

Contesting Images: Representations of the Modern Woman
in the German Illustrated Press, 1924-1933

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Abstract

Contesting Images: Representations of the Modern Woman in the German Illustrated Press, 1924-1933 (Under the direction of Karen Hagemann)

Images of the Modern Woman emerged during the interwar years alongside the expansion of the illustrated press, a new form of mass media, which reached a broad social strata. Thus far, scholars have concentrated on this consumer orientated image without acknowledging the tensions and contestation between differing conceptions of femininity in the broad and changing political spectrum of postwar Germany and the nuanced differences found in the visual and textual representations produced in a wide range of illustrated magazines. Questioning the dominant depiction of the New Woman, I argue that illustrated magazines of different political backgrounds incorporated, modified and emphasized different elements of the Modern Woman and thus presented conflicting constructions of femininity while locating modernity within the female body.

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Introduction

In December 1930 the communist magazine, *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (AIZ), published a poem by Frank Arnau entitled, “Six Long Days Behind the Typewriter” in which a young women who “dreams of a better morning,” finds herself caught in a world full of ups and downs and in the end remains in the precarious position between “money and misery.”¹ A photograph above the poem shows a young woman sitting behind a typewriter, a pad of notebook paper to her left. The typist, a construct of the New Woman, illustrated in this text is part of the discourse in Weimar Germany on the altered gender roles after World War I.

Images of the Modern Woman emerged during the interwar years alongside the expansion of the illustrated press, a new form of mass media, which reached a broad social strata. The image of the young, uninhibited, single female who worked at an office, wore stylish attire, cut her hair short, used cosmetics and spent her leisure time going to the cinema or dancing became in mass culture, in particular in movies, popular novels and advertisement, the iconographical representation of the emancipated New Woman in Weimar Germany. Thus far, scholars have concentrated on this consumer orientated image without acknowledging the tensions and contestation between differing conceptions of femininity in the broad and changing political spectrum of postwar

¹ *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, Berlin: Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 1924-1933, and Prague: P. Prokop, nr. 49 December, 1930.

Germany and the nuanced differences found in the visual and textual representations produced in a wide range of illustrated magazines.

Questioning the dominant depiction of the New Woman, I argue that illustrated magazines of different political backgrounds incorporated, modified and emphasized different elements of the Modern Woman and thus presented conflicting constructions of femininity. Attention to these contesting images reveal the fluidity of femininities. By examining representations of femininity in a broader framework of the Modern Woman, as opposed to the more narrow definition of the New Woman, we can see that different magazines used the images of the Modern Woman as a marker of their understandings of modernity. The negotiation of gender roles and constructions of appropriate femininity are not static processes. Even today, the social construction of gender, in part, depends upon the definitions, production and dissemination of gendered images within the mass media and are produced by institutions with particular political and social motives. Illustrated magazines became one important medium in which to define the Modern Woman, based on employment, leisure-time activities, household and the female body. An investigation into the various constructions of the Modern Woman reveals the diversity of the concept during the interwar years and challenges the notion that the so-called New Woman represented “emancipation” without contesting representations of female modernity.²

I plan to demonstrate this with an analysis of different illustrated magazines, representing a broad political spectrum from the far left to the far right which incorporated, modified and emphasized different elements of the Modern Woman. The

² Throughout this paper, the term “New Woman” will refer to the middle-class consumer orientated construction of female modernity. The term “Modern Woman” will be used in a specific context referring to the ways in which different publications defined female modernity.

image of a young woman, the wife of a factory worker or a member of the white-collar working class who managed a “rationalized household,” or the female athlete as an alternative to consumer orientated activities, presented in the communist magazine was a variant of the construct of the Modern Woman, as were the images propagated by the NSDAP which emphasized an approach to fashion and physical activity based on sustaining a national ideal of the German woman.

My interest in visual, cultural and gender history has lead me to ask: *first*, which contesting visual and textual images of the Modern Woman appear in the different magazines and how are textual and visual images related? *Second*, what are the similarities and differences between the representations in different magazines and what is their aim and function? And *third*, how did the presented images change over time?

Historiography

The emergence of gender as a category of historical analysis in the 1980s provided a theoretical framework which allowed historians to explore areas of modern German history with a new perspective. One important field that contributed to a critical inquiry of traditional historiography was the analysis of the gender-hierarchical division of labor between men and women in the workforce, society and family, including the rise of the white collar working class.³ This allowed for a more full understanding of women

³Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, “Beyond Kinder, Küche, Kirche: Weimar Women at Work,” *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, eds. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossman and, Marion A. Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 33-65. Ute Frevert, “Traditional Weiblichkeit und moderne Interessenorganisation: Frauen im Angestelltenberuf 1918-1933,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 7 (1981): 504-547. Karin Hausen, “Unemployment also Hits Women: The New and the Old Woman on the Dark Side of the Golden Twenties in Germany,” *Unemployment and the Great Depression in Weimar Germany*, ed. Peter D. Stachura (New York:Macmillan 1986), 131-152. Souanne Route, *Sozialpolitik als Geschlechterpolitik: Die Regulierung der Frauenarbeit nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt/M.:New York, 1993). Susanne Rouette, “Frauenarbeit, Geschlechterverhältnisse und staatliche

and their relation to paid work. Other studies questioned the perception of Weimar Germany as site of female emancipation, by examining their political and social situations, and in particular the everyday lives of working-class women.⁴

In addition, poststructuralist theories and the 'linguistic turn' provided historians with the tools to examine the construction of gender identities while deconstructing discourses, language, symbols and signs. In particular, studies of German popular culture, literature and film benefited from this new approach which helped to examine culturally and socially constructed collective identities of men and female representations. One field of research was the critical study of the image the New Woman which concentrated on, however, one dominant construct in mass culture. The research explored this middle-class construction of femininity alongside issues of modernity, rationalization, female emancipation and urban life.⁵

Politik," *Eine Welt von Feinden: Der große Krieg 1914-1918*, ed. Wolfgang Kruse (Frankfurt/M., 1997), 92-126. Susanne Route, "Zurück zur 'normalen' Hierarchie der Geschlechter," *Geschlechterhierarchie und Arbeitsteilung: Zur Geschichte ungleicher Erwerbschancen von Männern und Frauen*, ed. Karin Hausen (Göttingen, 1993), 167-190. Christina Benninghaus, *Die anderen Jugendlichen: Arbeitermädchen in der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt/M., New York, 1999). Christina Benninghaus, "Mothers' Toil and Daughters' Leisure: Working-class Girls and Time in 1920s Germany," *History Workshop Journal* 50, (2000): 45-72.

⁴Karen Hagemann, *Frauenalltag und Männerpolitik: Alltagsleben und gesellschaftliches Handeln von Arbeiterfrauen in der Weimarer Republik* (Bonn:Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf., 1990).

⁵ Some focused on women and mass culture in general, including, Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," *Studies in Entertainment. Critical Approaches to Mass Culture.*" ed. Tania Modleski (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 188-207. Patrice Petro, "Modernity and Mass Culture in Weimar Germany: Contours of a Discourse on Sexuality in Early Theories of Perception and Representation," *New German Critique* 40 (1987): 115-146. Other studies included discussions of the New Woman specifically, such as Marsha Meskimmon and Shearer West, ed. *Visions of the 'Neue Frau': Women and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany*. (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995). Katharina Von Ankum, ed., *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). Gunter Berghaus, "Girkultur: Feminism, Americanism, and Popular Entertainment in Weimar Germany," *Journal of Design History* 1 (1998): 193-219. Vibeke Rützou Petersen, *Women and Modernity in Weimar Germany: Reality and Representation in Popular Fiction* (New York: Berghahn, 2001).

Cultural and literary scholars ignore competing discourses of the Modern Woman and work instead from a perspective of literary criticism or film theory. One recent example is *Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Modernity: Film Literature and "New Objectivity,"* by Richard W. McCormick, published in 2001.⁶ His work focuses on the relationship between gender, sexuality, modernity and culture by examining two forms of media, film and literature. His work embraces a psychoanalytical approach and is primarily interested in analyzing the dominant image of the New Woman as presented in the popular novels of Irmgard Keun or in films such as, *Mädchen in Uniform*, from 1931. Another example is the 2006 anthology, edited by Gail Finley, *Visual Culture in Twentieth-Century Germany: Text as Spectacle*. Barbara Kosta also analyzes the dominant image of the New Woman in her article, "Cigarettes, Advertising and the Weimar Republic's Modern Woman."⁷ While arguing that cigarettes were both a symbol of liberation for women and a sign of social degeneracy, Kosta confirms the representation of the New Woman dominant in Weimar Germany, does not explore contesting forms of femininity and uses the terms "New Woman" and "Modern Woman" interchangeably. Patrice Petro's 1989 book, *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany*, includes elements of the illustrated press in a chapter exploring the development of the female reader, but overall her analysis is primarily designed to provide a contextualization of the female "reader" as the female "spectator" in relation to Weimar cinema, rather than a systematic comparison of textual

⁶Richard W. McCormick, *Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Modernity: Film, Literature and "New Objectivity."* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

⁷ Barbara Kosta, "Cigarettes, Advertising and the Weimar Republic's Modern Woman," *Visual Culture in Twentieth-Century Germany: Text as Spectacle*, ed., Gail Finley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 134-153.

images in the different illustrated magazines.⁸ Historian Ute Poiger focuses on the “modern girl around the world,” in a comparative approach with a group of scholars. This study specifically examines the similarities and differences of cosmetic and toiletry ads in a variety of publications, including those found in Germany, France, the United States, Japan and India. For Germany, Poiger focuses on *Die Dame*, *Die Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung* and *Die Woche*, publications for a middle and upper-class audience.⁹ The goal of the study is to “trace the Modern Girl’s various colonial and national incarnations and reveal links among the multiple geographic locations in which the Modern Girl phenomenon appeared.”¹⁰ While this study contributes to the understanding of the “globalization” of the “Modern Girl,” the study does not concentrate on internal contradictions and contestations of female modernity, but rather seeks to examine commonalities across borders.

Recent studies on the illustrated press also focus only on the dominant images. Numerous works examine the development of mass media and the illustrated press in Germany in the twentieth century. Some research focuses narrowly on the history of individual publications while others take broad approach and attempts to study the overall changes in the structure of the press over time.¹¹ Scholarship concentrating on the

⁸ Patrice, Petro, *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989).

⁹ The project is ongoing, but a current state of preliminary research is discussed in, ‘The Modern Girl around the World: A Research Agenda and Preliminary Findings’ in *Gender & History*, 17 no. 2 (2005): 245–294. Scholars included in the research group are Tani E. Barlow, Madeleine Yue Dong, Uta G. Poiger, Priti Ramamurthy, Lynn M. Thomas and Alys Eve Weinbaum.

¹⁰ Ibid, 246.

¹¹ Studies concentrating on individual publications include, Willmann Heinz, *Geschichte der Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung (AIZ), 1921-1938* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1974). Gabriele Ricke, *Die Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, Gegenmodell zur bürgerlichen Illustrierten* (Hannover: Internationalismus Verlag, 1974). Diethart

Weimar era discusses the rise of the illustrated press alongside the development of mass media and entertainment.¹² Works relating to the press with regards to National Socialism in the Weimar era largely focus on the development and usage of propaganda, ideology of the Nazi party and in regards to women and their image as “mothers.”¹³ Thus, with the inclusion of an illustrated magazine from the far right this construction will be critically explored. I will be able to demonstrate that the image of women the Nazi’s propagated was much more nuanced and modern in its own way.

Sources, Theory and Methodology

Kerbs, Walter Uka and Brigitte Walz-Richter, eds. *Zur Geschichte der Pressefotografie 1930-1936* (Berlin: Fröllich & Kaufmann, 1983). Hartwig Gebhart, “Nationalsozialistische Werbung in der Arbeiterschaft: die Illustrierte ‘ABZ-Arbeit in Bild und Zeit,’” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 33 no. 2(1985):310-338. Christian Ferber, *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung: Zeitbild, Chronik, Moritat Für Jedermann, 1892-1945* (Berlin: Ullstein Verlag, 1989). Studies of the press in general include, Konrad Dussel, *Deutsche Tagespresse im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. (Münster: Lit, 2004), Kurt Koszyk, *Geschichte der deutschen Presse: 1914-1945* (Berlin: Verlag, 1972), Stöber, Rudolf . *Deutsche Pressegeschichte* (Konstanz:UVK-Medien, 2000).

¹² Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1968). Modris Eksteins, “The Frankfurter Zeitung: Mirror of Weimar Democracy,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 6, no. 4 (1971): 3-28. Hanno Hardt, “Pictures for the Masses: Photography and the Rise of Popular Magazines in Weimar Germany,” *Communication Theory* 8 (1998), 7-29. Lynn Abrams, “From Control to Commercialization: the Triumph of Mass Entertainment in Germany, 1900-1925,” *German History* 8 no. 3(1990):278-293. Hanno Hardt, “Negotiated Images: The Rise of Photojournalism in Weimar Germany,” *In the Company of Media: Cultural Constructions of Communication 1920s-1930s* (Boulder:Westview Press, 2000), 60-88. Torsten Palmer, *The Weimer Republic: Through the Lens of the Press* (Cologne: Köneman, 2000).

¹³ Alexander G. Hardy, *Hitler’s Secret Weapon: the “Managed” Press and Propaganda Machine of Nazi Germany* (New York: Vintage Press, 1968). Leila J. Rupp, “Mothers of the Volk: The Images of Women in Nazi Germany,” *Signs* 3 (1979): 362-379. Hartwig Gebhart, “Nationalsozialistische Werbung in der Arbeiterschaft: die Illustrierte ‘ABZ-Arbeit in Bild und Zeit,’” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 33 no. 2(1985):310-338. Larry D. Wilcox, “Hitler and the Nazi Concept of the Press in the Weimar Republic.” *Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History* 2 no.1 (1985): 17-29. Robert G. Young, “‘Not this way please!’: Regulating the Press in Nazi Germany.” *Journalism Quarterly* 64 no. 4 (1987):787,792. Norbert Frei, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (München: Beck, 1989). Gerhard Paul, *Aufstand der Bilder: Die NS-Propaganda vor 1933* (Bonn:J.H.W. Dietz, 1990). George L. Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003). Detlef Mühlberger, *Hitler’s Voice: The Völkischer Beobachter, 1920-1933* (Oxford: P. Lang, 2004).

I will analyze visual and textual images in three different illustrated magazines that were marketed to a broad public between 1924-1933. They include the liberal-conservative *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* (BIZ, Berlin Illustrated Magazine), which was produced for a middle-class readership, the communist *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (AIZ, Worker's Illustrated Magazine) and the National Socialist's *Illustrierte Beobachter* (IB, Illustrated Observer). These three magazines contain an inherent nature for comparative analysis according to each publication's different political and social views as well as their widespread appeal in Germany. Therefore, it is vital to understand the social and political backgrounds of the magazines. A thorough investigation of the background of the three magazines will lead to a more full analysis of visual and textual images of the Modern Woman.

Gender will be used as one category of historical analysis in this study. "Gender" understood as a "constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes" and "a primary way of signifying relationships of power," allows historians to examine the ways in which gender identities are constructed and how they function to maintain or disrupt normative roles for men and women.¹⁴ I will use the approach of Peter Burke to explain how images and text were used to construct normative or disruptive gender roles in a specific historical context. Important for my work is the interrelatedness of text and images in the discourse analysis. Images in the illustrated press are not frivolous representations to be dismissed, or mere forms of entertainment;

¹⁴ Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 42. See also, Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 98 (December 1986): 1053-1075 and "Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism," in *Feminist Studies* 14 no. 1 (1988): 33-65. See also for a discussion of postmodern feminism, Judith Lorber, *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics* (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing, 2005), 264-270.

they are in fact, a form of discourse which enables historians to unpack the overt, subtle and hidden meanings of images and texts to better understand the importance of the construction and contestation of gender roles.¹⁵

In *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* Peter Burke suggests that while images are not windows into a past “reality,” they can give historians a sense of mentalities, ideologies and identities.¹⁶ Although many scholars recognize the need for photographs to be placed in an appropriate context, Burke points out the need to examine “contexts in the plural.”¹⁷ This entails the precise meaning of “contexts” for any specific study on a number of levels. Most important for my study are the following two: first, the initial production of the image includes artistic and social conventions of the time, which help shape how an image is made, motivations for production and methods of distribution must be analyzed. Second, the images and the accompanying texts can be examined to see how the magazines discussed the various elements of the Modern Woman and presented her to readers. For this project, particular attention is paid to places within the publications that specifically designated an image or idea as “modern” or “new” and paid close attention to format of the magazines and how they constructed a complete picture of their Modern Woman. Thus, different sections, such as advertisements, sports pages or fashion columns are emphasized in different proportions within the analysis.

¹⁵ Burke, Peter. *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2001).

¹⁶Burke, 30.

¹⁷ Ibid, 187.

Photographs and other illustrations in illustrated magazines are tied to the ideological forces informing the institutional structures of the specific publication, alongside the intent to inform readers of an event or social conditions in a particular manner while competing with other publications. The contexts in which the images appear and their specific functions are neither mutually exclusive nor static, they can and often do, change over time. Burke notes that “a series of images offers testimony more reliable than that of individual images,” providing a particular view of a certain representation change over time or allow the historian to compare a specific theme, in one time period, to understand different social perspectives of one event or idea.¹⁸ Thus, illustrated magazines, published on a bi-weekly or weekly basis provide an excellent realm of interrogation for the use and change of images over time.

While images can be considered a point of entry into contemporary views of a specific time and place, they must not be mistaken for direct access to a social world. Images can offer insights into social, cultural and gender constructs, but it is important to differentiate between the types and functions of images, including photographs, illustrations and advertisements. Photographs can tell us much about peoples living and working conditions, material culture and gender relationships, both as pieces of evidence and how photographs were used in the past. However, historians must recognize the limits of photographs as historical evidence. One cannot see outside the frame or always identify the producer, and must remain critical in regards to the unspoken elements of an image. Regardless of how alluring it may seem to read a photograph on its own terms, textual evidence in conjunction with the image leads to a more complicated understanding of the multiple layers of meanings. Illustrations and advertisements will be

¹⁸ Burke, 187.

analyzed carefully as well. Illustrations in the “humor” section of a magazine, for example, present easily understood gender stereotypes of men and women and serve to entertain as well as indicate specific social classes, ethnicities or political positions. Illustrated fashion sections, while displaying the trends and fads, serve to both inform, entertain and present the reader with options to buy ready-made clothing, patterns for women to sew their own clothes, ways to “modernize” an old dress, or create a new garment out of an old one. Advertisements are meant to entice, to induce spending, to encourage participation in consumption. Moreover, advertisers promoted a specific type of Modern Woman to market their goods to, which influenced the manner in which women became both a consumer and a commodity. Thus, taking into consideration the function of representations, one can see how individual elements of a magazine combine to create a holistic construction of the Modern Woman.

Structure of the paper

In the *first section*, the phenomenon of the New Woman and her emergence in Weimar Germany through an expanded mass media, particularly films and novels will be discussed. The *second section* will begin with a discussion of the landscape of the press in Germany and the technological changes that gave rise to illustrated magazines. Then the section will analyze the political, social and ideological forces of the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* and the *Illustrierte Beobachter* in order to better understand the production of the image and the relationship between the image and the magazine in which it appears. The *third section* will focus on the *BIZ* and the construction of the consumer-orientated, middle-class New Woman as well as the

tensions found in the magazine. It will then analyze the *AIZ*'s image of the Modern Woman as a comrade and worker and describe the *AIZ*'s criticisms of the middle-class image of the New Woman. This section will also concentrate on the *IB*'s construction of the Modern Woman, specifically tied to the woman's section in the magazine and its proposals for a "German" femininity. This section will also explore the ways in which the *IB* criticized women who displayed a penchant for "foreign" clothing and trends and demonstrate the tensions between images found in the magazine. The conclusion will draw out larger themes of the study and suggest possible avenues for further research.¹⁹

¹⁹ This M.A. thesis constitutes one part of a larger project. For my dissertation, I will incorporate more illustrated magazines and include magazines produced specifically for female readers as well as illustrated magazines from the Social Democratic Party. I plan to examine images of the Modern Woman from 1918 to 1961, including East and West Germany. This allows me to ask, alongside my stated questions, how did the images change over time under very different political and economic systems and different media markets during Weimar, Nazi, and Post-1945 East and West-Germany?

Chapter 1

The Phenomenon of the New Woman in Weimar Germany

The image of the New Woman in Weimar Germany became the embodiment of urban life, independence, consumerism, mass media, new technologies and the “rationalization” of everyday life. Young women, entering the job market, particularly the white-collar workforce, were perceived as the embodiment of the New Woman. She wore the latest fashions, used make-up, cut her hair in a *bubikopf*, spent her leisure time at cinemas, dancing and bars and worked as a typist or shop girl. This section will briefly analyze the dominant image of the New Woman in Weimar Germany and its representation in film and print media.

1. The New Woman at Work and in Leisure

The expansion of white-collar work in Weimar became one factor which pushed the construction of the New Woman into the imaginations of postwar Germany. The increased number of white-collar workers, an understanding of modernity which connotated shop assistants and office workers in an expanded bureaucratic administration and the service sector was one precondition for the rise of the New Woman. Traditional historical narratives of Weimar Germany interpreted this development of the labor market as a step towards the emancipation of women. However, since the 1980s, feminist scholars began to re-examine the established notion that women flooded the labor market

after World War I. A re-evaluation of statistical data combined with a careful analysis of labor market structures proved that women's involvement in the labor force was far more complicated. Women did not enter the labor force *en masse* during and after the First World War, as analyzed by Ute Daniel.²⁰ Rather, the change occurred in the sectors of the economy where women were working. In "Nach dem Krieg: Zurück zur 'normalen' Hierarchie der Geschlechter," Susanne Rouette argues that although conventional gender specific hierarchies in society had loosened during the First World War and the rhetoric of social-democracy had espoused equal rights for men and women, the "normal" gender hierarchy was reinstated following the war.²¹ She contends that the loss of war, the revolution, inflation and the high instability of everyday working conditions lead to the return of conventional gender hierarchies in order to provide "security" and "normality" in the social order.²² The "normality" of this social order was demonstrated in the continued segregation of the labor market and what constituted the growing segment of white collar work.

The expansion of administration and services required a workforce with new skills, including typing and stenography. Young women who entered the labor market needs during the First World War, embodied the needed skills. Clerks, secretaries, typists and shop girls made up the majority of the female white-collar working class. They perceived the jobs as an office clerk or shop assistant as one step above factory work, because of the better working conditions and the slightly higher salary. A

²⁰ Ute Daniel, *Arbeiterfrauen in der Kriegsgesellschaft : Beruf, Familie und Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

²¹ Susanne Rouette, "Nach dem Krieg: Zurück zur 'normalen' Hierarchie der Geschlechter," *Geschlechterhierarchie und Arbeitsteilung: Zur Geschichte ungleicher Erwerbschancen von Männern und Frauen*, ed. Karin Hausen, (Göttingen, 1993), 167-190.

²² Ibid, 181-182.

precondition for these jobs was youth, beauty and fashionable clothing.²³ In 1925 two thirds of female white-collar workers were under the age of 25 and almost all of them were single.²⁴ Female clerical workers before the war came mostly from a middle-class background but as the labor market hungered for more commercial staff, young women from working-class backgrounds “had the opportunity to ‘rise’ to white collar status.”²⁵ As Karen Hagemann demonstrates in “Ausbildung für die ‘weibliche Doppelrolle,’” white-collar work offered a promise of rising social status to a new generation of working class women.²⁶ In her analysis of white-collar work, the gender divided labor market and everyday lives of young women in Hamburg, Hagemann states that 33 percent of women worked in white collar jobs, 27 percent in factory work, 22 percent in domestic service, 11 percent self-employed and 8 percent as laborers in a family business.²⁷

This promise of rising social status, however, did not negate the realities of the gender segregated labor market. As Ute Frevert explains,

Industry’s enormous demand for commercial and business staff, which had taken root in the late nineteenth century, was related to a process which divided standardized and mechanized work functions in a way that was far from gender neutral: women were given the most routine and simple tasks, particularly the operation of new office machines ... While men saw it as an affront to their dignity if they had to stoop so low as to become typists, women seem to be blessed with a certain

²³ Ute Frevert, *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation* (Oxford: New York: Berg, 1990), 180-181.

²⁴ Ibid, 179.

²⁵ Ibid, 180-181.

²⁶ Karen Hagemann, “Ausbildung für die ‘weibliche Doppelrolle’” in *Geschlechterhierarchie und Arbeitsteilung: Zur Geschichte ungleicher Erwerbschancen von Männern und Frauen*, ed. Karin Hausen (Göttingen, 1993), 214-235, “Frauen in der ‘Männerwelt des Berufs,’” in *Frauenalltag und Männerpolitik: Alltagsleben und gesellschaftliches Handeln von Arbeiterfrauen in der Weimarer Republik*, 354-429 and, “Der ‘Traumberuf’ der Kontoristin: Wunschbilder und Wirklichkeiten weiblicher Büroarbeit in der Weimarer Republik,” in *Europe im Zeitalter des Industrialismus*, (Hamburg, 1993).

²⁷ Hagemann, “Ausbildung,” 216-217.

aptitude for the keyboard; digital suppleness acquired through playing the piano proved to be of practical value here.²⁸

There were almost one-and-a-half million white-collar workers in 1925, three times more than there were in 1907 which constituted an increase of 5 to 12.6 percent of all women in work.²⁹ The indicators of the gender division of labor for female white-collar work included simple, mechanical repetitive work, which needed lower qualifications and were paid less. Moreover, they were often employed in small to medium size businesses.³⁰ Frevert argues that although the role of a shop assistant or secretary may have seemed to provide a more privileged life, most young office clerks and assistants lived below the poverty line.³¹ However, not all female white-collar workers viewed their situation in the manner which Frevert describes. Even if their working conditions were still worse than that of male office clerks and their salary lower, women perceived their jobs as a step upwards. For example, a clerk in Hamburg expressed her enthusiasm for the atmosphere of camaraderie in the office, free time and an increase in salary. Although there existed room for some young women to advance into white-collar work, the labor market remained segregated along the lines of gender and the media's construction and presentation of the female white-collar worker remained a distant hope for the majority of young women.

Although many scholars focused on the realities and construction of the New Woman at work, other scholars investigated the perceptions of leisure time. Historian

²⁸ Ibid, 178.

²⁹ Ibid, 177.

³⁰ Ute Frevert in, "Traditional Weiblichkeit und moderne Interessenorganisation: Frauen im Angestelltenberuf 1918-1933" in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 7 (1981): 504-533

³¹ Frevert, "Women in Germany History," 183.

Christina Benninghaus, for example, discusses the sharp differences between the working-class girl's experiences with leisure time and their perceptions of white-collar workers. In "Mother's Toil and Daughter's Leisure," she notes that "Ultimately, the leisure-time behavior of girls aroused considerable suspicion ... Girls were singled out as the willing victims of an expanding commercial leisure culture. In the public imagination they were seen in their thousands, 'watching sensation films in suburban cinemas, filling dance-halls and greedily devouring trashy literature.'"³² The perception that white-collar workers (unlike young women standing on the factory floor) had an expendable income in order to indulge in the latest films, fashions, food, drink, cigarette and pulp novels, was discussed in contemporary discourses.³³ What were appropriate activities for young women? That depended of course, on the questions of class and politics, but the perception of the New Woman's leisure time had little to do with their reality. They were viewed as wasting time, looking for men, indulging in drinking and dancing and spending money on frivolous goods. This view was spurred by anxieties over the declining birthrate, the fear of females taking over men's jobs (particularly in times of high unemployment), the threat of female independence, women's sexuality and power, as well as the economic and political instability of Weimar Germany. The growth of mass media, which brought the image of the New Woman front and center to the larger population, boosted such perceptions.

³² Christina Benninghaus, "Mother's Toil," 46. For a discussion on working-class leisure time in relation to domestic responsibilities see her article "Die Hausarbeit der Mädchen—Gedanken wider den Opferdiskurs in der historischen Frauenforschung am Beispiel weiblicher Jugend in der Weimarer Republik," *Feministische Studien*, 14, (1996), 76-88.

³³ For contemporary critiques see also, Sigfried Kracauer, *Die Angestellten*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971. The essays were first published, beginning in 1929, in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

2. The New Woman in Film

The expansion of cinema in Weimar Germany and the growth of popular films provided a site where the image of the New Woman was developed and propagated. After the introduction of the talkie in 1927 and 1928, the genre of the “women’s movies” prospered. Films that focused on women and white-collar work became increasingly popular in the late Weimar Republic. Most successful were movies such as *Arm wie eine Kirchenmaus* (Poor as a Church Mouse, 1931), *Die Privatsekretarin* (The Private Secretary, 1931), *Das häßliche Mädchen* (The Ugly Girl, 1933), *Mädchen mit Prokura* (The Girl with the Power of Attorney, 1933) and *Liebe muß verstanden sein* (Love has to be Understood, 1933). These so-called *Bürofilme* (Office Films) presented the audience with the spectacle of the female white-collar worker as part of the new modern office space—revolutionized by technology and set within the hustle and bustle of urban space. The audience, saturated with visual images, saw the office worker or shop girl in an uncomplicated presentation of female youth, beauty and transformation as her workplace became a space in which to meet “Mr. Right.” Romantic comedies, through accident, coincidence and humorous misfortune and misunderstandings were resolved in the end, encapsulated in a seemingly perfect “happy ending.” The clichéd scripts, musical numbers and predictable scenes repeated the narrative of the dream of white-collar working girls who hoped to find “Mr. Right,” a man from a higher social status at their workplace, the office or shop.

While scholars such as Angelika Fuhrich underline that these films promoted a traditional gender order on the surface, they also portrayed a moment of a woman’s life

cycle which allowed her more “freedom.”³⁴ Yet, the female protagonists in the films usually captured the attention of their supervisors and after romantic interludes, end up marrying their boss and leaving their jobs. This job loss, however, is not viewed in negative terms. The joy of love and marriage and their future as a housewife outweigh any benefits of typing and note-taking. Thus, these films reinforce the idea that the office is a “temporary space,” something to do before women realize their most important roles as a housewife and mother. Fuhrich also notes how the visual connections between specific types of work and femininity became embedded through the symbol of the typewriter, often portrayed in conjunction with images on movie posters or movie ads in the press. She states, “By being associated with manual skills such as sewing and playing the piano, the act of typing, and by extension, the job as typist or, eventually, secretary became typecast as “woman’s work.”³⁵

The popular genre of the *Bürofilme* indicates the amount of attention paid to this particular trope and helped to solidify the gendered connection of the typewriter to femininity, while portraying at the same time the female job the office or shop floor as a brief period of independence, before young women fulfill their “natural” task as housewives and mothers. In a similar way, the dominant construction of the New Woman was transmitted to the public via popular fiction.

3. The New Woman in Print

³⁴ Angelika Fuhrich, “Women and Typewriter: Gender, Technology and Work in Late Weimar Film,” in *Women in German Yearbook* 16, 2000.

³⁵ Ibid, 152.

The figure of the New Woman also appeared in a variety of products in the expanding print market. The well-known and oft studied novels of Irmgard Keun, *Gigli, eine von uns*, (Gigli, one of us) and *Das kunstseidene Mädchen* (The Artificial Silk Girl) are two examples of young women who embody modernity both in their bodies and modes of negotiating urban spaces. The protagonists are secretaries or shopgirls, their relationships with men complicated, their relationships with their supervisor's even more so. Keun was also one of the most successful authors of the Ullstein Publishing house in Berlin that also produced the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*.

As evident in the scholarship concerning the New Woman and popular fiction, work played a central role in the construction of female subjectivity in the novels. As Vibeke Rützou Peterson notes in her recent study on women in popular Weimar fiction, "Reading audiences were asked to consider the office or sales clerk as the role model of female modernity and economic participation."³⁶ Work, and by extension, class became a crucial marker for the iconographical image of the New Woman. The tensions in this dominant construction are evident. On the one hand, the office is a site for the "emancipated" woman who finds independence through work and leisure time. On the other hand, it is a location for popular romance, tensions and flirtation between the employer and employee; inevitably leading towards a good marriage; running parallel to the narrative found in popular films.

As literary scholars have noted, the relationships and experiences of the female protagonists in fiction are much more complex than the simple story of "girl goes to work, girl meets boss, girl gets married." Popular fiction also engaged in tense

³⁶Peterson, 79.

generational conflicts and explored female sexuality. Scholars analyze the novel *Gilgi*, not only in terms of her sexuality in relation to the males in her life. Barbara Kosta argues that *Gilgi* is also a symbol for the break between mothers and daughters in Weimar. She states, “In contrast to previous generations of women, the modern daughter’s identity ostensibly rested on progress, self-reliance, and financial independence. The mother was portrayed as having no place in the world of her Weimar daughter.”³⁷ As Peterson’s work indicates, all popular authors including Vicki Baum, Rudolf Braune, Anita Christa Brück, Hedwig Courths-Mahler, depict the New Woman in terms of her ambivalent relationship with the overlapping spheres of work, leisure time and sexuality.³⁸ Issues of pre-marital pregnancies, abortion and prostitution are featured in some of the novels as well.

While scholars analyzed this iconographical representation within different arenas, such as film and novels, they agree that the construction of the New Woman embodied a threatening independent and sexually dangerous form of femininity, for men who considered her an assault on male dominated “public” spheres and women who imagined a traditional gender order. As Renate Bridenthal already noted in her 1989 article, “Something Old, Something New: Women between the Two World Wars,” “the working girls and the sexually loose woman became conflated into the same figure. Her

³⁷ Barbara Kosta, “Unruly Daughters and Modernity: Irmgard Keun’s *Gilgi: eine von uns*” *The German Quarterly* 68 no. 3 (1995): 271-286, 276. Here Kosta uses the terms “Modern Woman,” and “New Woman” interchangeably. A careful examination of her analysis indicates that this type of Modern Woman is the New Woman—the middle-class, consumer woman, the dominant type found in mass media, particularly in films and novels. For a study on Keun, see Inrid Marchlewitz, *Irmgard Keun: Leben und Werk* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999).

³⁸ Vibeke Rützou Peterson *Women and Modernity in Weimar Germany* (New York : Berghahn Books, 2001). See also Renny Harrigan, “Die emanzipierte Frau im deutschen Roman der Weimarer Republik,” in *Stereotyp und Vorurteil in der Literatur*, eds. James Elliot, Jürgen Pelzer and Carol Poore, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1978), 65-83, Lynda J. King, *Bestsellers by Design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), and Nicole Nottelmann, *Die Karrieren der Vicki Baum* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2007).

sheer existence threatened the stability of bourgeois values and lifestyles and her non-reproductive sexuality ... supported the need for a more controlling population policy to some.”³⁹ In a moment when economic instability, disruption of the gender order following WWI, the expansion of white-collar work and mass media converged the image of the New Woman became a scapegoat for several social problems. This image embodied decadency, immoral behavior, uninhibited lifestyles and alternate forms of femininity. Kosta summarizes, “Held responsible for rupturing conventional models of social order, the modern woman, as sexualized daughter, all too predictably provoked deep fears about the status of motherhood and the family, and about conventionally defined male and female gender roles.”⁴⁰

The perception of a chaotic gender order, including the intersections issues of female work, generational differences and female sexuality, which depicted a society in trouble. The image of the New Woman in popular fiction and the mass media indicates a realm in which the iconographic young woman became a familiar trope of entertainment, a cautionary tale and harbinger of danger.

* * *

The New Woman emerged during Weimar Germany in the expanding mass media. It was directly tied to the expansion of the white-collar work, which made them more visible in the public space, gave them an expendable income to spend on consumer goods and entertainment and demanded a conformity to fashion and beauty as part of their jobs. The expansion of films, popular novels and illustrated magazines brought the

³⁹ Bridenthal, 493.

⁴⁰ Kosta, 272.

image to an increasing mass audience. Next to movies and novels one important medium for its popularization were illustrated magazines, which combined both visual and textual material. Published on a weekly or monthly basis, and cheaper than the cinema or popular novels, readers could purchase and read them on a regular basis.

Chapter 2

The Rise of Illustrated Magazines

The years following World War I in Germany were fraught with political and social tensions upon the formation of the Weimar Republic. Revolutionary activities, economic disparity, hyper-inflation, large-scale unemployment and far reaching changes in the social order formed the everyday life experiences of most ordinary people. A vibrant culture and the mass media reflected these dramatic days and the problems they entailed. The expansion of the illustrated press allowed readers to follow turbulent political and social situations in text and images.

“Not since the beginning of the modern press had a new technology threatened to alter the face of newspapers and magazines as radically as photography.”⁴¹ Technological innovations in photography and printing during the interwar years provided publishers with the opportunity to reach an expanded readership across a broad social strata. The illustrated magazine became a popular medium of distributing information with an emphasis on images. These images, composed largely of photographs and illustrations, included a compelling front cover. The illustrated magazines also incorporated articles, serialized novels, crossword puzzles and special sections for theatre, film, sports and travel. The flood of visual media in Weimar Germany increased competition for

⁴¹ Hanno Hardt, *In the Company of Media: Cultural Constructions of Communications, 1920s-1930s* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 64.

“viewers,” and forced publications to continually enhance their illustrated magazines in order to sustain their readership and turn a profit. The publishing houses and editors of the illustrated magazines had a stake in how images were used and understood by the public sphere in influencing specific political and social “realities” in order to relate to their readers.

The following section will first briefly examine the growth of the illustrated press in general and the contested notions of the “photograph.” Afterwards, it will focus on the background of the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, and *Illustrierte Beobachter*. How did their publishing companies and editors respond to the rise of photography? What aims were they pursuing with their illustrated magazine?

1. Expansion of the Reading Public, Technological Changes and the Illustrated Press

Illustrated magazines, initially established in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, expanded after World War I. Of the 5000 magazines which existed in 1925 and 7500 published in 1932, only a small portion were illustrated magazines, because their production was still expensive and only possible for bigger publishing houses.⁴² But the audience of the illustrated magazines was huge. By 1931, the combined circulation of all illustrated magazines hit 5.3 million.⁴³ The majority of these publications, called magazines, were related to specific interest groups. They were business, trade and professional journals and were published by the trade unions or churches. Magazines,

⁴² Winfried Lerg, “Media Culture of the Weimar Republic: A Historical Overview” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 12 no.1 (1988), 96.

⁴³ Hoch, 223.

including sports, humor and satire, film, fashion, cultural and literary journals also burgeoned during the interwar years. Illustrated magazines, operating out of the urban centers of Weimar Germany, had the opportunity to attract more readers than most of the thousand other journals.

Important developments in the technology of the printing business and photography made illustrated magazines possible. The growth of the number of photographs, halftone reproduction in combination with the rotary press which allowed publications to be printed faster and in larger numbers allowed for news and entertainment to reach the intended audience much quicker than before.⁴⁴ By 1900, improvement of printing techniques alongside the rotary press made it possible for newspapers to print a larger number of editions, much like the format of today's publications. The development of Linotype, a method of creating moveable type by machine, instead of hand setting, was introduced at the end of the nineteenth century, allowing for quicker and less labor intensive production.⁴⁵ Techniques to improve the *quality* of printed images permitted publications to be print images faster and in larger numbers, greatly expanded the reach of the press.⁴⁶

Changes in the development of the camera also contributed to an influx of images. Bulky camera equipment could be traded for smaller, lighter, inexpensive cameras like the Ermanox and Lecia allowing the means of producing photographs to extend to a wider number of people. For example, 35 mm cameras allowed for close up shots and

⁴⁴ Habbo Knoch, "Living in Pictures: Photojournalism in Germany, 1900 to the 1930s," in *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth Century Germany*, eds. Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 220.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 121.

⁴⁶ Rudolf, Stöber, *Deutsche Pressegeschichte* (Konstanz : UVK-Medien, 2000), 120-121.

rapid succession of images. The Ermanox, developed by the Ernemann company in Dresden, allowed for photographs to be taken without a flash and in poor lighting and opened up more possibilities for shooting indoors.⁴⁷ Previously, photographers relied upon awkward bellows cameras, which had plate magazines for glass negatives, and because of their size, photographers had to carefully plan each shot. Thus, smaller, faster and lighter cameras allowed for more documentation in the larger public sphere.

The rise of photography in the press was linked with the development of picture and news agencies who competed with each other for prominence in the industry. The oldest wire service in Germany, the W.T.B. (*Wolff's Telegraphisches Bureau*) was established in 1849 and was politically and financially controlled by the government. In 1913, the T.U. (*Telegraphen-Union*) was formed and became a division of the nationalist Hugenberg media group in 1919.⁴⁸ Although newspapers employed their own journalists, it was not uncommon for news services to include international, national and regional reports from syndicated material. After 1919, 50 new picture agencies were established. In the early 1920s, there were approximately 40 agencies in Berlin alone, each employing approximately ten full-time photographers and 70 freelance photographers. Moreover, picture agencies established in the United States and Great Britain began to open offices in Berlin: Keystone View Company in 1926, Wide World Photos and Associated Press

⁴⁷ Ian Jeffrey, *Photography: A Concise History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 243. See also Helmut Gernsheim, *Geschichte der Photographie* (Stuttgart: Verlag Huber Frauenfeld, 1981).

⁴⁸ Lerg, 99.

News Photos in 1927 and the Pacific & Atlantic in 1928, all of which provided greater access to visual material on current events on a global scale.⁴⁹

Images became a viable commodity and agencies adapted different styles, in order to compete with one another, while readers demanded more interesting and unusual photos. At first, picture agencies organized photographs in series on specific topics until the advent of the photo-essay, when photographers began to “report” on an event like a story, which became a prominent feature of the illustrated magazines.⁵⁰ These developments contributed to the growth of the illustrated press, particularly after 1924.

While some photographers were employed as staff for a particular newspaper or illustrated magazines, the majority of press photographers in 1930 were only loosely affiliated with one publication. If a photographer chose to work for a photo agency, he was given no choice in the placement of their images. However, editors of popular magazines offered contracts to successful photographers with specifications for a front page photo or a lead photo for an inside story. As competition between illustrated magazines grew, photographers, in conjunction with respective editors, had a unique role in forming the content and viewpoints of images to be presented to the larger public.⁵¹

The expansion of the reading public in general also contributed to the growth of the market for newspapers and magazines. At the turn of the twentieth century, “The target readership ... was no longer the educated male population but the less-educated

⁴⁹ Torsten Palmer, *The Weimar Republic: Through the Lens of the Press*. ed. by Hendrik Neubauer (Cologne: Könemann, 2000), 22.

⁵⁰ Hardt, *Negotiated Images*, 71.

⁵¹ Ibid, 225-226.

bourgeoisie and especially the female bourgeoisie.”⁵² For the female and less educated readership, the illustrated magazine was the preferred medium. Increasing demands for democratization, the lessening of censorship and the elimination of a variety of taxes on newspapers were also reasons why the press sought out new readers. By the end of the First World War, the public relied more and more upon newspapers and magazines for up-to-date information.⁵³ But, Germany lacked a strong national press in the 1920s. A system of large regional and local newspapers, including district newspapers that relied on syndicated material to advanced urban presses in Berlin and Frankfurt dominated.⁵⁴

In the early 1920s, readers followed the turbulent political events and economic changes through the press and relied upon illustrated magazines and journals for entertaining reading material as well, including sporting events, film, theatre and fashion. Gideon Reuveni’s discussion of “reading sites,” describes the various ways in which publications reached a broader social strata, including bookstores for travelers in railway stations, kiosks operated in the street and vendors who moved among the crowds, selling papers. These public spaces became points of contact between all social classes and allowed individuals to choose, on a daily basis, their reading material. The expansion of the press in Germany, in conjunction with technological developments, impacted the whole political spectrum of print media and allowed publishers to reach a broader social strata.

⁵² Gideon Reuveni, “Reading as sites as sights for reading. The Sale of newspapers in Germany before 1933,” *Social History* 27, no 3 (2002), 273-287.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Hardt, *In the Company of Media*, 65.

2. The Primacy of Images

The inclusion of images enhanced text in popular illustrated magazines as they became a vehicle for modern communication, in which readers could extrapolate meaning through “seeing,” rather than “reading.” Moreover, as many scholars have indicated, photography was laden with ties to the “scientific understanding” of the world, one that was “objective,” where reality passed through a lens and editors presented to the public. Photography had “‘grown a conscious of its own laws’ due to its capacity for an ‘absolute realism’ and even ‘super realism.’”⁵⁵ Editors often treated photographs as unbiased images of people and events, with the understanding that the public accepted them without criticism. As scholar Hanno Hardt states, “Photographs are assigned the power to establish the real conditions of society, either in the form of middle-class conceptions of tradition and survival or in the provocative style of social criticism, with its attacks on the social and political establishment.”⁵⁶ The camera supplied the means to define a seemingly unprejudiced “truth,” and the perspective of “truth” was formed by both the individual taking the photograph and how a publication chose to place the photograph in its publication. Although photographs, for some, may have seemed impartial and carried an air of objectivity based on technological advancements of reproduction, some contemporaries sharply criticized the expansion of the illustrated press and the use of photographic representations.

One of the most prolific was the leftists writer and social critic, Siegfried Kracauer. In an essay first published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in 1927, he stated,

⁵⁵ Knoch, 225.

⁵⁶ Hardt, “Photography for the Masses: Photography and the Rise of Popular Magazines in Weimar Germany,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 13, no. 1 (1989): 7-30

“Never before has a period known so little about itself. In the hands of the ruling society, the invention of illustrated magazines is one of the most powerful means of organizing a strike against understanding.”⁵⁷ When “reality” is regarded as the “essence” of a photograph, he continued, the “result is a world reduced to pictures by a commercial illustrated press, which continues in its unsuccessful attempt to immortalize the present.”⁵⁸ Those who control the visual and sustain the claim of “objectivity” have the ability to construct and present their specific view of society. Kracauer’s criticisms are merely one illustration that the process of making photographs, their content and their use by the press did not remain an uncontested development in Weimar Germany. Other contemporary critics viewed the photograph as purely a representation of reality as a flimsy concept, yet recognized the power of a photograph to elicit strong emotive responses. Reproductions of images in photo books, as mirrors of reality also sought to reinforce the notion that the photographs represent an uncontested reality.⁵⁹

Important for the popularity of photography was that technological changes allowed for a broader public to engage in photo documentation, the so-called “democratic value” of producing images. Before the advent of lightweight cameras and roll film, family photographs were mainly a product of studios, ran by professionals. As a result of

⁵⁷Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. by Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 58.

⁵⁸ Hardt, *In the Company of Media*, 86.

⁵⁹Some of the well known works include: *August Sander: Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts*, (Schirmer/Mosel:Munich, 1980). Sanders photo books were banned under National Socialism Sanders work is unique in the respect that he focused on photographing a broad array of individuals. Other works published around the same time include: Helmer Lerski, *Alltagsköpfe* (Berlin, 1931). Lerski’s work focuses on representations of the lower-class, the unemployed, beggars, and domestic servants. Erna Lendvai-Dirksen, *Das Deutsche Volksgesicht* (Berlin, n.d. ca. 1930) documents inhabitants of remote country regions. Erich Retzlaff, *Menschen am Werk*, (Göttigen, 1931) concentrates on the male industrial worker and *Antlitz des Alters*, (Düsseldorf, 1930) concentrates on the older generation. Ludwig Brieger, *as Frauengesicht der Gegenwart*, (Stuttgart, 1930) is another example of the emergence of the “photo book” in the late Weimar period.

new cameras, ordinary people, at least those better off, also had the opportunity to document their everyday lives and photographs were not relegated to those who could afford to have their portraits taken by professionals. The movement towards documentary photography changed the normative conventions of photography, allowing for images beyond wedding photos or family portraits taken in luxurious sitting rooms. Cameras, small enough to be portable, documented weekend activities at the beach, street scenes, the insides of factories, worker's living spaces and political meetings and protests. While the authority and credibility of the photograph continued to be disputed throughout the interwar years, the public accepted the photo as an imprint of reality. Thus, the use of photographs in the press should not be viewed as a static process, but one that continually transformed with discourse between the press, as well as individuals in the broader public. The illustrated magazines made use of these developments. Most influential became the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, The *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* and the *Illustrierte Beobachter*.

3. The Illustrated Magazines

The Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung

Founded in 1890, the first mass illustrated publication in Germany, the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* (BIZ), reached a steady circulation of over two million copies in the 1920s early 1930s.⁶⁰ The BIZ, which was part of the Ullstein Press, was one of the three most powerful presses in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century, and was

⁶⁰Christian Ferber, *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung: Zeitbild, Chronik, Moritat Für Jedermann, 1892-1945* (Berlin: Ullstein Verlag, 1989), 5.

edited by Kurt Korff.⁶¹ The Ullstein Press, became the “... first publishing enterprises ... of the industrial order.”⁶² The Ullstein Press published popular authors such as Vicki Baum and several magazines focusing on the middle-class. The Ullstein magazines include the women’s journal *Die Dame*, a periodical for housewives *Blatt der Hausfrau* and *UHU*, a small publication which included short stories, “racy reportage” and nude women.⁶³ The influential daily newspapers *Vossische Zeitung* and *Berliner Morgenpost* were also published by the Ullstein press. The *BIZ* claimed to be one of the most widely read magazines of its kind in interwar Europe.⁶⁴

The Ullstein Press was the first publishing house to use the method of street vendors to sell their newspapers and magazines, including the *BIZ*, beginning in 1904. Other newspapers began to follow suit. “Selling newspapers in the street” became “not only a way of distributing reading material but also a form of publicity for newspapers and journals.”⁶⁵ Readers could easily pick up the weekly edition of the *BIZ* on their way to work. Approximately 16 percent of the *BIZ*’s circulation was in Berlin, the rest was distributed throughout Germany, thus reaching a far broader audience than most regional medium-size publications.⁶⁶

The *BIZ* became financially successful for the Ullstein company both in terms of circulation profits as well as advertising. Advertising volume reached near 50 percent of

⁶¹ Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*, 134.

⁶² Lerg, 95.

⁶³ Ibid, 134.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Reuveni, 283.

⁶⁶ Hardt, *Pictures for the Masses*, 15-16.

the publication by 1930.⁶⁷ Consumer goods, targeting a female readership; including health and beauty aids, cigarettes, clothing, bicycles, automobiles, chocolate, coffee and small household appliances spoke to a middle-class readership who had the purchasing power to obtain such goods. At the height of the *BIZ* success, a full-page ad cost 13,000 Marks, more than double the amount of its leading competitor, the *Münchener Illustrierte Zeitung* (*MIP*, Munich Illustrated Magazine), speaking to the dominance of the *BIZ*.

The *BIZ* generally avoided political issues, while concentrating on social and cultural developments, as well as international events. The wide range of topics included concerts, theatre, film, reports from institutions and events, sports reportage and travelogues. “Photo stories describing unemployment, working conditions, poverty, rearmament, or political extremism were exceedingly rare.”⁶⁸ The *BIZ* used photography to construct and reflect a middle-class view, one that rarely had anything to do with the social realities of most Germans from the working class. The images were used to photographers reinforce a notion of a *heile Welt* (ideal world).

Although the sources of photographs differ widely between publications, 80 percent of the photo essays in the *BIZ* are identified with a particular photo agency, by an individual or by an individual in conjunction with a specific agency. Some of the most celebrated photographers of the time, including Felix H. Man and Erich Salomon, published their work in the *BIZ*.⁶⁹ Domestic photo agencies, such as *Dephot* and *Weltrundschau*, provided much of the material for the expanded illustrated press as well

⁶⁷ Ibid, 16.

⁶⁸ Hardt, *In the Company of Media*, 73.

⁶⁹ Hardt, *Pictures for the Masses*, 16.

as the use of photographs produced in countries like the United States and distributed through the Berlin bureau of *Pacific & Atlantic Photos*, which later became known as the *Associated Press*.⁷⁰ The vast array of agencies and individuals credited with images in the *BIZ* reached over 230, speaking to the variety of sources available to its editors.⁷¹ “ ... German photojournalism in the 1920s attracts many photographers who produced series of picture essays under the guidance of editors and picture agencies and helped bourgeois magazine journalism succeed.”⁷² Mutually reinforced notions of commercial viability of photographs, the expansion of picture agencies and the interests of editors all merged to continually produce and reinforce middle-class notions of culture, consumerism while failing to offer serious critical assessments of political or social tensions in Weimar Germany.

Kurt Korff, editor of the *BIZ*, believed in the power of images. He argued that pictures contained the ability to impact a reader because they instantly conveyed meaning and “could not be matched even by the most eloquent text.”⁷³ Hired to work in the Ullstein text archives in 1906, Korff was familiar with the Ullstein publishing house when he became editor of the *BIZ* 1912. Herman Ullstein, the youngest of the Ullstein sons and dedicated to expanding the magazine department, described Korff as “ ... one of the most versatile and talented men the Ullsteins ever employed. The wealth of his good

⁷⁰ Hardt, *In the Company of Media*, 66.

⁷¹ Hardt, *Pictures for the Masses*, 25.

⁷² Hart, *In the Company of Media*, 73.

⁷³ Hart, *Pictures for the Masses*, 15.

ideas, his wit, his foresight, and his versatility were inexhaustible.”⁷⁴ The influence of Korff, alongside a remarkable staff, lead to the success of the *BIZ*, promoting the photo essay as well as introducing the single photograph as a magazine cover. He did not see the *BIZ* as a replacement of daily newspapers, but rather “an extension” of them, using the visual to entice readers, to invite them to observe an authentic reproduction of events. According to historian Rudolf Stöber, the secret of the *BIZ*’s success lay in economic managerial decisions and technical advancements as well as the hiring of smart personnel, including Korff and the well-known illustrator Kurt Scharfranski.⁷⁵

Korff’s writing on the illustrated press informs us about his understanding of how a photo should function, how it should be employed and why. He wrote in 1927, “the public grew increasingly accustomed to receiving a stronger impression of world events from pictures than from written reports. The report was admittedly faster, but the event in its full dimensions, in its total effect—only the picture offered that to the reader. Without a picture the things going on in the world were reproduced incompletely, often implausibly; the picture conveyed the strongest and most lasting impression.”⁷⁶

As early as 1919, the *BIZ* altered the role of the photographer. No longer would they merely provide background or illustration for a text, but the photographer became a journalist, relating an event to readers in ways that were, up until then, impossible. As Korff noted,

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Stöber, 241.

⁷⁶ Anton Kaes, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley:University of California Press, 1994). Kurt Korff’s essay, first published as “Die illustrierte Zeitschrift,” *Fünfzig Jahre Ullstein (1877-1927)*, (Berlin: Ullstein, 1927), 279-303.

“Press photography gives the people of the world a microscope with which they can view the events of their time. The photographer travels the world on your behalf and brings it closer to you. He stands on the edge of an erupting volcanic crater, cuts through the current of Niagara in a boat, climbs to the top of skyscrapers, flies over the Himalayas in an airplane, allows himself to be buried in a trench, stands in the line of fire between Spartacus and the government troops. And all this so that you can be in the places where you’ve never been, so that you learn to see this world inside and out, from every perspective. And as you see, you are informed.”⁷⁷

For Korff, selecting photographs did not rely directly on the event itself, or the importance of an event, but rather “on the allure of the photo itself.”⁷⁸ He aligned the development of illustrated magazines with that of cinema, stating, “It is no accident that the development of the cinema and the development of the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* ran roughly parallel. The public grew increasingly accustomed to receiving a stronger impression of world events from pictures than from written reports.”⁷⁹ More often than not, the “allure” of a photograph rested upon the curves of the newest female film star, the exotic images of Native Americans from the “Wild West” or the development in aviation technology, not pressing social issues.

The Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung

The *AIZ* directly confronted social conditions and politics through photojournalism. Hanno Hardt, in his 2000 study of Weimar print media, argues that the uses of photography was also part of an ideological struggle, when the left, especially the

⁷⁷ Palmer, 43.

⁷⁸ Knoch, 223.

⁷⁹ Palmer, 18.

Communist Party, recognized the potential of images and means of propaganda. He notes, “Thus, the rise of picture magazines results not only in a critique of photography as a technology of reproduction in the hands of bourgeois publishers, but also an intensive, purposive, and successful exploration of photography as a weapon in the hands of the working class.”⁸⁰ As exemplified in the organization of the *AIZ* with its contribution from the working-class photographers, the publication became a highly successful magazine. Unlike the *BIZ*, the *AIZ* was not motivated by the desire for economic success, but to enlist and support workers within the ideological tenants of the Communist Party. For this, an intensive cooperation between its publisher, editors and readers was necessary.

The publisher of the *AIZ* was the “energetic and enterprising Communist,” Willi Münzenberg who formed a publishing house officially related to the *Internationale Arbeiterhilfe* (International Workers Relief Organization, IAH).⁸¹ The *AIZ* was part of a “multimedia company,” one which also produced magazines such as the *Arbeiter-Fotograf* and *Film and Volk*.⁸² Münzenberg multimedia company also created films for a working-class audience. For this purpose he established the Prometheus film company.⁸³ In addition the company also published leftists detective stories and other novels, children’s books the newest novels from the Soviet Union and the well-known photomontage work of John Heartfield. The multimedia company and its flagship the *AIZ*

⁸⁰ Hardt, *In the Company of Media*, 62.

⁸¹ Deltev J.K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 172.

⁸² Lerg, 97.

⁸³ W.L. Guttsman, *Workers’ Culture in Weimar Germany: Between Tradition and Commitment* (New York: Berg, 1990), 271.

served the Communist Party and the IAH as public forms through which they tried to reach the “masses.” As historian Deltev Peukert noted,

The old workers’ educational movement was still very much alive—was attracting, indeed, larger numbers than ever—and the mass media enabled it to take on a more prominent public role. A greater amount of energy and hope was invested in the attempt to mobilize support and encourage participation through the new means of communication than at any other period in German history, before or since.⁸⁴

The IAH’s goal was to create a program and practice of politics which was flexible enough to attract sympathizers or individuals and groups uncommitted to the cause of international communism.⁸⁵ Münzenberg, an amateur photographer himself, argued that people needed news and opinions with “social relevance and cultural significance.”⁸⁶ Leftist mass media, like the *AIZ*, used the photograph as a potential means of transmitting the political message of the Communist Party to a broader social strata. In fact the *AIZ* actively, “sought ‘to turn the everyday conscience of the worker into a revolutionary conscience.’”⁸⁷

The *AIZ*, although not as large as the *BIZ*, had a press run of 200,000 in 1925 and 300,000.⁸⁸ It appeared biweekly from 1925 to 1927 and weekly from 1927 until 1938.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Peukert, 172.

⁸⁵ Petro, 87.

⁸⁶ Lerg, 97.

⁸⁷ Ricke, Gabrielle. *Die Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, 73.

⁸⁸ Rudolf Stöber, *Deutsche Pressegeschichte*, (Konstanz:UVK-Medien, 2000), 241. Stöber also includes a discussion of the *AIZ* in relation to later publications from the political right.

⁸⁹ Kuenzli, 32.

While the *BIZ* relied on advertizing for much of their revenue, most advertisers shied away from the *AIZ*, as the organization criticized mass consumption under a capitalistic rubric. While the *BIZ* relied heavily on material from photo agencies, the *AIZ* encouraged and supported the movement of worker-photographers or *Arbeiterphotographen*.

On March 25, 1926 the *AIZ* announced a photo competition in order to create their own source of photos, arguing that “The capitalist news agencies flood the daily newspaper with tendentious news about world events ... images from the life of the proletariat are unknown and are not being produced, because their diffusion does not further the interests of the capitalist employer ... This blank has to be filled ...”⁹⁰ The *AIZ* included a list of guidelines for the photographers, including the following aspects: “Photos which characterize the revolutionary movement in the working class ... the social situation of workers ... photos which present the daily life of the work in all its phases ... the working conditions and place of work ... modern technology and work processes ...”⁹¹ It was a resounding success. Within weeks, a national organization of worker-photographers was founded, augmented by local clubs and the first issue of *Der Arbeiter-Fotograf* was published in August of 1926. This movement produced so many photographs and photo essays for the *AIZ* that the International Proletarian Picture Agency was organized by 1930.⁹² Joachim Bütke explores in *Der Arbeiter Fotograf: Dokumente und Beiträge zur Arbeiterfotografie: 1926-1932*, the development of worker photography as a reaction against the camera in the hands of the middle-class press and

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

as a tool of protest against the representation of capitalist, bourgeois values as seen through the lens of the middle-class.⁹³ The author relates the images published in *Der Arbeiter Fotograf* to the development of the photography as a critique of political and social circumstances. These images depicted minors, metal workers and masons in their work environment, children of the working-class playing on a street corner, women at work in textile factories, interior and exterior shots of crumbling, cramped homes and the unemployed. *Arbeiter Fotografie* also offered technical and ideological assistance to photographers, including a section called *Bilderkritik*, or Photo Critique, in which workers would submit their photographs and be offered suggestions to improve them.⁹⁴ In turn, the photographs taken by workers became the base for the images used in the *AIZ*.

Images in the *AIZ* not only focused on events in Germany but included political stories and photo essays from around the world, most frequently the Soviet Union, describing via photographs, the living and working conditions of their fellow party members.⁹⁵ Information about social upheaval, poor working conditions and unemployment ran alongside feature stories of worker athletes, advice columns and worker theatre productions. Critiques of middle-class “mass culture,” consumerism and spending habits ran alongside articles which instructed readers on appropriate ways to spend their leisure time and promoted athletics as a community orientated pursuit. Political struggles were also well documented, including the push for an 8-hour workday,

⁹³ Bütthe, Joachim. *Der Arbeiter Fotograf: Dokumente und Beiträge zur Arbeiterfotografie: 1926-1932* (Prometh Verlag: Cologne, 1977), 38-39. For more discussions on the development of documentary photography, see Roland Günter, *Fotografie als Waffe: Geschichte der sozialdokumentarischen Fotografie*, (Hamburg: VSA, 1977).

⁹⁴ Ibid, 146-147.

⁹⁵ Stöber, 244.

issues over abortion laws, published profiles of well known individuals such as Clara Zetkin and later the vehement protests against the rise of extreme right parties, including the Nazi party. The *AIZ* also included special sections for women, focusing on fashion, athletics and techniques for managing a household.

The *AIZ*'s editor in chief, Lilly Becher, worked from 1921-1926 for various Communist publications before she took charge of the *AIZ*. She directed a small staff of five members between 1927 and 1933. A former toolmaker, Hermann Leupold, became her chief assistant and helped with the layout of the magazine.⁹⁶ Under her direction, worker photographers began to document their own lives, a process which contributed to both social criticism of their living and working conditions as well as mobilization against their circumstances. "To be a worker photographer meant to admit the subjectivity of one's own approach, to overcome the bourgeois influence upon the activities of viewing and taking pictures ..."⁹⁷ In order to preserve a sense of unity, credits beneath a photograph often identified the photographer as a "worker photographer," without a name or merely used an individual's initials and the name of a city.

Thus, the Communist Press promoted activism via photography through the inclusion of worker photographs while trying to expand its readership through the use of images. Münzenberg and the editorial staff of the *AIZ* was well aware that it was "easier to sell an illustrated magazine to an indifferent worker than a theoretical brochure."⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Hardt, *Pictures for the Masses*, 23. See also, Kurt Koszyk, *Geschichte der deutschen Presse: 1914-1945* (Berlin: Verlag, 1972), 331-332.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Lilly Becher argued that a single photograph can only describe the detail of an event, but a series of photos can “enhance the entire event,” and even if single photos are used, said Becher, they “demand more than a heading,” perhaps emphasized by a poem, for example.⁹⁹

The difference between the content of the photos in the *AIZ* and the middle-class press indicate the different motivations behind each publication. The *AIZ* aimed to “experiment and instruct” rather than “charm and persuade,” like the *BIZ*.¹⁰⁰ But interestingly, the documentary style of photography developed in the *AIZ* was actually so innovative and successful that the editors and photographers of more conservative magazines used this format to, although the content used created different visual narratives. cause.”¹⁰¹ The “narrative” photo essay was adopted by the middle-class press as they seized upon the significance of telling a story by visual means, one in which the reader or the “viewer” can immediately evaluate and respond to emotionally, according to their own social outlook. Thus, the *AIZ* not only confronted and challenged middle-class values and merits of capitalism but successfully contributed to redefining the role of images in the illustrated press.

Illustrierte Beobachter

Two members of the NSDAP party, Max Amann and Heinrich Hoffman, founded the *Illustrierte Beobachter* in 1926 and began publication under the Nazi publishing

⁹⁹ Büthe, 18.

¹⁰⁰ Hardt, *In the Company of Media*, 62.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

house Franz Eher Verlag. The *IB* reached a modest 50,000 copies in the first year.¹⁰² By the end of the 1920s, the *IB* reached over 300,000 and the Nazi dailies increased to about 3.2 million.¹⁰³ The Franz Eher Verlag publishing house also produced the NSDAP daily newspaper the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the official national newspaper of the party which reached a circulation of over 100,000 by 1931.¹⁰⁴ The readership of the *IB* rested upon the party faithful and did not, like the *BIZ* reach an extended audience, yet played an important role in emphasizing and developing Nazi ideology, particularly through the use of photographs. In the years leading up to 1933, the Nazi's began to take photographs more seriously and "press photography was redefined as a necessary instrument of Nazi propaganda."¹⁰⁵

The *IB*'s layout and design was similar to the *BIZ* and *AIZ* which included an interesting front cover and the center section designed as a place for the photo essay. The back page was devoted to individual photographs, capturing Hitler Youth camping trips, new theatre productions or military technology. The *IB* had a humor section, a weekly "report" written by Hitler and an ever growing advertizing section. The advertising section of the *IB* was small compared to the *BIZ* but by the end of the 1920s was larger

¹⁰² Knoch, 228.

¹⁰³ Palmer, 37.

¹⁰⁴ Deltel Mühlberger, *Hitler's Voice: The Völkischer Beobachter 1920-1933: Vol. I Organization and Development of the Nazi Party* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2004), 21. See also Mühlberger, *Hitler's Voice: The Völkischer Beobachter 1920-1933 Vol. II: Organization and Development of the Nazi Party*, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2004). His extensive documentation of the development and content of the *Völkischer Beobachter* rarely mentions the *Illustrierte Beobachter*, but is an excellent source concerning the NSDAP's daily newspaper. Unfortunately, I have yet to find extensive research on the background and development of the *Illustrierte Beobachter*, although considerable attention has been paid to other NSDAP illustrated magazines, including *Der Stürmer*.

¹⁰⁵ Hardt, *Negotiated Images*, 77.

than the *AIZ*'s. In general, the majority of the advertisements focused on NSDAP party propaganda, books, pamphlets, jewelry with Nazi insignia and handguns.

The editor of the *IB*, Heinrich Hoffman, worked as an official photographer during World War I and joined the NSDAP in 1920. He was chosen by Hitler as his official photographer and is credited with developing and reinforcing the mythic status of the Nazi leader in Weimar Germany. Hoffman, both as the editor for the magazine and the main contributor of photographs, was in a position to both direct the layout and design as well as the content of the *IB*. Hoffmann used images of Hitler and the party within the *IB*, but also published his photographs as postage stamps, postcards, posters and picture books. The royalties from the use of Hitler's image made Hoffmann a wealthy man and also allowed him the resources to publish several photo books of Hitler.¹⁰⁶ While the Nazi press lacked, " ... the interest in talent of outstanding photographers and editors, most of whom probably never sympathized with the Nazi cause," Hoffmann, in part, made up for this lack by his continued depictions of Hitler in a variety of media, particularly within the *IB*.¹⁰⁷

The *IB* helped to extend " ... the possibilities of visual propaganda for the Nazi party, even in the absence of a strong party press, professionalism, and adequate financial support."¹⁰⁸ The visual propaganda, often centered on Hitler's rallies and tours through Germany was augmented by written political messages, both from the leader himself and other party functionaries. As scholar Habbo Knoch notes,

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 76.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

“The blending of documentary exactness and political messages was utilized by the Nazis as a means of first acquiring and, after January 1933, consolidating power. The quality of photographs was less important than the visual impact of confrontations, dramatizations and secular religious presents of the *Führer*. Rooted in a longstanding tradition of visual self-representation by monarchs, which was transferred into the photographic age during the imperial period, the praise of Hitler was a core aim of the *Illustrierte Beobachter*.”¹⁰⁹

The majority of photo essays in the *IB* concentrated on the activities of the NSDAP, particularly political rallies and parades, speakers and meetings, taken in different cities. Photo essays in the center of the magazine are primarily concerned with party rally's and demonstrations of the SA and SS marching through streets. The photomontages of Hitler, surrounded by supporters became a regular feature of the *IB*, stressing the central role of the leader and the number of supporters alongside photo essays concerning new military technologies. Aviation technology is frequently featured, allowing the reader to get a birds-eye view of the landscape as well as the internal workings of the planes.

Although the glorification of Hitler may have been the central aim of the *IB*, the magazine also included a variety of other subjects, seemingly apolitical, including photo essays on different types of cacti, zoo animals and architecture. Industrial production became a favorite topic of the photo essay as well, documenting for example, how cigarettes are made or detailing the construction of new buildings. Articles and photographs concerning anti-Semitism were prevalent as well. In a typical edition, the *IB* dedicated one specific page for photographs of Jews. The black and white portraits of Jewish men were carefully aligned with anti-Semitic rhetoric concerning manufacturing,

¹⁰⁹ Knoch, 228.

businesses and racial inferiority. Although some photographs included women, the main focus was on men.

In general, the photographs and text developed by Hoffman were designed to reach a male audience. But, interestingly, by the end of the 1920s the *IB* took series efforts to include female readers by developing a “Woman’s Page” and including advertisements marketed towards women.

* * *

Each publication, weighted with its own ideology and motivations, provide a framework in which to analyze visual representations of the Modern Woman. The *BIZ*, a highly successful middle-class publication, avoided contentious social, political and economic issues, preferring to gain its readership by appealing to bourgeoisie values and substituting any critical inquiry into social matters with photographs centered around entertainment, technology and expanding its advertising section to appeal to customers who could afford the latest consumer goods. Surmising from the types of goods advertized in the *BIZ*, directed at female consumers, it is safe to say that the publication made sure its content would appease both male and female readers.

The *AIZ*, on the other hand, consciously used photography as a weapon to condemn capitalist culture and raise awareness of everyday working and living conditions, while using the power of images as a reaction against the *BIZ*’s imagined middle-class social reality. Photographs of workers, by workers, must be understood as a conscious assignment, which carries its own ideological burden. Moreover, the *AIZ*, in its imaginative use of the photo essay challenged the middle-class press to adopt similar

strategies to draw readers. Under the direction of the editor Lilly Becher the *AIZ* explicitly tried to draw in female readers, as exemplified in through articles and photographs relating directly to women's issues. The pages of the *AIZ* became a virtual battleground in which photographers and writers directly confronted social disparities and emphasized their opposition to the middle-class.

The *Illustrierte Beobachter*, while focusing its efforts on praising Hitler and documenting party supporters and activities also strove to provide some level of "entertainment" for their readers. The use of photograph continually attempted to reinforce the mythic idea of Hitler and connect him to the larger party by including images of Hitler with his party supporters. Although marketed to party members, the illustrated magazine made a conscious effort to include the topic of women in its publication. As the "visual supplement" to the Nazi's main newspaper, the *IB*'s visual appeal and connection to photographic objectivity created a forum in which the party could develop and disseminate their own vision of an "ideal world," which included discussing appropriate roles for women.

As a consequence of expanding technology in the newsroom, the portable camera and better printing techniques, alongside the political and social space for different publications to increase their support; illustrated magazines became an important site for ideological contestation concerning the Modern Woman. By understanding the main goals of the magazines and how they incorporated visual media to enforce a specific political and social worldview, one can better understand how images in each of the publications functioned. By analyzing the visual and textual images of the Modern Woman in the three illustrated magazines and focusing on their similarities, differences

and contradictions, we can gain a better understanding of how each magazine contributed to a public discourse on the gender order in Weimar Germany.

Chapter 3

Contesting Images of the Modern Woman

Hidden behind the notion that the New Woman was *the* cultural symbol for modernity in the Weimar Republic are contestations which emphasize different elements of the female; at work, in leisure, as a consumer, her body, in order to define the Modern Woman in relation to class and race. How do the illustrated magazines construct the Modern Woman in relation to other forms of feminine behavior? What do the magazines consider appropriate? What forms of female behavior or appearances are criticized and why? How do gender, class and race inform the magazines production of the ideal Modern Woman? What are the tensions found within and between the publications? How are the images and text related? Does the text contradict or complicate the visual representation in the magazine or does it reinforce the message of the image? By examining the text and images of the Modern Woman one can better understand how the mass marketed illustrated magazines attempted to regulate and enforce an ideal type of female modernity.

1. The Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung: The New Woman as Consumer and Commodity

The fashionable New Woman is highly visible within the pages of the *BIZ*. She is found on the cover, in special fashion and entertainment sections and, above all,

dominates the advertisements. The *BIZ* promoted the archetypical image of the New Woman and this term is used throughout this section in order to delineate between the other publications. Emphasizing youth, beauty and fashion, the *BIZ* marked the female body as a site for modernity in terms of comparing and contrasting “old” and “new” women. While initially appearing to embrace and promote an “emancipated” New Woman, the *BIZ* drew a clear distinction between appropriate and inappropriate feminine behaviors. This section will first discuss youth, beauty and the typist in advertisements. Next, it will focus on contrasting notions of the woman of “yesterday” and “today,” and the suitable demeanor for the New Woman. Finally, it will examine how the *BIZ* constructed boundaries for the New Woman’s behavior.

Selling the New Woman

Promising youth and beauty, the *BIZ* presented a woman whose femininity was instantly registered through the visual, particularly through cosmetic and perfume advertisements. The level of feminine sexuality and erotic intent are evident by the methods in which women are presented both as a consumer and as a commodity. While some of the ads show women alone, many of them infer that a New Woman attracts a man by emphasizing her physical appearance.

The two advertisements below are representative of the numerous images in the *BIZ*. In the left image, the young woman is posed on the edge of the bed, while a man stands expectantly behind her, smiling, presumably waiting for her to get dressed, or undressed depending on the viewers imagination.¹¹⁰ In the illustration on the right, the

¹¹⁰ *BIZ*, April 20, 1924.

woman's bare shoulders, exposed garter belt and stockings are highly suggestive.¹¹¹ Undergarments, the most personal garments of a woman's wardrobe are on display. While some of the representations of women in undergarments are to sell a brassiere or silk stockings, the ad shown in figure 2 is one for perfume.¹¹² There is a sense of intimacy located in the image, where the viewer is privileged to see the woman in a private space, without her knowing it.



Figure 1. "I buy everything at Max Kuhl ...
Elegant stockings and tights, modern knitwear
and slips"

Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung
April 20, 1924



Figure 2. "A perfume of phenomenal power
and exclusive quality, *Tai Tai*.
A perfect dream in an unequaled
harmonious setting. The scent reveals
exquisite taste, it gives the wearer grace
Elegant and pervasive, an intimate poetic
atmosphere."

Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung
August 24, 1924

¹¹¹ *BIZ*, August 24, 1924.

¹¹² One example of an ad for brassieres shows a woman in her bedroom, standing in front of the mirror (to show both the back and front of the design) in a June 1927 edition of the *BIZ*. The women modeling the latest design is young, with short dark, curly hair and a self-assured look on her face.

In the April 22, 1928 edition, a quarter-page advertisement states in bold lettering, “The modern woman stays young!” A woman wearing a short dress, her hair bobbed, standing in front of a set of doors, advertizes beauty cream for day and night. This ad notes that she has learned to “defeat aging,” and how to stay “young and fresh” by using “Mattcreme,” which gives her a “healthy complexion . . . Through this the ‘modern woman’ achieves a healthy face!”¹¹³ Ads for beauty creams and cosmetics, spanning 1924-1933, are often designed with labels such as “A modern woman” or the “beautiful woman.” A face cream ad in a January 1925 edition of the *BIZ* is virtually indistinguishable from one found in a March magazine in 1932. Both ads depict young women wearing make-up, looking confident and self assured that their appearance is one of perfection.¹¹⁴

Ads for perfume remained prevalent throughout the decade, even during the later years of the Weimar Republic and the women were represented in much the same manner. They were shown in their homes, getting ready for an evening out—as one image portrays a young woman in an evening gown splashing “Kölnisch Wasser” on her neck while at her vanity table in front of a mirror. Another perfume ad, for the same brand, depicts the young woman standing outside a theatre with her beau.¹¹⁵ Illustrating these scenes in a type of narrative, the women at home prepare for their evening out with handsome looking men. If present, the men in the illustrations are attractive and broad shouldered, the compliment to the female next to him.

¹¹³ *BIZ*, April 22, 1928.

¹¹⁴ *BIZ*, January 23, 1925 and March 16, 1932.

¹¹⁵ *BIZ*, May 22, 1927.

These advertisements, which are widespread throughout every issue exemplify the enhanced sexuality of women. The New Woman is not afraid of exposure, both in terms of her own body and what she is willing to “show” her audience. An ad shown in the January 1925 edition of the *BIZ* (which the magazine reprinted in the following months) for “Tosca” perfume, portrays a scene of pure decadence. A woman sprawled on a table, is by all means, the centerpiece. Her evening dress is nearly sheer, showing the outline of her body, her breast bared and she tilts her chin upwards in defiance. A man moves towards her, carrying a bottle of “Tosca” perfume on a silver platter. Clothing ads, showing models dressed in evening wear, also wear garments which show off their back, their shoulders and their legs. Two women, for example in the January 24, 1924 edition of the *BIZ*, are standing next to each other, holding fur wraps, the backs of their dresses cut low.¹¹⁶ Advertisements for household appliances, such as the new “Vox” stereo, a woman lounges in her pajamas, one arm resting on her new appliance, the other draped across the back of her chair, eyes closed.¹¹⁷ The woman is as much on display as the stereo itself.

The body is emphasized in these images in two aspects. First, the body is highlighted as a site for covering and uncovering. The negotiation between the proportion of the body that a viewer can see or that a viewer can imagine is shown in the settings woman are placed in and what they are wearing. The image of the woman in a slip and stockings for example, both accentuates her femininity by revealing her legs, shoulders, her back and hints at, yet does not expose, for example, her breasts. Secondly, the “skin” of the body receives attention as the site of youth. Ads emphasize the value of feminine

¹¹⁶ *BIZ*, January 24, 1924.

¹¹⁷ *BIZ*, August 16, 1926.

youth, encourage women to “prevent aging” and to be aware of the texture of their hands or their faces. The smell of the skin must not only be fresh, but alluring, as part of a maintenance routine that promises a pleasant working environment by “soothing the nerves,” and is equally important in maintaining social relationships with men.

One of the striking observances concerning these images is the nature of the young woman’s self-assuredness and self-awareness. The women are surrounded by mirrors, either in their homes, or checking their lipstick in public.¹¹⁸ They “see” themselves as fresh and new, they desire others to see them the same way. They are conscious of their beauty, they are satisfied with their bodies. With the help of beauty cream, make-up and perfume the young woman is transformed into a commodity that looks, feels and smells like a vision of delightful youth; characteristics which become the top priorities for female white-collar workers.

The Typist: Beauty at Work

The relationship between paid work and the New Woman in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* is highlighted in the advertisements the magazine ran. Images of the typist or the secretary are found here, but rarely anywhere else in the magazine, demonstrating the importance of targeting a young female readership with an expendable income, but not accentuating women’s role in the labor force beyond the power of her pocketbook. Much like her counterparts found in the popular films and novels, she symbolized the New Woman. Identified with her work, authors and directors often placed her in her workspace, but concerns over working-conditions and wages were never the

¹¹⁸ For example, series of ads ran beginning in the March 2, 1928 edition for “Pebeco” toothpaste show a woman holding a compact mirror at arm’s length, smiling at her own reflection.

topic of discussion. Rather, her appearance and relationships with the men around her became of central importance to popular narratives. Cosmetic and perfume industries targeted the secretary, typist or shop girl as the primary consumer.

When the typist or secretary is presented, she is always young and attractive. One such example is the above advertisement from June 1929, showing a woman sitting behind a typewriter, holding a bottle of perfume, as her boss leans casually across her desk.¹¹⁹ Evidently, he is quite interested in what she has to say concerning the “refreshing drops” of lavender-orange perfume. “Good looks despite a stressful job!” declares the ad, signifying the importance of appearance and feminine qualities in the office.



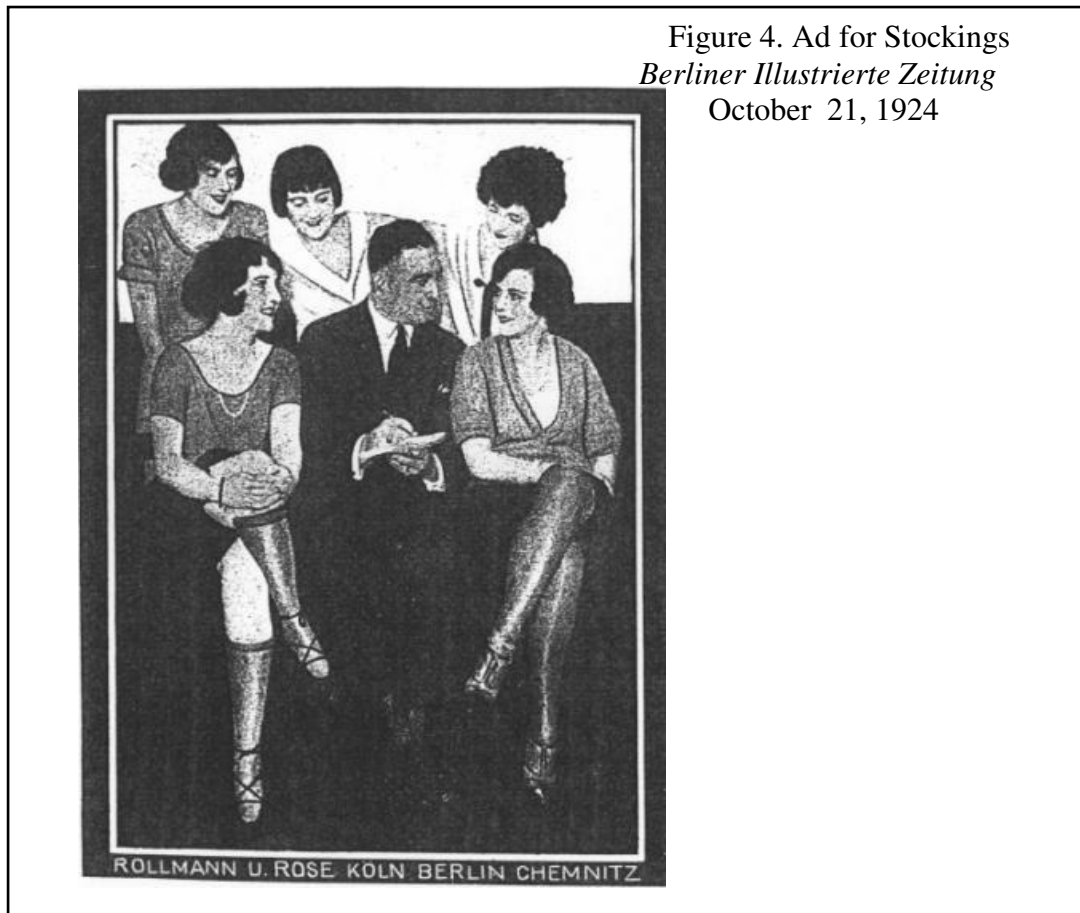
Figure 3.
“Good looks despite a stressful job!”

“Stressful job, especially in a room with poor ventilation and full of people makes you prematurely tired. This you can prevent! With a few drops of *Kölnisch Water Lavender-Orange* on your tissue deeply inhaled or on the forehead and behind the earlobes eliminates and provides for instant, visible relaxation. With the concept of the comfortable feeling you will again the efficient, exquisite, revitalizing scent, immediately, that of a dewy blossom. Your eyes will be brighter, the nerves fresh and your resilience will return. Use it several times a day!”

Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung
June 2, 1929

¹¹⁹ BIZ, nr. 26, June 2, 1929.

Although the job might be “stressful,” the perfume promises to sooth the nerves and guarantees the return of productiveness. Yet, the visual representation emphasizes the presence of the woman’s male supervisor and the bold headline emphasizes “good looks.” Productivity and soothed nerves take second place to the woman’s appearance. The *most* important quality is appearance, and particularly, in front of her boss.



Another image of the female white-collar worker is shown in an ad for stockings from December 1924.¹²⁰ Here the “boss” is encircled by five attentive young women. With short dark hair and stylish clothing, the women look directly at him. The two

¹²⁰ *BIZ*, December 21, 1924.

women in front, wearing short skirts, are not ashamed to show their stockings while the woman on the right shares a personal look with her boss. The stylish *bubikopf* and fashionable clothing are indicators of the figure of the New Woman. The ad is typical for the *BIZ* in that a woman's "job performance" does not rest upon her skills or the work she completes. Rather, the performance, in front of her coworkers and her supervisor, is centered upon her appearance. The advertisement also harkens to the familiar trope that the New Woman uses the workplace to attract a man for marriage.

"Hinds Honey Cream," keeps the typists skin "soft and smooth" notes an ad which depicts the "typing pool." While three short-haired women dutifully type away, one woman rests her chin on her hand, sitting in front of a stack of files, holding a pencil and addresses the viewer. Ads such as this both emphasize feminine work and machinery but insist that the feminine nature of a woman can be found in a jar of hand cream.¹²¹ "Why would you age early, if you can, through the use of Matt-Cream and Cold Cream stay young?" asks an ad published on February 24, 1928.¹²² A woman holds a jar of cold cream and points to the label, while two of her co-workers look on eagerly, one of them sitting on the desk, leaning in to listen. The maintenance of one's skin and preservation of youth, through brand-name products, is deemed an effective way of finding and keeping a job.

In an ad published in the April 24, 1928 edition, a young woman sits behind a desk, wearing a jacket and "tie" writing on a notepad.¹²³ "The working woman knows

¹²¹ *BIZ*, February 2, 1929.

¹²² *BIZ*, February 24, 1928.

¹²³ *BIZ*, April 24, 1928. These ads appear frequently in the *BIZ*. In 1929 a series of ads ran depicting women at work (typists and secretaries) for hand lotion and perfumes. They are similar in form, a half-page

which assets a young soft-skinned complexion displays,” reads the text. This ad for Palmolive soap notes that “the most beautiful film and stage stars use Palmolive ... because other soaps are too harsh.” Here is an ad which directly links the notion of the female office-worker to the stage and screen. The office is her “stage,” where a working woman embraces the glamour and beauty of the cinema, within the confines of her space.

These representations of female office workers also contain hints of the New Woman’s sexuality. The *BIZ* does not present the readers with a discourse concerning female white-collar workers other than as young, beautiful women gaining the attention of male authority and preserving their youth. However, the images also reveal subtle struggles of power between men and women. For example, while the man is in a dominant position in the advertisement for perfume, the woman acquires his interest through her femininity. The male supervisor in the stocking ad in figure 4 is both literally and figuratively the center of attention. In the ads, the New Woman is an object on display at work. Her “productivity” is enhanced by what she wears and what perfume she uses. The New Woman derives her power through her body, not her mind. She signifies an alluring combination of youthful beauty and sexuality that is not only found in nightclubs, theatres or dancehalls but in the realm of the workplace. She represents the fantasy of the typist or shop girl which required the purchase of consumer goods while she herself is presented as a commodity.

Changing Beauty: Contrasting Old and New

ad which calls to “typists, secretaries and stenographers,” to use a particular hand lotion for “charming and soft hands,” such as the one found in the *BIZ*, September 30, 1929.

As the editor-in-chief of the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, Kurt Korff understood the necessity of placing appealing images on the front cover of the magazine, in an attempt to gain and sustain readership. The New Woman, specifically in contrast to older generations, served as an attractive front cover and a site for marking modernity. This type of woman, no longer hidden under layers of clothing, felt comfortable showing more skin, wearing make-up and outwardly flirting with men in public. The New Woman visually constituted a break from tradition, particularly when she was juxtaposed with images of the past. Moreover, the images in the form of photographs gave the viewers a heightened sense of the reality of change between the “old” and “new” women of Germany. One cover from 1924 presented a portrait of a street in Berlin in 1924 and 1830.¹²⁴ The photograph on the left shows a young woman, wearing a short skirt, holding a newspaper and smiling at the camera as she gets her shoes polished. Her short hair peeks out from underneath a fashionable hat and busy street behind her, bustling with people, is her urban backdrop. The image on the right shows a serious woman, standing next to a man, covered in clothing from head to foot, barely an inch of skin to be seen. The New Woman, placed in an urban space, is depicted as independent and confident, distinguished from the past. She takes care of her appearance, reads newspapers and her carefree expression shows escape from any hardships. Readers could instantly register the visual change of women while the *BIZ* presented this type of beauty as unproblematic. The *BIZ* did not use these images to criticize changes in women’s appearance or behavior, but constructed the New Woman as a symbol of modernity, vibrant urban space and youthful attitudes.

¹²⁴ *BIZ*, September 21, 1924.

The cover photograph of the August 16, 1925 edition shows three woman standing on the beach. Two of them wear shorts and a “sailor shirt,” their hair cut in a *bubikopf*. The woman on the right, holding a cigarette and wearing long earrings is looking in shock at the third member of the party—a young woman whose long hair nearly reaches her waist. “So what’s next!” reads the caption “The astonishing *bubikopf* on the beach.”¹²⁵ The photo demonstrates the old-fashioned embodiment (long hair) next to the two women who are far more modern than their counterpart in the picture. The young women, shown in their leisure time, not only smoke and wear revealing clothing, but are aghast that their peer has refused to cut her hair, sending the message that the popular *bubikopf* is a sure sign of a modern, youthful appearance and refusing to cut one’s hair will surely bring about surprise from other women.

The cover photograph of the September 6, 1926 edition is quite similar to that found in 1924.¹²⁶ The “new” woman sits to the left of the “old,” whose dress is composed of layers of fabric. The “old” signifies the outmoded and outdated, where modes of dress hide the female body. The “new” woman however, wears a dress with short sleeves and a significantly higher hemline. The cover of the February 2, 1928 shows two images with the caption, “Costume balls then and now.”¹²⁷ The picture on the left from “fifty years ago” depicts a young woman sitting on a chair, one hand touching the

¹²⁵ Numerous ads also ran for the “Bubikopf.” One ad on June 5, 1927 sold “Elida Shampoo” for the *bubikopf* and illustrated a young woman getting her hair cut. The ad read, “Every modern woman knows the benefits of a *bubikopf*!” Using Elida Shampoo, a woman can have healthy hair! A short article in June 28, 1925 asks, “Bubikopf or not?” The “Gamine and Garconne type is ideal!” One photograph of a woman is captioned, “The summer sport girl of today: a smooth *bubikopf*, short skirt...cigarette in her mouth!” Thus, both advertisements and articles emphasized the symbolic importance of the *bubikopf* as an indicator of the New Woman.

¹²⁶ *BIZ*, September 6, 1926.

¹²⁷ *BIZ*, February 5, 1928.

brim of her wide hat. Her dress covers her from neck to foot with long sleeves, a man kneels beside her and she looks away from him. In the photograph on the right, a young man holds a champagne glass with one hand and has his arm around the young woman sitting on his lap. The two are smiling at each other—her legs are crossed, showing bare legs and the thin straps of her dress show off her shoulders and arms. For the reader, the images define the change in the standards of beauty and behavior while implicitly embracing the New Woman as a positive development.

The prominence of such contrasts on the cover illustrate the extent to which the *BIZ* continued to use narratives of “progress” and “modernity” to appeal to their readers, indicating that nowadays, women are more liberated when it comes to their appearance. Moreover, the *BIZ* frames these changes as unproblematic and remains uncritical of the standard of beauty which requires expensive clothing, jewelry and cosmetics. Notably, there are no such contrasts made in terms of men’s appearance. In fact, one illustration found in the “humor” section of the magazine shows the characteristics of women’s fashions compared to men. In five frames, the woman’s clothing transitions from long, flowing dresses and large, decorative hats to the slim, smooth garments of the 1920s. The man, wearing a tuxedo, remains exactly the same in all of the frames.¹²⁸ To represent change over time, and a shift to the modern era, the *BIZ* uses contrasting depictions of females to convey the impression that a site of modernity is found within a female body. Issues of modernity in terms of contrasting the old with the new also appear inside the magazines, which allow for a more textual analysis in terms of how the images and the text interact with each other.

¹²⁸ *BIZ*, March 9, 1924.

An article accompanied by photographs in the May 22, 1927 is headlined, “The Fashion of Today—A Fountain of Youth.”¹²⁹ The first photograph of a film star, Ida Wüst, shows her stepping out a car in 1912. This image is juxtaposed next to another photograph of her by a vehicle, taken in May 1927. In 1912, she wears a long skirt, bulky jacket and large hat with a feather. In 1927, however, she wears a skirt that shows off her legs, high heels, a fashionable jacket and a box hat. The dancer Anna Bavlova is photographed in 1912, her body covered from head to foot in a long coat, scarf and a hat that hides her hair, holding a large bag. In the next photograph of her—she is confidently striding towards the camera in a suit, heels and carrying a small purse in one hand. The article states, that fashion is moving forward, but this time it is a transformation of individuals—“and although they grow older—their appearance is decidedly younger.” The article approaches “youth” in different terms. The “fountain of youth” is a woman’s wardrobe, the magic formula for reversing aging. One does not necessarily have to *be* young, but one can *look* young and modern through her choice of clothing or footwear. For example, a photograph from a photo-essay on new fashion trends in 1925, shows a woman holding a fashionable shoe, her legs crossed at the ankles, resting atop a dead alligator, near its gaping jaws.¹³⁰ This woman embodies, by metaphor of a deceased wild beast, an independent, strong and fearless young woman. “Shoes made out of alligator skin are very modern!” The woman in the photograph, with her *bubikopf* and revealing

¹²⁹ *BIZ*, May 22, 1927. More examples of contrasting “old and new” can also be seen in the *BIZ*’s photo essays and articles such as “The Modern Woman in India,” found in the July 22, 1928 edition which portrays the young generation of Indian women in western style dress, standing next to their mother’s and grandmother’s who wear “traditional” saris. These depictions emphasize that young women, on a global scale, are significantly different than the older female members of their families and society in general.

¹³⁰ *BIZ*, January 1, 1925.

clothing symbolizing the New Woman as a consumer who can afford to buy exotic accessories.



Figure 5. "Shoes made out of alligator skin are very modern!"
Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, January 1, 1925.

Alligator skinned shoes may seem exotic to some readers, but the *BIZ* is careful to delineate between clothing and accessories that are modern but not tasteless. "Is women's clothing today too audacious? What was it before?," reads a headline on February 21, 1926.¹³¹ This article traces women's fashion over time and is visually exemplified in paintings and sculptures from different eras. One sculpture shows the "sports clothing" of females in Sparta while another painting depicts King Friedrich Wilhelm III next to his wife. She wears an empire waist dress, which pools on the floor around her feet. Another

¹³¹ *BIZ*, February 22, 1926.

illustration is captioned “The German woman in the time of the Reformation.” The emphasis is on her hat, which is at least twice the size of her head. Women’s fashion has changed in the last one hundred years, states the article, “in fact, women’s fashion has been ‘revolutionary.’” Sport, for example, has had an immense impact on women’s clothing—both in terms of what kinds of clothing women wear for sports—but also in the type of body that women have (slimmer, healthy, more athletic). “The fashion of the day is more free, but not really more “saucy” than the fashion of the past one hundred years,” the magazine argues. The *BIZ* describes the change in fashion overtime, in rising hemlines and influences from the French and American styles. The photographs of women “today” highlight a “young” fashionable sense—but indicate that the dresses are not really too audacious—they are “modern,” and conform to a widespread change in female dress—but nothing too shocking. Thus the *BIZ* is able to embrace and promote the fashion industry while convincing readers that “modern” does not imply garish or gaudy clothing.

In 1929 ideas of “shape” of the New Woman changed as well, demonstrating, once again, that the symbol of modernity could be seen in the figure woman. In late 1924 and through 1925, the *BIZ* ran a series of ads for the *Lobbenberg & Blemenau* model of the corset, with ads reading in thick bold letters, “Are you big? Then wear the Corset!” The ads show a pictures of a woman standing in front a mirror, smiling at her slender reflection. As demonstrated in the above advertisements and photographs, the slim figure of women was popularized in the *BIZ*, but one article in February 24, 1929 depicted a shift in what was considered modern.¹³² The cover photograph shows a woman being fitted for a suit. She stands in front of the mirror, one hand holding a cigarette, her dark

¹³² *BIZ*, February 24, 1929.

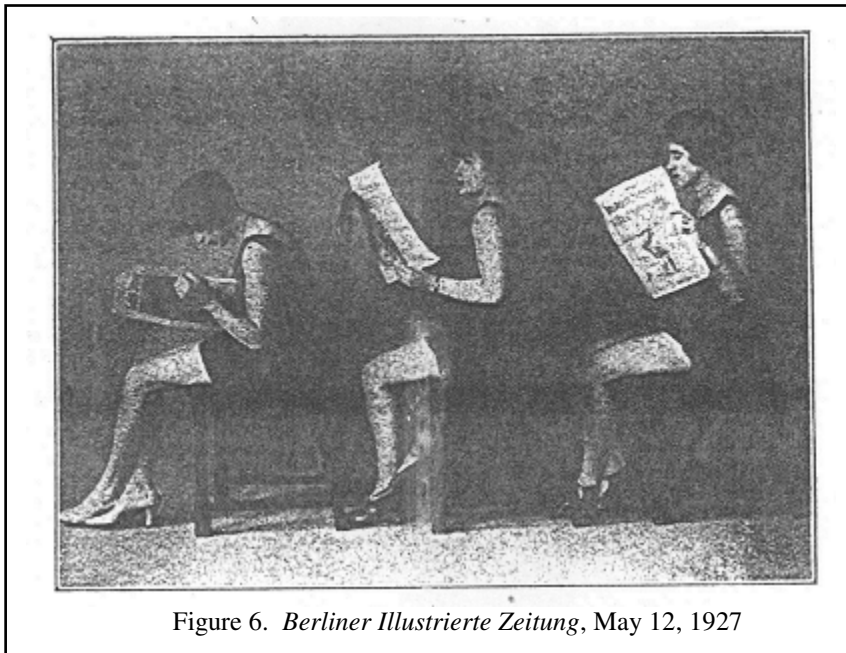
hair cut short. But instead of a long, slim figure, she is much more plump. The caption below reads “Thick is again modern!” The cover image corresponds to an inside article—which contains four illustrations of women. Nine women in a “London revue” are drawn with linked, round arms and plump legs kicking in the air. Another woman sits in a restaurant, food and drink surrounding her. The caption reads, “Thank god! Away with the calories! One can eat again what one wants!” The images of larger woman however, are not a call to a free-for-all indulgence in food and drink. When read with the text, it is clear that the *BIZ* is promoting a certain type of larger woman; not too big, not “fat.” She is still “pretty” and “fashionable.” This new “culture period” and the “tempo of the times,” allows for another type of “ideal beauty,” states the article. While the *BIZ* presented the slender New Woman through most of the years, in 1929 the *BIZ* decided that the “thick” woman was also modern. Was this a call for young women to eat and indulge with disregard to their shape? Certainly not! “Plump” was acceptable, “fat” was not.

In contrasting old ideals of femininity and beauty with new, the *BIZ* consistently used the same tropes. The women of the past are covered from head to foot, high collars, gloves, large hats hiding their hair, skirts covering their legs. Symbolically, the New Woman was a break from the past. She is not afraid to show off her legs, shoulders, short hair and stylish shoes. Images portrayed the New Woman in public spaces as she freely flirted, drank, smoked and dressed however she pleased. Yet, the *BIZ* was careful to argue that the latest trends and fashions, although revolutionary were modern and attractive, without being tasteless. The New Woman presented as independent and apparently more “emancipated,” was not vulgar. The *BIZ* told its readers that the New

Woman, with all her modernity and change, was not something dangerous or out-of-control. Articles underscoring “attractive” and “healthy” methods for standing sitting and walking promoted a specific type of behavior for the New Woman were also featured in the magazine.

The New Woman and her Demeanor

The discussion of youth and the New Woman took hold in articles discussing appropriate methods of standing, sitting, picking up objects and greeting friends. The New Woman became aware of her body in terms of how she should move and use her body correctly. A photo essay on May 12, 1927 demonstrates these “attractive and healthy measures.”¹³³



¹³³ *BIZ*, May 12 1927. Another article discusses the ways in which a young woman’s character can be measured by the way she sits in a chair. See *BIZ*, May 24, 1929.

A woman reading a magazine (the *BIZ* of course, is the prop here), is first slouched in her chair with her head down. This is false, but sitting up holding the newspaper close to her face, legs crossed at the ankles is the “right” way to sit. These instructions became part of the New Woman’s public performance, designed to cultivate graceful and appealing body language, underlined by language of “health.”

Correct ways to walk are demonstrated by photographs of women holding a coffee cup. The “false” way to move is “bending your knee” in front of you at a choppy angle. The “right” way to walk is to “glide,” holding the coffee cup in front of you, but not too close to your face. One does not slouch while standing at a table, but stands with her back straight, one does not bend from the waist to pick something off the ground (a very “un-pretty” method), but “bends at the knee” to pick something up. Not only are these methods much more attractive, they are also “far more healthy” for a young woman. Another article in the October 18, 1925 edition uses illustrations to discuss “instructional views for your demeanor.”¹³⁴

While including methods of sitting and greeting one another (one must not grasp the other person’s hand too tightly and step away from them, but rather gently clasp hands in a civil manner), the article also demonstrates the correct method of closing a door. A young woman does not enter the door and close it with her body turned sideways, but instead, shut the door as she faces the room. The focus on the body and movement become part of the construction of the New Woman. It is not merely how she looks, but how she acts. The images also depict a middle-class version of modernity. The women wear appropriate clothing to social gatherings and parties and understand the importance

¹³⁴ *BIZ*, October 18, 1927.

of measuring each movement in terms of fostering an entire image. It is not enough to *look* like the New Woman, one must *act* like the New Woman.

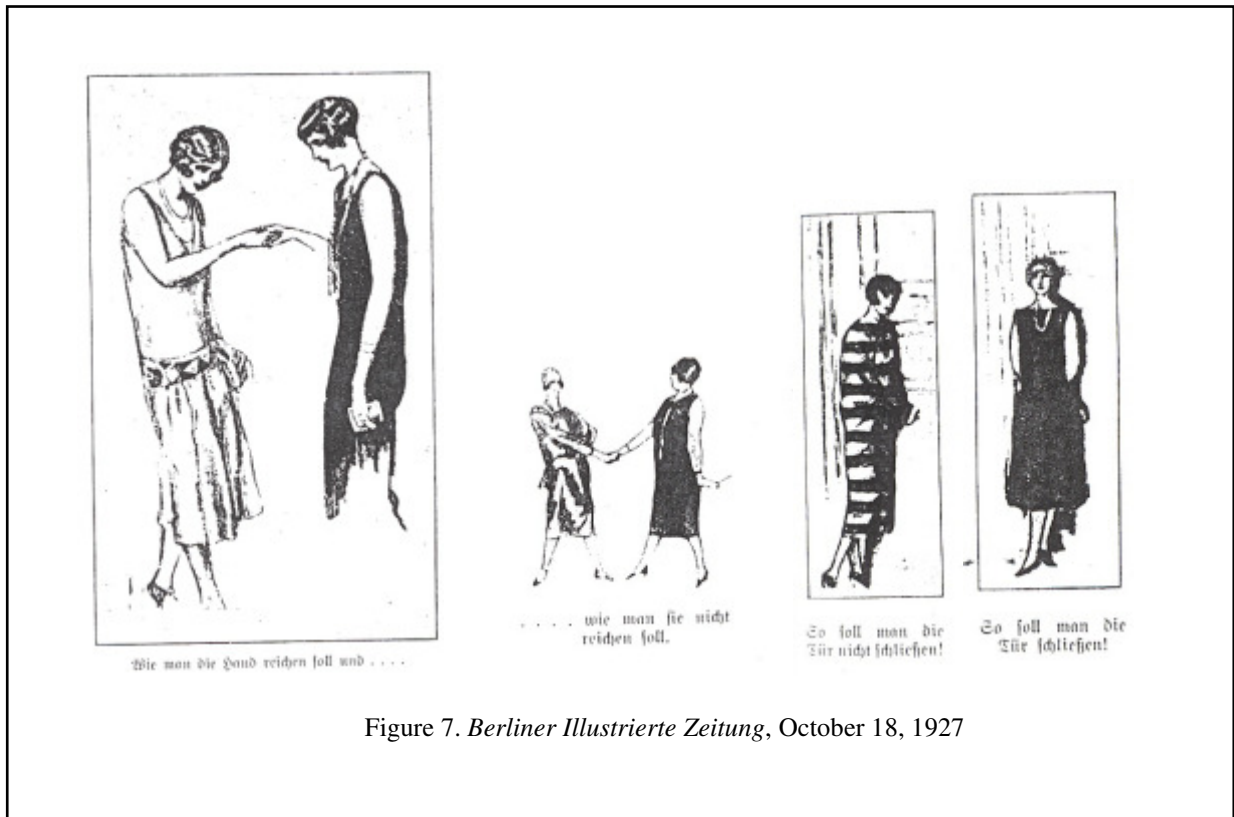


Figure 7. *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, October 18, 1927

The *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*'s instructions on what to wear, products to buy and how to act converged to form the New Woman's ideal type of femininity and modernity. The combination of advertisements, fashion sections and cover images drew sharp generational distinctions between the past and present and continually emphasized the female body as a site for modernity. Advertisements promised the white-collar worker the attention of her supervisor and demanded conformity to new trends. In conjunction, articles and photo essays presented an "unproblematic" standard of youth and beauty available through clothing and behavior. The New Woman embraced alligator shoes, short skirts, the *bubikopf*, smoking, dancing and drinking. Yet the New Woman's

apparent “emancipation” from the confines of the past was only appropriate to a certain extent.

“Now That is Enough!”: The New Woman Beyond Femininity

While appearing to endorse the independence, economic freedom and overt sexuality of the New Woman, representations in the *BIZ* also reveal tensions surrounding women who appear too masculine. These women became the extreme variation of the New Woman who rejected femininity in all forms. According to the film scholar Patrice Petro, images of mannish fashions symbolized, “ ... a far more disturbing trend, one in which women seemed to renounce femininity and regress to an adolescent sexuality—thus to deviate from the path of ‘normal’ female sexual development.”¹³⁵

This may be the case for some images, but Petro fails to make the critical distinction between representations of “androgynous” figures and overtly masculinized women. Androgyny points to gender neutrality in which feminine and masculine characteristics are called into question. The images found in the *BIZ* reflect two separate ideas. First a number of representations appear of masculinized females, whose gender is not entirely ambiguous. These women do not represent gender-neutral roles but rather adopt characteristics of masculinity, thus challenging the traditional construction of women as well as that of the young, fashionable female found within its own pages. Secondly, a conversation emerged in the late 1920s which focused specifically on androgyny. By examining these two images, one can see the complicated nature of defining appropriate gender roles using the New Woman as the centerpiece of the conversation.

¹³⁵ Petro, 105.

One of the first manifestations of this concern appeared in the *BIZ* on August 24, 1924 in an article entitled, “The Masculinization of Women.”¹³⁶ The two page photo essay and editorial includes photographs from popular women’s magazines, including *Die Dame* and the American fashion magazine, *Harpers Bazaar*. Two photographs of women, with page-boy haircuts are settled on top of the second page. The caption underneath reads: “The Masculinization of Women: Forms of the modern pageboy hairstyle from the magazine, *Die Dame*.”¹³⁷ Within the text, three indicators of this masculinization include the pageboy haircut, wearing a top hat and donning a man’s coat. In 1924, masculinization was discussed in terms of physical appearance, framed within a discussion of “fashion.” The images are benign, four photographs and one illustration of the pageboy haircut and one photograph of a woman wearing a hat and a long black coat. The women may be a bit masculinized, but not in excess. At this point, there is no real danger in these woman’s actions, the “feminine form” is adopting outward appearances of men, but the “parody” of men is not excessive. Although the images of short hair may seem masculine, it is clear in all of them, that the individuals are *women*. The woman wearing the heavy, dark, “manly” coat is still wearing high heels, and does not camouflage her sex.

Nine months later, the subject of masculinized women takes on a different tone. The bold title of this article from March 1925 reads, “Now that’s enough! Against the masculinization of women”¹³⁸ Two photographs at the top of the page show two women,

¹³⁶ *BIZ*, August 24, 1924.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*.

¹³⁸ *BIZ*, March 29, 1925.

with their hair styled like a man's and wearing suits and ties. This is not the bubikopf, but rather the short style of a man's haircut. The caption under one photo reads, "The masculinization of women is exaggerated more and more! Not a man, but rather the English actress Dolores (in private life-not a role)."¹³⁹ The emphasis on the photograph as "proof" of Dolores's taste for the masculine in her private life rather than in a movie, symbolizes the boundaries that the *BIZ* deems acceptable. While not explicitly mentioning lesbianism, the article condemns women for adopting clothing and hairstyles which are "unnatural."

Figure 8. *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, March 29, 1925



Die Vermännlichung der Frau wird immer mehr
übertrieben!
Kein Mann, sondern die englische Schauspielerin Dolores
(im Privatleben — nicht in einer Rolle). Phot. Abbe.



Die Schauspielerin Johanna Zutter (Zivilbild).

It is not that these women are neutral, not really masculine *or* feminine but rather that they are appropriating masculine characteristics through clothing and hair styles. The

¹³⁹ Ibid.

manner of this article suggests a shift from tolerable styles of a new haircut to an affront to femininity and society in general. The *BIZ* found some level of “masculinization” harmless, yet more severe adoptions of men’s clothing and haircuts proved to be beyond acceptable. While it may seem amusing at one point for women to wear men’s clothing, fears of upsetting the “natural” gender order began to surface.

The *BIZ* dedicated the cover of the November 13, 1927 edition to “Fräulein Mia.”¹⁴⁰ She and her gentleman friend stride past a small assembly of people and her male companion appears particularly dapper in a tailored suit, handkerchief in his pocket and cigarette in hand. To the left of the couple a man sits askew in his armchair, watching the two walk away. His face, framed by a thick beard, expresses genuine confusion. To the right of Mia, a bespectacled man bends down and whispers something into the ear of the young, curvy woman perched on the edge of her chair. They both smile and certainly, Mia is the source of amusement. Far from being inappropriate, Mia wears a skirt that falls just above her knees and her choice of footwear is about as feminine as one can get, high heels. This is not of concern. What is, however, is the top half. “Fräulein Mia” is drawn to represent a man: short hair parted on the side, suit jacket and tie, a cigarette in her right hand. She is not androgynous; she is framed as a woman, both by the caption and in contrast with the “real” man beside her. The deviant behavior, modeled by the fictional “Fräulein Mia,” is almost purely a visual representation. The small caption beneath the illustration reads, “What do *you* say about Fräulein Mia?” The publication invited readers to submit their comments and winners received a cash prize. The *BIZ* announced the cleverest of quips in December. A Berlin reader, Emmi Schmidt replied. “Oh wow-a self-made man!” She won 300 Reichmarks for her snappy reply. The “self-made man” alludes

¹⁴⁰ *BIZ*, November 13, 1927.

to the construction of gender through one's visual appearance and Fräulein Mia denies her gender by appropriating masculine characteristics.



Figure 9. *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, December 18, 1927

Above quotes from the readers, nine photographs of women with short dark hair are arranged in an arch. Two females wear bow-ties and cast their gaze to the side, rather than looking directly at the camera and do not smile. This array of “manly” women, in photograph form instead of drawings, could be used to lend “reality” to the fictional character of “Mia.” The *BIZ* presents the imaginary “Fräulein Mia” to gain readers attention, while using photographs to legitimize the discourse of problematic gender roles

in society. She is not merely an illustration for an amusing contest, for which the *BIZ* uses as a hook to promote their magazine, but also as proof of abnormal female behavior.

The *BIZ* also explored the subject of androgyny in a contest beginning on May 10, 1928.¹⁴¹ The headline “Boy or Girl?” stands boldly above six photographs, lettered A through F. The readers are invited to guess whether the individuals in the photographs are male or female. The photographs are of seemingly adolescent girls or boys, and the images are cropped tightly around their faces or show part of a tie or vest that they are wearing. In this instance, the gender norms of both male and females are called into question. The article is not framed around a female, imaginary or real, who is adopting male behaviors, but around figures whose sex is entirely absent. There is no contextualization, either in written or visual form which enables the reader to recognize the sex of the person. The six photographs are reprinted with the contest results a month later.¹⁴² The *BIZ* identifies three of them as girls and three as boys. The brief article beneath stresses the difficulty of being able to tell whether or not they are a boy or girl. To a certain extent, androgyny was part of the discourse presented to readers of the *BIZ*. While the appearance of this discourse in the magazine signaled a problem for youngsters, this connects with the overall worries of an unstable gender order.

Overall however, images concerning masculinized women suggest that the presence of unsteady gender roles is only a result of women defying the norms, not men. Moreover, the use of photographs in conjunction with the text also indicate to the readers

¹⁴¹ *BIZ*, May 20, 1928.

¹⁴² *BIZ*, June 17, 1928. Maud Lavin cites this example in the *BIZ* in her article “Androgyny, Spectatorship, and the Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch,” in *New German Critique*, no. 51, (1990): 62-86. Using, in part, a psychoanalytical approach Lavin argues that Höch’s “androgynous images depict a pleasure in the movement between gender positions and a deliberate deconstruction of rigid masculine and feminine identities,” p. 67.

that the threat of the over-masculine woman is “real.” She is not merely a character on-screen or an illustration in the humor section—but the “fact” that she truly exists is cause for concern. She is much more than a sources of amusement or wonder, there is the possibility that feminine qualities, hidden beneath men’s clothing and haircuts directly transfer to the inner subject—as a New Woman who denies her own “sex.” The junctures represent the contradictions between the attitude and appearance of the New Woman. She can be “independent,” but within the confines of her femininity. She can be “sexual,” but only in a heterosexual sense. These competing forms of identity for the New Woman demonstrate the extent to which the *BIZ* actively engaged in the construction of appropriate forms of femininity.

* * *

Advertisements consistently displayed the New Woman as an object of sexuality, defined through her youth, beauty and type of clothing she wore (or did not wear, depending on the advertisement). Moreover, she is not only the “buyer,” she can be bought. The “typists” exterior facade was vital for her job, as she was expected to appear in an appropriate manner in the office. For the purpose of advertising, she was tied to the “stage and screen.” The use of illustrations also conveys a sense of fantasy, the detailed drawings of creating the New Woman as someone who desires and is desired at the same time. The positions of their bodies, bare legs and shoulders and coy gazes at men indicate the heightened eroticism of young, independent women who are aware of their bodies and their femininity. Secondly, the New Woman became a clear site for comparing and contrasting the “old” and “new.” What accounted for the “new” included her clothing, haircut and where she was photographed. The use of photographs express as sense of the

“real.” Her was the New Woman “in the flesh,” so to speak. She walked through the streets, she danced at parties, she became an obvious marker for modernity. Third, while the *BIZ* did not seem to have any problems supporting or encouraging these views, the magazine drew a line when it came to the overmasculinization of the New Woman. Riding motorcycles or driving a car without a man was one thing, dressing like one was quite another story. The *BIZ* maintained specific class boundaries through the depictions of the New Woman at her white-collar job and the amount of money she had available to spend on consumer goods. The New Woman is also the archetypical image represented in cinema and popular novels, the one which is most discussed. But the following analysis will show it is only one variety of the image of the Modern Woman. While the popular *BIZ* defined the Modern Woman, as the New Woman within a specific framework of modernity, other publications, like the *AIZ* also weighed in on the debates, albeit with a different perspective.

2. *The Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*: The Modern Woman as Worker and Comrade

The image of the Modern Woman constructed in the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* was quite different than the youthful images of beauty that the *BIZ* presented. Eschewing a consumer orientated approach to defining femininity and modernity in store-bought goods, the *AIZ* presented their readers with methods to run an efficient household, dress with practicality, stay fit through exercise while offering stinging remarks about the

values of middle-class women's appetite for consumption and the proliferation of mass entertainment which depicted a fantasy world for young women.

While promoting the ideals of women's "emancipation" the Communist Party ultimately subsumed the "women question" under the banner of class struggle and viewed capitalism as the cause of women's oppression. As scholars such as Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz have noted, "While reforms within the capitalist system might alleviate some conditions, no satisfactory emancipation of women could, Marxists believed, occur until the ultimate triumph of socialism."¹⁴³ While supporting organizations for women workers, girl's clubs, educational courses in homemaking and political theory and weekend activities to gain women's support, the party, in practice, did not break the boundaries of the traditional "separate but equal" argument nor pose serious challenges to traditional gender roles. Even within the rhetoric of women's inclusion and participation in politics, "Potential contradictions in women's 'double burden' in production and reproduction were minimized and women were encourage to assume party responsibilities in addition to work in factory and family."¹⁴⁴ In her article "Men's Demonstrations and Women's Protest: Gender in Collective Action in the Urban Working-Class Milieu during the Weimar Republic," Karen Hagemann notes that "Women's policy and women's agitation interested the male majority in the Weimar labor movement primarily from three standpoints: the necessity to win women as voters;

¹⁴³Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, "Beyond Kinder, Küche, Kirche," in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, eds. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann and Marion Kaplan (Monthly Review Press: New York, 1984), 33-65. See also, Brian Peterson, "The Politics of Working-Class Women in the Weimar Republic," *Central European History* 10 (1977): 87-111 for a discussion of female voting patterns and party membership, particularly in regards to differences in age, employment, religion, geographic location and marital status.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 39.

as supporters of men's economic, social and political struggle; and as dutiful housewives, devoted mothers and socialist educators, who assured the reproduction of the working class and workers movement."¹⁴⁵ Thus, while the *AIZ* may have proclaimed to represent women's "emancipation," the construction of the Modern Woman centered upon the traditional gender division of labor in the home and workplace, while simultaneously encouraging women to adopt new strategies for a "rationalized household," in order to gain more time for leisure activities and party politics.

This section will first discuss the image of the Modern Woman at work, depicted and discussed in regular columns in the magazine for the "working woman." Next, it will examine the image of the modern housewife and the construction of the female athlete as two alternatives to the New Woman presented in the *BIZ* and middle-class consumer culture. Finally, the limits of the Modern Woman drawn in the *AIZ* will be discussed.

The Comrade at Work

The *AIZ* presented both the female white-collar office clerks and the female factory workers to its readers as representations of the Modern Woman. This is exemplified in occasional advertisements, the special magazine sections for women, and essays critiquing bourgeois values. Nonetheless, the image of the female office clerk in the *AIZ* is different from the *BIZ*, most importantly, not as eroticized. Moreover the

¹⁴⁵ Karen Hagemann, "Men's Demonstrations and Women's Protest: Gender in Collective Action in the Urban Working-Class Milieu during the Weimar Republic," in *Gender and History* 5 no. 1 (1993): 101-119., 109. See also, Eric D. Weitz, "Communism and the Public Spheres of Weimar Germany," in *Between Reform and Revolution: German Socialism and Communism from 1840 to 1990*, eds. David E. Barclay and Eric D. Weitz (Berghahn Books: New York, 1998), 275-291. Weitz concludes that although the party proclaimed women's "emancipation," the party showed very little sympathy for women's issues and continued to conceive of the public sphere as a masculine space.

definitions of “paid” and “unpaid” work were far more blurry in the *BIZ* when it came to outfitting the New Woman and factory work is invisible in the *BIZ*.

In the *AIZ* a whole section is regularly dedicated to “The Working Women.” One focus of this section is the provision of “practical” clothing patterns, often times specifically for women working in an office. Part of the requirement for white-collar work was the maintenance of an idealized image of a young, beautiful, stylish woman. The images, until mid-1927 are rough drawings and representations of office workers are small in scale and deemed sensible, not fashionable.¹⁴⁶ The March 6, 1927 column, “The Utilization of Old Clothing,” demonstrates how to use an outdated cape and transform it into a piece of clothing suitable for work. The sewing pattern is displayed beneath a figure modeling the outfit.¹⁴⁷ A column in April 1927 places a distinction on clothing for “work” and the “office.”¹⁴⁸ Here, the clothing is not modeled by any women and within the text further distinctions are made between different types of work, including clothing for housework and more stylish outfits for a sales or office girl. The representations themselves do not speak to a fashion-conscious proletariat but rather are imbued with practicality and sensibleness. Yet, few readers would be able to afford a wardrobe which included clothing for a wide variety of tasks or be able to afford to update their wardrobe each season with the latest trends.

A July 1927 article, “The Social Character in Fashion,” argues for “practical” and “healthy” clothing for the proletarian woman, while presenting a photograph of the

¹⁴⁶ *AIZ*, January 26, 1927 and *AIZ*, March 6, 1927.

¹⁴⁷ *AIZ*, March 6, 1927.

¹⁴⁸ *AIZ*, April 10, 1927.

Modern Woman in a low-waisted dress, short hair and high heels.¹⁴⁹ Articles such as this emphasized class differences, but argued that working women were by no means “bourgeoisie” if they wanted to adopt more fashionable styles. By August 1927, the illustrations in the *AIZ* began to appear more stylish.



No longer were women non-existent or roughly drawn, but now illustrations showed women posing with books, wearing hats and carrying stylish handbags.¹⁵⁰ The

¹⁴⁹ *AIZ*, July 13, 1927.

¹⁵⁰ *AIZ*, August 17, 1927, October 5, 1927 and November 1, 1927.

visual images of the Modern Woman began to emerge similar to those found in the *BIZ*. Columns appeared designating particular styles of clothing and fabric for each season, such as the October 5, 1927 edition describing clothing for autumn.¹⁵¹ An issue in November describes “practical Fall and Winter coats” and different styles clarified as “sporty” or “elegant.”¹⁵² The *AIZ* began to use some of the same type of textual descriptors for “modern” and “stylish” clothing by employing the same types of clarifications in the captions and text for the garments.

By 1928, “The Working Women” appeared with more regularity and continued to propagate fashionable clothing for women. The women in the drawings appear young, tall and slim. Their bodies, although not framed provocatively, are posed to show off the new summer dress, winter suits or uniforms for work. In the April 10, 1928 edition, clothing for “work” also included dresses that women would wear for housework or gardening, in combination with clothing for the office girl or sales girl.¹⁵³ However, a few months later the *AIZ* only exhibited young slender women, wearing garments suitable for office work, not housework. The magazine while presenting different “options” of clothing for women, began to construct an idealized type of Modern Woman which the majority of working-class women could not afford to be.

The *AIZ* also juxtaposed images of working women with fashion columns. In the September 5, 1930 edition, a photograph of young women working in a factory is set

¹⁵¹ *AIZ*, October 5, 1927.

¹⁵² *AIZ*, November 1, 1927.

¹⁵³ *AIZ*, April 10, 1928.

above a column for “Practical Autumn Coats.”¹⁵⁴ Amidst the economic strains of the depression, the *AIZ* suggested six different styles of coats for young women. In the photograph above, the female factory workers smile at the camera, sitting in front of sewing machines. The angle of the camera captures the long tables, with dozens of women sitting side by side, fabric bunched across the table. Although appearing to be “happy,” the caption provided suggests otherwise, describing the dark room light only be artificial light, close quarters of the workers and dusty air which caused adverse health effects. Thus, while integrating images of the Modern Woman the *AIZ* simultaneously pointed to detrimental working conditions for female workers in the clothing industry. This strategy allowed the *AIZ* to provide female readers with some semblance of modernity and style, while sustaining the rhetoric of class difference and pointing to the realities of most working women. Moreover, the illustrations of clothing capture the desire to appear modern and stylish.

These are the fantasies, part of the construction of the ideal types of femininity for young women who do have a job which requires them to act the part of a young, beautiful typist or shop girl. The photographs of working women, on the other hand are more akin to the “reality” of everyday life. Through the Worker’s Photography movement, individuals were encouraged to document their living and working conditions, but workers captured the gloomy interior’s of the factory or their small kitchens, not their office.

Although the images appear similar to those in the *BIZ*, as far as the type of clothing, there are significant differences between the publications. The *AIZ* dedicated a much smaller percentage of its pages to women, particularly young women for whom

¹⁵⁴ *AIZ*, September 5, 1930.

office garb was necessary. Secondly, the clothing was not ready-made, but patterns. The textual descriptions, while using some of the same types of language in describing a specific style, also underlined the sensibleness of garments. Economic reality necessitated making one's own clothes rather than buying a wardrobe of ready-made dresses and coats for each season. Rationalization, in this case, translated to everyday life choices. It is not merely the factory floor which becomes efficient, but a woman's appearance as well. Short text which accompanied illustrations attached "proletarian practicality" to clothing as to separate the working class from bourgeois culture and style even while using fashionable descriptors.

In an article in October 1930, the *AIZ* demonstrates this concern with a discussion of middle-class fashion in 1900, 1924 and 1930.¹⁵⁵ The paragraph above four women modeling different dresses advises women to ignore the "fashion industries propaganda," instead choose clothing that is practical and adequate, as well as pretty. "Sports Clothing," the focus of a column published in January 1928 and includes an illustration for "bloomers for ladies."¹⁵⁶ The short article asks, "Should the male or female worker wear sports clothing? Or, is wearing sports clothing a bourgeois matter? No. Naturally, there is a big difference between practical and luxurious sportswear."¹⁵⁷ The constructed images of working-class women, while adopting "bourgeois" styles had to be grounded in economic realities. The modification of the New Woman translated into the Modern Woman, concerned with the state of her household in addition to her daily appearance.

¹⁵⁵ *AIZ*, October 3, 1930.

¹⁵⁶ *AIZ*, January 31, 1928.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Household Rationalization and Hygiene

The *AIZ* also ran a series of columns for the working woman which focused on household management. While the readers of the *BIZ* employed domestic servants to clean, cook and shop for the household, working-class women could not afford the luxury of hiring servants. Responsible for their own households, the *AIZ* presented the Modern Woman who knew how to run an efficient, healthy household. The magazine provided instructional photographs for arranging furniture, decorating and “meeting the healthy standards” of a living space.¹⁵⁸ The movement concerning a rationalized household, discussed by scholars such as Karen Hagemann and Mary Nolan, offered educational programs, brochures, pamphlets and books advising women, in scientific terms, on the proper way to organize her home and family.¹⁵⁹

The *AIZ*, in support of the rationalized household, included visual and textual images which defined the new modern working-class home as a clean, well-organized efficient space. The house would run like a well-oiled machine. For example, one short

¹⁵⁸ *AIZ*, January 1, 1927. This article was the first in a series that ran for several months. The *AIZ* also included articles on babies, including methods for bathing children, proper nutrition, clothing and activities for young children.

¹⁵⁹ Mary Nolan, “‘Housework Made Easy,’: The Taylorized Housewife in Weimar Germany’s Rationalized Economy, in *Feminist Studies*, Fall 16 no. 3, 549-577. Karen Hagemann, *Frauenalltag und Männerpolitik*, 99-132. Hagemann also discussed rationalization and the development of welfare programs for pregnant women in “Rationalizing Family Work: Municipal Family Welfare and Urban Working Class Mothers in Germany,” in *Social Politics* 4 nr. 1 (1997): 21-48. and Karen Hagemann, “Of ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Housewives: Everyday Housework and the Limits of Household Rationalization in the Urban Working-Class Milieu of the Weimar Republic,” in *International Review of Social History* 41 n. 3 (1996): 305-330. Rationalization and Taylorization, both within industry and the home was promoted by a broad range of groups, including bourgeois feminists, the Social Democrats and industrialists. The scientific discourse of new reforms would theoretically, would enhance worker productivity, be more active in the worker’s movement etc... which in turn, would benefit industry and the national economy, the political party and the state. The Social Democratic magazine for women, *Frauenwelt*, includes numerous examples of the kinds of advice and visual images available to women.

article included three photographs displaying a small apartment, the space used resourcefully. This was the first in a series, which ran for several months. Each month, the section would focus on different areas of the apartment. A column on June 6, 1927 discusses the differences between “wasting time over dusting” or “practical devices,” for the home. The “kitchen really is a mess when all of the cooking utensils are hanging up,” for example.¹⁶⁰ Better to be orderly and clean and put them in a drawer or small cupboard. All of these techniques recommended that the working woman, who did not have the financial resources of a middle-class woman could still create a clean, healthy living space, using the assets available to her, often making something “new” out of something “old.”

A healthy household included proper methods for completing housework as well. A photo essay in the October 17, 1930 edition presented the proper methods of sitting at table to sew, standing to wash dishes, scrubbing the floor and carrying goods from the market. One photograph of a woman mending clothing is captioned, “A chair with a back and a footrest is not an ‘effeminacy’ but is rather restful and a source of gathering strength for the sewing work.”¹⁶¹ The dishwashing, also, should be done on a table that is high enough so a woman does not have to stoop over. These articles continued throughout the Weimar years, containing the same messages; the Modern Woman is aware of how she uses her body at work, but in a manner directly related to issues of health, not sexuality.

¹⁶⁰ *AIZ*, June 6, 1927.

¹⁶¹ *AIZ*, October 17, 1930.

In the column reserved for the “working woman,” in May 1927, illustrations exhibit the correct ways to sit while sewing or mending clothes.¹⁶² The first image depicts a woman sitting in her chair, leaning over her work, with her legs crossed. “The woman in this picture has her legs crossed over one another and because of this she sits bent.” The next image depicts a young woman, with her feet resting on the chair, her body curled over her sewing. “This is uncomfortable and impossible!,” the article states and would soon make a young woman unhealthy. The article continues, by discussing two other incorrect sitting positions until finally, the fifth woman “sits up straight and at the same time comfortably and naturally.” She has a footstool to rest her feet on and a table near her chair for her supplies, the correct way to sew. Modernity, in this context, is embracing a conscience attempt to visualize and use the body in a healthy manner, within the home. Alongside concepts concerned with healthy bodies include contrasts of the “old” and “new” woman, but not in terms of a youthful appearance as shown in the *BIZ*, but in her household.

An article in the April 4, 1928 edition entitled, “The Old and New Household,” includes six photographs, representing the outdated models of housework and the modern methods of washing, cooking and cleaning. The “women in offices and textile factories, handle complicated machines,” the article states and modern technology can transform the household as well. No stranger to these types of technology, the woman at home would be able to utilize the new appliances effectively.¹⁶³ One photograph depicts a small hotplate (one small pan over a burner) and is captioned, “Primitive—as in the time of

¹⁶² *AIZ*, May, 1927.

¹⁶³ *AIZ*, April 4, 1928.

your grandmother!” The images depict “clean, easy and practical,” new appliances (including a vacuum and an electric washing machine) used in middle-class home, which make housework much quicker. The problem, of course, is cost. “The vacuum cleaner is a practical cleaning instrument ... but what worker can pay 120 to 180 marks for it?” If advancements in technology ever do become affordable for the worker, however, the *AIZ* notes that it would allow more free time for sports, politics and education. Hagemann, in her research on rationalization and the working-class, notes that “The most important reason for the skeptical and reserved attitude of most working women was clearly that the recommendations for household rationalization generally bore little relevance to everyday life in their homes. This applied both to the ‘rationalization’ of working methods in the household and modernization of home furnishings and to the many small and large labor-saving devices suggested for purchase.”¹⁶⁴

If women did not have an inordinate amount of free time (which they did not), “practical methods” for housework encouraged women to adopt habits at home to keep their bodies more healthy. One article even suggested incorporating “a little gymnastics” into one’s household routine, stretching while sweeping the floor to keep the body flexible.¹⁶⁵ As absurd as this may sound, the *AIZ* promoted specific types of exercises for women to do at home as part of their normal household activities. An article published on November 2, 1927 instructs young women on proper methods of sitting in front of a

¹⁶⁴ Hagemann, “Of ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Housewives,” 328.

¹⁶⁵ *AIZ*, January 15, 1933.

sewing machine or typewriter, alongside three different exercises to strengthen their bodies.¹⁶⁶

Figure 12. *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, November 2, 1927



Noting that “women’s work such as sewing, typing, writing etc ...,” increases the “occupational illnesses ... of female work” and is physically harmful to the body. The article describes five exercises which young women can do at home to help with these problems. One exercise shows a woman laying on her back, arms straight at her sides, while her legs “bicycle” in the air. In order to combat the stress of one’s occupation, including white-collar work, women were instructed to be aware of their bodies and develop good habits to maintain their health.

The burden of the “modern home” rested upon the shoulders of the Modern Woman. The gender specific division of labor did not shift within the household. Women were still responsible for cooking, cleaning, sewing, shopping and looking after the children. The expectations of the Modern wife and mother, as illustrated in the articles and images in the *AIZ*, increased throughout the Weimar years. The images and

¹⁶⁶ *AIZ*, November 2, 1927.

corresponding text of women at home focused on practical methods for maintaining an orderly and clean household, using the resources available to them, while displaying correct approaches to housework for the Modern Woman which corresponded to the overall practices of healthy, everyday activities. Moreover, it was not just the home which needed to function in an orderly, mechanized manner, but the female body as well, not only through advice on how to be efficient with one's energy at home, but also through encouraging young women's participation in female sports. Organized athletic activities, played a large role in the construction of the Modern Woman, where young females, outside of work and the household participated in group activities to build their bodies and minds.

Sport, Health and Beauty

The body of the Modern Woman in the *AIZ* conveyed confidence and self-assurance, not through the use of clothing or cosmetics, but through strength, speed and athletic skill. W.L. Guttsman noted in *Workers Culture in Weimar Germany: Between Tradition and Commitment*, "The strongly political character of the communist sports organization was in line with the general policy of the KPD which ... endeavored to mobilize the resources of the ancillary organizations for the political struggle."¹⁶⁷ Female athletes, while regarded as a tool for political struggle, alongside the development of a healthy mind and body, also represented an alternative to the middle-class New Woman.

¹⁶⁷ W.L. Guttsman, *Workers Culture in Weimar Germany: Between Tradition and Commitment* (Berg: New York, 1990), 138.

In August 1926, the *AIZ* published a photo essay “Play and Sport” showing workers involved in athletic competitions throughout Germany.¹⁶⁸ In one photograph, six women are lined up for a relay-race while a photograph below reveals nine Russian swimmers challenging the female Berlin water-polo team. In May 1927, the *AIZ* reported on various sports events which took place earlier in the month. The photograph in the center of the page shows hundreds of young women simultaneously performing calisthenics. Many of the photographs promote team activities, rather than individual competitions, advocating cooperation and support among workers. All the women are in orderly rows, wear identical t-shirts and shorts and face forward. The caption underneath explains that this “massive demonstration of young working women” took place on May 1.¹⁶⁹ The *AIZ* used the captions or text among pictures to link the worker and the athlete. It would never be a massive demonstration of “women,” but always “working women,” emphasizing the importance of class. The following image, from the *AIZ* cover demonstrates the typical presentation of young women in the magazine.¹⁷⁰ Her body is strong although her clothing is gender specific. Her hair might be short but it is not the stylish cut of women in the *BIZ*, as working-class women could not afford expensive haircuts.

Physical activity, taking place outside, shows the connection with nature, rather than an urban environment. The text underneath the photo explains that rowing

¹⁶⁸ *AIZ*, March 25, 1926.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. See also Heike Egger, “Frauen und Arbeitersport in den 20 Jahren: Idee, Wirklichkeit und Mediale Darstellung” *Stadion* 26 no. 1 (2000):55-68. Egger specifically discusses female members of worker sports organizations in the Weimar Republic and discusses the influence of mass media and the communist press in developing the rhetoric of health and productivity in terms of female work and athletics.

¹⁷⁰ *AIZ*, October 24, 1931.

“strengthens the female body” and “makes it less susceptible to sickness.”¹⁷¹ The joint effort of a team sport strengthens unity as well as health. The Modern Woman, in this case, represents an ideal where strength is valued, but erotic power is nonexistent within the publication. The *BIZ* tended to place urban, modern women or famous actresses on the cover of their publication, emphasizing sexuality, but the *AIZ* stressed worker solidarity and “healthy” constructions of the female body.



Figure 13. *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, October 24, 1931

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

The *AIZ* discussed the prevailing messages related to the young female body in terms of health, not in terms of sexuality. The *AIZ*, in the last three years of the 1920s, began to publish a page dedicated specifically to female athletes. “Frauensport,” although not present in every issue, was more prominent than sporadic fashion columns for young women.

In June 1927, five photographs made up the women’s sports page.¹⁷² In the center is a photograph of a rowing team. The importance of sport, and the demonstration of women’s power and physical abilities speaks to the importance of the Modern Woman who is not defined by her sexuality. The *AIZ*’s cover photographs of young women are often athletes. The July 13, 1927 issues shows a young woman, standing in a field with her arms out, balancing on a small rock while the cover for an August issue depicts a swimmer, smiling into the camera.¹⁷³ A female, jumping over a hurdle is shown on a cover in April 1928, with the caption “Female Sports” beside her.¹⁷⁴ A July issue in 1929 shows two female athletes on the cover, sitting with their arms around each other’s shoulders and smiling.¹⁷⁵ The April 25, 1930 cover shows two female workers playing “leap frog,” and two months later displays a female swimmer alongside her male comrade.¹⁷⁶

In all of the images the females are presented without overt sexualization, in terms of eroticism or gaining the attention of men, even in summer sports when the females are

¹⁷² *AIZ*, June 29, 1927.

¹⁷³ *AIZ*, July 13, 1927 and *AIZ*, August 10, 1927.

¹⁷⁴ *AIZ*, April 11, 1928.

¹⁷⁵ *AIZ*, July 17, 1929.

¹⁷⁶ *AIZ*, April 25, 1930 and *AIZ*, June 19, 1930.

wearing bathing suits. The bathing suits themselves are modest, and other photographs show women in sports uniforms, looking like other members of their team. Overall, the *AIZ* presented its readers with an image of a young female athlete, an extension of the worker, always tied to class ideals and never misbehaving. The images and text emphasize the importance of health, solidarity and class consciousness not attracting men and spending money on consumer goods. The female athlete became an alternative type of Modern Woman to the *BIZ*'s middle-class consumer New Woman, one that embraced commitment and unity within the Communist Party.

Class Differences

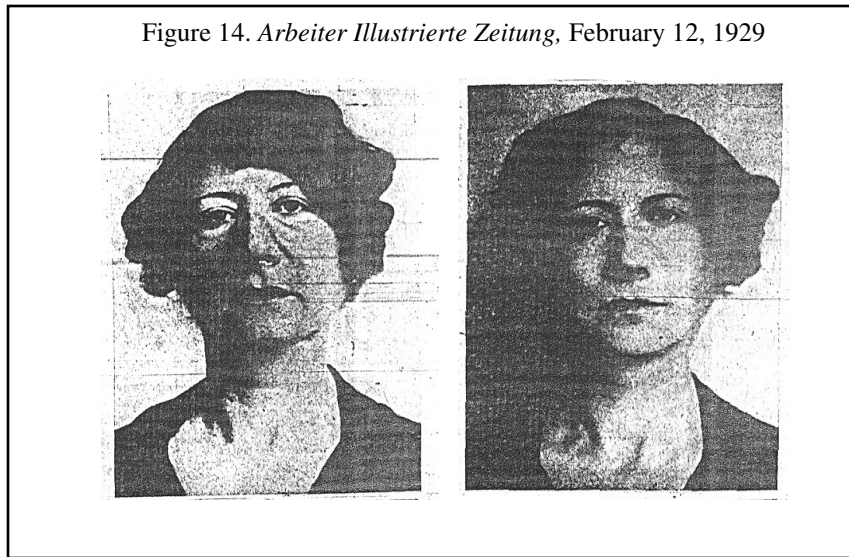
While young women were encouraged to develop healthy methods of keeping their bodies “natural” and “young,” the *AIZ* was careful to demonstrate the differences between this construction of female beauty and the middle-class's image. Two articles, one published in 1928 and 1929 admonished the bourgeois obsession with youth and beauty. “All for beauty,” reads the headline in December 17, 1929 edition.¹⁷⁷ Five photographs and one illustration document what young women will go through to stay beautiful. The article begins by stating that “textile workers work nine or ten hours a day, and when the work in the factory is over, then begins the housework.” These are the

¹⁷⁷ *AIZ*, December 17, 1929. It should be noted that the *AIZ* did procure a handful of advertisements concerning beauty products, but rarely. Advertisements including images of white-collar workers were also quite rare. As a communist press, the advertisement sections did not constitute a large percentage of the *AIZ* and were usually dedicated to promoting books, small appliances and household goods. For example, a half-page advertisement section in the December 8, 1926 edition promoted musical instruments, a small radio, tonic for nerves and rheumatism and a salon specializing in the “wave curl” hairstyle. The advertisements, mainly composed of text contain a few small images, nothing compared to those found in the *BIZ*. Even with difficulty procuring advertisements, during the late 1920's, a handful of ads emerged that displayed a young women working behind the typewriter by day and dancing with men by night. One particular ad for chocolate is a montage of a young woman standing beside the boss, a typist holding the “Stollwerk Gold” candy, while a small image in the corner shows young women dancing with men. This advertisement however, is a rarity.

working and living conditions for the majority of women, not to mention the problems of unemployment or illness. The article also notes that the female white-collar workers, “if they are not so pretty or modern,” have a difficult time finding work because they must maintain a specific appearance, a “free advertisement for the firm.” Criticizing the indulgence of women, who “dream of being slim,” the *AIZ* includes photographs of the latest techniques. One woman has her face and neck massaged “one can, through this paraffin mask stay ‘young and beautiful.’” One photograph shows a woman lounging on a bed, “wrapped in a paraffin binding” in order to gain an “elegant and slim” body. A serious looking man, in a white lab coat, dyes a “rich woman’s hair,” while the daily beauty routines are calculated in terms of time wasted and money spent.

Another article, published on February 12, 1929 with the title, “Social Cosmetics” illustrates the extent to which individuals will undergo medical procedures to modify their bodies. A series of photographs show a woman’s arm, once thick and sagging with skin and fat transformed into a slim, attractive limb. The first photograph shows the “before” image. In the second image, the arm is raised to show the incision and subsequent stitches from the operation. The third image shows the “after” picture. The “cosmetic and advertizing industries,” states the article, continues to promote the image of women who are “young and beautiful!” Again, the article notes that unemployed women, searching for a position as an office worker, is required to stay young in order to keep her job. Two photographs show and operation of a woman “before” and “after.” The first image depicts a tired, overworked woman. Her face is wrinkled, dark circles rest beneath her eyes. The second image shows the woman after the operation. The “face lift”

has removed years from her face. No longer does her face sag and droop, the wrinkles and bags under her eyes have disappeared.



The article notes that these are not procedures to increase the health of individuals, but are methods to maintain and uphold a specific type of beauty for women. Even breast augmentations are being performed to create an attractive female figure. Both of these articles demonstrate the concern of the *AIZ* with how the cosmetic and advertizing industries work together to maintain a specific notion of feminine beauty, that of youth, which is also tied to female white-collar workers. The use of photographs, again, intends to show the reality of the situation. The viewer can instantly recognize the change in an individual's appearance or maintenance routines, proof of differences between the working and middle-class, in terms of the ability to alter one's feminine appearance.

The *AIZ*, while condemning the processes that women undergo to remain young also includes sharp criticisms of the white-collar worker. These demonstrate a

denunciation of the activities, spending-patterns, and values embodied by the image of the female typist. In an article entitled, “Where does the money go?” printed in September of 1927, criticizes the “glitter” and “sparkle” of capitalistic obsession with clothing and jewelry.¹⁷⁸ The eight photographs which accompany the article are of smiling young woman, one of which shows off an umbrella with a butterfly on it, and four images of women’s silk stockings.

A month later another article appears, “The Fashion of ‘the lady’” with photographs of an upper class woman.¹⁷⁹ In one photograph, the woman stands in a garden and the caption beneath the photo reads, “The garden of the worker is a miserable flower pot – at best a little arbor. The capitalists have parks and a winter garden in their house. In such [a winter garden] the ‘lady’ wears silk pajamas.”¹⁸⁰ The article states, “Silk, velvet, lace and fur is the lady from morning to midnight.” The rich women change their clothes several times during the day and for an evening coat, the woman have “1, 2, 3, 5 and more fur coats” which cost “a thousand marks.” Moreover, “In velvet and lace glitters the woman while thousands of workers children hunger day after day.”¹⁸¹ The *AIZ* does not argue that women should not attempt to dress nicely or fashionably, but the overindulgence of such rich women, as shown in the photographs, is a bitter contrast between those who can afford to spend without conscience. These luxuries are incompatible with the economic realities of the worker and framing “the lady” as an

¹⁷⁸ *AIZ*, September 14, 1927.

¹⁷⁹ *AIZ*, October 19, 1927.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

indulgent capitalist allows the AIZ to critique bourgeois values emphasized in representations of frivolous females.



Figure 15. Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, October 27, 1927

An article published in February concentrates on a young middle-class female and asks, “What does a girl need for getting dressed?”¹⁸² Included on the page is a copy of a small article entitled, “U.S. Girl needs 600 Dollars for Clothes,” thus linking the modern women of the U.S. with the capitalistic gluttony of consumer goods.¹⁸³ Beneath a photo of eight pairs of shoes, neatly displayed, the caption reads, “The shoe collection of the “lady” is so big—the working woman hardly has a second pair to alternate” while another

¹⁸² AIZ, February 29, 1928.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

caption besides a photograph of a stylish young woman asks, “does the worker or proletarian housewife have time or money to look so nice as this young women?” Surely not. However, the article does note that a poor, pretty girl, for 20 Mark can have a decent wardrobe including stockings, a hat, blouse, skirt, dress, coat, handbag and a pair of shoes. For the “majority of women who must create and maintain a pretty look for an office job,” there are only patterns for self made clothing and inexpensive ready made goods. Thus, the problem is not necessarily in the desire or requirement to adapt to new trends or present oneself at work in a stylish manner, but the rather, the values embedded in the middle-class which consume with such rampant indulgence.

On the one hand, it remained important that young women adopt “modern” styles of dress, as required for white-collar work. Women, not being able to afford the luxury of a vast wardrobe, were forced to develop their image in a manner which allowed them to enter white-collar employment. On the other hand, the *AIZ* did not want to support the kind of reckless expenditures of bourgeois women. These articles functioned on three levels. First, to demonstrate and reproach upper-class women who spent large amounts of money on clothing. Secondly, to caution young women who dreamed of such luxury, that the values of the middle-class were not compatible with workers. Third, the articles provided sensible, practical alternatives for young women who wanted or needed the types of clothing for white-collar work.

Popular culture involving film, theatre and revues, outside the realm of clothing is discussed as well. A photo essay appeared during the summer in 1929 concerning the “Tiller Girls.”¹⁸⁴ The Tiller girls, a popular performance group composed of young

¹⁸⁴ *AIZ*, June 28, 1929.

women, entertained with dance and song on the theatre stage. As Gunter Berghaus explains in his essay, “Girlkulture, Feminism, Americanism and Popular Entertainment in Weimar Germany,” these theatrical productions encapsulated the modern urban space and the manifestation of female youth.¹⁸⁵ For example, revues in Weimar Germany include those of James Klein’s *Nacktreuen* (nude-revues) and Hermann Haller’s *Ausstattungsrevuen* (emphasizing lavish décor and costumes), all accentuating the female body.¹⁸⁶ He describes the highly successful “Tiller Girls” who “had been drilled to formal perfection by ex-Sergeant John Tiller,” as symbolizing the mechanization and standardization of industry in the 1920s.¹⁸⁷ He argues “For the girls, work and urbanity are inextricably intertwined. No wonder, therefore, that their dances express ‘the modern rhythm of work, the beat of the machine age.’”¹⁸⁸

The *AIZ* however, did not appreciate this “beat of the machine age,” and viewed the famous “Tiller Girls” in a different light. In the *AIZ*, the Tiller Girls are not a metaphor for industry and mechanization, but are used as an example of the “capitalistic exploitation of young women.”¹⁸⁹ In the June publication, five photographs of the Tiller Girls dominate the page. The women are resting between sets, auditioning for a show, or shown on the stage. It is only the small text beneath the largest photo that condemns the lack of culture in the theatre and ends the article by criticizing young girls for trading

¹⁸⁵ Gunter Berghaus, “Girlkulture, Feminism, Americanism and Popular Entertainment in Weimar Germany,” in *Journal of Design History* 1 (1998): 193-219.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 199.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 201.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 203.

¹⁸⁹ *AIZ*, June 28, 1929.

their youth and beauty, only to be used by “unscrupulous profiteer.”¹⁹⁰ The photos are full of young, beautiful, and seemingly happy women. At first glance, one would think the paper is “selling” the Tiller Girls. It is only the small commentary that shows the dissatisfaction with the capitalistic endeavor of John Tiller’s young dancers.



Figure 16. Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, July 1932

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

In response to films whose protagonists are secretaries, such as “Poor as a Church Mouse” and “The Private Secretary,” the *AIZ* produced an article entitled, “The Dream-Fabric of the White-Collar Worker.”¹⁹¹ The article, using cinema as a lens to critique bourgeois values, condemns the films’ romantic message of the secretary marrying her boss. The dominant image on the page is from “The Private Secretary,” and two other images from the films, including “Poor as a Church Mouse,” are also included on the page. The *AIZ* describes the “fairytale” quality of the pictures, arguing against the unrealistic notions of females who believe they can climb the social ladder by typing memos for their boss.¹⁹² The article begins by describing the poor pretty woman, who finds a prince (rich in gold and silver) who rescues her. “What is this!,” exclaims the *AIZ*, “You’ve guessed! An old fairytale. . .”

This fairytale, transformed for cinema, places the young woman and her prince, not in an enchanted forest or castle, but in the modern, urban workspace. The prince arrives not on a white horse, but an automobile. The young woman does not sweep ashes from the floor, but toils over her typewriter. “Forget about your fears of loneliness,” your “unhappiness at work” because the “this happiness of the dream fabric lasts for two hours!” “One dreams and hopes. . .this is the highest meaning and lowest aim of the lying romantic films,” argues the *AIZ*. Instead, one should recognize the struggle for the working class, the real struggle, not the fairytale projected through the flickering lights of a movie.

* * *

¹⁹¹ *AIZ*, July, 1932.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

The *AIZ* was not without its Modern Woman. At work, she was sensible when it came to her wardrobe. At home, she was practical and efficient in her household work. At play, she was dedicated to keeping her body healthy through athletic activities. Elements of the New Woman, the stylish consumer, were modified to produce a complete representation of the Modern Woman for the magazine which was tied to party ideology. First, the *AIZ* did include a variation of the female office-worker, but aware of the economic and social realities for young working women, carefully demonstrated opposition to the capitalistic values of female office workers while attempting to present a young female that embodied the values and goals of the Communist Party. Secondly, the dominant depictions of young women, found on the covers as well as in expanded sport sections, are that of the athletic female. The bodies of young females in the *AIZ* are natural and healthy. They do not wear make-up, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, flirt with men, toss seductive gazes at their bosses from behind a typewriter, or announce their sexuality through clothing. The *AIZ* promulgated the image of class solidarity, even in leisure time activities. They presented an image that described a situation in which young working women had time and energy to be involved in activities outside of paid employment, work in the home or in political activities. The *AIZ* offered a specific mode of recreational activity which promoted healthy bodies and camaraderie while opposing all consumer-orientated leisure activities. Although there are some images of individual women the majority of sport-related photographs include *groups* of young women. Finally, the *AIZ* used the consumer hungry middle-class women, techniques to stay young and the mass entertainment to demonstrate opposition to capitalist values, promote class solidarity and offer alternative methods for the Modern Woman to develop a rational and

healthy identity through work and play. Through these interweaving themes, the *AIZ* produced their vision of the Modern Woman. Those on the far Right however, also attempted to create a feminine identity tied to national politics, while also demonstrating opposition to the middle-class construction of the New Woman, although, through an alternative discourse which emphasized issues of race, more than class.

3. The *Illustrierte Beobachter*: The German Modern Woman

During the Weimar Republic, the Nazi Party seemed to have little interest in recruiting female members or discussing issues related to women. Historian Claudia Koonz notes that party members paid little attention to their female colleagues and did not campaign for the female vote.¹⁹³ Although Koonz argues that this provided room for female party members and supporters to organize on their own, this ended in 1933. Overall, the Nazi party's vision for women emphasized the primacy of motherhood and " ... their definition of that role expanded and contracted according to the needs of the Nazi Party and the state ... Traditional sex-role stereotypes were preserved to the detriment of men and women alike."¹⁹⁴ Koonz notes that "The separation between masculine and feminine spheres, which followed logically and psychologically from Nazi

¹⁹³ Claudia Koonz, "The Competition for Women's Lebensraum, 1928-1934," in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*. Edited by Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 213. See also, Claudia Koonz, "Mothers of the Fatherland: Women in Nazi Germany," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, eds. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 445-473., 448. See also, Elizabeth Harvey, "Visions of the Volk: German Women and the Far Right from Kaiserreich to Third Reich," *Journal of Women's History* 16 no. 3 (2004): 152-167. Leila J. Rupp, "Mother of the 'Volk': The Image of Women in Nazi Ideology" in *Signs* 3 no. 2 (1977): 362-379, Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make?: Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1999). Leila Rupp "Mother of the 'Volk': The Image of Women in Nazi Ideology" *Signs* 3, no. 2 (1977): 362-370. Jill Stephenson *The Nazi Organization of Women* (London: Barnes & Noble, 1981), 219.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 448.

leaders' misogyny, relegated women to their own space – both beneath and beyond the dominant world of men.”¹⁹⁵

As some scholars have noted, the Nazi rhetoric of “Kinder, Küche, Kirche” appealed to nostalgia for preindustrial society, while the recruitment of women to the labor force and mass political organizations, as well as attempts to rationalize reproduction, revealed modernizing tendencies.”¹⁹⁶ These “modernizing tendencies,” however do not just appear in terms of women’s participation in the labor force, but also appear in the *Illustrierte Beobachter* at the end of the 1920s in terms of the magazines construction of the German Modern Woman and her responsibility in regards to her consumer habits.

Women’s “own space,” the “private sphere” of the home became subject to discussion in the *IB* in the late 1920s and early 1930s in terms of women’s special role in preserving the German *Völk*. In her discussion concerning German women’s relationships to far-Right politics, Elizabeth Harvey notes that “ ... biological racism reinforced the principle of women’s inclusion with the nation as ‘carriers of the blood,’ ... it magnified the importance of questions that could be seen as falling within women’s domain: it offered women a role as ‘guardians of the race,’ as experts on reproduction and population question who would devise strategies to improve racial quality and strengthen racial boundaries, cure the reproduction of the ‘inferior’ and promote the breeding of pure

¹⁹⁵ Claudia Koonz, *Mothers of the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politic* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 6.

¹⁹⁶ Elizabeth D. Heineman, “Whose Mothers? Generational Difference, War and the Nazi Cult of Motherhood,” *Journal of Women’s History* 12, no. 4 (2001):139-164, 141.

‘Aryans.’¹⁹⁷ Biological racism surfaced within the *Illustrierte Beobachter*, particularly in terms of women’s roles as mothers.

The *Illustrierte Beobachter* did not reject the concept of the Modern Woman, but constructed a specific type of German Modern Woman who was aware of her spending habits, responsibility to the national economy while embracing her “natural” role as wife and mother. Moreover, the *IB* was careful to define the types of women responsible for the disruption of the labor market and the family. In doing so, the *IB* targeted the middle-class consumer type of the New Woman, like the one found on the *BIZ*, as threat to the gender order. This section will first examine an article in the *IB* discussing the qualities of the Modern Woman, analyze the “Page for Women,” discuss the female athlete, examine typical advertisements of the *IB* and finally, concentrate on the tensions found between appropriate femininities found in the magazine.

The Quality of the Modern Woman

A close reading of an article published in May 1930, titled, “The Woman in the Flashlight of the Present,” can productively illustrate the *IB*’s presentation of the Modern Woman in regards to larger social and political issues, particularly women’s participation in the labor force and her role within the family.¹⁹⁸ Arguing that the Modern Woman has moved away from her natural role as a wife and mother, the *IB* explicitly and implicitly outlines a model of femininity that is rooted in the “natural” characteristics of women.

¹⁹⁷ Elizabeth Harvey, “Visions of the Volk: German Women and the Far Right from Kaiserreich to Third Reich,” *Journal of Women’s History* 16 no. 3 (2004): 152-167.

¹⁹⁸ *IB*, May 31, 1930.

Beneath the headline in the two page spread, rests a photograph of a recently married couple smiling happily into the camera and framed within the shape of a heart. The caption above the photograph reads, “The woman has no understanding of the race question. The beauty queen chooses a Jew because she did not know better.”¹⁹⁹ Visually the “race question” is the center of the article, as this is the image the article is built around, emphasizing the issue of race within the overall argument that women are stepping outside their natural boundaries.



Figure 17. *Illustrierte Beobachter*, May 31, 1930

Koonz notes that during the 1920s, Hitler articulated his role for women in the Nazi state, “The German girl [will] belong to the Nazi State and with her marriage become a citizen ... Women were not born with rights; men conferred them. A man might

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

serve the state in many ways; women's only genuine calling lay in marriage, defined in the narrowest biological terms: to guarantee 'the increase and preservation of the species and the race. This alone is its meaning and its task.'"²⁰⁰ The implication of the visual image of the woman and the Jew, emphasizes both women's duty to marriage but decries the uneducated woman who does not understand the significance of choosing a suitable partner in order to "preserve" the "species and the race." Moreover, the "beauty queen," as a manifestation of the middle-class New Woman is directly tied to the Jew, a trope that reappears within the magazine.

"The modern woman, unchained, almost uncontrolled in everyday indulgence, was suddenly placed before various decisions because of the Great War," states the first sentence of the article. Marriage vanished not only from "a lack of suitable partners," (deaths in the First World War) but also because men, who were "marriage-shy" were more interested in climbing the corporate ladder. Thus, marriage as an institution was shattered and became a starting point for the emergence "uncontrolled women" in society. While it would be impossible to blame women for the demographic shifts after the war, the *IB* does place a certain level of liability on women in regards to the labor market.

Forced to provide for themselves, "woman became, in almost every occupation, more or less the dangerous competitor of men."²⁰¹ The article then argues that the woman's "modesty," "efficient sobriety" and "activity" undercut men's wages. Woman are found in jobs, "that are female in nature" the article notes, citing such examples as

²⁰⁰ Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, 56.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

nurses, female doctors and movie stars. Beyond these however, the *IB* points to women who are “supervisors in airports, diplomats, press secretaries and in occupations that the man previously considered his special domain.”²⁰² The result of women’s foray into the “male” occupations turned the “battle of the sexes for the house and marriage into the struggle for bread.” Beneath this paragraph, a corresponding image shows group of nurses, standing in an orderly row. The caption beneath it reads, “One occupation that men can agree to leave. The woman as nurses.”²⁰³ This connects the female character of the occupation to “natural” feminine qualities, inscribing a positive tone to the visual representation. The position of the male breadwinner, undermined by women’s expansion into the labor market has created a tension between the genders, because women “refuse” to remain in jobs that are characterized by female qualities. The concept of the male breadwinner, the man being responsible for the family income, became an important part of the debate concerning female employment, particularly during the tensions of the Great Depression.

Alongside the *IB*’s discussion of women in the labor force and appropriate feminine professions, public discussion of the *Doppelverdiner* or “Double-Earner” proclaimed that married women, engaged in employment outside the home, competed for men’s jobs in a time of high unemployment.²⁰⁴ As Renate Bridenthal noted, “There is no

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid. Next to this photograph, however, is a photograph of a female political candidate handing out pamphlets to a group of men on the “docks in London,” an “un-feminine” activity, the caption notes. The implicit compare/contrast between the two images functions as a visual point of reference for positive and negative activities for women.

²⁰⁴ For a discussion of women’s professional employment and debates over double-earners at the end of the 1920s and women in the professional workforce in general, through 1940, see Jill McIntyre “Women and the Professions in Germany, 1930-1940,” in *German Democracy and the Triumph of Hitler*, eds. Anthony Nichols and Rich Matthias (London: Allen and Unwin, 1981), 175-214. This article also focuses on the

guesswork about the social reaction to structural changes in the economy, which made women the scapegoat for unemployment, as witness to the countless bitter references to *Doppelverdiner*.”²⁰⁵ Karen Hausen in “Unemployment also Hits Women: The New and the Old Woman on the Dark Side of the Golden Twenties in Germany,” examines the problems of unemployment and the spread of short-time work the Weimar Republic and how this contributed to tensions between labor and capital and between women and men.²⁰⁶ She states that, “The Period of high unemployment in Weimar was a poor time for convincing working men, and even comrades, that women deserved equal access to employment.”²⁰⁷ Within the context of vehement protests against female participation in the labor force, particularly married women, the *IB* gave its approval to “feminine” jobs while stressing the proper role for women as “wife and mother.”

The assessment of women’s occupations and the perceived consequences for men, in the article in the *IB*, quickly become critique of modernity. The article states, “While she cannot deny her deep-rooted determination of motherhood—in spite of the appearance of a job and the pseudo-practicality of it—and above all solitude—they go alone through life in factory hell, mentally and physically exhausted, almost breaking down. While this is going on, her more rich sisters render homage to all fooleries—like

discussions surrounding the introduction of regulations concerning married women in the professions and the legislation in May 1932 which allowed national and local authorities to dismiss married women “whose financial circumstances ‘seemed constantly secure,’” 186.

²⁰⁵ Renate Bridenthal, “Beyond Kinder, Küche, Kirche: Weimar Women at Work,” *Central European History* 6, (1973):148-66.

²⁰⁶ Hausen, Karen “Unemployment also Hits Women: The New and the Old Woman on the Dark Side of the Golden Twenties in Germany,” in *Unemployment and the Great Depression in Weimar Germany*, ed. Peter D. Stachura, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire : Macmillan, 1986), 78-120.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 113.

fashion—as fashion and modernity offer possibilities.”²⁰⁸ Modernity is attached to the female in this context, ascribing the wealthier women the possibilities of living better than their female counterparts in the workforce.

Directly to the left of this paragraph is a photograph of five women playing billiards. Underneath the caption reads, “The rich ladies must kill their time, in doing so Billiards is certainly a healthier Sport than eating cake and whipped cream!” The message, in its critique of “rich” women’s activities denotes a sense of sarcasm. The women in the photograph appear to be in their early twenties. One of them, holding a pool cue and smiling to the camera wears shorts and a short-sleeve shirt while a female observer stands with her hands on her hips, a hat pulled down over her head.

The second half of the article focuses on two main themes: marriage and work, and the extent to which the female is responsible for her own situation. In a seeming attempt to avoid isolating women, the *IB* carefully navigates between the notion that women were “forced” into male occupations during the war and the notion that at now women were ripping the very bread out of the men’s hands by refusing to remain in “traditional” female occupations and refusing the “breadwinner” his proper position in the family.

Moreover, the wealthier women, in their preoccupation with fashion and consumption, do not face the same consequences as their feminine counterparts in the working-class. The same article continues, “The girl struggling for the bread becomes the victim of an eternally lusting Jewish vampire as she is an easy victim—exploited, abused and thrown away! For how long?” The *IB*, in demonstrating sympathy for the working girl directly connects Anti-Semitism with women’s daily struggles. “So appears the

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

woman in front of the camera in the present, varied in shape and form . . . She can be seated everywhere and it's okay," explains the article, but "this hard everyday life alienates her from her larger destiny. Cities and countries are depopulated." The article emphasizes the fears over a declining birthrate, as well as underlines the woman's position in the "modern world" by stating, "The working woman assists in the increasing isolation of the modern individual."²⁰⁹

Figure 18. *Illustrierte Beobachter*, May 31, 1930

The Woman is a model in her silk stockings.



The *IB* blames women in part for the "natural" social and gender order, leading to decreased birth rates, racially suspect marriages and increased competition for men in the workforce. The *IB* argues that women, who seek amusement and "participate in the intoxicating swirl of the city" will find their "delicate" bodies damaged. The "damage," of the female bodies, although not elaborated on, could be interpreted in a variety of

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

ways, including sexual damage related to rape and prostitution or the threat that women may become more masculine.²¹⁰

The article concludes by reasserting the “biological” differences between men and women, stating, “Nature has predetermined the robust man for the fight for existence. The woman is family, mother, the shelter of the home who functions in the silence of the holy peace. And nature does not allow to be mocked and to be kicked with feet without punishment!” The nature of the punishment, it seems, is the decaying social order, both in terms of women’s role in the labor force and the ideal family. The threatening tone of the statement and ultimate “punishment,” can also be linked to earlier statements in the article which connected the “Jewish” threat to young, working-class women.

The photographs corresponding with the article present an array of images of the Modern Woman, and without contextualization, the images could be copied from any of the other illustrated magazines. Yet, the captions and the text demonstrate that not all the women in the photographs are to be admired or emulated. The *IB* maneuvers between applauding the female nurses, describing an image of a female glider as “adventurous.” and arguing that a dance contest “dulls the mind.” A photograph of a woman’s legs is captioned, “The woman in the office is a model in her silk stockings” directly connecting the notion that urban glamour and fashion is merely a distraction from the real problems and responsibilities of women in general.²¹¹ The woman is nothing more than a mannequin, a far cry from her duties as a wife and mother. The young, urban office girl is

²¹⁰ As noted by Claudia Koonz in *Nazi Conscience*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2003), the “sexual freedom that promoted the mannish woman,” became a primary concern of Nazi Party leaders in relation to the “threats” to the *Volkskörper* from within the *Volk* itself. See pp. 103-104.

²¹¹ Ibid.

presented as a static, shallow consumer who does not understand her most important role in society.

Through this article, the *IB* explicitly marks the dangerous territory for women, particularly in terms of physical space. Urban spaces where poor working-class women fall prey to Jewish lust and the allure of the city and modern fashion which only wealthy women can afford, leads to “damaged bodies.” Women’s participation within the realm of male-dominated employment has upset the “natural” gender order and her own instinctive need to be a wife and mother. Implicitly, the *IB* constructs the woman, who yearns to nurture her husband and children and rejects the type of modernity which separates women from their families, as the ideal German Modern Woman. While the above article distinctly targeted fashion and modernity as an option for “wealthy women,” the *IB* also targeted a female audience by including a “Page for Women,” demonstrating the desire to connect fashion and politics.

German Fashion

While the *IB* contains images of the Modern Woman, although not to the extent that the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* or *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* did, it is clear that there is an ambiguous and tense relationship between the Modern Woman visually and textually within the magazine. The figure of the Modern Woman, shown in fashionable garb on the “Women’s Page” can be viewed as having two functions. First, to target female readership and urge women to dress in an appropriate, yet fashionable manner, tied to political interests. Secondly, the page serves as a marker for male readers, to

demonstrate the importance of women's issues among militarization, political rallies and technological advancements, so often the subjects of focus in the magazine.

As Leila Rupp noted in "Mother of the 'Volk': The Image of Women in Nazi Ideology, the Nazi's believed feminism " ... had convinced women that motherhood was beneath their dignity" and campaigned for women to return to their "natural" roles of wives and mothers.²¹² At the same time, Nazi ideology "created new responsibilities for women within the home. ... A woman would have to concern herself with the world outside her home and, through her duties within the family, could support racial, cultural and economic policy on the national level," which included guarding against foreign influences and transmitting German culture to their children.²¹³ As depicted within the *IB*, "Women could serve the nation by purchasing only goods produced in Germany, boycotting Jewish stores ... and buying carefully in order to raise the standard of living,"²¹⁴ These roles demanded that German Women, as consumers, must be informed and educated on the practice of helping to sustain the national economy through their spending patterns and awareness of German fashion.

The "page for women" focused most often on issues of fashion. The photographs and drawings are to a large extent, replica's of the fashion pages in other magazines. The women are usually thin, modeling the latest clothes, showing off a suit or sports garment, for example. The captions describe the type of fabric or the color of the garment. The text however places the issue of women's fashion in a political and social context. The articles often begin by describing the topic of the page, practical suits or sports clothing

²¹² Leila J. Rupp, "Mother of the 'Volk,' 370.

²¹³ Ibid, 371.

²¹⁴ Ibid, 372.

and stresses the importance of clothing that is sensible and still makes a woman look pretty. The articles discuss the fashion trends and the importance of buying good quality, “sturdy” clothing. Before long, however, the reader is cautioned against supporting both “foreign companies” and “Jewish manufacturers” and urges women to support “German” shops.

An article titled, “Fashion of the German Woman, against the price of the fashion dictators,” discusses the personal style of the German Woman and the excess of influence from foreign influences, particularly France.²¹⁵ The article continues by stating that “the policy of the German woman and girl” in regards to fashion is that “fashion is modern and for every German woman is not what the degenerate French in conjunction with the Jewish clothing factory owners prescribe, but rather what every woman needs, that which is practical, nice, inexpensive and also sturdy and pleasing.”²¹⁶ The women’s “appetite for clothing,” may be satisfied through a particularly German mode of style and consumption. The images with the article include a photograph of a woman modeling a winter coat, which is “flattering to all figures,” and is sold in a light-brown color. A photograph of four handbags at the bottom of the page is captioned, “Handbags in a flat or pouch form, all are ‘modern.’ When one has the time, make one for yourself.”²¹⁷

While using the same type of textual descriptors as the *BIZ* noting the color, texture and

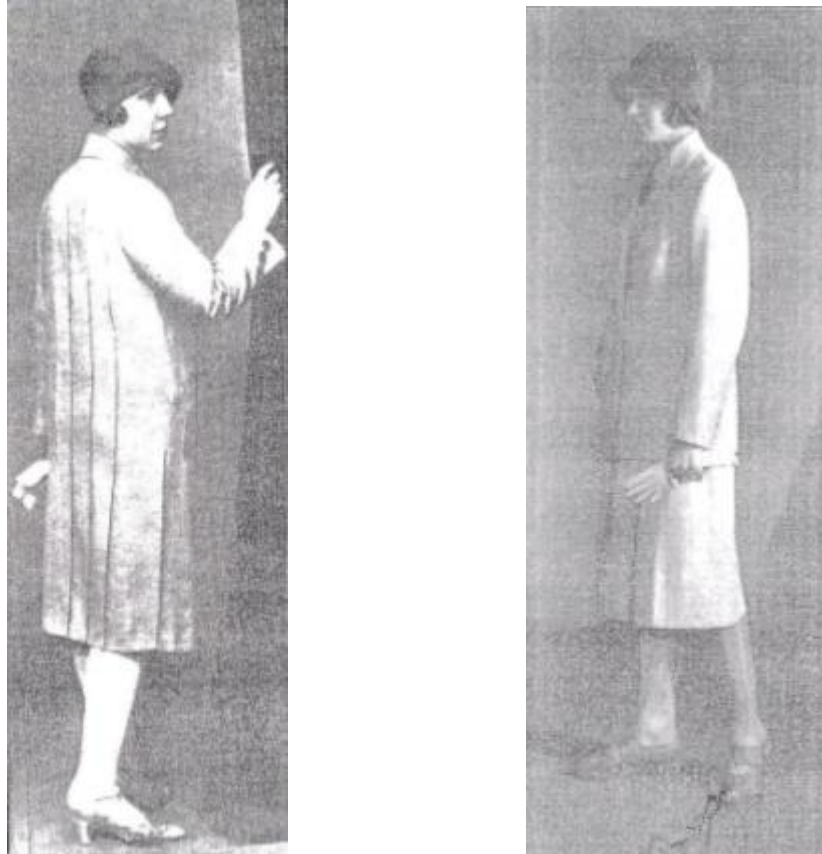
²¹⁵ *IB*, Nov. 23, 1929. Irene Guenther discusses the intersection of racism, economic nationalism and female eroticism in terms of fashion in “Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich,” (Oxford: Berg, 2004). Guenther does not use the *IB* in her analysis. See also, Sabine Hake, “In the Mirror of Fashion,” in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katherin Von Ankum (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1997). Hake also notes that right-wing critics of the Weimar Republic used fashion as a site to “describe the dangers of a homogeneous international culture,” and specifically attacked French couturiers and Jewish *Konfektionäre*, p. 193.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

quality of the garment, the *IB* politicized fashion much more than the *BIZ*. As the *AIZ*, fashion became a focal point for politics. But unlike the *AIZ* which concentrated on issues of class, the *IB* focused on the national economy and women's responsibility to adhere to the racist components of Nazi ideology.

Figure 19. *Illustrierte Beobachter*, March 19, 1933



However, like the *AIZ* the *IB* presented women with options to make their own clothing, yet only out of German materials. Articles on the “Page for women” reasoned that self-made clothing and accessories from “German” textiles can also be modern. For example, a short column and photographs in the January 18, 1930 edition encourage women to make “sports clothing” at home, by using the latest sewing and knitting

patterns.²¹⁸ Two of the photographs show women wearing their self-made creations, a sweater-jacket and a sweater with contrasting colors. Another small photograph also shows a handmade dress for a young girl, in an “easy and quick” pattern.²¹⁹

The March 19, 1932 issue features “Practical Street Suits,” and the article begins by describing the fashion ‘seasons,’ the changes in spring and fall clothing and notes that an economical woman can clothe herself both “practically” and “tastefully.”²²⁰ The photographs, arranged around the text, show fashionable women, modeling the type of suits and coats that are deemed appropriate to wear. The text describes the colors and fabrics of the clothing, showing the brown, sturdy jacket to the right, with a skirt that hits just below the knee. The first illustration presents clothing for the larger figure, and offers advice on how to dress to flatter your figure. After this, the article connects the seemingly non-harmful issue of the season’s styles with support for the German state. “In general, one can say that we do not, in dresses or suits, have the slightest occasion to support foreign countries or Jewish manufacturers.”²²¹

Urging women to support German companies, the article contends that German clothing is of higher quality, thus making the connection between the “good” German shops and those of outsiders, both literally and figuratively. The article concludes by arguing that a designer in Turkey, Kemal Pascha, has learned to adopt “European styles” but only uses Turkish materials, thus serving as an example of a nation which establishes

²¹⁸ *IB*, January 18, 1930.

²¹⁹ While the majority of “Women’s Page’s” concentrated on women’s fashion and style, the April 12, 1930 edition focused on clothing for children. The article discussed a trend for children’s clothing: in “sailor style” and included photographs of three children wearing playclothes and outdoor coats.

²²⁰ *IB*, March 19, 1932.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

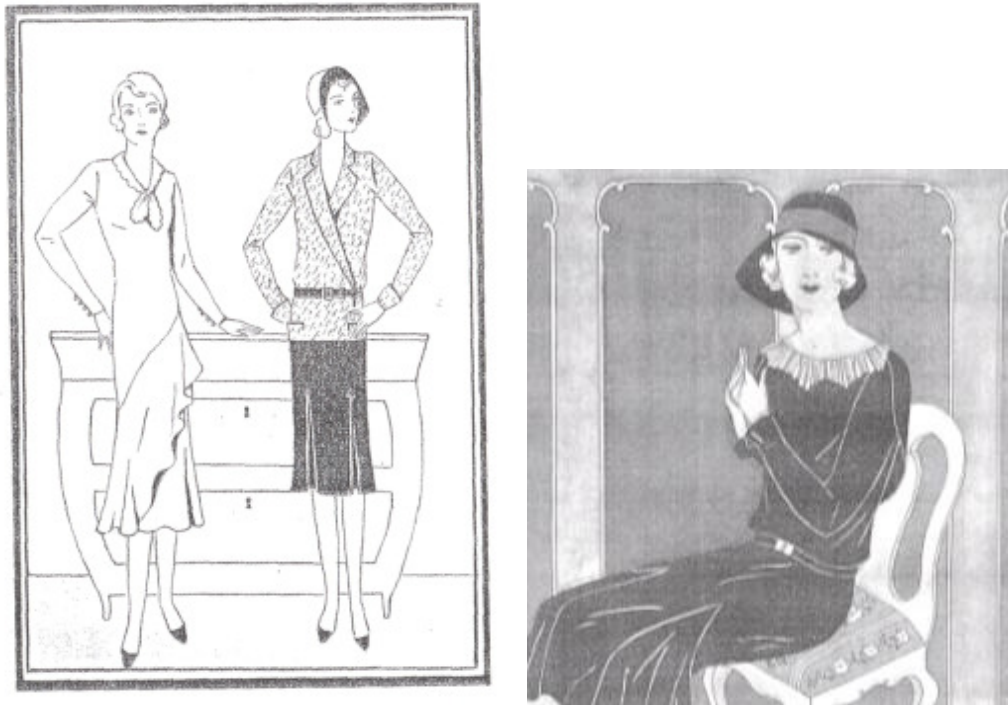
a “national fashion,” and urges women to support a similar program in Germany. The images, without contextualization, are quite similar to those found in the *BIZ* and *AIZ*. Black and white photographs of women, modeling. While three of the women are young and rather thin, there is one photograph of an older woman, with a body that is not so small. Here, the *IB* seems to be targeting a broader range of women, not just women in their early 20s for example. They are distinctly feminine however, in their presentation and lack any “masculine” qualities. The women in these photos all wear a feminine hats and although their hair may be cut short, it is unmistakable that these individuals are women. Thus, the article and photographs serve a variety of purposes. One is to include female readers, the second to connect fashion with practicality for a broad range of women and third, to connect appearance and shopping with national identity, telling women that German fashions, while adopting European styles, can be transformed into a “national fashion,” which excludes spending money on foreign (particularly French) and Jewish domestic manufacturers.

Another article concentrates on “the struggle against crazy fashions,” of the early 1930s.²²² The article is more explicit in its demands that women oppose designs and fabrics of non-German designers. The newest trend, states the article, is a long skirt. Although one might expect a more conservative notion of female dress, the article proposes that women stick with the shorter dresses and skirts (but not above the knee). “What would a working woman do with her long skirts? We’ll stick to our medium-length skirts for working.”²²³

²²² *IB*, January 15, 1930.

²²³ *Ibid*.

Figure 20. “The Struggle Against the Crazy Fashion,” *Illustrierte Beobachter*, Jan. 1, 1930.



The long skirt, although seemingly “conservative” in its ability to cover women, was of no use to women who needed a practical wardrobe and who could not afford the more expensive long skirts. The article playfully categorizes elements of fashion for the German Modern Woman and although not arguing against looking nice, urges women to be sensible. Corsets for example, are an “instrument of martyrdom” and notes that “We’re happy that the youth don’t have to know this and that our mother’s were at the mercy of the corset!”²²⁴ Thus, generational differences are also part of the discussion. The corset, with its cinching, tucking and smoothing effect, is not needed with the latest designs, which are more loose fitting. The corset is not modern, but a symbol of the past,

²²⁴ Ibid.

something that only reader's mother's would have worn. A sense of freedom, through clothing, can be obtained.

However, the modern German woman, while approving of the release of such a contraption, are advised to “stick to clothes with long lasting yarn (threads)” because women “work so much and don’t have a lot of money.” Moreover, the high quality of the clothing is also tied to who produces it, “If we reject these useless fashions we can reject the stupidity of fashion,” and thus, “we can reject the people in the economy who control the threads,” the manufacturing. “How can you look fashionable and reasonable at the same time?,” the article asks. Find good clothing that is useful for your work, a “simple blouse,” and a “normal skirt” is more comfortable and one can find a “comfortable and sturdy jacket” which matches the skirt. Then, “one will always be well dressed.”²²⁵ Fashion pages, which targeted women, presented a tension between fashion, national identity and practicality. The Modern German Woman is one who understood the difference between looking nice and supporting foreign, and specifically, Jewish manufacturers of ready-made clothing. A photograph published on March 23, 1929 depicts a group of young women facing the camera, while on the right, a woman models a suit. The caption reads, “This is once again something for the Jews! In Berlin there was recently, on Lindenstrasse the first ‘modeling agency’ opened for women ... generally the whole business of this particular exchange lies in the Jewish hands.”²²⁶ The *IB* argued that women can and should support the notion of a “national fashion,” and pay particular attention to who makes and sells the clothing, as demonstrated in the inclusion of photographs which “prove” the monopoly of the Jews in the fashion and modeling

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ *IB*, March 23, 1929.

industry. The *IB* is far from presenting a notion of extravagance and is sympathetic to women who work and do not have a large income with which to purchase a impractical wardrobe. Practicality, defined as buying high-quality clothing from “German manufacturer’s,” which supports the national economy is tied to articles of clothing which can be mixed and matched and can be worn in a variety of settings.

The images presented in the *IB* are themselves are akin to the middle-class photographs and illustrations of the New Woman in the *BIZ* and the *AIZ*’s construction of their Modern Woman. Yet nuanced differences, including women who are older and have a larger body type, are apparent. The relationship between the images and the text is of particular importance here. The text serves as an explanation for women’s fashion in terms of the “German” woman’s identity and appearance, while providing advice on how to support and maintain a particularly national view of style. Interestingly, the “page for women,” did not focus on issues of marriage or children. Instead, the *IB* attempted to create a space for women which functioned to encourage a specifically feminine mode of modernity to spotlight women’s consumption in regards to clothing. The body became a site in which the Modern German Woman declared her allegiance to the party, not only in terms of sexuality and reproduction, but in economic terms as well. By paying attention to where women shopped and styles they wore, women were in a unique position to bolster the German economy while boycotting Jewish businesses and “foreign” influences.

The Modern German Woman in Advertisements

As a consumer, the Modern German Woman, was initially instructed to buy German goods in the articles on “The Page for Women,” not through the advertisement section. Products advertised in the *IB* focused on household appliances, books and military gear. However, as ads increased in the late 1920s, the magazine did attempt to appeal to female readers, concentrating on home appliances, typewriters and hair or beauty products. The Modern Woman either depicted or targeted in the advertisements are much less than those found in the *BIZ*, but the *IB* did include a few ads which targeted a female audience. The *IB*’s advertising section slowly expanded and more and more ads (although in number, not comparable to those in the *BIZ*) included products directed at women and not just household appliances. Beauty aids, shampoos, toothpastes and hair products were more visible to the readers. The women in the advertisements were usually shown from the shoulders up, youthful and happy. Eroticism, in terms of women showing off their bodies in underwear ads or sitting in their bedrooms are absent, unlike those found in the *BIZ*. In the *IB*, “pretty” is acceptable, “sexy” is not. Next to ads for handguns or watches, were ads for hair products. Typewriters were exhibited with the “secretary” behind it, in the middle of ads selling the Nazi newspaper and rings, pins and necklaces with the party insignia. Although one could argue that a scattering of ads may not necessarily point to the Nazi’s construction of femininity and modernity, the images in conjunction with the articles outlining appropriate behavior indicate that these are important pieces of the whole to consider in the *IB*’s presentation of the Modern Woman.

An ad in the November 24, 1928 edition read, “Something for the modern woman!”²²⁷ The *IB* is not advertising shoes, makeup or clothing, but a new sewing

²²⁷ *IB*, November 24, 1928.

cabinet that is the “dream of the housewife,” thus linking modernity within the housewife, much different than in the *BIZ*. Other appliances include typewriters and handheld cameras, both of which include representations of women. An office worker sits behind the “modern, fast typewriter,” connecting the typewriter to female work. Cigarette ads also presented a more fashionable, stylish woman. Salem cigarettes advertised the “oriental tobacco” in the form of a beautify woman, holding a cigarette, surrounded by tobacco leaves.²²⁸

In 1931, the *IB* ran a series of advertisements for hair coloring and shampoo. The ads, including a photograph of a young blond woman, have a large caption next to her smiling face. “Always Blond,” “Blonds stay Blond!” and “Wonderful for Blond Hair!”²²⁹ The ads took up the bottom half of the page. In each issue, an article for or concerning women was placed directly above the advertisement. Although not the formal “Page for Women,” it is clear that the juxtaposition of the article and advertisement created a deliberate space within the publication for women. Even more, while male readers were bombarded with images of airplanes, tanks, gas masks, ships, skiers and boxing matches, the *IB*’s inclusion of women could also be seen as an indicator for men that issues of the German woman and femininity were, if not equally important to men’s ventures, at least needed to be considered. The modern woman in the *IB* is not frivolous and ignorant to the more important social and political consequences of fashion and consumption, nor to the ideological forces behind physically activity.

²²⁸ *IB*, September 8, 1928.

²²⁹ *IB* August 8, 1931. See also *IB* September 9, 1931, September 19, 1931 and October 17, 1931 through December 12, 1931. All eleven issues all contained the advertisement for hair color and shampoo.

The Healthy Female Body

The *IB*'s presentation of women and athletics is twofold. On the one hand, photographs demonstrate women dancing, playing pool, roller-skating and ice-skating and practicing archery, and without a careful reading, would seem to demonstrate support for the athletic and creative prowess of the female body. On the other hand, the *IB* used these images to criticize specific athletic pursuits. As historian Lelia Rupp noted, "The ideal Nazi woman was not frail and helpless, but strong, vigorous, athletic."²³⁰ She argues that, " ... one reason for emphasizing health and exercise was based on the dominant notion of woman-as-mother: The new standards of physical beauty prized broad-hipped women, unencumbered by corsets, who could easily bear children."²³¹ While this may be true, it is important to recognize that the magazine did not promote just any form of athletic activity, but clearly demonstrated opposition to athletic activities which were "unnatural" and "unfeminine."

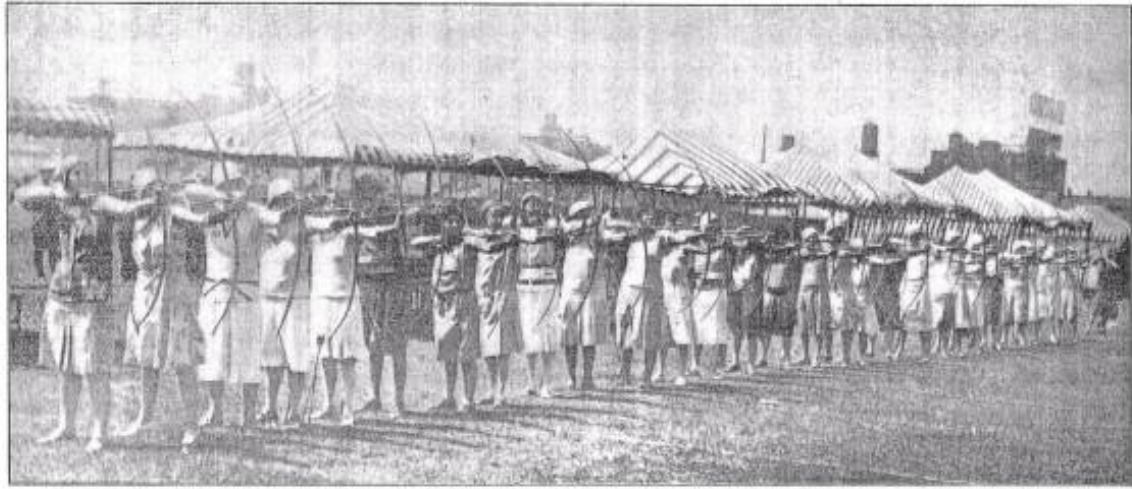
A photograph of a team of archers for example, take up the bottom half of one page in the September 13, 1930 edition.²³² Approximately 30 young women, wearing summer dresses are lined up, taking aim at an invisible target. The caption beneath the photograph states, "A photo that will press out the cold fear of pacifist idiots! But calm down—they are American Amazonians!!" In a tone which can be read as sarcastic, the *IB* makes light of women archers—even as a sport—tying it to military maneuvers and

²³⁰ Rupp, 376.

²³¹ Ibid, 378.

²³² *IB*, September 10, 1930.

implicitly stating that pacifist men are as effeminate and unmanly as the “American Amazonian’s” in their nice summer dresses.



Ein Bild, das unseren Pazifistentölpeln den kalten Anglistischeit auspressen wird! Aber beruhigen Sie sich, das sind — amerikanische Amazonen!!

Figure 21. Amazonian Women, *Illustrierte Beobachter*, September 13, 1930

Another image, published on July 12, 1930, is captioned, “Modern dancing gymnastics” or: Beauty is something different!”²³³ The photograph is composed of a group of female dancers, wearing shorts and t-shirts, jumping in the air, faces forwards, their hair flying around their faces. At first glance, one might think that the *IB* would complement the strength of the women or their athletic abilities. They do not. Instead, the *IB* criticizes the development of the “so-called rhythmic gymnastics and the search for the so-called “self expression” of the dancers of the Laben School.”

²³³ *IB*, July 12, 1930.



„Roberts künstlerische Gymnastik“ oben: Schön (D anders!
Die sogenannte rhythmische Gymnastik und das Suchen nach dem sogenannten „Ausdrucksvermögen“ des Tanzes der Schule Laban führt zu Krämpfen,
wie die der Frauen auf unserem Bild.

Figure 22. *Illustrierte Beobachter*, July 12, 1930

The dancing, they claim, leads to muscle cramps, like the “graces in our picture.” Opposing traditional forms of dance and embracing the movement known as *ausdruckstanz* (“dance of expression”), Rudolf Laban founded more than 25 schools across Germany. His notions of “free dance,” often performed without music, became a symbol for modern dance in Germany during the 1920s and was appropriated as “German Dance” under the Third Reich.²³⁴

²³⁴ Susan Allene Manning and Melissa Benson, “Interrupted Continuities: Modern Dance in Germany” in *The Drama Review* 30 no. 2 (1986): 30-45. See also Karl Toepfer, “Nudity and Modernity in German Dance, 1910-1930” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3 n.2 (1992): 58-108.

The cover of the magazine on November 17, 1928 depicts a young women in roller skates, jumping in the air and smiling into the camera.²³⁵ The corresponding article, “Real and False Grace in Women’s Sports,” depicts discusses “the real grace in women’s sports,” illustrated in activities like roller-skating or ice-skating and are more “natural” for women. New forms of “modern” dance are decidedly not feminine. The photographs of the modern dancers depict the women in dramatic poses, arms flung outwards, a most “ungraceful” pose. Moreover, the “female disposition” is more inclined toward the graceful sports of ice and roller-skating. The corresponding photographs are captioned, “The female roller skater is a really athletic and healthy sport for our women.” The *IB* also deemed skiing appropriate for women, demonstrated in the cover photograph of the first issue in 1931.²³⁶

The *IB* praised the youthful activities of sport, most often in a section entitled S.A. Sport, where women were not featured. However, the *IB* did published some articles and photographs of women and sport, but clearly demarcated the appropriate and inappropriate forms of athletic activities for young women. The discourse surrounding the health of the female body was framed in terms of combating trends in language couched in gendered terms. The pictures of the archers and dancers also depicts a particular revulsion to the type of “modernity” embodied in these female pursuits. “Beauty is something different,” states the *IB* and female beauty, in terms of the body is best exhibited in sports which seem to embrace the “natural” rhythms and movements of the female, such as ice-skating or ballet dancing.

²³⁵ *IB*, 17 November, 1928.

²³⁶ *IB*, 2 January 1931.

Race and Gender

While promoting representations of appropriate femininity and modernity in fashion and athletics in terms of a women's visual appearance, the *IB*'s contradictions and tensions rise. The Modern Woman, conscience of her body in terms of national health and style is pitted against images of the New Woman, the young, star-struck consumer type found in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*. As Claudia Koonz noted in "Mothers of the Fatherland, Women in Nazi Germany," "Women who supported the Nazis hoped to stem the tide of decadence they believe was engulfing their society," and in particular, blaming "foreign influence and women's emancipation" for "the demise of all morality and order," oftentimes symbolized by the New Woman.²³⁷ Not only did the *IB* draw upon the stereotype of the New Woman as a symbol of degenerate behavior but specifically tied her activities with anti-Semitic propaganda. Both the Jew and the New Woman "provided powerful metaphors against which people could direct their anger, and the anxieties generated by Hitler's warnings kept Nazis in a constant state of alert."²³⁸ One such example is a collection of illustrations with the headline reading, "The Jew and the German Blond," in which the *IB* describes the relationship *between* the typical New Woman and Jewish men, thus linking two powerful symbolic enemies together.²³⁹ The German Blond is a replica of the middle-class, consumer New Woman, depicted in the *BIZ* and popular films and novels.

²³⁷ Claudia Koonz, "Mothers of the Fatherland: Women in Nazi Germany," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, eds. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 445-473, 449.

²³⁸ Koonz, *Mothers of the Fatherland*, 56.

²³⁹ *IB*, November 1, 1930.

The German woman is depicted with short blond hair, wearing high heels, shorter dresses (or in her undergarments) and swimsuits for a beauty contest. The “Kavilier,” a stereotype of a younger, rich, Jewish man in the first illustration, sits at a table with the blond woman. The caption states, “There the disaster begins for the blond girl,” signifying the first step towards a disastrous ending if a “German Blond” gets involved with a Jewish man. The next drawing indicates a move from the “public” space of the street to that of a doctor’s office. In contrast to the young Jewish man, the Jewish doctor is fat, old, ugly, balding with the caricature of a large nose. He wears a doctor’s coat, one hand in his pocket, while the other holds a medical instrument. The woman faces him, in a state of undress, bare from the waist up. She’s pulling down the top of her dress and part of her breast exposed.

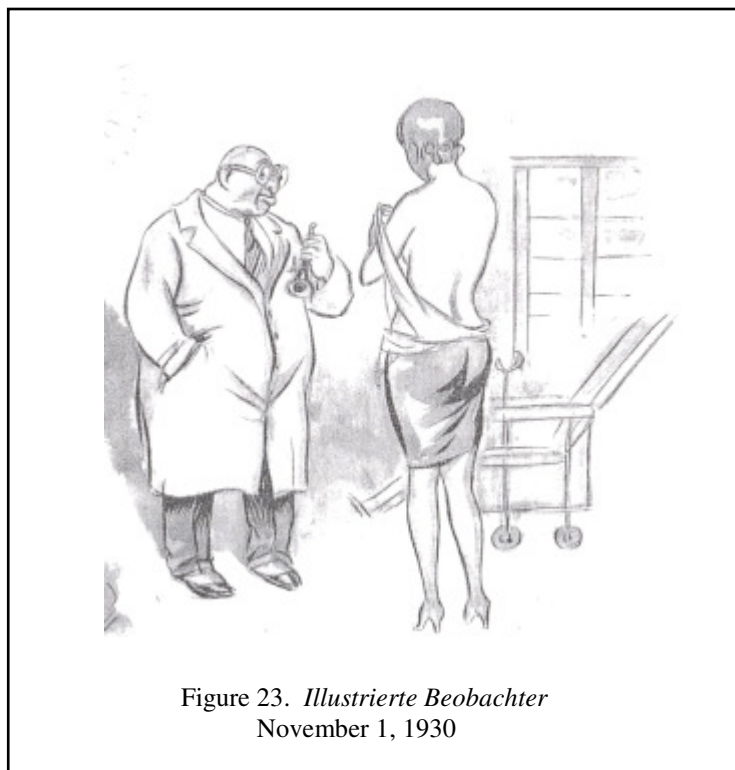


Figure 23. *Illustrierte Beobachter*
November 1, 1930

The caption is explicit, stating, “The blonds are examined by the lecherous Jews as painstakingly as a gynecologist. Blond girls—watch out before the cunning deceive you!”²⁴⁰ The connection, between a female specific medical examination and the sexuality of the Jew, warn young women to beware, instilling a sense of fear of what could happen next. The violation of female sexuality, by a Jew, is a trope employed in other illustrations as well.²⁴¹ In one image, a young woman is sitting in bed, clutching her blanket to her chest, a look of terror on her face.²⁴² She is the “German Blond,” with her light hair cut in the style of a *bubikopf*. A caption is absent from this illustration, but the message is clear.



Figure 24. *Illustrierte Beobachter*, November 1, 1930

²⁴⁰ Ibid. Interestingly, this trope is employed in a children’s book, *The Poison Mushroom*, published in 1938 in order to warn children about the dangers of Jews. See Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2006), 148-149.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

On the wall behind her a crucifix is hung, further marking the differences between herself and her attacker. The woman's fear is caused by the man who pokes head through the door and leers at the woman. His shadow cast on the wall emphasizes "Jewish" characteristics. The woman in figure 24 is one of complete victimhood. The fear of sexual violation for the blond woman comes as a direct result of the man's insatiable sexual appetite. These image and text present the woman as a victim to sexual depravity. There are no indications in these drawings that the woman is responsible for attracting men or alluring the man to her bed. However, other illustrations in the on the page present a different perspective, one that illuminates the "Blond Woman's" role in her own demise. Another picture, captioned, "Intimate overtime that she gives the boss (he is a Jew) makes the blond popular."²⁴³ The man, portrayed as overweight and wealthy has features that make him immediately recognizable as the *IB*'s perception of the Jew. He is in an oversized chair, a telephone sits on his office desk to his right, a small table with a decanter of presumably, alcohol to his right. The blond is in the center of the picture, sitting sideways across the man's lap, one arm around his neck. Her dress is nowhere to be seen, but she is wearing her slip, showing her legs and part of her chest. They are both clearly amused, smiling, and are having a good time. The man's face is turned toward the woman, his lips are pursed, as if to kiss her. In this depiction, the blond woman is given no sympathy. She is the one "giving overtime" and is portrayed as being responsible for her own actions which consequently, make her popular. There is no suggestion, on the surface, that she is being seduced or coerced in any manner. The setting points to an office, indicating that the woman is probably laboring as a secretary or stenographer, thus connecting the *IB*'s German Blond with the typical representation of the New Woman.

²⁴³ Ibid.

Baring the top part of her breasts and her long legs, the slip slides above her thigh, and points to the sexuality of the German Blond. Like the construction of the New Woman, she embraces and uses sexuality for her own purpose.

The familiar trope of the young, single woman dreaming of an acting career also appears in the montage. A young woman is in bed, her back to the man standing beside her, looking back at him with an expression of “satisfaction.” The man wears glasses, and seems to be re-attaching his suspenders, his overarching belly sagging down. “The way to become a star of the stage is often through the director’s bed,” states the caption bluntly. Who is to blame? Is it the young woman? Is it the Jewish director? Is it mass media which promotes such fantasies for German women? In this image, sexuality is embedded both in the young woman and the man. On the one hand, the pretty woman uses her sexuality to obtain a particular goal: to become a star. On the other hand, the Jewish man’s supposed proclivity young, blond woman allows him satisfaction of sexual gratification.

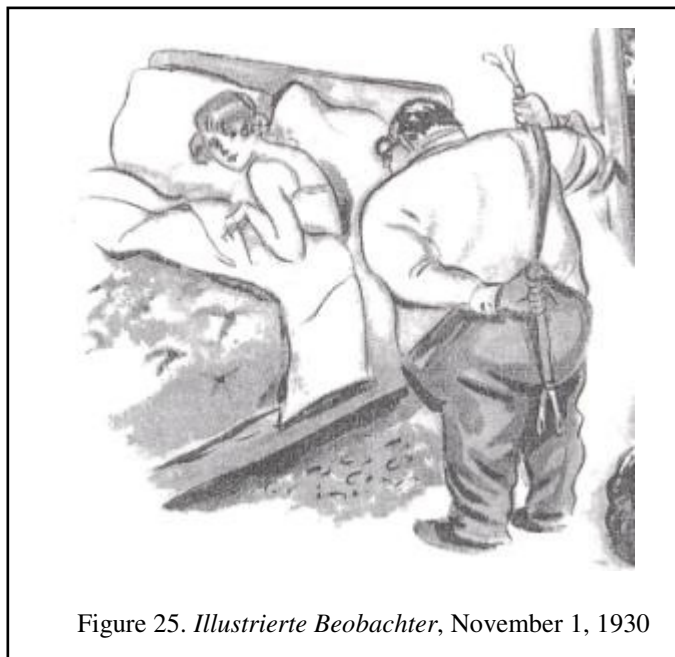


Figure 25. *Illustrierte Beobachter*, November 1, 1930

Another image in the essay portrays contestants in a beauty pageant, wearing swimsuits and a sash pose on a runway, holding their hands to their hair or placed on their hips.²⁴⁴ The audience, comprised of older Jewish men stare lavishly at their bodies. A caption which informs the readers that “Jewish men also like to be the distributor of blond goods at bars,” is set beneath an illustration of a dim bar, where a woman sits on a Jewish man’s lap, the table in front of them covered in alcohol bottles and tobacco products. As shown in the variety of illustrations, the woman is in each situation of her own choosing. In this case, she is not only depicted as a woman easily seduced by Jewish men, but a “consumer good” which Jewish men “distribute” throughout the bars.

These illustrations represent a cautionary tale in the most insidious of forms, both placing the woman as victim and offender at once. She is both used and uses the Jewish man, whose masculinity appears in the form of luxury, wealth and deviant sexual appetite. The final step, in this essay, is the fate of the German Blond. The “tragic end” leads her “to the street.” This caption, beneath a dejected looking woman standing in a pool of light from a streetlamp, insinuates that the final destination is prostitution. The visual connection of the “German Blond” as the New Woman illustrates the *IB*’s opposition to this type of female modernity. The illustration at the bottom right of the page is the epitome, however, of the young German woman. Her face is serious and her hair is worn in two long braids. The caption beside her states that young women need to wear the swastika pin on their dresses in order to fight against the sexually depraved Jewish men.²⁴⁵ These depictions represent the tensions between contesting forms of

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. Readers could choose from the variety of swastika emblazoned jewelry found in the *IB*’s advertising section.

femininity, the woman as an active agent in society and formation of appropriate femininity for young women.

An illustrated story, entitled “The story of a German Staatsbürger of the Jewish Race,” begins with the Jew traveling from Poland to Germany, where he is given money by a Jewish man in Germany.²⁴⁶ The Jew, shown drooling over money he has taken out of the bank travels to a clothing store where he buys a new suit. In the end, he travels from bar to bar alongside a blond “star.” The woman is depicted with short hair, sitting next to the Jewish man, driven in front of a nightclub. The identification with the young woman draws the connection of the urban woman to Jewish relationships. Other illustrated sections depict these familiar themes in the *IB*. Repeatedly, the young women are depicted as white-collar workers, either shop girls or typists, who are “duped” by the glamour and beauty of fine clothing, taken advantage of by their bosses within the workspace or shown in bars, clubs or promenading with their “Jewish” men on the city sidewalks.²⁴⁷ The New Woman became the target for criticizing the type of femininity responsible for social disorder. Denying her “natural role” as mother and wife, the seemingly economically independent, uninhibited young woman was transformed into the symbol of modernity gone wrong and directly tied to anti-Semitic rhetoric.

* * *

The Modern German Woman, as constructed in the *IB* could enjoy the latest fashions and trends, and be involved in athletic activities, but within a specific political

²⁴⁶ *IB*, March 22, 1930.

²⁴⁷ A series of these illustrations can be found in the *IB*, October 12, 1929, December 14, 1929, February 8, 1930, March 15, 1930 and April 8, 1930.

context designed to shape an ideal form of femininity. First, a woman's appearance, framed in terms of practicality and quality, became intertwined with the discourse on the nation and anti-Semitism. While offering an alternative Modern German Woman, the *IB* was able to prove its dedication to female readers while supporting the politics of the party. Although the *IB* restrained from always placing direct blame on women, it is clear that disrupting the labor market, the family and the nation often came from women's actions. Secondly, the question of female health was typically discussed in terms of inappropriate athletic activities, framing modern dance, for example, in terms of unhealthy and unnatural body movements. Third, the female as a consumer, although present in the *IB* in terms of some beauty aids, never became as developed as other magazines. Fourth, the *IB* became more outspoken against the type of Modern Woman who remained ignorant of the "race question," and whose economic independence threatened the "natural" gender order. The New Woman, as the young, beautiful consumer and white-collar worker that the *IB* designated as the "German Blond," became a fixture in the illustrations and articles who represented degeneracy and ruin. The *IB* presented the women as both the problem and the solution to the failings of the social and gender order in the end of the Weimar period.

Chapter 4

The Modern Woman in Weimar and Beyond

The differing constructions of the Modern Woman, negotiated in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* and the *Illustrierte Beobachter* reveal the contested nature of female modernity during the Weimar Republic. Contestations within and between the magazines uncover the complicated negotiation of femininities and demonstrate the ways they attempted to present a multi-faceted Modern Woman to their readers. By discussing the relationship between the visual and textual images and the main similarities and differences between the publications, one can begin to understand how the adaptation and modification of the Modern Woman, based on class and political differences, held a specific meaning for each publication.

Within the middle-class *BIZ*, the visual and textual images of the iconographical New Woman dominated the pages. Placed on the cover, in special fashion sections and in advertisements, it is clear that this representation of modernity positioned beauty and youth at the center and the New Woman as a consumer and a commodity. Defined as a young, beautiful, independent woman, with an expendable income, the *BIZ* perpetuated a mythic ideal of femininity, similar to that found in popular novels and films during the Weimar Republic. While seeming to embrace the “emancipated” woman, the magazine never seriously considered real social or political issues for women. The construction of the New Woman, alluring in her glamour and eternal youth, was never discussed in

relation to work or household and family. She remained a one-dimensional fantasy of soft skin, good looks, expensive clothes and alligator shoes. The New Woman's modernity, embodied in urban life, white-collar work, consumer goods and the hopes of marrying a rich husband, remained an elusive scenario for women. Moreover, the *BIZ* turned the figure of the New Woman herself into a commodity, placed on the cover to attract readers and in advertisements to attract buyers. In the *BIZ*, the women as both a consumer and a commodity are far more sexualized and more aware of their own bodies, in terms of what she allows the viewer to see and imagine, much more than in the *AIZ* and the *IB*. These more erotic bodies were not condemned, but treated as an appropriate type of femininity. The *BIZ*'s textual descriptors of the New Woman avoided confrontation or criticism and merely reinforced the corresponding visual image. There existed little tension between what the viewer saw and what the viewer read. For the *BIZ*, who targeted a middle-class audience, there was usually no need to modify elements of the New Woman in order to convince readers to renounce alternative forms of feminine modernity. The only serious apprehension exhibited in the *BIZ* pertained to the masculinization of the New Woman.

The popular *BIZ* reinforced traditional conceptions of femininity by disavowing gender play in terms of appearance. The masculinization of women in the beginning, harmless and playful, turned sour. The images presented to the readers turned from a lighthearted discussion of gender crossing to an admonition of young women who adopted masculine dress and hairstyle to the extreme. At first, the feminine qualities remained unhidden. The adoption of suits and ties, the absence of make-up and jewelry and a haircut, short and close to the head, cut over the ears and styled like a man's, however became symbolic of problematic femininity and sexuality. The masculinization

of women became a particular theme in the *BIZ* which shifted from acceptable modes of crossing gender norms to outright disgust at women's adaptation of masculine characteristics, to eventual concerns over androgynous youth. The *BIZ* allowed no space for women to cross traditional gender roles in terms of women's appearances. The feminine body, particularly one that is young and beautiful, remained a central component of the middle-class, consumer New Woman.

The *AIZ* promoted a more complicated Modern Woman, negotiating sites of modernity in paid work, the household and athletic activities. While some of the images, particularly in regards to fashion, are quite similar to those found in the *BIZ*, the textual descriptions alongside them points to one of the major differences between the publications. The *AIZ*, careful to explain the differences between working, middle and upper class notions of clothing and the values they held, recognized the political value of apparel. The *AIZ* couched discussions of fashion in terms of practicality, efficiency, thriftiness and class. The option of sewing one's own clothes, or making something new out of something old offered more realistic solutions to for women. The sections for women's fashion for the office aimed to demonstrate that the *AIZ*, aware of women's particular concerns, could present an image which incorporated the *visual* New Woman without approving of her behavior. The figure of the Modern Woman in the *AIZ*, both efficient and practical with her wardrobe, understood her appearance in terms of class. While at first, the images may appear similar to the New Woman found in the *BIZ*, the *AIZ* quickly demonstrated opposition to overindulgent young women, whose closets bulged with fur coats, dozens of shoes and accessories. Careful juxtaposition of photographs of the New Woman with articles condemning her behavior functioned to

encourage young women to beware of the shallow fantasies which promised a rich husband and everlasting happiness.

The *AIZ* and the *BIZ* also included special sections instructing women how to sit, walk and exercise, although in two very different realms. The *BIZ*'s advice for young women concerned social situations, walking through a door and greeting friends, for example. The *AIZ*'s specific instructions were related to health and work. The proper way to sit had nothing to do with the type of dress one was wearing, but the type of work one was doing. Posture related to doing the dishes, stretching to cleaning the floors. Whereas the *BIZ* demonstrated appropriate ways to sit and read the newspaper, the *AIZ* showed the correct way to sit in front of the sewing machine. Thus, while the aim of both publications was to instruct young women how to move and hold their bodies correctly and in a healthy manner, the situations which exemplified normal everyday activities was certainly affected by class differences.

The *BIZ* and *AIZ* contrasted “old” and “new” in terms of what is modern. The *BIZ* used this trope on a number of magazine cover's as well as articles. The women featured in the “present” mirrored the representations of women found in the advertisement and other sections of the magazine. The New Woman in the *BIZ* became a marker for modernity in terms of her youthful appearance and the magazine emphasized generational differences between women. The *AIZ*, using visual images and text, compared the past and present, but through the site of the home, gendered female, but not the female body. Moreover, the *AIZ* was the only publication to put emphasis on the home, particularly in terms of the “rationalized” household. While appearing to pay attention to female issues, the *AIZ* did not offer any real solutions to problems which

everyday women faced. Even though the magazine argued that a streamlined household gave women more time for political and leisure time activities, the magazine never challenged the gender division of labor.

The *IB*'s construction of the Modern German Woman, aware of her consumer habits in terms of the national economy, specifically supported "German" businesses and boycotted Jewish business and foreign influences. The photographs of fashionable women, however, needed the text with them in order for the correct message to be broadcast. Fashion is never *just* fashion, it is political, as it was in the *AIZ*. The texts with the photographs in the *IB* emphasized the Modern German Woman's role in developing a "national approach" to fashion. Like the *AIZ*, the corresponding text to the photographs and images was extremely important in demarcating the differences between different types of female modernity. A stylish dress, for examples, was no longer just a dress after reading the caption or article. Instead, the garment became the symbol of a German Modern Woman in opposition to foreign influences and the Jewish manufacturers. While the Nazi party declared women's ultimate role as wife and mother, the magazine presented a space for women to assume responsibility through her consumer habits.

While the *AIZ* criticized the New Woman in terms of consumption and leisure activities, the *IB* deemed the archetypical New Woman as responsible for the perceived disruption of the gender order within the labor market and the family. By taking men's jobs, ignoring their "natural" role as wives and mothers, the women denied their true calling. The women who bared their shoulders, breasts, legs and backs were not women to be admired, but admonished. These "beauty queens" who remained "ignorant of the race question" were responsible for social decay. The erotic female body also symbolized

a site of danger as depicted in the cautionary tales for young women against “Jewish sexual depravity.” The illustrations of the New Woman in the magazine were straightforward. The depictions of the “German Blond” and the “Jew” with emphasized ethnic characteristics were easily understood. The *IB* employed graphic imagery of the New Woman’s sexual body as a site for condemning the behavior of young women while directly connecting this with anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Unlike the *BIZ*, the *IB* and the *AIZ* used the female athlete as an extension of political ideologies. The *IB* used the female body in terms of athletics to depict “natural” or “unnatural” activities for young women. While supporting the image of the healthy and athletic young body the *IB* defined specific types of sports appropriate for women. Alongside arguing that ballet and ice-skating captured the “natural grace” of the female body, the *IB* deemed sports like modern dance and archery as unbecoming for young women. The *AIZ*, on the other hand, constructed the female athlete as a positive counter-image to the New Woman. The magazine did not wish to present a playful, flippant young woman who idled her time away in the cinema and spent earnings on inconsequential items like perfume or makeup. Instead it depicted alternative leisure time activities which fit the party’s desire for political mobilization. The *AIZ*’s female athletes may show skin, but it is not portrayed as a feminine sexual awareness or in conjunction with images of men. Although some may argue that the female athlete can be viewed as “erotic,” this does not seem to be the intent of the *AIZ*.

Although the frequency and placement of images shifted slightly from 1924-1933, none of the publications changed dramatically. The stabilization years, 1924-1928, are deemed thus because of a stable currency, investments and loans from the United States

under the terms of the Dawes Plan and overall economic recovery. It is not surprising to see representations of the New Woman as a carefree, white-collar, consumer orientated woman, indulging in perfumes, fur coats, cigarettes and radios with the (theoretically) expendable income during this time period. The Great Depression and the subsequent high unemployment rate increased poverty and social discontent for the majority of Germans. However, even amidst the stark images of late 1929 and the early 1930s, of mothers holding the hands of their gaunt children, the unemployed desperate for wages, among the upheaval of the tumultuous political years in the early 1930s, discourses which challenged the traditional representation of women continued. The Modern Woman would not be swept off the pages, even in what would seem the most desperate of circumstances in the early 1930s.

The contested representations of female modernity within the *AIZ*, *BIZ* and *IB* speak to the complex manner in which class, gender and race intersected in the construction appropriate femininities during the Weimar Republic. Even though the Communist Party proclaimed support for women's emancipation, the magazine never presented serious opposition to the gendered roles of women in the workplace, party politics or the home. The Nazi Party, while for the most part ignoring women during the Weimar Republic, reinforced the "natural" role of women as wife and mother. The *BIZ* avoiding political and social issues altogether, merely emphasized the New Woman as consumer and commodity. During the Weimar Republic, the illustrated press offered alternatives and possibilities of female modernity, but clearly marked the boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate appearances and activities. But what happened to the Modern Woman in 1933? What images appeared in the exiled *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* and the Nazi

appropriated *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*? Did the *Illustrierte Beobachter* modify the images of the Modern Woman during the 1930s and the Second World War? What manifestations of the Modern Woman appear after 1945? Are there long-term similarities in the construction of the Modern Woman, across political systems and in different media markets? The examination of the Modern Woman in the illustrated press under National Socialism and the two German States would offer valuable insights into the long-term discourses of competing and contesting images of women and modernity.

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