

Cottage Industry in the Hungarian Cooperative System before 1948*

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Received 20 September 2024 | Accepted 26 November 2024 | Published online 20 December 2024

Abstract. The cooperative system that emerged in Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century was very different from the much earlier processes in Western Europe. In Eastern Europe, including Hungary, the establishment and management of cooperatives was under the control of large capitalists and the state, and was closely linked to nation-building efforts. From the second half of the nineteenth century, the cottage industry movement developed with economic, nation-building, and folk-art preservation objectives. The institutional system of cottage industry included associations, alliances, central governing bodies, and cooperatives. In Hungarian academic research, cooperatives and the cottage industry movement are not linked, although both their aims and their organizations were closely related. This study reveals that the movement was integrated into the cooperative institutional system in several ways, and that the centralizing measures, that were increasingly evident in the cottage industry during the first half of the twentieth century, went hand in hand with the cooperative movement. Exploring these links is essential to understanding folk art, applied folk art, and the cottage industry cooperative system that developed from the 1950s onwards.

Keywords: cooperatives, cottage industry, economic nationalism, material folk art

Introduction

The development of cottage industry over the centuries has been determined by the natural environment. Using the raw materials available (wood, rush, wool, clay, etc.), people could produce objects for occasional orders, i.e., become ‘specialists’ and also sell their products at city markets and national fairs. In the latter case, we are talking about ‘cottage industry,’ which provided a livelihood for many villages in the Carpathian Basin.¹ This form of work was the basis for the state’s efforts

* The study has been published with the support of NRD I project K_22 142797 (NRDI K_22 143295) Heritage Constructions in Contemporary Community Settings – Identity, Memory, Representation.

1 Domonkos, *A kézművesség*, 20–21. Cottage industries also served as a basis for the exchange of products between villages and neighbouring or even distant regions. For more on the cottage industry base of the textile industry, see: Tolnai, *A paraszti*; Tolnai, *A manufaktúraipar*.

to centralize the cottage industry from the second half of the nineteenth century, which included training courses for cottage industry workers, the sale of products, and the financial support and control of their institutions. The study examines cottage industry as a result of the emergence of these centralizing efforts.

From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, Hungarian industry had an essentially double organizational model: traditional small-scale industry remained significant within the framework of industrial associations and industrial corporations even after the abolition of the guild system in 1872, while a concentrated manufacturing industry also emerged.² In addition, a system of cottage industries was formed, coordinated and supported by ministries. In this system, in addition to national organizations, entrepreneurs, church leaders, and women's associations aimed at boosting the local cottage industry (including folk arts) and their earning potential. The notions of 'manufacturing industry' and 'cottage industry' were not incompatible, as some factory foundations claimed the resources of the cottage industry and worked within a cottage industry framework (training their workers, supplying home workers with raw materials and samples for the products to be made).³ "Whether we call it »protoindustrialization« or »dispersed manufactures«, »cottage industry« or »folk art«, all these terms were used to describe a conscious development strategy that sought to turn the »national cottage industry« into an economic development, to strengthen the domestic industry and, thus, to economically strengthen the nation."⁴ The cooperative system also played a role in this strategy.

The cottage industry movement went hand in hand with the development of the cooperative ideal. The 2011 proceedings of the conference *Cooperatives in Ethnic Conflicts: Eastern Europe in the 19th and Early 20th Century* is the first to draw attention to the close link between nation-building and the cooperative movement in Eastern Europe. This process can be captured by the term 'economic nationalism'.⁵ But "the historiography of cooperatives and the cooperative movement in Eastern Europe has rarely noted the development of modern research on nationalism. And likewise, cooperatives have widely been ignored by research on nationalism. [...] Scholarship on cooperatives and nationalism runs basically on two tracks, one

2 Kaposi, *Magyarország gazdaságtörténete*, 239–41. Cited by Szulovszky, "The Weaving Industry in Hungary," 60. For more details on the changing situation of small industries from the 1850s to the 1940s see: Szulovszky, "Craft industries."

3 Lackner, "A háziipar szervezeti keretei," 77.

4 Szőcsné Gazda, "Háziipari mozgalmak," 166.

5 See Lorenz, "Introduction," 9–10; Pogány, Kubú and Kofman, *For a National Economy*; Teichova, Matis, and Pátek, *Economic Change*.

researched mostly by economists, the other by culturologists.”⁶ This dichotomy, complicated by further gaps and contradictions, is also evident in Hungarian research.

The development of the cooperative institutional system in Hungary, including various types of cooperatives, is well studied from historical, economic, and legal points of view.⁷ However, the research available does not cover the early cottage industry cooperatives or the cottage industry activities carried out within the framework of agricultural or consumer cooperatives.

Thanks to ethnography and history, the process and impact of the formation of the nation-state, which started in the second half of the nineteenth century, are well explored.⁸ The cottage industry movement was closely linked to nation-building in two ways. In line with the general Eastern European principles of cooperative building, one of the main aims of the cottage industry movement was to keep the workforce at home and ensure the livelihood of large numbers of people. In addition, the production and commercialization of objects, most of which were then presented ‘as the output of artistic cottage industries,’ and then as *folk art*, also served nation-building. For this reason, when exploring the history of folk art and peasant object making, both ethnography and art history addressed the beginnings of the cottage industry movement.⁹ There are a few case studies published on specific cooperatives or enterprises,¹⁰ but the influence and impact of the entire cottage industry institutional system, the central governing bodies, and the actors of the trade have not yet been sufficiently researched.¹¹

Therefore, we should examine how the cottage industry movement in Hungary met the aspirations of the cooperative movement and how the cottage industry participated in the cooperative system. The present study explores the relationship between cottage industry and cooperatives up to the end of the World War II, when the new political regime began to build the cooperative system on the Soviet model. The study does not aim to provide an analysis of economic history. It places the cottage industry movement in the history of cooperatives and draws historians’ and economic historians’ attention to this economic sector. The paper deals with all branches of the cottage industry, based on the available data. As an additional result, it broadens the focus of ethnography, contributing to the history of ‘material folk art’ and indirectly nuancing its definition.

6 Lorenz, “Introduction,” 13.

7 For the relevant works, see below.

8 See e.g., Hofer, “Construction of the »Folk Cultural Heritage«.”

9 Sinkó, “A népművészet-szemlélet változásai”; Kresz, “A magyar népművészet felfedezése”; Fügedi, “The Discovery”; Fülemlé, “Folk art heritage and tradition.”

10 For example, Flórián, “A »sárközi szöttek«”; Erdei T., “Csipkeműhelyek.”

11 On the folk-art trade, see: Cseh, “The Centralized Management.”

During the period under review, Hungary's borders changed several times, which certainly affected the development of the cottage industry. The 1920 Treaty of Trianon resulted in the loss of more than two thirds of the country's territory, while several of the annexed counties had been of great importance for the cottage industry. Transylvania,¹² Maramureş, Partium, and Eastern Banat became part of Romania. Upper Hungary (Felvidék), Subcarpathia (Kárpátalja), and the Great Rye Island (Csallóköz) became part of what was then Czechoslovakia. Bačka (with its important carpet weaving cottage industry), and the regions of Baranja (Drávaköz), Western Banat, Porabje (Vendvidék), and Međimurje (Muraköz) were allocated to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later known as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). The cottage industry of the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia, which became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes under the Trianon Treaty, had also been considered significant within the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary.¹³ Based on economic accounts and available data of the period, the present study focuses on historical Hungary up to the 1920s and, beyond that, on data for Small Hungary.¹⁴ More extensive research could be carried out on the cottage industries of the territories that the Trianon decision separated from Hungary.

There are two main categories of the workforce in the cottage industry: those employed in the companies' workshops, and those working from home. The latter option was selected by a considerable number of workers, who were provided with raw materials and tools as needed.

The beginnings of the cooperative movement

In the nineteenth century, the cooperative movement, which originated in Western Europe, could not be integrated into the Eastern European¹⁵ economy, including the Hungarian economy. Here, cooperatives were late to emerge in a more developed capitalist system, with the ruling class playing a major role in the process. In some places, tenacious leaders managed to set up agricultural cooperatives based on democratic principles, but the establishment of cooperatives throughout the country was mainly driven by the big landowners' interests and encouraged by state control. The first legal basis for this was provided by Act XXXVII of 1875, known as the Basic Law on Cooperatives. Sándor Gyimesi traces the history of agricultural cooperatives

12 On the Szekler Cottage Industry Association and the Women's Trade School in Sfântu Gheorghe: Szőcsné Gazda, "Egy nőipariskola és hatása."

13 For the Treaty of Trianon, see: Zeidler, "Treaty of Trianon"; Tomka, "The economic consequences."

14 For the history of the cottage industry in Szeklerland, see the works of Enikő Szőcsné Gazda cited in the study and Somai, "Szövetkezetek Erdélyben."

15 For more on the reasons, see: Lorenz, "Introduction" and the references cited.

in Hungary from 1879, the year of the farmers' congress of the Hungarian National Economic Association (*OMGE*). However, this organization did not find popularity with farmers. Of much greater importance was the *Hangya*¹⁶ Sales and Consumption Cooperative, founded in 1898 and operating for fifty years. By 1914, *Hangya* had 1,276 member cooperatives and some 200,000 members in its national network. Between the two world wars it had 700,000 producer members. In 1898, the National Central Credit Cooperative (*OKH*) was established to develop agriculture and cottage industry under the cooperative system. This organization brought village credit cooperatives and other cooperative-like village associations under state control. The *OKH* operated until 1947, when it was merged into the National Cooperative Credit Institute.¹⁷ The cooperatives were thus incorporated into a centralized network.¹⁸

In Western Europe, the cooperative movement first evolved in industry, but in Eastern Europe and Hungary most cooperatives—throughout their history—were predominantly agricultural. Cooperatives with a purely cottage industry profile were sporadic. The Association of Hungarian Cooperatives was founded in 1904 to bring together cooperatives. Its tasks included compiling statistics on cooperatives, organizing training courses, and establishing and maintaining international relations.¹⁹

The beginnings of the cottage industry movement

According to a survey conducted for the organization of the state administration of cottage industry, in 1884 there were 800,000 registered cottage workers, 760,000 of whom were women,²⁰ in a country of about 15 million people.²¹ The cottage industry in Hungary was still completely different from the German *Hausindustrie* model, which had already been established in the Czech Republic, Saxony, Switzerland, and Belgium. There, cottage industry was the main source of income for entire regions, with the whole family doing piecework when not busy in the fields. They worked to patterns, and their products were marketed as manufactory goods by employers or manufacturers. *Hausindustrie* provided an income for those who could no longer

16 *Hangya* means 'ant.'

17 *Révai kétkötetes*, 308–9.

18 Szilágyi, "Gazdasági társulások, egyesületek," 579–80; Sidó and Szarvas, *Hangya a világrendszerben*, 251–54, 623–25.

19 Gyimesi, "A parasztság és a szövetségi mozgalmak," 624, 635–36.

20 Jekelfalussy, *Magyarország háziipara*, 11; Konz, *The Impact of Industrial*, 153–54. Women's dominance in the cottage industry continued for decades. (Ferenczi, *A magyarországi háziipar*; Gyáni, "Női munka," 367–69). This and the role of women entrepreneurs and designers in the cottage industry, require a more detailed discussion beyond the scope of this paper.

21 *A Magyar Korona Országában*, 5.

make a living from farming. This was also the goal of the Hungarian government, although they did not want a complete diversion from agriculture. The first systematic display of cottage industry products was at the National Women's Exhibition in 1881. It was at that time that the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Trade took up the cause. The first large-scale cottage industry exhibition was held in 1885.²²

In the cottage industries, stronger state intervention was essential, as central support was necessary for training, for providing raw materials and, in some cases, modern equipment (e.g., looms and weaving machines). Operating the cottage industry inspectorates, which coordinated these tasks and the sale of cottage industry products, was always subject to state supervision.²³

The cottage industry register of 1898 lists eleven industries: wood, wicker, sorghum, straw, rush and basketwork, clay, textiles, amadou, iron and metal, leather, tin, and tinker cottage industries. Among the organizations and 'employers' that coordinated the cottage industry and sold its products, there were institutes, committees, associations, cooperatives, town councils, entrepreneurs, and training workshops.²⁴

The legal status and definition of cottage industry was omitted in the 1884 and 1922 Industry Acts.²⁵ The cottage industry could therefore operate in different ways: under the control of a single company or entrepreneur, on the initiative of the church, organized by associations belonging to women's unions, or as a cooperative. Associations and cottage industry associations also sometimes took the cooperative form of operation.

In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, cottage industries were established on three fundamental principles.

1. In the 1890s, the Department of Commerce supported the entrepreneurial system that had already been in operation in the cottage industry, expanding the districts of entrepreneurs and bringing in new entrepreneurs. Under this scheme, one entrepreneur in each district trained cottage industry workers, provided them with samples and raw materials, and undertook to sell the products.²⁶ Cottage industry associations were set up to promote trade in cottage products. Founded in Bratislava in 1894 under the patronage of Princess Isabella, the highly influential Izabella Cottage Industry Association²⁷ maintained textile

22 Ráth, "A háziipar," 300, 302.

23 Lackner, "A háziipar szervezeti keretei"; Cseh, "The Centralized Management."

24 Ráth, "A háziipar," 321; Kovács, "A háziipari törzskönyve."

25 Kruchina, "Magyarország háziipara," 9.

26 Csák E., *A háziipari termelés*, 110–11. Such entrepreneurs were, for example, the Gyarmathy couple in Kalotaszeg (Balogh and Fülemile, *Történeti idő*, 80–107).

27 Hungarian name: *Izabella Háziipari Egylet*.

workshops and schools in the counties of Bratislava, Nitra, and Trenčín,²⁸ moving its headquarters to Budapest in 1923 and operating until 1946. It was concerned not only with commercial interests but also with the authentic preservation of folk art, and in collaboration with the Society of Applied Arts, exhibited its products at numerous national and world exhibitions.²⁹

2. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs encouraged the development of artistic cottage industries, based on artistic rather than economic considerations. Therefore, the Ministry cooperated primarily with the Museum of Applied Arts and the School of Applied Arts.³⁰
3. By promoting cottage industry, the Ministry of Agriculture hoped to provide additional employment for the masses of agricultural workers and prevent them from emigrating. This was in line with the state's aim of creating agricultural cooperatives and their network in order to curb credit and commodity usury, develop economic skills and, among other things, stop emigration from Hungary.³¹ In 1897, the Ministry of Agriculture launched the so-called Mountain Region Action to support the economy of the mountainous areas (Northern Hungary) and later the neighbouring lowland areas with the aim to also boost their cottage industry. The action extended to poorer farming classes, irrespective of religious denomination or nationality.³² In designing the scheme, the deputies proposed to the ministry that economic cooperatives should be created by merging small farms. The cooperatives were creditworthy and received credit and additional support from the state.³³ The Ministerial Office for the Mountain Region³⁴ organized cottage industry courses and helped in selling products. In 1908, there were sixty-one cottage industry units (most of them basket weavers), eighteen of which were cooperatives. In 1909, the branch helped seventy-six cottage industries and cooperatives. In 1910, there were already eighty-three, with twenty-three of them cooperatives. "The Office for the Mountain Region sought to place cottage industry workshops under the control of contractors, which implied simpler operations in terms of raw material procurement and sales."³⁵ It also set up credit cooperatives, which

28 Flórián, "A »sárközi szóttes«," 216; Iványi, "A háziipar szerepe," 193.

29 Cseh, "The Centralized Management."

30 Pum, "A háziipar és annak helyzete," 11.

31 Gyimesi, "A parasztság és a szövetségi mozgalmak," 623.

32 Braun, "A hegyvidéki akció," 16, 200.

33 Braun, "A hegyvidéki akció," 73.

34 In 1913, the branch offices' area of responsibility covered most of Transylvania (now Romania) and the Mountain Region (now part of Ukraine and Slovakia) (Braun, "A hegyvidéki akció," 203).

35 Braun, "A hegyvidéki akció," 162, 165.

were part of the National Central Credit Cooperative, established in 1898.³⁶ The mountain region action was finally disrupted by the World War I.

Only one or two economic associations were formed on the initiative of the peasantry but, by the end of the nineteenth century, they had been integrated into the national networks.³⁷ State support was given not only to enterprises but also to cooperatives, but support was conditional on the cooperatives belonging to one of the national associations. Cottage industry plants could join a national network as either a separate cottage industry cooperative or as a member of a credit, consumption, or farmers' cooperative. With cooperatives outside the network, it was examined whether there were any private interests involved. "In the case of a bond under the influence and control of the State, we will deal in the most liberal manner with the matter of aid for the development of cottage industries, because we can protect the State's interests in every way." The cooperatives that joined the national network were eligible for financial assistance and support in the form of machinery, were exempt from taxation, and could procure certain state transport supplies without competitive tendering.³⁸

Cottage industry cooperatives

Central cooperatives

The National Central Credit Cooperative (*OKH*)

A number of cottage industry cooperatives operated under the umbrella of the National Central Credit Cooperative.³⁹ The *OKH* was permitted to admit only those cooperatives and contractors that had been part of the *OKH* since their inception.⁴⁰ In 1906, the Central Credit Cooperative included, for example, the Tápé Rush Weaving Cottage Industry and Credit Cooperative,⁴¹ from 1910 the First Székely [Szekler] Cottage Industry National Cooperative,⁴² and the Körösfő [later

36 Braun, "A hegyvidéki akció," 181.

37 Gyimesi, "A parasztság és a szövetkezeti mozgalmak," 619.

38 Pum, "A háziipar és annak helyzete," 10.

39 Hungarian name: *Országos Központi Hitelszövetkezet (OKH)*.

40 n. n., "Értesítések."

41 *Mihók-féle Magyar Compass* 34/2 (1906) 21, 17–41. Hungarian name: *Tápéi Gyékényszövő Háziipari és Hitelszövetkezet*. Tápé is a settlement in Southeastern Hungary. Weaving in Tápé was a significant cottage industry up to the second half of the 20th century (see: Kerekes, "A tápéi gyékényszövő háziipar").

42 *Mihók-féle Magyar Compass* 38/2 (1910) 839. Hungarian name: *Első Székely Háziipari Országos Szövetkezet*.

Kalotaszeg] Cottage Industry Cooperative (Kolozs County),⁴³ and the Kalocsa and Rural Cottage Industry Credit Cooperative.⁴⁴ In 1910, out of 2,206 cooperatives belonging to the National Central Credit Cooperative, only forty-seven were cottage industry cooperatives, engaged in such activities as basket weaving, shawl weaving, broom making, woodworking, and weaving.⁴⁵ In 1913, there were 2,412 cooperatives within the network, of which sixty-six were cottage industry cooperatives.⁴⁶ The author of the 1913 report had access to data on thirty cottage industry cooperatives, with a total of 2,122 members. They were engaged in basket weaving, rush weaving, the manufacture of wooden articles, canvas weaving, cloth making, etc. Among the most successful cooperatives was the cooperative of cottage industry clothiers in Kisújszállás and Túrkeve⁴⁷ “with 97 members and 224 shop units, providing permanent employment for nearly a thousand workers three quarters of whom were cottage industry workers).”⁴⁸ The equally successful Budapest Tailors’ Cooperative with 318 members and the Miskolc⁴⁹ and Szeged⁵⁰ Tailors’ Cooperatives are also listed as cottage industry cooperatives, which is instructive because of the small-scale nature of the activity and its guild history.

The cottage industry of basket weaving provided work for the masses across the country. The National Central Credit Cooperative had several basket weaving cooperatives, of which “the best results were achieved by the Apatin Basket Weavers’

43 *Mihók-féle Magyar Compass* 37/2 (1909) 784. Hungarian name: *Körösfői* [later *Kalotaszegi Háziipari Szövetkezet*]. Körösfő today Izvoru Crișului, village in the Kalotaszeg (Țara Călatei) region in Transylvania, today part of Romania. The Kalotaszeg Cottage Industry Cooperative played a major role in the widespread popularization and maintenance of Kalotaszeg folk art (Sebestyén, “Kalotaszeg vándor háziiparosai,” 56). The Kalotaszeg costume, embroidery, and woodcarving collectively established the region as a globally renowned cultural entity, and these artistic traditions continue to represent a significant aspect of Hungarian folk art.

44 *Nagy Magyar Compass* 41/2 (1913) 88. Hungarian name: *Kalocsa és Vidéke Háziipari Hitel-szövetkezet*. Kalocsa is a town in Southern Hungary. The decorative culture of Kalocsa and its region became an emblematic and world-famous element of Hungarian folk art in the twentieth century.

45 *Mihók-féle Magyar Compass* 38/1 (1910) 1559.

46 *Nagy Magyar Compass* 41/1 (1913) 1862. Other cooperatives of an industrial nature are thirty-two producer cooperatives, twenty-six sales cooperatives, ten industrial raw material purchasing cooperatives, eight machinery workshops, etc. (sic!) (Pum, “A háziipar és annak helyzete,” 12).

47 Settlements in Eastern Hungary, Great Hungarian Plain.

48 Pum, “A háziipar és annak helyzete,” 12.

49 County seat of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, Northeastern Hungary.

50 County seat of the former Csongrád County (today Csongrád-Csanád County), Southeastern Hungary.

Cooperative⁵¹ with 143 members, the *Martonos Basket Weavers' Cooperative*⁵² with 108 members, and the Taksony⁵³ Cooperative.

“Linen weaving is conducted by the cooperatives of the canvas merchants of Árdánháza,⁵⁴ the recently established cooperatives of the canvas merchants of Tarpa,⁵⁵ and of the canvas merchants of Árva County,⁵⁶ all on a cottage industry basis.” [...] “In the field of rush weaving, the cooperative of rush weavers in Tápé, among others, stood out.”⁵⁷

Cottage industry cooperatives were also assisted in marketing. In 1913, the Centre for the Purchase and Sale⁵⁸ of industrial and cottage industry cooperatives, affiliated with the National Central Credit Cooperative, was established to facilitate sales.⁵⁹ The Centre was initially set up to develop the basket weaving industry, at a time when a large sales company, the Basketry Joint Stock Company⁶⁰ in Szabadka, had ceased to exist. The Central Credit Cooperative played a significant role in maintaining the basket weaving cottage industry, through pooling sales and, more importantly, through the professional management of production: “the direction and method of production of the basket weaving cooperatives have been largely reorganized, as a result of which the country no longer has millions of fruit baskets in heaps” (instead, mainly clothing, travelling, and coupé baskets are produced).⁶¹ The other outstanding achievement of the National Central Credit Cooperative was the ‘rescue’ of the straw hat industry in Hajdúnánás, i.e., the employment of around a thousand cottage industry workers.

“The old company was in financial difficulties. [...] The government, wishing to save this cottage industry, unique in the country, called on the management of the Central Credit Cooperative to rescue it, and succeeded, so that the hat industry in Hajdúnánás resumed its operations as a cooperative within a few months.”⁶²

51 Hungarian name: *Apatini Kosárfonók Szövetkezete*. Апатин is a settlement in the former Southeastern Hungary, today in Serbia.

52 Hungarian name: *Martonosi Kosárfonók Termelőszövetkezete*. Мартонош is a settlement in the former Southeastern Hungary, today in Serbia.

53 Settlement by the Danube in Pest County.

54 Арданово. Village in Subcarpathia, today in Ukraine.

55 Municipality in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, Northeastern Hungary.

56 Árva County was situated in the northern part of the former Kingdom of Hungary, Upper Hungary. Today, it is part of Slovakia.

57 Pum, “A háziipar és annak helyzete,” 12.

58 Hungarian name: *Beszerező és Értékesítő Központ*.

59 *Központi Értesítő*, 24 August 1913. 38(68). 1984.

60 Hungarian name: *Kosáráru Részvénytársaság*.

61 Pum, “A háziipar és annak helyzete,” 12.

62 Pum, “A háziipar és annak helyzete,” 13.

Both basket weaving and the Hajdúnánás straw hat industry were significant cottage industries in Hungary up to the second half of the twentieth century, and the above figures show that the cooperative institutional system played a pivotal role in their maintenance and rescue.⁶³

The Credit Cooperative was interested in supporting profitable cottage industries. For example, a complaint regarding this issue was documented as early as 1912.

“The [...] co-operatives have been selling their goods through the National Central Credit Cooperative in recent years, and the leaders now blame the Cooperative Centre for the stalling of the cottage industry drive. [...] The speaker of the delegation [before the Minister of Agriculture – F. Cs.] complained that the National Central Credit Cooperative was not fulfilling its altruistic mission because it was closing down all the cooperatives that were not profitable, thereby reducing production and contributing to rising prices.”⁶⁴

In 1915, the *OKH* had a total of 2,441 cooperatives, of which twenty-nine were cottage industry cooperatives.⁶⁵ In 1919, all the industrial credit cooperatives belonging to the National Central Credit Cooperative, engaged in crafts and industrial, cottage industry and skilled trades, were placed under the supervision of the newly established National Central Cooperative of Industrialists.⁶⁶ By granting them loans, the National Central Credit Cooperative had an interest in the National Central Cooperative of Industrialists.⁶⁷ The legislation that governed the latter was Article XVIII of 1924, which stipulated that the organization’s task was to promote the economic interests of craft, small and medium-sized industries, as well as to contribute to industrial development. The text does not specifically mention cottage industries.⁶⁸ In 1925, four cottage industry cooperatives were part of

63 The straw-hat cottage industry in Hajdúnánás (Hajdú-Bihar County, Eastern Hungary) dates to the first half of the nineteenth century. The largest factory was founded in 1870 by Gyula Sohler, and its annual production reached 450,000 pieces in the years before World War I. A large part of its workers were home workers. This factory had to be rescued by the National Central Credit Cooperative after the trauma of the World War. The Hajdúnánás Straw-hat Making Cooperative was established in harmony with the interests of the local factories and operated as a joint-stock company until 1930. From the 1950s, the straw-hat making industry continued to operate in the settlement under the cottage industry cooperative system based on the Soviet model (Szabó, “Szalmakötő háziipar,” 71, 80, 83, 87).

64 n. n., “Magyar királyi népmentés,” 3.

65 *Nagy Magyar Compass* 44/1 (1916) 1816.

66 *Nagy Magyar Compass* 46–47/1 (1918) 709–10. Hungarian name: *Iparosok Országos Központi Szövetkezete*.

67 *Nagy Magyar Compass* 50/1 (1925) 679.

68 <https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=92400018.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3F-pagenum%3D39> (accessed 26 August 2024).

the Centre: the Kisújszállás Cottage Industry Clothiers Cooperative,⁶⁹ the Nádudvar Cottage Industry Cooperative⁷⁰ (basket weaving), the Taksony Basket Weavers' Cooperative,⁷¹ and the Túrkeve Cottage Industry Clothiers Cooperative.⁷² According to a 1929 report, the National Central Cooperative of Industrialists comprised fifty-eight industrial cooperatives with 16,600 members, but no data is available on how many of these were cottage industry cooperatives.⁷³

In 1920, under the auspices of the National Central Credit Cooperative, the *Orsó* and *Rokka* Cottage Industry Cooperative⁷⁴ was established, which played an instrumental role in the preservation and further development of folk art, and had cottage industry plants in several parts of the country.⁷⁵ The cooperative produced Hungarian folk art embroidery, lace, blouses, tablecloths, women's and children's clothing, crochet and fine underwear. Its products were sold mainly in the United States, but the Netherlands and Switzerland also purchased large quantities.⁷⁶ The cooperative was in liquidation by 1927.⁷⁷

Women's associations, such as the Izabella Cottage Industry Association, and women's unions played a major role in the development of the cottage industry. The most significant one was the National Association of Hungarian Women,⁷⁸ which operated between 1918 and 1946 and established 550 rural organizations. Among other public welfare activities (social assistance and child protection, education of women and poor children, etc.), the association established 130 weaving mills. In 1923, the Hungarian Women's Cottage Industry Cooperative⁷⁹ was set up under the umbrella of the National Central Credit Cooperative to promote the cottage

69 Hungarian name: *Kisújszállási Ruhakészítő Háziiparosok Termelő Szövetkezete*. Kisújszállás is a town in Eastern Hungary, in the Great Hungarian Plain.

70 Hungarian name: *Nádudvari Háziiparosok Szövetkezete*. Nádudvar is a town in Eastern Hungary, in the Great Hungarian Plain. Today, it is more famous for its pottery than for its basket weaving.

71 Hungarian name: *Taksonyi Kosárfonók Termelő Szövetkezete*.

72 Hungarian name: *Túrkevei Ruhakészítő Háziiparosok Termelő Szövetkezete*. *Gazdasági, pénzügyi és tőzsdei kompasz 1926–1927/1. vol. 2. B) Szövetkezetek [Cooperatives]*, 173.

73 Ihrig, "A szövetkezetek," 70.

74 Hungarian name: *Orsó és Rokka Háziipari Szövetkezet*. *Orsó* = spindle; *rokka* = spinning wheel.

75 *Gazdasági, pénzügyi és tőzsdei kompasz 1925–1926. vol. 1. part II. C) Szövetkezetek [Cooperatives]*. 1741.; in 1922 the centre operated departments in Baja, Hatvan, Hódmezővásárhely, Kecskemét, Pécel, Szentes. *Nagy Magyar Compass 49/2 (1922)*. 1444.

76 n. n., "Vegyes Hírek."

77 *Központi Értesítő 7 April 1927*. 52(14). 333.

78 Hungarian name: *Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége*.

79 Hungarian name: *Magyar Asszonyok Háziipari Szövetkezete*.

industry.⁸⁰ In 1942, another cooperative was established within the Association, the Cottage Industry Cooperative of the Members of the National Association of Hungarian Women.⁸¹ The reason for this is unknown.

“Under joint management and on the basis of reciprocity, the purpose of the cooperative was the wholesale and retail trade of needlework, handicrafts, applied art, folk art, wicker basketry, and furniture produced by its members in cottage industry settings, as well as to purchase raw materials and equipment for their production, and to promote the members’ cottage industry activities by setting up workshops and organizing their exhibitions and fairs.”⁸²

The “Hangya” Production, Sales, and Consumption Cooperative

Apart from the National Central Credit Cooperative, the other large organization, comprising hundreds of cooperatives, was the *Hangya* Production, Sales, and Consumption Cooperative.⁸³ The book, published in 1923 to commemorate the organization’s 25th anniversary, lists all the member cooperatives, but unfortunately not their profiles. In 1935, *Hangya* set up separate cooperatives for each branch it wished to organize. This is how the *Hangya* Production, Sales, and Consumption Cooperative came into being.⁸⁴ Their cottage industry products were distributed to cooperative centers in England, Finland, Switzerland and other European and overseas countries. *Hangya* opened a shop in Paris selling Hungarian cottage industry products.⁸⁵ In 1936, independent traders were concerned that “*Hangya* was attempting to establish an export syndicate for household goods, in which it would, naturally, have a larger stake and thus would change its present inferior position.”⁸⁶ The fears of competitors in the cottage industry were confirmed a few years later, as we read below. In 1939, *Hangya* operated sixty permanent rural sites with a workforce of 600 in the cottage industry.

The MOVE Consumption and Sales Cooperative

The Association for the Protection of Hungary (*Magyar Országos Véderő Egyesület / MOVE*) was a right-wing social, sports and cultural association founded in 1918,

80 n. n., “A magyar asszonyok,”; Nagy, “A Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége,” 139.

81 Hungarian name: *Magyar Asszonyok Nemzeti Szövetsége Tagjainak Háziiipari Szövetkezete*.

82 *Központi Értesítő* 16. July 1942. 67(29) 1428.

83 Hungarian name: *Hangya Termelő-Értékesítő és Fogyasztási Szövetkezet*.

84 n. n., “Új rendszer.”

85 Hegedűs, *Az egykéz*, 148–49; n. n., “Komoly sikereket.”

86 n. n., “Háziiipari kiviteli szindikátust.”

which, among other things, was dedicated to helping the working class, including the cottage industry. MOVE was founded in 1919, with its headquarters in Budapest with the objective to establish a network of consumption cooperatives throughout the country, encompassing even a cottage industry profile. For example, in Békéscsaba the Békés County Cottage Industry Cooperative⁸⁷ was established in 1921⁸⁸ with the aim to teach and provide work in the spinning-weaving, the lace making, and the leather embroidery cottage industry. Members could purchase the garments they produced at a reasonable price and sell their hemp-based and other products directly from the cooperative, cutting out middlemen.⁸⁹ By 1925, MOVE was in liquidation.⁹⁰

The ‘*Turán*’ Hungarian National Cottage Industry Cooperative⁹¹ was established between 1922 and 1927. It constituted a group of several cottage industry cooperatives, and was founded under the auspices of the National Hungarian Applied Arts Society, the “*Hangya*” Centre, the Association for the Protection of Hungary, the ‘*Iker*’ Industrial and Commercial Joint Stock Company,⁹² and the ‘*Transorient*’ Commercial Joint Stock Company.⁹³ Both the objectives of ‘*Turán*’ and those of *MOVE* were compatible with state propaganda, which promoted peasant culture and folk art in a particular reading as support for nationalist ideas.

Other cooperatives

The names of several additional cottage industry cooperatives are documented in contemporary sources. However, it remains unclear whether these cooperatives were part of a larger centre or operated as independent entities, but we have no space here to list all. By way of illustration, various types of cooperatives are considered, each with distinct profiles and motives for engaging in cottage industry.

From the perspective of folk art, two cooperatives that are still emblematic warrant mention: the Mezőkövesd and the Sárköz Cottage Industry Cooperatives.⁹⁴

87 Hungarian name: *Békés Megyei Háziipari Szövetkezet*.

88 *Nagy Magyar Compass* 48/2 (1920) 1239.; n. n., “Háziipar.” Further research is needed to determine exactly what other cottage industry institutions and cooperatives the organization was involved with.

89 *Központi Értesítő* 10 November 1921. 46(42) 1028.

90 *Központi Értesítő* 28 May 1925. 50(22) 494.

91 Hungarian name: „*Turán*” *Magyar Nemzeti Háziipari Szövetkezet*.

92 Hungarian name: „*Iker*” *Ipari és Kereskedelmi Részvénytársaság*.

93 Hungarian name: „*Transorient*” *Kereskedelmi Részvénytársaság*. n. n., “A »*Túrán*«”; *Budapesti Közlöny Hivatalos Értesítője*, 19 September 1927. 61(220). 10.

94 Hungarian names are: *Mezőkövesdi Háziipari Szövetkezet* and *Sárközi Háziipari Szövetkezet*.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the *matyó*⁹⁵ object-making culture was already highly representative of Hungarian folk art. To promote this tradition, the Mezőkövesd Cottage Industry Cooperative was founded in 1912.⁹⁶ Since *matyó* embroidery was already known worldwide, at the initiation of intelligent entrepreneurs, it stopped being *matyó* women's sole domain, as it employed other paid workers as well in its production. To protect their own interests, the people of Mezőkövesd formed a cooperative to distribute and sell *matyó* products. In this way, they could satisfy larger orders and monitor the authenticity of folk-art products.⁹⁷ The cooperative operated until 1935.⁹⁸

The Sárköz Cottage Industry Cooperative was established in December 1929 with the aim of preserving and promoting the folk art of the Sárköz.⁹⁹ It was organized as part of the Cottage Industry Inspectorate of Székesfehérvár.¹⁰⁰ The board of directors consisted of five members, four of whom were pastors of municipalities in the Sárvár region.¹⁰¹ This fact also indicates that church leaders attached great importance to the cottage industry in terms of creating public welfare. The cooperative was dissolved in 1936, and the sale of folk-art products was taken over by the national trade network of the *Hangya* Cooperative.¹⁰²

As there are also church-founded cooperatives as well, the role of the church in the development of the cottage industry is a subject of further investigation. For

See also above the Kalotaszeg Cottage Industry Cooperative and the Kalocsa Cottage Industry Cooperative.

95 The material folk art—folk costume, embroidery, and furniture painting—of Mezőkövesd, Tard, and Szentistván (in Northeastern Hungary) were internationally renowned from the late nineteenth century. The name *matyó* was used to refer to the Catholic population of the area, which was religiously and culturally distinct from the Reformed population. Today, the name is associated with the emblematic folk art of the three settlements.

96 *Központi Értesítő*, 1912 (Vol. 37, 2nd semester). 2830.

97 n. n., "Háziipari szövetkezet."

98 *Központi Értesítő* 25 July 1935. 60(30). XXIII.

99 Sárköz is a region in Southern Transdanubia. After the de-flooding of the Danube following its control in the nineteenth century, the excellent quality of the soil brought rapid prosperity to locals. This enabled the rich folk costume and textile culture of the Reformed population to develop.

100 The Cottage Industry Inspectorates were established in 1920 by the Ministry of Agriculture. At that time, the country's seven regional inspectorates were responsible for the procurement of raw materials, training, and the domestic distribution of products. The cottage industry inspectorates retained the autonomy of producers and, as official bodies, could not control either their production or their sales. For more details, see: Cseh, "The Centralized Management." Székesfehérvár is the county seat of Fejér County, Western Hungary.

101 *Központi Értesítő* 1 July 1929. 54(28) 495.

102 Flórián, "A »sárközi szötte«,” 221.

example, the Hungarian Protestant Cottage Industry Cooperative was founded in 1925 with several rural branches¹⁰³ and survived until 1928.¹⁰⁴

Some cooperatives were also engaged in the production of raw materials. The small farmers' cooperative in Felsőszeli¹⁰⁵ undertook the production, purchase, and processing of hemp, linen, and other industrial crops into semi-finished and finished products.¹⁰⁶ The Small Livestock and Cottage Industry Cooperative of Intellectual Workers¹⁰⁷ in Budapest was established for the purchase, finishing and the sale of Angora rabbits, silk wool, and rabbit fur produced from its members' breeding to meet its members' raw material requirements.¹⁰⁸

Cottage industries are sometimes included in the remit of cooperatives with a complex range of activities. The 'Union' General Merchandise Trade and Cottage Industry Cooperative¹⁰⁹ was established in Hódmezővásárhely¹¹⁰ in 1938. The "Union" managed its members' joint business and, based on reciprocity, procured and marketed household, sports, travel, clothing and decorative goods. It procured for its members raw materials for the production of the above and for cottage industry goods, and marketed the finished output. In addition, it also bred and marketed small domestic animals.¹¹¹

Cottage industry cooperatives were based on crafts. Nevertheless, the 'Existencia' Cottage Industry and Mechanical Cottage Industry Cooperative,¹¹² founded at the end of 1920, was a step towards further development, with the aim of developing the art industry and establishing the mechanical cottage industry.¹¹³

Joint stock companies and the cottage industry

Cottage industry work was not only carried out by cooperatives but also by other forms of enterprise, such as joint stock companies. In order to supply the cooperatives set up by the Ministry of Agriculture with the raw materials for the production

103 Hungarian name: *Magyar Protestáns Háziipari Szövetkezet*. n. n., "Magyar Protestáns."

104 n. n., "Felszámolások."

105 Horné Saliby. Settlement in former Upper Hungary, today in Slovakia.

106 *Központi Értesítő* 23 May 1940. 65(21) 722.

107 Hungarian name: *Szellemi Munkások Kisállattenyésztő és Háziipari Szövetkezete*.

108 *Központi Értesítő* 19 March 1942. 67(12) 473.

109 Hungarian name: "Unió" *Általános Árukereskedelmi és Háziipari Szövetkezet*.

110 Town in Southeastern Hungary, today it is famous for its pottery and embroidery culture.

111 *Központi Értesítő* 11 April 1940. 65(15) 502.

112 Hungarian name: *Existencia Műipari és Gépüzemű Háziipari Szövetkezet*.

113 *Központi Értesítő* 19 May 1921. 46(17). 440.

of cottage industry goods and to take over and sell their products, ‘joint-stock’ companies were established.¹¹⁴

The People’s Furniture Factory Joint Stock Company¹¹⁵ was in operation from 1919.

“The object of the company is [...] the manufacture, cottage industry production, and sale of goods that can be classified as woodwork. The joint-stock company also establishes business relations with cottage manufacturers, cottage producers and cottage cooperatives in order to market their production and to train and educate its workers by setting up various courses of specialization.”¹¹⁶

The Gyula Cottage Industry Hemp Weaving Joint Stock Company,¹¹⁷ established in 1921, promoted cottage spinning and weaving.¹¹⁸ The Hungarian Cottage Industry Development and Export Joint Stock Company,¹¹⁹ established in 1923, set up cottage industry plants and sold their products. It also assumed control over the shop of the cottage industry cooperative in Mezőkövesd.¹²⁰ The Hungarian Folk Art and Cottage Industry Joint Stock Company¹²¹ operated between 1920 and 1927.¹²² The role of joint-stock companies and other companies mentioned in the development of the cottage industry is the subject of further research. Nevertheless, it is obvious that these entities played a substantial role in the cottage industry movement and sought their place in an increasingly centralized system.

Cottage industries towards centralization

It is difficult to determine precisely the number of companies with a cottage industry profile—i.e., enterprises, joint-stock companies, associations, alliances, and cooperatives. Data collection is facilitated by contemporary business registers referenced in this study, but they provide minimal insight into the affiliations and influence of each entity. Furthermore, cooperative name may not indicate cottage industry

114 *Mihók-féle Magyar Compass* 34/2 (1906). 456.

115 Hungarian name: *Népbútorgyár Részvénytársaság*.

116 *Központi Értesítő* 23 March 1919. 44(24). 607.

117 Hungarian name: *Gyulai Háziipari Kenderszövő Részvénytársaság*. Gyula is a town in the Great Hungarian Plain, today near to the Romanian border.

118 *Nagy Magyar Compass* 48/2 (1920). 954.

119 Hungarian name: *Magyarhoni Háziiparfejlesztő és Kiviteli Részvénytársaság*.

120 *Nagy Magyar Compass* 49/2 (1922). 1110.

121 Hungarian name: *Magyar Népművészeti és Háziipari Részvénytársaság*.

122 *Központi Értesítő* 46/17 (1921). 445.

profile, as cottage industry workers were also employed by farmers' cooperatives, but it is uncertain to what extent they provided accurate data on the number of cottage industry workers. The National Centre of Farmer Cooperatives (*FOK*),¹²³ established in 1945, tried to gather data on cottage industries from its member cooperatives but was unsuccessful.¹²⁴ In 1925, the Ministry of Commerce ordered the Chambers of Commerce and Industry to compile statistics on industrial production. According to the 1926 report, 81,800 workers were engaged in cottage industry production in 1,026 municipalities in the territory of Small Hungary.¹²⁵ In 1928, the economist Viktor Csák E. also published a directory of Hungarian cottage industry enterprises. Among the eighty-two companies, there are joint-stock companies and companies of craftsmen and cottage industry entrepreneurs, and only four cooperatives: the Békés Basket Weaving Cottage Industry Cooperative¹²⁶ (fifty workers employed), the *Halasi* [Kiskunhalas] Lace Making and Selling Cooperative¹²⁷ (sewn lace), the Mezőkövesd Cottage Industry Cooperative (*matyó* embroidery), and the Zala County Cottage Industry Production and Sales Cooperative¹²⁸ (embroidered wall hangings, cushions and tablecloths, lace from Csetnek,¹²⁹ and embroidered and other lace handkerchiefs from Csetnek).¹³⁰ These were probably the most significant ones, as there are more the Central Bulletin.¹³¹ However, it is unclear which of them were ultimately effective.

Cottage industries often faced a shortage of capital, but under the Trade Act certain forms of enterprise (e.g., associations and alliances) were precluded from securing loans and lacked the requisite annual turnover to repay them. To solve this problem, in 1928 Viktor Csák E. proposed that companies should be grouped together in a central cooperative with the option of securing a public loan. He called for a cooperative law under which the commercial government would have exclusive supervisory authority over industrial cooperatives. This would enable them to extend loans, effectively excluding self-serving credit institutions from such transactions.¹³² We see below that by 1939 this idea was implemented.

123 Hungarian name: *Földműves Szövetkezetek Országos Központja*.

124 n. n., "Exportra készül fel."

125 Csák E., "A háziipari termelés," 119–22.

126 Hungarian name: *Békési Kosárfonó Háziipari Szövetkezet*.

127 Hungarian name: *Halasi* [Kiskunhalas] *Csipkekészítő és Értékesítő Szövetkezet*. Kiskunhalas is a settlement in Eastern Hungary, in the Great Hungarian Plain, world famous for its lacemaking.

128 Hungarian name: *Zalavármegyei Háziipari Termelő és Értékesítő Szövetkezet*.

129 Štítňik, settlement in former Upper Hungary, today in Slovakia. Today it is still famous for its lacemaking.

130 Csák E., "A háziipari termelés," 167–77.

131 (*Központi Értesítő*) Commercial register published from 1876 to 1948.

132 Csák E., "A háziipari termelés," 135–37.

Central cottage industry management bodies towards cooperatives

The Cooperative of the National Hungarian Cottage Industry Alliance

The *National Hungarian Cottage Industry Alliance*¹³³ was established in 1908 as an association, with the objective of facilitating the advancement of the cottage industry on a national scale. This was to be achieved by organizing training courses, setting up workshops, issuing sample books, centralizing raw material purchases, and providing work.¹³⁴ In addition, the organization aimed to centralize trade in cottage industry and folk art products.¹³⁵ This objective was not achieved¹³⁶ due to the proliferation of cottage industry associations and companies.¹³⁷ The alliance was founded under the chairmanship of Countess Ilona Batthyány¹³⁸ and the co-chairmanship of József Sztérényi,¹³⁹ thus at the initiative of the central government. In 1926, the National Hungarian Cottage Industry Alliance was transformed into a cooperative (The Cooperative of the National Hungarian Cottage Industry Alliance) as a member of the National Central Credit Cooperative.¹⁴⁰ Sztérényi wanted to find a solution to the centralization of cottage industry trade by setting up a cooperative. In 1929, he qualified cottage industry in Hungary as ‘unsuccessful’ and ‘barren experiments’ because “cottage industry workers are not yet at the intellectual level required for such an organization.” He also saw centralization as the solution for bringing together other cottage industries.¹⁴¹ Sztérényi called for the establishment of cottage industry trade cooperatives in Hungary the way they were already operating effectively abroad, although he saw their great disadvantage in turning art-oriented

133 Hungarian name: *Országos Magyar Háziipari Szövetség*.

134 *Az Országos Magyar Háziipari Szövetség alapszabályai*, 3; Cseh, “The Centralized Management.”

135 By the early 1940s, this goal was gradually achieved. See: Cseh, “The Centralized Management.”

136 In 1919, the People’s Economic Council also attempted to centralize the cottage industry (People’s Economic Council: Decree No. 84 of the People’s Economic Council. *Budapesti Közlöny* 1919. 53/92/. 1).

137 See for example Szöcsné Gazda, “A kutatástól a tömegmozgalomig.”

138 Countess Ilona Andrassy Batthyány Lajosné (1858–1952) was the founding president of the Hungarian Women’s Association, in addition to the National Association of Cottage Industry.

139 József Sztérényi (1861–1941), politician, expert on industrial development and industrial education, Minister of Trade in 1918 (*Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon 1000–1990*) <https://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/index.html> (accessed 25 July 2023). *Központi Értesítő* 1921. 46(17). 445.

140 Hungarian name: *Országos Magyar Háziipari Szövetség Szövetkezete*. *Központi Értesítő* 1927. 52(2). 25.

141 According to Sztérényi’s overview, the cottage industries in Hungary at that time were: embroidery, weaving, lacemaking, gold and silver embroidery, and needle painting (for ecclesiastical purposes), clay industry, carpet weaving, basket weaving, and wood carving. Sztérényi, “Háziipar,” 709–13.

cottage industries into mass-producing goods.¹⁴² The global economic crisis between 1929 and 1933 also curtailed the potential for cottage industry sales. Despite receiving support from the State Treasury, ultimately the National Hungarian Cottage Industry Alliance and the Cooperative was making a loss, and in 1932, Minister of Trade Tihamér Fabinyi liquidated it.¹⁴³

Meanwhile, in 1930, the cottage industry, which had previously been overseen by multiple ministries, was transferred to the exclusive purview of the Ministry of Commerce, which was operating the cottage industry inspectorates at the time. In 1932, the National Hungarian Society of Applied Arts,¹⁴⁴ independent of state bodies, was entrusted with the management of producers, with the intention of also governing the artistic cottage industries.¹⁴⁵

The Hungarian Cottage Industry Union / National Hungarian Cottage Industry Cooperative

Also with the aim of centralizing the export of domestic products, the Hungarian Cottage Industry Union¹⁴⁶ was established in 1939 by the Foreign Trade Office. This was because the unrealistic price competition from commercial companies resulted in pushing down prices.¹⁴⁷ Cooperatives, associations, trading companies and private traders were represented at the Union's inaugural meeting.¹⁴⁸ However, no individuals were appointed to the Union's management committee, only representatives of companies.¹⁴⁹ Business shares were also soon concentrated in the hands of large companies (Hangya Cooperative owned 25 percent, Domus Cottage Industry and

142 Szterényi, "Háziipar," 710.

143 n. n., "Közel egymillió pengős;" n. n., "A túl nagy rezszi;" *Központi Értesítő* 1933. 58(44). 697. The task of regenerating the cottage industry was given to the National Hungarian Society of Applied Arts, which had been in operation since 1885.

144 Hungarian name: *Országos Magyar Iparművészeti Társulat*.

145 Kruchina, "Magyarország háziipara," 11–13. For more details, see: Cseh, "The Centralized Management."

146 Hungarian name: *Magyar Háziipari Egyesülés*. Name version: Cottage Industry Export Association (*Háziipari Kiviteli Egyesülés*).

147 Critics of the decision argue that the state intervention is damaging to the saleability of cottage industry products abroad. This is confirmed by the report of the National Hungarian Society of Applied Arts, which states that "in connection with the collapse of the National Hungarian Cottage Industry Alliance, the cottage industry goods accumulated in the most important markets, England and Germany, were sold at liquidation prices, thus reducing the sales opportunities of all cottage industry companies to a minimum, which had a disastrous effect on both the companies' business results and cottage industry production." (n. n., "Elnököt választott").

148 MNL OL Z 1462. item 1. Minutes of general meetings, 1939. Hungarian Cottage Industry Union. 1939.

149 MNL OL Z 1462. item 1. Minutes, 11 May 1939. Hungarian Cottage Industry Union. 1939.

Applied Arts Ltd.¹⁵⁰ and *Hungarian Cottage Industry and Applied Arts Ltd.*¹⁵¹ 25 percent. The remaining 50 percent was owned by the members).¹⁵² In order to achieve its objectives, in 1940 the Union had to be transformed into a legal entity, i.e., a cooperative. The National Hungarian Cottage Industry Cooperative¹⁵³ could handle the procurement of raw materials, the establishment and maintenance of cooperative warehouses, the organization of public transport, the granting of loans, the lodging of customs security, and other economic matters. Only entrepreneurs on the register of certified cottage industries were eligible for membership, and only members of the cooperative were allowed to engage in export activities. According to its records, the cooperative continued to operate until 1948.¹⁵⁴

Cottage industry as a public welfare issue during the war years

During the World War II, the Ministry of Public Welfare was engaged in surveying cottage industry production and sales with the general aim of improving living standards. Some counties had already had welfare cooperatives before the war, but from 1941 all the counties were obliged to set them up. Their tasks included establishing and organizing cottage industries: facilitating the purchase of tools, equipment, and raw materials through loans, and organizing training courses.¹⁵⁵ From 1941, the National Inspectorate for Social Affairs' Fund for the Protection of People and Families¹⁵⁶ was responsible for the central management and control of cottage industries, and their activities had to be aligned with the work of the Ministry of Industry.¹⁵⁷ The public welfare cooperatives ceased to exist in 1948,¹⁵⁸ with only 163 independent cottage industries registered at the end of 1946.¹⁵⁹

150 Hungarian name: *Domus Háziipari és Iparművészeti Kft.*

151 Hungarian name: *Magyar Háziipari és Iparművészeti Kft.*

152 MNL OL Z 1462. item 1. Minutes, 19 December 1939. Hungarian Cottage Industry Union. 1939. Thus, the Hangya Production, Sales, and Consumption Cooperative achieved its goal specified in 1936 (see above), of strengthening its position in the trade of cottage industry articles.

153 Hungarian name: *Országos Magyar Háziipari Szövetkezet*. Name version: *Cottage Industry Export Cooperative (Háziipari Kiviteli Szövetkezet)*. *The Statutes of the National Hungarian Cottage Industry Cooperative* 1940; MNL OL Z 1462. item 11. Hungarian Cottage Industry Union. 1939.

154 MNL OL Z 1462. item 11. Notes. Hungarian Cottage Industry Union. 1939. For more details on the history of the cooperation, see: Cseh, "The Centralized Management."

155 Andrassy, "Közjóléti szövetkezet," 148–51.

156 Hungarian name: *Országos Szociális Felügyelőség Nép- és Családvédelmi Alapja*.

157 Somogyi, "Országos Szociális Felügyelőség," 175–76.

158 Government Decree No 7.770/1948 of the Government of the Hungarian Republic. *Magyar Közlöny* 164 (1948): 1637–38. See also here: https://jogkodex.hu/jsz/1948_7770_korm_rendelet_2081533 (accessed: 25 January 2023).

159 Nagy, "A Népi Iparművészeti Tanács," 67.

Between 1945 and 1947, Hungary's new political leadership abolished the civil cooperatives, including the *Hangya* Consumption Cooperative, founded in 1898, and the National Central Credit Cooperative. The Soviet-style system of cooperatives began to be established, with the collectivization of land, factories and other means of production.¹⁶⁰

The National Cottage Industry Joint Stock Company (*HART*),¹⁶¹ established in 1948 with the objective of centrally managing the cottage industry, sought to employ the population in cottage industry through farmers' cooperatives, adapting to the work schedule of agricultural labour. For this, the company had access to the assets of the liquidated public welfare cooperatives.¹⁶² In the early 1950s, a novel institutional framework was established with the objective of overseeing the operations of the small-scale cooperatives and, within them, the cottage industry.¹⁶³

Summary

From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, the cottage industry undertook to rescue and modernize what were considered traditional values—peasant craftsmanship and folk art—within the new economic and commercial structures. The cottage industry was apparently ready for being integrated into the cooperative movement, since “the cooperative movement was created as part of the construction of the Hungarian nation state,” and this effort rendered peasant culture the essence of Hungarian state formation and cultural policy between the two world wars.¹⁶⁴ This was a pervasive phenomenon across Eastern Europe. “Cooperatives [...] operated in a close symbiosis with [the] national movement [...] enabled] the transfer of national struggles from the cultural into the economic sphere.”¹⁶⁵ Cottage industry also provided employment for the masses and, through its products, constituted a significant basis for domestic and foreign trade. The cottage industry system was thus integrated into the accumulation of capital, for which the cooperative framework proved appropriate. “The cooperative movement provides for social reproduction at a lower cost by spreading its costs over the communities, and it also allows control over its members through state control and capital injection.”¹⁶⁶ This was one of the driv-

160 Losonczy, “Megszületett az állami;” Schnell, “A magyar szövetkezeti jog,” 45.

161 Hungarian name: *Állami Háziiipari Részvénytársaság (HART)*.

162 n. n., “Háziiipar a falun.”

163 Cseh, “The Centralized Management.”

164 Sidó and Szarvas, *Hangya a világrendszerben*, 258.

165 Lorenz, “Introduction,” 44.

166 Sidó and Szarvas, *Hangya a világrendszerben*, 261.

ing forces behind the cottage industry movement, thus behind the rediscovery and revival of folk art in many regions. Economic interests aligned with national aspirations also built up the domestic trade and export of folk art. All these objectives were accomplished through centralization, i.e., through establishing cooperatives.

The aim of this study was to outline the integration of the state-controlled cottage industry into the cooperative system. Several questions concerning the history of cottage industry in Hungary and related phenomena need to be analysed in more detail, such as the role of the church, church leaders, the elite, as well as of companies and entrepreneurs in developing the system. Other research topics might include the importance of cottage industry in the history of women's employment; the trade and promotion of cottage industry objects in exhibitions, popular prints, and publications; the history and importance of associations, organizations, and cooperatives in settlement life; the changing scope of cottage industry activities in light of economic trends; the relationship between cottage industry and folk art, and in this context, the changing concept of folk art. The cottage industry as a sector providing employment for the masses and the propagandistic use of folk art may also be seen as a separate issue.¹⁶⁷ All these issues are relevant not only in the first half of the twentieth century, but in the socialist era as well.

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Z Gazdasági Levéltár [Archive of Economics]

A Magyar Korona Országában az 1881. év elején végrehajtott népszámlálás eredményei némely hasznos háziállatok kimutatásával együtt. I. Általános területi és népességi viszonyok [The Results of the Census of the Countries of the Hungarian Crown, Taken at the Beginning of 1881, Together with a Statement

¹⁶⁷ The analysis of the use of cottage industry and folk art for state propaganda raises important methodological questions. Bence Ament-Kovács presented the propaganda using applied folk art in the 1950s and 1960s on the basis of written and material sources (Ament-Kovács, "Cottage Industry"). However, Ament-Kovács's findings have been criticized, as he did not examine how the object makers, the workers at different levels of the cooperative hierarchy and the ethnographers responsible for applied folk art experienced these processes. In light of all this, when analysing the propagandistic use of folk art, the question of who and what the goal of propaganda is, which social groups can be influenced by propaganda, and in our case, how the object makers themselves see their role in this process, should also be examined. Due to the lack of sources in the first half of the 20th century (lack of informants), the possibilities for research are limited, so it is necessary to examine a broader time frame in order to analyse the phenomenon of propaganda.

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