

**Intervention at Gung Ho Seminar
To celebrate Rewi Alley's 110th Anniversary
And the 20th Anniversary of the Revival of Gung Ho
Beijing, 7 September 2007
Bill Willmott**

Dear friends and fellow co-operators, I bring you greetings from the nine New Zealand members of Gung Ho.

We in the New Zealand China Friendship Society take some pride in the fact that our countryman, Rewi Alley, was a key person in Gung Ho during the Sino-Japanese War and then saw the opportunity to resurrect it in the reform period of the 1980s.

Rewi Alley was a remarkable man, fearless and resolute, intelligent and politically astute. I first met him in 1938 when he came for tea at our home in Chengdu. My parents were great admirers of Rewi. I was six years old then.

He sat me on his knee and asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I said a fireman, and he congratulated me on choosing a profession that could help other people. He made such a deep impression on me that, when we next met in Beijing exactly 40 years later, I felt he was an old friend.

I firmly believe that Rewi's greatest contribution to China was the Gung Ho movement, which he started twice. The second time, he was already 85, and any ordinary man would have felt it was time to rest, but Rewi set about collecting his old comrades together for the task, and they were successful.
Long live Gung Ho!

The New Zealand China Friendship Society strongly supports the Gung Ho co-operative movement. In 1993, we made a contribution to the Handicapped Workers' Garment Co-operative in Honghu that helped them buy machines to expand their operation and membership. In 1997, we contributed to the Mancheng Women's Credit Co-operative in rural Baoding (Hebei), which allowed it to help several women's rural co-operatives get started. And in 2001 we contributed to the He Mingqing Women's Co-operative Health Centre in Songjiazhuang (Hebei). Each of our contributions has been substantially extended by the New Zealand government's programme to foster aid from NGOs.

This year we are contributing a major gift of 180,000yuan to the people of Shandan, again with the help of the New Zealand government. Our gift will finance a programme to train farmers in eight villages who can lead in building new co-operatives, including different types of co-operatives such as a machinery co-op and a credit co-op. Rewi understood well that the key factor in building and sustaining co-operatives was training the leadership.

We in New Zealand are keen to keep the positive legacy of Rewi Alley alive. I know everyone here shares our enthusiasm, and it is a great satisfaction to be among so many friends with the same co-operative values.

Many hearts with one mind, let us march on together in the spirit of Rewi Alley.