

Two Articles from *Neue Berliner Illustrierte* (1956)

Abstract

These two articles reassured readers that looking good and having fun were by no means incompatible with Socialism and the Socialist way of life.

Source

What Will become of Lipstick and the Powder Compact?

Can I still take a walk with my boyfriend alone, or does that not fit with the Socialist life? Questions that concerned girls from Leuna, too, at the beginning of the competition. Without explaining a word, they themselves gave the best answers. There is Liane Heinrich, blond, slim, dressed in a modern and tasteful way. The former metalworker apprentice's nail polish is coordinated with her lipstick. In the evening, Liane, who is now an electrician, wears seamless stockings and white sandals with red stiletto heels with her white Perlon dress. Yet she does not attract attention within the brigade. Everyone there knows how to dress nicely, everyone can handle lipstick and a powder compact. They proved it in the evening at the theater. They rightly translated living socialistically with living more beautifully. For them that also includes making themselves pretty. However, their tool box in production control does not become a makeup kit. There they produce unmade-up quality work. And the boyfriend? Liane has brought her Hans-Joachim along. The brigade knows him and knows about the great love between the two. In Berlin, too, the two found many a quiet fifteen minutes for themselves all alone.

Are Dancing and Drinking Unsocialist?

Why would they be? Asks Ute and raises the glass with the golden "Mosel." Why would they be? – Rosi, Inge, and Liane, enthusiastic dancers all of them, shake their heads in astonishment. They think it's unsocialist if you get drunk, miss work because of it, and let down the collective. They think it's unsocialist if, following the Western model, you jump around the dance floor like a monkey and in the process try to look as foolish as possible. Unsocialist, because it is undignified. But they, all of them members of the Free German Youth, have really thought this all along. So what is new about their way of life? It starts at their work place. Here, where they, like millions of people, contribute every day to the growing prosperity of our republic, the new forms of our life are growing. There, comradesly help and collaboration with one another gradually become a matter of course. The unjustified "war" with the neighboring brigade is ended forever. One helps them and thanks them for many a piece of advice. After all, the neighboring brigade wants the same thing: to help fulfill the Seven-Year Plan. But the new forms of life are not abandoned at the factory gates. Shared brigade evenings, visits to the theater and movies, in which husbands, fiancés, and friends also take part, change the so-called private life, as well. The better they get to know each other, the better they get along – the men with their girlfriends and wives and vice versa. In the daily ten-minute conversations before the beginning of work, many a "private" problem can be solved as well. – Opponents claim that the family is being destroyed among us. That is nonsense. However, what has become obsolete with us is the old, petit-bourgeois way of life according to the motto "My home is my castle." Together we want to create happiness for all.

Werkbank. Die DDR in den fünfziger Jahren. Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1990, p. 105

Translation: Thomas Dunlap

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