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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

**FACULTY OF DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES**

WAR AND FASHION

**AN ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY IN
BRITAIN DURING AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER WORLD WAR II**

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INTRODUCTION

This Thesis will examine the influence of the government on the fashion industry in Britain, during and immediately after World War II. Why exactly did the government need to control the fashion industry so intently Chapter I will analyse the schemes and orders themselves, as they relate to each other, and indeed the circumstances in Britain which made these restrictions necessary. Chapter II will examine the government export schemes of fashion goods and how these encouraged designers and manufacturers to unite in order to present British fashion impressively abroad. Chapter III analyses the importance of the media in promoting government schemes and thus ensuring a positive response from the public. Chapter IV examines the 'New Look' and its financial implications in post-war Britain. Chapter V forms the conclusion to the thesis, as the long-term effects of the controls on the fashion industry are analysed. In order to show the long-term effects, some new material has been introduced in this chapter.

This thesis is concerned with women's clothing on the home front in Britain, and for this reason, much use has been made of Vogue magazine at the time; Vogue was just about the only magazine that was still concerned with fashion 'design' during the war, and many references have been made to this source. Much statistical data has been included to show the predicament of the government and indeed, the true reasons for the extent of government control on the industry.



Fig. 1 "No Slacking", *Vogue*, July 1942, p. 14.

CHAPTER I

Government intervention and an analysis of fashion controls

During the Second World War in Britain the government passed many laws and introduced many schemes concerning the manufacture of clothing, these were to have an enormous effect on the fashion industry during and after the war.

To put these controls in perspective, it is necessary to set the scene in Britain at the onset of the war. It was believed by the government, that the cost of war could be met by the profits from an export drive which was started in the winter of 1939/40. All exportable goods were promoted by government schemes and export was aided by government grants - opening new and lasting trade areas for British goods. By 1940, it was apparent that this would not be enough to fund Britain's participation in the war. In response, in 1940, J.M. Keynes published "How to pay for the war", in which he declared that it would only be possible through the deployment of the total economic resources of the country, rather than relying on taxes and exports. Consequently, the War Budget of 1941 featured many of Keynes policies and state control was extended to cover every aspect of the economy and social life. Government expenditure on defence rose from 25% of the total government expenditure in 1938/39, to 84% in 1942/43, a rise in monetary terms from £626,4 million to £4,840 million, and rising to £5,125 million in 1944/45. (John Stevenson, 1984, p. 447).

The government set about freeing workers from existing positions in order to join the forces, build essential war munitions and, of course, to work to keep the most vital areas of export trade open - and so, the Ministry of Labour was empowered to direct "any person in the United Kingdom to perform any service required in any place" (John Stevenson, 1984, p. 444).

The Ministry of Labour had organised a widespread advertising campaign for factory, farm and forces, asking women to volunteer for war work.

The government posted posters with slogans such as "Women of Britain - Come into the Factories", and "Join the Women's Land Army" (see Figs. 2 and 3).

Conscription of women was established in December 1941 for all single women between the ages of twenty and thirty. By 1943, all women between the ages of eighteen and a half and fifty, single or with children over fourteen years, had to come forward. By the middle of 1943, nine out of ten single women under the age of fifty one, and over the age of eighteen and a half; and eight out of ten married women were involved in war work. In fact there was virtually full employment.

Rationing

On June 1st 1941, clothes coupons were introduced for the Board of Trade's Rationing of Clothing, Cloth and Footwear Scheme. Rationing was introduced for many reasons, the main one of which was to create factory space for the manufacture of munitions and military equipment. According to Jane Mulvagh, an exhibition (no date given) of "The use of the Clothing Coupon" included a poster which explained how the reduced demand upon the clothing industry released valuable manpower and war materials for the war effort.

If everybody took a pair of scissors and cut out and gave to salvage one coupon, it would release 8.000 workers, 5.000 tons of raw material, which could be used to make 2.000.000 battle dresses, or clothe 500.000 soldiers from head to foot, including underwear, boots and greatcoat. (Jane Mulvagh, 1988, p.127).

Three women - a business-woman, a housewife and a buyer - advised the Board of Trade, in deciding on the minimum clothing requirements for a woman for a year. The Board found that low-paid families would not be affected by clothes rationing, although families on £4 to £5 a week would have to reduce purchases by about a quarter. Above that income, the reduction would get considerably higher. One needed to use money and coupons to pay for clothing and each garment for sale would have a sign indicating its coupon value. Each adult was given an annual allocation of 66 coupons to cover clothing and footwear (see Fig. 4).



Fig. 2 "Women of Britain come into the factories", *Images of War*, p. 45.



Fig. 3 "Join the Women's Land Army", Images of War, p. 10

Fig. 4 Rationing notice, *Daily Express* from *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 117.



RATIONING

of Clothing, Cloth, Footwear

from June 1, 1941

Rationing has been introduced, not to deprive you of your real needs, but to make more certain that you get your share of the country's goods—to get fair shares with everybody else.

When the shops re-open you will be able to buy cloth, clothes, footwear and knitting wool *only if you bring your Food Ration Book with you*. The shopkeeper will detach the required number of coupons from the unused margarine page. Each margarine coupon counts as one coupon towards the purchase of clothing or footwear. You will have a total of 66 coupons to last you for a year; so go sparingly. You can buy *where you like and when you like* without registering.

NUMBER OF COUPONS NEEDED

Men and Boys		Adult	Child	Women and Girls		Adult	Child
Unlined mackintosh or cape ..	9	7		Lined mackintoshes, or coats (over 28 in. in length) ..	14	11	
Other mackintoshes, or raincoat, or overcoat ..	16	11		Jacket, or short coat (under 28 in. in length) ..	11	8	
Coat, or jacket, or blazer or like garment ..	13	8		Dress, or gown, or frock—woollen ..	11	8	
Waistcoat, or pull-over, or cardigan, or jersey ..	5	3		Dress, or gown, or frock—other material ..	7	5	
Trousers (other than fustian or corduroy) ..	8	6		Gym tunic, or girl's skirt with bodice ..	8	6	
Fustian or corduroy trousers ..	5	5		Blouse, or sports shirt, or cardigan, or jumper ..	5	3	
Shorts ..	5	3		Skirt, or divided skirt ..	7	5	
Overalls, or dungarees or like garment ..	6	4		Overalls, or dungarees or like garment ..	6	4	
Dressing-gown or bathing-gown ..	8	6		Apron, or pinafore ..	3	2	
Night-shirt or pair of pyjamas ..	8	6		Pyjamas ..	8	6	
Shirt, or combinations—woollen ..	8	6		Nightdress ..	6	5	
Shirt, or combinations—other material ..	5	4		Petticoat, or slip, or combination, or cami-knickers ..	4	3	
Pants, or vest, or bathing costume, or child's blouse ..	4	2		Other undergarments, including corsets ..	3	2	
Pair of socks or stockings ..	3	1		Pair of stockings ..	2	1	
Collar, or tie, or pair of cuffs ..	1	1		Pair of socks (ankle length) ..	1	1	
Two handkerchiefs ..	1	1		Collar, or tie, or pair of cuffs ..	1	1	
Scarf, or pair of gloves or mittens ..	2	2		Two handkerchiefs ..	1	1	
Pair of slippers or goloshes ..	4	2		Scarf, or pair of gloves or mittens or muff ..	2	2	
Pair of boots or shoes ..	7	3		Pair of slippers, boots or shoes ..	5	3	
Pair of leggings, gaiters or spats ..	3	2					

CLOTH. Coupons needed per yard depend on the width. For example, a yard of woollen cloth 36 inches wide requires 3 coupons. The same amount of cotton or other cloth needs 2 coupons.

KNITTING WOOL. 1 coupon for two ounces.

THESE GOODS MAY BE BOUGHT *WITHOUT* COUPONS

¶ Children's clothing of sizes generally suitable for infants less than 4 years old. ¶ Boiler suits and workmen's bib and brace overalls. ¶ Hats and caps. ¶ Sewing thread. ¶ Mending wool and mending silk. ¶ Boot and shoe laces. ¶ Tapes, braids, ribbons and other fabrics of 3 inches or less in width. ¶ Elastic. ¶ Lace and lace net. ¶ Sanitary towels. ¶ Braces, suspenders and garters. ¶ Hard haberdashery. ¶ Clogs. ¶ Black-out cloth dyed black. ¶ All second-hand articles.

Special Notice to Retailers

Retailers will be allowed to get fresh stocks of cloth up to and including June 28th, of other rationed goods up to and including June 21st, **WITHOUT SURRENDERING COUPONS**. After those dates they will be able to obtain fresh stocks only by turning in their customers' coupons. Steps have been taken, in the interests of the smaller retailers, to limit during these periods the quantity of goods which can be supplied by a wholesaler or manufacturer to any one retailer however large his orders. *Further information can be obtained from your Trade Organisations.*

ISSUED BY THE BOARD OF TRADE

A suit required eighteen coupons, a blouse five, a woollen dress eleven, a coat fourteen, and a pair of shoes five. Even two handkerchiefs required one coupon. Children were dressed from their parents' allowance of coupons, with children under the age of four being exempt from rationing restrictions. It proved very difficult to plan for a family's summer and winter requirements, as a child of four years and over required eleven coupons for a coat, eight for a jacket, and five for a skirt.

The Rationing Scheme had a special scale for growing or extra-large children; people losing their clothing through enemy action were allowed roughly two years' supply of coupons. Prices were not controlled however, and prices continued to soar with the demand for restricted goods. Sir Kingsley Wood's budget of 1940 had introduced a new Purchase Tax on clothing, and by the time Rationing had arrived in June 1941, clothes prices had almost doubled in 18 months. The matter of excessive pricing was being dealt with simultaneously by the government under the Utility Scheme, which was introduced by the government around the same time. The media explained to people why restrictions were put in place, and most people seem to have accepted these explanations. One lady remembers:

You just accepted you couldn't have clothes ... it was amazing really, when you look back, how we did accept things without questions, didn't we. (Maggie Wood, 1989, p. 10).

The main thing was winning the war and getting it over and all the men back and everyone getting on with a decent life again, so you didn't worry (about clothes). (Maggi Wood, 1989, p.10).

Many magazines at the time had features on how to plan your coupons for the year, and it was generally felt that help was needed. *Vogue*, for example, in January 1942 invited celebrities to share with the readers how they had decided to allocate their coupons (see Fig. 5).

As the examples in this feature are all wealthy women, it is to be assumed that this advice would have been of limited value to the average woman with a family, but one notes the popularity of the tweed suit among their choices.

Fig. 5 "How Do Your Coupons Go?" Vogue, Jan. 1942, p. 46, 47.



COUPONS GO?

Mrs. Anthony Nelson

SHE goes regularly to the Beaver Club, where she serves tea and food to Canadian soldiers, so a good overall is a prime necessity for her. She bought a neat coat-shaped one, crisp green and white, for 7 coupons; and two pairs of really comfortable shoes to wear with it. For her private life, she invested 11 coupons in a jumper-suit of infinite versatility (right) — dark brown with sergeant stripes of bronze sequins. Sometimes she wears the skirt with a blouse and a bolero instead. For her, as for us all, stockings are the recurrent need, and with each issue of coupons she buys several pairs—six, to date. Her coupons spent amount to 44.

11	4	7	12	10	
TOTAL	44				



Mrs. Gilbert Russell

SHE spends her time now at her country house, Mattisfont Abbey, where she has a number of evacuees. Running it and them keeps her tremendously busy. But she has not let it crowd out her absorbing interest in literature and the fine arts. To wear in the evening, she has a black skirt, and this boldly patterned blouse which she made herself from an old evening dress. She, also, finds a tailored suit the mainstay of her wardrobe, and has got a new one from Strasser, in blue and black check, with which she fringes the chargers between sweater and blouses. To save her shoes, she wears sandals about the house; and she has an one-breasted red overall for her dairy work. There, with two pairs of stockings, bring the total of her coupon spending to 45.

18	11	7	1	5	
TOTAL	45				



HOW DO YOUR

Lady Stanley of Alderley

SHE is on Vogue's staff. Her work takes her about a good deal, both in and out of town; and a good suit, of the kind which looks well either in London or the country, is essential to her. She found it well worth while to spend 10 coupons on this warm tan tweed suit, from Lachasse, with collar and cuffs of black velvet. In town, she wears with it a blouse, court shoes, and black suede gloves; in the country, a sweater, brogues, and tan string gloves. She spent coupons, too, on stockings: and on a pair of wool-lined boots for fire-watching nights and glacial days. She bought one new blouse as well. Her coupon expenditure so far totals 43.

18	4	5	8	10	
TOTAL	45				



Lady Barnby

SHE works hard for prisoners of war in the War Office, and is also a member of the War Fashion Council, which plans the loyal clothes for British wool. Her latest choice for a basic outfit was this therefore suit—skirt, jacket and waist coat of Scottish tweed in a lovely powder blue and maroon check. Sometimes she wears this with a blouse, sometimes with a warm sweater—she's brought her new one home recently. As also is an American (a gold American eagle is her permanent adornment) she finds this country too cold for all stockings and so gets two pairs each and half a dozen handkerchiefs, which brings her coupon expenditure up to 50. The rest she is kindly saving for future emergencies.

18	5	5	8	5	
TOTAL	50				

8

The hard-wearing tweed suit was part of the staple wardrobe of most women during wartime as it could be mixed and matched and accessorised according to one's requirements, proving good coupon value.

The introduction of coupons forced designers to design garments that were coupon friendly. The "suit dress", or "jacket dress" as it was known, was a war-time favourite. Here we can see an example from *Vogue* magazine in March 1942 (see Fig. 6). This is a jacket and skirt sewn together to sell at the coupon value of a dress, or eleven rather than eighteen coupons. The buttons are wooden, as all metal was needed for munitions. As the Austerity Restrictions have not yet come into place, this is a good example of a reasonably unrestricted design.

Rationing became more severe with the progress of the war. Coupons were cut to 48 per year in the spring of 1942. According to Jane Mulvagh, this number dropped again to 41 by the end of 1942 (Jane Mulvagh, 1988, p. 128). Frances Kennett claims that clothes coupons "had dropped to 36 by the end of hostilities". (Frances Kennett, 1983, p. 66).

When the war was over, those returning from the forces found that they no longer had clothes, or that their old clothes no longer fitted. It was estimated that a man's wardrobe required 223 coupons and a woman's 219, so it was decided that women were to be given a money grant and 146 coupons, and men were to get a smaller bonus of coupons and had to report to their local barracks to be fitted with a free "demob" suit. (Paul Addison, 1985, p. 20). Rationing was finally lifted on March 15th 1949.

The Utility Scheme of 1941 - 1942

The Utility Scheme was introduced by the government in May 1941, and had been shaped by Ernest Bevin in Churchill's coalition government. This scheme covered many retail goods including clothing, and was designed to regulate the distribution of cloth to manufacturers and to set minimum standards of fabric quality. The Utility Scheme aimed at

Fig. 6 "All-in-one jumper suit" *Vogue*, March 1942, p. 58.



stabilising soaring prices within the clothing trade, by setting minimum and maximum prices for cloth and garments produced within the scheme. Cloth manufacturers working within the scheme were obliged to allocate at first 50% and later 85% of all cloth manufactured to the Utility Scheme. Utility fabrics were available free from Purchase Tax, whereas all other fabrics were subject to a Purchase Tax of 66.6 %.

This ensured a demand for Utility fabrics from the manufacturers. Fabrics were chosen for the scheme by the Board of Trade, if deemed a high enough quality, having passed tests for shrinkage, colour fastness and waterproofness (where appropriate). Value was not necessarily qualitative as sometimes even the cheapest quality cloths were approved by the Board if they passed these tests. Garments designed within the Utility Scheme were also free from Purchase Tax and had to be basic necessary garments, in wide demand by the general public, and considered by the Board to be economical of labour and without unnecessary ornamentation.

At this time, few guidelines were laid down for the use of Utility cloth, and Utility garments were rarely advertised, as there was no compulsion by law to manufacture clothing within the scheme. Harris Cohen was one of the first manufacturers to use Utility cloth and advertised Utility coats as early as April 1941 in *Vogue* (a month before the government announced the scheme). He advertised another coat in September 1941, again in *Vogue*, this time with a different Utility label, suggesting perhaps that the scheme was not yet fully organised (see Fig. 7). It seems that the Utility Scheme made little impact on the manufacturers, or the public, until 1942 when couturiers became involved with the scheme at the request of the Board of Trade. This became necessary after the rapid implementation of many new laws and schemes under which Utility was made compulsory and the entire fashion industry was controlled by the government. In order to explain the involvement of the couturiers, it is necessary to explain the laws which made this necessary.

"UTILITY"
LLAMA — CAMEL — TWEED



S
P
R
I
N
G

**THE FINEST TRAVELLING COAT
OBTAINABLE !**

Ideal for Town and Country wear—Made in pure Llama and may also be had in Camel and Tweed. Obtainable from Marshall & Snelgrove (Small Sizes) London and Guy Smith of Grimby and also all the leading fashion stores in Great Britain.

Ask your retailer
for the range of **UTILITY**
SPORTSWEAR.



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HARRIS COHEN (OXFORD ST.) LTD.
100 Oxford Street, London, W. 1.

Utility
LLAMA - CAMEL - TWEED



**ALL PURPOSE
COAT**

Made in 100 per cent. Llama (herringbone and plain), Camel and Tweed—it has a large armhole specially designed so that it can be worn over a tailor-made and still be a perfect fit.



Obtainable from Marshall & Snelgrove (Small Sizes), London: Daly's, Glasgow; Darlings, Edinburgh; Taylor's, Preston; Vincent Williams, Chester. The name of your nearest Retailer will be sent on application.

WHOLESALE ONLY

Manufactured and Produced by
HARRIS COHEN (OXFORD ST.) LTD.
100 Oxford Street, London, W. 1. Tel. Museum 4049

Fig. 7 Harris Cohen Utility coats, Vogue, April 1941, September 1941.

The Making of Clothes (Restrictions) Orders

The Making of Clothes (Restrictions) Orders¹ were introduced by the Board in the spring of 1942 and became known as the 'general austerity restrictions'. They were introduced as a direct response by the government to the growing demand for materials, both for war munitions and also perhaps more importantly, for the export drive. The word "austerity" had been introduced into general circulation by the Conservative President of the Board of Trade, Oliver Lyttleton, in 1941, and became one of the most often used words during the war. The aim of the restrictions was to make further savings of labour and materials, by simplifying garment styles. All clothes produced for the home market had to comply with these austerity restrictions, even if these clothes were produced outside of the Utility Scheme.

Trimmings, such as embroidery and ornamental stitching, were banned. Steel and rubber were banned (as these were needed for war munitions). The use of elastic was banned - except for use in women's underwear, children's clothes and in industrial garments. Styles were adjusted to save on cloth: the use of pleats, for example, was curtailed, as was the maximum length and width of skirts. The width of sleeves was restricted, hem turn-backs and seam allowances were curtailed, and men's trouser turn-ups were eliminated. The number of buttons was determined for each garment type and sleeve buttons were eliminated. In fact, every button and stitch had to be functionally accounted for. A limit was set on the number of basic designs to be made by a manufacturing firm within one year. Styles were limited to six for women's underwear and fifty for dresses, to encourage long runs of each style, therefore avoiding unnecessary waste of time. *Vogue* generally looked at these restrictions in an optimistic manner. In an article in July 1942, entitled "Fighting Trim", *Vogue* says:

Dress restrictions simply pare away superfluities, but leave basic elegance.... It is a great opportunity for the couture. They, by sheer skill of cut, sheer interest of fabric, can turn negative restrictions into positive triumphs. ...

¹Elizabeth Wilson, Lou Taylor, refer to the scheme as the "Making up of Civilian Clothing (Restrictions) Orders"

We persuaded these couture houses to make their first venture into 'Austerity' - to show how reassuring, how full of interest, is the prospect before us. (Vogue, July 1942, p.27)

Gor-Ray advertised the positive aspects of austerity restrictions with a range of ads in *Vogue* throughout the war (see Fig. 8). The extent of these restrictions proved very difficult for the average designer or manufacturer, and help was needed from the Board of Trade.

The Apparel and Textiles Order

The Apparel and Textiles Order was introduced in May 1942, to ensure adequate price controls, with the Utility Scheme becoming compulsory for all manufacturers, who had to undertake that 85% of their output would be Utility in order to receive supplies of cloth. When the garments were made, the manufacturer was only allowed to charge the cost of manufacture, plus a 5% mark up. Once the 85% was produced for Utility, the remaining 15% could be set at prices decided by the manufacturer. Most of this 15% was designated for export by the government, so very few non-Utility garments were available in Britain. Those that were available were subject to a very high purchase tax, and still had to comply with the Making of Clothing (Restrictions) Orders.

The Apparel and Textiles Order gave the Board of Trade further powers to control the supply of cloth, reducing the variety of cloth available to manufacturers, thus ensuring long runs of fabric to be woven, saving time and ensuring further price control. This explains why so many war-time garments look as if they are made of the same cloth.

Strict specifications were laid down for cotton and rayon, relating to the type and fineness of the yarn, the closeness of the weave, the weight of the cotton per yard, and the type of finish. For rayon, the number of threads in the warp and in the selvedge, and the allowance for shrinkage, were laid down by law. Wool didn't come under such strict specifications due to the difficulty in defining the many varieties of wool used in the weaving process. Only small patterns were approved by the Board of Trade in order to avoid wastage when matching seams.

Fashion Now Says Side Pleats

A new and inspired skirt fashion! Side pleats . . . tapering off into snug-fitting *single* material over the hips in the way made famous by the incomparable GOR-RAY "Koneray" Pleated Skirt. And a full skirt, with the so-very-useful patch pocket used to better advantage than ever before. GOR-RAY "Sidepleat" Skirts are on sale at all good fashion houses and stores. Enquire *to-day*.

Sidepleat Skirts.

Owed to Spring

Expect the budding beauty of spring time scented in a KONERAY. With graduated knife edge pleats ALL ROUND that taper off into a slender, snug, close-fitting hip line, the KONERAY is the smartest of skirts, yet freedom of movement is in no way impeded. And the pleats stay in, for there is no "pull" on them. You owe it to spring and to yourself to possess a KONERAY.

Ask your dealer or come to show you the KONERAY in the wide variety of quality materials in which it is available. There are black, Brown, Check, Corduroy, wool, Denim and Seersucker. First of England, and other All World Pleats. Prices from \$16.

Koneray

PLEATED SKIRTS

GOR-RAY

Fig. 8 "Gor-Ray skirts showing austerity changes, *Vogue*, March 1941, p. 14; July 1942, p. 81.

Small check patterns and tartan tended to dominate in woven wool and most other fabrics tended to be without pattern. Plain dresses were easy to change with accessories, and removable collars became very fashionable for this purpose.

The Concentration Scheme

Although the Concentration Scheme was announced in May 1941, it wasn't actually introduced until July 1942. This scheme was aimed at reducing the numbers working within the clothing industry, thereby releasing more manpower and womanpower for conscription. Under this scheme, a limited number of factories were designated by the Board of Trade for clothing manufacture, creating much factory space for the manufacture of uniforms and the storage of war machines. Many manufacturers were forced to combine together, rather than enter into direct competition, to stay in business. The Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers was one such combination.

Employees of these designated factories were subject to Essential Works Orders, which meant that they could not be dismissed or leave their jobs. They were paid guaranteed wages and their conditions of work were laid down. No new businesses in clothing manufacture were permitted, for the Board had carefully selected a range of different levels of quality manufacturers, and any deemed to be of an inadequate standard were closed down. Standards were very strictly monitored in these factories; shoddy work could not be disguised, and factories, chosen by the Board were given priority to retain skilled staff so as to maintain efficient high standards. So the government had the entire industry under control and performing for the benefit of the war effort.

The Utility Scheme of 1942 - 1952

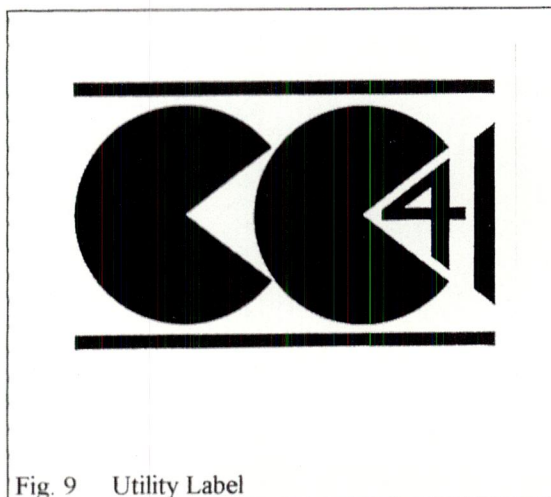
The Utility Scheme was now compulsory for all manufacturers, with Utility garments in production within two quality levels; the maximum price of the lower quality was set at two thirds of the maximum price of

the higher quality, with every manufacturer fitting into these two levels at some point. Utility was produced by everybody, from "Kay's Catalogue" to the couture designers. Even Norman Hartnell would take his vendeuse and mannequin to show his latest collection (85% of which was made to Utility specifications), to the King and Queen at a secret location. The Queen would then have the chosen garments made to Utility specifications, showing a patriotic concern for the war effort and a loyalty to those fighting on behalf of Britain. To overcome the lack of ornamentation allowed by the scheme, Hartnell would hand-paint patterns onto the fabric.

The less skilled, however, had problems with the implementation of the austerity restrictions in combination with Utility restrictions, and for this reason, the Board of Trade asked eight famous London couturiers to design a range of basic garments within the guidelines, as an inspiration to manufacturers. This scheme became known as the Utility Prototype Scheme.

The eight couturiers involved in the prototype scheme were Captain Molyneux, Charles Creed, Elspeth Champcommunal from The London House of Worth, Peter Russell, Victor Stiebel, Digby Morton, Lachasse and Hardy Amies. Norman Hartnell was not part of this scheme, but designed a range of Utility garments for the London ready-to-wear group, Berkertex. Each of the eight designers designed four basic items - a top coat, a suit, an afternoon dress, and a cotton overall dress - within the Utility restrictions, and in accordance with the Making of Clothing (Restrictions) Orders. These were then passed by the Board and put into

production. These garments were first seen in the fashion magazines in March 1942, and were available in the shops in the spring of 1943. The clothes were anonymous, carrying the label "CC41" to show that they complied with government regulations (see Fig. 9). This label replaced the "Utility garment" label of 1941 and indeed, looked a lot more official. These garments were



to be copied by mass-manufacturers and ready-to-wear alike. The prototype dress in Fig. 10 is a good example of Utility combined with austerity: only three buttons, sleeves shortened, hem-line barely over the knee, pockets limited to two, and collar cut in one piece. Skirts were often gathered lightly at the centre front to create an illusion of fullness. This dress is bright red which was typical of the time, as bright colours were used to enliven an outfit (although black was still the staple colour).

The prototype suit in Fig. 11 shows the maximum of three buttons, and a simple, one piece collar. It is to be noted, that the check pattern still lines up on the collar, the sleeves, and on the two permitted pockets (a couture trademark). The skirt just about covers the knees. The cooperation of the coutiers ensured a positive response from the media, who were fundamental to the success of the government plans and shrewdly, this ensured free publicity in magazines and newspapers. The Board organised a fashion show in September 1942 to generate even more publicity. Good publicity was needed for the scheme, as when Hugh Dalton, president of the Board of Trade, had introduced the scheme on the radio, as a scheme to produce "standard" clothes, the word "standard" put many people off. As a result, after the fashion show, many people were surprised at how un-standard the clothes were. *Woman and Beauty* wrote:

We came out walking on air.... How the word Utility ever dept into the description of these foods, we can never imagine, for they are smart, well cut, beautifully made and with a wide choice of materials, styles and colour. (*Woman and Beauty*, 1942).

The media were very supportive of the scheme as they were shown the couture prototypes which were made to couture standards. *Vogue* said that the clothes had

... a basic design of perfect proportion and line for which haute couture has always been famed. Now the women in the street, the government clerk and the busy housewife will all have an equal chance to buy beautifully designed clothes, suitable to their lives and incomes. (*Vogue*, Oct. 1942).

Fig. 10 Utility prototype dress, *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 140.



Fig. 11 Utility prototype suit, Through the Looking Glass, p. 118.



Vogue was very patriotic in its support of the scheme and featured Utility garments regularly (see Figs. 12 and 13). Harry Yoxall, the managing director of *Vogue* at the time, was involved with many of the couturiers from the Utility Prototype Scheme, in the setting up of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers. This connection meant adequate coverage of the work produced by the prototype scheme, thus indicating to the general public, the likely look of their clothes to come. Unfortunately, mass manufactured versions were not of such a high standard - as *Vogue* explains:

Each firm is free to put into each model, all the style and finish that the controlled price will allow them to afford. It can't obviously be a very high level of style and finish, but it will be the highest level that can be had at that price. (*Vogue*, Jan. 1942, p.62)

Sash ties made an appearance on coats, as buttons were so difficult to obtain. Leather was rationed and metal for buckles was unavailable. The Windsmoor Utility coat (see Fig. 14) shows a sash belt with huge pockets which were very fashionable at the time, due to their usefulness. The shoulders in this example are very square and wide, but from this time, shoulder lines begin to soften. A new range of more expensive cloth was added to the scheme at the beginning of 1945, as large stocks of low grade Utility cloth had accumulated, showing a public preference for better quality materials.

With the announcement of the 'New Look' and the increased demand from the public and the media, for freedom of choice, the government were forced to remove some of the restrictions in order to produce a toned down version for wear in Britain. Fig. 15 shows a dress from 1947/48 with a generous use of fabric in the skirt and a much longer hem-line than austerity would have allowed. The fabric has a very large tartan pattern which would not have been passed by the Board during the war.

The conservatives left Utility in place until 1952, although there was still demand from the public for government control. A survey of 2,500 persons carried out by "Social Survey" for the Board of Trade in 1950 showed that 57% were in favour of quality control with only 14% against. 83% were in favour of prices fixed by the government.



Fig. 12 Jaeger Utility suit, Vogue, Jan. 1942, p. 52.

Fig. 13 Spectator Utility dress, *Vogue*, Jan. 1942, p. 53.

Fig. 13 Spectator Utility dress, *Vogue*, Jan. 1942, p. 53.





Fig. 14 Windsmoor Utility coat, Vogue, July 1942, p.11.

Fig. 15 'New Look' Utility dress, History of Twentieth Century Fashion, p. 158.



49% were in favour of "more standardisation" with 39% opposing this. (Elizabeth Wilson, Lou Taylor 1989, p. 126)

With the new Conservative government of October 1951, the government system for the planning of the fashion industry was effectively dismantled. Fewer and fewer Utility garments were advertised and in 1952, Utility was replaced by the Douglas Scheme. This was a voluntary scheme under which all clothes were subject to tax, but at a lower level than for clothes outside the scheme. Clothes prices rose, quality controls were abolished and the Utility set prices and profit margins were ended. The Style Development Council set up by Harold Wilson, when at the Board of Trade was abolished. (This council had been responsible for the establishment of sizing regulations for women's clothing).

The Make Do and Mend Scheme

The Make Do and Mend Scheme was introduced by the Board of Trade to encourage women to "Mend and Make do, to save buying New". The scheme urged women to look after the clothes that they already had, rather than to use their coupons to buy new ones, in other words, to ease the demand on the clothing industry in order to redirect manpower into war work, as a result many people learned how to sew and repair during the war. The Ministry of Information produced a leaflet called "The Housewives guide to Making and Mending". This leaflet instructed the reader on how to make a slip and knickers set out of a long evening slip, and how to turn two old coats into one new one. One wonders however, how many working class women would have owned a long evening slip or two coats to turn into one.

One lady remembers:

Who had the time to make one pretty new dress out of three? I mean really, every one of my friends was involved in war work in some way, ... we hardly got enough sleep what with the air raids and the piles of work they gave us ... I'd have been ashamed always to look smart and pretty myself ... they weren't telling us anything new. (Elizabeth Wilson, Lou Taylor, 1989, p. 128)

Many women had to rely on their own ingenuity to remain clothed. One woman remembers meeting her husband when he was home on leave:

I met him at the station in his pants (a bit of lace made them into knickers), his shirt as a blouse, his pyjama jacket as a blazer, and a skirt made from a bleached good stuff bag, and a belt made from cellophane. And he never even noticed! (Maggie Wood, 1989, p.28)

Men's clothes were often converted into women's, meaning that often, men had no clothes when returning from the war. Children's clothes were cut from adult's clothes as it was difficult to dress children from one's own allowance of sixty six coupons. One woman remembers an extraordinary story of making do:

I thought I would like to tell you the tale of the cow gown (a coat used by farmers). My father used it until the sleeves were worn away and many darned holes caused by the hedge brambles. I unpicked it and made my toddler some dungarees, covering the darns with wool unpicked from an old jumper and pieces of material from the rag bag. After my daughter got over the crawling stage, the knees were unpatchable so I cut them off above the knees and bound them with more rag bits. These were worn until she was four years old and outgrew them. No that wasn't the end of the shorts as my friends toddler wore them for another two years. By the time they went into the rag bag, there was more patch than cow gown. We were sorry to say good-bye after 7 years useful service. (Maggie Wood, 1989, p. 28, 29)

Although many women have stories to tell such as this, not all women had to endure such hardship. The Make Do and Mend Scheme was regularly featured in all magazines and newspapers, personified by the ubiquitous Mrs. Sew and Sew (see Fig. 17), who taught one how to repair and darn. Good Housekeeping catered for the average working woman and carried articles which provided useful hints on how to renovate and update clothes already in the wardrobe. *Vogue* catered for the middle to upper classes, and also featured the Make Do and Mend Scheme. In an article entitled "66" in July 1941, *Vogue* announces:

Where once we picked for style and price value, we shall now pick for coupon value too. We shall be ready with attractive alteration schemes; with ideas for accessories; with suggestions for getting variety out of items as yet unrationed. ...

Go through your wardrobe



Fig. 16 "Make Do and Mend Scheme" (poster), *Images of War*, p.25.



Fig. 17 Mrs. Sew and Sew, *Persuasive Images - Posters of War and Revolution*, p. 105

Our Vogue pattern service, temporarily disabled by enemy action, will soon be in action again with coupon-saving models. Our knitting designers will help you knit your own at low coupon cost, or none - with unrationed thread. (Vogue, July 1941, p.17)

The Make Do and Mend articles may not have been very practical for the average woman. Features demonstrated the making of accessories, such as an evening bag, out of scraps (see Fig. 18), or a variety of mittens (see Fig. 19), despite the fact that recommended materials such as white fur or Persian lamb would have been impossible for most women to acquire. *Vogue* also carried articles on knitting garments. The garment in Fig. 20 from the March 1942 issue, is typical of the time. Wool was very scarce and rationed so the less a pattern used, the more useful it was.

An article in *Vogue* in July 1942 had a page entitled "Renovations follow the same slim lines, but exploit softer details". Here, *Vogue* suggests that even in the line of renovations, one must think of austerity; additionally, home dressmaking followed the lines of austerity restrictions - for even if one could sew, it was considered indecent to look anything other than patriotic. Waste was certainly frowned upon. The woman who mended was seen as doing her bit for the war effort. A letter was published in *Good Housekeeping* in 1943, from Hugh Dalton at the Board of Trade, explaining the importance of making do, and the success of the scheme so far (see Fig. 22):

To all of you who have so cheerfully made do, who have mended and managed and got months of extra wear out of your own, your husband's and your children's clothes, I say - thank you. Thank you for the raw materials you have saved the country; for the shipping space which you have freed to bring vital munitions of war to these shores ... for the men and women you have set free for the Fighting Forces and for direct war production ... to wear clothes that have been patched and darned - perhaps many times is to show oneself a true patriot. (Good Housekeeping, 1943)

Businesses and firms and Make do and Mend

Many firms having few goods available to sell, kept in business through advertising remodelling. "New corsets for old" (see Fig. 23) was a regular advertisement in *Vogue*.

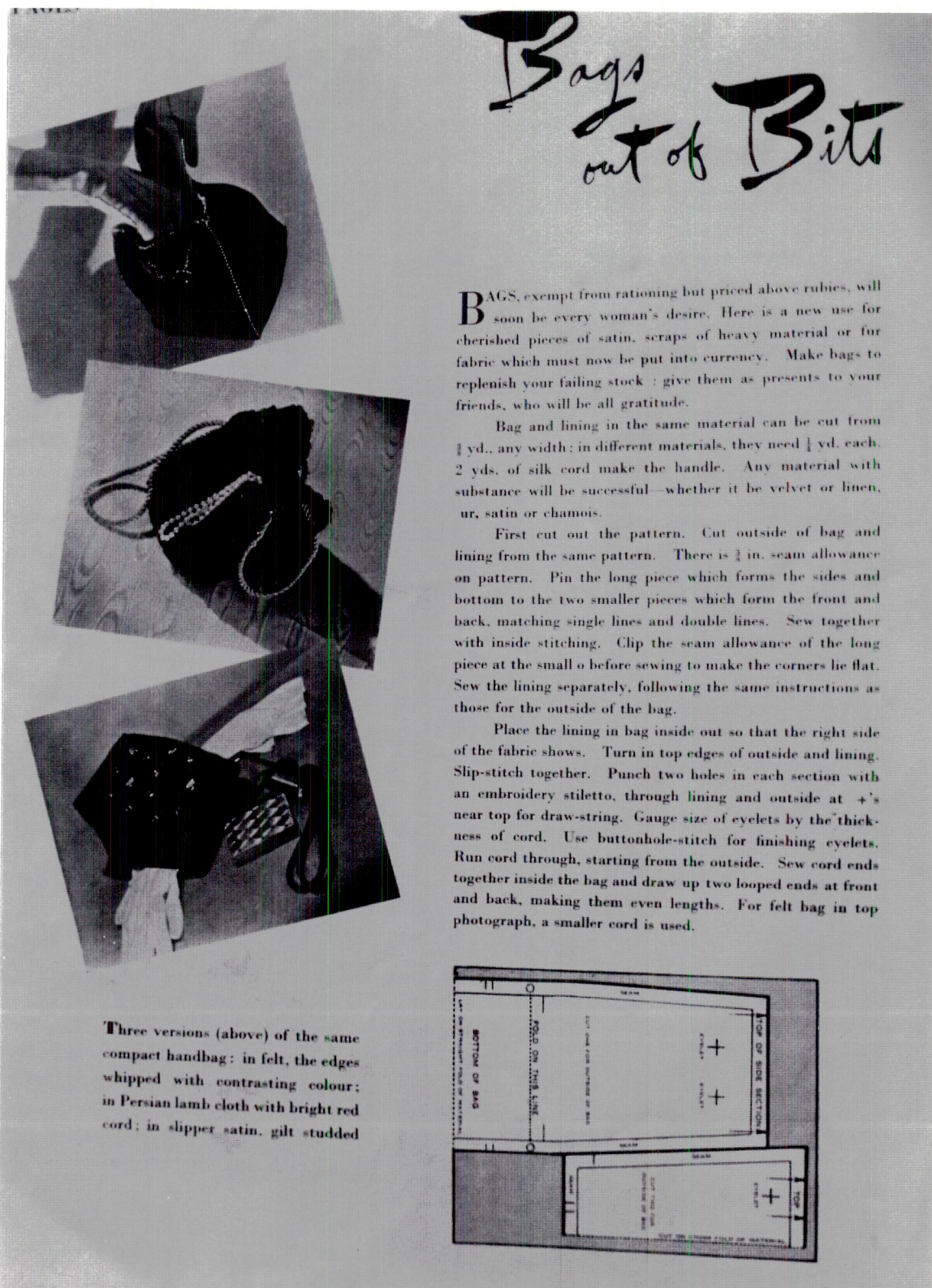
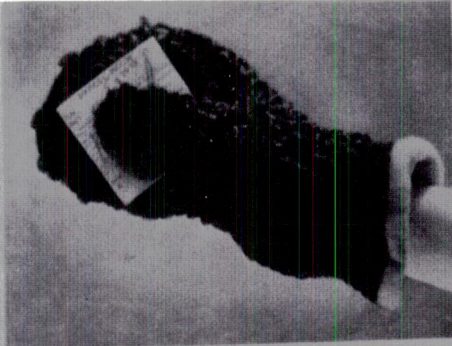


Fig. 18 "Bags out of bits" (make do and mend), *Vogue*, Jan. 1942, p.48



In Persian lamb cloth, for formal coats

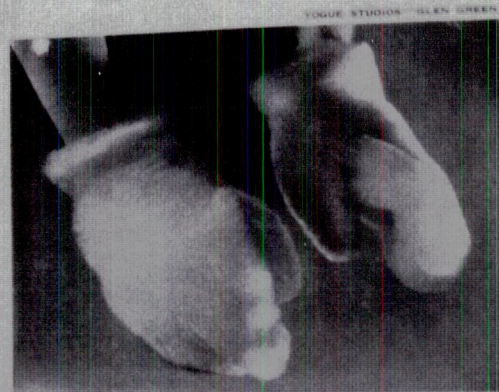
MITTS TO MAKE

ODD bits of material—wool, fur, velvet, corduroy, flannel, chamois—can be made into mitts, chic and warm, practical gifts for Christmas. You will need $\frac{3}{4}$ yd. of most materials.

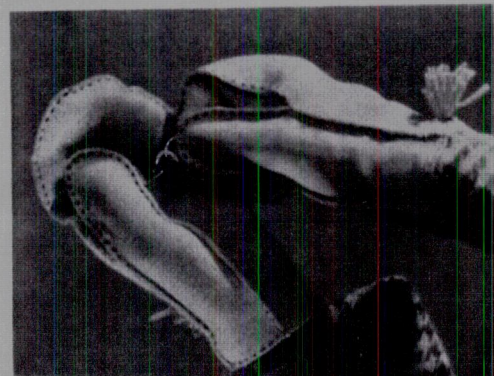
First form the thumb by folding line 1 upward toward finger-tips, then folding line 2 over, placing A's together. Complete thumb by sewing up seam from wrist. Fold palm over back of mitten. Stitch together all round, including folded side, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from edge. With fabric, sew seams on the inside and turn inside out. With chamois, use hand-running stitch on outside of mitten.

When mitt is lined, cut lining exactly the same as outside. If a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hem at wrist or a casing for drawstring is desired, sew bias strip 1 inch wide and 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long of the same fabric to edge and finish as hem. Or edge may be turned in $\frac{1}{2}$ inch and stitched or bound in contrasting colour.

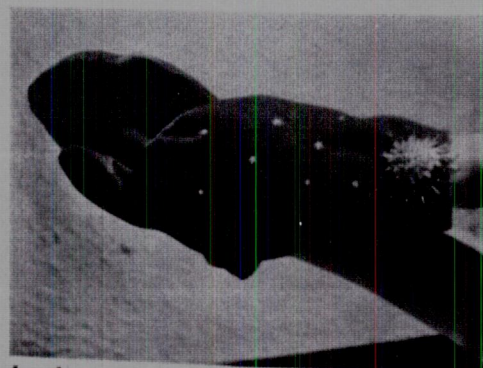
If draw-string is not used, stitch elastic inside 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches down from top on palm side. Or, make a small inverted pleat on back of mitten.



In white fur cloth for wintry weather



In chamois, for suits and sports coats



In velvet, star-studded for evening

Fig. 19 "Mitts to make" (make do and mend), *Vogue*, Dec. 1941, p. 62.



Fig. 20 'knit your own' cardigan, Vogue, March 1942, p. 92.



Fig. 21 Vogue cover reflecting the Make Do and Mend Scheme, Vogue, March 1942.



TO ALL OF YOU . . .

Two years of clothes rationing have come and gone. There are 600,000 fewer workers making civilian clothes than before the war. That is a saving of man-power of which we can all be proud.

To all of you who have so cheerfully made-do, who have mended and managed and got months of extra wear out of your own, your husband's and your children's clothes, I say—thank you.

Thank you for the raw materials you have saved the country ; for the shipping space which you have freed to bring vital munitions of war to these shores and to take them where they are most needed ; for the men and women you have set free for the Fighting Forces and for direct war production.

Remember that every coupon unspent means less strain on the country's resources. To wear clothes that have been patched and darned—perhaps many times—is to show oneself a true patriot. The “ right ” clothes are those we have worn for years, and the wrong ones those we buy, when we don't absolutely need them.

Making-do may at times seem a little dreary. Nearly every woman, and some men, would like something new to wear. But, even when old clothes aren't exciting, they are a war-winning fashion, to follow which will speed the day of victory.

Hugh Dalton.

Fig. 22 Letter from Hugh Dalton, president of the Board of Trade to the readers of Good Housekeeping, Good Housekeeping- the Home Front, p. 43.

NEW CORSETS *for* OLD

A Wartime Innovation

and saves your coupons

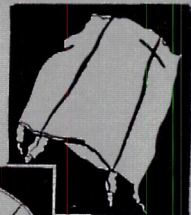
Knowing the difficulty you are experiencing in obtaining your "pet corset," the higher prices now prevailing, and purchase tax in addition, our RENOVATION SERVICE will be invaluable to you.

No matter what make or their present condition, they will be reconstructed by experts with any adjustments or renewals required, and returned to you post free, as good as new.

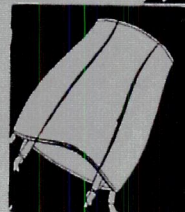
THE MINIMUM PRICE FOR THIS EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IS 12/6

PLEASE SEND P.O. WITH YOUR CORSETS
(Cleaning not undertaken)

from
12/6



BEFORE



AFTER
SERVICING

THE CORSET RENOVATING CO. (Dept. V.21)
134 Baker Street (2nd floor), London, W.1. Tel. Welbeck 3866



A Stitch -in-Time

A Braemar is a very precious possession indeed these days. And that is why the 'Stitch-in-Time' Service came into being. Your Braemar knitwear and underwear can be skilfully repaired to look almost as lovely as new. Holes can be mended, sleeves re-elbowed, skirts re-shaped. There is, of course, no purchase tax on repairs (unless a piece of new material is used) and no coupons are required. So look through your Braemar wardrobe now and see how many of these most cherished possessions need a 'Stitch-in-Time.'

All garments must be sent through a retailer, please!



'STITCH-IN-TIME' SERVICE

James Henderson & Co. Ltd., Hawick, Scotland

Fig. 23 "New corsets for old", *Vogue*, April 1942, p.87; "Stich in Time", *Vogue*, April 1942, p.76.

Companies advertised that a corset regularly repaired, lasted longer. Other firms advertised "new garments from old", where by one could bring in an old out it or a suit from a spouse on duty, and have it turned into something entirely new. "Viyella" placed an ad "Inspiration for Renovation" (see Fig. 24) in Vogue in 1942, explaining how the high quality of Viyella fabric made it a perfect choice for making "new" patchwork garments from old.

Make Do and Mend - the 'New Look'

With the introduction of the 'New Look', the Make Do and Mend Scheme became widely practiced. Because of Britain's financial situation, the Board of Trade needed to keep restrictions in place more than ever. The export trade between Britain and the United States of America became more vital than it had been during the war. With the 'New Look' also becoming popular in America, increased amounts of fabric were needed for Britain's vital export trade to the West. The Board of Trade kept rationing and restrictions in place, so women had to alter what clothes they already had to suit the new length. Princess Margaret is thought to have started a trend in alterations after the war.

On March 3rd (1948) she appeared publicly in a pink nutria coat with 3 velvet rings at the hem. On March 17th she appeared in the same coat, but it now had 4 rings at the hem, an alteration which did not escape notice. (Elizabeth Wilson, Lou Taylor, 1989, p. 34).

This method of "adding rings" to the hems of garments became a popular method of achieving the new length. Another method was to insert a panel above and below the waist of a contrasting fabric. Many magazines published articles on how to make do and alter existing clothes to achieve the 'New Look'.



INSPIRATION
FOR RENOVATION



Women with dress-sense are still managing to achieve originality. Now that lots of new clothes are neither patriotic nor possible, the art of patchwork has reappeared with a new

modernity and sense of design. Of course you must have good material to work with - that's where the unfaded freshness of your old 'Viyella' garments will prove such a stand-by.

OVERSEAS OFFICES AND REPRESENTATIVES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD



Fig. 24 Viyella advertisement, *Vogue*, April 1941, p. 48.

After the war, dressmaking was a popular passtime for many, with the increasing availability of sewing machines in the new industrialised Britain. Magazines continued to feature articles on dressmaking, with Norman Hartnell signing a contract in 1951 with *Woman's Illustrated*. The cover of each issue would show his model Jane Chorley wearing a Hartnell design, and the pattern and assembly instructions were to be included. This proved to be a very successful venture and lasted into the 1960's.

CHAPTER II

Government Export Schemes

Although the government had introduced all of these fashion restrictions, it was still very much in their interest to keep fashion in Britain alive, as a huge part of war funding came from taxation and the massive exports of fashion goods, the majority of which was exported to America. Britain had huge debts to pay to America from the Lend-Lease Schemes which enabled Britain to survive the war: America knew that in order to have her debts repaid, Britain's export schemes needed their full support; and 'Buy British' shops soon opened in New York.

The Board of Trade approached nine London couturiers to take part in the government sponsored "South American show of British Fashions for Export", organised in 1941. Digby Morton, Norman Hartnell, Captain Molyneux and Hardy Amies were among the couturiers who designed special collections using fabrics specially designed for the Ascher silk firm by well known artists, such as Graham Sutherland and Ben Nicholson. Many firms had relied on French fabric designers before the war, but were now forced to look to their own artists and designers to produce entirely British cloth. This led to an entirely new 'British style' and independence from France. British *Vogue* featured these collections and announced that the clothes were to be shown in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo and São Paulo and called it a cooperative collection. British *Vogue* published a special South American edition to accompany the cooperative collection and also published pictures in the home edition, although these looked alarmingly glamorous among the masculine tweeds and short suits featured in the rest of the magazine (see Fig. 25).

American *Vogue* and British *Vogue* co-operated in order to make these export drives a success. American *Vogue* urged its readers in 1940:

Here is one way that a woman can help support democracy's fight. Buying a British suit is as much a contribution to British defence as a sum of money. A new sweater puts another nail in a plane for Britain. (American *Vogue*, 1940)



Fig. 25 Molyneux exports to America, British Vogue, April 1941, p.41; Sept. 1941, p. 42.

MIGHTIER YET!

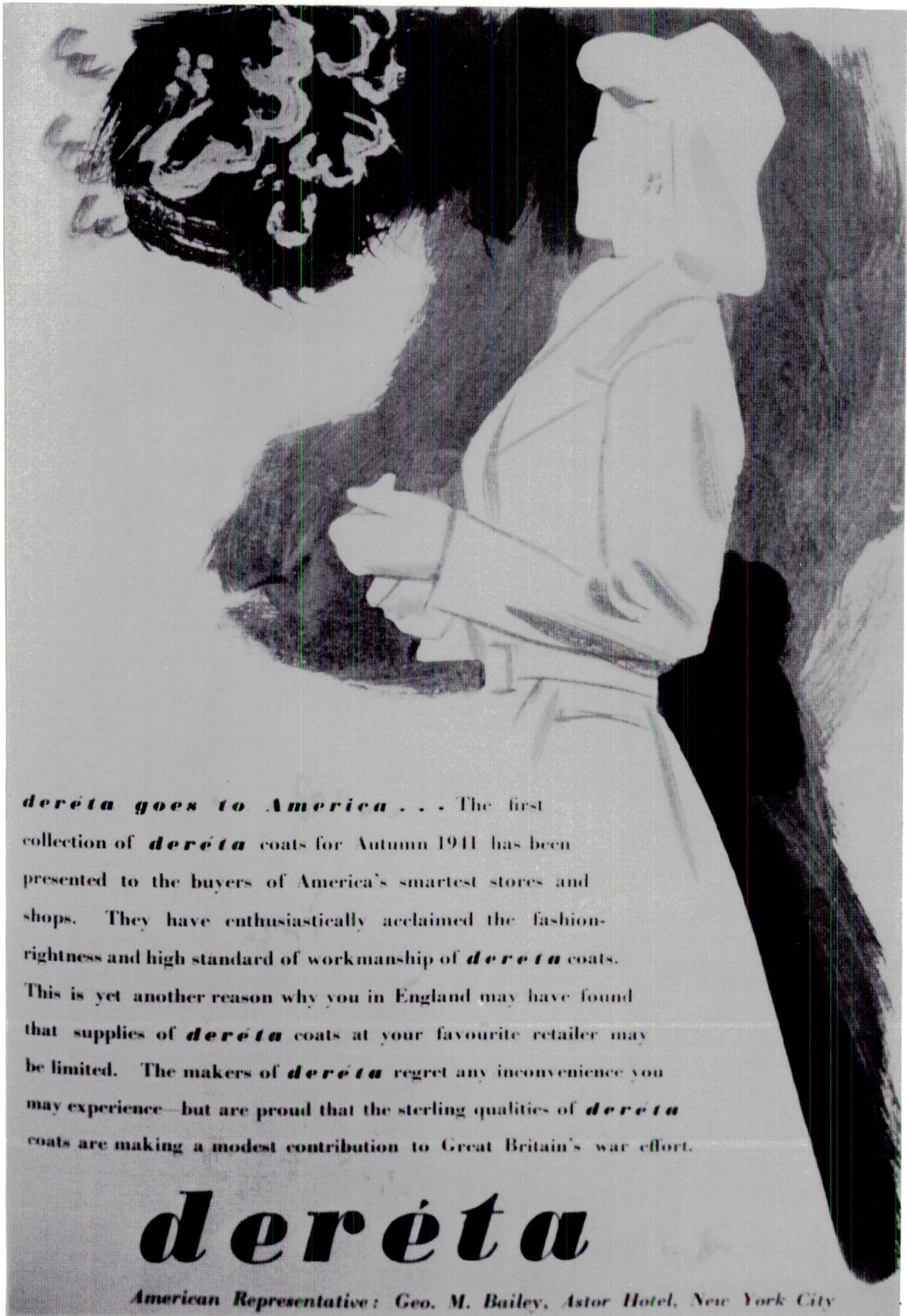


Every day more PLANES
Every day more PILOTS

PRINTED FOR H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE BY J. WILKINSON LTD. LONDON. WEL. 81-1 BY 28

Fig. 26 "Every day more planes, every day more pilots" Propaganda - the art of persuasion, p.95.

Fig. 27 "Deréta goes to America", Vogue, June 1941, p. 71.



deréta goes to America . . . The first collection of *deréta* coats for Autumn 1941 has been presented to the buyers of America's smartest stores and shops. They have enthusiastically acclaimed the fashion-rightness and high standard of workmanship of *deréta* coats. This is yet another reason why you in England may have found that supplies of *deréta* coats at your favourite retailer may be limited. The makers of *deréta* regret any inconvenience you may experience—but are proud that the sterling qualities of *deréta* coats are making a modest contribution to Great Britain's war effort.

deréta

American Representative: Geo. M. Bailey, Astor Hotel, New York City

MATITA



In accordance with Government decrees the number of Matita models available for the Home trade is unavoidably restricted, although a representative collection still finds a prominent place in exclusive shops throughout the Kingdom. Under the export drive requested by H. M. Government, Matita models are being exported in interesting quantities and are available in many overseas cities, as listed below:—

NEW YORK
MONTREAL
TORONTO
CHICAGO
HAMILTON
OTTAWA
ST. CATHARINES

CAPE TOWN
DURBAN
JOHANNESBURG
SALISBURY, RHODESIA
NAIROBI
BATAVIA

CALCUTTA
HONG KONG
SINGAPORE
MELBOURNE
ADELAIDE
PERTH

10, ADELPHI STREET, LONDON, W.1. 'PHONE: GER. 1033

Fig. 28 Matita advertises government export schemes, *Vogue*, June 41, p. 13.

The Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers

Many sources say that the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers was established in 1942². In fact, *Vogue* published an article in June 1941, entitled "Mrs. Reginald Fellowes - first president of the new Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers". (*Vogue*, June 1941, p.36). Digby Morton's advertisement in the same issue notes that he is a member of the new society, proving that the society was in fact established in 1941.

Vogue goes on to explain how the new couture group was "formed to further the prestige and promote the export of British fashions and fabrics". (*Vogue*, June 1941, p. 36).

In order to form the society, Norman Hartnell approached Colonel Fay, managing director of Worth, and other designers such as Charles Creed and Molyneux who were in exile from Paris at the time, and proposed forming a united design group. A meeting was organised, and the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers, or the 'Inc. Soc.' as it became known, was born in 1941. Margaret Havinden, a director of Crawford's advertising agency, drew up the constitution, following consultation with Alison Settle, who was familiar with the workings of the French "Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne", upon which the 'Inc. Soc.' is thought to be based. Havinden became the first chairman, Harry Yoxall, an American and managing director of British *Vogue* at the time, became the business head and entrepreneur of the society. The 'Inc. Soc.' had a long line of distinguished presidents, starting with the Hon. Mrs. Reginald Fellowes and succeeded by, among others, Lady Clark, Lady Rothermere, and Lady Hartwell. These distinguished members ensured the success of the society, from advertising, through to guaranteed exposure in *Vogue*.

²"In 1942, the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers was established." (Norman Hartnell, 1985, p. 34).

"The Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers was born in 1942" (Elizabeth Ewing, 1974, p. 149).

"The Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers was set up in 1942" (Elizabeth Wilson, Lou Taylor, 1989, p. 123).

The designers, who became known as the "top ten", included Norman Hartnell, Peter Russell, Worth, Angèle Delaughe, Digby Morton, Victor Stiebel, Hardy Amies, Molyneaux, Creed and Michael Sherard. The 'Inc.Soc.' had various other members at different times, including Mattli, Bianca Mosca, Lachasse, John Cavanagh, Michael, Ronald Paterson, Rhavis and Clive. During the war, the most important achievement of the 'Inc. Soc.' was the cooperation of some of it's members in the Utility Prototype Scheme.

CHAPTER III

The importance of the Media

The media had a huge role to play in informing the public about the latest government schemes and ensuring that they received a patriotic response. The media also followed closely the progression of the war abroad, and informed the public of how important their role was at home. The media exercised wide powers with a huge public following:

According to a newspaper readership survey carried out in 1939, 69% of the population over 16 years of age read a national newspaper and 82% one of the national Sunday Papers. Given that ... between 16.5 % and 22% of the population were probably unable to read a simple newspaper paragraph, virtually the whole effectively literate population read at least a Sunday Newspaper. (John Stevenson, 1984, p. 403).

With an increased literacy rate, the public were eager to follow the progress of the war and to understand how each event was to affect life in Britain. As a result,

... between 1937 and 1947, total daily sales (of newspapers) rose from 9,903,227 to 15,449,410, while Sunday sales almost doubled from 15,700,000 to 29,300,000. (John Stevenson, 1984, p. 403)

Newspapers were by far the most wide reaching media form, and also the most relied upon by the government for general issues. For fashion however, the magazines had a much larger role to play in promoting government schemes. "Women's magazines boomed as never before". (John Stevenson, 1984, p. 406)

The circulation of *Vogue* magazine climbed from 52,000 in 1941 to 106,000 in 1949, showing that the demand, for fashion news was on the increase during the war despite the government's restrictions.

Picture Post was launched in 1938, producing a circulation of over two million by the eve of the Second World War and reaching nine million by 1949. Considered less expensive and more widely read were *Women's Weekly* (1911) and *Woman's Own* (1932). By 1939, the most successful

was *Woman* (1937) priced at 2 D. (John Stephenson, 1984, p. 406)

Defence regulations empowered the government to suppress any newspaper or journal "calculated to form opposition to the war." (John Stephenson, 1984, p. 446)

The communist *Daily Worker* was suppressed from Jan. 1941 to Sept. 1942 and the *Daily Mirror* was warned that it may be suppressed for criticisms of the army in March 1942. Generally though, the media were positive in their coverage of the war and of government schemes and restrictions, and sometimes, their articles seemed unnaturally patriotic (see Fig. 29). *Vogue's* article, "No Margin for Error", for instance, discussed the clothes purchase tax imposed by Sir Kingsley Wood's budget.

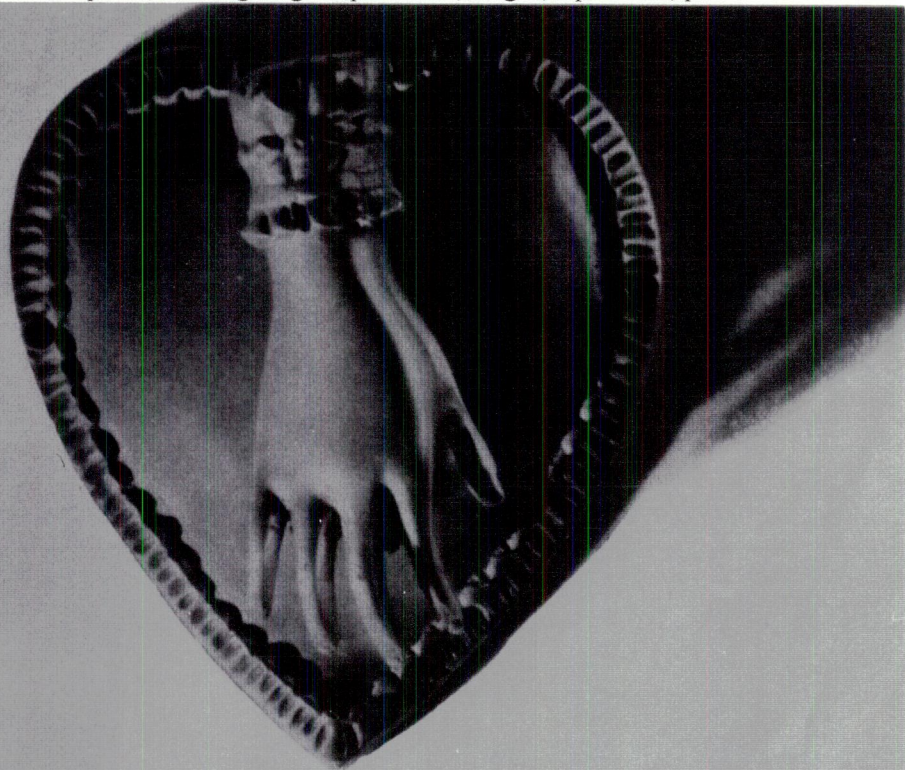
His acts might suggest him no friend to fashion; but *Vogue* (hopefully) detects an ally. Because of him, designers will get together frankly, to pool their ideas and use their limited materials to present a united fashion front. Because of him, women will buy carefully and cleverly ... by the inescapable pressure of the Purchase Tax he will set them practising those sound dress maxims that *Vogue* has always preached. How often have we counselled against "the dress you buy and seldom wear" ... if women must buy less, they will buy better. (*Vogue*, Oct. 1940, p. 33)

Vogue urged its readers to make the best of things. In May 1942, when stockings were in short supply, and those that were available were heavyweight, *Vogue* exhorts in the first person:

I resolve to wear stockings made of whatever is available and if they are not sheer enough to flatter my legs, I'll thin down my legs to flatter them. I resolve that if girdles have to go without elastic, I'll thin down my waistline by exercise and diet; that I won't expect a girdle to do all the work. (*Vogue*, May 1942, p. 53).

In July 1942, *Vogue* ran a feature "Sock Shock", in which they urged the reader to wear socks for the summer (see Fig. 30). The Board of Trade had just warned that there would not be enough stockings for winter if women didn't go stockingless for summer.

Fig. 29 "A woman's weapons", showing Vogue's patriotism, *Vogue*, April 1942, p. 23.



A WOMAN'S WEAPONS

I am a woman, and I have two major weapons. I have my hands. I have my heart.

With my hands, I can work, heal, fetch and carry, place and replace; I can keep the day-by-day mechanics of living reasonably tidy and stable.

With my heart . . . well, put it this way

I can be a good wife—Army, Navy, Air Force, or civilian. I can bring up my children, sane among all the insanity. I can run my house without servants and make of it, not an ivory tower for me, but a haven for my husband on his leaves—and for my friends, tired from their war work.

I can pay incredibly stiff taxes with an equally stiff upper lip. I can accept shortages without complaining, and severe rationing without going to pieces. If I am not tied to my home, I can offer myself to factory or Services. I can keep my head to-day despite all the yappings. I can accept any reality. I can reject every rumour. I can fight. I can win.

And I can look damn pretty right through it all.

Fig.30 "Sock Shock", no more stockings available, Vogue, April 1942, p. 44



In the same article, *Vogue* suggested "footlets" as an alternative and proposed that the Board of Trade might put them into production; in the meantime, *Vogue* supplied the pattern to knit them. Magazines at the time often functioned as the voice of the Board of Trade. Despite intense patriotism, resentment or sarcasm do sometimes break through. Early in the war, *Vogue* printed an article on "cutting down" (see Fig. 31). The words of this article are said through gritted teeth:

We call them civil servants though they seem more like rude masters. They cut us ever closer with their 'abhorred shears'. They tie us into knots with their red tape. They give us writers cramp with their block capitals. (*Vogue*, Oct. 1941, p. 31)

It then goes on to explain that "... still there's a war on. Limitation is essential. Rationing is fair. Nothing counts in comparison with victory. We may not grin, but we can bear it."

This particular source of dissatisfaction was incurred by the reduction of paper allowances, resulting in the reduction of the overall size of *Vogue*. To receive supplies of paper, a magazine had to be of use to the government and the country, and this meant carrying articles on all economy schemes and generally cooperating with the government.

Many articles instilled fear of enemy invasion in the reader and highlighted the importance of keeping British soldiers clothed and armed, ready to defend Britain. The public were aware of the atrocities that had occurred in places such as Greece and Portugal. *Vogue* carried an article in Nov. 1942 called "Greek Tragedy - some terrifying notes from eye - witnesses who have escaped".

Babies under two years are given some milk sometimes. In Marousi, for instance, the Near East Foundation did not have enough for the two hundred and fifty babies; the workers had to choose fifty infants whom they could keep alive and they watched the mothers of the two hundred doomed babies weep. ... There is little food. Death by starvation is slow, tranquil, the fate of innumerable Greeks There is no meat - dogs, cats, even rats are the only meats to be found; three pounds of donkey meat, which tastes like kitchen soap, costs about £2. (*Vogue*, Nov. 1942, p. 44).

Cutting down

WE CALL them civil servants, though they seem more like rude masters. They cut us ever closer with their "abhorred shears." They tie us into knots with their red tape. They give us writer's cramp with their black capitals.

Still, "there's a tear on." Limitation is essential. Rationing is fair. Nothing counts in comparison with victory. We may not grin, but we can bear it.

Ingenuity, within the spirit of the regulations, is legitimate. It is fair to coax two dresses out of one length, by using lace. It is clever to save coupons with ribbons and remnants. But it is cheating to try to beat the game. No clothes out of curtaining. No coupons from outside the family circle. No extra food in a black market-bag.

If, as flattering letters suggest, *Vogue* has been helpful with hints for rationed ragoûts, couponed clothing, quota-ed cosmetics, we can answer modestly that wisdom comes of experience. Almost the first control, and certainly the most drastic, was that of paper. For months we have been cutting down, down, down.

This issue marks another stage in our course of compulsory slimming. We must trim more thousands from our already short supply of the magazine, and ask you to share your copies. We must ration pages to advertisers, and ask them to try their wares in smaller space. *Vogue* Pattern Book, suspended first by action of the enemy, is suspended again by action of our friend the Controller. As a separate publication, that is: for *Vogue* Patterns will appear, as in this issue, under *Vogue's* cover, condensed in form, saving paper.

These are the ways to deal with controls. Obey the rules. Do without, somewhat. But maintain the intrinsic character—of your wardrobe, your table, your magazine, or whatever. . . .

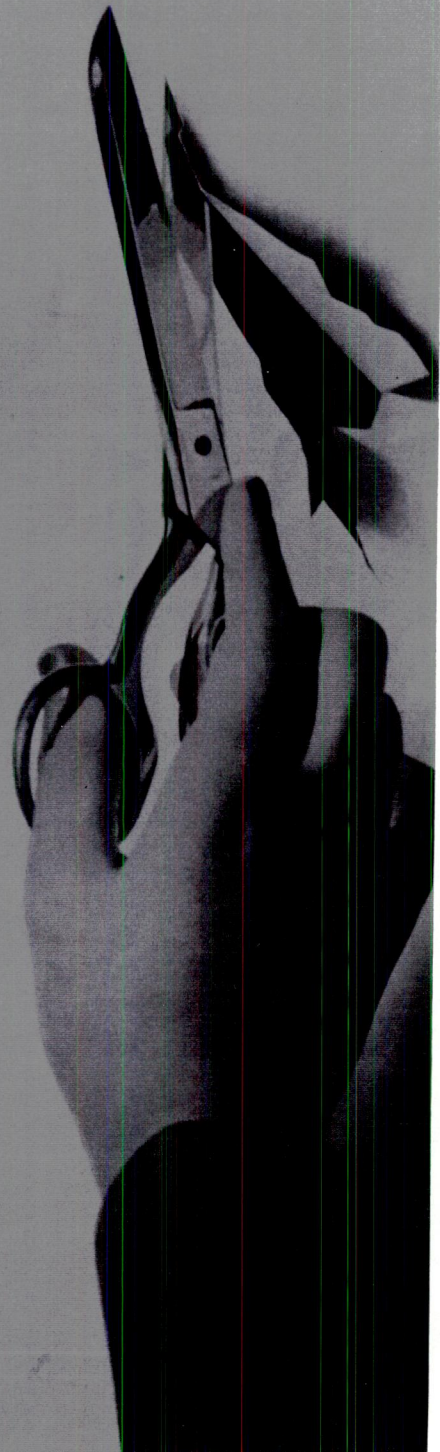


Fig. 31 "Cutting down" - showing tones of sarcasm, *Vogue*, Oct. 1941, p. 31.

The accompanying picture of a boy shattered by war (see Fig. 32), is one of the most memorable pictures of war-time *Vogue*. Articles such as this were intended to reassure the readers that their lot in Britain was not so bad after all, and to ensure that they worked hard and gave as much as they possibly could to the war effort. Notes at the foot of *Vogue's* pages for example, reminded its readers to "use as little paper as possible for fires" and "waste paper is vital to the war effort".

Propaganda was a major wartime issue. *Vogue* featured the propaganda prints of Arnold Lever of Jacqmar in an article entitled "Propaganda Prints". It featured many famous women wearing Levers prints in clothes designed by Bianca Mosca.

When the many processes involved in fine hand block printing are completed, Bianca Mosca takes the lovely stuffs and turns them into clothes as lovely. (*Vogue*, April 1942, p. 82)

We can see Mrs. Robert Hudson, wife of the Minister of Agriculture, opening a demonstration plot in Hyde Park wearing an apron featuring a "Dig for Victory" design. We also see Miss Vivien Leigh wearing a blouse printed with "66 coupons", depicting things rare and rationed. Mrs. Ellen Wilkinson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Security, wears its slogan "Fall in the Firebomb Fighters". In another article of June 1941, *Vogue* featured many of the fabrics which were commissioned by the Cotton Board's Design and Style centre. We are told of Fougasses printed silk, "pell-melled" with Churchill's slogans. "This tonic print sells as well in America as here!" Both articles explain that these propaganda prints have been developed with export in mind. Many other examples of Propaganda prints were made up into clothes for home and export (see Fig. 34).



Fig. 32 Boy shattered by war, Vogue, Nov. 1942, p. 45

Propaganda Prints

See the give-and-take between fashion and the world around: a world at war. Scribbled slogans, narrative pictures, are a print trend: so Arnold Lever of Jacquar employs the slogans and stories of wartime England. Bianca Mosca designed the clothes these leading ladies wear. All is done with propaganda purpose, and an eye on export.

MISS FRANCES DAY keeps fit in her poster-strewn 'London Wall' play suit. She has collected over £25,000 for her Penny Fund which provides all sorts of comforts for the Services.

MRS. ANTHONY DRENDEL HIDDLE, Jr., wife of the American Ambassador to the Allied Governments, braved London's rains last year. Her 'Mr-rain' print blouse is white on blue.

MRS. ROBERT HUDSON, wife of the Minister of Agriculture, opens a demonstration plot in Hyde Park. What more appropriate for her apron than a 'Dig-for-Victory' design?

MISS VIVIAN LEIGH, now Mrs. Dubedat at the Haymarket, wears '66 Coupons,' printed with things rare and rationed.

MISS EILEEN WILKINSON, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Security, wears its slogan, 'Fall in the Firebomb Fighters'.

MISS ELAINE LUCE loses tirelessly with Ensis, should Lever draw the 'House Guard' print of her pajamas, on newspaper, on Salisbury Plain.

LADY BEATTY works for the Naval Comforts Fund. Her blouse bears the classic cry—'The Navy's Here'—of the Allmark rescue.

LADY PORTAL, wife of Sir Charles Portal, Chief of Air Staff, and worker for R.A.F. charities, wears a 'Happy Landings' print.

MADAME BATHORY, tennis champion and chief of the *Les Victimes Françaises*, sports the 'Yves Frenay' print, with General de Gaulle's signature.

More about these prints on page 82

Fig. 33 Arnold Lever's propaganda prints for export, *Vogue*, April 1942, p. 28, 29.

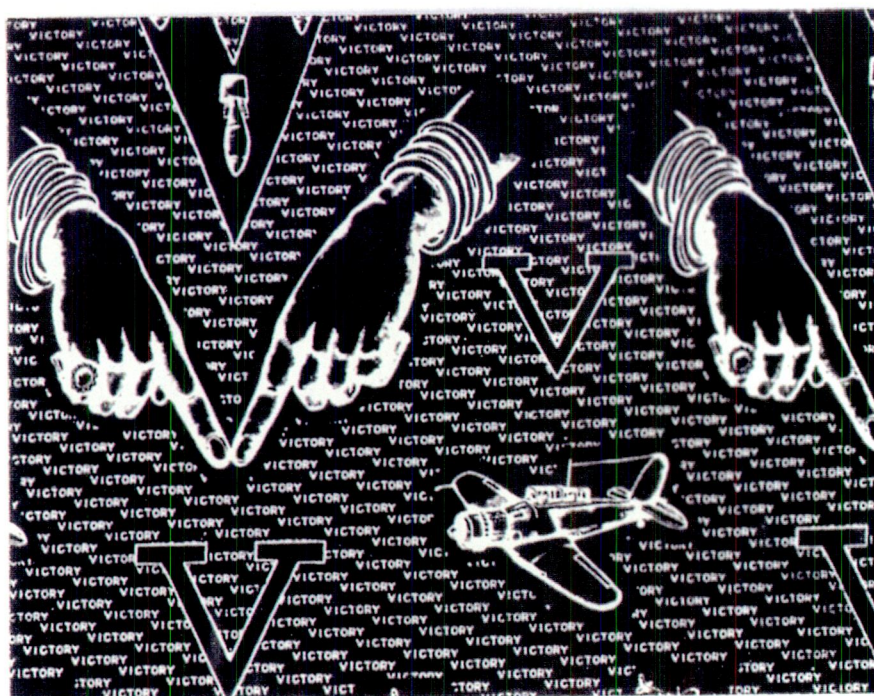
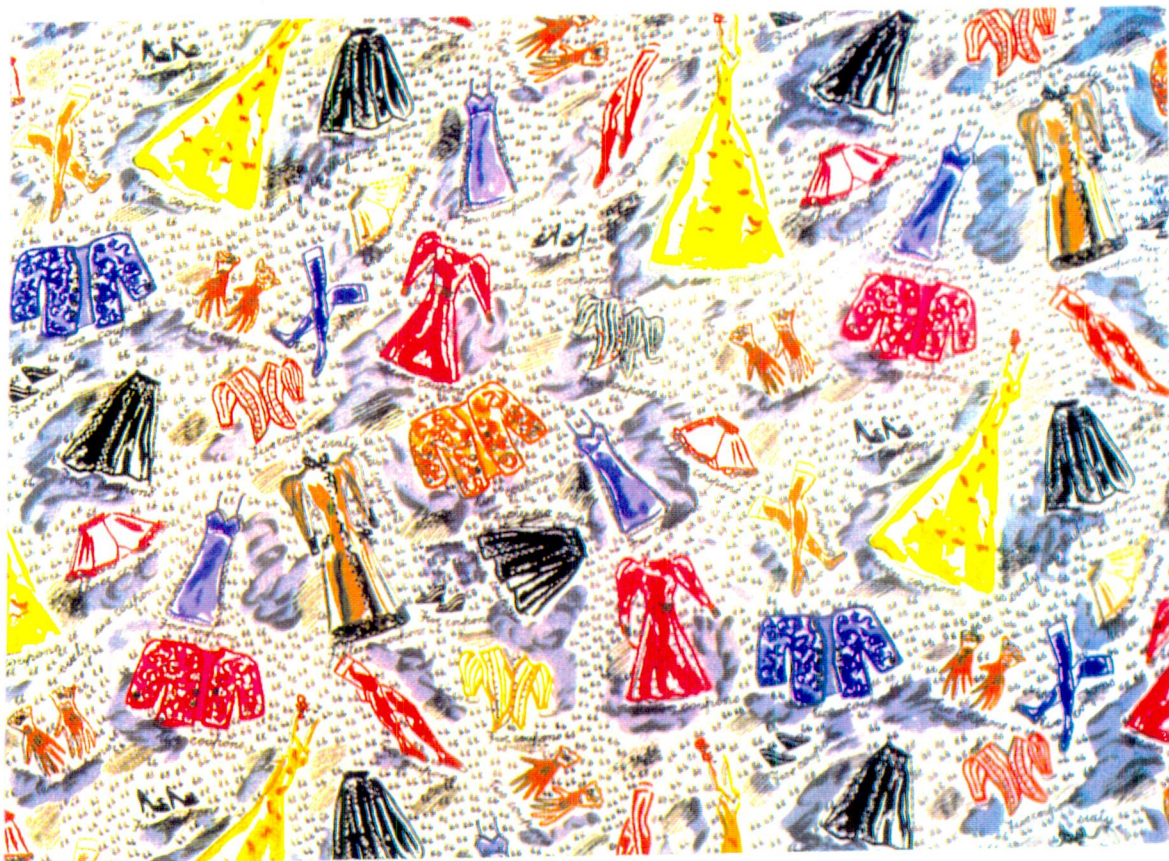


Fig. 34 Propaganda prints. Top: "66 coupons" depicting things rare and rationed. Bottom: "Victory V" showing Churchill's famous gesture. Both were designed for export. The Collectors Guide to 20th C. Fashion, p. 67, 69.

CHAPTER IV

The New Look in Britain

The 'New Look' was launched in February 1947 by Christian Dior and it was an immediate success (see Fig. 35). Of course, women wanted a more feminine look than Utility had allowed, but the change was not as sudden as is usually portrayed. Fashion had continued to change during the war, and many features of the 'New Look' were touched upon directly before the war in *Vogue*. In March 1939, corsets were featured with hip padding - an essential element of the 'New Look' (see Fig. 36).

An article in Jan. 1942, entitled "The New Look" tells about recent changes in the silhouette:

Getting down to detail: it's a look of lowered waistlines. The natural waist is fitted at it's lower rather than it's higher level, and every kind of dressmaking trick carries the eye down ... skirt fullness is gathered to the lowered edge of a fitted waist section. It's new for sleeves to end just below the elbow ... it's new for yokes to extend right over the shoulder cap, rounding the shoulder line. (*Vogue*, Jan. 1942, p. 21).

Many styles changed gradually from the hard-shouldered suits of 1940 to those of the mid-decade, with soft rounded shoulders, lowered waistlines and fuller hips. Big pockets had become very fashionable, gathered and placed on the hips accentuating the hip line. While these were very practical for war-time needs, they also helped to alter the silhouette. A softer, more bloused look became fashionable during the war, which had the benefit of allowing ease of movement for war duties. The shorter sleeve length of the 'New Look' was already common in Britain under the austerity restrictions.

The 'New Look' seemed a natural choice for women after austerity but most could not understand the financial predicament of the government and the need for continued post-war austerity.

In February 1946, *Vogue* invited a Cambridge economist and broadcaster, Louis Stanley to explain the shortage of new goods on the market. In an article called "The Second Battle of Britain" Stanley wrote:



Fig. 35 The 'New Look' by Christiane Dior, The Collector's Guide to 20th C. Fashion, p. 73.



Fig. 36 The 'NewLook' pre-empted-corsets with hip padding, Vogue, March 1939, from Hardy Amies, Still Here, p. 34



Fig. 36 (b) The new ballet length by Debenham & Freebody (for export only), Vogue, March 1942, p. 33

It is bad enough when such goods do not exist, but to learn that they are being produced - the best this country can make - only not for domestic consumption is a bitter pill ... women are further exasperated by illustrations in periodicals and the National press showing exotic fashions in Paris, Brussels New York, Stockholm, even Germany. ... We have to wipe out a deficit of £1,200,000,000 from Britain's balance of trade. (Vogue, Feb. 1946, quoted by Georgina Howell, 1975, p. 167)

With the announcement of the 'New Look' and the public reaction which followed, the government were outraged. Sir Stafford Cripps with the Board of Trade, soon to become Chancellor of the Exchequer, asked the British Guild of Creative Designers to keep the short skirt popular in Britain. Mr. Henry Scott of the Guild duly denounced the new length. Bessie Braddock MP. dismissed it as the "ridiculous whim of idle people". Many found the 'New Look' anti feminist. Mabel Ridealgh, a Labour MP. called the 'New Look' an

... utterly ridiculous, stupidly exaggerated waste of material and manpower, foisted on the average woman to the detriment of other more normal clothing ... the average housewife won't buy it. She can't afford the coupons, let alone the price. (The Daily Herald, Feb. 22nd 1948)

The designers however, were thrilled by the advent of the 'New Look'. Having been curtailed for so long in their design, they longed for the easing of restrictions. Hardy Amies said that the 'New Look'

... ensured that the large stores, where slumps were greatly feared in the spring, would maintain their turn-overs since the very fashion conscious American Public would be likely to feel it necessary to change their wardrobes completely. (The New Statesman and Nation, 4 Oct. 1947, p. 270).

In the same article Amies continued to say that

... the Board of Trade would, of course, be unwise to meddle with fashion ... it is very difficult to design for export only - in a void as it were. Furthermore, the Americans are sensitive on this point and repeatedly say they want to buy typically British clothes. This snob appeal would disappear rapidly if our public were to wear clothes considered by them to be dowdy. (The New Statesman and Nation, Oct. 4th, 1947, p. 270)

At this point, designers were finding it difficult to continue designing luxury for export and Utility for home. Coincidentally, *Vogue* was losing its patriotic edge.

It is unfair and economically unwise to leave our designers, one moment longer than is necessary, at such a disadvantage in relation to their competitors ... we add our voice to those which ask the Board of Trade to abolish Austerity as soon as practicable ... and we hope that, "as soon as practicable" will be construed with more urgency than its usually commands in Whitehall. (Georgina Howell, 1975, p. 167)

The financial implications of the 'New Look'

To the women of Britain, the 'New Look' spelt freedom at last from the years of war. To the government, it spelt further economic disaster. When the war ended, Britain was in its worst financial state ever. In fact, shortages became much more severe after the war, than during it, with bread being rationed for the first time. Britain's debts stood at 3,500 million in 1945 compared with 496million in 1939 (John Stevenson, 1984, p.450).

During the war, the deficit was made good by supplies delivered free of charge from the United States under President Roosevelt's programme of Lend-Lease. But, immediately after the defeat of Japan in August 1945, President Truman announced that Lend-Lease would be suspended forthwith.

Only loans of £5,000 million from the United States and Canada, granted on terms which included the dismantlement of the system of imperial preferences and other unfavourable 'strings', saved Britain from bankruptcy. (John Stevenson, 1984, p. 450).

Churchill gave the country over to Clement Atlee in 1945, when Labour were elected by a majority. Besides rebuilding the country after the war, the government had also pledged to reconstruct the social system. With plans based on the Beveridge Report of December 1942, which comprised of a scheme for the abolition of poverty through comprehensive social insurance. Beveridge argued that the success of the scheme depended

upon the introduction of family allowances, the creation of a National Health Service and the maintenance of a high level of employment. Beveridge listed the five problems to be overcome - Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. The result of this report was the gradual introduction of White Papers on all aspects of the reconstruction of post-war Britain. These White Papers defined the role and obligations of the post-war state. "Educational Reconstruction" was published in July 1943 and proposed a system of secondary education for all. "A National Health Service" was published in February 1944, proposing a free and comprehensive service covering all medical needs. The paper on "Employment Policy" followed soon after in May 1944 with "Social Insurance" following in September 1944. The final white paper was introduced in March 1945, outlining "Housing Policy", designed to address the need for new state housing in post-war Britain.

As many as four million houses, almost a third of the total stock, were damaged by enemy action, of which 475,000 were totally destroyed. In addition, blitzed factories, schools, hospitals and other buildings had to be costed. Shipping losses were also heavy - more than 13.5 million tons were lost which was almost two-thirds of the total British merchant fleet in 1939.

The media were critical of the socialism of the new Labour government, but in fact, social change was inevitable. All of the parties had pledged to carry out the changes planned between 1942 and 1945. In their election manifesto of 1945, the Conservatives pledged to carry through the Beveridge Plan of social insurance, to implement the Butler Education Act of 1944, to establish some form of National Health Service, to launch a major programme of state housing and to maintain a "high and stable level of employment". (Paul Addison, 1985, p. 18).

All of this required an enormous amount of income for the government. In fact, with full employment and the extent of the industrial boom, more workforce was needed to fuel the export drive.

In 1944, the 'Disabled Persons' Act was passed forcing employers positive discrimination in favour of disabled rehabilitated workers. This

was of course, designed to address the return to civilian life of so many injured soldiers; to assist the number of civilians injured during the blitz, and to ensure high employment figures after the war.

The government sought out reserves of foreign labour. About 100,000 workers were recruited by government agencies in Ireland swelling the Irish-born population of Britain to 1,000,000 by 1951. By the end of 1948, the Ministry of Labour had found employment for 45,000 Poles in return for their participation in the war. (Paul Addison, 1985, p. 174).

"European Voluntary Workers" were recruited by officials of the Ministry of Labour from displaced persons' camps in Germany and Austria. Even German prisoners of war were put into service as farm labourers.

Public posters begged women to stay at work a little longer and to work harder in order to manufacture more for export or to simply do with less (see Figs. 37 and 38). Posters announced that exports needed to be increased by 75% to secure sufficient imports for Britain's survival (see Fig. 39). Posters even urged factory workers to use their handkerchiefs in order to curtail the spread of disease in order to avoid loss of workforce through illness (see Fig. 40). Labour saw that it was necessary to keep restrictions in place over a period of five years, in order to avoid the havoc that had occurred after the end of the first world war when restrictions had been lifted immediately. Basic social needs such as food clothing housing and employment needed to be met before the controls could be lifted.



The big raids on Germany continue. British war plants share with the R.A.F. credit for these giant operations.

THE ATTACK BEGINS IN THE FACTORY

G.P. 3/15/6

PRINTED IN ENGLAND BY CHICHESTER WORKS LTD LONDON S1-4263

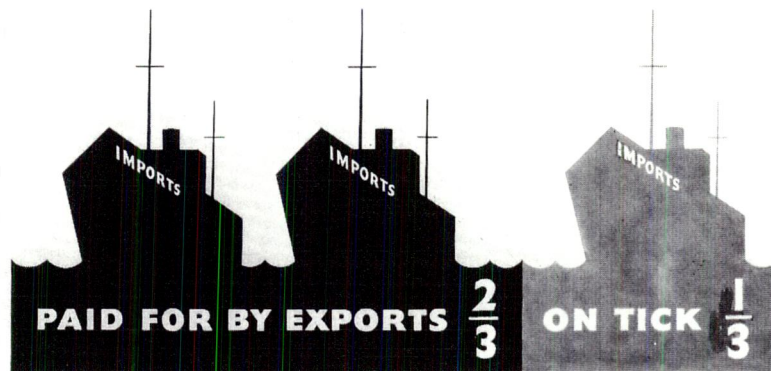
Fig. 37 "The attack begins in the factory" (poster), *Images of war*, p. 47.



Fig. 38 "Full Ahead Production" (poster) *Images of War*, p. 47.

WE NEED

**more imports from abroad
(cotton, rubber, tea and the like)
than our exports now pay for**



**This can't go on. We must
export one third more this
year or get less and fare worse**

***We're up against it!* WE WORK OR WANT**

Fig. 39 "We need...." (poster) 1947, Now the war is over, p. 82.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH says:-

Coughs and sneezes spread diseases



Trap the germs by using your handkerchief

Help to keep the Nation Fighting Fit



PRINTED FOR H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE BY CHROMOWORKS LTD. 25-26A, MARK LANE, LONDON, E.C.3

Fig. 40 "Coughs and sneezes" - to ensure maximum work output, Images of war, p. 34.

CHAPTER V

Effects of the war on the Fashion Industry

Many good things indirectly came about as a result of the Second World War and the resulting government interventions, especially between 1945 and 1951 when there was a majority Labour Government in power.

One of the main effects of the war, was encouraging people to work together under the Concentration Scheme, on a cooperative basis. The 'Inc.Soc.' for instance, inspired many other similar groups. In 1947, the London Model House Group was formed, grouping together many high quality, ready-to-wear manufacturers. The group was set up by Frederick Starke in order to form a united front to suppliers and retailers. Like the 'Inc. Soc.', they also wished to coordinate showings of their collections. Mr. Starke was aware of the massive confusion between the manufacturers, dealers and suppliers, particularly those from abroad, who needed to see all of the collections within one week. Previously, buyers needed to travel to London frequently to see all of the shows, and many of these coincided with the bigger Paris shows, meaning reduced attendance. The first coordinated showing took place in June 1947, one week in advance of the Paris Shows ensuring high attendance numbers and increased sales. The London Model House Group originally consisted of Brenner Sports, Dorville, Frederick Starke, W. & O. Marcus, Rima, Silhouette de Luxe and Spectator Sports, with the Jersey Co., Koupy Models and Simon Massey joining soon afterwards. The group was such a success, that it evolved into the even bigger Fashion House Group of London in 1958.

In 1947, the Apparel and Fashion Industry's Association was established by the joining together of the Apparel Manufacturers Association and the British Fashion Trades Association. This was the first ever national organisation of British manufacturers in the women's dressmaking industry. The British Mantle Manufacturers Association spoke for the heavier side of the industry, involved in the manufacture of outer-garments. All of these groups had representatives who spoke on their behalf in dealings and in negotiations with the government, Trade

Unions³ and other bodies. The fashion industry was now clearly organised into specific groups, enabling each to deal with the governments National Trade Policy for export, showing British fashion impressively abroad.

The National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers put forward an eight point plan for a National Board, to include employers, Trade Unions and government representatives. In response to this, in 1945, under the Labour government, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, initiated a policy of establishing "working parties" to guide every major industry in the consumer field on the road to prosperity. A working party for the heavy clothing industry was set up in 1946 and was followed by one for the light clothing industry and then for the rubber garment section.

All of this organisation meant an increase in production levels at a minimum cost, ensuring a greater consumption of ready-to-wear fashion goods. In the year ended January 31, 1950, sales of women's fashions had increased by 10% in department stores, 13.3% in the cooperatives and 27.4% in the multiples. (Elizabeth Ewing, 1974, p.152, 153). In conjunction with the Festival of Britain, *Vogue* published a special "Britannica" issue, which included an eight-page feature on "The Rise of the Ready-to-Wear", explaining that "the most fastidious and fashion-conscious woman can dress immediately for any occasion in Ready-to-wear clothes." The article revealed the extent to which ready-to-wear had developed in the previous decade, featuring clothes from Jaeger, Susan Small, Deréta Marcus, Brenner, Rima and Mary Black. The consumer was soon to enjoy the efficiency, with which the couture models were copied, and the speed with which they were filtered down into the ready-to-wear market.

There were many reasons for this, and the government was responsible for all of them. Mass manufacturing methods had been introduced for the manufacture of uniforms with accurate sizing also being established. Manufacturing standards had improved immensely under the Concentration scheme, fabric quality had also improved under the

³Trade Union membership was still very low with just under 30% of the workers belonging to the National Union of Tailors and Garment workers - 134,000 out of about 500,000. (Elizabeth Ewing, 1974, p. 153).

Apparel and Textiles Order in conjunction with Utility standards. For the first time, a minimum standard was set for low-cost clothing to ensure that every woman had access to quality workmanship and style. Britain and America were now leading the ready-to-wear market and both had surpassed France in this field. In 1955, the French couturiers sent a committee to America to study production methods in the ready-to-wear area. In the meantime, France was a major area of export for British manufacturing firms. Norman Hartnell was the first of the couture designers to move into the ready-to-wear market, when in 1942 he began designing for the Berkertex company. Hartnell continued to design for the company after the war, designing a range of budget dresses which sold in the U.K. for about 8-10 and were exported to France and sold there for 13. Over 3,000 were sold from the first consignment in a matter of days. Hartnell, while still designing couture, became a fashion consultant for "Great Universal Stores", where he designed for the mail-order business. Michael, another of the renowned couturiers became a design consultant for Marks and Spencer in 1961. Mattli and Ronald Patterson (among others) also managed to combine couture and ready-to-wear.

The effect of government control on the industry was to provide a framework for development after the war, but once the framework had been established, the severity of the restrictions needed to be eased, to provide a more natural environment for the designers through to the manufacturers, but the nations post-war finances meant that these controls needed to remain for longer than anyone had anticipated. British designers and manufacturers, had been forced by law and the lack of French influence between 1939 and 1945, to develop their own strengths, thereby creating their own stable market at home and abroad, as leaders in the ready-to-wear industry.

Look for these Labels

*They stand for
Quality and Style*

British manufacturers are determined, in spite of many difficulties, that their peace-time standards will be maintained. It is the truest economy to buy goods which bear a reputable name. Please see opposite page for list of names and addresses.



Fig. 41 Due to paper restrictions, Vogue advertised ready-to-wear labels on the back page, Vogue, Feb. 1941, p. 81.

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