

PERSONAL DATA

Age: 39

Sex: Male

Education: technical school graduate

Total Years Relevant Experience: 16

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1978

Year Left China: 1978

Initial Immigration Status: Illegal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: Canton native/OS ties unknown

Class Background/Political Designation: unknown

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Worker, Coal Company, Guangdong, 1963-65

2) Worker, Machinery Repair Collective, Canton, 1965-78

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

1) unknown

2) Municipal district, collective/(10-120, grew over years)

APPOINTMENTS: 1

TOTAL HOURS: 2.5

PAGES TEXT: 3

Occupational History (5/10/80, 2.5 hrs.)

The informant studied mathematics at a Canton technical middle school, and graduated in 1963 at the age of 22. He was assigned to work at a coal bureau in an out-of-the-way area of Guangdong, but after two years he tired of this and felt he was too far away from home. So he left his job of his own accord, but was not given a second job assignment--this was the regular practice. In 1965, a friend of his who had good relations with a party branch secretary at a factory used his ganging to get him work.

This was a plant which repaired machinery of various sorts--air compressors, winches, drill presses, lathes. It was called a 'comprehensive repair plant' (zonghe xiuli chang). The plant was a small collective under the administration of the district (qu), and was under the municipal industrial bureau. When he first came to the plant it had only about 10 people in all. He worked at this plant until he left in 1978, when he came to Hong Kong illegally.

The plant developed over the years, and by the time he left it had a staff of over 120, but was still a collective. As it grew in size, its tasks changed. First it switched to repairing only larger machines, and later it was installing cabs onto trucks for hauling goods, the chassis already having been assembled at another plant. Afterwards, it was sent to another plant for finishing.

The other plant was state-owned. This was actually "half state-owned" by the time he left, because after they started production they didn't have to go out and buy their own materials and spare parts, or market the goods. They had fixed relations and contracts with state plants. All their materials were supplied by the state. About half of their equipment was also supplied by the state, and they had fixed quotas of finished jobs to give to the next factory in the production process.

He was a worker, but after one year in the plant he started working in a 'technical innovation group' (jishu gexin zu). This group solved repair and overhaul problems with the machinery and equipment, and made designs and preparations for the production of new products. They finally ended repair operations in 1966-67 or so, and went into truck assembly a few years after. The product was always changing, the proportion of work in certain products changing, and the plant was in a continual state of flux as it grew.

So he did the work of a technician, including drawing diagrams, repairing things and making prototypes for new products. But he was not a technician in title or grade. The work was very flexible, and always changing.

Wages

When he first came to the plant, they used a system where they divided people into points (fen) according to their technical ability and the type of work they did. They went from 5 fen to 10 fen. Then at the end of the month, they would take the total profit, divide by the total number of fen in the plant, to derive the worth of each fen, and then gave each person the amount given their rating.

In 1969, they switched to a fixed wage system. The transfer was made as follows: According to your point rating, they figures out what your average monthly wage was during the previous year, then that became your fixed monthly wage. If a new worker came, they first went to talk with the branch party secretary, to find out what experience and technical level he had, and fix his wage on that basis, and also taking into consideration your family situation and need. This was usually about 20+¥. There was an

experienced worker in the plant who got over 80¥. That was the highest of anybody. There were no fixed scales or grades. When he first started work, the informant got 30+¥. After they fixed the wages in 1969, he got 54¥, with no raises thereafter. His wages did not change for 10 years.

Bonuses

They had bonuses up until the CR, when they abolished and had none. Then they restored them again in 1977. The bonus system, when they had it, was run like this: there was a proportion of profit set aside each month and not distributed as basic wage. A work group with good performance would be given an amount of money to distribute in proportion to the person's wage level. A collective group bonus. They used the same method both before the CR and after 1977.

Employment

There were no contract or temporary workers in this plant. All workers were the same status. There was no unit which assigned workers to their plant. They just came looking for work, and used the introductions of friends. There was never anyone fired. They did, however, deduct wages for strikingly bad performances. This was up to the group leader's discretion.

Organization of the Plant

Near the end of his stay there, when the plant was producing trucks, the plant was organized as follows. At the top, they had a branch party secretary, and 3 members of a party branch committee. They had a director and vice-director of the plant. The plant director was also the party secretary. The vice-director was also a party member. There was no revolutionary committee. In the plant director's office, they had someone handling political work, welfare, 2 people.

There were 3 shops. One made the cowlings for the engine and the front fenders. The second shop made the cab. The third was the metal working shop, where they had bellows, small furnaces, lathes, etc. There was a shop director, vice-director, in each shop, but no other staff. The shops were divided into groups (banzu), which varied in size from 3-10+ people. These were led by group leaders. These were people that the leaders of the plant trusted--not necessarily because they had leadership or technical ability. They didn't always have these characteristics. They were not mostly party members either--this didn't matter that much. They were appointed by the top leaders. The job of the group leader was to arrange the day's work, give work assignments and transfer personnel where needed. There were no fixed person to help him. But there were people who voluntarily helped on an informal basis, based on whether or not they had good ganging with the group leader. They would be turned to for advice on work assignments, decisions about how to produce something, whether or not to overhaul a machine, etc. They had meetings of various sizes--in groups, shops, entire plant, depending on the need. They had several departments (gu)--production (3 people), technology (4 people), finance (2 people). Under the production department was his own technical reform group. It was under production department leadership. His group had seven people in it.

Cultural Revolution

When the CR began, the influence on production was not that great, but shortly thereafter no one really ran things, and production slowed down for a period of 1-2 years. The workers in his plant did not form organizations of their own, and there were no real activities within the plant. The leaders

were not criticized and were still in power after the CR. But some-- not many--participated in city-wide organizations and did not come to work for long periods. But there were a few changes in the leading group, since right after the CR a few new leaders were transferred in by the district. The only people who were criticized were those who went out to participate in other mass organizations. After they came back, at the end of the CR, they were criticized for struggling and violence. Also at the same time they criticized some people for mistakes they had committed in the past, like permitting people to go to HK, or stealing things, or doing business with the plant's goods.

After the CR, there was a period of serious problems with work activism. This was from the end of the CR to about 1977. Not until 1978 did things get better. This was during the period when they fixed wages. This was also in part because people wanted to go to other factories but could not get transferred. By 'daigong' (loafing), he means that people will drag out a job much longer than the time required to finish it, and would be 'sick' and go see a doctor, and would leave the plant early.

They had a PLA propaganda team there for a while to "propagate Mao thought", check and see if there was any corruption based on examination of plant accounts, get to know the workers, find out who made mistakes, criticize a selected group of workers who would be sent to the countryside. If they found someone had made a mistake, they would collect materials and hold a meeting. When the PLA first came, the leading group in the plant didn't have real power. The PLA held onto power when they were there. They were at the plant for about one year. Before the PLA team came the old leaders were not exercising power, were not doing leadership work, were just passive (beimian), because they feared criticism and removal. The job of the PLA was to turn this situation around. There were four soldiers in this group in all. They also led political study meetings, where they would study documents, Mao's writings, and teach about class enemies.