

Excerpt from *Zoot Suit: The Enigmatic Career of an Extreme Style*.

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Excerpt from *Zoot Suit: The Enigmatic Career of an Extreme Style*

2012 |

Author(s): Peiss, Kathy; et al.

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Abstract

Kathy Peiss knocks the established literature aliter in her study of the zoot suit. This flashy, over-the-top garb of the 1940s has long been studied as a uniform of hipsters and *pachucos* in the United States, who were targeted for violent repression by white police and servicemen in the 1943 "Zoot Suit Riots" in Los Angeles. Peiss audaciously opens up her study to discuss the signifier of the zoot suit internationally. In a tour de force, she outlines the sense of cultural identity fostered among zoot suiters and allied long-coat wearers, as well as the political meanings assigned to them, in such diverse places as Mexico, Trinidad, South Africa, and the USSR during the 1940s.

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