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The German Prostitutes'  
Movement: *Hurenbewegung*.  
From Founding to Law  
Reform, 1980–2002<sup>1</sup>

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to present the German *Hurenbewegung* ('Whores' Movement'). I will explain the circumstances under which the first self-help groups for prostitutes and their supporters have formed since 1980, examining how they worked as a network while introducing the journals they published, which are used as primary sources in this historical overview. I will shed light on the claims the movement made and on the forms of its political action and examine how it argued for prostitutes' legal and social equality. Focal points include their activism and, specifically, how the activists dealt with HIV, which became an important issue in the 1980s. The exchange with political parties in the 1990s intended to promote legal reform will be described, as will the movement's reaction to the new prostitution law of 2002; a reform which was influenced by the sex workers' movement, as I discuss. In these years of activism the *Hurenbewegung* became institutionalised, and its focus shifted from political to social work. I will explore the circumstances which caused this shift, as well as the consequences that followed. Additionally, I will shortly demonstrate that there is a close link to feminist movements and give a very brief outlook on current activities by prostitutes in Germany.

Keywords: *sex work; feminism; HIV; self-help groups; institutionalization, political action, labour dispute, medical examination*

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## Introduction

Prostitutes in Germany<sup>2</sup> claimed equal rights to other workers and therefore fought together as a *Hurenbewegung* ('Whores' Movement') which has contributed to social and political changes in Germany. I describe how the prostitutes' movement developed from 1980 onwards, and shed light on some of the political action they used to contribute to the law-reform in 2002 and I will show how the *Hurenbewegung* came to be institutionalised during this period. I argue that we must understand the *Hurenbewegung* as a social movement and as a part of feminist movements of the time. Afterwards, I give a very brief outlook on the current situation in Germany and current political action on behalf of prostitutes.

Prostitution has been generally legal in Germany since 1949. Street prostitution was banned from defined prohibited areas—so-called '*Sperrbezirke*'—in which prostitution was forbidden. The rules which prohibit prostitution in certain areas vary from city to city. Prostitution was completely banned in the proximity of schools and churches and in communities with less than 50,000 inhabitants. When the prostitutes' movement grew in the 1980s, it was still mandatory for prostitutes to have regular medical examinations for sexually transmitted diseases. Prostitutes were generally not allowed to work together, not even in pairs; otherwise, they could be accused of promoting prostitution, which was illegal. For the same reason it was forbidden to actively improve working conditions in brothels, for instance through provision of condoms or towels. Brothel owners did not offer more than a room; otherwise they could be charged with promotion of prostitution. Prostitution was defined as 'immoral' (*sittenwidrig*), meaning that prostitutes had no right to demand payment in the event of a client refusing to pay for a sexual service. Even though prostitution was not recognised as work under German law, the tax office indirectly did so, requiring prostitutes to pay tax on their income. However, they did not enjoy the same rights as other taxpayers, such as healthcare, unemployment benefits and retirement insurance.<sup>3</sup>

2 This article only focusses on West Germany. In East Germany prostitution was illegal and no movement developed. If Germany is mentioned in this article, it is meant to signify West Germany. After 1989 it is meant to signify the whole country.

3 Freude am Sex, in: Der Spiegel 17 (1992), pp. 88f., p. 88; —d—: 2. Nationaler Prostituiertenkongress in Stuttgart: 'Moral' ist uns egal, in: Rotstift 10 (1986), pp. 4f., p. 4.

Against the background of this legal situation, the *Hurenbewegung* was active for about 20 years, and still it has been barely investigated.<sup>4</sup> As a social movement, the *Hurenbewegung* should receive greater attention in discussions on social movement research in Germany. Therefore, it is the aim of this paper to give an overview of the development of the movement's existence and evolution over the past 20 years.

This is a work of historical research based on source analysis. The article primarily uses sources originating from the *Hurenbewegung*, such as the journals and protocols of Whores' Congresses. These sources are described more precisely in the following chapter. In addition, several items of literature are used, as well as selected articles from German newspapers and journals. The discussions about a possible revision of legislation on prostitution in Germany have been analysed in detail by political scientist Susanne Dodillet in comparison to Sweden.<sup>5</sup> The lawyer Ulrich Leo described the implementation of laws applicable to prostitution during the period examined in the present paper.<sup>6</sup> To analyse the movement as a social movement, I refer to Donatella della Porta, Marica Tolomelli, Dieter Rucht and Roland Roth.

Because prostitution is predominantly engaged in by women, and activists of the German Whores' Movement were almost exclusively female, this article focuses on the history of women. The terms 'prostitution' and 'sex work'<sup>7</sup> are used synonymously, in both cases denoting a voluntarily offered target-oriented sexual service in exchange for payment.

4 Academically there are two works: An overview over the diverse groups in Germany and Austria can be found here: Almuth Waldenberger: *Die Hurenbewegung: Geschichte und Debatten in Deutschland und Österreich*, Berlin et al. 2016. The first scientific analysis of the group *Hydra* was done in 2013: Diana Drechsel: *Die Berliner Hurenbewegung: Eine diskursanalytische Untersuchung am Beispiel von Hydra e.V. ab 1980*, in: FFBIZ (ed.): *Spurensicherung: Feminismus in Aktion und Dokument*, Berlin 2013, pp. 7–16.

5 Susanne Dodillet: *Är sex arbete? Svensk och tysk prostitutionspolitik sedan 1970-talet*, Stockholm 2009. In German she published: Susanne Dodillet: *Prostitutionspolitik in Deutschland und in Schweden: Zum ideologischen Hintergrund von Sexarbeit und Sexkaufverbot*, in: Sabine Grenz/Martin Lücke (eds.): *Verhandlungen im Zwielficht: Momente der Prostitution in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Bielefeld 2006, pp. 95–112; Susanne Dodillet: *Deutschland—Schweden: Unterschiedliche ideologische Hintergründe in der Prostitutionsgesetzgebung*, in: APuZ—*Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 63:9 (2013), pp. 29–34.

6 Ulrich Leo: *Die strafrechtliche Kontrolle der Prostitution: Bestandsaufnahme und Kritik*, Kiel 1995.

7 For the history and development of the word 'sex work', invented by the US-American movement for prostitutes' rights at the end of the 1970s, see: Valerie Jenness: *Making it work: The Prostitutes' Rights Movement in perspective*, New York 1993.

## Presentation of the Movement's Points of Departure and of the Main Sources

The *Hurenbewegung* emerged in Germany in 1980, and by 1987 a network of eight self-help groups for prostitutes had formed a nationwide movement which continued to grow. The groups were founded by prostitutes, former prostitutes and supporters (mainly social workers). From the beginning, social workers and sex workers operated in close alignment. *Hydra*, started in West Berlin in 1980, was followed in 1984 by *HWG* ('Huren Wehren sich Gemeinsam', literally 'whores strike back together') in Frankfurt (Main), and in 1985 by *Rotstift* ('Red Pen') in Stuttgart. These three self-help groups also produced journals: *Hydra* published the *Nachtexpress* ('Night Express') from 1980 to 1995, while from 1984 to 1998 *HWG* published the *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen* ('Journal for Light and Heavy Girls')<sup>8</sup>, and from 1985 to 1987, *Rotstift* published the eponymous *Rotstift* journal. In these journals prostitutes wrote about their daily working routine including experiences with clients, about their private lives and about discrimination and stigmatisation. Also, they described their political demands and asked colleagues to join the groups to help them grow and gain strength. Supporters wrote in the journals about their motivation to assist the groups and about their experiences with the movement. Most of the information used in this article, therefore, is taken from journals, they are used as primary sources to illustrate the development of the movement and to analyse activists' discussions. Prostitutes received the journals for free; supporters had to pay for them. That was one way to finance the publications and it underlines the main target group of the publications: sex workers.

*Hydra* was founded mainly by supporters, rather than prostitutes themselves: because of the compulsory medical examinations imposed on prostitutes, the idea to create a group promoting the social acceptance of sex workers emerged in a Berlin health department in 1979. A female employer working in the department found the mistreatment of prostitutes disrespectful—in particular, the fact that they had to submit to examinations but their clients did not. Quickly, she found like-minded women and together they founded *Hydra*, aimed at supporting the occupational and cultural education of female prostitutes.<sup>9</sup> The group met regularly, inviting interested women to join. From the beginning, the activists proclaimed solidarity with prostitutes, to build a unit fighting together.<sup>10</sup> Named after the mythological serpent that grew two heads for each severed one, *Hydra* demonstrated

8 'Leichte Mädchen' (easy girls) is a German a synonym for a young prostitute.

9 Heide Simon: Zur besonderen Problematik von Prostituierten, in: *Nachtexpress* 5 (1984), pp. 3–8; Hurenkongress ABC: Eine Einführung für Kongreß-Neulinge. Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: nat. Hurenkongresse 96–99–2002, DO-00222.

10 Kennen Sie Hydra?, in: *Nachtexpress* 1 (1980), p. 1.

strength and resilience. *HWG* was named after the German legal expression for prostitutes, 'people with frequently changing sexual partners' ('Personen mit Häufig Wechselnden Geschlechtspartnern'). The activists changed the meaning to 'whores strike back together' ('Huren Wehren sich Gemeinsam'). As *Hydra* demonstrated with their name, *HWG*, too, would strongly resist any attack against prostitutes.

Using the word 'whore' ('Hure') in itself demonstrates activists' self-esteem and defiance. They reclaimed a word with negative connotations, transforming it into a proudly used self-designation. About 20 women founded *HWG* to support the sharing of information and communication between female prostitutes. The group created a direct network with local political authorities to discuss prostitutes' working conditions in Frankfurt.<sup>11</sup> Berlin and Frankfurt were important cities for political protest in Germany, especially in the 1970s and early 1980s<sup>12</sup>—it is probable that prostitutes living there would have been influenced by that climate of protest. This may explain why *Hydra* and *HWG* were the most active groups in the German prostitutes' movement.

In the framework of a nationwide network, using the label '*Hurenbewegung*', since 1985 delegates from the diverse groups have held a Whores' Congress every six months in different German cities.<sup>13</sup> As described in the *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen*, these congresses were defined as meetings of the movement. Here, the groups exchanged details about working conditions, which differed from city to city. For instance, prohibited areas ('*Sperrbezirke*') did not exist in Berlin, whereas in Frankfurt local authorities introduced them during the 1980s. For this reason, *HWG* focused their efforts on this issue, while *Hydra* instead directed their political action towards other issues. For the activists this sense of collectiveness and solidarity at the congresses and beyond was very important. At the congresses, the movement also discussed political strategies: for this reason, congress protocols are cited as important sources in this article, besides the journals already mentioned.<sup>14</sup> After every Congress, the participants issued a press release, and often they held a press-conference. By these means, the media was informed and daily

11 Maggie Roper: Die Prostituiertenbewegung, in: Irene Hübner/Maggie Roper (eds.): Protest im Spitzenhöschen: Huren wehren sich: Von der klassischen Hetäre zum postmodernen Bodygirl, Frankfurt am Main 1988, pp. 17–30, p. 26.

12 Sven Reichardt: Authentizität und Gemeinschaft: Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren, Berlin 2014, p. 28.

13 Kurs-Haltung, in: *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen* 8 (1990); in: *HWG-Reader*, published in 1989, including all volumes of *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen* published until then, p. 113.

14 All protocols and further sources can be found in the archive for prostitution which was established and is run by the institution *Madonna* in Bochum, entitled *Archiv- und Dokumentationszentrum SEXARBEIT*.

newspapers frequently wrote about the meetings. These articles mostly summarized the movement's demands and rarely offer a new perspective. This is why they are not used as sources in this paper.

Books written by members of the *Hurenbewegung* are used as additional sources to analyse the movement.<sup>15</sup> The first book on prostitution written from a prostitute's perspective was published in 1980 by Pieke Biermann. In it, she sampled stories told by colleagues and wrote about her own point of view on prostitution.<sup>16</sup> The author joined *Hydra* and was part of the international feminist campaign *Wages for housework*. As one of the first sex workers in Germany talking about their job, Biermann was present in the media and by doing so she demonstrated the importance of publicly discussing political ideas, in order to end discrimination, and to inform people outside of prostitution of the realities that prostitutes experienced in their jobs and in their private lives.

1980 marked the movement's inception, with the founding of *Hydra* as the first prostitutes' project in West Berlin and publication of the book edited by Pieke Biermann as its nucleus and starting point.

## Central Demands for Legal Equality

At their first Whores' Congress in Berlin in 1985, 30 women from different cities gathered. They wrote down 22 social and political demands, which were published in the movement's journals afterwards, and subsequently served as a groundwork for political discussions. These claims regarded the legal situation in particular, asking for a change in legislation and better working conditions free from state restrictions. At this first Congress, the *Hurenbewegung* already discussed the legal and social recognition of prostitution as a profession claiming this as their primary objective. Legal recognition would include access to social security, and they hoped it would lead to social acceptance of the service they were offering, as well.<sup>17</sup> Within the existing system, the German prostitutes' movement demanded a change to the current laws.

15 Prostituiertenprojekt Hydra (ed.): *Beruf: Hure*, Hamburg 1988; Cora Molloy: *Hurenalltag. Sperrgebiet — Stigma — Selbsthilfe*, Frankfurt am Main 1992; Christine Drößler/Jasmin Kratz (eds.): *Prostitution: Ein Handbuch*, Marburg 1994.

16 Biermann, Pieke: „Wir sind Frauen wie andere auch!“: *Prostituierte und ihre Kämpfe*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1980.

17 Der 1. Nationale Prostituierten-Kongreß vom 24.–27.10.1985 in Berlin, in: *Nachtexpress* 6 (1985/1986), pp. 4–7, p. 4.

The activists wanted the right for everyone to choose how to use their own body, as well as the social acceptance of free sexuality and equality between men and women. They felt discriminated against as persons in general, and as women in particular, which is why their actual intention was a profound change of society and the destruction of patriarchal structures.

Here are some examples of the 22 demands they presented:

- equality for prostitutes (no. 1)
- the right to sexual self-determination (no. 4)
- recognition of prostitution as a service (no. 6)
- inclusion of prostitutes in health insurance (no. 7)
- abolition of the law requiring health checks for prostitutes (no. 14)
- federal measures to educate about safe sex, especially for men (no. 18)
- no discrimination against former prostitutes, in professional or private life (no. 20)
- exemption from taxes as long as prostitutes' civil rights are restricted (no. 22)<sup>18</sup>

At the centre of these demands was the statutory immorality of prostitution according to the civil code law, § 138 I BGB<sup>19</sup>, which excluded prostitutes from access to social security, like health insurance and retirement benefits. For a sex worker it was impossible to legally sue for money if a client refused to pay, but conversely, the client could sue her for not providing the service he wanted.<sup>20</sup> In practice this rarely happened, but the argument made visible a “patriarchal logic”<sup>21</sup>, which documented the double standards in law and society, argued Cora Molloy, a *HWG* activist.<sup>22</sup> The *Hurenbewegung* therefore demanded the legal definition of prostitution as ‘immoral’ be abolished. According to the movement, all of these 22 demands put into a nutshell the most pressing issues and thereby made explicit and highlighted the need to discuss prostitution beyond its moral dimensions, because sex work was a dependent relationship between employer and employee: in the movement's terms, a capitalistic rather than societal issue.<sup>23</sup>

18 Maggie Roper: *Die Prostituiertenbewegung*, pp. 29f. Translated by the author.

19 Protocol of 16<sup>th</sup> Hurenkongress in Bochum. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: Kongress Bochum 94, DO-00220.

20 Ulrich Leo: *Die strafrechtliche Kontrolle der Prostitution*, p. 114.

21 “patriarchale Logik”, see: Cora Molloy: *Hurenalltag*, p. 29. Translated by the author.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 30; –d–: 2. Nationaler Prostituiertenkongress in Stuttgart, p. 4.

23 Sara: *Zuhälterinnen*, in: *Nachtexpress* 8 (1988), p. 38; cp.: *Viel Zustimmung für Prostitution als Beruf: Gewerbe sieht eine Chance auf geregelte Arbeitsverhältnisse/Streitpunkt Zuhälterei*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, 13 August 1999, p. 62.

## Activism for Law Change

With creativity and sometimes even a twinkle in their eyes, the *Hurenbewegung* proclaimed their demands and did so effectively. More groups have been founded constantly: about 50 participants met at every congress, consisting of delegates from projects in different cities. In the mid-1980s they approached politicians and discussed possible revisions of legislation. With the support of lawyers they even wrote legal drafts in the 1990s that were discussed in parliament until a new law was passed in 2001.

### 1980s

In 1986, one year after the first Whores' Congress, *Hydra* approached the Green Party (*Die Grünen*, as of 1993 *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*) to discuss the 22 mentioned demands and to explore whether or not—and in what way—they could be implemented.<sup>24</sup> The female members of the party concurred with the perception that prostitutes were discriminated against as women.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, this cooperation was not free from conflicts. The party prepared a first bill on prostitution, which the movement criticised because their demand for the abolition of compulsory medical examinations of prostitutes was not included.<sup>26</sup> This issue was particularly important to the movement, even before human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) became an issue in the 1980s. Activists from *Hydra* argued that the law that forced prostitutes to undergo medical examinations gave the client the sense of consuming a “healthy product” (“gesunde Ware”)<sup>27</sup>, encouraging them to reject the use of a condom because they felt safe, thereby increasing the risk on the prostitute's part and making it harder for prostitutes to insist on protection. Most clients did not see a need to protect themselves and the prostitutes' needs were invisible for these men, wrote *Nachtexpress*.<sup>28</sup> To heighten awareness of that issue, prostitutes in Germany took collective action in several cities on 12 December 1987, at noon. At central places they read out a letter, entitled ‘Nie mehr ohne!’ (‘Never again without!’),

24 Der 1. Nationale Prostituierten-Kongreß vom 24.–27.10.1985 in Berlin, in: *Nachtexpress* 6 (1985/1986), p. 6.

25 Prostitution & Recht, 5. Teil: Neue Möglichkeiten für Prostituierte, in: *Nachtexpress* 7 (1986/1987), p. 22.

26 Hydras 1. Stellungnahme, in: *Nachtexpress*, 7 (1986/1987), p. 24; Prostituiertenprojekt Hydra (eds.): *Beruf: Hure*, pp. 202–204.

27 “Machen wir'n Hütchen drüber”: Spiegel-Interview mit „Hydra“-Frauen über Prostitution und Gesellschaft, in: *Der Spiegel* 34 (1985), pp. 44–48, p. 48.

28 Bockscheine für Freier, in: *Nachtexpress* 10 (1990/1991), p. 19.



and handed it out to potential clients.<sup>29</sup> *Hydra* put the client into the focus of discussions, ultimately demanding that the client should be examined, rather than the prostitute.<sup>30</sup> On 2 June 1989, *Hydra* invited men to a self-constructed health department in a tent for a health check.<sup>31</sup> In a gynaecologist's chair, men could sit down, a *Hydra* activist pretended to perform a health check and afterwards they received a certificate of health, similar to those which prostitutes received after their compulsory examinations. This was meant to impress upon clients the feeling of degradation that many prostitutes felt during the procedure. In Frankfurt, *HWG* together with a taxi company launched the campaign 'SICHER anKOMMEN' ('coming safely'). The activists attached 2,000 condoms to 2,000 visiting cards requesting to have safe sex only. When clients asked their taxi driver to take them to a brothel, the driver gave a card to the client when he paid for the ride.<sup>32</sup> Through means like these, the movement underlined that both the client and the prostitute bore responsibility for each other's health, in contrast to the widespread perception—implied in the imposition of examinations on the women only—that this responsibility rested solely with the prostitute. They directly addressed clients with their demand no. 18: "Federal measures to educate about safe sex, especially for men". While there were no federal measures which satisfied the *Hurenbewegung*, they educated clients on their own. Several articles in local daily newspapers informed of their actions, and some of them have been reprinted in the *Nachtextexpress* and *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen*. With public activities like the ones described, the movement gained attention. But they did not solely resort to these public protests. An extensive bill written by the *Hurenbewegung* in 1989 was discussed in the German parliament *Bundestag* in March 1990.<sup>33</sup> For the movement a new law was a crucial means to end repression legitimised by the law, which is why they continued to pursue the matter adamantly.<sup>34</sup> When *Die*

29 Uta Falck: Skandal im Sperrbezirk? Die deutsche Hurenbewegung hat ihr Gesicht verändert: Eine Bestandsaufnahme, in: *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen* 16 (1997), pp. 35–37, p. 35; Liliane von Rönn: Du musst Dir die Macht zurückholen!, in: Elisabeth von Dücker (ed.): *Sexarbeit. Prostitution—Lebenswelten und Mythen*, Bremen 2005, pp. 219–221, p. 220; Strack, Friederike: Ein Vierteljahrhundert *Hydra*, in: Elisabeth von Dücker (ed.): *Sexarbeit*, pp. 211–213, p. 211.

30 Bald Bockscheine für die Freier?, in: *Der Spiegel* 34 (1985), p. 42.

31 Kurzmitteilungen, in: *Nachtextexpress* 10 (1990/1991), p. 6; Uta Falck: Skandal im Sperrbezirk?, p. 35; Strack: Ein Vierteljahrhundert *Hydra*, p. 211.

32 Sicher ankommen: Aber bitte mit Gummi!, in: *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen* 7 (1989), *HWG-Reader*, p. 94; Cora Molloy: *Hurenalltag*, p. 20.

33 Die Grünen im Bundestag, Arbeitskreis Frauenpolitik (ed.): *Beruf: Hure: Dokumentation der „Anhörung“ vom 5. März 1990 in Bonn*, Bonn 1991.

34 Die souveräne Entscheidung, in: *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen* 8 (1990), *HWG-Reader*, p. 115.

*Grünen* failed to gain sufficient votes to enter parliament again in December 1990, the bill was no longer a political hot topic; Germany had been reunited and other debates dominated the political agenda.<sup>35</sup>

## 1990s

After the administration of Frankfurt shut down a number of brothels in the year 1992, activists from *HWG* occupied a whorehouse. They distributed leaflets and held a press conference, to inform the media and interested people about the imminent evacuation of the brothel. They wrote their demands on a banner which they put on display: “Public order and immigration police—Hands off this house!”<sup>36</sup>, could be read, as well as: “For a self-governed brothel”<sup>37</sup> and “Prostitutes are being locked out without labour dispute!”<sup>38</sup> Through their demand of a self-governed brothel, they underlined that it was not working as prostitutes in itself that was problematic, but rather the conditions in the existing brothels. *HWG* acted as human rights advocates not only on behalf of their members, but also on behalf of foreign colleagues and stressed that they would not accept any kind of racism. The demands displayed on the banners were akin to positions of left-wing organisations that occupied houses and stood up against racism at that time. Despite these protests, police vacated the brothel, but *HWG* caught the attention of the media; once again a small goal was reached.<sup>39</sup>

For the recognition of prostitution as a legal profession, the self-help group *Bathseba* from the German city of Brunswick participated in a demonstration organised by the *DGB* (*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*, Federation of German Trade Unions) on 1 May 1992, International Workers’ Day. *Bathseba*, keen to participate in the fights for workers’ rights

35 Protocol of 11<sup>th</sup> Hurenkongress in Nuremberg. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: Kongress Bochum 92–96, DO-00219; Explosive Entwicklung, in: Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen 9 (1991), *HWG*-Reader, pp. 126f.; Freude am Sex, in: Der Spiegel 17 (1992), pp. 88f., p. 89; Peter Schmitt: Wenig Besserung für Prostituierte: Magere Bilanz beim ‚Nationalen Hurenkongreß‘ in Nürnberg, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ), 29 May 1995, p. 10.

36 “Ordnungsamt + Ausländerpolizei: Finger weg von diesem Haus!”, see: Cora Molloy: Hurenalltag, pp. 54f. Translated by the author.

37 “Für ein selbstverwaltetes Bordell!”, see: Ibid. Translated by the author.

38 “Prostituierte werden ohne Arbeitskampf ausgesperrt!”, see: Ibid. Translated by the author.

39 cp.: Nimsch fordert selbstverwaltetes Bordell: Haus an Elbestraße bei Räumung besetzt/Grüne hoffen auf Entscheidung für kleine Toleranzzone, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), 5 May 1992, p. 40.

and therefore joining the celebration of the *DGB*, printed their own leaflets, complaining that sex workers remained legally excluded and that a social double standard would exist.<sup>40</sup> Being self-confident, the activists went public and made their protest visible.

Despite growing attention from the media and solidarity from other social movements and political parties the *Hurenbewegung* still needed to fight against prejudice because of HIV. New negative attributions, like "Seuchenverbreiter" ("epidemic propagator") and "Risikogruppe" ("risk group") were increasingly used when talking about prostitution.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, women from the prostitutes' groups were invited by politicians and NGOs to discuss prostitution and AIDS, since they were increasingly seen as competent partners in dialog.<sup>42</sup> Also, groups were eligible to state support of campaigns of AIDS prevention; and initiated projects for prostitutes, such as the exit-program for women willing to move on, which was implemented by *Hydra*.<sup>43</sup> Prostitutes had to cope with the new stigma of being seen as potential carriers of HIV, but at the same time, their competences as dialog partners and their knowledge regarding HIV were recognised. Even though it was hard to combat the negative attributions that came with the rise of HIV, there was a chance in the disease, claimed the activist Pieke Biermann. The groups became eligible to state support and people were listening to sex workers' voices.<sup>44</sup>

In parallel the movement continued to work on a legal draft, which was formulated with lawyers and subsequently discussed with representatives of all political parties in 1995.<sup>45</sup> In January 1998, it was presented to the *Bundestag*, once more.<sup>46</sup> After a change of government in autumn the same year the Social Democrats and the Green Party resolved in their coalition agreement to improve the social and legal situation of prostitutes.<sup>47</sup>

40 Flyer/Solidaritätsaufruf by Bathseba. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: Schwesternorganisationen-Rundbriefe, DO-00240.

41 Vorwort, in: HWG-Reader, 1989, p. 5; Spiegel Streitgespräch Aids: Sex-Verbot für Zehntausende? Staatssekretär Gauweiler und Sexualwissenschaftler Dannecker über Meldepflicht und Seuchenbekämpfung, in: *Der Spiegel* 3 (1987), pp. 160–168.

42 Neues von Hydra, in: *Nachtextpress* 8 (1988), pp. 3f.; Neues von Hydra, in: *Nachtextpress* 7 (1986/1987), p. 3.

43 Uta Falck: Skandal im Sperrbezirk?, p. 35.

44 Pieke Biermann: Meine Antworten an Palette, answers to an interview Biermann took back, 1988, pp. 1–7, p. 6. Archive collection: Archivio di Lotta Femminista per il salario al lavoro domestico. Donazione Mariarosa Dalla Costa (Padova), shelf mark: Busta 15, 110. A similar development is described by Sebastian Haunss for the German gay-movement. Sebastian Haunss: Identität in Bewegung: Prozesse kollektiver Identität bei den Autonomen und in der Schwulenbewegung, Wiesbaden 2004, pp. 204f.

45 Protocol of 31<sup>st</sup> Hurenkongress in Dortmund. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: nat. Hurenkongresse 96–99–2002, DO-00222.

46 Susanne Dodillet: Prostitutionspolitik in Deutschland und in Schweden, p. 95.

47 *Ibid.*, pp. 107f.; Susanne Dodillet: Deutschland—Schweden, p. 33.

## 2002

Finally, in December 2001 a new law was passed with the aim of integrating sex workers into society and ending stigmatisation and discrimination against them. It was enacted on 1 January 2002.<sup>48</sup> Since then, prostitutes in Germany are entitled to health and pension insurance, and prostitution is no longer officially termed 'immoral', so that prostitutes can sue for money if a client refuses to pay. Since 2002, brothel operators can enter into a formal work contract with sex workers, and offering towels or condoms is no longer punishable.<sup>49</sup> Some of the activists' demands have therefore been fulfilled: "Recognition of prostitution as a service" (no. 6), "Inclusion of prostitutes in health insurance" (no. 7), "Exemption from taxes as long as prostitutes' civil rights are restricted" (no. 22) and of course the abolition of statutory immorality of prostitution. Also the medical examinations were abolished, and demand no. 14, "Abolition of the law requiring health checks for prostitutes" was fulfilled.

Nevertheless, for the *Hurenbewegung*, the law was a compromise and a halfway solution. Prostitution still was regulated by criminal law, rather than by labour law and prohibited areas (*Sperrbezirke*) were still possible. Preferring to work independently, formal work contracts have not been of interest to the majority of prostitutes. Equality between prostitutes and other workers has not been reached.<sup>50</sup> The *Hurenbewegung* took issue with the fact that the law did not pertain to migrants: it was only valid for women with a secure residential status.<sup>51</sup>

To sum up: The activists criticised the law for refusing to address the realities of prostitutes' lives.<sup>52</sup> The activist Friederike Strack of *Hydra* said it would have been more effective to fully accept prostitution, rather than to regulate it in that way.<sup>53</sup> Still, the

48 Susanne Dodillet: Prostitutionspolitik in Deutschland und in Schweden, p. 84.

49 Dodillet: Deutschland—Schweden, p. 29. An important precondition for the introduction of the law was a Berlin court ruling of the year 2000 following which prostitution can no longer be basically defined as 'immoral'.

50 Hurenbewegung enttäuscht: Prostituierten-Gesetz „eine windige Sache“, in: n-tv.de, 11 May 2001, at: <http://www.n-tv.de/politik/Prostituierten-Gesetz-eine-windige-Sache-article128486.html> (accessed on 13 December 2017); Peter Lücke: Prostituierte wandeln auf schmalen Grat: Trotz neuen Gesetzes: Hurenkongress unzufrieden mit der rechtlichen Situation des Gewerbes, in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)*, 5 July 2002 (unpaginated). Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: nat. Hurenkongresse 96–99–2002, DO-00222.

51 Veronica Munk: Sexarbeit als Konsequenz der Migration, in: Elisabeth von Dücker (ed.): *Sexarbeit*, pp. 116f., p. 117; as.: Ein Beruf wie jeder andere? Podiumsdiskussion über Prostitution/Neues Gesetz „ein Konstrukt mit Schwächen“, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, 24 November 2001, p. 79.

52 Protocol of 31<sup>st</sup> Hurenkongress in Dortmund. Archive collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: nat. Hurenkongresse 96–99–2002, DO-00222.

53 Strack quoted from: Julia Schaaf: Anschaffen und absichern: Am 1. Januar tritt ein neues Gesetz in Kraft, das Prostituierten mehr Rechte verschaffen soll. Was es ihnen bringt, bleibt

change in legislation was a partial success. And, disputes regarding its contents aside, it shows how effective the movement was in publicising sex workers' plight and achieving political change. According to the activist Cora Molloy of *HWG*, the years of cooperation between movement and Green Party were central to this change in legislation.<sup>54</sup> It took the *Hurenbewegung* years to identify which problems were most urgent and how change could be demanded and effectively achieved. Working with politicians and lawyers was helpful in acquiring the skills needed for this advocacy work and in the course of this work, many activities were carried out simultaneously, as Strack points out: "Decades of lobbying, escorted by provocative actions and serious bills".<sup>55</sup>

The movement developed in parallel to fundamental social changes in Germany.<sup>56</sup> Possibly the most important aspect to mention is that since 1997, rape in marriage was seen as a crime, where before no distinction was made regarding the conditions of intercourse between spouses and intercourse with her husband—regardless of whether consensual or not—was generally considered a 'wife's marital obligation'. Unquestionably, people thought and spoke differently and more respectfully about sexuality, women's bodies and prostitutes. That may have been more or less a result of general social change rather than being caused by the movement alone, but it was a change to which the movement contributed.

## Development and Institutionalisation of the *Hurenbewegung*

By 1997, groups associated with the *Hurenbewegung* were present in 15 German cities, as we can see from a leaflet produced by the *Hurenbewegung*, in which all groups participating are listed.<sup>57</sup> Some still exist today, such as *Hydra*, *Madonna* in Bochum, *Nitribitt* in Bremen and *Kassandra* in Nuremberg; others no longer exist, including *HWG*

umstritten, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung (FAZ), 21 October 2001, p. 53.

54 Cora Molloy: Beruf: Hure, in: Christine Drößler (ed.): Women at work: Sexarbeit, Binnenmarkt und Emanzipation: Dokumentation zum 1. Europäischen Prostituiertenkongress, Marburg 1992, p. 49.

55 "Jahrzehntelange Lobbyarbeit, begleitet von provokanten Aktionen und seriösen Gesetzesentwürfen", see: Strack: Ein Vierteljahrhundert Hydra, p. 212. Translated by the author.

56 Martina Löw/Renate Ruhne: "Eine umfangreiche Konzeption, die Dirnen von den Straßen zu holen": Zur Verhäuslichung der Prostitution, in: Sabine Grenz/Martin Lücke (eds.): Verhandlungen im Zwielficht: Momente der Prostitution in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Bielefeld 2006, pp. 177–209, p. 194.

57 Hurenkongress ABC: Eine Einführung für Kongress-Neulinge.

and *Rotstift*. In over 20 years of activism, from its beginnings in the early 1980s up to the law reform of 2002, the organisational structure and the modes of activism in the movement have changed.

The *Hurenbewegung* grew increasingly professional and paid jobs in the projects were important for its continuity, but led to institutionalisation at the same time. At the 18<sup>th</sup> Whores' Congress in 1995, the main topics of discussion were decriminalisation and legal recognition, as well as support for consulting services and self-help groups.<sup>58</sup> While remaining focused on the prospectus they had designed in 1985, consulting service now became important. Some of the former self-help projects for and by prostitutes had become consulting centres for prostitutes in the meantime. Prostitute consultation included giving advice for entering prostitution, sexual health, and moving on from sex work.<sup>59</sup>

One of the problems which these services faced and which were discussed by the *Hurenbewegung* was that prostitutes who wanted to move on primarily needed practical help—political questions were of little interest to them.<sup>60</sup> According to *Nachtexpress*, the reason for the extensive support which sex workers needed to move on was the fact that the job had not been socially recognized as work and former prostitutes had major difficulties finding other jobs. A legal recognition of prostitution as a profession was the key to this problem, the journal had already concluded by 1988.<sup>61</sup> They were hoping that after legal recognition, social acceptance would follow. Especially when HIV became a significant topic in the early 1980s, the *Hurenbewegung* had to address it. For women who wanted to quit the job and move on, finding a new employer who wanted to hire a former prostitute, who was suspected of being a health risk, was difficult.<sup>62</sup> This was the driving force behind demand no. 20: “No discrimination against former prostitutes, in professional or private life.”<sup>63</sup> Another reason for developing consultation infrastructure was described in the *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen*. Significant and worsening deterioration of the labour market led to prostitutes accumulating greater debts and exacerbated the risk of mental illness because of fear of an insecure future.<sup>64</sup>

58 Press statement to 18<sup>th</sup> Hurenkongress, Nuremberg, 28/05/1995. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: Kongress Bochum 92–96, DO-00219.

59 Cora Molloy: Die Deutsche Hurenbewegung, in: Christine Drößler/Jasmin Kratz (eds.): Prostitution: Ein Handbuch, Marburg 1994, pp. 13–23, pp. 19f.

60 Ich bin ausgestiegen: Elke, 30 Jahre, Aki und Ela, 37 Jahre, in: *Nachtexpress* 9 (1989), p. 21.

61 Inga Schneider: Aussteigen aus der Prostitution: Illusion oder Neuanfang?, in: *Nachtexpress* 8 (1988), p. 44.

62 Helga Bilitewski/Stephanie Klee: Aids: Was haben Prostituierte damit zu tun?, in: *Nachtexpress* 8 (1988), pp. 41–43, p. 41.

63 Maggie Roper: Die Prostituiertenbewegung, p. 30. Translated by the author.

64 Bochum entblößt die neuen 94er Modelle, in: *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen* 12 (1994), in: HWG-Reader, p. 216; protocol of 16<sup>th</sup> Hurenkongress in Bochum. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: Kongress Bochum 94, DO-00220.

A third reason for the growth of consulting was discussed in 1993 at the 15<sup>th</sup> Whores' Congress: financial support had a major impact on the groups. They received support for social work, but not for political work: in particular, the groups could receive federal money to assist people moving on from sex work, like the mentioned project by *Hydra*.<sup>65</sup> Moving on became an important issue in the projects, which is why social work received greater emphasis and political work was more or less done in the background, after work, when there was time. A difficulty caused by this constellation was that only people with the requisite education in social work could get paid. Sex workers, knowing the business and how to deal with work problems, could not get paid jobs in the consulting centres if they did not have an education in this area, as well.

For all these reasons, at the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress, the interests defended by the *Hurenbewegung* were openly questioned—were they those of sex workers demanding legal change for all prostitutes, or those of sex workers asking for personal support?<sup>66</sup> In Frankfurt there were two projects that cooperated and divided the issues among themselves. One focussed on social work and the other on political work: Since 1988, there was *Tamara*, a consulting centre for prostitutes engaged in social work, while *HWG* in the same city mainly focussed on political work. The two groups worked together very well: a former *HWG* activist worked for *Tamara*. The city of Frankfurt supported both groups, but at the end of the 1990s, because of budget cuts, the support for *HWG* was reduced and the group had to disband. No one from *HWG* was capable of working unpaid again, as they did at the beginning of the project in the mid-1980s.<sup>67</sup> Only *Tamara* remained operational.

Whether movements that transform into organisations that receive federal money can remain independent is a central question for movements that institutionalise.<sup>68</sup> The *Hurenbewegung* was caught in this dilemma: they received safety for social workers in the projects but lost autonomy.<sup>69</sup> Institutionalisation was seen by the movement as winning and losing at the same time. The group *Madonna* from Bochum deplored that before

65 Protocol of 22<sup>nd</sup> Hurenkongress in Bremen. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: nat. Hurenkongresse 96–99–2002, DO-00222; Maya Czajka: Huren in Bewegung, in: Elisabeth von Dücker (eds.): *Sexarbeit*, pp. 206f., p. 206.

66 Protocol of 15<sup>th</sup> Hurenkongress in Frankfurt. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: Kongress Bochum 92–96, DO-00219.

67 Cora Molloy: *Die Deutsche Hurenbewegung*, p. 15.

68 Disability Rights Movements raised the same question: Anne Waldschmidt et al.: “Nothing About Us Without Us”: Disability Rights Activism in European Countries—A Comparative Analysis, in: *Moving the Social: Journal of Social History and the History of Social Movements* 53 (2015), pp. 103–137, p. 116. Also available online at [http://dx.doi.org/10.13154/mts.53.2015.103–138](http://dx.doi.org/10.13154/mts.53.2015.103-138) (accessed 17 November, 2017).

69 Protocol of 16<sup>th</sup> Hurenkongress in Bochum. Archive collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: Kongress Bochum 94, DO-00220.



receiving federal money they could not be 'blackmailed', but now they had "muzzles and restrictions"<sup>70</sup>; the more money they received, the less provocative they could be. Financial security did not mean freedom to work as they wanted.

In 1999, *Madonna* suggested a discussion at the following congress: "Goodbye to the myth of 'self-help-group'—who or what are we? From initiative to institution".<sup>71</sup> The group was insecure about what the network had become: whether it was indeed still a movement or had disintegrated into a group of individual people working together to support prostitutes in need. At the beginning of the 1980s, sex workers and social workers formed the movement, concentrating on prostitutes' occupational problems. By increasingly offering advice regarding issues that were not directly connected to prostitution (e.g. dept, sickness, and residence regulation) the occupational issues that originally were at the centre of the movement were neglected and moved into the background. In the protocol of the first congress to follow the 2002 amendment of law, activists underlined that political work had to be done by the consulting centres, mostly staffed by social workers, and by sex workers as well.<sup>72</sup> Only if both groups would continue to cooperate, the *Hurenbewegung's* political work could go on.

The *Hurenbewegung* did not disperse, but did not continue with the described activities of publishing journals, examining potential clients in public or occupying brothels, either. Throughout its over 20 years of activity and advocacy work, the sex workers' legal situation has always been a topic within the movement: they worked hard, to be part of the wider societal and political discourse. Despite all these efforts, as Friederike Strack speculated recently, there may still be a long way to go until prostitutes will receive the same respect as other people.<sup>73</sup> The first demand voiced by the movement, "Equality for prostitutes", meaning the abolition of the social stigma associated with prostitution, as well as demands for legal equality with other workers, and for respect and freedom from discrimination, had not been met.

70 "Maulkörbe und Einschränkungen", see: protocol of 22<sup>nd</sup> Hurenkongress in Bremen, Archive collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: nat. Hurenkongresse 96–99–2002, DO-00222. Translated by the author.

71 "Abschied vom Mythos 'Selbsthilfegruppe'—wer oder was sind wir eigentlich? Von der Initiative zur Institution.", see: letter from Madonna to Hydra, Bochum, 14/04/1999. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: nat. Hurenkongresse 96–99–2002, DO-00222. Translated by the author.

72 Protocol of 31<sup>st</sup> Hurenkongress in Dortmund. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: nat. Hurenkongresse 96–99–2002, DO-00222.

73 Personal interview with Friederike Strack, Berlin, 18 November 2016.



## Fighting for Women's Rights

Two aspects were important to the movement: First, the legal recognition of prostitution as work, which could be achieved by an amendment of legislation. Second, the central intention of the movement was a profound change within society, not only for prostitutes, but for women in general. “The oppression of women in society puts them into prostitution—in whichever form”<sup>74</sup>, wrote *Hydra* in 1988. For the prostitutes' movement sexism was omnipresent, something that affected all woman, not only prostitutes. That is why the activists continually stressed the significance of opposing sexism and why they concentrated on the fact that prostitutes were mostly women, meaning that fighting for prostitutes' rights in the specific also contributed to the fight for women's rights in general, and that conversely no real improvement for prostitutes could be achieved, if society's perception and treatment of women in general was not improved, as well.<sup>75</sup> That is the motivation behind demand no. 4: “The right to sexual self-determination”. As long as prostitution is part of the patriarchal and capitalistic system, and as long as women are disadvantaged in the labour market, not only will they decide to work as prostitutes, sometimes they are forced to do so by a lack of alternative work, argued *Nachtextpress*.<sup>76</sup> By pointing out the ‘patriarchal system’ as a key issue, the movement demonstrated a substantive connection to the feminist movements of the 1970s and 1980s which used arguments surrounding patriarchy to underline that women still were not of equal rank to men and society was still organised around the male.<sup>77</sup> Both the feminists' and the prostitutes' movements were fighting for equality of men and women, against unequal power dynamics, and against any gender-discrimination.<sup>78</sup>

74 “Die Unterdrückung von Frauen innerhalb unserer Gesellschaft treibt diese zwangsläufig zur Prostitution—in welcher Form auch immer”, see: Prostituiertenprojekt Hydra (ed.): *Beruf: Hure*, 1988, p. 22. Translated by the author.

75 Maya Czajka: *Recht auf Liebe! Wir wollen selber bestimmen, wie und wen wir lieben!*, in: Christine Drößler (ed.): *Women at work*, pp. 141f.

76 *Wie alles anfang: Das Umstiegsprogramm*, in: *Nachtextpress* 9 (1989), p. 46.

77 Karin Hausen: *Patriarchat: Vom Nutzen und Nachteil eines Konzeptes für Frauenpolitik und Frauengeschichte*, in: Karin Hausen (ed.): *Geschlechtergeschichte als Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, Göttingen 2012, pp. 359–370, p. 359.

78 “*Bewegte Frauen*” und Sexarbeit, in: Christine Drößler (ed.): *Women at Work*, pp. 84–106, p. 84; *Heilige und Huren*, in: *Nachtextpress* 7 (1986/1987), pp. 5f.; Prostituiertenprojekt Hydra (ed.): *Beruf: Hure*, p. 12; Mareen Heying: *Hurenbewegungen und ihr Verhältnis zu Frauenbewegungen: Eine Annäherung an deutsche und italienische Prostituiertengruppen in den 1980er und 1990er Jahren*, in: *Ariadne: Forum für Frauen- und Geschlechtergeschichte* 70 (2016), pp. 52–59.

Combining social and patriarchal arguments, a former prostitute in the *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen* lamented the impact of laws designed and ratified by men, including the one stipulating the ‘immorality’ of prostitution. Prostitutes suffered because of their legal situation, and because they were being marginalized and discriminated against in society, she argued.<sup>79</sup> An author in *Nachtexpress* asserted that it was not the sexual service itself which hurt a woman’s pride, but the circumstances under which prostitution was legally performed. Consequently, it was prostitution as part of a patriarchal social structure that was to be destroyed, not prostitution as a profession. That could only be achieved by changing power relations in society. However, as long as prostitution existed and as long as women chose this job out of the limited alternatives they had the rights and the protection of sex workers were more important than ideological and moral concerns, concluded the *Hurenbewegung* in *Nachtexpress*.<sup>80</sup> First, legislation needed to be amended to give more rights to prostitutes and only then the social structure could be reformed, argued the *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen*.<sup>81</sup> That argument can be read as one of the reasons for the predominant focus on legal amendments in the movement.

The 8<sup>th</sup> of March, International Women’s Day, was an important date for politically active prostitutes in Germany. In 1994, a feminist strike-committee proclaimed a nationwide ‘Women’s Strike Day’ (*Frauenstreiktag*), and invited prostitutes’ groups to participate.<sup>82</sup> Women from *Hydra* transformed the ‘Women’s Strike Day’ into a ‘Whores’ Strike Day’ (*Hurenstreiktag*). They went to the Berlin triumphal column (*Siegestäule*) and attached a banner with the message: “Whores’ Strike for Whores’ Rights”.<sup>83</sup> Other activists blocked the street and gave leaflets and condoms to drivers of passing cars. *Hydra* felt a connection with the German feminist movements but at the same time, they put a focus on their own demands and goals by specifically highlighting the issue of prostitutes’ rights.

The politically active prostitutes in the various projects mentioned defined themselves as feminists.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, and due to the abovementioned implications of women’s position in society for the regard and treatment of prostitutes, the prostitutes’ movement in Germany can be seen as part of the feminist movements.

79 Ich setze auf die Frauen, in: *Zeitschrift für leichte und schwere Mädchen* 8 (1990), HWG-Reader, pp. 114f.

80 Ehre ... wem Ehre gebührt, in: *Nachtexpress* 7 (1986/1987), p. 7.

81 Ich setze auf die Frauen, pp. 114f.

82 Letter from ‘Unabhängiger Frauenverband’ (UFV, Independent Women’s Society) to Nitribitt, Berlin, 07/06/1993. Archive Collection: Madonna-Archiv Bochum, shelf mark: Schwesternorganisationen-Rundbriefe, DO-00240; Barbara Holland-Cunz: *Die alte neue Frauenfrage*, Frankfurt am Main 2003, pp. 152–157.

83 “Huren streiken für Hurenrechte”, see: *Die Besteigung von Else ...*, in: *Nachtexpress* 12 (1995), p. 4. Translated by the author.

84 Mareen Heying: *Hurenbewegungen und ihr Verhältnis zu Frauenbewegungen*, pp. 54f.

## Analytic Conclusion

In 1980, *Hydra*, the first prostitutes' project in Berlin, took up work. Shortly afterwards, others were founded, such as *HWG* in Frankfurt and *Rotstift* in Stuttgart. Together they formed a Whores' Movement, *Hurenbewegung*. From the beginning the diverse groups from different cities wanted to fight together, demonstrating unity and solidarity combined in a collective identity as sex workers with similar problems and therefore with the same political demands, aiming to reach common goals. By working and fighting together they tried to strengthen this collective identity. At the centre of their 22 demands, written during their first Whores' Congress in 1985, was the legal and social recognition of prostitution as work. From this perspective they argued for the general social equality of women to men, and for a change of power relations in society. With public actions like medical examinations of potential clients, occupation of a brothel, hanging banners from the Berlin triumphal column and publishing journals, the movement attracted the attention of the public, of readers and of the media. That was an important step towards opening public discussions, and prostitutes' rights became an issue in Germany.

Political scientist Donatella della Porta defines a social movement as "an organised and sustained effort of a collective of interrelated individuals, groups and organisations to promote or to resist social change with the use of public protest activities."<sup>85</sup> This effort of solidarity by a collective identity as sex workers, suffering the same social and legal restrictions, is evident in analysis of the *Hurenbewegung*, which brought together diverse groups of prostitutes, former prostitutes and supporters. Prostitutes and former prostitutes experienced the same daily life and thereby similar problems which led to the feeling of collective identity. The supporters did not experience these aspects, but as women fighting for women's rights they felt the same discrimination against women which female prostitutes felt. Therefore, a collective identity of the movements' activists can be identified.

In 2002, a new law on prostitution came into force. It abolished the legal status of immorality that had previously been assigned to prostitution and consequently, prostitution was now legally seen as an occupation. Also, the movement succeeded at having mandatory medical examinations for prostitutes abolished. These changes in legislation demonstrate the effectiveness of the movement. Of course, these achievements may have been aided by social changes in general and may not have been based on the work of the movement alone, but these nonetheless were changes to which the movement greatly contributed. The activists cooperated with, and solicited the support of, political parties and wrote and rewrote legal drafts. The *Hurenbewegung* fought for these achievements ceaselessly over the course of 20 years. Individuals and groups met twice

85 Donatella Della Porta: Social movements, political violence, and the state: A comparative analysis of Italy and Germany, Cambridge/New York 1995, p. 3.

a year for congresses to discuss their goals. Historian Marica Tolomelli underlines the network aspect of a movement, which is based on continuity and the will to change the present system, with regards to the law and/or society.<sup>86</sup> This we see in the *Hurenbewegung*: groups with identical interests cooperated as a network and demanded explicit change of legislation, as well as a change to social norms and perceptions, especially regarding the double standards applied to women in general and prostitutes in particular.

The German prostitutes' movement *Hurenbewegung* grew institutionalised over time and therefore lost some of its former political activity. Institutional social work forced the political aspect of the movement into the background. The groups could receive federal money to assist people with moving on from sex work, and for campaigns against HIV. Political work became secondary to these goals. Institutionalisation meant that while the movement gained a position among institutions entitled to public monetary support, it also grew less vocal regarding the most controversial issues, as Dieter Rucht and Jochen Roose explain.<sup>87</sup> The *Hurenbewegung* was caught in the dilemma of receiving safety for social workers in the projects but losing autonomy at the same time.

To analyse the effects of a movement is a crucial aspect: it is not formed as a goal in itself, but is meant to bring about change.<sup>88</sup> Still it remains an open question what effect the movement had on moral perspectives in society and fundamental social changes regarding sexuality and prostitution, especially when we consider Friederike Strack's concern that it might still be a long battle to fight, until prostitutes would not feel excluded from society anymore. Nonetheless, the *Hurenbewegung* has certainly contributed to political and societal changes in Germany.

## Brief Outlook

Since 2013, a professional organisation (*Berufsverband erotische und sexuelle Dienstleistungen*) for sex workers exists in Germany, working hard, but less provocatively than the *Hurenbewegung*. Since 2017, the campaign 'Sexarbeit ist Arbeit—Respekt!' ('Sex work is work—respect!'), a network of prostitutes and supporters, exists. A new law came into force on 1 July 2017, which makes working as a prostitute more complicated. Health education is now obligatory as well as an official registration as a prostitute which needs

86 Marica Tolomelli: „Repressiv getrennt“ oder „organisch verbündet“: Studenten und Arbeiter 1968 in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in Italien, Wiesbaden 2001, p. 10.

87 Dieter Rucht/Jochen Roose: Zur Institutionalisierung von Bewegungen: Umweltverbände und Umweltprotest in der Bundesrepublik, in: Annette Zimmer/Bernhard Weßels (eds.): *Verbände und Demokratie in Deutschland*, Opladen 2001, pp. 261–290, p. 262.

88 Roland Roth/Dieter Rucht: Einleitung, in: Roland Roth/Dieter Rucht (eds.): *Die sozialen Bewegungen in Deutschland seit 1945: Ein Handbuch*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2008, pp. 10–36, p. 28.

to be renewed every other year. While working, prostitutes have to carry on their person a document stating their registration. Working anonymously is much more difficult under this law, but still a lot of women try to hide the fact that they work in prostitution, because they are afraid of their family's and friends' reaction. They refuse to inform other people about the sexual service they are offering, because of the stigma which is still associated with sex work. This new form of stigmatisation has been implemented, even though sex workers and supporters discussed the bills with politicians at lengths. Although politicians listened to the target-group of the law, a law was passed that no politically active sex worker wanted. It did not consider prostitutes' criticism, and neither did it consider the objections voiced by consulting centres, lawyers and other experts. On 30 June 2017, one day before the law was enacted, in six German cities the campaign 'Sexarbeit ist Arbeit—Respekt!' sprang into action with banners designed to protest the imminent law. Today, prostitutes' protest in Germany does not have the same impact and influence as it had in the late 1990s, when a *Hurenbewegung* was strong.

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