

of international relief. In the year of Munich—the last year of peace in our time—he was reading history at Worcester College, Oxford; as a member of the Friends Ambulance Unit he worked in hospitals in England during the first war months, and late in 1941 he went out with an ambulance unit to China. Japanese bombs met him at Singapore, and again at Rangoon, before his convoy moved in over the old Burma road; and he had not been long in China before he received a request from Rewi Alley to take over the work of George Hogg at Paochi, the bustling little Shensi town that was in 1942 headquarters of the Indusco movement in the north-west.

Hogg went north to help build up and become first headmaster of the Bailie School for C.I.C. apprentices—a job which he carried on with something like genius until his sudden death from tetanus in 1945. Peter Townsend remained for a year at Paochi as “ocean secretary” (overseas representative) of the co-ops.; later he put in another year on the roads in Szechwan, chiefly working on transport; in 1944 he took up his

how wide a range the family implies. Admittedly, this has been the only guarantee of security for most Chinese throughout their history, and they still rely on it. But a Chinese family isn't any biological unit of one generation; it pretty soon spreads out into a small clan or tribe. One of our ideas in training Indusco co-operators is to try to enlarge this consciousness of interdependence to cover a wider community group, and it seems to work all right.”

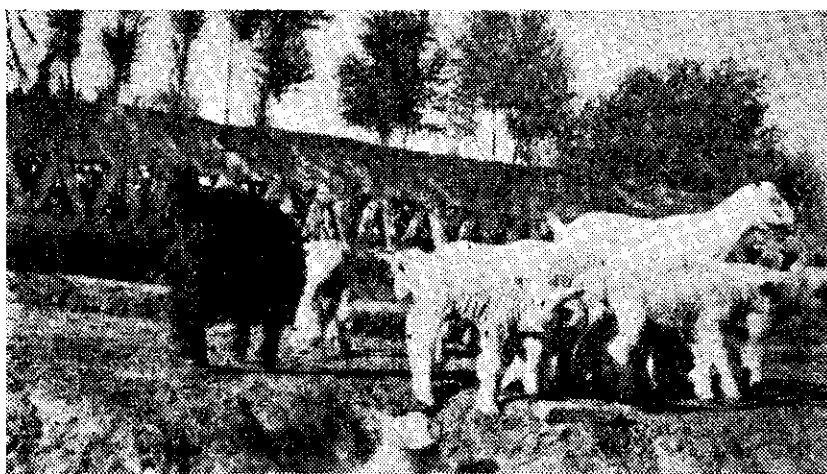
#### Growth of a Movement

“How much would you say the Industrial Co-operative movement owes to the work of Rewi Alley? Would it ever have got going without him?”

“The conditions were ripe, of course, when the movement was launched; but unquestionably Alley gave it invaluable creative drive in the first stages.”

“And when you first struck it in 1942 the movement was at its height?” I was thinking of the phenomenal growth of industrial co-ops. throughout Free China in 1940-41.

“Perhaps just a little past the peak. But it was still very strong indeed,



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present post as executive secretary to the International Committee for C.I.C., under the chairmanship of the crusading Bishop of Hong Kong, the Rt. Rev. R. O. Hall.

The outline history of the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives—now, as a movement, nearly 10 years old—is fairly well known in this country; they came into being as an emergency wartime measure to help maintain internal Chinese production, and have continued since the war as a strenuous experiment in co-operative organisation and practical democracy. I had been in at the birth of it all in the China of the late 'thirties; but Townsend had himself been part of the movement, working in close co-operation with Rewi Alley, during the hardest war years. “Do you still think,” I asked him, “that co-operation really suits China and the Chinese?”

“Yes, I'm sure it does. As a form of industrial organisation it is very close indeed to the traditional patterns of Chinese society—and it's not destructive of those old social forms, like Western style factory industry.”

“In spite of Chinese individualism and the family system?”

This drew a very Chinese smile. “People who talk about the family system in China don't always remember

especially in the north-west. I remember the sort of meetings we had in Paochi; the co-ops. had their own drama groups, there was always mass-singing and so forth. It was a real popular mass movement in those days, with an atmosphere of tremendous enthusiasm.”

“But since then it's lost ground?”

“It's true the numbers have dropped, from the wartime peak of nearly 2000 co-ops., with perhaps 100,000 workers, in Nationalist China alone. But this can be misleading, too—many of the co-ops. that have since failed came into existence to meet a purely wartime need, and had no post-war future anyway. Those that are left are a hardy nucleus, thoroughly tested and much stronger in original ability than ever before. So the pruning down process may not be altogether a bad thing.”

“What is the present strength of the movement?”

He thought this over. “At a very conservative estimate, taking only those we know about spread over all China, we have about 1500 co-ops. with some 50,000 to 60,000 members.”

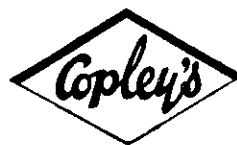
“All over China—does that mean on both sides of the civil war?”

“Fortunately, yes. The C.I.C. has been able to maintain its integrity as a

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