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Regulation of Fashion by Legal Acts in the Russian Empire

1. Introduction

In the history of imperial states attempts to regulate by the governance partials' life and behavior were especially evident in the field of fashion.

The language of the garb emphasized the social status of the owner, spoke of his artistic taste, but above all he balanced ethical principles in their rights.

The behavior of a person in society has the maximum sign, it requires the use of special techniques to identify and outplay the status of partners in the process of communication, during which a person is, first of all, a representative of a class, a social group. His social position dictates the language of behavior. Violation of these rules is a challenge to public morality, undermining the moral principles of society.

Non-verbal language of communication, including the language of the costume, is a means of transmitting information. To obtain and understand this information, recipients must know the meaning of the symbols, which, inter alia, is contained in regulatory documents.

The novelty of the study. Using the example of a nobiliary costume, the author explores the methods by which the authorities tried to adapt the rules of European etiquette to the traditional way of life in Russia,

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which in turn, was aimed at bringing Russia closer to the countries of Western Europe, interpenetration and enrichment of cultures.

The relevance of the work is determined both by insufficient study of legislative documents directly related to the evolution of Russian fashion, and by the fact that knowledge of the laws of its functioning will expand our ideas about domestic politics and culture of Russia in the indicated period.

Given the absence of a special study on the problem in domestic and foreign historiography, the author set a goal – based on the analysis of regulatory documents of the 18th–19th centuries to study the influence of power structures on the development of fashion, which in turn is associated with the construction of a power vertical.

2. Age of transformations of Emperor Peter

A person appears before other people in the aggregate of his internal and external properties. Ways to design appearance – important signals, signs of personality. At the same time clothes are a kind of business card of a person; they carry information about the official status of the owner, his tastes, and personality traits.

The costume primarily attracts the eyes of others, causing the corresponding emotions, and as a result it forms a certain relationship.

This statement is confirmed by the events that took place during the short-term reign in Russia of Grigory Otrepiev, who was one of the first rulers of Russia to “dress” the elite in a European costume and introduce new ceremonials at the Russian imperial courtyard.

Soon after the arrival of Grigory Otrepiev to Moscow, his associates were granted high posts, large salaries. The tsar ordered them to dress in a German dress, which was particularly luxurious.

Otrepiev’s bride, Marina Mnishek, arrived to Moscow on May 2, 1606, surrounded by a retinue of more than 400 people.

The royal wedding of Mnishek took place in the Uspensky cathedral. After congratulations the wedding ceremony of Grigory Otrepiev and Marina Mnishek was made.

The orchestra of Stanislav Mnishek sounded at the wedding feast, which gave the celebration an imprint of europeanism. At the conclu-

sion of the celebration, the tsar invited the guests to dance. The ball was opened by S. Mnishek and prince Vishnevetsky. Others followed².

The very providence of Otrepiev, unprecedented ceremonials at the Russian court, was a challenge to society. Otrepiev not only did not spare the traditions of Russian boyars – at one of the balls he was angry that the Polish ambassador dared to put on his hat during the dance. The tsar announced that he would order to remove the cap with his head away from anyone who would follow the example of the ambassador. At the same ball after each dance guests were obliged to bow to the sovereign³.

The fall of Grigory Otrepiev did not give balls and, accordingly, a European costume, to take root in Russian cultural life. They returned to court life under Peter I. Peter's Russia was a country with a different lifestyle of the ruling class.

The introduction of European customs into the life of the nobility required a change in old forms of clothing, shoes and hairstyles. For the implementation of the European costume government decrees were required that regulated not only its cut, but also the nature of the finishing, color, fabric and decoration.

January 4, 1700 "Decree on the wearing of dresses in the manner of the Hungarian" 3 was issued.

A change in the cut of clothes that occurred during the time of Peter was prepared to a certain extent in the second half of the 17th century, among the so-called Westerners. But under Peter I, the nobility was forced to completely abandon the Russian dress, which is supplanted by a Western European-style costume.

In the era of absolutism, the monarch himself becomes the trendsetter. To be dressed like a monarch meant to show his loyal obedience. The closest associates of Peter the Great, wishing to promote his reforms, warned the tsar's wishes, following his entire program. These included primarily those who, having been sent by the tsar abroad, returned with new knowledge in various fields of state and public life. The descendant of the old boyar clan Sheremetev B.P. Sheremetev, the first Russian,

² Pierling (1998), Dmitry the Impostor. Rostov-on-Don, p. 333.

³ R.G. Skrypnikov (1987), Impostors in Russia at the beginning of the 17th century. Novosibirsk, p. 172.

appeared before Peter I "in a French caftan with a Maltese cross on his chest and a diamond showered sword presented to him by Emperor Leopold"⁴. Young people considered it an honor if they could attend the evening meetings of the field marshal, among the participants were general feldzeichmeister J.V. Brooks, English envoy Lord Whitworth, Prussian Mardefeld and other foreign ministers.

During the first years of his stay in St. Petersburg, Peter I sometimes accepted foreign guests, ambassadors in the house of Prince A.D. Menshikov. Next to the throne room arranged for this was the dressing room of the sovereign, from where he went out before the start of an audience in a ceremonial caftan.

In the reforms of private and public life of Peter I a woman was given a special place. According to the plan of the converter women, released from tower-room to ballroom parquet and dressed in clothes in a European manner, could have softened the tempers of Russian society and quickly change all aspects of the life of a Russian person, which would ultimately affect the tempers of society.

On December 30, 1701, a decree was issued in which not only men but also women were prescribed to wear a German dress⁵.

Tsarist officials grabbed the citizens who violated the decrees and demanded payment of duties. If there was no money, the townspeople were put on their knees and the caftan floors were cut flush with the ground⁶.

Thus, the decrees of Peter I forbade the nobles and citizens to wear the old Russian costume and instead of it the following forms were established: for men – short caftan and camisole, culottes, long stockings and shoes with buckles, a white wig and powdered hair; for ladies a wide carcass skirt, a tight-fitting bodice (corsage) with a deep neckline, a wig, high-heeled shoes. The new costume struck Old Russian ethical and aesthetic ideas.

Despite the threats and fines the introduction of a new uniform was not easy.

⁴ Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire (CCLRE)-1. V. 4. № 1741. p. 1.

⁵ Rules of social life and etiquette. Good form. St. Petersburg, 1889, p. 25.

⁶ CCLRE-1. V. 4. № 1887. p. 182.

In December 1704, the tsar's next decree "On wearing a dress of all ranks to the people of Saxony and German, about not doing Russian dress to the masters, about not trading it in the shopping arcades, and about a fine for not fulfilling this decree" was issued⁷.

January 16, 1705 issued a decree "On the shaving of beards and mustaches of any rank of people." It was possible to pay off the compulsory shave only by paying a certain amount: "... from courtiers, and from the courtyards, and from the city, and all the servicemen, and clerks, 60 rubles per person; from guests of the first articles 100 rubles per person; medium and smaller articles... less than 100 rubles, from trade and village people 60 rubles... from village people... except for priests and clerks 30 rubles per person per year"⁸.

The person who paid the fee received the so-called beard badge – a round copper badge on one side of which a beard and mustache were depicted, and the inscription "Money taken" was inscribed on the other side. Only peasants and the clergy circumvented Peter's innovations.

It was not easy for the tsar to make the Russians shave their beards, which were considered a symbol of Orthodoxy. "... The Russians positively respected some kind of religious respect for their beards, especially since this made a difference between them and foreigners, and the priests supported them in this custom, giving the example that all pious men in ancient times wore a beard, according to how icons depict saints... " – wrote captain D. Perry⁹.

The private life of the Russians of the time of Peter I was an amazing mixture of national and European traditions. Each family sought in its own way to adapt to the new conditions of life. The costume of merchants and city dwellers evolved ambiguously, more or less determined only in the middle of the 19th century. He combined the forms of Russian folk dresses with elements of European fashion, but, as a rule, lagging behind the times.

⁷ C. de Bruni (1989), *Travels to Muscovy. Russia of the 18th century through the eyes of foreigners*. L. p. 91.

⁸ CCLRE-1. V. 4. № 1999. p. 272–273.

⁹ *Ib.* № 2015. P. 282–283.

3. Government decrees of the era of absolutism

The second half of the 18th century is characterized by a new stage in the development of aesthetic tastes of the Russian nobility. During this period, the supreme power was forced to repeatedly issue special decrees that limited unbridled luxury. So in March 1742 a personal decree was issued banning Russian and foreign merchants from selling brocade and other gold and silver materials without notifying the Empress¹⁰.

In December of the same year, a ban was issued on the wearing of "... rich dresses with gold and silver..."¹¹ and on the "... permission to wear lace only to the first five classes ..." ¹². It was forbidden to produce gold and silver brocade in Russian factories, the only exceptions were orders for the church and for combat dresses.

The owners of "rich dresses" throughout the Russian Empire should have been "branded", and it was forbidden to sew "rich dresses". Those who violated the decree were fined¹³.

The daughter of Peter the Great, Elizabeth Petrovna, while still being the Grand Duchess, was considered one of the elegant women of her time. She had no equal in the ability to dance. Becoming the Empress, she set the tone for panache. The dresses of Elizabeth Petrovna, each of which is unique, were role models, original standards of fashion of the time.

In order to earn the Empress's trust, the Grand Duchess Catherine Alekseevna tried to dress at the court balls as simply as possible, "and this pleased the Empress a lot, who didn't really like to appear in too elegant toilets at these [public] balls. However, when the people were ordered to appear in men's dresses, I appeared in luxurious dresses embroidered at all seams, or in dresses of a very exquisite taste"¹⁴, – recalls Catherine II.

¹⁰ Y.S. Ryabtsev (1998), Anthology on the history of Russian culture of the 18th-19th centuries. M., p. 130-131.

¹¹ CCLRE-1. V. 11. № 8524. p. 587.

¹² Ib. № 8680. C. 895.

¹³ Ib.

¹⁴ Ib. № 8680.

At the request of Catherine II in order to reduce the luxury of ladies' toilets, uniform dresses were invented for the ladies according to the provinces, which province the husband lived in, the same color and the same dress his wife had¹⁵.

They wanted to reduce the cost of toilets, but in reality everything turned out differently. When everyone began to sew uniform dresses, the poor-quality materials became very expensive. Cheap has become expensive.

In another decree of 1782 "On the appointment, on which holidays, which dress to wear by a male and female persons, who has the right to visit the Court", it was allowed to wear clothes made of gold or silver brocade¹⁶ on special occasions, on less solemn and other days – of silk or cloth. Cavaliers could from September 1 to May 1 "... wear velvet, and from May 1 to September silk materials..."¹⁷. Cloth was allowed to be worn at any time of the year.

The decree of January 16, 1783 ordered the branding of fabrics (brocade, sirsaki) produced in Russian factories and manufacturies with special stamps and punish those who would bring, sell, buy and carry foreign goods¹⁸. The restriction of import from abroad of industrial goods stimulated the development of Russian production and trade.

A new trend in the men's suit – tailcoat, long trousers, short vest – is connected in Russia with the French Revolution. Catherine II fought the "revolutionary" fashion, ordering the St. Petersburg police to wear vests and tailcoats of bright colors, boots with lapels – the clothes of the city dandies. The watchmen held lorgnettes in their hands and greeted the passing dandies: "Bonjour".

Emperor Pavel Petrovich, having ascended the throne, acted much more straightforwardly. If someone in the crowd appeared in a round hat, the adjutants rushed after the unfortunate person who ran away as hard as possible to avoid punishment with sticks.

¹⁵ Works of Catherine II. M., 1990. p. 117.

¹⁶ CCLRE-1. V. 21. № 15557.

¹⁷ CCLRE-1. V. 21. № 15569. p. 726.

¹⁸ *Ib.* p. 727.

“Never before at the whistle’s signal has there been such a quick change of all the scenery as happened when Paul I ascended the throne. Everything changed faster than in one day: costumes, hairstyles, appearance, manners, activities”¹⁹ – recalled Prince Chartorysky.

According to the opinion of the Emperor, the Russian man could not wear a republican dress, those who doubted that they threatened to put on a breech dress.

But two days after the news of the death of the Emperor, round hats appeared on the streets, and a few days later – tailcoats, drawers and vests, although the ban was not lifted from them²⁰.

With the fall of Napoleon in 1815, a whole era ends in fashion. Men’s fashion is finally freed from the influence of the court ceremonial, the wig and hair powder, lace frill and cuffs disappear. Knee-high knickers – culotte – are used only as court clothes, usually they wear long knickers. The main attention is paid to perfection of cut and suit processing.

4. Form of officials and students

In tsarist Russia a uniform dress was common. The military men and police and gendarmerie officers, students of higher and secondary schools, employees of the railway, officials of all fourteen classes had to wear the established clothes. The official clothes consisted of a uniform, a frock coat and a jacket. In official cases, officials had to wear a court sword (civilian), orders, cocked hat and greatcoat.

“A uniform means a place of service, as well as the degree of rank and position” – said the first paragraph of the highest approved provision on civilian uniforms of February 27, 1834²¹, which constituted a whole era in the bureaucratization of the political machinery and the regulation of the life of the estate of officials of the times of Nicholas I, establishing a common system of all civilian uniforms in the empire.

The overall cut of the civilian uniforms was single-breasted, with nine buttons on the chest, with three buttons on cuffs, with three under-

¹⁹ Ib. p. 792.

²⁰ Y.S. Ryabtsev, *Anthology...*, p. 150.

²¹ Ib. P. 151.

pocket flaps and with two on each lap; the color of the metal for all buttons and the image on them was set by the department.

Most of the civilian uniforms were made of cloth of dark green color; dark blue color belonged to the Ministry of Education, the Academy of Arts, the Mining Department, civil officials of the Ministry of Railways and public buildings, the Department of Spiritual Affairs, and foreign confessions; red – for uniforms of senators.

Uniforms were necessary for students of higher, secondary and lower educational institutions. Its cut depended on a formal occasion. Students had a ceremonial monotonous costume with a standing collar embroidered with gold galloons, a uniform of greenish-blue cloth and with it a civilian-style sword, cocked hat and gray overcoat of “nicholas” cut. At the university students appeared in lectures in gray double-breasted jackets and dark green trousers. The color of the collar and edging varied: blue for university students; green for students of law school; red for Katkov followers (Moscow Lyceum) etc.

Despite the fact that the concept of “beau monde” in Moscow was much narrower than in St. Petersburg, the position of a student of the secular circle was significant. Unlike the gymnasium students, who “didn’t go out” and did not appear in the society and could not visit only “dance mornings”, the student was a full participant in social life. He made visits, attended balls and routs.

Contrary to the established rule students tried to appear at balls not in uniform, but in a particular dress. For some time the authorities looked condescendingly on these violations. But with the advent of representatives of aristocratic circles in universities the situation changed. “Students began to get carried away by the charm of secular emptiness and decent manners... The strength of appearance is growing, and we should expect that the university will soon turn into a corps, and students into cadets”²² – indignantly wrote K.S. Aksakov.

Young aristocrats appeared everywhere in “...dandy uniforms”²³, and soon the university leadership began to demand constant wearing of uniforms. This decision caused dissatisfaction among most students.

²² CCLRE-2. V. 9, № 6860, p. 169.

²³ K.S. Aksakov (1990), *Memoirs of student life 1832–1855. Russian memoirs. Favorite pages. 1826–1856*, M., p. 114.

“We didn’t let these fashion-mongers on our benches...”²⁴ – recalled K.S. Aksakov.

Each court rank had a uniform assigned to his rank. The cut of the uniform, its color and finishing were strictly regulated by government decrees.

Two decrees of 1829 are devoted to the pattern of buttons on daily and ceremonial uniforms for the first and second ranks of the court, chamberlains and junkers. According to these decrees the daily and ceremonial uniforms of the first and second ranks of the court were supposed to have buttons depicting the Russian coat of arms.

In 1831 a decree on uniforms was issued for “...the ranks of the Ministry of the Imperial Court, the Cabinet and the Department of Dependencies”²⁵.

Sewing, the color of the cloth of uniforms, the number of buttons was no longer changed by a special government order. But according to the decree No. 29588 of 1855, the cut of the clothes of the first and second ranks of the highest court, masters of ceremonies, chamberlains, chamberlains-junkers somewhat changed. They were supposed to wear the parade uniform “...modeled on French caftans”²⁶.

The slightest changes in appearance in the form of a courtier demanded special permission from the supreme authority.

Conclusions

In imperial states with a pronounced vertical of power, regulatory documents strictly regulated almost all aspects of a person’s life – from the manner of social behavior and speaking to the way to go out, everything should correspond to the situation in society.

The uniform not only spoke about the place of service and the position held, there was a concept of “esprit de corps”, inextricably bound up with personal honor.

A number of state decrees of the XVIII-XIX centuries speaks of the

²⁴ Ib. p. 100.

²⁵ Ib. p. 113.

²⁶ Ib. V. 6 . Sec. I. № 4417.

great importance that was attached to the costume as an exponent of the estate and moral ideas of the nobility.

The language of the costume emphasized the social status of the owner, spoke about his artistic taste. But above all he balanced ethical and aesthetic principles.

The change of government always entails the introduction of new ceremonies and the filling in of new ideological content of generally accepted old norms.

Peter I “dressed” the Russian elite in a European costume, but after the October Revolution of 1917 the Soviet elite could not wear the pre-Peter outfit, which like the entire “sign system” of the Moscow kingdom was associated with the ideas of Orthodoxy, the inviolability and the eternity of tsarist governance.

In the 20–30s of the twentieth century the struggle in the USSR against the tailcoat and top hat was a struggle against bourgeois ethics and as a consequence, a struggle against the norms of Western European etiquette.

The problem of “form” in the broadest sense of the word was of particular importance for Russian life. The pressure of a powerful but not organized force – all this increased the importance of external forms of organization of life, whether it be forms of government or everyday life.

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26 CCLRE-2. V. 30. № 29588. p. 250.

SUMMARY

Attempts to regulate by the governance of mode of life and behavior of partials in the history of imperial states were especially evident in the fashion industry.

The article explores the evolution of the Russian court costume, as well as the uniform of officials and students during the XVIII–XIX centuries in the context of social political reforms that took place in the state during this period of time.

The content of government decrees published in the full collection of laws of the Russian Empire is analyzed, which contain orders on the color of the fabric, cut and trim of the costume. The purpose of this lawmaking is to “reconcile” the old Russian traditions with the norms of modern European life.

A special place in the study is given to the reforming activities of Peter I, who, with his decrees, changed the entire “sign” system of Ancient Russia.

Peter I “changed clothes” of the Russian elite into a European costume, but after the October Revolution of 1917, the Soviet elite could not wear the pre-Peter garb, which, like the entire “sign system” of the Moscow kingdom, was associated with the ideas of Orthodoxy, the inviolability and the eternity of regal power.

In the 20–30s of the twentieth century, the struggle in the USSR against the tailcoat and tall hat was a struggle against bourgeois ethics, and as a result, a struggle against the norms of Western European etiquette.

It is revealed that the problem of “form” in the broadest sense of the word was of particular importance for Russian life. The pressure of a powerful, but not organized force – all this increased the importance of external forms and organization of life, be it a form of government structure or everyday life.

Keywords: state, power, politics, government decrees, society, ethics, aesthetics, socialite costume