

# KUNG HO - "Working Together"

## China Builds A New World In The Midst Of War

LAST week the newspapers carried a cable message from Chungking reporting the resignation of Rewi Alley, a New Zealander, from the position of acting-Director of China's Industrial Co-operatives. Here is a summary of a BBC talk on Mr. Alley and his work by the Bishop of Victoria, Hong Kong. We quote from a recent English "Listener."

WHAT are Chinese Industrial Co-operatives, or as we generally call them, C.I.C.? In and around Hankow in 1938 there were thousands of refugees from Shanghai and other industrial cities. The problem was how these men and women could be set to work again to produce for China's war effort. But this was not enough for the group of Chinese and foreign friends responsible for starting C.I.C. They asked a further question: How can they be set to work in a way which will mean for them and possibly for many others, a better way of working and a better way of living than before? The simple fact was that the group were not only concerned with producing for the war. They were concerned with using this opportunity to create something which would count in the new world of the peace. And so they started C.I.C., an experiment in sharing—sharing of work, management and profits.

### The Spirit That Counts

I remember one day on the hills above Chungking kneeling behind a grave mound waiting for an air raid. The *chingbao*—the urgent signal—had gone 20 minutes before. When it sounded, we were in a little group of buildings with straw-thatched roofs and wattle walls, where three weaving co-operatives were working, with a common centre for recreation and a common system of marketing, though each of them was an independent co-operative, composed of refugees from different provinces. On my way up, I had visited three co-operatives, two making soap and one making shoes. I wondered what was happening to the men and boys I had seen working an hour or so before. When we saw the sun flash on the first bomb falling from the leading Japanese 'plane and heard the rattle of 27 'plane-loads falling in one spread over the city, I wondered if the things we had seen that morning full of so much hope had not already been shattered by this death from the air. The little factories were so flimsy. One of the soap factories had merely thatched roofs over its vats. The walls of the tiny office, where the chairman and the secretary did the business of the group, were little more than paper. But the flimsiness of the factory, the very primitive nature of the machinery, were of no account beside the spirit of the men.

### Rewi Alley Explains

A year ago, only one member of that co-operative knew anything at all about



WORKING TOGETHER: Girl students of Linkiang College, moved from Shanghai to Chungking, help to build roads and playing-fields at the new college

soap; he had worked as a hand in a primitive soap factory in a Lower Yangtse city. Then he had set off with his family on the long trek west to escape the Japanese invaders. I can imagine him now, with a bamboo pole over his shoulder, a child of three in one basket, and the bedding of the family in another; his wife behind him, with the baby strapped on her back, and another child holding on to her skirts. And two older children each with a smaller pole and a smaller load, the round, flat cooking pan, the white cotton sugar-bag full of rice, the precious jar of cooking oil, and a pungent bundle of dried fish. Before they reached Chungking, the two younger children were dead from hunger and fatigue, and the elder girl had been taken into one of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek's orphanages. Then the parents and the one young lad now left to them were met one day by that grand New Zealander, Rewi Alley, whose energy and almost mystic power of getting the best out of others, had called into being the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives. They listened to him and to the two Chinese engineers with him who had given up secure and well-paid jobs in Shanghai to begin this rebuilding of their country from the ruins of war. They heard for the first time the words *Kung Ho*, "working together," the motto of the C.I.C. They heard for the first time of the new kind of industry which the Government was helping the refugees to establish.

I can almost hear Rewi beginning to ask—eager, sympathetic—why was there only one boy in the family, what had happened to the other children, how far

had they come, and then telling them of the two Chinese boys he had adopted as little nippers, picked up starving in the street, and how they were now working as young men for the movement. Any lad could be an apprentice in this new *Kung Ho* movement. Even a lad had his rights. He mustn't work too long. After 18 months and if he were 18 years old, he could become a full member; he would share with the others, working together, just as soon as his man's strength was equal to a man's share of the work. And then Rewi Alley would go on: "Have you no friends from your own province here with you? Couldn't you get together a group? You know about making soap, and Mr. Lem here has been to college and has studied science—he can show you better ways of making soap with new chemicals. Do you think if I came again to-morrow you could have found a few more men from your province? And with money that we have been given by Madame Chiang Kai-Shek and her sister, Madame Kung, we could let you have about three months' training time to teach the other men, with Mr. Lem to help you; then if you want to go on and become a co-operative, you can sign the forms, and we'll give you a loan, and we'll find buildings for you and get you started."

### Share And Share Alike

Then slowly, with much patience, the principles were explained to them. There must be at least seven members. It didn't matter if they were men or women; in the new world men and women all share alike. There could be more than seven, of course, and more

were better, but if there were seven of them, then they could get a loan which they pledged themselves to repay over a term of years. They must elect their own chairman, their own secretary, their own treasurer. They must pay every member regular wages, and the chairman and secretary and treasurer must work at least three-quarters of their time with their hands as the others do. The members must settle all the business themselves, and they must carry out the co-operative law in the disposal of all profits. Every week they must go through the accounts. Every man must know how much the nitrate costs and the price of those barrels of pig-fat which come down the Yangtse in the long, thin river boats shooting the rapids without harm. Every man must know, too, about marketing. Rewi Alley would go on to tell them how, when they were organised, they would send a representative to a joint committee of all these new families of workers. Together, they would form a Federation. The Federation committee would deal with all matters of marketing and supply. They would buy nitrate and fat in bulk for the soap makers, cotton for the spinners, leather for the boot-makers; they would help them to sell their goods and to buy those they needed for themselves.

### The Co-operative Law

This new way of working, Rewi Alley would tell them, means that after the war "you will not work till you are too tired to do anything but sleep and eat; you will have, perhaps, eight or nine hours work a day, and then you will have leisure to talk and read. You must all learn to read and write and to understand figures. When it comes to the end of the year, your accounts will be made up. You must see that the chairman and the treasurer hand over 20 per cent of the money for the repayment of loans, 30 per cent goes into the treasury of the Federation, as reserve fund, for"—he would add with an ironic smile—"one of these days a bomb may hit your factory when you are out in the fields and you have to start all over again, and you will want some money to start with, something of your own which you have not got to pay interest on." And then he would read out again to them sections of the Chinese co-operative law, reminding them that 20 per cent of the profits must go to the Common Good Fund for education, for medical aid, and social-welfare. "There will be weddings one day, won't there, and funerals, too, and they cost money, and for those you can borrow money from the Common Good Fund."

As we knelt on that hillside waiting till the second wave of Japanese 'planes had come and gone and the second spread of bombs had crashed on the ground with great clouds of black smoke reaching up to Heaven, I thought how many of the members of this little group of co-operatives I was looking down on had yet to learn to read and write. Probably the soapmaker had found, as so many others, that only one of the group could read or write. In every

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A talk on Chinese Industrial Co-operatives by the  
BISHOP OF VICTORIA, HONG KONG, in the BBC  
Home Service