
PERSONAL DATA

Age: 42

Sex: Male

Education: College graduate (forestry)

Total Years Relevant Experience: 13

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1975

Year Left China: 1975

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: unknown

Class Background/Political Designation: unknown

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Peking Lumber Plant, 1963-75

a) Staff technician, Technical Department, 1963-65

b) Shop technician, Plywood Shop, 1965

c) Staff technician, Technical Department, 1966-68

d) Worker, furniture shop, 1968-69

e) Shop technician, furniture shop, 1969-75

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

1) Municipal/(2000)

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

shop worker, 1968-69

APPOINTMENTS: 3

TOTAL HOURS: 6.5

PAGES TEXT: 7

Occupational History (3/21/80, 2.5 hrs.)

The informant graduated from a forestry college in 1963, after a five-year course where he specialized in the machine processing of lumber. He was assigned to the Peking Lumber Factory, which was under the Peking Municipal Construction Materials Bureau. It had about 2000 employees, and its main products were plywood and furniture. He worked at this factory from 1963 to 1975, when he came to Hong Kong legally.

He worked at a number of different positions during his stay in the plant. Right after graduation he worked in the Technical Department, and worked there until the end of 1965. Then he was transferred to the Plywood Shop for one year, where he worked as a technician in the shop office. Then he returned to the technical department. In 1968 he was sent down to the shop to do manual labor in the shop where they made furniture. Around 1969 he was returned to the shop office, as a technician. He continued working in this shop office until 1975, but often he left the office temporarily to take part in temporary '3-in-1' groups (sanjiede) which worked on technical problems and product innovations.

The Department and Shop Offices

The technical department has 12-13 people working in it before the cultural revolution, and was divided into two groups--designing (sheji) and technology (gongyi). The designing group had a 'prototype group' (yangpin zu) attached to it which made sample products. It was manned by workers. The technical group had a laboratory under its leadership.

The informant worked in the technical group (gongyi zu). They made out the specifications for the processing of the products--how to run the machinery, at what settings, how long, at what speed, what kind of glue to use in plywood, specifications for the tools and machines used. This was completely office work.

The work of technicians in the shop office was quite different. These people were responsible for keeping the machinery in good repair and for handling diagrams for processing products. In this respect, shop technicians would take the drawings produced by the technical department and determine what parts would be produced, how, how many per piece of lumber, whether or not a knot would be permissible for that piece, etc. In essence they took the technical drawings from the department and deciphered them down into a production process. He was the only such person in his shop.

The shop he worked in was the 'parts shop' (peiliao chejian). In its office it had a shop director and vice-director, a branch party secretary, an accountant, and statistician. The accountant handled money, while the statistician handled production figures. So including the informant, there were six people in all. (The accountant and statistician jobs were combined into one during the CR). The shop managed 7 production groups, and about 100+ workers. There were no great changes in the structure at the shop office level during or after the CR. There was no transfer of department cadres to shop offices. They were sent directly to the shop floor.

The shop director handled the entire production process. He makes sure that production is going smoothly, he transfers and assigns workers to different groups. The vice-director helps him in whatever needs doing. The party branch secretary handled political meetings, campaigns, and study. Almost all shop directors are party members, as are many of the vice-director. Many of the vice-directors were line management before nationalization, but during the CR most of these were sent down for manual labor.

Wages and Bonuses

When he first started work in 1963 he was a practicing technician (jianxi), and turned into a regular technician after 1 year. The first year out of college he got about 53¥, and after one year raised to about 55¥, but he can't remember clearly. He forgets what grades he was assigned, and does not remember much about wage grades because he says they were not much in use during the period, especially after the CR began, and people didn't much talk about them. (Later he remembers that he was grade 13 after the jianxi period, and remained at this grade for his entire career). Up until 1975, there was no change in his basic wage.

There was a readjustment in wages in 1963, shortly before he entered the factory. There was also one in 1971. That year they set up year lines (1960 or 1961), and if you were still grade 2 after all these years, you were raised to grade 3. They also readjusted the wages of those who had moved from other factories since the last readjustment. So the changes were made and they were paid according to standard scales for wood machinery workers.

Before the CR, they had a bonus system. From plant profits each year they retained a fixed percentage for distribution as bonuses. The amount retained would be divided into 12 parts. Each quarter they formed a 'bonus assessment committee' (ping jiang weiyuan hui), which included leading cadres from shops, departments, the union, the plant office, to discuss and decide what percentage would be given out for each of the 3 grades:

1) 15¥, 2) 8¥, 3) 3¥. In most cases, grade 3 was the most common. Each production group would discuss each person's performance--work performance, political study performance, attendance. In the discussions each person gets a chance to speak about themselves. After everyone gets their time, then others would get a chance to criticize and comment on the other people. The third step is to nominate others for specific grades. The results are handed over to a 'bonus assessment group' (ping jiang xiaozu) which checks over the lists to make sure that the same quality of people are being nominated at the same grade in the different groups--they make sure there are parallel criteria in all groups. A very small number of workers got no bonus at all. These were the ones with serious work or attendance problems. They occasionally had arguments in bonus assessment meetings, but these were not too serious or common.

About 1967, they cancelled this system, after they split into 2 factions there was no way to assess fairly. They formally abolished the system in 1968. At that time they changed to 'supplementary wages' (fujia gongzi). Every person in the factory got a supplementary wage of 4.8¥, except the plant director and party secretary. This figure was not connected with profit, and did not fluctuate. His plant usually made a profit, this was its special characteristic. So he can't really tell whether these would be cancelled if the plant didn't make a profit. They kept using this system right up to the time he left in 1975. They had piece rates during 1960-61, before he started working there, and they used this method to figure the basic wage. There was no baogong system where you were given a fixed amount of time to finish a job. The baogong system was used in factories, but not usually in production work but in other types of work, like digging foundations, doing construction, etc. They would give someone a job, like digging out a hole, telling them how big it should be, how much time they should take to finish. If they finished early, they could leave early. The main advantage was to give workers an incentive to leave early

Temporary and Contract Labor

They had contract laborers from rural communes to do construction work, and ones from the city to do simple, non-skilled production work, when he first arrived in 1963. But by 1964 they never used them anymore. He does not know why. There were never many of them anyway. They had a contract which fixed their length of service, but he remembers little else.

Firings and Discipline

There were firings in his factory, during the cultural revolution. They sent people away to do labor reform. One fellow's crime was to oppose Lin Biao. They also had one firing before the CR, before he came in 1962. He had sold plywood and kept the money. He was caught and put in jail. Generally speaking, if a worker's work or attendance is very bad, there is no punishment they can give him, and they can't lower his wages. They just 'give him education'. This convincing (shuofu) work is initially the job of the group leader. If this does not work then they turn the job over to his closest coworkers. They come up to him and talk, visit his home, etc. They try to find out what is wrong.

They had only one person in his plant who was demoted, during the 'four cleans movement. This was for having irregular sexual relations with women who worked in the headquarters above the factory. He was kicked out of the party, stripped of his position as vice plant director, and sent to do work in the shops as an ordinary worker. His wages were also reduced to worker level.

Rules and Regulations (3/26/80, 2 hrs.)

Quality inspection--the quality control department (jianyan ke) handled quality inspections before the CR. They had one administrative cadre, three inspection workers, and several workers in shops. One experienced worker in the shop office, and one worker in each small group was responsible for quality inspection. (There were ba dayuan or worker-managers, before the CR, and wu da yuan afterwards). These worker yuan were called 'inspectors' or jianyan yuan before the CR, and 'technical quality personnel' (jishu zhiliang yuan) afterwards.

Each small group person inspected work after each work process--for example, furniture parts. If there was a problem he reported it to the group leader. If there was a major problem, the group leader in turn may report to the inspection department to solve the problem. This worker-'inspector' uses his break time to do the inspecting--15 minute periods for snacks in the middle of each 4 hour period before and after lunch.

The inspection department's inspection workers would examine each finished piece of furniture before it entered the warehouse. They roamed through the shops inspecting finished products. The quality inspection person (zhiliang yuan) in the small group had the power to reject articles, and would use standards prepared by ministries. The lumber standards were fixed nationally, the plywood standards set by the forestry ministry, and furniture standards were set at city bureau.

After the CR, this system was not adhered to very strictly. The standards set above the plant level were not followed, each plant had their own, and many still hadn't established new ones. Also, they criticized old systems of rules and regulations. During the CR there was no quality control at all.

The inspection department (jianyan ke) was abolished during the CR, and its functions were given to the technical department, and this was not its main function. It was in the business of designing and setting technical standards, not in inspecting and enforcing these standards. The inspection

department still had not been restored when he left in 1975. The 3 inspection workers (jianyan gong) had been sent to the 3 shops involved in producing commodities, and were assigned to the shop offices.

His own technical department had 12-13 people in it before the CR, and during the CR they sent almost all of them to the shops for labor. Then many were sent back to shop office to continue designing work. Seven or so ended up back in the technical department. The rest did designing work in the shops, and were also given the responsibility for machinery maintenance. They did basically the same work as before, except in the shops.

Manual Labor for Office Personnel

Before the CR cadres participated in one half day of labor each week. During the CR everybody participated full time. After the CR everybody participated 1.5 days per week. Every cadre was given a small notebook, and had to have it signed by the group leaders to prove that they did do the labor. Afterwards the books were looked at by the personnel department (renshi ke). If they failed to do this, they would be asked for an excuse. If their excuse was not a good one, the issue might be brought up at a mass meeting, but usually they would not mention names. If the person didn't get any better about it, they might criticize him at the meeting. This is awfully embarrassing.

Union

Before the CR the union handled welfare, education, suggestions, physical recreation. The union structure was abolished for over 2 years during the CR. In 1969, after they established the revolutionary committee and re-established the Party Committee, they finally re-established the union. It did the same work as before, but there was no longer any cultural education (reading, writing, etc.)

Workers' Congresses (zhigong daibiao dahui) met once a year, mostly to discuss the coming year's plans. They had them before the CR, then abolished them, then restored them again in 1972.

Meetings

Before the CR they had 5 days of study in all--after the shift for one hour each time. One day was for cultural education--reading and writing for the workers. There was also math, some physics for those who were more advanced. Part of the shop participated, people separated into different classes according to their ability. One day of meetings was the production meeting in the small group. One day was for political study, reading newspapers mostly. The remaining two days were set by the above levels of leadership, and the content was set by the party leaders, depending on the current campaign--anti-corruption, etc. During the CR, virtually no organized meetings of the above sort took place, political or otherwise. After the CR they had six days of political study per week, and completely abolished the cultural and technical education meetings.

The Four Cleans Movement and the Cultural Revolution

There were no real four cleans activities, and there was not even a work team sent down from above. The other 2 wood products plants in Peking had activities, though. The upper levels knew the situation and decided where to send work teams, and they did not select his plant. The four cleans movement began in 1965 in the wood products system in Peking.

As the cultural revolution began, the relatively young workers, mostly party members without positions, and young cadres, first got together to write the first big character poster critical of the party secretary. There

were about 12 of these people in all . After this first poster, the next day all the workers started putting them up. There were two officials involved. The first party secretary was somewhat bureaucratic, and had officious airs. The vice-secretary was closer to the workers, and liked to talk with them. The different factions among the workers split over which of these two secretaries to support.

There eventually developed fighting within the plant between factions. They dragged out and criticized both these party secretaries. They stood aside and did manual labor like sweeping floors. The plant director himself was not criticized seriously, and he just went down to participate in manual labor. Also, all the department heads did manual labor for about 2 months in a row, and also the shop directors. At its worst, production was down 50-60%. This was at the beginning of 1967. By mid-1967, the shop directors and department heads returned from manual labor, and production improved. At the end of 1967 or early 1968, the army came and established a military control committee (jun guan hui).

Military Control Committee (3/31/80, 2 hrs.)

There were 30 members of the PLA in the plant. Simply speaking, their job was to propagate Mao Thought. But concretely their job was to get the two factions together. They propagandized against anarchism, and convinced people to grasp production. These PLA representatives had the power to decide political and production matters both. They decided how to form a great alliance. They ran the 'cleaning of the class ranks' campaign. They decided virtually all problems. The party committee by that time did not exist.

These 30 PLA soldiers established a military control committee, and had one chairman, and 2 vice-heads. The rest were just 'deputies' (daibiao). The number of members on this military control committee gradually diminished over time. They exercised power before the establishment of the revolutionary committee and the re-establishment of the party committee. They handled both production and politics. This was because the party committee and all the plant directors had stood aside. They no longer had a 'factory committee' (chang wei hui), made up of plant directors, department heads, and a few selected shop directors, as they did before the CR. (They were mostly party members on this committee anyway).

Revolutionary Committee

A 'great alliance' (da lianhe) was formed by the PLA through meetings held with faction leaders and persuasion. These were really a series of preparatory meetings for the revolutionary committee. A name list of candidates was developed by the PLA control committee, in consultation with the 2 factions. The list contained equal representation of the factions and other leaders. They sent a name list of 25 or so down for discussion in the shops, and reduced the list to 17 names. Then 15 of these names on the final list were elected by a show of hands in meetings within small groups throughout the plant.

Members of the revolutionary committee. There were 3 members from each faction, 3 PLA deputies, a former party secretary, a former plant director, a former vice-plant director, and 3 more people, but he can't remember. The head of the RC was the head of the Military control committee. The vice-head of the RC was the vice-head of the military control committee. This was around 1968. There was still no party committee, and still no organizational life within the party.

About a half year after the RC was established, they began the re-establishment of the Party Committee, and revived its organizational life. This was

1969. The revolutionary committee established a small group, all party members, to restructure the party. This was called the 'party organization preparatory group' (dang zuzhi choubai xiaozu). Non-party members did not participate in this process.

The chairman of the party committee, the party secretary, was also the head of the Military Control committee, and the head of the revolutionary committee at the same time. The military control committee had by this time been abolished in name, but its leading members were still in control in the plant. After re-establishing the Party Committee, they began restructuring the lower levels of the party organization--the party branches, etc.. This was the period of open door rectification where the masses could raise opinions on individual party members. At this point, criticisms still had some effect, especially since the PLA units from the outside, not the party committee, was in control. After Lin Biao died, the PLA representatives left, and the former Plant Party secretary became head of both the revolutionary committee and party committee.

Departmental Structure after the Cultural Revolution

Around the time of the establishment of the RC, they carried out the simplification of administrative structures (qingjian jigou). The labor, inspection (jianyan), and equipment departments were abolished, and the personnel and security department (renshi baowei ke) was reduced to 2 people, where it had 5 before. The rest went to manual labor in the shops. Soon after the RC was established, the personnel department was restored, and by 1973 the equipment department was re-established. The others were not re-established by the time he left in 1975. All extra personnel were sent to do manual labor. They gradually returned to the departments as they were needed. By 1974, however, all had been returned to office work. After that, they had a rotating method of participation in manual labor.

Also, 3 cadres were selected each year to go to an agricultural village for labor. The unit had no May 7 cadre school. These were mostly for educational and administrative units. Also 2 cadres, and 3 technicians were assigned to suburban communes on a rotating basis to help them to establish and develop commune industry.

When there were many cadres 'sent down' for manual labor, a few young people were promoted to be cadres working in the shops, but none were promoted to the departments. No, he repeats, none were promoted to the departments, because this was for people with technical skills. Also, 1974-75, they had some young party cadres promoted to vice-leadership position in the party committee, and some were appointed to be shop directors. The work method of the departments changed after the CR. Before cadres made decisions based only on their own considerations. Afterwards there were more discussion meetings to get opinions. The department heads did not change after the CR. They also had another change after the CR. Workers and staff members did not work as hard as before. This was the result of anarchism and egalitarianism.

Before the CR, if you worked hard, you could get ahead. But after the CR, no. Also, there were no libraries and technical materials for them to work with. This was a universal and serious problem, and I says it was typical of all factories. There were simply no clear goals, no clear criteria for performance, and no real link of performance and promotion. So how were people promoted? On the basis of politics, enthusiasm in work, but not on technical level. Good political performance (biaoxian) means that a person is patriotic, active during political movements, criticism meetings. Were these people expressing their true feelings? (I asks this

himself, rhetorically). Not necessarily (bu yiding). He exhibits skepticism over whether or not these people were just trying to climb upward (xiang shang pa).

Basically speaking, there were no remaining factional ties after 1972 which could be traced to the CR. Thereafter leaders would have people they favored, who they had good friendships and feelings with. They would pull them along (la long), and pull them up around them. Many of the promotions during the 1970s were of young workers who entered the plant after 1970, so they were not influenced by CR factionalism. These were the kind of people raised to vice-shop director.

Technical Education

Before the CR, they had some technical study classes, but most of part-time study was cultural education--reading and writing. They also had 'technical skill exchanges' (jishi jiaoliu), which were meetings every Sunday for workers who were presented with a technical problem and questioned on how to solve it. It was run by the scientific and technical education committee of the Peking Municipal Government.

After the CR, they abolished regular cultural and technical study. It was all politics. But around the time he left in 1975 they were preparing to establish a July 21 workers' college where young workers were selected to attend classes half-time during the day. But the technical level of these classes was quite low. Factory technicians were the teachers.

"Three-in-one" Technical Innovation Groups

After the CR, I participated in these regularly. They had them before the CR, but did not call them '3-in-1'. The big change was that they added workers to the post-CR groups. These were temporary groups. They were made up of leading cadres (department or shop), technicians, and technical workers. A group was established when a problem appeared, and the shop director or department head would suggest the establishment of a group to the revolutionary committee, which discusses the matter and decides whether or not to establish a group. Depending on the scope of the problem and the administrative boundary of the group, a shop director, department head, or vice-plant director will select members of the group. The group at first discusses the problem, and raises suggestions.

After the group comes up with provisional answers, they check with the workers concerned before implementing the solution. These meetings take place during work hours, usually about 1-2 hours long. There were many meetings for a given group. Each meeting only pulls selected people away for attendance. The length of the group's existence is determined by the difficulty and complexity of the problem. They vary from 2-3 months to 1 year and longer. Who takes the place of workers when they leave their posts to attend these meetings? These attending workers are usually technical repair workers (weixiu gong), and they didn't have any fixed production post, so this usually was not a problem. The size of the group depends on the problem. It ranges from under 5 to into the teens.

Production problems in the plant: Quality went down a bit after the CR, mainly because the QC system was not adhered to strictly. But it is hard to say about output, because this was figured as gross output value. So it's hard to compare, because the composition of output in terms of value per unit of input might have changed. He does not know about these figures, given his job.