

## W. T. Stead and Participatory Reader Networks

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Reader participation has long been recognized as a key aspect of the New Journalism. According to Kate Jackson, savvy publishers “recreate[d] the old communal relations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain” by “manufacturing a community of interest through editorials, correspondence columns, competitions, and other features.”<sup>1</sup> Laurel Brake and Julie Codell note that readers’ “responses to articles and debates transformed them into active participants in Victorian debates.”<sup>2</sup> Like his contemporaries, W. T. Stead (1849–1912) deployed reading communities. They were fundamental to his conception of journalism’s future and its democratizing influence. In his 1886 article “The Future of Journalism,” Stead advocates for editors to install “*alter ego*[s] . . . in each district” in order to keep the “editor informed of all that is going on within that area that needs attending to, either for encouragement, or for repression, or merely for observation and report.”<sup>3</sup> Brake and Codell credit him with proposing the concept of government by journalism, where the “infrastructure of newspaper news-gathering and distribution became a system of political communication between reader-consumers and editor-owners.”<sup>4</sup>

Yet, to date, scholars have not recognized the link between Stead’s journalistic philosophies and the innovative reader communities he fostered in the *Link: A Journal for the Service of Man* (February 4, 1888–December 1, 1888) and the *Review of Reviews* (1890–1936).<sup>5</sup> Compared with the short-term, unidirectional opportunities for interaction cited by Jackson, Stead’s participatory reader networks were unique in their duration and complexity. In this essay I argue that the deployment of reader participation in Stead’s fin-de-siècle journalism was the culmination of a cohesive thread of media-based community engagement that can be traced

throughout his career. Rather than viewing Stead's journalism through the narrow lens of a single publication or journalistic campaign, I consider how his participatory reader networks were refined and shaped over the course of many years and within the pages of multiple periodicals.

### **“Thou art the man!”: The Foundations of Stead's Work as a Community Organizer**

Foundational elements of Stead's fin-de-siècle participatory reader networks are found throughout his life. Practical community-organizing experience from his youth led him to recognize journalism's potential to activate readers, democratize information, and drive social change.<sup>6</sup> Stead first used the press to inspire community affiliation after an incident spurred him to promote collaboration among Newcastle charities. In a typewritten memoir, which his daughter Estelle referenced when writing her father's biography, Stead told of giving a coat and a Bible to a tramp passing through Newcastle.<sup>7</sup> The tramp left town with the coat and the stolen personal possessions of his fellow lodgers but left the Bible behind. Stead was incensed. He called the tramp a “scoundrel” and thenceforth resolved to address the pitfalls of “indiscriminate almsgiving.”<sup>8</sup> Individual acts of philanthropy were inefficient, easily abused by deceitful individuals, and prone to unnecessary reduplication of effort. He continued, “Thinking over this thing I came to the conclusion—which I suppose everyone must come to—that nothing could be done excepting by association and by organization.”<sup>9</sup>

Stead's solution to the indiscriminate almsgiving problem became a model for his later reader networks. He used the local press and interpersonal networking to create a Newcastle Charity Organization Society. Years later, he recalled,

When I was out of my teens I got a Charity Organization Society established in Newcastle-on-Tyne by writing an “X. Y. Z.” letter to the *Northern Daily Express*

advocating some such method of dealing with mendicity. If I had stopped there nothing would have been done; but I bought fifty copies of the *Express*, marked my letter at each of the four corners with a big blue cross, and posted them so marked to fifty of the most public-spirited and philanthropic citizens of Newcastle. The letter itself would have fallen flat. What did the work was the arrival of that letter personally addressed with a kind of ‘Thou art the man!’ stamp on it.<sup>10</sup>

Stead strategically used the press to convince individuals to see themselves as essential to the success of his community-service campaigns. He continues, “Everything I have ever done since that time has been done in the same way, by a combination of the general appeal in print and the personal application of the appeal to the individual.”<sup>11</sup> Stead’s ideas about association, affiliation, print media, and interpersonal or virtual networking feature prominently in his later journalistic campaigns, philosophies, and reader networks.

In the early 1870s, Stead rechanneled his passion for charitable organizing and his affiliation-building techniques into print journalism. Had he not been “consumed by a great zeal to establish charity organization societies everywhere,” he may have never become a journalist.<sup>12</sup> When the *Northern Echo* was launched in Darlington on January 1, 1870, he saw it as a “useful pulpit in which to preach the doctrine of the organization of charity and of a co-operative way of dealing with the unemployed.”<sup>13</sup> *The Northern Echo* was the only half-penny daily outside of London.<sup>14</sup> Stead sent the paper’s editor, John Copleston, a series of articles promoting the creation of a Darlington charitable organization society along the lines of the one in Newcastle. The first submission, “Indiscriminate Almsgiving,” was published February 7, 1870. It called for a “scheme for the suppression of mendacity” through the “thorough organisation of charitable

relief.”<sup>15</sup> Stead’s initial foray into professional journalism established the model of his media-based community engagement by combining a cause-focused press campaign with a call for community involvement and organization.

Dissatisfied with the editor’s revisions, Stead wrote a letter of complaint to Copleston. In response, Copleston rebuked him for breaching newspaper etiquette; however, he soon became Stead’s mentor. According to Frederic Whyte, Stead thought a career in the press would allow him to “acquire greater power, perhaps, for benefitting his fellow-men.”<sup>16</sup> The daily newspaper gave Stead a broader platform from which he could expand the subject matter of his media-based social activism. Tony Nicholson describes the context into which the young journalist stepped:

All this exciting new content could be delivered faster than ever before and the advent of the telegraph led to a new delight in speed. Before Stead joined the *Northern Echo* in 1871, the paper ran its second and third editions as telegraphic news arrived and this practice became common in many provincial papers. It gave the experience of reading a breathless quality. . . . The visual make-up of papers improved as they introduced headlines and crossheads, shorter editorials and more attractive forms of advertising. Parliamentary and diplomatic reports remained, but provincial papers began widening their field of vision.<sup>17</sup>

At the *Northern Echo*, Stead quickly progressed in his newly adopted career.<sup>18</sup> In April 1871, at the age of twenty-two, he was promoted to editor. The position provided £150 per annum, a fortnight’s holiday, and the freedom to avoid subjects that clashed with his convictions.<sup>19</sup> Out of the pages of the *Northern Echo* emerged Stead’s characteristic style: the journalistic campaigns, personal engagement, and interviews that came to be associated with the New Journalism. During his ten-year tenure at the *Northern Echo* (1870–1880), Stead continued to experiment

with media-based campaigns. In 1893 he wrote, “In the *Northern Echo* I preached just the same as I preach now. . . . [I was] a heretic on the subject of Capital Punishment, and was always a very strong opponent of the Permissive Bill. On the other hand, I was, from the first, a vehement supporter of Mrs. Josephine Butler in her Crusade against the C. D. Acts.”<sup>20</sup>

In 1880, at the age of thirty-one, Stead left the north of England for London and the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The *Pall Mall Gazette* brought Stead’s media-based community activism to a wider audience. He joined the Liberal London daily in October 1880 and was promoted to editor three years later. In his 1880s press campaigns, he addressed poverty and living conditions in London (1883), the rescue of General Gordon in Khartoum (1884), government investment in the Navy (1884), the creation of an imperial federation (1885), and the Bloody Sunday labor unrest (1887).<sup>21</sup> The ambitiousness and international scale of the *Pall Mall Gazette* crusades set the stage for the empire-wide scope of the *Review of Reviews* participatory reader network he developed in the 1890s. During his time at the *Pall Mall Gazette* (October 1880–January 1890), Stead rose to become, in John Morley’s words, “the most powerful journalist on the island.”<sup>22</sup> He reached this pinnacle, of course, when the *Pall Mall Gazette* published his 1885 investigation into child prostitution—“The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon.”

The “Maiden Tribute” was a direct descendent of Stead’s community-engagement efforts at Newcastle. It can also be viewed as a revival of techniques from earlier in the century, such as G. W. M. Reynolds’s augmentation of *The Mysteries of London* with speeches around the time of the 1848 “Charing-Cross Revolution,” which served to inspire readers and audience members to participate in public protests.<sup>23</sup> Stead’s sensational investigation of sexual exploitation and child prostitution in London began on Saturday, July 4, 1885, when the *Pall Mall Gazette* issued a “frank warning” to readers. They were told that the first in a series of articles about an “actual

pilgrimage into a real hell,” filled with “unimpeachable facts,” would be appear on the following Monday.<sup>24</sup> Between July 6, 1885, and July 13, 1885, the public clambered for copies of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

Both the actions and emotions of readers underpin the formation of reader networks. The relatively local issue of prostitution in London appealed to readers not only in the metropolis, but also across the country and in foreign nations as well. Those clamouring to read “Maiden Tribute” articles embedded themselves in what Benedict Anderson calls “imagined communities,” a concept of nation-state founded upon the rituals of newspaper reading. Anderson stresses ritual actions, while other scholars like Mabel Berezin emphasize the significance of participants’ emotions in the formation of a group identity. In addition to participating in a community of reading, those scandalized by the *Pall Mall Gazette*’s shocking content were assembled into a community of feeling—a network of sympathetic readers united by emotion.<sup>25</sup> The “Maiden Tribute” suggested the need for community-building and collaboration around the issue of child prostitution by playing on fears and anxieties. Overblown, purple prose painted the metropolis as a mythological warren of darkness, danger, and sin. It suggested that an increasingly-fragmented modern world allowed vice and criminality to flourish unseen and unchallenged. Politicians averted their gaze, tacitly endorsing exploitation and venality.

The “Maiden Tribute” exemplifies Stead’s community-building methodologies and illustrates some of the shortcomings of his later participatory reader networks. The series encouraged readers to see themselves as members of affiliated communities. However, while the pages of the newspaper promoted affiliation, not all were equally empowered. For example, women were unified by their vulnerability. According to Judith Walkowitz, the “Maiden

"Maiden Tribute" depicted the city as a perilous labyrinth where dangerous men sexually exploited vulnerable women. While the series fuelled moral panic and fear, Walkowitz argues that it also fostered cross-class unity among women. However, she describes the affiliation as "fraught with contradictions and difficulties."<sup>26</sup> She continues, noting that it was a "call to female unity based on the example of suffering, fallen womanhood. . . . While championing the cause of the fallen woman and the 'endangered' girl, feminists established a hierarchical and custodial relation to the 'daughters' they had set out to protect."<sup>27</sup> The empowerment of one set of women was grounded upon the disempowerment of another. Like Stead's later organizing efforts, the "Maiden Tribute" vested autonomy in one group (philanthropists) at the expense of another (the objects of charity).

Just as in his first community-organizing campaign, Stead encouraged readers to see themselves as essential to the success of the "Maiden Tribute" investigation. Because of the scale of the endeavour, it was not feasible to personalize and distribute copies of the articles to all influential stakeholders. In addition, Stead had come to recognize the growing influence of the mass reading public. While the series was about vice in London, Stead wanted to activate the hearts, minds, and political will of a global, English-speaking community. To do so, he launched the series with a "Thou art the man!" message: "We Bid You Be of Good Hope."

This series suggested community and allegiance through the strategic deployment of pronouns. It began,

The Report of our Secret Commission will be read to-day with a shuddering horror that will thrill throughout the world. . . . we need not doubt that the House of Commons will find time to raise the age during which English girls are protected from inexpiable wrong. . . . These revelations, which we begin to

publish to-day, cannot fail to touch the heart and rouse the conscience of the English people. Terrible as is the exposure, the very horror of it is an inspiration. It speaks not of leaden despair, but with a joyful promise of better things to come.<sup>28</sup>

While the title differentiated the authorial/editorial “we” from the reader “you,” the phrase “our Secret Commission” in the first paragraph made the binary ambiguous and left open the possibility that “our” could be elided and combined with “we” and “you,” unifying the author, editor, and reader into a single entity.

The democratizing impulses behind the series were evident in the phrase “we need not doubt.” The collective “we” of the article’s title once again converged with the “we” of the audience. It suggested author, editor, and reader were equivalent. More importantly, it created a dialectic of opposition: “*We* need not doubt that the *House of Commons* will find time to raise the age.”<sup>29</sup> The community of “we” was differentiated from the structures of government. The emerging power of the democratized “we” was pitted against an inactive, ineffective, indifferent, ruling-class “they.” “We Bid You Be of Good Hope” and the “Maiden Tribute” were intentionally crafted to harness the collective influence of “we”—author, editor, Secret Commission, reader, newspaper, press networks—in order to force Parliament to act. And act it did. On August 10, 1885, a revised and amended Criminal Law Amendment Bill was passed that raised the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen years of age.

Just as the lurid series was a media sensation, so too was Stead’s subsequent trial and conviction on charges related to his purchase of Eliza Armstrong for £5, which was one of the more shocking details in the series. Stead’s trial at the Old Bailey took place between October 23 and November 10, 1885. In essence, New Journalism was as much on trial as the editor of the



*Pall Mall Gazette*. Stead—and his lurid style of investigative journalism—were found guilty. He served three months in prison for the abduction of Armstrong and indecent assault. During his incarceration, he continued to build and burnish his public reputation. In addition to editing the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he wrote two essays about his journalistic philosophies that were published in the *Contemporary Review* in 1886. “Maiden Tribute” would have been fresh in readers’ minds when they read “The Future of Journalism” and “Government by Journalism.”

### **“Government by Journalism,” “The Future of Journalism,” and the Alter-Ego Model**

Stead’s post-“Maiden Tribute” journalistic philosophies combined the democratizing power of an increasingly global press with a cult of personality founded on the editor’s new-found notoriety. These philosophies underpinned his later participatory reader networks. In “Government by Journalism” Stead credited science and technology with making the world a smaller place. “We are all next-door neighbours,” he writes.<sup>30</sup> Scientific advances have produced a new, far-reaching, populist democracy: “The telegraph and the printing-press have converted Great Britain into a vast agora, or assembly of the whole community. . . . The Press and the Platform . . . are merely expressions used to indicate the organs by which the people give utterance to their will, and the growth of their power is indicative of the extent to which the nation is taking into its own hands the direct management and control of its own affairs.”<sup>31</sup> In the wake of globalization, community was no longer defined by location. Instead, language and the popular press became bases of affiliation, which were in turn used to foster unity based on shared belief or feeling.

“Government by Journalism” outlined how the democratizing influence of the press and the platform united and empowered a new political power base—print media consumers. In his second article, “The Future of Journalism,” Stead outlined a structure for harnessing the new

power base's influence—the participatory reader network. He described a network of sympathetic readers, or “alter egos,” who would dedicate their time and energy to issues identified by a newspaper's editor. These “alter egos” were to be editor analogues organized by parliamentary district. Inspired by a newspaper's mission or its editor's identity, they would generate newspaper content, gather information, and interact with community leaders to expand both the editor's and the publication's sphere of influence. The key feature that distinguishes Stead's alter-ego system from other reader communities is the long-term nature of the relationship between reader and editor. Stead did not promote single acts of participation, such a letter to the editor or a contest entry. Rather, he sought to foster a long-term, multi-directional relationship, where reader and editor interacted repeatedly about a variety of subjects.

The democratizing power of Stead's work was premised on a cult of editorial personality. The network of alter egos was inspired by one man—an editor with an outsized public persona. The fame and power of the benevolent British newspaper editor would attract acolytes—in other words, readers would be honored to contribute time and energy to Stead, his post-“Maiden Tribute” editorial identity, and his many personal causes. He writes, “In the newspaper whose organization I am sketching there would be so many points of contact with the average Briton that there would be no doubt at all that there would be many persons sufficiently in sympathy with the direction to feel honoured by being asked to co-operate as voluntary unpaid associates with the editor. . . . The one thing indispensable is that they are intelligent, keenly interested in the general policy of the paper, and willing to take some trouble to contribute to its efficiency and to extend its power.”<sup>32</sup>

The alter-ego system also fostered a contradictory economy that combined consumerism with Stead's charitable and social-justice campaigns. Volunteers were unpaid associates. They

not only provided free labor but paid for the privilege of cooperating with the editor by purchasing copies of the publication. While readers were called upon to support and promote the editor's various causes, their collaborative community served a commercial enterprise. Populist politics and philanthropy built a network of dispersed, uncompensated spokespersons. Selling a cause amounted to selling a paper.

To attract suitable "select" volunteers, Stead drew attention to the exclusivity of the relationship between editor and volunteer. Those who joined him shared a collective identity. The partnership between editor and reader allowed volunteers to adopt his benevolent, custodial superiority. He wrote, "By this co-operation between a newspaper and select readers, it will be possible to focus the information and experience latent among our people as it has never been done before, and to take an immense stride towards the realization of the conscious government of all by all, in light of the wisdom of the best informed."<sup>33</sup> Stead preached equality while at the same time preserving hierarchical paternalism and the notion of a marginalized, putative other. His participatory reader networks perpetuated a tension between apparent democratization and the persistence of hierarchical inequalities.

After publication of "The Future of Journalism" and "Government by Journalism" in the *Contemporary Review*, Stead put the alter-ego model into practice, using it as the basis of two publication-based participatory reader networks: The Law and Liberty League circles associated with the *Link* (1888) and the Association of Helpers associated with the *Review of Reviews* (1890–1912).

### ***The Link: A Journal for the Service of Man***

In the participatory reader network associated with the *Link: A Journal for the Servants of Man* (February 4, 1888–December 1, 1888), the benevolent editor leveraged his celebrity, influence,

and press contacts to advocate for a cause that aligned with his personal beliefs. He combined organization, print media, personalization, and his post-“Maiden Tribute” journalistic philosophies to marshal a community of support behind Londoners’ right to assemble in public spaces for peaceful protest. The impetus for the *Link* was the Trafalgar Square labor unrest that came to be known as Bloody Sunday. As editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Stead reacted to the events in the same way he had since the beginning of his career: he called for organization and cooperation, using the press to publicize the cause, motivate readers, and drive collaboration. As noted in an 1888 editorial, he sought the “co-operation of all who are willing to assist in the defence of the laws and liberties of the people of London” in order to form a Law and Liberty League.<sup>34</sup>

The heart of the Law and Liberty League’s mission was legal advocacy, and its secondary focus was fundraising. It supported prisoners’ families, advocated for the right of public protest, and collected funds to defend Bloody Sunday arrestees, who were dubbed the “Prisoners of Liberty.”<sup>35</sup> To fight police corruption, the group also took up the cases of individuals arrested on the basis of police evidence alone. After calling for the formation of the Law and Liberty League, Stead publicized its activities in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. In February 1888 he partnered with Annie Besant, who had been involved in the Bloody Sunday protests and who had a long history of social and political advocacy, to co-edit a periodical that would be the “link of communication” for the organization. *The Link* was used to formally structure, regulate, and manage the expectations of the League’s members.

The co-editors described the four-page, halfpenny weekly as a “link of communication” for the network of members and circles.<sup>36</sup> Law and Liberty League volunteers were the *Link*’s primary audience, although the weekly had a secondary aim of reaching working-class readers.

In addition to articles, it contained reports on organization activities, answers to legal questions, explanations of new legislation, accounts of protests, meeting announcements, excerpts from other publications, and regular appeals for support. Early content focused primarily on the aftermath of the Bloody Sunday riots. Once progress was made on the public protest issue and the arrestees were released from prison, the *Link* and the league embraced other causes, including sweated labor and striking workers.<sup>37</sup>

The Law and Liberty League was an ambitious scheme. The “circles” addressed by the *Link* were “united by a common faith . . . and by a common pledge to perform certain duties.”<sup>38</sup> *Link* circles were organized by Parliamentary borough and division. The goal was to form a circle “in every constituency in the United Kingdom.”<sup>39</sup> Each complete circle was to have a maximum of 240 members divided into twenty sub-groups of twelve individuals. Captains from each of the twenty sub-groups reported to the circle’s center, and two delegates from each circle reported to a general council. As the platform of an organization that sought to bring together volunteers with differing political, religious, and social ideologies, the *Link* stressed unity and consensus.<sup>40</sup> In the opening article, Stead and Besant express their desire to “establish in every village and in every street, some man or woman who will sacrifice time and labor . . . systematically and cheerfully in the temporal Service of Man.”<sup>41</sup> They avoid points of conflict or disagreement among their readers by holding themselves out as models of the “possibility of this practical co-operation.”<sup>42</sup> They “have given unhesitating expression to their distinctive convictions[,] . . . the one an uncompromising and aggressive Atheist, while the other has constantly affirmed that ‘to be a Christ’ is to him the command of God.”<sup>43</sup> Besant and Stead thus pledge to set aside their differences and not use the publication for proselytizing on divisive issues.

The Law and Liberty League brought together a number of other pre-existing political and cultural networks, including groups of leading socialists, radicals, Fabian Society members, Pre-Raphaelites, politicians, and legal professionals.<sup>44</sup> Stead used the *Pall Mall Gazette* to publish meeting reports, donor lists, calls for volunteers, and updates on the League's accomplishments—content analogous to that found in niche publications such as professional, trade, self-help, or temperance periodicals.<sup>45</sup> In doing so, he simultaneously used the mass-market newspaper to generate visibility for the niche or “class” publication while adopting the techniques of “class” publications within a mass-market periodical.<sup>46</sup> Other special-interest publications also augmented the *Link*'s visibility. For example, William Morris, who served on the organization's executive committee, reported on the group's activities in the *Commonweal* (1885–1894), a penny monthly he edited for the Socialist League. Although the league's membership included socialists and radicals, Stead emphasized that it was neither a socialist organization nor a political party.<sup>47</sup>

Months before the *Link* was launched, the Law and Liberty League was actively pursuing its mission through meetings, letters, and telegrams, as well as content in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and other socialist papers.<sup>48</sup> Once the *Link* was created, volunteers' participation was managed through a column titled “To Be Done.” It announced upcoming protests, fundraising events, and meetings. Volunteer assignments included writing to Parliamentary representatives, signing petitions, assisting with events, and recruiting subscribers.<sup>49</sup> Correspondence was a key mode of engagement for the network. League volunteers sent newspaper clippings and reports on problems in their communities to the *Link*. Some wrote letters to the editors. Others contributed letters for a column called “The Consulting Room of the Law and Liberty League,” which asked

readers to submit “questions . . . on legal points of general interest” that would be answered by a “well-known barrister.”<sup>50</sup>

Just as he had done when he announced the formation of the Law and Liberty League in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Stead emphasized the importance of collaboration and personal relationships in the *Link*. The first issue stressed that each reader was responsible for the periodical’s success: “Remember, *The Link* is your organ; dependent upon your co-operation, your information, and your support for its existence.”<sup>51</sup> By shifting responsibility to the *Link*’s audience, while maintaining control over content, the editors could absolve themselves of responsibility should the participatory network fail. Readers were promised access to power in a reversal of the alter-ego concept. The editors embodied the readers, and, in turn, readers aspired to become the editors. In actual practice, the promised power was limited. In his editorial, Stead included a litany of restrictive instructions.<sup>52</sup> While the *Link* was a public forum, it was clearly moderated.<sup>53</sup>

As in Stead’s other democratic-yet-hierarchical schemes, the *Link*’s reader network had underlying tensions. In the opening editorial, volunteers were singled out as “fellow servants,” “Servants of Man,” “Friends,” and “circles.” Plural, collective terms reinforced community and collaboration. The formation of a group identity allowed those who considered themselves servants to see themselves as the protective superiors of those who were served. The distance between those who served and those who received service was evident in the paper’s motto, which appeared between the masthead and the first article on every front page: “The people are silence. I will be the advocate of this silence. I will speak for the dumb. I will speak of the small to the great, and of the feeble to the strong.”<sup>54</sup> The motto constructed a gulf between the superiority of the benevolent martyrs, such as Stead and Law and Liberty League members, and

the masses they condescended to serve. Likewise, egalitarian terminology—“fellow servants”—seemed to put editors and volunteers on equal footing. However, as “The Future of Journalism” makes evident, readers were expected to feel honored by the opportunity to cooperate with the superior, powerful editor at the heart of the participatory network. Stead’s alter-ego model was based on the centrality of a strong editorial identity which inspired and directed network volunteers. However, in the *Link* the leadership of one visionary editor was bifurcated into an editorial partnership. Therefore, the formation of a personal relationship between editor and reader was diluted. Because *Link* volunteers supported a cause rather than an individual, when the League’s mission changed there was no editorial identity to drive alterations in participants’ allegiances.

Both the *Link* and the Law and Liberty League were underfunded. Members of the league were required to subscribe as part of their service; however, their numbers fell well short of the ambitious community circles plan. There were not enough non-member subscribers because the periodical’s content was aimed at a relatively narrow, progressive audience. While the league aspired to have circles throughout Great Britain, content was focused on London and the East End. There was no advertising to make up subscription or donation shortfalls. The league’s legal mission also contributed to the publication’s early demise. The profession had no pro bono mandate, and legal defence was expensive. Barristers working on the league’s behalf were paid. According to the *Democrat*, “every lost case has cost £25, and every case that has been won has mulcted the League in £15.”<sup>55</sup> Despite constant fundraising, the organization was in the red by September 1888. The gap in funding, coupled with a destabilized organizational focus, spelled the death of the league and the *Link*.



The shifting priorities of the Law and Liberty League also contributed to its brevity. The organization was formed in response to a specific event (the Bloody Sunday riots), and the *Pall Mall Gazette* served as its preliminary community-building mechanism. More than two months after the formative events, members of the league implicitly shifted their allegiance to the *Link* as coverage in the *Pall Mall Gazette* dwindled and publication of the *Link* began. The leadership of one visionary editor was replaced with an editorial partnership, which altered the nature of alter-ego identification. Since the league predated the *Link*, the publication's participatory reader network was an adjunct, peripheral structure rather than central to the existence of the group. Once those arrested in connection with Bloody Sunday were released from prison, the impetus for the organization's existence and the group's sense of urgency subsided. The league tried to redefine itself by shifting its focus first to labor organizing and then to providing free legal services to the poor.<sup>56</sup> *The Link*, however, did not have the authoritative force to drive such a change.

*The Link*'s participatory reader network foundered after ten months because of the lack of "necessary funds for covering the weekly expenses" of publication.<sup>57</sup> However, the experience gave Stead the opportunity to make changes and revise expectations when forming his next participatory reader network in the *Review of Reviews*. Having learned lessons from the failure of the *Link*, Stead developed a less complex network that focused on a single editorial identity and supported a mission broad enough to encompass his ever-changing interests and escapades.

#### **"Our Association of Helpers" (1890–1912) and the *Review of Reviews* (1890–1936)**

The participatory reader network that Stead developed in connection with the *Review of Reviews* (1890–1936) was the culmination of a cohesive thread of media-based community engagement running throughout his career. In January 1890, Stead and the *Pall Mall Gazette* parted ways. His

relationship with paper's proprietor, Henry Yates Thompson, had soured in the aftermath of "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon"; as criticism of the *Pall Mall Gazette* increased, circulation numbers fell. Working in partnership with George Newnes (1851–1910), Stead initiated a new monthly digest of material from English-language periodicals—the *Review of Reviews*. A few months after the periodical was launched, Stead purchased Newnes's share with money from the Salvation Army and became the periodical's sole owner, proprietor, and editor.

*The Review of Reviews* aimed to bring order to the overwhelming number of English-language periodicals. It was, in essence, another of Stead's organization and association projects. He described the press as a "mighty maze" that the *Review of Reviews* would "supply a clue to . . . in the shape of a readable compendium of all the best articles in the magazines and reviews."<sup>58</sup> The reference to clue and maze were assuredly intentional. Just as he brought order to the labyrinth of London with the "Maiden Tribute," he would provide clues to guide readers through the bewildering maze of periodicals. He also promised to determine quality and separate the wheat from the chaff. Readers would recognize the Stead brand and, presumably, trust him to select only the "best articles" for consumption.

Despite protestations of modesty, Stead knowingly used his fame and extensive network of influence to attract readers and subscribers. Prior to the *Review*'s launch, he asked friends and dignitaries to comment on his new venture. The correspondence he received was repurposed into a kind of "Thou art the man!" invitation for readers to join the *Review*'s network of celebrity. In the January 1890 issue, Stead included letters, autographs, and photographs from "men whose names are as familiar as household words throughout the English-speaking world."<sup>59</sup> The tacit endorsements represented the editor's ties to political, social, and cultural luminaries: Gladstone, Cardinal Manning, Alfred Tennyson, Thomas Huxley, George Meredith, Bramwell Booth, Annie

Besant, the Archbishop of Dublin, Madame Adam, and many other earls, lords, marquises, politicians, activists, and reverends. Stead's personal network had an international reach and mindset. The Reverend Professor Fairbairn recommended including periodicals from Germany, Holland, Italy, and Russia in the *Review*, while the Late High Commissioner of South Africa noted that the *Review* would function to "[keep] the colonies in touch with the most highly educated feeling in this country, to strengthen the ties which unite the different portions of our Empire."<sup>60</sup> Addresses are incorporated into a few of the letters to draw attention to the significance of place and the diversity of locations. Facsimiles of the letters and correspondents' signatures suggested the diversity and number of correspondents. They also established written correspondence as an important mode of engagement with the publication. The autographs were augmented with images and additional signatures in the 1890 collection *Portraits and Autographs: An Album for the People*.<sup>61</sup> It further extended Stead's implied network, incorporating everyone from Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales to an extensive number of literary, artistic, and political figures: Emile Zola, Olive Schreiner, Mark Twain, Cecil Rhodes, Count Keneko Kentaro, and Leo Tolstoy's daughter Tatiana.

*The Review of Reviews* was intended to be a mechanism of inter-communication—a tool for organizing and engaging community, where the idea of community encompassed a far-ranging English-speaking empire.<sup>62</sup> From the first issue, Stead embarked on organizing a community of alter-egos—the "Association of Helpers." Like the *Review* itself, the reader network combined democratization with the power structures of empire. In "A Word to Those Who Are Willing to Help," Stead writes, "The secret power in all journalism, daily, weekly, or monthly, is the establishment of close touch between the Editor and his readers, and the creation in the minds of the latter of a consciousness that their co-operation is essential to the success of

the former.”<sup>63</sup> The structure of the proposed network echoes language from the first issue of the *Link*:

*Review of Reviews*

A great thing will be achieved when in every town or village throughout the English-speaking world there is one man or one woman who feels himself sufficiently in earnest about the objects of this *Review* to read it, to recommend it, to lend it, and to work for it as if he or she were the Editor in person. There is no one too poor or too insignificant to be of no use in this matter. <sup>64</sup>

*The Link*

What we want to do is establish in every village and in every street, some man or woman who will sacrifice time and labor as systematically and cheerfully in the temporal Service of Man, as others do in what they believe to be the service of God.<sup>65</sup>

While the wording is similar, the configuration of relationships had changed because the scope had expanded from the nation to the English-speaking empire. Stead still sought men and women, but the vagueness of “some” was transformed into the specificity of “one.” The scope broadened, zooming out from the close-focus of the “street” to the larger “town” or “village.” The revised emphasis indicates a desire to activate a manageable number of alter-egos around the globe. Most importantly, the focus on volunteers’ energies changed. Instead of the vague “Service of Man,” Stead sought volunteers who would serve him personally.

The opportunity to help was a chance to form a relationship with Stead, albeit a virtual one. He described his aim as “to get into more or less personal direct communication with a picked body of men or women . . . who will not hesitate to work for the *Review* and the ideals which it upholds.”<sup>66</sup> By volunteering, they would help a man whose name was a household word. He asked for volunteers’ names and addresses, which implied he would know each individually. Volunteers embedded themselves in the editor’s global network of influence, as evidenced in the autographs and letters found at the front of the issue. While exclusivity was one of the attractions of the opportunity to help, Stead engaged the posture of humble editor to democratize it: “It may well be that there are many to whom even a sixpence a month is a sum beyond their means. I was in that condition myself for many years.”<sup>67</sup> Rather than affiliating themselves with a specific cause—in other words, the “Maiden Tribute” or the Law and Liberty

League—alter-egos working for the *Review of Reviews* supported any cause or escapade the editor embraced over an extended period of time.

The relationship between editor and alter-ego was multi-directional. He promised to strive to produce the best possible periodical, and he asked readers to be “the eyes, the ears, and the brains . . . to help [him] in [his] task.”<sup>68</sup> Stead’s alter-egos were expected to consider themselves “Helpers.” They were to recruit subscribers, respond to calls for information, report threats to the English-speaking empire, send clippings from periodicals that discussed themes or concerns in the *Review of Reviews*, or do anything that would promote the periodical’s success. Through this virtual affiliation, reader-volunteers were asked to mirror, reproduce, and embody the editor’s identity to expand the publication’s sphere of influence. To prepare for their duties, they were required to read “Government by Journalism” and “The Future of Journalism.” Stead thus exercised seemingly-benevolent Foucauldian discipline to regulate his reader network.<sup>69</sup>

Between the establishment of the Association of Helpers in March 1890 and 1913, the year after Stead’s death, the participatory reader network embraced dozens of “good causes,” including world peace; workhouse improvements; quality-of-life issues, such as housing, public spaces, and access to recreational activities; penny postage for the English-speaking world; country-trips and adequate meals for underprivileged urban children; labor issues, such as working conditions and hours; and support for the elderly and dying. Monthly service assignments published in the *Review* regularized interaction between the editor and his helpers. Specific directions were provided on how to carry out each assignment. One of the earliest assignments was to gather information about conditions at local workhouses, including tabulating the number of inmates as well as the number of periodicals, newspapers, and toys available to them. This call was followed in April 1890 with series of assignments that included

writing to local newspapers, distributing copies of a report on findings from the initial survey, and collecting reading materials for workhouses.<sup>70</sup> Other assignments included determining political candidates' views, reporting on local issues, mapping local networks of influence by identifying community leaders, and completing surveys on local conditions.<sup>71</sup> Of course, helpers also encouraged people to subscribe to the *Review*.

The response to Stead's call for help was relatively modest, although it did generate interest around the globe. The March 1890 formalization of the Association of Helpers included Stead's boast, "When I inserted in the first number of the *Review of Reviews* an appeal to those who were willing to help, I was hardly prepared for the general enthusiastic response which the appeal exhibited."<sup>72</sup> A list of helper-represented constituencies in the March 1890 issue included a total of 179 parliamentary districts represented by 353 helpers.<sup>73</sup> Assuming 60,000 copies of the *Review* were distributed in January and February, then the call inspired approximately one-half of 1 percent of the audience to volunteer.<sup>74</sup>

<i>Review of Reviews</i> Issue	Parliamentary Districts, Colonies, Foreign Countries	Helpers
March 1890	179	353
April 1890	187	263
November 1891	264 total England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland = 219 Colonies = 25 Foreign Countries = 20	NA

The next month's issue included 187 districts, but the total number of helpers dropped to 263.<sup>75</sup> After April 1890, district lists were only occasionally printed in the *Review*. By November 1891, the list of districts stood at 264.<sup>76</sup> Of that number, twenty-five were in "colonies"—in other words, Africa, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand—and twenty were in "Foreign Countries," including seven locations in the United States. The total number of districts in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland stood at 219. The increase in helper locations abroad was

accompanied by a decrease in domestic constituencies. Since later lists were abbreviated and often did not specify the number of helpers in each district, it is impossible to gauge the Association of Helpers's actual size. The obfuscation of later membership levels suggests that divulging actual numbers would have signalled the limited reach and influence of the network and, in turn, its editor–leader.

Stead's enthusiasm for the Association of Helpers led him to create a spinoff periodical in February 1891—*Help: A Journal of Social Service*.<sup>77</sup> Stead claimed it was launched to contain an “ever-accumulating mass of copy, good copy, useful copy” that “stretched the elasticity of the *Review of Reviews* to the uttermost.”<sup>78</sup> Like the *Review of Reviews*, *Help* was intended to be a “medium of intercommunication[,] . . . a universal diffuser of helpful hints and suggestions[,] . . . a great depository of the latest information as to the best way of doing everything that is best worth doing.”<sup>79</sup> *Help* ran in tandem with the *Review of Reviews* until December 1892, and volunteers were expected to be familiar with and represent both publications. A brochure entitled “How to Help” was produced to recruit and indoctrinate volunteers.<sup>80</sup> It outlined the Association's mission, core values, and methodologies.<sup>81</sup> Stead's long-standing interests comprised the “fivefold ideal” of the *Review* and the Association of Helpers: (1) international brotherhood, (2) the reunion of all religions into a federation of service on behalf of those who suffer, (3) the rights of women, (4) improving the condition of the poor, and (5) the promotion of physical and artistic culture.

Once again, Stead's community organizing strategy blended tenets of equality and democratization with hierarchical paternalism. Helper assignments were gender neutral, and men and women were expected to participate as equals. This structure promoted the expansion of women's roles beyond the domestic sphere. Both men and women joined and managed the



helper network. In February 1892 the general secretary of the Association of Helpers was a woman, Mary G. Burnett. And, while an 1892 membership list is predominantly comprised of men, four dozen unmarried and married women are listed as constituent representatives.<sup>82</sup> Yet, at the same time, the call for women to participate could be seen as an attempt to reinforce traditional notions of women's philanthropic activism. "How to Help" reiterated the centrality of Stead and his editorial identity within the Association of Helpers. Its subtitle established the organization's hierarchy: "How you can help me, and I can help you, and we all can help the others." The editor/helper "we" was comprised of collaborative equals, while the term "others" fixed the alterity of an amorphous underclass outside of and inferior to the editor/Helper partnership.<sup>83</sup> The association later adopted the motto: "The Union of all Who Love in the Service of all Who Suffer," which reinforced the gulf between those who "love" and "serve" and those who "suffer."

In a parallel to the way editorial voice framed the content digested in the *Review of Reviews*, helper-related materials subsumed volunteers' identities within an overarching organizational identity. Stead's initial call for volunteers suggested the significance of the individual by offering an opportunity to enter into a one-to-one relationship with the editor. With the creation of the Association of Helpers, however, individuality was increasingly replaced with a collective or community identity. Monikers such as "Bradford Helper" and "Eccles Helper" were used in lieu of names. Volunteers were instructed to write "Helper" on all correspondence "to facilitate the despatch of business."<sup>84</sup> Stead's periodical-based activism required individual volunteers to adopt a community identity that was, in turn, part of the editor's identity and the *Review of Reviews* brand.

Stead's messages of worldwide English-speaking unity were belied by an evident British bias in helper service assignments. In an echo of Stead's *Pall Mall Gazette* campaigns, issues, topics, and assignments were based upon the mistaken assumption that worldwide circumstances and concerns were the same as those in England, London in particular. While transportation and technology made everyone neighbours, the association failed to consider different circumstances in countries like Canada and Australia. A helper in New Westminster, British Columbia, complained about the short amount of time volunteers were given to complete an assignment.<sup>85</sup> Another in Sydney, Australia, pointed out that the "extent of the country and sparse population" would hinder the proposed adoption of universal penny postage.<sup>86</sup> Stead and the Association of Helpers were unable to reconcile the interests of the locality in which mass media was produced and the diversity of interests within a networked, global community of participants.

Even Stead's outsized personality could not sustain the initial rush of enthusiasm for the Association of Helpers. While the network existed for more than a decade, the number of helper-related activities and articles in the *Review of Reviews* diminished over time. According to Frederick Whyte, Stead came to see the *Review of Reviews* as "inadequate and altogether futile . . . as a political organ."<sup>87</sup> He had been accustomed to the sensationalism and frequency of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, so the repurposed, editorially filtered, less-frequent content of the *Review* paled in comparison. Laurel Brake comments that he was frustrated by the "limited power base of the monthly."<sup>88</sup> He tried to reclaim the political influence he lost when he departed from the *Pall Mall Gazette* by launching new daily papers in 1893 and 1904; however, both quickly folded.

In truth, the *Review of Reviews* and its Association of Helpers attracted a narrow set of readers. Gowan Dawson suggests that Stead paradoxically aimed to reach mass audiences but only appealed to a small, like-minded readership.<sup>89</sup> Because the periodical's participatory reader

network was founded upon the centrality of the editor's identity, his loss of interest resulted in the slow demise of the Association of Helpers. The Association of Helpers was never officially disbanded, although Stead's death on the *Titanic* in 1912 can be seen as the group's official end.

### **Conclusion**

W. T. Stead's contribution to the development of reader engagement in New Journalism is more extensive and innovative than has hitherto been acknowledged. Motivating and organizing communities not only led him to a career in journalism, he employs techniques of reader engagement and participation throughout his career. An expanded view of Stead's use of participatory reader networks and the significance of reader participation in Stead's editorial endeavors offers the opportunity to re-examine and reconsider Stead's work. The "Maiden Tribute" series, for example, uses a personalized call to action, or "Thou art the man!" message, to activate readers. In addition to personalization, Stead later adopted the alter-ego model, the apotheosis of his participatory endeavors, which asks self-selecting readers to emulate the editor and embed themselves in the well-known man's network of influence. While his contemporaries offered fleeting opportunities for reader interaction, Stead's reader networks in the *Link* and the *Review of Reviews* foster repeated reader-editor exchanges and unite geographically dispersed individuals over a period of years. Stead's reader-engagement schemes have their limitations and contradictions. There are persistent tensions between democratization and the perpetuation of hierarchical inequalities. In addition, he is unable to reconcile interests rooted in the location of production with the diversity of interests within a networked, global participatory community. At the same time, Stead's networks seek to address needs no longer met by evolving social and political structures. Reader engagement did not emerge fully-formed in either New Journalism or Stead's career. With each subsequent publishing venture, Stead refines the personal and alter-ego

approaches. His use of reader engagement is experimental, yet it is also considered and intentional. Over the course of many years and in the pages of multiple publications, he incorporated social action into the experiences and expectations of readers. By fostering and organizing periodical-based communities of interest, Stead made a significant contribution to the development of New Journalism and the history of audience engagement.

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### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, “George Newnes and the ‘loyal Tit-Bitites,” 24.

<sup>2</sup> Brake and Codell, *Encounters in the Victorian Press*, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Stead, “Government by Journalism,” 672.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Alexis Easley mentions the activities of Stead’s Association of Helpers in her article, “W. T. Stead, Late-Victorian Feminism and the *Review of Reviews*.”

<sup>6</sup> He joined a number of local groups, including the Howden Sunday School, the Tract Society, the Cottage Meeting, the Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Society, the Newcastle Mendicity Society, and the local Preachers’ Society. Whyte, *Life of W. T. Stead*, 1:28.

<sup>7</sup> The typewritten manuscript is in the Papers of William T. Stead, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, UK.

<sup>8</sup> E. Stead, *My Father*, 44; Whyte, *Life of W. T. Stead*, 1:22. The oft-repeated story of the tramp incident became central to Stead's journalistic identity and personal mythology.

<sup>9</sup> E. Stead, *My Father*, 44.

<sup>10</sup> Stead, "How to Help," 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> E. Stead, *My Father*, 44.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>14</sup> Whyte, *Life of W. T. Stead*, 1:22.

<sup>15</sup> [Stead], "Indiscriminate Charity."

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>17</sup> Nicholson, "Provincial Stead," 14.

<sup>18</sup> Stead claimed that before the age of twenty-one, the only payment he received for his writing was a book by Miss Younge. E. Stead, *My Father*, 46. After nine months of unpaid work for the *Northern Echo*, he started receiving paid assignments in late 1870.

<sup>19</sup> E. Stead, *My Father*, 46.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>21</sup> According to Whyte, Stead called his media crusades "escapades." Whyte, *Life of W.T. Stead*, 1:104. His campaigns against London living conditions included an endorsement of Andrew Mearns's pamphlet, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883).

<sup>22</sup> Whyte, *Life of W.T. Stead*, 1:71.

<sup>23</sup> See Shannon, "Spoken Word and Printed Page."

<sup>24</sup> “Notice to Our Readers,” 1.

<sup>25</sup> Mabel Berezin uses the term “communities of feeling” to describe the use of public political rituals to create temporary affiliations of feeling among participants. She writes, “The repeated experience of ritual participation produces a feeling of solidarity—‘we *are* all here together, we *must* share something’; and lastly, it produces collective memory—‘we *were* all there together.’ What is experienced and what is remembered is the act of participating in the ritual event in the name of the polity.” Berezin, “Emotions and Political Identity,” 93.

<sup>26</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 133.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> “We Bid You Be of Good Hope,” 1.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.; my emphasis.

<sup>30</sup> Stead, “Government by Journalism,” 653.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 654.

<sup>32</sup> Stead, “Government by Journalism,” 672.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 675.

<sup>34</sup> “Law and Liberty League for London,” 5.

<sup>35</sup> The first issue of the *Link* refers to the goal of protecting the “right of meeting in Trafalgar Square.” “To Be Done,” 3. It also mentions actions to defend a young woman against a policeman’s false accusation as well as “War-Chest” funds raised for the “assistance of the wives and children of the Prisoners of Liberty.” “The People’s Pillory,” 4, and “The War-Chest,” 4. Before and after the *Link* was launched, the League and its formation, goals, activities, and fundraising were covered in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. See, e.g., “What Must Be Done Now?,” 5;

“Law and Liberty for London,” 8; “The Law and Liberty League at Work,” 1–3; “Welcoming the Prisoners of Liberty in London,” 11; and “£ s. d. for the Law and Liberty League,” 14.

<sup>36</sup> Besant and Stead, “To Our Fellow Servants,” 1.

<sup>37</sup> While it came into being because of the Bloody Sunday labor riots, the *Link* is also known for Annie Besant’s campaigns on behalf of sweated laborers, including match girls who struck against the Bryant and May company.

<sup>38</sup> Besant and Stead, “To Our Fellow Servants,” 1.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> *The Pall Mall Gazette* boasted that the Law and Liberty League united opposing viewpoints and represented a new civic congregation: “In respect to composition alone, it was . . . Secularist and Salvationist, Agnostic and Jew, Radical and Socialist, poet and artisan, journalist and ‘middle man,’ lawyer and labourer, capitalist and worker—a very heterogeneous yet highly sympathetic congregation.” “Establishment of the Law and Liberty League,” 1.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> In addition to Stead and Besant, members included William Morris, May Morris, Richard Pankhurst, Walter Crane, Corrie Grant, and barrister W. M. Thompson, who defended those arrested on Bloody Sunday.

<sup>45</sup> Donor names indicate the personal networks that supported the Law and Liberty League. W. Holman Hunt’s name appears more than once in the *Pall Mall Gazette* donor lists, pointing to the intersection of Morris’s artistic network with his political network. Donations were also received from radical clubs, socialist groups, barristers, working men, politicians, and law clerks.

<sup>46</sup> I would like to thank Andrew King for suggesting the crossover between mass-market and niche publication content.

<sup>47</sup> “General Council of the L. L. L.,” 4. In *English Socialist Periodicals, 1880–1900*, Deborah Mutch suggests that the *Link* is a socialist journal because of “the effect it had on the socialist movement during the period of its publication.” Mutch, *English Socialist Periodicals*, xiii.

Others argue the periodical was not socialist. Indeed, evidence from within the periodical, including Stead’s insistence on the league not being a socialist organization, suggests that it distanced itself from socialist organizations.

<sup>48</sup> One important task was providing bail for individuals arrested at post-Bloody Sunday protests. In his autobiography, artist and illustrator Walter Crane recalled receiving a postcard from Besant directing him to bail out people arrested during December 4, 1887 protests. Crane, *An Artist’s Reminiscences*, 270.

<sup>49</sup> For example, in August 1888 readers were asked to sell tickets to raise money to build a club for the Union of Women Match-makers. “To Be Done. By the Order of the Executive L. L. L.,” 3.

<sup>50</sup> “Consulting Room of the Law and Liberty League,” 4.

<sup>51</sup> “To Readers and Correspondents,” 3.

<sup>52</sup> Instructions included how to submit newspaper clippings (“remember that brevity is the soul of wit”), the necessity of good penmanship (“legible handwriting saves many MSS. from the wastepaper basket”); and the proper preparation of submissions (“write on one side of the paper only; always enclose name and address”). “To Readers and Correspondents,” 3.

<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, the editors anticipated a potential loss of civility should the platform be opened to the public. They write, “In the infinite diversity of opinions, respect must be shown for all



ideals.” “To Readers and Correspondents,” 3. Interpersonal relationships were established, but the new forms of virtual interaction opened up the potential for a breakdown in norms of sociability and decorum.

<sup>54</sup> The front-page motto was taken from Victor Hugo’s *The Man Who Laughs*.

<sup>55</sup> “Wanted! Lawyers for the Poor,” 467.

<sup>56</sup> The organization’s new focus, providing free legal advice to the poor, would have been even more expensive. A desperately hopeful December 1888 article in the *Commonweal* spelled out the Law and Liberty League’s financial situation and called for money to continue its mission: “With a little financial assistance [the league’s] work might be greatly extended. The balance-sheet showed an expenditure of £1,132, and a debt remaining of £170. Until this debt is discharged the League cannot undertake any further financial responsibilities, but it is hoped that sufficient subscriptions will come in from the public to enable it to continue its modest work as poor man’s advocate.” “The Law and Liberty League,” 413. *The Link*’s closure in the same month suggests that the call fell on deaf ears.

<sup>57</sup> “To Be Done. To Subscribers,” 4.

<sup>58</sup> “Programme,” 14.

<sup>59</sup> Stead, “Some Autograph Introductions,” 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>61</sup> *Portraits and Autographs* also promoted the Association of Helpers. An advertisement on the page facing the book’s preface describes the *Review of Reviews* as the “organ of the Association of Helpers, which has in it the promise of a worldwide growth.” Stead, *Portraits and Autographs*, iv.

<sup>62</sup> In the January 1890 issue, the tacit letters of endorsement were followed by Stead's address entitled "To All English-Speaking Folk," which outlined the new periodical's mission (15–20).

<sup>63</sup> "A Word to Those Who Are Willing To Help," 51.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Besant and Stead, "To Our Fellow Servants," 1.

<sup>66</sup> "A Word to Those Willing to Help," 53.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> My thanks to Andrew King for suggesting Stead's pastoralized adoption of Foucault.

<sup>70</sup> The report was published in the March 1890 issue. The April assignment essentially asked helpers to adopt Stead's "Thou art the man!" strategy of personalization to build a network of support. "Association of Helpers: Service for April," 274.

<sup>71</sup> Answers collected by a helper prior to the West Hartlepool by-election were included, along with images of the candidates, in the February 1891 issue. "Association of Helpers: Hartlepool Election," 141. In July 1890, helpers were encouraged to support excursions to the country for low-income, inner-city children. "The Association of Helpers: Service for July," 14–15.

Temperance efforts on the local level were surveyed in April 1891, and helpers were asked to respond with information about the "extent to which temperance substitutes for the publichouse have been provided in their respective districts" in order to supply material for a future article entitled "How to Fight the Tap-room." "Helpers' Service for April," 49. To map local networks of influence, helpers were asked to create lists of the "hundred most influential persons in their constituency." "Our Association of Helpers," 332. A March 1893 service assignment asked helpers to answer a series of eight questions about local schools, specifically, whether the board

would permit the use of buildings outside of school hours for other educational purposes.

“Helpers’ Service for March,” 338.

<sup>72</sup> “Our Association of Helpers,” 192.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 192–93.

<sup>74</sup> In a January 10, 1890 letter to Stead, Newnes said they had “sold and sent out about 30,000.”

George Newnes to W. T. Stead, January 10, 1890. Papers of William T. Stead, Churchill Archives Centre, University of Cambridge. Of course, circulation and sales continued after January 10, 1890; and a larger print run may have been distributed in February. Handwritten figures on a March 10, 1890 letter from Stead to Newnes during the course of their negotiations to part ways include the number 55,000 written above the number 50,000. If 100,000 copies of the *Review of Reviews* were distributed in January and February, then the response of 353 Helpers would have been a response rate of .353%.

<sup>75</sup> “Association of Helpers: Service for April,” 274.

<sup>76</sup> “After Two Years,” 552. The same issue reports that membership in an affiliated reader network, the Magic Lantern Mission (see n. 77), had reached between 300 and 400 members (553).

<sup>77</sup> *Help* served two of Stead’s causes. In addition to serving the Association of Helpers, it included content related to the Magic Lantern Mission. First developed in the seventeenth century and greatly-improved in the nineteenth, magic lanterns projected single or multiple photographs or painted images onto a screen, which anticipated the development of film late in the nineteenth century. First mentioned in a December 1890 *Review of Reviews* article, the Magic Lantern Mission sought to organize lanternists to provide free or low-cost educational, religious, and political presentations. “Magic Lantern Mission,” 561. The Magic Lantern Mission gave

Stead's social service agenda a multimedia dimension and speaks to his willingness to embrace new technologies. *Help* was filled with mission articles and advertisements targeting lanternists. In October 1892, Stead's affiliation with the Magic Lantern Mission ended when the sub-group left the *Review of Reviews*'s offices to set up a new, "more business-like" headquarters and its own fortnightly periodical. *Help* was discontinued two months later, which suggests that the sub-group was vital to the spinoff's survival.

<sup>78</sup> Stead, "To Our Readers," 1.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> In an undated letter, the Association's Secretary, Josephine Marshall, told a helper to leave leaflets or copies of "How to Help" in locations where potential volunteers might congregate: "Tables of any Hotels, Boarding Houses, Waiting rooms, free libraries, etc." Josephine Marshall to "Madam," n.d. Papers of William T. Stead, Churchill Archives Centre, University of Cambridge.

<sup>81</sup> *Help* became a venue for publishing a variety of materials related to the Association of Helpers, including rules and regulations in the February 1, 1892, issue. "Rules and Regulations," 24–25.

<sup>82</sup> "List of Members," 26–32.

<sup>83</sup> The hierarchy of service is reinforced in the brochure's content. "How to Help" begins by pointing out how Stead helped "you," i.e., the reader. "How to Help," 3. Having established the reader's indebtedness, the brochure turns to how "you," the reader, can help "me." Ibid., 4. A brief list of examples of service are provided, such as sending a list of the names and addresses of influential men and women in the reader's neighbourhood. The shift from oppositional you-

me to collaborative “we” follows, as Stead turns to discuss “How We Can Help the Others.” “How to Help,” 5.

<sup>84</sup> “Our Association of Helpers: Service for June,” 469. Even after Stead’s death, the habit persisted. In an April 1912 letter of condolence sent to Mrs. Stead by a helper from South Africa, the phrase “One of Mr. Stead’s Helpers” is written prominently across the bottom of the note. Mary Elliott to Mrs. Stead, April 5, 1912. Papers of William T. Stead, Churchill Archives Centre, University of Cambridge.

<sup>85</sup> “Our Association of Helpers. Service for May,” 380.

<sup>86</sup> “Helpers at Work,” 115.

<sup>87</sup> Whyte, *Life of W. T. Stead*, 2:55.

<sup>88</sup> Brake, “Who Is ‘We’?,” 59.

<sup>89</sup> See Dawson, “*Review of Reviews*,” 172–95.

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