

## **Fashion and Politics in Europe**

Far from being a marginal approach, fashion history provides a unique perspective on many economic, social, cultural, and political issues. This særemne will look at how fashion can contribute to debates about class, gender, racial, and civic identity in societies and nations within Europe.

Specifically, this særemne will examine political aspects of fashion in the context of a broad range of countries and epochs, encompassing Revolutionary France, Victorian Great Britain, Nazi Germany, Soviet Poland, and Post-Colonial Cambodia. These five cases will open up questions about the political significance of fashion, the political agency of women through fashion, the legitimation and contestation of racial ideology through fashion, the economic contradictions of communism through the fashion trade, and the colonization and decolonization of appearances.

Fashion does not merely mirror political changes, but can play an active role in transformations and processes. While dress practices are ostentatious, they are not necessarily easy to read and can carry competing meanings, which makes fashion all the more useful to highlight a complex visual economy where political meanings and values are constantly negotiated and re-written.

After scrutinizing what fashion tells us about politics, the særemne will turn its gaze inwards, and analyze the politics of fashion, that is, how fashion is itself the site of political struggles, especially by questioning the validity of the term “world fashion.”