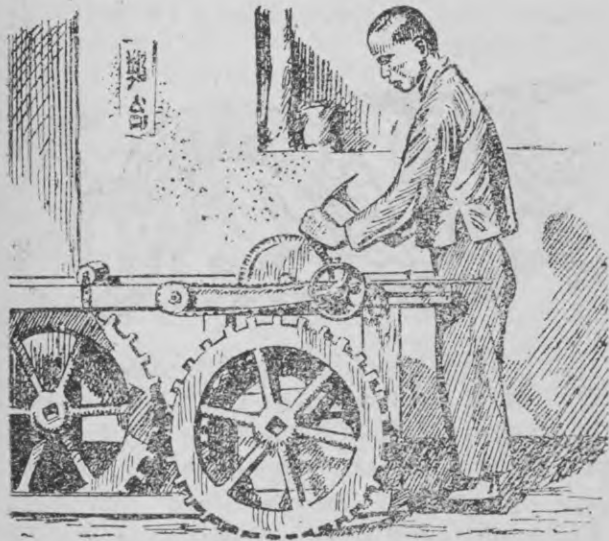


growth of Chinese Industrial Co-operatives, or the Work-Together Movement.

In the technique of Indusco—or CIC, as it was also known—China found the principle of industrial defence for a weak but large country against the menace from the air. It was simply this: that industry centred in crowded cities could not be efficiently or safely operated under continuous bombardment. It must, therefore, be evacuated and decentralised in small units spread over wide areas in such a manner as to rob the bomber of its only decisive behind-the-lines objective—the immobilisation of concentrations of machines and skilled operatives.



Alley was conceived to be the only man in China capable of creating the necessary organisation. Sceptics and defeatists called it a crackpot idea, and the plan might have been interred along with other amateur advice had it not been ardently sponsored, and Rewi Alley with it, by the British Ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr.

* * *

IN 1938, when Alley was appointed chief technical adviser to the organisation, it did not own a single factory, lathe or even chisel. Alley was its only staff. The obstacles seemed insuperable, but the sceptics are now eating their words for to-day *Ai Li*—the Chinese name for Alley, meaning Lover of Dawn—is identified with renewed hope and a future for thousands of derelicts of war.

Indusco set a record in China for the shortest distance between paper planning and action—two years. It can stand as a monument to a great nation's courage, ingenuity and endurance. Early in October, 1940, there were 2,300 vest-pocket factories spread across 16 provinces and under the technical direction of 70 branch headquarters.

The Indusco Line extended from guerrilla territory, behind enemy positions, deep into China, and from the Mongolian Plateau to the highlands of Yunnan. Over 50 types of industries were represented.

Alley was only the prime mover who started the wheels. But it was his prosaic mottoes and superhuman energy that prevailed. The magnitude of his effort can best be gleaned from the record of his own journeyings. In the first two years he travelled over 18,000 miles—a considerable achievement on the roads and trails of wartime China.

Pedalling bicycles, hitch-hiking on army trucks, riding an ambulance or horse into combat zones, but more often trudging along on his own tireless legs, Alley forged in the best of the CIC staff an almost religious will to carry the message of industry and working-together into the farthest corner of the country.

Among nick-names that he earned was that of *The Nine Lived*, because nine times he escaped death when buses and trucks in which he rode overturned or were wrecked on dangerous roads. A benign angel seemed to guard this moving target.

Twice bombs scored direct hits on dug-outs in which he sought refuge. Once a 200lb. bomb fell in the entrance to a cave in which Alley and other key men were standing. *Lucky it wasn't an Indusco product*, Alley observed, *or it wouldn't have been a dud!*

His abnormal nose has also won for Alley the name of *Tall Nose*. He was once riding in an ancient bus, when a bearded elder in front spoke to a youth seated alongside: *Chinese make better airmen than foreigners because they can see on all sides. Just take a look at the Tall Nose behind us. How can he see round an obstacle like that?* In Alley's case his nose has proved no handicap.