" by the wife of the head district attorney, Frau Henke, through which our readers will see that we by no means share the opinions of this lady. The publication of articles by this lady previously occurred because *Our Paper* is thoroughly nonpartisan and therefore willingly puts some space at the disposal of housewives for their wishes and complaints. ("Neuigkeiten" 1 October 1899)<sup>46</sup>

Perlmann's measures were clearly aimed at retaining or regaining credibility with his readership. He even intimated later in his commentary that Henke's opinions would no longer be included in the paper ("Neuigkeiten" 1 October 1899). Indeed, they were not.

Perlmann learned a lesson from this altercation with Frau Henke. By 1899, when the editor was no longer concerned with winning over the bourgeoisie to his cause, he continued to run articles bound to provoke maidservants. While Perlmann had always called on his audience to participate in community life by being careful readers and prolific contributors,<sup>47</sup> servants now had their ideological sensibilities tested and were encouraged to either respond or at least compare their findings with the commentaries that followed. Indeed, Perlmann's willingness to run provocative articles grew with his confidence in servants' ability to critique these selections according to community norms. The contrast is striking: whereas in October 1899 Perlmann immediately distanced himself from Frau Henke's opinions, by April 1900 he allowed servants to voice the first objections: "In No. 11, we published the treatise of a physician on a new type of occupational ailment—'kitchen rage.' We did it with the certainty of receiving responses from our readership, the receipt of which we may confirm here" ("Ursprung").<sup>48</sup> In these examples, Perlmann's construction of community resembles strategies employed in late twentieth-century newspapers like the British *Socialist Worker*, which cultivate what linguist Bob Hodges calls a "dynamic relationship" to its readers through calls to become engaged in the paper's causes (173). Like the editors of papers that appeared seventy years later, Perlmann encouraged readers to participate actively in community building. In the rubric "Zum Meinungs Austausch" (For Discussion) and other venues where servants could air their opinions, any servant who wrote in could see her name in print and thus received recognition as an authority. Moreover, such a public forum could aid readers in extrapolating general conclusions from their individual experiences.<sup>49</sup>

Perlmann's authority on maidservant issues would have been less effective if his readership had not found him to be sympathetic to its cause. In an entirely different type of interaction with his readers through the paper's "Briefkasten" (Mailbox) section, Perlmann underscored his

solidarity with the servant community by presenting himself as an avuncular confidant. In this regular section, he offered advice on topics ranging from cleaning methods to personal issues. Though criticized by one reader for refusing to print servants' inquiries along with his responses ("Briefkasten" 4 September 1898), one could interpret the editor's choice as a measure to maintain the confessional quality of this rubric. Instead of granting all readers equal access to each response by including the original letter, the individual supplicant felt personally addressed. Servants seemed to find Perlmann's intimate address gratifying; the editor reports having received thousands of letters in his first two years as editor ("An unsere verehrten Leser!").

Literary sociologist Rudolf Schenda offers one means of understanding the attraction of a personal interaction between reader and editor. Schenda identifies contact and consolation as two immediate needs of readers: "The imaginary conversation of the author with the reader, even if it should only occur infrequently in a text, accommodates this exigency: the reader feels spoken to, asked, informed, included in a conversation" (481).<sup>50</sup> Though Schenda speaks here of exigencies fulfilled through fiction, the reader's desire for contact and consolation can certainly be applied to this context as well. Indeed, with his "Briefkasten" column, Perlmann turned the imagined conversation into a real one. In this exchange, servants may have sought the professional and personal validation that scholars such as Karin Orth suggest was lacking elsewhere:

Over and again complaints that the bourgeois family failed to recognize their work effort shows up in the memoirs of former servants. Not the rough and hard work caused the servants grief, for they were familiar with these conditions from their childhood homes, but rather the absent praise, the missing "good words." (19)<sup>51</sup>

Lacking recognition from their own masters, readers could find compensation in Perlmann's attention and praise, for he was quick to laud readers when they performed their jobs dutifully, were careful readers, and supported their organization ("Briefkasten" 4 September 1898; 18 June 1899; 24 September 1899).

## Conclusion

In this essay, I have argued that the *BDZ* represented a unique publication at the turn of the century. Like most treatments of maidservice from this period, the newspaper was written by a member of the

bourgeoisie, yet I argue that the *BDZ* offers insights that other publications do not. Whereas nineteenth-century bourgeois literature featured servants only with reference to the bourgeoisie and its interests (Sagarra 134–35) and most texts written for servants from this period reflected attitudes and values that preserved bourgeois interests (Zull 95–110), Perlmann increasingly adapted his agenda to appeal to servants' concerns. Though his original commitment to reform involved bringing bourgeois masters closer to their domestic helpers, he ultimately redefined the readership-community according to gender and class and focused on raising solidarity among the ranks. Though Perlmann remained true to many of his bourgeois values—among them that marriage and motherhood were the pinnacle of womanhood—he ultimately conceded that servants could not make social gains if they conceived of themselves as extended members of the patriarchal household, but rather only as laborers deserving corresponding rights and protections. Accordingly, the discourse on domestic service in the *BDZ* changed to reflect these new associations. Themes that, on the other hand, remained constant throughout the run of Perlmann's newspaper were promises that loyal members of the community would be rewarded with improved working conditions and, ultimately, happy marriages.

Although the maidservant community was short-lived as an autonomous entity, and servants' most popular forms of resistance remained leaving a position or domestic service entirely (Müller 246), Karin Walser argues that the achievement of the maidservants' community lies precisely in this shift of reference points. By creating a forum for servants to share their experiences, Perlmann, the Hilfsverein, and Stillich's survey contributed to the breakdown of what Walser terms the "Interpretationsmonopol der Herrschenden" ("ruling class's monopoly on interpretations"). Once servants organized, they were empowered to challenge established stereotypes, demand subjectivity, refuse exclusion from social processes, and politicize issues that had previously been considered secret and private (Walser, *Dienstmädchen* 99–100). And while one cannot argue that Perlmann enabled servants to do this in his paper, the *BDZ* clearly initiated the process of community building. It would merit further study to assess how the maidservants' newspapers, building on the successes of the servants' movement, later redefined the social network, social norms, and social sanctions of the maidservant community.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Walser and Zull.

<sup>2</sup> See Goebel, Orth, Pauleweit, Tichy, and Wierling.

<sup>3</sup> This and all subsequent translations are mine. In January 1899, the paper was renamed *Unser Blatt* (Our Paper) and in July 1900, the title changed again to *Die Hausgehilfin* (The Domestic Assistant). In this essay, I speak generally of the newspaper as the *BDZ*, though when referring to specific editions, I use their respective title.

<sup>4</sup> Goebel mentions only two newspapers in the German Reich that predate the *Berliner Dienstboten-Zeitung* (242). Zull also mentions the *Deutsche Dienstmädchen-Zeitung und Romanbibliothek* (German Maidservants' Newspaper and Novel Library), which appears to have printed sixteen issues in 1894 (233).

<sup>5</sup> Perlmann, who described himself as an editor and author, was born in 1866 in Berlin, the son of a financier. After studying sociology and economics, the young journalist began writing articles on related subjects and ultimately became involved in the servants' movement in Berlin ("Perlmann, Emil").

<sup>6</sup> See also Müller 247 and Susmann 1189.

<sup>7</sup> While Schulz noted that the *BDZ* was already the official publication of the *Unterstützungsverein der Dienerschaft Deutschlands* when it first appeared in July 1898 (41; see also Zull 46–47), this process was much more gradual.

<sup>8</sup> Goebel reports that the *Deutsche Dienstbotenzeitung* (German Servants' Newspaper) appeared in Berlin in 1908 as the official party organ of the *Verband Deutscher Haushaltungsgehilfinnen* (Association of German Housekeeping Assistants; 242). Though she also mentions the *Monatsschrift des Vereins für die Interessen der Hausangestellten* (Monthly Magazine of the Organization for Domestic Employees' Interests), which appears to have debuted in 1899 (242), her own treatment of that magazine begins with 1909 (54).

<sup>9</sup> Orth divides up works written for and about servants into only two categories, either bourgeois or social-democratic, but does not indicate where this one would fall (11), whereas Ottmüller groups the *BDZ* with independent publications (19).

<sup>10</sup> Goebel notes only minor changes, such as the call for servants to receive two free Sundays a month, up from one in its earlier issues (130).

<sup>11</sup> Ottmüller numbers among the few who have identified an evolution in Perlmann's position. While the editor first called for loyal execution of duties, he later advocated a more confrontational approach to

resolving conflict, coupled with a mounting political sympathy for the SPD (110).

<sup>12</sup> While submissions to the *BDZ* were welcomed from all quarters, most came from Perlmann's own pen. Goebel suggests that most items featured in servants' newspapers were not likely written by servants (13).

<sup>13</sup> See also Engelsing 387–88.

<sup>14</sup> See also Orth 23 and Goebel 26.

<sup>15</sup> No such ads appeared in extant copies of the *BDZ*, however.

<sup>16</sup> In Oscar Stillich's survey conducted in 1900, most servants reported having one Sunday afternoon free every other weekend, at least in principle (qtd. in Orth 82).

<sup>17</sup> See also Müller 245–46.

<sup>18</sup> Müller calls the maidservant "perhaps the most loyal reader of these books" ("die vielleicht treueste Leserin dieser Hefte"; 236). Perlmann frequently presents the *BDZ* as more appropriate reading material than colportage literature for servants ("Lesen und Lernen").

<sup>19</sup> For an early study of maidservant community-building through Catholic organizations, see Schulz.

<sup>20</sup> Even newspapers as revolutionary as *Die Arbeiterin* promised a similar balance between serious and entertaining content (Frederiksen 62).

<sup>21</sup> Perlmann routinely assumed that most of his readers were women. Articles regularly appeared that discussed daughters being sent into service ("Dienstbotenfrage"), plus they focused on typically female positions in households ("Unsere Kinderfräulein und Kinder mädchen") and related servants' issues to women's issues in general ("Gemeinnütziges" 2 October 1898).

<sup>22</sup> The editors of *Die Arbeiterin* engaged in a similar focusing of their social network. The first edition of the paper in 1891 called to appeal to both women working in industry as well as bourgeois housewives. When the paper reappeared as *Die Gleichheit* (Equality) in 1892, the socialist message was much more explicit, and the focus now lay exclusively on working women (Frederiksen 61, 63–66).

<sup>23</sup> In these early editions, Perlmann even tried to cross class lines by proposing that domestic service could be an ideal occupation for bourgeois daughters ("Dienstbotenfrage"). While schools to teach working class daughters the basics of housekeeping were becoming more popular at the turn of the century (Frevert, "Civilizing" 327), this vision of turning maidservice into a practicum for bourgeois daughters was unprecedented and did not reappear in later editions.

<sup>24</sup> "Auch der Dienende verlangt Menschenrechte, wollen die Haushaltungsvorstände ihm diese nicht gewähren, so muß er sie sich zu erringen suchen. Verlangen die Hausfrauen, daß ich ihre Wünsche

berücksichtige, so muß ich als Unparteiischer auch die Wünsche der Dienenden unterstützen. [ ... ] Die Hausfrauen wollen dies nicht einsehen, daher müssen die Dienenden selbst die Kalamität zu beseitigen suchen, indem sie sich zusammenschließen [ ... ]."

<sup>25</sup> On July 9th, *Unser Blatt* reported that 200 people attended the general meeting of the Unterstützungsverein ("Vereins-Nachrichten" 9 July 1899) while the August 27th edition reported over 400 people in attendance at the August 17th meeting ("Vereins- und Versammlungsberichte" 27 August 1899).

<sup>26</sup> "Obwohl männliche und weibliche Dienende einem 'Gesindegesetz' unterliegen, so sind doch die Berufsthätigkeit und die Lohnverhältnisse dieser beiden Klassen sehr verschieden und deshalb gehen wir von der Ansicht aus, männliche und weibliche Dienende müssen gesonderte Vereine haben, was auch den Wünschen aller entspricht."

<sup>27</sup> The Hilfsverein für weibliches Hauspersonal did not last long. In February 1904, it fused with the Verein Berliner Dienstherrschaften und Dienstangestellter (Organization of Berlin Masters and Servants), an organization likewise founded in 1900 by a rival of the editor, which drew its membership from masters as well as maidservants. In 1906, the servant community once again broke ranks with its bourgeois masters, this time in favor of SPD affiliation (Schulz 43-44).

<sup>28</sup> "ein treuer, deutscher Diener"

<sup>29</sup> "Du dienest deiner Frau und deinem Herrn, / Dem Staate dient der Herr dort mit dem Stern, / Dem König dient der stolze Offizier / O glaub', mein Kind, wir dienen alle hier."

<sup>30</sup> "Wollen wir einen zufriedenen Mittelstand, müssen wir vor Allem tüchtige Hausfrauen heranbilden, die Frauen im Hause seien die 'besten Stütze[n]' des Staates - zu den Frauen im Hause gehörten auch die weiblichen Dienstboten und je mehr wir von diesen haben, um so mehr tüchtige Hausfrauen werden vorhanden sein und den Mittelstand zu einem zufriedenen gestalten."

<sup>31</sup> "Heirathet z.B. ein Mädchen, welches Jahre hindurch in Fabriken gearbeitet hat, dann erst zeigt es sich, daß es keine Ahnung von der Führung eines Hausstandes hat. Die Wirthschaft wird in größter Unordnung geführt, das Wirthschaftsgeld reicht nie, der Mann geht schließlich wieder, um ordentlich zu essen, in seine alte Stammkneipe und auf Befragen seiner Kollegen erklärt er dann: 'Weeß Jott, ick kann det Essen, wat meine Olle macht, nich runterkriegem.' Zwist, Trunksucht, unglückliche Ehen sind die Folge der verkehrten Berufswahl junger Mädchen."

<sup>32</sup> See Zull 125.

<sup>33</sup> See also Zull 53.

<sup>34</sup> See women's newspapers such as *Neue Bahnen* (New Paths) and *Die Frau* (Woman) in Frederiksen 47 and 51.

<sup>35</sup> "rein gewerblich"

<sup>36</sup> "Zum Sklaventhum sind diejenigen unserer Landesleute zu zählen, welche nach den Paragraphen von Sondergesetzen abgeurtheilt werden. Der Gesindestand mit seinen Gesinde-Ordnungen macht Tausende und Abertausende deutscher Landeskinder zu rechtlosen Sklaven."

<sup>37</sup> Only in 1918 were many of the regional *Gesindeordnungen* eliminated (Wierling 85).

<sup>38</sup> "Der Name Dienstbote, Diener, Gesinde ist für alle Diejenigen eine Ehre, welche als solche durch Ehrlichkeit, Fleiß und Strebsamkeit in anständiger Weise ihr Gehalt verdienen."

<sup>39</sup> "Ganz zweifellos handelt es sich hier nicht nur um eine Änderung der Berufsbezeichnung, vielmehr spiegeln sich recht eigentlich die völlige Umbildung der beruflichen und sozialen Situation und der Bruch mit dem Geist einer vergangenen Zeit darin wider."

<sup>40</sup> "die rechtliche, wirtschaftliche und soziale Benachteiligung"

<sup>41</sup> See Zull 79-80.

<sup>42</sup> "Auch dieser Fall lehrt wieder, daß die Dienende[n] durch den Besuch öffentlicher Tanzlokale vielen sittlichen Gefahren ausgesetzt sind und deshalb sollten doch Dienende und Herrschaften dahin streben, daß die Unterhaltungsabende des Hilfsvereins für weibliches Hauspersonal mehr und mehr von den Angestellten des Haushaltes besucht werden."

<sup>43</sup> In a chapter on maidservants in his 1911 cultural history, Hans Ostwald likewise mentions "those harmful public places, which have already swelled to a pernicious quantity - I mean dance halls" ("jene schädlichen öffentlichen Lokale, die schon zu einer verderblichen Menge angeschwollen sind - ich meine die Tanzhäuser"; 244).

<sup>44</sup> See Orth 117.

<sup>45</sup> "Wie ist es da aber nur möglich, daß diese beiderseitige gute Stimmung [zwischen Herrschaft und Dienstboten] oft nur kurze Zeit anhält? Nach langjähriger Erfahrung und hundertfachen Beweisen aus meinen Bekanntenkreisen muß ich aus Überzeugung leider dem Hauspersonal die größere Schuld zumessen."

<sup>46</sup> "Zu dem Artikel 'Der Umziehtag' von Frau Oberstaatsanwalt Henke möchten wir nachträglich einige Bemerkungen machen, aus welchen unser Leserkreis ersehen mag, daß wir die Ansichten dieser Dame durchaus nicht theilen. Die Veröffentlichungen der Artikel dieser Dame erfolgten bisher aus dem Grunde, weil 'Unser Blatt' ein durchaus unparteiisches ist und daher auch den Wünschen und Klagen der Hausfrauen gern einigen Raum zur Verfügung stellt."

<sup>47</sup> See "An unsere Leser."



<sup>48</sup> "Wir veröffentlichten in Nr. 11 die Abhandlung eines Arztes über eine neue Art von Berufskrankheit - den 'Küchenkoller.' Wir thaten es in der sicheren Voraussetzung, daraufhin aus unserem Leserkreise Gegenäußerung zu erhalten, deren Eingang wir hiermit auch bestätigen können."

<sup>49</sup> See Wierling 183.

<sup>50</sup> "Das Scheingespräch des Autors mit dem Leser, auch wenn es selten in einem Text in Erscheinung treten sollte, kommt dieser Exigenz entgegen: der Leser fühlt sich angesprochen, gefragt, belehrt, in einem Gesprächskreis einbezogen."

<sup>51</sup> "Immer wieder tauchen in den Lebenserinnerungen ehemaliger Dienstmädchen Klagen über die fehlende Anerkennung ihrer Arbeitsleistungen seitens der bürgerlichen Familie auf. Nicht die harte und schwere Arbeit machte den Dienstmädchen zu schaffen, denn diese Bedingungen waren ihnen aus ihren Herkunftsfamilien bekannt, sondern das fehlende Lob, die fehlenden 'guten Worte.'"

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