

PERSONAL DATA

Age: 42

Sex: Male

Education: University graduate (chemical fibres)

Total Years Relevant Experience: 19

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1979 Year Left China: 1979

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: Shanghai native/parents in U.S.

Class Background/Political Designation: professional (zhiyuan)

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Technician, Chemical Fibres Plant, Shunde County,
Guangdong (under construction), 1961-64

2) Staff Technician, Canton Textile Research Institute,
1964-79

Administrative Level of Work Unit/(No. of employees):

1) unknown

2) Municipal/(160)

Experience in Full-time Manual Labor (for non-worker occupations):

May 7 Cadre School, 6 mos., 1969

APPOINTMENTS: 2

TOTAL HOURS: 3

PAGES TEXT: 4

Occupational History (3/6/80, 2 hrs.)

The informant is 42 years old, born and raised in Shanghai. His father was a wealthy Shanghai doctor before liberation. He entered university in 1957, a difficult year to enter university, because it was the first year that there were more students than places since liberation. So it was difficult for him to get into the universities he would have liked. He attended the East China Textile College (huadong fangzhi gongxue yuan), and graduated in 1961. He studied chemical fibres.

In 1961 he was assigned to the Shunde Chemical Fibres plant in Guangdong Province, under the Textile Ministry. This was to be a new, large plant, and was still being built. The local people didn't want it there because of the pollution, and they thought it would influence their crops of rice and sugar. It was still under construction, and there were not any buildings. He was given the job of teaching technical classes in preparation for the opening of the plant. The construction was on again, off again, since 1961-64 was a period of readjustment in the economy, and unprofitable plants were being closed. Also, the local County officials opposed the plant, so there were a number of changes of plans along the way. First the County ordered construction to stop as part of the 'readjustment', then the province ordered it to start again. Finally, in 1964 the Textile Ministry decided the project should be abandoned. Construction was stopped without any products ever being produced. All personnel were dispersed to other units.

During these 4 years I had a lot of spare time, did a lot of reading, sleeping, shopping. Then he was transferred in 1964 to the Canton Municipal Textile Research Institute, where he worked until April 1979. This institute was under the Canton Municipal Textile Bureau, and had about 160 employees. From 1964-69 he worked in the materials office (qingbao shi) or library of the institute. He did translations from Japanese into Chinese, and also some English to Chinese.

During 1969, he went to a rural May 7 Cadre School in the Canton suburbs for 6 months. Later he returned to the institute, became a researcher, and did chemical experiments in a laboratory.

Cadre Wages

When he first graduated, he was a practicing (jianxi) technician, got paid equivalent to grade 14, but was not an assistant technician, and was not called grade 14. After 1 year he was raised to regular technician, and wages set at grade 13. During that year, Guangdong was experimenting with the merging and collapsing of the technician and administrative cadre scales. But it didn't work and they returned to the national system. In his first year he made 52.5¥, and 62¥ his second year.

The grades for technical cadres went from 1-15. Grades 1-9 were called engineers. Grades 10-13 were called technicians, and 14 and 15 were assistant technicians. Grade 13 and above were where recent university graduates started. Grades 14 and 15 were where graduates of middle school level technical schools were assigned. Also the 2 year university-level technical school graduates became assistant technicians. But the people from the middle-school level technical schools could become either assistant technicians or skilled workers. The assistant technicians could gradually be promoted to above grade 13, however. The top grades 1-5 were called 'high level intellectuals' (gaoji zhishi fenzi).

I was stuck at grade 13 right up until 1978, when he was raised to grade 12 during the wage readjustment. People were selected during this wage readjustment in small groups, and they also had forms where they filled

in their length of service, time of their last raise, etc. They chose mostly on the basis of length of service without raise, but did hold back others because of bad work performance. There were no tests. Forty percent of the staff received raises, according to the regulations.

There was also a readjustment in 1963 for those who had graduated in 1958. They were raised one grade, and a very small number with good work were raised 2 grades. There were no other readjustments for cadres, although he heard of one for workers in 1972.

There was no bonus system at the institute, and no supplementary wages. But they did have wage supplements when they did work with poisonous chemicals. Although people were dissatisfied with this system, these intellectuals, as was common in China, were timid (danxiao), since they often had bad class designations (chushen). But this didn't much effect their work habits, they couldn't protest or do anything. They just kept working. Also compared with other people in society, their lot wasn't all that bad.

Personal Files (dang an)

The cadre department handled the files on employees. The department was under the institute's Political Department (zhengzhi bu). The political department had been set up by the bureau of the city. They kept the files in a special room, and each year they gave cadres a form to fill out on themselves and their families. They were to report their personal histories and those of their relatives. People were afraid to write incorrect information in these forms because that could be used against them later. So they would keep an extra copy of the previous year's form in their desk to make sure that next year they would make no mistakes.

Politics, Cultural Revolution

There were no 4 cleans work teams sent to his unit during this period, but the bureau did take a few people with good political behavior and good class background to participate in work teams sent out to rural areas. During the winter of 1966 I was away in Shanghai on business and decided to stay there, because before there had been a lot of pressure in the unit to study, listen to political speeches, criticisms, and he hated this. He would not even pretend to listen. So he stayed several months in Shanghai with his family.

During the next 3 years he was able to spend 2 years in Shanghai, coming back to Canton from time to time. During the same 3 years he continued to work, but not to much effect. He still made trips to different units around the country on business, but these other units were usually disrupted also, so he often returned to Canton with nothing to show for his efforts. He did not pay much attention to politics, so he really can't remember much about the CR. His unit leader once criticized him for not minding politics at all. He used to sleep during study meetings, and never read a political or economic article in the newspaper. He only read chemistry, and stories.

But during the CR in his unit, since his hand at writing was so good, he was often asked to write slogans and wallposters, which he did. Generally, he feels that this period was a complete waste of time. If this was his attitude, how did he escape criticism? He always wrote wallposters, sometimes late into the night (it was not matter, his wife had been assigned work in a different part of China anyway), so they were grateful to him among the activist organizations. Also, his work record was flawless, had never been in trouble politically before, even though he had no interest in political matters at all. He also had good friendly relations with everyone in the institute.

Who were the activists? Party members and workers. They had technical workers in the labs to carry out experiments according to design. They tended to be active. Basically, there were two groups. First there was a group close to the Party, people who were in good with the Party. These people tended to be conservative. Others were those who had been in trouble or who had been criticized before. They later became rebels. Then there was the 'free and unfettered' faction (xiaoyao pai), of which he was a member. These people were either uninterested in politics or were afraid to enter in because of bad class background. But gradually the size of this middle group diminished as people were pressured to join one faction or another. It was dangerous not to participate in a faction.

Institute Connections with Factories (3/7/80, 1 hr.)

The institute was led by the Municipal Textile Bureau, and by the Municipal Scientific and Technical Committee. When enterprises in the Bureau's system had problems to solve, it was the institute's responsibility to help them solve them. Sometimes they would dispatch an institute member to the plant, and sometimes the plant would send technicians or workers to the institute for experimentation using their facilities. Small experiments were done at the institute, and large ones at the plants.

Investigations--"Cleaning of the Class Ranks"

Around the fall of 1968, they began a 'cleaning of the class ranks' campaign. They established 'special investigation groups' (zhuan'an zu) to investigate cases of people whose cases couldn't be cracked by criticism sessions. These were the people who wouldn't bend and confess. They were also people whose backgrounds looked suspicious after thumbing through their personal files.

So they would establish these groups. Most of the members were party members or people with good class backgrounds or good politics. Only a few privileged ones within these special investigation groups could read the files. The groups were supposed to question other people about the accused person's behavior. At that time, several hotels were set aside especially for members of these groups who were travelling to different cities, people's home towns, to dig up information about people's pasts. Each unit and railway station set up a reception center (jieshao chu) organized to introduce these people to the right places, hotels. Hotels in a city were divided into three types of use. First, those for investigations workers. Second, those from enterprises' supply departments who are traveling around to conclude contracts for raw materials and other products. Third, there were those set aside for general business use--technicians like the informant who were visiting other units or research institutes, going to meetings or inspection visits. The best hotels were set aside for the investigators. This practice did not stop until the 1970s. In his own unit, none of those put under this kind of investigation were ever actually found to have done something wrong. The people accused just gradually returned to their former status.

After the cleaning of the class ranks campaign, a revolutionary committee was established, and one PLA representative from the bureau came a few times to check up on things, to try and prevent the regular beatings being given to those who were subject to current investigations, and to guide the establishment of the RC. The investigation subjects, about 7-8 people, were kept at night in a basement room in the bureau office building.

Revolutionary Committee

The original director of the institute was made the RC head. She was a Thai overseas Chinese, a Party member, who had gone to Yenan in 1938 to

help resist the Japanese. Later she did underground work in Peking in the December 9 movement. Her husband was the Chairman of the Municipal Scientific and Technical Commission. She had known Mao, Jiang Qing in Yanan but had always been afraid to answer questions about that period put to her by her friends.

There was one worker representative, a vice-head, who was also a Party member. He didn't have any real power so the researchers in later years would tease him, calling him 'head' (zhuren), because he had only the title and no power. Since he was only a worker, despite his Party membership his grade rank was not high enough to read certain documents, and attend certain kinds of Party meetings, so he was really left aside in the shuffle. Since the institute director had higher Party administrative status, she had all the power and could control all things behind the scenes since the worker representative was restricted by Party regulations in what he could know, and was cut off from important documents and meetings. Institute researchers all called him 'head' right up until 1979.

The cleaning of the class ranks campaign was a pretty tense time. Everybody was forced to stay at the institute, and no one could return home.

How was this worker selected for the RC? He wasn't a leader of either faction of rebels, nor was he even an activist. He was chosen more or less as a compromise. Very few faction leaders were Party members. Like the case of Wu Guixian from Xianyang, Shanxi, at the State Cotton Mill No. 1 (this is near Xian). She had been a labor model during the Cultural Revolution, and was a party member, but she did not participate in either faction during the cultural revolution. When the call for the great alliance came, factions fought even harder with one another and could not decide. So she became the compromise representative, because she was a woman, labor model, party member, etc. Later she was promoted all the way up to the Central Committee.

Only one person stood aside during the Cultural Revolution for any length of time--an institute vice-director, a grade four engineer (224¥ per month) who had worked in the personnel department as the department head in a factory owned by the family of Rong Yiren in Canton. Before liberation he had earlier gone to the US to study management also, and all the old laoban of Canton's factories knew him. He was finally restored to his posts only last year (1979), but had previously had his name restored in 1978.

Ganqing and Guanxi

People in enterprises and institutes had personal friendships and enmities that often got in the way of the implementation of policies. Party of this is called 'going through the back door'. Personal relations often formed into two groups, and after the Cultural Revolution these groups were not always related to politics. The problem seems to have been worse after the CR. They had this before, of course, but it was not so serious as far as he remembers. I can't really explain why, its very complex.

Part of the problem was the newly promoted cadres of the CR period. There were also resentments over past criticisms, and also a split between those with and without good technical training for the jobs they filled. There were additional resentments about very low wages of the younger people who had never received wage raises despite promotions. There were many reasons, and these personal relations in a unit are just too complex to explain clearly.