

New Zealand and China

Rewi Alley

I had come back to my homeland of New Zealand from China in 1960, then again in the New Zealand summer of 1964-5. This time I arrived at the end of October 1971 and stayed until March 1972.

I found the people more comfortable, outwardly more prosperous, but there was a widespread inner disquiet caused by the rising prices, the falling dollar and the lack of certainty as to the way ahead.

Meetings to which I was invited to speak on China were better attended than they had been on past visits. More people really wanted to know about China, especially about the struggle for a transformation of thinking that has been going on there. Questions after each meeting showed much intelligent interest even though the perennials—'What about Tibet?' and 'What about China and Pakistan?' — did come up each time.

The Word 'Imperialism'

People, I found, still stick at the word 'imperialism' in any application to New Zealand, although New Year Honours were still being conferred in the name of the defunct 'British Empire' — long supposed to be a member of the Commonwealth and now on the point of being absorbed into the E.E.C.

How could we be imperialists, folks ask? Have you not heard of the many de-

monstrations against the US aggression in Indochina? Against racism in South Africa? Against New Zealand's participation in the Indochina War as a vassal of the US?

True, there is a growing section of New Zealand opinion that is increasingly progressive in its political thinking. Yet the Government of New Zealand, while withdrawing its troops from Vietnam, still trains Vietnamese puppet specialists in its universities who will go into the US-paid-for warlord army when they return. It also trains Cambodian officers in South Vietnam to strengthen the US puppet Lon Nol. Granted that in all of this they do as Australia does, the Australia that also follows the US baton. Australia, that with New Zealand form neo-colonialist-controlled bastions of Western imperialism in the South Pacific, is now menaced by the rebirth of the old Japanese imperialism which so rapidly and ably sets out to supplant American and British ones there. One-third of Australia's total exports now go to Japan and the figure is increasing. There are Japanese loans to Australia. Both Australia and New Zealand then become or start to become economic colonies of the revived imperialism of Japan, and the pace of Japanese economic infiltration in every possible field accelerates. In consequence there is widespread fear amongst the thinking people of both New Zealand and Australia that

their ruling class, which continues to promise them ever-increasing prosperity, will betray them in its own interests—in the hope that any new imperialism will use them as its own men, as the previous ones have done.

The old imperialists do not slacken their hold, however. New Zealand, unlike China, still has no national shipping line of its own. It is dependent on foreign shipping monopoly which raises freight charges as it wishes, and then blames the necessity for such on to the seamen's demand for adequate wages. There has been talk of New Zealand going into partnership with Taiwan-based ship-building firms, evidently without much thought being given to all that this entails. To seek such an agreement with China, however, would still be almost unthinkable.

A standing insult to the neighbours of Australia and New Zealand is the local racist policy in immigration, which gives Japanese imperialism a good excuse for its expansionist stance. Even today a New Zealander of Chinese descent is refused the right to enter Australia as easily as other New Zealanders, a situation which is acquiesced to by the New Zealand Government. In the field of labour workers are brought to New Zealand from the Pacific Islands for short terms to do rough work at lower wages than those which would have to be paid to New Zealanders. This provides a pattern which the swiftly penetrating Japanese imperialism will not be slow to follow as it gains more control in its new southward drive.

Neighbours

All this of course only if New Zealand still continues to snub its most powerful and potentially most friendly neighbour, the People's Republic of China, with its 800 million people. What does China want of New Zealand? It wants to see New Zealand a truly independent country, building up a more self-sufficient eco-

nomy, helping to raise standards in all Polynesia, free from racism and all the other evils of white chauvinism; a country really able to speak for itself and not as an adjunct to foreign imperialism. The fact that New Zealand sends troops to try to halt people's movements in South-east Asia loses vast credit for her amongst the Chinese people.

China herself has no troops outside her own borders. She has no desire nor need for foreign expansionism. At present she is engaged in a gigantic effort of construction, seen as much in the struggle to create a new man as in that to make material progress. Unlike the situation in New Zealand, additional comfort and the mad pursuit of individual happiness are not the mainsprings. 'Why do we live?' 'Who are our friends and who are our enemies?' 'Let us serve the people not only of our own land but also those of the hungry and exploited classes around the whole world.' 'Let us make for true working-class internationalism in the spirit of Norman Bethune.' All of these are common thoughts and motivations in China today. In New Zealand the general idea is that wealth is created by selling and buying. In China, in the struggle for self-sufficiency at all levels, the idea of putting theory into practice and the need to create anew is uppermost. In New Zealand, it is all prizes to the clever boy or girl, with the whole Western world open to them if they decide to go away and find more lucrative jobs. In China the people know they pay for all education and they want youth trained who will strengthen the groups from which they come and help to raise standards all round. Examinations today take a much lower position than they did. The future of the clever youngster is to use his cleverness to serve the people better, not to make a profit from them.

When I was in New Zealand, the Mayor of Tauranga said: 'What country would allow a person like Rewi Alley to come back to spend his declining years,

and the first thing he does is rubbish New Zealand?' In my own thinking I do feel that New Zealand is a courageous country with a kindly and hardworking people of whose positive contributions I as a New Zealander feel proud. The only people in New Zealand I would 'rubbish' would be those whose insatiable greed overwhelms every better instinct they may possess, the potential traitors, the swift talkers and opportunists whose aims are entirely selfish and who have no regard at all for the well-being of the mass of the people.

We have much to learn from China and it is important that we come to realise this while there is still time to do so. In the new world, of which New Zealand can be so much a part, it will not be the greatest prizes to the most eager to grab them but instead the slogan of work together for the benefit of those who in a down-right practical way really get out to build a new age. In this, the experience of the Chinese Revolution, which continues from one stage to the next, is of great value. Someone said to me during my travels in New Zealand that while farm communes were all right for China they would never do in New Zealand. But the big question is, what kind of New Zealand are we going to have in the future? To be self-sufficient and to be able to stand up against a thing like revived Japanese imperialism New Zealand would need a population of around fifteen million. How best to farm all the available land would be a matter for the New Zealand people to decide. If they continued with the unscientific system of private ownership of their major resources they would have to face increasing contradictions without any clear way of solving them. It will then be obvious that an adequate system of collective working together will have to be evolved; and at this stage a study of the Chinese rural commune will be of considerable value.

New Zealanders and Chinese

Surely, New Zealanders enjoy a high standard of comfort. The New Zealander consumes 24 gallons of beer a year not counting his intake of other stronger alcoholic beverages. He also drinks 25 gallons of milk, eats 40 lb of apples and 25 dozen eggs a year. The New Zealanders have the highest figure of livestock per person, including around 60,000,000 sheep. They also have high rates in coronary and mental disease while the habit of drug addiction borrowed from the US has risen amongst some groups of young people. Young folk have enormous energy—both Maori and *pakeha* (the European majority)—much of which is put into sport. Youngsters in high schools are often politically in advance of their elders, a much greater degree of understanding being evident than would have been the case in my own school-boy days. Anarchistic thought based on individual freedoms to gratify every passing whim, as well as ultra-left groupings, are common amongst university students. Again, there has been a very radical change amongst all of these during the past decade. More do try and think politically, though a common aim in line with New Zealand's basic needs is still lacking. There is a new and healthy simplicity in students' dress. The summer is bright with barefooted youngsters in shorts, and well-bronzed skins.

In China there is not the long string of owner-driven cars burning up imported fuels we see in New Zealand. Consequently, and also because there is strict prohibition of alcohol to drivers, road accidents are fewer. Public transport there is highly developed and for short distances the bicycle is used. 'Quite primitive,' the Western businessman would probably say. Yet the meaning of life does not necessarily come clear through the medium of the latest in imported passenger cars; nor does the kind of self-sufficiency that makes for real national in-

dependence. China is not plagued with 'bikies' on their Hondas, Suzukis or other Japanese-made motor bicycles, in gangs who frequently during my short stay in New Zealand would descend on a place and 'rubbish' it, leaving broken window panes and beer bottles in their wake—but broken beer bottles, thrown out of speeding cars, are quite a feature of New Zealand roadsides. Pollution by industry is common in all industrialising countries. The difference between New Zealand and China is that there is not only a strong awareness of the problem but also much being done to meet it, as I have seen myself in the latter land.

China's re-occupation of her rightful seat in the UN she helped to found was hailed by most UN members, including Britain and Canada, as a positive, constructive step in bettering international relations. New Zealand and Australia voted against China, together with some backward ex-French colonies, some small Latin American dictatorships, South Africa, Lon Nol's puppet Cambodia, the dictatorships of Bolivia and Brazil, Lesotho and other unpopular African regimes; plus the two dominating imperialist countries who want Taiwan for their own, the USA and Japan, both of whom have their own plans for the control of the Pacific. It will be a very long time before this UN vote is forgotten in China. The smug satisfaction of those of the ruling class of New Zealand and Australia who have achieved such material comfort will have to change and give place to an awareness that it is indeed unwise to insult our greatest neighbour, which is not the USA nor Japan, but People's China. Of the 2,270 US military installations outside the USA, quite a few are maintained on the occupied Chinese province of Taiwan.

In New Zealand there are the so-called space-tracking stations operated by the US at Woodbourne at Blenheim and Mount John at Tekapo, against which there have been demonstrations by those who oppose

the inclusion of New Zealand in the US missile world network. (The American base at Christchurch through which US planes fly to their McMurdo Sound base in Antarctica will be referred to in following pages.)

For China the problem of the liberation of Taiwan is not in the long run a difficult one, despite the fact that the US has poured its billions into that country—that is about as big as the province of Canterbury—to try to make a show place out of it and to try to prostitute it.

Basic Understanding Lacking

For New Zealand to get out of the clutches of imperialist monopoly, entailing a complete change in its establishment, is a much harder thing to do. Youngsters are radical until they get families and jobs, when they are liable to relapse into comfortable bourgeois habits of thinking, with no cultural revolution appearing to shake them back into a progressive state of mind. Yet the gap between the haves and the have-nots does widen. The rich do get richer and now the poor begin to get poorer. New Zealand must come to terms with other lands of the Pacific if she is to progress and attain an independent status. Yet any really basic understanding of the one-quarter of the world that is China is lacking. This may be in part due to anti-Chinese agitation by the politicians of the pioneer days of New Zealand who sought to promote the idea that the Chinese were scarcely human. Much is also due to the general feeling that New Zealand is 'sitting pretty' and has no need to be concerned about its neighbours. There is little appreciation of Chinese history or culture and of late years red-baiting has provided an additional front on which to attack China's people and policy. The work of the New Zealand-China Society has been epic in trying to change some of these attitudes, and notable contributions have been made by visiting speakers like Han Suyin and

Felix Greene to better understanding. Delegations to China, young and old, have returned and made their contributions also, but there is still a very long way to go before there is mass understanding on any great scale. The pamphlet *New Zealand and China* which is an article by the now ex-Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Holyoake, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Wellington, shows how very little is known or understood about the actual state of affairs in the China of today. It states that China attacked India, thus starting the 1962 war, which is not true. It says that the Great Leap Forward failed disastrously, which it did not; in most of its aspects it was a huge success. It says, 'A system based on a denial of human nature is not likely to be realised on any large scale, and Mao's has already failed.' An obvious untruth. The section of the pamphlet dealing with Chinese policy in Asia is too confused, too US-slanted to be more than a tendentious rigmarole. In the discussion on Taiwan under the 'Nationalist Government' of Chiang Kai-shek, already referred to as being so corrupt that it could not maintain control of the mainland, the pamphlet eulogises the same government for having brought about (in Taiwan) 'one of the highest living standards and the most rapidly-growing economies in Asia.' The fact is that Taiwan, as said earlier, has been selected by US-Japanese interests to be made into a showplace for imperialism just as old Nanking City was selected to be made into a showplace by the Kuomintang when there. Billions have been pitched into it from the USA. Hordes of 'do-gooders' have added their contributions in men and money.

Amongst New Zealanders of Chinese descent there is now more willingness to consider themselves 'Kiwis' than in other days. More of them have entered the ranks of the professions and not a few have married outside the old Chinese community. They are now no longer only

market-gardeners or laundrymen, avocations they entered after the end of the gold-mining rush of the early pioneer days. They too have their place in that history and it will be remembered that the first dairy factory in the country, the beginnings of a major industry, was one started by Chinese in Taranaki. Studying in the universities now are many Malaysians of Chinese extraction, as well as not a few from Singapore, North Kalimantan and elsewhere. There are also some from Hongkong and Taiwan.

New Invaders

In industry there are some promising signs, showing what the New Zealand workers can do. Small machine and precision tools are now beginning to go into the export trade while more of New Zealand's own machine tooling is being made at home. But imports of Japanese cars and motor vehicles grow steadily. Industry is far behind that of any Chinese province of approximately comparable area. Even tiny Albania in rugged Western Europe, a country about the size of Nelson—one of the smaller provinces in New Zealand—has a state shipping line of twenty-one ships, plying around the world. As said earlier, all of the shipping serving New Zealand's export trade is owned by firms in other countries. Now the squeeze of higher freight rates comes not only from British monopoly but also from Japanese. In January 1972 it was reported that New Zealand had to accept new Japanese freight rates though they were much higher than those of a competing Danish firm. Japanese contractors working on the extensions to the Auckland Harbour Bridge complained about the efficiency of New Zealand workers, obviously steering towards the time when Japanese workers could be brought in by their successors. Japanese land owners are already beginning to appear on the New Zealand scene and one hopes that they are not of the political complexion of those

Australia has recently invited into its Northern Territory. These, as shown in a recent television documentary seen in New Zealand, are fascist, John Birch types, who buy up land for a song, clear off the trees and convert it into cattle-raising country. One who was interviewed, a rancher millionaire, said he left the USA because the black people were becoming too 'uppity'. In Australia, he felt, he could still shoot down an Old Australian and get away with it. There are plenty of young people in both New Zealand and Australia who, if they were given a way, could develop the hinterland and who are not fascist white trash. Good, adventurous, intelligent youth, properly organised, could do better than any scabby bunch of thieving Texan money hogs.

Nevertheless, New Zealand is still in a position to be able to select her immigrants. How long that will last will depend upon developments in the Pacific, the New Zealand-Japanese market, and so on. As a country of around fifteen million she should be—when she goes socialist, as indeed she must—better able to achieve economic independence than she is with three million at present. She does not need land-grabbing capitalists, foreign investors, but under a new economic system would need good hard-working immigrants who will make the most of the land and its resources. At present the New Zealand-Chinese community is around ten thousand people only. In the interests of a sounder economy it could well be enlarged. The wealth of a land is in its people and their ability to produce creatively. It does not come from reckless selling of its birthright, cash down.

In China of Kuomintang days foreign interests said there was no oil. It all had to come from US oil companies. Nevertheless they managed to take over 55 per cent of the shares of the China Petroleum Company, just in case. Today the people of China have taken charge. Plenty of oil is found for ample self-sufficiency. No

profits go to foreign investors, and the ability of the Chinese people to be successful, all-round oil men has been highly developed.

'Scientific Base'

South of New Zealand, usually reached from the US base on the International Airport area of Christchurch, New Zealand, is the US base at McMurdo Sound, supposed to be one for scientific purposes only. In the past few years however a regular stream of generals, admirals and so on of the US establishment have been making their way there. There have also been US biological experts and many missile ones including the Nazi scientists Dr Wernher von Braun and E. Stuhlinger, the perfectors of the VI and VII missiles that shattered so much of London in World War II. South African apartheid advocates with their New Zealand supporters have made visits to the base, as has also the US fascist leader Goldwater. In the demonstration against Goldwater, who appeared on television the same evening with his 'Bomb the irrigation dykes of North Vietnam,' 'Bomb Hanoi' cries which followed his infamous one 'Bomb Vietnam back into the Stone Age', protestors were out in force and the police made arrests. By and large sympathy was with the protestors, not the infamous Goldwater.

How many fully realise the implications of these trips to McMurdo is not known but thoughtful people in New Zealand are beginning to wake up a bit these days, and the old order is not having all its own way. New Zealand is important to those who would rule the world by force but what they do with that force is painfully clear to an increasing number of young New Zealanders who watch the Vietnam picture with horror.

In China the idea of going back into the hills collectively and working on afforestation or on some big irrigation project would appeal to enough youth to en-

sure that there would be no problem about getting the task done. But the years of affluence in New Zealand and the standards of comfort that have been set would preclude pioneering in the way it was done half a century ago. In the hinterland now one sees much hill land that was cleared in former times returning to gorse, scrub and fern. The back valley where I worked for six years in the twenties is now deserted, rich though the country is. The average young man on marriage expects to be able to arrange for a house, wall to wall carpets, television, and all the rest, all on hire-purchase plan, along with some kind of car, and to live not too far away from city life. Truly, individual effort even if situated in scenic loveliness gets to be very lonely; and communal effort, except in a Maori Pa, has not yet been tried.

On New Zealand city streets and at holiday spots in summertime, one sees beautifully limbed and well-dressed children, though a fair number of the smaller ones are too fat. In contrast with China, one does not see youngsters doing anything but play—usually with little sense of being part of the life of the community. No marching off to the countryside to plant trees, harvest, or whatever the call may have been for. In the average home children in New Zealand look at television a good deal. A typical programme might show US 'Wild West' movies or perhaps a crime story with Detective 'Red Herring'; the 'baddies' secret communists allied to 'Albanians and Chinks' and the 'goodies' the detectives and security men. The effect of this kind of viewing on children of all ages is well illustrated in the following story, told to me by a New Zealand mother. A New Zealand family had lost a grandmother. Her daughter had to break the news to the three-year-old grandchild, whose immediate question was, 'Who shot her?' There are on the other hand not a few quite thoughtful and provocative TV programmes. Youth therefore is presented with a very mixed

brew, though in the main it is the successful individual who is starred, and the so-called superior role of Western capitalism in the world today. The news media are quite frankly partisan in this and brainwashes quite successfully, it must be said. The present appearance of and rise in unemployment however does make a great number of people do some re-thinking.

In New Zealand the rate of increase amongst Maoris and Polynesian islanders is very much greater than that of the *pakeha* or white-skinned people. There is also an increasing tendency to intermarry, however, so that now a great many *pakeha* people have Maori relatives. But there is still some considerable way to go before the old ideas of white superiority are universally discarded as the 'white trash' they are.

Foreign Aid

With regard to Women's Liberation, though New Zealand was the first nation to gain women's suffrage, their struggle to obtain 'equal pay for equal work' (equal with men) has still only been partially successful. There are still spheres where there is considerable inequality and the battle in New Zealand to deal with this problem goes on. Actually there cannot be any real Women's Liberation under the old society and many women are realising that.

New Zealand is still Europe-oriented. English feudal forms are still popular. As in the old neo-colonialist China, the word 'imported' on consumer goods has the connotation of being superior to those made at home. In New Zealand people are brainwashed to feel that it really cannot be done so well in their own land, that for them prosperity is a matter of simply selling their resources. In China self-sufficiency at all levels is encouraged in every way possible. People are proud of China-made goods.

In aid to other countries New Zealand provides education for Southeast Asian

students at her universities and sends lecturers to universities like those in Thailand where upper-class students are given a stereotyped copy of Western academic training but with no practical application. New Zealand also helps to build strategic roads in North Thailand to help the Bangkok Government to suppress the Thai Liberation Army and to keep the country safe for US and Japanese investment. New Zealand sends troops to assist the Malayan establishment to maintain its hold. It trains officers for the US puppet Lon Nol regime of Cambodia.

China too carries out a programme of foreign aid. She is putting in a railway for Tanzania and Zambia, a harbour in Mauritania, factories and hospitals in other African and Asian countries, always doing her best to get people to help themselves. Though she has a highly developed textile industry herself, which exports around the world, she has given several countries textile plants so that they can make their own textiles and be independent.

In China the political structure is based on the small working group, in which people all know each other, and can well select their representatives to higher levels. In New Zealand there is the old parliamentary structure, with politicians entering the race as a business, part of the acquisitive society. In a recent straw poll of many of the newly enfranchised electors of the 20-21 group in New Zealand, sixty per cent said they did not intend to exercise their voting power as neither of the two parties seeking to govern the country had enough in the way of constructive planning for them. Yet again, few of the youth would join together to spend time in a real political study group, or subject themselves to any loss of what they would call their individual freedom in order to play their own part constructively as political beings. Fewer still would realise a fact that most Chinese would acknowledge that in actuality to have 'no politics' is the worst kind of politics. Fewer again

would acknowledge, as the average Chinese does, that politics must lead in everything; that the correct theory gives spirit, and spirit changes to matter.

There is however a very sturdy desire to demolish old tabus that are part of an unscientific order. In the manner of old Chinese monks who withdrew from society and established themselves in some pleasant secluded spot, there are those who set up communes so as to be free from all that might contaminate them. Others join with hippy or other protest groups as their form of rejection of the old order. None has seen the bitterness, denial and death that came to the Chinese people as that old order declined. They cheer themselves with the thought, 'It can never happen here.' Which is not so. It can.

So Different

There are some relatively small things that strike one as being so different, when one returns from China: the youngsters playing cowboys in Wild-West hats and big pistols in holsters, out to shoot down the Injun in approved TV style; the bananas in fruit shops from Ecuador, grape-fruit from Jamaica, oranges from California, when farmers are leaving their rich fruit-growing lands in near-by Polynesia and coming to New Zealand in search of work. In China the doctrine of self-sufficiency is taken very seriously, and that of racism even more so. New Zealand compromises herself officially by sending off athletic and sports teams to apartheid South Africa with police protection against protestors. At the same time she blithely expects to have the multi-racial Commonwealth Games in Christchurch in 1974, in the face of growing international indignation at racism of any kind. Have her cake and eat it too. So much is she cut off from the realities of the international situation. China is a socialist State and profit does not come first. New Zealand

is a traders' world and immediate profit is the first consideration. It is very hard for people to think in other terms, especially as they have become used to considerable affluence, which they somehow feel is due to their own superiority over less-favoured peoples. This piece of mysticism is not the prevailing thought trend in China.

Since I was last in New Zealand, there has been a great spate of building new universities. Big complexes with modern facilities. In China, following the Cultural Revolution, there has been a move away from the super-campus and one towards relating university life to the problems that have to be faced in the world outside. In consequence there would not be a magnificent School of Forestry at the University of Canterbury as there is today. It would perhaps be somewhere along the railway line on the Westland side of Arthur's Pass, teaching how to make use of the gorse-covered slopes there to plant timber that could be harvested almost like wheat, as is done with that magnificent tree the China Pine in Hunan and Kiangsi. China has found that the product of the great university does not always look kindly at getting down to essentials in the tough hinterland. The struggle in New Zealand is to get through

the University course and with a good enough graduation paper to gain a job. For students to go out and actually plant and rear trees, gaining as much practical knowledge as they did theoretical, there would be little enthusiasm with things as they are in New Zealand education today.

In China, as Chairman Mao has so clearly pointed out, class struggle continues after the first successes of the revolution. In New Zealand class struggle of course goes on strongly in its various forms, whether it is the Prime Minister denouncing seamen or the people denouncing butcher Suharto on his government-invited visit to New Zealand last February, when shouts of 'Up with the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party)' rang out again—the first time he could have heard such since his take-over of the Indonesia which is New Zealand's closest Asian neighbour.

New Zealand today is at the crossroads. Much depends on the next steps taken. Youth is in revolt. Massive contradictions rise up, which the old order gives no solution to. Many folk look to China and marvel at a land with no inflation, no price rises, no interior or external loans, and a growing economy. Look, and wonder with the looking.

Sewage Water Irrigates Land

A new industrial city in North China has succeeded in using industrial waste water and other filthy water in the city to irrigate farmland. As a result of more than ten years of experiment in treating and using the sewage water, the city is effectively bringing pollution under control and making industrial waste serve agricultural production.

The capital of Hopei Province, Shihchiachuang, daily discharges large quantities of sewage as industry and the urban population grow.

The city now has five waste water disposal centres and a pumping station and irrigation ditches totalling more than 100 kilometres in length have been dug. Practically all the 400,000 tons of sewage daily discharged by the city's factories and living quarters is concentrated, treated and drained off to irrigate 12,930 hectares of cropland.

The amount of fertiliser contained in each ton of treated sewage is equivalent to 383 grammes of ammonium sulphate. Land irrigated with treated waste water yields 1.125 to 1.5 tons more grain per hectare than that irrigated with fresh water when other factors remain unchanged.

Hsinhua, Shihchiachuang, 8 April