

TRAVELS in CHINA

1966-71

Rewi Alley

NEW WORLD PRESS PEKING
1973

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
<i>Chapter 1</i> THE BEGINNINGS OF CHANGE. SOCIALIST EDUCATION MOVEMENT IN THE COUNTRY- SIDE	3
<i>Chapter 2</i> SOME HUNAN JOURNEYS	13
<i>Chapter 3</i> SHANGHAI	61
<i>Chapter 4</i> HOPEI	97
<i>Chapter 5</i> SHANTUNG	226
<i>Chapter 6</i> KIANGSI	261
<i>Chapter 7</i> KWANGTUNG	334
<i>Chapter 8</i> HEILUNGKIANG	390
<i>Chapter 9</i> CHEKIANG	414
<i>Chapter 10</i> KIANGSU	466
<i>Chapter 11</i> PEKING AND TIENTSIN	508
<i>Chapter 12</i> SHANSI	533
<i>Chapter 13</i> THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN EDUCATION	547
<i>Chapter 14</i> CONCLUSION	581

Introduction

There has been, and will be for some time to come, a good deal written on the China of the past half decade, for the changes during that time have been both fundamental and dramatic. This record, based in the main on my notes of travels during the 1966-71 period, takes us into factory, school, forest and commune in many parts of the hinterland. As cities and towns are now much more than before integrated with and servicing the back country, some visits to organisations even in the bigger urban centres have been included. Most of my travels were made to communes, organisations and other units which were considered to be models for work at that particular stage of the Cultural Revolution. Each step forward, however, showed up new steps that had to be taken to consolidate the position gained, and to insure that the idea spread to other brigades, communes, counties and provinces. One model piece of work cannot stand by itself, can only be considered a pilot-undertaking if others follow on, as they have done in the case of the greatest model of all, Tachai of Shansi. The subsequent years of the Cultural Revolution ensured that conditions were created which made it possible for all units to become pilots for others and to catch up with and learn from the more advanced. The negative results which followed the enforcement of the revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi will be seen from my notes on such brigades as Tao-yuan in Funing county, and Hsihoiing near Tientsin, which will be described in the chapters on Hopei and on Peking and Tientsin, respectively.

Prior to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the Socialist Education Movement had uncovered much work that was poor in the countryside and had already generated a widespread desire to study Mao Tsetung Thought and to apply it in practice. Thus it had given some considerable basic political education to many people in the rural areas and raised understanding which with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution resulted in immediate progress. It has been the aim of these notes to show some of these developments in Chinese life and the influence of Mao Tsetung's writings on the thinking, habits and work of the people.

Though the gigantic struggle that the Cultural Revolution brought to the whole superstructure, especially in the great cities, is not gone into

in these pages, journeys reported on may help the reader to a better understanding of the common folk's will to keep on working creatively all through the immense changes of those years. Not only was production maintained with increased vigor, but also the peasants seized hold of politics in a new way, a way that has greatly affected the thinking of those who struggle for advance not only in China, but also in the rest of the world.

Subsequent events in the revolution decided whether or not the lessons taught by these models could become the accepted norm in the commune organisation. Of course the fundamental question has been and always will be, whether the correct line is being followed or not, and all results must be measured against this standard. Do they conform to the basic political demand that they serve the people (the workers, peasants and revolutionary soldiers)? This has been called the struggle between the two lines — the line of Mao Tsetung of serving the people and building socialism with your own strength and resources, building it greater, faster, better, and with less waste, and the other, the revisionist line of relying on outside help, serving the interests of only a minority and in short re-introducing, with "enlightened self-interest", a new bourgeois class.

Many chapters are based on articles which have already appeared in "Eastern Horizon" or "Ta Kung Pao" in Hongkong. Others are from unpublished material. The reader may tire a little of the stress laid on work in the rural areas. He may even be a little irritated by weights and measures being expressed in the common Chinese forms, the "jin" which is half a kilogram, or about 1.1 pounds, and the "mou" which is one sixth of an acre, or one fifteenth of a hectare. These, however, are the measures in which the Chinese people think and which they feel are best to describe work on intensively cultivated land. As for the emphasis on commune work, it will be realised that of the over 800 million Chinese people around 80 percent work on the land and that therefore its productivity and man's organisation for its proper use are fundamental to China's progress today and basic to the success of her revolution, which has so great a meaning to the working people of the whole world.

REWI ALLEY

TRAVELS IN CHINA

1966 - 71

Rewi Alley, of New Zealand, has been devoting much of the fifth decade of his life in China to revisiting the Chinese countryside and cities with which he is so familiar, and recording what he sees with pen and camera.

New World Press has brought out a series of his travel books. These include **China's Hinterland in the Leap Forward** (1961), **Land and Folk in Kiangsi** (1962), **Amongst Hills and Streams of Hunan** (1963) and **In the Spirit of Hunghu — A Story of Hupeh Today** (1966).

Travels in China is the latest of the author's books. Rewi Alley describes his travels during the first years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. His journeys took him to the provinces of Hunan, Hopei, Shantung, Kiangsi, Kwangtung, Heilungkiang, Chekiang, Kiangsu and Shansi, and the cities of Shanghai, Peking and Tientsin.

Among the spokesmen who told him their stories were Red Guards on long marches, men