Contents

Introduction: Everyday Life and Recent History – A New Field of Ethnological
Research
1. A Culture of Shortage: Citizens' Living Standards as an Instrument of Political
Manipulation
Forty years of consumer training – Disaster: A convenient starting point – The marginalisation of private
trade and crafts - A bureaucratic, producer-controlled market - Barometers of the political mood: Sugar
and butter – "Temporary meat shortages": The chronic ailment of the system – The whimsical generosity of
the authorities: Imports – The realm of alcoholic oblivion – Selective egalitarianism: Branch privileges and
rationing coupons – Princesses behind the counters – A retreat to the canteen – The jungle of industrial
goods - Ambitions and imitations - Refrigerators and nails - Paper: A politically sensitive product - Woe
betide the sick and travellers! - An expedition to the "Pewex" - The charm of colourful plastic - Persuasion
and fantasy – The legacy of the shortage culture: The psychological burden
2. A Creeping Darkness: The Indoctrination of Secondary School Students in the
1940s
Ill-fated indoctrination – Postwar poverty and illusions – Young generation of the 1940s – Returning
heroes – Western broadcasts and their listeners – More oppression – Belongers and non-belongers –
While paying lip-service – School of newspeak
3. A Retreat to the Cinema: The Reception of Western Films by the Younger
Generation under Stalinism
The young postwar cinema goer – The celluloid past – Very British – Shadowed by the Vichy censor – Stillborn hopes – Pop-tunes from the forbidden world – Roar of the Hollywood lion – Dull and cruel – Polish disillusionment – Film Arcadia
4. Profession and Propaganda: University Education in the Grip of Ideology and
Poverty
Politically corrects and incorrects – Old and new universities – Supervisors of loyalty – Studies remodelled – Military classes – Fading zeal
5. More Isolation than Integration: Students in the Cultural Landscape of Postwar Uni-
versity Towns

Object of communist hatred: Cultural tradition – Old city-dwellers – Cracow under the heel – How to tame students? – Propaganda versus religion: A backfire – City-dwellers and newcomers: An uneasy coexistence – Dance campaign – Popular mythology of the West
6. Political Protest and Snobbery: Fashion among Cracow Students in the Early
1950s
The ideological battlefield: Entertainment and fashion – Dull and drab – Western military clothes – The network of informal peddlers – Bazaar folklore – Second-hand style – Trousers: A challenge for the tailor – Political incorrectness: Hairstyles – Flagging revolutionary spirit
7. Hiking, Mountaineering and Speleology: The Subculture of Escapism 177
To flee and forget – Under the tent canvas – Code and style – The Tatras closed off and controlled – The lure of faraway mountains – Bureaucrats and compromises
8. A Mechanical Fetish: Social Frustrations, Political Conformism and Private
Cars
Bureaucrats in their embellished limousines – Motorcycles for work heroes – A graceless design from the East – Dreams under control – The objects of social status: The scooter – Technical backfire: The Syrena – "Cheap and affordable", but rather tiny – Car-fans in the bureaucratic trap – A humiliating visit to a garage – A useful vehicle or a prestigious toy?
9. Drab Paradise: Towns in the Governance Philosophy and Practice of Postwar
Poland
10. Poland's Closest Neighbours: Official Communist Stereotypes and Popular
Myths
The immobility of the "fraternal" system – The timid exchange of professionals – Exotic Czechoslovakia – Budapest folly – Obedient and uniformed – Arrogant Yugos – Shopping menace – Politically correct Germans – Seeds of xenophobia – "Lazy and poor"
11. Eight Years Later: Back from the Planet of Apes?
Bibliography

. 293