The International Committee for the Promotion of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives

The International Committee for the Promotion of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives (Gung Ho International Committee, or ICCIC) is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1939 in Hong Kong. It suspended its work in 1952 and revived it in 1987.

What is Gung Ho?

Gung Ho is the abbreviated form of "Chinese industrial Cooperatives" in Chinese. It can also mean "work together". The Chinese industrial cooperative movement (Gung Ho) was initiated in 1937 soon after Japan's all-out invasion of China in Shanghai by a group of foreign friends headed by Rewi Alley of New Zealand and then noted American journalists Edgar Snow and Helen Foster Snow together with a group of Chinese patriots including Hu Yuzhi, Sha Qianli and Zhang Naiqi. The movement aimed at organizing the unemployed workers and refugees for production to support the War of Resistance. From its beginning it gained the support of China's outstanding stateswoman Soong Ching Ling (Mme. Sun Yat Sen), and of the Chinese Communist Party. In August 1938, the Association of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives, a leading body of Gung Ho movement, was set up in Wuhan, with Rewi Alley as the technical advisor directly involved in the promotion of cooperatives. That autumn, the first Gung Ho cooperative was set up in Baoji, Shaanxi Province. From then on, the movement spread quickly throughout the whole of unoccupied China including the liberated areas led by the Communist Party. According to incomplete statistics, 3,000 cooperatives were functioning in the peak year 1941 with a total membership of some 30,000. Besides articles of daily use by the people, Gung Ho produced a large number of army blankets and uniforms for the soldiers at the front, and provided the guerrilla fighters in the Communist base areas behind the Japanese line with weapons and ammunition, thus effectively helping China's War of Resistance.

Historical Background of the Gung Ho International Committee

To win support from abroad, collect funds for development and ensure the proper use of foreign aid, the International Committee for the Promotion of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives was founded in Hong Kong in January 1939. Mme. Soong Ching Ling was elected honorary chairman and the British Bishop of Hong Kong R. D. Hall, its chairman. The work of the Committee soon won warm support from among overseas Chinese and just-minded people world-wide who sympathized with the Chinese people in fighting against the Japanese aggression. Organizations to aid Gung Ho were set up in several countries notably the United States, Britain and the Philippines. Up to the end of 1945, contributions in cash and materials totaling almost 10 million US dollars poured in from the US, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore and other countries. Technical experts from many countries volunteered to come and work for Gung Ho.
The significant contribution made by the Gung Ho International Committee in support of the Chinese people's war efforts and for enhancing friendship between the peoples of China and other countries was highly praised by Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Soong Ching Ling, Ye Ting and many other revolutionary leaders. As a unique economic and social force in the war period, Gung Ho won international acclaim for its remarkable achievements and its spirit of working hard and working together. The term Gung Ho entered the English language as a word denoting whole-hearted dedication to a meaningful cause.

The Revival of Gung Ho

The Gung Ho International Committee moved its headquarters from Hong Kong to Shanghai following the victory over Japan. It ceased its activities in 1952 after the government of the People's Republic decided to put all the cooperative work under the All-China Federation of Cooperatives.

In 1978, stimulated by the new policy of economic reform and opening up, Rewi Alley, together with Zhu Xuefan, Xue Muqiao, Chen Hansheng, Lu Guangmian and other veteran Gung Ho leaders, initiated the revival of Gung Ho. They believed Gung Ho could play a role in China's socialist modernization in the new historical period. In 1983, the Association of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives was revived. Four years later, in September 1987, the Gung Ho International Committee also resumed its activities with Zhu Xuefan as honorary chairman and Rewi Alley as chairman. The Committee consisted of members who were cooperative experts, leaders of cooperative organizations and friendship societies, or prominent supporters of Gung Ho from nine countries and regions.

Aims and Tasks of the ICCIC

The ICCIC aims to further the establishment and development of cooperatives in the present historical period to enable them to make contributions to China's socialist modernization. Its tasks have been consistently readjusted and enriched from putting emphasis primarily on promoting experimental cooperative centers in the initial years to providing guidance and promoting organization and development of cooperatives of different types with industrial cooperatives as the mainstay. The current tasks as stipulated in the Constitution are:

--Develop extensive liaison with international cooperative or friendship organizations and individuals who wish to support the cooperative movement; carry on vocational exchanges as well as economic and technical cooperation; and seek to strengthen international support for the cooperative movement. Such support may take the form of donations, funding, and/or provision of equipment, technology, advanced management experiences and personnel training;

--Guide and promote the organization and development of cooperatives of different types with industrial cooperatives as the mainstay in accordance with the fine tradition of Gung Ho and the basic cooperative principles; explore and summarize the experiences of good management of these cooperatives operating within China's socialist market economy, and, through their role as models, further promote the healthy development of the cooperative cause;
--Study the experience of promoting industrial cooperatives and other forms of cooperative enterprises at home and abroad; sponsor exchanges of information and experience.

**ICCIC Activities Since its Revival**

In accordance with the will of the later Rewi Alley, ICCIC headed by Chairman Yang Bo initiated in 1989 the cooperative experimental program based on the traditional Gung Ho spirit and organizational principles. Three experimental centers were sponsored respectively in Shandan in Gansu, Honghu in Hubei and Longkou and Penglai in Shandong provinces with the support of the local governments. A good number of pilot cooperatives for demonstration purpose were set up in the years following and a series of training courses were organized to promote understanding of Gung Ho ABCs and to teach the managerial and technical skills. The purpose was to gain the necessary experience for promoting Gung Ho under the new conditions so as to pave the way for its future development. In 1992 the Rewi Alley Memorial Cooperative Foundation (RAMCF) was established to raise funds to assist cooperatives financially.

In 1995, ICCIC carried out an over-all evaluation of its experimental program. Based on the findings, the Committee decided to put its emphasis on checking, ratifying and improving the existing cooperatives in the centers, so that they conform to the Gung Ho principles: voluntary organization, self-funding, self-governing, independent accounting, taking for its own gains and losses, democratic management, and distributing to each according his/her work as well as dividends according to shares. It also decided that the policy of promoting pilot cooperatives to serve as models should be changed to providing guidance and help to the cooperatives in the experimental centers, but also taking as liaison partners those units whose enterprises were organized in conformity with basic cooperative principles, such as Songjiang in Shanghai, Lijiang in Yunnan, and the Shanghai All-Masters Printing Factory. To explore a new way for promoting Gung Ho, ICCIC began to work together with the local women's federations organize women's cooperatives in rural areas of Mancheng County, Gucheng County and Baoding City in Hebei Province.

At its Second General Assembly in December, 1998, ICCIC made further adjustment to its strategy and mission by broadening the scope of its work from focusing on the promotion of industrial cooperatives to one of promoting different types of cooperatives with industrial cooperatives as the mainstay, hence expanding the area of its work to all kinds of cooperatives already functioning or to be organized.

ICCIC has made great efforts over the years in sponsoring seminars or workshops for exchanging experiences among cooperatives, in organizing cooperative and technical training courses, arranging study tours for foreign visitors, attending international conferences, publishing books and brochures for publicity and in organizing commemoration of veteran Gung Ho leaders. Many of its projects have won warm support and financial assistance from international organizations and individual supporters.

**Focus of Current Work of ICCIC**

The focus of ICCIC's work at present can be summarized as follows:
1) to publicize the basic cooperative principles and familiarize people with Rewi Alley's own summing up of the lessons gained in the Gung Ho movement as well as role of cooperative economy today in China's socialist market economy;
2) to train cooperative organizers and managerial personnel and make known the ABCs of cooperatives to every coop member;
3) to organize the exchange of information and experience concerning cooperative economy and strengthen links and cooperation among cooperative institutions in China and abroad:
4) to establish a group of Gung Ho field instructors to provide guidance, help design, monitor and evaluate cooperative projects as well of assisting enterprises which wish to reorganize themselves into cooperatives;
5) to provide consultancy services to enterprises engaged in structural reform as well as to laid-off workers from state-owned enterprises seeking reemployment through working together in cooperatives.

Domestic and International Links of ICCIC

ICCIC is an international non-governmental organization registered in and approved by The Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China. It has established vocational links internally with such cooperative organizations as All-China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives, All-China Federation of Handicrafts Cooperatives, Chinese Association of Industrial Cooperatives and Chinese Society of Cooperative Economy etc. as well as some specialized institutes under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. It is a member of CICOPA (International Committee of Producer and Artisans Cooperatives) under ICA (International Cooperative Alliance). ICCIC also conducted various forms of exchanges with cooperative organizations or other NGOs in Spain, France, Belgium, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the US and Japan, of which some have formed partner relationship with ICCIC.

Structure of ICCIC

ICCIC has over 100 members from 10 countries: Australia, Belgium, Britain, China, Canada, Germany, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand and the US. They include leading members and promoters of cooperatives, cooperative economy experts, and friendly supporters of Gung Ho. The ICCIC Second General Assembly elected an executive board of 15 members, with Wang Houde as chairperson and Li Xiaolin, Lu Wanru, Michael Crook and Zhang Xiaoshan as vice-chairpersons.

ICCIC has a secretariat to handle its day-to-day work. Its office is located in the compound of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries in No.1, Taijichang, Beijing. It publishes a Bi-monthly Gung Ho Newsletter to brief the readers about ICCIC's activities, help exchange information and encourage exploration of questions concerning theory and practice in the cooperative sphere of the economy.