

Summary

This is the first Polish-language monograph on the trafficking of women and the first full-fledged work on the trafficking of women in Polish lands. The author's goal is to verify the central tenets of Polish historiography concerning the trafficking of women during the Partition. Polish historiography has been unresponsive to the recent Western European and American reinterpretations of the trafficking scare in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and continues to operate in a paradigm that assumes that thousands of Polish women were forcibly taken from Polish lands to foreign brothels in Latin America; these histories also assert that Polish Jews were complicit in this crime and supported silently by the occupying powers – in particular the Russian authorities – and that these groups aimed at destroying Polish nation demographically and morally.

In the first chapter, the author traces how the discourse on trafficking developed from the rhetoric of the new abolitionist movement and analyzes the popular narratives about the traffic organizers, their victims, common itineraries, and *modus operandi*. The second chapter explores how the stories of entrapment and enslavement of women affected the population living in the Polish lands, inciting a moral panic among the people over trafficking. The author shows how both the majority of Catholic Poles and Polish Jews experienced moral panic. At the same time, some groups, such as anti-Semites and Jewish intellectuals, took advantage of the vocabulary of this moral panic to advance their interests.

The following chapter addresses the perception of the traffic in prostitution as a Jewish trade and attempts to situate this association in a historical reality of the Jewish economic profile and involvement in border-crossing activities. Through exploring the world of smugglers and

prostitution intermediaries, the author demonstrates that the cooperation between Jews and non-Jews in illegal activities was limited to certain areas that required high levels of trust.

The fourth chapter juxtaposes the engagement of the occupying powers – Germans, Austrians, and Russians – in the fight against the trafficking of women and contemporary belief that the occupying powers intentionally failed to suppress this phenomenon. It demonstrates that the authorities actively addressed the alleged problem of trafficking, participating in international committees on the issue and policing the movements of suspected traffickers and their victims. The next chapter turns to the activities of the Christian Polish and Jewish associations for the protection of women that emerged as an outcome of the moral panic, a panic whose flames they continued to fan. The author carefully studies the reports of these organizations and their rhetoric concerning the public debate on trafficking. The juxtaposition of the results of reports and the rhetoric of these organizations shows that the overwhelming majority of the cases reported as trafficking of women were unfounded. The author claims that the associations for the protection of women were aware of the marginality of the problem but still promoted the narratives of women's entrapment and enslavement for their own interests. The sixth chapter analyzes a wave of disturbances in the Kingdom of Poland called the Pimp Pogrom that targeted the Jewish underworld and the facilities in which they ran their businesses, including prostitution. Although ostensibly anti-prostitution in their character, the author argues that the disturbances' participants took advantage of the moral panic to justify their bloody way of satisfying their own interests under a pretense of a moral crusade.

In the final chapter, the author concludes that, like in Western societies in the same period, Polish public opinion was influenced by the language of moral panic, and the trafficking of women was an exaggerated problem that, in reality, existed on a marginal scale. The narratives of the entrapment and enslavement of innocent women spoke to the anxieties of the population living in the Polish lands that were undergoing great transformation, unsettling the worldview of the masses.