

Hanoi Fashion

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HANOI—As miniskirts disappear from Saigon, official plans call for brightening up the streets of Hanoi with new color schemes in women's clothes.

Since 1954, North Vietnamese women of all ages have worn the traditional black slacks of this Spartan country. But the Ministry of Culture is studying 1,500 sketches of women's fashions and hair styles, a well-informed North Vietnamese source said.

The frivolous subject of style offers a clue to the Vietnam of the future—slight liberalization in the North coupled with a jam on the brakes in the South: a marriage of Sparta and Byzantium aimed at harmonizing two Vietnams, radically different in spirit and mores, but irremediably committed to reunification.

The people running the revolution are not about to embark on a consumers' society, which their Marxist principles condemn as unproductive. Still, they will have to deal with thousands of individuals north and south who badly want a breather after years of doing without personal comforts to support the war.

Now that the day of "Vietnam for the Vietnamese" has finally come, they want to enjoy some fruits of their victory.

"One of the lasting problems we must settle is that of the greater production of consumer goods," was the comment of the special representative here of South Vietnam's Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) to a Yugoslav newsman.

Ironically, it is the North that probably will bear the burden of this final push aimed at providing a bit better for some without stripping others of all they have. South Vietnam, cut off from American hard cash, manufactured goods and some raw materials, will remain for the time being dependent on the North, well-informed North Vietnamese sources said.

Though many of them originally came from the South, they will be sorely missed.

These massive and ongoing departures have left Hanoi with little but a phantom government. The answer is always the same when a newsman asks for his usual government contact: "Mr. X is out of town . . ."

But the North's toughest sacrifices will be in economic matters. The Hong Gain coal mines have officially announced plans to up their output quota by 3,000 tons of ore. A cosmetics factory has promised to grind out an extra 500 tons of soap, 50 tons of soap bars and 500,000 tubes of toothpaste. The Honh Ha (Red River) office supply factory has agreed to produce 100,000 pens of various kinds and 50,000 packets of carbon paper above its normal output.

All over the country, industrial complexes and cottage industries alike are proclaiming their solidarity with the South and their readiness to do their best to save the bankrupt and abandoned Southland from the hardships of a post-war economy.

Hanoi authorities are said to be preparing a major propaganda campaign to explain and justify this "voluntary" effort, which the government describes as "perfectly normal."

"Our brothers in the South have suffered more than us from the war," one hears in Hanoi. "It is our duty to give them maximum help."

But authorities are expected to balance calls for new sacrifices by keeping Northerners informed of reforms under way in the South.

The major reform, say officials in Hanoi, is to clear South Vietnam's cities and sprawling urban areas of all "unproductive elements," who will be assigned to farming or light industry in the countryside.

This seems the number one goal of the revolution. It is also a formidable undertaking when one contemplates Saigon's 4½ million residents, a good million of whom may count as "parasites" in the eyes of the revolution.

North Vietnam has during the last month sent south of the 17th parallel large numbers of its doctors, teachers, senior civil servants, nurses and other trained personnel.