

PROSTITUTION IN LAIBACH IN 1888

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This short review presents the state of prostitution in public health medical historiography of the then Laibach in the year 1888. All prostitutes were registered in the *Evidenz Protocol* and Ljubljana city physicist performed regular examinations of prostitutes three times a week and issued medical certificates of medical fitness and a report on the state of prostitution in the city of Ljubljana.

Key words: prostitution, Ljubljana, 19th century, history of medicine

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In the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, prostitution was strictly legally public health and police controlled in the late 19th and early 20th centuries based on the Criminal Code of 1852, which regulated the issue of prostitution, so that jurisdiction over prostitutes and prostitution belonged to the city authorities, i.e., *Mestni magistrat* (Figure 1) (1,2). Then there were laws and bylaws based on the mentioned Criminal Code, such as the Decree on Prostitution of September 12, 1874, issued in Linz (*Vorschriften der Prostitution*), and in Ljubljana in 1888 the decree according to the *Regulativ für der Prostitution* issued in Graz was implemented as of April 3, 1877, which was used in all cities where there were bordellos (3-5). All prostitutes were registered in the *Evidenz Protokoll* under the ordinal number with generals, first and last name, age and place of birth, and items 1 and 2 contain a translation of the Regulation: “how to control prostitution in Ljubljana” (5):

- 1) “Public women” or “unclean women” are all those women whose bodies perform unclean trades.
- 2) Every “public woman” has to report in person to the police department of the city magistrate, which de-

scribes her in a special book, the so-called main record (*Haupt Protokoll*). Only one woman is entered on one side of the minutes, and the adjectives are liked; serial number, class, first and last name, age, status, place of birth and homeland, previous job, apartment, will and propensity to prostitution. At each entry, the woman was questioned about the above-mentioned matters.

Arriving at the service in the brothel, the prostitute had to report to the city police where she received a prostitute’s card, which recorded her generals and medical examinations as proof of her health or illness (1,6,7). The scope of work of the city physicist, among many others, included medical control of the health of prostitutes. In 1878-1888, Dr. Avelin Roblek, the then Ljubljana city physicist, performed regular examinations of prostitutes and issued medical certificates of medical fitness and a report on the state of prostitution in the city of Ljubljana (8). Hygienic-epidemiological inspection of the prostitute was performed once a month, and examination of the prostitute three times a week and entered in the Prostitute’s Card (1,3,5). Thus, at the beginning of 1888, according to records, four

prostitutes were recorded to be on duty in Ljubljana. During January 1888, they were examined as follows: Ana aged 21 eight times; a 50-year-old prostitute born in Trento four times; Josefa aged 20, born in Fiume (Rijeka), eight times; and Sofia aged 18, born in Prague,

six times (6). Their health status was monitored by use of special tables, with generals about prostitutes, their age, duration of prostitution turnover, date of illness and recovery, diagnosis (illness) in Latin and then German, with consequences, post-convalescence status, and treatment outcome and procedure. Thus, during 1888, four prostitutes aged 24, 19, 30 and 22 fell ill and were diagnosed with *ulcus specificum (lues primaria)*, *condylomata lata et blenorrhoea vaginae* (lues degree II with gonorrhea), *abortus et metrorrhagia* (later inflammation of the uterus, *Gebärmuttercatthar*) and pleuritis (Figure 2). These diseases and conditions of prostitutes were directly related to sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies, and fornication was often considered the source of any sexually transmitted disease, including the most common syphilis and gonorrhea (blenorrhoea), so the 19-year-old prostitute was diagnosed with both entities. Their recovery and exclusion from the fornication service lasted for about a month, and prostitutes with chronic uterine catarrh were not allowed further work (5,6).



Figure 1. Front page of the Ljubljana Magistrat, 1888.

If treatment was needed in the Ljubljana Hospital (*Mestni špital*), 16 crowns were allocated for treatment at the city expense (6). If a prostitute did not want to come for treatment as recommended by a doctor, they were forcibly taken to the hospital for treatment, with the help of the police (1). The extent of fornication was

Protokoll Nr.	Name, Geburtsort, Alter und Eidung, Nummer der Kranken- Protokolle.	Datum der Erkrankung	Krankheit mit Angabe wo in seinem Leben sein Protokoll bisherig abtrat.	Datum der Genesung.	Diagnose in deutscher Sprache oder in lateinischer Sprache oder in beiden Sprachen.	Refund nach der Reconvalescenz	Anmerkung.
1	Sofia K. Prag, 23 Japen alt, Eidung Nr 4	2/1	Ulcus specif. per Mestnens Spital.	27/1	Kein weiterer Eidung der Prostitution.	Salikament genügend Heilung in Mestnens Spital am 27/1, genau genau.	Kein weiterer Eidung der Prostitution.
2	Anna K. Prag, 19 Japen alt, Eidung Nr 7	4/6	Condil. lat. et Blenorrh. vagin. Mestnens Spital.	26/7	Kein weiterer Eidung der Prostitution.	Salikament genügend Heilung in Mestnens Spital am 27/7, genau genau.	Kein weiterer Eidung der Prostitution.
3	Josefa K. Prag, 20 Japen alt, Eidung Nr 19	20/7	Abortus et Metrorr. hag von Dr. K. S.	25/8	Kein weiterer Eidung der Prostitution.	Kein weiterer Eidung der Prostitution.	Kein weiterer Eidung der Prostitution.
4	Antonina K. Prag, 22 Japen alt, Eidung Nr 32	4/8	Neuretis von Dr. K. S.	4/9	Kein weiterer Eidung der Prostitution.	Salikament genügend Heilung in Mestnens Spital am 7/9, genau genau.	Kein weiterer Eidung der Prostitution.

Figure 2. From the Evidenz Protokoll 1888 (source: Mestni Arhiv Ljubljana. Lju 489 Reg I, 1-744).

a public health and hospital problem in the then Monarchy, as shown by the example from 1888, when 8% of the total number of hospitalized patients in Bjelovar County Hospital were syphilitic, and in 1889 as many as 13.8% (1,7). From that time, there are no historical data on brothels in Bjelovar where Dr. Avelin Roblek served before serving in Ljubljana. However, according to his own previous research, there were three Bjelovar brothels before the Great War (1), which still operated under the same regular public health guides and police oversight. This short review is the result of the original research in the City Archives of Ljubljana as part of the work of the Ljubljana local physicist in 1888 and a contribution to the then public health medical historiography of the then Laibach.

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S A Ž E T A K

PROSTITUCIJA U LJUBLJANI U 1888. GODINI KRATKO PRIOPĆENJE (IZ MEDICINSKE PROŠLOSTI)

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Ovaj kratki pregled prikazuje stanje prostitucije u povijesti javnoga zdravstva Ljubljane (Laibach) 1888. godine. Sve prostitutke bile su upisivane u *Evidenz Protokoll*, a mjesni fizik grada Ljubljane obavljao je redovite preglede prostitutki tri puta na tjedan, izdavao uvjerenje o njihovu zdravstvenom stanju i podnosio izvješće o stanju prostitucije u Ljubljani.

Ključne riječi: prostitucija, Ljubljana, 19. stoljeće, povijest medicine