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Switzerland's foreign trade and textiles in 1959

After the recession that took place in 1958, Switzerland's foreign trade in 1959 was characterised on the whole by a marked recovery. From the quantitative point of view, imports advanced 7.7 % and exports 26 %. In 1959 therefore exports reached an all-time high with regard to both quantity and value. In imports, the upward trend is to a large extent due to the building up of stocks as well as the fairly general drop in prices recorded for imports. With regard to exports, however, it is mainly the increased demand for Swiss-made goods, brought about by the improvement in the international situation, that is responsible for this advance. Here are the figures concerning Switzerland's balance of trade during the last three years :

	In million 1957	of Swiss 1958	francs 1959
Total imports	8,447.1	7,335.2	8,267.9
Total exports	6,713.9	6,648.8	7,273.8
Adverse balance	1,733.2	686.4	994.1

The exchange coefficient (that is to say the value of exports expressed as a percentage of that of imports) remains at about 88 % (as opposed to 90.6 in 1958), which is still higher than the post-war average (84 %).

Below we give the export values of the main classes of textiles for the last three years :

	In Million of Swiss francs 1957	1958	1959
Cotton yarns	76.8	58.0	63.6
Cotton fabrics	176.8	161.7	167.7
Embroideries	134.1	121.2	121.0
Schappe	11.4	7.9	8.0
Yarns of artificial fibres .	100.6	105.4	117.7
Fabrics of natural and artificial silk	91.7	93.6	116.3
Ribbons of natural and artificial silk	12.9	12.2	12.8
Woollen yarns	33.1	29.4	41.3
Woollen fabrics	45.1	36.5	39.5
Hosiery and knitted articles	51.2	46.9	49.8
Ready-to-wear clothing .	69.2	68.5	69.1
Millinery braid	31.7	22.9	23.8
Footwear	46.2	41.2	47.8
Totals	880.8	805.4	878.4

Although most have failed to reach the 1957 level, exports on the whole, except for embroidery, show an advance over the figures for 1958. Certain branches however have made spectacular progress, namely yarns of artificial fibres, fabrics of natural and artificial silk, and woollen yarns. It should however be mentioned that while textiles played their part, in 1959, in the increase in Swiss exports, they did not however do so to quite the same extent as other branches of Swiss industry.

With regard to imports of textile products, a glance at the principal items quoted below shows the same

general trend as in exports : an increase as compared with 1958, but figures remaining below those for the previous year (1957 = 932.4 million Sw. Frs ; 1958 = 722.5 million ; 1959 = 842.61 million). The increase occurred in all the groups mentioned except cotton. Below we give the totals for 1959 with details concerning the main suppliers and the values for 1958 in parentheses. All figures are quoted in millions of Swiss francs (1 million Sw. Fr. = US \$ 233,000).

Cotton 185.788 (214.794) ; raw cotton 96.441 (126.62) : Peru 27.130 (36.657), Egypt 15.671 (16.734), Mexico 15.352 (22.161), United States 15.129 (31.454) ; printed fabrics 15.291 (12.663) : German Federal Republic 4.863 (4.240), France 2.673 (1.833), Netherlands 2.179 (1.767), Italy 1.623 (0.893), Austria 1.095 (1.295) ; velvets 9.168 (9.720) : Italy 3.535 (4.546), German Federal Republic 3.328 (3.133) ; hand embroideries 1.624 (1.106) : China 1.447 (0.910).

Silk 182.750 (112.147) ; raw silk 21.339 (14.825) : Japan 13.275 (7.445), China 7.353 (7.338) ; fabrics in artificial and synthetic yarns, filament 16.389 (9.996) : United States 9.317 (5.326), Japan 2.257 (0.467), German Federal Republic 2.001 (1.999), Italy 1.824 (1.180) ; fabrics in silk or schappe 14.756 (9.684) : China 7.639 (4.382), Italy 3.001 (1.978), France 1.934 (1.335), Japan 1.376 (1.580).

Wool 266.990 (233.810) ; worsted tops 58.240 (48.964) : France 24.810 (21.903), Uruguay 14.957 (13.788) ; fabrics 43.595 (41.191) : Italy 11.603 (10.601), Great Britain 11.425 (11.562), France 6.021 (5.021), German Federal Republic 5.632 (5.037) ; carpets 43.090 (32.868) : Iran 14.341 (9.870), Belgium-Luxemburg Union 6.980 (6.391), Afghanistan 4.002 (2.588), German Federal Republic 3.579 (3.129), France 3.241 (2.235), Italy 2.038 (1.639) ; washed wool, dyed 17.960 (20.816) : Belgium-Luxemburg Union 3.423 (3.232), Great Britain 2.472 (2.404), Australia 2.086 (6.083), German Federal Republic 2.022 (2.087) ; raw wool 20.547 (23.037) : Australia 11.493 (12.210), South Africa 3.401 (4.884), Chili 1.298 (0.554), Argentine 1.907 (2.590), France 0.667 (1.418).

Ready to wear clothing 207.085 (161.487) ; woollen underwear 30.779 (27.006) : Italy 11.703 (8.791), Japan 5.796 (4.473), Great Britain 5.331 (5.417), German Federal Republic 2.638 (3.625), France 2.553 (1.973) ; woollen garments for women and girls 20.039 (16.282) : Netherlands 6.230 (5.807), German Federal Republic 5.439 (3.770), Great Britain 2.604 (2.562), France 2.432 (1.608) ; silk, rayon, nylon underwear 20.827 (15.189) : German Federal Republic 9.727 (7.058), United States 4.200 (4.128), Italy 2.428 (0.786), France 1.795 (1.083) ; stockings of artificial and synthetic fibres, filament 15.635 (12.285) : Italy 7.116 (3.856), German Federal Republic 2.581 (1.922), United States 2.252 (2.916), Austria 1.033 (1.087) ; woollen garments for men and boys 12.591 (9.946) : German Federal Republic 5.989 (4.748), Netherlands 2.889 (1.803), Great Britain 1.585 (1.581), Italy 0.886 (0.667), France 0.542 (0.324).

Something so spontaneous...



PIERRE CARDIN

That the keynote of the 1960 spring collections is liberty is an undisputed fact, but this doesn't make it any easier for me to explain them.

As I sit here, pen poised for action, a confused mass of images jostle one another in my mind: a jumble of forms and colours so widely different from each other that I am hard put to find words to describe them.

At one time there was a certain unity about the new fashions each season. And when I say 'at one time' I do not mean in the days of the ancient Greeks or Romans, but only a few years back when anyone even slightly aware of what was going on knew in advance what trends the new fashions would follow. Perhaps there is a reason for this change. Perhaps it was that the liberty of the former lords of couture was confined within certain limits — those imposed by the shape of woman's body. When Jean Patou launched the simple little dresses that created his renown, when Worth wound yards and yards of fabulous materials, when Jeanne Lanvin specialised in decorative effects and Madeleine Vionnet in draperies, one could recognise their models as one can tell a car by its radiator grille, by its general line. And dresses hung from the shoulders, hips and waist.

About the year 1947 a latecomer to the world of couture upset all these principles: Christian Dior. He revolutionised fashion just as Paul Poiret had done before the first world war. He designed dresses with the eye of an architect and, like Pygmalion, recreated woman, but one who suggested hidden forms rather than asserted her own. And all have followed the path he blazed so brilliantly. All the young designers who have taken up the torch since have been attracted by the principles Dior had set forth so implicitly. How could it be otherwise? In this Paris that sets the fashion there are certain affinities and points of resemblance between the different art expressions, an overlapping network subtly woven between painting, music, couture and jewelry, the result being both a school of fashion and a style.

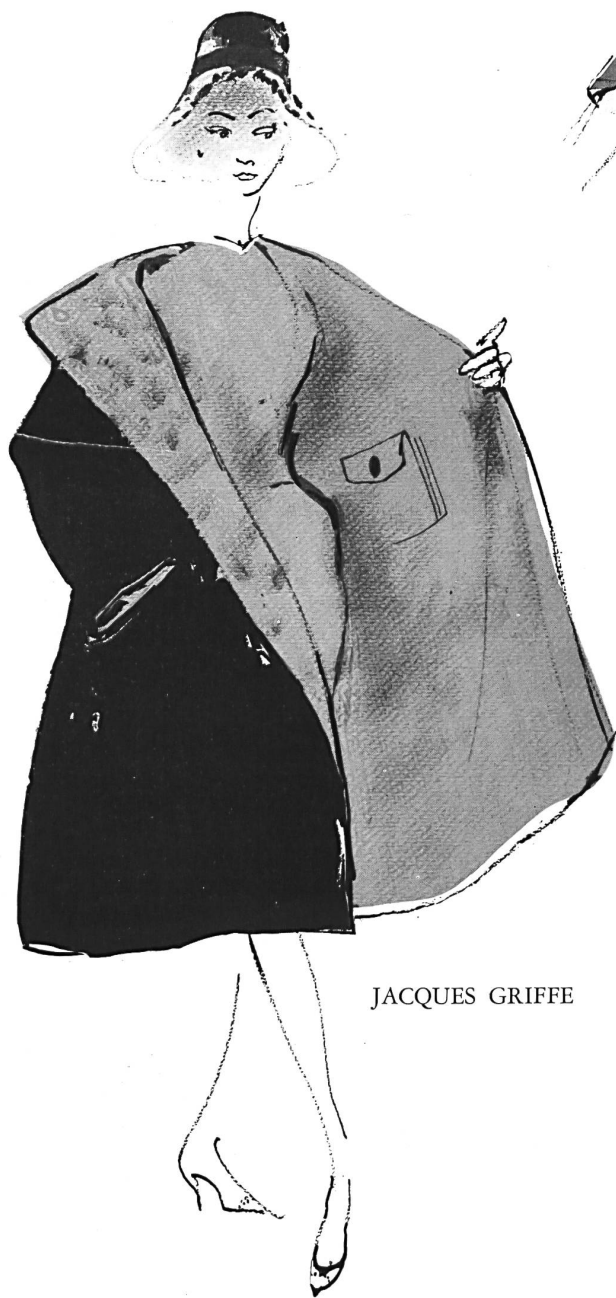
To judge it, one must try to look at it objectively. There is something so spontaneous and so fascinating about couture that simply to write that skirts are longer or shorter, or that the waist has been lowered or raised a few inches, gives only a very poor idea of it. By dwelling on each image one tends rather to flatten or minimise it (unless one is a Gauguin...).

I agree that to say that the keynote of this spring's collections is liberty is not sufficient, but yet it seems more true than a dry enumeration of the details composing this liberty.

Anyhow let us try to find out in what way these fashions are free, and why.

First of all, it is because the young woman of 1960 is vastly different from her counterpart of 1945, for example. After the war, a new generation emerged, and grew up keenly alive to certain nuances that seem strange to us. And it should not be forgotten that while the young women one meets are not in most cases those whose situation in life allows them to shop at the great couturiers', they are nevertheless the ones who provide the inspiration.

Let anyone who lives in Paris, is visiting here or merely passing through, take the time to try and find a seat at the „Drug Store“ of the Champs-Élysées and just watch. He will see the most motley parade, the most grotesque sometimes, but always the most amusing procession of the new type of women, with incredible hairstyles, pale lips and exotically painted eyes, and dressed with a studied, almost defiant casualness. Mannequins, starlets, young actresses, all pass before the counter, perfectly at ease, cigarette between their



JACQUES GRIFFE



JEAN PATOU

lips. Many of them model, for the magazines, the couture creations they cannot afford to wear themselves, but to which they lend, for the picture, their way of life, their own special cachet. How could the couturier, who creates his models on his mannequins and sees them afterwards transposed by the photographer, help but be influenced by them, by atmosphere in which they live?

The last two generations, the young and the not so young, seem separated by a deep chasm. Recently, a gallery in the Avenue Matignon caused quite a stir by showing Bernard Buffet's latest monumental paintings. Now to visitors of a certain age and classic mode of life, these paintings seem atrociously indecent, but in spite of their nightmare nudity, they were conceivable and understandable when confronted by the younger generation. A question of atmosphere...

And now to get back to the collections. The new fashion could be likened to an ornate Italian garden rather than a classical French park. Where we expect to see a yew, we find a fountain, where formal green vistas should bound the horizon, rise up pell-mell a mass of trees of different kinds, arbours, statues.

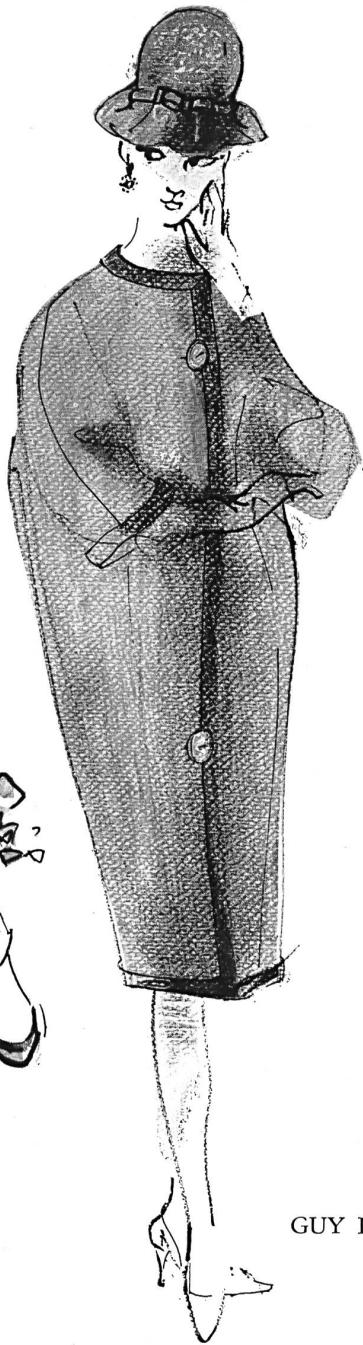
When one thinks one is looking at a suit, it is really a dress with a jacket. This bolero, which is so short and neat, is really only a skilful fold in the bodice of the dress. This coat is a cape and this blouse a dress.

Where are waists? It all depends on the designer and not on a seasonal trend. Where is the collar? It has disappeared, making way for a neat décolleté or a choker.

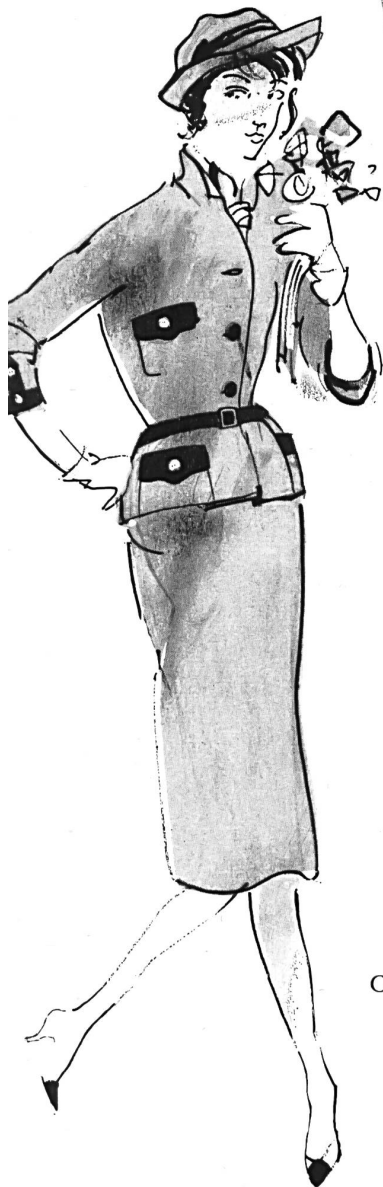
But, you will say, there must be some points in common. Yes, perhaps... I will give them to you just as they come to mind:

- a general tendency for sleeves to be set very low;
- the use — by all — of giant buttons, formerly launched by Jacques Fath;
- a return to British fabrics, Prince of Wales and houndstooth checks, tartans, light tweeds, for day wear;
- frequent use of tulles, wool muslins, voiles, crêpes and mousselines, for the dressier models, as well as the freshness of lace and guipure;
- a decrease, it seemed to me, in the number of navy blue dresses with white trim (revers, collars, cuffs and dickies), which were for many years the regular standby each spring.

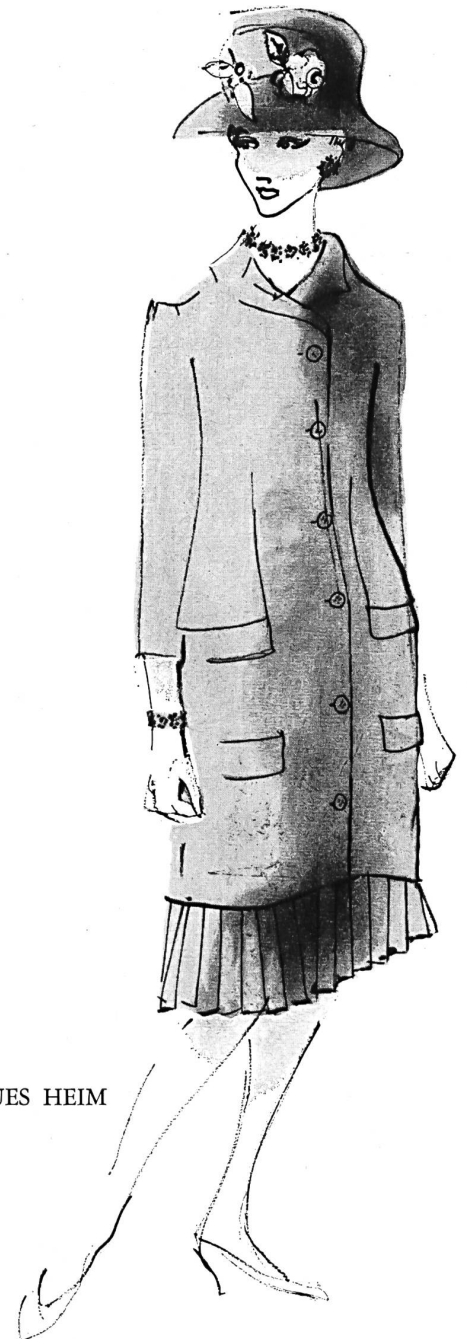
And then there is the quarrel, not of the ancients and moderns, but between the advocates of the Chanel style, in its supple simplicity, and the more arbitrary style, of a Cardin, for example, or any of half a dozen others, for there is a pleiad of talent.



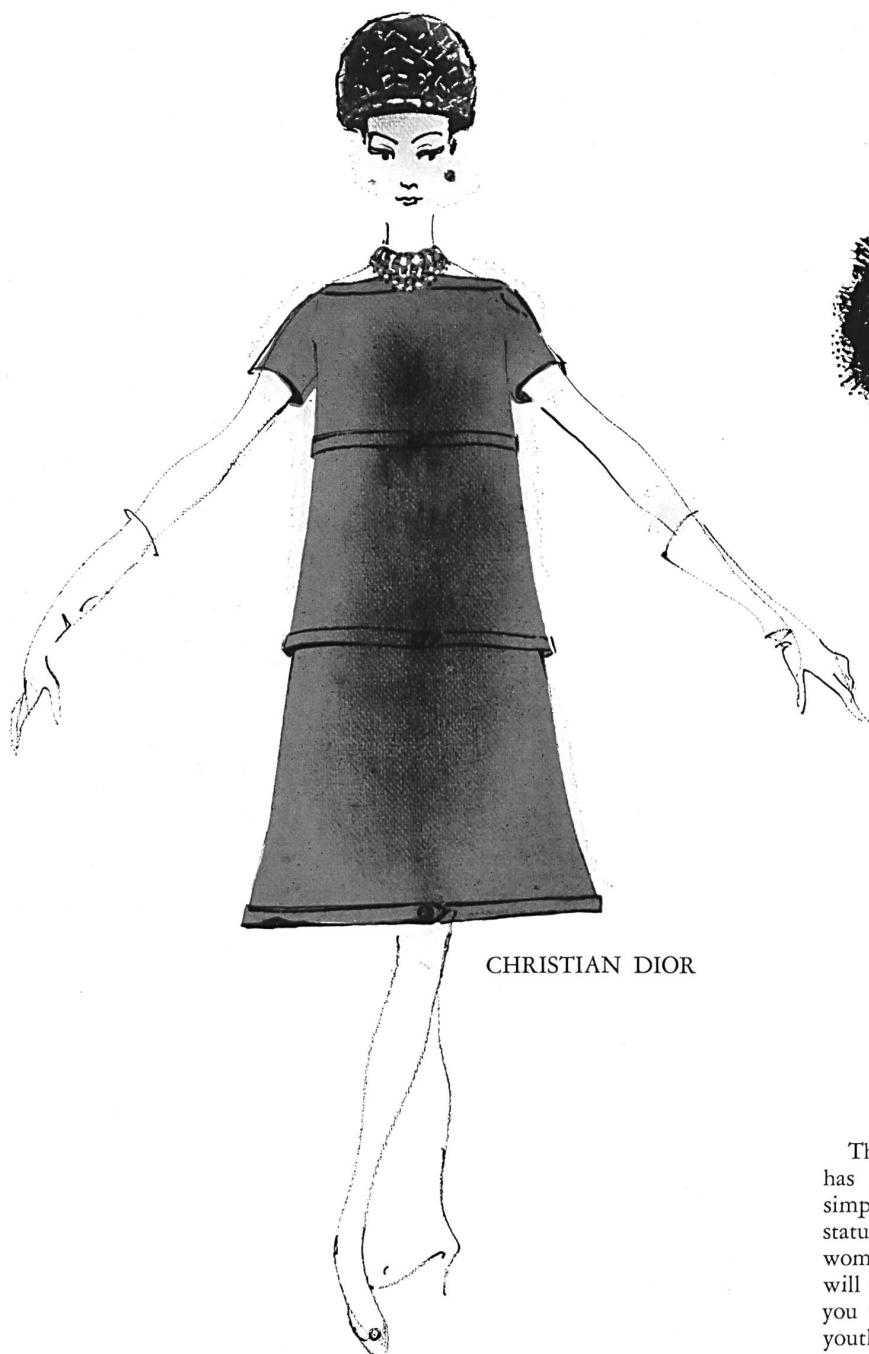
GUY LAROCHE



CHANEL



JACQUES HEIM



CHRISTIAN DIOR



PIERRE BALMAIN

Therefore, Madam, take a good look at the new fashion that has just been born. Picture yourself in one of these gay simple little dresses that will not turn you into a Greek statue or one of Velasquez' Infantas but into a modern young woman, discrete of figure, bold in personality... some of them will surprise you, change you perhaps, but on thinking it over you will agree they are witty, and that above all they radiate youth. After all, we are no longer living in the 19th. century, but in the day and age of Françoise Sagan, it is no longer a Constantin Guys tilbury that whisks you away but a snazzy little Florida convertible. And you will look ravishing, under the summer sun...

GALA