

Fashion & Wars in Ukraine and Poland

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Introduction

What were we working on?
Why did we choose this topic?

- Lack of easily available studies (and therefore difficulty to find something to directly compare/contradict)
- Relative lack of popularity in available materials
- Desire to present the material in an accessible fashion

Methods used

- Primarily consisting of materials available online
- Portraits and landscape pictures and images of fashion magazines, collated on archive websites, often taken from museums
- Articles and blog posts elaborating on the conditions and providing additional images



Results – fashion of Ukraine around WWI

- Simplicity and uniformity quickly dominated fashion at this time.
- Rapid industrialization and war shortages led to more utilitarian designs, compared to fancy fashion before.
- Fabrics became simpler and less ornate, with an emphasis on durability and affordability.
- The influence of Soviet ideology led to a standardization of fashion, with a preference for modest and uniform attire that emphasized collective identity over individual expression.
- Stylish military suits and accessories, such as caps or wallets, can be seen in postwar clothing. This reflected a certain militarization of culture and the influence of military life on fashion.
- The revival of national identity and therefore the rise of traditional Ukrainian elements in clothing (in places where Ukrainians were a significant majority)

Results – fashion of Poland around WWI

- Focus: fashion during the period of Belle Epoque, and during WWII. Fashion influences primarily from the Western Europe world – cities like Paris, Vienna, London.
- Secession fashion for women: usage of corsets to evoke a flower-like wavy silhouette, mostly pastel hues, elaborate patterns/floral motifs decorating the dresses
- Oriental and classicist-inspired fashion for women: Introduction of blouses and long skirts in the late XIXth century, reshaping of corsets, simpler cuts, more free flowing, evoking antique tunics and sometimes oriental dress cuts.
- Men's fashion: Fashion strongly influenced by London and not strongly tied to women's fashion: dark frock coats, white shirts with tall stiff collars, later on introduction of three-piece suits
- A remark on the fashion of provincial nobility: strong attempts to keep up with the Europe's fashion in spite of necessarily being behind on it due to travel times, as well as keeping up appearances despite lack of wealth, making imitations using fashion magazines as a basis, from cloth often produced in one's homestead
- WWII's broader influence on fashion: The designs were naturally simplified, with little among decorations remaining – though one could still see some on hats, for example. Materials were limited and new clothing had to be made from poorer sort of fabric, like wool jersey.
- Women's fashion: The less elaborate post-secession style seemed to be retained throughout the war, with blouses, jackets and flared skirts being common. Clothes had some decorativeness to them but it remained minimal. The rising prevalence of women's presence in various necessary jobs also contributed to valuing practicality over complexity in the outerwear.
- Men's fashion: In men's case there were little changes. Those who weren't called into war and didn't wear military uniforms, generally reused pre-war designs – suits, simple bowler hats, jackets.

Results – fashion of Ukraine around WWII

- **Simplicity and Practicality:** Due to rationing of materials and resources, clothing during the war years was characterized by simplicity and practicality.
- **Military Influence:** With many men serving in the military, military-style clothing became prevalent among civilians, especially for men. Women's fashion also saw influences from military uniforms, with tailored suits and dresses featuring military-inspired details such as brass buttons.
- **Rationing and Shortages:** The scarcity of fabric and other materials due to wartime rationing led to clothing shortages and limited choices in terms of styles and designs. People often had to mend and repurpose old clothing, and creative use of materials became essential.
- **Modesty and Conservation:** The scarcity of resources during the war years also influenced attitudes towards fashion, with an emphasis on modesty and conservation.

Results – fashion of Poland around WWII

- World War II Fashion:
 - General Clothing: Simple, worn-out clothing and military uniforms were common.
 - Women's Fashion: Due to commodity shortages, women adopted a more masculine style, including socks and boots, wide pants, jeans, T-shirts, and thick labor clothing.
 - Men's Fashion: Influenced by military attire. Besides uniforms, men wore suits, coats, and more informal clothing like tieless shirts and puffy pants.
- Post-War Fashion:
 - Economic Impact: Post-war bazaars saw a resurgence of shoemakers, stocking makers, tailors, and dressmakers, although many were too poor to afford their services.
 - Resourcefulness: Women used alternative materials for sewing, such as curtains, tablecloths, blankets, men's clothing, and even parachutes.
 - The first fashion magazines began to appear around 1945.
- Communist Influence on Fashion (Late 1949):
 - The communists aimed to incorporate the spirit of socialist realism into fashion, promoting modest and asexual styles.
- Western Influence and Aid:
 - Although Poland received limited Western aid, clothing resources from UNRRA set a fashion standard among men. Military clothing like khaki, jackets with epaulettes, parkas, and military sweaters became popular. Notably, Zbigniew Cybulski in "Ashes and Diamonds" wore a UNRRA military jacket, highlighting this trend.

Sources

Ukraine WWI

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<https://apostrophe.ua/ua/news/kyiv/misto/2024-04-27/jizn-pri-tsare-i-bolshevikah-tsvetnyie-foto-kieva-v-1910-1930-e-godyi/319799>

- Galicia 1920 (+ a few from 1933 and 1916)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/15693951@N00/albums/72157662062406194/>

- Kyiv in the photo of the 20s

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Poland WWI

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- An online archive of various pictures in specific periods of Polish history:
https://fotopolska.eu/Polska/WszystkieZdjecia/b6568,1914-1918_-_I_wojna_swiatowa,2280,48.html?f=1072918-foto
- Various blog posts both offering images and supplementing information:
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Sources pt. 2

Ukraine WWII

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