

## Fashion of Soviet Women

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The revolutionary agenda of the Soviet government led by the Bolsheviks began in October 1917 and had a radical ideology that created the catalyst of the revolutions following 1917. Soviet Russia saw a dramatic shift in politics and society that drastically altered the expectations of its people. The Bolsheviks attempted to be rid of the church, the bourgeoisie, the upper class, and the family, with the ultimate aim of establishing a classless, stateless society.<sup>1</sup> The new regime brought sweeping changes, including the nationalization of industry and land, the elimination of capitalism, and the establishment of workers' councils (Soviets). Russian society underwent a profound shift as the Bolsheviks sought to eliminate class structures and promote equality. The reality of the transition from an imperial, monarchical state to a socialist state was marked by civil war, economic hardships, and the suppression of dissent. Expectations for a new and better society ran high, fueled by the Marxist-Leninist ideology that supported the Bolshevik vision. However, economic struggles and the consolidation of power by the Bolsheviks led to a divergence between the idealized vision of a socialist utopia and the challenges faced in society. This period of radicalization set the stage for the emergence of the Soviet Union and the policies and social norms to follow, but it also laid bare the complexities and contradictions inherent in pursuing revolutionary ideals.

After the Russian Revolution, significant changes in laws and politics were specifically targeted toward women's rights and their roles in society. Bolshevik ideology emphasized gender equality and the emancipation of women in Russian society. From the beginning, the Bolsheviks emphasized women's rights and added that women shall be granted rights in the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia*. (New York: Arno Press, 1972.) 44.

constitution. Shortly after the October Revolution, the Bolshevik Government guaranteed equal rights for men and women in the workplace, in education, and in everyday life. The Family Code was introduced to Russian society in 1918 and was transformative to women, the family, and marriage. The Family Code granted women the right to vote, no-fault divorce, and recognized civil marriage.<sup>2</sup> In a sense, women in Soviet Russian society were embracing modernity and leaving traditionalism from the former leadership of the Tsarism. Consequently, women entered the workplace and became the perfect proletariat by wearing collective and uniform garments that emphasized rationality over style. Thus, women were beginning to be treated in the same way as men. A primary factor in the Bolshevik formation of policies was gender equality, which lasted from 1917 until the mid to late 1920s. As women were straying the path from less traditional expectations and towards modern ideas and actions, so did fashion. As women's roles in society were changing, their fashion also needed to reflect how they were becoming active members of the proletariat; they needed to dress in ways that made working efficient and a group effort.

Historians acknowledge the importance of fashion to society and how fashion design reflects a period in history; whether it is socially, economically, politically, or personally, fashion is important to acknowledge in history. Fashion choices provide a unique way to study the culture and people of an era because clothing has been an identification of individuals. As the author of "*Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing*" Diana Crane explicitly added in her text that clothing is an artifact because it reveals the behavior and empowerment of social identities.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Crane argues that fashion style is a form of art and that it was seen as valuable to upper-class societies before the Industrial Revolution. Clothing indicates a person's

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<sup>2</sup> Anne E. Gorsuch, "A Woman Is Not a Man': The Culture of Gender and Generation in Soviet Russia, 1921-1928." *Slavic Review* 55, no. 3 (1996).

<sup>3</sup> Diana Crane, *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

social class, gender, occupation, and religious affiliation. But with the wave created by the Industrial Revolution, there was also the emergence of ready-made clothing, which made fashion lose its social class affiliation. Instead, ready-made clothing favored the economy rather than symbolic importance and personal expression; in the case of the Soviet Union, uniformity became the indicator of Soviet Russian society. Crane discusses how personal style could link to an increase in materialistic values over morality. Additionally, one's style is influenced by leisure time and instances where people are unemployed in society.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, having a personal style was the opposite of what the Bolsheviks wanted. Women in Soviet Russia were fed propaganda to join the workforce and wear similar clothing as their male comrades. Thus forms a utopia that contains the question of this essay, what role do fashion designers and advertisements have in the glorified portrayals of the "New Soviet Woman" that emerged after the Bolshevik Revolution? It was apparent that the Bolsheviks wanted women to work and be a part of the new society of the proletariat. Clothes are important to all genders because fashion is about making a statement, and fashion and classes work together to create a social agenda. Consequently, the Soviet Union promoted styles that embodied socialist principles, which were reflected in both men's and women's fashion. Still, it is notable how those principles influenced women's fashion in the 1920s.

Fashion within the Lenin period, which was the first years following the revolution, was seen as more modern and simplistic. Vladimir Lenin was the first leader of Soviet Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and implemented various laws and policies that would reflect the treatment of women. The expectations of women in Soviet Russia are reflected in fashion and the way society expected women to appear in terms of clothing, hairstyles, and makeup. Moreover, the clothing designs reflect how society was expected to dress. There is a substantial amount of evidence that demonstrates that fashion revolved around simplification, uniformity, the working

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<sup>4</sup> Crane, *Fashion and Its Social Agendas*, 11.

class, androgyny, symbolism, and functionality in the Soviet Union. The Bolsheviks highly emphasized the differences between the proletariat and bourgeoisie as well as the removal of capitalism. As uniformity and the class system fell out, the abundant styles associated with Tsarism fell out and were traded in for styles that represented functionality over style.

Simplicity and functionality are the key to understanding the new wave of fashion in Soviet Russia during the rise of the Bolsheviks and socialism. With the emphasis on the “New Soviet Woman,” Russian women in the 1920s were expected to be workers, literate, physically fit and clean, sober, agnostic, and most importantly, committed to socialism and personal development: they were to be a “comrade” instead of a “mother figure.” Leaders of Soviet Russia were trying to make women equal to men and remove the idea of women being inferior in society.<sup>5</sup> At the time, Vladimir Lenin believed that women could be more than “household workers” if they were educated on politics and could understand the new reform, in which case Lenin could gain more members of the Bolshevik movement.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Alice Schuster, “Women’s Role in the Soviet Union: Ideology and Reality” *The Russian Review (Stanford)* 30, no. 3 (1971): 260–67.

## Fashion Before the Revolution

Fashion before the revolution, in Imperial Russia, served as a significant identification of identity. Fashion before the early twentieth century was focused on presenting one's class, wealth, and social standing in society. For the bourgeoisie, fashion represented their wealth; therefore, more color and fabrics equated to more money, more time for leisure, and really, no need to participate in the working class.<sup>7</sup> The upper class could wear excessive silhouettes and frilly fabric because they did not need to engage in manual labor, unlike the working class. To them, fashion was a privilege more than a necessity over anything. Elite bourgeoisie fashion consisted of tight-fitting corsets and narrow-fitting gowns, with fewer layers of fabric on the petticoats representing class, since sometimes their gowns were made in



**Figure 1:** A young woman in her evening dress from 1915, demonstrating the narrow-fitting gown with the excessive add-ons that represented class.<sup>6</sup>

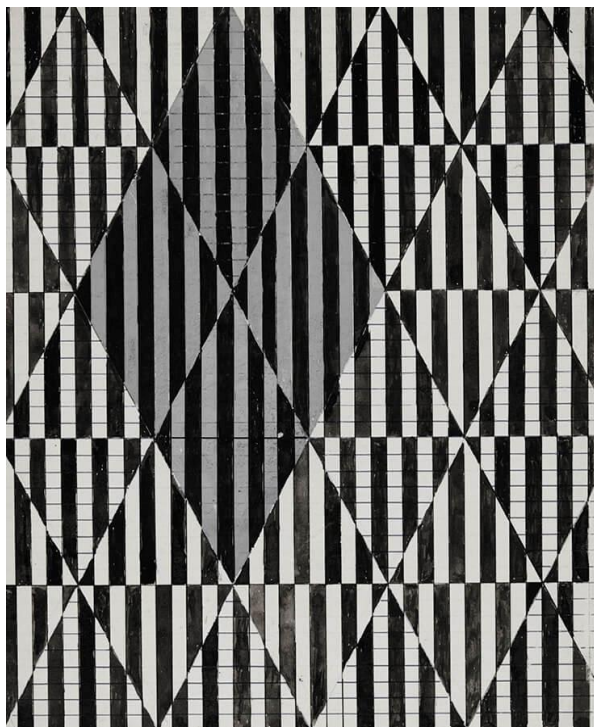
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<sup>6</sup> Christine Ruane, *The Empire's New Clothes: A History of the Russian Fashion Industry, 1700-1917* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 2009), 180.

<sup>7</sup> Crane, "Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing," 3.

France or other popular cities.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, fashion for the lower class consisted of functionality. They still wore similar silhouettes, but their fashion was not viewed as excessive. It was rare to see the lower-class don colorful clothing because they did not have the time nor the services to take care of the expensive fabrics, such as silk and wool. Overall, style and fashion before the Russian Revolution were considered a class privilege, but afterward, simplicity and uniformity were widely embraced by officials and the lower class.

### Origins of the New Art



**Figure 2:** Varvara Stepanova's textile design, in 1924.<sup>9</sup>

The origins of the New Art, characterized by the Avant-garde movement, can be traced to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe (and eventually globally) as artists sought to break away from traditional artistic conventions and explore innovative forms of expression. The Avant-garde movement is known for its sharp lines within art and the message of breaking away from traditional ideals when it comes to the role art has in culture. Many textiles prints and clothing designs from designers like Lyubov Popova and Varvara Stepanova reflected Avant-garde artistry in their prints

and sketches. The prominent designers' sketches have clear hints of Avant-garde style within

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<sup>8</sup> Ruane, *The Empire's New Clothes*, 180.

<sup>9</sup> Varvara Stepanova textile design, 1924.

the lines and shapes present. The intention of Stepanova's designs was for female workers to wear them in the factories following the 1918 Family Code. Just like Avant-garde art, Avant-garde fashion design demonstrates how artists would play with optical illusions and play with patterns. In the design curated by Stepanova (Figure 2), she is playing with triangles, lines, and hexagons. The shadowing and coloring of black and white give an optical illusion of movement. Similarly, the two designers are notable for their designs as they continued the formation of a new "proletarian dress" that reflects the working woman.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the new form of fashion was influenced by the sweeping art form of Avant-garde. Characterized by embracing a spirit of exploration, defying conventional norms, and questioning societal expectations, the Avant-garde movement redefined the boundaries of artistic expression during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Avant-garde movement embraced a spirit of experimentation, rejected established norms, and challenged societal expectations and was influenced by a rapidly changing world marked by industrialization and urbanization. The movement aimed to redefine the very nature of art, push boundaries, and foster a radical departure from the artistic conventions that had prevailed for centuries.<sup>11</sup> The Avant-garde movement appeared in Russia during a period of reconstruction as the new art form was about pushing boundaries and moving toward unconventional styles; with its bold lines and unconventional frames of artistry, it reflects fashion in the early twentieth century of Soviet Russia.

### **Fashion After the Revolution**

Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, fashion underwent a significant transformation as the new political and social order sought to break with the traditions of the

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<sup>10</sup> Gleason, Abbott, Kene, Peter, and Richard Stites, *Bolshevik Culture*, 209.

<sup>11</sup> Varvara Stepanova textile design, 1924.

past. The revolution's impact on fashion was marked by the emergence of new silhouettes and a push towards uniformity, both of which reflected the ideals of the Bolshevik regime. Narrow-fitting gowns with many layers and opulent designs were switched out for simple blouses and pants, demonstrating how Russian society shifted to emphasize the proletariat. Crane mentions that uniforms made it easier to identify working-class members, mainly because they would wear clothing that was comfortable enough to work in, such as coveralls.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, after the Bolsheviks formed policies that altered Russian society, they began to eliminate the upper class and the bourgeoisie by replacing them with workers and employees, or the proletariat. In his article "*The Great Retreat: the Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia,*" Nicholas Timasheff includes how the first socialist society consisted of a pyramid of members of the Communist party, workers, former peasants, and intellectuals, and at the very bottom was the former upper class.<sup>13</sup> In other words, the proletariat exchanged positions with the upper class; therefore, opulent upper-class fashion was exchanged for working-class fashion, which contained simple garments that lacked vibrant colors, excessive fabrics and jewels. With the new exposure to fashion came a new wave of designers who would become prominent figures in Bolshevik culture.

Various artists moved to fashion design following the Revolution in 1917, but the two most prominent fashion designers in Soviet Russia in the early twentieth century were Varvara Stepanova and Lyubov Popova. Both artists are known for reforming textile and fashion design and making sharp shapes, lines, and figures in their designs. A fabric swatch from Varvara Stepanova in 1924 (Figure 3) used colors like white, red, and black, a common color combo during the period, but due to aging the color has faded to make it beige, pink, and black.

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<sup>12</sup> Crane, *Fashion and Its Social Agendas*, 87.

<sup>13</sup> Timasheff, *The Great Retreat*, 300-301.



Most of Stepanovas's designs contained similar contrasts and designs, some with circles, squares, and triangles that make the contrasting shapes and colors stand out from one another. The textile sample in Figure 3 provides an example of how some textile designs were produced, but oftentimes prints designed by Stepanova were not manufactured.<sup>14</sup>



**Figure 3:** (left) Varvara Stepanova's piece of fabric from 1924, the original piece is about 12x11 CM.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 4:** (right) Two of Lyubov Popova's designs from 1923 or 1924.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Lyubov Popova is also known for her designs that are similar to Stepanova's, as most of her textile designs contain the popular sharp features of triangles and squares demonstrating the uniformity created to be worn by the working class, and most importantly, the working-class women. The image of Popova's design (Figure 4) resembles Stepanova's in that they both contain sharp features.

Designers like Stepanova and Popova designed clothing that had an androgynous silhouette. Notably, Stepanova's clothing designs featured more genderless approaches and seemed more athletic; in contrast, Popova's clothing leaned more towards feminine features

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<sup>14</sup> Olga Gurova, "Ideology of Consumption in the Soviet Union," In *Communism and Consumerism*, 7:68–84.

that fit more tightly and had frilly or excessive fabrics, though there were still touches of shapelessness in her designs. Moreover, fashion in Soviet Russia was all about functionality: garments that could be worn at work and not get in the way. Clothing for women in the workplace guaranteed the comfort of the worker, which is why women's clothing is typically perceived as being loose and not form-fitting.



**Figure 5:** (left) Lyubov Popovas's sketch of a coat and costume in 1924.<sup>15</sup>  
**Figure 6:** (right) Varvara Stepanovas sports uniforms, 1924.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, loose clothing is also linked to the beginning of mass machine-made clothing that followed the industrialization of the period; the emergence of such fashion resulted in the elimination of tailors that would alter clothing. Moreover, tight-fitting clothing indicated the need for alterations, a bourgeoisie ideal that represents style and vanity. After the Industrial Revolution, mass-made clothing became prominent globally. Additionally, with the Industrial Revolution came more job opportunities and, therefore, more positions for women to fill in the factories. With more women entering the workforce, there needed to be more clothing; thus, the boom of machine mass-made clothing represents collectivism. Designers

<sup>15</sup> Strizhenova, Tat'iana Konstantinova, and Era Mozolkova, *Soviet Costume and Textiles 1917-1945: Tatiana Strizhenova* (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), 137.

<sup>16</sup> Strizhenova and Mozolkova, *Soviet Costume and Textiles*, 150.

like Popova and Stepanova worked in factories, creating different textile prints in the textile warehouses.



**Figure 7:** “Summer-Dress”, on the left, contains instructions and what type of materials are needed to make the dress at home. Lamanova states in the guide that using comfortable fabrics is essential for the perfect outcome.<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, multiple garments of the same color, print, and shape were created with some as guides to take home. Because mass-made products became the rave, it is associated with uniformity. Women bought and made the same clothes because it was easy, and it was pushed by the Bolsheviks. Additionally, sewing templates were made by designers like Popova, Stepanova, and Nadezhda Lamanova; these guides made clothing easy to recreate at home for those who could not afford machine-made clothing. Convenience and easily made clothing became even more popular with ready-to-wear clothing that was mass-produced and sewing guides available on the streets of Russia. Additionally, ready-to-wear clothing was

<sup>17</sup> Strizhenova and Mozolkova, *Soviet Costume and Textiles*, 86.

picked up by advertisements that targeted women and their positions in society as workers, and intellectuals.

### **Advertising of Fashion in the Workplace**

Fashion for women in the workplace consisted of similar pieces and trends as on the urban streets of Soviet Russia. The scale of propaganda that was targeted towards women to join the workforce in the 1920s is apparent in fashion marketing.<sup>18</sup> In the 1920s, it was more common to find propaganda with women in the workplace than directly fashion-focused advertisements. Due to the Bolsheviks trying to make every member of Russian society a proletariat, they were consistently pushing women into the workforce. Of course, with the growth of machine-made clothing came the increase of warehouses specializing in textile printing. Factories needed more workers, and women needed jobs. Additionally, leaders of the textile mills were described as “boyish” and lacking femininity in their appearance.<sup>19</sup> The head of the textile mill’s description could give insight into what the Bolsheviks approved of and how they expected women to appear and behave. Another story, *The Women Run Everything*, adds more to the behavior the Bolsheviks and Soviet Russian society expected of female workers. Factory workers were “fresh-faced” and enthusiastic about what they did at the mill. Workers were hard-working, and they were expected to go beyond their limits, even pregnant women, who were expected to work until their due date.<sup>33</sup> Women were expected to be

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<sup>18</sup> Gurova, “3 Ideology of Consumption in the Soviet Union” 3.

<sup>19</sup> Kelly, *An Anthology of Russian Women’s Writing*, 283.

dedicated and excited to work in textile mills. Women in the workplace were seen as essential in the fashion industry of Soviet Russia. Women

would work in textile factories, where designs from Popova, Stepanova, and

other designers were manufactured. Consequently, working women were expected to wear coveralls, most times navy blue or just a dark color, have their hair tied up or covered, and express overall uniformity and simplicity. In the short story by Ekaterina Strogova, *The Foreman and The Forewoman*, the characters who work at a textile mill talk about their coworkers and what they wear to work. With the women's decent wages earned at the mill, older women

would show up to work in navy blue coveralls and kerchiefs (handkerchiefs) that covered their faces and hair.<sup>34</sup> The coveralls could be linked to protecting their clothing or their body, but they are also a demonstration of uniformity. Since clothing had been a sign of position in society, the navy-blue coverall uniforms represented the attempt to erase class and social hierarchy in the workplace. Uniformity made a statement by symbolizing that the working class was united; the matching uniforms worn by women represented the togetherness of working women.

**Figure 8:** “Women workers” “They are waiting; Our factories and fabrics.” 1920 Soviet propaganda poster that represents targeted propaganda.<sup>20</sup>



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<sup>20</sup> “Women workers” “They are waiting; Our factories and fabrics,” 1920’s Soviet propaganda poster.

## Fashion on the Street

Multiple sources discuss advertisements and how they always emphasized urban female workers having good hygiene and public presence when it comes to manners, attire, and awareness of consumerism; this was targeted to women from the Bolsheviks as a push to become the “New Soviet Woman.”<sup>21</sup> To the Bolsheviks, advertising was a perfect way to get the message across. In the 1920s to 1930s, a modern Soviet woman was meant to engage in productive labor; she needed to exercise physically and behave morally to work proficiently in society.<sup>22</sup> Advertisements from the 1920s are a strong demonstration of what the Bolsheviks expected from Soviet women, which was taking care of the body to be able to work efficiently and to be a proper worker in Soviet society.<sup>23</sup> What was the point of emphasizing the working class and the proletariat if members of society were not well enough to work? Additionally, functional and simple pieces were the preferred styles of both women and men in Soviet society. A short story written by Ekaterina Strogova, *The Foreman and The Forewoman*, describes the fashion pieces women wore inside and outside the factories. Although the story is fictional, it gives insight into life for women in the 1920s. Outside of the workplace, younger women would be seen wearing leather jackets, simple blouses, wrinkled skirts, and patchy shoes. This style of women’s fashion is a clear indication that they supported the revolution and the reformation of politics by the Bolsheviks. Therefore, the expected style of women outside of the factory was to be simple and quite different from pre-revolutionary fashion, which consisted more of polished shoes and ironed garments. In the story, Strogova adds that women who went to formal gatherings would wear silk blouses, clean and fancy shoes, and hair in nice braids and other tidy updos.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Kravets, Olga, and Özlem Sandikçi, “Marketing for Socialism: Soviet Cosmetics in the 1930s.” *The Business History Review* 87, no. 3 (2013): 461–87.

<sup>22</sup> Kravets, and Sandikçi, “Marketing for Socialism: Soviet Cosmetics in the 1930s,” 466.

<sup>23</sup> Kravets, and Sandikçi, “Marketing for Socialism: Soviet Cosmetics in the 1930s,” 467.

<sup>24</sup> Kelly, *An Anthology of Russian Women’s Writing, 1777-1992*. 283.

While the clothing was still feminine, it differs from the fashion before the 1920s. Women are wearing simple blouses instead of extravagant gowns and still wore fancy shoes for formal events. Still, they were also wearing patchy shoes to demonstrate the shift away from consumerism and class structure hierarchy. Furthermore, the women in the story and the women in society outside of the workplace were always wearing loose-fitting clothing. Though clothing has many interpretations, loose-fitted garments could be seen as an emancipation from women's exclusion from society.<sup>25</sup> Constrictive and elaborate clothing that emphasizes a woman's body is seen as a symbolic way of women being excluded from male-related activities.<sup>26</sup> This could be why women's clothing in Soviet Russia became loose and highlighted androgyny. To society, and more importantly, to women, clothing is a way to show power, which indicates why androgyny became so influential in fashion in Russia. With androgynous fashion, women were not confined to gender roles. Androgyny in fashion allowed women in Russia to express a sense of power and challenge societal expectations related to femininity.<sup>29</sup> This is why shapeless pieces became vital to women in Soviet Russia who were trying to escape the restrictions that had been put against them for centuries. Even though women could work and become active members of society, there were still limitations that excluded them from other activities in society.

### **The Ideal Woman in the 1920s**

The ideal woman in Soviet Russia, both outside of the workplace and in urban spaces, was meant to have a natural beauty to them. The lack of consumerism came with the limitation of vanity; women should not have been focused on their makeup or their clothing, but women should work on Soviet ideology. Multiple advertisements from the 1920s include little to no makeup on

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<sup>25</sup> Crane, "Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing," 100-101.

<sup>26</sup> Gorsuch, "A Woman Is Not a Man': The Culture of Gender and Generation in Soviet Russia, 1921-1928" 641.

their models or drawings.<sup>27</sup> Beauty was criticized and compared to bourgeoisie ideals, in which taking the time to do a full face of makeup was considered an upper-class privilege.<sup>36</sup> If any makeup products were to be worn, it would have been a bit of rouge on the lips and cheeks, or even charcoal, but that is more apparent later in the 1930s.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, it was not common for women to wear a large amount of makeup. Additionally, short hair was the revolutionary length, particularly because the upkeep of long hair was a luxury that most women did not have once bourgeoisie ideals were limited. Short hair was the beauty standard in 1920s Soviet Russia because it was less maintenance, less of a risk of getting in the way of work, and predominately associated with the “boyish” look present in 1920s fashion. Additionally, short hair for women symbolized a way to break away from traditional standards of femininity, something that was concurrent for women in Soviet Russia.

Furthermore, the “boyish” look could also be because women were reaching for equality and may have seen short hair as a tool in accomplishing equality. Another reason short hair and less makeup were so common in Soviet Russian fashion is that advertisements by the Bolsheviks advocated for a “less is more” style that had to be functional and rational.<sup>29</sup> Young working girls were asked once about their use of cosmetics, to which they replied, ““We do not use cosmetics. It spoils the face.””<sup>30</sup> Women in Soviet society were more concerned with being functional and comfortable than with their beauty and vanity.

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<sup>27</sup> Gurova, “Ideology of Consumption in the Soviet Union” In *Communism and Consumerism*, 7:68–84.

<sup>28</sup> Kravets, Olga, and Özlem Sandıkçı, “Marketing for Socialism: Soviet Cosmetics in the 1930s,” 473.

<sup>29</sup> Kelly, *An Anthology of Russian Women’s Writing*, 283.

<sup>30</sup> Gurova, “Ideology of Consumption in the Soviet Union,” In *Communism and Consumerism*, 93.





**Figure 10:** (left) Lilya Brik and Elsa Triole show dresses from fashion designer Nadezhda Lamanova: Date taken: October 21, 1923.



**Figure 11:** (right) Woman with a Star. taken on: 1923.

## Conclusion

The fashion sphere in Soviet Russia following the October Revolution in 1917 underwent a profound transformation for all, but particularly for women. The emergence of the “New Soviet Woman” was symbolic of gender equality and a departure from traditional gender roles and social norms that had been oppressive to women for centuries. Designers such as Varvara Stepanova and Lyubov Popova played a significant role in shaping a new aesthetic for society. Drawing from the Avant-garde movement, Stepanova and Popova created a new fashion that reflected the ideas promoted by the Bolsheviks. Their designs reflected simplicity, functionality, uniformity, and androgyny that promoted the working class and eradicated the upper class by stripping away opulent and excessive garments. Thus, the move toward uniformity in clothing mirrored the broader societal shift toward collectivism and the establishment of a classless, stateless society.

The workplace became a significant arena for the expression of these new fashion ideals, as women were entering the workforce in larger numbers. Advertisements and propaganda featuring female workers advocated for the “New Soviet Woman” as an active member of the

working class and proletariat, emphasizing physical fitness, productivity, and rejection of Bourgeoisie standards within beauty and fashion. Clothing in the workplace, and the streets, represented simplicity, androgyny, functionality, and equality. The lack of extravagant accents stood for the working class's unification and the elimination of class divisions.

However, it is important to note that the "New Soviet Woman" realities did not last through the next decade of the 1930s. With the rise of Stalin came the revival of traditional and conservative social values. With the imposition of traditional values and gender roles that were more limited by Stalin's government, the emphasis on androgynous fashion and the rejection of bourgeoisie aesthetics started to erode. The demands placed on women by society changed over time, affecting how they worked and setting trends in clothing. Therefore, Stalin's regime impacted women and sent the progress made for women back a decade, where concepts of femininity and being a mother figure were more important than being an active member of society.

In all, the fashion choices in Soviet Russia following the Bolshevik Revolution were not just about style; they were a manifestation of revolutionary ideals, an attempt to redefine gender roles, and a visual representation of the changing societal fabric. The Bolsheviks used fashion to effectively communicate their vision of a new society in Soviet Russia. Designers and advertising were crucial in creating the perception of the "New Soviet Woman," which reflected the socialist goals being pursued and larger societal shifts. The transition from imperial elegance to proletariat uniformity was more than just a change in fashion; it was a symbol of the significant sociopolitical change that characterized this era of Russian history. The brief window of androgynous and functional fashion in the 1920s reflected the revolutionary spirit of the time, setting the stage for future shifts in ideology and aesthetic preferences in the Stalinist era.