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DNIPRO WOMEN'S PERIODICAL "ROBITNYTSIA I DOMASHNIA HOSPODYNIA" (1926–1928) AS A GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF NEP FASHION

Khrystyna Astaptseva,

*Ph.D. in Journalism, Doctoral Student at the Department of Media Communications
of the Institute of Printing and Media Technologies,*

National University "Lviv Polytechnic" (Lviv, Ukraine)

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1578-5747

krisast@ukr.net

Abstract. The present article examines publications devoted to fashion and clothing production featured in the supplement to the Dnipropetrovsk-based newspaper *Zoria–Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia*—between 1926 and 1928. The publications not only rendered global fashion trends adapted to the constraints of the totalitarian regime but also provided practical guidance for women on tailoring, sewing, and garment care. Additionally, the periodical covered the state of the sewing industry in the Dnipropetrovsk region and the development of clothing design education within the broader discourse of Ukrainization and modernization.

The analysis of the publications demonstrates that fashion was not merely a matter of style but also functioned as an instrument of ideological and cultural transformation for women in Soviet Ukrainian society. Articles on fashion trends, clothing production, garment care, and the development of the sewing industry, involving discussions on women's emancipation, reflect the socio-economic transformations of the Soviet period. These transformations were influenced by European capitalist democratic values during the Ukrainization of the 1920s.

The role of fashion journalism in shaping the national consciousness of Ukrainian women in the 1920s and its connection to global trends holds particular significance for reinterpreting Ukraine's cultural heritage.

Key words: fashion, fashion journalism, women's periodicals, *Zoria* newspaper, free supplement to *Zoria* (*Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia*, 1926–1928), anti-Bolshevism, Ukrainization, New Economic Policy (NEP), Katerynoslav (Dnipro), feminism.

Introduction. The study of the Ukrainian women's press, which was published during the era of Ukrainization and the New Economic Policy (NEP), is of great importance because it allows us to take a fresh look at the process of self-identification of Ukrainian women during the Red Terror and understand that the concept of identity remained nationalistic and focused on pan-European values despite being affected by the totalitarian era. Erasing the Ukrainian press legacy of the totalitarian era is a profound mistake. Such a legacy needs thorough reinterpretation to finally eliminate the pattern of provincialism and colonial thinking. In fact, fashion journalism was also peculiar to women's magazines of the totalitarian era. And it was the bridge connecting Ukrainian women with sisters from democratic capitalist countries and gave the proper guidelines for self-awareness in the world community. Thus, it is crucial to merge the shades of history of different regions of Ukraine, which were antagonistic for a long time given the historical and political realities. Based on the study of approaches to rendering fashion trends and their perception by the readership, it is possible to draw valuable conclusions about the actual state of the national consciousness of Ukrainian women during the Ukrainization of the 1920s. The article focuses on the consideration of fashion issues on the pages of the supplement to the Dnipropetrovsk-based newspaper *Zoria–Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia*—published between November 1926 and May 1928 (16 issues were printed in total).

The purpose of the study. The research aims to analyze fashion publications in the Ukrainian women's magazine "*Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia*" (1926–1928) in the context of Ukrainization

and the New Economic Policy; to study their impact on the self-identification of Ukrainian women in the eastern region and the formation of national consciousness under a totalitarian regime.

Materials and methods. The article studies the content of the Dnipropetrovsk women's magazine "Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia" for the period of its existence – 1926-1928. In the scholarly discourse, Ukrainian scientists have omitted the journal's existence and functioning. A little wider, i.e., in the geographical and cultural-historical context of the day, the topic was considered in their works by Andriushchenko, N.A. "Reflection in the Literature of the Evolution of Cultural Paradigms in the Dnipropetrovsk Region in the Second Half of the 1920s-1930s" (Andriushchenko, 2014:198), "Cultural Life of the Dnipropetrovsk Region of the 1920s – the Early 1930s (Based on the Materials of the Journal "Zoria")" (Andriushchenko, 2013:156); Arkhireyskyi D. V. "Chekist Katerynoslav (1920–1921)" (Arkhireysky, 2001:33); Hohokhiia N. "Women in the Soviet Sociocultural Space of the 1930s: Gender Aspect of Urbanization" (Hohokhia, 2004:379); Lazebnyk V.I. "Katerynoslav of the Modernization Era (1890–1914)" (Lazebnyk, 2006:259); Levitskyi V. O. "Development of Light Industry Branches in Naddniprianska Ukraine in the Second Half of the 19th – Early 20th Century" (Levitsky, 2017:78). The research methodology relies on the following principles: analytical, comparative, and comparative-historical methods, retrospective analysis, and genre-typological analysis. To evaluate the cultural and ideological context, it is applied an interdisciplinary approach combining history, cultural studies and gender studies.

Results and discussion. "Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia" is a free supplement to the newspaper "Zoria", a mouthpiece of the Katerynoslav Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP). "Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia" was published from 1926 to 1928 in Russian, with its own numbering in the form of a separate journal. It is available in the funds of the V. I. Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine and Dnipropetrovsk Regional Universal Scientific Library named after the First Slavic Teachers Cyril and Methodius. Data on the supplement are introduced into scientific use for the first time since this printed mouthpiece has not yet been studied and covered in scholarly works by press experts. In total, 16 issues of "Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia" and 27 publications related to fashion and clothing production were published.

The period of the journal's functioning coincided with the era of Ukrainization. According to the 1926 address reference book "Katerynoslav Region", in Katerynoslav, which was renamed Dnipropetrovsk on July 19 of the same year, the Ukrainization of the communal services apparatus had begun on July 1, 1925. Thus, by the report time, it was Ukrainianized by 75%. The District Commission on Ukrainization was established on September 8, 1925, and 133 Ukrainization courses were organized in the district: of 4,058 students, 1,649 (40%) completed them. On average, state institutions were Ukrainianized by 30%, district executive committees – by 60-100%. As of September 1925, there were 73 courses with 2,001 students. Schools were 100% Ukrainianized, rural institutions – by 80-100%, hospitals – by 60% (Katerynoslav region: 1926 address reference book, 1926:282).

As a result, the publication of the supplement "Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia" in Russian was a temporary phenomenon. If it had not been prematurely closed due to the presence of materials with a bourgeois-nationalist hint, the journal would have switched to Ukrainian in 1928. In an article dedicated to the Press Day, the editor notes that "the circulation of journals in Ukrainian has increased significantly, but not enough. This shows that public interests and cultural needs of female workers, including housewives, are growing steadily." Therefore, it is evident how much women needed the Ukrainian-language press to develop their national interests (Printed publications day, 1928:4).

Regarding the editorial policy, the editorial board believed that "women are keenly interested in the issues of production and social life, child rearing, proper nutrition, and rational farming. The involvement of women in the press through their contribution to journalism is equally essential." Consequently, "although a small but consistent group of permanent correspondents from among

female workers” was rallied to work on the supplement “Robitnytsia i domashnia hospodynia”. They elaborated journalistic materials not only on narrowly feminine topics but also all spheres of industrial, social, and domestic life, not inferior to men. The editor praised the role of women in socio-cultural and journalistic realms: “It is impossible to carry out a cultural revolution without women. A woman has to fight every day to bring it to life. And she will be able to fight through active involvement into the press” (Printed publications day, 1928:4).

To understand the target audience of “Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia” and the role of fashion publications, we turn again to the 1926 address reference book “Katerynoslav region”. It states that according to the census of 1923, the population of Katerynoslav, Amur-Nyzhnodniprovsk, and Shliakhtivka was 73,325 men and 89,537 women, of whom 34.02% – workers, 27.14% – public servants, 13.04% – bourgeoisie, 6.2% – unemployed; by nationality: 42.5% – Russians, 32.2% – Jews, 13.8% – Ukrainians [p. 24]. Thus, given that “Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia” was a unique journal elucidating the women’s issue, at least a third of the indicated number of women (89,537) could be its subscribers (Katerynoslav region: 1926 address reference book, 1926:24).

When it comes to the state of the garment industry, Gubshveiprom, the Katerynoslav association of the garment industry, included a factory named after Volodarsky and shops in Katerynoslav, Zaporizhzhia, and Kryvyi Rih. In 1925, the factory had 104 mechanical sewing machines and 10 electric motors. The number of workers in 1923-1924 increased by 90%, in 1924-1925 – by 75%, and an increase by 25% was expected in 1925-1926. Production output was as follows: 1924-1925 – 17,952 conventional units; 1925-1926 – 60,000 units (an increase by 250%). Salaries grew from rub 51 in October 1924 to rub 74.8 in October 1925 (+47.5%). The cost of men’s coats decreased by 21%, trousers – by 7%, and underwear increased by 5% (Katerynoslav region: 1926 address reference book, 1926:125).

The modernization of the clothing industry was quite active, but the demand for making clothes at home did not disappear as there were expensive segments of the clothing range, e.g., underwear. Consequently, to save the family budget, it was more profitable for women to sew light clothes and underwear on their own. Therefore, if we analyze fashion publications in “Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia” (1926-1928), we can see that they can be divided into several categories following genre and topics.

1. Fashion news – sketches and descriptions of clothing models according to current trends: “Coats and Dresses of the Latest Fashion” (1926. No. 2, p. 8.), “Spring Fashion Season” (1927, No. 4 (6), p. 8), “Summer Fashion Season” (1927, No. 5(7) (71), p. 8), “Autumn Fashion Season” (1927, 8(10), p. 8.), “Winter Fashion Season” (1927, No. 11(13), p. 8), “A New Kind of Galoshes” (1927, No. 5(7), p. 5), “Spring Coats and Dresses” (1927, No. 2(4), p. 8), “Stars of Summer Dresses” (1927, No. 6(8), p. 8), “Fashion Corner” (1928, No. 2, p. 8.). Thus, it becomes clear that fashion in Katerynoslav (Dnipro) in the 1920s mixed rationality and restraint and focused on available materials and practicality, gradually moving away from military standards. Simple but elegant dresses with a combination of fabrics, bow pleats, and velvet belts were in vogue in women’s clothing. Woolen suits and jackets with an English collar dominated in business-style attire. Casual outfits comprised flannel and wool dresses, checkered patterns, and decorative buttons. Winter coats had fur collars and cuffs, spring – colored inserts. Men’s clothing remained classic with European influences: dark wool suits, military or working style shirts, and leather belts. Children’s clothes also had peculiar characteristics: boys wore suits with pants on the zippers, and girls wore dresses with pleated skirts and blouses with piping. As for fabrics, dressmakers actively used wool, flannel, cloth, drapes, and canvas. Gray, dark blue, brown, and black colors prevailed, for spring and summer – blue, red, and multi-colored patterns. From the drawings of dresses published in the supplement, it is evident that the most popular size was 48. It indicates a difference in then-beauty standards compared to the current one when the most common size is 44.

2. Women's emancipation and national policy. The journal also paid attention to women's emancipation in different countries. For example, photo notes "Turkish women are allowed not to cover their faces" (1927, no. 3(5), p. 7), "Unliberated" (1927, No. 5/7 (71), p. 6), "Down with the burqa!" (1928, no. 3, p. 2) reflect Soviet rhetoric on the "liberation" of women in the East. Materials prove the ideological impact that accompanied the fashion debate. The report on women in the garment industry "Needle and Shop-Window: "Dniproshveifabryka" (1926, no. 1, p. 4.) emphasizes their equality with men at work. It confirms a gradual change in gender roles in Soviet society.

3. Tailoring training and development. A photo note "In sewing circles" (1928, no. 2, p. 3) and M. Kurovska's article "On Topics of the Day: We Need a Handicraft School" (1928, no. 2, p. 7.) emphasize the importance of women's fashion education and hold Western European vocational schools providing women with thorough fashion training as an example. M. Kurovska noted that in Western Europe there were professional schools that gave women the opportunity to master the craft by vocation. In addition to cutting and sewing, they taught home economics, accounting, commercial law, drawing, anatomy, art history, and other disciplines. Students who wished to continue their studies could enter higher institutions to study in depth the quality of fabrics, history of costumes, chemistry of dyeing, and design basics. Such institutions aimed not only to train specialists but also to form the general education and artistic taste of future masters. The author stressed that Ukraine had to give up on outdated teaching methods and establish similar schools with training workshops. Female students would have to master not only cutting and sewing but also embroidery, making hats, artificial flowers, and papier-mâché toys. Lectures on history of costumes, materials science, and folk art would be equally important. The relevant school could be funded through the sale of workshop products and tuition fees for more affluent female students. Women needed that kind of education and hoped for its support (Kurovska, 1928:7).

4. Practical aspects of fashion and household advice. A special place in the supplement is occupied by notes devoted to fabric and clothing care that stresses a rational and pragmatic approach to everyday life, as follows: "Tips for Housewives: Wash-Fast Calico; Washing Wool Garments" (1926, No. 1, p. 7) and "Household Tips and Tricks: How to Remove Red Stains From Cherries or Wine?; How to Wash Colored Fabrics?" (1927, No. 7(9), p. 8), "How I Maintain a Sewing Machine for 2 Rubles" (1927, No. 6(08), p. 5.), "In the World of Household Chores: Dyeing Old Fabrics; Shoes for Autumn" (1927, No. 11 (13), p. 7.), "In the World of Household Chores: Washing Woolen Clothes" (1927, No. 6 (8), p. 7), "Practical Tips for Housewives: Wet Raincoats" (1927, No. 2(4), p. 7.), "In the World of Household Chores: Double-Acting Iron" (1928, No. 2, p. 8), "Useful Tips: Shoe Dirt Protector" (1928, No. 5, p. 8). The editorial staff's desire to teach female readers to use resources efficiently and save the family budget is evident.

5. Fashion in the context of Ukrainization and the light industry's progress. The period of 1926-1928 coincided with the active phase of Ukrainization and modernization of the clothing industry in Katerynoslav (Dnipro). At that time, the activities of Gubshveiprom, which united the Volodarsky Factory and the trading apparatus, were expanding. Production was mechanized and output increased that was reflected in the journal's articles. Publications, such as "Needle and Shop-Window "Dniproshveifabryka" (1926, No. 1, p. 4), informed about the gradual professionalization and modernization of garment production. This report tells us about the peculiarities of the modernization and electrification of the garment industry in Katerynoslav (Dnipro). For example, until 1926, "Dniproshveifabryka" was simply a sewing workshop in a cramped room on K. Marx Avenue. Subsequently, the enterprise became a modern factory with spacious, well-lit workshops equipped with ventilation. It comprised several workshops: men's, women's, white sewing, and trouser. The women's shop was particularly illustrative, where about 200 women worked. Once driven by hand, USA "Singer" sewing machines turned electrified. Transmissions allowed sewing machine operators to work faster, and workshop performance reached 1,400 units of outerwear per month. Contrary to

stereotypes, female dressmakers worked on an equal footing with men that even production managers recognized. In the white sewing department, technical improvements made the work even easier: the new machine sewed ten loops per minute, saving white seamstresses from myopia. The factory had three-store buildings and a trade union committee with active female members. Considerable attention was paid to the health care of female workers, and nurseries functioned for their children. Women earned 90–100 rubles, and white seamstresses – 50–60 rubles. Leaving the factory, a visitor could easily recognize its products in the urban environment: women in elegant jackets and coats were the living personification of the work of the seamstresses of “Dniproshveifabryka” (Ch.H., 1926:4).

6. Criticism of fashion trends. The note “Grimaces of Fashion Abroad: Long Pants Instead of a Skirt” (1927, No. 2(4), p. 5) renders the extravagant trends of Western fashion with an ironic implication. During NEP, fashion style reflected the level of well-being, which caused an ambiguous attitude of the Soviet authorities. The note “Mussolini Embarked Upon Fashion” (1926, No. 1, p. 3) demonstrates the realities of national fashion in Italy. The author of the article “On Foppery and the Ability to Dress Well” (1927, No. 6 (8), p. 5) criticized obsession with fashion but, at the same time, promoted “European” fashion for the Soviet woman: tidy, practical, but refined. The author raised the foppery issue because foppish young men sacrificed necessary expenses for books, health, or leisure to buy expensive clothes. The trend was becoming more noticeable among young public servants and workers: people skimmed on food to afford lacquered shoes or silk dresses. Foppery acquired particularly bizarre forms among women. In the bourgeois world, fashionistas ran to extremes, turning even to the style of wild tribes, such as tattoos or wearing nose rings. Although NEP followers had not yet adopted such habits, their influence was apparent: young female workers sought expensive attire, justifying it with a desire to dress well. However, the author stressed that dressing well does not mean spending the entire salary on fashions. Good taste and tidiness did not imply blind imitation of bourgeois habits. Excessive spending on expensive accessories undermines the financial situation and morally corrupts a person (Z.R., 1927:8).

Conclusions. The study of the publications in “Robitnytsia i Domashnia Hospodynia” (1926–1928) showed that fashion in Soviet Ukraine in the late 1920s was about everyday practicality and ideological impact. Analysis of materials proves that women’s press of that time played an important role in the modernization of society by contributing to the emancipation of women and their involvement in socio-economic processes. The journal oriented Ukrainian women toward global trends while adapting them to Soviet realities through publications on fashion trends, tips on cutting and sewing, and elucidation of the state of the garment industry and women’s emancipation. It informed about the processes of the light industry’s modernization, in particular the activities of Dniproshveifabryka, which used new technologies, including electrified sewing machines. Publications highlighted the growth of labor productivity and the active involvement of women in production, which encouraged their economic independence. It also focused on the need for professional clothing modeling schools based on European models. Comparison with Western European educational institutions stressed the need to introduce systematic training for Ukrainian women in sewing, design, and materials science.

Although it was printed in Russian, which was caused by the specifics of the then-language policy, the journal assisted in the formation of the national consciousness of Ukrainian women through an emphasis on the development of light industry, self-education, and everyday culture. The genre and thematic variety of publications proves the high social significance of fashion journalism, which also had an educational function in addition to popularizing style.

Thus, the study of fashion in periodicals of the Ukrainianization era allows us to better understand Ukrainian women’s cultural transformations and find similarities between the processes of self-identification of Ukrainian women of the 1920s and modern trends of national revival. The analysis of such sources is crucial for reinterpreting Ukrainian cultural heritage and overcoming stereotypes about the provinciality of Ukrainian fashion in the totalitarian era.

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