

Switzerland's foreign trade and textile in 1964

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Switzerland's Foreign Trade and Textiles in 1964

In 1964, Switzerland's foreign trade continued its upward trend, reaching a new all-time high. Imports increased by 11.1% compared with 1963; while this rate of growth was greater than in 1963 (7.7%), it remained lower than that of the years 1958-1962. The increase in exports during the same period amounted to 9.8% and in this way continued the gradual advance observed since 1960. The table below gives the overall results for Switzerland's foreign trade during the past five years.

Evolution of Switzerland's Balance of Trade

Years	Imports	Exports in millions of Swiss francs	Adverse balance	Coefficient of exchange %
1960	9,648.1	8,130.7	1,517.4	84.3
1961	11,644.4	8,822.1	2,822.3	75.8
1962	12,985.5	9,579.9	3,405.6	73.8
1963	13,989.4	10,441.7	3,547.7	74.6
1964	15,540.8	11,461.6	4,079.2	73.8

The adverse balance of trade increased by 15% compared with the previous year and in this way exceeded the 4 billion franc mark for the first time. The rate of increase was higher than in 1963 (4.2%), but remained lower than that observed between 1958 and 1962.

The chief exports of Swiss textile products and clothing showed a considerable increase on the whole as can be seen from the following figures:

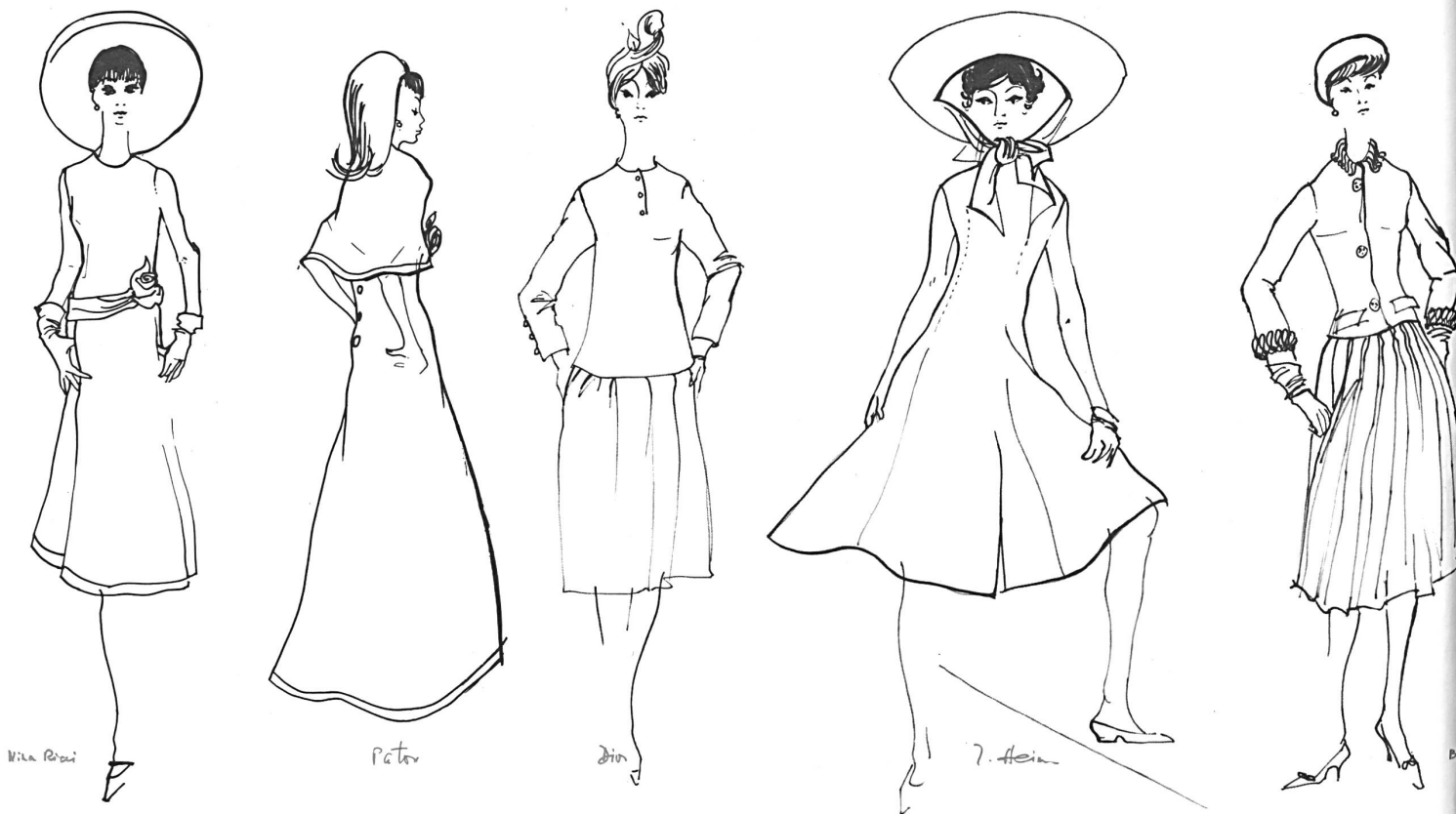
Swiss exports

	1963 in millions of francs	1964
Yarns of artificial textile fibres and staple fibre	238.9	272.2
Embroideries	144.6	155.5
Cotton fabrics	143.3	152.6
Fabrics of pure silk and artificial textile fibres	141.6	147.1
Hosiery and knitwear (stockings, knitted under- und outer-garments, knitted yard goods)	75.2	84.3
Ready-to-wear clothing in fabrics (clothing und undergarments, shirts, men's and women's outer-garments)	56.6	60.6
Straw braid for millinery	37.8	36.5
Footwear (in leather, etc.)	70.1	78.7

Among imports, we must consider first of all raw materials, which Switzerland does not produce herself, except for artificial and synthetic textile yarns (which are of course manufactured from imported cellulose and nylon salt). This category includes raw cotton, of which Switzerland imported 149.8 million francs' worth in 1964, her main suppliers being Peru, the United States, the United Arab Republic, Mexico, Brazil, Turkey and Morocco; next comes wool: raw wool in bulk 26.9 million francs, main suppliers Australia, South Africa, Great Britain and British Guiana; washed wool in bulk 21.9 million, main suppliers Australia, the Belgium-Luxembourg Union, South Africa and New Zealand; finally raw silk, 18.5 million, which Switzerland buys from China, Japan and South Korea. Apart from these *indispensable* imports, Switzerland also purchases abroad fairly large quantities of articles that she produces herself, especially in the clothing sector. Here are the main items, with the corresponding value of Swiss exports opposite, for 1964.

	Imports in millions of francs	Exports
Outergarments in knitted fabrics	138.9	43.7
Women's and girls' clothing in fabrics	101.6	43.6
Men's and boys' clothing	67.2	9.8
Tricot underwear	29.1	17.4
Foundation garments	22.0	2.5
Knitted yard goods	15.6	13.9
Stockings and socks	13.0	9.3
Hats and caps	9.9	9.5
Women's lingerie in fabrics	2.6	3.3

The above figures show therefore that while Switzerland is a big exporter of manufactured products in the textile and clothing sector, she is nevertheless an excellent client not only for overseas producers but also of competing industries abroad, for amounts almost always bigger than those of her exports of the same articles, in keeping with her fundamentally liberal attitude to trade.



To me, the highlight of the latest showings seems to have been the return of Captain Molyneux. To anyone who remembers—and couture, in spite of a vocation tending always to look towards the future, is quite capable of remembering when it has to — Molyneux occupies a very special place, as did Piquet in the years before the war. Molyneux stood for a certain aura of refined chic. And here he is back again, Molyneux, the gentleman of taste, the creative artist, the collector of impressionist paintings, the most Parisian of British. Yielding, like Chanel a short while ago, to the call of the sirens, unless perhaps it was quite simply a case of an infection by the couturier virus—which is impossible ever to throw off completely—he recently started up again, in the Rue Royale. And Chanel's adventure looks as though it is to be repeated all over again in that the fashion press is rather reticent, just as it was with Rue Cambon, because for the moment Molyneux has been content to recreate Molyneux fashions all over again. In similar circumstances Chanel readapted herself very quickly and it is expected that in the atmosphere of Paris the Captain's simple little dresses will very soon meet with the same wild success as before.

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What fun it is to be able to observe couture from the outside! By that I mean when one is not actually part of it, when one is not an essential cog in the machine nor caught up in the seasonal hustle and bustle, but free to try and form a few general ideas of one's own. Obviously there is a sort of atmosphere which couture is obliged to breathe. It cannot ignore the present youthfulness of the population, the diminishing age of the stars, the apotheosis of dancing, singing and speed symbolized by the sports car. All of which leads the most firmly established of couturiers to make a point of having designers who are entirely with it. But there is the other

side of the coin, that of the favoured few who can afford lovely clothes and are able to wear them with chic and distinction, and there is nothing "yéyé" about this clientele. The women in this rarefied strata of society look with amusement mixed with envy at the little starlets hardly out of the bud, who can wear almost anything and get away with it. Which does not stop them however from preferring lovely classical dresses spiced with a touch of youth.

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This season therefore, like every other season, we have seen the launching of a host of new and slightly eccentric ideas. At Real's, for example, we saw a 14-year old mannequin modelling clothes under the approving eye of teenage idols Sylvie Vartan and Mylène Demongeot. Carven, whose clientele is predominantly young, held his showing in reverse order, starting with the bridal gown as if a big banquet were to start with the dessert and end with the hors d'œuvre: Jacques Heim presented a number of daring pyjamas in revealing black lace over flesh-coloured tights; Courrèges showed models with an almost geometric cut. We also saw a fair number of pants designed to take the place of skirts, even though women, understandably reluctant to sacrifice their feminine appeal, have not exactly gone overboard for this new fad; we saw models by Cardin spilling over with gimmicks; we marvelled at the appearance of a host of new tricks that add a special touch to fashion but cannot be considered an end in themselves. Because, after all, the *raison d'être* of Parisian Couture is quality, cut and the golden mean.

A few years ago, I remember seeing (on television, I think) a remarkable performance by Picasso who, starting from a conventional drawing or painting in proportions and a style strictly conforming to classical canons, succeeded by successive strokes of his brush or pencil,

by intentional distortions one might almost say, in completely altering the original picture. To some extent this is what certain designers are doing today. But it is not so simple as it might appear, because behind these embellishments and intentional distortions, there has to be a hard core of talent, a solid foundation. And this solid foundation the couturiers possess, and are obliged to keep up, just as a virtuoso is obliged to do several hours of practice daily. No matter how wild they may seem, the young designers have been fed on the milk of Parisian couture. And whatever game of musical chairs they seem to be playing, passing from one couture house to another, breathing new life into it, rejuvenating it and stamping it with their presence, they nevertheless have to practise their scales like everyone else. Furthermore, those irreplaceable overseers, the "premières", the forewomen in the big houses, provide the indispensable note of stability.

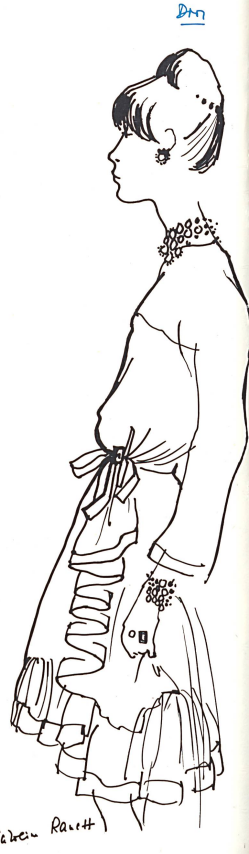
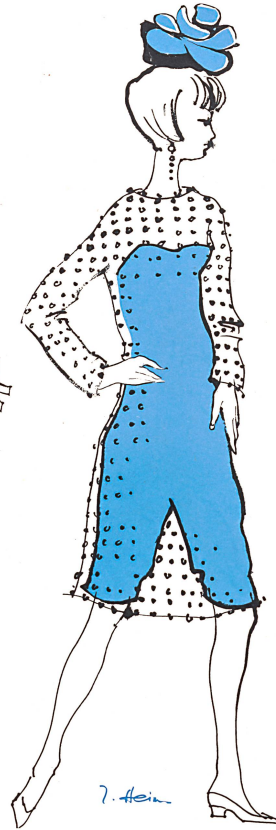
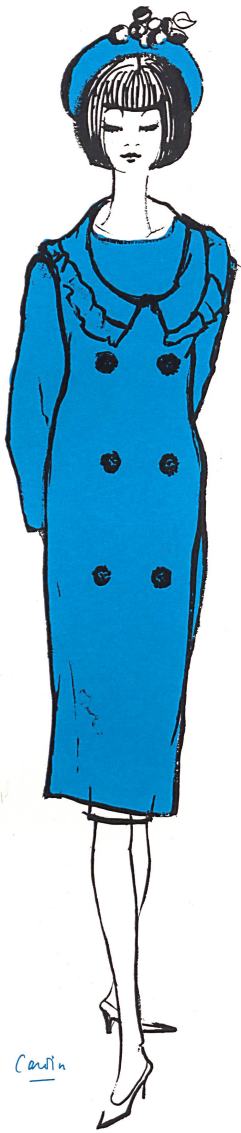
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This note is becoming more firmly established in that it is more visible among the "top brass" like Yves St. Laurent, Balmain, Castillo, Lanvin and Chanel, whose collections reflect their clientele—rich, quiet, appreciative and open to restrained novelty. From their palettes they produce an offering of beauty, accessible to the majority of women—I mean, of course, among those whose incomes allow them to cross the gilded thresholds past the braided doormen. It exists, in a somewhat freer form, at Guy Laroche's and Pierre Cardin's. It is the aim of Ricci, Griffe, Patou, Grès, Madeleine de Rauch and many others.

Considering the varied personalities involved, a very balanced fashion emerged at the beginning of 1965. It can be said to be balanced because there are no sweeping changes. I think too that summer fashions are less liable to upheavals than winter fashions, since for summer dresses

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cut is no longer the most important feature, and the use of vaporous fabrics dictates a certain style. But there are common features to be found in all the collections—lightly swirling skirts, full skirts, skirts with pleats as varied as dressmaking technique can make them, skirts cut on the bias, skirts with flounces, etc. the widespread use, too, of sheer effects with the considerable help of mousselines and organzas. For wear above these skirts, there is a little of everything: short jackets, jackets with basques, tight-fitting jackets—embroidered, piped, and with every variety of collar. There is also, thanks to textile ingenuity, a bumper crop of prints with gigantic flowers. But all this, with a certain restraint about it, at least for the day, even if certain

liberties are allowed for the evening, even if—in addition to sheath dresses, hobble skirts, between-length dresses (between ankle and calf)—there are as always the huge embroidered corollas. Hats for the summer are brimful of fantasy, from the flat pancakes clinging perilously to the back of the head, to the bretons and Gigi-style boaters. A final word: I am not sure whether it is the men who like to show off the charms of the women they are escorting or whether it is the women who feel it is hardly fair to conceal the beauty with which nature has endowed them, but what an acreage of bare backs, what a number of bosoms barely veiled! It reminds me of the famous saying: what is important is to know just how far is too far. At any rate, how one appreciates this generous display of feminine flesh when one goes—as go one undoubtedly must—to the gallery in the Avenue Matignon where the great artist Bernard Buffet displays his living skeletons, with every appearance of having been flayed alive, and all in the most lurid colours...

Gala

Cécile Raut