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Creators	Bartlett, Djurdja

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# Socialist Dandies International: East Europe, 1946–59

**Djurджа Bartlett**

Djurджа Bartlett is Senior Research Fellow at the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. She is author of *FashionEast: The Spectre That Haunted Socialism* (MIT Press) and editor of a volume on East Europe, Russia, and the Caucasus in the *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion* (2010).  
d.b.bartlett@fashion.arts.ac.uk

## **Abstract**

This article maps the looks and lifestyle choices of small groups of young, like-minded people who emerged in the postwar Soviet Union and East Europe in the background of huge political, social, and cultural changes. With their androgynous bodies wrapped in drape jackets and narrow trousers, and their love of jazz and swing, these young men stood in a sharp contrast to the official ideology that promoted socialism as a new, pure, and highly rationalized project, its ideal robust and strong man, and its mass culture that insisted on educational and restrained forms of entertainment. Through the categories of dress,

body, and big city, the article investigates the clashes, and the eventual truce, between the socialist streamlined and rationalized master narrative and the young dandies' fragmented and disordered narrative. The article argues that the socialist dandies were not politically minded, and that their challenge to the officially proclaimed values was informed by their adolescent recklessness and a general postwar desolation. They were declared state enemies because the socialist regimes did not allow for alternative types of modernity. Consequently, the authorities condemned the young dandies' looks and interests as cosmopolitan, because they originated in the West, and as artificial, since they belonged to the culture that had preceded a new socialist world.

**KEYWORDS:** dandy, socialism, modernity, cosmopolitan, artificial, Europeanized Zoot Suit

Following the end of the Second World War, a new man appeared in East Europe. He was young and androgynous, he listened to jazz and danced to swing, and was dressed in a drape jacket, short, narrow trousers, thick-soled shoes, and colorful socks.<sup>1</sup> In the Soviet Union he was called *Stiliaga*,<sup>2</sup> in Czechoslovakia he was known as *Pásek*,<sup>3</sup> in Hungary *Jampec*,<sup>4</sup> while in Poland he was called *Bikiniarz*.<sup>5</sup> In the period 1946–59, these dandified men emerged in the background of huge political, social, and cultural changes in the postwar Soviet Union and East Europe. Their distinctive looks and specific cultural interests were an aberration within the master narrative of state socialism, which instituted and justified a meaning for socialism as a completely new, absolutely pure, and highly rationalized project, to be collectively built by new strong men and women, and promoted through its institutional mass culture. This official, hugely homogenized culture insisted on educational and restrained forms of entertainment, such as mass gymnastics, state-orchestrated parades, and dancing and singing exclusively to new socialist dances and new socialist music. The young socialist dandies challenged this world of purity, its streamlined modernity, its concept of a new robust man, its collective nature, and its ways of enjoying oneself. Since they did not allow for alternative types of modernity, the socialist regimes condemned the young dandies' interests as cosmopolitan. In that context, the cosmopolitan was denounced both as ideologically inappropriate and as artificial, because, first, it originated in the West and, second, because it belonged to the culture that had preceded socialism. Furthermore, a socialist dandy stood as an artificial Adam to the ideologically constructed new Adam. His model of an androgynous, adolescent masculinity challenged the officially approved male ideal of a "masculinized" masculinity.

Within a newly emerging social structure, the socialist dandies came from diverse backgrounds, ranging from the prewar and new socialist elites to middle and the working classes. Few in number, they formed small groups of like-minded young people, which could include girls as marginal figures. Through three sections—Emergence, Repression, and Integration—this article examines the dress and lifestyle choices of these young dandified men, and the social dynamics between them and their respective societies. Section one explores their sudden appearance and the changing intensity of topographical and temporal opposition towards them in the context of postwar poverty and the porous borders between East and West. Section two examines the intense hostility towards their choice of dress, dance, and music, which is most evident in periods when ideological unity is threatened, exposing the anxieties, fears, and vulnerabilities of the respective countries through their choice of enemies. The hostile reception of this form of youth culture turns into a gradual acceptance from the mid-1950s on. The third section shows that the processes of integration result in the marginalization of the original dandified men and their elitist sartorial and cultural tastes, as standardization and homogenization are the price for more freedoms in dress and cultural expressions.

### Emergence

Historically, the phenomenon of dandyism has been observed in periods of social and political transitions.<sup>6</sup> The Second World War and its aftermath heralded a huge period of political, ideological, and social change. Although the concept of the Iron Curtain had been announced by Winston Churchill in 1946, the diametrically opposite politics to the two European blocs in the making had still to be established. Moreover, while the new ideological borders were being built up, the old ones had, temporarily, been brought down during wartime.

An early description of a socialist postwar dandy appears in the Soviet satirical magazine *Crocodile* (*Krokodil*) in 1946.<sup>7</sup> He enters the Metro dressed in a chrysanthemum-colored pullover, lilac jacket, green trousers, has a purple hat on his head, and a pair of colored shoes on his feet. Exaggerated as it is this description embodies a sudden opening of the Soviet Union towards the West after the Second World War. Red Army soldiers returned from the war with clothes, records, and magazines, as well as many new experiences of life in the West.<sup>8</sup> Captured by the victors in defeated Germany were many German and American films, in a variety of genres from crime, gangster, westerns, and Tarzan adventures, which the regime decided to show in Soviet cinemas.<sup>9</sup> All these fragments of popular culture were big news for the Russian population, as the Soviet Union was completely isolated from the West throughout the 1930s.

Thus, the cartoon showing the 1946 foppish man in *Crocodile* presents a confusing image. His flamboyant dress communicates an image of western opulence and individuality, but he looks more like a middle-aged gentleman than a young man, expert in the foxtrot, who spends his nights in the dance hall.<sup>10</sup> By 1949, again in *Crocodile*,<sup>11</sup> this boldly dressed man has acquired a name, Stiliaga. In the cartoon accompanying that article, Stiliaga resembles his 1946 predecessor in his choice of bold colors and extravagant dress style. Yet, there is a significant difference in their looks, as Stiliaga is presented as a young man. Embracing a girlfriend, he sweeps the dance floor in his pale green jacket, brown trousers, pink-checked shirt, loudly patterned tie, striped socks, and two-tone shoes (Figure 1). From that time on, the name Stiliaga will continue to mark the young Soviet men interested in jazz music, modern dances, and flashy dress.



**Figure 1**

A cartoon accompanying the article "Stiliaga," *Crocodile*, Moscow, 1949.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s Soviet Union, only the elite possessed the finance, the connections, and a level of education to indulge in dressing up. Writer Vassily Aksyonov, a provincial student studying in Moscow in 1952, was amazed to attend a party at which original American jazz records were played, young people danced boogie-woogie, and wore “jackets with huge padded shoulders, tight black trousers, and thick soled shoes” (Aksyonov 1989: 13). A girl at the party told him that “she hated the Soviet Union and adored America.” Later he discovered she was the daughter of a high-ranking KGB officer (Aksyonov 1989: 12). Cartoons and satirical articles published in *Crocodile* also point towards the privileged social origin of those early dandies. A youth, staring carelessly from the page of *Crocodile* in his drape jacket and loud tie, while standing in front of a big car, from which a couple of empty bottles are rolling out, is declared “his Daddy’s victory”<sup>12</sup> (Figure 2). Their privileged social background had



**Figure 2**  
“Daddy’s ‘Victory,’” *Crocodile*,  
Moscow, 1954.

prompted and enabled the first Stiliagi to express their disillusionment with the rigid system, created by their parents, and its officially endorsed mass culture.

Disaffection soon spread to a more socially diverse group, a generation that had entered the war as adolescents and emerged from it as restless young men,<sup>13</sup> who “desired something more than kolkhoz feasts, wartime exploits, industrial melodramas, and the endless performance of reworked folk songs on radio and in clubs” (Stites 1992: 124). In their dress, their love of modern dancing, and their interest in the original jazz music, these young men differed from both their fathers’ generation and the feted war veterans, who often were just a couple of years older. However, even when they started to incorporate the middle class and working class, the Stiliagi still consisted of quite compact and elitist groups of like-minded young people. They provoked an extremely hostile official reception, quite disproportionate to their small numbers, when they spilled out from the private parties into the streets of the big cities.

In East Europe, new dandies emerged in the environment of shortages, the black market, and petty crime. Concurrently, their search for self-identity had been additionally burdened with a specific set of ideological and political obstacles, as East Europe transitioned from war to peace and from the prewar capitalist social order to the Soviet type of socialism. Articles and cartoons about the Czech *Pásek*, Hungarian *Jampec*, and Polish *Bikiniarz* appear in their respective domestic media immediately after the war. The journals report on his dress and his fascination with jazz, swing, and boogie-woogie. In fact, he had already been visible during the war. In his semiautobiographical novel *The Cowards*, written in 1948–9, the Czech writer and jazzman Josef Škvorecký describes the life of the Czech provincial golden youth during the German occupation, a group of whom forms a jazz band and plays American classics at concerts in their home town of Kostelec.<sup>14</sup> At the end of the war, the hero Danny Smiřický, who represents the author, reminisces about his 1943 band’s jam-sessions for their faithful *Pásek* public, who “danced their bastard version of swing in their thick rubber-soled shoes” (Škvorecký 2010: 407–8).<sup>15</sup> In the same novel, Danny himself is described as *Pásek*, wearing “a great pair of shoes with thick white rubber soles and trousers so tight that he could almost feel them stretching” (Škvorecký 2010: 161). Young dandies are also observed in other countries under the German occupation. In Warsaw, despite a German ban, they indulge their love of jazz in semi-clandestine clubs throughout the war.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the latest information on music, dances, and dress traveled through occupied Europe, mediated through films that somehow escaped German censors, and even through German propaganda magazines, such as *Signal*, while jazz, regardless of its official prohibition, was occasionally still broadcast on the radio.<sup>17</sup>

The war damaged the previous class system requiring the new socialist regimes to hastily impose a new one, officially privileging the working class over other stratas of society. Within that fluid social structure, Bikiniarz, Jampec, and Pásek cross class boundaries and include the children of new socialist elites, the descendants of disowned prewar elites, and the working-class boys.<sup>18</sup> United by their common interest in dress and music, they mingle in cafes, nightclubs, and flea markets at which Western goods are sold and resold. Promenading their looks in prominent city squares, such as Wenceslas Square in Prague or the Three Crosses Square in Warsaw, they chose to make themselves very visible. In Warsaw, they frequent the newly reopened cafes with live music and dancing.<sup>19</sup> Gathering in the working-class district of Józsefváros in Budapest, their loud, syncopated music attracts a lot of attention.<sup>20</sup> While the East European capitals are their main stomping ground, the dandies gradually appear in other cities, and even in small provincial towns and villages. Indeed, as reported in an article published in the Polish magazine *Banner of Youth* (*Sztandar Młodych*) in December 1951, a young dandy, one Bambrych Zygmunt, emerged in the countryside. In his well-cut jacket, a pair of short, narrow trousers, and colorful socks, he was “the first rural follower of the American stupidity in the village Olszewice, district Niemodin.”<sup>21</sup> An article in the Polish student journal *Simply* (*Po Prostu*) starts with a discussion of the Bikiniarze appearance in the well-off parts of Warsaw in the early 1950s, only to detect their subsequent emergence in the important industrial city Łódź and in the newly built socialist model city of Nowa Huta (Manturzewski 1958: 14).

### Repression

The articulation of difference through a dandified dress, modern dances, and a love of jazz could have been perceived as a generational issue, a mere youthful whim. However, careless pursuit of personal interests and a cultivated disregard for the official views on dress, body, and types of leisure politicized the position of Stiliaga, Bikiniarz, Jampec, and Pásek. The regimes had read their dress styles and their types of leisure as cosmopolitan, i.e. oppositional to the core values of the new systems they wanted to build up. First, the cosmopolitan was identified with the Western, and thus proclaimed ideologically unsuitable. Second, in the context of the invention of a pure new world, the cosmopolitan was identified with the artificial. Thus the artifacts, sounds, and dance steps in which young dandies were interested, did not only belong to an alien culture, but also to a culture that had already existed, so they were not fulfilling the socialist desperate need for everything to be new or, at least, to pretend to be new.



In fact, the Soviet Union actively engaged in reversing the relationship between the original and its copy once the 1920s genuine avant-garde attempts on constructing a new socialist world and new socialist objects were abandoned. From the 1930s on, the socialist culture started to promote the recoded versions of existing Western artifacts and cultural forms, embellishing them with some elements of socialist and national culture. Within the emerging Stalinist mass culture, such elaborate copies were presented as genuine socialist originals. This cultural production continued following the end of the war, and there were many attempts at socialist jazz, new socialist dances, new types of leisure, and appropriate dress styles. The problem with Stiliaga, Biki-niarz, Jampec, and Pásek was that they were not interested in socialist copies of Western originals but in the originals themselves: the American jazz records, dance movements as executed in Western films, and genuine foreign items offered by speculators.

In the Soviet Union, the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign started immediately after the war. The glimpse of the West, brought by the war alliances, was about to be banned, and Western culture and Western lifestyles were to be despised again. Heavy attacks on jazz and the dances related to it, such as swing and boogie-woogie, had already started in 1946, and the Soviet Union closed itself off again until the death of Stalin in 1953.<sup>22</sup> Although in the late 1940s and early 1950s the first socialist dandies were satirized in *Crocodile*, the very fact that they belonged to the elite protected them from serious denunciation. The hostility towards the Stiliagi became more vocal when, during a phase of the purification following Stalin's death, the hidden excesses of his elites started to be exposed, often through the public vices of their children. The journal of the Communist Youth Organization *Komsomol Truth* (*Komsomol'skaia Pravda*) fumes against the *Stiliagi* in 1956: "He lives off his parents, and 'burns money' in restaurants ... He 'adores' everything foreign and is ready to sell his right arm for a fashionable phonograph record."<sup>23</sup> Additionally, Khrushchev introduced the qualitatively new rapport with the West which presupposed both exchange and competition, and so exposed all the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of the Soviet society in comparison with its Western counterpart. The official opening towards the West was trumpeted at home and abroad, but, at the same time, the socialist values, patriotic feelings, and insistence on the collective nature of Soviet society had been intensely promoted and defended at home.

Flaunting their frivolous interests in the streets of the big Soviet cities, the *Stiliagi* suddenly became too visible to be ignored. For the vulnerable society under the change from Stalinist terror to Khrushchev's strictly controlled liberalism, the main worry was related to the eventual spread of the *Stiliagi* phenomenon to the mass of its loyal youth:

The most astonishing thing is that some students and young workers copy this worthless group of foppish debauchees and their bohemian way of life. There are few of these deluded people: one, for example, is Vladimir Fadeev, an eighteen year-old electrician who has been designated “The Floor Polisher” by the workers of Moscow restaurants because of his passion for shuffling round the floor to jazz music.<sup>24</sup>

The Stiliagi challenged the very foundations of the Soviet system with their individualistic looks in the society, which “always claimed the collective, and not the individual, as the primary unit of society” (Kharkhordin 1999: 8). In his archaeological and genealogical analysis of the concepts and practices of the Soviet collective, sociologist Oleg Kharkhordin claims that, starting in the 1910s with only the politically engaged groups, such as a Communist party cell, qualifying as *kollektiv* (collective), the whole society was gradually conceptualized and mediated through distinct types of collectives:

A Russian entered a collective as a small child, passed from one to another in the course of life, but was never (normally) outside a collective. The network of collectives constituted the entire terrain of social life, so ubiquitous that people stopped noticing them as a phenomenon ... Indeed, before the collective became this generic form, every existing human group in the Soviet Union had in fact to turn itself into a *kollektiv*, that is, had to construct or reconstruct itself according to a very specific set of organizational principles. (Kharkhordin 1999: 87–8)

Claiming that the Stiliagi comprise of just “a few, a small handful of people,” the journal *Soviet Culture* (*Sovetskaia kul'tura*) nevertheless stressed: “Yet, does this mean that we can overlook this ugly phenomenon, however petty and private it might be? Our public and our Kom-somol organizations have answered this question by starting an uncompromising struggle with these parasites who imitate worthless foreign ‘fashions.’”<sup>25</sup>

The concepts of collective and purity were even more important in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, when they turned into socialist states under Soviet control in 1948. The regimes envisioned their new societies as collective projects, which would be built up by new socially conscious citizens. In East Europe the hostilities towards the young dandies raged in the late 1940s and last up to the mid-1950s, in the context of this ideological battle for purity against both the domestic prewar and the contemporary Western cultural forms and rituals. The polluted cosmopolitan was to be exchanged with two newly approved categories: the socialist and the ethnic. Moreover, the regimes equated

the ethnic with the socialist, claiming that both were deeply national, profoundly human, and perpetually creative.<sup>26</sup> The media offensive against the dandies was published among the articles that praised the heroes of socialist labor, pictured male and female farmworkers cultivating the land, glorified the economic and cultural achievements of the Soviet Union, confronted US foreign policies, and dismissed a degenerate cosmopolitanism in the everyday and the arts.

“I believe”—wrote the author of the letter published in the Hungarian communist party journal *Free People* (*Szabad nép*) in September 1950—“that a samba fever and young people-mania of wearing American clothes are the manifestations of cosmopolitanism; they are the attack of the reactionary forces. Thus this is not only about new ‘dance steps’ or about ‘fashion issues’, it is an attack of cosmopolitanism.”<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the early 1950s, the Polish magazine *Banner of Youth* raged against the Bikiniarze in its regular column “Friends!,” penned by the socially conscious working-class youth. Thus, a mechanic Waldemar Maliszewski claims that the Bikiniarz is a stupid person who blindly trusts American propaganda and craves the American lifestyle, because he cannot distinguish truth from lie.<sup>28</sup>

The hostility towards the dandies’ sartorial and lifestyle choices in this early socialist period points towards the deeper insecurities and anxieties underlying the East European socialist project. The biggest problem was that the new East European socialist countries had been capitalist societies before the war, and that their very recent pre-socialist cultures and lifestyles were populated with, among other phenomena, jazz, dancing, cafes, racy cabaret programs, and Hollywood films.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, their prewar cosmopolitan cultures, while distrusted and disturbed by the Nazis, did not disappear under the German occupation.<sup>30</sup> In Leopold Tyrmand’s novel *The Man with the White Eyes*, which details the exciting and dangerous aspects of everyday life in postwar Warsaw, a journalist Edwin Kolanko reminisces about prewar films and film theatres: “... the flea-pits of the twenties and early thirties ... they were our university, where we learned all about Life and Ideals, how to behave, Ethics and even the Ten Commandments. Remember how we used to model ourselves on the heroes of those silent films—Douglas Fairbanks, Eddie Polo, Tom Mix ... ” (Tyrmand 1959: 16). In a memoir covering his adolescent years, Peter Demetz recalls going to the war-time Prague cinemas around the central Wenceslas Square, which showed the latest American, French, and Czech films, as well as promenading there in his carefully chosen jackets and ties, in order to impress the girls (Demetz 2008: 41–3). In its attempts to eradicate the prewar urban rituals, the Czech new fashion magazine *Woman and Fashion* (*Žena a móda*) objects to the Pásek gathering at the same location, Wenceslas Square, precisely because their prewar and war-time predecessors Potápka strolled there as well (Figure 3). The urban is considered cosmopolitan, and as such inappropriate for the socialist

**Figure 3**

A cartoon of the Czech Pásek, *Woman and Fashion*, Prague, 1954.



youth from which the cosmopolitan Pásek differ considerably: “These worthy heirs of the former Potápka should permanently disappear from the streets of Prague, from bars, dance halls and the tram stations, because they definitely do not belong to our healthy, creative and positive society of today.”<sup>31</sup>

Socialist type of “political anatomy,” accompanied by its specific “mechanics of power” over the individual had been challenged not by a rival yet comparable model of disciplining human bodies, but by the small, completely-out-of-the system groups who did not use any predictable, politics-related type of resistance, but opposed the system with frivolity and futility, with which this highly organized system, aiming at the most abstract, noblest ideals, could not deal with. In his analysis of the various historical models of style-mediated rebellion, ranging from eighteenth century France to Thatcherite Great Britain,

the French cultural analyst Patrice Bollon observes that their respective societies declared their sartorial styles variably “futile, incredible, idiotic, degenerate and decadent,” but nevertheless have perpetually felt threatened by them:

These style protests do not advertise only defiance in relation to a social control, a sneer at the authority and its rules, but possibly something much bigger: the affirmation of a total life, at least at the level of dreams and fantasies, relish in ornament because of ornament, interest in style because of style, in all of which the society detects its basic materialist values disintegrating. (Bollon 1990: 14)

Bollon emphasizes that, in the end, all the societies have understood that these isolated attempts at self-creation could eventually lead towards the attempts on the creation of a new world (Bollon 1990: 262). Concerning a highly guarded socialist system, in which changes were slow and controlled, either from the top or through a widespread practice of mutual surveillance,<sup>32</sup> this could not have been allowed.

So, why and how did the socialist dandies dare to be frivolous at all? The answer might lie both in the times they lived in, and in their youth. The atrocities that took place during the Second World War exposed an extremely violent face of modernity. In the aftermath of the war, an enforced political and social order made this new modernity additionally violent in East Europe, both at symbolical and everyday life level. Postwar roughness and desolation could only intensify a typical recklessness of their age, and prompt some adolescents to express their dissatisfaction through the means that were appropriate and relevant to their age group. Art critic Francesco Bonami maps adolescence as “a tension between desire, vision and destruction” (2003: 11). Furthermore, Bonami does not limit adolescence to a brief biological period of an individual’s growing up, but claims that, “however painful and tragic, the crisis of adolescence is part of the evolutionary process of history,” and emphasizes that “nobody escapes adolescence, not even the societies and nations,” adding that “there is no future without an adolescent” (2003: 11). In fact, regardless of the official narrative praising a bright future and the role of youth in building it, the state socialism had been already “old” in the Soviet Union when the Stiliagi appeared on the public stage, and was increasingly ageing in East European countries, which were made to accept the ossified Stalinist model, in which Bikiniarze, Jampec, and Pásek did not fit.

According to Michel Foucault’s interpretation, the Baudelairean dandy is “not the man who goes off to discover himself ... he is the man who tries to invent himself” (1984: 42). In comparison, it is possible to detect the elements of self-invention in the socialist dandy’s look, and these visually signal his incompatibility with the

official aesthetics of socialist realism. Embedded in an absolute temporal sphere and preferring grandness and pseudo-classicism as its stylistic expressions, socialist realism was archaic, even when it pretended to be modern.<sup>33</sup> Young dandy's aesthetics, in contrast, was fragmented and focused on a detail, embedded in an opposing—fleeting and ruptured—concept of modernity. As observed in the various analyses of the mid-nineteenth-century dandy, embracing this type of modernity required a certain level of existentialist heroism. Both Baudelaire and, subsequently, Foucault declare the first modernist dandy a hero. For Baudelaire, he is an exceptional being due to his taste and a calculated distance from the everyday (1964: 28). Foucault finds heroic the dandy's willingness to embark on the modernist "task of producing himself" (1984: 42). Discussing the same historical dandy model, Albert Camus claims that the Baudelairean dandy inaugurates "... an aesthetics of solitary creators, who are obstinate rivals of a God they condemn" (2000: 49). This task of inventing oneself weighed even more on the socialist dandies. Their craving for a type of modernity, in which their looks and interests would fit, turned them into a specific type of "solitary creators" who competed against an indeed mighty "god," the monolith and over-organized socialist system. The next three subsections—"Dress," "Body," and the "Big City"—map the intensity and duration of the official opposition towards Stiliagi, Bikiniarze, Jampec, and Pásek.

### Dress

The postwar socialist dandies were promiscuous in designing their dress. Consisting of drape jacket and a pair of drainpipe trousers, it was related to the American Zoot Suit, which was favored by the deprived blacks and Chicanos in the late 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>34</sup> But, the socialist dandies preferred a Europeanized Zoot Suit, in which a drape jacket stayed, but the original wide trousers gathered at the bottom became narrower and shorter. In Europe, the Zoot Suit was first recoded into this youthful style by the French Zazous during the Second World War.<sup>35</sup> As depicted in cartoons in the collaborationist French press, the Zazou still occasionally shows his debt to the original American Zoot Suit in 1942, by wearing a pair of trousers that balloon at the knees and gather to narrow cuffs, but a year later his trousers acquire a new, drainpipe shape.<sup>36</sup> Other elements of the Zazou's wardrobe—his checked-patterned jacket that reaches the knees, thick-soled shoes resembling the desert boots worn by Allied soldiers in Africa, colorful socks, an unopened umbrella, a loud patterned tie—position him at the side of his country's war enemies. Additionally, the Zazous listened to jazz and danced to swing, as if they still lived in prewar cosmopolitan Paris.

Dandies in the countries under German occupation, such as Poland and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, adopt the same dress code during the war.<sup>37</sup> The Polish collaborationist newspaper *New Courier of Warsaw* disapproves of the Warsaw “flashy” youth in “... long, loose jackets ... (and) tight trousers ... with hats on their pomaded hair, and hands in suede gloves holding an umbrella.”<sup>38</sup> The war-time Czech Potápka paraded in loose checked jacket, tight trousers, and shoes with thick soles, which were known as “Hungarian.”<sup>39</sup> A narrator in Škvorecký’s novella *Bass Saxophone*, which takes place during the war, endures a tough look from an old German gentleman, owner of a bass saxophone that the young man craves. The German’s eye glides over his “checked jacket, black shoe-string below his collar and the broad brim of his *Tatra* hat” (Škvorecký 1978: 111). While he is aware that his dress and his love of jazz could get him in trouble with the German occupiers, the narrator reminisces that he had been proud to be “Potápka, Gejblik and Pásek” (Škvorecký 1978: 111).<sup>40</sup>

The same drape jacket and drainpipe trousers appear on the backs of the English Teddy boys in working-class London neighborhoods in the immediate postwar period.<sup>41</sup> Made by small tailors in the back streets of East and South London, their dress mixed a proletarian translation of the upper class Neo-Edwardian male attire with American sartorial influences. The Teddy Boys, similar to the Zazous, made their trousers short and narrow, adhering to a Europeanized version of the Zoot Suit. The British media spotted the Teddy Boys only in the early 1950s,<sup>42</sup> but they had already been loitering on street corners in their proletarian dandy dress from the late 1940s. Christopher Breward depicts the Teddy Boys in the background “of dingy markets and dowdy local shops,” which serve as “retail outlets for the purchase of their wardrobes together with a ready-made ‘outdoor’ theatre for their eventual display” (Breward 2004: 135).

During the war, the Europeanized Zoot Suit swiftly crosses the borders between the West and the East. In the immediate postwar period, it also promptly crosses the newly built ideological borders between the two politically opposed blocs of countries. In his diary, writer and dandy himself, Leopold Tyrmand claims that, following the end of the war, the Bikiniarz look was informed by both the war-time French Zazou and the postwar American jitterbug cultures (Tyrmand 1995: 144). By 1951, the phenomenon is so widespread that the Bikiniarze feel confident enough to publicly defend their dress. “Whom could I offend with my short trousers and long hair,” wonders Leon Kwiatkowski from Wrocław on the pages of the Polish journal *Banner of Youth*.<sup>43</sup> An unskilled Hungarian worker observed drainpipe trousers, patterned socks, and gaudy neckties on the working-class youth dancing at the Tripoli, a cheap Budapest club playing live jazz music five nights a week.<sup>44</sup> In the media, the young Hungarian dandies are called the English Jampecok (Horváth 2005). In 1952, the

Czechoslovak fashion magazine *Woman and Fashion* depicts the Pásek in the brightly colored jackets with wide shoulders, “repulsively painted ties,” “Hungarian” thick-soled shoes, and narrow trousers.<sup>45</sup>

As presented in the *Crocodile* in 1949, the first Stiliaga wears a drape jacket, but his trousers are still wide (see Figure 1). The *Crocodile* cartoons depict the Stiliaga in a pair of narrow, short trousers from 1953 on, showing that exclusive access to the latest Western trends in dress and music was no longer limited to the privileged few. The growing popularity of this boyish suit is the reason why hostility towards the Stiliagi and their dress will grow from the mid-1950s on:

Who is not familiar with these utterly repulsive young men, with their ultra-modish jackets, their ultra-tight and ultra-short trousers and their extravagant neck-ties in all colours of the rainbow, and with an air of self-satisfied stupidity on their faces?<sup>46</sup>

In contrast to the Soviet Union, the East European dandies could draw both on their prewar and war-time cultures and rituals to support their metropolitan status in that early postwar period. In fact, they will be able to access more information on Western dress, dance, and music throughout the 1950s, as the East European borders will remain porous towards the West in comparison to the Soviet Union, but that information will no longer be easily obtained. Under the circumstances, being a socialist dandy, both in East Europe and the Soviet Union, depends on the efforts one is prepared to invest towards gathering relevant information on dress, as well as on acquiring genuine Western clothes or embarking on producing do-it-yourself (DIY) versions. The relationship between the desire for dandy clothes and the conceptual order had a different dynamic in East Europe in which small dress salons were allowed. Thus the Czechoslovak *Woman and Fashion* could rage: “We did not succeed in discovering who were the mysterious tailors willing to make all these impossible collars, dragoon cuts and skin-tight trousers with wide-turn ups.”<sup>47</sup> In the more isolated Soviet Union sartorial expressions of Western modernity had a much more secretive life, as any private business initiative was banned. The Soviet dandies, apart from acquiring their clothes on the black market or hoping to find them in the commission shops,<sup>48</sup> resigned themselves to DIY techniques. Vasily Aksyonov reminisced how, in his home town in the Soviet province of Kazan, he and his West-influenced group of friends, depended on their girlfriends to knit them jumpers with a deer motif and embroider their ties with cowboys and cactuses (Aksyonov 1989: 13). The journal *Komsomol Truth* declares this practice tasteless and badly executed, and widespread. A cowboy shirt on the Stiliaga’s back in the far-away city of Ulyanovsk is sewn from “some sort of coarse fabric used for upholstering sofas.”<sup>49</sup>



The success in achieving such challenging goals facilitates the access into the small exclusive groups of like-minded young people. In his memoir, the Russian jazzman Aleksei Kozlov, who himself came from a middle-class background, states that he socialized with the Stiliagi because some of their privileged members owned original American jazz records. But, he was acknowledged only after acquiring a long jacket, narrow trousers with wide cuffs, and thick-soled shoes (1998: 79). In designing their dress, both East European and Soviet dandies increasingly rely on Western films that reach their cinema screens. A skilled factory worker Arkadi Bairon emphasizes that his Stiliaga looks—a long, green jacket with patch pockets and padded shoulders, and narrow trousers—were inspired by foreign films.<sup>50</sup> In that sense, the socialist dandy appearance is informed by the—however limited—experiences of Western modernity and its visual paradigms. Attention to detail and an emphasis on a fragment are important elements of their dress.

But all the details of the socialist dandies' wardrobe acquire strictly ideological meanings in their respective media. A tie embellished with a motif of palms and bikini-clad girls does not qualify its owner as a person with poor taste but rather as an admirer of an alien culture. A checked pattern on the jacket is declared cosmopolitan, and thus alien within the aesthetics that praises the ethnic.<sup>51</sup> Colorful striped socks are doubly distrusted, because of their modernist geometric motif and their ideologically suspicious brightness. On the first Soviet Stiliaga, the socks look “stitched together from an American flag.”<sup>52</sup> Additionally, the cartoon representations rely on exaggerated sartorial quotations from the wardrobes of Western heroes in contemporary comics, gangster films, and cowboy films, and the boyish suit is often also accompanied by a half-empty bottle of alcohol poking out from a jacket pocket, a wide-brimmed fedora, and even a pipe (Figure 4). While such hybrid visualizations were meant to make them look ridiculous, they nevertheless show that the look of the socialist dandies was a sartorial, and social, hybrid anyway. Both Czech Pásek and Polish Bikiniarze were occasionally presented smoking a pipe, as if they were French Existentialists (Figure 5). This image certainly fitted into a complex set of social and cultural references concerning the East European dandies. While they sartorially resembled Teddy Boys, socialist dandies, unlike their English lumpen-proletarian counterparts, came from a diversified social background, comprising manual workers, high school pupils, and university students. The latter's intellectual pretensions, stretching from avant-garde arts to French existentialist philosophy and Italian neo-realist films, were still considered cosmopolitan in the early 1950s, thus the puffing of a pipe only contributed to the young dandies' negative image.<sup>53</sup> A couple of years later, the intellectual and artistic pretensions will be sartorially influenced by the French films that arrived in Polish cinemas, a merger that was called Polish-French style (Manturzewski 1958: 15).

**Figure 4**

A cartoon of the Bikiniarz on the cover of the Polish satirical journal *Pins*, Warsaw, 1954.



However, in that early, purifying period, a sartorial “delinquency” is perceived as serious a crime as a real delinquency, and the East European dandies are most often likened to hooligans. The Polish ideologue Stanislaw Manturzewski states that the petty criminals from the working class Warsaw districts and the Bikiniarze from the well-off parts of the city adhered to the same American “elegance” in the early 1950—duck-tail hairstyle, a hat, and a wide “Bikini” tie (Manturzewski 1958: 14). As much as they adopt various elements from the wardrobe of their Western counterparts, the Bikiniarze also rely on their domestic prewar metropolitan culture in designing their style. They appropriate a checked cloth cap, but wear it over the eyes and stuffed with newspaper, in order to give it a cheery, carefree look. That is how this otherwise customary working-class cap<sup>54</sup> was styled by dandified petty criminals in the Warsaw working class

**Figure 5**

A cartoon of the Pásek accompanying the article "This Time for Young Men," *Woman and Fashion*, Prague, 1952.



district of Praga and its area of Targówek prior to the war (Nowicki 1992: 33). This collaged look provides not only a rough edge to the Bikiniarze culture, but also blurs the designated class and social distinctions. In their version, a checked cloth cap loses its socially acceptable working-class provenance, while keeping its naughty, petty crime image. In his autobiography, film director Roman Polanski reminisces about wearing a cloth cap in this style as a member of a postwar Cracow youth group called the Pheasants:<sup>55</sup>

Really conscientious *Pheasants* topped off this creation with a cloth cap set at a jaunty angle and bulging at the back, where it had been padded with newspaper. Before entering one of our haunts, it was customary to spit on our hands and slick our

greasy wings of hair. When fights broke out, café floors would be littered with rolled-up balls of newspaper from *Pheasants'* caps. (Polanski 1984: 71)

A culturally guided investment in dress enabled socialist dandies to develop not only an elaborately negotiated look but also a unique style of their own, different not only to the official modest and utilitarian dress aesthetics but also to the dress of their equally sartorially active co-actors on the unofficial sartorial scene: the black marketeers. Writing about the Stiliagi, the journal *Soviet Culture* reports that "... a foreign tie with a picture of a half-naked woman on it is the object of their envy."<sup>56</sup> Indeed, the socialist dandies appropriated a wide tie decorated with an American motif from the Spiv, a black marketeer from whom they were buying their clothes, but this tie had a different meaning in their respective wardrobes. In the case of young dandies, it ironically accentuates their adolescent boyish look. In contrast, it highlights the grown-up, gangster-style flashiness of the Spivs.<sup>57</sup> Their respective domestic media are equally hostile towards the young socialist dandies and the Spivs, but they nevertheless visually depict them differently. Thus the Stiliaga Garri looks different from the black marketeer Goga Baranchuk in the cartoon images that accompany articles presenting both of them as negative heroes. Garri wastes his time dancing boogie-woogie, buying and parading his outfits,<sup>58</sup> while Goga "whispers" offers for a purchase of deficient goods in the ears of the passers-by.<sup>59</sup> In comparison to the socially conscious socialist youth they are both undesirable protagonists in the busy city streets and in its cafes, and only too visible in their wide-shouldered jackets and large patterned ties. Yet Garri's slim frame and his energetic body posture significantly differ from Goga's portly body, slumped in the restaurant chair, with various delicacies laid at the table in front of him. The terracotta red color of Goga's grown-up double-breasted suit shows that he wanted and needed to be noticed. A real-life Soviet black marketeer Valentin Tikhonenko describes his 1950s style:

I was a fashionable man Number One. I bought a Swiss coat in order to advertise my business. I had an American Stetson hat, everything was colourful; my coat was blue and long up to the knee. (Guk 1997)<sup>60</sup>

Foreign visitors spotted black marketeers' flashy elegance on the otherwise grimy Soviet streets. William S. Just, a journalist with the British *Observer*, portrayed one of the "business boys": "He was wearing a fine grey suit, of excellent fit. Look, Horn of London," he said.<sup>61</sup> Just like the socialist dandies, the Spivs looked at films for their inspiration, favoring those with gangster and action plots. Tikhonenko emphasized that he modeled himself after a hero in the "trophy" film

*Raid*, an American intelligence officer who operated in the ranks of Gestapo: “He was amazingly charismatic guy. I quickly sketched his style, and I have a photo of myself with the same hat” (Guk 1997). One of the protagonists in Tyrmand’s novel *The Man with the White Eyes*, a young tearaway called Jerzy Meteor, proudly dresses up in front of a mirror in Western clothes acquired on the black market, at which he trades himself:

Meteor put on his trousers and took out a clean shirt: the trousers were gabardine, narrow and highly-pressed, the shirt pale-blue, with a wide-collar in the Italian style. Meteor fastened the collar carefully with his long, thin fingers and dirty nails. Then he brought out a tie of poisonous green, covered with golden triangles, and carefully put it on: this was followed by a pair of chamois-leather shoes with thick crêpe soles. Finally, he produced a double-breasted jacket of the same pale lilac shade as his trousers and surveyed himself with profound satisfaction. (Tyrmand 1959: 98–9)

While Tyrmand in his portrait of the complex postwar Warsaw life does not condemn Meteor for living on the wrong side of the law, he calls his style “flashy elegance” (“*krzykliwa elegancja*”) (Tyrmand 1959: 99). Tyrmand is knowledgeable about clothes and the meanings they provide, and uses dress to differentiate between different social groups. The dress style of the mid-1950s *Bikiniarze*, whom he calls Bohemians, is less flashy, with “young men in very tight trousers and shoes with thick crêpe soles, and girls in duffle coats” (Tyrmand 1959: 53).

The looks and behavior of the girls who were part of the scene from the late 1940s throughout the 1950s were also scrutinized but never as violently opposed as those of young dandies. While following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, a New Man and a New Woman were both supposed to be strong and robust, the Stalinist period had reconceptualized an ideal woman in a more diversified model, asking of her to be worker, mother, and wife, and, moreover, expecting her to be discreetly feminine. Thus the girls would meet official disapproval when they dared to venture beyond the permitted borders of a clearly framed concept of modest femininity, whether they adhered to an androgynous, “boyish” look or adopted the elements of excessive femininity in their looks. A letter sent by Anna Káti, a teacher from a small Hungarian town Erdőkürt, to the journal *Free Youth* (*Szabad Ifjúság*) claims that the girls are also responsible for the Jampec culture:

There is a proverb: Birds of feather flock together. So, if you spot monkey-looking Jampec you will never see a simple, nicely dressed girl on his arm. These girls want to be prominent and

striking. She can be “modern” if she uses purple lipstick, wears a narrow skirt and a pair of elegant shoes. She spends ten forints for a hair-dresser, and three for a manicurist. A girl can also pluck her eyebrows or go to a beautician, and that’s unique!<sup>62</sup>

Flaunting their impeccable elegance and good looks in postwar Warsaw, two young women, mockingly named Mary and Lucy, are pronounced “the vampires of beauty” in the Polish satirical journal *Pins (Szpilki)*.<sup>63</sup> They walk the Warsaw streets on platform shoes and are attired in low-cut, Western-style dresses that emulate Rita Hayworth’s style, and, indeed, are made from fabrics that arrived from New York. Their long hair is coiffed in the “Atlantic” style, and their long, curled eyelashes exude sex appeal. This carefully maintained Westernized decorativeness was associated with loose morals, as these girls supposedly socialized with bad boys and spent their nights on the dance floor. In *The Man with the White Eyes*, Tyrmand depicts the type:

... a wonderfully slender, dark girl with an urchin cut like an Italian film star, wearing a broad black belt and grey skirt: her painted commonplace face was resting on the shoulder of a big, grinning youth whom she was embracing with dirty, highly-varnished fingernails. (Tyrmand 1959: 167)

An open expression of sexualized dress and loud makeup also provoked the puritanical Soviet system. The journal *Soviet Culture* states that the Stiliaga’s stylish female counterpart

... wears dresses which reveal her figure to the point of indecency. She wears slit skirts. Her lips are bright with lipstick. In summer, she is shod in “Roman” sandals. Her hair is done in the manner of “fashionable” foreign actresses.<sup>64</sup>

Girls socializing with young dandies inhabit the same socialist demi-monde that is, according to the media, infected with fashionability, excessive sexuality, and juvenile delinquency, each of which contribute to an overwhelming criminal status of their favorite locations. A young Hungarian factory worker Marika is not only too fashionable; she wears her expensive pleated and pencil skirts, her pink pullovers, long cardigans, and silk blouses to the club in which she dances with the trouble-making Jampec boys, one of whom gets arrested for causing a fight.<sup>65</sup> Another Hungarian negative heroine, a school dropout, Jutka wastes her time dancing in a Jampec style in a skirt with a checked pattern, and, furthermore, she behaves like a boy.<sup>66</sup> While one of them is over-sexualized, and the other is presented as a boyish type, both Marika and Jutka are criticized as they both attempt to alter the official concepts of masculinity and femininity.

Gender was conceptualized by the state, and it did not provide for any deviation from the prescribed gender division. In the Soviet Union, braids were the only acceptable way to style long hair, but even braids are suspicious if their wearers mingle with the Stiliagi. The mother of a high school pupil called Larissa reports to the journal *Komsomol Truth* that her daughter was unfairly stripped of the grant that covered her schooling at the Alma Ata Institute of Foreign Languages, because, together with her three girlfriends, she was labeled Stiliaga.<sup>67</sup> The reason given in a letter that the mother received from the school denounced their interest in nice clothes and dancing with the Stiliagi. Additionally, the hair of one of them was too short, the bangs on one of the others were too long, and one of them had “the wrong kind of braids.”<sup>68</sup> With the boys sporting long hair, and the girls cutting their hair short, the strict division between the sexes was seriously disturbed. The *Komsomol Truth* fumes against the Stiliagi, but also condemns: “... the even more disgusting girls, with their coiffures ‘a la garson’—pitiful bristles of cropped hair—and their shoes that remind one of Caterpillar tractors.”<sup>69</sup>

## Body

Clothes emanating from an alien culture were the big problem concerning the look of the young dandies, but, furthermore, these clothes dressed a differently shaped body to the officially promoted one. The “masculinized” masculinity introduced following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, remained the only desirable male ideal within the socialist representational system. The iconography of a strong and muscular body fitted well into a broader socialist program aimed at mastering nature, and this concept only gained in importance during the 1930s Stalinist huge industrialization project.<sup>70</sup> In the late 1940s Soviet Union and East Europe, an ideal man is still robust and powerfully built, as only such men could rebuild the war-damaged countries and construct new socialist societies. Moreover, a strong man owes his incredible physical strength to his own willpower, which is embedded in his total dedication to the socialist ideals.

In comparison to a grown-up muscular male body, the adolescent lean body of a young dandy appears weak and fragile, but it is dangerous nevertheless, as these two differently looking bodies carry two different narratives. The main problem is that both of these body types belong to young men. In contrast to the West, where the appearance of the youthful looking and flamboyantly dressed Teddy Boy was equally a class and a generational shock, as youth had not yet been recognized as an important social asset, socialist ideology endorsed youth from the very beginning. The progressive youth—meaning healthy, sporty, strongly built, and loyal—was a socialist hope. Various youth

associations disciplined the young from an early age, instilling into their minds the socialist ideals, and shaping their bodies, through various physical activities, from sport to manual work, into a preferred robust frame. In that world, there was no place for a lonely adolescent, whose existentialist doubts and insecurities about his wants and desires were embedded in a slender body. In such a highly ideologized world, a slim body was perceived as a serious challenge to the exaggerated virility of the ideal body.

Consequently, contemporary cartoons and newspaper articles recognize the young dandy's body as a negative Other of the muscular body of a new man. The visual accounts mock his juvenile body frame, elongating his awkward-looking adolescent limbs to the extreme and attiring them in a pair of the extraordinarily narrow and short trousers. In describing a first Polish rural dandy in 1951, the journal *Banner of Youth* emphasizes that "his trousers look like they have been borrowed from a younger brother."<sup>71</sup> Indeed, only very young men could carry off such a narrow trouser cut. Moreover, being short in order to show off their silly socks, and too delicate for hard shoes below them, these trousers suited boys who did not want to become men. As much as the socialist dandies could have just wanted to wear whatever pleased them, these childish trousers are perceived as a strong political statement in the societies which wanted their men to be serious and grown-up.

Furthermore, contemporary media often pick on the young dandy's "effeminate" manners, which additionally distance him from a proper man and turn him into an artificial, alien being. The Polish *Banner of Youth* makes its point by stating that a young dandy's "colourful socks remind us of those worn by women."<sup>72</sup> In the Soviet media, he is often presented as a bejeweled caricature. In a 1946 article, a Soviet dandy owns a bracelet-style watch, wears rings, is curled and powdered, and sparkles with orange nail polish on his long nails, which resemble claws.<sup>73</sup> In the same journal in 1949, the *Stiliaga* is drawn as a feminized creature. He leaves a smell of perfume as he walks into a room. Moreover, his lips are painted red, his eyebrows and thin moustache are groomed, and—the article states—the most fashionable Parisian woman would have envied his perm and manicure.<sup>74</sup> In the *Crocodile* cartoon, yet another Soviet dandy is depicted leisurely manicuring his nails while talking to the official at the Job Centre in his yellow jacket, tie, and striped pink shirt with cuffs (Figure 6).<sup>75</sup> These exaggerated descriptions show that some of the most subconscious fears of the totalitarian systems were embodied in boys who were interested in such an unmanly activity as dressing up, and, even worse, in a manner that emphasized their androgynous looks. The young dandy's longish hair, greased into a duck tail at the back of his neck is also heavily criticized. The Czechoslovak magazine *Woman and Fashion* inquired: "... where are located these secret barbers who



**Figure 6**

A cartoon entitled "Burning Desires,"  
*Crocodile*, Moscow, 1954.



have no problem in destroying young men's heads with some bizarre styles, in exchange for a little money?"<sup>76</sup>

Historically, a dandy reveals the crisis of masculinity from the mid-eighteenth century on, but the postwar socialist countries, going through the dramatic societal and ideological changes could not allow themselves such a crisis. A dandy is perceived as idle and disrespectful towards socialist work ethics, and thus unproductive, while the new societies needed their men virile and hard-working. The latter's interaction with nature builds his strength and changes him into its master. In contrast, the young dandy's aestheticist approach points towards his alienation from socialist society, its official culture, and its concept of unpolluted nature. From his position of an unacceptable outsider, the socialist dandy fits into the French psychiatrist Francoise Dolto's definition of dandy as solitary adolescent, who is, moreover, the product of an absent father (Dolto 1999: 18).<sup>77</sup> Indeed, a socialist dandy's father may have been killed in the war and thus be literally absent, or he was absent as a relevant role model, as the father's generation had to adjust to the ideological requirements of the new system in order to survive. In their analysis of the Teddy Boy phenomenon, Paul Rock and Stanley Cohen describe the Teddy Boy "as a kind of existential storm-trooper in the age war" (Rock and

Cohen 1970: 312). At the same time, but under the different political and social circumstances, the position of a young socialist dandy was both similar and different. He clashes, ideologically and physically, with his equally youthful counterpart sporting a strong muscular body, but the rupture between dandy and his father is embedded in both the generational and ideological differences.

While the new socialist man could be called an ideologically constructed Adam, the socialist dandy could be defined as a prototype for Dolto's artificial Adam (1999: 18). She does not consider a true dandy to be an effeminate, fashionable being, finding solace in front of the mirror. This, she leaves to his imitators. Instead, for a true dandy "the mirror is master of his uncompromising differences" (1999: 19) that he cannot solve, especially as he is, abandoned by his father, all alone in that existential battle. Similarly, a young socialist dandy's looks and manners were less about clothes and more about an existential angst pointed towards those who exercised political and social power. Without specifically aiming at it, he was politically and socially transgressive as his carefully chosen clothes and his body shape, merely by being different, tested the limits that socialist society placed on individuals.

### **Big City**

The high visibility of the young dandies was an immense problem for the regimes as such, but, moreover, socialism had an ontological problem with the concept of a big city. There is hardly anything further away from pure unpolluted nature than the diversified life of a highly urbanized environment. While socialism was interested in various modernist elements, such as ambitious sky-rocketing architecture and the capacity to manage large crowds and the varied activities of the city, it felt very uncomfortable with the messiness and buzz that accompanied them. Similar to nature, a big city also had to be conquered. The processes of reinvention of big cities included interventions in the historic fabric of cities either by reconstructing the remaining war bombsites or by demolishing the existing prewar city centers and replacing them with the buildings adhering to Stalinist totalitarian aesthetics. But, apart from their fast-changing appearance, big cities were also supposed to adjust to new rationalized ways of doing things and to adopt restrained types of leisure in order to harmonize with a new world. City centers became the battlefields at which the contemporary Western highly diversified modernity was recoded into a streamlined, rationalized modernity that would suit the socialist vision of purity and restraint.

It was obvious that a young dandy, sporting such a slim frame, was neither capable of nor interested in mastering nature by building new

socialist cities in a new rationalized order. He was happy to leave this task to men whose corporeal strength and sense of harmony were embedded in a new world. Instead, a young dandy enjoyed carefree strolls in the main streets and squares. As described in the journal *Soviet Culture*: “The Stiliagi have their favourite meeting places in the centre of Moscow. From there they spread into the restaurants, clubs and dance-halls or stroll for hours on end along Gorkii Street.”<sup>78</sup> The article lists the names of the Stiliagi, showing both that there were not many of them, but also that they made themselves very visible by their daily walks up and down Gorkii Street, which they called Broadway. The Czech Pásek renamed the central Prague Wenceslas Square as “Trafalgar,” which they, additionally, called *Trafousha* in their slang.<sup>79</sup> In Warsaw, they parade along the main avenue Nowy Świat. With its carefully orchestrated routes and even more carefully chosen clothes, the young dandies’ strolls become an urban ritual in itself by which they appropriate parts of the big city and show that it could still be an exciting cosmopolitan location.

Moreover, the young dandies participate in more exciting cosmopolitan rituals—dancing swing and boogie-woogie, listening to jazz and shopping—which, in contrast to a restricted socialist model, require a disordered type of the big city, open to chaos and endless possibilities. The cosmopolitan happens in a makeshift socialist demi-monde consisting of cafes, bars, dance halls, night clubs, open markets, and city corners which accommodate the illegal trade in Western goods. There is a shady world even when it takes place in the city centers, a world in which the separation of classes and of sexes is perverted, just as Barbara Vinken showed that the demi-monde of the dandy and the coquette that flourished at the birthplace of fashion in modernity, in the Second Empire of Napoleon III, stood outside the order of class and gender (Vinken 2005: 7). Conducted openly in the city centers, while blurring the prescribed norms and distinctions, the cosmopolitan rituals of the young dandies threaten the concept of the new socialist city. In contrast to the system’s favorite, ideologically constructed Adam, who takes part in public festivities such as the 1st of May parade, engages in sports, and enjoys dancing and singing events in an organized, disciplined manner, the other new Adam inhabits a world which is, as he himself, condemned as artificial.

As the new regimes did not acknowledge competing representations of identity, they could not deal with this new Adam as an alternative human model embedded in an alternative type of modernist city. Instead, the young dandy’s big city is the worst example of an artificial nature, an uncontrollable jungle, which is, accordingly, populated with wild animals and barbarians. A satirical poem published in *Crocodile* states that, sporting his curly mane, the young Soviet dandy commands the streets as if he were a “lion of the capital”: “Look at his hair-style, playfully curled, but there is emptiness below that wavy mane ...

He was Grisha, but he is Garri now, and he is on the boulevard each day at the usual time.”<sup>80</sup> The socialist media often uses “monkey” and “parrot” as negative tropes for the young dandies.<sup>81</sup> In 1952, the Polish journal *Simply* published a textual and visual satire on the theme of the Christmas crib, populated with a series of blasphemous characters. A hooligan is drawn as an ape-resembling creature with a threatening knife in his hand, while the drawings of a monkey and the Bikiniarz hardly differ from each other.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, the Bikiniarz wears a “monkey suit” in another Polish article.<sup>83</sup> In the same vein, the trope monkey often stands for Jampec in the Hungarian media, in which he is most often called “monkey-like Jampec.” In 1957, a *Crocodile* cartoon under the title “Monkeys” shows the monkeys behind the bars laughing at the Stiliaga and his girlfriend standing in front of their cage at the zoo. Covered in their uniform brown fur, the monkeys look discreet in comparison to the Stiliaga in his fuchsia-colored jacket, a wide patterned tie, and yellow thick-soled shoes, and his girlfriend in her big-checked yellow and green dress accompanied with a pink handbag (Figure 7).

Reminiscing on his Stiliaga days, Aleksei Kozlov observed: “As soon as I entered the tram, everyone there would begin discussing and condemning me: ‘Ooh, dressed up like a peacock!’ or ‘Young man, aren’t you ashamed of yourself, walking around looking like a parakeet?’ or ‘Look, some kind of monkey!’ I always stood red-faced” (Troitsky 1988: 15). Color in dress was so shocking against the background of the poverty-stricken and ideologically austere East European cities that the system could only deal with it by mockery. While in 1955, *Soviet Culture* condemns Arkadi B.’s wild nightlife, the article also stresses that he “is always dressed brightly as a parrot.”<sup>84</sup> According to Tikhonenko, his dress style was also compared to a parrot: “I used to wear expensive and beautiful suits made of pure wool. I had an English coat ... All my clothes were tasteful, the colours were not wild (but) the Komsomol press wrote: ‘parrot-like’. Do the English do parrot-like?” Likewise, the Cracow counterpart of the Bikiniarz was called the Pheasant in the media, after another bird known for its multicolored plumage.

A barbarian is yet another trope for mapping an “untamed” member of the socialist society. In the 1946 *Crocodile* article, a Soviet dandy shares the same name—Montihomo—with the hero of Anton Chekhov’s short story “Boys.” While Chekhov’s juvenile hero, inspired by the widely popular Thomas Mayne Reid’s characters,<sup>85</sup> fantasizes escaping to the Wild West and signs his farewell letter as Montihomo, his later namesake is not a naive adolescent. He resembles the American Indians, with his fascination with everything sparkly and bright. Also, just like the American Indians, he is still a hunter, albeit the one chasing ideologically suspicious goods: “... everything new in the market jungles, cruising from a commission shop to an open market

**Figure 7**

A cartoon entitled "Monkeys,"  
*Crocodile*, Moscow, 1957.



and back ... it's too late to criticize him, his traitor's taste shows that he is a barbarian." The later Montihomo lacks the American Indians' genuine traits even in relation to his accommodation. His "cultured wigwam" contains all the latest electric appliances, a gramophone, telephone, and the twelve latest foxtrot records. The article ridicules the features of Western modernity when they refer to fun and pleasure: "The times when Montihomo yelled are long gone ... the machines sing for him (now), the times when Montihomo danced around the fire are long gone ... quite rightly, in the spirit of the times, he dances around radiola, from midnight to 2am."<sup>86</sup>

In his investigation of the concepts of the savage and the barbarian in the historico-political discourse, Foucault claims that the savage is

“the exchanger ... Insofar as he exchanges rights, he founds society and sovereignty. Insofar as he exchanges goods, he constitutes a social body which is, at the same time, an economic body” (Foucault 2003: 194). The barbarian, instead, “can be understood, characterized and defined only in relation to a civilization, and by the fact that he exists outside it ... The barbarian is always the man who stalks the frontiers of States, the man who stumbles into the city walls” (Foucault 2003: 195). Montihomo is perceived as a dangerous barbarian precisely due to his attempts to pollute a pure socialist culture with alien objects and sounds, which he gathers in his modernist degenerate jungle. But, socialism had only sympathy for the genuine, indigenous type of savage. Thus when the film *Tarzan’s New York Adventure*<sup>87</sup> arrived in the Soviet cinemas in the early 1950s, Tarzan could be presented as a positive hero, fighting for his pure unpolluted world against the background of the perverted Gotham city. In order to make him look as far away as possible from his usual jungle looks and surroundings, Tarzan’s creators attired him in a Manhattan-middle-class-manager-style suit. The Stiliagi, who have already embraced their youthful uniform of a drape jacket and short, narrow trousers, did not borrow Tarzan’s double-breasted, grown-up suit accompanied by a pair of wide trousers. But, the Soviet youth was mesmerized with the marvelous sights of the New York skyline and its night life infected with jitterbug dances. The official narrative had no chance in comparison with the concept of the big city visualized as a disorderly and yet so exciting jungle. The journal *Soviet Culture* bitterly complained: “The shrill cacophony of jazz, monotonous ‘boogie-woogie’, convulsive ‘be-bop’, recorded by amateurs and sold on the sly somewhere, postcards of sugar-sweet ‘beauties’ in vulgar taste, and foreign ‘film stars’—this is the ‘art’ they revel in.”<sup>88</sup>

A socially conscious reader of the Czech youth journal *Young Front* (*Mladá fronta*) also complains about this fragmented world, ruled by a pleasure principle, and perceives it as a chaotic, jungle-like mess in 1946: “There are strange sounds heard from the radio—Am I among Africans? Young and even old people dance in the coffee houses—Why are they shaking in that strange way? They are dancing boogie-woogie.”<sup>89</sup> It was this modernist jungle that the socialist dandies wanted to live in and that they eventually managed to enjoy, in brief timeframes and limited geographical coordinates during a still transitional, early postwar period in the Soviet Union and, especially, in East Europe. In Warsaw, according to Tyrmand: “... immediately after the war cafés began to spring up like mushrooms all over the city, in cellars, in hastily patched up buildings, in bombed-out houses against a backcloth of ruins. They were shabby, hectic, crowded. One of the first regular cafés was the Peal of Bells ... (which) became the favourite meeting place of the most progressive element of the young people of Warsaw” (Tyrmand 1959: 51). The only Moscow cocktail

bar in the early 1950s, *Kokteil Khol*, situated in Gorkii Street, became their favorite place to see and be seen.<sup>90</sup>

The dancing venues and dances favored by the young dandies were heavily criticized. In the 1950 article “The New Hungarian Social Dance Culture,” the Budapest monthly *Cultured People* (*Művelt nép*) divides contemporary dances along ideological lines, claiming that the waltz and the polka are progressive and democratic, while the tango and foxtrot are “reflections of capitalist decline.”<sup>91</sup> However, the article claims that really dangerous dances are “swing, samba, boogie-woogie, rumba, conga and hokie pokie,” as they are “tools of aggression let loose by the bosses of America against human culture and progress.”<sup>92</sup> The article emphasizes: “There is no coincidence that the Jampecok, the brainless believers in this ‘American life-style’, became the first swing dancers.”<sup>93</sup> The Soviet dandies even called their dances ‘the atomic’, ‘the Canadian’ and ‘the Hamburg’, according to Arkadi Bairon who practiced ‘stylish’ dances at his favourite dance place at Voronok station in Moscow.”<sup>94</sup> Aleksei Kozlov further clarifies that the first two were variations of jitterbug, lindy hop, and boogie-woogie, while the third one resembled a slow foxtrot (Kozlov 1998: 72) (Figure 8).

The young dandies’ dance movements challenged the official corporeal norms of gender and sexuality. A Budapest young man Péter Vajda joined a discussion on the Jampec dances in the youth weekly *Free Youth*: “There were many complaints that the young people like cosmopolitan dance music, hop about in an unseemly way and toss each other around ... The band mixed such wild rumbas, sambas and swing that it was no wonder the couples made convulsive movements.”<sup>95</sup> For the authorities, swing and boogie-woogie were an unwanted metaphor for urban flux and syncopated movement, and thus clashed with the preferred purposeful moves within the socialist concept of streamlined modernity. But, the regimes did not want to prevent young people from dancing. Similar to the other cultural forms, they encouraged their artists to invent new socialist dances, hastily modeled on traditional ethnic predecessors, such as the polka. “Polanka,” proposed in the Polish journal *Simply* was one of these new dances with the prescribed movements.<sup>96</sup> Following the traditional ethnic dance pattern, dance figures for the Polanka’s steps are heavily structured and do not allow for any improvisation in the couple’s moves.

This and similar newly composed dances were far away from the syncopated moves executed by the young dandies while listening to jazz. As claimed by the jazz expert Frederick Starr, “dancing pushed the Stiliagi still further in the direction of jazz” (Starr 1994: 241). Jazz shared the fate of other “cosmopolitan” phenomena in the Soviet Union in the immediate postwar period, and in East Europe following the 1948 communist coups. Its characteristics such as improvisation, syncopated rhythm, tempo, speed, and immediacy did not suit the socialist ideas on discipline and order. Moreover, the original jazz



**Figure 8**

A cartoon entitled "Dancing between the Tables," *Crocodile*, Moscow, 1958.

was condemned as alien and artificial just because it arrived from the West, and because it already existed before the socialist period, while the newly composed socialist attempts were praised and proclaimed a true and proper type of jazz, though being mere imitations. But, the young dandies craved the original sounds and original records.<sup>97</sup>

Regardless of opposition, such jazz was played in nightclubs, workers' clubs, student dancing clubs, and dancing venues aligned with the newly instituted Houses of Culture, executed by the domestic orchestras whose members were equally capable of playing the latest Western jazz numbers and of promptly changing to appropriate tamed waltz tunes, if the need arose. An unskilled Hungarian worker, who emigrated to the West in 1954, later reminisced about the unofficial lifestyle that he had left behind in his working-class neighborhood: "When the band plays jazz, one of the kids stands at the door. If a police car approaches, he signals and the band quickly switches to a Moscow-style waltz ... Where they learn those dances is impossible to say."<sup>98</sup>



But Western jazz and its musicians eventually arrived in the Soviet Union, only to meet the Stiliagi's approval and official disapproval. Discussing the 6th World Youth Festival that took place in Moscow in the summer of 1957,<sup>99</sup> the journal *Soviet Culture* comments that jazz repertoire should be rooted in the national soil, that the compositions should embody national rhythms and melodic turns, and that only such jazz ensembles as Czechoslovak and Romanian were successful at the festival.<sup>100</sup> Taking part in this discussion on the appropriate form of jazz, one of the readers reports that, listening to one of the foreign orchestras at the festival, " 'Stiliagi' in loose shirts, 'stylish' jackets and trousers, and fancy haircuts went wild over the 'crazy rhythm' and 'rock'n'roll numbers.'<sup>101</sup> However, the journal emphasizes that "such 'jazz fanatics' represent a negligible minority of the Soviet young people."<sup>102</sup>

The streets of the big cities, and venues aligned along them, were not an ever-changing theater set only for the young dandies, but also for black-marketeers. As described by the 1950s Leningrad speculator Valentin Tikhonenko:

It was not business, it was a spectacle with one actor, for which I was a scriptwriter, director and stage manager. The flow of foreigners was our costume department. I negotiated with them, by visiting them during their breakfast in the hotel Evropeiski. They would eat luxurious food, which we never had ourselves. (Guk 1997)

Through his illegal activities, Tikhonenko appropriated a rare cosmopolitan oasis in his hometown, otherwise only meant for the use of foreign visitors. In general, socialist dandies could acquire their clothes mainly on the black market in the Soviet Union, and, also, from flea markets in East Europe. The latter did especially brisk trade in Western clothes in Poland, where parcels sent from the diaspora from America and Great Britain were sold and resold, and where different social groups mingled together. While Meteor was a Spiv, a flashily dressed black-marketeer, the heroine of the novel *The Man with the White Eyes*, a secretary called Martha Mayewska, was a well-educated middle-class girl. These two characters represent two different worlds that mixed in postwar Warsaw. They meet in cafes and night clubs to listen to popular Western music, and search for second-hand Western clothes. Martha and Meteor actually meet for the first time at a flea market, while rummaging around for "Ciuchy," slang for fashionable second-hand clothes. While Martha looks longingly at "taffeta ballgowns, beach-skirts and blouses, sweaters, underwear, gloves, bathing costumes, jumpers, shorts and shoes" (Tyrmand 1959: 265), she could not even afford the one item that she fell in love with, a white nylon bathing-suit. With cash from his murky business, Meteor was

able to discreetly facilitate Martha's purchase, which started their strange relationship and, consequently, spiced the plot of the novel.

In his autobiography, film director Roman Polanski reminisces on the dress style that he carefully created by cruising the open market in Cracow:

... being a *Pheasant* entailed a lot of scavenging in the flea market—a lot of expense, too. Shoes were all-important. The most sought-after had no toecaps. Black leather was the conventional material, though blue suede was even more highly prized. Ankle-tight trousers were surmounted by long-skirted plaid or corduroy jackets with ski-jump shoulders. Shirts had to have shallow, wide-angled collars ... This was accentuated by a tie with a huge, one-color Windsor knot. My own particular pride and joy was an American fishtail, ultra-wide, part yellow and part maroon, with a stylized rose in the middle. (Polanski 1984: 71)

Members of different social groups, from intellectuals and artists, to descendants of prewar entrepreneurs and disinherited Polish nobility, frequented the open markets (Polanski 1984: 93–4). Second-hand Western clothes were not just fashionable clothes. For those who craved them, a physical residue of their Western provenance remained on those jackets, ties, and socks. Tyrmand states: “In the forefront of the battle stood the colourfully striped socks, authentic, straight from the packages (that arrived from the West)” (Tyrmand 1995: 144).

### Integration

By the mid-1950s the magazines that had orchestrated the Khrushchev regime's attacks on the Stiliagi started to challenge the assaults that judged young people solely according to their looks. As the phenomenon had spread among the Soviet middle and working classes, it would have been dangerous to alienate the growing numbers interested in sartorial expression and Western dance and music. Instead, the task was to re-educate them and integrate them into the wider society. In the 1958 article “How Wide Should Trousers Be Cut?” *Komsomol Truth* firmly supports the argument that Stiliagi should not necessarily be defined by the width of his trousers, admitting that even *Crocodile* was wrong in promoting this misleading image through its cartoons:

It is not simply matter of clothes. And we feel that certain of our press organs are guilty of implanting this crude, one-sided and essentially incorrect notion about Stiliagi in the minds of our young people. Take, for example, the magazine *Crocodile*. For a long

time it has invariably directed the sharp edge of its satire precisely against the absurd appearance of Stiliagi, without attempting to expose their essential nature.<sup>103</sup>

The main problem, the journal argues, is that Stiliagi do not appropriate only foreign fashions but bourgeois morality as well. But, could only young people be blamed for this? *Komsomol Truth* insists that the Communist Youth League (YCL) is responsible to educate the youth in the matters of ethics and taste.<sup>104</sup> It argues that instead of branding any flashily dressed young man as Stiliaga, the YCL officials should smarten up their own looks, and abandon “wrinkled, soiled suits and dirty shoes.”<sup>105</sup> Besides, the YCL leaders should acknowledge lack of taste not only in the Stiliagi dress but also in poor patterns of badly sewn clothes on the shelves of their local department stores.<sup>106</sup> *Komsomol Truth* is visibly in a hurry to spread a new directive: we need to both ideologically guide our young people and offer them nice clothes in our shops.

As letters, blaming local YCL leaders of overzealous reactions concerning the young people’s dress and hairstyle, keep arriving to the *Komsomol Truth*’s Moscow headquarters, a battle for the human soul, especially of the young, becomes a pressing issue. Thus the article “How Wide Should Trousers Be Cut?” questions the official line. Why is this young worker from Voronezh so anxious about the width of his trousers, and fear that he will be perceived as Stiliagi if he decides on a narrow cut? Why did the Sverdlovsk YCL patrol stop young men who looked like the Stiliagi and forcibly cut their hair off? Why were three young workers, who looked like Stiliagi, detained in a park in Ulyanovsk by a local YCL patrol and police? The fact that their trousers were narrow, and that one of them was wearing a rather tasteless cowboy shirt should not have been a reason to subject two of them to haircuts and strip a shirt from the back of the third one.<sup>107</sup> During the Khrushchev years the social structure started to change. Stalin’s social contract with his elites, mostly consisting of the bureaucracy, state artists, and high-level experts, was exchanged for one that favored a fast-growing and much wider group of skilled workers and young educated experts. They were hard-working and loyal, or, at least, presented themselves as such.<sup>108</sup> Finally, the masses of young men in narrow trousers are indeed no longer Stiliagi. Unlike elitist and unproductive Stiliagi, they are a new generation, whose members need the regime as much as the regime needs them. They are active producers of the new society and are ready to adjust, expecting in exchange small concessions, such as a pair of narrow trousers or a slightly longer hairstyle.

Moreover, Soviet vigilance against the damaging influences of Western dress and music were to significantly alter in just a few months during 1957. The Moscow World Youth Festival brought to

the capital 34,000 foreign and 60,000 Soviet delegates, making a big impact on the young Soviet population. This direct contact with Western music, dancing, and youthful dress styles also resulted in radical changes in the official iconography, with a swift move from a young man in a pair of excessively narrow trousers to an American hipster look-alike. A young couple in the *Crocodile* cartoon of September 1957 are not named or ridiculed as monkeys; they are simply “Imitators.” Their casual sporty look of shorts, short-sleeved checked shirt, and trainers (him) and Capri pants, tight T-shirt, little heels, and ponytail (her), copy Western contemporary style, but it no longer seems to be a big ideological issue (Figure 9).

In East Europe, the changes in the official relationship towards young dandies commenced earlier. While the repression started when



**Figure 9**

A cartoon entitled “Imitators,” *Crocodile*, Moscow, 1957.

the new socialist states were forced into Stalinist-type socialism in the late 1940s, their integration into wider society took place as part of the aspirations for more personal freedoms and political reforms following Stalin's death. In 1956, the Soviet type of socialism was challenged by uprisings in Hungary and Poland. Khrushchev's Soviet Union mercilessly crushed these revolts in order to protect both its model of socialism and its own interests in the region. The failure of the East European political projects put an end to the expectations that a real change would happen. As the regimes wanted to show that they nevertheless could offer some difference in relation to the much more restrained Soviet model, some diversity in the arts, applied arts, and dress styles was allowed.

Thus, a Polish journal, *Simply*, run by this time by a radicalized youth whose members still insisted on political emancipation from the Soviet Union, was abolished in 1957,<sup>109</sup> but the journal's earlier victims—the apolitical *Bikiniarze*—were by this time no longer state enemies, as their interest in dress, love of jazz and dancing was considered a harmless proof of a set of the new personal freedoms. Tyrmand claimed that in Poland the ideological accusations against the *Bikiniarze* had disappeared by the mid-1950s, by which time the regime understood that colorful socks do not a priori designate a hooligan, and that it was possible to be a good student and a model young person while still loving flamboyant ties, jazz, and swing (1995: 144). Tyrmand supported the sartorial creativity, arguing that "*Ciuchy* elegance" worn by university students, gave a European flavor to the Warsaw streets. He related the contemporary culture of dress to paintings by Picasso, Braque, Leger, and Dufy and stated that fashion did not recognize the Iron Curtain (Tyrmand 1995: 142–4).

In a 1956 journal article "The Influence of the Proletariat on Fashion," the designer Barbara Hoff acknowledged the Western sartorial influences on the Polish youth. For her, a new proletarian fashion did not comprise the robust jackets on the backs of the workers building the new Polish industrial town Nowa Huta, which had been hastily constructed in the suburbs of Cracow. Instead, she promoted sleek black sweaters worn by the poor but stylish young men in the 1950s Italian neo-realist films. Hoff could praise their stylishness as, belonging to the lumpen-proletariat strata of Italian society, poor and unemployed residents of the suburbs of Rome and Naples fitted into a socialist narrative. Hoff, who would dedicate her career to promoting youthful sartorial styles, further claimed that the *Bikiniarze* were intelligent young artists who greatly contributed to the nation in literature, theater, and fine arts.<sup>110</sup> With their interests repositioned from the low-culture-field of loitering on street corners, extravagant dressing up and nightclub dancing to a high-culture-field of avant-garde theater and film, graphic design and instrumental jazz, individualism in dress

was now appropriate. Barbara Hoff promoted a series of youthful fashion trends in the weekly *Przekrój* (*Cross Section*) in 1957. The so-called Artistic style, which Hoff envisioned to be worn by art school students, greatly resembled Bikiniarze looks in their later, more sophisticated phase, when they modeled themselves on the image of Paris Left Bank intellectuals. In this style a boy would wear tight trousers, his hair would fall to his neck, he wore his pullover on bare skin, plimsolls on his feet, and a scarf around his neck. A girl wore a black pullover, trousers or a wide, long skirt gathered at the waist, a short jacket, and flat shoes on bare legs in the summer or with thick stockings in the winter. She wore no makeup and her hair was styled à la Juliette Greco.<sup>111</sup> In *Przekrój*, the newly approved looks were published alongside images of Picasso's paintings, reviews of the latest French films and gossipy portraits of film stars such as Brigitte Bardot.

Moreover, Hoff's sloppy and careless Artistic style was worn by an urban and restless generation in everyday life. As the journalist of the English *Observer* George Sherman reported, the young men who gathered in an "existentialist" cellar called Manekin in the historic center of Warsaw wore drainpipe trousers and black turtleneck pullovers, and the girls wore tight skirts and long, "Left Bank" hairstyles. Their rock and roll and calypso dances, smoke-filled atmosphere, and intense conversations gave the cellar a definite bohemian feel (Sherman 1958: 31). Although their looks and their music were Westernized, Sherman did not fail to observe a specific socialist youth attitude towards life that mixed political apathy and pessimism with innovation and escapism. In 1957, *Przekrój* reports that a group of young people staged a cabaret in the basement of the palace "Under the Rams" in Cracow, which the journal describes as "the seat of the young Cracow bohemians ... a meeting place of twenty-year-old bearded boys and handsome girls with Juliette Greco hair-styles ... all of them wearing black sweaters."<sup>112</sup> *Przekrój* reminds its readership that many among this young crowd could possibly have been expelled from the Polish Communist Youth organization (ZMP) on the grounds of their Bikiniarze looks and interests, but also states that Bikiniarze and anarchistic spirit live on, unlike the now dissolved ZMP.<sup>113</sup> The cabaret program itself, which even included a striptease act accompanied by the reading of Spinoza's *Ethics*, is praised for its youthful bravery, if not for its artistic achievements.<sup>114</sup>

In the Hungarian media, Western dances are not officially considered dangerous towards the end of the 1950s. The article from *Woman's Journal* (*Nők lapja*) claims: "This is rock'n'roll. It comes from the heart and it goes to the heart. What a happiness that this dance is slowly reaching us. If someone does not believe it, just visit the street in which a dance school is located, and where these images were taken ... They dance like this"<sup>115</sup> (Figure 10).

**NÁDOR ILONA RIPORTJA**

**Ők... táncolnak**



**1.** Csárdáshoz a piros cizmá, kerin-  
gőhöz a fehér túllöktemény, rock  
and rollhoz a minél szűkebb szok-  
nya, s a vicém „minős apacinq” lilik.  
Mode à la vadnyugat

**2.** Ideálisé én hogy csinálom! Ugye fog az  
menni, nem vagy te akármilyen csaj,  
nem hiába díltzik érted a fél banda!

**3.** Csak lassan, kece-  
sen, a „balhé” majd  
csak ezután jön. Em-  
lékezz rá vissza, mit mon-  
dott a mester a tánc sul-  
lyan; a klassz csurgiban a  
legfontosabb a szép test-  
tartást!

Figure 10

"They Dance Like This," *Women's Journal*, Budapest, 1957.



4. Ez az, helyben vagyunk, most már megy, mint a karikacsapás. De lesz ez még cifrább is...



5. Lám csak, milyen ötletesek a figurák. A rocki nem olyan unalmas, mint mondjuk egy angol keringő. És a fiú milyen gyengéd, milyen tiszteletjes partnerével!



6. A képen látható... Hogy mi látható a képen, ne is részletezzük. Maradjunk inkább abban, hogy íme egy szép, izéssé, izéssé táncfigurá...



7. Ez igen, ez méltó befejezése ennek a táncnak, hiszen „ez a rock and roll, mely szívből jön, és szívhez szól!” És milyen örömmel, hogy már hozzánk is eljutott lassacskán. Aki nem hiszi, látogasson el a Körútra, abba a tánciskolába, ahol felvételeink készültek. Ott meggyőződhet róla, a gyönyörűkővet benne, mint a tánciskola legifjabb nézővendége (legfejebb kevesebb áhitattal), hogy valóban, — így táncolnak ők.





## Conclusion and Afterwards

The phenomenon of the socialist dandy could emerge in parallel with its Western counterparts only in the immediate postwar period, due to the suddenly opened (the Soviet Union) or the still existing connections with the West (East Europe). Equally, as its repression phase shows, the new and old cultural and ideological concepts were still in turmoil at that historical moment. In contrast, the regimes did not pretend to construct new socialist culture by the end of the 1950s, but fought for political survival by gradually depoliticizing the society, and looking for new allies in that process. It brings a new relationship towards the cosmopolitan, and enables its early promoters to be accepted. First, young dandies had never been political, and, second, the society depoliticizes to the point where their interests are no longer considered dangerous. Additionally, as an interest in fashionable dress and modern music (jazz will soon be replaced by rock and roll) spreads among an ever wider young population, the regimes do not want to alienate their youth. On the other hand, moving into the mainstream brings an end to the fanatical attention to detail, the exclusivity in dress and its Western provenance on which socialist dandies insisted. There is more freedom, but it is a diluted version of freedom, a result of a compromise between the regimes and their young people. This compromise also meant that the young increasingly withdrew to their own world, which the state could not reach. Pretending that they supported the system, they only grew more apolitical.<sup>116</sup>

Postwar socialist dandies, those unintentional rebels, lived their lives squeezed between two utopias: the official socialist utopia and the Western world, which was utopian because they could not participate in it. Their dress and lifestyle were both a vision of a different present and of a different future. It could be said that both the Zazous and the Teddy Boys were visionaries of the forthcoming consumerist paradise in which the young would be the most cherished customers. In contrast, the future that socialist dandies craved would never happen. The differences between the West and East became more prominent. In the socialist bloc, youthful dress and dance might had been accepted ideologically and incorporated into the mainstream culture, but this shift was not accompanied by the processes of mass consumption. In contrast, youth subcultures, their dress and music, had been integrated into the mainstream culture in a different way in the West: through the market and ever-growing and varied consumption. The age of affluence had arrived in the West by the end of the 1950s, but the East had stayed poor and deprived.

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## Notes

1. This article covers the alternative dress codes in the Soviet Union and three ex-socialist countries—Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland—in the period 1946–59.
2. *Stiliaga* (plural: *Stiliagi*) started as a neologism in 1949, but became a widely used word. It is usually translated as Style Hunter. For an overview of different views on *Stiliaga*, see Edele (2002), Fürst (2006), and Roth-Ey (2004).
3. *Pásek*: a young man attired in drape jacket and short, narrow trousers, Spiv, Teddy Boy, Yob.
4. *Jampec* (plural *Jampecok*): could be translated as Teddy Boy and “spiv,” but the name also referred to a young hooligan. In its original Yiddish meaning the word stood for “prick,” both literally and metaphorically. In the interwar years, *Jampec* could describe an upper-class person leading an extravagant lifestyle. It only acquired its meaning related to a fashionable young person in the Hungarian language in the early 1950s. For an overview of the *Jampec* within Hungarian youth cultures, see Brown (2008) and Horváth (2005).
5. *Bikiniarz* (plural *Bikiniarze*), usually translated as the Bikini Boy. The name had been related to the nuclear explosion at Bikini Atoll, as well as to the ludicrous images of bikini-clad young women that adorned the cheap American ties worn by the *Bikiniarze*. For an overview of the *Bikiniarze*, see Chłopek (2005), Glogowski (2001), Potocki (1994), and Tyrmand (1995).
6. For an overview, see Baudelaire (1964), Ratcliff (2001), and Laver (1968).
7. Krotkii, Emil. “Varnished Claw” (Montihomo: Lakirovanii kogot). *Crocodile (Krokodil)*, Moscow, N 7, March 10, 1946: 4.
8. For an overview of the political, social, and cultural climate following the end of the war, see Zubkova (1998: 11–39); see Starr (1994: 223) for the American jazz records brought back to Moscow by Red Army soldiers.
9. “Trophy” films were shown for various reasons, from the lack of new Soviet films to an urgent need to bring money into the war-impooverished state coffers. Additionally, the Soviet authorities did not pay any royalties on these captured films. For an overview on trophy films, see Edele (2002) and Kenez (1992).
10. Krotkii, “Varnished Claw,” 1946: 4.

11. Beliaev, D. “Stiliaga.” *Crocodile*, Moscow, March 10, 1949: 10.
12. “Daddy’s ‘Victory’ ” (“Papina ‘pobeda’ ”). *Crocodile*, Moscow, N 6, February 28, 1954: back cover.
13. For an overview, see Zubkova (1998) and Edele (2002).
14. Kostelec represents the small town of Náchod in which Josef Škvorecký was actually born, and which is located in the mountainous northeastern border of Bohemia (see Škvorecký 1988).
15. In the English translation of the book, the fans are called Zoot-suiters, but throughout the Czech version (Škvorecký 1958), they are called Pásek. Škvorecký wrote a book in 1948–9 when he was twenty-four years old; it was published in 1958, and it was immediately banned, officially because of the celebration of idle and disinterested youth interested in jazz, and of his “disrespectful” presentation of the Soviet Red Army liberators.
16. For an overview on the life in Warsaw under the German occupation, see Szarota (1995).
17. *Signal* was the Nazi propaganda illustrated magazine distributed throughout the occupied Europe during the war. For an overview on the Nazi ambivalent relationship towards jazz, see Kater (2003). For an overview on wartime access to instrumental jazz by listening to Radio Stockholm, reading jazz magazines such as the French *Jazz Hot*, and watching films such as the Swedish *Swing it, Pupils (Swing Mistern)*, see Škvorecký (1978, 1988).
18. For an overview on the social structure of the Jampecok and Biki-niarze, see Horváth (2005), Polanski (1984), and Potocki (1994).
19. For an overview, see Potocki (1994) and Tyrmand (1995).
20. Szabó, Pál. “Will the Moral Grow by Itself?” (“Kialakul-e önmagától az új erkölcs?”). *Free Youth (Szabad ifjúság)*, Budapest, April 23, 1954: 2.
21. Ostrowska, Zofia. “Rural Dandy Infected by American Fashion” (“Amerykańską modą zaraził się wiejski elegant”). *Banner of Youth (Sztandar Młodych)*, Warsaw, N 289, December 4, 1951: 5.
22. For an overview of the postwar anti-cosmopolitanism campaign, see Zubkova (1998) and Starr (1994).
23. Rusakova, E. “Who of Them is Stiliaga” (“Kto iz nih Stiliaga?”). *Komsomol Truth (Komsomol’skaia pravda)*, Moscow, August 11, 1956: 2.
24. Gogoberidze, Gr. “‘Style’ and Its Followers” (“‘Stil’ i ego pokloniki”). *Soviet Culture (Sovetskaia kul’tura)*, Moscow, January 18, 1955: 2. The article lists the names of both the parents and their Stiliagi children.
25. Gogoberidze, “‘Style’ and Its Followers” 1955: 2.
26. Reliance on the ethnic in the arts and applied arts was executed through the new organizational structures, which were hastily established in East Europe in the late 1940s, and specifically devoted to promotion and production of new ethnic-style artifacts,

- music, and dances, as well as to preservation of the existing ones. For an overview of the role of ethnic in socialism, see Bartlett (2010).
27. *Free People (Szabad Nép)*, Budapest, September 8, 1950, quoted in: Vitányi, Iván. “The New Hungarian Social Dance Culture” (“Az új magyar társasági tánckultúráról”). *Cultured People (Művelt nép)*, Budapest, N 8, October 1950: 16.
  28. Maliszewski, Waldemar. “‘Bikiniarz’ is a man who cannot distinguish truth from fabrication” (“‘Bikiniarz’ to człowiek, który nie odróżnia prawdy od fałszu”). *Banner of Youth*, Warsaw, N 286, November 30: 1951: 3.
  29. For an overview on the Warsaw and Budapest prewar nightlife and culture, see Nowicki (1992) (Warsaw) and Lukacs (1988) (Budapest).
  30. For an overview on the cultural life in the East European capitals under the German occupation, see Szarota (1973, 1995) (Warsaw), Demetz (2008) (Prague), and Lukacs (1988) (Budapest).
  31. “This Time for Young Men” (“Tentokrát i pro mladé muže”). *Woman and Fashion (Žena a móda)*, Prague, 1952, N 9: 20.
  32. For the practices of mutual surveillance, see Kharkhordin (1999).
  33. On socialist realism in fashion and the arts, see Bartlett (2010).
  34. The Zoot Suit is characterized by a long jacket reaching the knees and a pair of extravagantly cut trousers, pleated at the waist, widened at the knees, and tapered at the cuffs. In 1940s USA, the blacks and Chicanos sartorially rebelled in their flamboyant Zoot Suits against both their deprived social status and the war austerity which limited the use of fabric. For an overview on Zoot Suit in the USA and the UK, see Cosgrove (1984).
  35. The Zazous were small in numbers and restricted to central Paris. Due to their love of jazz and swing, they were initially called the Swings. It is assumed that they acquired their later name Zazou after Cab Calloway’s song “Zaz, zuh, zaz.” Their dress and lifestyle dedicated to listening to jazz and dancing swing were immortalized in Boris Vian’s novel *Vercoquin et le plankton* (1947), as well as in the collection of his wartime poems *Cent Sonnets* (1984: 51–9). By 1943, the raging opposition in the collaborationist French press will make the Zazous if not quite disappear then certainly less visible. For an overview on the Zazous, see Bollon (1990) and Loiseau (1977).
  36. See the cartoons reproduced in: Chenoune (1993: 204–5).
  37. The East European factual and fictional materials relate only to the Zazous and not to the other youth groups who dressed similarly and listened to jazz in occupied Europe (for example, Szarota 1995; Škvorecký 1978; Tyrmand 1995).
  38. Jaś. “Flashy Youth” (“Tombakova mlodzież”). *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, Warsaw, N 248, October 20, 1941.

39. “Potápka, Pásek, Hooligan” (“Potápky, páskové, chuligáni”), a round table at the Czech channel ČT24, January 8, 2011. See <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/exkluzivne-na-ct24/osobnosti-na-ct24/112025-potapky-paskove-chuligani/> (accessed April 24, 2012).
40. The English translation uses only the word “dandy,” but the Czech original (“Bassaksofon,” in Škvorecký 1967: 113–14) specifies all these different names used in war-torn Czechoslovakia for a young man interested in jazz and a particular, Europeanized version of the American Zoot Suit with narrow trousers. For an overview, see also: “Potápka, Pásek, Hooligan” (“Potápky, páskové, chuligáni”), a round table at the Czech channel ČT24, January 8, 2011. See <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/exkluzivne-na-ct24/osobnosti-na-ct24/112025-potapky-paskove-chuligani/> (accessed April 24, 2012).
41. On the Teddy Boys’ dress style in the late 1940s and early 1950s, see Breward (2004: 125–38) and Ehrman (2004: 112–15).
42. Marchant, Hilde. “The Truth about the Teddy Boys and Teddy Girls.” *Picture Post*, London, May 29, 1954: 25–8.
43. Kwiatkowski, Leon. “I am ‘Bikiniarz’” (“Jestem ‘bikiniarzem’”). *Banner of the Youth*, Warsaw, N 291, December 6, 1951: 3.
44. Oral testimony, OSA/RFE Items 8619/54, mf 43, quoted in Brown (2008).
45. “This Time for Young Men,” 1952, N 9: 20.
46. Kruzhkov, Nik. “The Mitrofans of Modern Times” (“Vremen no-veishih Mitrofany”). *Komsomol Truth*, Moscow, February 3, 1957: 2.
47. “This Time for Young Men,” 1952, N 9: 20.
48. So-called commission shops existed in all socialist countries. They were state-managed and sold somebody’s goods, mainly of Western origin, for a commission.
49. Pochivalov, L. “How Wide Should Trouser Legs Be Cut?” (“Kakoi shiriny shit’ brioki?”). *Komsomol Truth*, Moscow, October 5, 1958: 3.
50. Gogoberidze, “‘Style’ and Its Followers” 1955: 2.
51. Checked pattern, considered alternatively American or British, was especially controversial, both during the war and in the immediate postwar period. Stiliaga, Bikiniarze, and Pásek are often depicted in checked jackets, while girls who socialize with them wear checked skirts.
52. Beliaev, “Stiliaga,” 1949: 10.
53. Odolska, W. “Disabling a Hooligan” (“Obezwładnić chuligana”). *Simply (Po Prostu)*, March 30, 1954: 7; “This Time for Young Men,” 1952, N 9: 20.
54. The checked cloth cap was worn by working-class men at the end of the nineteenth century in the West, and, due to its working-class

- credentials, was accepted by Lenin and other Bolsheviks following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.
55. Similar youth groups were given different names in the different parts of Poland. While the *Bikiniarze* were related to Warsaw, Cracow's disaffected youth was called *basanty* (*Pheasants*) or *dzo-lerzy* (apparently coming from "jolly"); see Polanski (1984: 71) and Tyrmand (1995: 144).
  56. Gogoberidze, " 'Style' and Its Followers" 1955: 2.
  57. The Zazous wore wide ties, while the Teddy Boys wore narrow ties, called "boot-lace" and "slim Jim" ties.
  58. Timofeev, Boris. "Garri." *Crocodile*, Moscow, N 34, December 10, 1953: 5.
  59. "Asanov, Nikolai. "Whisperer" ("Sheptun"). *Crocodile*, Moscow, N 16, June 10, 1954: 4–5.
  60. Tikhonenko offers the account of the shady black-marketeers' world in 1950s Leningrad, claiming, among other things: "The people (related to us) with admiration ... There were around thirty black marketeers at that time. We were Leningrad's chosen boys, fast, intelligent, eager to learn and wishing to get free."
  61. Kruzhkov, "The Mitrofans of Modern Times" 1957: 2.
  62. Káti, Anna. "The Girls Are Also Responsible" ("A lányok is felelősek"). Reader's letter within the article "On Dance and Dancing Culture" ("A táncról és a tánczenéről"). *Free Youth*, Budapest, May 16, 1954: 4
  63. Ścisłowski, W. "Vampires" ("Wampirzyce"). *Pins (Szpilki)*, Warsaw, N 31, August 5, 1951: 5.
  64. Gogoberidze, " 'Style' and Its Followers" 1955: 2.
  65. Tardos, Tibor. "Marika's Clothes" ("Marika ruhái"). *Women's Journal (Nők lapja)*, Budapest, N 48, December 1, 1955.
  66. Silzong, Irena "What Will Happen to You Jutka?" ("Mi lesz veled Jutka?"). *Women's Journal*, Budapest, N 43, October 27, 1955.
  67. Novoplianskii, D. "Wrong Direction" ("Lozhnoe napravlenie"). *Komsomol Truth*, Moscow, June 27, 1957: 3.
  68. Novoplianskii, "Wrong Direction," 1957: 3. Aleksei Kozlov also claims that all schoolgirls "had identical braids wrapped up on top of their head" (Troitsky 1988: 14).
  69. Kruzhkov, "The Mitrofans of Modern Times" 1957: 2.
  70. For an overview on the concept of the New Man's Body, see Clark (1993).
  71. Ostrowska, "Disabling a Hooligan," 1951: 5.
  72. Ostrowska, "Disabling a Hooligan," 1951: 5.
  73. Krotkii, "Varnished Claw," 1946: 4.
  74. Beliaev, "Stiliaga," 1949: 10.
  75. Fedorov, Iu. "Burning Desires" ("Zhguchee zhelanie"). *Crocodile*, Moscow, N 8, March 20, 1954: 3.

76. “This Time for Young Men,” 1952, N 9: 20.
77. Mark Allen Svede (2001) perceives Dolto’s reference on dandy as a result of an absent father in relation to the spread of the Stiliagi following Stalin’s death, but I maintain that it could be interpreted in a more general context.
78. Gogoberidze, “‘Style’ and Its Followers” 1955: 2.
79. “This Time for Young Men,” 1952, N 9: 20.
80. Timofeev, “Garri,” 1953: 5.
81. The similarities between human behavior and the behavior of these two animals could have been a reason for such comparisons. Their specific traits, such as “unruliness” and tendency to “thoughtlessly” copy the humans, linked them to the traits despised in the socialist dandies, who were declared “unruly” and “thoughtless” in their appropriation of an alien culture. In contrast, there has been much sympathy towards monkey and parrot and their striking similarities with the humans in the Western accounts (see Schwartz 1996: 143–73).
82. Ćwiertnia, Jerzy. “New Year’s Crib” (“Noworoczna szopka”). *Simply*, Warsaw, N 1, January 3, 1952: 8.
83. Odolska, “Disabling a Hooligan,” 1954: 7.
84. Gogoberidze, “‘Style’ and Its Followers” 1955: 2.
85. The article refers to a writer Thomas Mayne Reid, whose novels on the American West enjoyed a worldwide popularity, including Russia, especially with boys. Moreover, the *Crocodile* article’s title: “Montihomo: The Varnished Claw” draws on a young wishful adventurer who signed his farewell letter with: “Montihomo the Hawk’s Claw” in Anton Chekhov’s story “The Boys.”
86. Krotkii, “Varnished Claw,” 1946: 4.
87. Launched in 1942, *Tarzan’s New York Adventure* is the sixth Tarzan film to feature actors Johnny Weissmuller and Maureen O’Sullivan.
88. Gogoberidze, “‘Style’ and Its Followers” 1955: 2.
89. The column “Readers’ Letters,” a letter by Zd. Šantorová, Prague XIX, *Young Front (Mladá fronta)*, Prague, March 31, 1946.
90. For an overview on *Koktejl Kholi*, see Rütters (2006).
91. Vitányi, Iván. “The New Hungarian Social Dance Culture” (“Az új magyar társasági tánckultúráról”). *Művelt nép (Cultured People)*, Budapest, N 8, October 1950: 16. The article was a reaction to a reader’s letter against American lifestyle and its various manifestations published a month earlier in the daily *Free People* on September 8, 1950.
92. Vitányi, Iván. “The New Hungarian Social Dance Culture” (“Az új magyar társasági tánckultúráról”). *Művelt nép (Cultured People)*, Budapest, N 8, October 1950: 16.
93. Vitányi, “The New Hungarian Social Dance Culture” 1950: 16.
94. Gogoberidze, “‘Style’ and Its Followers” 1955: 2.

95. Vajda, Péter. “I Am Searching with the Battery ... ” (“Lámpással keresem ... ”), discussion in the article “On Dance and Dancing Culture,” *Free Youth*, Budapest, May 16, 1954: 4.
96. “We Learn to Dance” (“Uczymy się tańczyć”). *Simply*, Warsaw, N 23, June 5, 1952: 5.
97. On the Voice of America, see Starr (1994: 210). As claimed by Starr: “Before the Stiliagi, jazz had been absorbed into the cultural establishment and crushed by it. Jazz emerged from the Stiliagi’s incubator as the centrepiece of a new sub-culture, cultivated for its own sake and without compromises” (Starr 1994: 237). Starr further states that “the ban on jazz recordings enormously increased their value as a commodity in the Stiliagi circle,” which resulted in “bootleg recordings reproduced on X-ray plates” (Starr 1994: 241).
98. OSA/RFE Items 8619/54, mf 43, quoted in Brown (2008).
99. The Sixth Youth World Festival took place in Moscow in the summer of 1957, while the fifth one happened in Warsaw in 1955. *The New York Times* described the Moscow festival as a “dizzying round” of games, conferences, parties, and carnivals that gave Soviet youth their first opportunity to interact with youth from non-communist countries.
100. Anon., “Once More about Jazz” (“Eshche raz o dzhaze”) (Review of Readers’ Letters). *Soviet Culture*, Moscow, October 1, 1957: 2.
101. Anon., “Once More about Jazz,” 1957: 2.
102. Anon., “Once More about Jazz,” 1957: 2.
103. Pochivalov, “How Wide Should Trouser Legs Be Cut?” 1958: 3.
104. Pochivalov, “How Wide Should Trouser Legs Be Cut?” 1958: 3.
105. Pochivalov, “How Wide Should Trouser Legs Be Cut?” 1958: 3.
106. Pochivalov, “How Wide Should Trouser Legs Be Cut?” 1958: 3.
107. Pochivalov, “How Wide Should Trouser Legs Be Cut?” 1958: 3.
108. On simulation as a pattern of the Soviet behavior in the public eye, see Kharkhordin (1999).
109. The Stalinist ZMP (Union of Polish Youth) has been replaced by two organizations: ZMS (Union of Socialist Youth: mainly workers, few student members) and ZMW (Union of Rural Youth). For an overview of the *Simply* riots, see Sherman 1958: 34).
110. Hoff, B. “The Influence of the Proletariat on Fashion” (“Wpływ proletariatu na mode”). *Przemiany (Transformation)*, Katowice, N 3, October 28, 1956: 7.
111. Kamyczek, J. and B. Hoff. “About the Dress Style of Our Young People.” *Przekrój (Cross Section)*, Kraków, N 649, September 15, 1957: 16–17. In the following issue of *Przekrój* (N 650, September 22, 1957: 16–17), Hoff covered other Westernized youth dress styles: the “be-bop” style practiced by those who were very interested in fashion, and Rock and Roll style, whose followers relied on the American rock and roll aesthetics: T-shirts, trainers on bare feet for the boys and ballerinas for the girls.



112. “The Cellar,” *Przekrój*, Cracow, February 10, 1957: 12–14.
113. “The Cellar,” 1957: 12–14.
114. “The Cellar,” 1957: 12–14.
115. Nádor, Ilona. “They Dance Like This” (“Igy táncolnak ők”). *Women’s Journal*, Budapest, N 34, September 19, 1957.
116. For an overview in relation to the Soviet Union, see Kharkhordin (1999); for East Europe, see Neuburg (1972).

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