

BROTHELS IN TALLINN

In 1893, the brothels moved from the harbour's vicinity to the streets of Mardi and Polgu. This reduced the number of intoxicated sailors visiting the brothels and simplified the order-keeping. The harlot houses had fancy names: "Victoria," "Venezia," "Mandshuria," "Polarstern" and "Royal Stern," "Gelbe Affe" and "Deutscher Rhein". The best-known harlot house was the brothel at Mardi 3, operated under Jevdokia Blohhina and being the subject of the old student song *Maja Mardi Uulitsas* (The House at Mardi Street)." The vast majority of prostitutes did not work in brothels, doing it on their own and in secret instead. There were several secret brothels, but a large part of the prostitutes had no permanent residence. In the 1920s, several prostitutes in Tallinn lived in sand caves nears the city.

During revolutions, emotions were vented on brothels. On January 12, 1905 several brothels were set on fire in Tallinn. The worst fire was at the harlot house of Kuku Street, where the fire brigade was hindered and the building burned to the ground. The brothel arsonists appeared again on October 14, but the military patrol set them straight this time. Another wave of setting brothels to fire happened on March 2, 1917, when it was considered necessary to unleash political hatred on these institutions. The newspaper writes: "The fire claimed the dirty dungeons of Tallinn"; "The glow of the burning harlot houses illuminated the sky all night. By morning, they were ashes and dust."