

*Berlin, stop, wake up,  
You're dancing with death.*

*Paul Zech*

**W**

Weimar Berlin was a wealth of hedonistic pleasures. For artists, eager tourists and bored bourgeois, the delights of the Berlin underworld offered a chance for adventure, inspiration and escape.

The "grand tour" of outsider Berlin involved slumming the workers' districts and social clubs run by criminal gangs. Voyeuristic thrill-seekers navigated a sleazy labyrinth of narcotics, pornography, and prostitutes appealing to every taste. Women and men sold themselves to stave off poverty. Husbands advertised their wives as "a real nice piece." Pornography, sometimes disguised as "sex education," flourished in literature and on film.

All the while, social critics derided the collapse of traditional values, and warned of rapidly increasing rates of abortion, disease, and incest. Soon, their cries would be joined by other angry voices. The party was destined for a crashing halt.

