The American journalist Harrison Salisbury was very surprised to encounter Tarzan on Moscow's Gorky Street when visiting Russia in 1949. To be precise, he did not meet Tarzan himself nor did he bump into the American actor Johnny Weissmuller on Moscow's main street. Rather he encountered the Soviet version of Tarzan: a young lad who amused him and his friends with the piercing cry of ‘Ekh-Dzhein’ (Hey-Jane).

Tarzan was a phenomenon in Soviet postwar youth culture. He inspired a new hairstyle (long at the front and back, short at the sides) among trendy young Soviet men, provoked innumerable imitations of the above-described kind, and was well known even in remote areas of the country. By the time Salisbury met Tarzan as part of Soviet youth culture, the fetching hero had made a remarkable journey. The film copies, which introduced Soviet audiences to the man from the jungle and American film sensation, had come from occupied Germany as so-called trophy items and were shown in Soviet cinemas in the dubbed German version with Russian subtitles. Tarzan, who only made his way onto the Soviet screens because the Soviet postwar cinematic industry was in desperate need of money, had thus already entertained fascist Germany before he found himself in communist Russia. His on-screen persona was then filtered through the eyes of his enthusiastic Soviet audience, who applied their own views, desires, and preferences to it, turning him – the semi-primitive of the jungle – into a counter-icon for the strict, rule-bound Stalinist society in which they lived.

Tarzan had mass appeal among Soviet youth, but he proved particularly inspiring for what was arguably the Soviet Union's first subculture: the so-called stiliagi. Dubbed ‘style-seekers’ by the disdainful Soviet press, these youngsters did indeed aspire to bring ‘style’ to their lives, taking great care to dress in Western fashion (tight trousers, colorful ties, and thick-soled shoes became stiliagi markers), to comb their hair in an extravagant way (Tarzan's quiff provided early inspiration, while later Fellini's films made

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the ‘Italian’ style popular), to bond over the sound of jazz gleaned from the Voice of America and trophy records brought home by returning veterans of the war, and to dance faster and more daringly than their peers. There is no doubt that in terms of looks and spirit the *stiliagi* were part of a wave of jazz-inspired youth cultures in Europe, which drew their cultural repertoire from the American swing scene, and which had already spawned the Swing kids and Swing Heinis in fascist Germany and Austria, the Zazous in wartime France, the zoot-suiters in the United States, and later the Teddy Boys in postwar Britain. They all were counterpoints to an environment that was militarized and culturally repressive. At the same time they all were products of the growing cultural influence of America in Europe and part of an increasingly global youth culture. And yet, they all were specific to their time and place. The *stiliagi* were unmistakably shaped by their Soviet habitat and experience. They were not perfect replicas of their Western peers. Vasilii Aksenov, later an acclaimed émigré writer, considered himself a real ‘chuvak’ (the *stiliagi* term for themselves) because he had acquired a reindeer sweater as sported by John Payne in the film *Sun Valley Serenade* – a classic among Soviet youth. While later contact with Moscow’s golden youth soon disabused him of his version of ‘stylelessness’, his life as a provincial *stiliaga* in Kazan was no less rebellious or subcultural than that of the boogie-woogie dancing KGB offspring whom he encountered in the Soviet capital.4

Aksenov’s personal history as the son of the party activist Evgenia Ginsburg, repressed in 1937, and at the time of her son’s forays into fashion, an inmate of the GULAG, highlights another specific aspect of Soviet non-conformist youth culture: its conscious or unconscious relationship with political dissent and regime criticism. While most *stiliagi* prided themselves in their apoliticalness, for some (including Aksenov) it was a significant part of their journey into opposition. Even for those who did not go down this road consciously, the mere enactment of the *stiliagi* lifestyle opened up questions about what their actions meant within the rigidly normative Soviet system. They certainly had a different valence to the very similar behavior of their Western counterparts. Two decades later another Western-inspired, and more consciously global, youth subculture – the hippie movement – would raise the same questions: how Western were Western-inspired youth cultures across the Iron Curtain? How successful were youth in transgressing their national boundaries? Or to what extent did they remain subject to the particularities of their location and circumstance?

This chapter is going to take a detailed look at two significant waves of Western-inspired youth culture in the Soviet Union and examine their significance with reference to the questions posed above. Both the *stiliagi* and the Soviet hippies took their semiotic clues from phenomena that originated in the West and spread around the globe, yet both could not help but respond to and be shaped by more homegrown factors such as the repressive