



**OUR BRITISH
FASHION
AWARENESS IN THE
PART OF THE XX
CENTURY**



Introduction

Too many words are said about fashion....

Too many colorful reference books can be found on the shelves. Picturesque magazines with attractive models are displayed everywhere. All looks like a fairy tale.....

But why is this fairy tale almost about French designers and fashion houses? Is there any English connection and what is this story like in my country and particularly in my city in the time when my parents and grand parents were young?

Did we have the same trends in fashion with Great Britain for the same periods?

We decided to study this subject by the example of the latter half of the XXth century, taking them by decades.

Just for this, we've searched for information on British fashion, we've learned our situation and made a survey among our relatives and friends for making further comparison and careful analysis.

1950-s

United Kingdom

Fashion history would never be the same again for austere Britain after the 1950s when youthful look became an emerging fashion voice. Since then French fashion designers like Dior and Chanel dominated British world with their patterns. British women quickly adopted Dior's "H", princess "A" and "Y" lines in garments.

Chanel's simple elegant collarless jacket, finished with gold braid, enjoyed its spell of popularity even in 60-s!

Although fashion houses patterns were aimed at wealthy clients only, it quickly became the standard formal look for women at all social levels, so much they were imitated and copied.

In this era women were made look feminine and glamorous. The right effect could only be achieved if you wore brightly patterned dresses with tight waists and wide, just below the knee skirts with stiff, starched petticoats.

Imitation fur, or fur fabric was very popular and mink fur and leopard skin pattern made young women dream!

Men's fashion was introduced with tighter fitting narrow legged trousers, and pullovers .

A new consumer driven society was born and girls would never aspire to look like being 30-40 years old, but like movie stars!



In the 1940s and 1950s American culture became very dominant in Europe, having influenced Britain as well. The era of jeans for casual wear emerged.

The dramatic impact of movie films and the prominence of film stars set the fashion in manners, make-up, hairstyle and clothes.

Women, girls, men and youths, - all desired look-alike copies of outfits, accessories and jewelry, worn by the most popular screen idols.

Their reflection could be seen in hairstyles in using curlers and lots of back combing.

It was widely believed that Hollywood glamour would rub off on you if you had the alike clothes and developed the look. One way to achieve this look was to make your own clothes or customize them.



1950s

The USSR

In the USSR nobody had said about New Look's Style up to death of Stalin

As our Victory in WWII gave renewed impetus to the economic regeneration of our country people tried to gain the most necessary things for life.

Thus, even later a fashion question remained out of range of Soviet women interests: the pictures of fashionable garment were still limited to the captured or Chinese fashion.

But style of New Look became firmly established

in the USSR only in 1956 with the screen release of the film «Carnival night», in which Lyudmila Gurchenko was dressed in the model of Dior, offered to her in 1947. Since then, Soviet society followed Dior's and Chanel's fashion garments, drafting and sewing clothes by their own.





Interim conclusion

As we can see from the studied materials, Britain itself was heavily influenced by French fashion and American lifestyle in 50-s It was a period of rather conservative attitudes and values.

At the beginning of 50-s rationing was in both countries and post war period marked by regaining export-import markets to survive. Nevertheless, a new restored peaceful life made people want and expect more for the future. Dancing parties were a regular meeting place for youths and models of that time provided a careless and relaxed atmosphere.

Both countries have New Look's style, but the USSR got it much later. Also, we take notice of woman's fashion, it is ideal figure with a thin waist and magnificent bust, which was created by a corset, protective straps on thighs and gaskets in a bra, and careful make-up which was inflicted already from early morning. For formal occasions Chanel's look was the must in both countries with a little time difference.

People starved of novelty became the hostages of TV black and white screen, which showed vigorous Rock-n-Roll and the beauty of fashion style was widely displayed in dance.

1960-s

United Kingdom



Like all social phenomena, fashion in 60-s had to go through revolution in shapes, lengths and prints.

By 1963 the wide skirts of 50-s had disappeared

and mini was about to rule the minds and made old fashioned underwear and stockings go. They've been replaced by tights and panty-hose to let mini to the offices!

Hairstyles have also changed: the geometric style of Vidal Sassoon was in the look.

By 1966 Mary Quant was producing short waist skimming mini dresses and skirts that were set 6 or 7 inches above the knee.

It would not be right to believe that she invented the fashionable mini skirt, though the idea of making "in mini" came to Courrèges and Quant nearly at the same time. She only made dresses and skirts even shorter for her boutique Bazaar. She is rightly credited with making popular a style that had not taken off when it made its earlier debut, but in the wake of her original - London in 60-s was awash with progressively named boutiques.

If 50-s were influenced by French designers, 60-s underwent Italian impact: with its tapered trousers and thin lapels on jackets. They added to a new look striped blazers, kipper ties and the Mod style was complete!

Bright colors and geometric patterns epitomized this period; in footwear fashion there was an equal love for wrinkle pickers (pointed toe) among men and women and calf-length boots for the latter. Slim fitting trousers became popular as a casual wear for women.

It's the right time when London got the name of "Swinging London" and some people got the name "beautiful people"

Though Mod Fashions were mainstream culture fashions and styles quickly changed. Thus, in mid 60-s Hippy style comes with its long hair, beads, beards, kaftans, paisley patterns, floral shirts, jackets with wide lapels, velvet and brocade flares, dresses in velvet and lace...its influence was long lasting

People with smaller pockets (working class) were unable to join those "beautiful ones" and by chance became further subcultures founders!

By the end of 60-s hemlines started to drop, having offered midi and maxi.



1960-s

The USSR



The idea of fashion on the whole was not encouraged, as official ideology, considered it unnecessary, even harmful and seducing young people.

in 1960th different fairs and international exhibitions became more frequent with participation of western firms.

Things were judged not by their design or authorship, but exceptionally by their origin – if

They were telling you that the thing was «Yugoslavian», «Italian» etc., it automatically meant «chic» and “of high quality”.

They opened a chain of restricted shops “Berezka” or outlets like “Special fitting out for workers” for those somehow related to international missions (ambassadors, diplomats, marines, airways staff, administrative circles, international traders and so on.

Things began to change since Viacheslav Zaitsev has gone to work as a fashion designer at the International Fashion House.

In the late 60-s Hippy style came to our country from America, having brought all its kinds of garment.

They launched publishing Russian magazines like “Rabotnitsa” and “Krestianka” where trends of time in fashion were shown with patterns so, that good hands could make all models themselves.

It was the time when expensive fabrics appeared on sale in shops and in clothes markets.

One could see women wearing brightly patterned dresses with tight waists and wide, just below the knee skirts made up from 6,8,12 gussets they were made with round in shape yoke. To be fashionable at that time you should wear high heeled perforated shoes (open-toe) or the ones with buckles

Men preferred tighter fitting narrow legged trousers, and pullovers ; hats were very popular among youths. Sports outfits were very comfortable for strolls and holiday activities.





Interim conclusion

Stylistically the 60-s freely borrowed from other periods becoming eclectic since then. It was the era of “Swinging London” and different music styles contributed to this diversity, what is not proper to our country.

We’ve still been cherishing the 50-s look, due to its appearance in the mid and late 50-s. The only style came to our territory and minds was Hippy, that brought garments with prints and colors.

A few people could enjoy their new fashionable look, as only restricted shops’ consumers had enough money and chance to buy these models.

TV and local magazines could help in changing style.

1970-s

United Kingdom



70-s fashion followed the one of 60-x in many ways, moreover it bursted into a multitude of different styles and influences. Thus, “flower” influence was everywhere in the air. There was a place for mini midi (mid-calf length) and maxi (full length) skirts.

Hot pants, ultra short shorts with bibs and braces varied the skirt’s theme. Long socks were worn with those pieces of clothes. On the top – tight fitting blouses or shirts in bright colors with big rounded collars or even printed T-shirts.

Increasingly flared jeans (just from the knee) were popular with men and women for everyday wear. Hipsters were also widely spread in wearing. Cheesecloth shirts and blouses showed the mainstream fashion trends.

Platform soles was another time defining element, mainly worn by women and more fashionable men. Trainers and canvas shoes were needed if you wore jeans or shorts.

Long hair becomes fashionable for both women and men!

This period has a lot of hangovers as 70-s “suffered with nostalgia for bygone years, since 20-s!

Brown shades, tweed, long skirts, long-sleeved shirts or smocks topped with a floppy brimmed hat had their revival.

Disco look as a new style began in the 1970s and was memorable for its hot pants look and Spandex tops. Shiny clinging Lycra stretch disco pants in hot strident shiny colors with stretch sequin bandeau tops were often adaptations of professional modern dance wear that found itself making an impact at discos as disco dancing became fashionable.

More often men wore skin tight see through shirts, open to the waist. Gold lame, leopard skin and stretch halter jumpsuits and white clothes that glowed in Ultra Violet lights capture the 70s Disco fashion perfectly.

Late 70-s were marked as a splash of Punk fashion: Punk bands created a new look which was based on a sexual fetish for black leather, combined with ripped T-shirts with provocative slogans printed on them. As Punk demonstrated rejection of anything, mean: protest, their ripped and bleached clothes, spiked hair, dyed in bright colors, black make up were also largely ignored by passers by of the decade to come.

1970-s

The USSR



Eclecticism in fashion styles was proper to 70-s in our country, as we had import things from Eastern, Asian and European countries. Clothes markets became a common place for buying something fashionable.

Folklore theme was introduced with embroidered sheepskin coats, folk blouses and embroidered woman's jackets, Turkish shoes, bags through a shoulder, leather wares, waistcoats, Indian saris, gauze and cheesecloth woman's jackets, gipsy skirts etc.

Retro style was a mainstream fashion trend of that time.

There wasn't a question about hemlines as mini, midi and maxi successfully coexisted in formal and casual wear, but this time they were more bell-bottomed.

Increasingly flared jeans were popular with men and women.

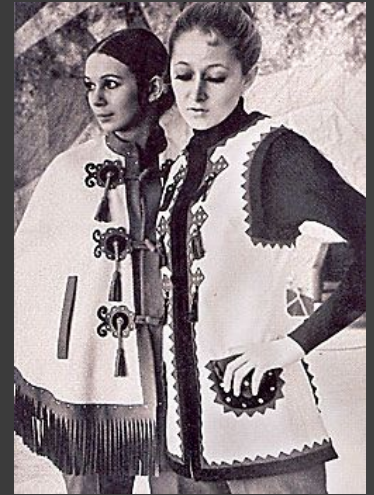
Platform soles were extremely popular and worn by women and more fashionable men.

70-s were also a triumph for knitted and crocheted fashion as having available ready-made garments, skilled creative Russian women hadn't let any laziness by making cardigans, jackets and pullovers.

Pop culture had a considerable impact on 70-s fashion, having introduced new shiny fabrics into mainstream fashion.

Banana trousers with gold border or edging replaced jeans.

in spite of their deficit, fur clothes had their comeback, in particular case fluffy ones like raccoon or polar fox.





Interim conclusion

As we stated, 70-s brought many improvements to people's lives; travelling abroad became accessible to many more citizens of both countries.

A new big luxury for people was a color television and this rare thing gathered those who wanted to see the world in its full beauty. The opportunity to share ideas involved new well-connections.

While Britain was experimenting with hangovers and new styles we caught up with the missing trends in fashion of 60-s and felt nearly contemporary and equal with them, except outrageous sub cultural elements in clothing that came and developed much later.

People here were happy to procure some foreign gadgets for their close.

1980-s

United Kingdom

The 80-s gave people more choices to get dressed than ever before. Punk style, which was now on the wane, turned the fashion world, as well as music one upside down and in this utter chaos there emerged New Romantics, inspired by historical costume and outrageous make up.

Such power dressing became essential for the career women, wanting to feel the equal of men in the world of business.

'Dynasty' the 1980s television fantasy soap series contributed a lot to promote fashions which enlarged the shoulder with special shoulder pads, what made them broader and hips appear narrower – a right image to assert your authority! One of the main characters was played by the naturally broad shouldered film star Linda Evans. Another icon of the style became Princess Diana, whose great impact is still undoubted.

Thus, a new generation of Yuppie claimed its rights.

Nevertheless, New Romantic look remained a fringe activity, mostly seen in trendy London clubs, while the rest of youths were still into Rockabilly, Mod or Punk or wearing flares.

In new distinctive features of the time one may mention that trousers became straight legged, double breasted suit and thin ties became popular. A fashionable touch was a striped shirt and polo shirts, but the latter were not worth having, unless they carried a designer label. Just in that period there was a trade in fake labels to sew them on cheaper things and as a result: to look like real expensive models.

In mainstream fashion they often were eager to have deck shoes (for men) and raincoats (for women) .

In the 1980s, fashion was influenced by the western economic boom and helped chain stores to prosper. Youth culture stopped

hogging the scene as the teenage market lost its impetus.

80-s are often viewed as an era of greed and selfishness.



1980-s

The USSR

Style of 80-s was considered to be very vulgar, possibly, for this reason it had a long run.

It remained eclectic due to the fact that imported things, like outfits were possibly the remains of previous seasons and people were buying garments they could afford.

Local manufactured things left much to be desired as nearly everything was in the same dull colors, nevertheless spotted print was hot at that time.

Many surprising things start to take place In our country, first a new European magazine appeared on sale called « Burda Moden». This new edition became an original «window to Europe», and our women were able to have a clear concept of what was fashionable in contemporary world society.

First fashion show finally took place in Moscow and became a regular event since then.

Those, who was able to sew, looked advanced and smart.

Perfection and boldness of woman of 80s affected the Soviet Union as well: the same shoulder pads were widely used in outfits, heavy fabrics gave an impression of firmness and self-confidence. Various imitation jewelry gave a hint of aspiration for being trendy.





Interim conclusion

The 80-s was an era of trends of different directions, but dominant was the one of being the City trader doing business; it was also a decade of deep social divisions, we felt changes in mid-80-s with “Perestroika” period. It was like an avalanche of information, freedom and opening opportunities for developing of any kind. This fact in history mixed everything since then.

New life conditions became more permissive than ever before and people lived on with great expectations about their future.

The trend towards looser fitting and layered clothing was coming from Japanese designers for the rest of new trends there was a TV series like “Dynasty”.

Russian people continue living within their means and were fortunately still far from those problems Western countries already had.

1990-s

United Kingdom



This decade in fashion adopted the spirit of 70-s in the manner of fashion styles' coexistence. They even started to call it "anti-fashion" in mainstream culture. Bright neon colors and abstract designs went on in wearing at casual and special occasions. The most popular, since mid-80s, clothes are mini skirts and cocktail dresses, made of leather or Lycra , long fitted blazers, silky or synthetic tank tops all this could easily be laced or sequined .

TV as usual set its pace in new look with its inspiring movie and music pop stars. Thus, after several films the chic things in modern clothing were made of Spandex, latex, PVC and being worn with high-heeled boots, as the revengeful heroine of "Cat woman"

Leather jackets were extremely fashionable as unisex garment.

There were some new trends for body ornaments: piercing involved the appearance of new top's hemline and gave birth to belly-shirts, that uncovered decorated belly button. So much uncovered skin space contributed to further piercing.

Somehow, other subcultures' garments made comebacks and maintained till another decade in modified forms.

Teenagers of 90-s wore khaki pants (cargo pants) and camo pants, young ladies favored Capri pants. It was a time of Aloha shirts in men's wear and baby T-shirts and spaghetti strap tank tops.

They applied beige, brown and nude matte lipstick nearly all this period; glitter was a common thing to apply on uncovered skin.

1990-s

The USSR



Women in 90-s were emancipated, wanting to look like men and be equal in every aspect.

Such ideas contributed to unisex style in fashion.

All flesh and elegant was drown into ripped out jeans, running shoes or trainers and crushed sport shirts.

Luxury of eighties bothered all, and magnificent forms and stunning features gave place to complete absence of natural feminine look, or even if they were, everything was concealed under manlike garments.

In this situation the way out remained the same – follow fashion magazines' patterns and sew Europe like things.



Interim conclusion

This time, seems, we caught up with the two previous decades and felt expert in some things. We new lots of fabrics and their properties, we tried different styles and thanks to the international relations in fashion sphere all new trends could be seen and imitated in time by humble people. There was a little difference between fashion house models and street fashion. Designers started creating art things to make this difference more distinctive.

Overall conclusion

The applied art to design clothing and lifestyle accessories created within the cultural and social influences of a specific time makes fashion design, but somehow, people who are not professionals are able to influence mainstream fashion in their places.

We thought a lot about global meaning of international communication and times.....

What is definitely known is the fact of international co-design. We couldn't state at any viewed decade in comparison that we had a purely British fashion influence due to the mutual impact of Western countries upon each other.

People of our country were also and still are in different social status: if in post war period they were somewhere beautifully, neatly dressed, - people in our region (most of them were political exiles) had to dress their children and themselves in things made from fabrics for foot wraps or modify the oldest second-hand things. Only their strong will maintained good look and taste in things.

Making survey among local people, we have found out that this fashion theme is worth studying further so it is individual and intimate how each person had managed to look trendy!

We've noticed the lack of information about detailed descriptions of fashion garments in different regions of our country and resolved that having our relatives still alive we can restore the real image of different generations in Russia listening and editing unforgettable vivid recollections.

Just talk to your local people and you'll be able to possess priceless facts for social history.



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Author's page



This project was
made by:

***Kozharova
Ulyana,***

grade 11 "A",
Secondary
School № 97
Krasnoyarsk
and

scientific adviser

Gorenskaya

Olga,
EFLT

