

WORKERS' CO-OPERATIVE
PRODUCTIVE
AND ARTISANAL SOCIETIES

in the

*LEATHER,
TEXTILE*

and CLOTHING

INDUSTRIES

in

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

DENMARK

FRANCE

ISRAEL

ITALY

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE

Auxiliary Committee

of

*Workers' Co-operative Productive
and Artisanal Societies*

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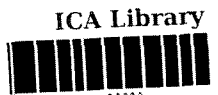
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C Z E C H O S L A V A K I A

USTREDNI RADA DRUZSTEV

Co-operative Tanneries.

The National Union of Co-operative Productive Societies in Czechoslovakia, through regional unions, groups 59 co-operative tanneries. Of these 28 are shoemaking co-operatives, 19 are for fancy leather goods, 3 are saddlers' co-operatives, 1 is a glove-making and 8 are furriermaking co-operatives.

The co-operative tanneries have 12,670 members, 12.7 per cent of all co-operative workers, and account for 10.6 per cent of the total volume of production. The leather co-operatives are occupied with the following branches of activity -

The shoe-making co-operatives manufacture mens' and womens' walking shoes, sports shoes, working shoes and slippers; also light and heavy orthopaedic shoes. Shoe repairs form a large part of their work.

The co-operatives for fancy leather goods make leather cases, travelling bags, various kinds of document cases, handbags, leather and plastic cases and other articles. They also manufacture various kinds of boxes, packing cases, and cases for use or display in leather or leather substitutes. Most of them undertake repairs of all kinds of fancy leather goods.

The saddlers' co-operatives manufacture individual pieces of harness for agricultural co-operatives, for cattle-rearing stations and for veterinary purposes. They also manufacture waterproof sheeting, games equipment, travelling bags, game-bags, workers' protective equipment such as gloves, aprons, etc. They also undertake repairs of all types of leather goods, including belts and straps.

The glove-making co-operative manufactures womens' and mens' gloves, as well as sports and working gloves, and does all kinds of glove repairs.

The furrier co-operatives manufacture protective working garments, children's fur bags, womens' coats, various other fur goods, caps and they deal in repairs.

The work of the co-operatives in the leather trade is so organised that the societies complement each other and, together with the co-operatives manufacturing ready-made clothing, make an essential contribution to the constant expansion of the ready-made clothing trade, with due regard to world fashions.

Since the shoemaking co-operatives are the most important branch of the leather trade, the report will give them particular emphasis.

The shoe co-operatives have three main economic tasks -

To manufacture shoes made-to-order for individual clients; this is mostly hand-work;

To carry out all shoe repairs, supplying customers with good and quick service, by ensuring that the repair shops have the capacity to satisfy demand within the quickest possible time;

To make limited ranges of shoes of high quality, entirely or partly by hand, offering a wide choice of style, for the State retailing stores.

The shoe manufacturing industry is well able to meet the basic demands of the home market, also the export market, for its high technical standard facilitates the supply of good quality shoes. However, a high standard of production demands mass production which results in lower prices. It would not be economic if the state shoe-manufacturing enterprises made individual pairs of shoes or small ranges of shoes to satisfy more exacting customers or buyers of special sizes. For the same reason it would not be to their advantage to undertake shoe repairs.

The three tasks mentioned are the result of conditions in the shoe industry, where the co-operatives can deal with work which would not be economic for industrial enterprises or would be too difficult from the point of view of organisation.

The shoe co-operatives are continuing the traditional division of work which has developed in Czechoslovakia for more than fifty years. This is the division of large-scale industrial manufacture of shoes, small scale craft work, and repairs. The smaller manufacturers grouped themselves into co-operatives in 1918-1945, in order to resist competition from large scale industrial manufacturers. It can be seen that, particularly after the second world war, the shoe co-operatives are widely developed and more numerous. Their

development and the improvement of their economic position have made it possible for them to progressively abandon the traditional working methods and to apply successively a technology and an organisation of manufacturing and services much more productive.

The different co-operative societies have their centres of work strictly laid down. Their enterprises are usually confined to a district, or several districts, so that they can meet the demands of the residents in that district by the network of their enterprises. The productive co-operatives systematically direct their activity in order to assure the services and production for the inhabitants and to contribute in this way to the continual raising of material and cultural standards.

The shoe-manufacturing co-operatives participate in carrying out the basic tasks mentioned above, according to their productive capacity and the size of the area in which they work, so that in some societies the making of shoes-to-order and repairs predominate, whereas others manufacture limited ranges of shoes for the State retailing houses.

The making of shoes-to-order and repairs are undertaken in the biggest workshops, to which are attached receiving shops, as well as in the small enterprises. Concentration in the larger factories facilitates specialisation of workshops and workers, the best use of mecanised methods, the most rational investment, the social improvement of working conditions and a basic increase in output. Orders are taken by the receiving shops, where skilled workmen discuss with their clients the making of the shoes they desire, take a pattern of the foot and the necessary measurements, and fill in an order form. These order forms, bearing the required data, are sent each day to the department where orders are prepared for manufacture, and there they are fitted into the daily work programmes of the various workshops. Completed orders are sent back to the receiving shops, where, after a fitting, they are sent to the client. The receiving shops, the department for preparing the orders and the workshops themselves are co-ordinated by the controlled operation of the enterprise and by a work time-table.

The receiving shops are mostly situated in the bigger towns and communes, where orders of at least 100 pairs per month can be expected. They also receive repairs. The shoe co-operatives also have independent workshops for repairs. The network of repair shops is much more compact since it is necessary to bring the repairs service as near as possible to the inhabitants. Each receiving workshop has facilities for normal or express repairs.

From the point of view of organisation, the receiving workshops are divided into four groups, according to the nature of their work -

Receiving and repair workshops, which take in orders and repairs, send the orders to be made up elsewhere and undertake all repairs in their own workshops;

Receiving and repair workshops dealing with express repairs, which take in orders and repairs, send out the orders for manufacture in the factories, and also larger repairs, and carry out small repairs for quick delivery;

Workshops which receive and undertake repairs;

Workshops which receive express repairs, which execute small repairs themselves and send large-scale repairs to the factories.

Also within the framework of these four groups are shops for express, while-you-wait repairs, furnished to provide pleasant and comfortable surroundings for customers. Some workshops have stocking and sock repairs service. Standard prices, in accordance with a price list, are charged for repair work, with the exception of some special repairs which are priced individually. The importance of these receiving and express repairs workshops is that they facilitate rapid execution of repair and delivery to the customer. Their disadvantage is their low productive capacity; because of which they cannot be equipped perfectly with machines which are not fully used.

The factories for basic repairs, which receive orders from the receiving shops, are much bigger, which permits better organisation of work, division of labour, greater mecanisation, and the most perfect organisation repair work. Vans maintain contact between the factories and the receiving shops. Mutual contact is ensured by the regulations governing the enterprise and conditioned by simple, efficient working methods.

The organisation of manufacture in the workshops is systematically improved. Individual hand-making is only done in very exceptional cases, mostly for special kinds of shoes, such as for theatre groups, for national costumes, etc. Mostly, division of work between groups is practised and in some cases the division of work on lines. Handling of materials, shaping of the shoe parts, and finishing are the most mecanised stages of the work. Hand work is still used for making model shoes whose inner sole and sole are separately stitched on by hand. The making of such shoes to order is very exacting work, from the point of view of careful preparation and skilled workers, since, even although specialisation can be applied, in this case exclusively individual making is required, according to the wishes of different clients.

The main task of shoe co-operatives is to meet the demands of the inhabitants, in the area where they operate, with regard to shoes made-to-order and repairs. Their remaining production capacity includes the manufacture of limited ranges of hand-made or partly hand-made shoes for the State retailing houses. They deliver high quality shoes, with a wide range of styles, to these houses, which satisfy the needs of the most exacting clients. The co-operatives draw up quarterly contracts with the buyers, regarding delivery. The shoes are made partly in specialised workshops, and partly in workshops for made-to-order shoes, so as to make use of their capacity during their slack season. The manufacture of limited ranges of shoes is based, either on division of work into groups, or on lines, and the degree of mecanisation is generally much higher than for shoes made to order.

Shoes for daily wear are subject to change of fashions. The co-operatives ensure the continual development of new styles of shoes through their development establishments and design centres. The aim of these centres is to develop and experiment with new kinds and new styles of shoes and to prepare the finished designs for manufacture. New models are primarily designed for made-to-order shoes, for which new collections to complete the existing ones are prepared every quarter. This development work is carried out independently by each co-operative for made-to-order manufacture. The annual collection of models for the limited ranges of mass produced shoes is made by the National Union of Co-operative Productive Societies, on the basis of suggestions regarding new designs and new kinds of shoes, put forward by the development or design centres. Representatives of the buying houses, whose opinion is decisive in the adaptation or elimination of the proposed designs, also take part in the selection of designs. In addition, the proposed collection, even before being discussed by the commercial buying enterprises, must be submitted to the "Council of Plastic Arts", which considers the designs aesthetically and from the point of view of fashion, and eliminates those which are unsuitable. In the development of new products, the co-operatives are assisted by the "Planning and Development Institute" attached to the National Union of Productive Co-operative Societies. This Institute organises various actions which contribute to increasing the professional knowledge of those working in the development branches who present the new products to the public, for example, conferences for fashion designers, vocational seminars, fashion magazines, exhibitions, etc.

From the foregoing it can be seen that the co-operative manufacture of shoes demands technically skilled workers and expert artisans. For this reason the shoe co-operatives are keenly interested in the training of new skilled workers. The small co-operatives send their apprentices to the apprenticeship schools of the larger co-operatives or to schools organised by

the National Union of Productive Co-operatives. The National Union of Productive Co-operative Societies also organises courses for skilled workers who wish to obtain further qualifications. The costs of these schools are borne either by the co-operatives or by the National Union of Productive Co-operative Societies, in order that the participants may increase their qualifications without payment. Providing facilities for employees to add to their qualifications is not the only way in which the co-operatives endeavour to raise the material and cultural standard of their members. They systematically improve working conditions by building new enterprises; hygienic conditions are improved by the installation of machines with improved dust absorption, and buildings for social purposes are constructed near the enterprises, work canteens and holiday homes are built, etc. By means of special funds members' holidays are paid for, either entirely or in part; a proportion of the costs of their childrens' holidays are paid for, also costs of excursions to historical places; a contribution is made towards canteen meals; the participation of members in events of cultural interest, etc., is facilitated.

The third five-year plan for economic development of the national economy, for the period 1961-1965, provides for considerable development of co-operative shoe manufacture, particularly shoes made-to-order and repairs. The members of the co-operative shoe manufacturing societies know that in carrying out their tasks they are contributing to raising the material and cultural standards of all people in the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia.

Clothing Co-operatives.

Within the Czech Co-operative Productive Movement there are 113 Clothing Co-operatives which represent 21.1% of all Productive Co-operatives. In this branch there are 24,508 employees, 24.5% of the total number of employees of Productive Co-operatives. It is the second most important branch, with its contribution of 17.4% to the total production of Productive Co-operatives.

As the standard of living in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic constantly rises, so the requirements of this branch increase. In recent years special attention has been paid to the development of made-to-order clothes and services for the inhabitants, as well as equipment for salons and enterprises for made-to-order clothing, where the qualified tailors, designers and head workers are employed. The care taken of these workers brings the best results as the volume and quality of the work is always increasing. In regional and district towns, the output capacity covers 100% of work carried out to order. The majority of the salons and workshops satisfy the needs of

the most exacting customers, as all the garments are individually made with due respect to technological processes in clothing as well as in men's and women's underwear. These enterprises collaborate with co-operatives manufacturing accessories, such as hand-made bobbin lace, woollen fabrics, fur accessories, binding, buttons, jewellery, etc. The organisation of the work in the salons and enterprises is governed by the wishes of the customers as regards the completion of the order with the least possible delay. For this reason, during season, workers in small-scale production are transferred to made-to-order production.

The fact that the customers are offered a large selection of the most up-to-date models contributes considerably to their satisfaction.

Textile Co-operatives are important suppliers of material, by the manufacture of types and designs of materials different from those manufactured by the State industry, and are only for made-to-order Clothing Co-operatives. In the workshops, there are even fashion journals from abroad so as to have a perfect choice and a complete picture of the latest fashion trends.

The publicity and the supply of these products are arranged independently by the Co-operatives. In certain cases, publicity is assured in a centralised way (films, television, State fashion journals, etc.).

In their efforts to improve services to customers, the Co-operatives, in collaboration with national committees, have recently decided to modify and increase the number of working hours, having regard to the needs of the workers.

There is an increasing demand for the care and repair of clothes and linen. It is for this reason that Co-operatives have turned their attention to satisfying this demand and have built a network of collection and repair workshops. In the larger towns, special repair workshops have been built for express repairs and express pressing of clothes.

Upon request, the maintenance and repair of clothes can be done at the home of the client. The worker in the Clothing Co-operative has a portable sewing machine with attachments. Apart from their basic work, that is to say dressmaking and the care of clothes, the Co-operatives in recent years have provided other services - the opening of shops for express cleaning and dyeing of clothes, express laundries, shops for mangling and ironing linen and curtains, repairs of fine fabrics, of hats, leather and fur clothes, fur storage depots. Some Co-operatives iron clothes during the night, mainly for large hotels and foreign visitors. The manufacture of small quantity clothes in Clothing Co-operatives is complementary to large-scale State manufacture.

The State Conference for the Clothing and Textile trade laid down specialised activity of Clothing Co-operatives and their enterprises, according to which they would build new enterprises on a perfect technical and organisational level. In this way they replaced private enterprises whose owners voluntarily decided to join the Co-operatives.

On a broad basis, the manufacture to order and the care of men's and women's clothes is specialised. Special enterprises exist for the manufacture to order of men's and women's underwear, and for the manufacture of fashionable accessories, also salons for children's clothes and enterprises for the manufacture of rainwear and sports clothes. In large towns and spas first class fashion salons are built for the most exacting clients.

In the countryside, also, there are enterprises for the manufacture to order and the care of clothes and linen, of which the services are assured through collection workshops in collaboration with the shops of the Consumers' Co-operatives. An employee of the Productive Co-operative works in these collection centres for the day, or certain hours.

One of the principal tasks this year is the introduction of mass production to order, on a large scale. The results of a number of co-operatives show that it is possible, with good organisation and the application of new technology, for mass production to assure a higher work productivity, to increase the average quality of products and to employ less qualified workers, mainly women. The introduction of mass production will result in increased profit earning capacity and benefits, mainly for qualified workers.

Clothing Co-operatives pay particular attention to the development of models. With the help of the enterprises of the Central Co-operative Productive Union, the Union's Institute for Development and Planning organises professional courses for workers in made-to-order dressmaking.

In these courses, the participants learn new sewing technique, new technological processes and the line of made-to-order clothes for the coming season. The new models are sent to the Co-operatives in fashion magazines, according to the season. For employees at the head of fashion salons, State Conferences for designers are organised, with fashion shows and fashion accessories.

To publicise made-to-order manufacture and the services of the Productive Co-operatives, the Institute for Development and Planning organised 63 fashion parades last year, which had great success in educating parents on suitable modern clothes for young people.

To assure the development of made-to-order dressmaking, 392 apprentices finished their training in 1959 and 407 new apprentices were taken on. The large Co-operatives have their own training centres; in others, particularly the smallest, individual instruction is given by an employee acting as instructor. In view of the importance of this activity, the number of apprentices will be increased during the third five-year plan, so that in 1965 only professionals will be employed.

The Central Union organises courses for cutters and fabric designers to enable them to acquire full professional knowledge.

Dressmaking to order in Czechoslovakia has a long tradition, and the ability of our tailors is well known even abroad. Productive Co-operatives do not only help to maintain this tradition, but to raise it to an even higher level.

The activity of Textile Co-operatives largely depends on the activity of Clothing Co-operatives. At the present the 34 Textile Co-operatives participate in the production of Productive Co-operatives by 4.2%. Their principal task is the development of production characterised by the development of individual and made-to-order manufacture, quite different from the large-scale manufacture of State industry.

The level of the organisation of work in these Textile Co-operatives varies according to the manufacturing programme. In small-scale manufacture the organised workshop manufacture predominates; in manufacture to order and repairs, group manufacture predominates for which the Co-operatives are creating the necessary conditions, at the same time increasing the quality of products and publicising hand-made artisanal production.

The Textile Co-operatives in their complexity form an organised manufacture with mutual co-operative relations at the different stages. Good collaboration also exists between the clothing sector and spinning co-operatives, dye works, weaving establishments, knitting works, printing works, all of which aim at maximum exclusiveness and best quality products.

These Co-operatives enjoy the full help of the Central Co-operative Productive Union's Institute for Development and Planning which combines all the activity of the Textile and Clothing Co-operatives, and the same method is applied for improving the qualification of employees, as in the Clothing Co-operatives.

The development of this branch is organised mainly in the manufacture-to-order of hand-knitted and machine made goods of all sorts, mainly clothes, sports clothes and children's clothes; subsequently in the development of the repair and furnishing fabrics, carpets, curtains, knitted goods, linen and other services, for example, umbrella repairs, the ironing of curtains, covers etc.

In this way this industrial branch can also be successively oriented to the service of the people, which is the principal aim of Czech Productive Co-operation.

D E N M A R K

About 35 years ago "Arbejdernes Kooperative Skotøjsfabrik" (Workers' Co-operative Shoe Factory) was started as an unusual shoemaker's shop, in the city of Copenhagen. The unusual thing was that a couple of journey-men shoemakers, without means at all, undertook to repair shoes from morning to evening for the workers employed in the firms in the neighbourhood. That one day they had a breakdown with some tools so that some people had to go home bare-footed (fortunately it was a warm summer day) is only mentioned for the sake of good order.

From these first difficult and hard times AKS grew steadily year after year, so that today it has a quite modern plant at its disposal as well as six well-established retail shops in Copenhagen and two of the bigger towns in the provinces, and employs about 150 workers and employees.

Thus, the Society has an excellent position on the home market which only includes about 4.5 million people. However, the European marketing plans have obliged AKS, like so many other Societies in these epoch-making years, to investigate its position. It, therefore, tried to contact another Co-operative Society in Denmark, called Fox, which has a plant and nine retail shops in the bigger towns in the provinces. A Committee of representatives from both Societies has been appointed with the purpose of arranging an amalgamation in order to have one Co-operative Society with two plants and fifteen retail shops at its disposal. This amalgamation took place on 1st January, 1961, for the strengthening and benefit of the co-operative shoe supply in Denmark.

AKS has some export and is still working strenuously to increase this part of its sales. Actually, year after year, its exports have been increasing, probably because all shoes exported by AKS are not only first-class products, but are produced and exported at a reasonable price.

The whole question of export which we have much at heart in AKS turns us to a question which is of vital importance for the continued progress of the Danish Co-operative Union: Is it possible for boots and shoes of the various types to be exchanged within the Co-operative Societies in Europe, so that the respective types are produced in the countries and districts where there are the best conditions and qualifications for their manufacture?

Danish Clothing Industry.

The present situation within the clothing trade is characterised by relatively good marketing conditions, caused by the economic boom. Clothing covers ready-made cloth for men and women, as well as dresses, gowns and lingerie.

The trade has had a rise in turnover of about 4% compared with the corresponding period in 1959. A comparison with the turnover of other consumption goods shows that the latter have had an increase of about 6%.

When compared with an increase in turnover of about 25% within the radio and television trade, one has an impression of the present problems, probably also those of the near future regarding the possibilities for the clothing trade to carry on in the changeable consumption choice.

As this comparison has been made in Crowns, there is no important uncertainty in the result, as the tendency is so clear that possible varied price movements cannot affect the impression.

Dividing clothing into the various types, it appears that ready-made clothes for women are most in demand, probably owing to the change to lighter clothing. It would be unrealistic to oppose this tendency, therefore, it calls for a change of production according to consumption choice.

It is a pleasing facet that exports of women's ready-made clothes have so increased that exports now exceed imports.

The clothing trade is encumbered with a trade tax of 10% of cost price; the repeal of this tax is desirable, although the consumers do not feel it as it is imposed at the wholesale stage. This, however, has the financial disadvantage that the claim for investing in stocks means investing prepaid taxes.

Supplies of piece goods, not least those from other countries, have been irregular as regards dates of delivery. This prevents the security which is necessary for planning production in order to reduce production costs.

After the establishment of the two European free trade areas all possibilities for reducing production costs have to be taken into consideration, and in this connection it is not without importance that Denmark is a low tariff country.

As mentioned above, however, Denmark has succeeded in increasing her export. In 1959 Danish ready-made clothing industry exported to a value of 52 million Danish crowns, of which ready-made clothing for men accounted for about 20 million Cr.

The problems for the clothing industry will also in the future be to get a share in the rising standard of living, but the trade is definitely handicapped compared with the consumers' rising interests in technical goods, not forgetting the increases in motorizing and tourism.

As regards clothing the Co-operative Societies have not asserted themselves very much.

Tilskaaerernes A/S (The Cutters) is a Retail Society with a total turnover of about 13 million Crowns, and a wholesale turnover of about 7 million Crowns for own production of ready-made clothing for men and women.

Comparing this turnover with the total turnover of the industry, we are not able to act as price-regulation to the extent desired.

FRANCE

The textile, clothing and leather industries have been one of the domains of French co-operative experience since its earliest days. In fact, some attempts to create workers' associations in these industries were made even before the 1848 revolution, and the ground was found to be well prepared in a workers' milieu of ancient corporate traditions. Associations of shop foremen and silk weavers of Lyons were an example of the upsurge of co-operative ideas in an industry - silk weaving - and a town - Lyons - where traditions of solidarity and mutual help were particularly strong.

Such favourable psychological conditions, however, do not suffice to provoke rapid co-operative progress. In fact, the great mass of men and women workers drawn into the large workshops of capitalist origin, since the end of the 18th century, in no way benefited from a professional culture or a tradition of the trade. Amongst the workers, only those possessing real professional qualifications could envisage and promote the creation of co-operative workshops. The others were too closely imprisoned by their lack of culture and their material misery to be able to plan even the most humble project of emancipation.

As a result, co-operative experience in the textile and clothing industries have been the achievements of workers engaged in the final stages of production - tailors, trimming makers, waistcoat makers, embroiderers, etc. On the contrary, the basic industries - carding, spinning, weaving, dyeing, finishing, etc. - remained in the hands of capitalists employing great masses of workers with little or no qualifications and using equipment such as the workers could not afford to buy out of their savings.

This situation existed throughout the 19th century, but it should be noted that if the 1848 revolution saw the birth of a great number of co-operative clothing workshops - for example the famous "Association des Ouvriers Tailleurs de Clichy" whose members quickly numbered 1,600, or its branch "La Réciprocité, Association d'Ouvriers tailleurs, libre, fraternelle, égalitaire" - one did not see the creation of co-operatives for spinning or weaving, or even plans of association between owners of spinning and weaving factories and their workers.

Thus, from the beginning of the Co-operative Movement in France, the textile industry, the first modern large industry organised on capitalist lines, offered an example of the division which the future evolution of techniques of production or social organisation would maintain between the sectors susceptible to benefit by the co-operative formula, and those, with certain exceptions, which would remain the prerogative of capitalism.

Recent Evolution.

Limited since its inception to a narrow field of activity associated with textiles and clothing, Workers' Co-operation had to link closely the economic and social ups-and-downs.

Nevertheless, the beginning of the 20th century, particularly the period immediately preceding and following the first world war, had seen the creation of an important number of co-operatives, mainly in the ready-to-wear clothing industry. The period was opportune for a number of reasons: it saw the first success of trade unionism in an industry where the speculative paternalism of the employers had, for a long time, been the only form of social action. On the other hand, the improvement of the living conditions of the popular masses increased the consumption of products and textile articles. Lastly, military orders from 1910, particularly after 1914, caused a multiplication of small clothing factories, where legal regulations for the protection of the workers were systematically violated, thus increasing the need for licensed enterprises to prove that the requirements of mass production were not incompatible with the strict observation of laws for the protection of labour.

It was under these conditions, for example, that in December 1914 the Co-operative "Union et Travail" was founded by a militant worker, Jules Gabut, which, whilst struggling especially against work done in the home, which was considered a source of exploiting women hand workers, quickly grew into a large enterprise, with hundreds of members and supplying the Commissariat with hundreds of thousands of uniforms.

After the 1914-1918 war, the Textile Co-operatives expanded. For example, the Society "Union et Travail", while maintaining its clothing workshops at Paris, built an important factory for wool weaving at Elbeuf. Also, many Societies were founded by recently demobilised professionals. The 1920's, in particular, saw a certain number of Co-operatives spring up in an industry which, until then, had remained the freehold of the artisanal enterprise - shoemaking.

If, in fact, the shoemakers had been for a long time the guardians of a mutualist and collectivist ideal, of which shoemaker Ephram had been the spokesman during the 1830's, the dispersion of their industry had prevented the creation of co-operative workshops. But after 1919, large capitalism interested itself more and more in activity where close international relations were established between large well-equipped firms. From capitalist concentration, and in reaction to it, many Shoemaking Co-operatives were formed, notably in the regions of Limoges and Fougères.

Finally, in a neighbouring domain, that of the manufacture of rope sandals, two Societies were established between the two world wars: in a trade which was, and which remains, characterised by an artisanal structure, they introduced, with a new social life, an incontestable element of technical modernisation and commercial strength.

The second world war, however, was cruel to the textile, clothing and leather group. The scarcity of raw materials, the dispersion of workers, then, after the war, the evolution of home demand and the progressive decline of export markets led to the disappearance of a large number of Societies from this group. To these reasons may be added another of a sociological nature: the evolution of technical processes of manufacture gradually caused the disappearance of highly qualified hand-workers, the mainstay of the Co-operatives, to replace them by hastily trained workers, operating more complex machinery, and forced to do more parcelled out tasks. The reactions of these workers were fundamentally different from the reactions of those qualified men who preceded them. Very often the work in clothing workshops is nothing more to a woman than a means of earning money; she does not tie herself to the workshop. The rotation of manpower is more rapid. Finally, to all outward appearances as regards the Co-operatives, the change in the recruitment of workers involved a decline of trade union activity and, consequently, many of the social conquests of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were breached in these activities. Thus, work done at home was once more largely practised by contractors who tried, by this method, to fight against competition more and more keen. The rôle of Clothing Co-operatives changed from the offensive to the defensive. Depending largely on administrative markets by virtue of which they only supply work from the raw materials put at their disposal by the Administrations, they suffered to the full the effects of competition on a market which tends in other respects to shrink from day to day.

Present Situation.

a. Workers' Co-operatives.

Today, the group of French Co-operatives in the Textile, Clothing and Leather industries comprises 17 Societies which had a turnover of 750 million old francs in 1959, but which was only 4% over 1958, and 18% below the 1956 record.

To eliminate the influence of nominal price increases on raw materials and labour, the Confédération Générale des S.C.O.P. has established a true index of activity which gives the exact level of production of the Societies in the group, independently of all variations due to the depreciation of money values. On the basis of 100 in 1949, this index rose by 26.8% between 1955 and 1956, by 18.1% between 1956 and 1957, dropped by 23% between 1957 and 1958, but rose again by 8.4% between 1958 and 1959. On the other hand, the comparable national index rose by 6.7% between 1955 and 1956, 11.8% between 1956 and 1957, dropped by 0.8% between 1957 and 1958 and experienced a further fall of 4% between 1958 and 1959.

The comparison between these two series of figures shows how, in this sector, the Co-operatives are menaced more than their patronal and capitalist competitors

by unforeseen accidents. The disaster of 1957-58, suffered in a period of grave inflation and the beginning of a recession, affected the Co-operatives more deeply than their competitors.

However, the disaster seems to have been checked, and the Co-operatives which survived the difficulties of the second world war and the period of reconstruction of the economy are, on the whole, well equipped enterprises. Two Co-operatives for the manufacture of sandals, two Societies for the manufacture of shoes, a large glove factory connected with a large tannery having as its members all the tailors and glovemakers of the town of St. Junien in the Haute Vienne, the members of a Society for printing fabrics which has just celebrated its 30th anniversary, a shirt factory which is one of the most important suppliers of the multiple stores, a mill for mattress ticking, are amongst, if not the most important, at least the most dynamic enterprises of their profession.

The relative stabilisation of prices and the return of economic activity allowed the Societies to again attract investments which previous circumstances had discouraged. Above all, the Societies continue to play an important rôle as regards stability of employment, and the cover of social risks by their own institutions - superannuation fund, mutual insurance companies, etc. They are thus the nucleus from which, at the price of recruitment and of training, new Co-operatives could be established tomorrow in these activities which technical progress and social and economic upheavals have not entirely stripped of their traditional characteristics.

b. Artisanal Co-operatives

The artisanal sector is particularly developed in the textile industries; out of the 26,000 textile enterprises in France in 1958, more than 17,000 - according to the census - had less than 5 wage earners. But in spite of numerous efforts Artisanal Co-operation has not succeeded in implanting itself very vigorously in this sector.

At present there are 10 Artisanal Marketing Co-operatives in the Lyons and St. Etienne regions which assure the sale of the products of many hundreds of artisan silk weavers or ribbon makers. The Society for the Purchase of Textile Materials, a co-operative purchasing group working for the benefit of its artisanal members, should also be mentioned. The S.A.M.T. buys material for its members, with credits put at its disposal by the Caisse Centrale de Crédit Co-opératif. Its volume of activity is around 100 million francs per annum, which, considering the small unitary extent of operations, corresponds to a hundred new equipments put into service each year.

The weakness of Artisanal Co-operation in this industry seems to be due to two factors -

The legal definition of handicrafts, which, by limiting the size of artisanal enterprises to a level incompatible with the needs of a rational production, also limits the aptitude of the artisans to create and animate complex collective organisations;

The reason that the majority of textile artisans are home workers, or are sub-contractors for large capitalist enterprises, and thus dispose quite naturally of a source of supply and marketing and have no need to establish communal organisations to undertake these functions.

Finally it should be mentioned that there are no Artisanal Co-operatives in the leather industry.

Conclusion.

The situation of Artisanal and Workers' Co-operation in the sector under consideration is far from presenting the same encouraging perspectives as in the industrial branches previously studied by our Committee.

It seems that where Workers' Co-operatives have contributed to obtain for the workers in these industries the social security and the standard of living which were formerly denied to them, they have lost a large part of their attraction in the eyes of the beneficiaries of their activity.

It is only by a more favourable combination of circumstances and systematic action on the part of the central organisations that a revival of this branch of activity of Workers' Co-operation can be achieved.

I S R A E L

TABLE I

No. of Co-operatives and Working Forces
in the Co-operative Producer and Service Movement.

(June 1957 - June 1960)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Producer</u>		<u>Passenger and Goods Transport</u>		<u>Sundry Services</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	Number	Working Force	Number	Working Force	Number	Working Force	Number	Working Force
1957	173	4162	23	7001	39	1120	235	12283
1958	170	3950	24	7578	43	1141	237	12669
1959	158	3780	28	7674	40	1101	226	12555
1960	152	3786	27	8403	40	1152	219	13341

TABLE II

Information on Own Capital, Annual Income and Wages (in 1,000I£+)
in the Producer and Services Movement (June 1957-June 1960)

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Co-operatives</u>	<u>Working Force</u>	<u>Own Capital</u>	<u>Income (gross)</u>	<u>Wages</u>
1957	235	12283	13840	106,317	44,433
1958	237	12669	14086	126,733	52,736
1959	226	12555	15378	140,755	52,351
1960	219	13341	19856	156,068	61,948

+ I£ 5 equals £ 1 sterling.

General Remarks.

Under a re-organisation programme, implemented in the middle of 1958, the Producer Co-operative Movement was divided into three separate and autonomous sections: Industry; Transport (Passenger and Goods); Services - each endowed with executive power and managed by a Board of Directors and an Executive Secretariat.

The Secretariat of the Central Union continues to function as an apex organisation and co-ordinating body for all three sections.

The Audit Union, as well as the Departments of Organisation and Training, Culture and Education, Financial, Legal and Statistical Services, Insurance and General Representation, carry on their activity within the common framework.

The following financial and social institutions continue their subsidiary existence within the general framework -

Co-operative Fund, Ltd.	Financial Instrument of the Producer and Service Co-operative Movement.
Own Capital	I£ 1,200,000
Annual Turnover	I£ 4,200,000
Noa, Ltd.,	Joint Purchasing and Distribution Service of the Passenger and Goods Transport Co-operative.
Annual Turnover	I£ 4,000,000 to I£ 5,000,000.
Shataf, Ltd.	Producer Co-operative. Supply and Marketing Body.
Annual Turnover	I£ 1,000,000
Caterers Union, Ltd.	Co-operative Hotel and Restaurant Development Administration.
Annual Turnover	exceeds I£ 1,000,000.
Magen, Ltd.	Producer and Service Co-operatives, Central Pension Fund.
The Capital of the Fund (covering old age, invalidity, widows and orphans' pension)	I£ 3,500,000.

Leather, Textile and Clothing Co-operatives.

The majority of Co-operatives in the three sections under review were set up after the establishment of the State, and most of their working force consists of recently arrived immigrants. The following table reflects the position in the middle of 1960 -

<u>Description</u>	<u>No. of Co-operatives</u>	<u>Working Force</u>	<u>Own Capital</u>	<u>Annual Gross Income</u>	<u>Wages per Annu</u>
			<u>in I£</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>in I£</u>
Leather	8	179	131	2,040	620
Textile and Clothing ...	6	86	63	1,066	427
<u>Total</u>	14	265	194	3,106	1,047

Leather - Seven Shoe Manufacturing and One Hide Processing Societies.

These Societies have shown remarkable resistance and ability to hold their own in the face of unremitting competition from privately owned industries. In a combined effort to streamline their co-operative industries and improve efficiency, they joined forces to ensure stability of prices and handle imports of raw material as well as exports of finished goods collectively.

One Co-operative produces working shoes and summer sandals; another, high-quality children's shoes, and during the summer season, elegant ladies' sandals. Two societies produce high-class ladies' shoes. The members of yet another Society (working force 12), specialising mainly in fur-lined mules and children's shoes, were all social cases, helped by "Joint" to organise into a productive and self-supporting unit. One of these, "Na'alei Artzeinu" of Jerusalem, (founded in 1936), which counts among the biggest firms of shoe manufacturers in the country, even gained strength in the course of its struggle for existence, and now occupies a leading position in the country's shoe manufacturing line both economically and commercially, having developed also a not inconsiderable export to East-European and African countries in the past few years.

The oldest of the Shoe-Making-Societies has been in existence since 1933. The others were founded 17, 12 and 10 years ago; the last 12 months ago.

In addition there are two Shoe-Manufacturing Societies in two different Kibbutzim, specialising in working boots and children's shoes, and manned by kibbutz members, who maintain a joint marketing system.

Textile - Two Societies.

"Rakaphet", a textile printing mill, founded in 1949 by a group of war veterans, developed from a workshop into a leading enterprise in the textile printing line, with modern equipment, housed in a spacious building, a working force of 30, and an annual turnover of I£ 500,000. There is also some export trade in various fashion goods. The other Society, "Sassgona", a textile dyeing and bleaching plant, has also made quite creditable progress, both technically and financially.

In view of the expanding textile industry and the increasing areas put under cotton in this country, our textile processing plants are faced with development problems, such as the introduction of automatic printing methods, which call for an investment of over I£ 500,000.

Clothing - Four Co-operatives.

Most of the members of the four Clothing Societies had been high-class tailors who were forced by the changing conditions to forsake their original trade, and incorporate in the ever-expanding confection business.

The Co-operative Societies in the confection line, which is based on low pay, modern mechanised working methods, and a high output, struggle hard to hold their own against the two latter factors, due to lack of working capital as well as a high age level of the members.

The oldest of these Co-operatives "Atid", founded in 1924, has not been able to expand beyond a working force of 15 members, because it could not successfully compete with up-to-date, large-scale enterprises in the confection business which is quickly embracing a large section of the inland trade and making successful attempts at exports.

I T A L Y

CONFEDERAZIONE COOPERATIVA ITALIANA

Member societies of the Italian Co-operative Federation in the industries which form the subject of this report are few in number, but they are highly specialised and pursue their activities in extremely varied fields - silk spinning, shoe production, fur trade, mattress making, knitting, dressmaking, mass production of ready-made clothes, shirt-making, weaving, lace and carpet production.

They are scattered over various regions of Italy, particularly in the North and South in the provinces of Udine, Treviso, Como, Trapani, Agrigento, Chieti, Cremona, Palermo, Lecce, Taranto, Bari, Arezzo, Bologna, Cagliari, Sassari, Catania, Trieste, Milan and Parma.

Shoes and Leather.

Shoe-makers' and saddlers' co-operatives are generally concerned with the wholesale buying of skins and leathers. The majority of them have been formed since 1950, and possess workrooms with modern equipment. Some also undertake shoe repairs, while others take up contracts for civil or military supplies or deal in the production of high quality made-to-measure shoes. One of these societies, purely commercial in character, has organised the marketing of these shoes, which are sold throughout the district by a team of travelling salesmen; up to the present the results have been excellent. Another society specialised in the production of heavy shoes for farmers, but demand has fallen off in recent years.

Shoemakers' co-operatives have developed fairly well in Italy for, in spite of strong competition from the large factories, the high quality of the craftsman's hand-made product is still much sought after and, in any event, sells at a good price.

Spinning.

The majority of the spinning co-operatives working with raw silk are in Venetie, particularly the provinces of Udine and Treviso. Specialised workers handle the dry cocoons which come from the co-operative drying plants at Frioul and from the province of Treviso. Most co-operatives of this type were constituted in 1948, when almost all the Frioul spinning factories were abandoned by the silk manufacturers because they were not making sufficient profits. The resulting unemployment for thousands of workers, and the enormous difficulties arising from it for the co-operative drying plants which could no longer find a market for the millions of kilos of cocoons, led to the founding of the co-operative spinning factories which enabled the drying plants to market their products outside the silk manufacturers.

The spinning co-operatives were thus supplied with raw materials, and the drying plants were able to sell the raw silk threads instead of the cocoons. But after the recovery of the market, it was no longer to their advantage to sell the cocoons to the spinning co-operatives; they preferred to sell the raw material direct. This was the beginning of a severe slump in the spinning co-operatives, some of which had to close down. Steps are being taken to assist them by obtaining an adequate allocation of raw materials as well as a reduction in manufacturing taxes.

Tailoring.

The tailoring co-operative societies are of particular interest, and have had remarkable results in Sardinia, especially Trieste where 44 tailor artisans have united in the "Tailors' and Dressmakers' Consortium of Trieste". This recently formed co-operative supplies its members with fabrics, linings, haberdashery and other materials, and secures orders for them, either by tendering for local authority contracts or dealing with individual customers.

Ready-made Clothing, Hosiery and Miscellaneous.

Considerable results have also been obtained in the field of ready-made clothing. The "Inter-Provincial Syndicate of Co-operatives for Women Workers", at Bologna, includes a number of co-operatives whose members are mattress makers, dressmakers, knitters or shirt-makers.

These societies were formed in 1952 by women workers trained by the "Ente Nazionale Addestramento Istruzione Professionale" (National Organisation of Vocational Training) of the Italian Workers' Christian Associations;

later women workers from the surrounding districts joined them. The Consortium has begun to sell direct to the consumer, but has met with many difficulties and strong competition. But, in view of the good quality of the goods produced, particularly lingerie and knitted articles, future prospects are good. The workrooms are fitted with modern equipment such as electric sewing, ironing, buttonhole-making and knitting machines.

From among the numerous other societies in this sector of industry, the "Univel" Co-operative of Milan merits special mention. It was founded in September 1948 on the initiative of the American Joint Distribution Committee (an American society for assisting Jewish refugees) which granted a loan of 7,500,000 lire to facilitate the professional reclassification of refugees. The help of an expert in the production of veils and wedding dresses was enlisted in the person of Mr. H. Rothstein, who is now Vice-President and Director of "Univel".

The original members of the co-operative, the Jewish refugees, left Italy after learning a trade, to build a new life in America, Australia or other countries. The Co-operative is now composed only of Italians and is entirely independent of the American Joint Distribution Committee, whose initial loan has been completely repaid.

At the beginning, the work was limited to the production of wedding and first communion veils, but later the making of dresses for weddings and first communions has been strongly developed. Sales at present amount to about 80 million lire per annum.

Through a network of representatives, "Univel" is able to sell its goods on the home market and has commenced to export to countries in the Middle-East. It now envisages the production of childrens' clothes.

It should be mentioned that in certain cases womens' co-operatives for the production of clothing were formed to enable them to supplement the family budget. For example, in Santa Giusta, in the province of Cagliari, a village with a population of 2,500, the main occupations are fishing, agriculture and sheep-rearing. For part of the year the heads of families are without work or are under-employed; the constitution of a home-knitting co-operative has provided the women, especially the youngest, with the means of contributing to the upkeep of the family.

The Cantu "Lace Manufacturing Co-operative" is also worthy of special mention. It was founded in 1920 and now has more than 200 members, all lace-makers, who work at home during their free time. The various pieces

made on the traditional "tambour" are assembled in a workroom owned by the co-operative; in this workroom designs are created, renewed every year according to the tastes of the clients, and the cards used by the lacemakers to make the various pieces at home are prepared.

The Society's output is almost entirely absorbed by the home market, but an organisation for export is being formed. The chief problem for preserving the traditions of Cantu lace today is the reluctance of young new members, for generally young girls prefer more remunerative work **outside their homes**. Production is now towards complete manufactured articles, such as table-cloths and serviettes made entirely of lace, or lace and linen, table runners, tea-sets, lingerie, etc...

With regard to carpet and tapestry making, the C.A.T.E. (Erice Artisans' Carpet Co-operative), at Erice in the Sicilian province of Trapani should be mentioned, which was recently formed to establish and develop the typical textiles handicraft of Erice, which has a centuries old tradition going back to the time of Arabian domination in Sicily. The co-operative also produces handbags and belts; textiles are sold mostly in the summer months, but periodically the society deals with a considerable export trade.

Societies in the industries which form the subject of this report were founded at very different times. In some areas, their formation is of long standing, in others it is only recently that the need has been felt to unite the strength of the workers in the co-operative form.

In all these sectors, the co-operatives in Italy have made some progress, and it can be foreseen that the development will continue, particularly because of the various forms of assistance and labour protection which they have been able to obtain for the workers and artisans.

I T A L Y

LEGA NAZIONALE DELLE COOPERATIVE

Origins and Historical Synthesis.

The origins of the co-operative productive societies in the leather, textile and clothing industries, like other Italian co-operative societies, are closely linked to the origins of the workers' movement and its first struggles to obtain more humane living conditions.

Indeed, apart from some rare exceptions, it was through the intensification of the struggle for social reforms in Italy in the second half of the last century that, one after the other, the first co-operative productive societies were formed.

Even limiting ourselves to a few examples, we must mention that of about 150 tailors who formed a co-operative in Bologna in 1868, undertaking to pay 15 centimes each week to create a strike fund and to obtain from their patrons better wages and the most simple liberties of a trade union. Afterwards, when the strike failed, the 150 tailors formed a clothing co-operative society.

The most striking example is the "Society for the Woolcraft Workers of Prado" formed in 1882 by 40 weavers as a result of the serious situation in the district and the slump in the textile industry, due to the meanness of manufacturers who had not provided for the modernisation of working methods, were already outstripped by foreign competition and were attempting to put the responsibility and the consequences of the slump on the workers, by short time and continual lowering of wages.

To protect the threat to labour, a co-operative society of dressmakers, milliners and lingerie makers was formed in Turin in 1884 and a shoemakers' society at Figline Valdarno (Firenze), while throughout the country this new instrument of protection, with its chief characteristic from its beginning

of the active participation of the workers in the struggle to defend their work and way of life, clearly indicated the reasons why the workers had created a new kind of organisation beside the mutual societies and corporations.

Towards the end of the century, when a solution had to be found to the serious problem of the brutal exploitation of home workers, co-operative societies for women workers, of whom there are many in Italy, were created since, side by side with the large industries, large workers' sectors in the small and medium-sized industries tried to combat competition from the large manufacturers by working at home, which was miserably paid.

Many societies started in this period, particularly in Toscana and Emilie, societies of lacemakers, of buttonmakers, of "copean"; the latter group was so active that the agitation of the Florence braiders in 1897, which culminated in the formation of 17 labour co-operative societies in 17 districts of the province, was an event of national importance which forced the Minister, Mr. Guicciardini, to allow the braiders' co-operative societies to open credit accounts in any bank. This, however, was an academic promise which was never realised for, at that time, government policy and legislation gave no encouragement to the co-operative society.

Conditions for a greater and more favourable development were blamed at the beginning of the 20th century under the liberal and reforming policy of Giolitto. From 1903 to 1914 Italian co-operation developed vigorously and continued even after the first world war.

But, at the beginning of 1921, fascism initiated devastating action against co-operation, which terminated in the dissolution of the national league of co-operative societies. This was the beginning of a long period of tyranny and suppression of all liberty - which, besides putting an end to co-operation in Italy, gravely endangered the economic life of those societies which managed to survive. But when in 1945, with the return of democracy, free co-operation was reborn for the second time, everything had to be started again.

During the last fifteen years, the goodwill and sacrifice of Italian co-operators has given new prosperity to the co-operative movement, even if, in spite of precise constitutional statutes, it has not always received the necessary understanding from the authorities.

Solidarity of the Sector.

It is wholly to the credit of the co-operators if in Italy today, in spite of the difficult circumstances in which they have had to develop and live, the co-operative societies in the leather, textile and clothing industries are numerous and well organised. They are affiliated to the

National Organisation of Co-operative Societies and form part of the industrial and artisanal sector which groups 114 co-operative societies with 8,171 members.

Some are industrial in character, having well-equipped factories and modern machines tended by the members, whereas others are artisanal in character, or they serve their members who work at home, limiting themselves to obtaining, collecting and selling their work.

Among the co-operative societies in the first group is the modern and well-equipped co-operative stocking factory of Caronno Pertusella in the province of Varese; the fabric factory "Socit" of Prato; "Imperia", mens' underwear factory at Camerano in the province of Ancona; co-operative society "Clothing" of Bologna, which is rather different in character, for in addition to its industrial activity, it also assures work at home to 600 members.

Stockings, fabrics, coats, suits, raincoats, gabardines, shirts and knitted garments manufactured by these co-operative societies, which amount to about 2 milliards per annum, are well known and play a considerable rôle on the home market.

Also in the first group are several societies which make shoes: the "Mastromarco" society of Lamporecchio (Pistoia), which specialises in shoes for hunting and skiing, S.Giovanni Persiceto, S.Venanzio di Galleria and S.Gioglio di Piano societies in the province of Bologna; Spilamberto Co-operative Society in the province of Modena; the Villanova del Ghetto Co-operative Society in the province of Revigo.

The output of these societies, with that of others we have not mentioned, amounts to about 700 million lire; for workmanship and experienced choice of raw materials their shoes are equal to the best the Italian market can offer and at the same price.

Among the co-operative societies for home workers, which maintain contact with agents on behalf of the members, those created by the marsh herb workers should be mentioned; they fix prices, accept orders, deliver the finished product, supply technical and administrative assistance to the members and, in many cases, provide necessary machines and implements.

Of the remaining societies we will cite only the Villanova de Bagnacavallo Co-operative Society, in the province of Ravenna; this society, with 770 members, groups almost all the workers in the district who, by the work they do at home which requires no transport, are able to supplement what they earn by agricultural work.

The society organises the whole of the work, the gathering of the grasses in the valleys, the drying and the distribution of work according to the skill of each worker.

Every year, Villanova produces thousands of bags, little buckets of every shape and size, which now have a firm market in Italy and are preparing to compete on foreign markets.

A similar kind of work, which includes straw hat-making, is practised by other co-operative societies for home workers at Buti in the province of Pisa, at Fossoli in Carpi, at Migliarina in Modena, at Massa Fermana in the province of Ascoli Piceno, and in many other parts of Emilie and Tuscany.

In the sector of home workers, there are also other co-operative societies and many pre-co-operative groups in the specialised hosiery and clothing trades at Bagnacavallo (Ravenna), at Bologna at Sala Bolognese, S.Giovanni Persiceto, S.Agata, Anzola, all in the province of Bologna; at Carpi (Modena), at Reggio Emilia, at Forli, at Cagliari and at Sarzana (La Spezia).

Future Development.

The prospective development for societies in the sector mentioned are considerable; in recent years they have made profound studies in order to put working processes on an industrial basis, to reduce production costs and to understand the rules of the market, in order to determine better the trends of production.

Furthermore, there is the need and the possibility to create new societies of women home-workers, of whom there are many in Italy where this kind of work meets their needs and overcomes the difficulties, particularly for women, of finding employment in industry or agriculture.

There is no doubt that co-operative and pre-co-operative organisations offer a sure means for protecting the rights of this large category of women workers ("coopean", drapers, shirtmakers, dressmakers, knitters) as regards the application of the law on work at home, the various forms of assistance, the best working conditions, market and collective buying or raw materials.

To ensure the continued development of our co-operative productive and artisanal societies in the leather, textile and clothing industries, it is important to know how the organisation of distribution on the Italian and overseas markets can be expanded.

This possibility is provoked by the improvements which many societies in the organisation of their establishments will realise, and by the transformation of societies which have kept their artisanal character by industrialising actual production and investigations, surveys and market research, finally giving it a typical character on the basis of conditioning it to the import and export policy of co-operative movements of other countries.

Here, we would stress how the resolution voted at the I.C.A. Congress at Stockholm in 1957, inviting all National Co-operative Organisations to organise and increase as far as possible the volume of trade between all types of societies of different countries has, as far as we are concerned, only been really carried out by the co-operative societies of Eastern Europe, particularly Centrosoyus of the U.S.S.R.

The possibilities of export offered to us, particularly by the Russian Co-operative Societies, has assured work to some of our societies in the textile, hosiery and shoe industries and the wood imported in exchange has been worked by our co-operative organisations and then transferred to labour and artisanal co-operatives.

In 1959 our hosiery exports to Russia amounted to 130 million lire and shoe exports to 170 million lire.

These are, of course, modest results in comparison with the possibilities of absorption of the products of our workers and artisanal co-operatives by other co-operative organisations abroad, and therefore everything possible will be done to develop and increase trade with co-operative organisations of other countries.

However, as regards the improvement of our trading relations with foreign co-operative organisations, particularly with the countries of the West, our best intentions will be in vain if they show no desire to work with us.

This goodwill was shown to us by the co-operative movements of the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries in spite of the difficulties involved, for the socialist market is an autonomous entity, and almost independent, which conforms to laws different from those governing the capitalist market, relying on the essential principles of "invelée" economy.

The same goodwill is asked of movements in western countries in commencing and developing sound inter-co-operative relations, not only for mutual benefit but for their necessity, particularly for those countries which, like Italy, form part of the European Common Market.

Indeed, it is well known, and experience gained up to the present shows, that the realisation of the Common Market will have contrasting results in the six member countries; that is to say, the strengthening of some establishments and the weakening of many others in accordance with the law of monopoly development, which seeks to strengthen the strongest and weaken the weakest.

Consequently, the European Common Market will no doubt represent increased activity for the large industries, but for the small enterprise it will signify a smaller market, and the law of the largest profit will augment the predominance of monopolies to the detriment of the small-scale or medium-sized industries, both co-operative and artisanal.

In these circumstances, it is not difficult to foresee how the execution of the Common Market will be a serious obstacle to the Co-operative Movement of the member countries in the development of their production and the expansion of their distributive organisation, whether in the home or foreign markets, for under the pretext that only the big industries are able to "attack" international competition successfully, the monopoly groups will seek the assistance of every government by the reduction of customs duties, by tax concessions, credit, etc., and where government assistance is not forthcoming, by international agreements among monopolies in order to equalise prices, conditions of sale, create zones of influence and finally remove all competition and sweep aside the smaller enterprises.

For all these reasons, we are convinced of the importance of developing inter-co-operative trade, and of the necessity of reaching an agreement between the co-operative movements of the countries of the Common Market in order to pave the way for the expansion of trade relations and the creation of a commercial framework more suited to the needs of the many co-operative movements and to the action against monopolies which should be developed on the economic and political plane.

We believe it is possible to realise this fraternal collaboration, and that it is the sure path for defending the legitimate and common interests for preserving, to some extent, the fruits of the work of co-operators from speculation and for weakening the forces of monopoly, which dominate our production and our trade.