

POLISH STUDIES –  
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Jolanta Sikorska-Kulesza

# Tolerated Evil

Prostitution in the Kingdom of Poland  
in the Nineteenth Century



PETER LANG

Jolanta Sikorska-Kulesza

## Tolerated Evil

In the nineteenth century, state policy towards prostitution was primarily shaped by an assessment of its role in spreading venereal diseases. In this book, the author traces normative and organisational efforts of the authorities of the Kingdom of Poland, which sought to maintain control over prostitution and the health of women who offered paid sexual services. The author uses data collected by the police and medical authorities supervising legal and illegal prostitution to provide a demographic and sociological picture of the big-city and small-town market of sexual commerce. It was only in the early twentieth century when prostitution became an important subject of the Polish public debate, a process which is described in the book against the backdrop of the major issues and fears of the epoch.

### The Author

Jolanta Sikorska-Kulesza is a professor at the Institute of History of the University of Warsaw. She specialises in research on the social history of the Kingdom of Poland and the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the nineteenth century (the history and transformations of the nobility, memory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the social role of photography) and critical editing of sources.

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Translated by Julita Mastalerz



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## List of abbreviations

AGAD	Central Archives of Historical Records
ALR	General State Laws for the Prussian States
Am.A	Augustów City Records
Am.L	Lublin City Records
Am.Ł	Łódź City Records
Am.S	Suwałki City Records
APCz	State Archive in Częstochowa
APK	State Archive in Kielce
APL	State Archive in Lublin
APŁ	State Archive in Łódź
APS	State Archive in Suwałki
APW	State Archive in Warsaw
CWPL	Central Authorities of the November Uprising
DP KP	Journal of Laws of the Kingdom of Poland
KGL	Chancellery of the Governor of Lublin Gubernia
KKGP	Code of Criminal and Corrective Penalties
KL-P	Medical-and-Police Committee
KRSW	Government Commission for Internal Affairs
KRW	Government War Commission
KWK	Committee of the Kalisz Voivodeship
L	Medical (Department)
LVIA	Lithuanian State Historical Archives
MMCz	Magistrate of Częstochowa City
RGIA	Russian State Historical Archives
RGKiel.	Kielce Gubernia Authorities
RGL	Lublin Gubernia Authorities
RGOSz	Principal Welfare Council of Hospitals
RGP	Piotrków Gubernia Authorities
RGW	Warsaw Gubernia Authorities
ULGW	Medical Office of the Warsaw Gubernia
WL	Medical Department
WP	Police Department



# Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Relevant literature portrays the 19th century as a period of an unprecedented development of prostitution. Brothel houses and streetwalkers were an integral part of capitalist urban landscape. According to contemporaneous observers of social life, women rendering paid sexual services in European metropolises such as London, Paris, Berlin and St. Petersburg were counted by the thousand, or even hundreds of thousand, and were regularly availed of by married and single men.<sup>2</sup> While such estimates and beliefs are likely to have been exaggerated, and research proves prostitution to have been developing relatively well in any and all periods (naturally, in proportion to the surrounding reality of life), the statement regarding its expansion in the 19th century seems justified. No previous epoch had produced such favourable circumstances for the evolution of this sector of the market. The pervasive and swift urbanisation and industrialisation of 19th-century Europe led to an equally rapid increase in the numbers of poor and destitute city dwellers, including an army of women with no means of sustenance, who were, so to speak, doomed to become prostitutes. On the other hand, the same economic processes and their social consequences, such as urban and overseas migration, the gender imbalance among immigrants, as well as certain cultural phenomena (especially the different norms of sexual behaviour applied to women and men) generated a higher demand for commercial sex and increased the number of potential customers.

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- 1 The present work is a translated version of my post-doctoral dissertation, published in the Polish language in 2004. It was the first academic monograph based on archival sources that tackled the subject of prostitution in Polish territory in the 19th century. The English-language edition presents updated information on the recent research pertaining to 19th-century prostitution (in the Introduction) and a list of relevant publications issued after 2004 (the final section of Bibliography). The main body of the work was only supplemented with small additions considered of use to foreign audiences, e.g. explaining certain historical circumstances; errors noted in the original were corrected (Chart 2 in Chapter 2). The translation and publication of the present work was made possible owing to a grant issued by the National Programme for the Development of Humanities in Poland.
  - 2 Adolf Rzańnicki, for instance, offered the following numbers: 250 000 prostitutes in London, 100 000 in Paris, 50 000 in Berlin, 35 000 in St. Petersburg. Adolf Rzańnicki, *W sprawie prostytucji* (Vilnius: Nakład Wiedzy, 1911), p. 4.

Sources indicate that the world of 19th-century prostitution was very diverse. Aside from heterosexual services (the organisation of which appears to have been changing at an unprecedented pace), there existed an entirely illegal – but nevertheless organised – market of child and homosexual prostitution. There were brothels for every budget. Their owners made efforts to cater to even the most refined – or the most licentious – tastes. Luxurious, “specialist” establishments for the most affluent and most demanding customers<sup>3</sup> coexisted with houses which hardly met any basic standards, frequented by soldiers who had to queue up for a chance to satisfy their sexual drives. Since the final quarter of the 19th century, brothels began to be replaced by so-called meeting houses and entertainment venues open at night, where sexual services were offered in *chambres séparées*. The poorest prostitutes searched for customers in the streets. In the course of the century, the business sphere related to prostitution gained veritably capitalist momentum, moving from local to global trade, conducted in the form of organised international trafficking of women to be used as prostitutes.

Another thereby unseen phenomenon related to prostitution was the State’s and the society’s interest in the issue. The connection between paid sexual services and the growing incidence of syphilis and other venereal diseases meant that the topic of prostitution was discussed not only in medical textbooks (as it had been since the 17th century), but also in state offices, which led to the widespread introduction of a system of regimentation of prostitution. Previously only implemented on a very small scale, the system involved subjecting prostitutes and establishments to specific forms of supervision carried out by police-and-medical authorities established for that very purpose. Since the first half of the 19th century, prostitutes had become subjects of academic study.<sup>4</sup> The bodies, minds, and personal histories of women who plied the flesh trade started to be

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3 In 1998, one of such establishments, *Les Belles-Paules* in Blondel St. in Paris, which enjoyed considerable popularity in the first decades of the 20th century, was put on the list of French cultural heritage sites. The officially stated reasons for this decision referred to the artistic value of the interior decoration and sanitary equipment installed in its bathrooms. See: Krzysztof Rutkowski, “Raptularz końca wieku. Zły sen”, *Rzeczypospolita*, no. 155 (1998), pp. 4–5.

4 The pride of place among these publications goes to the outstanding study of Parisian prostitution, written by hygienist Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet. It established a standard for writing about prostitution which was later followed all over Europe. The scope of research and the innovative methodology used in the publication was widely admired. Alexandre Jean-Baptiste Parent-Duchâtelet, *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris* (Paris: J. – B. Baillière et Fils, 1836).

analysed by medical doctors (venereologists and hygienists) and, with the development of new disciplines of science, also by anthropologists, criminologists, psychologists, sociologists and historians. Increasingly often, the results of this research, published in books and specialist journals, were popularised by periodicals aimed at the general reader. What could be observed was a certain ennoblement of the issue in public discourse. The culmination of this process came at the turn of the century, when the matter was no longer discussed only in connection with public health concerns, but also in the context of the sources of marginalisation of women, their social and legal standing, and the fight against prostitution. Socialist thinkers and activists such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and August Bebel pointed to the connection between prostitution and the development and evolution of social and economic organisation. In the 1870s, the growing significance ascribed to prostitution as a factor in social life led to the emergence of an international movement to combat the phenomenon, known as abolitionism. At the same time, prostitution, human trafficking and the status of prostitution started to be used (especially by members of the suffragette movement) as an opening point for discussing other pressing matters.

The frequency with which women of ill repute were depicted in literature and visual arts had also increased. They became the protagonists of novels by Honore Balzac, Alexandre Dumas Fils, Emile Zola, Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and many other 19th-century authors,<sup>5</sup> and appeared on paintings and sketches by such outstanding artists as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Eduard Manet and Edgar Degas.<sup>6</sup> The subject of prostitution was included in cinematography since its

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5 For more on prostitution in 19th-century literature see e.g.: Jack Lewis Culross, *The Prostitute and the Image of Prostitution in Victorian Fiction*, (Ann Arbor: Lousiana State University, 1970); Nancy McCombs, *Earthspirit, Victim, or Whore? The Prostitute in German Literature, 1880–1925* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986); Tom Winniffrith, *Fallen Women in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute, Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge Mass.-London: Harvard University Press, 1989); George Siegel, "The Fallen Women in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature", *Harvard Slavic Studies*, Vol. 5 (1970), pp. 81–107.

6 For more on prostitution in 19th-century art see e.g.: Hollis Clayson, *Painted Love, Prostitution in French Art of the Impressionist Era* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1991); Edward Farell Marsicano, *The Femme Fatale Myth: Sources and Manifestations in Selected Visual Media 1880–1920* (Ann Arbor: Emory University, 1983); Emmanuel Pernoud, *Bordel en peinture. L'art contre Le goût* (Paris: Adam Biro, 2001).

early beginnings.<sup>7</sup> Another factor that made the issue popular was the growing interest in human sexuality and the fascination with eroticism observable in the 19th century.

The above-mentioned processes were also present in the territory of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was divided between Prussia, Austria and Russia following the partitions of Poland. As with many countries and regions of Europe, a system of regimentation of prostitution was introduced in all these administrative regions (though not simultaneously). The present publication presents the development and operation of the system in one part of the former Polish territory, namely the Kingdom of Poland, since its proclamation in 1815 to the year 1915, when it ceased to be managed by Russian administration.<sup>8</sup> This one-hundred-year period brought fundamental changes in the political status of the Kingdom. Initially a semi-sovereign country dependent on Russia, but with its own constitution, parliament, central administration and army, the Kingdom gradually lost its autonomous institutions after two failed military insurrections (1830–1831 and 1863–1864) and as a result of the policy of unification implemented by Russia. In the 1870s it was turned into a province of the Russian Empire, entirely subordinate to the central authorities in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and governed with the help of a well-developed network of police forces. The official name of the region was changed to the Vistula Land (Privislinsky Kray). Consequently, while the first normative solutions and executive action concerning prostitution in the Kingdom of Poland were decided on by Polish officials in Warsaw, in time laws and regulations began to be imposed directly by Russia. The Polish society regained a small degree of agency (making postulates, establishing organisations) following the democratic transformations that took place in Russia in 1905–1907. The development of prostitution itself was, in turn, influenced by the demographic, social and economic changes observable in the Kingdom. The second half of the 19th century brought a wave of intense urbanisation and industrialisation. The emancipation reform of 1864 led to an increased number of rural residents migrating to cities and industrial centres, and moving beyond the borders of the Kingdom. In 1816 the Kingdom of Poland (127.3 thousand square kilometres) had a population of 3.3 million

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7 James Robert Parish, *Prostitution in Hollywood Films. Plots, Critiques, Casts and Credits for 389 Theatrical and Made-for-Television Releases*, (North Carolina-London: McFarland & Co Inc., 1992).

8 The Kingdom of Poland was established during the Viennese Congress and encompassed the lands of the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–1813), a part of the territory split between Russia, Prussia and Austria.

people; at the beginning of the 20th century that number had increased to over 12.1 million.

The first two chapters of this book, essential in fulfilling its academic aim, present the approach taken by the Kingdom's authorities (both Polish and Russian) with regard to prostitution in the course of the 19th century. Chapter 1 focuses on the creation of the system of regimentation, which the Kingdom had inherited from the Prussian administrative organs governing Warsaw in 1797–1807. It describes the process of implementing rules for the legal operation of brothel houses and prostitutes plying their trade independently, the emergence of regulations and the institutions of police, administrative and medical supervision over women. It also explains, as much as the modest source base allows, the motives behind the decisions taken by the authorities, as well as their standpoint and views on the matter. Chapter 2 offers an overview and an evaluation of the factual efficacy of the system (to the extent that is possible), both in large urban centres and in small towns throughout the entire analysed period. It traces the conditions in which medical supervision over prostitution was carried out and the results it produced, the organisation of medical examinations and the treatment of prostitutes introduced to protect the population from sexually transmitted diseases. For a system of regimentation to be effective, measures needed to be taken to combat illegal prostitution – such as tracking women suspected of engaging in paid sex and avoiding examination, and persecuting the organisers of illegal prostitution and human trafficking. The gathered source material, mainly records of police investigations, was used as the basis to present the profile of women apprehended for illegal prostitution throughout the decades. A detailed analysis of legal prostitution in the Kingdom of Poland – its scale, geographical distribution, the social and demographic background of prostitutes and brothel owners was presented in Chapter 3, based on the relatively substantial amount of statistical data acquired in the Kingdom in 1889, summarised and published by the Statistics Department of the Ministry of the Interior in St. Petersburg.

The final chapter in the book presents the local public opinion regarding the system of tolerated prostitution and its supervision. The analysis of relevant sources revealed a fascinating, diverse discussion on the topic, held – mainly in the press – by members of various social and professional groups, reformers and social activists, at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. It reflected not only the thitherto unexpressed attitude towards the relations between prostitution and the State persisting in the society outside the circle of officials. Questions as to the justifiability of maintaining a system of regimentation were used as an excuse to reveal the public's views on prostitution itself, on its sources and on the aid offered to its victims. The issue of prostitution also became the starting

point for a broader debate on the moral condition of the society and the family, the gender relations, the need for changing social norms and realities. The discourse surrounding prostitution at the time was inherently connected with various phenomena in political, social and economic life, as well as in the mentality, culture and science of the day. Describing it within the context of the numerous transformations that took place at the turn of the centuries would require more detailed and more focused research. The present book only presents the central themes in this dispute and outlines the key issues.

Due to the publication's focus on the operation of the regimentation system in the entire territory of the Kingdom of Poland throughout the analysed period, not all of the issues traditionally tackled in analyses of prostitution shall be discussed in the same amount of detail. It should be noted that prostitution in Warsaw, although considered at length in the present work, is not analysed proportionately to its significance stemming from the scale and structure of paid sexual services rendered in the capital, or to the quantity of existing source material, which would suffice as the basis for an up-to-date monograph on the capital of the Kingdom.<sup>9</sup> The historiography of prostitution all over the world mainly comprises works focusing on specific urban centres.

The present book describes the operation of the regimentation system primarily on the basis of official records produced by the local and central administrative bodies responsible for supervising prostitution. The query encompassed the archives of voivodeship committees and gubernia authorities<sup>10</sup> (medical and military-and-police departments; medical-and-police committees<sup>11</sup>), medical offices, municipal authorities and the police bodies that answered to

9 Out of necessity, this lacuna is filled by material from popular science publications: Waclaw Zaleski, *Z dziejów prostytucji w Warszawie* (Warsaw: Druk. Policyjna, 1923); Stanisław Milewski, *Ciemne sprawy dawnych warszawiaków* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982). In the 1790s, the author of a guide of the capital's houses of ill repute still proudly stated: "May the world know that Warsaw's famous for; famous for providing the best sort of whore". [Antoni Kossakowski], "Suplement 'Przewodnikowi [Warszawskiemu]' przez innego autora wydany w tymże roku 1779, in: "Oświeceniowe 'Przewodniki' po warszawskich domach rozkoszy", ed. Edmund Rabowicz, *Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego, Dodatek do Prac Historyczno-Literackich* no. 8–9, (1985), p. 67.

10 Initially, the Kingdom of Poland was divided into voivodeships administered by voivodeship committees. In 1837 they were replaced with gubernias managed by gubernia authorities.

11 Only in Suwałki were the records of the Medical-and-Police Committee (6 units) made into a separate fond (LVIA, Vilnius, fond 1080).



them, and the Office of the Chief Police Inspector in Warsaw. Research was conducted in the archives of central offices of the Kingdom and Russia, i.a. the Government Commission for Internal Affairs,<sup>12</sup> managing matters of public health; the Principal Welfare Council of Hospitals (1832–1870);<sup>13</sup> the Office of the General Governor of Warsaw; the Office of the Chief Inspector of Healthcare in St. Petersburg; and the Russian State Duma's Committee for the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>14</sup> The archives of the Medical Council (1809–1867), very relevant to the issue, are no longer available. This gap in source material is partially filled by the monograph *Rada Lekarska Księstwa Warszawskiego i Królestwa Polskiego (1809–1867)* written by physician Franciszek Giedroyć and based on the archives of this institution (which the author extensively quotes).<sup>15</sup> Irreparable damage was also done by the loss of nearly all records from the city of Warsaw (destroyed during the Second World War), which would have been crucial in the reconstruction of the image of prostitution in the capital and the mechanisms through which women were dragged into the world of the flesh trade. The missing archives include those of Warsaw's Medical-and-Police Committee at the Office of the Chief Police Inspector (which probably included records of the inspector working at the Medical Office in Warsaw in 1843–1866), managing all issues related to prostitution in the city since 1867. Only a number of printed reports from the Committee's activity in several years have survived.

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- 12 Hereinafter abbreviated to 'KRSW', irrespective of the name the Commission bore at a given period, as these changed several times since 1815 and the disestablishment of the institution in 1868. Annual reports of the Commission's activity proved very valuable, as they pertained e.g. to health and the moral condition, and to municipal projects undertaken by Warsaw which included information on the city's revenue from legal prostitution.
  - 13 Earlier called the Main Council for Hospital Supervision (1817–1832). The collection comes from the period of 1832–1870, and comprises the records of special institutional field councils and files taken out of the KRSW documentation. The central archive was destroyed in 1944.
  - 14 When the query for the present publication was being conducted, the RGIA (invoking technical reasons) had long ceased to grant access to the archives of the Medical Department of the Ministry of the Interior, which was instrumental in introducing regulations pertaining to prostitution in Russia, and since the 1860s also in the Kingdom of Poland.
  - 15 Franciszek Giedroyć, *Rada Lekarska Księstwa Warszawskiego i Królestwa Polskiego (1809–1867)* (Warsaw: Władysław Łazarski, 1913). Giedroyć also had access to the archives of the Warsaw magistrate and KRSW records pertaining to prostitution.

The quantity of available sources pertaining to a given region does not necessarily correspond to the scale of prostitution within its borders. It is now difficult to ascertain to what extent the size of specific collections of records results from the actual scale of prostitution and the supervision thereof, and not from the history of the archives (or institutional documentation)<sup>16</sup>. With regard to the first half of the 19th century (before 1860s), existing records on “harlots” and the steps taken against “venereal women” come from Kalisz (1820s and 1830s; Committee of the Kalisz Voivodeship), Augustów Voivodeship (1840s and 1850s; the Magistrate of Suwałki City) and, in a much smaller number, from Piotrków (Piotrków City Records) and Radom (Radom’s Medical Office).<sup>17</sup> Data from the second half of the 19th century – or, more precisely, from the 1880s onwards – has survived in nearly all regions of the Kingdom. The largest collection pertains to the Lublin Gubernia, excepting the city of Lublin (Lublin Gubernia Authorities), hence the slight overrepresentation of references to this region, especially in the part describing medical supervision. Slightly less data comes from the Kielce Gubernia (Kielce Gubernia Authorities), less still from the Piotrków region (Piotrków Gubernia Authorities, Łódź City Records, the Magistrate of Częstochowa City), the Warsaw region (Warsaw Gubernia Authorities), the Kalisz region (Kalisz Gubernia Authorities) and the Łomża region (Łomża Gubernia Authorities). The material offered insight into the more provincial part of the Kingdom of Poland – smaller towns and, to some extent, the countryside, from which many prostitutes had originally come. The society of the Kingdom of Poland was largely agrarian, with enclaves of industrial urban communities in Warsaw, Łódź, and the Dąbrowa Coal Basin. Relatively large-scale prostitution only developed in those provincial, gubernia (voivodeship) and district capitals that housed large military garrisons, yet sexual services were offered everywhere, most frequently by women from the countryside. For them,

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16 After a time, officials could declare the amassed documentation to be worthless. The collection of the Suwałki Gubernia Authorities contains a folder entitled “On the reports delivered on syphilitic patients in the Suwałki Gubernia 8th Feb. 1877 – 25th May 1878”, bearing the following note: “The files themselves were sold [files were sold e.g. to be turned into tow fibre – J.S.-K.], excluding circular no. 1139 and the register”. As a side note, this testifies to the exemplary attitude of the local registrars. (LVIA, Vilnius, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 101, front page of the case folder).

17 The records pertaining to prostitution in the Mazovian Voivodeship may be extant; it is uncertain as most of the archives of the Mazovian Voivodeship Committee held in AGAD are still inaccessible.

prostitution was a temporary occupation taken up outside the season of work in the fields.

The nature of the interest a given office had in prostitution determined the type of documentation it produced. Thus, existing sources consist primarily of reporting correspondence (accounts of medical supervision of prostitutes, reports and transcripts from meetings of various committees established to supervise prostitution) and are almost exclusively limited to numerical data and general prescriptions. Exceptions to this rule include information regarding brothel houses (licences, requests from citizens asking the authorities to intervene). Reports from a given region and period are sometimes inconsistent; it is difficult to ascertain whether this results from the small scale of the problem, the inefficacy of administration, or the loss of records. Regardless of the underlying causes, this incongruity makes it impossible to take full advantage of the benefits of such sources – namely their homogeneity and the (theoretically) large quantity. Moreover, the numbers cited by the police and the various committees may sometimes seem questionable. The full spectrum of prostitution is not easily discernible from the records, which is why historians are forced to reconstruct the image from tiny scraps of information, often second-hand in nature. Official documents are, for instance, entirely devoid of information on the most affluent prostitutes. The State showed no interest in mistresses and kept women, as they had protectors, did not come into conflict with the law, and sometimes enjoyed a rather ambivalent social status. In the words of one contemporary, they had “the sad privilege of sinning with impunity”. Thus, even a relatively sizable local documentation usually reveals only a fraction of the world of prostitution. For this very reason, the present publication often (perhaps excessively) presents specific cases of individual people registered by the offices and known by name. More than any other source, these cases offer insight into the lives of real people, shortening the distance between historians and the subjects of their study of the past. Another type of officially generated source material are statistics, such as the publication on prostitution in the Russian Empire in 1889, and the general census of 1897 which included prostitutes on the list of occupations.

The above-mentioned sources are not the only archival material relevant to the subject. The query conducted for the present publication did not, for instance, include court files, as they are incomplete. Moreover, the case documentation in lower courts (where prostitutes were usually tried) contains very little information. Such sources would not present a reliable picture of police supervision over prostitution, yet could contain interesting supplementary data

of sociological nature. Any scholar wishing to tackle this issue must, however, brace themselves for searching through files that had not been prepared to facilitate research queries.

Additional information to complete the image emerging from archival material was acquired from printed legal acts, periodicals, published monographs, memoirs and the *belles-lettres*. It must, however, be noted that prostitution is not an easy topic to study, not only due to the scarce documentation (the taboo nature of the phenomenon and its categorisation as a crime), but also because the credibility of statements is difficult to verify. Many of them are riddled with unfounded beliefs, exaggeration and judgment.

Even diaries, whose main advantage as a source is the presence of everyday life topics, fail to be of use in the study of 19th-century prostitution in Polish territory. Few memoirs from the period disclose any information on the author's sexual life. This aspect of existence tended to be politely overlooked.<sup>18</sup> In such circumstances, the moral dilemmas faced by young Stefan Żeromski (who later became an acclaimed author) in connection with a visit to a brothel can hardly be regarded as representative for his entire generation.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, it should be added that the presence of such sources – produced in massive quantities since the 19th century – makes it impossible to conduct a fully exhaustive archival query, which in this case becomes rather random. From the 1870s

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18 An exception to this rule is found in the diary of Leon Sergejevich Baykov, surviving in a Polish translation heavily abbreviated by the publisher. Baykov was an official for special tasks working under Nikolai Novosilcov, who doubled as his drinking companion. As the publisher of the Polish edition explains, he wrote “day after day, records of all of his physical activities, without exception, mentioning his food and excess, his most brutal misbehaviour and his yielding to urges, feats of prowess and secret impotence of his body worn by age (...) and debauchery, and also the course of secret diseases from which he suffered – he wrote about everything”. He did not shy away from “deeply personal matters, of such kind as no other memoir would even consider to leave a trace of”. Only the wish to present Baykov as “the perfect incarnation and impersonation of moral corruption, demonism and cynicism of a bureaucrat from Novosilcov’s entourage” saved some of his more salacious passages from the strict censorship of its editor Aleksander Kraushar; Leon Bajkow, *Z kartek pamiętnika rękopiśmiennego (1824–1829) przez Alkara*, ed. Aleksander Kraushar, 2nd edition (Cracow: druk W. L. Anczyca i Sp., 1913), pp. 4, 5, 13.

19 Especially since, in this particular case, we cannot exclude the possibility of self-stylisation (even though the text was not intended for publication) to pose as a modern – i.e. internally conflicted – protagonist. Jerzy Kądziała, “Wstęp”, in: Stefan Żeromski, *Dzienniki* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: 1961), pp. VIII–IX, L.

onwards, prostitutes started to appear as characters in social-problem novels (Adolf Dygasiński, Bolesław Prus).<sup>20</sup> Many writers of the early 20th century (e.g. Stefan Żeromski, Gabriela Zapolska)<sup>21</sup> tackled the issue of fallen women and prostitution with clear educational and ideological agendas in mind. For this reason, their works constitute as valuable a source as the press of the day, given their potential to influence readers.

The largest quantity of data to reconstruct the discourse pertaining to prostitution and its tolerated form comes from newspapers and periodicals. Apart from specialist publications, most notably those issued by medical and hygienist institutions (e.g. *Zdrowie*, published by the Warsaw Association of Hygiene), which discussed the links between prostitution and venereal disease, the ongoing medical supervision and prostitution itself, the subject was most often breached in women's press of various ilk, as well as in periodicals focusing on culture and the society, especially those on the liberal or leftist side of the spectrum. The query for this publication encompassed all issues of over a dozen weekly magazines published in Warsaw, and random issues of daily press. Two early 20th-century periodicals issued in Galicia were also included due to their chosen subject matter – *Czystość* (1905–1909; focused on the fight against prostitution) and *Nowe Słowo* (1902–1907; the first feminist periodical).

The international body of work presenting the history of prostitution in various time periods is vast. A number of synthetic publications on the topic appeared as early as in the 19th century, setting the standard for a genre that was continued (with considerable success) in the 20th century, this time intended for the general reader – history through the ages, from Biblical stories of harlotry, the Antiquity (this part usually discussed alleged regulations instituted by Solon) to the author's own decade. Such works contain much factographic and anecdotal information, offered with a pinch of moralising. Although far from meeting modern expectations, they nevertheless prove valuable to historians of prostitution, as texts that shaped the image of prostitution and the attitude

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20 Ewa Ihnatowicz regards the presentation and analysis of prostitution offered in social-problem novels of the 1870s and 1880s as rather superficial. "Positivist writers stopped short of reconstructing social mechanisms, contenting themselves with describing external circumstances, the personalities and psychological processes affecting individuals"; Ewa Ihnatowicz, "Miasto kryminalne?", in: *Miasto-Kultura-Literatura-XIX wiek*, ed. Jan Data (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Gdańskie, 1993), pp. 114, 116.

21 Jadwiga Zacharska, *O kobiecie w literaturze przełomu XIX i XX wieku* (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2000), pp. 139–159 (chapter: "Prostyutka – kobieta uwiedziona czy wyzwolona?").

towards it. Existing sources also include numerous monographs focusing on prostitution in selected countries and cities.<sup>22</sup>

Academic interest in prostitution grew significantly in the 20th century, especially since the 1960s. The impressive oeuvre of works on the issue was partially synthesised in bibliographies of studies of prostitution, published in the 1970s and 1990s.<sup>23</sup> Most of the reasons behind the popularity of the topic (aside from the apparently unwavering reader interest) are associated with the development of social history, which started to tackle such issues as the history of family life, the status of women, gender relations and social outcasts. The study of human sexuality as a social phenomenon (pioneered by Michel Foucault) has also been rapidly evolving. These trends appeared both in European and in American historiography and became more prominent in the 1970s, with the development of feminist studies, the interest in homoerotic relations and homosexual prostitution, and the issue of AIDS (which was compared to the threat of syphilis in the 19th century). New directions in the study of prostitution involved the analysis of police and administrative records. Ordinary streetwalkers and nameless prostitutes replaced courtesans as the central characters in relevant historiography. Apart from describing the social reality of brothel houses, scholars started to focus on the prerequisite conditions for the phenomenon, the channels

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- 22 In France, Great Britain or Germany the number of such publications reached several hundred. Golosenko established that 431 works on prostitution were published in Russia in 1861–1917; Igor. A. Golosenko, *Rossiyskaya sotsiologiya prostitutsii (1861–1917)* (Sankt-Petersburg: Filial Instituta Sotsiologii RAN 1997), p. 8 Chart 1. Other countries with such publications include Italy (Giovanni Gozzoli, *La prostituzione in Italia*, Rome 1886), Switzerland (Alexandre Guillot, *La lutte contre l'exploitation et la réglementation du vice à Genève jusqu'au 22 mars 1896* (Geneva: Ed. Eggimann, 1889), Belgium (Louis Fiaux, *La prostitution en Belgique*, Paris: aux Bureaux du Progrès Médical, Veuve Fabé, G. Carré, 1892), Austria (Josef Schrank, *Die Prostitution in Wien* (Vienna: self-published, 1886)), Sweden (Otto M. Westerberg, *Prostitutionens Reglementering* (Stockholm: i kommission hos A. V. Carlsson, 1890)) and Portugal (Francisco Ignacio do Santos Cruz, *Da Prostituição na Cidade de Lisboa* (Lisboa: Typ. Lisbonense 1841).
- 23 Vern L. Bullough, Margaret Deacon, Barrett Elcano, Bonnie Bullough (eds.), *A Bibliography of Prostitution* (New York: Garland, 1977) (comprises 6494 entries) and its continuation: Vern L. Bullough, Lilli Sentz (eds.) *Prostitution: A Guide to Sources 1960–1990* (New York: Garland 1992) (1965 entries); Biswanath Joardar, *Prostitution: A Bibliographical Synthesis* (New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1983); Stanley D. Nash, *Prostitution in Great Britain 1485–1901. An Annotated Bibliography* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1994).

of marginalisation of women and the popularity of prostitution among men, as well as on State and municipal policy towards paid sex.

Although historical research into prostitution encompassed nearly all eras from the Antiquity and the Middle Ages<sup>24</sup> to modernity, the focus on the period of 1800–1920 (for which the source material is the most sizable) is clearly apparent.<sup>25</sup> Current studies pertain not only to France<sup>26</sup> and other European countries,<sup>27</sup> but also to prostitution in

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- 24 For instance the publication (also translated into Polish): Jacques Rossiaud, *La prostitution médiévale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1988).
- 25 See: Timothy J. Gilfoyle, “Prostitutes in the Archives: Problems and Possibilities in Documenting the History of Sexuality”, *American Archivist*, no. 57 (1994), p. 518.
- 26 Most notably the numerous works of Alain Corbin, particularly *Les Filles de noce. Misère sexuelle et prostitution au XIX siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978; reprinted in 1982) and Jean-Marc Berlière, *La police des mœurs sous la IIIe République* (Paris: Seuil, 1992); Jaques Solé, *L'âge d'or de la prostitution. De 1870 à nos jours* (Paris: Hachette Littérature, 1994); Simone Delattre, *Les Douze Heures Noires. La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000).
- 27 To offer some examples, Great Britain – Trevor Fischer, *Prostitution and the Victorians* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Leslie Hall, *Sex, Gender and social Change in Britain since 1880* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000); Scotland – Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1990); Germany – Sybilla Kraft, *Zucht und Unzucht. Prostitution und Sittenpolizei im München der Jahrhundertwende* (Munich: Hugendubel, 1996); Sabine Kienitz, *Sexualität, Macht und Moral: Prostitution und Geschlechter-beziehungen Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts in Württemberg. Ein Beitrag zur Mentalitätsgeschichte* (Berlin: Akademie, 1995); Denmark – M. Bøge Pedersen, *Den reglementerede prostitution i København fra 1874 til 1906* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Forlag, 2000); Italy – Mary Gibson, *Prostitution and the State in Italy 1860–1915* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999, 1st edition 1986); Portugal – Maria Isabel Viegas Liberato, *Sexo, ciência, poder e exclusão social, a tolerância da prostituição em Portugal 1841–1926* (Lisbon: Livros do Brasil, 2002); Spain – Rafael Carrasco (ed.), *La prostitution en Espagne de l'époque des rois catholiques à la IIe republique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994); Francisco Núñez Roldán, *Mujeres públicas: Historia de la prostitución en España (Historia de la España sorprendente)* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1995); Russia – Laura Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters: Prostitutes and their Regulation in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1995); N. B. Lebina, M. V. Shkarovskiy, *Prostitutsiya v Peterburge (40-e gg. XX v. – 40-e gg. XX v.)* (Moscow: 1994); Igor S. Kon, *Seksualnaya kultura v Rossii: klubnichka na beryozkhe*, Moscow: Institut Etnologii i Antropologii RAN 1997; Igor S. Kon, “Sexuality and politics in Russia”, in: *Sexual Cultures in Europe. National histories*, ed. Franz X. Eder, Lesley A. Hall, Gert Hekma (Manchester-New York: Manchester university Press, 1999); Natalja L. Pushkarova,

China,<sup>28</sup> North<sup>29</sup> and South America,<sup>30</sup> and the Arabic world. As a still present phenomenon, prostitution has also become the subject of study for sociologists, psychologists, sexologists and lawyers around the globe.

The achievements of Polish historiography seem rather modest in this respect, not only in comparison with research conducted in other parts of the world, but also with other fields of social study. No synthetic work on the history of prostitution was written in the 19th century.<sup>31</sup> This being said, the pan-European trend for studying prostitutes and prostitution observable among physicians and lawyers led to the publication of the extremely valuable works by Antoni Rolle,<sup>32</sup>

*Chastnaya zhizn' russkoy zhenshchiny v doindustrial'noy Rossii X – nachalo XIX v: nevesta, zhena, lyubovnitsa*, Moscow: Ladomir 1997.

- 28 For instance: Christian Henriot, *Belles de Shanghai. Prostitution et Sexualite en Chine aux XIXe-XXe siècles* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1997).
- 29 Examples of works published in the 1990s: Marylin Wood Hill, *Their Sister's Keepers: Prostitution in New York City 1830–1870* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Benson Tong, *Unsubmissive Women. Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Norman-London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994); Larry Whiteaker, *Seduction, Prostitution, and Moral Reform in New York, 1830–1860* (New York-London: Routledge, 1997).
- 30 Luis Carlos Soares, *Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro*, (London: University of London, Institute of Latin American Studies, 1988); Donna J. Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires. Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991); Anna Maria Atondo Rodriguez, *El amor venal y la condición femenina en el México colonial* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1992); Magali Engel, *Meretrizes e Doutores: saber médico e prostituição no Rio de Janeiro (1840–1890)* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1989); Álvaro Góngora Escobedo, *La prostitución en Santiago, 1813–1931* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1999) Aída Martínez; Pablo Rodríguez, *Placer, dinero y pecado: historia de la prostitución en Colombia* (Bogota: Aguilar, 2002).
- 31 Józef Lubecki's *Historia prostytucji w starożytności i wśród Kościoła chrześcijańskiego* (written in 1878), focusing on prostitution in the Antiquity, may have been intended as the beginning of such a project, yet the author was perhaps discouraged by the problems with distribution and bookshops refusing to sell the publication. The work is not mentioned in Estreicher's bibliography. See: Maria Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski. Biografia* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1987), Vol. 1, p. 232.
- 32 For an overview of his works on the issue of prostitution and his achievements in the field see: Jolanta Sikorska-Kulesza, "Prostytucja w XIX wieku na Podolu w świetle badań Józefa Apolinarego Rollego", *Przegląd Wschodni*, Vol. V, issue. 3 (19) (1998), pp. 435–452.



Franciszek Giedroyć (doctors of medicine) and Jan Maurycy Kamiński<sup>33</sup> (a barister), which described the contemporary situation and now constitute a source of useful data. All three of the mentioned authors took up the issue of prostitution motivated by their scholarly ambitions and social concerns. The first to do so was Józef Antoni Rolle, a doctor from Kamieniec Podolski (present-day Ukraine), whose publications appeared in medical specialist press in all three parts of partitioned Poland. Rolle wrote about venereal diseases and paid sex as early as in the 1850s and 60s, not only out of social-activist sentiments, but also due to the fact that he had come into contact with the issue relatively early, during his long stay in Paris, where it was hotly debated at the time. He was the first historian and analyst of contemporary prostitution who asked questions that went beyond the medical and anecdotal aspects of the phenomenon, and developed an adequately broad plan for combating prostitution. However, his contemporary research (including the first and – thus far – the only article on prostitution in the countryside, published in a medical periodical in Warsaw<sup>34</sup>) focused only on Podolia, and his historical study – on pre-partitioned Poland.

Invaluable information for any historian delving into the issue of 19th-century prostitution in the Kingdom of Poland is found in the works the Warsaw-based venereologist and regimentationist Franciszek Giedroyć. As the head doctor of the St. Lazarus hospital, which treated prostitutes, and a physician at its outpatient clinic, Giedroyć had an extensive knowledge of the topic in question. His works are objective and based on reliable sources, a substantial portion of which is no longer available to scholars.<sup>35</sup>

Doctor Jan Macko, in turn, wrote about prostitution from the perspective of an opponent of the system of regimentation. Macko was a physician and an abolitionist activist working in Interwar Poland.<sup>36</sup> His book, published in 1927 and

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33 Jan Maurycy Kamiński, *O prostytucji* (Warsaw: A. Pajewski, 1875), 2nd edition.

34 Józef A. Rolle, “Materiały do topografii i higieny Podola (Prostytucja)”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 38, 39, 40 (1869).

35 His most important works were: Franciszek Giedroyć, *Prostytutki jako źródło chorób wenerycznych w Warszawie (w ciągu ostatnich lat kilku)* (Warsaw: Drukarnia Maryi Ziemkiewiczowej, 1892); idem, *Rys historyczny szpitala św. Łazarza w Warszawie* (Warsaw: Drukarnia Kowalewskiego, 1897); idem, *Rada Lekarska Księstwa Warszawskiego i Królestwa Polskiego (1809–1867)* (Warsaw: Władysław Łazarzski, 1913).

36 Jan Macko, *Prostytucja. Nierząd – handel “żywym towarem” – pornografia ze stanowiska historii, etyki, higieny i prawa* (Warsaw: nakł. Polskiego Komitetu Walki z Handlem Kobietami i Dziećmi, 1927); idem, *Nierząd jako choroba społeczna* (Warsaw: nakł. Polskiego Komitetu Walki z Handlem Kobietami i Dziećmi, 1938).

presenting all aspects of prostitution and debauchery (legal, medical, ethical and hygienist) includes a rather superficial historical overview of the issue (40 pages covering the period between the Antiquity and contemporary times) riddled with mistakes, which are particularly jarring if they pertain to Polish territory. The interwar period also saw the publication of the first and thus far the only history of prostitution in 19th-century Warsaw, by Waclaw Zaleski.<sup>37</sup> Despite its poor research methodology and anecdotal nature, the work remains a source of information on Warsaw's prostitution, especially in the final 25 years of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, as few official records from the period have survived.

In post-war Poland, the history of prostitution in Polish territory was not a topic favoured by scholars.<sup>38</sup> Thus far (2004) no academic has made it into their main subject of study. The findings made in this respect – though unquestionably valuable and based on reliable sources – are the result of broader studies of human sexuality (Adam Krawiec's book on the sexual behaviours of mediaeval Poles and their contemporaneous views on the issue<sup>39</sup>) or of urban squalor and women's activity in the 17th – 18th century (the works of Andrzej Karpiński, a historian of the modern period).<sup>40</sup> A synthetic history of prostitution around the world (including Warsaw) intended for the general reader was written by Marek Karpiński.<sup>41</sup>

Historiographic works focusing on prostitution in Polish territory in the 19th-century are even more scarce. They include one chapter in Małgorzata Karpińska's book about crime in Warsaw in the period of the Kingdom of

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37 Zaleski, *Z dziejów*; Waclaw Zaleski, *Prostytucja powojenna w Warszawie* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Pracowników Księgarskich, 1927).

38 In the 1980s, historian of modernity Zbigniew Kuchowicz called attention to the biological aspects of history, including prostitution in the programme of research. See: Zbigniew Kuchowicz, *O biologiczny wymiar historii. Książka propozycji* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985), pp. 194–197.

39 Adam Krawiec, *Seksualność w średniowiecznej Polsce* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2000).

40 Andrzej Karpiński, "Prostytucja w dużych miastach polskich w XVI i XVII w. (Kraków, Lublin, Poznań, Warszawa)", *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, no. 2 (1988), pp. 277–302; idem, *Pauperes. O mieszkańcach Warszawy XVI i XVII wieku* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1983); idem, *Kobieta w mieście polskim w drugiej połowie XVI i w XVII wieku* (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 1995).

41 Marek Karpiński, *Najstarszy zawód świata. Historia prostytucji* (London: Lemur, 1997).

Poland<sup>42</sup> and a single article on prostitution in Cracow at the turn of the 20th century, written by Michał Baczkowski.<sup>43</sup> The issue of prostitutes in Warsaw was briefly discussed in Stanisław Milewski's popular-science publication describing crime in Warsaw on the basis of contemporaneous press articles. It offers little new information regarding the topic.<sup>44</sup> Anna Pawłowska's publication from the 1980s presents the attitude towards prostitution as one of the socio-ethical problems of the early 20th century, as displayed in the first Polish-language feminist periodicals.<sup>45</sup>

Since the year 2004, when the first edition of *The Tolerated Evil* was published, many Polish historians (especially from the younger generation) have shown interest in and began research on various aspects associated with prostitution in Polish territory in the 19th century.<sup>46</sup> This development certainly gave the author of the present book a sense of satisfaction (as she had, to some extent, acted as a trailblazer) yet it came mostly as a result of the development of Polish social history, with such sub-disciplines as the history of women, crime and the outskirts of society, social pathologies, the history of sexuality (sexual education), and the social history of medicine. Another factor that affects the choice of historical research are existing phenomena spotlighted by the media, such as human trafficking.

The majority of the several dozen works that appeared in 2004–2019 focuses on the opinions of social activists (e.g. Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska), or recapitulates the discussion regarding prostitution held in the press in the late

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42 Małgorzata Karpińska, *Złodzieje, agenci, policyjni strażnicy. . . Przestępstwa pospolite w Warszawie 1815–1830*. (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 1999). Karpińska analysed reports from an agent of secret police.

43 Michał Baczkowski, "Prostytucja w Krakowie na Przełomie XIX i XX w.," *Studia Historyczne*, Vol. 43, no. 4, 2000, pp. 595–598.

44 Stanisław Milewski, *Ciemne sprawy dawnych warszawiaków* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982).

45 Anna Pawłowska, "Kwestie etyczne-obyczajowe w prasie kobiecej przełomu XIX i XX wieku (na łamach 'Steru' i 'Nowego Słowa')," *Studia Historyczne*, year 30, issue 4 (1987), pp. 571–588. Other works providing a broad context for prostitution as a social issue (and the related venereal diseases) include the following publication on the history of the eugenic movement in Poland – Magdalena Gawin, *Rasa i nowoczesność. Historia polskiego ruchu eugenicznego (1880–1952)* (Warsaw: Neriton, 2003).

46 And in other time periods, esp. Interwar Poland. See: Paweł Rzewuski, *Warszawa – miasto grzechu. Prostytucja w II RP* (Cracow: Promohistoria, 2014), idem, *Grzechy "Paryża Północy" mroczne życie przedwojennej Warszawy* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2019).

19th and early 20th century – in one or two periodicals representing the views of a specific professional group (e.g. physicians, educators) or ideological circle (feminists, conservatives).<sup>47</sup> Press articles and, to an even greater extent, literary texts provide as much insight into prostitution, as they do on the society and its problems (e.g. family).<sup>48</sup> The issue was analysed in particular detail by Aneta Bołdyrew, a historian of education and upbringing, who wrote many publications discussing social pathologies in the Kingdom of Poland in the last 50 years of its existence. She was the first to touch on the issue of underage prostitutes; her book also presents the concepts for preventing prostitution and the educational-prophylactic and resocialisation initiatives directed at “fallen women” or those in danger of turning to prostitution.<sup>49</sup>

International trade in women from Polish territory is another widely discussed topic related to prostitution whose analyses, in a sense, pertain more to constructed narratives than to reality. An edited compendium of relevant sources (press articles) from 1873–1938 was compiled (and preceded by a sizable foreword) by lawyer Radosław Antonow, most likely to provide historical context for modern legal studies on human trafficking.<sup>50</sup> The most comprehensive analysis of the issue, based on an archival query conducted all over the world and ample knowledge of relevant literature (an exhaustive overview of the current state of research) was presented by Aleksandra Jakubczak.<sup>51</sup> The work confirms the

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47 See works by Aneta Bołdyrew, Daria Domarańczyk, Ewelina Maria Kostrzewska and Hanna Kurowska published in: *Miłość sprzedajna*, ed. Bożena Płonka-Syroka, Kaja Marchel, Andrzej Syroka (Wrocław: Arboretum, 2014). The full titles of these and other relevant publications may be found in the final section of the Bibliography.

48 See: Lena Magnone, “Prostytutka: niezbędny członek (pozytywistycznej) rodziny?” in: *Polska dramatyczna. 2, Dramat i dramatyzacje w XVIII i XIX wieku*, ed. Małgorzata Sugiera (Cracow: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2014), pp. 143–174.

49 Aneta Bołdyrew, *Spółczesność Królestwa Polskiego wobec patologii społecznych w latach 1864–1914* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2016), Chapter IV “Prostytucja jako przedmiot dyskusji społecznej i działań opiekuńczo-wychowawczych”, pp. 145–204. The various measures intended to prevent women’s prostitution in interwar Poland were described in: Piotr Gołdyn, *Pogarda dla zawodu. Litość dla człowieka. Społeczno-edukacyjne formy działalności wobec kobiet zagrożonych prostytucją w Polsce (1918–1939)* (Kalisz: Kaliskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 2013).

50 Radosław Antonow (ed.), *Drogi hańby. Piśmiennictwo polskie przełomu XIX i XX wieku o handlu “żywym towarem.”* (Wrocław: Wydział Prawa, Administracji i Ekonomii Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2013).

51 The book was submitted for publication at Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego and will appear in 2020. I extend my thanks to its author for providing me with the manuscript.

lack of reliable descriptions of this type of criminal activity. The (rather understandable) nonexistence of tangible evidence for the crime, juxtaposed with the huge scale of the problem – as perceived by contemporaneous social activists and observers of social life – led Jakubczak to believe that the issue should be regarded in terms of a myth and the paradigm of the so-called moral panic. Thus, she questions the scale and, consequently, the social significance of the phenomenon.<sup>52</sup> The interest in 19th-century trade in women is also related to another developing branch of historical studies in Poland, namely research into the history of Jews in Polish territory and the role they were believed (justly or not) to have played in human trafficking.<sup>53</sup> In an earlier work, Aleksandra Jakubczak tackled the issue of the so-called pogrom of pimps that took place in Warsaw during the 1905 revolution, presenting it from the perspective of the Jewish press and literature. Jakubczak offers an overview and an analysis of all opinions regarding the sources of the pogrom.<sup>54</sup> Since a systematic query in the archives of Russian offices is still impossible to conduct, the motivation of the authorities must remain conjectural and interpretative.

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- 52 For more in the problems of methodological research of the realities of the trade in women see: Jolanta Sikorska-Kulesza, “Handel kobietami z ziem polskich na przełomie XIX i XX wieku”, in: *O kobietach. Szkice i studia. Wiek XIX i XX*, ed. J. Hoff (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego 2011). The fact that no traders or their prospective victims were ever apprehended in the Polish state, newly re-established after the First World War, is rather telling, given that there were official forces tasked with the prevention of human trafficking, as indicated by my own research query in the archives of the Polish Committee for the Prevention of the Trade in Women and Children (*Polski Komitet Walki z Handlem Kobietami i Dziećmi*) at the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw; see also: Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz, “Czarny mit Galicji: prostytutka i handel ‘żywym towarem’ jako element paniki moralnej”, in: *Galicja: mozaika nie tylko narodowa, tom studiów*, ed. Urszula Jakubowska, Vol. 4 (Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2017), pp. 197–204.
- 53 The MA thesis of Aleksandra Jakubczak completed in 2016 at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, entitled “Jews’ Participation in White Slavery and Prostitution as was reflected in Hebrew Press Between the Years 1800 and 1914”; for a later period see: Piotr Gołdyn, “Jewish Associations for Protection of Woman in Poland in Years 1918–1939”, *Studia Judaica: biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Studiów Żydowskich*, no. 2, year. 9 (2006), pp. 311–322.
- 54 Aleksandra Jakubczak, “‘Pogrom alfonsów’ w Warszawie 1905 roku w świetle prasy żydowskiej”, *Studia Judaica* 18 (2015), 2 (36), pp. 339–357. Jakubczak’s MA thesis on the crackdown on brothel houses in 1905, entitled “Pogrom domów publicznych w Warszawie w 1905 roku”, was completed in 2017 at the Institute of History of the University of Warsaw.

Noteworthy publications on relevant topics include Aleksander Gotowicz's article focusing on prostitution and venereal disease in the industrial Piotrków Gubernia, based on the known portion of the annual Medical Department reports of the Russian Ministry of the Interior, the first general census in the Russian Empire (1897) and local press articles.<sup>55</sup>

The issue of prostitution and the people involved in it is also mentioned briefly in many publications pertaining to domestic service, sexual education, and moral reform movements.<sup>56</sup>

Most importantly, however, prostitution in Polish territory was recently described in an excellent monograph by an American historian Keely Stauter-Halsted. Intended to provide information on all regions of pre-partition Poland (though it offers very little data on the part under Prussian administration and the lands incorporated into Russia, the so-called Western Kray or Western gubernias), the book concentrates on the final decades of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, when the phenomenon reached its peak and was widely commented, disproportionately to the threat it posed (hence the concept of moral panic).<sup>57</sup>

Many topics related to prostitution have already been studied; successive works provide more information, detail and insight on issues defined earlier, also offering new interpretations. Existing research presents prostitution in Polish territory mainly as a medical concern (a threat to the health of individuals, the nation and the society) and a socio-economic problem (pathology, poverty, the status of women), yet this is merely one of its many facets.

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The vocabulary of prostitution was rich and varied in any and all periods<sup>58</sup> and

55 Aleksander Gotowicz, "Przyczynek do historii prostytucji oraz chorób wenerycznych w guberni piotrkowskiej na przełomie XIX i XX wieku", *In Gremium: studia nad historią, kulturą i polityką*, Vol. 6 (2012), pp. 87–108. Gotowicz also quotes court records, thereby corroborating their informative potential with regard to prostitution.

56 For instance: Alicja Urbanik-Kopec, *Instrukcja nadużycia. Służące w XIX-wiecznych polskich domach* (Katowice: Sonia Draga, 2019); Jerzy Franke, "Czystość" (1905–1909) *Augustyna Wróblewskiego albo iluzja etycznej krucjaty* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2013).

57 Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The devil's chain. Prostitution and social control in partitioned Poland* (Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press, 2015). For more relevant articles by the same author see: the final section of the Bibliography.

58 In late-mediaeval Polish, the Latin term *meretrix* (trollop, denoting any woman whose behaviour was deemed questionable) was translated elegantly as *zła dziewczka* ("a bad

languages.<sup>59</sup> As far as Polish is concerned, neutral terms such as *dziewczyna* and *dziewka* (girl, wench) coexisted with ones with a clear pejorative connotation, from *kurtyzana* (courtesan),<sup>60</sup> *kobieta lekkich obyczajów* (woman of loose morals), *dama z półświatka* (lady of the demimonde), *kobieta publiczna* (public woman), *nierządnicza publiczna* (public harlot), and *kobieta nierządna* (harlot woman), *kobieta rozwiązła* (loose woman), *kobieta upadła* (fallen woman), *rozpuśtnica* (debauched woman) *nierządnicza* (harlot),<sup>61</sup> *prostytutka* (prostitute),<sup>62</sup> *ładacznica* (trollop),<sup>63</sup> *dziwka* (slut),<sup>64</sup> to the very vulgar *kurwa* (whore).<sup>65</sup> Prostitutes were also described with many telling/semantically transparent names derived e.g. from their legal status (*kobiety tolerowane*, *tolerantki* – tolerated

wench”) and colloquially as *kurwa* (the word did not carry the clear vulgar connotation it does today) and numerous diminutives of the term, e.g. *kurwiczka*, *kurewka*, *kurwiszcze*, *kurwię*, or *gamratka*, *paniduszka*. After: Krawiec, *Seksualność*, pp. 215, 222. Terms used in the 17th and 18th century included: *małpa* (monkey), *wszetecznicza* (public woman), *skortyzanka*, *przychodka*, *miejska dziewczka* (city wench).

- 59 In French, for instance, the renowned hygienist Parent-Duchâtelet (whom the historian Alain Corbin described as a veritable Linnaeus of prostitution) distinguished between prostitutes registered by the police (*filles soumises*, *filles en carte*), who worked in brothels (*filles de maison*, *filles à numéro*), and those not bound to such houses, seeking out clients on their own (*filles isolée*). *Filles insoumises* remained outside police supervision and engaged in illegal prostitution (*prostitution clandestine*). Aside from these technical terms, the French language offers a wide array of appellations for prostitutes, i.a. *venale* (salable woman), *raccrocheuse* (street wench), *putain* (whore), *entretenu* (kept woman), *demimonde*, *lorette* (woman of loose morals), *cocotte*. See: Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 19, 190–192, 200–203; idem, “Commercial Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France: A System of Images and Regulations”, *Representations*, Vol. 14, Spring 1986, pp. 210–211.
- 60 Jan Karłowicz, Adam Kryński, Władysław Niedźwiedzki, *Słownik języka polskiego* (Warsaw: nakł. prenumeratorów, Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1902), Vol. 2, p. 646.
- 61 Samuel Bogumił Linde, *Słownik języka polskiego* (Lvov: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, 1857), 2nd edition, p. 334; Karłowicz et al., *Słownik*, Warsaw 1904, Vol. 3, p. 333.
- 62 Karłowicz et al., *Słownik*, Warsaw 1908, Vol. 4, p. 1027. The dictionary derives the term from the word *prostytuta* (from the Latin *prostitutus*), which it defines as a contemptible person of low moral standing, mercantile.
- 63 Karłowicz et al., *Słownik*, Warsaw 1902, Vol. 2, p. 674; Linde, *Słownik*, Lvov 1855, Vol. 2, p. 579.
- 64 Karłowicz et al., *Słownik*, Warsaw 1900, Vol. 1, p. 662.
- 65 Linde, *Słownik*, Lvov 1855, p. 556; Karłowicz et al., *Słownik*, Warsaw 1902, Vol. 2, p. 646. This term also functions in the Polish language as a very strong swear word.

women, *kontrolne* – controlees, *biletowe* – ticket ladies, *książkowe*, *księżniczki* – book ladies, from the medical record books they carried; the latter term is a play on words and also means ‘princesses’), their place of residence and/or employment (*burdelówki* – brothelottes, *rogówki* – cornerettes, *wilczyce* – she-wolves; homeless or vagrant prostitutes were called *gabineciarki* – cabinet ladies, *szambrseparatystkii*, *separatystki* – separatists), their working hours and behaviour (*damulki nocy* – damsels of the night, *nocne nietoperze* – nocturnal bats, *ćmy nocne* – nocturnal moths), their material status (*półkoszulkowe* – half-shirts, *trzygroszowe* – three dimes; in the late 18th century also *damy powozowe* – carriage ladies, *chustkowe* – scarf ladies, *kapelusze* – hat ladies). Some terms revealed the speaker’s attitude towards the legal and social status of prostitutes. Abolitionists called them “white slaves” or “living goods”.<sup>66</sup> Other appellations had a literary provenance (*kamelia*, *nana*, *demimondówka*) or were directly borrowed from other languages (*gryzетка*). Stanisław Milewski found even more names with various etymology: *aksamitki* – velvets, *mamzelki*, *nimfy* – nymphs, *grandesy*, *sylfidki* – sylphs, *czarnoszyjki* – black necks.<sup>67</sup>

Language drew a clear line between a prostitute offering herself to one or a handful of chosen clients (*kokota* – cocotte, *dama kameliowa* – lady of the camellias, *kamelia* – camellia, *metresa* – mistress, *utrzymanka* – kept woman; the dictionary also provides such synonyms as *nałożnica*, *kawalerka*, *wygodnica*, *miłośnica*) and a woman available to all, common and overt, submissive to anyone who requests it – i.e. *kobieta publiczna* – public woman, *nierządnicą publiczną* – public harlot (the dictionary contains such synonyms as *wszetecznicą*, *ladacznica*, *jawnogrzesznica*, *prostyutka*).<sup>68</sup>

Nineteenth-century officials usually wrote of “prostitutes” (*prostytutki*) and “harlots” (*nierządnicę*), yet the press, careful not to offend the sensibilities of the readers, mainly used euphemism, archaisms or historical terms. Thus, articles mentioned “these ladies”, “these madams”, “women of bad life”, “women of easy life”, “bawds” or hetairai. Words denoting a house of prostitution (*zamtuz*,

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66 A different (more amiable or perhaps simply ironic) attitude towards prostitutes was shown e.g. by the famous 18th-century diarist Jędrzej Kitowicz (the author of *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III*), who called them *dobrodziejki* (kind ladies).

67 Milewski, *Ciemne sprawy*, pp. 69–99.

68 In colloquial 19th-century Polish, the words *nierządnicą* (harlot, debauched woman) and *prostytutka* (prostitute) were used interchangeably. In the legal jargon, however, *nierzęd* (debauchery) was a broader term, which encompassed prostitution (public debauchery), adultery, incest, bigamy and homosexuality.



*lupanar*) were similarly mediaeval (or early-modern) in origin; unlike the term *burdel* (brothel) which carried vulgar connotations.

Terminology reflects the great diversity of the world of prostitution, with upscale prostitutes, kept women and mistresses of the bourgeoisie at the top, and common streetwalkers and cheap brothel employees at the very bottom, debased and disdained by all. The only denominators common for the entire spectrum were: (a) rendering sexual services for material gain, and (b) being held in contempt for engaging in such activity. Obvious as it may seem, it should be emphasised that social scorn was the strongest in the case of those prostitutes that occupied the lowest positions in the hierarchy of harlotry.

Delimiting the phenomenon of prostitution and defining the criteria for categorising specific individuals as prostitutes poses a considerable problem for researchers.<sup>69</sup> The greatest contributions to developing a universal definition were made by scholars specialising in medicine (sexology), legal studies (criminology), and sociology.<sup>70</sup> They questioned each of the fundamental elements of the classical Roman definition, formulated at the turn of the 2nd and the 3rd centuries by the jurist Ulpian. It includes: the plurality of clients, the lack of choice, and the charging of fees. The form of these fees was discussed, as were the motives behind the actions of individuals rendering sexual services, the content of the service itself, the number of customers and the possibilities for choosing clients, emotional state, frequency, etc. The story of these efforts demonstrates the understandable variability or modification of at least some of the criteria, and the connection between definitions and the existing moral standards – a liberal

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69 An overview of the definitions presented by many classical publications on the history of prostitution published in the first decades of the 20th century (e.g. by Flexner in 1919, Bloch in 1912, Fischer in 1925) is found in: Magdalena Jasińska, *Proces społecznego wykołajenia młodocianych dziewcząt* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Prawnicze, 1967), pp. 5–9, Małgorzata Kowalczyk-Jamnicka, *Společno-kulturowe uwarunkowania prostytucji w Polsce* (Bydgoszcz: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1998), pp. 8–14. See also: Gail Pheterson, *The Prostitution Prism* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), pp. 27–29, 30–36.

70 Wilhelm Bernsdorf, “Soziologie der Prostitution”, in: *Die Sexualität des Menschen. Handbuch der medizinischen Sexualforschung*, ed. Hans Giese (Stuttgart: Enke, 1968), pp. 191–248; Leszek Lernell, “Przestępczość seksualna”, in: *Seksuologia społeczna*, ed. Kazimierz Imieliński (Warsaw: PWN, 1974), p. 424; Kazimierz Imieliński, *Seksuologia kulturowa* (Warsaw: PWN, 1980), pp. 56–57; idem, *Manowce seksu. Prostytucja* (Łódź: Res Polona, 1990); Brunon Hołyst, *Kryminologia* (Warsaw: PWN, 1979), p. 169; Michał Antoniszyn, Andrzej Marek, *Prostytucja w świetle badań kryminalistycznych* (Warsaw: Włocławskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985), pp. 6–12.

or restrictive attitude towards prostitution or, more broadly, sexual behaviour. The array of practices that were condemned and intuitively categorised as prostitution underwent gradual changes that reflected the shifts in the social acceptance of sexual and extramarital relations. In a sense, it was proportionate to the level of acquiescence for extramarital sex. A negative moral assessment of pre- and extramarital congress affected the colloquial definition of prostitution. Certain academic difficulties also arise from the delicate nature of the subject and the complexity of sexual relations. Some elements of these relations regarded as specific to prostitution, e.g. the connection between sex and money (or any other form of material gain) may sometimes be observed in situations that would never be labelled as such activity.

What historians find significant are the behaviours which would earn a woman the stigma of a prostitute in the eyes of her contemporaries. The same words did not always reflect the same reality, especially since no definition of prostitution existed in the law. Terms carried a different meaning, depending on what individuals or social groups were using them, and the women to which they referred. Some used the label of “harlot” for women who did not conform to the existing norms by acting casually towards men, others made a distinction between individuals who supported themselves by rendering sexual services and treated this as a trade, and individuals who simply led an uninhibited sexual life, sometimes with multiple partners, between extramarital sexual relations or promiscuity, and sexual contact that constituted a source of income for one of the people involved.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, not everyone considered a “fallen woman” to be synonymous with a “prostitute”. Professional discourse (e.g. medical) sought to narrow down the understanding of the term harlotry (i.e. debauchery and prostitution) to only mean the latter as a profession. This trend was facilitated by the existing regimentation system, which involved the registration of women who rendered sexual services for a fee.<sup>72</sup> To what extent was this opinion common, given that authors writing about prostitution saw it fit to underscore this difference? Józef

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71 *O reglamentatsii prostitutsii i abolitsionizme*, Rostov upon Don, 1907, p. 1.

72 Changes in the understanding and definitions of the term “prostitution” could have been influenced by police regulations (and the attempted implementation thereof) to extend medical supervision over women from the lower classes and professional groups from which many prostitutes had been recruited (e.g. domestic servants, factory workers).

Antoni Rolle emphasised that a sinful woman was not yet a harlot.<sup>73</sup> In the 1860s, lawyer Jan Maurycy Kamiński noted: “A true prostitute, according to us, is one who offers herself without choice or desire (*sine delectu*), without any love, even in the worst meaning of the term. As soon as the matter involves a degree of choice, selecting a person for who they are, then, bizarre, odd and strange as the reasons for this choice may be, a woman might be immodest, coquettish or lewd, yet she will not be a prostitute”.<sup>74</sup> Franciszek Giedroyć mentioned the term “harlotry”, which used to be regarded as the opposite of marital love (“illegitimate children give evidence of the widespread nature of harlotry”<sup>75</sup>), and presented free love as the antithesis of spousal affection. As he wrote in the introduction to his book on prostitution, “although satisfaction of carnal desires outside of the marital bed is perceived as harlotry, and the woman participating therein as a ‘harlot’, such a view cannot and should not be deemed rational according to our present understanding, and a woman faithful to her lover, albeit not joined with him in matrimony blessed by the Church, is by no means a prostitute”.<sup>76</sup> Other 19th-century definitions were considerably more restrictive, e.g. regarding any sustained extramarital relations to be a sufficient condition for labelling a woman as a prostitute, “even if such relations are aimed only at sensual pleasures, not a desire for profit” (Albert Neisser).<sup>77</sup> Similar views were expressed in the 1920s by the Polish abolitionist Jan Macko, who defined prostitution as any “incidental extramarital sexual intercourse (. . .) relying not on natural sexual selection, but on a consensual contract, under which one person offers themselves to another, for the purpose of momentarily satisfying sexual desires”.<sup>78</sup>

The definition of prostitution was an objective of an ideological battle; language served as an instrument of repression, meant to trigger the mechanisms of self-control and self-limitation. It was also a means of a moral evaluation of women’s behaviour.

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73 Rolle, “Materyały”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 38 (1869). Rolle invokes the French legal definition formulated in 1790, which delineated the premise of prostitution as frequent sexual contacts with various individuals.

74 Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, p. 106.

75 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 12.

76 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 14.

77 After: Jasińska, *Proces*, p. 4.

78 Macko, *Prostytucja*, p. 44.

my late mentor Professor Ireneusz Ihnatowicz. The initial plan, discussed with Professor Ihnatowicz, was to make this work a study of the sexuality of Poles. Ultimately, however, it evolved into a book on only one aspect of it, and only indirectly pertaining to social norms. The encouragement of Professor Anna Żarnowska proved very valuable.<sup>79</sup> I am also grateful to the Lanckoronski Foundation in Brzezie, for granting me a foreign scholarship which allowed me to familiarise myself with more recent publications on the subject. While I was in the process of gathering materials and writing this book, many people offered me their help and kindness. My nearest and dearest showed understanding and patience, for which I am wholeheartedly grateful.

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79 Professor Anna Żarnowska (1931–2007) initiated research on the socio-cultural history of women in Polish territory in the 19th and 20th century. These efforts resulted in a multi-volume series of studies edited by herself and Professor Andrzej Szwarc.

# Chapter 1 THE STATE VERSUS PROSTITUTION: Rules, regulations and means of control

## 1. Between tolerance and repression – prostitution in early modern Poland

The earliest records of prostitution in Polish territory come from the 14th and the 15th centuries, though the profession had indubitably been practiced earlier. Traces of its “systematised, fully shaped form” may be found in sources, which mention organised brothels “subject to certain forms of control executed by municipal authorities”.<sup>80</sup> In mid-15th century, city brothels, called *zamtuz*, i.e. ‘a public house’ from the Middle-Low-German *samt-hūs*, were usually supervised by municipal headsmen,<sup>81</sup> and operated legally not only in the capital city of Cracow and other large urban centres, but also in smaller towns (e.g. Pyzdry, Pobiedziska, Busko), and even in the countryside.<sup>82</sup>

Research conducted by Adam Krawiec and Andrzej Karpiński (pertaining to the 15th century and the 16th–17th centuries respectively) presents prostitution as a phenomenon whose actual scale is now difficult to establish due to the nature and state of the existing sources,<sup>83</sup> but which may nonetheless be recognised as elaborately and fully structured in terms of its whereabouts, legal status, and the degree of the occupation’s professionalisation. The largest urban centres – Cracow, Warsaw, Lvov, Poznań and Lublin – already had all forms of prostitution known in later centuries. Aside from brothels operating with no

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80 Adam Krawiec, *Seksualność w średniowiecznej Polsce* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2000) pp. 216, 220–223.

81 This was probably related to the dissemination of German models, since it were German countries which typically connected the office of a headsmen with the administration of houses of ill repute. See: Hanna Zaremska, *Niegodne rzemiosło. Kat w społeczeństwie Polski XIV–XVI w.* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1986) p. 28. Small brothels also operated by some workshops of craft, see: Krawiec, *Seksualność*, p. 222.

82 Krawiec, *Seksualność*, pp. 221, 223.

83 Analysing municipal court registers, Karpiński found information on 171 professional and occasional prostitutes from five cities in the Kingdom (it should be noted that no criminal records for Warsaw have survived) – Andrzej Karpiński, *Kobieta w mieście polskim w drugiej połowie XVI i w XVII wieku* (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 1995) p. 334.

legal impediment to their trade, there were also covert practices undertaken by women on their own or in illegal houses, inns and taverns. Paid sexual services were offered in cities, in villages and by the roads, by professional prostitutes and many women venturing into such practices on a provisional and occasional basis.<sup>84</sup> Despite the Church's condemnation of prostitution and the incontestable severity of the law regarding extramarital relations (such as adultery), municipal authorities did not take a clear stand on the issue. In practice, consent was given to prostitution taking place in legal supervised brothels; outside of them, it was usually treated as a transgression against morals.<sup>85</sup> The authorities exerted some unspecified level of control over brothels and even profited from prostitution.<sup>86</sup> At the most, they made sporadic attempts at curbing the scale of the phenomenon by imposing high taxes on prostitutes or forbidding them from renting any property in the city.<sup>87</sup>

At times, individuals practicing prostitution outside of the houses designated by the magistrates were punished by flogging or even expulsion from the city. The degree of repression against women resorting to prostitution was nonetheless relatively low. Practices such as stripping prostitutes naked and leaving them in cages for all to see, mentioned in earlier sources quoted by 19th-century historians, may have expressed the attitude towards such women, but were not intended as punishment (at least not always) for harlotry alone; these means were employed if charges of prostitution went alongside other misdeeds – felonies and behaviour which were either scandalising or dangerous to the society, e.g. prostitution done by women infected with sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>88</sup> Since the beginning of the 16th century, the increasingly strict moral standards of the reformation and counter-reformation caused more and more voices to

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84 Andrzej Karpiński, “Prostytycja w dużych miastach polskich w XVI i XVII w. (Kraków, Lublin, Poznań, Warszawa)”, *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, no. 2 (1988), pp. 280–287; Krawiec, *Seksualność*, p. 221.

85 Other forms were procuration, pandering, adultery, bigamy and incest; Karpiński, *Kobieta*, p. 333.

86 Karpiński, “Prostytycja”, p. 285; Andrzej Karpiński, *Pauperes. O mieszkańcach Warszawy XVI i XVII wieku* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1983) pp. 214, 215. The author quotes Szymon Starowolski, who condemned the fact the city made profits from harlotry: “In larger cities officials do not shy away from taking weekly fees from loose women”.

87 They were also subject to certain restrictions in the legal relations under civil law. – Karpiński, “Prostytycja”, p. 294.

88 Karpiński, *Pauperes*, pp. 213–220; Karpiński, “Prostytycja”, p. 294; Krawiec, *Seksualność*, p. 217.

speak against tolerating prostitution.<sup>89</sup> However, the attempts at curbing the phenomenon were still very weak, while repressive attitudes coexisted with leniency. Prostitutes were only ostracised in a more severe manner in difficult times, for instance during epidemics of contagious diseases. Houses of ill repute were then closed, while prostitutes were driven out of cities or forced to perform dangerous tasks (e.g. burying plague victims). However, it is important to add that they were not the only, or even the most numerous social group treated in such a manner.<sup>90</sup>

The inconsistent legal standpoint presented towards prostitution did not, however, extend to procuration and pandering. The punishment for any of the latter was severe – from public flogging and mutilation of the body to banishment or even death. As in other cases, however, the actual practice diverged greatly from the letter of the law.<sup>91</sup>

Our knowledge of commercial sexual practices in 18th-century Poland is much more fragmented. However, conditions for its development seemed favourable, at least in Warsaw. In the latter half of the century the population of the city spiked (ca. 100 thousand inhabitants in 1792). At the time, Warsaw was a bustling centre of politics, trade and culture; its streets traversed not only by permanent residents, but also by many seasonal visitors in need of entertainment – members of the nobility, merchants and foreigners.<sup>92</sup> Narrative sources quoted by academic and popular publications point to a rapid development of prostitution in the capital city. Evidence may, for instance, be found in Jędrzej Kitowicz's work, describing the situation in the mid-18th century.<sup>93</sup> Foreign authors writing in the early 1790s, in turn, painted a picture of debauchery and moral decay, of

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89 For instance Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski criticised the existence of “lewd houses openly instituted”. See Karpiński, “Prostytucja”, pp. 293, 285; Karpiński, *Pauperes*, pp. 214, 217; Karpiński, *Kobieta*, p. 345.

90 Jan Kracik, *Pokonać czarną śmierć. Staropolskie postawy wobec zarazy* (Cracow: Machaszaba, 1991), p. 29; Andrzej Karpiński, *W walce z niewidzialnym wrogiem. Epidemie chorób zakaźnych w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVIII wieku i ich następstwa demograficzne, społeczno-ekonomiczne i polityczne* (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 2000) pp. 28, 43, 113, 115–116.

91 Karpiński, *Prostytucja*, p. 296; Karpiński, *Kobieta*, pp. 41–42.

92 Krystyna Zienkowska, *Sławetni i urodzeni. Ruch polityczny mieszczaństwa w dobie Sejmu Czteroletniego* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1976), pp. 288–289.

93 His famous memoir includes the statement that it was “the evil no large city can do without” – Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III* (Wrocław: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1951), p. 305.

prostitution and rampant venereal disease.<sup>94</sup> There were also voices expressing a libertine attitude towards sexual life, such as *In praise of the brothel [Pochwała bordelu]* by Stanisław Kostka Potocki.<sup>95</sup> From a historian's perspective, particularly valuable details regarding the world of Warsaw's prostitution (in the context of health, morals and social interactions) may be found in two rhyming guidebooks<sup>96</sup> from the 1770, which contained advice and information for enthusiasts of paid sexual services not familiar with the Warsaw scene.<sup>97</sup> These exceptional texts, almost sensational in their linguistic and substantive aspect, were discovered and published in 1985 by Edmund Rabowicz, who also ascribed their authorship.<sup>98</sup> They were popularised due to Marek Karpiński's book on the history of prostitution.<sup>99</sup>

The authorities responsible for order in the capital city were prone to turn a blind eye to prostitution – as usual, the will and activity of specific individuals played a prominent role. According to Waław Zaleski, an expert on the

94 See: Fryderyk Schultz, *Podróże Inflantczyka z Rygi do Warszawy i po Polsce w latach 1791–1793*, pp. 531–540; Johann Joseph Kausch, *Wizerunek narodu polskiego. Opis podróży ze Śląska do Krakowa w Małopolsce*, pp. 289–291. Both diaries in: *Polska stanisławowska w oczach cudzoziemców*, ed. Waław Zawadzki (Warsaw: PIW, 1963), Vol. 2. A record from 1792 listed 59 prostitutes in Warsaw; Samuel Szymkiewicz, *Warszawa na przełomie XVIII i XIX wieku w świetle pomiarów i spisów* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1959), p. 227.

95 The full text in: Edmund Rabowicz, “Oświeceniowe ‘Przewodniki’ po warszawskich domach rozkoszy”, *Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Dodatek do Prac Historycznoliterackich*, no. 8–9 (1985), pp. 23–26.

96 [Antoni Felicjan Nagłowski], “Przewodnik warszawski”, *Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Dodatek do Prac Historycznoliterackich*, no. 8–9 (1985), pp. 27–43; [Antoni Kossakowski], “Suplement przewodnikowi [warszawskiemu] przez innego autora wydany w tymże roku 1779”, *Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Dodatek do Prac Historycznoliterackich*, no. 8–9 (1985), pp. 45–67.

97 “Więc dla was fryców, którzy do Warszawy / Zjechawszy, próżno wszędzie się włóczycie, / Przewodnik będzie mój prosty i prawy, / I za nim idąc do kurwy traficie” (literally: So for you, dunces, who, having come to Warsaw, wander aimlessly about, my guidebook will be simple and true, and shall lead you straight to a harlot); [Nagłowski], “Przewodnik”, p. 28.

98 Rabowicz, “Oświeceniowe ‘Przewodniki’”. Rabowicz found them in 1957 in the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kyiv. They were in a collection inherited from a private library, in a *silva rerum* of various obscene texts.

99 Marek Karpiński, *Najstarszy zawód świata. Historia prostytucji* (London: Lemur, 1997), pp. 85–104.



history of prostitution in Warsaw, a crusade against harlots was declared in the 1740s by the Grand Marshal of the Crown Franciszek Bieliński, who strove to bring Warsaw to heel by ordering all procurers to be punished and all women of ill repute to be taken off the streets and directed to houses of labour.<sup>100</sup> The very same tactics is described in the mentioned guidebooks, and so the information recounted by the royal surgeon Leopold Lafontaine and the memoir writer Fryderyk Schultz, who claimed that prostitution in Warsaw was not in any way controlled by the police or the government, does not seem accurate at all.<sup>101</sup>

However, no separate legal regulations on the phenomenon were written in the entire period of the first Republic's existence. It was only the poorer prostitutes that could fall victim to actions aimed at purifying cities (e.g. those pertaining to vagrancy). The legislation of *Inner regulation for free cities in the Commonwealth* [*Urządzenie wewnętrzne miast wolnych Rzeczypospolitej*] dated 24th June 1791, which listed brothels among the institutions under the supervision of the magistrate, was only sanctioning the factual situation.<sup>102</sup>

On the other hand, since the mid-18th century the Republic of Poland had been undergoing a wave of transformations, leading to the emergence of a modern administration which, as exemplified by the history of other countries, tended to extend control and regulation over increasingly large areas of private life; as well as to the defining and commencement of new administrative duties in the realm of healthcare and sanitation (medical police).<sup>103</sup> It must be noted that such changes created an environment that was conducive to including prostitution in the State's sphere of interest and defining its status, as was the case in many other countries.

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100 Waclaw Zaleski, *Z dziejów prostytucji w Warszawie* (Warsaw: Druk. Policyjna, 1923), pp. 9–10.

101 Lafontaine's account in: Kausch, *Wizerunek*, p. 290; Schultz, *Podróże*, p. 531. The existence of some form of police control was inferred from source material, see: Stanisław Janikowski, "Materiały do dziejów higieny i policji lekarskiej w Polsce. II Nierząd (Prostitutio)", *Pamiętniki Towarzystwa Lekarskiego Warszawskiego*, Vol. 52 (1864), pp. 337–338. On the practice of flogging and shutting prostitutes in gaol ordered by the instigator see [Antoni Kossakowski], "Suplement", verses 781–802, pp. 66–67.

102 Section 8, dealing with "supervision of municipal prisons, hospitals and public houses"; *Volumina Legum*, Vol. 9, Cracow 1889.

103 Tadeusz Srogosz, *Problemy sanitarno-zdrowotne w działalności administracji Rzeczypospolitej w okresie stanisławowskim* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo AM, 1993) pp. 285–389.

## 2. The first regulation of prostitution – Warsaw 1802

Important changes in the status of prostitution occurred after the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and were the first to arrive in the territory taken by Prussia. After the partition, the first occupiers and masters of Warsaw legalised prostitution on certain conditions, issued in Berlin with the date of 16th November 1802.<sup>104</sup> In the Polish language they were publicised as: *An ordinance forestalling the ensnaring of young girls into licentiousness in bordellos, or otherwise for money, nonetheless containing regulations towards halting the venereal plague in Warsaw* [*Ordynacya zabiegająca uwodzeniu młodych dziewcząt do życia nierządneho w bordelach, lub innym sposobem za pieniądze, nie mniej przepisy na zatamowanie zarazy wenerycznej w Warszawie obejmująca*].<sup>105</sup>

The legislator declared to “decisively put an end to beguiling [procuration] and the very harmful consequences of the overwhelming spread of the venereal plague”.<sup>106</sup> The new authorities regarded the medical threat as a matter of concern due to the presence of their army – at the time, one in five residents of Warsaw was a Prussian soldier. In 1796–1806, the garrison in Warsaw annually housed 8–10 thousand soldiers, while the city had a little over 60 thousand inhabitants (1799).<sup>107</sup> Aside from the military, the capital of Southern Prussia<sup>108</sup> also had to accommodate ca. 1000 newly arrived officials.<sup>109</sup> Thus, regulating the practice of prostitution was in the Prussians’ own interest. The impulse behind specific regulations, and later the ordinance itself, came mainly from Friedrich Georg Caspar von Tilly, who held the post of the president of Warsaw since 1799 and

104 Practice may have preceded the legislation itself. Authors writing in the 19th century specify 1800 as the date of “official recognition” of brothels; see: *Wykład chorób wenerycznych podług Zeissla, Redera i innych ułożony przez studentów medycyny pod przewodnictwem doktorów Pawlikowskiego K i Stankiewiczza H.* (Warsaw, 1873) p. 400; Jan Maurycy Kamiński, *O prostytucji* (Warsaw: A. Pajewski, 1875), p. 96; Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, pp. 11–12.

105 The full text of the ordinance was published by Giedroyć in: Franciszek Giedroyć, *Rys historyczny szpitala św. Łazarza w Warszawie* (Warsaw: Drukarnia Kowalewskiego, 1897), pp. 209–219.

106 *Ordynacya*, in: Giedroyć, *Rys*, p. 210.

107 Jan Kosim, *Okupacja pruska i konspiracje rewolucyjne w Warszawie 1796–1806* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1976), pp. 42, 88, 96.

108 Southern Prussia was the name of one of the three provinces into which the lands annexed by Prussia were divided after the partitions. The province encompassed e.g. a part of Mazovia and Warsaw.

109 Jarosław Czubyat, *Warszawa 1806–1815. Miasto i ludzie* (Warsaw: Neriton, 1997), p. 15.

had previously been the commander of one of the infantry regiments stationed in the city.<sup>110</sup>

A broader context for this normalisation may be found in many other undertakings initiated by the occupier. The new Prussian administration organised many aspects of life in Warsaw according to its own models and laws (e.g. establishing medical police, passing many regulatory and sanitary laws).<sup>111</sup> German-speaking countries handled the matter of public prostitution with varying degrees of severity – from absolute bans, through factual tolerance to full legalisation. The *General State Laws for the Prussian States* (*Allgemeines Landrecht für die Königlich Preussischen Staaten*; hereinafter: ALR) from 1794 allowed prostitution practices to be conducted solely in brothel houses (ALR art. 999) subject to state supervision and medical control (e.g. in 1780 Berlin had ca. 100 such houses and 700–900 prostitutes).<sup>112</sup> The collection of regulations on prostitution in Warsaw (and probably Poznań as well)<sup>113</sup> was derived from these legislative acts and elaborated on the articles of the codex introduced in Polish territory in 1797.

What the Prussian legislators saw as the most reliable means of maintaining control over prostitution was limiting the practice to brothel houses. The ordinance reads: “First and foremost, let it serve as a rule that women lending their bodies out for the lewd craft ought to remain in houses designated for such practices, under the supervision of the police, as well as under the supervision of a proprietor or proprietress, so as the governance over them could be executed

110 Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, p. 11; Kosim, *Okupacja*, p. 117.

111 Jan Kosim, *Pod pruskim zaborem. Warszawa w latach 1796–1806* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1980), p. 123; Franciszek Giedroyć, *Rada Lekarska Księstwa Warszawskiego i Królestwa Polskiego (1809–1867)* (Warsaw: Władysław Łazarski, 1913), p. 57.

112 Marek Czaplński, “Wstydlivy problem. Demi-monde w Niemczech XIX wieku”, *Zbliżenia* no. 3 (1997), p. 43. See also: Marek Czaplński’s review of Sybille Krafft’s book *Zucht und Unzucht. Prostitution und Sittenpolizei in München der Jahrhundertwende* in *Przegląd Historyczny*, Vol. LXXXVIII, issue 2 (1997), pp. 363–366; Richard J. Evans, “Prostitution, State and Society in Imperial Germany”, *Past and Present*, no. 70 (1976), pp. 106–129.

113 A similar set of regulations for Poznań was published in Berlin on 4th February 1804: *Ustawa przeciwko zwodzeniu młodych dziewczyn do Burdelów i do innego gatunku rozwiązłości, jako też: przeciwko rozszerzaniu się wenerycznych chorób w Poznaniu* [Bill against the ensnaring of young girls into Brothels and other kinds of debaucheries, as well as: against the spreading of venereal diseases in Poznań], Poznań State Archive (Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu; hereinafter APP).

easily and conveniently” (art. 1).<sup>114</sup> However articles 21 and 23 allowed for the possibility of legal prostitution being practiced outside the houses,<sup>115</sup> provided that the women wishing to engage in it applied for a permit and followed the regulations specified in the *Ordinance*.<sup>116</sup> Such a solution offered a degree of hope that at least some of the prostitutes who did not wish to work in brothel houses would voluntarily submit themselves to state supervision, and thus to medical control. It may have also been dictated by the wish to provide a more discreet setting for using the service of prostitutes.

Thus, the Prussian administration of Warsaw introduced a system of licensing prostitution.<sup>117</sup> Henceforth, running a brothel (“establishing a household of harlots”) required a relevant permit. The proprietor could acquire it free of charge for the period of six months (along with a written list of duties and the text of the *Ordinance*), after having specified the location of the planned

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114 Cf. ALR art. 999 – “Lewd (wanton) women who wish to enter the trade of selling their body must proceed to whorehouses allowed to exist under state supervision” – *Powszechne prawo kryminalne dla państw pruskich. Część druga obejmująca w sobie tytuł dwudziesty części drugiej powszechnego prawa pruskiego o występkach i karach*, Warsaw 1813, trans. Ignacy Stawiariski.

115 Art. 21; “A harlot wishing to leave the brothel to continue the very same indecent practices on her own will be allowed to have such sport, yet solely under explicit consent by the police”; art. 23: “Extraordinary women who sustain themselves from debauchery on their own with several others should also report themselves to the Police Directorate in order to be registered and issued a permit. They are nonetheless obliged, as are harlots lending themselves out in brothels, not to resist attempts at inspection, which shall be undertaken by the district surgeon. They are likewise obligated to pay two talars per month to the coffer of St. Lazarus Hospital. In general, such women ought to comply with all regulations on bordellos and harlots living therein issued in the relevant Ordinance, and should they transgress, they will be subject to all the punishment specified herein. We therefore admonish them with the utmost severity not to shirk from the obligation of reporting their profession properly, thinking that they could remain undiscovered and unknown for lending themselves to debauchery, since the police authorities will use all the means available to acquire information on their lewd and indecent lives, whereupon they will punish these women with the utmost severity as ones that established a brothel household without the required permission.”

116 Art. 1023 of the ALR may be interpreted similarly: “Women making a trade of harlotry who did not bring themselves under specific police supervision are to be apprehended. . .” *Powszechne prawo*. This “specific supervision” was not tantamount to employment in a brothel house.

117 Cf. ALR art. 1001.

house and introducing the prostitutes that would work there.<sup>118</sup> The supervision of prostitution, from issuing permits for practicing the craft to exacting punishment for infringement of regulations, was within the competence of the Directorate of Police, which was a part of the municipal authorities. The police, in turn, mainly exercised supervision through the owners of brothel houses, who bore responsibility for the conduct of prostitutes and were charged with ensuring order and the safety of their clients.<sup>119</sup> Frequent brawls and non-compliance with regulations could cost them their license. As many as six of the nine articles specifying the appropriate punishment pertained to brothel owners; one referred to panderers, one to landlords renting out property, and two to prostitutes themselves. Penalising proprietors aside, the effectiveness of the system was also ensured by the introduction of rewards for informers (art. 19, 29).

The *Ordinance* reflected the reproachful attitude the authorities held towards procuration. The most severe punishment (prohibition of managing a brothel house, six to ten years' imprisonment, flogging and public display, art. 26) was reserved for practices of employing girls brought into the trade "by treachery or violent conduct".<sup>120</sup> Professional procuration was punishable by two to three years of forced labour, and flogging followed by expulsion from the city (art. 25); the punishment for occasional procuration was six to twelve months in a correctional institution or a house of public labour, whereas employing underage girls (also as servants) was penalised with two years of work in a correctional institution (art. 10).<sup>121</sup>

The remaining penalties and punishments pertained to illegal prostitution.<sup>122</sup> The *Ordinance* specified that "harlots roaming the streets in the dark shall not be

118 Cf. ALR. art. 1000 ("Such brothel houses are only to be suffered in large populous cities and in no other locations than ones distant from public roads and streets"), art. 1003 and 1004.

119 "Such an obligation is regarded as a risk and burden placed upon him and, for the common good, inherent to the profession allowed to be thus pursued" (art. 12, 17, 18 of the *Ordinance*). Cf. ALR art. 1017–1019.

120 Cf. ALR art. 1005–1007.

121 It is an elaboration of ALR art. 996.

122 Running an illegal brothel house was punishable with between a year and two years' imprisonment; a landlord lending property for such purposes risked a fine or six months' imprisonment. The fine for failing to report women working in a brothel amounted to 50 talars, whereas women engaging in prostitution illegally could be sentenced to 6 to 12 months in prison and flogging. Cf. ALR art. 1001, 1004, 1023, 1024. The two latter articles of the codex not only penalised unlicensed prostitution, but also provided for obligatory re-socialisation. Having completed their punishment, the women were supposed to stay in the houses of labour "until such time as they find

tolerated". In practice, the possibility of direct police action was limited due to the small number and the relative inefficiency of its personnel, even though Waław Zaleski writes that the police was fierce in combating illicit prostitution.<sup>123</sup>

According to the same historian, the Prussian government was the first to impose taxation on the brothel houses of Warsaw and established fixed rates for the services rendered there (with lower fees for soldiers).<sup>124</sup> This fiscal angle is, however, absent from the *Ordinance*. The only mentioned fees – payable by proprietors and prostitutes working outside of brothel houses – were meant for the hospital of St. Lazarus to finance the treatment of women who had fallen ill. The medical care “from the contributions of the licensed harlots” was to be free of charge (art. 14).

The Prussian regulations were motivated by the wish to control the prostitution market, to have decisive impact on the scale of the phenomenon, and to remove it from the public eye so that it did not disturb the peace of ordinary citizens.<sup>125</sup> One should also emphasise the clear intention to prevent the demoralisation of young girls and understanding the circumstances that led to that. In hindsight, however, what proved the most important was the introduction of compulsory medical examination and treatment of prostitutes, even though the *Ordinance* was very vague in describing these procedures, and did not elaborate on article 1002 of the ALR in any significant manner. It decreed that brothel houses be brought under strict and constant medical supervision, which led to a shift in the perception of prostitution in Warsaw, so characteristic for the 19th century. It began to be regarded mainly as a medical problem.<sup>126</sup> Hiding a disease or choosing private treatment made prostitutes and proprietors liable to one of the more severe punishments – three months in a correctional institution

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the will and opportunity to sustain themselves by honest means”. It was apparently decided that in Warsaw this would have been impossible.

123 Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, p. 12.

124 Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, pp. 11–12.

125 In 1803 there supposedly were ca. 100 prostitutes in Warsaw – Stefan Kieniewicz, *Warszawa w latach 1795–1914* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1976), p. 69.

126 In Prussia, obligatory medical examinations of prostitutes were introduced in 1769. See: Marek Czapliński, “Prostytucja jako problem miasta Wrocławia w XIX wieku”, *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka*, Vol. 53 no. 3 (1999) p. 316 (English translation available at: <http://sobotka.uni.wroc.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/1.pdf>). In 18th-century Warsaw, medical examinations were conducted on an incidental basis, following police roundups of vagrant and beggar women. Nagłowski’s “Przewodnik warszawski” warned readers off places where one could catch a disease.

(six for repeated offense), with the additional measures of flogging before and after the period of custody.<sup>127</sup> Should the prostitute infect anyone or display clear symptoms of disease that would preclude ignorance of her condition, she could be sentenced to one year of imprisonment. The legislation provided for informing harlots (also in writing) of the relevant symptoms in women and men, so that they could recognise them on themselves (art. 11 b, 12) and not allow any sexual contact with a diseased client (art. 11 c).<sup>128</sup>

Prussians did attempt to – at least as far as declarations were concerned – provide protection for prostitutes working in brothel houses. “Since experience teaches us that many house proprietors treat the girls they manage with much harshness and keep strict control over them,” the *Ordinance* provided prostitutes with the possibility to file a complaint to the police officer who was to visit the brothel regularly for that purpose. It was promised that, should a prostitute be willing to abandon her profession, “the Police Directorate would provide immediate and brave assistance in this endeavour and shield her from any difficulty” (art. 21). The legislation stated expressly that any debt towards the proprietor could not serve as a valid reason for keeping a woman against her will (art. 21). These provisions were based on ALR articles 1020 and 1021, yet it is dubitable whether they were actually implemented.

The Prussian ordinance defined the boundaries of acceptable prostitution and the rules for its control in Warsaw, which remained principally unchanged until the First World War. Licensing and supervising brothel houses, registering prostitutes, compulsory medical examination and treatment, the regulations for employment and dismissal – all these aspects formed a system of state control. Similar strategies implemented through the regulation of prostitution were adopted in the late 18th and early 19th century in many different countries, partially due to the increase of the scale of prostitution.

### 3. The realm of projects and provisions (1815–1843)

The earlier division into overt and covert prostitution continued to exist in the Duchy of Warsaw and the Kingdom of Poland. Until 1818 it was grounded in

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127 Cf. ALR art. 1013–1015.

128 Due to the risk of losing track of women who had left the hospital, the doctors from the St. Lazarus hospital were instructed to supply the Police Directorate with protocols stating the declared place of residence and future plans of all released patients. A prostitute providing false information was to be punished with 8 to 14 days of close arrest (art. 15).

administrative and civil laws, since the Prussian legislation on carnal misdemeanor regarding common prostitution was still in use in an unchanged form. The territories annexed to the Duchy of Warsaw in 1809 were, in turn, using the Austrian penal code (1803), which considered prostitution a serious offence against morals and penalised propagating and profiting from such activities.<sup>129</sup> In 1818 both regulations were replaced by the *Kodex karzący dla Królestwa Polskiego* [Criminal code for the Kingdom of Poland].<sup>130</sup> The first Polish penal code did not mention prostitution, even though ten out of the twelve specified transgressions against morals pertained to sexual behaviour. It was a significant deviation from the original, i.e. the Austrian criminal legislation of 1803.<sup>131</sup> Thus, if one was to seek foreign influence over Polish laws, the source to be indicated as the closest would be the French *Code pénal* from 1810, which only mentioned prostitution in the entry on protecting persons under 21 years of age against procuration and the facilitation of depravity.<sup>132</sup> The codex condemned forcing individuals into prostitution, yet instituted very weak penalties, as the intended punishment for “seducing an innocent unto public harlotry” was three to twelve months of imprisonment, while the charges could only be laid by the legal guardians of the victim (art. 449, 450, 453).

Zaleski writes that until Ivan Paskiewicz took the post of viceroy (which he held in 1832–1856), Warsaw had no “strict principles of supervision” over prostitution save for police directives against illegal harlotry. Although no indication for the existence of comprehensive regulations may indeed be found in the sources, it is certain that the system of state control was still in place. Prostitution was allowed to be practiced in licensed brothel houses which had to conform to certain regulations;<sup>133</sup> registered women of ill repute were obliged to undergo medical control and treatment; illegal prostitution was fought against, as evidenced by reports from the office of agent Henryk Mackrott of Grand Duke

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129 Jan Śliwowski, “Kodeks karzący Królestwa Polskiego” (1818). *Historia jego powstania i próba krytycznej analizy*, Warsaw 1958, pp. 11, 375.

130 *Kodeks karzący dla Królestwa Polskiego*, (Warsaw, 1830).

131 Śliwowski, *Kodeks*, p. 375.

132 *Kodex przestępstw i kar przetłumaczony z francuskiego*, Warsaw 1811, article 334 (book II, section IV, transgressions against morals). The comprehensive and detailed analysis of the work on Polish legal codes presented by Śliwowski does not mention any debate on the issue of prostitution (Śliwowski, *Kodeks*).

133 See: “Konsens utrzymywania kobiet publicznych Wydziału Policyjnego Urzędu Muncypalnego m.st. Warszawy” (1831, a template), APW, Korotyński Archive, t. VIII, t. 44, k. 5–7.



Konstantin's secret police.<sup>134</sup> According to Małgorzata Karpińska's research, in 1821–1830 Mackrott reported 82 instances of breaking police regulations pertaining to brothel houses. In 41.5 % cases the offence was breaking the ban on selling liquor, 32.9 % pertained to opening after the permitted hour, and 25.6 % to lodging soldiers overnight.<sup>135</sup> Karpińska established that in the period in question there were at least 39 licensed houses (between 1821 and 1830 the numbers were as follows: 2, 15, 15, 16, 25, 20, 9, 7, 4, 3),<sup>136</sup> and least 22 illegal ones.<sup>137</sup> The number of legally registered prostitutes grew: in 1819 it was 148, 192 in 1822, 252 in 1824; in 1825 it was already smaller (215) and decreased to 200 in 1826.<sup>138</sup>

Supreme authority over prostitution in the capital city was held by the president of the Municipal Office, as the head of the department of police (including medical police). A decree by the Minister of the Interior issued on 31st May 1816, which defined the authority of the president in detail, mentioned “paying heed” to houses of lewd women through “earlier police arrangements on the matter”.<sup>139</sup> It is therefore probable that Prussian regulations remained in force. However, after the November Uprising the city lost its control over prostitution. After 1833 the office of the vice-president (after 1839 called the Chief Police Inspector, pol. *oberpolicmajester*), which was to supervise it as the head of executive police, became fully independent of the president of the city.<sup>140</sup>

The status of prostitutes living outside of brothels is not entirely clear. According to 19th-century authors “at the time [before 1843 – J.S.-K.], prostitution was

134 AGAD, Policja Tajna Wielkiego Księcia Konstantego [Secret Police of Duke Konstantin], 75 archival units from Mackrott's office. No police records from Warsaw have survived.

135 Małgorzata Karpińska, *Złodzieje, agenci, policyjni strażnicy... Przystępstwa pospolite w Warszawie 1815–1830* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 1999), p. 56.

136 Karpińska, *Złodzieje*, p. 56 (Chart 1). The decrease in numbers since 1826 is not necessarily tantamount to the decrease in the number of brothel houses, but certainly indicates less interest in such establishments on the part of the secret police.

137 Karpińska, *Złodzieje*, p. 58.

138 Adam Szczypiorski, *Ćwierć wieku Warszawy 1806–1830* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1964), pp. 184–185.

139 “Rozporządzenie, rozwijające i wprowadzające w wykonanie postanowienie Namiestnika Królewskiego, dotyczące organizacyi Urzędu Muncypalności i Policji i w mieście stołecznem Warszawie”, in: *Zbiór Praw Administracyjnych Królestwa Polskiego, Wydział Spraw Wewnętrznych*, part 5 *Zarząd Gospodarczy Miasta Warszawy*, Vol. 1, Warsaw 1868, p. 53 (paragraph 49).

140 A. Szczypiorski, *Warszawa, jej gospodarka i ludność w latach 1832–1862*, Warsaw 1966, p. 10.

only tolerated in houses of ill repute and prohibited to women living individually, that is alone,” which was seen as the main reason for the development of covert practices, since “it is understandable [that] having no wish to be in brothel houses, they preferred to engage in harlotry in secret”.<sup>141</sup> On the other hand, however, if it is true that the KRSW regulation against covert prostitution issued in 1820 ordered “the unrelenting,” i.e. those who did not wish to abandon their profession, to be registered “for further control, so that they would conform to general regulations on taxation and inspection,”<sup>142</sup> some form of legalisation of individual prostitution must have existed. Perhaps in places that did not have any brothels the police was willing to tolerate independent prostitutes in the city.

Licensed brothels probably existed outside of Warsaw as well. For instance, an excerpt from the register of records of the police department of the Committee of the Kalisz Voivodeship (the records themselves have not survived) point to a legal brothel having operated in Kalisz in the second decade of the 19th century.<sup>143</sup> The first evidence for medical control of prostitutes in the Kalisz and Lublin Voivodeships also comes from the same period.<sup>144</sup>

Indication for the authorities’ interest in prostitution may be found in the drafts of police and sanitary regulations detailing the operation of brothel houses, the fight against illegal harlotry and the inspection of prostitutes. In the first three decades of the 19th century alone, at least five such bills were drafted, and two were passed as law. In 1809, a project of organising medical police including a chapter on the organisation of brothel houses was filed at the General Medical Council (established as the academic medical department of the Ministry of the Interior, which supervised the health service in the Duchy of Warsaw since 1809) by doctor Józef Kulpiński, the inspector of the main infirmary in Lublin.<sup>145</sup> Further drafts were produced in the period of the Kingdom

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141 *Wykład*, p. 401; J. M. Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, p. 98. The first mention of legally operating “harlots living in Warsaw” comes from 1842 and is found in a report by the chief police inspector to the KRSW – AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 2464, k. 632.

142 *Wykład*, p. 401. Giedroyć, who was meticulous and well acquainted with the records, never mentioned such a directive.

143 See: AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 c, “Repertorium, czyli wykaz akt wydziału policyjnego KWK”. In the section entitled “*W przedmiocie akt teatrów, widowisk, zabaw*” [With regard to theatre acts, shows and entertainment] there is an entry on “*Utrzymywanie domu kobiet publicznych*” [Maintaining a house of public women].

144 Giedroyć, *Rada*, pp. 660–661.

145 Giedroyć, *Rada*, pp. 657–658; Text in: Franciszek Giedroyć, “*Domy wilczkowania*”: (*projekt organizacyi wewnętrznej zamtużów w Polsce*) (Warsaw: Drukarnia Kowalewskiego, 1912).

of Poland. Jan Stummer, the chief medical officer of the Polish army, the head of the health department at the Government War Commission (hereinafter: KRW) and a member of the Medical Council (formerly the General Medical Council at the KRSW) in 1821 presented the Warsaw Magistrate with regulations, pertaining in part to medical examination and in part to brothel houses. The office deemed these insufficient and put forward their own proposal (1824), which was nonetheless shelved.<sup>146</sup> In 1825 the KRSW and the KRW tasked the mentioned Stummer with “drafting new or tightening and perfecting existing police regulations in the country regarding the prevention of the spread of the venereal disease”.<sup>147</sup> Stummer completed this assignment, yet as before, his project was never implemented.

The subject was taken up again during Paskiewicz’s term of office. Late in 1833, a committee of military doctors established by the governor and led by military physician Bazyli Chołodowicz, general of the regular army, developed a project of “regulations on the intended measures towards halting the progress of venereal disease in Warsaw”.<sup>148</sup> These only concerned the search for prostitutes suspected of carrying a disease, who were to be hunted by the police and the military. With regard to legal prostitution, it was suggested that the secret police should follow the example of foreign cities in paying more attention to the management of brothels with respect to prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Giedroyc states that these regulations, made slightly more lenient by Paskiewicz, were in force until 1843, even though they were initially regarded as temporary. Their implementation, especially the supervision over hospitals, was safeguarded by “the Committee for the prevention of the spread of contagious diseases”. It was the first of many Warsaw committees aimed at combating sexually transmitted diseases. In the 1860s and 1870s, such institutions also started to appear in other

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146 *Wykład*, pp. 401–402. Pawlikowski, who was not aware for the *Ordinance* of 1802, deemed them to be the first written regulations pertaining to prostitution in Warsaw. The exact content of the drafts is not known.

147 Giedroyc, *Rada*, pp. 661–662. The Committee’s postulates presented to Stummer aimed at “establishing in the capital exclusive superintendence over harlot women” (which may be understood as creating a separate institution to supervise prostitution) as well as founding and managing houses of employment for such women in the capital and voivodship cities (as a means of removing them from the streets). The draft had probably not survived in the records of the Medical Council, otherwise Giedroyc would have summarised or quoted it directly, as he did in other cases.

148 The text, composed of two parts: (A) “on the part of the police” and (B) “on the part of military commanders,” was published in: Giedroyc, *Rada*, pp. 662–664.

cities of the Kingdom of Poland. Paskiewicz appointed the head doctor of the hospitals in the Kingdom of Poland to lead the committee; the other members were a military doctor, an official of the municipal police, and since 1838 also a medical inspector of the city of Warsaw and the head doctor in the hospital of St. Lazarus.<sup>149</sup>

As far as the scarce source material seems to suggest, what these drafts had in common was the issue of the threat of venereal disease and the pressure exerted by the military on the civil authorities in connection with this problem. The change of focus as compared to the period of Prussian administration was very distinct – this time it was about ensuring frequent control of the prostitutes' health, as is apparent even from the titles of the legislative acts. All the known authors of the drafts were military doctors, while the regulations from the years 1825 and 1833 were developed directly in connection with the alarming news of the soaring numbers of infected soldiers. In the 1830s, prostitution seemed to influence the general state of health in the army.<sup>150</sup> In the spring of 1821 governor Józef Zajączek filed a relevant report by the KRW to the KRSW, which prompted the latter institution to issue a directive declaring the need for organising medical examinations and treatment for prostitutes throughout the country. Similarly, in 1824 and 1825 Zajączek passed the complaints from the KRW regarding the inefficient means of control over women of ill repute.<sup>151</sup>

The pressure was not eased even at the time of the November Uprising (1830–1831). Early in 1831, the high command of the Polish army demanded that the administration exert more energy in combating illegal prostitution and controlling the health condition of the women.<sup>152</sup> In the Kalisz Voivodeship, as women willing to render sexual services were drawn towards military garrisons and camps of enlisted volunteers, the Citizens' Council of Kalisz became concerned about the combat readiness of their insurgent forces. It therefore appealed to the Voivodeship Commission to apply the existing regulations, demanding that the numbers of women subject to observation and examination be expanded.<sup>153</sup> After the failed insurrection, similar problems were reported by commanders of

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149 Giedroyć, *Rada*, p. 664.

150 It is mentioned in the memoirs of Józef Patelski, *Wspomnienia wojskowe z lat 1823–1831*, (Vilnius: Biblioteka Pamiętników, 1921), p. 44.

151 Giedroyć, *Rada*, pp. 660–661.

152 Jan Władysław Chojna, "Warszawskie lazarety wojskowe w czasie powstania listopadowego", *Archiwum Historii Medycyny*", Vol. XXXVI, no. 1–2 (1973), p. 77.

153 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e, n. pag.

the Russian forces stationed in Warsaw and throughout the Kingdom.<sup>154</sup> With the Polish army disbanded, they were the main source of pressure upon the authorities, demanding decisive action in terms of regulation and healthcare. In their eyes, the administration was the one to blame for the increase in the percentage of infected soldiers, since it did not prevent illegal prostitution with due diligence. The army was therefore the driving force behind the State's standard-setting efforts with regard to the conditions under which prostitution was to be tolerated and the repressions pertaining to its illegal aspect.

There is no doubt that the military and the police was interested in prostitution mainly due to its role in the spread of venereal disease. In Europe, the history of sexually transmitted diseases stretches back to the late 15th century, when an epidemic of syphilis broke out among the mercenary armies of Charles VIII that had taken Naples. Returning home, the soldiers spread the disease across the continent.<sup>155</sup> Since the very beginning, the illness was associated with prostitutes. As one Warsaw-based doctor from the 1840s put it, harlots were "beings that, so to speak, served as *guides* for the plague".<sup>156</sup> Venereal diseases had always been perceived as a grave threat, especially given the fact that no differentiation between them existed (the unitarist theory) and until the 1830 any disease attacking the genitals was considered syphilitic in nature.<sup>157</sup> Speaking at

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154 Giedroyc, *Rada*, p. 662. The Government Commission for Internal Affairs was also receiving reports from local administrative authorities complaining about unprecedented numbers of "public women".

155 The history of medicine offers two hypotheses on the origins of syphilis, one connecting it with the New World, the other arguing that a benign form of the disease had existed in Europe for centuries. See: Kazimierz Lejman, "Zarys historii kiły", *Archiwum Historii Medycyny*, Vol. XXXII, issue 2 (1969), pp. 125–126. Claude Quétel, *History of Syphilis*, trans. Judith Braddock and Brian Pike, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), p. 20. As noted by Marcin Bielski, the author of *Kronika polska* (1597), the disease arrived in Poland "brought from Rome to Cracow by one madam who was travelling for indulgence there". Quoted after: Kracik, *Pokonać*, p. 48.

156 Ludwik Grabowski, "O chorobie wenerycznej pod względem policyi lekarskiej", *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Lekarskiego Warszawskiego*, Vol. XVIII, libellus 1 (1847), p. 8.

157 Andrzej Stapiński, *Zwalczanie kiły i rzeżączki w Polsce* (Warsaw: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1979), p. 42. Even in the most developed countries, the number of cases of venereal disease was only brought down in the final decades of the 20th century. In certain regions of the world syphilis still poses a serious epidemiological threat. In most countries, all infected patients are subject to compulsory registration and treatment; Tomasz F. Mroczkowski (ed.), *Choroby przenoszone drogą płciową* (Warsaw: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1998), p. 14.

a meeting of the Warsaw Medical Society in 1843, Ludwik Grabowski described the consequences of venereal diseases in terms of “the calamities they bring to humankind” and “advancing ruin”. As he stated, “due to the persistence with which the venereal disease resists eradication, and the disaster it spells for the society, it may be regarded as more harmful than human plagues, even the miasmas”. The disease was said to “debase generations”; Grabowski quoted foreign sources stating that “the very best, the very wealth of nations resting in the youth is perpetually corroded away by the virulent venereal poison”.<sup>158</sup>

The threat caused by the permanent consequences of venereal diseases that damaged the body and were transmitted to the next generation had long been identified by doctors (though without the note of panic characteristic for the late 19th and early 20th century), who pointed to the need for adequate measures to be taken by the state authorities.<sup>159</sup>

An increase in the number of patients among the poor and the military was noted in the Kingdom of Poland in the 1820s and 1830s, yet no accurate estimates for the 1st half of the 19th century may be presented due to the lack of sufficient data and the low percentage of patients that were hospitalised. The

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158 Grabowski, “O chorobie”, pp. 7, 8.

159 A late 18th-century police report for the Police Commission of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth reads: “It is worse indeed when the type of the infernal disease which – having infected the very source of life, through careless or inappropriate medication surfaces in the progeny, turning it into a debilitated tribe – has spread so wide throughout our communes that it poses an ultimate threat. The offices of the military and the increasing number of bachelors spread this plague. One fears to realise that these people, whom the Homeland would expect to be healthy and hale, in the very flower of their age, either prove fruitless in matrimony, or produce weak issue that would subsequently be utterly unproductive, becoming an idle burden on the earth.” The author proposes: “It appears therefore that the supervision of the Government ought to strive towards recognising and perfectly curing those affected by the illness, so as to preserve at least the new brood that is the hope of the Homeland. It would be conducive to this purpose, if there were communal doctors and medical assistants, paid by the Coffer of the Civilian-Military Commission, whose duty it would be to care for the health of moneyless peasantry, and, having tracked venereal diseases, cure them with the most decent means. While the exalted Police Commission, through [its] morally apt regulations, shall accomplish this beneficial task” – AGAD, The Kingdom of Poland Archive, j.a. 149, k. 36–37. See: Wiktor Piotrowski, “Choroby zakaźne w epoce polskiego oświecenia”, *Archiwum Historii i Filozofii Medycyny*, Vol. LKII, issue 63 (1997), pp. 203–210. The royal surgeon Lafontaine compared the incidence of venereal disease in the country with urban standards, writing that in one hundred recruits coming to Warsaw, eighty were infected with syphilis; Piotrowski, “Choroby”, p. 208.

hospital of St. Lazarus in Warsaw, which offered treatment for venereal diseases, admitted more and more patients (1813 in 1833, 2039 in 1837, 2517 in 1838, and 3978 in 1840); in the 1840s it could treat ca. 400 individuals at a time.<sup>160</sup> However, the increasing numbers of hospitalised individuals do not necessarily point to a growing percentage of the “syphilitically ill” among the society. It is apparent that the growing numbers correspond to the development of the hospital, the management of medical care, and the actions taken by the police and healthcare to identify infected individuals. The social and professional status of hospitalised women, who constituted 70% of the patients, indicates that they were brought to the institution by force, mainly following police arrest.<sup>161</sup> On the other hand, the abovementioned proposed bills and the organisation of inpatient care for people infected with venereal diseases in the 1820s provide clear evidence that the illness evoked a sense of danger. Objectively speaking, the harsh and unsanitary conditions in which the poor lived were conducive to the spread of the disease, as was the work-related migration of people, the development of new forms of production (bringing great numbers of men and women together), and billeting soldiers with private citizens. In the eyes of a contemporaneous doctor specialising in the issue, venereal diseases constituted a genuine epidemiological problem in the 19th century. “The real dread they caused was justified both by their great dissemination and the grave consequences for the body,” especially since “they usually afflicted young people and had a negative impact on the health of the family.”<sup>162</sup>

The existence of the threat or the awareness thereof does not, however, fully explain the proactive attitude the authorities displayed in creating regulations related to prostitution. Especially in the early 19th century, extending the medical aspects of rules and restrictions appears to have been systemic in nature and stemmed from the State’s involvement in the development of sufficient structures of medical care, as well as from the growing status of medicine, which exerted an ever-larger influence over public opinion and the authorities’ decisions. From the second half of the 18th century onwards, the attitude towards the issue of health represented by European states and societies underwent a breakthrough

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160 Stapiński, *Zwalczanie kiły*, pp. 29–32. The data quoted by the author comes from reports by the Principal Supervisory Board of Charitable Institutions written between 1833–1840.

161 32% vagrants and clandestine harlots, 28% public women, 20% servants, 10% workers, 2% coffee makers, only 2% “of proper moral conduct,” the rest were children and the elderly; Stapiński, *Zwalczanie kiły*, p. 31.

162 Stapiński, *Zwalczanie kiły*, p. 32.

change, resulting in the emergence of the idea of public health preservation encompassing the entire society. Health started to be regarded in terms of state economy and politics. Preventive activities and the treatment of diseases became institutionalised (the emergence of medical universities, hospitals, the positions of official doctors); the principles of the health propagation and preservation movement (the so-called hygenism) were established. The generation of the French Enlightenment contributed to the recognition of every citizen's right to health, as well as to the formulation of the concept of state responsibility for providing physical welfare.<sup>163</sup> The previously existing system of healthcare, based on philanthropy and religious institutions, proved insufficient confronted with the standards set by the elite of the age and the scale of factual medical problems Europe had to face due to the growing urbanisation, migration to cities, the development of industry, and the growth of the working class population and all its negative consequences. The State needed to assume new responsibilities and take long-term action.<sup>164</sup> Since the very beginning, protecting citizens from contagious diseases was among the principal tasks of the "medical police".<sup>165</sup>

For a time, the poor organisation of medical care allowed doctors to believe that the problem with combating venereal disease lay not in the gaps in knowledge regarding aetiology and treatment, but in the number of doctors and hospitals, as well as in the principles of healthcare. In other words, they saw the situation as resulting from "centuries of neglect".<sup>166</sup> The Europe of the first half of the 19th century was fairly optimistic towards the possibility of eradicating venereal disease.<sup>167</sup> The threat was estimated as less serious than in the previous centuries;

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163 As noted by the specialist on the history of medicine Jan Nosko, there emerged "a vision of an egalitarian society based on the principles of rationalism and science, combining health as one of the natural human rights safeguarded by the government embodying the technocratic ideal of using science in the service of the State, and the model of scholars and doctors as experts and advisors to the decision-making bodies"; Jan Nosko, "Ku nowożytniej koncepcji troski o zdrowie publiczne. Intellektualne przywództwo Francji", *Archiwum Historii i Filozofii Medycyny*, Vol. DCII, issue 3 (1997), p. 262.

164 See: Nosko, "Ku nowożytniej", pp. 264, 280.

165 Giedroyć, *Rada*, p. 36.

166 In 1843, Grabowski was confident about the "ease with which venereal diseases can now be cured given the current state of medical skills" (Grabowski, "O chorobie", p. 10); cf. footnote 79.

167 Mary Gibson, *Prostitution and the State in Italy. 1860–1915* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), p. 161.



the disease did not take forms as severe as the ones described in earlier periods, while medicine had what was thought to be effective means of treatment.<sup>168</sup>

Thus, the efforts towards the organisation of sanitation and healthcare in the Kingdom (begun in the Duchy of Warsaw)<sup>169</sup> also included a program of combating contagious diseases. The fight with venereal disease was mainly understood as exercising control over prostitution. The most important regulations in the 19th-century Kingdom, introduced in 1843, were the result of expanding art. 15 and 62 of the legislation on civil and medical government in the Kingdom of Poland (1838; ultimately approved on 16/28 April 1840) and working on the reorganisation of police-and-medical services in Warsaw.<sup>170</sup> In 1841, Paskiewicz established a new Committee. The Chief Police Inspector in Warsaw, the Principal Healthcare Inspector, the President of the Welfare Council of St. Lazarus Hospital and the Warsaw Civil Governor were tasked with reviewing sanitary and police regulations thitherto used in the Kingdom and familiarising themselves with the regulations in force in other large European cities in order to design effective means of supervising prostitution in Warsaw.<sup>171</sup> Therefore, the committee drew not only from the expertise of the Warsaw police accumulated since the times of Prussian administration, but also from the experience of governing bodies in other countries. They may have sent delegates abroad to examine the solutions used there.<sup>172</sup> The country that created a highly praised

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168 Alain Corbin, “L’hérédosyphilis ou l’impossible rédemption. Contribution à l’histoire de l’hérédité morbide, in: idem, *Le temps, le désir et l’horreur. Essais sur le dix-neuvième siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1991) pp. 144–145.

169 With regard to Poland, the first attempts at legal regulations of medical treatment appeared in the 1770s. The principles of reforming the system of healthcare and sanitation were to be implemented by the new authorities instituted by the Great Sejm (1788–1792). The Constitution of 3rd May 1791 put healthcare in the hands of the Police Commission, in line with the Enlightenment’s views on the competences of the institution with regard to citizen safety; see: Srogosz, *Problemy*, pp. 285–389.

170 “Ustawa o zarządzie wydziału cywilno-lekarskiego w Królestwie Polskim” [Bill on the management of the civil and medical department in the Kingdom of Poland], DP KP, Vol. XXII, p. 427 and Vol. XXV, p. 129; Giedroyc, *Rada*, pp. 90–91; Szczypiorski, *Warszawa*, p. 184.

171 Giedroyc, *Rada*, p. 664. A mention of a “recently established Committee” which was collecting relevant proposals from civil governors and medical offices in the Kingdom; AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47, k. 50.

172 One of the speakers at a meeting of the Warsaw Medical Society noted: “we were a witness and a participant of a practical implementation of government regulations abroad and in the country”; Grabowski, “O chorobie”, pp. 4–6.

system of tolerated prostitution was France. The principles of regulation, set during the rule of the Consulate, were copied and adapted in many different countries.<sup>173</sup> Paris not only attracted tourists and newcomers wishing to entertain themselves in brothels, but also held the attention of the police, searching for policy models and solutions for the problem of prostitution.

The reformers from Warsaw could also consult a wide array of academic literary sources on the connection between prostitution and venereal disease.<sup>174</sup> The title of the greatest European authority on the subject of prostitution was then held by the French doctor and scholar Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet, “*son théoricien, mais son apôtre, on pourrait presque dire son chantre, le plus prestigieux.*”<sup>175</sup> The detailed study<sup>176</sup> of the socio-anthropological and socio-hygienical aspects of prostitution in Paris, published in 1836, was highly instrumental in the justification of the policy of tolerance towards prostitution in Europe. As a theoretician and practitioner of social hygiene studying the relations between living conditions and illness,<sup>177</sup> Parent-Duchâtelet was interested in commercial sex and its influence over the physical health of the society. He was a proponent of isolating prostitutes in brothel houses and subjecting them to rigorous medical control. According to Corbin, he was also motivated by an unconscious fear of the prostitutes’ impact on the destruction of the upper classes’ lifestyle.<sup>178</sup>

A similar connection, based on conjecture rather than source material, may be identified between the activity of the Committee in Warsaw and similar

173 On the French system of regulations see Alain Corbin, “Commercial Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France: A System of Images and Regulations”, *Representations*, Vol. 14 (1986), pp. 209–219. Its workings were also described in: Jill Harsin, *Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Jean-Marc Berlière, *La police des moeurs sous la IIIe République* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), pp. 17–35.

174 For a full bibliography of works from the 1830s see: Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 6.

175 On Parent-Duchâtelet’s influence over his contemporaries see Alain Corbin, *Les Filles de noce. Misère sexuelle et prostitution au XIX siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982), pp. 13–36; Harsin, *Policing*, pp. 96–130.

176 Alexandre Jean-Baptiste Parent-Duchâtelet, *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris*, Vol. I–II, (Paris: J. – B. Baillièere et Fils, 1836). Reissued in 2000 with Corbin’s introduction.

177 He was equally industrious in solving the problem of sewer drainage in Paris and the elimination of cesspits; see: Anne F. La Berge, “A. J. B. Parent-Duchâtelet: Hygienist of Paris, 1821–1836”, *Clio Medica. Acta Academiae taternationalis Historiae Medicinae*, Vol. 12, no. 4 (1977), pp. 279–301.

178 Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 24.

work being done in the early 1840s at the Medical Department of the Ministry of the Interior in St. Petersburg.<sup>179</sup> Even if only the 1843 legislation is considered, Warsaw was the first city in the Russian Empire to have introduced separate regulations regarding prostitution. The history of legalised public prostitution in Russia only began in the summer of 1843, with the establishment of the Medical Police Committee in St. Petersburg and the registration of first prostitutes (*podnadzornye*).<sup>180</sup> Regulations for brothel owners in St. Petersburg and Moscow came into force in 1844 (Riga followed as the third, in 1854).<sup>181</sup> Laura Bernstein regards the introduction of regulations in Russia as yet another manifestation of the bureaucratisation of public life, so characteristic for Nikolai I's rule, and an indication of the extraordinary activity and ambition of the Minister of the Interior, Lev Perovski, who was the driving force behind many reforms in the police and medical programmes imitating French models (in this case *police des mœurs*), and not as a response to real social problems, as it was the case in France or England.<sup>182</sup>

By the end of 1841, the “police-and-medical regulations for the prevention of venereal disease” were finally ready. In January 1842 they were introduced for a trial period of one year.<sup>183</sup> The text of the legislation has not survived, yet it

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179 Laura Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters: Prostitutes and their Regulation in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – Oxford: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 19–24.

180 The laws of 18th-century Russia granted the police the right to punish both parties engaging in paid sex with a fine or arrest, and mandated the persecution of “vagrant women of debauched behaviour” should any suspicion of them being infected with venereal diseases arise. Prostitution was not tolerated, but clandestine brothels flourished in St. Petersburg in the 18th century. See Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, pp. 13–15.

181 N. B. Lebina, M. V. Shkarovskiy, *Prostitutsiya v Peterburge (40-e gg. XX v. – 40-e gg. XX v.)*, Moscow 1994, pp. 11, 21–22. The laws were in place until 1861, when they were supplemented with regulations on the so-called “meeting houses.” In 1852, Petersburg had 152 legally registered brothels. The importance of the Petersburg Committee is evident from the fact that it was led by the president of the Medical Department of the Ministry of the Interior in St. Petersburg.

182 Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters*, p. 15; Barbara A. Engel, *Between the Fields and the City. Women, Work, and Family in Russia, 1861–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 167.

183 Grabowski cites one article pertaining to rewards and punishments that were to incite ill women to report for treatment. Should a woman suspected of prostitution and detained by the police prove diseased, after the treatment she was punished with flogging; if she voluntarily turned to a medical facility, the therapy was followed by a financial reward. The latter were, however, reserved for “women of good repute,”

could not have been very different from the final version ratified by the viceroy on 18th/30th January 1843.<sup>184</sup> They were the culmination of all previous efforts and experience with regard to the normalisation of the sex trade in the Kingdom of Poland.

In principle, the new regulations applied in Warsaw did not differ from the previous ones, combining anti-venereal preventive measures (precluding infection, early-stage detection) with the supervision of prostitutes. The mainstays of the system, i.e. state restrictions over the market, sequestration of prostitutes in brothel houses, compulsory medical examination and hospitalisation of the infected women, were reinforced further by the expansion of rules pertaining to medical surveillance, hospital treatment and registration of prostitutes (the *Ordinance* had 31 articles, the *Regulations* included 122). The content of the legislation directly corresponds to its unambiguous name.<sup>185</sup> Roughly three quarters of its articles dealt with the medical aspect of regimentation, specifying whom the examination would encompass, who would “perform them and administer treatment, what punishment are set for evading examination and treatment, etc.” The regulations on the functioning of brothel houses (36 in total) also became more specific. Many pertained to combating illegal prostitution. These shall be described in detail in Chapters 2 and 3 of the present work; for the time being it must only be noted that changes which (in hindsight) proved the most significant included allowing prostitutes to ply their trade legally outside of brothel houses. It was, naturally, conditional to official registration. The legalisation of individual prostitution was expected to limit illegal sexual trade; the authorities assumed that some of the women who did not want to surrender themselves to the regime of brothel owners would nonetheless agree to medical and police control. Registration of women rendering paid sexual services on their own account was also instituted in St. Petersburg in 1852, although the initial regulations in

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even though the opinion did not protect them from follow-up medical examinations, if conducted separately from the ones performed on prostitutes; Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 30.

184 *Przepisy policyjno-lekarskie do zapobieżenia szerzeniu się choroby syfilitycznej w mieście Warszawie* [Police-and-medical regulations for the prevention of the spread of the syphilitic disease in the city of Warsaw], [Warsaw 1843].

185 Chapters: I (general principles), II (policing and medical measures), III (the competences of the Medical Office and the officers subordinate to it), IV (the cooperation of police), V (the cooperation of the head doctor at the hospital of St. Lazarus), VI (the cooperation of military authorities), VII (on public houses), VIII (on penalties), IX (on fines).

that city did not provide for any tolerance for prostitution outside of brothel houses.<sup>186</sup>

Thenceforth, the structures of legal prostitution comprised women hired in brothels of various categories, along with those who were formally independent and plied their trade on their own (“harlots living separately,” Rus. *odinochky*), hereinafter called independent prostitutes.

Once again, the *Regulations* sanctioned the profession of a “harlot,” which appeared in alphabetical registers of citizens’ occupations between “teachers” and the category of “unstable lifestyle.”<sup>187</sup>

The tasks related to supervising prostitution were assigned to various medical, police and military organisations in Warsaw. The highest organ of medical aspect of police authority was the Chief Police Inspector in Warsaw, in charge of the executive police,<sup>188</sup> and the Chief Medical Inspector of Healthcare, whose responsibilities included matters of the medical police in the Kingdom.<sup>189</sup> They operated through a team<sup>190</sup> established for this very purpose at the Medical Office in Warsaw<sup>191</sup> and the police and medical institutions subordinate to them.

186 Lebina, Shkarovskiy, *Prostitutsiya*, p. 29.

187 It was so in the occupation lists from the districts of Kalisz (as many prostitutes as teachers), Łęczycza and Wieluń dated to 1864 and 1865 – AGAD, KWK, j.a. 3359.

188 Szczypiorski, *Warszawa*, pp. 34–35. He was in charge of the Police Bureau, police night watch and day watch, the Bureau of Service Control, and executive police.

189 The highest authority in medical matters was held by the Medical Council (1809–1867) of the KRSW. In 1838 the Commission also established the office of the Principal Healthcare Inspector. For details on its wide competences see: Giedroyć, *Rada*, pp. 78–79.

190 The team began to operate in 1842. Their principal task was protecting the military. Aside from an annual budget of 2265 silver roubles, the team also received 600 roubles from the viceroy’s own funds. In March 1842 the Administrative Council ordered the revenue from “public women” and brothel houses, thitherto directed to the municipal budget, to be entrusted to the Chief Police Inspector for the purpose of organising police and medical control over prostitution in 1843. See: Grabowski, “O chorobie”, pp. 28–29; Szczypiorski, *Warszawa*, p. 41.

191 Medical Offices were subsidiaries of the Medical Council operating in Gubernias between 1838–1866. Initially the system comprised one office per two Gubernias and a separate one for Warsaw; after the 1850s each seat of a Gubernia had one. The competences of the offices corresponded to the tasks assigned at the time to national healthcare systems, and encompassed medical (supervising healthcare), judicial, police (the broadly defined responsibilities of the medical police included supervising prostitution with the help of the police), as well as academic duties (Giedroyć, *Rada*, p. 32).

The team comprised members chosen by the military governor of Warsaw – the commissioner of police, an assistant and three superintendents – and by the KRSW – two doctors and a secretary for record keeping (art. 48, 121). The commissioner cooperated with the inspector in charge of the Medical Office in Warsaw and attended the meetings of that institution, having the decisive vote in any matters entrusted to it, yet reported directly to the Chief Inspector of Police (art. 48). He was to report any shortcomings in task completion to his superior or to the Chief Medical Inspector of Healthcare.

All key decisions regarding brothels and prostitutes in the capital, such as the opening, relocation or closing of brothels, as well as adding women to the list of licensed prostitutes – had to bear the signature of the Chief Police Inspector. The commissioner was to inform him of each and every unregistered prostitute the apparatus managed to trace.

According to the historian Andrzej Szczypiorski, the Chief Police Inspector's authority over prostitution "was an instrument of influence, carefully crafted and employed by the police and intelligence to control social mood and the attitudes towards the occupying authorities."<sup>192</sup> This was probably the case. However, police control over prostitution was an element of all 19th-century systems of regimentation based in administrative law. Memoir authors and later historians describing prostitution in Warsaw also blamed the Russian authorities for allowing the trade to flourish in the city, for the freedom it factually enjoyed and, consequently, for the decline of morals among the youth. They saw it as deliberate action aimed at demoralising Poles and distracting them from political matters.<sup>193</sup> The police turned a blind eye to violations and was willing to cover them up, if it meant receiving sufficient remuneration from the interested parties. The subject of corruption among the Warsaw police and the practices of using regimentation rules for personal gain was tackled by Waław Zaleski.<sup>194</sup>

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192 Szczypiorski, *Warszawa*, p. 42; the connection between prostitution and the security police was also argued in a later period by Macko, *Prostytucja*, p. 40.

193 Stanisław Milewski, *Ciemne sprawy dawnych warszawiaków* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1982), p. 71; on the mood of debauchery and amusement imposed by Russian officers and clerks see e.g.: Felicjan Faleński, "Wspomnienia z mojego życia", in: *Miscellanea z pogranicza XIX i XX w.*, *Archiwum Literackie*, ed. Kazimierz Budzyk, Vol. 8, (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1964), p. 91; Antoni Zaleski, *Towarzystwo warszawskie. Listy do przyjaciółki przez Baronową XYZ*, ed. R. Kołodziejczyk (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971), p. 206–210.

194 Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, pp. 52–54; See also: Andrzej Chwalba, *Imperium korupcji w Rosji i Królestwie Polskim w latach 1861–1917* (Cracow: Księgarnia Akademicka, 1995), pp. 82–83.

The Principal Healthcare Inspector was responsible for the medical aspect of supervision. He received (or ought to receive) a monthly statistic report by the Medical Office in Warsaw regarding the state of research “with added insight on how to improve this branch of service,” as well as an annual analysis of the influence medical service had on the state of venereal disease incidence in the capital (Art. 42). Officials specified in the *Regulations* met at his office on a quarterly basis to discuss effective measures of implementing the existing laws, introducing new ones and eradicating irregularities.<sup>195</sup> As with the Chief Police Inspector, the Healthcare Inspector was to be informed of any identified prostitute and any newly opened brothel house.

The commissioner’s broad spectrum of duties could only be managed with the collective efforts of different organisations, and if the number of prostitutes was relatively small. His competences included controlling – personally, if possible – the licensed brothels, medical examinations (“if possible, assisting inspection”), tracking illicit sex workers (independently of the local police), preventing prostitutes from entering the military camp near Warsaw, ensuring order on the streets after nightfall, arresting vagrant women accosting passers-by, as well as receiving fees from independent prostitutes (art. 48, sections 1–12). The authorities also expected the person who held the office to be proactive in suggesting future measures.

The Medical Office kept the register of prostitutes and other women subject to medical examination, organised and supervised checkups, worked on decisions regarding brothel houses and prostitutes (art. 75), supervised the collection of fees, and extended a kind of care over women in brothel houses, all in cooperation with the police, as well as military and administrative authorities. Controlling the work of doctors and midwives was a task assigned to the Office Inspector. In terms of attitude and organisation, the system was rooted in the 18th century notion of the medical police combining medical objectives with maintaining order.

Other institutions cooperating with the Medical Office were: the Police Bureau, the Office of Servant Control, the Department of Police and Judiciary, the Police Court, the Warsaw Department of Police, district commissioners, city governors, military governors, barracks supervisors, the clerical office of the

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195 The meetings were attended by: a staff officer representing the military under the authority of the military governor of the city, the senior garrison doctor, the senior doctor of the military hospital, the inspector of the Medical Office, the head doctor of the St. Lazarus hospital, and the commissioner of police at the Medical Office.

military hospital and the head doctor of the St. Lazarus hospital, as well as the Magistrate (if only to collect money for the budget).

In order to ensure effective control over prostitution and “monitor the extermination of venereal disease,” a system of data circulation and reciprocal control was created. It included reports, notices, statements and proposals.<sup>196</sup>

The new regulations introduced in Warsaw were soon used as the basis for similar laws for other cities in the Kingdom. The KRSW compiled an excerpt from the Warsaw regulations entitled “Police and medical regulations for the prevention of the spread of venereal disease in the Gubernia seats of the Kingdom of Poland” and composed “An explanation of the principles under which the establishment of public houses could be allowed in Gubernia seats, should such a need be recognised.”<sup>197</sup> The Committee, most likely acting upon the request of the governor of Płock “regarding certain rules, or the conditions under which houses of public women could be established in the city of Płock”. In the first half of April 1843 the mentioned documents were sent to city governors, advising the application of the rule in other cities as well, “according to their needs.”

The “supreme direction for this aspect of service” was invariably set by civil governors or the members of the local government designated by them. The activity of the police and doctors was, in turn, directed by municipal authorities. The regulations stipulated quarterly discussions on the matter, held by the senior garrison doctor, the local regiment’s staff doctor, the district doctor, and the chief of medicine at the hospital managing the treatment of the venereally ill. The talks were to be held at the magistrate. It should be remembered that preventive action against sexually transmitted disease was within the competence of Medical Offices.<sup>198</sup>

Although the 1843 regulations for gubernia seats included two categories of tolerable prostitution, they precluded the simultaneous existence of the two within a single city. It was assumed that “should the magistrate, considering the population of the city, feel compelled to tolerate a certain number of independent women of ill repute,” it may only do so in cities that had no brothel house, be it existing or planned.

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196 The official correspondence pertaining to Warsaw has not survived, yet the records from other cities in the Kingdom provide sufficient evidence.

197 APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 34–51 v. Copies of texts submitted in 1878 by the office of the General Governor of Warsaw to the head of the Piotrków Gubernia.

198 See footnote 95.



Given the fragmentary nature of the existing records, it is impossible to ascertain whether these regulations were actually implemented, and to what extent. In Piotrków and Łódź for instance, in 1878 (the earliest records) brothel houses operated without any regulations of organisation or control;<sup>199</sup> the records in Lublin quoted the 1843 laws even at the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>200</sup>

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the local administration did exercise some form of control over prostitution on their own turf, most probably since the 1820s, following the KRSW's guidelines on the examination and treatment of venereally ill women.<sup>201</sup> From 1841 onwards, the parts of annual reports written to the KRSW by gubernia authorities describing the state of morals in any given area mentioned data on the numbers of public women "known to the police" (which probably means ones engaged in legal prostitution, whether in a brothel or not), while the statement of individuals detained by the police included a section listing women arrested for illicit prostitution. In 1841 the police of the Kingdom of Poland "knew of" 823 prostitutes (chart 1) and detained 4427 illicit ones.

Nearly a half of all public women listed in 1841 (401 out of 823) resided in Warsaw. The fact is justifiable given the insurmountable gap in the size and multi-functionality of the city separating the capital from other urban centres in the Kingdom. By the early 1840s Warsaw had already recovered from the loss in population it sustained in the November Uprising and its aftermath; in 1841 the city had over 140 thousand permanent residents<sup>202</sup> and tens of thousands seasonal inhabitants, the numbers of whom were steadily growing. The city was also gradually regaining its economic significance and developing in terms of territory and urban structure. The consensus, especially among visitors, was that

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199 In Piotrków, the authorities only turned their attention to the brothel house at Słowiańska street when the local residents complained about the troublesome neighbours. This prompted the local governor to write to his Warsaw counterpart inquiring about the conditions under which a seat of a gubernia could tolerate the existence of prostitutes (APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 39, 96); in Łódź the first license for a brothel house was issued by the governor in 1879 – Marta Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wizerunek kobiety łódzkiej przełomu XIX i XX wieku* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Ibid., 2001), p. 61.

200 APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:103, k. 20. The Gubernia Authorities in Lublin also asked the government in Warsaw about regulations on the establishment and upkeep of brothels at least twice (in 1886 and 1895) (APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 72; WP IV 1895:775, k. 23).

201 Giedroyć, *Rada*, pp. 660–661.

202 AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 6994, k. 656; Szczypiorski, *Warszawa*, p. 235.

**Chart 1.** The number of prostitutes in the Kingdom of Poland in 1841 by gubernia (districts with no registered public women were not included)

<b>Gubernia, district</b>	<b>Number of prostitutes</b>
<b>Mazovia Gubernia</b>	412
Warsaw city	401
Warsaw district	8
Gostynin district	3
<b>Lublin Gubernia</b>	125
Zamość district	47
Lublin district	30
Hrubieszów district	23
Krasnystaw district	14
Lublin city	11
<b>Podlasie Gubernia</b>	73
Radzymin district	48
Kalwaria district	25
Suwałki city	16
Łomża district	15
Augustów district	13
<b>Kalisz Gubernia</b>	59
Kalisz city	44
Piotrków district	15
<b>Kielce Gubernia</b>	57
Olkusz district	44
Kielce city	10
Miechów district	3
<b>Sandomierz Gubernia</b>	28
Siedlce city	10
Siedlce district	9
Biała Podlaska district	6
<b>Augustów Gubernia</b>	69
Radom district	26
Sandomierz district	2
<b>Płock Gubernia</b>	-
<b>Total</b>	823

Source: AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 6994, k. 328, 386, 437, 481, 592, 668.

in Paskiewicz's time the capital exuded an air of frivolity and mirth – "lechery and cards [are] currently the main elements of our capital's life."<sup>203</sup> The social makeup of the wealthier end of the client base of Warsaw prostitutes probably comprised the increasingly numerous cadre of officials (already partially composed of Russians), the military (40–50 thousand men in the Russian garrison in the capital and its suburbs),<sup>204</sup> merchants coming to trade at markets, and landowners (some of them from the western borderlands of the Empire) who spent the winter in the capital. These groups sought to entertain themselves not only by attending theatres, balls and social gatherings, but also by visiting brothels and the residences of "harlots known far and wide in the city."<sup>205</sup> The less affluent could "practice the sins of insobriety and licentiousness, so condemned by the bourgeois morality" in liquor-and-beer gardens, inns,<sup>206</sup> and brothels of the lowest category, while the poorest looked for sexual experiences in the streets.

Warsaw attracted prostitutes from the entire region; the proximity of the large urban centre explains the absence of paid women in other districts of the Mazovian Gubernia. A similar concentration of prostitutes in the principal centre of entertainment in a given administrative region was observed in Kalisz (74.5 % prostitutes in the gubernia), which the statistic identifies as the second largest centre of sex trade in the Kingdom. Dubbed "little Warsaw," Kalisz did not boast any licensed brothel house at the time, but nonetheless had 44 "women known for harlotry" (almost ten times fewer than Warsaw; yet the population of Kalisz in 1841 was more than ten times smaller than the capital's and amounted to 12 thousand). The location of the city (near the border, on the route connecting Warsaw with the Russian interior), the presence of a garrison and a centre of

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203 Excerpt from a letter by the poet Gustaw Zieliński to Ignacy Orpiszewski. Quoted after: Alina Kowalczykowa, *Warszawa romantyczna* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1987), p. 194.

204 Kieniewicz, *Warszawa*, p. 110. On the lifestyle of Russians in Warsaw, "most [of whom] supported not one, but two households" and amused themselves with "joyful daughters of Corinth" see: Zaleski, *Towarzystwo*, p. 184

205 The passage refers to the 1830s and "dancing on graves," (after the fall of the November Uprising), yet memoir writers left similar accounts of the decade that followed, mentioning gambling, drunkenness, debauchery and demoralisation among Russian officers, as well as among the Polish youth "ruining what was left of their health". See: Stefan Witwicki, "Moskale w Polsce", in: *Zbiór pism pomniejszych utworu Stefana Witwickiego* (Warsaw: F. A. Brockhaus, 1878), Vol. II, pp. 32–34; Felicjan Faleński, "Z pamiętników", ed. W. Przeclawski, *Nowy Przegląd Literatury i Sztuki*, Vol. I (1921), pp. 320–322.

206 Wacław Szymanowski and Aleksander Niewiarowski, *Wspomnienia o cyganerii warszawskiej* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1964), p. 27.

the cloth trade (which had lost some of its importance after the 1820s, yet still attracted workforce from the countryside) meant that Kalisz had a permanent population of women engaging in prostitution.<sup>207</sup>

In other gubernias, including the one with the seat in Lublin, which was then the second largest city in the Kingdom (over 20 thousand residents in 1841),<sup>208</sup> the regional capital did not play such a role, and the number of public women was not directly proportional to the population. What had the most significance was the presence of the army, hence the high concentration in the Lublin Gubernia (88.8 % of the prostitutes in the gubernia were found in the Zamość district where a stronghold was located, and in the Hrubieszów and Lublin districts), the Podlasie Gubernia (the military was constantly stationed in Radzymin) and the Augustów Gubernia (Suwałki). Other important factors included the proximity of large places of employment, a fact which justifies the high score of the Olkusz district (Kielce Gubernia). It would, however, be a mistake to regard the numbers presented in the chart as reflecting the factual scale of prostitution, as the results were also dependent on the diligence of the local police forces. This is clearly apparent in the case of Płock. Given how the governor of Płock was bemoaning the system's inability to deal with illicit prostitution in 1843,<sup>209</sup> the lack of known paid women in the gubernia may only mean that the police failed to register any.

Tolerance for prostitution, inherently implying the lack of any penalisation for the practice, went against the new legal standpoint on the matter professed by the penal code introduced in the Kingdom on 1st January 1848. The *Code of Criminal and Corrective Penalties (Kodeks kar głównych i poprawczych*; hereinafter KKGp) was an abbreviated version of the Imperial Penal Code of 1845,<sup>210</sup> and punished men and women with six months to two years of imprisonment for open harlotry (*nepotrebstvo*).<sup>211</sup> Visiting a woman of ill repute could also

207 Władysław Rusiński, *Kalisz. Zarys dziejów* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1983), pp. 53–65.

208 Tadeusz Mencil (ed.), *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974), pp. 547–556.

209 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 43.

210 *Kodeks kar głównych i poprawczych*, Warsaw 1847; Juliusz Bardach (ed.), *Historia państwa i prawa Polski* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo naukowe PWN, 1981), Vol. III, pp. 541–560.

211 “For debauchery, made manifest by shameless deeds perpetrated in public or otherwise disturbing to others” (art. 715 KKGp). On the tradition of persecuting prostitution in Russia see: Leбина and Shkarovskiy, *Prostituciya*, p. 19.

result in a fine (between one and ten roubles; art. 719), if it was done “in an overt and scandalous manner.”<sup>212</sup> In practice, the new legislation brought chaos.<sup>213</sup> Following a ministerial intervention (from the departments of internal affairs and justice), tsar Nikolai I agreed to make registered prostitutes exempt from penalties for rendering sexual services. In 1853 the State Council decreed that registered women could not be prosecuted for prostitution alone; following insistent requests to base the legislation solely on administrative regulations, article 715 was removed from the next edition of the code, issued in 1866 (the 1866 version of the code came into force in the Kingdom in 1876 along with the reform of the judiciary, as another stage in the process of Russification in the country<sup>214</sup>). The matter was also brought up in the drafting of the bill on “justice of the peace” courts, which were to rule on matters not included in the code. The authors of the legislation strived to give the supervision of prostitution some sort of legal form. Thus, the 1864 law regarding “justices of the peace” included article 44, which specified the penalties for the failure to comply with regulations instituted to prevent prostitution and counteract its negative consequences.<sup>215</sup>

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212 Laura Engelstein, who analysed Russian law pertaining to sexual conduct, opines that it regarded prostitution as a “noncriminal activity, like public drunkenness, which created an atmosphere conducive to immorality and crime.” It did not break the law as such, but was detrimental to the moral development of the masses, and caused the moral decay of individuals, fostering their propensity for criminal activity; Laura Engelstein, “Gender and the Juridical Subject: Prostitution and Rape in Nineteenth-Century Russian Criminal Code”, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 60, no. 3 (1988) p. 485.

213 In Engelstein’s view, “the confusion between police, or so-called administrative measures, and legislative procedure, was a feature of the autocracy’s policy of deliberate misrule.” Although administrative regulations were criticised for non-compliance with the letter of the law, from the technical point of view the Russian system allowed for the existence of contradictory laws (Engelstein, “Gender”, p. 484). Germany was another country where, since the introduction of the Criminal Code in 1871, police regulations on the regimentation of prostitution were against the law, a fact which was used in the struggle to close brothel houses (Evans, *Prostitution*, pp. 110–111).

214 *Kodeks kar głównych i poprawczych wydanie 1866 dla Królestwa Polskiego (ukaz 25 września v.s. 1876 roku). Z objaśnieniami, poczerpniętymi z wyroków kasacyjnych departamentów Senatu Rządzącego W. Miklaszewskiego*, Warsaw 1876–1878. The new version kept the existing regulations on procuration (art. 998–1000) with only minor changes.

215 RGIA, f. 1276, op. 9, d. 807; Antoni Okolski, *Wykład prawa administracyjnego obowiązującego w Królestwie Polskim* (Warsaw: Redakcja Biblioteki Umiejętności Prawnych, 1880), Vol. II, p. 146.

As before, the legislature used a system of punishment in an attempt to incite prostitutes to report illness. “Debauched women affected with the infectious disease brought about by their way of life (*lues venerea*), who would not announce this at the very beginning” risked a fine or confinement (for the first instance 10 roubles and 7–21 days in prison; for the second – 30 roubles and three weeks to three months’ imprisonment; for the third – three to six months confinement in a correctional institution). For “transferring” a disease resulting from sexual intercourse, the “culprit” could be sentenced to two months in prison or a pecuniary fine of up to 200 roubles.<sup>216</sup>

The regulations preventing prostitution and its consequences were more elaborate when compared to the Polish law of 1818. The KKGPP instituted much stricter punishment for procuration (art. 726–730) and the facilitation of or enticement to prostitution (art. 716–718).<sup>217</sup> It also created an entire hierarchy of associated circumstances (including the role of the victim and the person who took advantage of them) determining the extent of the punishment. The maximum sentence, i.e. deportation to the Tomsk or Tobolsk Gubernia combined with two to three years of confinement,<sup>218</sup> was reserved for parents procuring their own children for prostitution and for husbands procuring their wives. A similar punishment (one to two years, and two to four years for individuals subjectable to corporeal punishment) was imposed for the procuration of minors by their teachers or legal guardians (art. 728).

The measures of penalising the procuration of girls from outside of the perpetrator’s family were much less severe. Incidental procurers were subject to a fine of 5 to 10 roubles for their first offence, and to confinement for 3 to 6 months for a repeated offense. “Those who had made the procuration of harlots their trade” were to be punished with a fine (3–10 roubles in cities, 1–3 roubles in the countryside), and 6 to 12 months’ confinement in a correctional institution for a repeated offense.

Thus, the legal protection extended over families rather than over women. In the early legislative codes, practically all sexual offenses were connected with

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216 Art. 720 KKGPP; *Ustav o nakazaniyakh, nalagayemykh mirovymi sud'yami*, Izd. 1885 g., St. Petersburg 1885 (art. 103).

217 The means of punishment for consciously creating opportunities for prostitution: for apartment owners (7 to 21 days of detention), for owners of various premises, such as hotels, bathhouses, restaurants, etc. (first offense 10 to 20 roubles, second offense 20 to 40 roubles, third offense 20 to 40 roubles and the order to close the establishment).

218 Persons subjectable to corporeal punishment could be sent to penal colonies (i.e. a type of labour camps) for the period of 4–6 years (KKGPP, art. 726, 727).

the shared interest of the community (as threats to public order and proper conduct), and kept separate from the issue of the rights of an individual and personal injury. The approach did not change until the legislative reform in 1903.<sup>219</sup>

#### 4. The “necessary evil” and an ideal brothel

Statements clarifying the authorities’ approach to prostitution and its tolerance within the State in the first half of the 19th century are very rare. The only sources historians currently have at their disposal are the legislative acts (enforced and proposed), the few surviving comments in official correspondence and a single article published in medical press. As noted before, contemporaneous policies towards prostitution stemmed from the belief in its instrumental role in the dissemination of dangerous venereal diseases, as well as in the need to protect the health of the people (or rather, the military). The lesson that could be derived from history was that repressions against prostitution had never been successful. What is more, the reformers of the time saw prohibiting prostitution as more dangerous than a policy of tolerance. As the example of other countries indicated, wherever prostitution was delegalised and everyone who plied the trade persecuted or punished, the numbers of paid women grew, while the “morality and the physical health of all the residents in the city [the author was referring to Vienna – J. S.-K.] were in jeopardy”. In contrast, places with an active medical police service – such as Paris – reported a decrease in the incidence of venereal diseases.<sup>220</sup> Since the disease could not be contained with medicine alone, if only due to the fact that the infected tended to avoid doctors (out of shame and various superstitions related to venereal disease), prophylactics aimed at reducing the number of infections seemed the most sensible solution. Subjecting prostitutes to supervision and confining them in brothel houses ensured control over the state of their health. It was also hoped that with the legalisation of prostitution illicit sex trade could be curbed or even eradicated completely.

Until the end of the 19th century, the most often quoted argument for allowing brothels to operate legally was that registered houses of ill repute limited or eliminated clandestine prostitution and the diseases that it would inevitably bring. Local officials stated simply that the police were unable to bring prostitutes under control. In Plock, for instance, “aside from the lack of a house of such trade and with the presence of the army, all attempts at clearing the city

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219 Engelstein, “Gender”, pp. 468–469.

220 Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 7.

from debauched women proved futile.”<sup>221</sup> The governor of Płock, who penned these words in 1843, thought that illegal prostitution would automatically be focused or at least limited by establishing a brothel house, thereby making it easier for the police to perform their assigned tasks.<sup>222</sup> Official correspondence dating from the second half of the 19th century contains not only words of justification for the opening of brothels, but even open demands for their presence. In 1870, for instance, following one Szaia Aronwald’s request for permission to establish a brothel in the village of Czarny Dwór (Powązki near Warsaw), chief police inspector Grigoriy Vlasov informed the governor of Warsaw that the existence of such establishments in the communes around Warsaw was “necessary and even beneficial” to effective supervision, due to the garrisoned army and the associated presence of many clandestine houses of prostitution.<sup>223</sup> In a confidential note to the Lublin governor, written on 25th June 1895, the staff of the stronghold in Ivanogorod (Dęblin) argued that the presence of such an establishment in the Irena district near the stronghold would be “entirely indispensable, since there are around 7 thousand people in the stronghold, and it would mean constant control and prevent the spread of syphilis. With the closing of public houses, vagrant women engaging in prostitution outside of medical supervision increase in numbers. The number of soldiers suffering from syphilis also grows.” The matter had been dragging at least since 1895. In August 1898 the staff made one further attempt to press the governor for a decision, stating that “such an establishment is necessary for the garrison.”<sup>224</sup> Another institution arguing for the establishment of a brothel, this time in Lublin, was a commission set up by the anti-syphilis committee in Lublin. In 1905 it described brothels as “the inevitable evil, a means of prevention for clandestine prostitution which spawns and spreads venereal disease.”<sup>225</sup> In 1898 the district doctor in Konin (Kalisz

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221 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 44. Similar thoughts were expressed in the 1890s by the governor of Piotrków (APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 97–98) and the Chief Police Inspector in Łódź; APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 37 (29th June 1896). Russian texts translated solely for the purpose of the present publication.

222 Similar arguments were presented by the Chief Police Inspector in Łódź, who supported Ruchlia Lubelska’s request for the license for opening a brothel. As he put it, the place would allow “ill-willed people to exploit women dealing in debauchery”; APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 37 (29th June 1896); also APŁ, RGK, WL, j.a. 7878a, k. 56.

223 APW (Pułtusk branch), RGW, WL, Referat I, j.a. 1870:29, k. 1–3.

224 APL, RGL, W P IV 1895:77, k. 31, 18, 39.

225 APL, RGL, W P IV 1898:89, k. 28 v.; also APL, RGL, L 1891:2 part I, k. 7–10, 153–157 (on the views in opening two brothel houses in Lublin).



Gubernia) explained that, in a city where the number of men exceeded that of women owing to the presence of the garrison, “given the lack of a licensed house [and despite the existence of 9 legally registered prostitutes], the urgent need for sexual contacts has to be satisfied in private (*chastnym obrazom*),” which in turn gives rise to the dangerous phenomenon of illicit prostitution.<sup>226</sup> Throughout the century, similar arguments were also used by the owners (or prospective owners) of brothels. For instance in 1816, when the police intended to close the public houses in Mariensztat, Źródłowa and Garbarska streets in Warsaw, acting in accordance with the 1807 decree of the Minister of the Interior, the proprietors warned the directorate that “people accustomed to visiting such houses, seeking the women they need and failing to find any on the premises, will surely cause trouble and harm, and thereby disturb the order in the mentioned streets”. They also remarked that men would then turn to public women who avoid medical examination, making themselves more vulnerable to disease.<sup>227</sup> Ludmiła Klajt, applying for a permission to open a brothel in Puławy in 1895, wrote that the enterprise was to satisfy the needs of the two regiments stationed in the area, and that the command thereof was favourable to the idea, “wishing to curb the progress of debauchery in the local population.”<sup>228</sup>

As the century drew to a close and the social acceptance for prostitution dwindled, opinions such as the one expressed by the district chief in Chełm in September 1898 were still an exception, especially in official correspondence. The official stated that the brothel in Chełm ought to be closed, as it was “a source of temptation and an open expression of depravity, staining the morality of the people.”<sup>229</sup>

The policy of legalisation was not tantamount to accepting prostitution as such. The phenomenon was still regarded as evil, from the medical and moral perspective alike. Prostitution was both an indication of demoralisation and a source thereof.

Much can be inferred from KRSW’s reply to the question posed in 1843 by the governor of Płock, who was inquiring about the possibility of opening

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226 APL, RGK, WL, j.a. 7857, k. 188.

227 Giedroyć, *Rada*, p. 659.

228 APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:103, k. 5. In 1898, expressing the wish to open a brothel of a higher category in Lublin, she argued that the lack of such a house is conducive to the rise of unsupervised prostitution among female domestic servants (APL, RGL, WP IV 1898:89, k. 9–9v.).

229 APL, RGL, WP IV 1898:208. Similar opinions were expressed by the magistrate and honorary citizens of the city of Chełmno in 1906 (APL, RGL, L 1906:23, k. 174).

a brothel house in the city. Explaining its policy of tolerance towards prostitution, the Commission proved that it was fully aware of the certain ambiguity and the awkward position in which the authorities found themselves, as well as of their powerlessness to reconcile moral standards with the existing reality: “the Government Commission sees it as necessary to state that the authorities ought to universally strive to eradicate harlotry, which has an indubitably harmful effect on the morality and health of all residents. Preventing it in smaller localities cannot pose as much of an obstacle as in more populous cities such as Warsaw, where this evil has already become something of a social need.” A further passage reads: “Harlotry has doubly harmful consequences: it is conducive to the corruption of morals and gives rise to the calamitous syphilitic disease. Should no possibility of eradicating harlotry exist, pains ought to be taken to at least safeguard good health. Thorough and regular inspections of women lending themselves to harlotry are the only method towards this purpose. It is therefore natural to conclude that, instead of clandestine back-alley harlotry which, as is known, may become the principal cause of disease, it is better to tolerate public houses. Being periodically examined by medical persons, the women staying in these houses do not cause as much alarm in spreading pestilence, which is, besides, never allowed to mature in them, and can therefore cause less harm than among women lending themselves to harlotry in secret.”<sup>230</sup> The Commission “sees no counterindication to allowing the establishment of public houses in Płock, since Your Excellency recognises such a necessity and is certain that the founding of a brothel house shall be the downfall of clandestine harlotry, so calamitous in its consequences.” It was, however, added: “The sole condition is that these permits and the entirety of activity related to this aspect of service bear no marks of being a clear authorisation from the Government, as one should act to ensure that, permits notwithstanding, harlotry remains an object of reproach and is regarded as a necessary evil, only tolerated on account of local conditions and considerations, to avert worse disasters.”<sup>231</sup> In 1896, a copy of this document and the 1843

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230 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 44–44v.

231 The Commission emphasised this once more: “In no case, however, can this be disregarded, so that tolerance towards harlotry does not bear the features of authorisation granted by higher authorities” (APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 44–45 v.). The Russian Ministry of the Interior was equally adamant to keep up appearances. In 1844, it evaluated the proposal to tax brothel houses and prostitutes as not only unlawful, but beneath the dignity of any authority. In 1873, a similar matter was described as “inelegant” (RGIA, f. 1270, op. 1, d. 966, l. 2, 3).

regulations was sent to the governor of Piotrków, who was then attempting to regulate the matter of prostitution in his region.

The State put itself in open opposition to the accepted *ordre moral*, yet nonetheless tried to uphold it through the organisation and regimentation of the prostitution market. Tolerance for prostitution was not to be understood as support; “houses of overt harlotry. . . are to be neither privileged nor obliged, but only suffered, that is tolerated.”<sup>232</sup>

The opinions on prostitution held by the officials, doctors, military men and brothel proprietors of the day carried an implicit meaning – the belief that men are incapable of maintaining sexual abstinence, or, more precisely, feel a natural, physiological need of satisfying their sexual drive. All parties involved in the correspondence pertaining to concession-granting often invoke the existence of solitary men, such as soldiers, students, workers, as the sole and therefore obvious and understandable argument. The chief of the Puławy district mentions two infantry regiments, three artillery batteries and around 300 students of the Institute of Agriculture and Forestry, concluding that “under such circumstances the presence of a public house in Puławy is necessary.” A brothel house was equally “necessary” in Janów (Lublin Gubernia), as the district had to accommodate “the 9th regiment of Don Cossacks, two battalions of the 70th Infantry Regiment and four border guard units of the Sandomierz Brigade.”<sup>233</sup> Regimentation was therefore based on the premise that prostitution was kept in existence by the very nature of male sexuality, which required the continual satisfaction of sexual drives, and could find no legal outlets to this purpose. As many sources throughout the 19th century emphasised, the problem lay in the fact that, due to financial concerns, a certain percentage of men entered matrimony late in life, many years after reaching full sexual maturity. The models of accepted sexual behaviour, different for males and females, and the rigorous standards applied to the sexuality of women – fiancées and wives – limited the freedom of sexual life and pushed it towards extramarital solutions, the easiest of which, at least for men, was prostitution.

This assumption led to acknowledging prostitution as useful. At a meeting of the Warsaw Medical Society, Ludwik Grabowski declared that “the presence [of prostitutes] in populous cities is incontrovertibly a necessity” and “common sense dictates that [they] be tolerated and their health cared for.” “Attention and

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232 Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 20.

233 APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:103 (Puławy), 1901:695 (Janów). See also RGL, W P IV 1898:89, k. 2–16.

efforts of this kind [i.e. medical and police supervision] are hardly against collective morality, nor do they arouse a stronger drive towards debauchery; since everyday experience indicates that carnality thrives if the hazard of infection is great, and those who are the most familiar with the venereal are often the most lecherous and hardly contribute to containing the disease. Those of the youth that are yet unspoiled by frivolity or beguiling persuasions, upon entering this downward spiral of life, are sometimes saved by the careful monitoring of harlots' health. There can be no doubt as to how the numbers of harlots can be decreased with such means, after supervision is extended over them, *how infanticide and suicide of abandoned children is limited for this reason* [emphasis J. S.-K.], indeed, the most sacred sentiments of faith and charity command the caring government to turn its eyes to harlotry and patiently endure it: the very knowledge of the good and bad inclinations of the residents is fundamentally mandatory for the higher officials who hold authority over them. To ensure that venereal disease does not spread in secret throughout larger cities and in places where unmarried men reside in larger numbers, the establishment of so-called public houses is a necessary evil. Even though the need to institute and suffer such venues in cities indicates nothing good about the moral state of the residents, there is no other method to prevent violations, adultery and the spread of the venereal plague: for this reason, such institutions ought to be suffered even in cities of moderate size."<sup>234</sup>

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234 Kulpiński, a physician, was of the opinion that the government should only agree to the presence of public houses in larger cities with administrative functions. In Lublin, for instance, he envisioned one brothel accommodating twelve 1st class "paramours" and eighteen 2nd class ones (for services, laundry); Giedroyc, *Domy wilczkowania*, p. 5. Johann Paul Harl, the author of a German police manual, wrote: "*Da Bordelle die Zerstörung der Gesundheit fortdauernd begünstigen, da sie besonders der Jugend gefährlich sind, und überdieß nicht nur auf Niederträchtigkeit beruhen, sondern auch ihren Zweck verfehlen; so darf keine gute Polizei Bordelle privilegieren oder auch ihre Existenz nur dulden, sondern sie muß vielmehr denselben aus allen Kräften entgegen arbeiten*" (art. 428); Johann Paul Harl, *Vollständiges Handbuch der Polizei-Wissenschaft, ihrer Hilfsquellen und Geschichte* (Erlangen: Johann Jakob Palm, 1809). He did not ignore reality. "*Wo unglücklicher Weise Bordelle errichtet oder sonst öffentliche Huren tolerirt sind*" (art. 432) he moved to protect the clients from contracting a venereal disease by instituting daily medical control for prostitutes and issuing written attestations for healthy ones, while directing the ill ones to hospitals. This remained the model police approach throughout the entire 19th century. The translator of the Polish edition of Harl's book, Adam Gliszczyński (the prefect of the Bydgoszcz department; formerly a member of the Great Parliament and an activist of the Association of

The aim was not only to protect people from disease, but also to prevent male sexual violence stemming from the inability of satisfying one’s sexual drive by legal means. Following this line of thought, tolerating the presence of brothels was a social need.<sup>235</sup>

The author of the project drafted in 1809 was even more open in expressing his views on the role brothels played in cooling passions, pacifying possible outbursts of male sexual violence and preventing the consequences, medical or otherwise, of extramarital intercourse. He states: “In the cities it is impossible to avoid unmarried women being importuned due to the propensities of youth and the need to fulfil the necessities of nature in the assigned form. Due to many people not being able to marry or support a wife, to prevent all manner of violations of nature and tyranny of mothers who would harm their own offspring, to prevent the debauchery and degradation of women supporting themselves off men, by offering themselves to them for their convenience and giving a bad example to some, and ruining others by depravity, to pay heed to the pestilence spreading through so many families, to so many bad mothers sacrificing their daughters to debauchery, to pay heed to the cunning between married couples, the envy between men, and other immoral vices, it is advisable to combat all these indecent things by designating a venue for wolfery.”<sup>236</sup>

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Polish Republicans) added his own proposal: “It would be best if the Police publically denounced venereal women and confined them, or at least warn about them” – Johann Paul Harl, *Nauka politycy. Dzieło podręczne nieuchronnie potrzebne dla sprawujących urzędy policyjne...*, trans. Adam Gliszczyński, (Bydgoszcz, 1811).

235 The workings behind the connection between sexual violence and the social strategies applied to prostitution, introducing organisation in the name of the greater good, as a necessity and the lesser evil, were described by Jacques Rossiaud in one of the most interesting books on prostitution, which focuses on the middle ages and the early modern period: Rossiaud, *La prostitution*, pp. 26–41.

236 The author proposed to call brothels “houses of wolfery:” “This moniker is given because any man living honestly, although he is compelled by nature to execute the functions of his organic part, he nonetheless feels abashed towards his friends, relatives and youngsters, and goes out in secret, so that he would not be seen, not unlike a young wolf sneaking into a barn. Thus, so as not to offend the ear, I chose to call the houses of paramours possessing a government permit by this term, wolfery” (Giedroyć, *Domy wilczkowania*, p. 2). This circumspectness, however, clearly indicates that it was still considered somewhat indecorous for a government to tolerate or, more precisely, to organise prostitution. [translator’s note: the author uses the verb *wilczkowanie*, which has herein been translated as wolfery, although it must be noted that it is derived from a diminutive of the word “wolf”: *wilczek*, so the literal meaning of the verb is “to

As Grabowski put it, one had no other choice but to “patiently endure the evil which protected from the worse.”<sup>237</sup> This approach reflected the views of St. Augustine, who wrote the following: “remove prostitutes from the social order, and lust will destroy it [. . .] Ugly as they are, they occupy their appointed place, leaving better places for better ones.”<sup>238</sup> Parent-Duchâtelet’s beliefs regarding the inevitability of prostitution and its benefits proved of utmost importance.<sup>239</sup>

Since prostitution appeared impossible to eradicate, advocates of regimentation intended to channel male virility into the controlled, safe and isolated environment of brothel houses, which the French started to describe with the term “tolerated houses” (*la maison tolérée*).<sup>240</sup> The State took it upon itself to make male sexuality safe for the client and the society.<sup>241</sup> By controlling the hygiene,

behave like a little wolf”; even though fully grammatical, it is a complete neologism and does not occur elsewhere in this or any other sense.]

- 237 Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 8. Cf. the opinion expressed in the *Monitor* (1776, no. 77, p. 656) advocating the introduction of controlled prostitution – “one chooses the lesser of two evils, as history teaches that much more dire consequences arose in those large cities which made the most strenuous efforts to eradicate harlotry and expelled the women playing at it. Fornication, violation, the rape of maidens, murder in infanticide followed promptly in greater amount”. Quoted after Piotrowski, *Choroby zakaźne*, p. 208.
- 238 Saint Augustine, *On Order [De ordine]*, Book II, First Debate, 4.12, trans. Silvano Boruso (South Bend: St. Augustine Press, 2007), p. 65–66. Relevant literature also made frequent references to the pseudo-Augustinian doctrine: “*La femme publique est dans la société ce que la sentine est à la barque et le cloaque dans le palais. Retranche le cloaque et tout le palais sera infecté*” – quoted after Jacques Rossiaud, *La prostitution médiévale*, Paris: Flammarion 1988 p. 91.
- 239 “*Les prostituées sont aussi inévitables dans une agglomération d’hommes, que les égouts, les voiries et les dépôt d’immondices.*” The popularity of such views survived beyond the 19th century. In 1901 Julian Marchlewski, an activist of the workers’ movement writing for *Głos* still cited the French scholar as representing the prevalent opinion; Julian Marchlewski, “Prostyucja”, *Głos*, no. 1 (1901).
- 240 In Warsaw under Prussian rule, licensed brothels were dubbed “Parisian”; Giedroyć, *Rada*, p. 69.
- 241 19th-century commentators and historians of prostitution made Solon into the founding father of regimentation, writing that he established public houses and bought prostitutes to be employed there using state funds, to protect respectable women and provide an outlet for the Hellenes’ temperament. F.S. Pierre Dufour, *Histoire de la Prostitution Chez Tous les Peuples du Monde Depuis l’antiquité la Plus Reculée Jusqu’à Nos Jours*, Paris: Seré 1851, Vol. 1, p. 117; Adolf Rząśnicki, “Prostyucja a proletariat, *Kuźnia*, no. 11 (1914).

health and behaviour of prostitutes, the “tolerated house” was to ensure that men returned to their families and to the society free of venereal disease.<sup>242</sup> In the process, it also hid the immorality and frailty of human nature from the public eye. Prostitution – and thus also pre- and extramarital sexuality – were to be brought under control with police obligations and prohibitions. As noted by the French historian Alain Corbin, regimentation reflected the dream of creating a service institution, controlled and indirectly managed by the State, featuring a “nobilitated prostitute,” who constituted “a rampart of sexual order.”<sup>243</sup>

An image of a model brothel house, as a site where the sexual aspect of the citizens’ existence was tamed by rational organisation, was presented by Kulpiński in his 1809 draft.<sup>244</sup> The prostitutes (or “paramours”) employed by the public house were to form a closed “association” presided over by “a stately and sensible supervisor”. Brothels under government protection ought to be reliable institutions (the proposal to locate them in brick buildings acquires a symbolic meaning), safe and orderly (the government would receive the proprietess’ complaints against ill-behaving clients), and closed to “non-residents” between 10 PM and 5 AM. With regard to prostitutes, “it would be better to choose women that would not bear offspring, but be healthy inside and out, of good height, with plump calves, firm and robust bodies: such ones, having once dedicated themselves to entering this association, shall stay forever and make their living therein.”<sup>245</sup> Restrictions were also to be applied to age – for prostitutes the

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242 Alain Corbin, “La prostituée”, in: *Misérables et glorieuse la femme du XIXe siècle*, ed. Jean-Paul Aron (Paris: Fayard, 1980), p. 42.

243 Corbin, “La prostituée”, p. 44. According to Corbin, prostitutes embodied moral decay; regimentationists tolerated such corruption, because it allowed the social organism to function properly. The author mentions the regimentation of prostitution among other regulatory activities aimed at creating a healthy city; others included regulations regarding sewage disposal and the killing of livestock.

244 The project comprised the following sections: “On supervisors” (16 articles), “Duties of the porter”, “duties of the paramours” (8 articles), “Duties of the surgeon”.

245 Giedroyć, “*Domy wilczkowania*”, p. 5. The doctor did not forget the erotic value and its importance; he proposed to decorate the doors of the “cells” with “portraits of each maiden, naturally rendered and fancifully nude, in various positions, along with the price of entry”. He was also mindful of the financial aspect: the customers were to pay for getting through the door (the doorman’s toll) as well as for the service (“per cell”). Both sums, which could only be altered upon notifying the district physician and with the consent of the chief of medicine, had to be specified in the records. In 1843 Grabowski expressed an additional wish for the police to prohibit brothels from employing women who were “sickly, weak, recognised upon examination as unfit for the work, suffering from mature *venerya*, lung consumption, rash of the head or

minimum was to be 16, and for clients 18 years. As a doctor, Kulpiński did not forget cleanliness (“as it will mean health and distinction for the association), which was to be ensured by baths taken twice a week. As a man and a citizen, he also thought of discretion, designing a system of managing the traffic of clients so that they would never meet one another.

A brothel following this design would function solely to relieve sexual tension, unlike the existing venues, which provided all sorts of entertainment, often communally.

First-class prostitutes were to exist in utter isolation; even if the client expressed such a wish, they could not be “let out into the world at all, save under Government permission, for serious reasons”. Never venturing outside, even in their houses they had to “live most quietly” and modestly, “make no demands of anyone, and maintain the decent ambition that it was not for the business, but for the peace within human society and out of human love that she agreed to serve as a substitute. Moreover, she should not debase herself, but strive to combine pleasure with the courtesy of an enlightened woman”.<sup>246</sup> In their free time, these aesthetically pleasing, quiet priestesses of erotic love could occupy themselves with knitting, singing, playing instruments, studying, or even charity (Kulpiński proposed that they organise theatre plays – naturally only staging morally appropriate works and only for women – and donate all the revenue to support orphans and hospitals).

The protection against venereal diseases was to be managed by a surgeon “advanced in years,” who would examine the women twice a week and also inform them of the symptoms of disease and “how they are to beware of the venereal weakness and attacks of the venereal” in situations where an infected client, despite the “courteous yet sensible” remarks, would still demand physical contact from a prostitute. In order to avoid such coercion, the author of the project proposed that the porter letting clients into the house (trained to recognise the symptoms of disease) direct the ill ones to “venereal paramours”.

Prostitution concentrated and concealed in brothels was therefore a means of protecting the society from disease, violence and unrest (Kulpiński portrays prostitutes as martyrs for the cause of safety and peace), from the moral decay that the sight of prostitutes could bring, and also from disorder in the literal sense, i.e. inconvenience and the crime usually associated with it (the system

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entire body, syphilis, or with deficiencies of the physical form or diseases of the sexual organs”; Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 22.

246 Giedroyć, “*Domy wilczkowania*”, p. 6.



of tolerance towards prostitution allowed for the penalisation of transgressions against the social order).

The idea of rational organisation of all aspects of social life, accomplished through numerous obligations and prohibitions, stemmed from the Enlightenment philosophy of rule, in which the State took on many duties (carried out by the police etc.) and entered far within the realm of the citizens' private life, at least in terms of thought and responsibility. In this sense, it may be argued that the regimentation of prostitution in the 19th century originated from the rational philosophy of the Enlightenment.<sup>247</sup>

The regulation of prostitution was justified with the concepts of the necessary evil – the lesser, tolerated one. As a Russian official in Płock put it, it was “a necessary evil, but muzzled.”<sup>248</sup>

## 5. The system of supervising prostitution in the 2nd half of the 19th century – medical-and-police committees in gubernias and districts

The 2nd half of the 19th century marked the beginning of the process of institutionalising the supervision of prostitution in the Kingdom of Poland through the so-called medical-and-police committees. They were also known as “anti-syphilitic” committees, and the latter denomination reflects the purpose for their establishment more accurately. Control over prostitution and the risk of venereal infections, thitherto exercised by the police and medical offices, was handed over to special teams composed of the highest officials in a given region (the governor, the president, the mayor, the chief of police), doctors and representatives of the military. Its principal (and for a long time the only) task was to protect the army from sexually transmitted disease. In the Warsaw Military District, comprising over 53 thousand soldiers in 1851, in every thousand infirm men there were 120.6 “syphilitics” – a percentage that was the third largest in

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247 Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 25. As noted by the already mentioned Harl, the most significant duties of the police included “*Ansehung des Lebens und der Gesundheit und [. . .] Schutz gegen ansteckende Krankheiten*” (art. 299), “*und die Polizei soll daher jede Gelegenheit dazu [i.e. infection with syphilis] soviel als möglich abzuwenden suchen*” (art. 426). Among the many aspects of life that ought to be controlled and supervised by “*gute Polizei*”, Harl mentions human sexuality (“corporeality”), understood as a threat to physical health (Art. 112, 235, 236, 242) – Harl, *Vollständiges Handbuch*.

248 N. Druzhinin, *Prostitutsiya v gorode Plocke*, (Płock, 1907), p. 5.

the Russian army and led to considerable expenses for medical treatment.<sup>249</sup> In the final two decades of the 19th century, as the population and economy in several urban centres in the Kingdom (and Russia) grew at a dynamic speed, the attention of the authorities also turned to the dire health problems among their inhabitants.

In the course of two years, between March 1861 and May 1863,<sup>250</sup> the viceroy of the Kingdom and the KRSW issued several directives regarding the prevention of venereal diseases and the supervision of prostitution.<sup>251</sup> On 25th March 1861, the commander in chief of the former 1st Army ordered medical-and-police committees to be established “for troops stationed in Poland” in all seats of gubernias and districts, as well as in cities accommodating independent military units which included a staff doctor. The committees were tasked with supervising activity aimed at preventing the spread of venereal diseases.<sup>252</sup> The KRSW initially (rescript dated 8th/20th April 1861) obliged medical offices to take care of protecting the still growing army. The offices were expanded to include a delegate from the army, a military doctor and an officer. In district seats similar duties were imposed on district chiefs, to be assisted by district doctors and representatives of the military.<sup>253</sup> The degree of control representatives of the military had over the actions of civil administration, and the extent of cooperation between the two increased greatly in the entire country. The following year (rescripts dated 15th/27th January and 5th/17th February 1862), the Commission instructed governors to be swift in establishing committees for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and supervising the search for and the examination of “lewd women”. These organs were to be founded wherever government doctors resided and wherever military units were billeted (the examination was to be done by military doctors).<sup>254</sup> City committees were subordinate to district ones, while the latter answered to gubernia committees.

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249 Józef Rolle, “Choroby weneryczne (1854–1864)”, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Lekarskiego Warszawskiego* Vol. 8 (1865), pp. 162–163.

250 I.e. before the insurrection and in the first months of the January Uprising, which began on 22/23 January 1863.

251 8/20 April 1861, 15/27 January, 5/17 February, 9/21 February and 19/31 May 1862, and 19/31 May 1863. See: LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 110–111; APL, RGL, L 1896:27, k. 9.

252 An extract from this regulation entitled “On the Medical-and-Police Committees for the troops stationed in the Kingdom of Poland” in LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 110–116v.

253 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15014, k. 67.

254 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15014, k. 67v, 68.

The committees established in the early 1860s were associated with medical offices.<sup>255</sup> In 1866 the law on gubernia and district management in the Kingdom of Poland dissolved medical offices, whose competences were taken over by medical departments newly established within the gubernia authorities.<sup>256</sup> Along with the KRSW, the Russian lawgivers dissolved (1867) the central medical authorities in the Kingdom: the Medical Council, the office of the Principal Healthcare Inspector, the Medical Department. Thenceforth, healthcare in Polish territory was administered by the Medical Department of the Ministry of the Interior in St. Petersburg.<sup>257</sup> The supervision of prostitution was based on Russian legislation, the most important of which was the circular no. 39 issued by the Ministry of the Interior on 28th October 1851,<sup>258</sup> which assigned governors in Russia responsibility for the registration, examination and treatment of prostitutes. Towns and cities were to compile “accurate and comprehensive” lists of public women (i.e. those who made prostitution their trade). Each change in their residence had to be reported, and the police of the locality to which a given prostitute travelled needed to be notified of the fact.<sup>259</sup> The police was also responsible for ensuring that public women showed up for their scheduled examinations. These regulations had already been introduced in the Kingdom (by the 1843 regulations and earlier directives).

The earliest records of establishing committees come from May and October 1861 and pertain to the Włocławek district in the Warsaw Gubernia. “The committee for preventing the spread of the syphilitic affliction,” tasked mainly with ensuring the health of the soldiers of the Nizhnii Novgorod Infantry Regiment, convened for the first time in January 1862.<sup>260</sup> Early in 1862 the chief of the Gostynin district issued instructions regarding the search for “indecent persons,”

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255 AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 280, 298. The records of medical offices in other gubernias do not contain such information, yet it must be noted that only a small percentage thereof has survived.

256 The powers and competences of gubernia authorities regarding healthcare were defined by the Russian medical legislation. See: Okolski, *Wykład*, Vol. I, pp. 127–128.

257 APL, RGL, WP 1901:695. References were made to the legislation for Russian gubernias written as early as in the 1840s.

258 The text: *Vrachebno-politseyskiy nadzor za gorodskoy prostitutsey*, (St. Petersburg, 1910), pp. 11–12. Later supplements added on 12th October 1860 and 24th October 1877.

259 In 1886, for instance, the Warsaw Medical-and-Police Committee asked the gubernia authorities in Lublin to inform of every prostitute heading for Warsaw, complaining that the regulations of 1851 are not respected; APL, RGL, WP IV 1886:146, k. 1.

260 AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 298, k. 1; j.a. 280, k. 1.

their supervision and examination (e.g. registering them and distributing medical record books). He ordered mayors of cities with military garrisons to establish medical-and-police committees, and instructed vogts to monitor women suspected of prostitution and to send them in for medical examination.<sup>261</sup> Records dated to after 1866, when the duties of the Warsaw Medical Office were taken over by the Medical Department at the Gubernia Authorities of Warsaw, do not contain much information regarding the supervision of prostitutes in the gubernia (excluding Warsaw). Since at least 1868 until the mid-1850s, the Department compiled an annual *libellus* of records pertaining to “the examination of public women,” yet the only surviving documents are the registers of deeds in which these *libelli* are mentioned.<sup>262</sup> A new label for the documents (“on the activity of medical-and-police committees”) appeared in 1892, which may suggest that the committees had reassumed their duties after a period of inactivity. Be that as it may, all surviving records come from the Włocławek district (quarterly reports of the committee for the years 1901 and 1907–1909) and the Gostynin district (a single quarter in 1901).<sup>263</sup> It is possible that only these administrative regions had any organised supervision of prostitution, although sources indicate the presence of public women in other districts as well.

The 1897 report on health status in the Warsaw Gubernia reveals that the administrative region (excluding Warsaw) had 338 public women: 68 employed in four brothels (2 in the Warsaw district, and one in Łowicz and Pułtusk), 52 detained individuals suspected of prostitution (the majority, i.e. 11, were reported in the Grójec district) and 218 independent prostitutes (*odinochki*). This last category was the most numerous in the Włocławek district (59), in the Pułtusk and Kutno districts (26 in each), and in the Gostynin district (20). The remaining districts each listed several.<sup>264</sup> Units stationed in the Warsaw Gubernia included divisions and regiments of the 5th and 15th Corps of the Russian Imperial Army of the Warsaw Military District. The highest concentration of troops (outside of

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261 AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 280, k. 3, 9, 10, 14–16. Letters of reminder from October.

262 APW (Pułtusk branch), RGW, WL, referat I, repertoria 391–395 (case register from 1868–1874), referat XIV, repertoria 406–410 (case register from 1876–1884).

263 APW (Pułtusk branch), RGW, WL, referat XIV, j.a.: 1901:48, 1907:83, 1908:32, 1909:72. Although no gaps in documentation are mentioned in the repertory, the archive lacks records dating from 1896, 1897, 1902 and 1904. Despite the archiving of the office’s records done in 1915, the RGW collection has not been organised.

264 APW (Pułtusk branch), RGW, WL, referat XIV, j.a. 1898:5, k. 71.

Warsaw) was found in Włocławek, which explains both the scale of prostitution and the authorities' efforts to control it.<sup>265</sup>

In the 1860s, after the reform of the gubernia authorities was introduced, the supervision of prostitution was also organised in the Suwałki and Kielce districts. In Suwałki the task was assigned to the Governor's Office in 1867. The committee<sup>266</sup> began its work in 1868 by requesting to gather information on the incidence scale of venereal diseases, the reasons behind their spread among the military, army deployment and the extent of prostitution in the gubernia. Not waiting for the data, which were probably never acquired, it set the frequency for the examination of public women (which had, incidentally, been conducted since at least the 1840s), appointed the doctors to be responsible for them and forbade prostitutes to move away from their places of residence without the consent of the relevant authorities (similar regulations were made in the Augustów district).<sup>267</sup> The activity of the gubernia committee is evidenced by records from the 1870s,<sup>268</sup> while the only documentation on the district committees (or the supervision as such) is dated to 1886, 1887, and 1896,<sup>269</sup> and pertains to the Kalwaria district,<sup>270</sup> the Augustów district, the Suwałki district, the Wołkowysk district and the Władysławów district.<sup>271</sup>

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265 Adam Dobroński, "Dyslokacja wojsk rosyjskich w Królestwie Polskim przed I wojną światową", *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości* Vol. 20 (1976), pp. 254–257.

266 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 98–99v, 105–108v, 146. The district chief served as the chair of the committee; the remaining members were four doctors (two from the army, one from the Jewish hospital, one from the municipal hospital of St. Peter and Paul), the chief of police and a police secretary.

267 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 117, 146. The records of Augustów city contain a document specifying the conditions for leaving the city signed (with crosses) by 14 prostitutes; APS, Am.A, j.a. 350, k. 10 (1869).

268 Decisions on the medical examination of women and men, on the supervision of servants and on supervision in the countryside see: LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 162, k. 22–24v.

269 LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 310. The *libellus* entitled "O działalności Komitetu Lekarsko-Policyjnego I 1896 – I 1897" [On the activity of the Medical-and-Police Committee Jan. 1896] contains reports by doctors from the hospital of St. Peter and Paul, and by district chiefs.

270 Until 1903 prostitutes in Kalwaria were supervised by the police ("land guard"), who directed them to periodical medical checkups at the district doctor. The senior district land guard kept a register of prostitutes and noted the results of the examination therein; LVIA, f. 1080, ap. 1, b. 1, k. 26.

271 Several examination reports from the period have survived (the existence of a committee is directly mentioned in the Suwałki district); LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 172.

In 1867 a Medical-and-Police Committee was also established in Kielce,<sup>272</sup> and in 1868 in all district of the Kielce Gubernia except for Włoszczowa. They ceased their activity after just two years (with the exception of the Stopnica and Olkusz districts), yet the periodical examinations continued. In 1871, when an increase in the number of infected soldiers was reported in the region, the governor instructed the staff officer for special purposes to analyse the preventive measures that had been used. The committees were revived and continued to operate throughout the 1880s and probably in later decades as well.<sup>273</sup>

In the Kalisz Gubernia (reestablished in 1866), the medical-and-police committees were presumably inaugurated in 1876, following an intervention by the commander of the 5th Hussar Regiment, who was concerned with the growing incidence of syphilis among soldiers. In a letter to the governor dated to 4th December 1875, he invoked the fact that such committees existed “almost everywhere” and inquired after the possibility of organising a similar institution to manage the medical examination of public women, the evaluation of sanitary conditions and the administration of adequate countermeasures in Kalisz and the entire gubernia. The addressee of the letter immediately responded by ordering the establishment of committees in all towns with a garrison. Within the month of December, such institutions were created in Kalisz, Warta (the Turek district), where the 10th Horse Artillery Battery was stationed, and Opatówek (the Kalisz district).<sup>274</sup> The committees in Wieluń, in Wierumowo and Praszka, in Konin (where the 5th Kargopol Dragoon Regiment was stationed), and in Koło (the Koło district) started to operate in January 1867.<sup>275</sup> The earliest data regarding the committee in the Łęczycza district come from the 1890s (Łęczycza 1895, Ozorków 1896). The members of the committees in the Kalisz Gubernia also included representatives of the municipal community.

The largest amount of documentation from anti-syphilitic committees comes from the Lublin Gubernia. At least in some of its towns, such institutions existed the very earliest since the 1870s.<sup>276</sup> Regular reports from Lublin, Puławy (named

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272 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15014, k. 68v.

273 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15070, k. 39.

274 APŁ, RGK, WL, j.a. 7737, k. 2–14.

275 APŁ, RGK, WL, j.a. 7857, k. 188, 271, 330, 492; j.a. 7829. According to a report by the district doctor in Kolsk, in 1898 the localities in the district had committees comprising vogts and private doctors.

276 APL, RGL, L 1895: 25, k. 45. According to officials writing in 1896, the anti-syphilitic committee in Puławy had operated for over 20 years, yet their archives did not contain any information on the date and circumstances of its establishment.

Novoalexandrovsk at the time), Janów and Krasnystaw are only available for the year 1886 and onwards; the data from other districts comes from an even later period.<sup>277</sup> District committees were not always the lowest link in the system. If the army was stationed in smaller towns or villages, the task of regular medical inspection of prostitutes and reporting its results fell to local commune authorities. Examples in the Lublin Gubernia include the Irena district near the Citadel in Dęblin (Ivanogorod at the time) and Opole in the Puławy district.

The frequency of committee<sup>278</sup> meetings varied, but was usually relatively regular: weekly for district institutions and bimonthly for gubernia ones. The formal aim for their operation, emphasised by their names (e.g. the district anti-syphilitic committee for adopting medical-and-police measures to combat venereal disease) was to monitor the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, yet some institutions on the lower levels were also responsible for organising medical examinations.<sup>279</sup>

The plan of activities for any given year was decided by the gubernia committee on the basis of the data sent by district committees (regarding the number of prostitutes, examination results and the number of the infected). Its directives, usually limited to increasing the frequency of examinations or organising round-ups to apprehend prostitutes, were then conveyed by governors to district chiefs and chiefs of police, who in turn recounted them to the land guards and vogts.

Prostitution was supervised in all districts of the Lublin Gubernia, which was related to the fact that military units were spread rather evenly throughout the region.<sup>280</sup> However, the report by the military commission established to evaluate this activity, the in 1899 the organisation of relevant procedures varied in quality.<sup>281</sup> Medical-and-police committees operated only in the Janów district

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277 APL, RGL, L 1886:6; 1887:1; 1888:7; 1895:25; 1899:20.

278 District committees were led by the president of the city (e.g. in Krasnystaw) or the district chief (e.g. in Puławy, Janów). As everywhere else, they comprised doctors and representatives of the local garrison.

279 The committee in Krasnystaw defined its duties simply as “the inspection of lewd and public women”; APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 7.

280 Dobroński, “Dyslokacja”, pp. 256–258.

281 APL, RGL, L 1895:25, k. 26, 28–31, 36–37, 42, 45; 1899:20, k. 59–64. The commission commenced its activity by sending an inquiry to governors asking whether medical-and-police committees existed in their region, whether these institutions included representatives of the army, and whether military doctors were involved in the examination of prostitutes. The commission also asked about the number of patients and demanded information regarding prostitution itself – the number and categories of existing brothels (whether there were special ones for the army), the number of women employed therein, the number of independent prostitutes under supervision, the

(Janów, Kraśnik) and the Zamość district (Zamość, Szczepieszyn). The authorities there saw it as advisable to create committees in two other settlements (Urorzędów, Zaklikowo), in the village of Zakrzówek in the Janów district (where a sugar refinery was located), as well as in Frampol and Krasnobród in the Zamość district. In the districts of Hrubieszów, Tomaszów, and Krasnystaw the medical examination was managed by municipal and communal sanitary committees, i.e. institutions dealing with matters of order and hygiene (such as cleaning the streets, managing cemeteries and sanitation). In Krasnystaw, the sanitary committee kept a register of prostitutes; under its authority, women suspected of prostitution were detained and “examined thoroughly”. No medical-and-police committee existed in the Chełmsk district at the time. The district chief decided that it was sufficient to have prostitutes regularly examined by the municipal and military doctor.

The district that received the highest evaluation for the supervision of its prostitutes was Puławy, where the land guards constantly followed clandestine prostitutes and observed military quarters, following instructions issued by the district chief. The authorities in the Biłgoraj district, in turn, exercised no control, although the investigation of the commission prompted them to recognise the necessity to establish a committee in Biłgoraj and three other places: Tarnogród, Kreszów and Czożirów.

A meeting of Russian syphilologists, who convened in St. Petersburg in January 1897, served as a source of inspiration. That year, on instruction by the Ministry of the Interior, the governor of Lublin established a special team to lay down principles for preventing syphilis and supervising prostitution in the gubernia.<sup>282</sup> The Ministry, however, never evaluated the results of their work.<sup>283</sup> In 1899, the gubernia authorities received detailed information on the state of the system of regimentation in the gubernia, sent by the committee founded to gather this data. The governor then chose not to wait for the Ministry’s reply, and provided district chiefs with his executive directives pertaining to the organisation of

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number of women not overtly categorised as prostitutes, and finally the number of women detained for vagrancy.

282 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 61v–62. The 1897 meeting to discuss measures against syphilis served as an opportunity for summary and conclusion. The Medical Department of the Ministry of the Interior strived to collect information regarding prostitution and the organisation of supervision. Local medical authorities were encouraged to present their own proposals (APL, RGL, L 1896:27, k. 37–39).

283 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 42–44.



medical checkups and the elimination of clandestine prostitution.<sup>284</sup> The introduction of a new initiative, a new project and new executive directives did not mean changes in the policy or even new methods of work. The same instructions were repeated over and over, as if introduced for the first time. Does this indicate that the office was in a state of disorder and earlier documentation could not be accessed, or that the matter was utterly neglected and the instructions coming from higher authorities were simply responded to in a routine manner? In the latter case, the records may have only been kept to create a false impression of exercising supervision. One is particularly inclined to make such an assumption if identical reports keep appearing over a long period of time.

In the Piotrków Gubernia, which was the most industrialised in the Kingdom, the level of control over prostitution was low. The only exception was Częstochowa, where a relevant committee operated at least since 1878. The institution adapted the directive of the Ministry of the Interior dated to 24th November 1877 (regarding the tightening and the extension of groups subjected to medical inspection) to fit local circumstances, and presented models for documentation used in the supervision process.<sup>285</sup>

The earliest information on the organised control of prostitution in Piotrków (the seat of the gubernia) and Łódź (a large industrial centre) only come from 1890. It reveals that in 1891 the independent prostitutes of Piotrków (the register comprised 15 names) were supervised by the Medical-and Police Committee led by the president, while all others, i.e. “brothel-based” (in 1891 the city had one public house) and the so-called “itinerant” prostitutes who stayed in hotels fell under the authority of the chief of police.<sup>286</sup> In 1893 the committee submitted a project to the governor, suggesting that the supervision of all public women should be centralised under the office of the chief of police, and that prostitutes should be issued medical record books (which would mean tolerating newcomers and allowing them to stay in the city for longer periods). In 1895 the project was still waiting to be accepted, even though the matter had already become urgent due to the noticeable rise of illegal prostitution and the incidence of venereal diseases among civilians and the soldiers of the 28th Infantry Regiment. In the course of less than ten months, 40 cases of syphilis were reported in the army,

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284 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 61v–62.

285 APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3285, k. 15–19, 50, 67–69. On 27th November 1882 the committee wrote another document specifying the methods of combating prostitution. It restates the 1878 regulations in an unaltered form; APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3344, k. 13–15.

286 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 149, k. 6–10.

and 8 among women not included on the list of tolerated prostitutes, but plied the trade.<sup>287</sup>

In Łódź the supervision of prostitution was organised very late. Until 1894 a small degree of control was exercised by the magistrate.<sup>288</sup> In 1890 a preliminary register of prostitutes was compiled and the so-called black books were issued.<sup>289</sup> In 1894, when the structure of police authorities in the city was reorganised, the management of prostitutes was handed over to the investigative division of the police, led by the medical police inspector. In 1896 the chief of police in Łódź prepared a set of instructions for brothel houses which granted the police absolute authority over prostitution in the city. The governor did not approve the project, invoking the 1843 regulations, according to which such authority should belong to magistrates only.<sup>290</sup>

As before, the most elaborate (and the best-functioning) system of supervising prostitution existed in Warsaw. Since 1843 it remained in the hands of a police inspector at the Medical Office of Warsaw, subordinate to the local chief of police. Despite that, illegal prostitution still flourished, and the number of patients in hospitals treating syphilis and other venereal diseases continued to grow. Attempts to improve the system had been in the making since the early 1860s. In July 1862 the matter was discussed in the capital by members of the Warsaw Medical Society. The doctors agreed that, given the rapid growth in the scale of prostitution in the city, the 1843 regulations no longer constituted an effective countermeasure to clandestine harlotry.<sup>291</sup> They criticised the leniency granted to prostitutes in Warsaw, who manifestly waited for customers in cafés and other venues in the city centre. In strictly medical terms, their concern was aroused by the insufficient help provided to the least affluent patients. They expressed the need to arrange ambulatories in hospitals that would offer medical assistance free of charge. Concluding their discussion, the Society appointed a seven-person team to analyse the matter. Its members included such prominent

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287 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 149, k. 18.

288 Edward Rosset, *Prostyucja i choroby weneryczne w Łodzi* (Łódź: Magistrat m. Łodzi. Wydział Zdrowia Publicznego, 1931), p. 10; B. Margulies, "Prostyucya w Łodzi", *Zdrowie*, no. 8 (1906), pp. 539.

289 Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wizerunek*, p. 61.

290 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 37 (act no. 35084). In 1896 a tolerated house operating under 1843 regulations was opened, yet with no formal agreement.

291 "Protokół posiedzenia 15 lipca 1862 r.", *Pamiętniki Towarzystwa Lekarskiego Warszawskiego* 1862, p. 215.

doctors and philanthropists as Stanisław Janikowski and Henryk Natanson, yet the results of their work remain unknown.

Field marshal Fyodor Berg, appointed as the viceroy of the Kingdom of Poland in August 1863 also saw the 1843 regulations as unsatisfactory. He criticised the legislation for being one-sided and overly focused on medical supervision while neglecting police regulations which would facilitate the effective prevention of clandestine prostitution.<sup>292</sup> Thus, in 1864 he established a “new committee” of doctors and military officers led by the chief of police. They were to review the relevant regulations written since 1843 and draft new ones. The aim was to provide the police with prerogatives that would allow it to take complete control over prostitution in Warsaw. The solutions they prepared won Berg’s approval. In February 1867 the viceroy created a Medical-and-Police Committee at the Office of the Chief Police Inspector in Warsaw – the new authority that was to govern prostitution in the capital until the end of the partition period. The committee took over the competences of the inspector at the Medical Office of the city of Warsaw, the dissolved Medical Office and the Principal Medical Inspector.

In 1868 sent the new regulations on the organisation of prostitution surveillance to St. Petersburg for review. Pressured by the chief police inspector, he did not wait for the reply, but introduced “good and advantageous” regulations modelled after the ones enforced in St. Petersburg, Moscow and all large cities in Europe.<sup>293</sup> St. Petersburg expressed some reservations regarding the proposal to collect fees from public women and brothel houses and transfer the money to the municipal budget (and not, as before, to the treasury). Even the right to collect financial penalties for transgressions committed by proprietors and prostitutes (the project presented a system of judicial and police penalties imposed by the Medical-and-Police committees) was contested; the Ministry of the Interior decided to consult it with the Ministry of Justice and the Second Section of His Imperial Majesty’s Own Chancellery, which reviewed legislation proposals. In the spring of 1873 Berg received the instruction to use only the existing regulations until the final decision was reached. While the Committee was accepted as the temporary Medical-and-Police authority; the Ministry ordered it to stop collecting fees from public women and houses, as filling the municipal or national treasury in such a manner was deemed “inelegant”.<sup>294</sup> On 25th May 1873

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292 RGIA, f. 1270, op. 1, d. 966.

293 *Wykład*, p. 405; RGIA, f. 1270, op. 1, d. 966; In November the Constituent Committee granted funds for the medical examination of public women in eight precincts of Warsaw; *Postanowienia Komitetu Urządzającego*, Vol. XVII, p. 288.

294 RGIA, f. 1270, op. 1, d. 966.

the Ministry of the Interior accepted the project of operation for the Warsaw Medical-and-Police Committee.<sup>295</sup>

Instructions by the General Governor of Warsaw defining the duties of all Committee officials and the supporting police and medical officers were published in June 1874.<sup>296</sup> The rules for the operation of brothel houses were set; the only existing version, dated to 1878, is a copy sent to the governor in Piotrków.<sup>297</sup> Such were the circumstances in which the *Regulations* of 1843 were changed.

By associating the Committee with the Office of the Chief Police Inspector, the new regulations placed matters of prostitution entirely in the hands of the police. The inspector in charge of the Committee was to be aided by three officials – two assistants responsible for the work of the medical and police units, each in his appointed part of the city, and a field official who, assisted by Cossack troops, was to make daily patrols outside the city (up to ten versts 10.7 km, outside the boundaries) in search of places of illegal prostitution and women rendering such services.<sup>298</sup>

Control over illegal prostitution, the invigilation of procurers and women suspected of sex work, the registration and de-registration of prostitutes (discussed in further sections of the present work) was in the hands of nine supervisors – full-time employees of the Committee operating within a specified territory. Their assistants at the lowest level were officers of the Warsaw police – district commissioners (*uchastkovyy pristav*) and senior block officers (*starchiy okolotochnyy nadziratel'*), who monitored prostitution in their area. The other full-time employees of the Committee were: a secretary, two clerks, five doctors, one midwife and two equestrian guards.<sup>299</sup> Thus, the commissioner had a staff of twenty-three full-time Committee employees, and could call upon

295 RGIA, f. 1298, op. 1, d. 1730, l. 193.

296 L. F. Rogozin (ed.), „Uтверzhdennaya byvshim Varshavskim Voyennym General-Gubernatorom 6/18 iyunya 1874 g. instruktsii dlya chinov vremennago Varshavskago Vrachebno-Politseyskago Komiteta” in: *Svod uzakonenyi i rasporyazheniy pravitel'stva po vrachebnoy i sanitarnoy chasti v Imperii*, (St. Petersburg 1895–1896), pp. 137–146.

297 APŁ, RGP, WP, j.a. 38.

298 The official was obliged to note the names of women apprehended on each day and the decision taken in each case in a special book which he was to present to the commissioner on a weekly basis.

299 *Izvlachenye iz statisticheskoy chasti otchetov o deystviyakh Vrachebno-Politseyskogo Komiteta po nadzoru za prostitutsiyey v gorode Varshave za 1882, 1883 i 1884 gody*, Warsaw 1886, p. 18.

the assistance of police forces. He also used information provided by building caretakers and managers, and the medical expertise of the municipal health-care services (doctors and midwives). The entire process was overseen by the Chief Police Inspector of Warsaw. The Warsaw Medical-and-Police Committee had a very substantial budget – in 1873 it amounted to 17 790 roubles,<sup>300</sup> and in 1909 to 18 300 roubles. 10 972 of the latter sum came from the magistrate, while the remaining 7 408 were added from the treasury. The only city in Russia with larger financial means to control prostitution was St. Petersburg (24 000 roubles; Moscow had 10 255 roubles). The costs of the supervision in other Polish cities were lower.<sup>301</sup>

The 1843 *Regulations* emphasised the organisation of medical supervision and defined the rules within which public houses were to function. The 1874 instructions, in turn, pertained mainly to methods of monitoring and registering women suspected of rendering sexual services for a fee. The brothels in the capital city continued to operate unimpeded, yet the legalisation of prostitution outside public houses, introduced in 1843, led to a rapid growth in the number of “tolerated women” who plied their trade independently (in reality they were mired in networks of ties with various intermediaries). The new structure of organisation forms and the development of prostitution associated with the territorial, economic and demographic growth of Warsaw meant that the authorities found themselves in a truly difficult position. Committee supervisors were granted much freedom in apprehending women suspected of prostitution. Wishing to make independent prostitutes easier to monitor and focus their activity in specific places, as early as in 1868 the Committee introduced “meeting houses”. While not much different from brothels (the issue shall be discussed in Chapter 3), they did not evoke equally negative associations, so initially many women agreed to this solution.

The Medical-and-Police Committee continued to use the 1843 and 1874 legislation until the end of the century. Nevertheless, it was still considered inadequate as a measure to curb prostitution. What is more, the last quarter of the century brought changes in the mentality regarding social relations, a tendency towards providing a reliable guarantee for the rights of individuals. These trends

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300 *Zbiór praw wydany po r. 1871 staraniem Redakcji Biblioteki Umiejętności Prawnych*, Vol. III, p. 101. According to Russian archives, in 1973 the Ministry of the Interior established the budget of the Medical-and-Police Committee as 15 791 roubles. 90 % of the sum was employee wages; RGIA, f. 1270, op. 1, d. 966.

301 *Vrachebno-politseyskiy nadzor*, pp. 14–16.

(also related to the legal status of prostitution) reached the Kingdom of Poland, partially owing to the movement against the regimentation of prostitution present in Europe since the 1870s. Even more significantly, they found support among the liberal lawyers of Russia. The system of regimentation reflecting the need to govern all aspects of life regarded as conducive to anarchy was oppressive towards prostitutes or, more precisely, towards all women of lower classes who encountered difficulties in stabilising their life situation and acted in a chaotic manner. They were permanently at risk of police invigilation and arrest as potential prostitutes. The regulations gave police the right to pass moral judgment on their conduct, and no malpractice on their part could lead to disciplinary action. However, whether such malpractice occurred can be inferred rather than proven. In contrast with, for instance, the French papers, which reported any mistakes made by the vice police (Yves Guyot's articles),<sup>302</sup> the Polish press, muzzled by the foreign authorities administering Poland, could not play such a role.

The price to be paid for the tolerance of prostitution was weakening the legal standing of women engaging in sex trade, and handing them over (along with those suspected of prostitution) to the sole jurisdiction of the police-medical regime.<sup>303</sup> In matters defined by administrative regulations on prostitution, such women were subject to administrative procedures without the need of a court ruling, and to revocation of certain civil rights (their passports were taken away; their freedom of movement and residence were limited).<sup>304</sup> Such arbitrary police jurisdiction, leaving much room for abuse, began to be criticised in Europe even by proponents of regimentation hailing from medical and judicial circles. They strove to base the regulations on proper legal grounds.<sup>305</sup> Moreover, as noted by Engelstein, some Russian lawyers working towards the liberalisation of the law in the Empire spoke against the arbitrariness of regulations regarding the registration of women as prostitutes, proposing to introduce judiciary supervision over police authority. This criticism led to the introduction of certain methods of limiting the abuse of the existing regulations that would not undermine the legislation as such. In 1892 the Senate decided that article 44 of the law on justices of

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302 Berlière, *La police des mœurs*, pp. 7–14.

303 Arkadii Elistratov, *O prikreplenii zhenshchiny k prostitutsii (Vrachebno-politseyskiy nadzor)*, (Kazan, 1906), p. II.

304 In a specific case in Russia, the court declared that a prostitute could not serve as a witness or swear an oath; RGIA, f. 1405, op. 67, j.ch. 7676, l. 36–5 (years 1869–1886).

305 Walkowitz, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p. 376; Gibson, *Prostitution*, pp. 2–3, 24, 37–75. Only in Great Britain, Belgium and Italy did the regulation of prostitution have parliamentary grounds.

the peace pertained not only to registered prostitutes, and that women engaging in illegal prostitution not included on the list should also be brought to these courts.<sup>306</sup> Although administrative regulations prescribed caution in registering women of dubious morals onto the lists of prostitutes, the voice of the Senate held greater gravitas.

Changes which may be regarded as softening the system of supervision occurred gradually and for a variety of causes. In October 1888, the Chief Inspector of Police in Warsaw decreed that independent prostitutes could keep their passports provided they were undergoing regular examinations. The supervision over them was thenceforth dubbed “secret,” in contrast with the “overt” monitoring of prostitutes who had their passports confiscated, i.e. those working in brothel houses.<sup>307</sup> The principal aim was to encourage women to attend medical check-ups; if they proved disciplined, other limitations were lifted.

A tendency to improve the situation of prostitutes are evident in the new circular regulating prostitution, published on 8th/21st October 1903. It was the first such document to include the entire territory of the Russian Empire.<sup>308</sup> *Polozhenie ob organizatsii gorodskoy prostitutsii v Imperii* drafted by the Medical Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs obliged the authorities to, first and foremost, organise an agency to supervise prostitution. Thus the Ministry decidedly chose to maintain and develop regimentation; in the early years of the 20th century this was no longer obvious, even to the officials responsible for fighting venereal diseases, and even in Russia. The 1903 regulations, whose declared main aim was to protect the populace from the infection with syphilis and venereal diseases, consisted of 66 articles grouped in the following sections: 1) on institutions supervising urban prostitution (22 articles), 2) for prostitutes (11

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306 Engelstein, “Gender”, p. 488; Russian legislation was still ambiguous regarding the matter of prostitution. For instance, the new regulations defining the means of human trafficking prevention (1909) still made the distinction between registered and non-registered prostitutes, while Russian abolitionists still regarded professional prostitution as illegal and punishable by law (Art. 156–158 of the bill on the eradication and prevention of crime); RGIA, f. 1276, op. 9, d. 807.

307 Elistratov, *O prikrepleni*, p. 7. In St. Petersburg the principle was applied since 1868.

308 Circular no. 1611. Text: APL, RGL, WP IV 1898:89, k. 2–4v. [*Alfavitnyy Sbornik rasporyazheniy po S-Peterburgskomu gradonachalstvu i politsii, izvlechennykh iz prikazov za vremya s 1902 g. po 10 iyulya 1904*] Based on these regulations, the local authorities were obliged to prepare a concrete project for their gubernia; if the project deviated from the general regulations, it required acceptance from the Ministry of the Interior, if not, just the governor’s signature.

articles), 3) for administrators of the houses of prostitution (28 articles), 4) for persons maintaining supervised places of prostitution (5 articles). Regulations concerning the services of independent prostitutes, as well as regulations concerning venues other than the houses of prostitution where paid sexual services were on offer, were a novelty, at least in the Kingdom of Poland. The creators of these regulations, wishing to extend medical assistance to as many prostitutes as possible, were trying to stay abreast of the changing market. In Warsaw, a project of changes in the organisation of relevant medical and police supervision in the capital was sent to the Medical Department by the general-governor as early as in 1901; the project included the prerogatives of the Medical-and-Police Committee to issue permits to establish apartments with a few prostitutes and to visit prostitutes.<sup>309</sup>

First and foremost, however, the 1903 regulations decreed that consent of the woman herself, expressed in writing, was required to submit an illegal prostitute to supervision. In case of a refusal, a clandestine prostitute stood trial according to Art. 44, which was included in the new Penal Code, dated 1903 (introduced a few years later), as Art. 528.<sup>310</sup> When candidates for employment in a tolerated house had parents, guardians, husbands (whose place of abode was known), the women could be submitted to supervision only with the knowledge of those persons. All substantial decisions were to be taken collectively by the committees. In 1901, under the pressure of the society's opposition to the women trafficking, age restrictions for the registration as a prostitute (18 years for independent ones, 21 for those employed at the houses of prostitution) with criminal liability were introduced by the Ministry of the Interior (the 1903 Code). Also, the overt supervision (which pertained to prostitutes employed at the houses

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309 The project was sent back because regulations for the entire Russian Empire were in preparation. It was later adjusted to the requirements of the circular dated 1903 – RGIA., f. 1298, op. 1, d. 1730, l. 177, 179–183.

310 Police jurisdiction over prostitution was thus not eliminated, but the infringement of police regulations became a criminal offence. Laura Engelstein writes that in spite of the more serious stigma attached to criminal trials and heavier penalties resulting therefrom, in terms of lawful court proceedings and respect for the personal rights of the offenders it was better to stand trial for a criminal offence than fall under the jurisdiction of police courts. She quotes a Russian lawyer: “when ... even criminals have their ‘Magna Carta libertatum’ in the form of the criminal code and the rules of criminal procedure, which determine down to the smallest details for what and under what circumstances they may be punished, only prostitutes remain without legal defense, without specific rules and duties”; Engelstein, “Gender”, p. 492.



of prostitution and meant non-issuance of their passports) and covert supervision (which meant that the women were issued passports and could move freely within the state borders) were introduced in the entire Russian Empire. Certain preventive measures were introduced for the first time, as the committees were advised to cooperate with the organisations fighting to lay some boundaries to the very phenomenon of prostitution.

The 1903 circular introduced two models of regulating prostitution, leaving the choice to the local authorities: either having one central agency (the Medical-and-Police Committee, that is, in reality, the police), or dividing the tasks between the municipal sanitary agencies (medical supervision) and police committees (responsibility for the prostitutes' attendance at medical examinations). Information collected in 1909 demonstrated that other models were employed as well: in four cities in Russia prostitution was supervised by municipal committees. Also, in some cities separate supervisory organs were not established, and the relevant tasks were fulfilled by the police (the police inspector, police commissioner and their assistants) based on general laws.<sup>311</sup> Five of those cities, as stated in a brochure issued by the Ministry of the Interior, were in the Kingdom of Poland, namely Kielce, Piotrków, Płock, Siedlce and Łódź. In the remaining cities of the Kingdom, medical-and-police committees were established (or perhaps, more accurately, re-organised), whose membership and tasks were effectively the same as in the Kingdom's already-existing committees.

With regard to prostitution, Warsaw remained one of only seven cities in Russia (the others being Riga, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinoslav, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod and Orenburg) to have extensive supervisory institutions that operated on the basis of special regulations issued at an earlier date and only adjusted to conform with the normative regulations of 1903.<sup>312</sup>

Existing data illustrate the process of establishing a supervisory body in Suwałki in keeping with the 1903 circular.<sup>313</sup> The person responsible was Deputy Governor Count Boris Borkh, the chairman of the earlier Medical-and-Police

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311 *Vrachebno-politseyskiy nadzor*, pp. 11–13. The brochure sums up the data on the organisation of the supervision in Russia as per 1909.

312 The documents of the Ministry of the Interior contain an outline of the regulations regarding the organisation of the committees in Warsaw, dated 1901 and adjusted to conform with the 1903 circular. In comparison with 1873, the number of overseers was increased to 11 – RGIA, f. 1298, op. 1, d. 1730, l.177 ff; *Vrachebno-politseyskiy nadzor*, p. 12.

313 LVIA, f. 1080, ap. 1, b . 1, l. 1.

Committee. The Commission was instituted in November 1903 and a month later it presented “A project for the organisation of prostitution control in Suwałki,” the relevant institution being again the Medical-and-Police Committee.<sup>314</sup> The regulations were ready in the autumn of 1904 and were printed before the end of the year (*A project for the organisation of prostitution control in Suwałki*);<sup>315</sup> this was unusually fast with compared with other cities of the Kingdom. In Lublin, a committee conforming to the 1903 circular was set up in 1905<sup>316</sup> and was headed by the city’s president, not the governor as was the case elsewhere. The members of the committee were the same as in the preceding one.<sup>317</sup> The Kielce Gubernia presented a relevant project only in 1911.<sup>318</sup>

The Gubernia Medical-and-Police Committee in Suwałki consisted of members of the regional administration (with the deputy governor as its chairman), the municipal administration (with an official delegated by the Suwałki police inspector as an acting officer; his duties were regulated by a special instruction), the state health service (the gubernia medical inspector, municipal and district medical officers, head doctor of the St. Peter and Paul hospital), and the army (a delegate and a military doctor).<sup>319</sup> The important decisions were taken collectively by a general meeting of the committee, the other decisions by the chairman. Committees in Radom, Kalisz and Łomża had similar members, as per the circular.

The competencies of the Suwałki committee (and any other one) included all the issues pertaining to prostitution in the town itself and in its vicinity. It was

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314 LVIA, f. 1080, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 12, 23.

315 LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 630, l. 6; f. 1080 ap. 1, b. 1, l. 19–22v.

316 APL, RGL, L 1903:106, k. 1. In 1915 it was replaced with the Lublin Gubernia Sanitary Committee (APL Am.L, j.a. 6049). In the gubernia itself the situation varied, e.g. as late as 1910 the chief of the Puławy district apologised for not having the 1903 circular in his documentation, but only the regulations pertaining to St. Petersburg issued by the Principal Medical Office and the Medical Council (APL, RGL, L 1910:35, k. 37–41).

317 The police inspector, the chief of the Lublin district land guard, 3 to 6 doctors: the district medical officer, head doctor of the St. Joseph hospital, the head doctor of the military hospital, a military doctor from the 69th Riazan Infantry Regiment. Also, the quartermaster of the dragoon regiment was a member of the committee in 1891; APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 2; 1891: no. 2 part I; 1896:27, k. 9.

318 RGIA, f. 1298, op. 1, d. 1730, l. 144–146; d. 2332, l. 59–60.

319 In reality, the Medical and Police Committee was a gubernia agency attached to the medical department of the gubernia administrative office (where the register of prostitutes was held). In the Vilnius LVIA, the Committee’s archive has been detached as a distinct set.

responsible for the task of legalising clandestine prostitution (point 8a), which included the invigilation (by local policemen) of prostitutes, owners of clandestine houses of prostitution, pimps and supporters of clandestine prostitution. It held the ultimate authority over tolerated prostitution: it issued concessions and took the most important decisions (i.e. entering and removing prostitutes from the register).<sup>320</sup> One more task of the committee was medical supervision. The police was obliged to inform the committee on the reasons for a prostitute's non-attendance at a medical examination, deliver certificates and medical vouchers to prostitutes, and institute measures to protect the property of prostitutes currently in medical care.

The Medical-and-Police Committee in Suwałki became the model for similar committees in district towns. In the Augustów district, where the scale of legal and clandestine prostitution was one of the largest in the gubernia, the plan of the supervision was ready in October 1905.<sup>321</sup> In the Wołków district, where previously prostitutes had been examined by a district medical officer, the newly instituted committee (i.e. the chief of the district, the chief of the district land guard, the Werzdałowo medical officer and the medical officer of the border guard) noted the fact that the town of Werzdałowo and the village of Kibarty had a large migrant population and a border-guard brigade was stationed there.<sup>322</sup>

The introduction of the Russian regulation in the year 1903 crowned, in a sense, the Medical Department's efforts with regard to preventing venereal

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320 "An information programme presented by the police to the Committee regarding the women whom the police wish to submit to the Medical-and-Police Committee's supervision" contained the following data: first name and surname, sobriquet, age, family situation, place of residence of the woman (as well as her husband and her parents), children if applicable, occupation, level of education. File with these data; LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 568; b. 630; *Projekt, Suwałki 1904*, p. 40.

321 LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 568, l. 36–37, 40. Strict supervision over prostitution was exercised by the authorities from 1895 onwards. Examinations were conducted twice a week in the presence of the military doctor and an officer from the garrison. Subject to those examinations were women from the public house and the "registered clandestine prostitutes".

322 LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 568, l. 38. In Władysławowo, in turn, the institution of a committee was considered unnecessary. On 10th January 1905 an opinion to this effect was stated by the chief of the district, the chief of the guard, the mayor, the district medical officer, the commander of the border guard. During the previous decade not a single prostitute, either local or arriving from elsewhere, had been registered in the town, there was no public house, meeting house or places of clandestine prostitution. Cases of venereal diseases were rare; LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 630, l. 34–35.

diseases and prostitution. From the late 1870s onwards, the relevant involvement of the authorities increased in the entire Europe. This involvement resulted from similar motives as in the first half of the 19th century, but the scale of the problem was larger. The increase in the numbers of venereal patients and the scale of prostitution seemed frightening. New views regarding hereditary syphilis were becoming widespread, and a new wave of interest in public health resulted in the development of various hygienic organisations. Criticism levelled at regimentation for ethical and legal reasons completed the picture. At the same time, regimentation (which by then had functioned for a few decades) provided know-how, while the research of scholars who had studied this problem and the data collected by the committees, the hospitals and the police provided increasingly objective (or at least so it was believed) tools for the assessment of the regimentation system. An analysis of the Ministry of the Interior documentation held in St. Petersburg shows that – contrary to the public discourse regarding regimentation, in which the government was unequivocally presented as an ardent defender of the system (more on this topic in Chapter 4) – the official views evolved and the existing solutions evoked very little enthusiasm. The opinions of the abolitionists were being listened to and the writings of medical authorities from the entire Europe, as well as the views and arguments of Russian medics and lawyers, were being analysed. The latter had been presented at, among others, the first conference of venereologist to take place in Russia (Conference on preventive measures against venereal diseases, 1897)<sup>323</sup> and the Conference regarding the fight against trafficking in women (1910).<sup>324</sup> The Ministry employed administrative channels to collect data on the functioning of relevant supervisory bodies in the entire Empire (1901 and 1909). The conclusions seemed clear: prostitution in the cities (especially industrial towns and ports) continued to increase rapidly, the incidence of syphilis increased in both the urban and rural population, including the army (which grew all the more important as the international situation deteriorated) and the schools, and the supervision, if it existed at all, was assessed as ineffective.<sup>325</sup> In 1910 the Ministry of the Interior invited

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323 *Trudy vysochayshe razreshennogo s'ezda po obsuzhdeniyu mer protiv sifilisa v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1897), Vol. 1, 2.

324 *Trudy pervago vserossiyskogo s'ezda po bor'be s torgom zhenshchinami i yego prichinami proiskhodyashchago v S.-Peterburge s 21 do 25 aprelya 1910 goda* (St. Petersburg, 1910), Vol. I–II.

325 In 1901 special supervisory institutions existed only in some 60 district towns and capitals of gubernias. In most of them, full authority over prostitution lay with the police; yet even in those places where Medical-and-Police Committees had been instituted,

the representatives of the Ministries of Justice, of War and of Education, as well as social activists (e.g. members of the Russian Association for the Protection of Women) to a meeting, wishing to ascertain their views on whether to continue the regimentation system and maintain the public houses.<sup>326</sup> In 1912 an inter-departmental commission for the assessment of the medical supervision; this commission admitted that the idea of limiting prostitution to public houses proved unsuccessful from the medical point of view, even though it was noted that an unequivocal estimation is difficult to reach for the reasons of methodology.<sup>327</sup> In 1913 the chairman of the Council of Ministers asked for the ministers' opinion on the plan of abolishing regimentation and closing the houses of prostitution which had been submitted to the Duma. The opinion that came from the Ministry of the Interior was unequivocal: from the medical and sanitary point of view, regimentation and the houses of prostitution were indefensible, as they had accomplished little in fighting syphilis and the supervision was a great burden on the police. Yet an opinion was one thing, a decision – another. The minister was worried that if the houses of prostitution were to be closed, a multitude of clandestine venues would emerge where not only diseases, but also crime would flourish; this would make the police's plight even harder; he also alluded to the moral effects of this decision. Should regimentation be abolished, he asserted, the principles of social and family life might be adversely affected as, for instance, the incidence of cohabitation would increase.<sup>328</sup> He proposed the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed solution be further reviewed.

Also in Warsaw, in the year 1910, the so-called "Commission for Fighting Prostitution" debated on how to adjust the methods of fighting prostitution to new conditions. Doctors from the Medical-and-Police Committee wrote a letter to the chief police inspector. The commission voted in favour of closing the houses of prostitution (very few of which were still in operation after the revolution of 1905) and focused entirely on how to supervise legal independent prostitution. In addition to meeting houses, the commission granted legality to prostitution carried out at the so-called furnished lodgings as forms of mediation in the rendering of an erotic service. The co-called prostitute control quarters

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their power was quite illusory, limited to occasional meetings to assess the situation; Elistratov, *O prikrepleni*, pp. 3–5.

326 RGIA, f. 733, op. 199, d. 16, l. 60–61.

327 RGIA, f. 1288, op. 1, d. 2382, l. 180–187.

328 RGIA, f. 1276, op. 9, d. 807.

(housing four women per apartment) were established in order to facilitate effective medical supervision.<sup>329</sup>

Ultimately, despite the doubts and the awareness that over the century that the system had been in operation the conditions had changed materially, the achieved solutions retained some form of regimentation. It remained in force until the end of the Partitions, covering an increasing number of persons in an increasingly large territory, even though the results were not satisfactory.

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329 Macko, *Prostytucja*, p. 41; Adolf Rzański, "Walka z prostytutką", *Nowe Życie*, Vol. 1, no. 4 (1910).

## Chapter 2: POLICE AND MEDICAL SUPERVISION OVER PROSTITUTION

### 1. The fight against “back-alley harlotry”

Throughout the 19th century, the term “police and medical supervision over prostitution” encompassed investigative, regulatory and medical action taken in connection with paid sexual services, both legal and illicit. Apart from examination and treatment, all these tasks were performed by the police. They included control over the tolerated forms of prostitution in accordance with relevant regulations, and suppression of illegal practices. Regulations defined this “control” as safeguarding order in brothel houses and ensuring that prostitutes show up for their scheduled examination. The fight against illicit prostitution, in turn, meant searching for women who plied the trade without a license.

The hopes that clandestine prostitution would naturally move to tolerated brothel houses, expressed by the proponents of regimentation, soon proved to have been vain. The threat of punishment did little to deter people from illicit prostitution. Worse still, the scale of clandestine harlotry was (to the best of our knowledge, accurately) estimated as massive, which made the phenomenon particularly dangerous in the public’s perception. Thus, law enforcement was incessant in its efforts to track clandestine prostitution, engaging its resources, personnel and time. These practices continued throughout the entire period under analysis, yet with varying intensity, depending on the means available at the time and the perceived gravity of the problem.

Moreover, one should openly state that the area of police investigation did not encompass the entire sphere of unlicensed prostitution. On the one hand, there were upscale prostitutes, the so-called *femmes galantes* – kept women whose clientele was composed solely of wealthy men. They plied their trade with absolute impunity, as the police focused their attention on prostitutes from among the outcasts and the lowest social strata. On the other, since the principal aim was to isolate and treat those whose contribution to the spread of the disease was greatest, the police detained many peasant women suspected of leading an unrestrained sexual life, and not of prostitution as the main (or even temporary) source of income. The officials were fully aware of this practice. Specific cases mentioned in the source material (especially dating from the 1st half of the 19th century) do not always make it clear whether they pertain to prostitutes

“proper” or to women from the outskirts of society who found themselves outside organised social life (vagrants), and whose lifestyle was associated with sexual services, or to working women (servants and hired hands) who engaged in sexual contacts despite being unmarried, which was then considered licentious behaviour. All were frequently described as “loose women” or “harlots” along with licensed prostitutes, even though the latter category was usually labelled as “public women”. This nomenclature emphasises the (in itself obvious) connection between prostitution and the class of poorest citizens who were considerably mobile both in terms of location and “profession”. One should also note that the reasons behind police raids are not always discernible – some of them were aimed at eliminating clandestine establishments (“to eradicate licentiousness and lechery”), while others were performed purely for sanitary purposes, i.e. to examine the health of the employees.

The earliest sources (records from Kalisz dated 1827–1836)<sup>330</sup> state that the women arrested “engage in idleness and questionable morals” or are “vagrant, jobless and of questionable repute”; they are accused of “licentious conduct and idleness”, suspected of “immoral lifestyle and idleness” and labelled as persons “leading licentious lifestyles of suspected thereof”, “leading lewd lifestyles”, “enjoying a life of idleness and debauchery” or “being out of employ and leading a licentious life”. Lists of women detained and examined also include “servants out of employ”, “with no stable and respectable means of livelihood”, “engaging only in vagrancy”, “suspected of not being engaged in any decent occupation”, “women with no means of sustenance”, “women out of employ wandering the streets day and night”, “in service and under suspicion of the venereal”, as well as “women afflicted with the venereal malady.”

In their search for “harlots and syphilitics,” the police turned mainly to vagrant women or those suspected of having no stable source of income, associating this state with licentious behaviour. One official in Kalisz stated in 1827, “vagrant women without a steady and respectable employment have become the source of licentiousness, confluence and idleness here in the city”, adding that “venereal diseases are rife among such women.”<sup>331</sup> Similar arguments were used in 1831 to urge the police to swift action: “If it is mainly idleness and debauchery that makes the risk of such disease greater, the police authorities should strive in earnest to watch for person out of employ, so that they would not be suffered hereabouts.”<sup>332</sup>

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330 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e, n. pag.

331 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (15th June 1827).

332 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (20th February 1831).



The number of unemployed young women and men constituted a substantial problem since the beginning of the period in question, especially in the larger urban centres. The migration to cities, Warsaw in particular, was a growing trend. In 1817 the Commission of the Mazovian Voivodeship explained it with “the convergence of higher military and civil authorities in Warsaw, the ease of making profit, and the freedoms and pleasures everyone experiences here”. The president of the city complained: “[people] flock to Warsaw, and no police in the whole world would be able to prevent it”.<sup>333</sup> The influx of migrant population increased in times of crisis or rapid transformations.<sup>334</sup> It was an accepted truth that cities offered greater opportunities for employment (permanent or seasonal) or even for collecting alms, and that this fact acted like a magnet for the inhabitants of villages and small towns. After 1807 officials themselves associated migration with granting the peasantry with personal freedoms. They also noted that the “use of the right to move freely” often led to vagrancy and thievery.<sup>335</sup> It may be added that, for women, failure to find employment could degrade them to the status of harlots.

Larger cities had to accommodate a substantial number of newcomers who either did not find work, or had just lost it, as well as those who were not even looking and refused to submit to the accepted norms of behaviour. The society of the day tended to see the life circumstances of such individuals (from beggars, homeless people and harlots to the unemployed or seeking work) as resulting from conscious choices, “their own fault”.<sup>336</sup> The authorities branded them as shirkers and parasites, immoral and rotten to the core, and thus a threat to

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333 AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 7022, k. 20.

334 On the influx of migrant population to Warsaw in the 1st half of the 19th century see Tadeusz Łepkowski, *Początki klasy robotniczej* (Warsaw: PWN, 1956), pp. 112–143.

335 AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 7021, k. 32 (a report by the Committee of the Płock Voivodeship from 1817).

336 For instance the remark: “If we see masses of beggars roaming the city, besieging every house and almost every passer-by, let us not feel terror, as they are, for the most part, idlers, debauched persons, comfortably off if coming from the country, who seek to use begging as a means to procure the money to satisfy their fancy, and only a small portion of them is truly destitute” – AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 124, k. 18 v. (1855). On the changes in the perception of and the policy towards the poor and social outcasts in the early modern period and the 19th century e.g. in: Elżbieta Mazur, *Dobroczynność w Warszawie w XIX w.* (Warsaw: Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, 1999), pp. 3–4; Chlebowska, *Między miłosierdziem a obowiązkiem: publiczna opieka nad ubogimi na Pomorzu w latach 1815–1872 na przykładzie rejencji szczecińskiej i koszalińskiej* (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2002), pp. 5–17.

the order and material safety of permanent residents. A visible increase in the number of “vagrants” in search of work prompted the police to exercise control, which often meant simply expelling such people from cities “in order to secure the fortunes and possessions of citizens”, “avoid scandalising the public, contain the spread of harmful addictions (. . .) and prevent pestilence” as well as the “immoral conduct of this class”.<sup>337</sup>

In Kalisz in the 1820s and 1830s women accused of licentious conduct and remaining out of employ were detained almost on a daily basis.<sup>338</sup> Many documents reiterate the statement that there were many prostitutes in the city: in January 1831 their numbers in Kalisz and the nearby villages (Ogrody, Czaszki, Glinianki, Wydory etc.) were “substantial”; they remained so in February 1832 (when Russian forces were stationed in the region). In autumn 1836 it was also reported that “a substantial number [of harlots] resides in the villages by the city”.<sup>339</sup>

In 1836 the zeal of the Kalisz police force was even criticised by the Commission of the Kalisz Region,<sup>340</sup> which complained that the municipal authorities were making it difficult for the residents of other districts to cross the city limits: “it is often so that the Municipal Office, without investigating the reasons (. . .) for the need to arrive in the City, detains outsiders coming to purchase comestibles or to do other unforeseen business, which is particularly common in the case of the hamlets closest to the city”.<sup>341</sup> The Magistrate denied any malpractice, explaining that tollbooth registrars and precinct supervisors making the arrests were “already familiar with licentious women, since they return several times”. Wishing, however, to prevent further claims of such kind, the institution instructed regional committee members to issue a directive to residents of the countryside, “so that, with regard to the female sex, no person roamed the city at night, and with regard to men, no person dawdled in taverns, since firstly women roaming the streets in the evening are taken for harlots, and as to men, drunkenness leads to various evil deeds”.<sup>342</sup>

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337 AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 7021, k. 290, 293; j.a. 7023, k. 92; j.a. 7291.

338 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (19th July 1832 r.).

339 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (20th February 1831; 16th February 1832; 18th/30th November 1836).

340 The Kalisz Region encompassed two districts (Kalisz and Warta) in the Kalisz Voivodeship of the day.

341 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (10th/22nd October 1836).

342 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (18th/30th November 1836).

Clandestine prostitutes looked for clients in inns, taverns, lodgings, parks, and empty (“lonely”) streets, usually in the evening or at night. Such venues, listed in the regulations on prostitution and the prevention of venereal disease, as well as in the orders coming from superiors until the end of the regimentation system, were the target of night-time police raids. Suspicious women (caught “in the act or roaming the streets in the evening, or lingering in tavern houses”)<sup>343</sup> were detained. The regulations introduced in 1843 directed the police to places of “clandestine trysts”, identifying them as coffee houses, taverns and eateries.<sup>344</sup> Thirty years later, when the market of entertainment and services was already much more developed, the instructions for the Warsaw police and the 9 supervisors of the Medical and Police Committee (hereinafter: KL-P) included the observation of coffee houses, alehouses, restaurants, inns, taverns, hotels, lodging houses, eateries, bathhouses, baths, halls for dancing classes and masked balls, yards, streets, the vicinity of garrisons, parks, orchards, secluded areas, the banks of Vistula, illicit watering holes, the residences of clandestine panderers and tolerated women, as well as other suspicious venues.<sup>345</sup> Policemen were also to follow and report on women frequenting such locals and meeting men, paying attention to those who entered alone but left in male company, or would frequently be seen strolling alongside men. Careful supervision was also extended over the behaviour of female servants, seamstresses, the staff of hotels and establishments serving food and drink, as well as women working in warehouses (workshops or shops) and factories employing both sexes. The final group under observation, first from caretakers and watchmen, were women living alone. If they came home late or did not return for the night, if they received visits from

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343 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (18th/30th November 1836; 9th June 1827; 6th September 1828). The KWK demanded reports on every detained woman, specified by name; On the supervision of inn and taverns and the arrests therein in the 2nd half of the 19th century – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 223; APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15014, k. 101; APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3285, k. 15–19.

344 The memoirist K. Łukaszewicz painted the following picture of Warsaw coffee houses and confectioneries in the 1820s: “In their hidden alcoves paradise delights would take place: the youth was debauched, and spared no thought for their own health” – Łukaszewicz, *Wspomnienia starego lekarza o czasach powstania listopadowego (1825–1835)* (Zamość: Koło Miłośników Książki, 1937), p. 26; monitoring such venues in Warsaw could not have been easy. In 1845, for instance, the city boasted 949 taverns, 146 coffee houses, and 34 houses of lodging – *Gazeta Policyjna*, no 43 (1845).

345 *Utverzhdannaya*, pp. 137–146; Similarly in Lublin – APL, RGL, L 1896:27, k. 38–39.

men, or if there were noises coming out of their flat, the conditions for suspecting such women of prostitution were met.

In the venues mentioned above, the police had the right to arrest on sight any woman who shouted, caused ruckus, drank with men, was inebriated, behaved indecently, slept on the street, exited the garrison at night or at dawn, or walked the streets at that time. They could also investigate and direct a woman to a medical examination (with the knowledge of the KL-P, and before 1897, upon consulting the chief police inspector) following a tip from an infected man.

The report of the Warsaw Medical and Police Committee for 1867–1869 reveals the circumstances in which women were detained in the capital city. In 1867, 72.4% of detained vagrants and women suspected of harlotry were arrested near the garrison and the quarters of non-commissioned officers (so-called lower ranks), in 1868 the figure amounted to 60.6%. In the same time period, additional 26.8% and 38.8% (respectively) detainees were servants and menials (no information is given where they were arrested). A small percentage of women were arrested in houses of illicit prostitution (*pritony*), coffee houses, alehouses, bathhouses and homes of known panderers.<sup>346</sup>

A new incentive to revise the principles of medical and police supervision came in 1877 with the directive of the Ministry of the Interior dated to 24th November and increasing the scope of medical examination. Under its influence, the KL-P in Częstochowa laid down a set of principles for tracking illicit prostitution, which involved the cooperation of people from outside the police. Property owners were to monitor female servants living in their tenements and informed the magistrate should any suspicion of licentiousness arise. Such a denunciation note led to medical examination or even adding the woman in question onto the list or registered prostitutes. The military was asked to bar women from entering garrison grounds and to keep the soldiers in their quarters during fairs and holidays, when the land guard was entirely unable to bring all lewd women under control. The necessity of asking the soldiers whom they got infected by was also emphasised. Private doctors were obligated to inform the magistrate of all cases of syphilis; the list of infected patients including their addresses was to be provided by all hospitals on a weekly basis.<sup>347</sup>

The area of permanent interest of police and medical services also encompassed the suburbs (in Warsaw within 10 versts of the city; in Kielce within 3) and

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346 “Statystyka lekarska. Prostytycyja w mieście Warszawie w latach 1867, 1868 i 1869”, *Gazeta Lekarska*, no. 32 (1870).

347 APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3285, k. 15–19.

the countryside.<sup>348</sup> Village administrators were asked to take “women caught practicing debauchery” to the district doctor.<sup>349</sup>

The first specific professional group suspected of engaging in prostitution were female servants. A commonly expressed view was that many of them lead licentious lives; such accusations appeared throughout the entire 19th century. The police used their authority to control their professional lives, granted to them by the law on household service of 24th December 1823.<sup>350</sup> Under this legislation, female servants were obliged to register and receive a work record book, in which every change of post and breaks in employment were noted, along with opinions of employers. Failure to report the loss of this document could be punishable with arrest. If a servant lost her job, she was required to report this fact to the police within a day and to begin her search for a new post “immediately”. Should she manage to find none within a month, she had to notify the police once more, under the penalty of three days of detention (Art. 102). The police would then issue “a residency permit for the purpose of application” (Art. 103). “Should the impression arise that they do not take on steady employment due to their love for idleness and questionable conduct”, female servants were treated in accordance with the same regulations that applied to vagrants (residence and work for board only in a house of employment).<sup>351</sup> Quitting one’s job of one’s own volition must have been a frequent phenomenon in that professional group, given that the law tried to protect employers from such occurrences.<sup>352</sup> Female servants were disciplined with pecuniary sanctions, and if the employer reported behaviour such as

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348 The records provide more information on incidental examination related to diagnosing the disease in a person originating from a given village or the soldiers stationed there. The Anti-syphilitic Committee prescribed that in such cases the villages and hamlets had to be surveyed by a doctor. See e.g. APL, RGL, L 1887:1, k. 72–73, 124; RGL, L 1899:29.

349 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 162,1. 22, 23 v, 24 v. See also AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 280, k. 2, 3, 9, 13 (Gostynin District in the Warsaw Gubernia, 1860s).

350 DP KP, Vol. VI. The law also applied to apprentices and hired hands of either sex; AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 7291 (“The order of the serving class and household attendants in the Kingdom of Poland 1816–1824”); On the control and registration of servants: Szczypiorski, *Ćwierć wieku*, pp. 171–172.

351 Articles 100–112 on “servants out of employ”. In the latter half of the 19th century, cases of arrest for vagrancy and the lack of a license document were constantly reported by the press, e.g. *Warszawska Gazeta Policyjna*.

352 The phenomenon is also documented in archival sources. See e.g. records describing conflicts between servants and employers in Częstochowa and Suwałki: APCz, MMCz, j. a. 3194; APS, Am.S, j.a. 460.

leaving the premises without permission (especially for the night), frequenting taverns, or displays of improper morals, the police had the right to flog the woman in question or place her under arrest (Art. 25 and the following up to 37).

Attempts were also made to extend permanent medical supervision to female servants staying in employment. The right to arrest women “even presently working ones, who meanwhile contribute to the spread of the syphilitic disease through their lewd conduct” was granted to the police in the Kingdom of Poland by the supervisory regulations of 1843.<sup>353</sup> Under these laws, the police was also entitled to detain and examine female servants, if their employers reported them as ill. Servant supervision offices were obligated to inform the commissioner by the Medical Office of Warsaw of any women remaining out of employment for a period of several months and of those whose record book contained reports of vagrancy and drunkenness. The need to conduct medical examination on servants upon the request of employers (or servants – “which will never happen”) was acknowledged by a special committee investigating the efficiency of medical supervision in the Lublin Gubernia in 1899. It moved, however that the doctor called for such purposes examined the women free of charge and only noted the diagnosis of “healthy” or “ill”, without naming the disease.

Despite the broad scope of their authority over servants and the very low legal standing of this professional group, the police found the task neither easy<sup>354</sup>

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353 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 50–50 v.; *Przepisy*; On the earlier applications of this principle – AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (7th July 1832). During the November Uprising, upon the request of the High Command, the National Government ordered the KRSW to take additional action apart from the regular examination of public women and clandestine prostitutes, asking that “the local police, with the utmost responsibility, took pains to track infected women, without excluding those female servants staying with private households who would require hospital aid, and even, if such a necessity should arise, to obligate the owners of houses to bear public welfare in mind and diligently inform the police of any women with a similar (...) affliction that would reside in their houses”. Apart from the “public welfare” frequently invoked in such circumstances, one should note the awareness that combining the two categories of women was, in fact, an abuse of the provisions of law. This was also acknowledged by the General Director of Police, who wrote the Government addressing i.a. the issue of periodical inspection of servants along with public women and clandestine prostitutes, but only after “ascertaining firmly that they are of this ilk” – AGAD, CWPL, j.a. 165, k. 1–12.

354 According to Kuznecov, coercing servants to attend examinations required the police to have a dose of cunning. The women used work as an excuse, cried, complained about compulsion and injustice, made scenes or even lost consciousness (1867) – Kuznecov,

nor self-explanatory. In 1862 in Suwałki where, as it was stated “a great number of servants engaged in back-alley harlotry”, the magistrate’s attempts to introduce medical examinations were met with resistance. “Those who lodged them thought this ill-advised, or even an insult to innocence”.<sup>355</sup> In 1884 the propriety of examining female servants and hired hands was also debated by the KL-P in Kielce. Its members regarded it as rational and desirable, yet ultimately abandoned the idea predicting a wave of complaints and general discontent.<sup>356</sup>

Female servants could feel exposed to the threat of police supervision until the end of the 19th century,<sup>357</sup> especially since detention could result in their names being added to the register of tolerated prostitutes. Initially the targets of police raids and detention were determined through observation and common experience, in which certain professions were inherently associated with prostitution. In time, however, the police gained access to statistical data (which were already held in high regard), such as the results of scholarly analysis and records gathered by medical and police committees, listing the previous professions of known prostitutes. The information provided reassurance that the “risk group” had been correctly identified.

Fairly regular action towards women suspected of licentiousness was taken since at least the 1820s, when the KRSW instructed that they be detained, examined and treated (ordinance dated 27th May 1821). The only region in which records from that period have survived is the Kalisz Voivodeship, whose authorities showed quite a lot of initiative. However, the situation in other parts of the Kingdom was similar, especially in cities housing a garrison, since “women leading licentious lives” were most likely to settle there.<sup>358</sup> The presence of the

*Prostitutsiya i sifilis v Rossii: Istoriko-statisticheskiye issledovaniya* ( St. Peterburg 1871), p. 250 (on prostitution in Warsaw).

355 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 15 v. In 1863 the police detained those “who already had a record of harlotry and were treated” (Ibid., k. 45).

356 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15163, k. 42. Earlier, in 1876, the Committee decided to detain those who remain in service but do not lead virtuous lives (*nakhodyatsya v uslužhenii no vedut sebya durno*) – RGKiel., j.a. 15070, k. 36–39.

357 In January 1899 examinations in Lublin extended even to servants in monasteries – APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 1–2; Between 1882 and 1889 an average number of 3 thousand of “hired hands and servants etc. eluding inspection and roaming the streets” was detained in Warsaw – Franciszek Giedroyc, *Prostytutki jako źródło chorób wenerycznych w Warszawie (w ciągu ostatnich kilku lat)* (Warsaw: Drukarnia Maryi Ziemkiewiczowej, 1892), p. 44, chart XXXI.

358 Giedroyc, *Rada*, pp. 660–661. On the search for prostitutes in localities housing military camps in the Kalisz (1832), Piotrków (1833), and Sieradz (1832–1834) administrative regions – AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e.

army was always an incentive; with the arrival of troops people invariably expected “a warranted influx of harlots hungry for profits in the city”.<sup>359</sup> Unable to contain the problem of clandestine prostitution, in 1828 the KWK implored the commanders of military units to ensure that soldiers “stay in their quarters after the prescribed hour, giving harlots no reason to roam about”, since “if military men are out and about later in the night, harlots accost and subsequently infect them”.<sup>360</sup> Usually, however, the string of demands travelled in the opposite direction. In the unusual circumstances of the November Uprising, the Citizen’s Council of the Kalisz Voivodeship felt concerned for the inhabitants of Kalisz and the villages in its vicinity in connection with the presence of “substantial numbers of women plying the flesh trade and moreover infected with the venereal disease, seducing not only civilian youth, but even those boys that assemble under military banners, and present them with such gifts”. “Foreseeing the terrible consequences that the spread of the disease among the common folk could bring, the overcrowding of infirmaries and the incapacitation of military operations, and wishing to prevent such great evils”, the Council urged the administration to track and register all suspicious element without delay and to conduct examination i.a. on all unmarried women and widows with not stable employment or respectable sources of income, “staying with their mothers, grandmothers or aunts under the guise of washerwomen, or suchlike, unless the mother can prove that she has the household and the means to sustain those”.<sup>361</sup>

After 1831 and until the very end of their stay in the Kingdom of Poland (1915), the Russian army made appeals to the civil administration, invariably urging for more effective and vigorous action or even extraordinary measures. Upon the military’s demand (or for its sake) additional raids were organised and every complaint was responded to without delay. There can be no doubt that even in regions which may be described as exercising constant, routine supervision over prostitution (registered and clandestine), the practice was related mainly

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359 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 295 (Suwałki). The population of Augustów frequently complained that the army “brought women in droves, and to provide for them, the soldiers go a-thieving” – APS, Am.S, j.a. 467, k. 77.

360 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (6th September 1828).

361 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (7th July 1832, Appeal dated to 29th January 1831). After the failed uprising, this time prompted by the complaints of the district military governor (the new authority whose competences and capabilities extended beyond military affairs), the KWK instructed all mayors and vogts of communes to conduct regular inspections among the women specified in the earlier appeal issued by the insurgents (Ibid. 21st February 1832).



(if not exclusively) to the presence of the army. In February 1832 the district military governor ordered the Committee “to clear the city and its surroundings of the type of harlots that reside in Kalisz and the nearby villages, steal from the inhabitants and infect the soldiers stationed there, thereby putting the state to the expense of treating soldiers”.<sup>362</sup> The situation in other parts of the Kingdom was similar. In the Suwałki Gubernia, before the redeployment of troops scheduled for the summer of 1855, the military governor instructed the president of Suwałki to “expel [from the city] all harlot women, even if they should have passports”,<sup>363</sup> while the civil governor asked him to ensure “that harlot women do not abandon their legal places of residence” (which indicates that they did follow the army), “that they are not suffered anywhere with no proper identification and are sent back to their places of origin by transport”, and that “those lending themselves to overt harlotry” and “those giving shelter to such women and procuring to harlotry” are punished according to the letter of the law.<sup>364</sup>

The next excerpt contains a rare description of the circumstances in which the women were apprehended. In March 1862 the police in Suwałki organised a raid “due to the military authorities’ lamenting that the current number of licentious women here in the city of Suwałki is extraordinarily great, as a result of which an equally great number of soldiers of the lower ranks is afflicted with the venereal plague. Furthermore, since gentlemen and ladies oftentimes complain here at the police that their servant girls, having abandoned their duties in the evening hours, engage in harlotry, on account of which the masters suffer theft and deceit. And finally, because it is apparent that many local residents keep numerous servants with no documentation, thus inviting disorder into the city, the control over which oftentimes puts the police officials sent to these houses where they are found at the risk of unpleasant treatment or even harm from those maintaining such”. “In order to alleviate the difficulties encountered in this respect both with regard to the inspection of the health of such women, as well as establishing their origin”, the police inspector instructed officers to “bring over” women known “both for unlawful inhabitancy and clandestine harlotry”. He delegated four policemen “to spot the said women as they purchase meat by the butcheries on the present day and bring each of them over to the Magistrate for the purpose of ascertaining their health and origin”.<sup>365</sup> Twenty-three women

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362 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (16th February 1832).

363 LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 184, b. 289. The document instructs the city guards “to take all women which could be out of employ to the station for inspection”.

364 LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 184, l. 291.

365 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 24–25.

were detained in this operation (all of them proved healthy, yet six were staying in Suwałki without proper documents).

From the 1880s onwards, records of similar situations may be found in the archival sources from the Lublin Gubernia. The army repeatedly forced the civil administration to act with incessant interventions, inquiries and requests, invariably resulting from new cases of infection. Their demands were often very specific, which to our modern minds may seem rather grotesque. The records from 1886, for instance, contain an entire two months of correspondence between the headquarters of the 18th Infantry Division and first the district and then the gubernia authorities regarding the need to arrest and treat a certain Kaśka Artemiak, who, with absolute impunity, bestowed the gift of “venerya” upon soldiers in Krasnystaw. Even on 24th December the governor signed the note ordering the district chief to find and examine the wanted woman and transport her to a hospital.<sup>366</sup> In another case, the fact that a certain cannoneer from the 5th Battery of the 18th Artillery Regiment got infected with gonorrhoea following contact with a woman (whom he identified) in the Irena settlement (then in the Novoaleksandrovsk district) forced the authorities of the commune to intensify the supervision of all women engaging in prostitution.<sup>367</sup> In Chełm, between July and 1st September 1888 a certain “stranger” managed to infect twelve cossacks from the 2nd Orenburg Cossack Regiment stationed there, and ten privates at an earlier period. The command of the 13th Cavalry Division reported many cases of illness after the unit passed through Chełm. It therefore demanded tighter control over clandestine prostitution in the city and its area, urging that clandestine prostitutes be examined along with the registered ones.<sup>368</sup> On another occasion, as the 17th Infantry Division was scheduled to be camped near Chełm in the summer of 1911, its commander asked the governor in Lublin to organise registration and medical examinations for prostitutes in the district, stating that, in his knowledge, the scale of prostitution “outside the register” in Chełm was massive.<sup>369</sup>

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366 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 124–125.

367 APL, RGL, L 1886:20, k. 96. Similarly – 1897:32; 1906:23; 1907:32, k. 89.

368 APL, RGL, L 1888:7, k. 150, 155. In 1897 and 1898, 303 soldiers of the 65th and 66th Infantry Regiments stationed in Chełm were afflicted with sexually transmitted diseases – RGL, L 1899:20, k. 5.

369 APL, RGL, L 1911:46, k. 98. Similarly in Zamość, 300 cases were reported in the 68th Infantry Regiment in 1897 and 1898. Thus, the command of the 17th Infantry Division warned the city of the planned arrival of new regiments for the firearms courses in May and August – RGL, L 1899:20, k. 5.

Upon arrest, women suspected of prostitution were first subject to a medical examination (provided they were not over 50 years of age; under the regulations of 1843). The steps taken afterwards depended on whether the detainees proved ill or healthy and subsequently whether they had a permit for staying at the place of apprehension, and whether they were employed. The authorities applied regulations on clandestine prostitution, vagrancy and liability for transmitting venereal disease.<sup>370</sup> The earliest description of what was done in practice comes from a 1819 report by the police department of the Committee of the Kalisz Voivodeship: “Women devoting themselves to a libertine life without the license of police authority were brought under proper supervision, the ill ones were taken to treatment, while the healthy ones were indicated a decent means of livelihood, which they had to pursue in their proper commune to which they belonged”.<sup>371</sup>

Infected women were first sent to hospitals; when the treatment was complete, they underwent the same process that applied to the healthy detainees. If they were apprehended in their place of origin, they were directed to employers, if their registered address was somewhere else, they were transported to their place of birth or to their last place of residence and ordered to take up an occupation there.<sup>372</sup> Before that could happen, however, such women needed to be penalised. Clandestine prostitution was punishable by flagellation or detention. The 1843 regulations for Warsaw specified six strokes or three days of police arrest (for the first offence), twelve strokes or six days of arrest and a month’s confinement in a house of work and shelter for the purpose of “the betterment of morals” (after the second arrest), sixteen strokes or eight days of arrest as well as confinement “for a longer period” (following each successive arrest).<sup>373</sup> After flagellation was abolished as punishment, the penalty was restricted to detention or fine.<sup>374</sup> Cases of clandestine prostitution were managed according to the administrative

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370 Article 103 of the law on the penalties exacted by the justices of the peace (two months of incarceration or 200 silver roubles of fine).

371 AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 7023, k. 96.

372 This was also prescribed by the regulations of 1843 – the detained was to be “coerced into the path of duty, which is to service or ordinary employment, if she be local; non-local ones shall be transported to their places of origin or the last place of residence” – APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 50–50 v.

373 *Przepisy*, Art. 105; APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 50.

374 Records contain very few references to flagellation – APS, Am.S, j.a. 467, k. 85; the KRSW forbade (17/29 1863) the use of flagellation as penalty for public women infected with sexually transmitted diseases before they were sent to the hospital – *Zbiór Przepisów Administracyjnych. Wydział Spraw Wewnętrznych*, part. III, Vol. I,

procedure. The punishment was decided by the Direct Police Court (after 1847 the Correctional Police Court) without the formalities of a trial, “in haste and with no cost”. Under article 44, the cases were judged by justices of the peace.<sup>375</sup>

For as long as the system of regimentation was in place, the most commonly pronounced sentence was detention.<sup>376</sup> In the case of loose women from outside the city, gaol was more of a lodging in which they awaited to be transported to their place of origin, and not an instrument of repression. At times the detainees were hired for public works – at least this was the case in Kalisz. In the autumn of 1828, it was decided that women “apprehended for vagrancy and engaged in a life of licentiousness” were to “weed out the grass from the cobbles in front of the palace and around the church as far as the Warsaw bridge” before being sent back to their places of origin.<sup>377</sup>

Such transport proceeded under the watchful eye of guards (“under lock and chain”) and was usually paid for by the city.<sup>378</sup> The only records that shed some light on this aspect of the harlots’ existence come from the magistrate of Suwałki. In February 1842, for instance, the mayor of Sejny dispatched one Matylda Reyichert to the president of Suwałki, carrying the following note: “The one sent to the appeal of the Illustrious President (. . .) Matylda Reyichert infected with

p. 477; the punishment of flogging meted out in the 1880s in the cellar beneath the chancellery office of one of the Warsaw precincts was mentioned by Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, p. 99.

375 On the system of prosecuting police offences punishable by less severe penalties see Kaczyńska, *Człowiek przed sądem. Społeczne aspekty przestępczości w Królestwie Polskim 1815–1914* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982), pp. 141–148.

376 Sometimes the very conditions in police gaol created a hazard of venereal disease. In Suwałki, for instance, the gaol comprised three rooms: one for registered prostitutes who were avoiding examination, one for “those remaining under court investigation” for misdeeds, and one for the arrested men and women. “Here the disease may easily spread”, reported the president of the city – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 231–232; Even in the early 20th century, aside from old and sick women taken off the streets, the most numerous inmates of the women’s cell in the police gaol of Warsaw’s city hall were prostitutes. For a description of the terrible sanitary conditions in this room (congestion, damp, cold, darkness, filth) see: Stefania Sempołowska, *Z dna nędzy*, (Warsaw: K. Kowalewski, 1909), pp. 3–5.

377 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (6th September 1828; also 15th June 1827).

378 In the 1820s the cost and organisation of the transport of vagrants etc. were specified in the regulations of 27th May 1823 – DP KP, Vol. VIII; vogts’ receipts of the transport of certain persons to the district’s authorities in: APS, the Government of the Augustów District, j.a. 10.

venerya, is not resident in this city or included in the register of peoples, since in the year 1840 she was resettled in Warsaw, whom I have the honour to return to the Illustrious President under transport, for further direction”. The note was addressed “To the Illustrious President of the Gov. C. of Suwałki appended to Matylda Reychert”.<sup>379</sup>

Similarly, the mayor of Łomża sent “under transport” to the president of Suwałki one Machla Rubinowna, a resident of Suwałki, who, on her way from that city to Płock, made a stop in Łomża and “instead of service chose the occupation of harlotry” with the suggestion “that he prohibit to her any further vagrancy of such kind”.<sup>380</sup> In the 1860s, the president of Suwałki asked the vogt of the Berżniki commune to receive and confine a “debauched woman” named Anna Wianta, said to “constantly devote herself to harlotry and vagrancy” and to have taken advance payment for household service from several employers.<sup>381</sup>

Helena Korzeniewska, a daughter of a customs official from Filipów made a long journey under police surveillance and at the city’s expense. “Left by her father uncared for and unsupervised, she engaged in vagrancy and licentious living”, eventually finding her way to police gaol, where she gave birth to a baby. Since she had no money to pay the wet nurse hired to feed the baby, the president of Suwałki (on 21st April 1848) sent Helena to Filipów, with her child and the wet nurse in tow, to be put under her father’s care. The father, however, did not possess sufficient means to support his daughter and settle her debts, so the mayor of Filipów sent all three back to Suwałki “by the service of the same man”. On 15th May, the president of Suwałki dispatched them to the mayor of Augustów, the place of residence of Helena’s brother, who worked as a policeman (the law stipulated that people with no means of livelihood should be sent to their closest relatives), “with the call of instruction to her brother, to extend over her the management to which he is obliged, and as for the baby belonging to his sister Helena, and sent through Anna Warakomska, to arrange for it to be fostered by this woman for the specified remuneration, which Helena Korzeniewska

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379 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 81–82.

380 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 86.

381 APS, Am.S, j.a. 467, k. 12; The mayor of the city of Raczki, in turn, asked the president of Suwałki, the presumed place of residence of one Zośka Sygałówna, daughter of Lejba Sygałowicz, “suspected of falling pregnant” “to order an inspection to establish whether the mentioned Zośka Sygałówna is presently with child or traces of abortion of the foetus are discernible, and kindly inform me thereof, as it would be difficult to ascertain similar circumstances here by cause of the lack of a doctor or midwife”. – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 194–195 (1848).

ought to be paying from her takings". The president also prescribed "that Helena Korzeniewska was lodged with her brother, by whom she could take the place and duty of a servant, thereby putting a halt to her devotion to vagrancy and licentiousness"<sup>382</sup>

The methods and aims (save for the sanitary concerns) of dealing with licentious women fit the framework of the policies applied at the time towards social outcasts and the poorest classes. Corporeal punishment, confinement and expulsion aside, attempts were made to integrate this volatile element into the working community, directing such people towards more respectable means of support and introducing them to work. As they themselves wrote in 1827, the Committee of the Kalisz Voivodeship fought clandestine prostitution "for the prevention of the growth of this class of pernicious persons and for guidance to a different way of life"<sup>383</sup> Local authorities, in whose care suspicious women were left, were instructed to not only keep them under supervision and prevent them from continuing their habit of vagrancy and harlotry,<sup>384</sup> but also make sure "that those engage in the decent occupation that is service"<sup>385</sup>

Although administration received reports of immediate employment of the detainees, the reality was unlikely to bend to bureaucratic prescriptions – a fact which ultimately began to be noticed. The problem was twofold: firstly, not all employers were willing to hire women with as much as a suspicion of

382 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 224–228. The vogt of the Koniecbor commune provided the following characterisation of the woman being sent to the care of the president of Suwałki: "One Marianna Trzecińska v. Trzcinkowska, around 40 years of age, professing herself to come from the city of Suwałki, apprehended for vagrancy with no papers, occupying herself with drunkenness and public harlotry in the light of day" was being sent to the Magistrate "with respect to barring her from vagabondage, or more precisely the abovementioned reprehensible deeds – requesting the receipt from the mentioned being delivered", LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 94 (1843); In records from the latter half of the 19th century mentions of sending prostitutes away are very rare, e.g. APŁ, RGP, j.a. 5156, k. 77.

383 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (13th October 1832 and earlier 20th February 1831).

384 In February 1848, for instance, the president of Suwałki sent Monika Dyakiewicz "dabbling in harlotry" to the vogt of the Mirdinie commune, with the instruction "not to permit the mentioned one any further vagrancy" – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 198.

385 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (9th June 1827). The Committee in Kalisz tried to enforce the implementation of its orders on the authorities subordinate to it, demanding quarterly reports containing, among other things, the number of women sent to enter service (AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e, 21st February 1832).

loose morals to their name. Secondly, not all of these women wanted to abandon their previous lifestyle in the city, even if they had the option. Thus, exasperated officials would sometimes let slip certain (reasonable) remarks that the orders of their superiors were impossible to follow. For instance, the Municipal Office of Kalisz was asking what to do “should nobody take them, how are they to be managed – since it is certain that they will not be dissuaded from their licentious lives, and it doubtful that such women would be employed by anybody”.<sup>386</sup> The Committee of the Sandomierz Voivodeship, in turn, noted in 1834 that “harlotry is most often pursued by women having no permanent residence and no means of livelihood save for private household service, and it is easily foreseeable that, with neither trust nor a good reputation, they will not find even such employment”.<sup>387</sup>

The police was therefore struggling to deal with the same women over and over: “These women sent away from the city, every moment others arrive in a flash” (Kalisz, 1827);<sup>388</sup> “despite even the most vigorous action on my part I cannot rid myself thereof, since, even though on a daily basis I transport them away and punish by police measures, in several days they still return to the city” (Suwałki, 1848);<sup>389</sup> “women of the worst conduct, detrimental to the development of our city [Suwałki], however many times they were transported out to their places of residence, they continue to arrive to Suwałki, where they occupy themselves with licentious living, vagrancy, drunkenness, squabbling and petty theft” (Suwałki, the 1860s).<sup>390</sup> The instruction was to persevere. The letter from the Gubernia Authorities of Augustów to the president of Suwałki in March 1852 states: “They return constantly, and the most effective measure in this regard will be to follow the existing police regulations to the letter, since no person without permanent and decent means of livelihood should be permitted even a momentary stay in the city”.<sup>391</sup>

With regard to the “inveterate harlots,” who constantly “squeeze their way back in” and do not enter any employment, harsher principles were to be applied. In Kalisz harlots were sent to participate in public works: “they will be coerced to local works round the road and for board only, for as long as do not undertake a stable

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386 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (26th April / 8th May 1838 and 5th/17th May 1838).

387 AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47, k. 11.

388 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (22nd June 1827).

389 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 231–232.

390 APS, Am.S, j.a. 467, k. 83.

391 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 274.

and permanent method of support”.<sup>392</sup> This was hardly an easy task. The municipal office was unwilling to employ detainees by the river, not because the work was strenuous (“using them to pluck at grass would for them be a lesser chore”), but because it required a larger number of guards to supervise. When detention and flagellation proved ineffective, municipal authorities appealed for the assistance and expertise of the court,<sup>393</sup> even though they were not always abreast with the legal situation. In 1838, the president of Kalisz asked the governor<sup>394</sup> to ascertain and explain what regulations apply to the treatment of women engaging in prostitution, stating that “the local courts, having no set principles in their possession to pass judgment on the guilty brought before them, send similar cases to the authority that initiated the correspondence”.<sup>395</sup> Records from the 1850s already make references to court rulings for “spreading harlotry”.<sup>396</sup>

The problem of assimilating people with no ties into the social and professional structure (such individuals’ reluctance to commit to permanent employment on the one hand, and the authorities’ efforts to coerce them to work on the other), which Nina Assorodobraj analysed in the context of Stanisław Poniatowski’s reign, persisted into the period of the Kingdom of Poland, with many of its aspects remaining unchanged.<sup>397</sup> With very few exceptions, attempts at installing similar women in places from which they had fled ended in failure. Moreover, cleaning the streets of poverty detrimental to health and morals required a

392 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (17th/29th September 1836). They were also sent to work “around the river Proсна or in the new strolling garden” (AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e, 15th June 1827). In 1819 women were also directed to work for foreign clothiers, which resembles the policy applied in Stanisław Poniatowski’s reign described by Nina Assorodobraj. See AGAD, KRSW, J-a. 7023, k. 112; Nina Assorodobraj, *Początki klasy robotniczej. Problem rąk roboczych w przemyśle polskim epoki stanisławowskiej* (Warsaw: Czytelnik 1966); Szczypiorski, *Ćwierć wieku*, p. 117.

393 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (17th/29th September 1836). On sending prostitutes to the court in the Suwałki Gubernia: LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 74, 164, 165; APS, Am.S, j.a. 467, k. 85.

394 After the voivodeships were replaced with gubernias in 1837, voivodeship committees were renamed to gubernia authorities.

395 The reply survives only in the form of a note on the received letter (moreover, it is dated 30th September, while the document was received on 13th July). It reads: “*ad acta* until the penal gaol in Sieradz is organised” – AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (11th/23rd July 1838).

396 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 243, 254, 274, 293 (the Justice of the Peace of the Dąbrowa Region, the Suwałki Gubernia).

397 Assorodobraj, *Początki*.



certain infrastructure (penal and correctional institutions, houses of work and shelters) which was not widely developed in the Kingdom.<sup>398</sup> Throughout the 19th century, a policy of repression was applied and the organisation of aid was struggling to break the ossified model of philanthropy which only treated the symptoms.<sup>399</sup> The process of marginalisation which these women had undergone was, in most cases, irreversible given the social, economic and ethical circumstances at the time.

Monitoring vagrant prostitutes “with a watchful eye” and handling the apprehended ones according to the existing procedures absorbed the police and the offices to a considerable extent. Initially the work was done in the belief that it would prove worthwhile and effective. In 1831 one official in the Kalisz Voivodeship lectured that “suchlike feebleness [disease] should happen rarely or even not at all, if the good police extend tender care over this element of servant staff, holding liable such persons or house owners who would offer shelter to women out of service”.<sup>400</sup> With time, however, a certain note of impatience begins to be discernible; one may even argue that the authorities were no longer willing to deal with women “preoccupying local governments in unnecessary and over-long correspondence”, especially since the work seemed endless and required the city to incur considerable expenses.<sup>401</sup> The Committee of the Kalisz Voivodeship continued to encourage the police to extend constant supervision over harlots and servants, appealing to their conscience with descriptions of the consequences of venereal disease or threatening them with legal repercussions. The investigation report pertaining to thirteen women apprehended in June 1827 indicated that twelve of them had not been under police control even though they did not possess (or had lost) their work record books and identification. The Committee instructed the Municipal Office to punish the policemen and issued a warning to the Office itself, stating that “even for the resultant effects of diseases among such women shall the Office be held accountable, not having overseen servants in

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398 Examples of such penalties: AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 7021, k. 245 (1817); j.a. 7022, k. 26, 53 (1818). On the initiatives to rehabilitate social outcasts through work: Adam Szczypiorski, *Ćwierć wieku*, p. 117.

399 Elżbieta Mazur, *Dobroczytność*, p. 154.

400 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (20th February 1831).

401 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (18th November 1836; complaints from the Regional Committee of Kalisz, to which matters of prostitutes were a particularly large burden, as the majority of women apprehended in Kalisz came from around the city); also LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 13; On them being a burden to the city – APS, Am.S, j.a. 467, k. 232.

general”.<sup>402</sup> Ten years later (1836) the city authorities were sent another word of caution: “licentious women prone to idleness may be seen where ever, in the day and late in the evening. Their bold strolling in the public garden (so called park) in the late evening causes the supposition that the local police have neglected to pay due attention to this part of the serving class”.<sup>403</sup>

The scale of the problem did not diminish even in the 2nd half of the 19th century. The police inspector in Kielce explained the lack of success in finding women engaging in illicit prostitution with their chosen lifestyle: “they are hard to catch, and only sometimes fall into one’s hands, as many licentious women are either not domiciled in the city but merely visit it, or having no permanent lodgings roam the streets and suburbs day and night, and fall into the hands of the searching police by sheer accident”.<sup>404</sup> Fourteen years later the KL-P in Kielce laid the blame mostly on the insufficient number of city guards, especially since after the year 1884 soldiers were no longer participating in night patrols. Kielce needed four guards, one per district. In 1884 the city was patrolled twice every night (by the police guard and two watchmen from the fire department). The guards were obliged to arrest vagrant and inebriated women, and escort them to medical examination in the morning. To make the patrols more effective, the Committee proposed marking the passports or residence documents with agreed-upon symbols to indicate that its owner engages in clandestine prostitution.<sup>405</sup>

From the women’s point of view, the direst consequence of detention (suffered by some of the apprehended and examined) was being added to the list of tolerated women and thus subject to medical and police supervision. Information on how this process looked like in practice is available e.g. in records from St. Petersburg (and its Committee),<sup>406</sup> yet sources from the Kingdom of Poland, including Warsaw, are almost nonexistent. There are only two known documents from the first decades of the 19th century testifying to the compilation of a list of detained women, a practice intended to enable regular medical checkups. In 1833 the Committee of the Kalisz Voivodeship, thinking “the inspection to be insufficient” demanded that licentious women roaming the streets and not engaged in household service or any stable employment be listed after arrest and

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402 AGAD, KWK, j.a., 1697 e (15th June 1827 and later 21st February 1832).

403 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (17th/29th September 1836).

404 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15014, k. 74v.

405 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15163, k. 41v–42.

406 See Engelstein, *Between the Fields*, pp. 168–171.

examined on a monthly basis. In Suwałki, apprehended harlots were listed at least since 1848. Surviving records include a book entitled “The control of licentious women encountered in the gubernia city of Suwałki for the ascertaining of their health”, which contained the results of examination conducted between July and October.<sup>407</sup>

Police procedures were determined by the regulations analysed in Chapter 1. According to the Warsaw *Regulations* of 1843, the fate of each woman was to be decided by the precinct commissioners and the chief police inspector of the city. Two categories were listed: “indubitable harlots” and those suspected of harlotry. Both lists were compiled and updated (monthly) by the precinct commissioner, who then sent it to the Medical Office and the Police Bureau (by the chief inspector of police). The former list was not subject to any verification, with the commissioner being liable for its credibility (although the consequences of mistakes were not specified). Based on the list, women were immediately directed to medical examination. In the case of women suspected of prostitution, the commissioner of the Medical Office (i.e. managing the issue of prostitution in the city) investigated the case to ascertain the “conduct of these women”. Having established that the suspect frequented venues in which clandestine prostitution was practiced (or was infected with a venereal disease), the commissioner would submit a motion to the chief police inspector and the Principal Healthcare Inspector to register the women for “control inspection” (the list of prostitutes). The chief police inspector could open an additional investigation, yet it could not take longer than five days.<sup>408</sup> After the establishment of the KL-P in Warsaw in 1867 the list of prostitutes was still compiled on the basis of investigation (which was among routine police activity) and information from citizens. A separate register was made for women under suspicion, as to whose “morals the police authorities have not been thoroughly convinced”. Such women (referred to as “secret” ones) were obliged to undergo medical examination until the police had finished gathering evidence in their case. The decision to move any of them to the list of registered prostitutes was made by the chief police inspector. The conditions for regarding a woman as suspicious have already been discussed.<sup>409</sup>

Proving that a given woman was indeed engaged in prostitution took a considerable amount of time, and not infrequently the investigation did not result

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407 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 1–43.

408 *Przepisy*.

409 *Utværzdhdennya*. On adding a suspect to the book of prostitutes in Łęczycza – APŁ, RGK, WL, j.a. 7857, k. 330–331v.

**Chart 1.** The number of women under investigation in Warsaw in 1868–1884

Year	Count at the end of the year	Registered as tolerated prostitutes	%*	Deleted from the list due to lack of evidence	%**	Deleted for other reasons (departure, marriage, death)	Newly listed, under observation
1868	291	18		38		—	27
1869	280	22	7.6	20	6.9	-	-
1882	299	14	4.7	33	11.7	10	78
1883	328	3	0.9	21	7.0	21	74
1884	349	2	0.6	31	9.5	26	82

Source: "Statystyka", *Gazeta Lekarska* no. 32 (1870); (between 1868–1869); *Izvlachenije*, p. 4 (1882–1884).

\* The percentage was calculated on the basis of the number of women included on the list of individuals under supervision at the end of the previous year. It is possible that some of the prostitutes transferred to the category of tolerated ones in a given year had been included on the list that same year.

\*\* The percentage was calculated on the basis of the number of women deleted in the same year.

in registering the suspect as a tolerated prostitute (naturally, it is impossible to ascertain whether or not the police was paid by the woman to fail). The treatment of women included in the list of monitored detainees (secret control) is presented in Chart 1.

Each year final decisions were made only for a small number of the women brought onto the list (between 12.9 and 18.6%). More of them were deleted from the list (between 6.9 and 17.4) than transferred to the category of registered prostitutes (between 0.6 and 6%). Throughout the 1880s, the number of women suspected of rendering illicit sexual services was larger by over 20 than that of individuals deleted from the list. Documents from the St. Lazarus Hospital dated to 1880–1890 also corroborate that the agents of the Committee were able to convince only some of the women to register as prostitutes (by persuasion or presenting new evidence). Out of 1 233 female patients, 599 of whom were brought to the hospital by force, 317 (25.7%) registered as prostitutes after discharge. The majority (199) responded to persuasion, while the remaining ones (118) were forced to do so on the basis of solid evidence for licentious conduct.<sup>410</sup>

Extending medical supervision over all women known to engage in prostitution constituted one of the principal conditions for the effectiveness of the

<sup>410</sup> Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 48.

system of regimentation, justifying its existence. However, authors considering the issue in various European countries soon began to realise that many women who rendered paid sexual services never even made it to the list of suspects. Those proponents of the system who noticed this problem explained it with corruption among police agents and not with objective difficulties or simply the fact that it would not be feasible to take control over illicit prostitution with police measures alone. In the Kingdom of Poland, the possibilities for open discussion of corruption among the police were rather limited; legally published press only started to tackle the topic with a dose of boldness in the early 20th century, citing French examples.<sup>411</sup> The phenomenon was nonetheless observable in the Kingdom, as evidenced by the conclusions made by the Committee of the Gubernia Authorities of Lublin (established in 1899 to review the system of supervision). It stated that the more affluent prostitutes are overlooked in control, which suggests a certain bias on the part of the police.<sup>412</sup>

The signature of the chief police inspector was also required in the process of voluntary registration on the list of prostitutes. The women wishing to be brought onto the list filed a relevant declaration at the KL-P. If they were married or underage, the consent of their legal guardians was also necessary. According to the letter and nature of the law at the time, which denied women the freedom to act or make decisions without their spouse’s authorisation, a married woman could only be registered as a prostitute if her husband’s place of residence was unknown to the police and the woman’s conduct left no doubt as to her profession. With regard to minors under 16 years of age, they were included in the register if their legal guardians could not be contacted, and the girls were openly rendering sexual services.<sup>413</sup> The only reservation was that “innocent women” could not be brought upon the list.

For a long time the public voiced no objections against the prerogatives of the police and the medical and police committees discussed above, allowing them to supervise women from the lowest social strata whose conduct they (rather arbitrarily) deemed as immoral. As one lawyer and author of a book about

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411 Emanuel Sonnenberg, “O reglamentacji prostytutuj”, *Medycyna*, no. 10 (1905).

412 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 45.

413 The KL-P in Warsaw requested the chief of the Częstochowa district to inform the parents of Perla Pienkus and Marianna Napierska that both of them willingly enlisted in a brothel house in Warsaw. In another document, the vogt was informing the district chief that notified the baker Walenty Smoliński from Sosnowiec that his daughter Salomea was brought onto the register of tolerated women in Warsaw – AMCz, MMCz, j. a. 3304, k. 7–9; j.a. 3320, k. 52.

prostitution noted: "Police regulations have a very clear objective: to eradicate scandal and prevent disease. This, wherever a woman is, in her conduct, a cause of general offense, in minors specifically, or wherever she gives herself to so many and such men that she may raise the presupposition of an easy spread of disease, there the administration has the duty to apply to her the regulations binding all prostitutes."<sup>414</sup> This perception only changed at the beginning of the 20th century.

Influenced by liberal trends in legislation, in 1892 the Governing Senate of Russia passed a resolution defining the limitations of the judicial authority in employing article 44 of the law on the sentences pronounced by justices of the peace. It was decided that a woman could be registered as a prostitute and subjected to supervisory regulations only upon her own request or by order of the medical and police committee, justified by verified evidence gathered in accordance with proper procedures. In both cases the registration needed to be validated by the woman's signature. Should she not consent, she was to be treated as a clandestine prostitute and sent to court.<sup>415</sup> The same principles were also included in the regulations on prostitution ratified in 1903. After a discreet (as expressly specified) investigation, a given committee was to summon the suspect, interrogate her and consider the evidence. The decision to register needed to be taken collectively, and the registration itself preceded by a written expression of the woman's consent. If she refused to give it, the committee could relegate the case to a court.<sup>416</sup>

The agreement of a spouse or legal guardian was still required in the case of minors and married women. If the police could not acquire her guardians' consent, any girl below 18 (there was a shift in age) was to be sent to a shelter. This testifies to the good intentions of the legislators, yet the lack of shelter houses made such action impossible.

The threat of invigilation, arrest and inclusion in the register of professional prostitutes was real mainly in the case of the lower classes. Regulations pertaining to prostitution and the prevention of venereal disease gave the police considerable powers which, despite all advice to proceed with caution ("so that no honest women of irreproachable conduct suffered unjust persecution"), were easy to abuse. At the end of the 19th century the press criticised the police for neglecting

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414 Jan Maurycy Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, pp. 106–107.

415 *Vrachebnyy nadzor*, pp. 19–20.

416 In 1909 the Ministry of the Interior checked how the registration process worked in practice. Most of the committees followed the letter of the law, yet cases of registering women against their will did occur; often the decision was made by a single person – *Vrachebnyy nadzor*, p. 24.

their obligations in curbing street prostitution, yet in the early 20th century it was already voicing abolitionist opinions. “The rampancy of police supervision sometimes reached such levels of abuse that decent women were arrested, and one of them was even subjected to medical inspection”, reported the Warsaw paper *Prawda* in 1904, when the chief police inspector decided to limit the patrolmen and watchmen’s authority to apprehend prostitutes. The article also added: “Whoever was but once a witness to the nightly hunt after prostitutes, and saw or heard their screaming, pleading and weeping, felt such disdain and doubt in this unbridled freedom of superintendence over them that will now welcome the new regulation with the hope of never seeing such scandalising scenes again”.<sup>417</sup>

## 2. The scale of illicit prostitution and the characterisation of prostitutes

The factual scale of the phenomenon is difficult to ascertain. Historians analysing it agree that all attempts at estimating the total number of illegal prostitutes are highly speculative in nature.<sup>418</sup>

Some information on the scale of clandestine prostitution may be inferred from the reports of Gubernia authorities sent to the KRSW since the 1840s (and already cited in Chapter 1). They list the numbers of women arrested for illicit harlotry.

In 1841 the police listed over four thousand women (the statistic probably refers to the number of arrests made in a given year) detained for unlicensed prostitution; ca. 70% of them were apprehended in Warsaw. Aside from offering the most favourable conditions for the development of prostitution and experiencing a massive influx of migrants (already discussed in the present publication), the capital of the Kingdom was the first to introduce regulations on the monitoring of women engaging in clandestine prostitution and had the most sophisticated structures of supervision. This made prostitution easier to detect, even though the police in smaller cities and towns seem to have had more potential for being

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417 “Ściągnięte cugle”, *Prawda* no. 33 (1904).

418 See: Edward J. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice. The Jewish Fight against White Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 64; Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 193; Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Society. The Regulation of sexuality since 1800* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 14.

**Chart 2.** The number of women arrested for engaging in illegal prostitution in the Kingdom of Poland in 1841

Gubernia	Denomination		Total
	Christian	Jewish	
Kalisz	717	92	809
Augustów	158	30	188
Mazovia (excluding Warsaw)	116	34	150
Lublin	24	44	68
Podlasie	40	-	40
Płock	20	10	30
Kielce	23	4	27
Sandomierz	5	1	6
Warsaw	2903	64	2967
Total (excluding Warsaw)	1103	215	1318
Total (including Warsaw)	4006	279	4285

Source: AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 6994, k. 135, 189,239, 332, 390, 441, 486, 672, 896.

effective, as it was harder for illegal prostitutes to hide. Prostitutes constituted 20% of all individuals arrested in 1841 in Warsaw.<sup>419</sup>

Assuming the statistics presented in the chart as a measure of the distribution and development of prostitution in the Kingdom, the region that emerges as the second largest centre of illicit sexual services is the Kalisz Gubernia. There, the police arrested 809 women, i.e. over 60% of the 1318 apprehended outside of Warsaw. Almost all (97%) clandestine prostitution practices in the Gubernia were reported in the Kalisz district (presumably in Kalisz alone; 559) and in the Konin district (788 out of 809).<sup>420</sup> As in the capital, the data must have been influenced by the fact that police supervision was effective and constant since the 1820s, as evidenced by the source material cited above. These factors were independent of the objectively favourable conditions for the development of

419 The number of the arrested was 14 383, while the number of permanent residents amounted to 140 471 – AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 6994, k. 623–625; In 1844, 1356 women were arrested for clandestine prostitution; they made up 9% of all detainees, second only to vagrants (43 %) – *Gazeta Policyjna* no. 43 (1845).

420 AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 6994, k. 235–239.



sexual services, discussed in connection with the distribution of registered prostitutes.

The known scale of clandestine prostitution in the Augustów Gubernia as compared to the number of registered prostitutes in the region marks it as the next larger centre for women of loose morals (over 14% of those arrested outside of Warsaw). Out of 188 cases of arrest, over 87% took place in the Łomża district (62 women), the Sejny district (51) and the Mariampol district (51), i.e. along the road to St. Petersburg. More than 40 women suspected of harlotry were arrested in the Stanisławów district (71, the Mazovia Gubernia), the Krasnystaw district (41, the Lublin Gubernia) and in Siedlce (40).<sup>421</sup> The police in other districts arrested only up to ten or twenty persons, or none at all.

Ten and twenty years later the situation outside of Warsaw remained largely unchanged. In 1851 the number of suspects arrested amounted to 1170 (no data exists for the Lublin and Płock Gubernia), while in 1861 – to 1201 (no data for the Płock Gubernia).<sup>422</sup> The Kalisz district still held the record for the largest number of arrests (in 1845–1866 it was part of the Warsaw Gubernia): 799 in 1851 and 364 ten years later.<sup>423</sup> The incomplete nature of the statistics and the administrative changes introduced at the time make it difficult to compare this data to the earlier period.

Estimating the scale of clandestine prostitution in the entire Kingdom in the latter part of the 19th century proves impossible. Committee reports dating from the 1890s onwards have survived, yet rarely cover periods longer than half a year for any given administrative region. Such data may only provide some indication of the extent of the phenomenon, but it would be difficult to ascertain whether they could be considered reliable for any longer periods or larger areas. In the Lublin Gubernia, for instance, the police in district seats arrested several or at most around a dozen women per month. In the final quarter of 1890, 9 women suspected of clandestine prostitution were examined in the Chełm district. Its registers at the time listed 12 to 15 prostitutes. In the first quarter of 1891 the number of arrests rose to 13 (whole the number of tolerated women was 12 to 14). In the Hrubieszów district, 12 women suspected of prostitution were examined in May 1897, and 9 in June that same year.<sup>424</sup> A much greater number of suspects was apprehended in Lublin.

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421 AGAD, KRSW j.a. 6994, k. 328, 437, 486, 896.

422 AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 7004, k. 16, 26, 67, 70, 76, 111, 210, 230, 238; j.a. 7014, k. 6, 25, 61, 115, 185, 195, 279, 333.

423 AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 7004, k. 16; j.a. 7014, k. 25.

424 APL, RGL, L 1891: 2 part I, k. 27; L 1897:32, k. 9, 13.

Between January 1886 and June 1891 the police arrested between several and several dozen women a month (the highest number – 43 – was noted in May 1886).<sup>425</sup> However, the women suspected of prostitution were always fewer in number than tolerated prostitutes. The Committee's reports sometimes reported a decrease in the scale of back alley harlotry, yet the military expressed the opposite opinion. The situation was similar in other gubernias, such as the Kielce region, where more than ten women were apprehended on the suspicion of prostitution in each quarter of the year 1884 (several in the city of Kielce itself), or the Kalisz Gubernia, where several women were arrested in each of the district seats in 1897 (2 in Łęczycza which had 21 registered prostitutes, 8 in Sieradz which had 34, and 4 in Turek which had 8; in Konin, in turn, where the number of tolerated women amounted to 19, the police arrested as many as 40 suspects).<sup>426</sup>

Do the relatively small numbers reported in the less populous towns testify to the modest scale of illegal prostitution, or to the effectiveness of preventive measures? Or were the figures deliberately lowered to meet the expectations of superiors? It should only be noted that not all of the arrested women did indeed engage in prostitution, and conversely, not all harlots (even those known to the police) were detained.

A different picture of the scale of clandestine prostitution in Warsaw emerges from the data published by the KL-P in the city. The section entitled "the detection of clandestine harlotry" presented the numbers of women apprehended "with police measures" (unfortunately the descriptions used in different years are not always unambiguous, which raises the question whether the statistic presents one and the same category of women) and the numbers of women suspected of prostitution subjected to "secret" police control. Chart 3 presents data regarding clandestine prostitution over a time span of twelve years.

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425 The number of women apprehended as suspects and the number of registered prostitutes in Lublin in 1886–1888: 1) 1886: 23–86 (January), 43–84 (May), 37–86 (June), 39–88 (July) – APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 54, 28, 82, 122; 2) 1887: 19–102 (January), 64–92 (February–May), 54–62 (June–August), 27–62 (September), 29–75 (December–January 1888) – APL, RGL, L 1887:1, k. 17, 70, 121, 152, 203; 3) 1888: 43–78 (February–May), 35–82 (June–August) – RGL, L 1888:7, k. 95, 148.

426 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15165, k. 12–12v, 45–45v, 50, 101, 103, 157, 167; APŁ, RGK, j.a. 7857, k. 190, 337v, 365–374 v, 400–417v.

**Chart 3.** The number of women under observation and the number of women apprehended by police patrols in Warsaw and its suburbs between 1867–1891

Year	Number of women under observation	Number of detained women
1867	320	3929
1868	320	8258
1869	291	7510
1882	278	4283
1883	299	3985
1884	328	4200
1885	349	4697
1886	334	5233
1887	131	3926
1888	30	4151
1889	45	5662
1891	382	1836

Sources: “Statystyka”, *Gazeta Lekarska* 1870, no. 32 (for 1867–1869); *Izvyechenie*, p. 4 (for 1882–1885); Franciszek Giedroyc, *Prostytutki*, pp. 43–45 (for 1885–1889); *Statisticheskoe obozrenie*, p. 11–13 (for 1891).

The number of women arrested in a given year can hardly be regarded as indicative of the scale of clandestine prostitution, mainly because one and the same woman could be arrested several, if not several dozen times a year. Secondly, the list includes different categories of people detained to be inspected or examined after arrest made for unrelated reasons. It may, however, serve as evidence of the continuation of police and medical supervision. The large number of detainees reported in 1868 and 1869 probably resulted from the zeal of the KL-P established in 1867. On average, more than ten individuals were apprehended every day (except in 1891, where the number was 4, and 1868, when it amounted to 25), and between over 300 to 500 on a monthly basis (again excluding the two extremes in the statistic). The low count noted in 1891 may stem from the fact that the statistic did not mention all the categories of detainees included in earlier reports.

Officials of the Committee also differed in their estimates of the scale of clandestine prostitution. Assuming that the percentage of infected women among illicit prostitutes would be the same as among registered ones, they calculated (on a proportional basis) the number of women engaging in illegal prostitution at 1764 in the year 1867 (1640 in 1868 and 3047 in 1869), 721 in 1882, 526 in 1883,

and 697 in 1884.<sup>427</sup> Giedroyć, in turn, tried to assess it by comparing the number of births in an out of wedlock. Noting that not all mothers of illegitimate children were likely to be clandestine prostitutes, he nonetheless regarded the result he arrived at (12 592, lowered to 10 thousand for the reason mentioned above) to be the closest to the factual number of illegally operating women of ill repute. Giedroyć also added that these were not professional prostitutes, but women “leading sexual, extramarital lives” most of whom had a permanent occupation and were unlikely to turn to legal prostitution.<sup>428</sup> Giedroyć’s figure was twice as large as the average number of women inspected yearly by the police and four times larger than the number of tolerated prostitutes, but nevertheless appears small in comparison with the estimates reported in the press (20–50 thousand in the early 20th century; between 80 and 150 thousand in the entire Kingdom).<sup>429</sup>

Who were the women suspected of licentiousness? The records of the Committee of the Kalisz Voivodeship contain information on 115 detainees mentioned by name, arrested in 1827 and 1832.<sup>430</sup> Interrogation reports from 1827 contain answers to questions about the work record book and employment history, current workplace, origin (most probably meaning the place of registered residence), address in Kalisz (lodging “loose” women was penalised) and the reason for arrest. In 1832 interrogators also inquired about the age and creed of the detainees, yet not about their place of origin. The names and surnames of the arrested women suggest that all of them were Polish.

The inspection of thirteen women arrested in 1827 reinforced the authorities’ view that the suspects engaged in no honest occupation and had no permanent employment. Only one of them presented a work record book; the others had either lost theirs or had never been in possession of one. Only two women were categorised as harlots, one was singled out as a vagrant, while the others combined vagrancy and idleness with licentiousness, “immoral living” and

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427 “Statystyka”, *Gazeta Lekarska* 1870, no. 32, p. 542; *Izvlecheniye*, p. 12; the KL-P’s estimates for 1891 (17 341) are based on erroneous assumptions – *Statisticheskoye obozreniye*, p. 23; physician Pawlikowski assessed the scale of illegal prostitution in the period of 1842–1864 (on the basis of the number of hospitalised patients) to involve an average of 1400 women a year – *Wykład*, pp. 406–407.

428 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, pp. 45, 51.

429 Stanisław Koszutski, “Na mównicy. Walka z prostytutką”, *Głos*, no. 25 (1900); St. Annański (S. Auerbach), “Zagadnienie prostytucji w świetle higieny społecznej”, *Wiedza*, vol 1, no. 3 (1910).

430 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (13th June 1827; 7th August 1832).

“questionable morals.” It would be difficult to even suggest any differences in the factual circumstances of these women on the basis of such descriptions.

Although the majority (ten out of thirteen) of the detainees came from outside Kalisz, they had not arrived from afar: seven from the Kalisz region (Koło, villages in the vicinity – Pleszów in the Szczytniki commune, Zagurowo, Rzgów, Pyzdry, Błaszów), one from the village of Krempe in the Grand Duchy of Poznań, one from Wieluń and one from Stawiszyn. The (regrettably scarce) data from other parts of the Kingdom also points to the nearest vicinity of larger cities as the place of origin of illegal prostitutes. The only likely exceptions were Warsaw and other centres of economy of supra-regional importance, known for offering job opportunities and drawing migrants from more remote places. This issue shall be discussed in Chapter 3 in connection with analysing the origins of registered prostitutes.

Records from 1848 contain information on the provenance of 23 women arrested for illicit prostitution in Suwałki. Two of them came from Prussia, four from Suwałki, one from the towns of Filipów, Augustów, Kalwaria, Sejny, Wierzbołów and Mariampol respectively, seven from villages in the region; the origins of the remaining four remained unspecified.<sup>431</sup> In Pińczów (the Kielce Gubernia), only five out of the 67 women mentioned by name and surname in interrogation records from 1862, 1864 and 1865 had come from other districts. Thirty-four were permanent residents of Pińczów, 18 came from the countryside and 10 from small towns in the district.<sup>432</sup> Of course, there is no certainty that all the arrested women engaged in prostitution. The police fulfilled their duty to escort women suspected thereof to be examined. In the case of unemployed women, servants and hired hands (most of the detainees fell into one of the three categories) any suspicion of licentiousness sufficed as a reason for arrest.

Police “interviews” shed some light on the issue of the social and professional background of the detainees (Charts 4 and 6).

All of these women were “brought into arrest for licentious living”, yet only eight were labelled as harlots (five of them resided with their mothers; one 30-year-old woman had children and “supported herself openly from licentious living;” three had no registered address). The striking fact is that around one third of the women (31 out of 97 mentioned in the source material) was out of

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431 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 24–25. A raid on one of the suspicious apartments conducted in Suwałki in 1908 resulted in the arrest of five women, four of whom came from villages in the Augustów and Suwałki districts (LVIA, f. 1080, ap. 1, b. 3, l. 8–9).

432 APK, Chief of the Stopnice District, j.a. 70.

**Chart 4.** The occupations of women arrested in 1827 and in July, August and September 1832 in Kalisz and its vicinity

Occupation	Number of women	Percentage
None	30	29.1
Kitchen staff	26	25.2
Tavern staff	13	12.6
Harlot	8	7.8
Hired hand	8	7.8
Maid	6	5.8
Miscellaneous help	3	2.9
Seamstress	2	1.9
Staying with mother	1	1
No data	6	5.8
Total	103	99.9

Source: AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e.

work, while the remaining detainees had some post or employment. Most of them worked as servants which was – incidentally – one of the most typical and common occupations for girls from the countryside. Whether or not they rendered paid sexual services on the side, it is hard to tell.

Almost a half of those interrogated in 1832 were young women less than 20 years of age (Chart 5).

In the latter half of the century, the majority of women arrested in Warsaw also had some means of employment (Chart 6).<sup>433</sup>

92.2% of the women suspected of illegal prostitution were working, 5.3% were (at least formally) supported by their husbands, while the remaining 2% had no occupation whatsoever. As before, the majority of those accused of clandestine prostitution were servants, who constituted  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all detainees and 81.1% of the working ones. They were followed by workers hired as seamstresses, hired hands, washerwomen and waitresses. It would be hard to judge whether these charges

433 Giedroyć compiled a list of the reported occupations of the women forced to undergo medical treatment at the St. Lazarus Hospital in 1888–1890. Out of the 599 women, 332 were servants (washerwomen, shop assistants, alehouse employees), 166 were hired hands, 34 were seamstresses and 55 had no work (21 – married women, 34 – in the custody of their families) – Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 47 (chart XXXIII).

**Chart 5.** The age of women arrested in Kalisz in August, September and October 1832

Age group	Number of women	Percentage
Under 15	4	3.6 %
16–20	45	40.9 %
21–25	33	30.0 %
26–30	27	24.5 %
Over 30	1	0.9 %

Source: AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e.

**Chart 6.** The occupations of women arrested for vagrancy and suspected of prostitution in Warsaw and its suburbs in 1891

Occupation	Number of women	%
Servant	1109	75.3
Seamstress	64	4.3
Hired hand	54	3.7
Factory worker	50	3.4
Washerwoman	34	2.3
Waiter	21	1.4
Ironer	7	0.5
Wet nurse	6	0.4
Vendor	5	0.3
Florist	4	0.3
Hosier	2	0.1
Glover	1	0.06
Nanny	1	0.06
Governess	1	0.06
Buffet staff	1	0.06
Hotel staff	1	0.06
Bookkeeper	1	0.06
Supported by parents or Family	42	2.8
Married	37	2.5
Prostitute from another city	3	0.2
Former prostitute	1	0.06
Newcomer	1	0.06
Escapee from the shelter for fallen women	1	0.06
None	25	1.7

Source: *Statisticheskoe obozrenie*, p. 11.

were justified. Only 82 women (out of 1473) were arrested in illicit brothel houses and venues owned by panderers, and only 11 of them were immediately subjected to control prescribed for prostitutes.<sup>434</sup>

The large percentage of working women testifies to the scale of police supervision over the conduct of women from the lowest strata of Warsaw's urban society. On the other hand, the data indirectly indicates that women from the mentioned circles could be seen in public in the evening, spent their free time in the company of men in the streets, in coffee houses, taverns and so on, despite the risk of being apprehended by the KL-P or the police.

### 3. The infrastructure of harlotry – panderers and pimps

As is widely known, the client and the prostitute are not the only actors on the scene of prostitution. Rather prominent roles were also played by the organisers of the sex trade and the various kinds of “guardians” to prostitutes – panderers (sometimes referred to as *rufianie* – ruffians, or *fryerzy* – after the German *Freien* – lover,) intermediaries, “entrepreneurs” owning illegal brothels, pimps and proprietors renting out venues. The list of individuals profiting from prostitution, especially in its illegal aspect, may also include the large group of supervisors instituted by the State to safeguard the moral purity and safety of the citizens, i.e. the police. Information on these circles is even more scarce than in the case of prostitutes, partially due to the fact that (as may be inferred from the limited source material) the police was far less active in pursuing them, even though the supervisory regulations did prescribe that people organising illicit sexual services were to be sought out and brought to justice. This provides one more evidence to the claim that the principal aim of the supervision was healthcare.

As mentioned above, illicit sexual services were thought to be on offer in all types of venues serving food and drink. They are mentioned by memoir writers and official correspondence. The function of “providing shelter” and “support” to harlots was usually taken up by tavern owners. In Kielce, for instance (1872), one Lejbus Zilberber, who had a tavern near the barracks, “kept lewd women in

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434 *Statisticheskoye obozreniye*, p. 11. Out of the total of 1473 detainees, 200 were immediately added to the list.



separate rooms and charged soldiers 10–15 kopecks.<sup>435</sup> The police let him off with a warning, even though the military governor demanded the relocation of his business. In other known cases the police imposed pecuniary fines.<sup>436</sup> In 1838 the Magistrate of Kalisz issued “An announcement prohibiting licentious women from lingering in Tavern Houses”.<sup>437</sup> In 1842, 190 (out of 640) owners in Warsaw were penalised for “permitting idle seduction in their taverns.”<sup>438</sup>

Clandestine brothel houses were sometimes discovered in fashions’ repositories<sup>439</sup> and labour exchange offices, yet in most cases such venues were hidden in private appartaments. In Kalisz, individuals who lodged prostitutes and received their clients included: a widow, a housekeeper from the countryside, a tailor, a painter and a retired soldier.<sup>440</sup> In the 1820s and 1830s the Municipal Office in Kalisz received several orders to track “housekeepers male

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435 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15027, k. 172–177. On similar serviced rendered for soldiers in taverns near the regiment quarters in Warsaw in the 1820s see: Patelski, *Wspomnienia*, pp. 40, 51.

436 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (13th June 1827). Out of the eleven women apprehended in Kalisz in 1827 on suspicion of licentious living, four were lodged by tavern owners, who were punished with substantial fines. Similar steps were taken in 1834, when the precinct supervisor arrested five women on the premises of Wojciech Baranowski, an owner of a tavern selling domestically produced liquor. His appeals to the Voivodship Committee proved ineffective, as it was not the first time harlots had been discovered in his venue. The Committee warned Baranowski that, should such a situation happen again, his license to sell food and drink would be revoked (AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e, 30th May 1832); After the introduction of the KKGP, the fine amounted to 10–20 roubles.

437 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (18th/30th April 1838).

438 AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 6994, k. 628.

439 On the clothing repository of one Ms. Szejner operating in Warsaw in the 1820s as an entertainment venue for young men – Łukaszewicz, *Wspomnienia*, p. 18; on the warehouse of hats at 46 Krucza Street reported in 1905 by street prostitutes, where the sexual services were rendered by girls 10 to 12 years of age – Janusz Korczak, “Przeciw rozpuście”, *Głos*, no. 22 (1905).

440 According to the findings of the police department, the tailor Ludwik Majewski demanded half of the rate Marianna Brajerówna charged her clients – AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (7th/19th February 1836, 4th October 1836); in Płock the “entrepreneur” Sruł lodged women at his own house, but delivered them to the clients’ hotel rooms or private appartments. The source of this information claimed that “these were deficient goods, as Sruł moved among stupid serving girls and country bumpkins that knew only how to blink their eyes in stupefaction” – A.N. Druzhinin, *Prostitutsiya*, p. 5.

and female who would lodge harlots, even privately” and punish them with a fine<sup>441</sup> as well as “being called out in the four corners of the city”, in order to “give information to all residents that lodging such women leads to a hefty fine and court trial”.<sup>442</sup>

Sometimes the diligence of the police did not bring the desired effect. In 1827, for instance, the officers in Kalisz investigated the case of one Mr. Bogusławski, who “kept women without address registration.” The president of the city, however, complained that “with this man, the Municipal Office needs to honestly confess, there is no more measure which could be used to bring him to order. He is the owner of a shack worth perhaps 30 złoty if not less, he himself close to four score in years, having no profession, incapacitated by age, he walks around the city a-begging, deaf to each and every word of caution. Almost perpetually does he keep lewd women in his shack, and the house has been searched a hundred times already, and the women cast off from the city, howbeit others still arrive by the moment. The Office sees no way to collect the fine of fifteen złoty from this pauper, since he not only owes the city 30 złoty for his mortgage still, and since 1830 at that, but has also paid almost no taxes for nigh two years, and his shack is so miserable that no person wants to live therein. For these reasons we request the Voivodeship Committee to kindly remit the fine imposed or exchange it to arrest, although Bogusławski would feel content with arrest, since he would have some upkeep at least”.<sup>443</sup>

The police were probably prompted to intervene by the complaints of local residents, tired with the bothersome and dangerous proximity of such venues. This was the case with the couple named Dolicki, who in the early 20th century ran a small illegal brothel house in Janów near the garrison cemetery, and Barbara Korenzajer, who lodged several girls in Chełm.<sup>444</sup> A similar episode occurred in Kalisz in 1838, in connection with the house of the confectioner Bętkowski, where citizen councils were organised. The Radziszewski family whom he took as tenants put up two prostitutes. The neighbours complained that these women

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441 Records from 1832 already mention that fines paid by proprietors for lodging unemployed women were to be pooled into a fund for the treatment of the venereally ill. The KWK ordered regional committees to send quarterly reports on how many such proprietors were apprehended and what funds were amassed – AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (21st February 1832).

442 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (22nd June 1827; 18th/30th April 1838).

443 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (22nd June 1827).

444 APL, RGL, L 1907:32, k. 92–93 (Janów); 1900:52, k. 17–23 (Chełm); 1889:20, k. 27 (Kraśnik).

“harass passers-by from out the windows, and scandalise the youth living in the vicinity” and, naturally, that “such women hiding alone with no medical inspection put the youth at risk of harmful disease and lewd living”.<sup>445</sup>

The KL-P in Warsaw tolerated the existence of a substantial number of “secret dens of lechery” and panderers, exercising control over them. In 1882–1890 their number oscillated between 42 (in 1887) and 174 (in 1883). Such venues were a substantial contribution to the business, as they constituted between 71 and 93% of legal and illicit locales of the sort.<sup>446</sup>

Brothels, illegal and tolerated alike, required a steady stream of new workforce. The task of recruitment fell either to the proprietors themselves, to their family members (e.g. husbands), or to individuals specialising solely in procurement.<sup>447</sup> Administrative records contain very few traces of this phenomenon. More information could perhaps be inferred from court records, even though contemporaneous commentators opined that charges of facilitating prostitution and procurement were rarely seen in court.<sup>448</sup> In 1893 the authorities of Lublin were dealing with the case of Stanisław Nurowski, formerly a cashier at a shop in Warsaw, who organised a brothel in Lublin, ran by his friend Magdalena Truszczyńska. An anonymous citizen claimed that Nurowski drafted young women to work at brothel houses and extorted money from independent prostitutes plying their trade in Lublin.<sup>449</sup> He and his friends would apparently lure girls coming to the city in search of work to his flat, deflower and induce them to register as prostitutes and work at brothels, only to deliver them to various cities and sell to public houses there. Panderers looked for potential employees in rural areas and among country girls seeking employment in the city; bodies known to engage in pandering included servant agencies, which is why the law forbade combining this occupation with running inns or similar venues.

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445 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (18th/30th April 1838). Later correspondence indicates that the entire family was involved in such activity. The Office gave Bętkowski three days to evict the Radziszewski family, who were, in turn, “instructed to send their daughters to household service or employ them at a decent permanent post”.

446 Giedroyc, *Prostytutki*, p. 54, chart XXXVIII.

447 The organisation of such enterprises was discussed in detail by Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, pp. 118–124; Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, pp. 119–125.

448 Jan Maurycy Kamiński (*O prostytucji*, pp. 162–163) writes that 75 individuals were prosecuted in 1863.

449 APL, KGL, j.a. 1893: 291, k. 1–11.

Since the late 19th century, and especially in the first decades of the 20th century, such incidents began to be reported in newspapers.<sup>450</sup> The articles, however, focused on human trafficking on an international scale. In Western Europe, the issue came to light in the 1880s, and soon became one of the most widely covered topics in the press.<sup>451</sup> The social impact of such press reports and their role in the early 20th-century discourse on prostitution shall be analysed in Chapter 4. Transporting women abroad was hardly a novel idea in the 19th century (foreigners have always been used to attract customers to brothel houses),<sup>452</sup> yet only in the latter half of that century did the phenomenon grow massive in scale and acquire – to use a contemporary term – sufficient media publicity. Human trafficking (in Polish referred to as: trade in living goods) was a consequence of European expansion, both economic and demographic.<sup>453</sup> There can be no doubt that massive overseas migration of Europeans did give rise to certain problems related to sexual activity. It also contributed to the growing internationalisation of the practice of prostitution and expanded its supply routes. The rapid development of urban centres in the Americas (e.g. Buenos Aires) brought a serious imbalance in the gender makeup. As noted by historian Ronald Hyam, these needs were, to a considerable extent, satisfied by entering into relations with the indigenous population, much more open and pragmatic in matters of sex.<sup>454</sup> However, marriage was not the desired form thereof, and thus prostitution

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450 For instance, the abduction of Estera E., who had come to Warsaw to learn sewing and was abducted by a panderer known as Mordka Tatar and subsequently sold to a brothel “of the worst sort” at 64 Niska Street run by Ruchla Niser, was described in “Porwanie dziewczyny”, *Dzień*, no. 290 (1913).

451 Everything started in 1881 when it was revealed that English girls were being sold to brothels in Belgium. Soon afterwards (1885) *The Pall Mall Gazette* published a series of William Stead’s articles “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon”, based on information he acquired in a feat of investigative journalism (Stead had “bought” and “sold” a young girl). His articles were reprinted in newspapers across Europe. See Walkowitz, “Dangerous Sexualities”, p. 379; Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 407.

452 For information on the Warsaw “market” in the 18th and 19th century see: Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, p. 118; Milewski, *Ciemne sprawy*, p. 69.

453 Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 412 nn.

454 “The expansion of Europe was thus not only a matter of ‘Christianity and commerce’ but also a matter of copulation and concubinage”, concludes Ronald Hyam, a British historian analysing the topic of Britons in the colonies. The colonies were an attractive venue for quenching one’s sexual needs, as well as all types of hetero- and homosexual practices – Ronald Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century, 1815–1914. A Study of Empire and Expansion* (London: Barnes & Noble, 1993), pp. 292, 294.

played an increasingly prominent role. Human trafficking was facilitated by the ever-expanding network of transport and the grinding poverty of millions of families, forcing women to seek work overseas. Panderers preyed on their hopes of finding employment in the new environment.<sup>455</sup>

In Poland, the phenomenon of the procurement of women for brothel houses abroad was described as *handel żywym towarem* (dealing with live goods), which did not instantly reveal a connection with the origins and nature of the discussion on the subject, unlike the terms used in English, French and German (*white slavery*, *white slave trade*, French: *traite de blanches*, German: *Mädchenhandel*). Incidentally, the Polish term was initially used to describe the situation of prostitutes within the system of regimentation; only in the 1870s did it come to designate the phenomenon of forcible recruitment to brothels (especially abroad). After the abolition of black slavery in Europe and America, “white slavery” seemed to be a natural metaphor for prostitution.<sup>456</sup>

The Polish public’s first contact with the issue were incidental reports on the capture and trials of human traffickers in Western Europe, particularly likely to be published if the cases involved citizens of the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>457</sup> According to the press, both Western and domestic, Hungary and the Austrian Galicia were the largest hunting grounds for human traffickers. In the late 1880s the Warsaw newspaper *Głos* judged the trade of women in the Kingdom to be “isolated incidents”, noting, however, that in Galicia (including the borderlands of the Kingdom of Poland) the phenomenon had grown in scale “in recent years.”<sup>458</sup> Such practices were already thought to be very well organised at the time and, as insinuated by *Głos*, were developing so rapidly owing to the “cooperation” of the Austrian police. The newspaper also mentioned a circular written to starosts to incite them to track down traffickers. In the late 1890s, the Kingdom of Poland and the formerly Polish-Lithuanian territories within the borders of the Russian Empire also started to be mentioned as a source of women sent to brothels in South America.<sup>459</sup> At the beginning of the 20th century the press

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455 Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp. 33–34; Another factor of importance in the early 20th century was the decline of brothels in Europe resulting e.g. from the diminishing tolerance for such establishments among the public. See: Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 413.

456 See Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp. 35–37; Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 405–436.

457 For instance in the column called “Głosy”, *Głos*, no. 47 (1888), no. 39 (1896).

458 “Głosy”, *Głos*, no. 47 (1888); the routes of human trafficking in Europe were described in 1870s by Jan Maurycy Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, pp. 118–124.

459 “Głosy”, *Głos*, no. 39 (1896). A letter to *Kurier Warszawski* written by a member of the Société de Protection et de Secours aux Femmes Amenées in Buenos Aires.

already mentioned “tens of thousands” victims each year.<sup>460</sup> Ten thousand young women were reported to have passed through the Austrian-Russian border in Sosnowiec in the course of one year, transported by rail from the Kingdom to Russia; the press stated that 12–15 thousand Jewish girls were shipped annually to bawdy houses in Western Europe and South America.<sup>461</sup>

The area of recruitment and the trafficking destinations (which included Russia)<sup>462</sup> made Warsaw a particularly significant link in the human trade; the nation reputed to be the main organisers and agents of this type of crime in Europe were Jews,<sup>463</sup> known in Argentina and Brazil as *caftans* (due to their characteristic attire) or as *Russo* (only in Argentina).<sup>464</sup> The capital of the Kingdom was among the places where human traffickers operating in Eastern Europe would meet on a yearly basis.<sup>465</sup> Their wholesale businesses were truly global in scale, while retail was limited to delivering women to brothels or directly to customers in the Kingdom. As the author of a 1913 article on “Warsaw goods” put it, “from here the wares labelled as ‘Polish’ are transported to far corners of the world, bringing the awareness of the existence of the land that constitutes

460 St. Annański, “Zagadnienie prostytucji”.

461 Adolf Rząsniński, “W sprawie walki z handlem żywym towarem”, *Społeczeństwo*, no. 44 (1909); “Kronika”, *Nowe Słowo*, no. 14 (1902), p. 341.

462 The main destination was South America, especially urban centres in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. For more on the routes, locations and methods of traffic see: Stanisław Posner, *Nad przepaścią. Handel żywym towarem* (Warsaw: 1911), pp. 8–15.

463 According to Bristow, the greatest contributions to the organisation of international human trade were made by the Japanese (in the Far East) and Jews (between Europe and the Americas) – Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp. 30, 113; Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance. Purity Movements in Britain Since 1700* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977), pp. 178–179; Corbin, *Les filles*, pp. 428–429; on not only Jews, but “all sorts of sleaze” – J. P[o]ławski?, “Warszawski towar”, *Humanista Polski*, no. 12 (1913).

464 This meant Russians; due to their chosen profession, the term acquired pejorative connotations – see: Donna J. Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires. Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), pp. 10, 19; Luis Carlos Soares, *Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro*, (London: University of London, Institute of Latin American Studies, 1988), p. 18.

465 St. Annański, “Krytyka i sprawozdania. Dr. Aug. Wróblewski, O prostytucji i handlu kobietami, Warszawa 1900”, *Społeczeństwo*, no. 35 (1909). Annański claims that after 1905 Warsaw lost its position of one of the major markets of international trade as a result of effective police control in railway stations. The less overt and ostentatious behaviour of flesh traders in the latter half of the 19th century was attributed to the activity of the Association for the Protection of Women. Nevertheless, Warsaw was still at the forefront of the trade in women, along with Vilnius and Sosnowiec.

their main source of supply. Polishness is represented there not only by our rustic Kasias and Marysias, the label is also stuck to whole regiments of Suras and Rachels; and crooked noses, curly hair and guttural speech have already become inherently associated with the image of the so-called ‘Pole’ held abroad, along with whoremongering, forgery and all sorts of filth<sup>466</sup>. Research on the history of prostitution in South America has disproved many myths regarding the numbers of e.g. Polish women, allegedly associated with prostitution. Historical records do not always paint a uniform picture of the percentage of European women in the market. According to one set of data, in the latter half of the 19th century only 1/5 prostitutes in Brazil were of local provenance, yet others suggest that it were the foreigners who constituted the minority.<sup>467</sup> A separate issue is whether these women were victims, as the press of the day presented them, or, as modern researchers suspect (although hard evidence is difficult to find), that they had known where they were headed and had dabbled in prostitution even in Europe. According to Donna J. Guy, in the case of European prostitutes in Buenos Aires who came from underprivileged families and migrated in the hope of bettering their station in life, “prostitution was more typically a self-conscious response to poverty than the result of trickery by an evil procurer”.<sup>468</sup> Consequently, as Guy puts it, “contemporary European impressions of Buenos Aires were based partly on true incidents whose frequency was highly exaggerated”.<sup>469</sup>

The belief in the mass scale of the trade in European women<sup>470</sup> and the ethical, social and national aspects of this activity, voiced increasingly often, provoked

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466 J.P.[opławski?], “Warszawski towar”; In August 1913 *Prawda* reported that during such meetings a certain number of underage girls are mysteriously abducted in Warsaw – Orion, “Echa prawdy. Z tajemnic Warszawy”, *Prawda*, no. 35 (1913).

467 Luis Carlos Soares, *Prostitution*, pp. 17–18.

468 Donna J. Guy, *Sex*, p. 7; Alain Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 418.

469 The majority of European women found in South American brothels in 1870–1914 hailed from Eastern Europe, France and Italy. Out of the 6413 prostitutes registered in Buenos Aires in 1889–1901, 25% were Argentinean, 19% came from Russia (combined with those arriving from Germany and Austro-Hungary, they made up 36%), 13% were Italian, 9% were French, and 1% hailed from Africa – Donna J. Guy, *Sex*, pp. 6–7, 16.

470 According to abolitionist propaganda, 60 thousand “white slaves” were lost every year. Estimating the actual scale of human trafficking at the time is a daunting task, partially due to the very nature of this criminal practice. Modern historians are reluctant to accept the approximations made in the late 19th and early 20th century. Alain Corbin, for instance, opines that the trade in women was, in fact, a rather insignificant phenomenon. In France, charges of participating in human trafficking were brought against 754 panderers; in Paris only 8 of the individuals accused were found guilty

a strong reaction across the world. The first congress dedicated to the prevention of the white slave trade was organised in London in 1899. Pressured by the public opinion, governments of various countries also moved to create effective instruments to protect women from panderers. Representatives of 15 countries (including Russia) convening in Paris in 1902 were the first to express the will to develop sufficient legislative measures against the trade in prostitutes. The work on defining the object of the offence, the age of protection, the sexual status of women (so that not only the procuration of virgins would be punished), the severity of fines, etc. took several years and resulted in the convention ratified on 17th May 1909 by Russia and sixteen other countries. It penalised the procuration of underage girls and maidens even under their consent, and pandering adult ones using trickery, rape or abuse of authority. The document obliged the signatories to delimit the extent of the penalty of incarceration.<sup>471</sup>

The regulations of the KKGp, as well as Article 44 of the law on the prerogatives of the justices of the peace, applicable in the Kingdom of Poland at the time, did not constitute a sufficient legal base for preventing procuration. The fact had been noted by Polish lawyers as early as in the 1870s.<sup>472</sup> The prescribed penalties for the offence were too light, especially in the case of professional procurers (a fine of 3–5 roubles) as opposed to those obliged to act as guardians to the victim (such as her parents or husband). Not enough emphasis was put on the object of the crime or the harm done to individuals. The opinion voiced by Russian lawyers and international commitments made by Russia led to changes. An amendment “on the measures towards curbing the trade of women for the purpose of harlotry” was adopted on 25th December 1909/7th January 1910. It made alterations in Article 44 (the law on the prerogatives of justices of the peace), as well as in Articles 993, 998, 1000 (the penal code applied in the Kingdom since 1876), and introduced the regulations of the new penal code (1903) in Articles 500, and 524–529. Thenceforth, professional procuration was punishable with incarceration, and the age of protection for the victims was set to 21.

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of the crime. In the course of four years, only 41 women – real or alleged victims of trafficking – were repatriated at the State’s expense. See: Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 419. However court records cannot be regarded as conclusive arguments, given the low detectability of such crimes, the corruption associated with their investigation and the lack of commitment on the part of the police.

471 The wording of the convention and the amendments to the Russian law were discussed by J. Nowodworski, “Konwencja o handlu żywym towarem”, *Gazeta Sądowa Warszawska*, no. 26 and 27 (1913).

472 Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, p. 178.



Displays of public interest, articles in the press and legislative work indubitably prompted the police to pay more attention to the problem,<sup>473</sup> leading to increased efforts in tracking handlers. Nevertheless, law enforcement was still rather sluggish and ineffective. The collection of records from the general governor's references the matter less frequently than the fight against pornography.<sup>474</sup> The press would sometimes report spectacular successes of the police, yet mentions of the "discovery" of 100 traffickers congregated in Rothblutt's coffee house at Królewska Street in Warsaw<sup>475</sup> or the arrival of 2000 brothel owners from Argentina cast serious doubts on the credibility of such information.<sup>476</sup>

Another group profiting from prostitution and preying on prostitutes were pimps, sometimes also referred to as *alfonsi* (after the publication of Alexandre Dumas' play *Monsieur Alphonse* in 1873). The hierarchised world of pimps reflected the hierarchy of prostitutes.<sup>477</sup> Apart from extolling money "for a peaceful living in the city", they also began to play an increasingly prominent role as guardians to prostitutes. The growing number of women plying the trade outside brothel houses, both legally and illegally, led to a larger demand for men who would assist them in conducting business, especially in the streets, and protect them from competition and agents of the police.<sup>478</sup> After the hour beyond which women were not allowed on the streets, such "companions" would stand guard, warning prostitutes of any approaching patrols.<sup>479</sup> In large cities such as Warsaw,

473 In a gesture of international cooperation, in 1906 the Russian police provided its counterpart in Great Britain with the photographs of 100 dealers in "the flesh trade" – Bristow, *Vice*, p. 177.

474 AGAD, the General Governor of Warsaw. However, due to the state of finding aids to this collection (it is still being processed), the reliability of the research queries may be questioned; APK, the Kielce Department of Investigation, 1908–1915, j.a. 1, 10, 11.

475 Teodor Jeske-Choiński, "Handlarze żywego towaru", *Przegląd Powszechny*, no. 7 (1914).

476 The police arrested the "biggest shots" exposed by local pimps, presumably afraid of competition and disturbances in the market they had thus far controlled – J. P[opławski?], "Warszawski towar, Kronika. Z zaboru rosyjskiego", *Naprzód*, no. 261 (1913); "Wiadomości bieżące. Walka z nierządem", *Dzień*, no. 136 (1914).

477 Louis Martineau, *Prostytucja potajemna*, Warsaw 1892, p. 81; Martineau, *La prostitution clandestine ou la prostitution des in-soumises*, Paris 1885.

478 For more on this role see: Waclaw Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, pp. 99, 119; A similar phenomenon was discussed by Judith Walkowitz, who analysed the examples of Plymouth and Southampton – Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, pp. 211–212.

479 *Kurier Codzienny*, no. 9 (1883); Corbin noted the often sado-masochistic relations between prostitutes and their pimps, and used e.g. tattoos to describe the feelings of the women – Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 232–234.

pimps with connections to the criminal world were a dangerous stratum of social outcasts. There is, however, little evidence to suggest that the police took any interest in them. They only drew the public's attention in May 1905, when they became the target of an attack by an angry mob.

The pogrom of pimps, panderers and prostitutes lasted for three days – from 24th to the evening of 26th May. It began when Jewish workers armed with sticks, knives and even revolver guns attacked the pimps sitting in the coffee house at the corner of Sienna and Zielna Street. The incident was reported in detail and commented on in the daily press.<sup>480</sup> By Saturday, large groups of men (200–400 people) had already combed through tenements in the area between Marszałkowska and Przyokopowa Street, breaking into brothels, meeting houses, apartments of more affluent prostitutes and panderers. They smashed property, tossed things out of the flats, and brawled with pimps. No law enforcement units saw it fit to intervene. Only on Friday 26th did the general governor Konstantin Maximovich send for eight regiments of infantry from the camp in Bielany, and handed the city over to the army.

The three-day incident resulted in the damage of 150 apartments, which had acted as brothels or lodgings for individual prostitutes. Medical assistance was given to 176 injured individuals, 100 of whom had fallen victim to street justice. Thirty-one of the wounded were hospitalised, 5 died of their wounds (information from 28th May). Most of the arrested pimps turned out to be thieves known to the police.

The extraordinary event confused the public and was interpreted in a number of ways. Modern historians, unimpeded by ideological agendas, also offer differing explanations for the pogrom. Elżbieta Kaczyńska perceives it as a manifestation of purification tendencies characteristic for revolutionary movements, an unplanned occurrence spontaneously following revolutionary events.<sup>481</sup> Others suspect that the whole incident was planned by the Russian police, which often provoked Jewish pogroms in order to contain revolutionary moods.<sup>482</sup> It

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480 For instance in *Kurier Warszawski*, no. 143–146 (1905).

481 Elżbieta Kaczyńska, "Tłum a władza. Anatomia masowych ruchów społecznych w Królestwie Polskim na przełomie XIX i XX wieku", in: *Przemoc zbiorowa. Ruch masowy. Rewolucja*, ed. Elżbieta Kaczyńska and Zbigniew W. Rykowski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1990), p. 80; Władysław Lech Karwacki, *Łódź w latach rewolucji 1905–1907* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1975), p. 67.

482 Bolesław Koreywo, *Dwie moralności a walka z nieładem* (Poznań: Spółka Pedagogiczna, 1925), p. 7; Zaleski noted that the pogrom had been instigated by the chief police inspector Piotr Meyer to discredit the revolutionary movement – Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, p. 64.

was established that the realm of prostitution had been infiltrated by the police and the Okhrana. Edward Bristow, in turn, sees the pogrom as an initiative of the Jewish Bund, wishing to eradicate the distasteful trade associated with Jews.<sup>483</sup> Lacking source material that could corroborate any of the above hypotheses, one may only mention that similar attacks took place in Lublin and Łódź.<sup>484</sup>

Following the events, reports of police action against pimps started to appear in the press on a more regular basis, especially since their connection with other criminal activity (theft, robbery, handling stolen goods) filled residents with a sense of dread.

#### 4. The organisation of medical examination and treatment for prostitutes

Regular examination and treatment of public women were the pillars of the system of regimentation, the reasons behind tolerance for prostitution, and the main preventive measures against venereal disease. As the municipal doctor of Augustów put it, “only by this measure within the power of the police authority, and by the limitation of the desire for back-alley coupling, may the plague be halted”.<sup>485</sup> For as long as the system existed, many doctors and officials responsible for public healthcare honestly believed medical inspection of persons running the highest risk of infection to be necessary given the limited possibilities of treating venereal disease and used this argument to justify coercion.

The period of regimentation in the Kingdom of Poland lasted a little over one hundred years. In that time, the circle of individuals subjected to more or less regular controls became progressively broader in terms of background and occupation. Apart from prostitutes and other groups discussed in the first part of the present chapter, compulsory examination was also performed on soldiers and certain groups of hired hands in factories and other places of employment. The system gradually started to be applied in all seats of gubernias and districts, as well as settlements with any larger concentration of unmarried men (mainly the army). Changes in the conditions in which these examinations took place were, however, progressing at a much slower pace, despite their significance for

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483 Bristow, *Vice*, p. 180.

484 Ludwik Mrocza, Władysław Bortnowski, *Dwa powstania* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1974), p. 95.

485 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 47; Similar statements were made by the KRSW in 1843: “it is the only measure towards safeguarding health” – APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 44–45.

the accuracy of diagnosis and for the attitude of the women subjected to such procedures.

Identifying the “high risk groups” was the first factor determining the efficiency of any measure taken against venereal disease. The initial choices resulted from associating sexually transmitted diseases with prostitution or debauchery in a broader sense. The system of regimentation was established due to the role prostitutes were believed to play in the spread of such afflictions. “Prostitutes are an army of enemy forces, who may rarely kill, yet nonetheless wreak havoc in the lines of its benefactors”, wrote Franciszek Giedroyć at the end of the century.<sup>486</sup> The extent of the havoc wrought by prostitutes is, however, difficult to specify. The most effective method to measure their impact would be to look at the sources of infection in other patients. The scarce reports on the subject sent to medical and police committees from military hospitals in the late 19th century (based on the patients’ own statements) confirm that prostitutes played a key role in transmitting venereal disease, at least among soldiers.<sup>487</sup> Surveys conducted among Warsaw students in 1903 provided less unambiguous results. The percentage of infected students among those using the services of registered prostitutes was 43, while among those visiting both legal and illicit prostitutes 65% contracted the disease. However, the risk was not any smaller for students whose sexual activity did not involve prostitutes (i.e. in the circles of “independent practitioners”), since in these groups the percentage of infected individuals was similar (43%).<sup>488</sup> The opinions of western doctors and researchers such as Alfred Fournier, Charles Mauriac and Alfred Blaschko, according to whom ca. 80% of infections resulted from contacts with prostitutes, were known in the Kingdom (and, more importantly, also in Russia, where the decisions on such matters were made).<sup>489</sup>

The first group to be subjected to regular medical examinations were prostitutes in brothel houses. The regulations also prescribed that owners of such

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486 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 26.

487 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 12, 40v; 1877:1; APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15070, k. 36–39.

488 Tadeusz Łazowski, Konrad Siwicki, *Życie płciowe warszawskiej młodzieży akademickiej według ankiety z roku 1903* (Warsaw, 1906), p. 73.

489 In the group of 1 254 patients examined by Fournier, 77.4% of the poorer ones and 15% of the more affluent ones had caught the disease from prostitutes (however, the latter figure would rise to 50% if kept women were to be counted as prostitutes). Among Mauriac’s patients (5008 in total), 84.7% were infected by prostitutes (mainly illegal ones); 34.4% of this group displayed symptoms of syphilis – After Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 41.

establishments who dabbled in prostitution themselves should also be examined (1802, 1843) along with “all women and servants under 40 years of age living there under any guise at all” (1843).<sup>490</sup> The “mandatory regulations” for Lea Klajn’s brothel in Lublin (1898) included medical control for the prostitutes’ daughters and even “women who would come a-calling during the doctor’s appointed visit”, assuming (perhaps rightly) that no decent woman would visit such a venue.<sup>491</sup> Wishing to extend the obligation to be regularly examined to as many women as possible, the police broadened the scope of tolerated prostitution to women from outside brothels (since 1843); in the latter half of the 19th century some of the women dabbling in prostitution as an additional source of income (or simply “leading licentious lives”) were not added to the lists of registered prostitutes, but to lists of “those subjected to mandatory examination”, provided they promised to undergo regular medical control.<sup>492</sup> The routine examination of various categories of registered women was referred to as “periodical” (which were compulsory in Warsaw), while incidental control of other individuals (mainly those arrested) were known as “extraordinary” procedures. The earliest quarterly reports from the examination of licentious women date from 1837–1844 and come from the Sieradz region in the Kalisz Gubernia. They contain no information on the number of women, mentioning only whether the examined persons were ill “in matters of the venereal”.<sup>493</sup>

The views and decisions which directed doctors’ and officials’ attention towards the working class in the latter half of the 19th century stemmed from urbanisation and the social consequences of industrialisation. The number of workshops employing many workers of both sexes was already growing in the first half of the century. These first generations of hired hands would live far from their families, staying in a new environment for prolonged periods of time.

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490 *Przepisy*; APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 35. A sample agreement for brothel houses in Warsaw dated to the 1870s sets the age limit to 45 years (in meeting houses it was still 40) (APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 27v, 28v.).

491 APŁ, RGL, W P IV 1898:89, k. 15, p. 3.

492 Reports by medical and police committees in various cities of the Kingdom mention not only prostitutes from brothel houses and the so-called *odinochky*, but also “women of loose conduct”, which suggests the emergence of a certain group existing on the fringes of professional prostitution and semi-legally, which was known to the police and underwent regular examination. See: APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15185 (1885); APW (Pułtusk branch), RGW, WL, Referat XIV, j.a. 1901:48, 1907:72, 1908:32.

493 AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1967 e (from the Committee of the Sieradz Region to the KWK and the Authorities of the Kalisz Gubernia 1837–1844).

Every year tens of thousands of people set out to find seasonal work outside of their places of origin (in Russia the figure for the early 20th century amounted to 5 million). The authorities' drive to subject these masses to medical control stemmed not only from the belief that such people were rather carefree in their approach to sexual contacts, but also from the awareness of their poor understanding of sanitation, the horrible living and working conditions, all of which increased the risk of non-sexual transmission of disease.<sup>494</sup> Late 19th-century statistics on venereal infection proved that the incidence was highest in garrison towns, industrial centres and large cities.<sup>495</sup> An increase in the number of infected was noted among the civilian population; in earlier years the majority of the patients were military men.<sup>496</sup> It was therefore concluded that the State needed "to oversee the health of not only soldiers, but also working people, as these social classes of people in their prime of life and physically strong are naturally providing the largest numbers of the venereally ill", even though, on the other

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494 Grabowski mentions the following causes of syphilis transmission unrelated to "unclean congress": (1) "woodwinds, pipes, glasses, chalices, spoons, birthing chairs, bathrooms, (2) unclean clothing, bedsheets, underclothes, vessels, outhouses, chamberpots, (3) touching venereal pustules with skin that was cut or is covered with tender epidermis, (4) touching unclean hands, or better still, unclean surgical tools, (5) kissing, breastfeeding, putting in false teeth, giving birth, circumcision, obstetric examination, surgical procedures" – Grabowski, *O chorobie*, pp. 17–18; In Russia there were known regions of endemic incidence of syphilis where 95 % of the population was infected, and only 5 % by sexual transmission – RGIA, f. 1288, op. 1, d. 2332, k. 180–187; Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-siècle Russia* (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 165–168; Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 366–367. The high frequency of non-sexual infection was associated with the poor living conditions of the population – Lejman, "Zarys", p. 132.

495 In Warsaw, for instance, an average of 2% of inhabitants suffered from venereal diseases in 1867–1869. This was, however, an extraordinary situation. In 1882–1884 hospitalised patients constituted 0.7% of the population (on average). Military men were in the majority, yet only by 2–5%. Women constituted 31% of the hospitalised. Thus, the victims were in (more or less) equal parts soldiers, civilians and women. Calculations based on: "Statystyka lekarska", *Izvlecheniye*, pp. 6–8. Polling data from other cities in the Kingdom indicate that the situation was not dire. For instance in 1879, 1884 and 1885 the districts of the Kielce Gubernia reported between 0,6% and 0.15% incidence among the population, in the year in which the percentage was highest – APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15104, k. 45; 15163, k. 53; 15165, k. 52.

496 All these observations were based on imperfect data, a fact which had already been noted at the time. For the evaluation of inter-department committee established in 1912 by the Ministry of the Interior see RGIA, f. 1288, op. 1, d. 2332, k. 180–187.

hand, as a stratum likely to marry early, workers were at risk of being infection for a shorter period of time.<sup>497</sup> Experts invoked similar solutions used abroad. In Prussia, for instance, the law forbade employing nonresident workers without a prior medical checkup.<sup>498</sup> Since the 1880s Europe was experiencing a wave of syphilophobia, rooted in the incidence of the disease (still large, if no longer growing)<sup>499</sup> and in the contemporaneous views on sexually transmitted disease, which presented them as a biological hazard. This was due to the discovery of the *gonococci* bacteria, known as “the scourge of young married couples”, as well as the theories on congenital syphilis and associating the disease with its tertiary stage, which could manifest, even after several decades, with severe neurological changes. The belief in the gravity of the threat led the proponents of the medical and police supervision (not only in Russia) to more severe views on regimentation reflected in their proposals and attempts to extend compulsory medical examination to the working class and the poorest citizens.<sup>500</sup>

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497 Zygmunt Krówczynski, “W sprawie uregulowania prostytucji”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 1 (1891). Information on the spread of syphilis among workers in artisanal workshops in the Lublin Gubernia: APL, RGL, L 1891:2 part I, k. 9. These were not large enterprises or large groups of people. As the regional physician, Rolle studied many cases of venereal disease among the workers of sugar refineries, e.g. one female hired hand “overly susceptible to the advances of her workmates” infected six men in the course of a single night – Józef A. Rolle, “Sposzczenia z dziedziny chorób syfilitycznych”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 2, Vol. 3 (1864).

498 W. Gajkiewicz, “Posiedzenie”, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Lekarskiego Warszawskiego*, Vol. 78, issue 3 (1881), p. 592. In the Lublin Gubernia, servers in taverns, confectioneries and bakeries, and personnel in hair salons and bathhouses needed to undergo a physical examination upon employment and later on a regular basis – APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:775, k. 14.

499 In 1902, for instance, some doctors estimated that 13 to 20% of the population of Paris suffered from venereal diseases (Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 388). During a one-day physical inspection conducted in Prussia on 30th April 1900, venereal disease was identified in 41 thousand individuals, 11 thousand of whom were just diagnosed with syphilis; A. Scholtz, “Strategie na drodze ‘Ustawy o zwalczaniu chorób wenerycznych’”, *Archiwum Historii i Filozofii Medycyny*, Vol. 60, issue 4 (1997), p. 385. The number of known patients in the 50 European gubernias of Russia in 1902–1907 exceeded 4 million (RGIA, f. 1288, op. 1, d. 2332, k. 180–187). Władysław Miklaszewski, who was a social activist and a doctor specialising in hygiene, reported that 95% of male residents of Warsaw contracted gonorrhoea, and 75% syphilis. Although the data would be difficult to substantiate, they certainly had an impact on the public opinion.

500 Alain Corbin, “Le péril vénérien au début du siècle: prophylaxie sanitaire et prophylaxie morale”, *Recherches*, no. 29 (1977), p. 245.

In the latter half of the 19th century, the obligation to be checked for venereal disease was ultimately imposed on various groups of hired workers in places of employment across the Kingdom. In Warsaw, Viceroy Fyodor Berg authorised the resolutions of the special medical and police committee (4th July 1864, 8th May 1865) which compelled owners of various enterprises to vouch for the decency of their female workers and personnel. District police commissioners made sure “that the proprietors of alehouses, coffee houses, taverns, restaurants and factories take it unto themselves to give assurance for their female staff” (1874).<sup>501</sup> Invoking the mentioned resolutions, in 1883 the chief police inspector of Warsaw general Nikolai Buturlin introduced obligatory physical examination for female factory workers, servers in restaurants etc. whose conduct would not be vouched for by their employers.<sup>502</sup> The women who were not able to acquire such a declaration were to report to the KL-P twice a month to be examined. According to the press, only 62 out of the 500 places of employment answered the request to vouch for the morals of their employees.<sup>503</sup> The association with the supervision of prostitutes was inescapable,<sup>504</sup> and thus caused an uproar among the workers and their families, as well as a strong protest of the Proletariat party (the first Polish workers’ party). The appeal written by Ludwik Waryński and widely circulated in the city called female workers to fight and resist (“Death better than dishonour”; “They want a battle, they will get one”).<sup>505</sup> The Ministry of the Interior intervened and the resolution was ultimately revoked as incongruent with the existing regulations.

The most competent experts on the matter, i.e. venereologists, did not present a uniform opinion regarding the prescribed extent of medical supervision and discussed the issue in medical periodicals. In 1891, a Lvov-based doctor named Zygmunt Krówczyński proposed to introduce regular examinations for women employed in coffee houses, restaurants and hotels (such venues were traditionally associated with paid sexual services), as well as female hired hands, servants and factory workers.<sup>506</sup> Franciszek Giedroyc from Warsaw deemed the motion

501 „Instruktsiya dlya uchastkovykh pristavov Varshavskoy politsii, otnositel’no nablyudeniya za prostitutsiyey” in: *Svod uzakoneny... po vrachebnoy*, p. 144, clause 9.

502 The full text of the resolution in *Warszawska Gazeta Policyjna*, no. 22 (1883).

503 *Nowiny*, no. 40 (1883).

504 Bolesław Prus commented: “One may therefore say that the totality of our working women was ‘equalised’ with these female capitalists supporting themselves from their own means”, Bolesław Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. 6, pp. 31–32.

505 Leon Baumgarten, *Dzieje Wielkiego Proletariatu* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1966), pp. 158–161. It was the Proletariat’s first political undertaking against the authorities.

506 Zygmunt Krówczyński, “W sprawie”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 2 (1891).



unrealistic and ineffective, and invoked the moral benefit of young women. Incessant examinations to which they would be subjected for their employer to comply with the obligation to hire only healthy personnel could potentially leave them desensitised and lead to social stigmatisation and the loss of the innate sense of shame, which in turn might prompt them to prostitution.<sup>507</sup>

Be that as it may, evidence for conducting such examinations and monitoring the conduct of female workers may be found in many towns apart from Warsaw. In 1886 the KL-P in Częstochowa imposed on factory owners the obligation to inform them of any improper conduct on the part of workers and to hire a doctor for periodical inspections of the employees' health. Employers were also required to put the obligation of regular checkups as one of the conditions for being hired.<sup>508</sup> Such regulations made female workers into hostages of factory doctors and owners. The opinion was voiced in socialist press: "in many factories in Łódź, upon being hired, female workers are subjected to a physical inspection like prostitutes. Such examinations serve the directors, foremen and doctors as a means of recruiting new lovers"<sup>509</sup> Surviving report forms from medical and police committees from the late 1870s onwards include the category of "persons examined in factories, places of work, places of temporary residence, workers returning from work". Records from the (poorly industrialised) Kalisz Gubernia dating from 1886–1914 contain recurring mentions of examinations conducted in various places of employment, on unmarried bakers, butchers, apprentices, tavern servers, cooks, valets, and per diem workers.<sup>510</sup> These random data (gathered during examinations that were not incidental) pertain mainly, if not exclusively, to bachelors. Women are not mentioned (there is only one referral to a buffet lady), yet it may simply be due to the fact that they were not employed

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507 Krówczyński's idea to limit the examination to looking at the oral cavity was also criticised by the Warsaw-based venereologist, who argued that while "women's modesty would not be insulted, the result would be null" – Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 67.

508 APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3344, k. 32, 33. To exemplify the control over the morals of female workers: in 1893 Wiktoria Rybacka employed in of one of the factories in Łódź was fined with 70 kopecks for "frolicking with workers" – APL, Senior Factory Inspector of the Piotrków Gubernia, j.a. 2603 (the book of revenues and expenditures on fines).

509 "Z kraju", *Przedświt*, no. 9 (1902); Similar information was reported in *Robotnik* and *Czerwony Sztandar*.

510 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 54, 28 v, 82, 122 (Lublin 1886); 1891:2 part I, k. 32–34 (Janów), part II, k. 12 (Chełm); 1911:46, k. 89–90 (Krasnystaw), k. 108, 181 (Biłgoraj district, between 20 and 78 men examined per month); 1912:36, k. 16; In the Kielce Gubernia both male and female workers were examined, e.g. APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15104, k. 127; 15163, k. 118, 149.

in such places. Records from the Kalisz Gubernia include regular reports from the examination of unmarried male workers from several textile factories (e.g. in Opatówek) and breweries conducted in 1898–1899, 1901, 1905. These were organised roughly four times a year for a group of ca. a dozen men.<sup>511</sup> The working class in Łęczycza and Ozorków was not subjected to periodical checkups. Only men suspected of being ill and women suspected of dabbling in prostitution were examined.<sup>512</sup> The obligation was also imposed on workers returning from Prussia, as they were regarded as the principal source of infection within families.<sup>513</sup>

Consequently, the police and medical supervision in the Kingdom extended beyond the class of prostitutes, unemployed and vagrants with which it was commonly associated. Neither were the examinations only performed on women, as opponents of regimentation would later claim. The weak social position of the lower classes allowed the authorities to broaden the scope of sanitary control to groups from outside the underclass, even without their consent. The arbitrary examination of female workers was not contested outside of the working class and socialist circles. Class and gender prejudices were indubitably a factor.<sup>514</sup>

The option to use coercion meant that periodical examinations could also be conducted on soldiers (*Przepisy* 1843), who were the largest clientele of paid sexual services. They were inspected at various stages of their career: as recruits, during service and, at the end of the 19th century, before being discharged to reserve and upon arrival in their place of origin. Such supervision clearly went beyond the direct objective of protecting the army from infection.<sup>515</sup> The significance of the problem of venereal disease in the military has already been discussed in the present publication. The frequency of medical inspection was set in 1843 to once a week. Just to provide an example, at the end of the century, soldiers of the 14th Armenian Corps stationed in the Lublin Gubernia were examined every ten days; those who had previously been infected with syphilis

511 APL, RGK, WL, j.a. 7829, 7854, 7860, 7938.

512 APL, RGK, WL, j.a. 7857, k. 334–338 (104 examinations, performed on 389 men). The same records (k. 190, 365–374, 400–417) also inform of the examination of male workers in Sieradz, Konin and Turek; also files: 7878 a, k. 266–267; 8088, k. 91; 7957a; 7963 (1904–1908); 7829; 7854; 7860; 7938. In the Piotrków Gubernia – APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 128, k. 136–137.

513 APL, RGK, WL, j.a. 7857, k. 492 (Wieluń).

514 See also Walkowitz, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p. 376.

515 APL, RGL, L 1895:25, k. 42; 1899:20, k. 40v.; APL, RGK, WL, j.a. 7857, k. 190, 271–274 (Konin, Wieluń).

or other venereal diseases underwent checkups on a weekly basis.<sup>516</sup> In 1873 the KL-P in Kielce instructed that the health of soldiers in the 28th Polotsk Infantry Regiment be inspected daily by unit unterofficers, weekly by feldwebels and twice a month by physicians. Cossacks and soldiers of the battalion stationed in Kielce were examined twice a month.<sup>517</sup> The threat of venereal disease also drew attention to the conduct of women working in military camps, soldiers' wives (*soldatki*) and servants. In order to hire a female servant, the wife of a garrisoned soldier required the consent of his commander, granted only if the wife herself had the opinion of a decent woman.<sup>518</sup>

Even assuming that the aim of the physical examination was slightly different in the case of men and women, i.e. that diseased harlots (the witches of the day) were hunted to protect the population, while soldiers, as the largest professional group under scrutiny, were treated like victims, isolating the ill individuals in hospitals did reduce the risk of further transmission. Requests for examinations in the army, made by some anti-syphilitic committees, indicate that their members were fully aware of the role soldiers played in spreading the disease among the civilian population. The magistrate of Suwałki dared to answer the army's complaint against poor supervision with the statement that "only the newly arrived forces did bring a great number of the venereally ill (...) after a time transplanting the plague to some of the local harlots"<sup>519</sup>

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516 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 40 v–41. Soldiers were examined in their garrisons, workers most likely at their places of employment, and detainees in police gaol. The phrase "inspected in factories" appears in – APL, RGL, L 1891: 2 part 1, k. 27 (Chełm).

517 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15027, k. 46v–47; 15163, k. 40v. Earlier in 1870 the governor pressed for weekly (and not monthly) medical checkups in the regiment of Cossack guards (RGKiel., j.a. 15014, k. 75); Concerned for the health of their land guards, the committee in the Włoszczowa district (known as the police committee) instructed the commander of the unit to not only arrange for the weekly examination of the guards, but also to "order them to keep their bodies in cleanliness, to 'steam' in the baths once a week and cleanse their genitals after each act of sexual congress" (RGKiel., j. a. 15014, k. 50).

518 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 114–115 (1860); f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 568, l. 36–40.

519 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 15v. Rolle regarded the Russian army as the nursery of the great pox. Unmarried, uneducated, undemanding and unpunished for hiding the disease, the Russian soldier "brought syphilis to his winter lair under the peaceful eaves of the peasant home". Rolle's observations, noting the large numbers of patients in hamlets along the trail of the army in Podolia (in the Russian Empire), also held true for the Kingdom of Poland – Józef Rolle, "Choroby weneryczne (1854–1864)", *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Lekarskiego Warszawskiego*, Vol. 8 (1865), p. 161. Following a survey in several villages in 1897, doctors in the Lublin Gubernia estimated that 27%

The gender barrier was not as insurmountable as one could surmise; its existence might even have been a stereotype introduced by the abolitionists' perspective on regimentation. The temptation to examine at least some of the clientele paying for sexual services was certainly there. In 1843 one member of the Warsaw Medical Society suggested medical checkups for men that were, for any reason, arrested in houses of tolerated harlotry. The procedure was intended to act as one more penalty for immoral conduct. The author of the proposal also thought that, upon noticing symptoms of the disease in her client, a prostitute should be able to immediately call a doctor "for the completion of the suspect's inspection and ensure treatment with the help of the police".<sup>520</sup>

In 1886 the Gubernia Authorities in Lublin wrote the Warsaw chief of police asking whether the men found in brothel houses should also be subjected to medical examinations. That same year, the KL-P in Częstochowa ordered weekly checkups to be performed on both men and women in the local house of ill repute. It is, however probable that all of the venue's regulars were soldiers.<sup>521</sup>

Although official excuses for tolerating prostitution laid the blame for spreading venereal diseases on prostitutes alone, the system encompassed (or tried to encompass) some of their clients as well. The authorities were well aware that isolating infected prostitutes would not be enough to stop the spread of the disease. Some forms of control had to be applied to the customers as well. All regulations on brothel houses, from the Ordinance of 1802 to the circular of 1903, tried to prevent the transmission of venereal disease from clients to public women. Thus, they advised prostitutes to inspect the clients' genitals "so that, spotting such [disease] in any of the guests, they did not allow carnal embrace". The Medical Department of the Ministry of the Interior also issued an ordinance (25th November 1885) compelling prostitutes to inspect the genitals and underwear of their clients and forbidding sexual contact upon discovering even the most minor symptoms of the disease.<sup>522</sup> The existing sources do not offer enough insight into the workings of brothel houses to judge whether the freedom of men entering into such venues was, in fact, in any way restricted. Much was left to the owners' discretion, as such regulations were rather difficult to execute. Moreover, sexual services rendered in brothels were only one aspect of professional

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of the region's population was afflicted with syphilis. The credibility of such methodology aside, one should nevertheless assume that officials did believe these numbers (APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 42–44).

520 Grabowski, "O chorobie", pp. 19–20.

521 APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3334, k. 35.

522 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 72.

prostitution, and one of decreasing prominence. Outside of the brothel context, the only group that could be coerced into being examined (with a varying degree of success) were prostitutes themselves. Thus, men had to be reached through education, spreading awareness of the consequences of venereal infection and the need to uphold certain standards of personal hygiene; and such efforts were made at the end of the 19th century, in the form of various guidebooks and leaflets published e.g. by the Association for Hygiene.<sup>523</sup> As noted by the pragmatist and proponent of regimentation Franciszek Giedroyć, “lack of familiarity with even the most rudimentary rules of hygiene of sexual organs, uncleanness, negligence and carelessness, often augmented with alcohol inebriation, and superstition, are the causes of evil (. . .) With the proper conduct of men the number of the infected could only fall”.<sup>524</sup>

From the medical point of view, frequent inspections of prostitutes were one of the most important factors determining the efficiency of supervision. Instructions given to the municipal doctor in Warsaw in 1817 and 1824 spoke of weekly examinations of women,<sup>525</sup> while the regulations of 1843 defined the minimum frequency of checkups as two times a week for brothels and once a week for independent prostitutes. Doctors deemed this schedule appropriate given the incubation period of venereal diseases.<sup>526</sup> Under the laws of 1903 examination twice a week was compulsory for all women of ill repute. Moreover, with regard to prostitutes, each change of the place of residence meant additional examination. As a supplementary safety measure, brothel houses were obliged to monitor prostitutes and inform the doctor of any apparent symptoms of disease (“mandatory regulations for brothel houses in Lublin” from 1898).<sup>527</sup> In meeting houses it was the proprietess that took on the role of the physician, checking regularly visiting women once or twice a week, and those making infrequent visits – every time they showed up.

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523 For instance Franciszek Giedroyć, *Jak się zachować w chorobach wenerycznych. Wskazówki praktyczne* (Warsaw: Skład główny w księgarni Gebethnera i Wolffa, druk St. Niemiery, 1893). Even in 1844, in his review of measures to prevent infection, Ludwik Grabowski warned against putting one’s trust in “membrane sacks” that “seemingly protect from harm, accoutring imprudent youngsters with false courage” – Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 12.

524 Giedroyć, *Prostyutki*, pp. 68, 71.

525 Giedroyć, *Rada*, p. 53.

526 W. Gajkiewicz, “Posiedzenie”, *Pamiętniki Towarzystwa Lekarskiego Warszawskiego* Vol. 78, issue 3 (1881), p. 591.

527 APL, RGL, W P IV 1895:775, k. 26.

In practice, the execution varied. The numerous injunctions to organise examinations on a regular basis suggest that there were some difficulties in following these regulations, yet the general trend is clearly apparent – in the course of the 19th century the number of compulsory medical checkups increased from one, perhaps two a month to one or two per week. If the activity did not bring the expected fall in the diseases' incidence, or if a rise was noted, medical and police authorities reacted with an increase of the frequency of inspection.

In the Augustów Gubernia, where the earliest data comes from (1840 and 1850s), the schedule of examinations was determined mainly by the health of the soldiers stationed in the region. In 1848 in Suwałki public women were usually inspected thrice a month, yet additional examinations were immediately organised following each intervention of the army.<sup>528</sup> On 24th June 1848, when the commander of the infantry regiment asked the city's president for more frequent checkups, all known prostitutes were immediately brought to the town hall and inspected.<sup>529</sup> The same response was triggered by a strongly worded letter from the military governor, who demanded that the Magistrate find and, within six days, examine all licentious women (with "such a detrimental influence on the army's health") and deal with them according to the letter of the law. The governor also wished to receive a list of names of the detained women containing information on what was done with each of them.<sup>530</sup> In 1851, in turn, having received complaints from the military, the president of Suwałki decreed "to make sure that women of licentious conduct are inspected regularly every 10 days" and, since 1852, once a week. By 1863 medical checkups were conducted even twice a week, as it was believed that "many women from the surrounding countryside come to Suwałki and engage in harlotry".<sup>531</sup>

From the 1860s onwards, each locality in the Kingdom that had an anti-syphilitic committee organised physical examination for tolerated prostitutes once or twice per week. In 1862 in Włocławek both soldiers and women of ill repute were inspected on a weekly basis, and by 1866 already twice a week. The same could be observed in Łódź (1869 and 1870).<sup>532</sup> In 1885, following doctors' requests, the KL-P in Częstochowa increased the number of set examination

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528 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 1–43, 47.

529 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 207, 208, 215.

530 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 235–236.

531 In the autumn of 1851 the hospital in Suwałki was treating ca. 100 soldiers suffering from venereal diseases – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 207, 255, 265, 289; b. 88, l. 45.

532 AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 298, k. 1–2, 43; APŁ, Am.Ł, j. a. 5156, k. 43, 62.

days from one to two per week.<sup>533</sup> However, when the chief of police in Lublin proposed to double the frequency of checkups (to twice a week), the local KL-P refused, explaining that no significant increase in the disease's incidence was noted, while it was known that assembling all the prostitutes in the city even once a week was already problematic given the small number of the law enforcement units. As late as in 1898, the majority of lewd women in Lublin was controlled once a week; the only ones examined twice were working in the public house of the lowest category.<sup>534</sup>

If the checkups were conducted on a weekly basis, they usually took place on Saturday at noon,<sup>535</sup> in order to isolate infected women on the day they presumably received the largest number of clients. In places where prostitutes were examined twice a week, the checkups were organised at regular intervals, e.g. on Mondays and Thursdays at 10:45 AM (in Lublin and Łódź) or Wednesdays and Saturdays at noon (in Zamość). Doctors in Warsaw inspected brothels on Mondays and Fridays (9.00 AM and 3.00 PM), and received patients in examination rooms on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.<sup>536</sup> Visiting hours were chosen with consideration for the daily schedules of physicians, prostitutes, and members of the land guard who had to deliver the women to the designated place. Another concern was the need to perform the examination by daylight.

Women suspected of licentiousness were inspected as frequently as the police organised their raids. In cities with a large number of unlicensed prostitutes, raids were among routine police activities throughout the entire period under analysis. Sources attest to them being conducted even on a daily basis. In some places, however, lewd women were only apprehended and examined from time to time. In Szczepieszyn and Lubartów, for instance, in the 1890s such operations

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533 APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3340, k. 3; The same occurred in Kielce, APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15070, k. 36–39.

534 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, lc. 86 v, 126; W P IV 1895:775, k. 5, 26. In 1895 the district doctor still visited the public house only once a month. It was therefore decided that examinations in the new house would be conducted by two doctors, twice every week. Individual prostitutes in Zamość and Puławy as well as in the brothel in the nearby Irena settlement were instructed to attend medical checkups twice a week, while those from brothel houses in these cities (and individual ones in all other districts) were inspected once a week.

535 APŁ, Am.Ł., j.a. 280, k. 3 – also in Kutno in 1862; in 1862 in Suwałki (LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 15 v, 118), in Kalwaria (LVIA, f. 1080, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 26); everywhere in the Lublin Gubernia.

536 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 27; 1898: 52, k. 22; APŁ, Am.Ł., j.a. 5156, k. 66; APW, ZK, t. VIII, t. 44, k. 3; *Przepisy*, III 2 i.

were conducted four times a year.<sup>537</sup> Examinations were performed on the day of arrest or on the following morning. At times physicians did not agree to conduct them outside of prearranged schedules. The municipal doctor in Łódź, clearly unaware of the significance of his own work, wrote (in the Polish language in 1871) asking “that harlots seized about the streets of Łódź are not sent to me for inspection (...) outside of Thursday and Monday at nine, as it is an affront to public decency and my own person is exposed to all sorts of inconvenience”.<sup>538</sup>

“Delivering” registered prostitutes to examinations and regular raids to apprehend unregistered ones was a part of the police routine. Law enforcement also searched for women identified by infected patients as the “source” of disease. The soldiers’ testimonies were not always helpful. Their credibility was often questioned: they either lied to protect the girls or – more likely – were simply unable to recognise the right person, as they only knew the meeting place (which could be e.g. a field outside the city<sup>539</sup>), were inebriated at the time and usually had congress with vagrant women whom they knew (at most) by name. In 1884 the KL-P in Kielce rationalised: “such data rarely leads to the desired conclusion, since they are rarely familiar with the women they lay with, and so they usually report that they got infected after having congress with a Marysia or a Józia, no surnames mentioned, which circumstance hinders the police in their attempts to find the culprit, especially since the names Marysia and Józia are very common among public women”.<sup>540</sup>

In 1867–1891 the frequency of inspections in Warsaw rose, and amounted to over 71 thousand examinations per year – more than 220 daily. Examinations of registered prostitutes constituted around 80%.<sup>541</sup> Assuming that the numbers reported by the KL-P are not exaggerated (which is impossible to verify), the effort of the “prostitution services” expended considerable effort. However, doctors did comment that if a single examining physician had to conduct 16 thousand procedures per year, these could not have been very thorough.

537 AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 298, k. 2.

538 APŁ, Am.Ł, j.a. 5156, k. 66. In Łódź and the Piotrków Gubernia, highly urbanised and housing a lot of industry, the organisation of supervision was rather poor. This proves that the authorities were mostly concerned about the state of the army.

539 Most infections occurred in the spring and summer months, when contacts with vagrant women were easier – APL, RGL, L 1898:52, k. 11; 1899:20, k. 31, 41.

540 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15163, k. 40 (1884).

541 Calculations based on: “Statystyka lekarska”; *Izvlecheniye*; Giedroyć, *Prostyutki*; *Statisticheskoyr obozreniye*.



This being said, the frequency of examinations was but one of the many factors influencing the evaluation of the system. One of its flaws consisted in the fact that prostitutes could simply avoid being inspected. Although the organisation of supervision improved over time and the people involved in it gained more experience, as the proportions between tolerated prostitution in and outside brothels began to change to favour the latter (not to mention the problem of clandestine prostitution) and cities grew larger, it became increasingly difficult to ensure that prostitutes showed up for their regular medical examinations. According to some doctors and state officials, the number of infected patients was indicative not of the spread of the disease, but of the fact that women who had to undergo examinations neglected to comply with this obligation. The same phenomenon was observed in other European countries. To the doctors' surprise, prostitutes were unwilling to be subjected to inspection (especially with a speculum, commonly known in France as the "government's penis"), pointing to the physical and psychological discomfort associated with the procedure they saw as humiliating.<sup>542</sup> Doctors were therefore instructed not to antagonise the women with their behaviour and to ostracism (*Przepisy*). Grabowski advised to treat prostitutes like any other patient "without joking, overfamiliarity, without harmful contempt or discourtesy", to "scold any indecency and insolence towards oneself", and to call them by surname, and not by first name.<sup>543</sup>

In brothel houses examination was hard to avoid. Furthermore, absence was punishable with a hefty fine. Thus, proprietesses focused on hiding any signs of disease among their employees for as long as possible, not to risk the financial losses their absence would entail.<sup>544</sup>

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542 See e.g. Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 134; Walkowitz, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p. 376. Emile Zola wrote of his protagonist: "The idea of inspection filled her with agony and shame, she who had so often thrown her chemise over the house-tops" (Emile Zola, *Nana*, trans. Burton Rascoe (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2001), p. 191.

543 Grabowski, "O chorobie", p. 24.

544 Hospital doctors found traces of leeches and sanitising with iodine solution used as means to conceal symptoms of disease ("Sprawozdanie z czynności lekarskiej w oddziale kobiet publicznych w szpitalu św. Łazarza w Warszawie w r. 1876", *Medycyna*, no. 33 (1877)); Doctor's suppositions on avoiding examination – APL, RGL, L 1906:23, k. 43–44, 47–48v.; Hospital treatment could take between several days and several months. Within six months in 1884, for instance, four out of the eight employees of the public house in Kielce spent between three weeks and three months in the hospital – APK, RGKiel., j. a. 15165, k. 50, 101, 103, 157, 167.

Procedures such as medical examination naturally generated corruption. In December 1863 the Medical Office of the Augustów Gubernia warned the police against forged certificates of examination presented by the more affluent prostitutes. The Gubernia Authorities in Augustów harboured suspicion against a feldsher named Orłowski, who “upon taking an offering from the poxy harlot, certifies that she is healthy”.<sup>545</sup> Suggestions as to police “protection” were also made. The same authorities noted: “It has come to our attention that the inspector of police allegedly makes profit on hiding harlots and that not all of them are delivered for inspection”. Prostitutes themselves complained that policemen turned a blind eye to the fact that some ladies were evading control.<sup>546</sup> The committee established to inspect the efficiency of medical and police supervision in the Lublin Gubernia in 1899, the police usually dragged working women from the poorest strata of the society to be inspected, leaving the wealthier ones alone.

It was commonplace for prostitutes of the lowest category (i.e. the majority of women following this profession) to disregard the obligatory examinations or even escape the city to avoid them. Some were assisted by soldiers who hid them in the barracks.<sup>547</sup> In the early 1860s in the Suwałki Gubernia, the only women to attend examinations of their own volition were “those with steady means, with the appearance of decent women”, whereas women “with no permanent place of residence, loitering among soldiers and dawdling in taverns with them” had to be “gathered for inspection” by the police. “However, not one is left uninspected throughout the week, excepting only when she departs from the city, which happens rather frequently”.<sup>548</sup> In the town of Janów in the Lublin Gubernia, on the prescribed day land guards would arrive at the abodes of known prostitutes early in the morning to take them to inspection. Reports written by district anti-syphilitic committees in that same gubernia (e.g. in Krasnystaw, Puławy) in 1886 contain such phrases as “the police delivered seven women”, “prostitutes were not delivered for examinations”, and “the Magistrate delivered licentious women”.<sup>549</sup> Coercion was used throughout the entire period under analysis. For

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545 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 265. In 1886, a feldsher in the Kalwaria district of the Suwałki Gubernia was also suspected of issuing false certificates – LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 172, l. 226.

546 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 14.

547 APL, RGL, WL 1886:6, k. 127.

548 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 15–16 v.

549 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 7, 16, 18, 23; 1899:20, k. 27; In 1878 the KL-P in Częstochowa assigned this task to the district community officer – APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3285, k. 16; in Warsaw it fell to local caretakers.

instance, in 1914 the new authorities in Lublin gave the Committee permission to use coercive measures (i.e. organise a raid) if “the registration of prostitutes is not achieved with civilised means”,<sup>550</sup>

Throughout the century, officials, doctors and, most of all, military commanders produced an incessant string of complains against the police, accusing them of poor supervision, which in practice meant unsatisfactorily low detectability of licentious women – registered and otherwise. Some district authorities openly admitted that the medical checkups were not performed on all women dabbling in prostitution,<sup>551</sup> expressing discontent at the low number of women under supervision.

To monitor prostitutes’ attendance at their scheduled examinations, so-called *kontrolle* was introduced (1843) – lists of prostitutes’ names to check attendance and note the results of the check-up. In Kielce the name of each prostitute was accompanied by the name of the police officer responsible for the precinct in which she resided. In Częstochowa, the model of control registers developed in the 1880s included information on the women’s age, creed, height, facial appearance, hair, eyes, nose, lips, chin and characteristic features.<sup>552</sup> A number of such lists from different periods have survived in Suwałki, Augustów and Kielce. After the examination was concluded for the day<sup>553</sup> the land guard would set off to find the absent women and deliver them to the physician and impose punishment if they failed to provide a valid excuse (under the regulations of 1843 penalties involved flogging, detention or a fine). According to the new court proceedings introduced in 1874 (which did not permit coercive measures) the prescribed procedure was to refer the cases of absent women (who missed two examinations) to justices of the peace to be penalised.<sup>554</sup>

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550 APL, RGL, L 1914:52.

551 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 28–29 (Chełm); APK, RGKiel., WL, j.a. 15014, k. 33. In 1864 (a period of insurrection and repression), Warsaw authorities explained that “the abnormal circumstances in the country could have its impact, and lead to hindrances to the proper execution of duties of the police service” – AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 280, k. 17.

552 AMCz, MMCz, j.a. 3285, k. 67–68.

553 Lists of absentees were sent to the chief of the land guard (LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 136), in Zamość to the district chief, and in Lublin to the chief of police (APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 17, 30, k. 40–45; 1891:2, k. 7–10). The *Regulations* specified whom to report to in such cases (II 18–27).

554 E.g. Józefa Stróżycka, a prostitute from a brothel in Kielce, was sentenced by the justice of the peace to detention two times for failing to attend her checkups (serving her time between 16th–19th August 1884, 5th December 1884 – 4th January 1885) – APK, RGKiel., WL, j.a. 12547, k. 20v. Out of the 1043 women who missed their checkups

In the 1880s in the Lublin Gubernia such cases were frequent. Having completed the checkups, physicians provided the magistrate (in Lublin itself the chief of police) with a list of women who had not showed up, which was later sent to the justices of the peace. Wishing to improve the organisation of the supervision, Lublin's chief of police suggested that the justices penalise unexcused absences during examinations outside of the regular order of cases to judge.<sup>555</sup>

Absence during physical examinations was not always motivated with the wish to avoid them. For instance, the check-up in Janów scheduled for July 1886 did not take place “due to the women's going out to work in the fields”; between May and December 1911 and in 1912 in Biłgoraj “there were not checkups for prostitutes, because they all left when the army marched out of Biłgoraj”.<sup>556</sup> Valid excuses also included hospitalisation, police detention, a journey outside of town or pregnancy.<sup>557</sup>

The actual scale of the phenomenon of skipping examinations is difficult to ascertain. For instance, a comparison between the number of checkups and the number of registered prostitutes living in Warsaw in a given year does not indicate that absence was a problem. According to the data gathered by the KL-P, in 1882–1884 an average tolerated prostitute (working in a brothel, a meeting house or individually) was examined ca. once a week (Chart 7).<sup>558</sup> Nevertheless,

in 1889, 258 (who were absent two times) were summoned to court – Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 55. On prosecuting absences in court see e.g.: LVIA, f. 1080, ap. 1, b. 162, l. 1; APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 86–87; 1899:20, k. 24–25 (Biłgoraj); APL, RGK, WL, j.a. 7857, fol. 330. On prostitutes arrested for missing scheduled examinations in the early 20th century see: Sempołowska, *Z dna nędzy*, p. 17.

555 APL, RGL, L 1891:2 cz. I, k. 7–10; a washerwoman named Antonina Skubik was banished from Janów in 1888 by the chief of the land guard for constant evasion of examinations, yet documented instances of such penalties are very rare in the latter half of the 19th century – APL, KGL, j.a. 1888:360. As before, prostitutes kept returning, even if they had been sent away.

556 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 18, 67, 95, 96; 1887:1, k. 121–124; 1911:46, k. 108, 181.

557 E.g. in Kielce in the spring of 1864, out of 40 registered public women examinations were attended by “29 or more”. Absences were, however, justified with illness, police detention and journeys outside the city (APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15163, k. 40–41); Similar causes of absence of 12 prostitutes (out of 34) at the examination conducted on 18th April 1867 in Suwałki were mentioned by the president of the city (LVIA, f. 1070, p. 1, b. 88, l. 136).

558 *Izvlcheniye*, p. 6. The regularity of examinations sheds doubts on the credibility of the 1897 report from Konin, whose 19 registered prostitutes were allegedly inspected 1824 times, which would constitute exactly two examinations per week – APL, RGK, WL, j.a. 7857, k. 190.

**Chart 7.** The number of examinations compared to the number of tolerated prostitutes in Warsaw in 1882–1884

Year	Number of examinations	Number of prostitutes	Average number of examinations per prostitute
1882	47 496	838	56.6
1883	50 402	828	60.8
1884	54 205	866	62.5

Source: *Izvolecheniye*, pp. 2, 6 (the number of women reported in January).

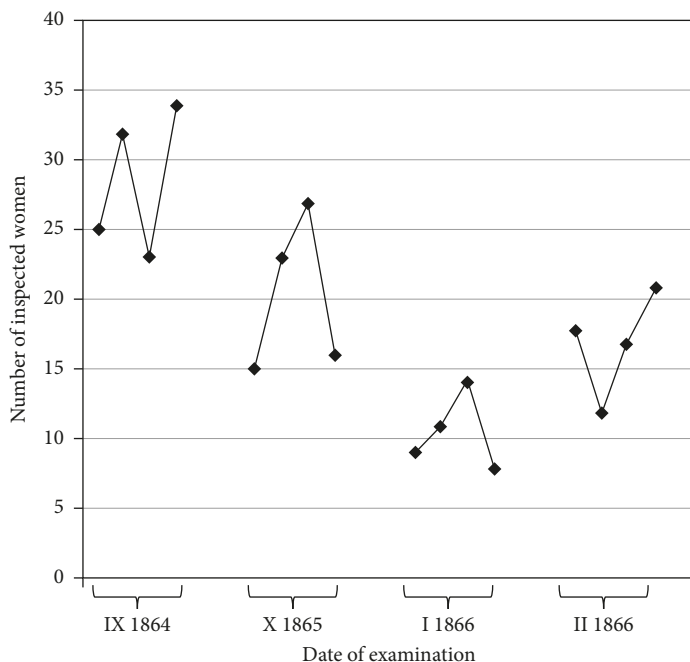
these results (if they may be considered credible at all) are rather deceptive, because even though the examinations were counted throughout the year, the number of prostitutes could only reflect the state at a single specific time. Given the frequent rotation of prostitutes this could mean a total replacement even several times per year.

More plausible conclusions may be made by comparing the numbers of women examined within shorter periods (a single month). For instance, in Włocławek (Graph 1) in the 1860s, a single inspection date involved examining between 8 (January 1866) and 34 women (September 1864), on average between 10 (January 1866) and 25 (September 1864) individuals per day. The substantial discrepancy between the numbers noted in winter 1866 and in autumn 1864 or 1865 may stem from changes in the number of public women in the city, as well as from varying diligence in supervision. Worse still, it remains uncertain whether the numbers pertain only to registered prostitutes or whether they include women detained on suspicion of illness. The fluctuation of the number of inspected women within a single month, which could reach ten or more (thirteen in October 1865), seem to indicate attempts to avoid examination.

The examinations in Suwałki (Graph 2) involved a decidedly larger crowd: each month in 1865 they were attended by an average number of 15 to 24 women; and by 17 to 24 in 1866. However, in 1865 the number of persons present varied between 8 (the fourth examination in December) and 28 (the second and third examination in September) and in 1866 between 10 (the second examination in November) and 37 (the second examination in August).

Inspections were usually organised at regular intervals, typically once a week. The number of attendees could differ greatly even within a single month: in December 1865 the difference amounted to 13, and in August the following year

**Graph 1.** The fluctuation in the numbers of public women attending examinations in Włocławek in the 1860s.

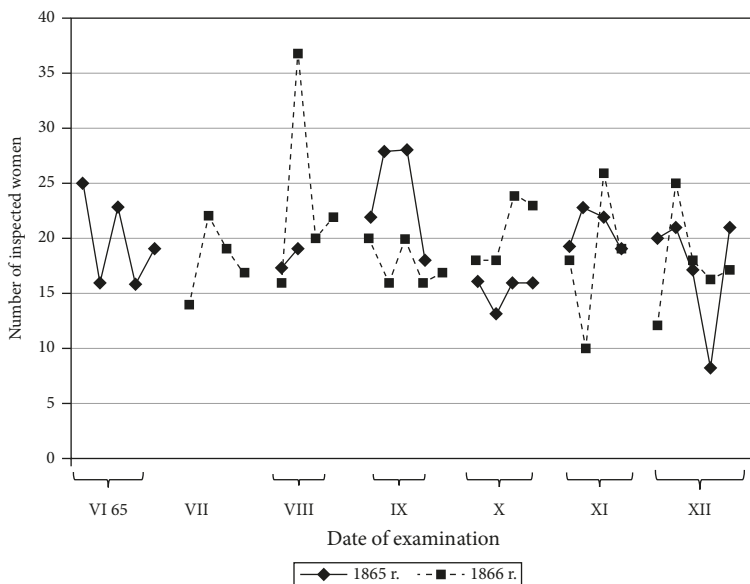


Source: AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 280, k. 17.

to 21 individuals.<sup>559</sup> It should also be remembered that even the lowest constant number of attendees (e.g. 8 in 1865) does not necessarily mean that there was a group of women who showed up for each weekly check-up. Evidence to the contrary may be found in the list of names of the examinees, which make it possible to track the behaviour of specific women throughout a certain period of time.

<sup>559</sup> In 1868 and 1869, physical examinations were organised 4–5 times a month and always involved over 30 women. Cf. the monthly average (the first figure represents 1868, the latter – 1869): January – 33, 34; February – 39, 37; March – 41, 43; April – 46, 41; May – 41, 59; June – 45, 57; July – 33, 46; August – 33,40; September – 32,43; October – 36, 39; November – 34, 35; December – 33,35 (LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 131, l. 17–45).

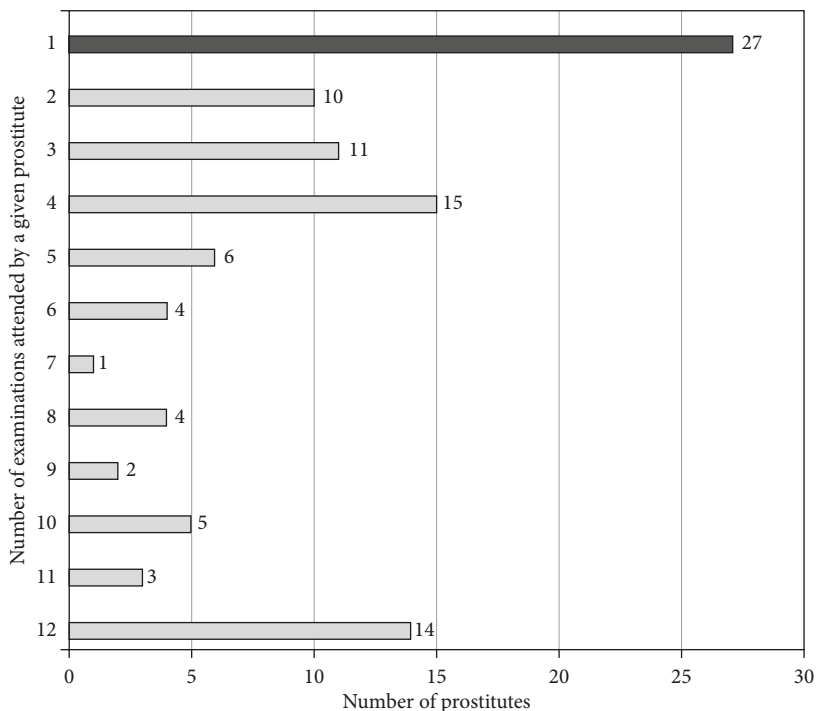
**Graph 2.** The variation in the number of public women attending examinations in Suwałki in the latter half of 1865 and 1866.



Source: LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 131, l. 17–45.

Graph 3 presents the analysis of examination attendance in 1896 for all prostitutes in Suwałki known by name and surname registered each month in the control record book.

The register of examinations from 1896 contains 101 names of public women. None of them attended more than 12 checkups throughout the year, which means an average of one examination per month. Significantly, there were only 14 women who attended 12 examinations; ca. 12% of all the prostitutes in the register. Around one third (32%) showed up between 6 and 12 times, i.e. once a month or bimonthly on average. Nearly one third (26%) came to be examined only once. Sixty two percent of all registered women were examined (by a single doctor) between one and four times that year. With only lists of names at our disposal, we can construct a number of interpretations. The changes could have resulted from consistent and successful efforts to evade examination, yet to continue practising their profession, prostitutes needed the consent of the police (and the possibility that they had it cannot be disregarded). The differences in numbers could also be explained with hospitalisation (yet this could only pertain

**Graph 3.** Attendance at examinations of tolerated prostitutes in Suwałki in 1896.

Source: LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 310, l. 37 v – 158v.

to a small number of women and for short periods of time), or with changes in the place of residence (according to the law prostitutes should then be examined in their new city), or with the decision to abandon prostitution. By intuition alone, one may identify the mobility of prostitutes as the main reason, perhaps motivated by the wish to avoid inspection. The random sets of surviving data indicate that very few of the registered prostitutes attended examinations at least once a month.<sup>560</sup>

<sup>560</sup> A similar picture emerges from the analysis of all such reports written in the Kingdom of Poland. For instance in 1901 in Hrubieszów none of the 25 registered prostitutes showed up for examinations once a month. One of them was examined 11 times and one 10 times that year. 32% of the 25 women were inspected between 6 and 11 times (two of them 6 times, 7 and 9 times), 36% (9 women) showed up only once (a total of



Some reports of medical and police committees note how many of the registered women (aside from the ones working in tolerated brothels) failed to attend examinations in a given period. In the early 1870s, for instance, the inspections in the Kielce Gubernia were regarded as ineffective, since they were attended at most by a fifth of the registered women. The same judgement was passed in mid-1885. The percentage of absentees among the registered prostitutes of the gubernia amounted to between 40.6% and 71%, and between 75% and 93% in the city of Kielce itself.<sup>561</sup>

The belief that women avoided examinations was neither exaggerated nor inaccurate; such behaviour did indeed have serious consequences. The system of supervision was thought to be easiest to avoid for women who were just entering the world of prostitution. From the medical perspective, this was a disastrous observation, as research suggested that almost all women dabbling in prostitution became infected within the first three years. As Giedroyć wrote “experience teaches us that, especially in those beginning their career, both evading examination and disappearing or deleting is due to a contagious disease of the prostitute (usually the pox, less frequently the clap), with all the consequences this state might bring, and most of all the wish to avoid the compulsory treatment.”<sup>562</sup>

Doctors tried to deduce why women were so reluctant to be examined and treated in hospitals, hoping that the answer would let them improve the system of supervision. What they usually identified as the main problem were the fees incurred by prostitutes. The authorities took pains to avoid the impression that police supervision was a means for the state to profit from prostitution, agreeing only to fees for medical treatment. Under the regulations of 1843, which introduced a new system and new rates for the fees,<sup>563</sup> brothel proprietesses in Warsaw needed to pay between 45 and 75 kopecks per month “for securing the health”

68% entered the examination room no more than four times (four of them 4 times, three of them 3 times and three 2 times) – APŁ, RGL, L 1901:25.

561 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15165, k. 45–167; j.a. 15027, k. 47 (over 50% absent in 1871); In Łęczycza only one of the 16 registered women showed up – APŁ, RGK, WL, j.a. 7829, k. 5–6.

562 Giedroyć, *Prostyutki*, p. 34.

563 Until 1831 doctors in Warsaw charged prostitutes 15 groszy for each examination. In 1831 physicians were assigned a salary from the city’s coffers, since taking money from brothel owners was believed to “oftentimes entail some impropriety”; see: *Wykład*, p. 401; Giedroyć, *Rada*, pp. 659–660; Since 1843: *Przepisy* § 111, 115–116, 119; APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 46–47, 51. A Governor could assign a salary for the feldsher from the funds collected from public women.

of their employees. The rate depended on the category of the establishment. Outside of the capital the fee amounted to 50 kopecks. It was a considerable expense, yet the fines for avoiding these fees were even higher. The obligation to pay was also extended to *odinochki*. In Warsaw, the examination of prostitutes constituted a substantial source of income for doctors, larger, in fact, than their regular earnings at hospitals. Thus, when the chief police inspector in Warsaw moved for the abolition of doctor's fees, the viceroy Berg was forced to object. While he did believe this would reduce illegal prostitution, noting that many women were unwilling to work in brothels due to the associated expenses, he concluded that it would also mean more work and less money for the doctors.<sup>564</sup> In 1878, the prostitutes from Kielce, examined in the magistrate and in a meeting house filed a complaint to the police inspector, stating that the fee of 50 kopecks per examination was too much. Believing this to be the main reason behind avoiding physical checkups, the Gubernia Authorities in Kielce (following the police inspector's suggestion) forbade doctors to charge the women inspected in the magistrate.<sup>565</sup>

Other motives for avoiding inspection and the methods thereof were reported in *Czerwony Sztandar* (published by the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania), in an article on female workers from Łódź who engaged in prostitution: "The lion's share of these hideous earnings needs to be surrendered to guards and policemen. Otherwise the workers would be taken to the precinct for 'examination', any girl whom the precinct doctor deems healthy is not let out at once, but is first handed over as spoils to the Cossacks whose several units were brought to Łódź by the government to keep 'peace and order' in the city".<sup>566</sup>

Until the beginning of the 20th century, the employees of brothel houses (in Warsaw only those of the highest category) were examined on the premises.<sup>567</sup> Thus, a public woman was fully isolated from the outside world. The owner of the establishment was obliged to provide "a chair for inspection, a number of vaginal diopters, an uterine syringe, chlorine water, clean water and a brass basin for the

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564 RGIA, f. 1270, op. 1, d. 966.

565 Others could be charged "as doctors saw fit" (APK, RGKiel., WL, j.a. 15092, k. 65–66).

566 *Czerwony Sztandar*, no. 19 (1904). It is difficult to ascertain whether such situations did indeed occur and with what frequency.

567 In Kielce for an additional fee – APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15163, k. 40–41 (1884).

use of persons conducting the examination” (1843).<sup>568</sup> The inspecting doctor was also to “tour the public houses on occasion” to check whether they complied with the sanitary requirements specified in the regulations: no bed-sharing among women, equipping all rooms for receiving clients with cleaning products (soap) and disinfectants (e.g. strong vinegar, a solution of calcium chloride), keeping the furnishings, underclothes and bedsheets clean (in Częstochowa, brothels of the first category were obliged to change the bedding and sheets at least twice a week).<sup>569</sup> From 1903 onwards examinations in brothels were only performed under special permission, as the authorities wished for all inspections to be organised in appropriately equipped examination rooms (the circular dated to 8th October 1903, p. 16).

Prostitutes plying their trade legally and independently had the right to be examined in their own apartments or in the hotel in which they were staying.<sup>570</sup> In principle, this privilege was reserved for the “better” prostitutes, “not entirely devoid of shame;” in practice, it was simply a matter of money, since the doctor had to be sufficiently compensated for the trouble (in Warsaw 22.5 kopecks per visit).<sup>571</sup> However, the already mentioned Lublin committee established in 1899 suggested that if the examination was financed by the prostitute herself and performed in her own home, there was no guarantee of impartial judgment.

All other prostitutes were examined in special rooms located in hospitals, police and magistrate headquarters, rented flats in private tenements, or brothel houses. City guards would make sure that public women “upon crossing the

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568 In the brothel in Pułtusk, for instance, the examinations were performed “in a special room decently lit and suitable for its purpose”, equipped with the necessary instruments and products – APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 19 (similarly in Zamość, k. 30).

569 AMCz, MMCz, j.a. 3396; APL, RGP, j.a. 3285, k. 52; *Przepisy*, VII 75–84, II 36–38.

570 In 1886, for instance, tolerated prostitutes from Lublin who did not want to come to the examination room, which was the located in the city hall, they could apply to the doctor and the chief of police for a permit to be inspected at home – APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 86. It was the same in the entire gubernia – RGL, L 1899:20, k. 19–23 (e.g. Hrubieszów).

571 APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 48; In 1909 the examination room in Lublin was only frequented by lower classes of prostitutes. “Of the more neatly dressed ones, I saw none” noted one official – APL, RGL, L 1909:40, k. 63.

street, did not walk together and behaved decently, without drawing anyone's attention (1843)".<sup>572</sup>

The first venues for examinations were the St. Lazarus Hospital in Warsaw,<sup>573</sup> and police gaols<sup>574</sup> and town halls<sup>575</sup> in other cities. Warsaw and Łódź also organised examinations in precinct offices and in the office of the KL-P.<sup>576</sup> However, the conditions in most of them were less than perfect; usually the room was simply a corner, a storage space, the leased used room in the building. Women were forced to wait for the doctor's arrival, standing in the courtyards of precinct offices and magistrates sometimes for hours on end, exposed to snide comments. In Suwałki, in 1870 examinations were still being conducted near the gaol cells, close to a clogged pantry, in a room "for the Magistrate's effects" where the shoes and clothing of the detainees were being stored.<sup>577</sup> In 1899 the authorities in Zamość reported that inspections were taking place in a two-room space in the magistrate adjusted for the purpose and equipped with "a good chair, mercury chloride for disinfection, towels and other tools for the washing of hands, four diopters and a scoop". A different image of the examination room (which raises questions as to the credibility of the local authorities' reports) was presented by the doctor of the 14th Corps of the 1st Division of Don Cossacks. Although his opinion on other examination rooms was also very low,

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572 In 1873 the committee in Suwałki decreed that public women of the lower classes be examined as before, every Saturday in the hospital (they were usually drunk and brought by the land guard), while the employees of brothels ("secret ones") were to be inspected on Fridays "so as to conserve a certain sense of modesty". However, if they resisted inspection, they were to be arrested, locked in gaol for the night and examined on Saturday together with harlots of the lower order. See: LVLA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 162, l. 23–24 v; APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15165.

573 First- and second-class registered prostitutes were examined since the autumn of 1831 at a house owned by the St. Lazarus Hospital and located at the corner of Mostowa and Brzozowa Street. Precinct surgeons from across the city would see patients there twice a week (APW, ZK, t. VIII, t. 44, k. 3).

574 For instance in Kraśnik, Tomaszów, Włodawa and Biłgoraj. On scheduled days prostitutes would wait for the doctor in tiny and poorly-lit rooms together with detainees – APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 26, 27, 39, 54.

575 For instance in the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s in Suwałki (LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 207, 255; b. 88, k. 4), in Włocławek and Kutno (AGAD, ULGW, j-a. 298, k. 1–2; j. a. 280, k. 3), in Tomaszów (APL, RGP, j.a. 38), in Kielce (APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15014, k. 70; j.a. 15163, k. 41).

576 APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 37 n. pag.; Giedroyć, *Rada*, p. 662.

577 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 162, l. 7, 8 v, 12.

he pronounced the one in Zamość to be the worst of them all: “The examination space is located in the town hall building, on the ground floor. One room is dark and tiny, this is where women wait in line and are examined. The only window lets pedestrians peek in from the street. The room constitutes the corridor of the watchman’s flat, and he has small children. There is no washbasin in the room at all, and only one diopther that is not washed at all, only wiped with a dirty towel, which may transfer the disease from one examined person to the next”. In a further section the doctor instructed the Governor thusly: “Meanwhile the large number of patients necessitates changes in the conditions in which inspections are performed. When it comes to the space itself, it needs to consist of two rooms, one of them well-lit”.<sup>578</sup> The situation in Częstochowa was no better. The chief of the land guard asked for a suitable room to be prepared “to avoid complaints”, since the inspection room used in December 1885 had all the windows smashed and lacked a stove.<sup>579</sup> The examination room in the magistrate in Biłgoraj used in 1899 was believed to have only one advantage, namely “the large window providing an entirely sufficient amount of light”. What the space lacked was a washbasin, a gynaecological chair, instruments, and disinfectants, not to mention a waiting room for the women.<sup>580</sup>

Compared to these examples, the conditions in Hrubieszów seemed very well. There the examination space consisted of a separate room with two windows, heated in winter and appropriately furnished. Nevertheless, the district doctor noted that the same room also served as the magistrate’s archives.<sup>581</sup>

Hospitals seemed the most appropriate place for such procedures. In some years, examinations of public women were conducted in hospitals in Chełm (until 1900 and after 1907), Krasnystaw, Szczepieszyn, Janów, Lublin, Augustów (1850), Włocławek (1866) and Suwałki (1873).<sup>582</sup> The St. Joseph Hospital in

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578 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 32–34.

579 APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3340, k. 3.

580 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 24. Having received such a report from the doctor, the district chief presented the governor with a list of items to be acquired, explaining that he had no means to purchase them.

581 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 22–23.

582 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 17, 27, 39, 54. In Janów prostitutes were inspected in the municipal hospital which also organised treatment for the infected women. The room was spacious and well-lit, with a gynecological chair, a sufficient number of instruments and disinfectants. The authorities expressed their gratitude towards the hospital, since the municipal office lacked the funds to organise examinations. See also: LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 243 and b. 162, l. 23; AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 298, k. 43.

Lublin organised inspections for prostitutes of the lower strata at least between 1886 and 1894. Afterwards, however, the authorities of the hospital pleaded with the chief of police to move the examinations elsewhere due to the noisy and vulgar behaviour of the women. It was then decided to furnish an examination room at the magistrate.<sup>583</sup> In Piotrków, inspections were performed in a rather unusual venue. Every Tuesday and Friday women of ill repute were examined in a building formerly belonging to Bernardine monks, adjacent to a church. The room was small and furnished with one uncomfortable examinations chair and a single speculum. The women would wait in line in front of the church. Furthermore, there was no space where they could undress. In a letter to the Governor, the local KL-P justified its request to change the location of the examination room by stating that the arrangement “offends the religious sensitivities of the people, as well as the moral propriety of both residents and prostitutes, depriving the latter of the last vestiges of shame, since by attending examinations they become known to all the faithful”.<sup>584</sup>

In the 1890s the authorities in Suwałki saw it as the most fitting to conduct physical examinations of prostitutes, including those working in the local brothel, in the hospital or the city hall, yet neither the St. Peter and Paul Hospital, nor the magistrate had an “appropriate space” at its disposal.<sup>585</sup> Thus, the medical check-up room was organised in the public house run by Lejba Rejff, who rented out two rooms for the purpose, for the annual charge of 100 roubles. A similar solution was used in Augustów.<sup>586</sup>

As much as may be inferred from the scarce source material, the practice of setting examination spaces in leased rooms in private apartments became more widespread in the final decades of the 19th century, even though renting put a financial strain on many small town authorities.<sup>587</sup> Moreover, finding a suitable room was never easy, since, as the president of Lublin observed, “no decent

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583 APL, Am.L, j.a. 1027, k. 3–4.

584 APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 149, k. 5, 8v–9.

585 LVLA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 209, l. 1–13.

586 APS, Am.A, j.a. 353, k. 12. The contract amounted to the annual sum of 100 roubles, payable in four installments from the city’s coffers. The sum was used by the owner to equip the room in medical instruments, as well as cleaning and sanitary supplies (soap, towels).

587 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 11 (Kraśnik). The Lublin committee evaluating the local supervision concluded that municipal institutions ought to offer their rooms for such a good cause free of charge (APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 45v).

house wants residents like this”.<sup>588</sup> In 1909 the board of the seven-grade school located opposite the examination point at Bernardyńska Street in Lublin lodged a protest justified as follows: “on checkup day the youth encounters groups of prostitutes, while youngsters in the trade school looking out from the windows see the women gather and enter, not always behaving in a modest fashion. This distracts the youth from their schoolwork.”<sup>589</sup> There were other schools at Bernardyńska Street, some of them for girls. Thus, the municipal office undertook to find a new location for the examinations, ultimately renting a two-room apartment with a kitchen at 43 Jezuicka Street, on the second floor of a tenement owned by Gersza Szichta. Initially the city paid 200 roubles per year, yet had to concede to a raise in the fee in 1913, as the presence of prostitutes discouraged potential tenants from renting rooms in the same apartment, thereby causing losses to its owner. Doctors in Lublin bemoaned the terrible conditions, mentioning the dark and particularly troublesome staircase, the single room divided in two with a wooden screen, dark, dirty and cold, as the stove was not working. In 1915 a contract was signed for the lease of a new apartment, yet the conditions there were equally bad. The venue was named the Ambulatory of the Municipal Medical Committee, the Female Policing Ambulatory, or even the Prostitution Office (October 1915).<sup>590</sup>

The analysed data from the 1890s and later years indicate that at least the medical services took care to conduct the examinations in adequate conditions: in a separate space with a waiting room (it was suggested to at least divide the room with a curtain), well lit and sufficiently equipped. Awareness of the consequences of poor sanitation was a crucial factor. Under the laws introduced on 8th October 1903 a new examination point could only be opened after a medical inspector had seen the space and approved of the conditions therein. The concerns for

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588 APL, Am.L, j.a. 1909, k. 63.

589 APL, Am.L, j.a. 6048, k. 3, 16. In Chełm, in 1900–1906 the magistrate paid 100 roubles for the use of a room in the house at Czarna Street owned by one Mr. Zigieli. The owners and residents of other houses in the street demanded that the inspection point be moved; they also accused Zigieli of running an illegal brothel. The city council granted their request and moved the examinations to the hospital – APL, RGL, L 1906:23, k. 15.

590 APL, Am.L, j.a. 6049, k. 5, 8, 10, 19, 34–40, 50, 54, 98, 99, 102, 111. The 1867 contract between the magistrate in Łódź and Gotfryd Szultz, the owner of the property at 494 Południowa Street for one year’s lease of: one front room for conducting inspections on licentious women” specified the fee of 30 roubles per year (APL, Am.L, j.a. 5156, k. 4, 35, 54).

the conditions of medical examinations and the requirements specified for the procedures also point to the humanisation of the attitude towards prostitutes. Covering the window, providing a waiting room and a separate space for the examination, heating and doors that could be closed all provided a level of comfort not only to uninvolved persons, but also to the examined women themselves. The emphasis on the fact that prostitutes are inspected “behind closed doors” put in a doctor’s report from Hrubieszów is more than telling.<sup>591</sup>

The examination consisted in inspecting “all parts that could be afflicted with the venereal disease, using all methods provided by medical science” (1843) to check for symptoms (rash, pustules, etc.). If no lesions were observed on the skin and in the oral cavity, the next step was to examine the inside of the genitalia using a diopter (which the sources called a “mirror”, *speculum uteri*). The state of medical knowledge aside, the accuracy of the diagnosis depended on the doctors’ own skill and the instruments they had at their disposal. Given that diagnosis could only be made by visual inspection (microscopic examination was only conducted in hospitals and started to be used at the end of the century), early detection was not always easy, and virtually impossible in the latent (symptomless) stage of the disease. “At best, the symptoms may be noticed when they are plain for the eye to see”, noted one speaker at the meeting of the Łódź Association for Hygiene.<sup>592</sup> He is unlikely to have been exaggerating, as the majority of patients sent to the St. Lazarus Hospital already had lesions on their skin.<sup>593</sup> Significant developments in diagnosing syphilis occurred very late. The breakthrough only came in the first decade of the 20th century, following Fritz Schaudinn’s discovery of the *Treponema pallidum* bacterium which causes syphilis (1905), and the introduction of the antibody test (developed by Wassermann, Neisser and Bruck in 1906) in diagnosing the disease.<sup>594</sup> Nevertheless, examinations conducted in the Kingdom of Poland remained unchanged until the abolition of the regimentation system.

New equipment was gradually introduced, allowing doctors to inspect patients more thoroughly. In the 1840s standard examination stools with no movable

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591 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 22–23.

592 Sonnenberg, “O reglamentacji”.

593 “Sprawozdanie”, *Medycyna*, no. 35 (1877).

594 Lejman, “Zarys”, pp. 132–135. In 1878 Albert Neisser identified the causative agent of gonorrhoea, in 1884 Hans Gram developed a test to detect the presence of such bacteria in a living organism, and in 1889 August Ducrey discovered the bacterium responsible for chancroid.



elements were replaced with the prototype of a gynaecological chair (known as an “inspection stool”), first in the St. Lazarus Hospital in Warsaw.<sup>595</sup> The earliest information on the furnishings of examination rooms date to the late 19th century and come mainly from the Lublin Gubernia. Reports sent to the committee evaluating the level of supervision in 1899 by country doctors usually mention the lack of special examination chairs (or the poor state thereof) and an insufficient number of specula, vessels and even sanitary and disinfecting supplies, which were the cheapest elements of the necessary set. The majority of the inspected rooms was equipped with old and insufficient instruments. The doctor in Tomaszów had provided his own chair, yet “it had already been rendered useless” and he was forced to examine patients on an ordinary stool. Elsewhere, an expanding tabletop was used for the purpose.<sup>596</sup> Sinks, soap and towels for the doctors’ use were provided everywhere, yet only the room in Tomaszów also provided such amenities to prostitutes.<sup>597</sup> If the instruments were not sterilised after every use, their insufficient number meant that the inspection itself posed a potential threat. The committee in Piotrków was right to observe that using only a single speculum “one may easily transfer the disease from one woman to the next”.<sup>598</sup> Some doctors probably limited the examination to inspecting external organs. Only the one in Hrubieszów assured the governor that the checkups are thorough and conducted with care, using instruments purchased by the doctor himself. Cases of misdiagnosis were probably frequent. Hospital staff and inspecting doctors sometimes threw accusations at one another – the former claiming to have been sent healthy women for treatment, the latter complaining that ill ones were being released.<sup>599</sup>

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595 On its benefits and its constructor – Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 25.

596 APL, Am.L., j. a. 6049, k. 5. (1909)

597 The military doctor also saw it as necessary to provide an outhouse, chairs, a sink, soap, towels and a basin for the prostitutes to wash themselves before inspection – APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 26, 44 v.

598 In 1891 the examination room in Piotrków was almost empty, lacking everything from furnishings (there was only a single “uncomfortable” chair), to instruments and cleaning supplies. There were even no towels – APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 149, k. 8v–9.

599 Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 26; At least in theory, doctors bore the responsibility for the quality of their service. Negligence could even cost them their post. Documents do mention investigations conducted in connection with misdiagnosis (e.g. in 1877 in Suwałki in the case of a public woman named Szejna Goldberg – LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 172, l. 226).

The local administration explained the poor condition and supply situation of the examination rooms with the lack of funds.<sup>600</sup> In Hrubieszów, the magistrate refused to assign any money to furnish the room. Thus, the district doctor used his own money to buy a gynaecological chair and a washbasin. In Biłgoraj the doctors used equipment borrowed from the hospital or brought their own. Other magistrates allocated a modest fund to the examination rooms, annually or on an incidental basis. The chief in Krasnystaw received 20 roubles from the city; similar funds were assigned in Irena and Puławy.

Throughout the 19th century the task of inspecting prostitutes fell to “medical officers” on different levels of the healthcare hierarchy, such as doctors in hospitals treating venereal diseases, municipal or district doctors (where there were none, physicians with a private practice were hired, e.g. in tolerated houses in Irena, Szczepieszyn, Kraśnik), feldshers and midwives. In Warsaw the examinations, conducted initially at the Medical Office and then in the KL-P, were performed by resident doctors. A diagnosis made by a midwife was not enough to send a patient to a hospital. Under the existing regulations for gubernia seats (1843) inspections in brothels had to be carried out by a feldsher in the presence of a physician,<sup>601</sup> yet it was soon decided that the former was simply to assist or act as a substitute in the doctor’s absence.<sup>602</sup> In practice, even in brothels and examination rooms located in gubernia cities the task of examining prostitutes fell almost exclusively to feldshers. For instance in Suwałki in 1848 a district feldsher was appointed.<sup>603</sup> However, as soon as symptoms of syphilis were

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600 The costs of furnishing such a room may be gleaned from records from Lublin. In 1909 the sum of 47 roubles 3 kopecks was spent on 40 “uterine specula”, an irrigator, 4 glass spatulas, 2 pairs of pincers, 2 glass trays, bedsheets, a metal basin, cotton wool, and a packet of mercury chloride. The room also required a wardrobe, a chair, a gynaecological chair, a washbasin; additional expenses were also made on heating and on cleaning supplies (APL, Am.L, j.a. 6049, k. 5, 6, 15).

601 Such was the situation in the Piotrków, Kielce and Lublin Gubernia in the 1870s – APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 48; APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15027, k. 47v.; APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 100.

602 In 1852 the Gubernia Authorities in Augustów was informed that doctor “Bieńkowski called in as the senior physician to inspect the health of harlots does not perform these himself, or even come to the magistrate, sending the feldsher instead” – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 265; f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 172, l. 226.

603 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 47. The signature of this feldsher may be found in the examination record book even in the early 1850s. Despite the growing number of doctors, their employment in the Kingdom of Poland was far below demand, even at the end of the 19th century.

discovered in several soldiers of the regiment stationed there, its commander demanded that the inspection be conducted by a qualified physician.<sup>604</sup>

Being examined by a professional midwife was regarded as a sign of better treatment. Consequently, they were employed in meeting houses (unless the owner herself had appropriate qualifications) “to complete inspections of somewhat more decent women who also dabbled in clandestine harlotry”. In the 1870s the chief inspector of police in Warsaw tried to hire midwives, stating that “the KL-P is sent not prostitutes, but those who had, for various reasons, been out in the street at night and were apprehended and brought to the KL-P. For such women to be inspected by a doctor would be demeaning”<sup>605</sup>

The progress of medicine coupled with the lack of any spectacular successes in treating venereal disease laid bare the need for the examining physicians to have specialist knowledge in the field of venereology, gynaecology and dermatology. The ultimate goal of reformers, voiced increasingly often at the end of the century, was for the inspections to be performed by doctors fully qualified to diagnose venereal diseases.<sup>606</sup> Graduates of medical studies were only rudimentarily familiar with the field, which started to be included in the curriculum in the early 19th century. By the 1850s venereology had become a well established discipline, yet the postulate regarding doctors’ qualifications did not gain official recognition until the first decade of the 20th century. The circular dated to the 8th October 1903 prescribed employing sufficiently qualified physicians for inspections “whenever possible”. In practice, this requirement could only be met in Warsaw.

In small towns, paid sexual services were rendered mostly to the army garrisoned in the vicinity. Since the 1860s regulations stipulated that a military delegate and a military doctor needed to be present both during routine and incidental examinations of individual prostitutes, brothel employees and illegal harlots in any locality where the army was stationed.<sup>607</sup> This provision probably increased the probability of such examinations being organised and improved the accuracy of diagnosis (limiting the opportunities for brothel owners to bribe doctors; a firmer basis for diagnosing venereal disease). In the majority of localities in the

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604 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 162, l. 22–24 v; b. 18, l. 207.

605 RGIA, f. 1270, ap. 1, b. 966.

606 On the need for qualified “prostitution doctors” see e.g. Zygmunt Krówczynski, “W sprawie”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 2 (1898).

607 APL, RGL, L 1898: 25, k. 11–12. The army was to ensure that a military doctor is present during examinations. See also e.g. LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 117 (1904) and f. 1080, ap. 1, b. 1.

Lublin Gubernia, inspection reports bear the signatures of military doctors.<sup>608</sup> However, the frequent reminders of the obligation to be present may suggest that military doctors did not always participate in the examinations, at least not in the 1890s.<sup>609</sup> Whenever the incidence of syphilis rose among soldiers, commanders would reproach civil authorities for not inviting the military doctor to participate in the examination of prostitutes.<sup>610</sup>

In April 1900 the command of the 14th Armenian Corps relegated eleven of its doctors for a period of six months to take part in examinations in Lublin, Chełm, Zamość, Kraśnik, Krasnystaw, Puławy, Janów, Biłgoraj, Tomaszów and Szczepieszyn in the Lublin Gubernia, and in Włodawa in the Siedlce Gubernia.<sup>611</sup>

The persons present during the inspection of prostitutes (in brothels and examination rooms) included not only doctors, but also military delegates appointed by their commanders<sup>612</sup> as well as police officials. This naturally fuelled

608 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 14, 27, 96 (the physician of the 70th Riazan Infantry Regiment – in Opole and Wieniawa near Pułtusk; from the military hospital in the citadel – in Irena; of the 20th Olburg Dragoon Regiment – in Hrubieszów; of the 15th Cossack Regiment – in Tomaszów; of the 9th Don Infantry Regiment – in Janów); APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 27 (the doctor of the 70th Riazan Infantry Regiment – in Kraśnik); APL, RGP, j.a. 149, k. 1; APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15040, k. 70.

609 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 86–87; 1891:2 part I, k. 55–56; 1898:25, k. 11–12; 1899:2, part I, k. 55; 1906:23; The situation in other gubernias could have been the same. In Nowy Dwór (Warsaw Gubernia) the doctor from the citadel did not participate in inspections in the local brothel even in 1907, and examinations were organised once a week. Correspondence on the subject – APW (Pułtusk branch), RGW, WL, Referat XIV, j.a. 83.

610 For instance the commander of the 20th Dragoon Regiment stationed in the Hrubieszów district sent three reports concerning this matter to the district chief. Finally, he complained to the commander of the 7th Cavalry Division (APL, RGL, L 1898:52, k. 14). In other cases the military did not send any doctor: on 26th September 1905 the chief of the garrison in Suwałki informed the MPC that the division's physicians were very busy and thus unable to participate in the examinations (LVIA, f. 1080, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 35). The matter was deemed important enough for the absence of doctors during inspection was to be reported to the Warsaw general governor, the highest authority in the Kingdom of Poland.

611 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 39.

612 At times, the activity of the delegate proved problematic for the civil administration. For instance in 1862 the commander of the Symbir Infantry Regiment demanded the list of licentious women to be delivered from the Suwałki magistrate, so that his delegate, second lieutenant Zawadzki, assigned to assist in the examinations, knew which women skipped their scheduled appointments. The second lieutenant then

prostitutes' resentment towards the procedure. In 1862 in Suwałki, women were examined in the presence of the police inspector, in Kielce and Częstochowa in the presence of a land guard, and in Warsaw in the presence of precinct officials. As specified under the 1843 regulations, the men were there to ensure that attendance is taken, and to escort the diseased ones to the hospital. Protests against the presence of non-medical personnel during examinations started to be voiced by the end of the century. In Piotrków, the president's resolution (18th December 1893) required the magistrate secretary to sit in the examination room,<sup>613</sup> the military doctor for the 28th Polotsk Infantry Regiment pleaded with the Piotrków governor to request a change in procedure, emphasising that the present one was undermining the doctors' authority and "provokes and disturbs the abashment of young prostitutes".<sup>614</sup> The prohibition of admitting police officials and any other uninvolved parties to the examination room was only introduced by the circular of 8th October 1903.<sup>615</sup> Thenceforth, the doctor could only be assisted by feldshers or midwives. This provision was, however, frequently forgotten, even in Warsaw. As late as in 1910 the chief inspector of police received a complaint that in some precincts women are examined in open spaces, in the presence of non-medical persons.<sup>616</sup>

The State undertook the responsibility for ensuring the safety of clients choosing to use the service of a prostitute. Acting upon this conviction, some individuals who had suffered an injury to their health demanded compensation. In 1888 a visitor in Zamość who stopped by the brothel of a Mr. Łaba and contracted a venereal disease, lodged a complaint at the gubernia authorities in

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informed his commander of the falling numbers of examinees (while new soldiers kept being infected), raising doubts as to the police force's diligence in delivering women for inspection. Forced to offer explanations to the governor, the magistrate accused the army of infecting prostitutes, and described the delegate as overzealous ("an officer of too tender an age and too little experience, with no proper knowledge of the assignment he was given" – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 14, 15v–16v.

613 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 15v–16 v; APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15014, l. 75v; AMCz, MMCz, j.a. 3396, k. 90.

614 APŁ, RGP, WL, j. a. 149, k. 3–4 v. He also invoked Russian regulations, which did not allow for the presence of the police (the instruction by the Ministry of the Interior dated 28th July 1861 for the medical and police committees in Russia, and the regulations on the police supervision of women of loose conduct).

615 Also in the draft of regulations for Warsaw in 1901 – RGIA, f. 12798, op. 1. d. 1730, k. 179–183.

616 *Warszawska Gazeta Policyjna*, no. 129 (1910).

Lublin, stating that “he had thought the prostitutes controlled”.<sup>617</sup> One form of reassuring the client were written notices handed to prostitutes upon inspection since 1843, with “put at ease the mind of a gentleman wishing to avail himself of the woman, assuring him of the present state of her health”.<sup>618</sup> In reality, being signed off as “healthy” was only tantamount to not displaying any visible symptoms of disease, which is why doctors aware of the fact spoke of “police health” (1877).

The earliest known prostitute health certificates come from Suwałki. They had the form of an attestation of health written on a separate sheet of paper and signed by the doctor. The note read e.g. as follows: “Szyfra Dawidowna has undergone inspection and is healthy” or “I certify that Ruchla Jurkman, having been examined in the private parts, proved entirely clean and healthy – doctor Rowiński. Suwałki 3 V 1850”.<sup>619</sup>

Prostitutes in Warsaw were issued printed record books including the description of their appearance, and a chart for noting the results of examinations to be authenticated with a signature and an official seal, as well as an excerpt from the laws and obligations of prostitutes.<sup>620</sup> Evidence for issuing record books to prostitutes is found in Włocławek (1866), Suwałki, Augustów (1873), Częstochowa (1878), Lublin, Łódź, Piotrków (1894; the booklets were purchased in the magistrate by the owner of the brothel).<sup>621</sup>

617 APL, RGL, L 1888:7, k. 153; similarly in LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 162, l. 20 (a complaint from second lieutenant of the 11th Grenadier Regiment to the president of Suwałki).

618 Grabowski, “O chorobie”, pp. 25–26. These could have been modelled after *carte individuelle* issued to French prostitutes.

619 LVIA, f. 1080, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 10, 19, 28. In 1886 in Lublin the doctor was still issuing certificates of health on “a piece of paper”. Consequently, the chief of police ordered the results of the examination to be noted only in the booklets issued to prostitutes by the police office (requiring a receipt, a signature and an official seal) – APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 86.

620 According to the model introduced in 1904 by the KL-P in Suwałki and under the regulations of 1903, the record book (*medycynski bilet*) needed to include: the name and surname, aliases, age, information on the date of compulsory examination, the appearance of the woman (her height, the shape of her face, nose, lips and chin, the colour of her eyes and hair, and special features). The last pages contained the regulations on the laws and obligations of a prostitute (in Polish and Russian).

621 According to the district doctor of Włocławek “the venereal disease is less branched out due to the more energetic police measures undertaken in handing harlots record books in the Warsaw fashion” (AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 298, k. 43). See also LVIA, f. 1080,

In 1871 the chief of police in Kielce took the decision to issue record books to all prostitutes, although the local KL-P initially opined that “this would bring no benefit, as [prostitutes] belong to the poorest class with no roots and prone to drunkenness, and therefore would either lose the books or carry them away, moving to other places”. The Administration Department of the Gubernia Authorities in Kielce, acknowledging the Committees concern for expenses, proposed in 1872 to have the prostitutes bring several clean sheets of paper to the magistrate. The pages would then be numbered, stitched and handed to them as booklets – a solution that was regarded as best.<sup>622</sup> In 1899 an audit conducted by officials of the Gubernia Authorities in Lublin found that record books were used by prostitutes in Chełm, Kraśnik, Hrubieszów (yellow booklets, 1896), Krasnystaw, Puławy and Irena (here the records also mention independent prostitutes), as well as in Lublin. The situation in Janów in 1899 was worse – there were no booklets for the women, nor even a register of the prostitutes’ names – a fact which facilitated evasion and hindered the administration’s attempts at supervision.<sup>623</sup> The authorities in Zamość were instructed by the auditing officials to provide prostitutes with health certificates containing a photograph and signed by a civilian and military doctor.<sup>624</sup>

In brothels, it was the owners who were responsible for keeping medical record books. In Augustów prostitutes could be fined for losing their documents. In Biłgoraj at least the police issued record sheets free of charge, asking prostitutes to sign a receipt and promise to bring these to every examination. However, because women kept losing their documents, in 1899 the state of their health was only recorded in a control book kept in the magistrate’s office, causing “the guests of prostitutes to be deprived of the opportunity to be informed of the state of their health”. In such circumstances the client simply had to trust that the women were indeed regularly inspected and that those who displayed any symptoms were immediately sent to the hospital.

In many cities, the document issued to prostitutes acted as a substitute for their passports, which were collected and kept at the police station. The significant consequences of this decision shall be discussed in a further section of the present publication.

ap. 1, b. 1, l. 24v; APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3285, k. 16; APL, RGL, L 1903:106, k. 8 (record book appended); APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 149, k. 3–4.

622 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15027, k. 47, 128, 144.

623 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 24–25, 27, 19, 30. Similarly in Tomaszów and Zamość.

624 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 17, 19, 22–23, 28–29, 32–34. Also: L 1898:52, k. 12v, 43–45; L 1901:25, k. 40, 92 (Biłgoraj).

Although the system of inspection was leaky as a sieve, every year the examining doctors sent several thousand women and men for hospital treatment. In this case as well, records spanning a longer period of time are only available for Warsaw. In 1842–1864 the annual average of women diagnosed with a venereal disease was 1103, 24% among the registered prostitutes, 76% among the rest.<sup>625</sup> Later on the proportion of disease incidence between registered prostitutes and all other examined women changed. In 1865–1871, when disease was discovered on average in 1736 women a year, registered prostitutes already constituted 52%, and in 1882–1884 as much as 89%, which translated to an average 1230 prostitutes per year (out of 1386 diseased women).<sup>626</sup> The greatest incidence of venereal diseases (the KL-P does not specify which ones) could be observed among prostitutes in brothel houses (Chart 8).<sup>627</sup> The percentage of diseased women there was much higher (apart from 1867–1869) than among independent prostitutes.

According to calculations made by Giedroyć, which may encompass a very short period (1887–1889), yet are based on detailed information from the records of the St. Lazarus Hospital, the hospital annually treated an average of 95.5% prostitutes employed in brothels and only 24% of those plying the trade independently. It should, however, be added that at the time brothel employees constituted only 17.5% of all tolerated women. The high percentage of diseased women in brothels may be explained with the larger frequency of contact with clients, translatable to a larger risk of infection. However, the decisive factor was supervision – a higher frequency of examinations and fewer opportunities for evading inspections, inevitably associated with the loss of employment. Similar thinking led Giedroyć to the conclusion that the system of tolerated brothel houses was still more beneficial for the society's health than legal prostitution outside of them, not mentioning illicit practices (“one infected clandestine prostitute is more dangerous than 10 or 20 diseased ones remaining under supervision”).<sup>628</sup> On the other hand, the numerical data is neither univocal nor fully convincing. For instance in 1889 examinations were conducted on 1043

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625 Calculations based on: *Wykład*, p. 406. One and the same woman would sometimes be admitted to “public women’s ward” even ten times per year – “Sprawozdanie”, *Medycyna*, no. 33 (1877).

626 Calculations based on: *Wykład*, p. 406; *Izvlечeniye*, p. 8.

627 The incidence of disease was also higher in the public houses of the Kielce Gubernia in 1879–1884, yet these are isolated data that cannot be generalised – APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15104, 15163, 15165.

628 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 42.



**Chart 8.** The ratio of diseased prostitutes to healthy ones in the given group in 1867–1891

Year	In brothel houses	Independent
1867	76.3	108.0
1868	64.4	150.0
1869	64.8	83.0
1882	76	38.2
1883	93.1	41.8
1884	89.6	45.4
1885	89.1	30.1
1886	92.7	28.3
1887	93.8	23.3
1888	89.1	11.8
1889	122	20.6
1890	114.2	24.8
1891	139	37.7

Source: *Statystyka lekarska* (1867–1869); Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, pp. 30–31 (1882–1889); *Statisticheskoye obozreniye*, pp. 15, 19 (1891).

prostitutes who had avoided supervision, most of whom probably engaged in the trade individually (258 were absent at more than two examinations). A total of 252 (i.e. 24.5%) proved to be infected.<sup>629</sup> There remains the question on what grounds one should assume that the incidence of disease was different among the uninspected women dabbling in prostitution.

The belief that prostitutes outside the system of supervision posed a graver threat stemmed from the lack of impartial data on the factual number of ill individuals in this group and credible information on the scale of clandestine prostitution. Many academics presented their own opinions as fact, stating e.g. that a clandestine prostitute was transmitting venereal disease to an average number of 15 clients per month, and a vagrant one to 100. It was obvious that illicit prostitutes found it easier to avoid inspection and that they could remain unaware of being infected for longer periods of time. Meanwhile, supervised prostitutes from brothel houses were sent to hospitals at the slightest indication of an infection.

<sup>629</sup> Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 55.

The final link in the system of preventing and combating venereal disease that involved prostitutes was compulsory hospital treatment. The authorities repeatedly emphasised that private treatment was forbidden;<sup>630</sup> only “the more decent women” in Warsaw could write to the inspector of the Medical Office, applying for a permit to be treated at home. In time, the authorities started to realise that the obligatory treatment burdened the few existing hospitals with cases that truly did not require hospitalisation, yet it was the only way of treating these patients and ensuring that they would not continue to ply their trade. In Giedroyć’s experience, infected prostitutes were unlikely to cease working. They would start treatment if they were discovered and sent to the hospital, or sought medical attention only when the symptoms became bothersome and impossible to conceal.<sup>631</sup> Such behaviour was necessitated by financial concerns and the fear of “falling out of the loop” of clients. Worse still, the most common disease in these circles was the most dangerous one – syphilis. The possibility of outpatient treatment in cases where the diseased individual was not a threat to their surroundings was only introduced by the circular of 1903.

It might seem that the final stage of the supervision of prostitutes defined by the phrase “sent to the hospital” was the least problematic. However, records from the 1840s and 1850s reveal the difficulties the police faced in fulfilling this task, calling into question the efficiency of this aspect of the system.

The procedure of admission to hospital involved the decision of several administrative bodies. Having been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease, public women working individually or in brothel houses were to be hospitalised within two hours (the ones from meeting houses within 24 hours) and since 1903 within the day, “assisted and guarded by the local police” (1843).<sup>632</sup> As may be seen from the records, delivering patients for treatment on such a short notice

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630 For instance the circular by the chief of the Gostynin district written to the vogts and mayors to instruct them to ensure that “licentious persons” do not seek treatment in secret, but are sent to the hospital (AGAD, ULGW, j.a. 280, k. 14–16). In Częstochowa, at least from 1878 onwards, women getting treatment outside of hospital care were tracked down, while feldshers were forbidden from medicating those afflicted with syphilis (APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3285, k. 16).

631 Giedroyć, *Prostyutki*, pp. 41, 48.

632 The residents of the capital could sometimes see rows of prostitutes escorted by the police from low-end brothels (Milewski, *Ciemne sprawy*, p. 82); APK, RGKiel., WL, j.a. 7857, k. 330–331 (Łęczycza 1897); in Piotrków from 1894 onwards, the diagnosing doctor handed the record book of the diseased woman over to the land guard, which was to make sure that she is hospitalised (APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 170, k. 7).

proved impossible, at least outside of Warsaw. The “eligibility ticket” signed by a doctor and the police officer present at the examination, and bearing the date and hour of the inspection, was sent to the magistrate and later to the gubernia authorities. The gubernia then had to acquire the consent of the Welfare Council of Hospitals for admitting the patient to a given clinic. Only then was the woman transported to the hospital. If the Council declined, which sometimes happened, e.g. due to the lack of available space, prostitutes had to wait longer to be admitted to hospital.<sup>633</sup> This, in turn, gave rise to problems of medical, legal, organisational and financial nature. For instance in 1839, for reasons that remain unknown, the hospital in Radom refused to take in “the venereal”, as a result of which the Municipal Office in Radom, aware of the danger these women posed, was forced to “sustain” them (also financially) “under lock with no treatment”.<sup>634</sup> The Gubernia Authorities in Sandomierz intervened in this case at the KRSW, “since there are many venereal patients, the regional doctor has conducted inspections in the city and around it, and these must be treated. Not to spread the disease, the infected are sustained by the Municipal Office under lock with no treatment”.<sup>635</sup> Women kept against their will sometimes ran away, as did a widow named Konstancja Czubińska, involved in “license and drunkenness”, who “fled from being taken to hospital” in 1842.<sup>636</sup>

Hospital infrastructure for treating sexually transmitted diseases had been developing in the Kingdom of Poland since the 1820s. Wards and clinics for the venereally ill were then established in Zamość, Lublin, Płock and Pułtusk.<sup>637</sup> In 1827 the Government Committee of Revenue and Treasury established an infirmary in Wigry, which was to treat venereal disease among peasants from the state-owned lands Wigry and Kuków.<sup>638</sup> The specialist clinic of St. Lazarus in Warsaw had been treating venereal afflictions since 1591. In 1832 the Kingdom had 26 working hospitals, 9 of which admitted patients with sexually transmitted diseases; in 1842 the number increased to 16 (out of 54), there already were 4 hospitals specializing in these alone.<sup>639</sup> Venereal diseases were also treated in

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633 An example of such peregrination of records in a specific case in 1842 – LVIA, f. 1070, ap.1, b. 18, l. 45, 62–64, 74, 146, 205, 243.

634 AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 27, k. 53; j.a. 47, k. 44, 52. Similar problems reported in: LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 204–205.

635 AGAD, RGOSz, j. a. 47, k. 54.

636 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 92v; APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 170, k. 7.

637 F. Giedroyć, *Rada*, p. 661.

638 Town residents could be admitted there for a fee – APS, Am.A, j. a. 245, k. 1–34v.

639 Lejman, “Zarys”, p. 140; Records dated to the 1860s onwards mention municipal and military hospitals in: Chełm, Lublin, Zamość, Pułtusk, Hrubieszów, Włocławek,

hospitals for “those with no means for treatment” (e.g. the one in Szczuczyn established in 1839).<sup>640</sup> The Jewish population and soldiers were treated in separate clinics. Hospitals could usually offer between several and around a dozen beds (in Warsaw 100).<sup>641</sup> Specialist hospitals and wards were, however, few, and the initiatives undertaken did not bring the desired results, mainly due to the lack of money (e.g. Suwałki 1848, Radom 1839, Kałuszyn 1867).<sup>642</sup> In Warsaw, specialist medical care was offered in 4 hospitals (St. Lazarus, the Jewish hospital and two military ones), two infirmaries managed by hospitals, 6 private clinics and several dozen specialist physicians.

Not much is known about the conditions in these hospitals. They are unlikely to have been good. In the Radom hospital, for instance, even as late as in the 1840s women and men were accommodated in the same rooms, two patients per bed. Thus, a stay in the hospital was more of an infection hazard than a chance for recovery.<sup>643</sup> The conditions in the St. Lazarus hospital, which had the largest capacity, were still criticised in the early 1840s by Grabowski, who stated: “even the coolest of philosophers would not step herein with indifference”. In the early 20th century authors noted the gaol-like atmosphere of the place and conditions certain to demoralise.<sup>644</sup> The treatment itself could also inspire fear and (entirely

Kutno, Suwałki, Mariampol, Kalwaria, Augustów, Łomża, Kielce, Olkusz, Miechów, Stopnica, Kalisz, Łęczycza, Sieradz, Wieluń and Turek.

640 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 63, 146.

641 Wraćebnyj, p. 37 (early 20th century: 100 in Warsaw, 20 in Lublin and Płock, 11 in Włocławek, 8 in Suwałki, Lipno, Hrubieszów and Łęczycza, 4 in Kraśnik and Opoczno).

642 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 204–205, k. 231–232.; AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47 (Radom); j.a. 23 (Mińsk Mazowiecki, Kałuszyn). This may have been due to the residents’ resentment towards people afflicted with diseases stemming from “lechery and wicked ways”. Cf. Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 133–134.

643 AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47, k. 60. In 1855 the special council managing hospitals passed the following opinion on the patients of the St. Lazarus Hospital in Warsaw: “Here treatment is given to persons of both sexes, only partially diseased, and one may say generally healthy, and young at that, morally depraved, raucous or prone to frivolity, desertion and all kinds of misconduct which ought to be reasonably curbed and penalised.” Qtd. after Giedroyć, *Rada*, pp. 150–151.

644 Stanisława Wertensteinowa, “Z tragizmów życia”, *Prawda*, no. 13 (1907). The issue of human trafficking and prostitution, popular at the end of the 19th century, was also discussed in the context of hospitals. Some journalists claimed that these institutions had become a venue for recruiting new prostitutes. Papers wrote that brothel owners would endeavour to be admitted as patients or would send their maidservants to incite potential employees and discuss terms of work – St. Annański, “Dr. Aug. Wróblewski. ‘O prostytucji i handlu kobietami’. Warszawa 1900”, *Krytyka*, no. 2 (1901). Such

justified) misgivings, especially in the case of syphilis. Hospitals mainly used elaborate methods of metalotherapy. The most popular remedies for syphilis were preparations of mercury administered in various ways: by rubbing on the patient's skin, by fumigation, or even by mouth. This could lead to severe poisoning or even death.<sup>645</sup> Thus, the cure could at times prove more dangerous than the disease, and it hardly comes as a surprise that patients feared such treatment and often refused to undergo the procedures (the hospital bill of 1842 delegatised coercion), while various quack doctors and miracle workers enjoyed unwavering popularity.<sup>646</sup> The first synthetic drug – Salvarsan (also known under the name “Ehrlich-Hata – 606” referring to its inventors) was introduced in 1910, yet the threat of syphilis was not truly contained until the emergence of penicillin (1943).<sup>647</sup> Only then did the long and tragic history of its incidence in Europe slowly come to an end.

One of the principal reasons why prostitutes tended to avoid treatment were the associated costs. This fact was noted by one Lvov-based doctor: “for the prostitute, the hospital will forever remain a loathsome institution, depriving her of her freedom, and our own hospitals are all the more loathsome, given that the communes force even the most impoverished prostitutes to pay for the treatment.”<sup>648</sup> In the case of registered women, the costs were covered from the regular fees they incurred.<sup>649</sup> Women caught at licentious living needed to bear the

rumours may have contained a grain of truth, given that hospitalised public women were prohibited from receiving any visitors. So as not to demoralise other patients, in principle prostitutes were not to be placed in the same room as young women.

645 Kracik, *Pokonać*, pp. 52–53. On methods of treatment used in Europe see e.g. Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 143; Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 214 nn.; Gibson, *Prostitution*, p. 165. In search of a cure, researchers transmitted syphilis to thousands of patients across Europe – Lejman, “Zarys”, p. 134.

646 Łukaszewicz, *Wspomnienia*, pp. 17, 29. A model example of a patient worn out by the treatment was Leon Sergejevich Baykov, a close coworker of Nikolai Novosilcov, an influential Russian official in the Kingdom. Himself a sex addict, he left a meticulous account of the progress of his disease – Aleksander Kraushar, *Bajkow. Z kartek pamiętnika rękopiśmiennego (1824–1829)*, 2nd edition, (Cracow: druk W. L. Anczyca i Sp., 1913), p. 40.

647 Lejman, “Zarys”, pp. 133–135.

648 Krówczyński, “W sprawie”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 2 (1891).

649 In Tomaszów (Piotrków Gubernia), a brothel owner called Ewa Orzechowska paid a treatment tax of 75 roubles and 80 kopecks. Out of this sum, 35 roubles and 10 kopecks were spent on the medical care for an ill employée named Olga Błat (APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 19). Examples of the cost of treatment in: APS, Am.A, j.a. 245, k. 8; j.a. 352, k. 65.

expenses themselves. Those that could not were financed by their families or the commune in which they had their permanent address.<sup>650</sup>

At least since 2nd December 1817, when the viceroy of the Kingdom of Poland decreed that “the native communes are obliged to bear the cost of treatment of its poor inhabitants, including syphilitic women, regardless of their temporary place of residence, until they are erased from the commune’s book of residents. The said women, should they be infected with the disease called *lues venerea* not by accident, but as a consequence of their way of living, and not report this to a physician at the very first inkling of the malady, shall be punishable upon recovery under Art. 720 of the Code of Criminal and Corrective Penalties”. This decision was to be publicised “to refresh the memory both of police officials and residents, and most of all women given to licentious living”<sup>651</sup>

Thus, even women who left their native villages legally “travelling on passports” still returned to their place of origin “on paper” or in person “by transport” after they had been discharged from hospital, to return the money spent on their treatment.<sup>652</sup> The final task of the police (after ensuring that prostitutes attended examinations and escorting them to hospitals) consisted in collecting the fee for medical assistance. This was one of the reasons why prostitutes were inspected upon being released from hospital. The magistrate records from Suwałki contain several official letters written in 1848 by the General Council (the administration of the hospital) to the president of the city to inform that specific prostitutes were

650 In 1852 the Gubernia Authorities in Augustów decreed that diseased women be sent to hospitals “securing the cost of treatment with movable property or funds” (LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 265). Correspondence between the Magistrate in Częstochowa and the hospital (1874 and 1875) on the admission and discharge of prostitutes, and the appended receipts in: AMCz, MMCz, j.a. 3253 and 3285. The treatment of “venereal” domestics was financed from the funds collected by fining tenement owners lodging women out of employ, from the commune’s own budget or from the city’s coffers – AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e; LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 101, l. 14.

651 LVIA, f. 1070, b. 18, l. 237–238. A regulation on penalising “syphilitic women” and refunds of treatment costs. See e.g. the apportioning of fees for the upkeep and treatment of four patients in the state-owned infirmary in Wigry among the citizens of the commune of Augustów city (750 persons 16 groszy each) – APS, Am.A, j.a. 245, k. 15–33.

652 In 1849 the chief of the Augustów district wrote the gubernia authorities asking “whether article 720 could be applied to licentious women through exchange into corporeal punishment and incarceration in any sort of gaol” – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 73, 74, 124. On the procedure of collecting treatment fees after hospitalisation: LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 93.

being sent to him “after recovery and under escort”. Prostitutes that completed their treatment were sent to localities in which they were registered as residents. This posed a considerable problem for the administration. Sometimes a long time would pass before the police was able to ascertain e.g. that it was impossible to exact the money (case reports, financial statements, reports by mayors and vogts). As contemporaries reported: “it often happens that they pay part of the cost out of their wages or earnings, and so it takes so long”.<sup>653</sup> The obligation to repay the state for the treatment could sometimes bring ruin upon poorer families. The medical assistance given to one Franciszka Skubała “of unreliable conduct”, who was frequently sent to the hospital forced her father to sell all his real estate – at least according to the vogt of the commune.<sup>654</sup> When the options of repaying the debt were exhausted, appeals were made to remit it. This was probably a frequent occurrence. The records of the Main General Council from 1831–1840 pertaining to the venereal hospital in Radom<sup>655</sup> suggest that the cost of treatment was indeed borne by the authorities of the city and the commune, even though ministerial officials envisaged that they would be exacted from the patients themselves. In 1831 the KRSW authorised the Municipal Office in Radom to settle the overdue payments for the treatment of “venereal Women” (which amounted to 463 złoty), adding, however, “that the Harlots in possession of their own means were sustained at their own expense, whereas those with no means were to be sent into service to ensure that the loan would be repaid from their wages”.<sup>656</sup> Neither was the Committee willing to believe the claims of the limited or nonexistent financial wherewithal of the patients, deeming the Municipal Office’s frequent decisions to cancel the debt as indicative of negligence, accusing the local officials of conducting investigations in a perfunctory manner.<sup>657</sup>

The procedure of exacting money from patient may be gleaned from the records from the Sandomierz Voivodeship dated to the early 1830s. After a lengthy correspondence, the majority of cases concluded with a request to remit

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653 AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47, k. 10, 18.

654 AMCz, MMCz, j.a. 3285, k. 32.

655 For instance in may 1832 the Committee of the Sandomierz Voivodeship asked for the cancellation of the sum of 2028 złoty paid for the treatment of licentious women. The debt was apportioned to fifteen harlots, with different fees for specific individuals: the lowest (19.22 złoty) referred to the treatment of Ludwika Gołębiowska, the highest (425.15 złoty) – of Salomea Gerayska – AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47, k. 5.

656 AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47, k. 6.

657 AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47, k. 6, 7.

the obligation to pay, on the grounds of the poor financial situation of the given family.<sup>658</sup> This was clearly a vicious circle: most of these women moved from place to place with few prospects of finding employment since, as noted above “with neither trust nor a good reputation, they will not find even private employment, where the wages received could be used towards satisfying the costs borne at the time of their infirmity”; “these persons cannot find service and are, most often, destitute wanderers”.<sup>659</sup> In this context the author of the document offered a very interesting remark of a more general nature: “The excuses of those vogts whose communes were burdened with the obligation to pay and return the costs borne to sustain persons from these communes in infirmaries for venereal ailments are noteworthy. How should it be that expenses resulting from individual debauchery and idleness be shouldered by industrious, peaceful residents whose hard-earned money is barely enough to satisfy the most basic needs and pay official taxes? The Voivodeship Committee regards it as its primary duty to uproot depravity and public lack for morals as much as possible”.<sup>660</sup> The costs of treatment were indeed a burden, especially since one and the same woman was sometimes hospitalised several or even several dozen times. In 1846 the vogt of the Szurpiły commune complained about Dorota Żylińska “accused of vagrancy and licentious living on numerous accounts”, stating that she “causes the commune to incur needless expense for medical procedures in Szczuczyn”.<sup>661</sup>

Another reason for inspecting female patients discharged from venereal wards was the wish to ascertain their further status (if they were not registered) and verifying whether they were indeed cured (with the help of an inspection physician or a military doctor). Thus, hospitals were obliged to inform the authorities who was leaving the institution.<sup>662</sup> Surviving records contain many complaints

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658 Correspondence between the Municipal Office and the Committee of the Radom Region and vogts of various communes – AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47, k. 10–11, 13–14, 16, 17, 35.

659 AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47, k. 11, 13.

660 AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 47, k. 10.

661 LVIA, f. 1070, 1, 18, l. 164. The office informed that in the Lublin Gubernia in 1900 the cost of treating diseased prostitutes in Biłgoraj, Szczeczeszyn, Tomaszów and Włodawa were borne by the city or the commune. In Chełm, Janów and Krasnystaw prostitutes paid for their treatment themselves. In Lublin, Kraśnik and Puławy medical assistance was free, provided that the given prostitute did not evade regular inspection (APL, RGL, L 1900:20, k. 43).

662 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 196–199, 210–211. Moreover, the hospital physicians could e.g. send the cured women to the magistrate “for their health to be inspected by the military doctor”, as specified under the regulation of 1866 (LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1,



about people getting infected by prostitutes who had not been entirely cured, as well as requests to not discharge anyone before the prescribed end of the treatment. Such correspondence was usually carried on by military commanders.<sup>663</sup> The phenomenon was common enough to raise doubts as to the justifiability of hospital treatment. The usual practice in hospitals was to continue treatment until the disappearance of visible symptoms on the patient's skin and mucous membranes. If microscopic observation was used, very few of these patients would be permitted to leave the hospital.<sup>664</sup> The treatment of the venereally ill required time, and the waiting lines for hospital beds were growing longer. The problem was serious indeed. Contrarily to what opponents of regimentation claimed at the beginning of the 20th century, it was not because hospitals were eager to comply with a patient's request for discharge even if she had not fully recovered, in order to admit someone displaying more obvious symptoms.<sup>665</sup> Despite being the most reasonable methods available, the treatment administered to patients did not guarantee that a syphilitic patient would not infect anyone else within the next three to five years. "The currently employed hospital treatment is not able to effectively obstruct the spread of the pox, since a prostitute will always have the opportunity to transfer the disease before any symptoms of a relapse are observed", wrote one Łódź-based physician in 1905.<sup>666</sup> Fifteen years earlier, Krówczyński offered a similar evaluation: "A patient suffering from the pox is treated in a hospital until the lesions on the skin and mucous membranes recede; at that moment the afflicted is released even though she carries poison within, which may still be transmitted if no visible lesions are present". "Worse still, a prostitution doctor may pronounce such a woman

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b. 88, l. 56). The committee instructed that women discharged from the hospital be examined by the military doctor and the municipal doctor from the hospital (LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 146 v). The magistrate in Łódź decided that the St. Alexander hospital should discharge prostitutes only twice a week, to facilitate supervision. The discharged women were escorted to the magistrate, where they were examined by a doctor who then complied with the formalities of "taking notes in the register" (APŁ, Am.Ł., j. a. 5156, k. 9).

663 LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 146; APŁ, Am.Ł., j.a. 5156, k. 11, 15 (a complaint from the municipal doctor); APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15070, k. 36–39 (on discharging with no symptoms).

664 W. Kopytowski, "Jak często u prostytutek uznanych za zdrowe, trafiają się gonokoki i inne bakterie w wydzielinie szyjki?", *Kronika Lekarska*, issue 3 (1895).

665 Hospitals discharged partially recovered patients that posed less grave danger, in order to admit those with apparent symptoms – St. Annański, "Zagadnienie prostytucji".

666 Sonnenberg, "O reglamentacji".

to be entirely recovered, although I am as convinced as a hospital doctor may be that such a patient still is, or rather can be, a source of the pox". The venereologist envisaged organising shelter homes for prostitutes, in which they could stay under observation throughout the period when remission was possible. Knowing this to be unrealistic, he advocated for police supervision ensuring that certified prostitutes "for whom government control takes responsibility, be recruited from those that may not transfer the pox, that is whose that either have not yet contracted the disease, or had passed the contagious period, which usually occurs three years after the moment of infection".<sup>667</sup> Giedroyć also provided practical advice: "The ideal solution are prostitutes more than five years in business, having undergone the pox and its remissions and recovered, since in their fifth year they no longer infect and are themselves immune to the plague of pox".<sup>668</sup> Since clients were aware of such recommendations, prostitutes with longer work experience were rather popular.<sup>669</sup>

The realities of police and sanitary supervision in the Kingdom of Poland presented in the present chapter are not easy to evaluate, even for shorter periods that had left a more abundant trace in written records. They testify to the constant struggle between the central and local authorities regarding the execution of existing regulations and the supervision of prostitution as such. They also illustrate the efforts of the local supervisory forces exerted to control the lively, mobile and unruly group that prostitutes constituted. The data proves that supervision function in a constant state of shortage – of doctors, instruments, sanitary supplies, hospital beds. Examinations did not extend to all women engaging in prostitution, and were conducted perfunctorily, with many errors in diagnosis. However, the most important factor was the fact that, although progress was being made, the state of medical knowledge regarding the aetiology and treatment of venereal diseases was still insufficient throughout the 19th century. One is, therefore, inclined to agree with the opinion voiced by one of the speakers at the congress of doctors held in Berlin in 1904: "The present regimentation is

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667 Z. Krówczyński, "W sprawie", *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 2 (1891). He added that if registered prostitutes did not transmit the disease, clandestine prostitution would not enjoy such popularity, thereby contradicting the commonly expressed opinion that clandestine prostitution posed the most danger.

668 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, pp. 22–23. He also advised to use the services of older prostitutes in his guidebook – Giedroyć, *Jak się zachować*, p. 17; Similar views in: Jan Papeé, "Choroby weneryczne, ich rozszerzenie i zapobieganie", *Przegląd Higieniczny*, no. 10 (1906).

669 W. Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, p. 58.

a very loose net which may only stop whales. A multitude of persons afflicted with the disease is allowed to pass through the net”.<sup>670</sup> Even before the regimentation system was vociferously condemned by abolitionists, also with respect to its medical benefits (it did not offer any guarantee of preventing infection),<sup>671</sup> its functioning was criticised by the proponents of regimentation (as discussed in Chapter 1). The views of the executors of state supervision, although rarely disclosed, have also been presented above. In 1899, notified that examinations were (allegedly) not conducted in accordance with regulations, the Medical Department of the Gubernia Authorities in Lublin established a special committee to evaluate the quality of medical supervision in the gubernia. Their judgment, based on reports filed by district and municipal doctors, as well as the report of a similar committee set up by the command of the 14th Armenian Corps, testify to the insufficiencies of the supervision system: too few doctors, lack of equipment and sanitary supplies, inadequate conditions for inspection (decreasing the chance of an accurate diagnosis), and conducting inspection at inopportune times.<sup>672</sup> In 1898 the physician of the KL-P in Konin pronounced the supervision in his district as purely fictional due to the lack of funds and organisational malpractice.<sup>673</sup>

The proponents of regimentation did realise that the system “cannot meet the ideal standard of absolute protection, nor be a means for the utter eradication of venereal diseases from the picture”.<sup>674</sup> Franciszek Giedroyc, indubitably familiar with the realities of the connection between venereal disease and prostitution (at least in Warsaw) may have admitted that the treatment of prostitutes afflicted with the pox does not work towards its designed purpose and is not able to curb the progress of the plague to the desired degree, yet nonetheless saw

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670 Sonnenberg, “O reglamentacji”. Doctors in other European countries noted the same errors and problems decreasing the benefits of *visites sanitaires* – Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 137–138, Berlière, *La police*, pp. 83–86; Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, pp. 201–202.

671 The reply several dozen doctors gave to the survey organised by the feminist periodical *Ster*, which asked doctors in 1913 whether the system of regimentation of prostitution ought to be preserved. All answers in *Ster*, no. 1–2, 3, 4–5 (1914).

672 APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 23–39; L 1900:52, k. 72.

673 APŁ, RGK, WL, j.a. 7857, k. 188. Even in 1860s another physician criticised the execution of supervisory regulations (yet not the idea itself) mentioning the impunity of prostitutes, the practice of evading examinations and the long periods of waiting to be admitted to hospital – Józef A. Rolle, “Materyały do topografii i higieny Podola (Prostytucja)”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 38 (1869).

674 Jan Papeć, “Choroby weneryczne”, *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 7 (1904). His views leaned towards neo-regimentation.

regimentation as absolutely necessary. Given the ubiquity of paid sexual services, prostitutes constituted a real and substantial threat to the community's health, especially since only between ten and twenty percent of diseased persons were willingly seeking medical assistance in hospitals. On the other hand, the existence of a system of regimentation could also dissuade people from undergoing hospitalisation, as it created a clear association between treatment and prostitution. Since more detailed information may be gleaned from statistical data and Giedroyć's calculations presented in his book,<sup>675</sup> it suffices here to present only his conclusions regarding the danger posed by prostitutes. According to Giedroyć, 82% of professionally active public women had undergone (or were infected with) syphilis and could experience a relapse within the next three to five years. He estimated that at the beginning of each year, 40.5% of licentious women posed a threat of infection (at any given period in time, an average of 22.51% of all professionally active prostitutes would carry the disease at its most contagious stage, and a further 17.54% at a relatively contagious stage), while the rest would already have undergone the disease (and its relapses), thereby posing no danger upon contact. He did, however admit, that doctors were yet unable to identify the specific moment when the blood of an infected patient ceased to be a potential source of infection (or when it began to pose danger).<sup>676</sup>

The calculations presented by Giedroyć (and other physicians as well) were rather far-fetched and contradictory, presenting conclusions based on data from very short periods as universal truth. Under such circumstances, the only solution was to follow common sense – a method which appealed to many. The great physician and scholar Alfred Fournier used it to defend the regimentation system at the medical conference in Brussels in 1899, stating: "If a woman afflicted with *condylomata lata* or chancres staying in the St. Lazarus hospital retires for the night, she is alone and therefore harmless. . . However, what would she do on that same night, were she free to roam as she pleased? Surely, she would spread disease to one or several men".<sup>677</sup> For the sake of these men, the system needed to be maintained.

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675 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, pp. 30–40.

676 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 32.

677 Emanuel Sonnenberg, "O reglamentacji", *Medycyna*, no. 11 (1905).

## Chapter 3 LEGAL PROSTITUTION: Social and demographic analysis

### 1. The scale and territorial distribution of licensed prostitution

In 1889, data regarding prostitution was collected in the entire Russian Empire, in accordance with a single model. In theory, this was to be achieved within one day (1st August), in practice, however, the information took several months to acquire. The idea originated from the Medical Department of the Ministry of the Interior, whose competences included the prevention of venereal diseases, and therefore also the issue of prostitution. Acting in cooperation with the Central Statistical Committee of Russia, the department's Bureau of Statistics and Epidemiology had prepared surveys inquiring about public houses (19 questions), their proprietesses and employees (29 questions), as well as independent prostitutes (29 questions). The results sent to St. Petersburg were grouped by the Medical Department by region (the 50 gubernias of European Russia, the Kingdom of Poland, Siberia, Central Asia and the Caucasus) and published in 1891.<sup>678</sup>

Naturally, the figures recorded therein represent the minimal scale of prostitution at the time (especially in the case of larger cities), since, as mentioned above, the phenomenon developed swiftly outside of the legal boundaries set by the State. Sometimes, the numbers presented in the census are lower than the ones in the local periodical reports dating from the 1880s; in all probability, the figures do not indicate any wish to artificially lower the scale of prostitution, but simply present the "image of the day" in a phenomenon that was statistically very fluid, as will be demonstrated below. Significantly, the survey provides various information regarding over two thousand women legally registered as prostitutes, and is the only set of data of such scale and amount of detail pertaining to prostitution in the Kingdom.<sup>679</sup> Thus, it cannot be disregarded as a source, even though the credibility of much of its content may be contested.

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678 *Prostitutsiya v Rossiyskoy imperii po obsledovaniyu 1-go avgusta 1889 g.*, St. Petersburg, 1891.

679 Another set of data regarding prostitution (the number of brothel owners and prostitutes) was collected during the first general census in Russia conducted in 1897, and featured in the section on professions. It contains less information than the 1880s census and is arguably less credible, as it was based solely on statements provided by the respondents.

Unfortunately, there is little possibility to verify the information by comparison or through analysing the circumstances of data collection. The modest correspondence pertaining to the census provides little insight on the circumstances in which the surveys were completed. It is only certain that the final figures do not represent the situation in any given day or even a week. In the Lublin Gubernia, for instance, the forms sent to the district chiefs on 29th June were dispatched to the gubernia authorities between August and October, and were not forwarded to St. Petersburg until 7th November 1889.<sup>680</sup> The doctors overseeing the medical surveillance of prostitutes in their designated regions were asked to complete the surveys on the basis of their conversations with public women and the proprietesses of brothel houses. The instructions encouraged doctors to provide extensive comments and notes, which would not fit into the size of the columns in the provided survey sheets. No trace of such comments may be found in the compilation made by the Department.<sup>681</sup> Arguably the most credible information came from what the doctor could copy from the women's passports or check in the documentation produced while executing surveillance. These included social background, the place of origin, marital status and age (although women would often state a completely different age in examination records made one month apart). However, information on the financial situation of the prostitute's family, her age at the time of her first sexual contact and the circumstances thereof, or even her previous occupation, could only be provided by the woman herself, and is therefore less reliable, either due to faulty memory or incomplete knowledge, or as a result of deliberate misinformation. However, it is this aspect of the survey – characterising the public women – that is the most meaningful and may be considered representative for tolerated prostitution. The faults in statistical sources were known both to their creators (starting from Parent-Duchâtelet, who gathered information material on over five thousand Parisian prostitutes) and to contemporary historians, who nonetheless usually have the option of comparing the results of many research projects on prostitutes conducted within a similar time frame.<sup>682</sup>

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680 APL, RGL, L 1889:11, k. 1–2; 1889:106, k. 6; RGIA, f. 1290, op. 2, d. 325. Officials in Warsaw, for instance, complained that they had had some problems in gathering all the required data regarding registered prostitutes within the specified time frame, RGIA, f. 1290, op. 2, d. 325, 1. 203–207.

681 APL, RGL, L 1889:106, k. 6.

682 E.g. in St. Petersburg, apart from the 1889 census, research was conducted by doctors Pyotr Oboznenko (over 4 thousand prostitutes) and Ivan Fedorov (over 2.5 thousand). See Engel, *Between*, pp. 172–173.

**Chart 1.** The number of tolerated prostitutes in 1889, both independent and working in brothel houses

Gubernia	In brothels – number	%	Independent prostitutes – number	%	Total
Warsaw	162	14.4	960	85.6	1122
Lublin	14	6.8	193	92.2	207
Piotrków	33	23.6	107	76.4	140
Kalisz	26	27.0	96	73.0	122
Płock	9	8.7	94	91.3	103
Łomża	11	11.7	83	88.3	94
Radom	11	16.6	55	83.4	66
Suwałki	20	33.9	39	66.1	59
Kielce	5	8.6	53	91.4	58
Siedlce	11	23.4	36	76.6	47
Total	302	14.9	1716	85.1	2018

Source: *Prostituciya*, Chart I, pp. 24–27.

The number of women legally involved in prostitution in the Kingdom of Poland was growing. In 1841 the police “knew” 823 public women, while in 1889, less than 50 years later, the number of licensed prostitutes already amounted to 2018 (Chart 1), and on 1st January 1909 to 2512.<sup>683</sup>

More than fifty percent of all public women were registered in the Warsaw Gubernia. The second largest concentration (with numbers five times smaller) was reported in the Lublin Gubernia, outperforming the Piotrków Gubernia (by 67 prostitutes) and the Kalisz Gubernia (by 85). The four regions combined held 80% of all licensed prostitution in the Kingdom.

The foremost position of the Warsaw Gubernia testifies to the unique role Warsaw played on the stage of public harlotry in the Kingdom of Poland. Out of 1122 prostitutes, 962<sup>684</sup> (85%) plied their trade in the capital. The scale of legal

683 Data pertaining to 1909 (as of 1st January) published in: *Vrachebny nadzor*, pp. 30–35.

684 According to the KL-P, in January there were 1255 registered women, in December there were 1186 – Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 20, Chart X. The number 962 recorded in the census may represent the state of affairs when the survey was being completed, yet one cannot exclude the possibility of a different categorisation of the collective “taken out” of the KL-P data by Giedroyć and the census officials. This demonstrates how relative the available data (in compiled form) may actually be.

prostitution in Warsaw was also very large in comparison with other cities in the Russian Empire. More than a half (54.3%) of the 7840 prostitutes registered in Russia were living on one of the three cities: St. Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw. With regard to prostitutes working outside of brothel houses, the capital of the Kingdom of Poland took second place after St. Petersburg.<sup>685</sup>

When compared, the numbers of licensed prostitutes in Warsaw recorded in successive years suggest that a breakthrough seems to have occurred in the mid-1860s. In 1841–1864, the annual average of public women in the city amounted to 442, but in 1865–1872 it was already twice as large (912), and had increased threefold by 1882–1889 (1408).<sup>686</sup> While the upward trend is indisputable, the precise date of the quantitative leap (if it indeed occurred) raises some doubts, since the changes observable in police registers did not directly reflect factual changes in the scale of the phenomenon, but, to a large extent, resulted from the level of activity of the police supervision, which greatly increased after 1867, following the establishment of the KL-P at the chancellery of the chief police inspector. This being said, the dynamic demographic growth of the capital noted at the turn of the centuries (particularly in the 1890s),<sup>687</sup> the rapid progress in industry since 1870s, and the improving situation of agriculture all

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685 The ten cities in Russia with the largest number of prostitutes in 1889 (the figures represent respectively: the number of prostitutes in brothels, and working individually): St. Petersburg (584, 1647), Moscow (924, 144), Warsaw (152, 810), Nizhny Novgorod (131, 531), Riga (289, 172), Odessa (271, 151), Kazan (134, 170), Kronshtadt (103, 116), Vilnius (120, 92), Rostov (176, 36), Kharkiv (181, 30) – *Prostituciya*, p. 24. In 1909 Warsaw replaced Moscow as the second largest centre for legal prostitution in Russia. The list of cities with over a hundred public women started to include Łódź (22nd place) – *Vrachebny nadzor*, pp 54, 61.

686 Calculations based on the data presented in: *Wykład*, p. 406; Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, pp. 18–20, Chart X. In Giedroyć's calculations, in 1882–1889 per every 1000 women there were between 5.45 (1888) and 11.86 (1882) prostitutes (p. 69, Chart XXXIX). Giedroyć groups together prostitutes living individually, working in brothels and meeting houses, and “women subject to mandatory examinations.” Between 1882–1887, the latter category included an average of 552 women (it no longer appears in statistical data after 1888). It is, however, uncertain whether they were included in the data published in *Wykład*.

687 Maria Nietyksza, *Ludność Warszawy na przełomie XIX i XX wieku* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1971), p. 28; The faster pace of Warsaw's demographic growth in comparison with other European cities was noted by Józef Konczyński, *Ludność Warszawy. Studium statystyczne 1877–1911* (Warsaw: Kasa im. Mianowskiego 1913), p. 14.



facilitated the swift development of prostitution – which usually flourishes in prosperous times, generating new customers, as well as during periods of economic crisis, which, in turn, result in an increase in the percentage of women in dire financial situation. Full of garrisoned soldiers (in 1882–1884 their numbers in Warsaw and the surrounding countryside amounted to 71–79 thousand, with 31–36 thousand permanently stationed in the city itself), offices, schools and universities, marketplaces, theatres, shops, entertainment venues, and partying crowds (landed nobility, the new social strata of bourgeoisie and workers, as well as fresh workforce arriving to the metropolis from almost all corners of the country), Warsaw offered the best conditions for the development of paid sexual services. It was also facilitated by the demographic structure of the city's permanent population. In 1882 (when a census was conducted) nearly half of the working-age men (46.7%) and women (49.4%) remained single (27% of men and 26% of women in the most sexually active age group of 20–35).<sup>688</sup> The large 19th-century city created a market for prostitution and, in a sense, protected it, providing the best space for such activities.

The only other city in the Kingdom whose economic and demographic growth at the end of the 19th century could compare to Warsaw was the industrial Łódź. Its population increased at a truly astonishing rate – in 1880 it amounted to over 77 thousand, whereas in 1907 to ca. 330 thousand.<sup>689</sup> Yet, according to the 1889 census, the centre of this city housed no more than 57 tolerated prostitutes. Other sources indicate that their numbers must have been greater, since the 1891 register comprised 90 names.<sup>690</sup> The case of Łódź provides an example of the low reliability of the survey data, highly dependent on the efficiency of surveillance in a given region. Systematic and centrally governed control over prostitution had not been instituted in Łódź until mid-1880s, which is when at least some of the prostitutes were forced to register. In 1894–1904 there were, on average, 276 licensed public women residing in the city; the Łódź-based doctor Margulies

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688 Giedroyc, *Prostytutki*, pp. 6–13. He calculated that in 1882–1889 for every 1000 men aged 16–60 (including the military permanently stationed in the city) there were 82.8 “women engaging in “extramarital sexual life”, 13.28 independent prostitutes and 3 prostitutes employed in brothels. The proportion is even higher if only unmarried men are considered: respectively 137.9, 22.1 and 5.79 per 1000 men (Chart XL, p. 70).

689 Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wizerunek*, p. 13.

690 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 129; According to Sikorska-Kowalska, the number of registered women was even larger: 65 in 1882, 173 in 1886, 300 in 1890. However, the source she cites does not present any such data; most likely the footnote contains some mistake – Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wizerunek*, p. 61.

regarded this figure as a fraction of the actual numbers of women offering sexual services for a fee. The average number of women apprehended on suspicion of prostitution in that period amounted to 380. By 1909, the Piotrków Gubernia and its largest metropolis became the second largest centre for prostitution, with 328 legally registered women, 207 of whom resided in Łódź (an increase rate of 3.6%).<sup>691</sup> Police supervision in Łódź most likely continued to be relatively inefficient, and the officers (as noted in the previous chapter) were susceptible to bribery. It may also be surmised that a large portion of the potential clientele of legal prostitutes allayed their sexual needs through casual relationships within their own social class (workers) or by taking advantage of women's dependent position in employment relationships (foremen, technical staff).

In general, the figures do not correspond with the views expressed at the time in the press, which bemoaned the mass scale and "unprecedented growth" of prostitution in Łódź and Warsaw. Not caring to provide any evidence, journalists and moralists presented rather improbable numbers of illicit prostitutes (compared e.g. to the number of single women in the appropriate age group), amounting to as many as 50 thousand in Warsaw and 20–25 thousand in Łódź.<sup>692</sup> Wishing to elicit the right response, the authors were rarely precise, and may have deliberately exaggerated the scale of the phenomenon they discussed in the moral context. These opinions are, however, more congruent with the views of historians of prostitution and urban development in Europe, who regard the rapid expansion of the phenomenon in the 19th century as a side effect, or even a functional consequence of the first stage in the development of a modern industrial city, involving rapid changes, serious demographic and social problems which bred difficulties in acclimatisation that, in turn, led to various pathologies.<sup>693</sup> In absolute terms, the cities of the Kingdom of Poland never had as many

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691 Margulies, "Prostytucya", p. 539; *Vrachebny nadzor*, p. 32.

692 Stanisław Koszutski, "Na mównicy. Walka z prostytutką", *Głos*, no. 25 (1900); Since the factual scale of prostitution cannot be ascertained, the problem should not be minimised either, as its significance did not lie solely in the scope. It should also be noted that registered prostitutes constituted only a small fraction (26–30% in 1882–1884) of all women known to the KL-P and suspected of prostitution. In 1882, for instance, there were 942 licensed women, while the number of all other individuals arrested for harlotry, the "clandestine" prostitutes subject to surveillance, amounted to 2239 (*Izvecheniye*, pp. 2–3).

693 Some historians even deem prostitution to be the most characteristic feature of 19th-century urban culture. For more information and literature on this hypothesis, see Evans, "Prostitution", p. 106.

residents and prostitutes as London, Paris or later Berlin, yet the pace of transformations was indeed extreme and detectable for both their permanent and new residents. In 1889 more than half (55.5%) of the registered prostitutes in the Kingdom lived in one of three cities: the two large metropolises of Warsaw and Łódź, or the gubernia capital of Lublin (102 prostitutes, second only to Warsaw) which had a population of ca. 50 thousand. In 1909 Lublin lost its position to Kielce (102 prostitutes, compared to 50 in Lublin). Fifty seven percent of all prostitutes resided in these three cities. In 1909 almost 3/4 (72%) women legally registered as prostitutes worked in one of 10 cities in the Kingdom: Warsaw (1 127 prostitutes), Łódź (207), Kielce (102), Radom (81), Zamość (69), Włocławek (52), Lublin (50), Augustów (43), Mariampol (41), Kutno (41).<sup>694</sup>

Chart 1 aggregates the number of prostitutes in each gubernia, whereas the data published by the Ministry of the Interior presented a separate figure for every locality in which even a single public woman had registered. This approach provides a more accurate picture of the phenomenon's territorial distribution. If one disregards Warsaw with its concentration of nearly 50% of all licensed prostitutes (which considerably changes the resulting picture) and collate the number of public women according to the status of the given locality (gubernia seats, district towns, other towns and settlements, villages), it becomes clear that the incidence of prostitution was spread rather evenly throughout the entire Kingdom. Naturally, the administrative status of a town did not always correspond to its actual situation, role in the region or the size of its population, yet nonetheless provides some information on its nature. The services of public women, especially those rendering them on an independent basis, were available in all gubernia cities (48.2% prostitutes), in the majority of district towns (36.4%), in several other towns and settlements (8.25%), and even in the countryside (3.6%; this is how I interpret the cases noted as "in the district"). It may also be stated that nearly half of the registered prostitutes (44.5% after subtracting the ones in Warsaw, Lublin and Łódź) supported themselves by such means in medium-sized, small, or even very small localities, not necessarily residing there permanently, but only visiting for certain periods of time. In the course of the following twenty years (by 1909), prostitution had moved even more prominently to smaller towns (only 34% in gubernia capitals), localities with large military garrisons (Augustów, Mariampol, Włocławek, Zamość, Puławy) industrial centres (Łódź, Tomaszów in the Piotrków Gubernia, Sosnowiec) and others, which the press reported as "the transplantation of the

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694 *Vrachebnyy nadzor*, pp. 30–35.

degenerate urban morals to smaller towns as they developed closer ties to large cities”, a process facilitated by the improvement of communication and the economic upturn. Prostitutes could make some profit there during market days and church fairs, as well as, as one journalist noted, during family celebrations such as weddings and christenings.<sup>695</sup>

The phenomenon of prostitution is usually associated with urban centres, yet research pertaining to different time periods increasingly often reveals its presence also in rural areas. It involves two separate aspects – the seasonal prostitution of country women practiced in the city, and prostitution in the countryside. In Augustów, for instance, girls from the surrounding towns and villages (Szczebry, Jeleniewo, Dowspudy, Kolnica) engaged in prostitution in winter months, when no work needed to be done in the fields.<sup>696</sup> A similar situation was reported in the Lublin Gubernia. One official from the Lubartów District did not categorise such women as professional prostitutes, i.e. ones who “had turned debauchery into a stable occupation.” As he explained, “the women engaging in harlotry are peasants trailing after the army, who come back to tend to the fields at such times as the army is out of Lubartów, for which reason they cannot be included in the category of independent prostitutes (*odinochky*).”<sup>697</sup> The district doctor of Lipnica (the Płock Gubernia), in turn, wrote: “The countryside, the traditional sanctuary of purity, does not yet grant the right of citizenship to the loathsome city harlots, yet harbours an ever growing number of female individuals who divide their time between rural occupations that give them the semblance of permanent residence, and forays into the surrounding cities for streetwalking ventures.”<sup>698</sup> Medical and police committees noted: “harlotry is also spreading among women in the countryside.” This was mostly due to the presence of the army, which attracted prostitutes from many different localities; prolonged stays of garrisoned soldiers also prompted rural women to engage in paid sexual services.<sup>699</sup> The physician Józef Apolinary Rolle made a classification of rural

695 “Głosy”, *Głos*, no. 8 (1900).

696 Wojciech Batura, Andrzej Makowski, Jarosław Szlaszyński, *Dzieje Augustowa od założenia miasta do 1945 r.* (Suwałki: Zbigniew J. Filipkowski 1997), pp. 151–152.

697 APL, RGL, L 1898:52, k. 12; similarly also APL, RGL, L 1887:1, k. 17–18 (Kraśnik); 1888:7, k. 148–149 (Janów).

698 *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Lekarskiego Warszawskiego*, Vol. X, lib. 11 (1866), p. 375. The most prone to prostitution were rural women “of libertine living” and “of highly suspicious living.”

699 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 30; See information on prostitution in the village of Aleksota in the Mariampol District, where the 110th Kamsk Infantry Regiment was stationed in 1888. The number of infected soldiers and villagers was so high that the decision

prostitutes in Podolia (indicating the difference between debauchery and prostitution), which included married women, recruits (i.e. women whose husbands were in the military) and unmarried mothers.<sup>700</sup> Naturally, one cannot automatically assume that the same phenomenon could be observed in the countryside of the Kingdom of Poland, yet the belief in the strict morals in the Polish countryside (also perpetuated at the time) ought to be disregarded as a myth. It is dispelled by diaries (e.g. Stefan Żeromski's observations during his work as a tutor in noble estates<sup>701</sup>), research conducted by Polish ethnologists on the subject of peasant sexuality, as well as studies on folklore.<sup>702</sup> There was an extent to which violations of the formally established moral standards pertaining to sexual activity were, in fact, accepted. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that, as Rolle claimed, "legions of women" operated within this grey area, even though the already cited Stanisław Koszutski opined that the numbers of country girls dabbling in prostitution reached 20–25 thousand.<sup>703</sup>

In the Kingdom of Poland, prostitution functioned in regions that differed in terms of demographic, social, economic and cultural circumstances. The scale of the phenomenon in a given area was determined by a number of factors: the level of urbanisation, the size of the immigrant population, the age structure, gender structure and marital status structure of the local community, the economy of the region and the social functions of its main centre. These may only be discussed in relatively general terms, since it would be difficult to compare and interpret differences that amount to several individuals. The high positions of the gubernias to the west of the Vistula river – the Warsaw, Piotrków and Kalisz ones – may be explained with industrialisation (Warsaw, Łódź, Częstochowa, Sosnowiec, Tomaszów, Kalisz, Zduńska Wola, Ozorków), the high level of urbanisation (the Piotrków Gubernia), the rate of employment in industry (the Piotrków and Warsaw Gubernia), or the large percentage of rural proletariat seeking their

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was taken to bring the prostitutes in the hamlet under medical and police supervision – LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 184, l. 1–10.

700 Rolle, "Materyały", pp. 306–307. More on the topic in Jolanta Sikorska-Kulesza, "Prostytucja w XIX wieku na Podolu w świetle badań Józefa Apolinarego Rollego", *Przegląd Wschodni*, Vol. 5, issue 3(19) (1998), pp. 443–446.

701 Żeromski used the metaphor of the brothel to describe the relations in the manor and the surrounding villages – Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, p. 507, also pp. 61, 484–487.

702 See Dobrosława Wężowicz-Ziółkowska, *Miłość ludowa. Wzory miłości wieśniaczej w polskiej pieśni ludowej XVIII–XX wieku* (Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 1991), pp. 17–48 (presenting the body of knowledge gathered by ethnologists).

703 Koszutski, "Na mównicy".

fortunes in the city (the Kalisz Gubernia). In other gubernias the decisive factor was usually the difficult financial situation of individuals who could not find employment in the countryside or in the nearest cities due to the poor development and the lack of industry (the Suwałki Gubernia). This being said, the scale or even the very presence of prostitution was mainly determined by the proximity of the army. As mentioned above, public women would usually leave the city if the garrison was redeployed (Janów, Biłgoraj, Tomaszów). Records of the medical and police committees testify that the number of prostitutes outside of the gubernia capitals (where their clientele comprised i.a. officials, students and workers) was mostly related to the presence of soldiers and, to a lesser extent, also workers (although this image may be somewhat distorted by the perspective of the source). Within 20 years after the census of 1889, the greatest increase in the number of licensed prostitutes was noted in the Suwałki Gubernia (239%), and the Kielce Gubernia (203%), with the industrialised Radom and Piotrków Gubernias falling behind (with 183% and 134% respectively).<sup>704</sup> This may be attributed to the relocation of the army to the east to reinforce the garrisons stationed there.<sup>705</sup> The army – and consequently prostitutes – arrived at the Suwałki Gubernia (formerly the Augustów Gubernia) in 1816. From the 1890s onwards, as the relations between Prussia and the Russian Empire underwent dramatic changes, the garrisons, already very sizable since the end of the January Uprising, were enlarged even further (10 thousand in Suwałki, 3 thousand in Augustów).<sup>706</sup> Large complexes of barracks were erected there in the 1890s. The presence of the army provided a much-needed boost to the economy of the region, which had been the least developed in the Kingdom.<sup>707</sup> This “market boom” allowed 60 to 140 women to support themselves from paid sexual services. Brothel houses employed almost as many people as several workshops in the gubernia.

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704 The number of prostitutes in 1909 by gubernia: Warsaw – 1283, Piotrków – 328, Lublin – 245, Suwałki – 141, Radom – 121, Kielce – 118, Płock – 84, Kalisz – 72, Łomża – 66, Siedlce – 54 (*Vrachebny nadzor*, pp. 30–35).

705 Dobroński, “Dyslokacja”, pp. 253–265.

706 Batura, Makowski, Szlaszyński, *Dzieje Augustowa*, p. 151.

707 On the economic situation in the gubernia: Elżbieta Kaczyńska, “Gubernia suwalska w świetle oficjalnych danych statystycznych w latach 1866–1914”, in: *Studia i materiały do dziejów Suwalszczyzny*, ed. Jerzy Antoniewicz, (Białystok: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965), pp. 283–316.

## 2. Brothel houses and their owners

Prostitution confined and isolated in brothel houses invariably remained the form of organisation most favoured by the proponents of regimentation. However, in 1889 only 14.9% of all prostitutes registered in the Kingdom of Poland plied their trade in such establishments. In Russia the differences in scale between confined and independent prostitution were not as prominent.<sup>708</sup> For instance, in the 50 European gubernias of the Empire, which amassed 7/10 of all tolerated prostitutes in Russia, the number of women remaining under medical and police control and working outside of brothels was only 10% greater than that of brothel employees (6826 and 6121 respectively).<sup>709</sup>

In 1889, the Kingdom of Poland had 48 legally operating brothels, distributed (with the exception of Warsaw) rather evenly throughout its gubernias.<sup>710</sup> The majority number – seventeen (35.4%) – of them were located in Warsaw, four in Suwałki,<sup>711</sup> two in Łódź,<sup>712</sup> Mariampol, Puławy and in three other gubernia capitals: Siedlce, Kalisz and Radom. The remaining four gubernia seats (Kielce,<sup>713</sup> Piotrków,<sup>714</sup> Łomża and Płock), as well as each of the twelve district towns

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708 *Prostitucija*, p. XI; The same could be said e.g. of Italy, where the percentage of licensed prostitutes working in brothels in 1881 was between 43% (in Calabria) and 44% (in Sardinia) and 82% (in Tuscany) – Gibson, *Prostitution*, p. 88; In 1909 the proportion of prostitutes in brothel houses in the Kingdom was already slightly higher, reaching 18.5%. This did not have much impact on the general situation.

709 The prostitutes registered in the Kingdom of Poland constituted over 1/10 of all tolerated prostitutes in Russia, who totalled 8047 independent women and 7538 brothel employees.

710 In total, there were 1216 brothel houses in the Russian Empire. The smallest number was found in the Kingdom of Poland (3.9%); 75% (912) of them were located in the 50 gubernias of European Russia.

711 In 1867 the city had 5 brothels, in 1908 only one, and three in 1911 (LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 131, l. 9–13; f. 1080, ap. I, b. 6, l. 1–21; f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 568, l. 1–45).

712 The first permit was issued in 1879. According to Sikorska-Kowalska, in 1895 Łódź boasted as many as 32 brothels, in 1897–11; Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wizerunek*, p. 61.

713 Two brothels in 1885 – APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15165, k. 12.

714 Two years later no licensed brothel house existed in the city. The KL-P in Piotrków advocated for allowing prostitution services to be legally rendered also in hotels and private houses, justifying this stance with the size of the city (30 thousand residents), the presence of three army regiments and 1000 bachelors “satisfying their needs with the help of prostitutes” among the students and factory workers. In the Committee’s estimation, Piotrków ought to have 20 to 40 public women (APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 170, k. 7).

(Częstochowa, Biłgoraj, Zamość, Pułtusk,<sup>715</sup> Szczuczyn, Lipno, Konin, Łęczyca, Kutno, Włocławek and Biała) had only one licensed brothel.

Map. Brothel houses in the Kingdom of Poland in 1889.



715 Also in 1897 – APW (Pułtusk branch), RGW, WL, Referat XIV, j.a. 1898:5.



The only gubernia city not marked on the above map is Lublin. No licensed brothel existed there in 1889, yet sources testify that at least one such institution operated there in other years.<sup>716</sup>

Archival sources add some information to the picture emerging from the census. They indicate that, at specific points in time, venues for legal prostitution had also existed in other localities. In the Lublin Gubernia, for instance, they could be found in the district town of Janów,<sup>717</sup> Chełm and the Irena settlement near Puławy. In the Lublin Suburb of Chełm, a public house of the lowest category run by Mindla Sztalgajm operated at least between 1882 and 1900; early in 1890 the district chief acceded to the request of Herman and Maria Zigel (a married couple), who wished to open another such venue in their property at Czarna Street.<sup>718</sup> Novoalexandrovsk (Puławy) had two brothels in 1882, one in the period between 1892 and 1895, and two again in 1899 (one for soldiers, one for officers), which continued to operate at least until 1902.<sup>719</sup> In the Piotrków Gubernia, a resident of Warsaw applied for the license to open a public house in 1895 and most likely succeeded, since one “house of harlotry” owned by “some Warsaw woman” operated there in 1904. In that same year licensed cathouses were also reported to exist not only in Łódź, but also in Rawa, Sosnowiec, Częstochowa and Piotrków.<sup>720</sup> With regard to the Kalisz Gubernia, one such venue employing 27 prostitutes operated in Sieradz in the 1890s.<sup>721</sup> Twenty years later (1909) only 25 brothels and 16 other “dens of iniquity” remained in the Kingdom. The largest decrease in their numbers was noted in Warsaw (from 17 to 5); Zamość, Puławy, Radom and Suwałki each had two

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716 In April 1898, one Lea Klain was granted permission to open a brothel house at no. 286a Dolnej Panny Marii Street. She ran the establishment until the end of 1905, when her duties were taken over by Lejba Markrejch. In 1905 a similar venue of a lower category (“for the needs of the Lublin garrison”) was opened in the same street by Tauba Szwarckopf – APL, RGL, L 1905:76, k. 2–12v, 28–32.

717 In 1890 there were as many as 3 brothels there – APL, RGL, L 1891:2, k. 32–34; the nearby Kraśnik, in turn, had 3 illicit brothels – APL, RGL, L 1899:20, k. 27.

718 APL, RGL, WP IV 1898:208, k. 19; L 1906:23, k. 21. It was still in operation in 1898.

719 APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:775, k. 47.

720 APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 37; Stanisław Skalski, “Prostytucya w gubernii piotrkowskiej”, *Zdrowie* 22, no. 8 (1906), pp. 549–553.

721 APL, RGK, j.a. 7857, k. 400–417; The query did not include the Łomża or the Radom Gubernia.

such venues.<sup>722</sup> The territorial distribution of public houses also changed – they appeared in Augustów, Ostrołęka, Międzyrzec Podlaski, Łowicz, Nowy Dwór and Sosnowiec, but were not reported by the medical-and-police committees in Łódź, Piotrków, Kielce, Płock, Lipno, Pułtusk, Szczuczyn, Łęczyca, Konin, Biłgoraj, Łomża and Siedlce, where they had existed in 1889.<sup>723</sup> Naturally, his does not have to mean that they had disappeared forever, although the times were already changing.

Some brothels operating in 1889 already had a long history (Chart 2), some of the ones in Warsaw and Płock had opened even before the January Uprising,<sup>724</sup> while four other venues (one in Piotrków, three in Warsaw) had been in business for over 21 years (up to 25).

Within the time frame classification used by the authors of the census, the majority of the brothels in the Kingdom (37.5 %) represented the medium categories, having operated for between 5 and 15 years. One third of them (33.3%) were new establishments (especially ones less than a year in business, constituting 12.5%). The least numerous (although by no means inconsiderable in percentage – 25%) were brothels at least 15 years in business. Public houses in the Kingdom of Poland were the most durable in the entire Russian Empire, with more than 60% staying in operation for over than 5 years. Their longevity testifies not only to the unwavering demand for their services (which is hardly surprising) and the profitability of the business, but also to the owners' efforts to meet the standards required for their license to be extended. In the periods of 1867–1870 and 1882–1885, for which the relevant data is available,<sup>725</sup> the percentage of establishments that closed every year was between 14% (1869) and 41% (1868), while the proportion of newly opened ones amounted to between ca. 12% (1867) and 29% (1869). It is uncertain whether the closing venues were old or operating for less than a year, or why this happened (was it e.g. due to having lost the licence?).

Criticism against public houses and the system that sanctioned their existence in Europe (voiced from the 1870s onwards), the practice of evading the

722 *Vrachebnyy nadzor*, pp. 30–35.

723 *Vrachebnyy nadzor*, pp. 30–35. The case of Łódź is intriguing – is it possible for a licensed brothel to have operated there in 1909? In 1901 the city had 14 of them – Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wizerunek*, p. 61.

724 Possibly since 1843 – APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 39; Lea Olender's venue in Puławy operated at least for 15 years (1888–1903), while Mindla Sztalgajm's house in Zamość – for 18 years (1882–1900) – APŁ, RGL, WP IV 1895:103, k. 21; 1900:463, k. 2–7.

725 *Statystyka lekarska (1867–1870), Izvlecheniye (1882–1885)*.

Chart 2. Brothel houses in 1889 by years in operation

Gubernia	One or less	2 years	Up to 3 years	Up to 4 years	Up to 5 years	Up to 10 years	Up to 15 years	Up to 20 years	Up to 25 years	Up to 50 years	Total
Warsaw	2	2	1	1	-	4	3	2	3	1	19
Kalisz	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	4
Kielce	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Łomża	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3
Lublin	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	4
Piotrków	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	4
Płock	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Radom	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Suwałki	1	1	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	6
Siedlce	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3
Total	6	7	3	2	1	11	6	6	4	2	48

Source: *Prostitucja*, chart IV, p. 11.

police-and-medical supervision, and the changing tastes of the clientele led to a decrease (sometimes very spectacular) in the numbers of these institutions, noticeable since the 1880s. They were replaced, especially in large cities, by entertainment venues (*café chantants*, or the so-called halls for dancing classes) featuring a female staff and women of loose morals. The police were also issuing an ever-increasing number of medical record books for prostitutes working independently, seeing this as a means towards curbing unsupervised prostitution. This was not the only argument for granting prostitutes more freedom. Another was verbalised by the president of Piotrków in 1891: “On the other hand, entering a brothel house is free for all, for which reason many individuals in a position of prominence find it impossible to visit such a house, as they could encounter their subordinates, e.g. an officer could meet a warrant officer or a simple soldier.”<sup>726</sup> The number of licensed women also grew. The changes were so vast and rapid that historians describe them as a collapse of the system of prostitution confined to brothel houses.<sup>727</sup> In Paris, for instance, the number of cathouses fell from ca. 250 in the 1840s to ca. 150 in 1870 and ca. 50 in 1900.<sup>728</sup> In St. Petersburg, the number of brothels continued to rise until the end of the 1870s (152 in 1852; 206 in 1879), but fell in the next decade (146 in 1883; 82 in 1889; 69 in 1897).<sup>729</sup>

In Warsaw (Chart 3), the first period of decline and stabilisation on the scale of several establishments was noted late in the 1840s and continued until the early 1860s. The following decade brought a multiplication of licensed brothels (up to over 40), most likely related to stricter surveillance, and approval for a larger number of establishments following the enlargement of Warsaw’s garrison and permission to open meeting houses, which the list groups together with brothels. Another change, perhaps more connected to the mentioned tendencies observable in other countries, came in the late 1870s and early 1870s, or perhaps slightly earlier in the 1870s (no data exists). The number of brothels decreased roughly by half. At the same time, there was an increase in various types of “secret hideous” and clandestine procurers who were, in fact, under the supervision of the KL-P. The

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726 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 170, k. 7–9.

727 Walkowitz, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p. 380.

728 Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 171–173; Harsin, *Policing*, pp. 309–311, chart 24; Similarly in England – Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes. Prostitution in the Nineteenth-Century* (London–New York: Routledge 1990), pp. 137, 144 (Glasgow); Bristow, *Vice*, pp. 160–161 (Manchester).

729 Lebina, Shkarovskiy, *Prostitutsiya*, pp. 22–24. The same was true of German cities – Evans, “Prostitution”, p. 114.

**Chart 3.** The number of brothels in Warsaw in 1821–1889

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1821	2	1847	11	1862	11
1822	15	1848	9	1863	23
1823	15	1849	8	1864	22
1824	16	1850	9	1865	39
1825	25	1851	8	1866	42
1826	20	1852	8	1867	39
1827	9	1853	8	1868	34
1828	7	1854	8	1869	39
1829	4	1855	8	1870	40
1830	3	1856	8	1871	41
1842	14	1857	8	1882	17
1843	15	1858	8	1883	15
1844	15	1859	8	1884	14
1845	17	1860	7	1885	16
1846	13	1861	9	1889	17

Source: Karpińska, *Złodzieje*, p. 56 (1821–1830; based on Mackrott's reports that may not include all brothels); *Wykład*, 406 (1842–1864; 1871); *Statystyka* (1867–1870); *Izvlacheniyе*, pp. 1–2 (1882–1884).

prosperity of Warsaw's brothels which continued (with some fluctuations)<sup>730</sup> until the end of the 19th century, ended abruptly after the introduction of monopoly on spirits, which took away brothels' rights to sell alcohol. The last nail in their proverbial coffin were the pogroms of 1905, discussed in the previous chapter. Many prostitutes and organisers of the business fled from Warsaw at the time, and brothel houses were replaced with cabarets, third-rate hotels and furnished rooms rented out by the hour.<sup>731</sup> The census of 1909 reported only five brothels.

<sup>730</sup> Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, pp. 56–58. The author divided the history of Warsaw's prostitution in the last 30 years of the Kingdom of Poland into four periods: 1878–1884 (the “fat years”, which he attributes to the wealth of the landed nobility and the development of industry); 1884–1898 (a period of slight decline related to the crisis that followed the introduction of grain imports to Germany, and the moving of Warsaw factories to centres by the Dnieper); 1898–1905 (after the introduction of the monopoly on spirits, brothels were nonetheless supported by tradesmen coming to acquire goods in Warsaw and Łódź) and the decline after 1905.

<sup>731</sup> The paper *Dzień* mentioned 70 such hotels existing in Warsaw in 1914. – “Z Warszawy. Hotelarstwo i prostytutcja”, *Dzień*, no. 309 (1914).

In Congress Poland, brothel houses were divided into two categories distinguishable (formally) by the number and kind of levies they needed to pay to the city.<sup>732</sup> The *Regulations* issued for Warsaw in 1843 already mentioned four types of “houses of public women”, differing in terms of acceptable location, prices and kinds of services, fees and interior decoration.<sup>733</sup> Houses of the top two categories could be located in “more decent” streets, receive guests until midnight and send women out to meet their clients in private apartments. The maximum price in an establishment of the 1st category was set to 1.5 roubles (3 roubles for an outside appointment), while those of the 2nd category could charge only half as much. Only brothels of the highest class could apply for a license to serve food. Accordingly, they were expected to have a “better” decor and had to pay higher levies: the annual fee of 15 roubles for a first-class establishment (12 for a second class one) and a monthly fee of 75 kopecks per prostitute (60 for 2nd class brothels). Brothels classified into the remaining two categories were situated in “side” or “more remote” streets, could stay open only until 10 PM and did not offer – at least in theory – any services other than sexual contact (for 30 kopecks in a brothel of the 3rd category and 10 in a 4th category one). The annual levy for running such a business was 10 and 6 roubles respectively, while the monthly fee per prostitute amounted to 45 kopecks.

Official correspondence from outside of Warsaw reveals the factual categorisation of tolerated houses. Some of them (the “student and officer ones”) catered for “the intelligent public”, others (the “soldier ones”, or “houses of the lowest rank” with “prostitutes of the lowest kind”) served “the simple public” of “lower classes and soldiers.”<sup>734</sup> In reality, the situation in Warsaw was very similar – the majority of brothels in the city belonged either to the 2nd or to the 4th category. In 1867–1870 and 1882–1885 the “better” establishments were more numerous, amounting to between 51% (1867) and 76% (1882). In the 1860s their number exceeded 20; in later decades there were still more

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732 Giedroyć, *Rada*, pp. 659–660.

733 *Przepisy*, art. 74, 81, 82, 110, 111; The terms used for such establishments included: *dom nierządu publicznego* [a house of public harlotry], *dom jawnego nierządu* [a house of overt harlotry] or, mirroring the French term, *dom tolerowany* [tolerated house, Rus. *dom terpimosti*). In many other countries the established name for such legally operating brothels was ‘closed house’ (French: *maison close*; It: *case chiuse*).

734 APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:103 (Puławy); 1895:775, k. 47; 1900:463, k. 2–3 (Zamość); L 1899:20, k. 190; 1905:76, k. 5–12, 28–29 (Lublin). Similarly in Łódź, Piotrków – APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 8.

than ten. The cheapest ones numbered more than ten in the 1860s and 4 in the 1880s. Higher-class brothels were also less likely to close; in 1867 their number decreased by 9%, in 1868 by 31%, in 1869 by 21%, which was nonetheless counterbalanced by the opening of new ones. With regard to brothels for the poorest citizens, more of them closed than opened (in the 1880s the decrease in their number was even greater).<sup>735</sup>

The Warsaw *Regulations* of 1843 introduced the possibility of opening meeting houses (*dom osobennykh svidaniy*, *maison de passe*, *maison de rendez-vous*), to which prostitutes would come to see their clients. In principle, these establishments were to cater for middle- and upper-class men, “facilitating their trysts with women, but only such as remained under medical surveillance and carry a record book testifying to their good health at the latest examination.” The privileged status of such places is evident from the specific concessions: location in streets “of the second rank”, license to play music, organise dancing, and (after acquiring a separate permit) serve food, staying open throughout the night.<sup>736</sup> Consequently, meeting houses were venues of “higher” entertainment. Premises called *maison de passe* could be rented out for several hours to a customer of any gender, whereas the term *maison à parties* (or *maison de rendez-vous*) was used in Warsaw to denote meeting houses in which “entrepreneurs” of higher standing organised social evenings and balls, arranged meetings between wealthy clients and women who were not always professional prostitutes but, as one contemporary reported, members of the “decent classes” of society.<sup>737</sup> In the 1890s, one such place of entertainment and socialisation (and not paid sexual services) in the capital was Tomaszowa’s venue neighbouring with the church at Długa Street.<sup>738</sup> The first venues of this kind, intended as an alternative for brothel houses and congregating individual prostitutes, were established in 1865 and immediately rose to popularity (19 in 1865, 22 in 1867). This form of rendering services was much more convenient for prostitutes, as it granted them more freedom and removed the stigma of a brothel even from the name. It was also believed that this solution would allow the police to maintain control over

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735 See footnote 722.

736 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 10. The records also include a form for the “License to run a meeting house of the 2nd rank in the city of Warsaw 187. . .”

737 Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, pp. 77–78; 140–145. The annual levy for running a meeting house was three times as high as for a category 1 brothel (1843).

738 Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, p. 43–44.

the behaviour and health of prostitutes, and provide men with a setting more discreet and intimate than the one offered in traditional brothel houses, which an increasing number of customers (also in Warsaw) started to avoid.<sup>739</sup> For customers seeking ever new experiences and new thrills, meeting houses created the illusion of an erotic adventure, offering more than merely the satisfaction of their sexual urges. However, the popularisation of meeting houses also meant that they soon lost their unique appeal. The census of 1889 mentioned only one such house in the entire Kingdom.

Permits to open meeting houses were issued outside of Warsaw as well. In Lublin the regulations specified two categories of such establishments, regarded as a more refined form of brothel. A higher-class meeting house was to be entirely safe in terms of sanitation, which the authorities intended to achieve by granting permits only to affluent individuals known to the police, and by setting very high fines for prostitutes falling ill or infecting a client. One such venue was opened in 1898. Lower-grade meeting houses were simply furnished apartments to which proprietors would procure licensed prostitutes.<sup>740</sup>

The census of 1889 classifies brothels into three categories according to the levies they paid (I – high; II – medium; III – low). The majority of brothels in the Kingdom catered for the more affluent clientele (53.2% were houses paying the high levy; 27.7% paid the medium one), while the cheapest ones were the least numerous. These were reported to exist only in the Warsaw Gubernia (66.7% of all brothels in this category in the Kingdom), the Łomża, Kalisz and Piotrków Gubernia, i.e. regions with the highest number of venues and the most diverse choice (with the exception of Łomża). Every gubernia had between 1 and 5 houses of the 1st and 2nd category; no third-category brothels were reported in the Siedlce, Płock, Lublin and Kielce Gubernias. The potential clientele of the least sophisticated establishments was more likely to allay their needs with clandestine prostitutes, if at all.

A colourful overview of the closed prostitution scene in Warsaw was left by Waclaw Zaleski. The chief police inspector Mikołaj Kleigels (1888–1896) forced brothel proprietors to move their establishments. He earmarked a section of Towarowa Street (between Krochmalna and Grzybowska) as the new location for brothels from Freta Street, Podwale and Nowe Miasto, where the conditions were very poor. His requirements were met by 8 owners, including Sonia Sawicka and Szlimakowska, who opened the most upscale venues. Their wealthy clients,

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739 Józef L., “Policja obyczajów”, *Głos*, no. 30 (1900); All across Europe brothel houses were evolving from “closed premises” to open establishments, further testifying to the failure of the regimentation system.

740 APL, RGL, L 1886:6, k. 79–80; WP IV 1898:89, k. 5–8.



**Chart 4.** The number of brothel houses in each of the three categories and the number of prostitutes employed there in 1889

Gubernia	Category I		Category II		Category III	
	Brothel houses	prostitutes	Brothel houses	prostitutes	Brothel houses	prostitutes
Warsaw	5	54	8	72	6	36
Kalisz	2	21	1	2	1	3
Kielce	1	5	–	–	–	–
Łomża	1	4	1	1	1	6
Lublin	3	11	–	–	–	–
Piotrków	2	21	1	3	1	9
Płock	2	9	–	–	–	–
Radom	1	6	1	5	–	–
Suwałki	5	16	1	4	–	–
Siedlce	3	11	–	–	–	–
Total	25	158	13	87	9	54

Source: *Prostituciya*, chart V, p. 12.

hailing mostly from the nobility, could entertain themselves and engage in amatory pursuits surrounded by scenes from French military history, as befitted the descendants of noble knights. The first marbles, columns, chambers of mirrors, spacious boudoirs and bedrooms to be seen in Warsaw's houses of pleasure were reputedly toured even by ladies from polite society.<sup>741</sup>

Information on the appearance of brothels in smaller cities may be found in (scarce) on-site verification reports written before a license was granted. In the Irena settlement near Puławy (1896) the establishment comprised two houses in a single yard. The front one had three bedrooms with four beds each, and one common room. It also included a kitchen, a hall, and the hostess' room. As a venue "furnished in a relatively comfortable and decent manner", it was intended to serve "more intelligent guests", in contrast to the house in the back, which had two separate rooms with two beds each, to cater for the needs of soldiers, warrant officers and members of the "simple classes."<sup>742</sup> In 1903, Icek Edelman, the

741 Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, pp. 46–53.

742 APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:775, k. 9. The arrangement of two beds per room soon ceased to be acceptable, the authorities required rooms divided with screens (L 1903:106, k. 10), and finally separate spaces for each prostitute and her "guest" (1903).

owner of one Lublin brothel rented five rooms for the needs of his establishment. The report noted that the common room had two windows, two rooms for four of the prostitutes working there also had windows, and only one chamber (also intended for two prostitutes) was windowless.<sup>743</sup>

The price list of brothel houses included three types of service: (1) a visit for a specified period of time (all houses), (2) a visit for the night (houses of the 1st category and some of the 2nd-class ones; although, as the census in Łomża and Kalisz indicates, also brothels of the lowest category) and (3) hiring a prostitute to arrive at a different address (1st category). The prices per visit reported in the survey varied depending on the class of the establishment and the region in which it was located, from 15 kopecks in the Warsaw Gubernia (3rd category, but more often 30 or 50 kopecks)<sup>744</sup> to 3 roubles (1st category, the most expensive venues in the Warsaw and Piotrków Gubernia cost 2–3 roubles per visit, in the Kalisz Gubernia 1–2 roubles, and in other regions 1 rouble). A night's stay at one of the finest houses was, naturally, more costly: the lowest prices were noted in the Siedlce Gubernia (1.5 rouble), the highest – in the Piotrków (10 roubles) and Warsaw Gubernia, where the cheapest venues charged 5 roubles.<sup>745</sup> The option of sending a prostitute to a client's apartment or to a hotel, which the census reports as available only in three gubernias in the Kingdom, was in fact very common. Sometimes the client was not even aware of the factual profession of the woman procured to him by the intermediary of the hotel valet. When the "provincial lover" did not want a professional harlot, he got a "sewing girl" or a "clandestinely active married woman", who was, in fact, an employee of a local brothel house. The client would have his erotic adventure, while the woman would practice her acting skills.<sup>746</sup> What is more, brothels could also organise "business tours", e.g. proprietesses from Warsaw would take their employees to market fairs in Łowicz and Skaryszew, while the prostitutes of Włocławek would sometimes visit Płock.

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743 APL, RGL, L 1903:76, k. 9; A description of a slightly more upscale establishment in Płock in Druzhinin, *Prostitutsiya*, p. 6.

744 APL, RGP.WL, j.a. 38, k. 10.

745 Naturally, the prices were changing throughout the analysed period, dictated by law and – most of all – by the market itself. The regulations of 1877 set the price of a visit in a brothel for the lower classes (especially soldiers) at 15 silver kopecks. The 1896 "Instruction" for brothel houses in Łódź specified 50 kopecks as the maximum price. The license form (box 2) specified 6 roubles as the maximum price "for availing oneself of a woman", while "the remuneration for an entire night" could be "set by a mutual agreement" – APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 37, n. pag.

746 Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, p. 157.

**Chart 5.** The fees paid by brothel house customers in 1889 (in roubles)

Gubernia	Category I			Category II			Category III		
	Per visit	Per night	Outside of the brothel	Per visit	Per night	Outside of the brothel	Per visit	Per night	Outside of the brothel
Warsaw	2-3	5-10	-	0.5-1	2-5	0.15	0.5	-	-
Kalisz	1-2	2-3	3-4	0.5-1	-	1.5-2	0.5	0.5-1	-
Kielce	1	2-5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Łomża	1	2	-	0.5-1	1-2	-	0.3	1	-
Lublin	1	2-4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Piotrków	2-3	3-10	-	-	-	-	0.5	-	-
Płock	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Radom	1	3	-	0.5-1	1.5-2	-	-	-	-
Suwałki	1	3	-	0.3	-	-	-	-	-
Siedlce	1	1.5-5	2-6	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: *Prostituciya*, chart II, pp. 6-7.

The author providing this information states that “these were usually of inferior categories and if they found clients at all, it was only due to the novelty of it and the men’s necessities.”<sup>747</sup>

The number of prostitutes in the brothels of the Kingdom was not high (Chart 6). At the time of the survey, the 48 establishments were legally employing 302 women, more than 50% of whom (162) worked in the Warsaw Gubernia. This was related to both the large number of brothels in the capital, as well as the fact that the largest establishments were located there. Most bawdy houses had no more than five women employed at any given time. In the Warsaw Gubernia, however, as many as 10 out of 17 establishments offered the services of more than six, with four venues employing between 16 and 18 sex workers. Their existence tipped the balance of the average size of brothels in the Kingdom (that amounted to 6.4), even though 75% of provincial brothels hired up to 5 women. Large houses of pleasure also existed in Kalisz (one with 17 women) and Piotrków (8, 9 and 13 employees), since the local authorities allowed for large establishments

<sup>747</sup> Druzhinin, *Prostitutsiya*, pp. 4-5.

**Chart 6.** The number of brothels by the number of prostitutes employed there in 1889

Gubernia	Number of prostitutes																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Warsaw	–	1	1	2	4	1	1	2	1	–	2	–	–	–	–	1	1	2
Kalisz	–	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Kielce	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Łomża	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lublin	–	–	1	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Piotrków	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
Płock	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Radom	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Suwałki	–	2	1	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Siedlce	–	1	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	3	5	6	6	9	4	1	3	2	–	2	–	1	–	–	1	2	2

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart. II, pp. 6–7.

to be opened,<sup>748</sup> whereas the ones in Suwałki and Mariampol were very small in scale.<sup>749</sup>

The greatest number of prostitutes in Warsaw were employed in 4th grade establishments (according to the classification in the source document). In 1867 the average number of employees there amounted to 12.9 women (compared to 6 in 2nd category venues), and in 1868 to 11.7 (compared to 6.4 in 2nd grade ones).<sup>750</sup> The management of brothels was a highly feminised profession, an aspect of female business activity in urban areas.<sup>751</sup> The first regulations pertaining to

748 According to the 1843 regulations, the minimum was 5 women; the “Instruction” of Łódź’s chief police inspector allowed for a brothel to employ up to 18 prostitutes – APŁ, RGP WL, j.a. 37.

749 It was not always so, e.g. in 1908 Brafman’s establishment employed 9–11 women – LVIA, f. 1080, ap. 1, b. 5, l. 4–13.

750 The size of brothels in Warsaw was gradually decreasing: 10.8 employees in 1867; 8.3 in 1868; 7.8 in 1869; 7.8 in 1870 (*Statystyka*). A similar trend was observable in most European countries, e.g. the average in Parisian brothels was as follows: 8.4 in 1867; 8.6 in 1877; 9.4 in 1887; 10.1 in 1897; 4.5 in 1900; 4 in 1902; 3.1 in 1903 (Harsin, *Policing*, pp. 309–311). British houses of pleasure usually employed 2 or 3 women (Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 24). Small establishments also dominated in other parts of the Russian Empire.

751 Karpiński, *Kobieta*, p. 154.

**Chart 7.** The age of brothel managers in the Kingdom of Poland in 1889

Gubernia	25–30	30–35	35–40	40–45	45–50	50–55	Over 55
Warsaw	2	4	5	3	3	2	–
Kalisz	–	2	2	–	–	–	–
Kielce	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Łomża	–	–	1	2	–	–	–
Lublin	–	1	3	–	–	–	–
Piotrków	–	–	2	2	–	–	–
Płock	–	1	–	–	–	1	–
Radom	–	–	1	1	–	–	–
Suwałki	2	–	2	1	–	–	1
Siedlce	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Total	6	8	17	10	3	3	1

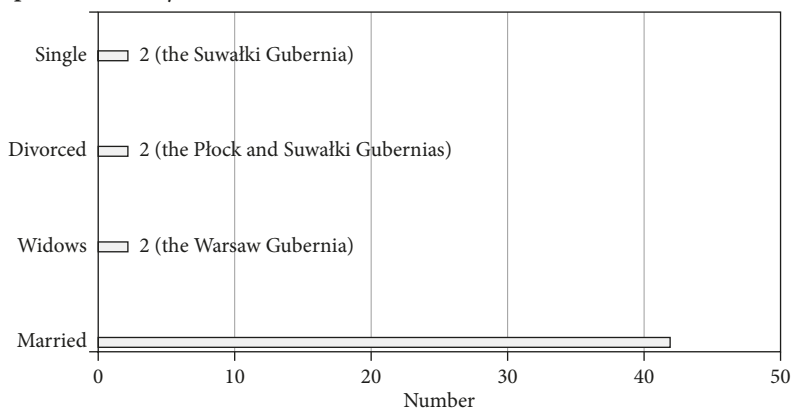
Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart VII, p. 16.

the functioning of brothels made no mention of the gender of the owners, even though the opinion that few permits should be issued to men was indeed voiced, justified with the claim that “this leads to frequent arguments between the proprietor, the public women and the guests.”<sup>752</sup> In the latter half of the 19th century, permits started to be issued to women only (Warsaw, Łódź, Piotrków).<sup>753</sup> From 1903 onwards the same rule applied in the whole of Russia.

The 1889 census also provides information on the denomination, ethnicity, social provenance, marital status and age of 48 women who acted as managers of brothel houses. In 1903 the minimum age for a brothel owner was set to 35. If the same regulation was in place at the time of the census, around 2/3 of proprietesses would not qualify (Chart 7).

<sup>752</sup> Grabowski, *O chorobie*, p. 21.

<sup>753</sup> APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 7v (the 1870s); j.a. 37, n. pag. (“Instruction”, 1896); In Augustów, the first brothel house was opened at the end of the 19th century – by a man – Batura, Makowski, Szlaszyński, *Dzieje Augustowa*, p. 152. In the column entitled “running brothel houses”, the general census of 1897 lists 28 men (and 27 women); most of these establishments were found in regions housing military units (11 in the Lublin Gubernia, including 8 in the Nowoaleksandrowsk district; 5 in the Suwałki Gubernia) and in the Piotrków Gubernia (6).

**Graph 1.** The family situation of brothel owners in 1889.

Source: *Prostituciya*, chart IX, p. 19; table VIII, p. 17.

The majority (56.25%) were mature women, between 35 and 45 years of age, with enough experience to handle such a specific establishment, its residents, clients and officers of the law.<sup>754</sup> Some of them may have received help from their spouses. At the time of the census, 42 (out of 48) brothel owners were married, two were widowed, two divorced, and only two single (Graph 1).

At the turn of the centuries, six out of the seven brothel proprietesses from the Lublin Gubernia who disclosed their marital status had a spouse. They were the owners of the houses where the establishments were located, and often featured in documents as their wives' business partners – engaging in procuration or running taverns in the same neighbourhood.<sup>755</sup> The regulations allowed them to live in the brothel house (as the proprietess was obliged to be present in the establishment at all times, to keep the peace), albeit in a separate section of the building, isolated from the rooms for prostitutes and for receiving clients (1903).

754 Kamiński viewed them as industrious, independent, cruel and, in a sense, respected – Kamiński, *O prostytutce*, pp. 147–148; In France as well, brothel management was an occupation of more mature women, mainly over 26 years of age – Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 92.

755 APL, RGL, W P IV 1898:208 (Chełm); 1895:775, k. 47–49 (Puławy); 1898:89, k. 1–46 (Lublin); KGL, j.a. 1893:291, k. 1–11.

**Chart 8.** The denomination and ethnicity of brothel managers in 1889

Governor- rate	Denomination				Ethnicity			
	Catholic	Mosaic	Protestant	Orthodox	Polish	Jewish	German	Russian
Warsaw	3	16	–	–	4	15	–	–
Kalisz*	1	3	–	–	3	–	–	1
Kielce	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	–
Łomża	–	3	–	–	–	3	–	–
Lublin	–	4	–	–	–	3	–	–
Piotrków	–	4	–	–	–	4	–	–
Płock	1	1	–	–	1	1	–	–
Radom	–	2	–	–	2	–	–	–
Suwałki**	1	3	1	1	–	3	2	1
Siedlce	–	3	–	–	–	3	–	–
Total	6	40	1	1	10	34	2	2

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart V, p. 13; table VI, p. 14.

\* One of the four owners described her ethnicity as German.

\*\* Two of the six owners were of the Protestant denomination and of the Russian and German ethnicity.

The brothel managers themselves could keep their children close by only when these were no older than 3 years of age.<sup>756</sup>

The ethnic background and religious denomination of women running brothel houses in 1889 (Chart 8) correspond to the stereotypical 19th-century view (especially prevalent in the later decades) that the profession had been entirely dominated by Jewish people: 34 of the respondents (70.8%) declared to be of Jewish ethnicity; even more of them (40–83.3%) were of the Mosaic denomination. Five of six women of the Mosaic creed described themselves as Polish (one in the Kalisz Gubernia could have been German, yet no conclusive statement can be made on the matter, as the primary source is no longer available). Polish ethnicity was declared by a total of 10 women. Six (12.5%) brothel managers were Catholic – four of them Polish, one Polish or German (in the Kalisz Gubernia), one Russian or German (the Suwałki Gubernia). The most

<sup>756</sup> A different view was offered by the physician Grabowski, who demanded (in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the civil legislation) that husbands issue an official permit for their wives to “follow such a lifestyle” (Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 21); APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:775, k. 5.

diverse region in this respect was the Suwałki Gubernia – the brothels there were run by several Jewish women, two Russians and one German.<sup>757</sup> Records dating from the very end of the 19th century also indicate that women of the Jewish ancestry were the majority among brothel owners. In the Lublin Gubernia, only one of the 25 managers known by name was not of the Mosaic denomination. A similar situation was reported in other gubernias,<sup>758</sup> yet the probative value of these data is low, since existing records contain very few mentions of brothel houses. Similarly, the few surnames of Warsaw brothel *mesdames* (Jabłonowska, Szadkowska, Jasińska) recorded in memoirs from the period of Congress Poland can give no certainty that in the 1st half of the century the occupation had indeed been dominated by Polish women.<sup>759</sup> After the limitations pertaining to the Jewish population were removed in the 1860s, brothel management (i.e. legal prostitution) was another branch of business activity to which they gained more access. The influx of Jews from other regions of the Empire (the so-called Litvaks) was also commonly associated with prostitution-related activity (e.g. procuration), at least by the press of the day.

The vast majority of brothel managers were of the bourgeois background (Graph 2) – a designation which is, nevertheless, rather unspecific. Only two came from families of a slightly higher status, i.e. merchants and so-called honorary citizens. Soldier wives constituted a specific category. The term applied to wives of soldiers who, having no man to take care of them and no sources of income, often followed the army and lived in the barracks or, in this case, sought

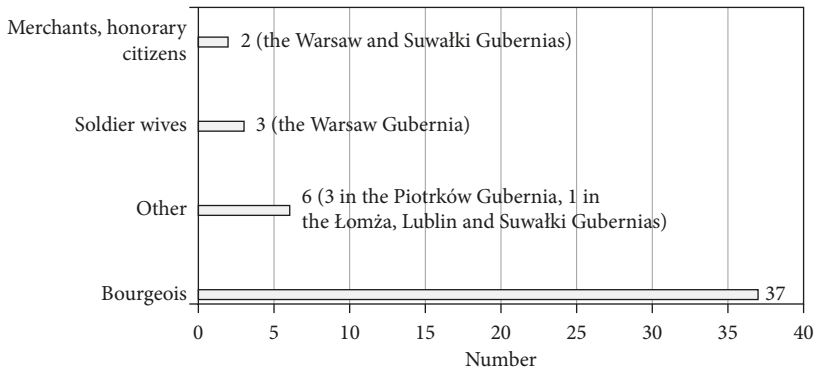
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757 Half of the brothel owners in the Empire were Russian (53.1%). Jewish women (27.6%) dominated the “industry” of legal prostitution in the 50 gubernias of European Russia (73.1% declared Jewish ethnicity, 71.6% the Mosaic denomination), the Kingdom of Poland, and Siberia (10.4% in each, and in terms of religion 13.2% and 10.6% respectively). With regard to Polish proprietesses (slightly more than 30 individuals, 2.6%) 61.3% ran their business in European Russia, 32.2% in the Kingdom, and the remaining 6.5% in the Caucasus – *Prostitutsiya*, pp. XII, XIII, XIV (the list in the table included 20 ethnicities).

758 Suwałki – see footnote 34; Płock – Druzhinin, *Prostitutsiya*, p. 6; Częstochowa – in 1891–1897 a brothel was run by one Frimszta Zylbersztejn – APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3396, k. 3–5; j.a. 3450, k. 8–10; all brothels in the Piotrków Gubernia (aside from Tomaszów, where no data exists) – Skalski, “Prostyucya w gubernii”, pp. 549–553.

759 Karpińska, *Złodzieje*, pp. 65–66; Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, pp. 46–53; Milewski, *Ciemne sprawy*, p. 78.



**Graph 2.** The social background of proprietesses in 1889.

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart IX, p. 19.

alternative methods of making money.<sup>760</sup> Prostitutes also recruited themselves from this group (up to 8% in the Russian Empire). The only information that may be discerned regarding the remaining six proprietesses is that they did not hail from the nobility, peasantry or clergy, and were not foreign.

The respondents of the survey were not asked about their education. The records only provide such data for four women.<sup>761</sup> Thus, it would hardly be sensible to assume that their level (illiterate) applied to all brothel managers, even though it does seem probable. Equally uncertain is the credibility of the image presented in the press and literature, where many proprietesses were said to be former prostitutes wise enough to secure their fortunes. Kamiński, who studied the issue in the 1870s, mentioned primarily former prostitutes provided with the necessary means by a business partner, then affluent tavern owners and clandestine procuresses, and finally the “decent classes” (e.g. a widow of a tax clerk). Brothel managers were also married to circus performers, actors, and former policemen.<sup>762</sup>

<sup>760</sup> Bourgeois background was the most common among brothel owners in the entire Russian Empire, yet the overall percentage was lower (47.5%) than in the Kingdom of Poland.

<sup>761</sup> APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:103, k. 1–10; 1889:89, k. 1–46; 1895:775, k. 49; 1900:463, k. 2–3.

<sup>762</sup> Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, p. 146; Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, p. 49.

The efficiency of the system or regimentation depended largely on the attitude of the individuals managing brothel houses. Since at least 1843, any person wishing to acquire a license for such a business needed to comply with certain requirements which were to guarantee that the brothel would be safe and cause no problems. For this reason, apart from proving they had sufficient means,<sup>763</sup> prospective managers had to qualify in terms of age and gender, as well as in terms of behaviour and moral traits. The requirement to present a note attesting to the peaceful and decent conduct and lack of a criminal record (issued by the precinct inspector) first appeared in the regulations of 1843.<sup>764</sup> It was stated expressly that the managers themselves were prohibited from engaging in prostitution, yet such a possibility was considered in the regulations pertaining to medical examination. According to Grabowski, an ideal brothel proprietress was a woman not prone to argument, legerdemain, drunkenness, disobedience, or insolence, and with no former history of fraud or “seducing adolescent girls.”<sup>765</sup>

The archives of the Lublin Gubernia testify that the police adhered to these regulations. Statements justifying the decision to grant the license note that the applicants were not prosecuted, are of proper conduct (F. Geller, Maria Forszteter), live quietly, were never investigated by law enforcement (Lea Klajn). In the case of Lea Olender, the governor’s chancellery opined that “nothing reprehensible in her political behaviour was noted, and the offenses in connection with which she appeared in court were trivial in nature.” Later, however, it was discovered that both she and her husband Szulim had been under overt police supervision for criminal activity and “depraved behaviour.” Documents concerning Jachweta Wajncenblit, who applied for permission to open a brothel in Puławy in 1895, stated that in 1884 she had been imprisoned for stealing watches. Gindla Berman was denied license “due to her improper conduct.”<sup>766</sup>

The procedure of applying for the license to run a brothel house started with filing a request at the relevant authority, which differed across regions and time periods: (1) in Warsaw such matters were first handled by the Magistrate, and after 1843 by the commissioner at the Medical Office (the signature of the chief

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763 E.g. Tauba Szwarckopf was granted a license to open a tolerated house in Lublin in 1901, which was later revoked because she did not have the required capital – APL, RGL, L 1905:76, k. 12.

764 *Przepisy*; APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 7–11, 98v.

765 Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 21. Curiously enough, brothel managers and prostitutes were sometimes suspected of lesbianism.

766 APL, RGL, W P IV 1891:23, k. 1–4; 1895:775, k. 47; 1895:103, k. 1–10,21; 1898:89, k. 1–46; RGL, L 1910:177, k. 1–61.

police inspector was required), and since 1867 by the KL-P, (2) in the country they were among the competences of the magistrates (the assent of the civil governor was required,<sup>767</sup> 1843), and since the 1860s the final signature was put by the governor upon the request of the medical-and-police committee or the district chief. These were the bodies responsible for controlling the prostitution market – the number, location, size and category of brothel houses.<sup>768</sup>

Further regulations pertaining to prostitution added an ever-growing list of requirements to be met by anyone wishing to obtain a license. The earliest of these concerned the planned location of the establishment. The principles behind police supervision included keeping prostitutes out of the public eye, as far as possible from uninvolved pedestrians, in secluded or specially designated spots. This led to defining the districts and streets where brothels could be opened. Attempts were made to protect the prestigious status of certain areas (mainly streets), yet, aside from sufficient regulations, this required also certain action on the part of the police force, and the members thereof did make use of their authority, but mainly for corrupt practices. In large and old cities such as Warsaw the topography of prostitution – like any other occupation or trade in a municipal guild system – was confined to a specified area.<sup>769</sup> Thus, until relatively late in the 19th century, brothel houses tended to concentrate in streets in the area of the old town; narrow, dark corners far enough from the new routes of communication so as not to cause unease, and yet close enough to be accessible. The development of prostitution, its links with the army, and the various changes in urban landscape created new spaces for such businesses within the spatial and social structures of the city – in the vicinity of barracks, in poor districts on the outskirts, around hotels and railway stations. Since the end of the 19th century, in pursuit of customers, prostitution moved to streets not specified as suitable for tolerated sex trade, to new districts of the city. It also spread to the streets in the new centre – Marszałkowska, Nowy Świat, Nowogrodzka, Wilcza.<sup>770</sup> Finally, regardless of all prohibitions (prostitutes gained the “right of peregrination” by bribing policemen), loose women conquered the entire city, so that in the residents’ estimation hardly any street or area was free of them.

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767 APL, RGP, WL, 38, k. 98; APL, RGL, L 1910:77, k. 32.

768 See e.g. APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3396, k. 1891; APW, ZK VIII, t. 44, k. 5–7.

769 Bronisław Geremek, *Ludzie marginesu w średniowiecznym Paryżu w XIV – XV w.* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1972).

770 The spread of tenements and apartments where sex services were rendered is apparent from the press coverage of the pogroms of May 1905.

The city zones that were – at least in theory – shielded from prostitution by a prohibition against opening brothel houses, included not only specific streets,<sup>771</sup> but also the nearest vicinity of public institutions (in 1843 and 1903 within 150 fathoms – 350 metres – from churches or Orthodox temples, schools, public buildings).<sup>772</sup> Limitations were also set for the permissible number of residences inhabited by prostitutes – one house per street and one flat per tenement. Similar prohibitions were also in place in other countries with a regimentation system.<sup>773</sup>

The concession for running a brothel in a given location could be revoked. As stated in records from Częstochowa, it was issued “for as long as the authorities see it as proper in this place.”<sup>774</sup> With the territorial expansion of the city limits and the changes in the social functions of specific districts, the presence of brothel houses (and later apartments of prostitutes), although sometimes long established, could gradually become undesirable. Demands were made for the owners to move the venue, which could potentially bring substantial losses. The known cases of forcible relocation of brothels (in Lublin, Puławy, Zamość and Chełm) resulted from the initiatives and protests of the neighbours, who saw

771 For streets with and without the permit for tolerated prostitution in Warsaw in the Congress Poland period see: Karpińska, *Złodzieje*, p. 61. Some changes were introduced in 1841 and 1898 – Teodora Męczkowska, “Nad otchłanią”, *Ogniwo*, no. 35 (1902); In Lublin the governor’s regulation of 1893 granted the permission to open brothel houses i.a. in the following streets: Olejna, Rybna, Grodzka, Zamkowa, Ruska, Lubartowska, Bonifratska, Szewska, Dolnej Panny Marii – APL, RGL, WP IV 1898:89, k. 3–8; In Kielce prostitutes were forbidden from residing in Ruska, Kapitulna, Wielka, Hipoteczna, Leonarda, Konstantynowska, Leśna, Mała, Stary and Nowy Bazar, and Wozniesienska Streets (early 20th century) – RGIA, f. 1298, op. 1, d. 1730. l. 146.

772 The windows were to face side streets or alleys, not main streets – APL, RGP WL, sygn. 38, k. 8v; When Lea Olender, who ran the brothel in Piaskowa Street in Puławy, moved her establishment to Kosa Street, she was not granted official permission, due to the fact that the venue was too close to an Orthodox church (the case dragged for 4 years, between 1909 and 1912) – APL, RGL, L 1910:177, k. 1–61 (the authorities referred to the circular of 1909 which pertained to St. Petersburg – a fact which Olender attempted to use).

773 In 1878, France introduced a regulation prohibiting brothels from opening near schools, places of cult or any larger public edifice – Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 87.

774 The very introduction of regulations in 1802 also implied the removal of the existing establishment from cramped, densely populated streets to “small streets a considerable distance away, but still accessible to the police” – *Ordynacya*, Art. 8; The regimentation enthusiast Grabowski envisaged brothels as located in free-standing houses with no other structures in front – Grabowski, “O chorobie”, p. 21.

the establishment as a disturbance of peace, a threat, a provocation, and a potential cause of financial loss. Thus, they sought legal grounds that would allow the removal of the venue from the street. An interesting case of conflicting interests occurred in the Irena settlement. In the autumn of 1898, a brothel house opened near the road leading to the “Iwanowskie Sioło” estate owned by the family of prince Paskiewicz. The edifice could be seen from the palace and its administrative buildings. Urged by the demands of the estate’s administrators, the district chief promised to have the brothel removed, but only after the expiration of its temporary permit. The owner of the brothel, however, managed to find herself a protector in the person of the chief of staff at the nearby Ivanogorod fortress. After a relatively long string of correspondence, the governor accepted the army command’s argument that the brothel was “extremely essential to the garrison”, and since no other location for it could be found, he only ordered that it be surrounded with a wooden fence.<sup>775</sup> Mindla Sztalgajn, who had been running a brothel in Zamość for 18 years, had no such protection. In 1900, when she moved the establishment, not having cleared the necessary formalities, to a recently built house in Lubelskie Przedmieście, her new neighbours protested. Sztalgajn could hardly stand a chance against families of officers (the commander of the 2nd Brigade of the 17th Infantry Division lived but 500 paces away from her venue) and civil officials. Invoking the existing regulations (the brothel complied with all requirements) was to no avail, and the district chief ordered the relocation of the venue. The governor, to whom the brothel manager tried to appeal, wrote that “her efforts do not merit his attention.”<sup>776</sup>

Brothels were sometimes removed if, following the growth and development of the city, they found themselves in central areas. Such was the case with Czarna Street in Chełm, which had no other buildings when the pleasure house opened. However, fifteen years later new residential building appeared in the neighbourhood, and the “intelligent class” that moved in there had no intention of living next door to brothels. In smaller cities, catering to the needs and interests of everyone was often very difficult. The district chief explained to the governor that wherever the brothel would be relocated, it would still be in the centre, and other neighbours would be displeased.<sup>777</sup>

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775 APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:775, k. 55–58 (the administration complained that servants were importuned and soldiers accompanied by harlots were entering the estate grounds).

776 APL, RGL, W P IV 1900:463, k. 2–7.

777 APL, RGL, L 1906:23, k. 174; In Lublin a conflict arose over the prostitutes’ right to reside and brothels to open in Dolnej Panny Marii Street, which featured a church,

The interior of the brothel also needed to comply with certain requirements, mainly sanitary (these have already been discussed), but also aesthetic (dry and sufficiently lit rooms, an entrance directly from the street “as to a house of trade”; the venues could not be located on subterranean floors, while each prostitute needed to have a separate room; no likenesses of public figures could be hung on the walls – 1903).<sup>778</sup> Before granting it a permit to open, each establishment was inspected by the municipal doctor and architect, sometimes accompanied by an engineer and the chief of the land guard. If a brothel did not meet the necessary standards, the license was not issued or made conditional to introducing the specified changes. In Lublin, for instance, Tauba Szwarckopf was first instructed to surround her premises, which occupied the top of a knoll, with a fence to “prevent the visitors from falling down.”<sup>779</sup> It was prohibited to decorate a house of pleasure with portraits of high officials (1903).

Depending on the city, the license was issued for six months (1802; Częstochowa<sup>780</sup>) or one year. The owners signed a declaration to follow the regulations, which were also to be displayed for the clients to read.<sup>781</sup> The earliest existing template for a license dates from 1831 and pertains to 1st category houses in Warsaw.<sup>782</sup>

Brothel houses were presumably the only “business institution” that could not legally advertise their services. The prohibition was made increasingly specific with each successive set of regulations. For instance, the door to the house of pleasure should remain closed at all times, the windows were to be “covered with curtains at least at the bottom” or even completely, and since 1903 the ones facing the street had to be covered with a light-blocking fabric in the evening

an orphanage, an all female gymnasium and 40 residential houses – APL, RGL, L 1905:76, k. 2–41.

778 The circular in: APL, RGL, WP IV 1898:89, k. 2–4v.

779 APL, RGL, L 1905:76, k. 5; An example of refusal due to inadequate conditions – AMCz, MMCz, j.a. 3401, k. 26.

780 APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3396, k. 14–15.

781 The gubernia authorities in Lublin ordered the proprietess Lea Klajn to “print a sufficient number of copies of the regulations and put them in each room of the brothel house” at her own expense – APL RGL, WP IV 1898:89, k. 15–16v; see also RGL, L 1903:106, k. 10.

782 It includes: the list of prostitutes, the address and appearance of the house, the conditions for hiring and dismissing employees, the opening hours, the tasks associated with medical supervision, security and order – APW, ZK, t. VIII, t. 44, k. 5–7.

and at night.<sup>783</sup> Prostitutes could be fined for inviting or “luring men, loitering in front of the house, walking outside the gate, standing in the hall or in the gateway, or showing herself in any attire that would be “offensive to decency.” They were also prohibited from leaning out the windows and singing seductive songs. The aim was to prevent demoralisation and preclude public spectacles of debauchery. The fact that these rules were reiterated numerous times implies numerous violations – to which contemporary accounts also testify.<sup>784</sup> Half-naked prostitutes would stand in front of their establishments, chatting up young men, or lean out of the windows, prompting the chief of the Chełm district to remark that the brothel house was “an overt display of harlotry, detrimental to the morals of the people.”<sup>785</sup> Direct activity was, however, indispensable, as it was the only available method for acquiring clients.<sup>786</sup> As Bolesław Prus put it, an attitude of waiting is only effective in politics. He did, nevertheless, agree with the grievances voiced by the paper’s readers, that the instigation of “those ladies” recently (in 1883) exceeds all conceivable limits. Aggressive prostitutes sauntering through the main streets were accosting not only men, jostling and lashing at women who had no escort, “causing discomfort to the most decent young ladies.” “There may hardly be a city in Europe as licentious as Warsaw”, opined Prus. “Shamelessness is ubiquitous, as it constitutes a chronic disease of the society; yet everywhere else it wraps itself in some cover, for instance that of police modesty. However, such female figures as may be seen after dark in Warsaw, such legions, such insolence in addressing passers-by is reputedly seen nowhere else.”<sup>787</sup> The behaviour of prostitutes, in this case mostly independent ones, was described in the press as a plague upon the streets of Warsaw. Journalists warned that “if the municipal authorities do not step in, Warsaw will become a city in which debauchery is ten times more visible than in Paris, which has such a fame.”<sup>788</sup> When the chief

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783 A detailed description, noting that the door needs to have a peephole to see the client before letting him in, is provided in the regulations for Lublin – APL, RGL, WP IV 1898:89, k. 15; Also: APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 7v, 46; APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3396: APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:775, k. 23.

784 For Warsaw in the 1820s see Karpińska, *Złodzieje*, p. 57; Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, p. 127.

785 APL, RGL, WP IV 1898:208.

786 The editorial board of the guide “Przewodnik po Warszawie” refused to print the advertisement of one of the city’s brothel owners – Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, pp. 149–151.

787 Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. VI, p. 13 (*Nowiny*, no. 21 (1883)).

788 *Kurier Codzienny*, no. 9 (1883), quoted after Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. VI, p. 397; Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. VI, pp. 395–396. (*Kurier Poranny*, no. 9 (1883), *Kurier Codzienny*, no. 9 (1883)).

police inspector finally issued a decree<sup>789</sup> ordering KL-P supervisors to patrol the streets in person and escort any loitering prostitutes to the precinct police station and penalise those that bother passers-by, it was lauded as “journalism’s triumph over the underworld.” It was, however, a hollow victory, since the regulation did little to change the factual state of affairs. Brothel houses remained noisy, with “drunk characters of various ilk” loitering around the neighbourhood, and people brawling.<sup>790</sup> One old age pensioner from Freta Street, where several such establishments were located, wrote to *Kurier Warszawski* to complain about the loud music, drunk customers, shouting, and noisy interventions by some of the policemen every night until five in the morning.<sup>791</sup>

Regardless of the level of social acceptance for prostitution, having a neighbour as bothersome as a brothel house was never desirable. Prohibitions against making noise, singing, and doing “anything that may offend sensibilities and disturb the peace of neighbouring residents” had little effect. Tenement owners and residents organised protests against opening brothels in their streets or demanded the relocation of existing ones. In Piotrków in the 1890s, a group of forty residents of Słowiańska street appealed to the governor to prevent a house of pleasure from opening, and when it started to operate, requested to have it removed to someplace outside of the city centre. They invoked moral and economic considerations, as well as matters of security. The most commonly used argument was the demoralising and detrimental influence such establishments had on minors, and male and female students (surprisingly, it was sometimes stated that the youth stole money from their parents and guardians to visit houses of pleasure); protesters also mentioned women being rudely addressed in the streets, and prostitutes behaving in a scandalous fashion. Tenements that held brothels, or even examination rooms, as well as the neighbouring houses, lost their value, as the prices of renting a flat there dropped. As a result of shouting, fisticuffs and “terrible scandals,” tenants left and frequent cases of theft were reported. One contemporary even opined that all families in the neighbourhood consequently became poorer, since both fathers and sons spent their money in houses of pleasure.<sup>792</sup> The address would become a stigma, and if the local

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789 “W sprawie przyzwoitości publicznej”, *Kurier Poranny*, no. 9 (1883).

790 On protests in the Lublin Gubernia see: APL, RGL, WP IV 1882: 227, k. 1–2; 1893:345, k. 1–2; 1895:103, k. 37; 1898:89, k. 28; 1898:208; L 1899:20, k. 40; 1900:463, k. 2–3; 1905:11, k. 32; 1906:23; 1912:36; KGL, j.a. 1893:291, 1–4; 1897:248, k. 1–34; Am.L, j.a. 6049, k. 63.

791 *Kurier Warszawski*, no. 245a (1883), quoted after Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. VI, p. 537.

792 APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, n. pag.



residents were unable to force the prostitutes out, they often chose to leave themselves. This was the case with the intelligentsia that used to inhabit the Old Town in Warsaw.<sup>793</sup> An unusual situation occurred in the Irena settlement. In 1897 the owner of one tenement refused to rent it to be used as a brothel because the local priest had threatened him with excommunication. It took an entire year to convince him to change his mind (as mentioned above, the brothel was considered an essential institution in that locality).<sup>794</sup> The authorities usually reacted to pleas, even though they needed to be voiced with sufficient frequency. This is what happened in Chełm in 1898, where the Ziegel family owning the brothel at Czarna Street did not comply with the order to relocate their business.<sup>795</sup> In Warsaw, the owner of the funeral home in Freta Street, Mr. Kropiwnicki and the reverend father Chełmicki, whose church neighbored with the meeting house run by Ms. Tomasowa, finally succeeded in their efforts to have the offending venue removed. In the 1870s, the owner of the Consignment and Information Money Exchange, Mr. Korpaczewski, was hailed as the bane of all prostitutes in Trębacka Street, since he caused the removal of brothels from the area.<sup>796</sup>

Protests and complaints could sometimes result from the client feeling disappointed with the service. The Police and Military Department of the Gubernia Authorities in Lublin received one anonymous letter from a teacher, claiming that “upon leaving the brothel house one gets robbed and has no-one to complain to”, that the manager of the house does not deserve any credit, as she herself engages in harlotry, while such an establishment may be run “only by a worthy person.” The note concludes with the remark that the public house is “a virulent poison, especially affecting us, intelligent people”, seemingly expecting the authorities to draw men away from such venues.<sup>797</sup>

Lower-category brothels were intended to only provide sexual services; they were prohibited from selling alcohol (for economic reasons and to prevent violence) and tobacco, and offering any opportunities for gambling (the list of

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793 Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, p. 59.

794 APL, RGL, W P IV 1898:775, k. 55.

795 APL, RGL, WP IV 1898:208. Tenement owners wrote: [this] has a highly demoralising effect not only on our adolescent children, but on adults as well. Moreover, prostitutes shout, make noise and disturb us neighbours at night, which also affects our families. Passing through this street, where the traffic is relatively high, pedestrians are forced to behold all manners of indecency and hear the shouting, loud insults and highly inappropriate language used by the prostitutes and the soldiers who visit them.”

796 Zaleski, *Z dziejów*, p. 42; Z. Nieborowski, “Na widnokręgu”, *Prawda*, no. 35 (1885).

797 APL, RGL, 1895:103, k. 37.

forbidden games included e.g. chess). Since 1903 these regulations applied to all brothel houses. The ones for affluent clients could have music and food “for the customers’ convenience” under ordinary conditions, i.e. after securing an appropriate license (1831 – also to serve tea and coffee; 1843). This was the most desired form of a brothel (very lucrative for its owner), regarded as a venue of diverse entertainment and relaxed atmosphere, allowing the client to shed the corset of formality constraining the middle class in everyday life. In a brothel house, a man could and wanted to feel very much at ease.

The regulation of opening hours for houses of pleasure was probably dictated by the need to keep the streets quiet and families undisturbed. Another possible factor is maintaining discipline among factory workers and the military. The earliest closing time was 10 PM (in winter; in summer – 11 PM), but the rule did not apply to higher-category venues, which could remain open for later (until midnight, or three or four in the morning, as it was in Lublin and Łódź). The regulations of 1843 forbade receiving clients on Sundays and festival days on the hours of masses (rule upheld in 1903).

To continue to run a brothel house, the owner was required to pay various types of fees, twofold in their aim and nature: (1) fees to cover the cost of examination and treatment; charged per prostitute, (2) fees for business activity (opening, licenses, the registration of women), and were submitted to the police. The amounts payable changed in time.<sup>798</sup> Warsaw certainly profited from licensed prostitution. In 1835 the proceeds of the levies from public women (included in the so-called various unconditional revenues) amounted to 14 000 złoty, which

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798 In Congress Poland: a weekly fee of 15 groszy per woman for her health ticket, 2 złoty for the entry about the hiring or transfer of a prostitute, the renewal of the license payable every six months – 15 złoty (category 1), 9 złoty (category 2), 24 złoty for opening an establishment, a monthly examination tax of 3 or 2 złoty per woman (category 1 and 2 respectively), a monthly tax for managers – 6 or 3 złoty (category 1 and 2) – Giedroyc, *Rada*, pp. 659–660. In 1843 the fixed annual fee amounted to 15 roubles per brothel (ordinary tax), while the varying fees (the so-called extraordinary tax) for safeguarding the health of prostitutes comprised, on average, 50 kopecks per woman on a monthly basis – *Przepisy*. In Częstochowa the latter fee amounted to 60 kopecks (50 for treatment, 10 for supplying the woman upon leaving the brothel). Apart from that, brothels needed to pay an annual fee of up to 15 roubles – APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3401, k. 5–22; In Łódź an additional fee was levied for each contract between a prostitute and the brothel’s proprietess. It amounted to 15 kopecks (stamp duty) and 5 kopecks for each of the two copies of the contract to be taken by the involved parties (clause 2 of “Instructions”) – APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 37 n. pag.; j.a. 38, k. 51–51v.

constituted 0.28% of all levies, 0.44% of unconditional revenues, and 3.77% of various revenues (12 000 złoty in 1836; 11 500 in 1841).<sup>799</sup> The sum exceeded the cost of maintenance of the St. Lazarus hospital (10 000 zł) and detention buildings (1 000 zł); it was the equivalent of 20.8% of the expenses incurred by the Department of Police (57 600 in total). The fines imposed by the police court for failing to comply with administrative and police regulations on prostitution were directed to the general budget of the venereal hospital (as were the ones for clandestine prostitution). The magistrate was to ensure that the fines are collected with due diligence.<sup>800</sup>

Brothel management was indubitably a lucrative business. Some owners opened venues in several localities or moved from one to another, while new ones continued to arrive from Russia. For instance, Sura Sodelman originating from the Moscow Gubernia, managed a brothel house in Kielce, and after the death of Bajła Sodelman (possibly a relative) took over the house in Irena near Puławy.<sup>801</sup> Jachweta Wajncenblit from Lublin applied to open a brothel in Puławy in 1895, while Maria Forszteter, who ran a similar establishment there, wanted to open another one in Irena. One F. Geller, a 31-year-old married woman residing in Warsaw and managing a brothel there, made attempts at taking over two houses of pleasure in Puławy.<sup>802</sup>

A new levy, introduced in 1843 (10 or 15 kopecks per prostitute per month), secured a fund for women who chose to leave the profession, to “satisfy their basic needs.” The money was deposited at the municipal budget and used to invest in National Bank bonds (at least in Warsaw and Łódź).<sup>803</sup> The decision to withdraw money from the fund (no more than 3 roubles) was taken by the magistrate, after investigating the situation of the woman wishing to start a new life (e.g. enter domestic service or matrimony). A prostitute who had not stayed at a brothel house for at least six months, or had returned to the profession after

799 AGAD, KRSW, j.a. 5418, k. 27, 39, 87, 94v, 222. For comparison, in 1835 the city expected to acquire 26 075 złoty from police fines.

800 APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 27–28, 103v.

801 APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:775, k. 6–10.

802 APL, RGL, W P IV 1895:103, k. 1–10, 21; 1895:775, k. 47; 1901:695; *Głos* reported that the intense competition in Warsaw prompted entrepreneurs dabbling in this business to establish an association (Chewra) for mutual help and the limitation of competition – “Głosy”, *Głos*, no. 9 (1890).

803 APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 19 (punkt 12, 48); The chief police inspector in Lublin suggested that prostitutes pay a weekly fee of 1 rouble for the savings fund – APL, RGL, L 1905:76, k. 5–6; In Częstochowa – APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3401, k. 5–22.

having received fund money was not entitled to any assistance, even if she had been paying the regular fees. In Warsaw the total sum stored in the fund in January 1882 was 18 600 roubles in silver; by 1884 it had increased to 21 763. In the period of 1882–1884, for which some data has survived, not a single prostitute leaving the profession qualified for receiving money from the fund (they were either outside the category that paid the levies, or had returned to prostitution).<sup>804</sup> When the KL-P announced its intention to use the money to build a refuge for old, sick and crippled prostitutes, writer and journalist Aleksander Świętochowski reacted to this “unhealthy charitableness” with the following statement: “there are slightly more profound philanthropist pursuits than ensuring a peaceful old age for beings who have lived in moral excrement.”<sup>805</sup> Twenty years later he would probably have chosen his words more carefully.

The institutions executing surveillance over brothel houses reserved the right to control the hiring of prostitutes and all changes in personnel. The aim was, naturally, not to assess the women’s qualifications for the job, although the Warsaw regulations of 1831 did suggest employing girls with a pleasant countenance, but to execute medical supervision, control the age of the employees, and offer a degree of protection of the women’s interest. A brothel manager wishing to hire a woman was expected to appear with her before an official of the police and sanitary services, so that the new employee would register and submit a written declaration of her wish to enter a brothel house.<sup>806</sup> For instance, between 24th February and 17th December 1910 the two houses of pleasure in Suwałki acquired twelve new employees (Lejba Rejz’s house recruited ten; while the remaining two were employed at Zamelberg’s establishment, which appeared in the records from December). The candidates were required to report at the police station, where they would be interviewed. Afterwards the police sent information concerning the women, as well as their passports, to the KL-P, which authorised their employment at “a public house as prostitutes” and issued an identification document (invariably a medical record book). The final stage of the recruitment process was medical examination.<sup>807</sup>

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804 *Iz vlecheniye*, p. 17.

805 After Milewski, *Ciemne sprawy*, p. 86.

806 The declaration is quoted by Teodora Męczkowska, in *Nad otchłanią*.

807 LVLA, f. 1009, op. 4, d. 568, k. 37–38; The chief police inspector in Lublin enquired whether he may issue the permit to Tauba Szwarzkopf with the reservation that she would not be allowed to hire Christian women as prostitutes – APL, RGL, L 1905:76, k. 5v.

It is unclear when the passports of prostitutes started to be routinely confiscated. The practice was an additional instrument binding a woman to prostitution. Any situation that required her to show a document of identification (work, residence) immediately revealed her profession; the presence of “the black book” reduced her chances of ever returning to normality. Receiving this document was the start of a slippery slope towards the world of prostitution, which had particularly tragic consequences in the case of women who chose to engage in prostitution in a moment of crisis which they assumed to be temporary. The stigma of a harlot, symbolised by the book, distanced these women from the life of their social environment, spoiling their chances of a normal existence.<sup>808</sup> Regimentationists undoubtedly introduced such a practice with the intention to professionalise prostitution, yet in everyday implementation it served mainly as security measure to prevent women from evading medical examinations. The primary argument was that, passport in hand, women left brothel houses without permission or even moved to other cities to avoid medical supervision for as long as possible. In the view of officials, departure was usually a way to escape doctors and hospitalisation. And even if prostitutes informed the authorities of their travels, they would still change the destination half-way, choosing cities in which they were not known. Equipped only with their medical record book and the “ticket for the journey”, they had fewer chances for evading supervision.<sup>809</sup>

The limitation of personal freedom that the surveillance system imposed on prostitutes through the obligatory registration was one of the main arguments in the discussion over regimentation of prostitution at the beginning of the 20th century. It should be noted that by that time only a small number of public women had their passports confiscated (those who plied their trade in brothels). In Warsaw, the practice had been employed since 1888, but many cities used it from the start; it was officially introduced in the entire Russian Empire in 1903 by a Circular of the Ministry of the Interior.

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808 It would be difficult to judge whether people truly felt convinced by the argument used by the Russian lawyer and abolitionist Elistratov, who said that the “yellow ticket” closed all opportunities for education (in his own words, brutally so) for girls who paid for their schooling by engaging in prostitution – Elistratov, *O prikreplanii*, p. 8.

809 In Piotrków, the magistrate and the chief police inspector engaged in a dispute over the confiscation of passports of itinerant prostitutes. The police officer argued that this practice protects women from being taken to America or Turkey – APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 149, k. 6–16; The passports of Kielce prostitutes were returned after the women presented a certificate of their good health – APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15014, k. 75v (1880s).

Each move of any prostitute – be it leaving employment in a brothel, or a transfer to another, or even the shortest journey – ought to be consulted with the relevant authorities. This provision was implemented in practice, as evidenced by the correspondence between the KL-P in Suwałki and the city's chief police inspector regarding the comings and goings of brothel prostitutes in 1908 and 1911.<sup>810</sup> The destinations the women mentioned included localities within the gubernia (e.g. Mariampol, Augustów) and beyond the Kingdom of Poland (e.g. Grodno, Pińsk). It is unclear whether they travelled for personal reasons or for work. A woman named Joanna Ostrowska, for instance, travelled to Pińsk on 9th March, but returned to Brafman's house in Suwałki on 17th that same month. A trip of a similarly short duration was reported by Malwina Kluniejko. Lejba Rejff employed at least seven prostitutes at any given time (such was their number on 21st September 1911), yet the records show that the number of women leaving, coming back and arriving at his house for the first time reached 21. A similar situation was observable in other establishments, which shall be discussed below. It is, however, impossible to estimate how often one prostitute changed her address in the course of her career. Attendance lists from medical examinations (Chapter 2), statistical data gathered by the KL-P in Warsaw regarding the departures, arrivals, and re-registrations of former prostitutes – all point to incredible mobility of public women. The phenomenon was also noted by historians researching prostitution in other countries.<sup>811</sup> One may only suspect the multitude of reasons behind it: was it the wish to evade examinations, or perhaps to flee from horrible mistreatment, in search of a better life and income? The rules of the business dictated frequent changes in the personnel, which

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810 The records of the KL-P in Suwałki include a folder entitled *O ruchu prostytucji II 1908 – XII 1908* (On the movement of prostitution Feb. 1908 – Dec. 1908) (LVIA, f. 1080, ap. 1, b. 6, l. 1–82), while the ones in Suwałki's magistrate contain information *O ruchu prostytutek w domu publicznym Lejby Rejff* (On the movement of prostitutes in the public house of Lejba Rejff) dated to 1911 (LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 568, l. 1–45); Brothel owners were obliged to keep a list of all women they employed, to serve as the basis for controlling the fees, examination attendance and changes in place of residence. For a model of the list see: APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3285, k. 69.

811 An average prostitute in Germany in 1863 changed her address twice (Evans, "Prostitution", p. 112). Some of the British prostitutes wandered through the country following the military (Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 23). More than half of French prostitutes stayed in the same establishment for up to two months (9.7% for less than a week, 29.4% between 7 and 30 days, 19.7% for 30–60 days), 33.1% for less than 12 months (Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 112–115).

is why the owners reacted to the shifts in demand by finding new employees. Another factor that cannot be disregarded is that women could abandon prostitution, which for many of them could have been but a short episode in their lives.

An opinion popular in the early 20th century was that a prostitute was basically a slave of the brothel and its proprietess. Managers indeed seem to have had unlimited control over their employees. The proprietess was to care for her employees *ex officio*. In Lublin, the regulations for houses of pleasure advised the manager to keep the prostitutes “on a short leash”, but not to beat or harass them.<sup>812</sup> In Płock, the women working in the local brothel house were kept in line and prevented “from madness and desertion” by two stout bulldogs; to reinvigorate their spirits and replenish their strength, the owner sometimes took the employees to the cinema and gave them small presents.<sup>813</sup> Elements of hygienics and extending protection over women are apparent in the prohibition to “work” during late-stage pregnancy and menstruation, as well as the instruction to “take care that prostitutes do not exhaust their strength through overly frequent intercourse with men.”<sup>814</sup>

All such regulations regarding supervision, local instructions and rules for brothel managers mentioned the issue of women abandoning prostitution. They uniformly declared, as did the Warsaw licensing act of the 1870s, that “exiting a brothel house to do honest work cannot be forbidden to any woman” and even that “for those declaring a heartfelt wish to mend their ways, the police will try to find service, excluding places suspected of harlotry,” as promised in the earlier regulations of 1843.<sup>815</sup> Declaring the intention to abandon prostitution for honest work was, however, not enough, which may explain why so many women simply left their place of residence in secret. The conditions under which a woman’s name could be crossed out from the list of prostitutes (apart from death, illness or injury) included marriage (“should she happen to be wed”), finding employment in domestic service or some other place of work, entering an institution of moral betterment, and finding a guardian (a relative or a stranger) who would provide for her.<sup>816</sup>

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812 APL, RGL, WP IV 1898:89, k. 16.

813 Druzhinin, *Prostitutsiya*, p. 7.

814 APL, RGL, L 1903:106, k. 10.

815 In 1898 the “Mandatory rules” for Lea Klajn’s brothel house allowed a prostitute to leave the establishment whenever she wished.

816 APL, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 10v–11, 48–49v. The 1877 regulations for Warsaw mentioned not only marriage or employment, but also old age, illness and crippling injury, as if

In all of the above cases, it was mandatory for a “reliable” person to vouchsafe for the woman’s future conduct and commit to ensuring that the delinquent would thenceforth embrace “a decent livelihood and engage in neither licentiousness nor clandestine harlotry.” In order to ensure that a prostitute had indeed abandoned her former profession, the Committee investigated her case. Thus, a considerable amount of time usually passed before a woman who applied for it was actually removed from the list. Existing records contain very few specific cases of de-registration. In November 1869, one illiterate woman named Letta Putter appeared before the chief of the land guard and the chief police inspector of Łódź “in the matter of release from examination.” She was a permanent resident of Kalisz, who had been working in one of Łódź’s brothels for two years. She explained: “seeing that for six weeks I have dismissed myself from the mentioned [propietness] and wholly intend to lead a decent life, as I remain with only a single one, who wishes to take me as his wife.” In 1868, the request to remove Julianna Galert from the list of licentious women was filed on her behalf by Karol Gotlib Zymerman. “For three weeks now, he wrote, I have taken Julianna Galert into service and have given her care as I would to my own child, and it is my hope that she will remain obedient to me, I therefore appeal. . . .” Another extant document is the request made by Emilia Gań in 1870 to remove her from the list of public women motivated as follows: “since I do not in the present time, nor in any foreseeable future, have any wish to maintain any relations with men, and make a living by washing underclothes and doing other jobs.” She added that her removal from the list of prostitutes is the condition for her continued employment.<sup>817</sup> Sometimes the requests to de-register a woman were made by her parents, as was the case with Józefa Jackowska in Lublin in 1891.<sup>818</sup> Another documented case comes from the Kielce Gubernia. In 1885 Józefa Stróżycka applied to be removed from the list of public women in the following manner: “I humbly ask Your Excellency to ask the lord police inspector of the city of Kielce, who is very kind to all unfortunate souls, to free me from medical examination, as a person erroneously drafted onto the list of public women, while I assert and swear to the Lord God and You that I do not belong among public women, but live a good (honest) life and work hard for my daily bread.” However, not only the Lord God knew this not to be wholly true. According to the KL-P records,

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these reasons were not obvious. A prostitute could only be forced to return to a brothel if it could be proved that she continued to engage in harlotry.

817 APL, Am.Ł, j.a. 5156, k. 24, 58, 60.

818 APL, RGL, L 1891: no. 2, part. 1.



Stróżycka had already worked at a brothel house (14th Dec. 1883 – May 1885), and had stayed under police arrest for over ten days on two occasions, because she was very averse to medical examination. She had also undergone brief treatment at the venereal ward of the local hospital. In mid-1885 she entered domestic service, abandoning the life of a prostitute. The Committee may have removed her from the register (no information on this subject survives), but was certainly unwilling to exempt her from the stamp duty which Stróżycka failed to pay upon filing her request. She disappeared shortly afterwards, and the authorities were searching for her in the entire gubernia. Extant documentation includes correspondence dated to 1886–1889 centred around attempts to collect the debt of 1 rouble 20 kopecks.<sup>819</sup>

Under the 1843 regulations, all the mentioned situations – finding other employment, marriage or entering a charitable institution – still required the woman to settle any debt she may have had with the owner of the brothel. The only exception were women leaving the establishment in which they contracted venereal disease (provided they did not engage in harlotry elsewhere). This was to serve as punishment for the manager “for not having executed care to prevent women from becoming infected.”<sup>820</sup> The tales of prostitutes becoming so indebted to the owners that they basically became slaves must have been mainly accurate, because the majority of the regulations (1802, 1831, 1874, 1903) declared to defend prostitutes, leaving brothel owners the option to assert their rights in court or allow the mediation of a KL-P Commissioner.<sup>821</sup> Secondly, the regulations were intended to protect women from debt and exploitation. One means of controlling owners and preventing fraud was the introduction of account books to record the revenues of prostitutes, their debts and – in order to avoid conflicts over ownership – any possessions the prostitute brought to the house or bought with her own money.<sup>822</sup> This did not eliminate malpractice. Kamiński clearly

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819 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 12547, k. 23–49; Cf. footnote 224.

820 *Przepisy*, art. 96.

821 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 8 v, 9–10.

822 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 37 (“Instructions”); APŁ, RGL, W P IV 1898:89, k. 2–4; Document templates: LVIA, f. 1009, ap. 4, b. 630, l. 41–42; APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3285, k. 15–19, 50, 67–69. For each meeting house in Warsaw a new record book was opened at the KL-P – one copy for the owner, one for the tolerated prostitute. This was intended as a means to prevent misunderstanding and fraud. The manager put in the accounts in the book owned by the prostitute; the prostitute in the ones in possession of the manager. The account book was to be reviewed on a biweekly basis by assistants of the Committee Commissioner and if the prostitute decided to leave.

demonstrated the mechanisms of debt accumulation and deceiving prostitutes (and surveillance officers) which quickly led to women owing much more than they could possibly earn.<sup>823</sup> The authorities also introduced the principle that any prostitute who had worked in a brothel for at least one year was to receive a set of clothes from the venue's owner (a change of underwear, shoes and outer garments appropriate for the time of year),<sup>824</sup> yet if her stay was shorter, she could only take whatever she brought in (and was specified in the book). In Warsaw the KL-P Commissioner Jeleniew convinced brothel owners that a certain sum deducted from the prostitute's income could not be used to settle her debt. The price of outfits was to be assessed by the KL-P, so that the brothel manager would not overstate it.<sup>825</sup> It was also forbidden to force prostitutes to buy any luxury goods or any other property that would exceed their income (1831). It is apparent that officials also listened in to confessions of "slaves to the houses of pleasure."

The police attempted to regulate the division of revenues for working in a brothel house. The most favourable rates (half the price of service) applied in meeting houses. However, prostitutes there were also required to pay a part of the maintenance costs (e.g. heating). In brothels for less elevated clientele, all the revenue remained in the hands of the owner, and prostitutes were only able to keep the gifts they received from their guests (items, money).<sup>826</sup> The instruction for public houses in Łódź (1896) specified, in turn, that the prostitute should receive 1/5 of the takings (*vyruchka*). The remainder (4/5) of the sum collected by the owner was partially to cover the room and board of the prostitute, as well as her wardrobe; 1/5 of this revenue was to be set aside for the prostitutes' fund payable upon leaving the profession.<sup>827</sup> The specific division and scope of duties was determined by the regulations of 1903. Many, and possibly even the majority

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823 Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, pp. 152–155. In Płock, whenever a prostitute did not have a client, the owner put a debt into her account book – Druzhinin, *Prostytuciya*, p. 7. It is naturally impossible to ascertain, whether this was indeed the case. However, customers to whose sense of pity prostitutes tried to appeal certainly believed so; the image was also convenient for the public opinion.

824 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 19 (punkt 11). This model was used by the chief police inspector in Łódź, who suggested that prostitutes should be entitled to such a discharge allowance after six months of employment – APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 37 ("Instructions"); also in Lublin – APL, RGL, WP IV 1895:775, k. 25v: 1898:89, k. 2–4v.

825 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, pp. 57–58.

826 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 38, k. 10v.

827 APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 37 ("Instructions"); the 1903 circular.

of the “confined” prostitutes were in a very difficult situation. On the other hand, the profits they could make, especially in the more upscale establishments, far exceeded the wages of many workers.<sup>828</sup> The women complained about being stripped of everything, even the tips received from their clients; thus, they compensated the loss by stealing from the men. Theft was the most common crime in this environment. Moreover, prostitutes had the highest incidence of theft among all professional groups both male and female.<sup>829</sup> Other criminal acts often committed by prostitutes included insulting public officials and resistance towards the authorities.<sup>830</sup>

### 3. The social and demographic makeup of tolerated prostitutes

Prostitutes were a very diverse group. Corbin talks of a certain social mimicry, noting that prostitutes are defined by their clientele. The broader, and the more vague, a definition of the phenomenon we adopt, the broader the spectrum of its forms becomes. The economic criterion reveals an image of prostitution that spans from the highest luxury to encounters in the poorest of streets. Affluent independent prostitutes – mistresses and kept women – could be well known not only to the men they catered to, but were disregarded by the sanitary and police authorities, and as such remain outside the scope of the present publication (and the sources on which it is based). The 1889 census, however, presented a rather uniform group of licensed prostitutes. It appears that registration was more than a technical, formal distinguishing mark for that group. Given what has been ascertained about the police-and-medical supervision, it may be assumed that it was extended over a set of similar women (despite their individual differences) who could not count on the protection of a wealthy client. The category is best described with the label “public women”, i.e. women for everyone.

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828 According to Engel's calculations, an independent prostitute in St. Petersburg earned 40–50 roubles, which was as much as a qualified worker, whereas one employed in a brothel house could make 15 roubles, assuming she had 5 clients a day for 25 days. This was still twice as much as the wages of e.g. a seamstress in Warsaw – Engel, *Between the Fields*, p. 185.

829 Sempołowska, *Z dna nędzy*, pp. 20–21.

830 Józef Konczyński, *Stan moralny społeczeństwa polskiego na podstawie danych statystyki kryminalnej* (Warsaw: Zapomoga Kasy im. J. Mianowskiego, 1911), pp. 73, 177–179.

The answers over 2 thousand women gave to survey questions about their social background, place of origins, former occupation, family situation, their age at the time of their first sexual contact and the circumstances thereof, their current age and the age when they started to engage in prostitution could sometimes have been inaccurate,<sup>831</sup> yet they do allow scholars to construct an image of public women of the late 19th century that may be confronted with the one presented in the press and narrative sources (which appears stereotypical and tainted with the abolitionist ideology). It may also serve as the basis to determine the circumstances that facilitated the marginalisation of women and increased the risk of them resorting to prostitution.

The presentation and analysis of data encompasses all registered prostitutes. Although the conditions they lived and worked in were different depending on whether they were employed in a brothel or plied the trade independently, there were very few features (among those considered) that truly divided the two categories. If notable differences are present, the data is displayed separately for each group.

In his book about prostitutes, Franciszek Giedroyc noted that he had often read, and heard even more frequently, that most of licentious women are Jewish.<sup>832</sup> The one-day census conducted in Warsaw demonstrates just how erroneous this assumption was: 72.7% of public women were Catholic, 21.36% followed the Mosaic creed; moreover, the percentage of prostitutes among all women of this ethnicity in the age group of 15–35 years was lower (1.3%) than among Catholic ones (2.2%).<sup>833</sup> The census of 1889 also contradicts Giedroyc's statement. In the

831 Prostitutes could create their own biographies; aware of the judgment passed on their profession by the society, they could have deliberately presented themselves mainly as victims. See: Józef Apolinary Rolle, "Materyały", *Przegląd Lekarski*, no. 38 (1869); Kamiński was also unwilling to believe them – Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, p. 136.

832 Giedroyc, *Prostytutki*, p. 27; This seemed obvious to Prus, who wrote in 1877 that "Jewish women constitute the majority of prostitutes" – Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. X, p. 167 (*Kurier Codzienny*, no. 181 (1877)).

833 Giedroyc, *Prostytutki*, pp. 27–28. In 1896, 237 (56.7%) of the 418 women newly registered as prostitutes by Warsaw's KL-P were of the Catholic denomination, whereas ones of the Mosaic creed constituted 22.7% (95 individuals) – Antoni Wyslouch, *Ohyda wieku* (Warsaw: Skład Główny w Księgarni E. Wende i S-ka, 1904), p. 5; In early 20th-century Cracow there were 719 tolerated prostitutes: 53.13% of them Polish, 17.23% German, 16.3% Jewish; 5.84% Ruthenian; 6.25% Czech – Adolf Rząśnicki, "Przyczynek do prostytucji w Krakowie", *Społeczeństwo*, no. 24 (1908); According to Bristow, an overrepresentation of prostitutes among the Jewish population could only be observed in Vilnius, where 47% of all prostitutes in 1873 were of Jewish (Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp. 21–22, 48–84).

**Chart 9a.** The ethnicity of brothel house prostitutes in 1889

Gubernia	Polish	Jewish	Russian	German
Warsaw	127	20	7	7
Kalisz	26	–	–	–
Kielce	4	–	1	–
Łomża	6	4	1	–
Lublin	10	2	1	1
Piotrków	25	6	1	1
Płock	9	–	–	–
Radom	10	–	1	–
Suwałki	10	5	5	–
Siedlce	5	2	2	2
Total	232	39	39	11

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart X, pp. 22–23.

Kingdom of Poland, prostitution was predominantly an occupation for Poles. It must be emphasised that this statement refers to legal prostitution.<sup>834</sup>

In 1889 (Charts 9a and 9c), tolerated prostitutes of Polish ethnicity constituted 76.8% of those employed in brothel houses and 73.7% of independent ones. Jewish women were in second place in that category, both among brothel employees (12.9%) and independent workers (15.8%). The highest number of women of Jewish ancestry (and of the Mosaic creed,<sup>835</sup> the differences in these numbers are minuscule) was observable in the Warsaw Gubernia (67% of independent and 51% of brothel prostitutes), the region also had the highest percentage of Jewish prostitutes (19% among independent ones, 12% among brothel employees). A similarly high percentage (but with significantly lower numerical figures) of women of Jewish descent was noted among brothel employees in the Suwałki Gubernia (5 out of 20 women) and the Piotrków Gubernia (6 out of 33,

<sup>834</sup> Some indirect indication of the denomination and ethnicity may be found in the names and surnames (first names alone would be less credible, as the over-representation of specific names could result from certain fashions in the given regions, or could also indicate that these were pseudonyms). All lists of prostitutes from the Lublin, Kielce and Suwałki Gubernias include very few individuals of Jewish descent.

<sup>835</sup> Charts 9b and 9d, pp. 269, 270.

**Chart 9b.** The denomination of brothel house prostitutes in 1889

Gubernia	Catholic	Mosaic	Orthodox	Protestant
Warsaw	129	20	7	6
Kalisz	18	7	–	1
Kielce	4	–	1	–
Łomża	6	4	1	–
Lublin	11	2	1	–
Piotrków	23	8	1	1
Płock	9	–	–	–
Radom	7	3	1	–
Suwałki	13	5	2	–
Siedlce	5	2	2	2
Total	225	51	16	10

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart XI, pp. 30–31.

**Chart 9c.** The ethnicity of independent prostitutes in 1889

Gubernia	Polish	Jewish	Russian	German
Warsaw	716	182	31	29
Kalisz	89	3	1	3
Kielce	43	7	1	1
Łomża	72	3	4	2
Lublin	104	40	45	4
Piotrków	76	15	1	15
Płock	79	6	3	6
Radom	46	3	–	5
Suwałki	18	3	14	4
Siedlce	22	10	2	2
Total	1265	272	102	71

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart X, pp. 22–23.

i.e. 18%),<sup>836</sup> as well as among independent prostitutes in the Siedlce Gubernia (27%) and the Lublin Gubernia (20%). It is therefore apparent that the proportion was high in regions with a large Jewish population. Early 20th-century press was reporting a substantial rise in the number of prostitutes of Jewish descent at

<sup>836</sup> In 1896, out of the 91 prostitutes registered in Łódź, 29 (32%) had Jewish-sounding names and surnames (APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 37).

**Chart 9d.** The denomination of independent prostitutes in 1889

Gubernia	Catholic	Mosaic	Orthodox	Protestant
Warsaw	724	181	28	27
Kalisz	86	5	1	4
Kielce	44	7	1	1
Łomża	73	3	4	3
Lublin	125	40	25	2
Piotrków	81	14	1	11
Płock	72	6	3	13
Radom	43	–	–	5
Suwałki	30	3	2	4
Siedlce	25	8	2	1
Total	1303	274	67	71

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart XI, pp. 30–31.

**Chart 10.** The marital status of prostitutes in 1889

Gubernia	Single		Married		Widows		Divorced	
	In brothels	Individual	In brothels	Individual	In brothels	Individual	In brothels	Individual
Warsaw	161	897	–	29	1	15	–	18
Kalisz	24	90	1	5	1	1	–	–
Kielce	4	48	1	1	–	2	–	2
Łomża	10	77	–	5	–	1	1	–
Lublin	14	172	–	12	–	6	–	3
Piotrków	33	104	–	2	–	1	–	–
Płock	9	87	–	4	–	3	–	–
Radom	10	52	1	3	–	–	–	–
Suwałki	18	35	1	3	–	1	1	–
Siedlce	11	31	–	1	–	1	–	3
Total	294	1593	4	65	2	31	2	26

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart XIV, pp. 42–43, 46–47.

the turn of the centuries, recognising that Jews were not only the organisers of prostitution, but also the victims thereof.<sup>837</sup>

Individual prostitutes and brothel employees in the Kingdom also included Russians (6.9%; most of them in the Lublin Gubernia – 46, the Warsaw Gubernia – 38 and the Suwałki Gubernia – 19), Germans (4% – the majority of them in the Warsaw and Piotrków Gubernia, which is understandable given the size of the market in the former, and the large German population in the latter), as well as three Czech women (in the Warsaw, Kielce and Łomża Gubernias), three Romani women (in the Warsaw, Łomża and Radom Gubernias) and one French woman (in a brothel house in Warsaw).

Prostitutes were predominantly single (unmarried, widowed, divorced). The lack of a male guardian was, to some extent, a justification for their decision to enter the profession. Single women constituted as much as 93.5% of brothel employees and 92.8% of independent prostitutes (Chart 10).<sup>838</sup> It is possible that the proportion was actually higher, as it is not certain whether married women had left their husbands or were plying the trade with their consent.

Another detail that may be added to this image of prostitute's situation in 1889 is that one in four (25.75%; 28.1% of independent ones, 12.1% of brothel house employees) had given birth. The fate of their children remains unknown; at the time of the census only one in ten individual prostitutes (and 1.6% of those in brothels) had children.<sup>839</sup> Illegitimate children are not mentioned in many sources pertaining to the history of specific prostitutes, but records on the matter are so scarce that they may only serve as an illustration, but not as the basis for any generalised statements. However, a pregnancy out of wedlock could imply

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837 "Echa warszawskie", e.g. *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, no. 33 (1904); "Pogrom", *Prawda*, no. 21 (1905).

838 A similar proportion of unmarried women among prostitutes was probably observable in all European countries. In Bologna, for instance 92% of licentious women in 1863–1886 were single (Gibson, *Prostitution*, p. 95). In Marseilles married ones constituted 6%, whereas in Paris (in 1880–1886) unmarried ones were only 5.88% (Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 74–75).

839 *Prostitutsiya*, chart XIX, pp. 46–47. The present analysis will not discuss the gender of individuals engaging in prostitution in the 19th century, not because it was an exclusively female occupation. Existing sources, scarce and unverifiable though they may be (the already mentioned diary by Łukaszewicz) do mention men offering paid sexual services to women, while publications discussing male homosexual prostitution had already appeared in the early 20th century.



**Chart 11a.** The age of brothel house prostitutes in 1889

Gubernia	Under 15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	Over 55
Warsaw	–	1	3	14	29	16	16	3	2	1
Kalisz	–	–	1	2	6	13	–	–	–	–
Kielce	–	–	–	1	–	3	1	–	–	–
Łomża	–	1	–	2	–	4	3	–	–	–
Lublin	–	–	2	2	2	6	1	–	–	–
Piotrków	–	–	–	2	9	16	1	–	–	–
Płock	–	–	–	–	1	5	1	–	–	–
Radom	–	–	–	1	3	5	1	–	–	–
Suwałki	–	–	–	2	2	8	6	–	–	–
Siedlce	1	–	1	1	2	4	1	–	–	–
Total	1	2	7	27	54	131	31	3	2	1

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart XII, pp. 33–35.

the loss of employment, being cast out of a family home, and the need to provide for the baby alone.<sup>840</sup>

Due to the nature of the occupation, prostitution is usually associated with young women. However, data on illicit prostitutes indicates that the reality was more complex. A similar conclusion can be made for registered prostitution (Charts 11a, 11b, 12). An average woman plying the flesh trade on an individual basis was 26 years of age, whereas her colleague from a brothel house was 21.

The vast majority of prostitutes were between 20 and 40 years of age; this age group constituted around 55% of brothel employees and over 80% among individual prostitutes. The percentage of teenage girls in brothels was twice as high as among independent prostitutes (35% of employees were up to 19 years old; individual prostitutes that age constituted 18%). Brothel managers had more opportunities to hire personnel in accordance with their clients' wishes, which mainly involved young women. The percentage of prostitutes over 25 years of age was

840 See: Maria Grzywo-Dąbrowska, *Psychologia prostytutek*, (Warsaw: Polskie Lekarskie Tow. Wydawnicze, 1928). The book details the story of many among the 587 prostitutes that remained under hospital observation for a period of 8 months. These women lived their childhood and youth before the first world war.

**Chart 11b.** The age of independent prostitutes in 1889

Gubernia	Under 15	15–16	16–17	17–18	18–19	19–20	20–25	25–30	30–35	35–40	40–45	45–50	Over 55
Warsaw	2	5	20	35	46	59	361	253	87	61	13	14	3
Kalisz	–	–	2	2	2	5	29	23	9	11	9	3	–
Kielce	–	–	2	–	2	1	23	13	4	5	2	1	–
Łomża	–	–	–	2	2	3	33	27	12	2	1	1	–
Lublin	1	1	7	13	16	14	65	44	19	6	6	1	–
Piotrków	–	–	–	6	7	7	49	25	9	4	–	–	–
Płock	–	–	1	3	6	9	35	18	12	4	3	3	–
Radom	–	–	–	–	1	1	15	14	6	3	1	2	–
Suwałki	–	1	–	–	1	4	9	8	9	6	1	–	–
Siedlce	–	2	1	2	–	3	14	6	4	–	4	–	–
Total	3	9	33	63	83	106	633	431	71	102	40	25	3

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart XII, pp. 3–35.

**Chart 12.** The age of prostitutes in 1889 (in percentage)

Category/ age	Under 20	20–40	40–50	Over 50
In brothels	30.1 %	55.3 %	–	0.1 %
Individual	17.4 %	78.5 %	3.8 %	0.2 %
All	19.4 %	75.0 %	3.2 %	0.2 %

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart XII, pp. 33–35.

lower (slightly less so in the independent category).<sup>841</sup> Age was the most common additional information provided in surveillance records of public women. The surviving data from different periods and regions pertains to women on different stages of life. For instance, out of the 23 prostitutes in Suwałki (1862), 6 were under 20 years of age, 7 represented the age group of 21 to 25, 5 were between 26 and 30, and another five (i.e. 20%) were older than 31. Different proportions were observable in Hrubieszów (25 prostitutes in 1901) and in Łódź

841 In Britain, for instance, most prostitutes abandoned the profession around 25 to start a family (Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 196). A similar view was expressed by Engel regarding St. Petersburg prostitutes (Engel, *Between the Fields*, p. 193).

(91 prostitutes in 1891).<sup>842</sup> In both cases women up to 20 years of age constituted the largest group (48% in Hrubieszów; 62% in Łódź), while the oldest among the registered prostitutes constituted only a small percentage (4% in Łódź, none in Hrubieszów).

A decrease in the number of prostitutes over 25 years of age was noticeable in every region. It may be surmised that registration – which sealed the fate of a woman, making it more difficult to ever leave the profession – would lengthen the period of work, but the age of illicit prostitutes was, in fact similar (although it must be remembered that in this case the pool of data is much smaller).

The regulations forbade hiring underage girls in brothel houses or registering them as prostitutes. High penalties for this offence were already inscribed into the 1802 ordinance. In 1843 the minimum age was set at 18. In Piotrków, Częstochowa, Lublin (1870s–1890s) a prostitute could not be younger than 16 years of age.<sup>843</sup> With regard to Warsaw, the age limit for brothel employees was 18, for employees of meeting houses – 16. Due to the influence of the abolitionist movement and the pressure of the international public opinion, the limit was shifted in several European countries. In 1901 the Russian Ministry of the Interior introduced new regulations in the Empire. Under the assumption that a brothel house is much more detrimental to the physical and moral development of a young girl than any working conditions outside it, the period of protection was extended, and the minimum age limit for brothel employees was increased to 21, and for independent prostitutes to 18. It was suggested to replace repressive measures with elements of social welfare and resocialisation. Thus, underage prostitutes were to be sent to their parents, and if they were orphaned – to almshouses (which were nonexistent). In practice, minors not only lived in brothels, but were also registered there (37 persons of under 19 in 1889). The one-day census conducted in Warsaw in 1882 directed the attention of the press towards the issue of “fallen children” living in houses of pleasure (it revealed the presence of three girls aged 9, 11 and 12).<sup>844</sup> According to Margulies, the

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842 APL, RGL, L 1901:25 (Hrubieszów). A larger sample is available in Łódź, where the data reveals the age of 91 tolerated prostitutes. Among them there were 57 women of 20 and under, 24 between 21–25 years of age, 6 between 26 and 30, and 4 over 31 (APŁ, RGP, WL, j.a. 128, k. 56–58).

843 An owner caught twice on hiring a minor lost the license – APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3464, k. 1; Records show that the authorities made a true effort to establish the age of a detainee. For relevant correspondence sent to the girl's place of origin see APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3450, k. 36–37, 47–48.

844 [Aleksander Świętochowski], “Liberum veto”, *Prawda*, no. 11 (1882).

medical and police records from Łódź failed to mention the age of prostitutes in order to hide the fact that the police was turning a blind eye to the existing prohibitions. Referring to information acquired from people “close to the issue of surveillance”, he claimed that 6–8% of prostitutes in Łódź are younger than 16.<sup>845</sup> Child prostitution may not have been as visible as on the streets of London or St. Petersburg, yet it was a fact of life in the Kingdom.<sup>846</sup>

Almost all prostitutes (97.9% of brothel employees and 93% of independent ones) entered the world of the flesh trade between their 13th and 26th birthday; the majority in this group started between 15 and 19 (71.5% of brothel employees and 51.3% of independent ones).<sup>847</sup> The large (20%) discrepancy between the two groups may indicate that women took different paths to arrive at such a place in life. Few were likely to knock on the doors of brothel houses asking to be hired. More of them fell victim to panderers making money by recruiting young girls for houses of pleasure. Independent prostitutes took longer, if not to engage in the profession, then certainly to register. They usually started in some occupation, trying to make a living out of it, perhaps treating prostitution as a side job – and at one point or another got caught at it by the police. A certain amount of time would usually pass between the first instance of rendering sexual services and registration, whereas in a brothel house the owner risked the loss of her license if a new employee was not registered immediately.

More information on the factors pushing young girls to the outskirts of the society may be acquired through interpreting the data regarding their age at the time of their sexual initiation and its circumstances. One in four prostitutes in the Kingdom of Poland (513 women in total) declared that their first sexual contact involved coercion and violence (the highest percentage – 29.75% – was

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845 B. Margulies, “Prostytucya”, p. 541. The brothel house in Włocławek employed girls below the permitted age. They convinced a client from out of town to write a complaint on their behalf, as they were being kept there against their will and the pleas they had made with the local police brought no effect (APW (Pułtusk branch), RGW, WL, Referat I, j.a. 1889:20, k. 7).

846 Information presented at a lecture by Gawroński delivered in 1907 and based on his study of 164 children forced to engage in prostitution (Wertensteinowa, “Z tragizmów życia”, *Prawda*, no. 13 (1907)). Among the 292 prostitutes registered in Warsaw in 1895, 202 (69.2%) were underage (16 and up); in 1896 the percentage was 65.8 (275 out of 418) (Wysłouch, *Ohyda*, p. 5).

847 A typical English prostitute started out at the age of 18–19 and spent several years prowling the streets (Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 19). In the Paris of 1880–1886, 73.9% of prostitutes were over 21 when they registered, 23.7% were between 18 and 21 (Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 72).

**Chart 13.** The percentage of prostitutes in 1889 who entered the profession at the age of 13 to 26

Prostitutes / Age	13–15	15–19	19–26
In brothels	1.9	71.5	24.4
Individual	9.9	51.3	31.8

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart X, p. 42.

noted in the Warsaw Gubernia); 14.4% of them had not gone through puberty at the time (among women who had started their sexual life willingly the proportion was 6.7%; thus, more than 1/5 of the respondents were seduced before they had started menstruating). The majority had lost their virginity between 14 and 18.<sup>848</sup> It would be difficult to judge whether the early sexual initiation was an introduction to prostitution, as we don't know how much time passed before any given woman started to engage in prostitution. However, this could hardly have been a beneficial element of the women's socialisation. The early sexual initiation of prostitutes is also noted by researchers studying the phenomenon today.

In 1889 roughly 40% of prostitutes had been in the profession for over 5 years; 31% had been involved for a year or less. The longer the period, the smaller the percentage: 13.7% had been working for 2 years, 11.3% for 3, 9.1% for 4, 7.7% for 5. The majority of women (63.1%) had undergone a venereal infection during that time, with ca. 14% treated for syphilis.<sup>849</sup>

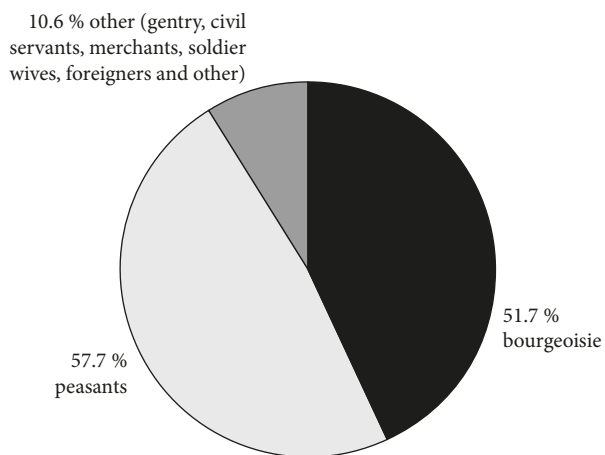
Prostitutes were the first victims of venereal disease; they were also the most affected. For them, sexually transmitted infection was an inherent risk. Another was alcoholism. The work, especially if carried out in brothels of the lowest category, was debilitating, detrimental to both the mind and the body. Świętochowski recalled his impressions from inspecting several public houses in Warsaw. Among other venues, he visited “a squalid two-room hovel” in Sienna street. “We encountered two or three very young women, haggard, gaunt, sleepy, poorly dressed and more vulgar than any we had ever seen. They did not try to tempt us with any subtler hints, but spouted words so shameless and filthy that I felt nauseous.”<sup>850</sup>

848 *Prostitutsiya*, pp. XXXIII–XXXV; The majority of prostitutes in Britain had undergone sexual initiation at 16, and had typically started working in the profession after 1 or 2 years – Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, pp. 17–18.

849 *Prostitutsiya*, p. 3, Chart i.

850 Aleksander Świętochowski, *Wspomnienia*, (Warsaw: 1966), p. 28; Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, pp. 166–172.

**Graph 3.** The social background of licensed prostitutes in the Kingdom of Poland in 1889.



Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart XIII, pp. 38–39.

The social background of prostitutes in the Kingdom (Graph 3) corresponds to the belief, popular at the time, that the vast majority of licentious women came from among the lowest classes and social strata. This is a constant for prostitution, observable in Europe and Russia. The reasons behind such a large proportion of members of the lowest classes seem obvious given the nature of the profession, and are associated with a dire financial situation (and the large pool of potential recruits). Less rigorous (at least in practice) moral norms may only be considered an additional factor. Some differences may be observed only when comparing the percentage of women from the two largest social groups, which provided ca. 90% of public women, i.e. the bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Prostitutes hailing from towns and cities were more numerous (over 51%) than those from rural areas (ca. 38%).

In this respect, the difference between brothel employees and independent prostitutes was small – the percentage of peasant women among the *odinocky* of the Kingdom was higher by five percent (38.5% compared to 33.8%), while the proportion of those hailing from the bourgeoisie was smaller by three percent (51.5% compared to 53.3%). With regard to the remaining prostitutes (10% of independent ones, 12.9% of brothel employees), 48 independent workers and 6 women in brothels declared to be from the gentry

(of from the families of civil servants), 7 independent ones and one brothel employee came from merchant families, 13 independent ones and 4 others identified themselves as soldier wives, 4 independent ones were citizens of foreign countries, while the background of 128 (including 100 independent ones) remained unidentified. None of the mentioned categories automatically implied a better economic situation; in fact it was rarely the case. Greater differences in social background are only noticeable between the tolerated prostitutes from the Warsaw Gubernia (or rather, as it may be assumed, in Warsaw itself) and the ones from other regions of the Kingdom. The vast majority of licentious women in the capital's gubernia came from the bourgeoisie (63.2% of *odinochky* and 64.8% of brothel employees); the proportion of women from the country was smaller (27.7% working independently and 33.95% in brothels). In that, Warsaw was more similar to other European cities than to Russian ones. According to the study conducted by Fedorov and Oboznenko in 1890, nearly a half of St. Petersburg's prostitutes hailed from the peasantry, whereas 1/3 had bourgeois origins,<sup>851</sup> which means that the toll of peasants' migration to the city was greater.

There is no previous data to which these results could be compared. In Kamiński's estimation, the number of prostitutes hailing from the countryside increased after the abolition of serfdom. The sources presented above (Kalisz, Suwałki) testify that a similar process was already underway in the 1820s and 1830s, and later – the only unknown is its scale. In the remaining gubernias, prostitutes of bourgeois origin were the majority (by a slight margin) only in brothel houses (40% bourgeoisie, 33.5% peasantry, 26.4% other). However, over 50% of all licensed prostitutes outside of the Warsaw Gubernia came from peasant families (36.5% bourgeoisie, 52.1% peasantry, 11.4% other). The analysis of illicit prostitution already mentioned the issue of prostitution being based in local, usually rural environment.<sup>852</sup> The census corroborates this (spatially and territorially) limited information.<sup>853</sup>

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851 Engel, *Between the Fields*, p. 174; In Russia, the same census yielded the opposite results – prostitutes of rural origin constituted 47.5%, while those from the bourgeois – 36.3%; *Prostituciya*, p. 7.

852 Out of the 376 licentious women mentioned in “surveillance documents” from Suwałki dated to 1846–1851, 175 (over 46%) had been born in a city (only 5 of them outside of the Augustów Gubernia), 172 came from the countryside, and 29 from Prussia (26) or Russia – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18 and b. 88.

853 Despite their objectivity, the data presents an image that is, in a sense, misleading. Studies of Cracow-based prostitutes in which the sources traced a given group for

**Chart 14.** The education of prostitutes in 1889

Gubernia	School education	Homeschooled	Can read and write	No education
Warsaw	126	9	101	873
Kalisz	2	–	5	115
Kielce	4	–	3	51
Łomża	8	–	–	86
Lublin	18	17	11	155
Piotrków	21	3	4	112
Płock	11	–	5	87
Radom	5	–	8	53
Suwałki	5	9	4	41
Siedlce	1	1	10	35
Total	201	39	151	1608

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, charts XXV, XXVII.

The high percentage of illiterates among prostitutes (Chart 14) indicates that they came from the most pauperised strata of the bourgeoisie and other classes and social groups. 1608 women could not read or write. Only 201 (126 of them in the Warsaw Gubernia) had some form of school education.<sup>854</sup> To borrow Abraham Flexner's words, it may be concluded that prostitutes were mainly "unskilled daughters of the unskilled classes."<sup>855</sup>

Data regarding provenance (Chart 15) adds little to the conclusions regarding the background from which prostitutes were recruited. It only informs (as nothing

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extended periods of time indicate that the prevalence of women hailing from the countryside and small towns, apparent in census data from given years (in 1889: 31.3% from cities in Galicia, 30.3% from the countryside), was not so great if the length of a woman's stay in the city was taken into account – Michał Baczkowski, "Prostytucja w Krakowie na Przełomie XIX i XX w.," *Studia Historyczne*, Vol. 43, no. 4 (2000), pp. 595–598.

<sup>854</sup> European "standards" in this respect were similar. In Italy the percentage of illiterates among prostitutes in 1875 was 84% (Gibson, *Prostitution*, p. 96). According to Corbin, there is no evidence to suggest that the education of French prostitutes was decidedly poorer than of the average citizen. In the 1880s, illiteracy rate among women in Paris was 20%, and in Marseilles – 45% (Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 81–82).

<sup>855</sup> After Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 15.



**Chart 15.** The place of origin of independent and brothel prostitutes in 1889

Gubernia	Local				From other gubernias				Foreign			
	Individual		In brothels		Individual		In brothels		Individual		In brothels	
	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%	Num- ber	%
Warsaw	526	54.8	45	27.8	410	42.7	113	69.7	24	2.5	4	2.5
Kalisz	86	89.6	7	26.9	6	6.2	18	69.2	4	4.2	1	3.8
Kielce	41	77.3	5	100	10	18.9	–	–	2	3.8	–	–
Łomża	65	78.3	5	45.5	13	15.7	6	54.5	5	6.0	–	–
Lublin	140	72.5	7	50.0	49	25.4	6	42.8	4	2.1	1	7.2
Piotrków	67	62.6	10	30.3	32	29.9	19	57.6	8	7.5	4	12.1
Płock	78	83.0	7	77.8	12	12.8	1	14.3	4	4.2	1	14.3
Radom	39	70.9	7	63.6	14	25.4	4	36.4	2	3.6	–	–
Suwałki	35	89.7	9	45.0	3	7.7	11	55.0	1	2.6	–	–
Siedlce	27	75.0	4	36.4	7	19.4	7	63.4	2	2.5	–	–
Total	1104	64.3	106	35.1	556	32.4	185	61.2	56	3.3	11	3.6

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart I, p. 3.

else was asked) whether the women came from the same gubernia in which they were working at the time. It is therefore uncertain whether they came from the country, or from another city, and whether they had arrived as prostitutes (some of them must have, given what we know about their travels), or whether prostitution was a consequence of migration. The census does not provide any possibility to correlate different types of data, for instance social background and place of origin. Only if the differences are large can one make more informed guesses whether the data pertains to the same groups of people.

The place of origin was significantly different for brothel employees and independent prostitutes. The latter came predominantly from the same gubernia in which they registered (with the exception of the Warsaw Gubernia), which does not necessarily mean that they were born in that city (they certainly were not). The large percentage of prostitutes hailing from villages and towns from the vicinity is apparent from all registers specifying not only their names, but also the places of permanent residence.<sup>856</sup> Everywhere except Warsaw and Łódź,

856 “Control records” from Suwałki from the years 1846–1851 (376 prostitutes) noted that only 9% of women came from outside the Augustów Gubernia (29 from Prussia, 3 from Russia, 5 from cities in the Kingdom of Poland). The majority were Suwałki

prostitutes from the same gubernia constituted more than 70%. The average for the Kingdom was 64.3% from within the gubernia and 32.4% from without.

The opposite situation was observable in brothels in most of the Kingdom; there, almost twice as many prostitutes came from outside the gubernia in which they were registered. The Płock, Radom and Lublin Gubernias were an exception, yet the overall numbers of prostitutes there were very low. With regard to the Warsaw and Kalisz Gubernias, 70% of brothel house employees hailed from other regions. A similar proportion of non-local prostitutes was noted in the Siedlce (64%), Łomża, Piotrków and Suwałki Gubernias (over 50%). In the case of independent prostitutes, one could speculate about the limited possibilities women migrating to the city had in hiding from the police, whereas the situation in brothel houses is likely to have resulted from the procurers' activity and personnel rotation planned by brothel owners. Panderers may have targeted girls who had recently arrived at the city in search of work, they may also have gone out to seek potential employees in the countryside. Studies of prostitution in Germany, Russia, Italy and Great Britain have led to similar conclusions.<sup>857</sup>

The 1889 surveys also asked women about the financial standing of their families, allowing them to choose one of four answers: (a) rich, (b) affluent, (c) poor, (d) unknown (Chart 16).

Identification with a poor family background, indicated by 76.5% of brothel employees and 72% of independent prostitutes, corresponded with the popular views on the causes of the social marginalisation of women, as well as with all the information on the issue accumulated since the beginning of the 19th century. The reasons for engaging in prostitution are less clear in the case of

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residents (32%) originating from the Suwałki District (35%; 95 out of 135 women came from the nearby commune of Kuków, 11 from the Przerośl commune). The rest hailed from districts in close vicinity; the Sejny district (10.6%), the Augustów district (6%), the Kalwaria district (5%) – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 18, 88.

857 The majority of tolerated prostitutes in Germany in the early 20th century came outside of the cities in which they were working (Evans, "Prostitution", p. 115). Over 46% of Russian prostitutes had been born in a different gubernia than the one in which they resided in 1889 (*Prostitutsiya*). A similar tendency was also observable in Italy in 1875: 50% of women came from the same province, a further 45% had migrated from other provinces (usually the neighbouring ones), 5% from other countries (Gibson, *Prostitution*, p. 98). The majority of British prostitutes had been born in a city or were recent arrivals from nearby villages (Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 15).

**Chart 16.** The financial situation of prostitutes' families of origin in 1889

Gubernia	Rich		Affluent		Poor		unknown	
	In brothels	Individual	In brothels	Individual	In brothels	Individual	In brothels	Individual
Warsaw	–	26	19	76	143	776	–	82
Kalisz	–	–	2	2	18	45	6	49
Kielce	–	–	1	5	1	24	3	24
Łomża	–	1	–	10	7	41	4	31
Lublin	–	5	5	20	8	108	1	60
Piotrków	–	1	7	12	25	93	1	1
Płock	–	–	–	4	9	90	–	–
Radom	–	–	2	11	9	26	–	18
Suwałki	–	–	10	8	6	17	4	14
Siedlce	–	–	4	7	5	16	2	13
Total	–	33 (1.9 %)	50 (16.5 %)	155 (9.0 %)	231 (76.5 %)	1236 (72.0 %)	21 (6.9 %)	292 (17.0 %)

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart XVI, p. 53.

the 238 who estimated the financial situation of their families as good and very good (16.5% and 10.9%) at the time of their decision to follow that career path. Assuming their answers have been true, these women must have been motivated by a more individual and complex array of factors and circumstances. The few stories of specific prostitutes recorded in the source material shed very little light on this issue. Some women said that they started to engage in prostitution upon the instigation of their friends; they were hoping for a better and easier way of life.<sup>858</sup> The model of a prostitute as a victim of poverty does not fit every story that led to prostitution in the 19th century. Aside from the economic necessity stemming from abject poverty, reasons that could induce a young woman to become a prostitute could include physical violence, coercion from a stranger or even from her own family. Regardless of the details, the woman in question was invariably in a difficult emotional situation, involving e.g. the death of one of her parents and the remarriage of the other. Stanisława Wertensteinowa describes a case of a girl beaten and mistreated by her step-mother. At the age of fifteen, she and her brother ran away to live with their relatives in Łódź. In the railway

858 In 1835 an eighteen-year-old named Marianna Brajerówna was accused of engaging in harlotry in the house of one Mr. Majewski, a tailor from Kalisz – AGAD, KWK, j.a. 1697 e (26 IX/8 X 1835).

**Chart 17a.** The family situation of brothel house prostitutes in the four gubernias with the largest number of public women in this category in 1889

Gubernia	Both father and mother living	Father living	Mother living	Adult siblings living	Underage siblings living	More distant relatives living	No family
Warsaw	3	2	10	46	–	73	26
Kalisz	–	5	6	4	–	10	1
Piotrków	–	–	2	9	1	20	1
Suwałki	1	1	–	4	–	11	3
Total	10	9	19	73	1	146	42

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart XIV, pp. 42–43.

carriage the girl was seduced by two strangers and subsequently sold to a brothel, where she was being kept against her will and forced to work as a servant and a prostitute for a period of several months. Social activist Stefania Sempołowska also presented the stories of several prostitutes whom she met in Warsaw’s police gaol. One of the girls, born in Żyrardów, had been brought to the city by her sister at 15, ostensibly “to enter service”, which in practice meant being handed over to the same brothel in which the sister was employed. Another one was a victim of a domestic conflict with her step-mother. The girl “became a streetwalker to spite her father”, although she did have a job at a factory. According to Sempołowska, prostitutes did not have, or at least did not express, any sense of injustice – they were cynical instead, making argumentative nature their strength.<sup>859</sup>

The situation of their family of origin (Charts 17a, 17b) was arguably the most important factor determining the fate of these girls. The numbers speak for themselves. Only 3% of prostitutes still had both of their parents, 10.6% had lost their mother or father, 18.3% were most likely abandoned as children. For an additional 42.5%, the only living family consisted of more distant relatives (grandparents); given that they had no siblings, it may be assumed that they had been born out of wedlock. The circumstances of prostitutes in many other countries were probably similar.<sup>860</sup>

859 Sempołowska, *Z dna nędzy*, pp. 28, 32.

860 In Russia 18.5% were orphans, 12.6% had one or two living parents, 47.5% had some more distant relatives (*Prostitutsiya*, p. XXV). In early 20th-century Cracow 8.76%

**Chart 17b.** The family situation of independent prostitutes in the four gubernias with the larger number of public women in this category in 1889

Gubernia	Both father and mother living	Father living	Mother living	Adult siblings living	Underage siblings living	More distant relatives living	No family
Warsaw	18	36	67	248	2	397	192
Kalisz	2	2	10	35	1	22	24
Lublin	1	3	8	37	–	103	41
Piotrków	2	3	2	38	–	50	12
Płock	25	19	16	17	1	–	16
Total	51	69	111	437	7	712	329
Total both categories	61	78	130	510	8	858	371

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, chart XVI, pp. 42–43.

To use the language of modern psychology and sociology, prostitutes came from deeply dysfunctional families. The socialisation of these women in their childhood and adolescent years took place in extremely difficult circumstances. The typical motives in the story of this group of over two thousand women included orphanhood (full or partial), poverty if not destitution, which usually implied terrible living conditions that also affected the sexual awareness of children (this issue was often discussed in the press), illiteracy, early and often forced sexual initiation, migration to an entirely unfamiliar environment. These women were essentially left to fend for themselves since childhood and were forced to earn their keep. Without a family to support them, they were doomed to fail. Unemployment or low wages would eventually lead them to prostitution.

For the majority of the registered women, prostitution was not the first occupation;  $\frac{3}{4}$  of them had had some sort of previous employment (the remaining 21% had lived with their family, 9.3% had remained without a job or any means of support). In their case prostitution could have been the final stage in a longer process of social degradation.

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of the 719 prostitutes were illegitimate children, 7.9% were orphans, and 2.78% had only one living parent (Wysłouch, *Ohyda*, p. 4).

**Chart 18.** The occupation of prostitutes before they engaged in that profession

Occupation	In brothels	Individual	Total number	Percentage
Domestic servant	162	909	1071	53.1
Supported by family	92	332	424	21.0
No occupation	10	178	188	9.3
Seamstress, dressmaker	26	123	149	7.4
Factory worker	3	59	62	3.1
Hired hand	–	59	27	1.3
Supported by someone	3	17	20	0.1
Washerwoman	–	20	20	0.1
Peddler, baker	1	13	14	0.6
Doing other types of work	2	17	19	0.6
Craftswoman	–	11	11	0.5
Nanny, governess	2	5	7	0.3
Artist, acrobat	1	5	6	0.2
Total	302	1748	2018	100

Source: *Prostitutsiya*, pp. 74–75.

The most typical path towards prostitution throughout the 19th century led through domestic service (more than a half – 53.1% of prostitutes surveyed in 1889 had that experience),<sup>861</sup> even though the fact that women were forced to seek employment brought a decrease in the percentage of domestic servants among working women (the proportion was nonetheless substantial – over 29 thousand female servants resided in Warsaw in 1882).<sup>862</sup> In the period under analysis, domestics were regarded as the usual suspects and potential prostitutes.

861 Former servants constituted over 50% of prostitutes in England (Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, pp. 16, 194, 372), and over 40% in St. Petersburg (Engel, *Between the Fields*, p. 123), while in Italy in 1875 this group comprised 28% (Gibson, *Prostitution*, p. 106). In 1872, the percentage of former domestics among the registered prostitutes of Hamburg was 58.1% (Evans, “Prostitution”, pp. 115–116), and in Cracow only 28.3% (Baczkowski, “Prostyucja”, p. 604).

862 In 1897 there were over 38 thousand women working as servants in the city of Warsaw. See: Nietyksza, *Ludność*, p. 241, Giedroyć, *Prostyutki*, p. 41, 43.

It may be argued that they were doomed to repeat the history of every fallen woman.<sup>863</sup> Their alleged lack of morals was highlighted in data regarding the mothers of illegitimate children, since servants also held the first place in this category.<sup>864</sup> The legions of female servants had the demographic makeup that predestined them to extramarital sexual activity (they were young and single).

A considerable number of sources with information regarding this group was created in the 19th century, due to the already discussed fact that it was subject to many regulations and was constantly monitored as suspected of licentious behaviour. For the very same reasons, early in the 20th century journalists and social activists took interest in the working and living conditions of domestic servants. They did not deny the immoral conduct of young women (also criticising the quality of their work), but explained the underlying causes for such behaviour, compiling a long list of faults to be found in employers and the society as a whole. Servants also became protagonists of stories that revealed the hypocrisy of the bourgeois sphere.

The legal, social and personal situation of female domestic servants was indubitably difficult. Experts listed an array of factors that could push young women towards “the abyss of depravity:” overly high expectations imposed by employers, strenuous work, the employers’ tendency to delay payment, mistreatment and humiliation the staff had to endure from the employers’ family, lack of free time and days off, restriction of freedom and opportunities to meet one’s peers, disregard for the servants’ basic needs (material and spiritual), lack of care (which ought to have been extended by the lady of the house employing servants; however, thrifty housekeepers tended to dismiss servants for the summer, leaving them without pay or lodgings).<sup>865</sup> The fate of a young woman depended, among

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863 See: Żeromski’s remarks and fears regarding his sister Bolcia, who became a domestic servant: “I see her pregnant, a thief, a prostitute” – Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, Vol. VIII, p. 171.

864 The physician Wysłouch refers to data from Paris (2/3 mothers) and Berlin – Wysłouch, *Ohyda*, p. 32. Łódź also had the highest percentage – Sikorska-Kowalska, *Wizerunek*, p. 21.

865 Teodora Męczkowska, *Służące a prostytutka* (Warsaw: Druk A. Pęczalskiego i K. Marszałkowskiego, 1906), p. 11; Wysłouch, *Ohyda*, p. 6; Władysław Chodecki, “Ciepcha służące do prostytutki”, *Zdrowie* (1906). Stanisława Wertensteinowa recounted the stories of two prostitutes she knew, who started work as servants at an early age (8 and 10 years). Both fell ill due to the excruciating work. One of them was seduced at 14 and gave birth to a baby that she gave away to a shelter after a few years, whereupon (at 17) she “descended into decadence, following the advice of depraved companions.” The other, having found no employment, was sent to a brothel by a procurer, and was forcibly kept there for several months – Wertensteinowa, “Z tragizmów życia.”

other things, on the assessment written by the employer in her work record book.<sup>866</sup>

The occupation of a servant was rooted in the old system of dependency and had little to do with the modern relations between employer and their employees. Under the existing regulations, the person hiring a servant had the right to use “strict measures of household discipline, should admonitions prove to no avail”, and executed it as they saw fit. Servants caught by the police or seeking help at the station (for instance in reclaiming their effects from the employer or getting their overdue pay) complained about being beaten “for the sake of obedience” or “for no reason whatsoever.”<sup>867</sup>

Some of them were also harassed sexually by their employers (as factory workers were by foremen). The household could become a source of demoralisation. Teodora Męczkowska, a social worker, educator and feminist, wrote a booklet about servants’ connection to prostitution. She stated expressly that “a servant offers her employer not only her work, but also herself, and our husbands, brothers, sons and nephews are not guiltless in this, a fact which hardly anyone denies.”<sup>868</sup> Even if, as Ludwik Krzywicki opined in his memoirs, servant women were “too eager to grant favours”,<sup>869</sup> the men benefitting from this could not be absolved from the responsibility. This type of “supplementary services” were usually provided by female servants when the lady of the house was on vacation,

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866 In 1873 the authorities of the Suwałki Gubernia decreed that female servants *sui generis* be issued “record books of moral conduct.” Employers were to fill these with information on the behaviour of their female staff – LVIA, f. 1070, ap. 1, b. 162, l. 24v.

867 For instance APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3194, k. 161–163 (1865). The only institution extending some degree of protection over servants was the police. As noted by the Częstochowa district chief, the police was obliged to provide “sufficient protection to servants from their masters, and to the masters from servants” Cz, MMCz, j.a. 3194, k. 5, 1863).

868 Męczkowska, *Służące*, pp. 16–17; “May the masters and their sons beat their breast in remorse”, writes Wyslouch, *Ohyda*, p. 6; Chodecki, “Co pcha”, pp. 563–565; APL, RGL, 1 1881:139, k. 2–7. This line of reasoning is also found in a novella by Leon Choromański. The lady of the house asks one female servant to alleviate the sexual needs of her crippled brother (“I could not possibly bring him streetwalkers, this would put him in danger of contracting an even more serious disease”). The lady is prompted to make such a proposal by the fact that the girl in question had formerly worked in a hotel (“since she served at a hotel, she is not an innocent anymore”) and the belief that “the lower classes need to be obedient and carry the heaviest burden, for which the poor in spirit will find eternal reward in there (points to the sky)” – “Służąca” (in the series “Życie brutalne”), *Przegląd Społeczny*, no. 11 (1906).

869 Ludwik Krzywicki, *Wspomnienia*, (Warsaw: Czytelnik 1956–1958), Vol. 1, p. 97.



or when the estate was visited by students. Such situations (which the society regarded as common)<sup>870</sup> stemmed partially from the sense of ownership over one's staff, entrenched in feudal mentality. Records also mention cases of sexual exploitation. In April 1863, for instance, Teresa Jędrzejowska employed as a servant in the house of Łukasz Żor testified at the office of the police inspector in Częstochowa: "Żor is constantly importuning me into laying with him, and on two occasions he even violently forced me to do so. Since I confessed this to his wife, Żor constantly beats me in retribution, which is why I cannot stay in his service any longer." The mentioned Żor denied everything. "In conclusion, he wrote, I should also mention that the woman is of poor moral conduct and has already had a child, and therefore her claims deserve no credibility."<sup>871</sup> A pregnancy resulting from such contacts doomed the young woman to be thrown out of her home (such themes were often tackled in literature – e.g. Maslova from Leo Tolstoy's *Resurrection* or Hanka in Dulaska's employ from *Moralność Pani Dulskiej* by Gabriela Zapolska).

Employers aside, a girl's descent down the social ladder and into prostitution could also be caused by a "fiancé" of her own social class, who exploited her naivety and her wish to get married. Such mechanisms were described by the periodical *Przegląd Tygodniowy* in the aptly-titled article *Kuchenne sutenerstwo* [Kitchen Procuration]<sup>872</sup>.

The authors describing the plight of female servants were perfectly aware of the social and personal loneliness these young women experienced. Most of them came from rural areas, often arriving at the city at a very young age. Domestic service was the most easily available employment for unqualified girls from the countryside, and highly sought after. As noted by Cezary Kukło,<sup>873</sup> it

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870 Bristow is convinced that the brutal sexual exploitation of domestic servants was much more widespread than human trafficking. He nevertheless notes that the stereotype of the seduction of a naïve country girl is far from accurate (Bristow, *Prostitution*, p. 25). Out of 16000 British prostitutes, 2836 named "seduction" as the direct cause of their entering the profession, with only 659 stating that they had been seduced by a gentleman. Most of them experienced their sexual initiation with a man of their own social group, not with someone of the middle classes, as was the stereotypical view (Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, p. 18).

871 APCz, MMCz, j.a. 3194, k. 54–55.

872 "Kuchenne sutenerstwo", *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, no. 15 (1904).

873 Cezary Kukło, "Czy w Polsce przedrozbiorowej służba domowa była etapem w życiu człowieka?" in: *Spółeczeństwo w dobie przemian. Wiek XIX i XX. Księga jubileuszowa Profesor Anny Żarnowskiej*, ed. Maria Nietyksza and Andrzej Szwarz, (Warsaw: DiG 2003), p. 205.

could be only a stage in the life of a country girl, who was supposed to make some savings and return to her native village after several years. Separated from their families and left to their own devices, the girls “lack any form of moral support, and easily soak in all kinds of deadly moral miasmas.”<sup>874</sup> Life in the city and the new environment brought the problem of adaptation. Alienation coupled with insight into the life of a more affluent family gave rise to new needs. As Męczkowska put it, “he [the servant] no longer belongs with the people among whom he was born, but neither does he belong to the bourgeois among whom he lives and towards whom he is driven (. . .). He has lost the noble blood and life force of the people, having instead acquired the humiliating vices and desires of the bourgeoisie, yet lacks the means to satisfy them”<sup>875</sup>. Socialists, in turn, emphasised the fact that servants could not count on the support of their own professional group, which was not organised in any way and lacked a trade union; scattered as it was, it remained utterly defenceless. In this respect, the situation of factory workers was much better, despite the lack of job security and the low wages. This may explain the lower rate of former female workers among prostitutes. According to Męczkowska, the daughters of hired hands simply had stricter supervision from their parents. “Fear of other people’s opinion may save a factory worker from moral bankruptcy, since such a worker lives among the society, belongs to a certain organised collective. A servant is alone.”<sup>876</sup> In 1889 7.5% prostitutes declared themselves to be former workers, hired hands, washerwomen and providers of other services. Given the suggestions appearing in the press at the turn of the centuries, it should be emphasised that former factory workers constituted no more than 3% of licensed prostitutes.<sup>877</sup>

Stanisława Wertensteinowa listened to the confessions of 45 individuals who found shelter in the refuge organised after the pogroms in Warsaw in 1905. The women came from very poor families and became independent very early in life – ¾ of them started working between their 7th and 12th birthday. Some entered domestic service, others were employed in a factory or a workshop.

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874 Teodora Męczkowska, “O służbie domowej”, *Głos*, no. 25 (1900).

875 Męczkowska, *Służące*, p. 13, 15. Similarly, Wysłouch noted their excessive fondness for clothes, an attitude adopted from the ladies whom they served – Wysłouch, *Ohyda*, p. 6.

876 Męczkowska, “O służbie domowej.”

877 In France, industry was not the main source of recruitment either (Corbin, *Les Filles*, p. 78). In the late 19th century the list of former professions common among prostitutes started to include new typically female and low-paid occupations: shop assistant, waitress, bartender – Walkowitz, “Dangerous Sexualities”, pp. 372–373.

Wertensteinowa recounts the story of one 12-year-old who worked 15-hour shifts in a cigarette factory, sometimes at night, alongside men and women. At 16 she was raped by some boy and sold to a brothel. Overworking made many of the factory and workshop staff fall ill and lose their jobs, which pushed them to the edge of destitution. There lay in wait panderers, “depraved female companions”, employment agencies clandestinely dabbling in procuration or creating opportunities for it to happen.<sup>878</sup> “Few of them came from abject poverty, from hunger, but many more, which is all the same, were driven by overworking, exhaustion, low spirits, and had fallen into the company of depraved women and a panderer who, under the guise of a fiancé, sent the unfortunate woman to her doom. The girls who had fallen into this abyss were most often seduced, defiled, not infrequently by someone from the so-called intelligentsia, pushed away by their family, overcome with shame and convinced that they were no longer fit for a life of decency.”<sup>879</sup>

Another professional group widely suspected of prostitution,<sup>880</sup> yet defended by the press (detailing their difficult situation) were seamstresses.<sup>881</sup> In 1889, 7.4% of registered prostitutes admitted to having worked in tailoring. The several thousand seamstresses in the Kingdom were an exploited, poorly paid group. They were not able to support themselves from this work alone, and were constantly at risk of losing their employment – seasonally, as many workshops would close for certain periods in the year. Many were in fact dismissed, or even cheated out of some of their due wages, for the workshop owners to be certain that they would return to work after the dead season. The situation of seamstresses and the existing texts on the matter are interesting for a number of reasons. These women could only count on themselves and were often forced to support an entire family with their work. As one may imagine, it was a much-valued occupation among the poorest families that were nonetheless slightly higher on the social ladder, but had found themselves in dire circumstances, since it was regarded as noble work accessible to young women who were neither educated nor prepared for the realities of life. For this reason, the supply of

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878 S. Milewski, *Ciemne sprawy*, p. 90.

879 Wertensteinowa, “Z tragizmów życia.”

880 “When the needle’s an ordeal, she prefers to be Camille”, wrote the satirical paper *Mucha*; after: Milewski, *Ciemne sprawy*, p. 75. Authors with a more vivid imagination accused them of lesbianism and masturbation – “Z pamiętnika szwaczki”, *Głos*, no. 43 (1888).

881 Among others by Bolesław Prus in *Kurier Warszawski* no. 289 (1883), no. 68b (1884), no. 16 (1884), no. 32 (1887), no. 37 (1887) and *Kurier Codzienny*, no. 243 (1899).

ready hands always exceeded the demands of the market. The press wrote about the daughters of night guards, workers, artisans, and about girls “brought up relatively well.” Their marital plans involved men outside of the working class, yet the officials and highly qualified artisans of their dreams expected their bride to come with at least a modest dowry. Thus, an acquaintance often resulted in the woman becoming a kept mistress; ultimately, not all of them resented the role, as it provided them a companion and financial support. While such attitudes are unlikely to have been common, it should be noted that in this case the census (in which the percentage of former seamstresses among prostitutes is small) is not the most reliable source of information, as the role of a kept woman did not necessarily lead to licensed prostitution (that was the focus of the survey). Another topic discussed in the press in connection with the fate of seamstresses was the allegedly widespread Don Juanism, i.e. men pursuing women as they returned from work in the evening, alone. The ladies were stopped in the street and addressed in a very presumptuous manner, almost forced into making the acquaintance.<sup>882</sup> Such practices were, perhaps accurately, explained in literature as men’s desire for “something better”, something safe and more private.<sup>883</sup> From the perspective of single women, it was a threat to their basic safety in public spaces. They were at risk of being accosted not only while travelling by train, but also while walking home from work.

There remains the issue of abandoning prostitution. The survey shows “the image of the day”, which is static. Yearly reports by the medical and police services and analyses of the lists of prostitutes over extended periods of time reveal that prostitutes were a group in permanent motion. This pertains both to brothel employees, rotated on a regular basis, as well as to all other women rendering sexual services for a fee. The analysis of the list of women working at an upscale house of pleasure in Lublin between 1901 and January 1905 includes 68 names, even though the establishment did not employ much more than 5 women at any given time.<sup>884</sup> The total number of licensed prostitutes staying in the brothel in Kielce within six months in 1885 amounted to 34, yet only five of them remained there for the entire period. With regard to the rest, 13 stayed there for a month, 6 for two months, 5 for three months, 2 for four and 3 for five months. We

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882 Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. 8, p. 455, Vol. 10, pp. 29, 311–312, Vol. 11, p. 71, Vol. 15, pp. 24–25, 55.

883 Jadwiga Zacharska, *O kobiecie w literaturze przełomu XIX i XX wieku* (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2000), p. 142.

884 APL, RGL, W P IV 1898:89, k. 40–40 v, 47–48; L 1905:77, k. 40–41.

**Chart 19.** The percentage of prostitutes removed from lists and added thereto in 1882–1889 (the highest and the lowest in the period in question) in Warsaw

Prostitutes	Individual	In brothels	In meeting houses	Others under supervision
Removed	27.1–43.2	37.9–63.2	38.9–57.0	18.6–37.9
Added	29.9–53.4	25.8–64.4	44.9–57.0	18.6–20.6

Source: Based on Giedroyc, *Prostyutki*, charts X, XI, pp. 18–21.

know that half of them left having informed the KL-P of their destination (3 to Warsaw, Lublin and Sosnowiec, 4 to Koniecpól, Jędrzejów, Busko and Radom, 2 to Pińczow and other localities in the Kalisz and Radom Gubernias).<sup>885</sup>

The issue of mobility among prostitutes was already tackled to some degree in the 19th century, with the data of the Warsaw KL-P used as the basis. The period of 1867–1873 was analysed by Jan Kamiński, the years 1882–1890 by Franciszek Giedroyc.<sup>886</sup> The calculations based on the 1880s data published by Giedroyc are presented in Chart 19, separating the categories of independent prostitutes, brothel employees, meeting house employees and women registered for compulsory examination (in their case the level of mobility was the lowest).

Each year, an average of 30% to 50% of registered women was removed from the list, while between 27% and 46% was added. The proportion of women remaining on the lists for one more year amounted to between 5% and 38%. The figures were similar outside of the capital, although the data there is less comprehensive. In the Kielce Gubernia, for instance, the list compiled in January 1885 contains 20 new names, but 45 known from the previous register of 92 names are missing. Another 32 names were removed in March, while 28 were added; in April there appeared 32 new women, while 36 were crossed out from the list.<sup>887</sup>

This phenomenon is as significant as it is interesting, since it has a connection with one of the key issues related to prostitution, namely the possibility of such women ever returning to “normal” life. In the eyes of the public, women who did not manage to break free of the profession at an opportune moment met a tragic end. Apart from the few who stepped up from engaging in prostitution to managing a venue with such services, the rest – at least according to widespread

885 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15165, k. 45–167; Similarly in Koło – APL, RGK, WL, j-a. 7829, k. 9–21 (1896).

886 Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, pp. 174–175; F. Giedroyc, *Prostyutki*, pp. 18–21, charts X, XI.

887 APK, RGKiel., j.a. 15165, k. 45–167.

opinions – followed a downward spiral that ended with selling their bodies on the street. The life would finally lead them to a shelter for the destitute, a gaol, a hospital, and lastly to an autopsy table.<sup>888</sup> Giedroyć was familiar with several patients at the St. Lazarus hospital – wearied women past their prime who spent the larger part of the year there, mostly staying for winter months (which gave them the moniker “winter women”). They would deliberately cause injuries to their reproductive organs, either in the hospital after they had healed, or in the city, whenever they lost their lodgings or went hungry.<sup>889</sup>

Were the changes in the list associated with – to put it in the most general of terms – personnel rotation of prostitutes in search of a better place to live, or do they reflect the numbers of women abandoning the profession? The age of prostitutes and the length of their involvement in the business corroborates the obvious truth that this was hardly an occupation for life. Some answers may be found in the data collected by KL-Ps, which noted the reasons for removal from the list and stated whether this was the first instance of a woman being registered as a prostitute. The data from 1882–1890 presented by Giedroyć indicates that most women were de-registered due to their relocation (legal change of residence or escape). These constituted 37% (7701 de-registrations) of the total number of prostitutes in the analysed period of nine years. The percentage from a single year is even more telling. For instance, in 1882, 1883 and 1884 the ratio of prostitutes de-registering due to relocation was between 82% and 87% (this could include individuals registering and de-registering several times in the course of the year).<sup>890</sup>

The fact that relocation did not necessarily mean a break with prostitution is apparent from data regarding new registrations in a given year – women registering in the KL-P for the first time comprised an average of 40.8% (31.5 in 1885,

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888 The fate of Kaśka Kariatyda from the eponymous novel by Gabriela Zapolska is representative of this view.

889 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, p. 22.

890 Giedroyć, *Prostytutki*, pp. 18–21 (1882–1890); *Izvlecheniye*, p. 9 (1882–1884); The situation was similar in earlier periods, e.g. in 1865 out of 923 women removed from the list in Warsaw, 60% fled and 14% left the city legally – J.M. Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, p. 178. In Cracow, out of the total number of 716 prostitutes (in 1902–1910) the majority (42%) de-registered to move to other cities, slightly fewer (32%) were removed because the police had lost track of them, 15% stayed in the city, while the remaining 11% returned to their parents, entered employment (more than a dozen) or found other means of support, died, married, or went to gaol or a correctional institution – Rzańnicki, “Przyczynek do prostytucji.”

45.9% in 1883); 59.2% (the lowest figure was 54.1% in 1883; the highest – 68.45% in 1885) were “repeat offenders” with whom the Warsaw police had previously lost contact (which is not tantamount to leaving the profession), or who arrived from other cities in which they plied the same trade.<sup>891</sup> With very few exceptions (most likely in the case of brothel employees), the women who registered as prostitutes for the first time had previously worked in the field illegally, perhaps in addition to some other employment. Registration was only the result of an investigation conducted by the police and KL-P supervisors.

All other acts of deregistration met the conditions specified in the regulations (marriage, employment, care, death). In 1882–1890 only a small percentage of women were de-registered due to entering matrimony (2.05%, 434 women), finding other work (1.19%, 251), dying (0.67%, 142), or finding means of support from a charity institution or from their families (0.05% and 0.09%).<sup>892</sup> Such situations occurred to an average of several dozen women a year. Their marriages “ought to be attributed to the steady influx of foreigners, who, lacking any other relations, are content even with such a catch”, wrote Kamiński, most likely referring to the Russian military. He added that “quite often these are people of few intellectual gifts, but of a decent, or very decent standing in life.” In Kamiński’s view, de-registering prostitutes showed little promise of reintegrating with the society.<sup>893</sup> Although it was certainly an exaggeration to say that the only prostitutes who truly leave the profession once and for all are the dead ones, the issue of resocialisation tackled by social activists in the early 20th century proved more troublesome than anticipated. Despite all difficulties in withdrawing from prostitution, the fact that certain numbers of women “disappeared” from the lists indicates that they were able to find some way (legal or another) out of the profession.

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891 The KL-P in Warsaw informed of the influx of prostitutes from the provinces, explaining it with their wish to hide from police supervision – APL, RGL, WP IV 1886:146, k. 1.

892 A similarly low percentage was noted in 1863–1872 – Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, pp. 176–178.

893 Kamiński, *O prostytucji*, p. 177; e.g. in Bologna, 8% of all women legally removed from the police registry in 1863–1886 stated marriage as the reason. In 1863 in Naples matrimony was the grounds for de-registering 3% of prostitutes – Gibson, *Prostitution*, pp. 142–145.





# Chapter 4: PROSTITUTION IN THE EYES OF THE SOCIETY: Written discourse at the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries

## 1. Abolitionism vs. regimentationism

The first voices of criticism against tolerating prostitution appeared in Western Europe at the end of the 1860s. The support, or at least indifference towards the regimentation system characteristic for the 1st half of the century (when the State was expected to manage the physical and moral filth – the human dumpster, both literally and figuratively) gave way to negating the utility of the system and a growing discontent regarding the existence of prostitution as such. Earlier, public harlotry had been, almost exclusively, the concern of “good police”, doctors and officials. Even in places where the scale of the phenomenon brought it to the public eye (e.g. Paris, London), prostitution was rarely discussed outside of the mentioned environments. However, as the lack of success in combating venereal disease and street prostitution became increasingly obvious, the relevant discourse spread to much wider circles. These deemed prostitution to be one of the social disasters of Europe and declared war against regimentation and harlotry, in which they wanted to involve the entire society.

Historians of prostitution agree that the key role in this process was played by the so-called neo-abolitionism,<sup>894</sup> which gained immense popularity, comparable to that of the anti-slavery movement.<sup>895</sup> It managed to mobilise a large portion of the public in Europe and America to strive to set “white slaves” free from both legal and social discrimination they were facing. The criticism of the European regimentation system originated in England. The Contagious Disease Act, introduced by the Westminster Parliament in 1864, gave courts in localities that held garrisoned troops or the fleet the right to force public women to undergo medical examinations and treatment in designated hospitals. Thus,

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894 The name of the movement referred to the campaign for the abolition of slavery. For more on neo-abolitionism see e.g.: Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, pp. 86–89, 90–112; Berlière, *La police*, pp. 131–165; Veniamin Tarnovskiy, *Prostitutsiya i abolitsionizm* (Petersburg: Izdaniye Karla Rikker, 1888).

895 Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp. 80–84.

in contrast to the French, Polish and Russian system, the British solution was rooted in parliamentary legislation; the role of the police was limited to finding suspects, while the verdict was left to judicial authorities. Nevertheless, the legislation was criticised almost immediately. The success of the vigorous social campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act, which led to its utter repeal in 1886, ought to be ascribed primarily to Josephine Butler, one of the female activists of the Ladies' National Association.<sup>896</sup> Butler's movement gained the stern support of various circles (workers, women, clergy), as evidenced e.g. by the fact that her petition to the parliament was signed by over 2.5 million people.

The opponents of tolerated prostitution were heard ever clearer everywhere across Western Europe. Their expertly tackled propaganda activities (e.g. Butler's tour of the continent, Yves Guyot's activity in France – the latter was to abolitionism what Parent-Duchâtelet to regimentationism) and slogans that fell on fertile social and ideological ground made the movement attractive to many. In 1874 neo-abolitionists founded an international federation associating activists and proponents of social changes. In the course of the following decade, they organised four international congresses to tackle the issue (1877 in Geneva, 1880 in Genoa, 1883 in Hague, 1886 in London). During their very first meeting, the Federation formulated the ambitious goal of striving towards the absolute elimination of prostitution from social life, and indicated the steps to be taken in this direction. The fact that its ideas were incorporated into the programme of the feminist movement had a huge impact on the abolitionists' success, as they managed to turn the attention of people everywhere from the Atlantic coast to the Ural Mountains to the matter of prostitution.

Reaching such a broad spectrum of the public would have been impossible if prostitution at the time was not linked to so many other problems within the society. The abolitionist movement was built on the foundation of social and mental transformations taking place in Europe. Other favourable factors included the speed at which information travelled and the distance it covered (the development of the press), the ongoing democratisation of many aspects of life and the growing aspirations of the marginalised social groups. Consequently, the idea of neo-abolitionism proliferated in Europe and gave this issue (which

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896 Josephine Butler, Stanisław Posner, *“Mój pochód, krzyżowy”*. *Zarysy autobiograficzne żywota i pracy*, foreword by Stanisław Posner (Warsaw: Ogniw, 1904); Nancy Boyd, *Three Victorian Women Who Changed Their World: Josephine Butler, Octavia Hill, Florence Nightingale* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 23–92; Glen Petrie, *A Singular Iniquity: The Campaigns of Josephine Butler* (New York: Viking Press, 1971).

was but one of many worries of the society at the time) publicity and importance, perhaps greater than merited.

In Polish territory, prostitution became a topic of public discourse later than in the rest of Europe. Abolitionist ideas were slow to seep into the mind of Poles. In 1888 the Warsaw paper *Głos* published Bolesław Limanowski's article denouncing the system of regimentation, especially critical towards the medical examination of prostitutes, "the vilest form of female slavery", "the barbaric practice that so offends the democratic and humanitarian sensitivities of today. It is demanded by the modern drive towards equal rights for women", yet the text was exceptional in nature.<sup>897</sup> The fact that the programme of the abolitionist movement was presented in 1889, in a summary of the proceedings of the 2nd International Women's Congress in Paris, given by one of the speakers at a meeting of the Guardians of the 3rd Sewing Workshop of the Charitable Society in Warsaw (Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit or Aleksandra Krycińska) lacked any broader consequences.<sup>898</sup> The women's movement in Polish territory was still at the stage of formulating its programme and the forms of interacting with the public, which is why the issue of prostitution was only tackled by these circles ten years later.

In the last three decades of the 19th century, the press informed the public of philanthropist initiatives to help fallen women, of cases of disturbance of the peace involving pedestrians being accosted by prostitutes, of human trafficking, and also of criminal cases in which women of loose morals were implicated. The language of these articles makes it apparent that their authors distanced themselves from the issue of prostitution (and especially the women engaged in such activities), even going as far as to present the issue in a humorous manner.<sup>899</sup> The phenomenon itself was hardly regarded as a problem; the existence of prostitution

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897 Bolesław Limanowski, "Reglamentacja występku", *Głos*, no. 31 (1888). Limanowski may have taken interest in the problem after meeting women arrested in the course of evening round-ups, during the night he spent in a jail in Lvov.

898 "Konferencja publiczna w walce z handlem żywym towarem. Referat Pauliny Kuczalskiej-Reinschmit", *Ster*, no. 4–5 (1914). On the Polish women participating in the Congress: Jan Hulewicz, "Kuczalska-Reinschmit Paulina", in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, ed. Michał Girdwoyń and Adam Gross (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1959–1960), Vol. VIII, pp. 69–70.

899 For instance, writing about the workhouse for "fallen women" or, as the author puts it, the "sinful daughters of Eve". The institution was also meant to ensure "that underage Evies displaying bad tendencies did not fall into the arms of... Adams, upon the chink of a coin" – "Echa warszawskie", *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, no. 39 (1882).

was simply an aspect of human physiology. In 1868, the journalist reviewing the Warsaw stage production of Alexandre Dumas<sup>900</sup> *Camille* claimed that the author had no right to make a fallen woman into a protagonist, much less to rehabilitate her through the plot of the story. The review reads: “the women of his *demi-monde* have long treaded the edge of the abyss, so long, in fact, that they earned the reputation of loud coquettes, and only when the divine spark of (one dares say: dubitably) true love flares in their hearts do they transform into Magdalenes whose tears fall at the feet of their beloved, into the victims of the other half of humankind, victims who cry in the author’s own voice: for reform, for a rebirth, or for punishment and retribution. No, it needs to be said outright, that even if the rehabilitation of beings wallowing in filth (regardless of what the unfortunate initial motivation may have been) had a true and good aspect to it, and stirred the audience to compassion and contentment, under no circumstances should it be used to idealise or erect altars to heroism. Women of the *demi-monde* ought not to be protagonists, if only due to the fact that they have nothing in their defence, not even passion which, as a force, propels the drama in a compelling manner – their actions were a series of decisions taken willingly, after just one, the first (which was forced), and thus constituted consent to the state of affairs; while the sudden love, which the author wishes to portray as true and immortal, can never be so, and will never purify, as anyone may easily attest. If it were so, how would the love of pure, noble women, or the love of women who had erred but once in life, differ from the affections of women who had for long years lived in corruption?”<sup>901</sup> The journalist reviewing Mieczysław Dzikowski’s novel *Dziewczyna*, published in 1870 (which tells the story of a seduced seamstress), rejects the issue as unbecoming in literary works, opining that it belongs solely to the realm of police services and public health, since “there are things

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900 E. L[ubawski], “Pojęcia pani Aubray. Komedja w IV aktach Alexandra Dumasa syna. Przekład Władysława Umiastowskiego”, *Biblioteka Warszawska*, Vol. III (1868), pp. 505–510. Another reviewer – Fryderyk H. Lewestam – called the work “filth” in a public speech.

901 Lubawski continued: “No, there is so many urgent needs that call for aid and mercy, for help and alleviation, that the issue of fallen women from the alien *demi-monde*, shall forever remain a sign of the times in French literature, and a monument to elegant style, bold statements, striking arguments denouncing the wrongdoings of the society, yet will not become a model for drama involving universally human feelings, universally experienced moments (...) but we are, inadvertently, cross with the author, that he made us feel moved with such an issue, which shall be repeated until the world’s end, with no hope of being mended whatsoever.”

on Earth from which the novel (. . .) turns its eye in disdain.”<sup>902</sup> Such unworthy, hitherto avoided topics were only introduced to literature by the programme of the positivist movement, and did not become the focal point until the rise of naturalism. Aleksander Świętochowski defended Dzikowski’s work for this very reason. He was drawn to the issue of prostitution, not because of the social, but ethical concerns – the problem of reconciling the existing moral norms with reality, the conflict between biological needs and moral obligations. As he wrote in a letter to Piotr Chmielowski, it was the contradiction “that I see constantly, even in you and in myself. For instance, I am moved by *Camille*, but still accost seamstresses.”<sup>903</sup>

In time, owing to foreign and Polish *belles-lettres* as well as reviews and discussions published in the press, readers gradually became more accustomed to this delicate issue and gained knowledge about different aspects of the phenomenon. In the late 1860s and early 1870s such a role was played by Alexandre Dumas’ *Camille*.<sup>904</sup> Later, the reviewers’ passions were stirred by works written by Guy de Maupassant, Joris K. Huysmans, Leo Tolstoy, Bjørnstjerne Martinius Bjornson, and finally by the naturalists led by Emile Zola. Representatives of this movement, whom Bolesław Prus dubbed “Columbuses of the gutter,”<sup>905</sup> made human misery into one of the central topics of their works, turning prostitutes (as mentioned in the introduction) into titular characters – e.g. in Zola’s *Nana*. In Polish literature, fallen women and their clients appear as background or central characters in the works of Adolf Dygasiński, Bolesław Prus, Stefan Żeromski, Gabriela Zapolska, Władysław Berent and several dozen other, now forgotten writers.<sup>906</sup> Phenomena characteristic for the *Zeitgeist* of the turn of the centuries, such as decadence, interest in pathologies and the lowest instincts, absolutising sexual factors, etc., bred dozens of literary texts in which prostitutes were

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902 After: Aleksander Świętochowski, *Wybór pism krytyczno-literackich*, introduction and footnotes by Maria Brykalska (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1973), pp. 97–100.

903 After: Maria Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski. Biografia* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1987), Vol. 1, pp. 142–143. Świętochowski often discussed the problem of moral responsibility in the light of biological predetermination.

904 *Przegląd Tygodniowy* published it as a complimentary supplement for subscribers in 1869/1870.

905 Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. VI, p. 178.

906 See: Ewa Ihnatowicz, “Miasto kryminalne?”, in: *Miasto – Kultura – Literatura – XIX wiek*, ed. Jan Data (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Gdańskie, 1993), pp. 113–124; Zacharska, *O kobietach*, pp. 139–159.

portrayed – depending on the author’s views – as victims or seductresses and liberated women. Works by Żeromski and Zapolska prompted public discussion on the situation of women and male sexual behaviours.<sup>907</sup>

As far as Polish public is concerned, the first to bring the issue of prostitution and the ideals of the abolitionist movement to the centre of attention were feminist activists, who followed the example of their western-European counterparts and introduced the matter of regimentation of prostitution and the development of new standards of sexual morality into the programme of women’s emancipation movement. Inspired by the experiences of foreign social activists, they used forms and arguments known from France, Germany and other European countries. In May or June 1900, Teodora Męczkowska, who was one of the most active members of the women’s movement (also with regard to prostitution), presented a report at the so-called “Delegation of women’s work”. In it, she described prostitution as an important current issue that required social work. She concluded with the appeal to expand the programme of the women’s movement to include the matter of abolishing regimentation and initiating educational work towards the prevention of prostitution.<sup>908</sup> Męczkowska complained that the issue of prostitution and the related ethical concerns were thoroughly disregarded in public discourse and that the wide spread of the ethical movement did not translate to any factual changes, while “the deeply rooted tenet that this is not a subject to be openly discussed still prevails”.<sup>909</sup> Years later, she recalled that no respectable paper was willing to tackle the issue; the only periodical not afraid of delicate subjects was *Głos*, yet even there her article on public morals was censored by the editors (for instance the word “prostitution” was

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907 For instance: “O biernej Ewie (Z okazji Żeromskiego ‘Dziejów grzechu’);” *Ster*, no. 6 (1908); “To o czym się nie mówi”; *Ster*, no. 6 (1909); Kazimiera Bujwidowa, “O czym się nie mówi”; *Ster*, no. 7–8 (1909); Samuel Hirszhorn, “Dwie moralności (‘O czym się nie mówi’ – powieść Gabrieli Zapolskiej);” *Czystość*, no. 29 (1909).

908 “Konferencja publiczna.” Political activist Stanisław Koszutski also referred to Męczkowska’s presentation, appreciating the effort to bring the subject to everyone’s attention and discussion. He did, however, criticise the methods of prevention she proposed, and even her evaluation and analysis of the problem – Koszutski, “Na mównicy”.

909 Teodora Męczkowska, “Moralność obyczajowa”; *Głos*, no. 28 (1900). A similar statement: “Prostitution is perhaps the only area in which the society turns away from the weak, refuses to extend a hand to beings wishing to stand up; on the contrary, does everything in its power to keep them on their road to degradation” – J. L., “Policja obyczajów”; *Głos*, no. 30 (1900).

replaced with “indecenty”).<sup>910</sup> Indubitably, anyone who tackled the problem of prostitution, and especially women, needed to be brave and unrelenting; female activists addressed it in spite of the opinion of the majority. According to Męczkowska, initially their work was appreciated by very few people.<sup>911</sup> These included physicians, such as Antoni Wysłouch and Leon Wernic (venereologist, hygienist, the editor of *Zdrowie*) and lawyers such as Stanisław Posner (journalist and social activist with leftist inclinations). In 1900 they joined Męczkowska to establish (illegally, due to the circumstances at the time) the Society of Abolitionists (*Towarzystwo Abolicjonistyczne*) based in Warsaw, an association of proponents of Josephine Butler’s programme (members of the Society exchanged correspondence with Butler and made her manifesto available to Polish readers, publishing it under the title *Przez drogę krzyżową*).<sup>912</sup> Before the outbreak of the Great War, several other organisations designed to combat prostitution were also created in the Kingdom: *Warszawskie Chrześcijańskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Kobiet* (the Warsaw Christian Association of Protecting Women, 1902), *Żydowskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Kobiet* (the Jewish Association of Protecting Women, 1904), *Towarzystwo Walki z Chorobami Płciowymi i Szerzenia Zasad Abolicjonizmu* (the Association to Combat Venereal Diseases and Propagate the Principles of Abolitionism, 1906), *Towarzystwo Reformy Obyczajów* (the Association for the Reform of Morals, 1906), *Towarzystwo Szerzenia Czystości Obyczajów* (the Association to Propagate the Purity of Morals, 1906).<sup>913</sup>

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910 Teodora Męczkowska, *Pamiętnik pisany w Zakopanem w r. 1944/45 na wygnaniu*, Biblioteka Narodowa, Oddział Rękopisów, sygn. 10303 II, k. 47–50.

911 “Plon odpowiedzi”, *Ster*, no. 3 (1914); Męczkowska, *Pamiętnik*, k. 50.

912 Witold Chodźko, *Handel kobietami* (Warsaw: Polski Komitet Walki z Handlem Kobietami i Dziećmi, 1935), p. 18. In 1915 the Society of Abolitionists was transformed into the Polish Society to Combat Prostitution and Venereal Disease (*Polskie Towarzystwo Walki z Nierządem i Chorobami Płciowymi*), which subsequently changed into the Polish Eugenics Society (*Polskie Towarzystwo Eugeniczne*) led by Leon Wernic. On the pre-eugenic themes in these circles see: Magdalena Gawin, *Rasa i nowoczesność. Historia polskiego ruchu eugenicznego (1880–1952)* (Warsaw: Neriton, 2003), pp. 83–85.

913 The goals of these associations were stated e.g. in *Czystość*, the press organ of abolitionist societies; “Wyjątki z ustawy Warszawskiego Towarzystwa dla walki z chorobami sekretnymi i szerzenia zasad abolicjonizmu”, *Czystość*, no. 27 (1909); August Wróblewski, “Towarzystwo do zwalczania chorób płciowych”, *Czystość*, no. 29, 30 (1909); Sruł Auerbach, “Przed zebraniem Towarzystwa dla zwalczania Chorób Płciowych”, *Czystość*, no. 31 (1909); Leon Wernic, “Cel i zadania Towarzystwa dla zwalczania chorób płciowych”, *Czystość*, no. 31 (1909).

Officially, the proposal to denounce the regimentation of prostitution and to demand its abolition was adopted at the first Conference of Polish Women, held in Cracow in 1905.<sup>914</sup> One plenary session at the 1907 meeting and a separate section was devoted to prostitution and the so-called double morality.<sup>915</sup> In 1909 the Cracow branch of the women's rights protection movement issued the so-called primer of women's issues, written by feminist and education activist Kazimiera Bujwidowa. It was composed of briefly stated postulates for socially aware women and had the form of a pad with removable pages, resembling a calendar. The eight principal postulates of the women's movement, defining its goals in terms of economy, education, legislation, politics, motherhood and the protection of children, included "the abolition of administratively legalised prostitution" (clause 7).<sup>916</sup> This testifies to the importance women's rights activists ascribed to the problem of prostitution. It was discussed at length in Cracow feminist papers *Ster* and *Nowe Słowo*; with the latter publishing a special supplement *Czystość*, pertaining primarily to these issues.<sup>917</sup> However, the matter of prostitution was not mentioned at the 1913 conference, either in the discussion around education, or women's work in industry, not to divide activists representing various approaches to the movement by presenting an issue which took some feminists very far in their musings on the underlying causes and proposed changes.<sup>918</sup>

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914 "Program wspólnej pracy uchwalony na I Zjeździe Kobiet Polskich w Krakowie w dniach 20–23 X 1905 roku", *Nowe Słowo*, no. 20 (1905).

915 After this conference, the opponents of regimentation circled around the abolitionist August Wróblewski and his periodical *Czystość* sent a member of the Duma, Alfons Parczewski, their proposals regarding e.g. the gradual withdrawal of the regimentation system – first the de-legalisation of brothels, followed by the cessation of tolerance for independent prostitution; "Projekt ślubów cywilnych i zwalczania rozpusty", *Czystość*, no. 1 (1908); August Wróblewski, "Reglamentacja prostytucji w Warszawie", *Czystość*, no. 25 (1909).

916 Kazimiera Bujwidowa, *Czy kobieta powinna mieć te same prawa co mężczyzna?* (Cracow: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze "Encyklopedyi Ludowej", 1909), p. 4. Clause 8 mentioned the abolition of all privileges of gender expressed in codified and moral laws.

917 Anna Pawłowska, "Kwestie etyczno-obyczajowe w prasie kobiecej przełomu XIX i XX wieku (na łamach 'Steru' i 'Nowego Słowa')", *Studia Historyczne* R. XXX, issue 4 (119) (1987), pp. 571–587.

918 Kazimiera Bujwidowa, *O postępowym i niepostępowym ruchu kobiecym w Galicji* (Lvov: Drukarnia "Polska", 1913), p. 16.



The principal and direct aim of the abolitionist movement was to put an end to the police-and-medical supervision of prostitutes, force all brothel houses to close and convince the authorities to introduce changes to the penal code (more severe punishment for panderers). As the initiator and patron of the regimentation system, the State was therefore both the addressee and the main opponent of their postulates. Given the political situation of the Kingdom of Poland, whose citizens had no legal means of political pressure, the issue was difficult, and sometimes downright impossible to advocate. Only after the system changes that took place in Russia in 1905 did Poles acquire the instruments that enabled them to give this activity an organised form and put social pressure on the authorities through the Parliament. The revolution of 1905 brought not only the liberalisation of public activity in the Kingdom (the right to form associations, replacing preventive censorship with a repressive one), but released an enormous charge of activist energy channelled through various types of social activity. The mentioned pogrom of public houses in Warsaw in May that year was another factor that made prostitution seem an even more interesting and pressing issue. Anti-regimentationist activity intensified in the final years before the outbreak of the war, due to the ongoing legislative work in the third and fourth Duma, aimed at drafting laws against human trafficking (cf. Chapter 1). Russian legislative initiatives regarding women's rights and offenses against morality opened new opportunities for proponents of the delegalisation of prostitution. The most prominent role at the time was played by the Union for the Equal Rights of Polish Women (*Związek Równouprawnienia Kobiet Polskich*; hereinafter ZRKP), led by Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit. Established in 1907, the organisation represented the most radical direction of feminist ideas. The first Polish campaign towards the abolishment of the regimentation system was organised in 1909 in connection with a proposed draft of a "law regarding the means towards the curbing of the trade in women for harlotry," presented at the Duma. The ZRKP expressed their demand to disestablish regimentation, close brothels and uphold the legal protection of persons under 21 years of age, sending letters to the Polish Circle in St. Petersburg and organising two conferences in Warsaw. The one in May, entitled "Women's Perspective on the So-Called Flesh Trade" managed to gather a sizable audience (including representatives of the press, women's organisations and charities). Teodora Męczkowska delivered a lecture presenting the history of regimentation in Warsaw and the principles of the system's operation; Władysława Weychert focused on women's paths towards prostitution, illustrating the issue with the stories of prostitutes she spoke to in gaol; the principal organiser of the event, Kuczalska, presented an overview of the issue of human trafficking in the broad context of the development of women's rights movement in Europe and

its goals.<sup>919</sup> The second conference, “On the means of self-defence”, took place in September 1909. This time, speakers included Kazimiera Bujwidowa and Teresa Lubińska.<sup>920</sup> In 1910, the press organ of the ZRKP summarised the theses presented by the participants of the Russian conference tackling the issue of the trade in women, held in St. Petersburg.<sup>921</sup> As the initiative of the All-Russian League of Equal Rights for Women led 44 members of the Duma to make a motion to close cathouses, abolish regimentation and treat venereal diseases in accordance with universally applicable principles (1913), the management of the ZRKP passed a resolution (9 December 1913) to appeal to Polish members of the parliament to support the proposal, as well as to the public, asking for voices of support to be sent to the editing board of *Ster*.<sup>922</sup> Other societies with similar goals were also contacted in order to organise coordinated actions to spread information through conferences, lectures, public appeals, etc. Editors of *Ster* sent two thousand copies of their “Appeal to the society” out to doctors, lawyers and famous activists, asking them to formulate their opinion on the issue of regimentation. They received 304 replies, which were subsequently published in *Ster* and sent to the MPS along with the Union’s memorial.<sup>923</sup> In accordance with the resolution, members of the Union organised a conference featuring female doctors, Julia Blay (a promoter of sexual education), Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, as well as Kuczalska’s closest associate, Józefa Bojanowska. Kuczalska delivered a programmatic speech, in her usual militant style, summarising the activities of

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919 “Opinia Związku równouprawnienia kobiet polskich ‘O projekcie nowego prawa, zmierzającego do zatamowania handlu kobietami w celach nierządu’”, *Ster*, no. 4 (1909); “Związek równouprawnienia kobiet polskich. Głos kobiet o tzw. handlu żywym towarem”, *Ster*, no. 5/6 (1909); Władysława Weychertówna, “Źródła społeczne i etyczne handlu żywym towarem (Odczyt wypowiedziany w dniu 18 V 1909 r.)”, *Ster*, no. 6 (1909).

920 Romana Pachucka, *Pamiętniki 1886–1914* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1958), pp. 173–174; Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit, “Przeciw ohydzie t.z. handlu żywym towarem”, *Ster*, no. 4 (1909); K. “Niemożliwa propozycja”, *Ster*, no. 5 (1909).

921 S. Kijowski, “Walka z prostytucją. 1-szy Wszechrosyjski zjazd w sprawie t.zw. handlu żywym towarem”, *Ster*, no. 5 and 6 (1910).

922 “O konwencji międzynarodowej w sprawie handlu żywym towarem. W oświetleniu Towarzystwa Prawniczego”, *Ster*, no. 7–8 (1913); “Do Społeczeństwa”, *Ster*, no. 19–20 (1913); “Uchwała Związku R.K.P. o zniesieniu reglamentacji prostytucji”, *Ster*, no. 19–20 (1913); “O ‘nieodpowiedni ton’”, *Ster*, no. 1–2 (1914); “Wezwanie”, *Ster*, no. 4–5 (1914).

923 Pachucka, *Pamiętniki*, pp. 269–271; “Plon odpowiedzi”, *Ster*, no. 1–2, 3 (1914).

the Polish women's movement regarding prostitution.<sup>924</sup> In the final years before the outbreak of the First World War, prostitution and the related issues were tackled (during conferences, open meetings, in periodicals published by women's organisations and in social and cultural weeklies) by the most prominent and most active feminists of the day.

What critics of the regimentation system regarded as fundamental were the moral and legal consequences of state tolerance for prostitution. The medical aspect was only a minor concern. The Conference of Polish Women in 1905 denounced regimentation as an idea, presenting three reasons: (1) regimentation is an affront to ethics and justice, (2) it only applies to women and is an affront to their dignity, (3) it causes the dissemination of venereal disease.<sup>925</sup> Critics judged the system primarily from the moral perspective, stating that the regimentation of prostitution is tantamount to the acceptance of public harlotry, and consequently to its propagation, as tolerance allows people to entertain the thought that prostitution is not an evil, since the State does not counteract it. Legally licensed public houses provide incentive for young men, giving them the right, as Kuczalska put it, "to violate a woman's honour and dignity". Abolitionists, in turn, vilified prostitution as a uniformly harmful phenomenon with dire hygienic, moral and social consequences felt by everyone. In her programmatic text on the ethical and social goals of the women's movement, Teodora Męczkowska wrote: "Prostitution is perhaps the best evidence of what can emerge from perverted relations between people, how easily the violence of some breeds the moral and physical enslavement of others, finally, how this enslavement and exploitation lead downward a slippery slope of the dehumanisation of both the abusers and the abused. Verily, one finds it hard to comprehend how civilised societies deem to fight prostitution solely because it brings the physical degeneration of the nation, disregarding the very essence, the immorality of relations in which one party commits a misdemeanour with impunity, and the other – the victim – is forever stigmatised for this deed." She also declared that women were no longer willing to stand for "such an opportunistic stance, degrading to human dignity. They fight not the consequences of prostitution, but prostitution itself, as filth and barbarity. Every women's association demands, first and foremost, the utter abolishment of regimentation, in the assumption that supervision over

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924 "Konferencja publiczna; Przemówienie Dr. Julji Blay", *Ster*, no. 4–5 (1914);  
"Sprawozdanie Zarządu ZRKP", *Ster*, no. 4–5 (1914).

925 "Program wspólnej pracy; Życie z życia", *Ster*, no. 1–2 (1914).

prostitution is, in itself, immoral.”<sup>926</sup> Activists invoked the State’s fundamental obligation to protect moral values. “The law cannot enter into an agreement with prostitution,” wrote Adolf Rzańnicki (a doctor and a socialist), “and yet the entire system of regimentation is nothing short of a tacit agreement to a crime.”<sup>927</sup>

The most often invoked argument as to why regimentation should be opposed was the status of prostitutes, compared to that of female slaves. It was also the reason why feminists were interested in the issue. Without any detailed analyses, abolitionists wrote that the regulations of the system put prostitutes outside of the law and society, denying them their basic rights as citizens that had been developed by European societies of the 19th century – freedom, equality in the eyes of the law, and personal immunity. They listed the numerous tragic consequences of legalising brothels, registration and police-and-medical supervision: the transformation of women occasionally selling their bodies into professional prostitutes, and the shift from a seasonal occupation to a career due to the practice of confiscating passports and the resulting difficulties in abandoning the practice, as well as the slave-like (as was believed) dependence on brothel owners and dealers of the “flesh trade”, the objectification of women, their utter subordination to police authority, the round-ups of prostitutes and all women suspected of licentiousness, the mandatory medical examinations infringing on the freedom and dignity of women, and finally all the related examples of police malpractice. The audience of the first Conference of Polish Women in Cracow heard in connection with licensed brothel houses: “Regimentation treats a woman as an object, a commodity to be traded by the worst dregs of the society. Furthermore, regimentation allows for the establishment of warehouses of human goods, as long as the traders pay taxes and register their merchandise to be controlled by the police. The policeman lords over life and death. If a woman falls into the hands of the police but once, she is already buried alive. She is denied even the chance to improve, as this will not be taken into consideration by the police, unless her parents or her husband vouchsafe for her.”<sup>928</sup> The press commented on the moral police (in France, yet it was widely surmised that the

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926 Teodora Męczkowska, *Ruch kobiecy. Ideały etyczno-społeczne ruchu kobiecego* (Warsaw: skł. gł. w Księgarni Gebethera i Wolffa, 1907), p. 25.

927 Adam Rzańnicki, “W sprawie prostytucji”, *Społeczeństwo*, no. 40 (1909). Similarly: M. Kor., “Towarzystwo Schronienia św. Małgorzaty”, *Prawda*, no. 49 (1908). “For as long as organised harlotry exists and remains under the governance of separate laws, the open, festering wound in the society will remain”, as *Prawda* wrote in 1904 (no. 33, “Fejleton. Ściągnięte cugle”).

928 “O konieczności zniesienia reglamentacji”, in: *Program wspólnej pracy*.

Warsaw branch operated in a similar fashion): “The agent of morality differs from a pimp in that he is even more depraved, and moreover operates with the authority of an official (. . .) a panderer’s authority over a prostitute is rooted in the law of the knife, an agent’s – in administrative regulations.”<sup>929</sup> The public was frightened with claims that the same fate may befall random women who find themselves within the range of police activities. Thus, the presentation of the problem in Polish press was very different to the dramatic and frequent reports of police malpractice published in French periodicals.<sup>930</sup> This was partially due to censorship, but also because the individuals speaking against regimentation in Polish territory had very little information on the realities of the life of local prostitutes.

The issue that thrilled contemporaneous readers the most was the so-called trade in living goods (human trafficking, cf. Chapter 2). Not much effort was needed to persuade everyone that professional procuration and the trade in women could not be effectively combated as long as brothel houses existed, as they provided a market for “human commodities”. The issue captivated people’s imagination, revealing various interests, both individual and national in nature. During the 1909 conference, Kuczalska addressed the need to enact legislation “which would also prevent the special brand of ‘Polish goods’ from being built in universal markets. Let others see that the Polish nation does not wish Warsaw to be a wholesale warehouse of white female slaves.”<sup>931</sup> References to the issue of international flesh trade fuelled the criticism of the existing system even further, compelling the public’s attention across countries and consequently securing the success of the abolitionist movement. Having realised the potential of this topic, abolitionists invoked it with considerable frequency.<sup>932</sup> The topic proved convenient for many participants in the discussion (as well as for the State, as it discouraged people from emigrating), allowing them to easily gain the society’s sympathy. The trade in women was vilified by the proponents of regimentation, who used it as an argument for more State involvement in the issue, as well as by the abolitionists, who blamed the State (or the privileged classes) for tolerating

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929 Jerzy Huzarski, “Dzieje grzechu Marianny. Policja obyczajności”, *Spółeczeństwo*, no. 37 (1910).

930 Berlière, *La police*, pp. 7–10.

931 “Głos kobiet”, *Ster*, no. 5 (1909); On Englishmen’s emotion regarding the trade in British women see Philipa Levine, “Venereal Disease. Prostitution and the Politics of Empire: The Case of British India”, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 4 (1983), p. 593.

932 Bristow, *Prostitution*, p. 37; Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, pp. 250–251.

any form of prostitution. Due to its sensational nature, the subject remained a fixture in the press of the day, and the focal point of brochures and conferences (such as the one organised by the ZRKP in Warsaw). The factual and exaggerated data circulating in the society led to a kind of panic. Stories were told of innocent victims of ruthless panders, who abducted them to brothels in faraway, overseas countries, where they were entirely isolated from the world and doomed to die a slow, agonising death.<sup>933</sup>

The fate of the regimentation system was decided primarily by the medical context, i.e. its value as the principal preventive measure against venereal diseases. In this respect, abolitionists held no doubts whatsoever – regimentationism had not served its intended purpose of limiting the incidence of the diseases. Those among abolitionist activists who used more tangible arguments (mainly doctors) pointed to the ineffectiveness of the medical examinations (superficial diagnostics, low frequency of check-ups) and treatment (discharging women that had not completely recovered).<sup>934</sup> Their conclusions were, essentially, nothing new and had already been made by the executors of the system (cf. Chapter 1), yet did help spread awareness in the society and popularise the view that the security measures taken by the State were insufficient. The alleged surety of prostitutes' health brought the opposite of their intended goal – facilitating the spread of the disease, as they gave men the illusion of safety during their congress with licensed prostitutes. What feminists saw as crucial was the moral implications of the fact that examinations were conducted solely on women (as was repeatedly emphasised). They saw it as an example of the State protecting the men who were responsible for prostitution at the expense of women; which was all the more unfair given the fact that the clients were the offenders – and prostitutes their victims.

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933 Maria Turzyska, "Handel kobietami" in: *Głos kobiet w kwestii kobiecej*, ed. Kazimiera Bujwidowa (Cracow: Nakładem Stow. Pomocy naukowej dla Polek im. J. I. Kraszewskiego, 1903), (reprinted in: *Chcemy całego życia. Antologia tekstów feministycznych z lat 1870–1939*, ed. Aneta Górnicka-Boratyńska (Warsaw: Res Publica, 1999), pp. 203–212); In 1909 alone *Czystość* published the following articles on the issue of human trafficking: "O handlu żywym towarem" (no. 22); "Handel kobietami" (no. 23); A. Wr[óblewski], "Handel kobietami na Węgrzech" (no. 26), "O handlu kobietami" (based on "Der Mädchenhandel" by doctor Schrank, no. 35, 36, 37); A. W[róblewski], "Do Żydów o handlu kobietami" (no. 37); See: Bristow, *Prostitution*, pp. 43–45; Bristow, *Vice*, p. 189.

934 "O projekcie", *Ster*, no. 4 (1909).

Opponents of regimentation also invoked empirical arguments, namely statistical data on the incidence of syphilis among prostitutes (which indicated that the majority of infected prostitutes were brothel inmates, cf. Chapter 2) and on the occurrence rates of venereal diseases in countries that abolished regimentation (Great Britain) or liberalised the system (Italy<sup>935</sup>). The variety of sources for the numbers presented, the contradictory or simply divergent, incomplete and incomparable data quoted in specialist publications and texts for the general public allowed both sides of the argument to choose and interpret their information to fit whatever thesis they wanted to present. This was hardly even a case of deliberate manipulation, but rather the result of dilettantism and an uncritical approach to information. Moreover, the commentators of the day disregarded the multitude of other factors outside of the regimentation system that could influence the society's health and had a greater impact in quickly developing countries than the existence or nonexistence of police surveillance. Abolitionists claimed that statistics showed no medical benefits of tolerating prostitution, emphasising that countries that had done away with regimentation (e.g. Great Britain) noted a decrease in the incidence of syphilis.<sup>936</sup> They refused to accept the compulsion and discrimination ingrained in the healthcare policy that was (in a slightly exaggerated view) represented by regimentationism and the steps taken by State administration. Abolitionists did not underestimate the threat of venereal diseases; to the contrary, in fact, their criticism of the existing system coincided with a period of increasing syphilophobia (see: Chapter 2), to which they also deliberately contributed, as did their ideological opponents. As with the matter of human trafficking, they used commonly shared fears to win over the public and convince more people to their ideas. However, the principal postulates of the critics of medical-and-police surveillance regarding venereal diseases included universally educating the youth about the dangers posed by such illnesses, de-stigmatising sexually transmitted diseases as shameful and regarding them as any other malady, as well as expanding the scope of free medical assistance and infrastructure. This line of thought was indubitably progressive, yet proved more than risky given the backwardness of Polish lands and the underdevelopment of healthcare in the Kingdom of Poland (and in Russia, where

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935 On 29th March 1888 Francesco Crispi oversaw the repeal of patents, compulsory examinations and hospitalisation in Italy – Gibson, *Prostitution*, pp. 52–54.

936 Zofia Sadowska, “W sprawie zniesienia reglamentacji”, *Ster*, no. 4 (1909). The journalist presented data concerning the number of syphilitic patients in the English army and navy and the decrease of the number of deaths resulting from venereal diseases (in fact, the mortality rate has never been a great problem in the case of syphilis).

all the important decisions were taken). The State's interests were not considered. Medical concerns remained in the background outside of specialist press. The readers of the press, brochures and leaflets, and the audiences at conferences, meetings and public gatherings were reminded of the subjugation and humiliation of women brought by the regulations pertaining to venereal diseases, and the malpractice they bred in the treatment of not only prostitutes, but other women (e.g. the examination of factory workers – which could have resonated with people unwilling to sympathise with the fate of public women). It was, after all, a matter of principles. Within the public discourse at the turn of the centuries, prostitution was certainly more than an aspect of the issue of syphilis. The argumentation was largely accusatory in tone. The system could not be successful, because it focused on opposing women – the victims of prostitution. The laws applied to them infringed on their basic human right to freedom. Regimentation was not the key to combating prostitution. As the physician Antoni Wysłouch put it “no rules and regulations will heal this festering ulcer on the society.”<sup>937</sup>

Abolitionists ambitiously strove towards the complete elimination of prostitution, presenting it as an all-encompassing evil directly affecting not only the hundreds of thousands (as it was believed) prostitutes worldwide, but also their clients and, through them, innocent women and children. The metaphors they chose to use were often taken from medical jargon – this was a characteristic feature of the social discourse of the day, stemming from the development of medical sciences and the impact the theory of evolution had on the perception and understanding of the social reality. Thus, abolitionists wrote of a bleeding, putrid “open and festering wound on the body of the entire society”, compared prostitution to an ulcer (one of the worst ones to affect the social organism), leprosy which “causes the organism of contemporary cultured nations to become leprous”, a gangrene of the society, a “hell of human degeneration.”<sup>938</sup> Along with venereal diseases and alcoholism, prostitution was counted among the deadly poisons of the modern human race, discussed in the press since the 1860s in connection with the alleged issue of its degeneration. These were the threats that could potentially lead to humankind's degeneracy and destruction. The perceived scale of the problem proved important for the discourse on prostitution: “Nearly 100 thousand women, pushed into the abyss of harlotry – this is no ulcer, no wound, but a general disease of ‘the social organism’, whose examination and

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937 Wysłouch, *Ohyda*, p. 9.

938 For instance – “Fejleton. Pamiętnik. Ściągnięte cugle”, *Prawda*, no. 33 (1904); Annański, “Zagadnienie prostytucji”.



treatment requires deep analysis, serious consideration, extensive means and deliberate action involving large forces and powerful energies,” noted Stanisław Koszutski.<sup>939</sup>

The connection between prostitution and disease was, therefore, threefold: it was a symptom of the civilisation’s moral affliction, an evil and a disease in itself, and finally the direct cause of physical illness for thousands of people (syphilis and its horrifying, irreversible consequences).<sup>940</sup> Although the proponents of abolitionism questioned the role of prostitutes as the principal carriers of diseases, they did not deny or underestimate the role prostitution played in spreading infection. In the latter half of the 19th century the problem was regarded as a much graver threat than in previous decades, largely because of the thesis of the so-called secondary heredity of syphilis, popular since the 1870s, which prompted discussion on the fate of innocent children and women who were the victims of syphilis contracted by their fathers and husbands.<sup>941</sup> Following Alfred Fournier,<sup>942</sup> commentators invoked the alarmingly high incidence of infertility, miscarriage, stillbirths and infant mortality – in other words, the hecatomb of children. The fears regarding the far-reaching demographic consequences of marriages in which one partner was suffering from a venereal disease seemed justified: “Should carnal relations persist in the same conditions as they do today, the fundamental aim of sexual activity – the continuation of the species – will be lost”.<sup>943</sup>

The obsessive fear of syphilis in particular is, in itself, a fascinating topic. The scare resulted in an avalanche of texts, also literary, discussing the consequences of venereal diseases, and was one of the underlying motives behind the struggle

939 Koszutski, “Na mównicy”. Earlier, *Głos* dubbed prostitution “the specter of physical and moral misery, irreparable in its consequences, a hundred times more devastating than the bubonic plague in Bombay” – “Głosy”, *Głos*, no. 8 (1900).

940 Cf. A. Kowalski, “W drażliwej sprawie”, *Nowe Słowo*, no. 14 (1902).

941 “The source shed light on all aspects of the issue, revealing the horror and turpitude of the terrible disease [prostitution] of the modern society, a disease which is tearing thousands of girls away from the working class every year, in secret and duplicity, and having transformed them into bodies infected with diseases and alcohol, subsequently spread the poison to the male youth, afflicting wives and children, those very women and innocents for whose alleged benefit the institution that fills any honest man with horror had been established and tolerated” – Maria Turzyma, *Wyzwalająca się kobieta* (Cracow: skł. gł. w Księgarni G. Gebethnera i Spółki, Drukarnia W. L. Anczyca i S-ki, 1906), p. 46.

942 On Fournier as “the new pope of syphilography” – Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 362–363, 366.

943 Annański, “Zagadnienie prostytucji”.

to introduce sexual education (others saw it as an argument to maintain a system of regimentation). A campaign was launched to enlighten the society as to the tragic consequences of the disease, even though it did not pose any direct threat (unlike e.g. tuberculosis). Doctors were often aware of the exaggerated nature of the statements, yet fuelled the fear of the pathological effects of prostitution. They provided social activists and journalists with scientific, medical arguments. Aside from unbiased information accordant with contemporaneous theories in medical science, detailing the long-term consequences of syphilis and other venereal diseases, the press and the *belles-lettres* of the day disseminated expressive descriptions of the macabre repercussions of contracting the disease – visions of appendages falling off, eyes pouring out of the skull, open wounds and ulcers.<sup>944</sup> “The hell invented by fanaticism is a fiction, yet hell on Earth does exist – its name is Syphilis”, one young journalist wrote, striking terror in the readers of *Ster*.<sup>945</sup> Diseased men frequenting brothels or prostitutes’ apartments passed their condition to their wives, and produced – as activists were convinced – diseased offspring. The same author claimed that “family homes increasingly often turn into infirmaries”. As mentioned in previous chapters, the threat of degeneracy was substantiated by the belief in the tragic consequences of congenital syphilis coupled with the conviction that the disease affects almost all men, and through them also women and children.<sup>946</sup>

The vocal objection to prostitution was therefore an expression of the growing intolerance for the existence of the phenomenon, not as a symptom of economic and social inequality experienced by tens of thousands of young women forced to sell their bodies, but as a threat to the very condition of the society consumed by various maladies, and lastly, as a reflection of the status of women and the existing state and nature of the institutions of family and marriage. Compassion for women (who were usually blameless in the situation) and the basic sense of justice made people care for the situation in which the regimentation system put any registered or even potential prostitute. The “white female slave” of the 20th century, freed by her defenders from the responsibility for her fate (choices), the victim of social and economic relations, embodied the situation of women almost perfectly. The existence of prostitution was an affront to women’s dignity and emphasised the aspect to which feminist activists were particularly sensitive – reducing a woman to a commodity, an object of sexual desire. For this

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944 For example in: “Pocałunek Almanzora!”, *Ster*, no. 10–11 (1908).

945 Joanna Olszewska, “Moralność jutra”, *Ster*, no. 8, 9 (1911).

946 Stefan Kijowski, “Z życia”, *Ster*, no. 11, 12 (1910).

reason, the champion of women's movement Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit stated that "prostitution needs to be removed from accepted customs, for health, ethics, justice and the happiness of nations demand it."<sup>947</sup>

## 2. The perceived origins of prostitution

The first task in the process of building a world without prostitution was to provide the society with an explanation of the origins of this seemingly universal and timeless phenomenon. The 19th-century discussion of the issue involved two essential hypotheses regarding the causes of prostitution, which modern social and medical science attempt to combine.<sup>948</sup> The first one assumed prostitution to be the result of social and economic changes; the other saw it as rooted primarily in biological factors. Both were given a theoretical grounding and an academic veneer already in the 19th century.

The scientific theory of the pathological origins of prostitution and the innate tendencies for lechery observable in some women was developed by the Italian psychiatrist and anthropologist Cesare Lombroso, the co-founder of the anthropological school of criminology (along with Enrico Ferri and Raffaele Garofalo).<sup>949</sup> According to his theory, "scientifically" substantiated by the results of various anthropological studies,<sup>950</sup> prostitutes were born with certain characterological propensities for the profession ("natural born prostitutes"). This

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947 "Konferencja publiczna".

948 See: Małgorzata Kowalczyk-Jamnicka, *Spoleczno-kulturowe uwarunkowania prostytucji w Polsce* (Bydgoszcz: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1998).

949 Their works were translated into Polish: Cesare Lombroso, Guglielmo Ferrero, *Kobieta jako zbrodniarka i prostytutka* (Warsaw: H. Cohn, 1895), pp. 294, 375; An overview of their theories in: Kazimierz Imieliński, *Manowce seksu. Prostytucja* (Łódź: Res Polona, 1990), pp. 119–120, Hilde Olrik, "Le sang impur. Notes sur le concept de prostituée-née chez Lombroso", *Romantisme. Revue du dix-neuvième siècle*, no. 31 (1981), pp. 167–178.

950 By attaching electrodes to the tongue, nose, breasts, abdomen and vulva of prostitutes they "scientifically" proved that they have more tolerance for pain than other women (on whom, incidentally, such experiments were not conducted), that they display male features (especially with regard to sexual urges), and that they were, in a word "primitive men". Cesare Lombroso "discovered" that a prostitute is "a relic of an earlier stage in human evolution: mentally undeveloped, physically deformed and subhuman" – Nickie Roberts, *Whores in history. Prostitution in Western Society*, (London: Harper Collins, 1992), p. 229.

was the perceived causes of their increased sexual drive,<sup>951</sup> indolence, vanity and deviatory features. Biological preconditions were used to explain observations that seemed difficult to comprehend, especially for women – such as the fact that prostitution was sometimes the occupation of individuals who were not forced to choose it due to financial concerns. The theory was rather convenient for the privileged classes, as it absolved them of any blame for the fate of women and leading them to sell their bodies. The views of Lombroso and his school were popular and readily accepted among regimentationists; its supporters included the venereologist professor Benjamin Tarnowski, the author of a comprehensive study on regimentation and abolitionism. Furthermore, the biological theory was popularised by naturalist literature, also in Poland. Adolf Dygasiński, for instance, considered instincts and the forces of nature to be at least as important as economic and social factors.<sup>952</sup>

No theory of a pathological predestination to prostitution found support among abolitionists and proponents of thorough reforms to the morals of the day. Although observation studies of the milieu of prostitutes (scarce as they were) indicated the presence of a certain number of pathological types among them – “abnormal, evidently hysterical women and various kinds of neuropaths” – the deviation was ascribed to environmental conditioning, i.e. the extremely harsh conditions for living and socialising among the groups to which the majority of prostitutes were born; they were “the hereditarily burdened daughters of alcoholic parents.” The society and the law it developed pushed these women “into a bottomless abyss.”<sup>953</sup>

Polish abolitionists adopted the theory presenting prostitution as the product of a historically cultivated subordinate status of women and the social and economic circumstances of the modern world. The most comprehensive overview of this concept was offered by socialist authors, who portrayed the causes of

951 Already in the late 18th century the physician Lafontaine wrote in the same vein, describing Warsaw prostitutes of the worst ilk: “Each alleyway serves as their venue for satisfying sexual urges for a small fee, for a glass of vodka” – Kausch, *Wizerunek*, p. 291.

952 Adolf Dygasiński, *Na warszawskim bruku* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1959), works: “Głód i miłość”, “Na warszawskim bruku”.

953 Stanisława Wertensteinowa, “Z truizmów życia”, *Prawda*, no. 13 (1907); Rząśnicki, “W sprawie prostytucji”; Koszutski (“Na mównicy”) argued that the hypothesis of natural born prostitutes was a misconception, as even though there were people prone to debauchery, the predisposition to sell oneself did not exist. The principal critic of this theory was Alfred Blascho.

prostitution in a systemic manner, as an element of the description of the historical process and the existing 19th-century reality. They developed a cohesive evaluation of the social and moral factors determining the demand for sexual services and supplying an army of women ready to provide them. The issue of prostitution was tackled by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, yet the work that had the greatest impact on the views of its contemporaries was August Bebel's *Woman under Socialism*,<sup>954</sup> whose theses, arguments and examples were repeated in many texts on prostitution written by leftist abolitionist activists and feminists. With regard to the Polish press, the matter was discussed nearly by all prominent thinkers and activists with socialist inclinations: Ludwik Krzywicki, Stanisław Kelles-Krauz, Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, Stanisław Koszutski, Julian Marchlewski.<sup>955</sup> The principal authority presenting the connections between prostitution and the working class was the physician Adam Rząśnicki, who authored many articles and booklets in the issue.

August Bebel analysed the topic of prostitution from a historical perspective, in the moral and economic context, against the backdrop of the “bourgeois marriage” of the day, the status of women and the material and moral situation of the proletariat. Prostitution, he claimed, was a social construct necessary in the bourgeois world. “Marriage presents one side of the capitalist or bourgeois world; prostitution presents the other. Marriage is the obverse, prostitution the reverse of the medal.”<sup>956</sup> Arranging marriages for purely financial reasons, the obligation of marital fidelity for married women and sexual abstinence for unmarried ones, i.a. for financial reasons – all of these factors generated the demand for buying erotic love expressed by bachelors and men who found no sexual satisfaction in their marriage. They constituted an enormous market for prostitution.

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954 August Bebel, *Woman under Socialism*, trans. Daniel De Leon (New York: New York Labor News Company, 1904); the first Polish translation of this work was published in London in 1897.

955 “Prostitution is the most heinous social crime [...] it has existed in all places where the society is divided into masters and servants.” In another passage he states: “with the development of commerce and the trade in goods, the hawking of women’s bodies becomes more common. This social leprosy develops fully within societies based on free hire; prostitution takes its most hideous form, that of an organised trade, it becomes an enterprise based on the exploitation of women selling their bodies” – Julian Marchlewski, “Prostytycja”, *Głos*, no. 1 (1901).

956 Bebel, *Woman*, p. 143. The Communist Manifesto regarded prostitution as the most characteristic symptom of the deterioration of moral standards, to which capitalism was inevitably heading.

“Prostitution thus becomes a social institution in the capitalist world, the same as police, standing armies, the Church, and wage-mastership,” concluded Bebel.<sup>957</sup> His arguments regarding the status of women, all the social and gender limitations imposed upon people, and the nature of marriage at the time, no longer fulfilling its purpose, were particularly appreciated by feminists.

Referring to prostitutes themselves, Bebel described the dire situation of women of the proletariat, exploited by the labour market, struggling under the twin yoke of the home and the factory. He explained the path towards prostitution experienced by peasant women as a necessity of life, the consequence of abject poverty as well as poor morals and progressive demoralisation resulting from the social relations developed by the capitalist system and the terrible reality of working-class families in which women were forced to seek employment, while their children were being brought up by the street. Poverty, hardship, the conditions at work and at home, and unenlightenment were dooming thousands of people from the proletariat to degeneracy and the atrophy of ethical principles warding them off prostitution. “The conditions of the material kind and, consequently, ethical as well, in which the working masses live, or are forced to live, create an environment that inevitably breeds an abundance of moral leprosy,” informed Julian Marchlewski.<sup>958</sup>

Associating the underlying causes of prostitution with economic conditions seemed obvious and resulted from observations that could be made by anyone willing to see the problem. All research indicated that the majority of prostitutes hailed from the poorest classes (and remained there). The reception of such views was further facilitated by the growing feeling of disappointment with the advances of civilisation expected to arrive with the development of industry and sciences. The intelligentsia had been voicing such sentiments since the late 1880s. The public was equally dissatisfied with the tragic consequences of the social relations created by capitalism, and expressed these feelings by criticising the moral aspects of civilisation. The national ideologist Jan Ludwik Popławski presented the multi-faceted causes of prostitution (appearing to be the symptoms of an affliction of the civilisation at the time) as the price to be paid for the pace of the changes. He noted the multitude of factors stimulating debauchery, such as deliberate actions of groups who profited from it, the propaganda of moral pornography, militarism, the economic circumstances of the working class that prevented people from marrying early, and the dissemination of certain

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957 Bebel, *Woman*, p. 143.

958 Marchlewski, “Prostytcja”.

vulgarised doctrines claiming that the satisfaction of natural urges is invariably beneficial and morally right (*naturalia non sunt turpia*). “Most likely,” he wrote, “the weakening of legal familial relations, or even the existence of prostitution, are not yet tantamount to utmost sexual debauchery, yet do constitute a foundation on which it may easily develop. The conditions of professional work, both physical and intellectual, the horrible sanitary conditions of large agglomerations, the precarious, feverish life with no certainty of tomorrow, requiring strong stimuli after the depressing work, all of this contributes to neural degeneration, so to speak. On the other hand, the excess of means and pleasures coupled with an equally precarious and even more feverish existence leads to the degeneration of the privileged classes. This degeneration is the backdrop for the dissemination and development of sexual promiscuity, which may largely be considered a pathological symptom.”<sup>959</sup> Similar views were expressed in *Prawda* in 1907. “The refinement of needs, effeminacy of manners, development of life’s pleasures and increased difficulty for a man to feed a family consequently leads to marriages of financial convenience and prostitution with pandering. This is facilitated by the legally sanctioned option to manage private capital, which leads to malpractice. This option, coupled with the degenerate sexual drive which is passed down to future generations as a deviancy of the nerves or of the brain, leads men towards debauchery.”<sup>960</sup>

The economic factors behind prostitution were described in varying stages of meticulousness and accuracy, primarily pointing to the unemployment rates and the low wages offered to women. Their earnings usually did not allow them to support themselves or covered only the basic necessities, which inevitably led to disaster in the event of illness or dismissal.<sup>961</sup> Living conditions were described as particularly pathogenic – the practice of renting a single space to several families (even as many as 10 people in one room), or leasing “corners” in a room to unfamiliar women or men.<sup>962</sup> Nobody, however, used the argument that prostitution was a relatively well-paid occupation and that it could seem an easy living

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959 J-L. P[opławski], “Walka z rozpustą”, *Głos*, no. 6 (1892).

960 S. Wertensteinowa, “Z truizmów życia”.

961 See: the discussion on the causes of prostitution held in *Nowe Słowo* in 1902: A. Kowalewski, “W ‘drażliwej sprawie’” (no. 14); Stanisław Kelles-Krauz, “Półśrodek” (no. 19); Iza Moszczeńska, “Prostytycja i praca kobiet” (no. 24).

962 Marchlewski, “Prostytycja”. Męczkowska directly claims that the situation has a demoralising influence: “they behold the most hideous scenes. It is hardly surprising that urges are prematurely awakened, as is the wish to satisfy them?” – Męczkowska, “Moralność”.

in comparison to, for instance, factory work. Such a line of thinking excluded the element of compulsion and made it a question of choice, which abolitionists perceived as applicable only to exceptional and rare cases.

Socialists prophesised that prostitution would disappear with the fall of the capitalist system. “The victory of the proletariat”, wrote Rzaśnicki, “will be the demarcation line beyond which prostitution will cease to be the rule, and will turn into an exception.”<sup>963</sup> The fight against prostitution was therefore tantamount to the struggle against the entire social and state system in the name of the liberation of the proletariat. Friedrich Engels promised that “far from disappearing, it [monogamy] will, on the contrary, be realized completely. For with the transformation of the means of production into social property there will disappear also wage-labor, the proletariat, and therefore the necessity for a certain – statistically calculable – number of women to surrender themselves for money. Prostitution disappears; monogamy, instead of collapsing, at last becomes a reality – also for men.”<sup>964</sup>

Socialists unmasking the connections between prostitution and the system along with those who benefitted from it revealed the true nature of the alleged (and, in their eyes, duplicitous) help for prostitutes and all ideas for solving the problem proposed by groups not associated with leftist thinking. Rzaśnicki wrote: “Why, one has to do something to becalm the awakened pangs of conscience, to subdue the screaming hues, in order to continue one’s life of peace, so that one’s afternoon nap is not disturbed by the screams of victims. We know these philanthropists all too well to believe that the tears glistening in their eyes as they deliver their speeches commiserating with the fate of the ‘white female slaves’ are anything else but tears of duplicity! We claim that they are not sincere in their struggle towards the liberation of women, since we are aware that neither the contemporary society, nor the Christian-bourgeois philanthropists and moralists have any will to truly combat prostitution, because the moment the movement they themselves established gained any radical features, they would become its most vicious opponents and defend the *status quo ante*. We do not believe in the goodwill of the people, as the modern society cannot do without prostitution, and neither does it want to. We do not believe the bourgeois orators

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963 Rzaśnicki, “W sprawie prostytucji”.

964 Friedrich Engels, *On the Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, In the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan*, trans. Alick West, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1940), ([https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/origin\\_family.pdf](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/origin_family.pdf)), p. 40.



or the representatives of the modern states, since they are at the same time proponents of public houses and the system of regimentation.”<sup>965</sup>

Owing to the efforts of the feminist and abolitionist movements, prostitution started to be associated not only with economic and social factors, but also with the discussion regarding the cultural and moral origins of the phenomenon, touching on a very wide array of topics. The condemnation of prostitution, and the energy expended to identify its causes and present them to the public, stemmed not only from feelings of compassion for proletarian prostitutes. More than any other group voicing their views on the issue, feminists linked their opinion with women’s underprivileged position in marriage and the society as a whole. Women’s rights activists put much effort into propagating a different image of prostitutes and a different approach towards them. They conceptualised and established various organisations aimed at helping prostitutes abandon their profession, described the economic factors leading women from the poorest classes to engage in prostitution, but devoted at least the same attention to matters of the family and the relations between men and women. Thereby, they touched upon issues to which prostitution was only indirectly related or served as a pretext to discuss, issues that were fundamental for the women’s rights movement and required radical reforms. Family, marriage and love were the primary fields of activity for women from the social strata whose interests feminists represented and from which they themselves hailed, stirring much emotion. The matters discussed were therefore considered important, even though most women saw feminist activists as too radical in their approach.

Debating the causes of prostitution resulted in the identification of those responsible. Almost all feminists, i.e. the radical side of the women’s movement of the early 20th century, made numerous statements accusing men and emphasising their past and present, direct and indirect responsibility for the existence of prostitution. It was one of the motifs in the discourse on the accountability of men, on whom feminist thought put the blame for the state of such “darkly viewed” civilisation.<sup>966</sup> It was “with their [men’s] money”, “for their entertainment”, due to “weakness of character” and “even weaker morals”, for the “satisfaction of their untamed animal instincts” that “dens of debauchery” were

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965 Rząśnicki, “W sprawie walki”.

966 The subject was tackled by Aneta Górnicka-Boratyńska, *Stańmy się sobą. Cztery projekty emancypacji (1863–1939)* (Izabelin: Czarna Owca, 2001), pp. 110–111. The work also discusses prostitution (pp. 9–11).

created, “dooming young maidens’ lives.”<sup>967</sup> In this context, revealing the extent of destruction wrought by prostitution, the executioner was also presented as a willing victim who loses his health and moral chastity, while in traditional discourse the criticism directed against men frequenting brothel houses pointed only to prostitution as the cause of financial ruin.

In accordance with abolitionist views, feminists questioned the reasoning behind tolerating prostitution as a necessary evil, based on the alleged nature of male sexual drive. Similarly to regimentationists, they believed the sexual practices of men to be the principal cause for the development of prostitution, but did not acknowledge these as biologically determined. In their eyes, such behaviours were the product of culture, not nature. Thus, they argued that the view which presented the satisfaction of sexual urges as necessary for men’s health and abstinence as harmful was “a monstrous lie”, “an atavistic belief”, “a hideous superstition” that needed to be rooted out.<sup>968</sup> Feminists associated with *Ster* and *Nowe Słowo* did not, however (aside from a few remarks), refer to the other premise of prostitution as a necessary evil, still popular in the 20th century, namely the view that prostitution was a means of protecting the chastity of middle-class women. Their public statements on prostitution and male sexuality, rather bold at the time when coming from women, were less focused on the sexuality of the fairer sex.<sup>969</sup> It was still a taboo subject for the majority of women’s rights activists; they were the victims of the very relations which they

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967 “After all, a prostitute is usually a mentally challenged person, a hungry creature coming from the most cruelly disowned strata of our society, often a child of 15 or 16 years of age, led astray by a ‘gentleman’ from the so-called polite society, an intelligent man, a man of a certain standing. Who, then, is the fallen one?... Who should be forbidden from committing heinous crimes? The one who, entirely consciously, commits a disgraceful deed, does fatal harm to a being that is ignorant, gullible and almost invariably naïve.” – Męczkowska, *Ruch kobiecy*, pp. 24–25; Also – W. N., “Parę słów o zbrodniach”, *Humanista Polski*, no. 3 (1913); Turzyna, “Handel kobietami”, p. 205.

968 “Na Straży. Niemożliwa propozycja”, *Ster*, no. 4 (1909); K. Bujwidowa, “O czym się nie mówi”; “O czym kobiety nie mówią”, *Ster*, no. 1 (1913).

969 On feminist views on sexuality see: Jerzy Franke, *Polska prasa kobieca w latach 1820–1918* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Bibliotekarzy Polskich, 1999), pp. 235–240; Górnicka-Boratyńska, *Stańmy się sobą*, pp. 112–116; Katarzyna Dormus, *Kazimiera Bujwidowa 1867–1932. Życie i działalność społeczno-oświatowa* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo i Drukarnia ‘Secesja’, 2002), pp. 117–118; Jolanta Sikorska-Kulesza, “Prostytucja a program reformy obyczajów na początku XX w.”, in: *Spółczeństwo w dobie przemian*, pp. 119–126.

were describing and criticising, and which limited the expression of female sexuality. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why most of them demanded for the ideal of sexual temperance obligatory for women to be applied to men as well. A different opinion on the matter was voiced by Zofia Nałkowska. During the 1907 women's conference she stated: "Poverty is not the sole cause and feature of prostitution, since poverty may now be found in so many aspects of life; the selling of flesh is not a feature exclusive to prostitution, since all too often we, the so-called honest women, in our married life sell not only our bodies, but also our souls. The cause of prostitution lies in us, honest women, whose virtue, whose ethical ideals of chastity are conditioned by the existence of prostitution alone. We grow upon it like artificial flowers on a swamp – and it is we who cannot do without it, not men. They only need a woman, we only need a prostitute."<sup>970</sup> In stating: "we want a full life", Nałkowska demanded the right for women to enjoy the sexual freedom available to men: "By shunning a woman who was seduced, by cutting ties with a woman who fled her husband, by condemning any emancipated woman as fallen, by limiting her possibilities to earn money with our social and societal ostracism, we – honest, respectable ladies – make her into a prostitute or push her towards the embrace of the *demi-monde*."<sup>971</sup> However, the circle of authors writing for *Ster* distanced themselves from such "modernist" views in the vein of free love.

A key issue examined by the proponents of women's emancipation was the so-called double morality, different for men and women, a concept referring to the existence of two disparate worlds of life and values.<sup>972</sup> The struggle against this state of affairs and the acceptance thereof was ingrained in the slogans of the women's movement. In the realm of eros, the standards of double morality

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970 Zofia Nałkowska, "Uwagi o etycznych zadaniach ruchu kobiecego", in: *Chcemy całego życia* (first published in *Krytyka*, no. 11 (1907); followed by a discussion the speech generated).

971 Nałkowska, "Uwagi", p. 359. The blame lay not only on husbands frequenting houses of ill repute and fathers taking their sons to such venues, but also on mothers "looking at their misdeeds through the cracks" and often also on "women practicing prostitution under the guise of married life, selling embraces in the comfort of their homes, for money to get garments and luxuries", wrote J. P[opławski], "Walka z rozpustą", *Głos*, no. 6 (1892).

972 The issue was repeatedly tackled e.g. by Iza Moszczeńska: "Podwójna moralność", *Nowe Słowo*, no. 5 (1903); "Podwójna moralność. Kobiety upadłe", *Krytyka*, R. VI, issues 8–9, 10 (1905); "Podwójna moralność. Panowie stworzenia", *Krytyka*, R. VIII, issue 2 (1906); see also: Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 20, no. 1 (1959), pp. 195–216.

required women to remain chaste, while putting no such limitations on men. In the event of a transgression, these standards dictated that the woman in question be excluded from her circles and bombarded with absolute disdain. In some social groups a person like that faced rejection from her family and could be literally thrown out from her home, which was but a step away from prostitution, whereas men were not punished for such misdemeanours in any way, be it in the personal or social sphere. This was seen as an even greater injustice given the fact that, as it was presented, women transgressed out of ignorance, weakness, love in which they lost themselves, whereas men – out of cynicism, egoism and dishonesty – nothing beyond the wish to quench “animal urges”, beyond “momentary ecstasy”. A man who seduced a woman, accused of “the first thrust” against her, could simply leave her, often with a child, and still suffer no consequences. Feminists tried to convince women who took such matters for granted that the world did not have to operate on such premises and that the situation depended on the women’s own attitude.<sup>973</sup>

The double morality that emerged over the course of history in order to guarantee the legitimacy of male offspring may have contributed to the popularity of prostitution among the middle and upper classes, ingrained in the public awareness of the fact that passion in married life is an evil. This belief must have stirred anxieties of varying nature, especially in women, and limited marital sexual activity. Thus, the passions of men, including married ones, found release in public houses, with almost official consent. The line of thinking at the time could be summarised as: “love your wife, have sex with a prostitute.”<sup>974</sup> The bourgeois morality sanctified the asexuality of a wife and mother, created an image of a wife as a Madonna, a keeper of the home and hearth, the very opposite of the sensual, sinful Magdalene, contemptible, yet indispensable for the satisfaction of the vital needs of men.<sup>975</sup>

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973 The negative consequences of such “weakness” as one of the origins of the inferior status of women were discussed by Maria Turzyna [M. Wiśniewska], *Wyzwalająca się kobieta*, pp. 1–17 (the chapter entitled “Potrójne więzy kobiety” [the threefold restraint on a woman]); Turzyna perceived these restraints in women’s nature and motherhood, whereas another activist, Kazimiera Bujwidowa, saw them in the social development of women and their acceptance of their own inferior position, hence her motto: Let us become ourselves (*Stańmy się sobą*) – Kazimiera Bujwidowa, “Stańmy się sobą”, in: *Chcemy całego życia*, pp. 290–299 (first published in *Krytyka*, Vol. 2 (1907)).

974 See: Bristow, *Vice*, pp. 52–53.

975 See e.g.: Walkowitz, *Dangerous Sexualities*, p. 370.

The commentators of the day were convinced that the services of prostitutes were a universal experience for men, a “malady of the age.” “With regard to the state of contemporary morals, no-one will likely deny that in terms of sexual deviation it has been teetering on the edge of an abyss, beyond which all humanity may face utter destruction”, noted Turzyna.<sup>976</sup> Neither feminists, nor other moralisers were interested in the habits of workers and soldiers. Their discourse on the clients of prostitutes referred to men of their own classes, whom honest women had to, so to speak, share with streetwalkers. A propaganda text by Kazimiera Bujwidowa reads: “Yet the men availing themselves of this prostitute are our ‘beloved’ fathers, husbands, brothers, our ‘respected’ members of parliament, doctors, merchants, attorneys. Thus, the cause of destroying this double morality, this duplicity of principles, is taken up by the emancipated woman.”<sup>977</sup> Turzyna posed the question: “And is this woman [a prostitute] so far removed from us? Do we not share life with her every day through our son, our brother, our husband, our friend, our acquaintance, is she not being said hello or goodbye to by the one who will become or fiancé tomorrow, who is now the beloved of our soul, and will soon be the master of our fate?” She also mentioned the consequences: “He goes there and brings disease, which he will instil in us with the first kiss of his love, which he will pass down to our children born in excruciating pain and bred with endless affection by our powerless, helpless hands. He goes there, leaving behind his respect for women, his reverence for love, his gift of feeling and giving the immense, beautiful pleasure that emerges from the mutual surrender of two pure, honest beings. There goes our love as well, and later becomes to him so sapless, excessive and incomprehensible that he returns there again, away from our arms, cold and unloving, for they no longer feel pure mutual affection.”<sup>978</sup>

The scale of men’s interest in paid sexual services is impossible to estimate; one may only reiterate the earlier conclusion that prostitutes were visited by men of all classes, from workers to the aristocracy. Surveys regarding the sexual activity of Warsaw’s students revealed that prostitutes were frequently involved in the sexual initiation of young men, and that many of them used such services on a regular basis.<sup>979</sup> An example of regarding a visit to a brothel house as a

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976 Turzyna, *Wyzwalająca się kobieta*, p. 125.

977 Bujwidowa, *Czy kobieta*, p. 13; Very similar views – M. Bujno-Arct, “Gdzie najwinniejsi”, *Prawda*, no. 22 (1905).

978 Turzyna, *Wyzwalająca się kobieta*, p. 54.

979 Łazowski, Siwicki, *Życie płciowe*; M. Falski, “Niektóre dane z życia młodzieży szkół średnich”, *Nowe Tory*, no. 9 (1906).

natural way to “satisfy an organic need,” all the more telling given that it comes from a sensitive socialist, may be found in the views of Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz. He wrote to his fiancée about his sexual chastity: “I have infringed on it twice in my life, driven by a physiological need (. . .). I have no intention of concealing from you that, when I feel a compelling need thereto, I will do so again; though, on the other hand, it is no boast when I add that I do it not to take pleasure, that I overdose not this medicine, that I suppress this need for as long as can be suppressed without harming the body and spirit”. He further explained his attitude in the reply to her next letter: “I sternly deny that such satisfaction of a natural need took away any part of my human dignity, that it has animalised me to even the smallest degree (. . .) it was so much an addressing of a physiological need on my part, so far was I from any thought of amorous pleasure, that I have not once kissed any of them, and having satisfied my need I conversed with one of them of their terrible situation and exploitation by entrepreneurs. It would be a feat indeed to find more horrible stories than the ones she told me.”<sup>980</sup> In this view, sex was utterly disconnected from any emotional attachment, which is why feminists so often wrote about “animal instincts” when tackling male sexuality.

The 21-year-old Stefan Żeromski, in turn, found visiting brothels a less-than-easy experience. He was tormented by pangs of conscience. He wrote in his journal: “Yesterday evening. . . the devil in the blood was victorious. It is a devil indeed, for it followed my every step, overwhelming my thoughts, my body – and prevailed. And so, after nearly two years, I have befouled myself and plunged into this loathsome filth, bathed therein. . . Nature and society shake hands to throw the burden of responsibility onto the individual. In their horrific brotherly embrace, a noble figure crumbles, falls and is tainted. . . Yesternight, on my way to these horrid Eumenides, who hunt the virtue of youth, to these accursed dens of dishonour – I felt only horrendous desire that seemed to me a right, as much a necessity as life – so horrible, horrible today!”<sup>981</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the issue of prostitution was related to the nature and condition of marriage at the time, and feminist press devoted much attention to exploring this connection. The greatest fault of the institution of marriage were its ties with the economy, which made it into a forced union with no warm feelings,

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980 Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, *Listy 1890–1897*, ed. Feliks Tych (Warsaw – Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1984), Vol. 1, pp. 125, 131. In Kelles-Krauz’s case this was unlikely to be the only source of information on the suffering of the people, yet many clients came in closer contact with the lower classes only through prostitutes.

981 Stefan Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, Vol. II, p. 193. He regarded prostitution in terms of blame and punishment, as a disease to pay for “old sins, as a result of new faults” (p. 393).

in which the woman was to play the role of *une madame pour faire des enfants*,<sup>982</sup> a “pleasant pet”, an “idle female”, an “item to satisfy the instincts of men.”<sup>983</sup> The connection between marriage and prostitution was, in a way, twofold – causative (a man in a loveless marriage seeks sexual satisfaction outside of his home) and structural (marriage as the result of a contract and “selling oneself”<sup>984</sup> “loveless marriage” and “loveless harlotry”, the submissive attitude of women). The accuracy of this evaluation is another matter altogether. In any case, the harsh metaphor of a prostitute-wife was also an expression of a certain phobia regarding the social reduction of women’s role to the realm of the sexual. What feminists saw as the most important were the similarities in the fate of a wife and a prostitute, the disadvantageous position of both – as Maria Turzyna put it, marriage and prostitution were two altars on which women were the sacrifice.<sup>985</sup>

The loneliness and humiliation women experienced in marriage, the danger of being seduced and joining the armies of prostitutes, were all used by feminists to criticise the one-sided education of girls that ensured that women eternally remained “at the stage of childhood”. It gave them one more reason to propose and emphasise the need for a new model of upbringing and schooling for girls, which would prepare them for independent life, for coping with challenges, in order to avoid the fate of a “female slave.” This was the reason behind the importance of educational work and the proposal of far-reaching reform regarding women’s status in society.

### 3. Aid for prostitutes and the struggle for a new morality

Social activists, journalists, physicians and educators involved in the fight against prostitution tried to organise some forms of help for fallen women and prevent others from following in their footsteps. They also raised public awareness, hoping to elicit a change in behaviour that would eliminate prostitution from social life entirely (“The ideal to which we aspire is for the human livestock to find no buyer”<sup>986</sup> Neither of these activities was easy or brought any

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982 Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmit, *Młodzież żeńska i sprawa kobieca* (Warsaw: skł. gł. w Księgarni Naukowej, 1906), pp. 16, 21.

983 Bujwidowa, *Czy kobieta*, p. 3.

984 A statement likening married women to prostitutes appeared in the very first issue of *Ster* – Zofia Lamprecht, “Prostytucja w małżeństwie”, *Ster*, no. 1 (1907). The author of the article held very similar views on men marrying to get the spouse’s dowry (calling them “prostitutes”).

985 Męczkowska, *Ruch kobiecy*, p. 22; M. Turzyna, *Wyzwalająca się kobieta*, p. 4.

986 Męczkowska, *Ruch kobiecy*, p. 26.

visible success, yet they were planned to span for many years. The degree of dissatisfaction with the existing social norms and the level of radicalism varied; sometimes, perhaps, the rhetoric of the struggle made these sentiments appear stronger than they really were. In any case, participants in this discussion directed their postulates not only at the State – its officials and politicians. They were only responsible for the abolition of the system of medical and police supervision, the de-legalisation of brothels and the strengthening of punitive measures against procuration. Abolitionists aspired to much loftier goals, imagining a world without prostitution (or, at least, with it reduced to a much smaller scale), striving for much greater, more fundamental changes than the end of regimentation. The fight against the sources of prostitution required not only legal, social and economic transformations, but a new perspective on sexual morality and the relations between genders. Thus, abolitionists appealed directly to women and men. With a hearty dose of idealism, success could have seemed easier to achieve than changes in economy, as it depended solely on the goodwill of each and every individual.

The causes of prostitution and the aims indirectly related to paid sexual services naturally put the actions of abolitionists in a broader context (apart from socialist struggles against the system) of the movement of moral reform, correlated with abolitionism.<sup>987</sup> In Polish territory, the movement was represented by youth organisations, e.g. “Ethos” and “Eleusis” in Galicia, as well as by press titles such as *Czystość* and *Przyszłość*. The most prominent role in the periodicals was played by Augustyn Wróblewski; contributors included Antoni Wysłouch and Leon Wernic.<sup>988</sup> The movement drew inspiration from the fear of the degeneration of humankind, present in public discourse since the 1860s. This outcome was presented as possible, due to, among other factors, the rampant spread of venereal diseases and alcoholism. Members of the moral reform movement strove towards the establishment of new standards of ethics, centred around the key term of “purity”. “Pure life” was regarded as the path to the rebirth of individuals and entire nations. The idea was incorporated into the feminist programme of “moral restoration.” Understood rather broadly as “the purity of thought, feelings and deeds”, the ideal also pertained to the realm of human sexuality, entailing the sanctity of pre-marital abstinence and fidelity in marriage. “The old ethical dualism can persist no longer, the demands made towards women

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987 For more on the subject see: David Pivar, *Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868–1900* (Westport–London: Greenwood Press, 1973).

988 Pawłowska, “Kwestie etyczno-obyczajowe”, p. 576.



and regarding their chastity must be fully applied to men as well,” wrote Teodora Męczkowska in 1900.<sup>989</sup> The aim was to nurture a fitting approach towards sexual matters, a new morality in erotic relations – sex mainly for procreation, out of love and solely within the bonds of marriage. The promotion of sexual restraint required the organisation of a public educational campaign; it was one of the objectives and elements of the ongoing and proposed sexual education for children and adolescents, and the efforts to convince their parents of the benefits thereof. A resolution on the need for sexual education in the spirit of “sexual purity” was adopted by the congress of women in Cracow in 1905. The curriculum for such classes was presented at the meeting by the pioneers of Polish abolitionism – Antoni Wysłouch and August Wróblewski. Much persuasion was required to convince the public that sexual abstinence caused no harm, since the prevalent opinion (previously shared by most doctors) was that “chastity has an adverse effect on a man’s health.”

The programme of sexual education that emerged in Polish lands in the early 20th century, partially in response to the scale and consequences of prostitution, included (among many other things) the postulate of sexual chastity until matrimony, and the foregoing of paid sexual services as unhealthy, dangerous and, most of all, immoral. It also entailed a different approach to women. This last aim was to be achieved through the popularisation of a new model of child rearing.<sup>990</sup> High hopes were associated with coeducational schools. There was a consensus that the previously practiced separation of the genders at the time of physical and spiritual adolescence only “agitated the senses and cultivated wrong urges,” directing the imagination in an improper direction, leading to the development of erroneous assumptions of the opposite gender. The clash of these two very different worlds upon marriage was then believed to breed conflict and prevent understanding.<sup>991</sup> This was but a step away from paid sex. Separate education for

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989 Męczkowska, “Moralność obyczajowa”; Turzyna contested this view: “Applying to men a reverse dogma, an equivalent of that which has been affecting women, cannot be regarded as a valid solution to the problem. The demand for physical chastity as the only measure of a person’s worth is equally demeaning when applied to men, as it was when it constituted the only theoretical (if not always practical) value of a woman. Just as it created half-virgins, this measure may well create a thoroughly depraved type of man, with the preservation of physical chastity, forced for whatever reasons” – M. Turzyna, *Wyzwalająca się kobieta*, p. 125.

990 Everywhere in the world, the purity movement focused mainly on the education of the younger generations. See: Pivar, *Purity Crusade*, pp. 7–9.

991 Teodora Męczkowska, *Szkoły mieszane (koedukacyjne)* (Warsaw: M. Arcta, 1906), pp. 59, 71.

boys and girls stemmed not only from the fear of its adverse effect on the youth's moral condition, but also from the belief in the difference of the mental capacities of men and women, which naturally led to the tenet of the inherent inferiority of the fairer sex.<sup>992</sup> Coeducation was thought to decrease lustfulness in men, and teach them to respect women, treat them as partners, as "an equal human being", not (as is widespread), as "an instrument of ecstasy or entertainment".<sup>993</sup> The new ideals to be imparted to young men included a sense of responsibility (it is immoral to seduce, and equally immoral to abandon one's own child) and the lesson that the search for pleasure was not the meaning of existence.

Looking at the issue from our modern perspective, it may seem surprising that representatives of the movement truly had faith in the transformation of human nature and the self-improvement that was to result from education and the persuasions of the (lay) moralists. As noted by Katarzyna Dormus, who analysed Bujwidowa's views, the belief is likely to have stemmed from deeply ingrained humanism, yet involved the desire to enforce a "righteous" way of thinking on all individuals for the sake of humanity – an approach that invariably leads to compulsion.<sup>994</sup> It should be emphasised that the abolitionists' attitude towards sexuality went against the new *Zeitgeist* manifesting itself in more individual freedom in the realm of sexual activity, acquiescence for erotic love outside the bonds of marriage, a more liberal approach to sex (reduced to a matter of personal opinions and individual conduct), different from the strict rules championed by the purity movement.

Amidst their work towards cultivating a new morality, the movement did not forget about tangible aid for prostitutes and women in danger of following this path. The need to help "fallen, depraved women" had been voiced earlier, even before prostitutes became the subject of public concern and attention. Warsaw had a shelter for fallen women since at least the early 1880s. Located at Żytnia Street, the institution was called *Zakład Opieki Najświętszej Marii Panny*, and belonged to a chain of the so-called Magdalene charities operating across

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992 Męczkowska, *Szkoły*, p. 60.

993 "Our task should be to remove the filth from our homes, to bring opinions on the right track, so that they stigmatise not the victim, but the perpetrator, and finally, to educate the young generations, so that they perceive a woman as a citizen, a companion in labour, a mother, a sister and a wife, and not an instrument of carnal pleasure", wrote Bujno-Arct, "Gdzie najwinniejsi".

994 Dormus, *Kazimiera Bujwidowa*, pp. 107, 104–120 (listing Bujwidowa's publications on ethics); See also: Katarzyna Dormus, "Warszawski 'Ster' (1907–1914) i jego program wychowawczy", *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty*, Vol. 49 (2000), pp. 87–110.

Europe. With the support and patronage of women from the elites of the society (e.g. Kazimiera Ożarowska in the 1890s), the shelter aimed at converting fallen women (alcoholics, thieves, prostitutes) to return to honest living.<sup>995</sup> It comprised several wooden and brick buildings, housing (or confining) around one hundred girls and women between thirteen and over forty years of age. Upon entering, these women were given new names and were forbidden to talk about the past. Their lives were filled with work (embroidery, weaving, cooking, household chores, washing) and prayer. Such education was said to bear fruit after four to six years.<sup>996</sup> Bolesław Prus, who described the institution, refrained from commenting on these methods, yet the press of the day sometimes remarked on the little to nonexistent efficacy of similar resocialisation models intended to turn prostitutes into disciplined members of the Christian community.

In 1895 lady Ludwika Moriconi organised a shelter for five girls who fled a brothel house. After several years, this “tiny space” at Grzybowska Street in Warsaw was replaced by a sizable institution in Piaseczno near Warsaw (*Schronienie św. Małgorzaty*<sup>997</sup>), sheltering 50 young women who wished to abandon prostitution and prepare for “an honest occupation and morally right conduct”. One of the contemporaneous periodicals praised it as ranking among the best-managed shelters of this kind in Europe in terms of social arrangements. By 1907 it admitted 520 prostitutes (including 310 licensed ones); only 57 failed to be resocialised. On 7th January 1908, Moriconi founded the Society of St. Margaret’s Shelter. Its charter contained plans for nationwide incentives, establishing shelters for girls and women “pulled out of prostitution” (Art. 1 mentions aid for individuals “pulled into prostitution between infancy and adulthood), separate for minors and adults, with shelters for chronically ill children to operate in association with the latter.<sup>998</sup> Article 4 ensured that a woman admitted to such a shelter would be automatically removed from the police-and-medical register.

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995 A trial held in 1882 and the subsequent information provided by readers revealed that the shelter was used to confine not only fallen women, but also young “difficult” girls left there by parents or guardians who were unable to control them – “Echa warszawskie”, *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, no. 39 (1882).

996 Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. XV, pp. 227–229.

997 Referring to saint Margaret of Cortona, a lewd woman famous for her looks, who later became a “penitent sister” at the Third Order of Saint Francis.

998 M. Kor., “Towarzystwo Schronienia św. Małgorzaty”, *Prawda*, no. 49 (1908); See: A. Wr[óblewski], “Przytułki dla upadłych kobiet”, *Czystość*, no. 26 (1909); Tomasz Nocznicki, “Przytułek dla nieszczęśliwych kobiet”, *Czystość*, no. 28 (1909); “Konferencja w sprawie niesienia pomocy upadłym kobietom”, *Czystość*, no. 9 (1908/1909).

In 1905, after the May pogrom of brothels in Warsaw, the Jewish Association for the Protection of Women organised a shelter for 20 prostitutes. With very modest financial resources at its disposal, the institution functioned for a year and a half, offering lodgings for 45 women.<sup>999</sup> All of such shelters used work, prayer and educational talks as the principal means for resocialisation. The press mocked them at times, questioning the effectiveness of religious practices.

The belief in the need for and the beneficial effects of extending a helping hand to fallen women was greatly tested, because many prostitutes left the shelters to go back to their former occupation.<sup>1000</sup> They found it difficult to return to normality, the habits and traits they had acquired made them recognisable; besides, not all of them had the will to exchange the life they had been living for hard work, from which many of them had fled to engage in prostitution. The low efficiency rates of “rescue work” for the benefit of public women were noted everywhere across the world.<sup>1001</sup> The observations made in the Jewish shelter for prostitutes suggested that “degenerate and corrupted from childhood, the daughters of immoral parents, they usually returned to harlotry.” Due to their way of life, “they had become excitable, and would sometimes fly into a temper” that did not allow them to live a different existence. Rehabilitation was, however, considered worthwhile in the case of women driven to harlotry by adverse circumstances (destitution, unfortunate turns of events, their own stupidity or gullibility, deception or persuasion). Out of the 45 women staying in the shelter, 6 returned to their families, 4 became servants, 3 started to work in a factory, 2 got married, 17 left the institution without permission (possibly to return to prostitution), 5 were confirmed to have returned to their former occupation, 8 remained in the shelter’s care.

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999 Wertensteinowa, “Z tragizmów życia”; After the pogrom of Warsaw’s public houses in May 1905, one of the worker’s associations decided to “offer hospitality to fallen women in order to pull these unfortunate ones from the abyss of degradation and dependence on despicable environment. Those wishing to enter the path towards self-improvement will be taken in by honest worker families, so that, under the good influence, they also get to work.” The group committed to provide these families with 10 roubles a month for the upkeep of these prostitutes, until they themselves found some employment (the funds came from private associations and charities) – “Pogrom”, *Prawda*, no. 21 (1905).

1000 Happy endings could be found in positivist novels, which portrayed the fate of prostitutes in accordance with the model: fall from grace – rehabilitation – penance and return to the society. See: Ichnatowicz, “Miasto kryminalne?”, p. 118.

1001 Evans, “Prostitution”, p. 113.

Regardless of the wishes of prostitutes themselves, charitable institutions offering help to such women were scarce. The press wrote about societies offering aid to “the outcasts of the female world” in other countries.<sup>1002</sup> Bolesław Prus acknowledged the need to establish in Warsaw a shelter for women loitering the streets, where “such paupers could receive a free meal, sit around, stay the night.”<sup>1003</sup> Charitable aid in the Kingdom of Poland, well-organised as it was, could only help a small fraction of those in need; moreover, very little of it was directed towards prostitutes. The charitable institutions (shelters, hospitals) operating in the first half of the 19th century and managed by the Church or the Charity Association (*Towarzystwo Dobroczynności*; since 1814) were, in principle, intended for the elderly and the disabled, often with the provision that they were to cater to “have-nots of good conduct”, that “priority would be given to individuals of impeccable moral bearing.” In the case of aid for young people, patrons would state that it was reserved e.g. for “maidens of good conduct and legitimate origins.”<sup>1004</sup> The specific political situation the Polish society experienced in the 19th century also had an impact on the sources of aid – the contribution of State institutions was much smaller than in other countries, especially Western Europe, where they bore the financial brunt of helping the needy.<sup>1005</sup> In the 2nd half of the century the Kingdom, or at least Warsaw, had a considerable number of charitable institutions that offered assistance in finding employment and provided shelter to people who found themselves in particularly difficult

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1002 For instance: W. Rabski, “Listy z Krakowskiego Przedmieścia”, *Kurier Warszawski*, no. 91 (1900). Rabski described the workings of ethical societies from London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin. Representatives of the institutions were sent out to walk the cities at night and invite the “outcasts of the female world” for talks. Girls wishing to abandon their occupation were provided with room and board and gradually accustomed to regular work. Next, the charitable societies “introduced the woman torn away from the mud to special classes, where she would learn tailoring, millinery, bookbinding, midwifery, etc.” Midwives reacted to such news with outrage, shocked at the prospect of former prostitutes entering their professional group; Bolesław Prus commented on this as an example of obstacles the society placed before women wishing to abandon prostitution (“every decent path is hermetically closed before the unfortunate sinners”) – Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. 16, pp. 421–426.

1003 Prus, *Kroniki*, Vol. 16, p. 426 (an excerpt from *Gazeta Codzienna*, no. 104 (1900)).

1004 “Jak”. Fundusz ubogich panien w Wiślicy (1865 r.) – AGAD, RGOSz, j.a. 262.

1005 For more on the subject (with Warsaw as an example) see: Mazur, *Dobroczynność w Warszawie*; see also: Chlebowska, *Między Miłosierdziem*, p. 17.

circumstances.<sup>1006</sup> It may therefore be argued that they saved some percentage of women from prostitution.

Abolitionists focused on prevention, on not allowing prostitution to happen, on saving women from the trap set for them by panderers and human traffickers (hence the descriptions of the methods they were using). Their most ambitious initiative involved the creation of societies for the protection of women, modelled after the ones operating in other European countries since the late 19th century. The Christian Society for the Protection of Women was founded in 1902, the Jewish Society for the Protection of Women – in 1904.<sup>1007</sup> Their members were divided into three groups: honorary, obliged to active aid, and active (so-called agents). The latter category, exempt from membership fees (5 roubles per year), contributed by doing actual work, as it was they who implemented the statutory goals of the societies. The “legislation” of the Society defined these aims as “the protection of adolescent girls and women from downfall and leading the fallen towards the path to decency.”<sup>1008</sup> The preventive measures, listed in 10 points, included caring for children (informing courts of the need to extend care over orphans and abandoned children, helping families with limited means find supervision and activities for their offspring), young women (helping adolescent girls and young women find honest work, protecting them from danger as they sought employment, by posting special notices, in Russian, Polish and “outlander” languages, in ports and railway stations, to prevent human trafficking and the practice of whisking women away to foreign countries, helping young workers find new jobs if they found themselves out of employ in the summer when textile workshops were less productive), and rescuing the fallen (inciting young women treated in hospitals or obstetric institutes to honest work, providing help in finding employment or lodgings at an appropriate shelter).

The Christian Society intended to organise venues for leisure activities and voluntary work, in order to offer proper entertainment to young women of limited means, temporary lodgings for newcomers seeking work or changing employment, and permanent shelters for women with no families (separate for Catholics and Protestants). The funds for all of this were expected to come from membership fees, revenues from concerts, lectures, etc., as well as donations,

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1006 For a description of the forms and scope of aid see: Mazur, *Dobroczynność*, pp. 48–78 (adults), 79–105 (children).

1007 See: Mazur, *Dobroczynność*, p. 77; “Warszawskie chrześcijańskie Towarzystwo ochrony kobiet”, *Czystość*, no. 33, 34 (1909); “Żydowskie Towarzystwo o kobietach” *Czystość*, no. 33, 34 (1909).

1008 “Kronika miesiaca”, *Biblioteka Warszawska*, Vol. 1, issue 2 (1902), pp. 396–399.

bequests, and finally investments (additional capital was to be composed of some of the revenue and converted to bonds and securities). It was hoped that the Society would contribute “to keeping many beings at the level of ‘humanity’, to uplifting many souls from ruin, to stopping many others at the edge of an abyss,” yet it failed to draw enough interest to implement all its postulates and expand its activity.<sup>1009</sup> In 1904 its managers established a separate branch that was to focus on finding work for young women (free of charge for every woman who came recommended by a trustworthy citizen, vouchsafing for her diligence and industriousness). Employees of this branch had to ensure that the women received remuneration for their work, since employers would often consider the very act of hiring personnel as a great favour, as was the case with the protégées of father Kirchner’s institution seeking jobs for the destitute.<sup>1010</sup>

Other philanthropist organisations also provided indirect or direct aid to prostitutes and young women in danger of following that path. The Warsaw Association for Hygiene, for instance, opened a department of educational hygiene; the Warsaw Charitable Society had a department of orphanages, 20 activity halls and 26 sewing workshops, organised medical assistance and helped with employment. The Gentry Society also contributed, delegating members to help the personnel of the reading room of the St. Lazarus hospital read morally instructive texts to female patients.

The success of such charity work depended on the society’s attitude towards prostitutes. It required a change in approach, and a dose of compassion. Thus, contemporary evaluation of prostitutes was very different from the earlier stereotype of a lazy, degenerate woman. The new counter-stereotype stemmed from shifting the blame from the public woman to other subjects: men, the society, the State, the political system. As mentioned above, the model prostitute of anti-regimentationist journalism was a victim, an unfortunate soul, hunted, persecuted, beaten, scorned and rejected by the society, but essentially noble and morally purer than her “vampire-client.” To use an example from literature, she was Sonia from Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*.<sup>1011</sup> Owing to abolitionist

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1009 *Prawda*, no. 46 (1904); *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, no. 33 (1904).

1010 “Echa warszawskie”, *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, no. 11 (1904).

1011 One columnist writing for *Prawda* criticised the male society of righteous and religious “gentlemen” coming to the city for leisure, the “pillars of society” ready for adventure. They objectify women, “take her as if she was some instrument essential to their lordly needs”. The journalist also stated that “the greatest thief is he who, taking advantage of the circumstances, steals the life of a human being, sucks out her blood like a vampire, exploits her underdevelopment; if anyone told him that the lowliest

journalism, by the end of the 19th century the entire Europe regarded prostitutes with a note of compassion and understanding, trying to justify their actions. This led to the emergence of related charity movements.<sup>1012</sup> The change in mentality was noted in *Prawda* in 1904: “It is a noble sign of our times that increasingly often do we repaint ‘fallen’ individuals into unfortunate ones (. . .) Our society finds its fault even in their misdeeds, and, in its lofty aspirations, exerts more effort to improve itself than to penalise the sinners. Amidst these aspirations, the approach to the so-called ‘fallen women’ has been greatly transformed. There are still some who spit at them, yet there also are those who grieve for them. There still are some who push them into the depths of despair, yet there are also those who rescue them from therein.”<sup>1013</sup> Feminists tried to convince their readers that “regarding a fallen woman, they ought not to feel contempt, but fill their hearts with compassion, shame and outrage at the harm that had been done in the course of the centuries.”<sup>1014</sup>

Prostitution, human trafficking and venereal diseases were real and serious problems, even if – as modern historians claim – the press exaggerated their scale. The reasons for criticising the system of regimentation went beyond the argument that it did not stop the development of prostitution or nullify the threat of venereal disease. These reasons lay beyond prostitution, as it caused and stemmed from phenomena much broader than paid sex alone.<sup>1015</sup> The debate on prostitution taking place at the time derived from the ongoing social and ideological transformations in the 19th century: the progressive democratisation of the society and the growing aspirations of the underprivileged groups (women, workers), hoping for actual freedom, equality and dignity. The women’s movement saw prostitutes as the embodiment of the subservient role women played for men, socialists regarded them as a symbol of the oppression of the working class. In the eyes of the bourgeoisie, prostitutes were harbingers of a threat to the stability of the existing social order. “Mercantile love” became a symbol of

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prostitute stands on a much higher moral ground than these righteous men who rail against depravity while secretly sneaking out to brothels, such a gentleman would be surprised and offended, and likely comment that... freemasonry on our home turf begins to take alarming forms.” The excuse they use is that “these women are clearly not forced to do anything, they pester men themselves” – “Karnawał zielony”, *Prawda*, no. 22 (1904).

1012 See: Bristow, *Vice*, p. 63; Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 39–41.

1013 “Fejleton. Pamiętnik, Ściągnięte cugle”, *Prawda*, no. 33 (1904).

1014 Męczkowska, “Moralność obyczajowa”.

1015 Corbin, *Les Filles*, pp. 315 and following.



the widespread decline in morals. The changing mentality and social sensitivity brought doubts and both legal and moral opposition to the system of supervision applied to prostitutes. The social reception of the theory of evolution and heredity, juxtaposed with the image of the social and moral reality of the day (defined by some as “sexual abandon”) had a profound impact on the perception of the problem, the evaluation of opinions and dangers, as well as the search for preventive measures. The debate on prostitution was, in fact, a discussion on the great issues of the day – equality, justice, liberty and morality.



## Concluding remarks

Over the course of prostitution's long history, periods of tolerance alternated with attempts at repression. Both of these approaches could be observed in the 19th century, as if presenting the history of the phenomenon in an abbreviated form. After a period when prostitution was officially sanctioned by the State, there came the abolitionists with their demands to delegalise it. The debate on the issue was interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War. The development of prostitution resulting from the war and the related sanitary threats (amplified in wartime conditions) strengthened the position of regimentationists. It seems, however, that despite the success abolitionist propaganda had in influencing the society's perception of prostitution and the women engaging in such activities (the stereotype of prostitutes as victims), the complete implementation of the postulates to abolish regimentation would not have been possible in the atmosphere of strong syphilophobia that permeated the world in the early 20th century.

The 19th century honed the method of pacifying prostitution through its regimentation. The situation of women rendering sexual services for a fee, and to some extent also the situation of the clients using such services, was determined by administrative regulations. In most cases, regimentation is introduced to control some commodity. In this instance, by imposing regulations on the prostitution market, the State followed the philosophy of the necessary evil. "If the sexual drive, innate in everyone, cannot be satisfied by legal means, it seeks a different outlet and generates prostitution, which thereby becomes an essential and permanent component of the society. Historical evidence indicates that this has always been so, and that nothing could eliminate this seemingly redundant, or even harmful state of affairs. It persists until the present: prostitution has become necessary, and therefore should be tolerated; furthermore, it ought to be controlled, as it constitutes the principal source of the venereal plague," argued the stern supporter of regimentation, doctor Franciszek Giedroyc. The prostitution-related policy of the Kingdom of Poland and many other European countries was shaped mainly by the perceived public health threat related to prostitution's role in transmitting venereal diseases. Paid sex was tolerated in order for the State to be able to monitor the health of prostitutes and limit the spread of the disease among their clients. At the same time, prostitution was acknowledged as needed in the society, as a means to prevent acts of sexual violence and the destruction of the social order based on the principle of double morality.

In the course of several decades, the authorities of the Kingdom of Poland created reliable and detailed principles of controlling prostitution in the form of successive regulations. The surveillance of independent prostitutes and brothel employees and the fight with illicit sexual services was managed by special committees (anti-syphilitic, medical-and-police) established in all gubernia seats and district towns, and in all localities that housed military garrisons. Regimentation involved organs of state administration on every level, from communes to central offices. At the end of the 19th century, as their operation began to be seen as increasingly successful, the regimentation policy came under attack from the public, which saw prostitution not only as an evil causing thousands of young women to suffer, but also as a symbol of a disease affecting the entire civilisation.

United in their belief in the need to combat prostitution, social workers of various ilk spoke in defence of the tolerated prostitute, pushed beyond the margins of the society by the network of state regulations. Moreover, early-20th-century opponents of prostitution discussed the phenomenon in the context of marriage, the status of women (disproportionate to their aspirations for freedom), the dire situation of the working class and the ideas for its liberation, and the disease and degeneration of the society. The opposing sides of the debate differed not only in their understanding of the phenomenon and the interests they represented, but also in their responsibilities – that of the State and of social movements. Abolitionists did not reckon with any resistance from the world and could afford to have faith in the conscientiousness of properly informed citizens, while the authorities mainly considered the numbers of venereally ill soldiers. Lacking reliable instruments to measure the scale of the threat and aware of the still imperfect state of medical knowledge at the time, they were all the more reluctant to forego medical examinations, which were the only available and practically tested method of preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. While it was widely accepted that regimentation would not be able to eliminate the problem of venereal disease completely, the authorities believed that meticulous adherence to regulations did limit the dissemination of such illnesses. Moreover, by associating hospitalisation with coercion and prostitution, regimentation cemented people's aversion to contacts with doctors and hospitals (or so the argument ran), which made the decision to stop applying police measures even harder to take.

The phenomenon of prostitution has been the topic of academic interest for more than a hundred years. Scientific research began in the 19th century and pertained mainly to prostitutes – their social and family background, and the paths that had led them to the profession. Competing theories explaining the

underlying causes of the existence of the flesh trade were presented: the biological theory (especially Cesare Lombroso's anthropological theory of a "born prostitute") and the social-and-economic theory that referred to the terrible circumstances of women and families from the lowest social strata, resulting from the dynamic processes of industrialisation and industrialisation taking place in the 19th century. Other commentators, especially feminists, associated prostitution with the existence of a patriarchal, monogamous model of marriage and social inequality. In the light of the research findings (mainly referring to the poorest of the licensed prostitutes) and observations made at the time, the economic theory seemed the most convincing – and, as such, had arguably the greatest influence on the perceived reasons for engaging in prostitution. Commentators were aware of the civilisational consequences of large numbers of people moving to the city from the countryside, the changes in the nature of work and in living conditions. They acknowledged the problems newcomers would have in adapting to life in the "urban jungle", the harsh working conditions and low wages for women, the tragic fate of thousands of children left unsupervised, the horrible living arrangements, and the destitution of tens of thousands of people plagued with hunger and illness.

Dire circumstances caused many women to become "streetwalkers". Some did so not to go hungry, others to flee their hard, monotonous and debilitating life, in the vain hope for a better existence, unaware of the various consequences of engaging in prostitution. Modern historians sometimes see women's paths to prostitution as stemming from a conscious choice to use the only available means of fighting for their own independence; a manifestation of the need for personal freedom and self-government. This seems to pertain primarily to the most upscale prostitutes, who were outside the scope of police supervision and the studies conducted at the time.

Since the research of the French hygienist Parent-Duchâtelet, academics have amassed a considerable body of knowledge on the approach the state and the law had to prostitution. There are publications detailing the stories of famous courtesans, the situation of the proletariat of the prostitution world and the houses of ill repute from many cities in the world. Historians will likely continue to explore the connection between 19th-century prostitution and healthcare issues (healthcare policy, the prevention of diseases and the social perception of illnesses) social policy (aid for the poor and people from the outskirts of the society), crime and employment in capitalist, industrialised cities, family and the interest in the most intimate aspects of family life, the outcry against the inferior status of women in both the private and the public sphere, and many other (more or less) related problems of 19th-century world.

The dreams of the moral reformers from before the First World War never came true. There are societies which had already implemented all of the economic and social postulates of such movements, and undergone profound cultural changes with regard to sexual morality – thereby eliminating all factors mentioned in the late 19th and early 20th century as the principal causes of prostitution – yet the phenomenon still exists, and may even be regarded as quickly developing, in line with new circumstances and new problems of the contemporary civilisation.

# Bibliography

The bibliography encompasses the list of archival and library sources referenced in the book. It does not include the works mentioned in the Introduction.

The bibliography is supplemented with a list of publications issued in 2004–2019.

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