

**Socialism, the Thaw and Youth Delinquency:
From the Analysis of Polish Films in the Thaw**

How was youth, especially youth delinquency, represented in the socialist culture of the former Eastern Bloc? And what did such representation mean in the context of modernity in the 20th century? In answering these questions, this paper focuses on Polish films from around 1956 that deal with the problem of “hooligans”.

During Poland’s Stalinist era (1949-1955), hooliganism was one of the most serious problems in Polish society, but until the “Thaw” it had never been addressed head-on. However, public attention to “hooligans” dramatically changed in 1956, when Poland underwent a great socio-cultural transformation, the so-called “Polish October”. As a result of this change, hooliganism widely drew attention in public discourse, including documentary films.

From an analysis of the images of hooligans as represented in these films, this paper tries to make clear the peculiarities of youth in socialist Poland’s official discourse. In such films, images of youth represented a cultural possibility of the Thaw that went beyond the official discourse. At the same time, however, such views of youth would suffer a certain re-assimilation within the existing system.