

Background: (3/1/84, 1.5 hrs.)

The informant worked at the Petroleum Refinery of Changsha City, Province of Hunan. It employed around 500. It was originally under the jurisdiction of the provincial petroleum refining bureau, but in 1976 was put under the chemical industry bureau of the city of Changsha. He worked there for 6 years; 1971-77. The plant was established during the Great Leap Forward, many of the oldest workers were peasants who moved into the city during that era. Before the CR almost all workers were originally peasants, the workforce really had a peasant flavor. Even until today most of these older workers still live in individual dorms, and their families still are in the countryside. Later some of them could get their families into the city and put them in the factory in a separate "dependents dormitory". Most workers lived in factory housing. The workers--we called them "the old '58 workers" (lao wuba gong)--all had urban hukou, but not their families. After the CR this changed; the old workers began to retire with pensions, young workers from the city hired more often after this. These old '58 workers were all baoshou pai during the CR--they were all wuhao gongren--model workers. During the years I was there they hired about 100 new workers, all young and from the city, some of them of course were educated youth from the countryside. Of the latter group, most were sent-down children of the factory's employees (from the family dorms). This was an official policy on the part of the work unit, and it was encouraged by the government. They said the factory should solve workers' problems like this on their own.

I was an apprentice for 3 years, 18, 20, 22 ¥. During this period I spent a lot of time as a full-time basketball player on the factory's team. But he was assigned a master and so forth, even though he was often absent from work. After three years, he was a grade one worker, and after one more year, grade 2 at 35 yuan. Because he worked at hot and hazardous physical work, he got 4.5 ¥ of high temperature grain supplements, so he got 38.5¥ altogether, and this is what most everyone got, because they all got up to grade 2, and then couldn't get any higher. The workers called it the aiji xian (Egypt line--he draws a picture of a pyramid). You can't get any higher than this (the tip of the pyramid). When you're grade two, they say you've "reached the Egypt line". The older workers, many were grade 4 and 5, but very few were 6, 7, and almost no 8's.

There were other kinds of supplements for high temperature. In the summer they gave workers another 2 ¥, but more often they gave us sugar and ludou (mung beans). They came from the factory's cafeteria. Sometimes they gave them tickets for popsicles that they can exchange at ice cream parlors. This was just a fuli, like buying shoes and clothes for workers. It is a policy of a xitong, not the nation as a whole.

The factory had a small farm out in the suburbs about 10 kilometers away. During the CR they acquired it, they got the farm because Mao said everyone should learn gong, nong, bing. So workers and cadres had to engage in labor and learn how to shoot guns. This was like a May 7 cadre school but was not called that. The "bad elements" from the factory worked there--people with bad biao xian. They got the land from a commune in exchange for an arrangement whereby the factory would repair the machinery of the commune in their small enterprises. The peasants from that commune had the exclusive right to get all the shit out of the factory's

latrines. The factory gave them old machinery they no longer needed. They could lend their projector to the commune to show films for them. The factory sent its Chairman Mao arts troupe to them to perform at the spring festival. So the peasants helped the factory grow sweet potatoes, cabbage, pigs on the farm. It was a good deal for them, it was a permanent agreement.

What kind of people from the factory went there? Bad elements were the first kind; people who stole, were liumang, had bad thought. The factory security department decided this, it didn't go through the public security bureau. A second kind was "volunteer" labor; laodong duanlian, maybe once a month they would send 200 people out there in trucks for one day. Over the time he was there the workers went there less and less. Why did they do this? Not only to get food for the factory, although that was part of it, but real purpose was to reform you thoughts. But it was an advantage economically as well because the factory could get pork, which was very scarce then. All the food went to the dining hall. Other factories he knows of had orange groves and peach trees, some planted watermelons. At spring festival the dining hall had a banquet at spring festival; lots of meat, wine, vegetables, and products from our farm, and it was free. This was a good deal. But this was also a source of corruption. Leaders could get pork for themselves and workers wouldn't know. The head of the dining hall would cut a deal with the factory head to get promoted by giving away food for them. The food would disappear from the dining hall from time to time and when this happened sometimes a worker would put up a wallposter saying "where did our pork go"? Or sometimes instead of a spring festival banquet they would give us all some money instead of the banquet. This was a sign that all the food from the farm was going somewhere else. Another source of corruption was when the factory traded the goods it produced for other supplies for other supplies or for food. There is no way for the workers to really know what is going on among the cadres.

So I was a worker for the entire 6 years, actually three years apprentice. I was not a good element. I was not youth league, not a model worker, and didn't participate in militia training. I also had a bad background. All I wanted to do was study. The shop head had the power to send you to go to the farm for labor if he didn't like you. He sent me there twice--for about one week each time. Sometimes people were sent for a month (they could return home to sleep). The shop head didn't like me, he said I wasn't a socialist worker, but a bourgeois intellectual. He had me criticized in the group several times. They sent several doctors and engineers also. So if the shop head didn't like you, you were in trouble. This was arranged directly by the shop director, not the top factory leadership. The shop head was also the party branch secretary, an old 8th route army fighter.

So one day he said to me: "Lao Liang, please come see me after work." I went into his office, he said "sit down." "Smoke?" "No." "Tea?" "No." "Well, Liang, I'll tell you truthfully. The leaders have met and decided that you're thought isn't good, so you should go to the farm for a while." I said "OK, great!" What else could I say?

This cadre really didn't like me. He couldn't understand why I studied so much. He would say "Why do you have to study all the time? Aren't you a worker? You work with your hands, not your mind." He knew I was studying because I did it at work. Work was so lax nobody did much but their own things, repair clothes and so forth. But I read.

Political Organizations (3/7/84, 2 hrs.)

In 1971 when I got to the factory there was only a revolutionary committee, and it replaced both the factory director system and the union system. But it still had the people's militia and youth league. At that time the factory seemed like an army, based on a military system. The whole society was organized like the military then. Shops and groups were renamed with military names: a work group was a ban (squad), above that was the pai (platoon) [equivalent to the section], and above that was the workshop level, the lian (company). [In his usage, the gongduan and the chejian are the same level of organization, the intermediate level he is less clear about the name, but it sounds like the 'shift' that is sometimes between groups and shops in other continuous process factories].

The revolutionary committee (RC) had a head (zhuren), and several vice-directors. They were the leaders of the factory. The members (weiyuan) were the leaders of the shops; they all attended these meetings. The RC head was the party secretary, the vice heads are vice secretaries. A merging of the party and the administrative organization. In reality the Party led everything. The party meant the RC, the same. It was a mixture of party, administrative, and military organization.

At the shop level, there were lianzhang, they were the heads of the party general branches. There were several vice heads, and also two or three vice branch secretaries. And then there were several members of the shop committee, who were the paizhang. The pai is equal to the party branch, or you could also call it a dang xiao zu. The head of the pai is a head of the dang xiao zu.

The ban was the basic level of production. The head was always a party member. They are members of the party group at the pai level. The ban had usually between 5 and 12-15 members. We also called it the work group (zuoye zu). There were two party members in my own group of eleven.

There was a youth league. The secretary of the youth league committee of the factory was a vice party secretary of the factory. The heads of each level of the CYL organization (which paralleled the party organization all the way down) were vice heads at each level of the party organization. There were 3 CYL members in my group.

The functions of the political organizations: to carry out the party line, sometimes on the direct orders of the party organization in the chemical bureau, sometime from newspapers or Red Flag. They would say "grasp revolution, speed production". A second function was social control, and control of promotions and transfers. They controlled all promotions. They controlled all matters and transfers. Your salary, whether you are criticized, whether you get housing, whether your wife can get a job in the factory, whether your kid can come back from the countryside.

The youth league had 3 functions. Whenever there was a party meeting the CYL would have another meeting and read out the same reports and discuss them all over again.. Second, to recruit league members and train them to become party members. You have to pass through the youth league to become party members. Third, to gather volunteers for shock brigades (tuji dui) to get things done right away. For example, if there is a leak in the pipes somewhere or something is broken and needs fixing right away, the party will get the CYL to mobilize young people to volunteer and do it right away. For example, if they were digging some foundations or tunnels, workers will do it very slowly because they have no motivation, and they will complain about conditions. So they'll hold a meeting in the

shop, criticize the workers, and then tell the tuji dui, the shock brigade of activists, to do it, and they'll stay up all night and so it in less than half the time. They work like crazy. Then the party secretary will call another meeting and criticize the workers again, saying "you workers complain about conditions, you just have no revolutionary feeling, these young boys did your work for you overnight!" The workers got mad at these shock brigade members, we really hated these activists.

The militia's functions were to guard against class enemies and ready for war with the USSR. The militia went to people's houses to check on household registrations, especially if there were youths that had snuck back into the city from the countryside. They would report them and make them go back. They also keep an eye on the "bad elements" from past campaigns. If there is any political movement, the militia grabs these people and makes them come in for political study and criticism. At night they patrol the factory grounds.

There are two kinds of militia (minbing). Basic (jigan), everyone except bad elements and workers over 40 and older women workers. I was considered dangerous white expert roader. Also I was the only young worker who was not a member of the basic militia. So almost all young workers were members of the militia (only workers, not staff). These militia were really only militiamen in name. They were just called this, it was part of being a worker then, there was no real military training.

There was also the armed militia. They have guns, and these are the ones who do the three things listed above. These people are young activists, youth league members and party members. They are taught how to march, drill, and shoot. They were treated as soldiers by the local army headquarters. They run around marching, charge at dummies, and yell "Kill!"

Around 1973 they restored the union and took away the military names. But the system in reality did not change. I entered the factory in October 1971. The army officers had just left the RC. The workers didn't like the soldiers, I used to talk with them about it. They said they didn't know about how to run a factory or motivate workers; they just treated workers like soldiers, just knew how to run political study, and make us dig bunkers. Many said they just had sex with women in the factory, and sometimes married them.

Staff Offices

Under the RC (party committee) office, there were several ke, actually called zu when he first got there and later changed around 1973. There was the administration dept. (housing, work clothes, cafeteria, borrowing money, the farm and the pigs, labor insurance, clinic, travel subsidies), the production dept. (production tasks in each shop, scheduling, sales and supply, transport, technical drawings and designing--these were all divided into separate depts after they changed in the mid 1970s.), the personnel and security dept (renbao zu, which handled dossiers, investigations, transfers, contacts with the public security, labor reeducation, liumang, bad elements, and the militia. Later it split into separate personnel dept., security dept.). They also had a reading room with party publications and reference news. I knew all of these because the offices were in the bottom floor of my dorm building.

Factory Residences and the Resident's Committee (3/9/84, 2 hrs.)

Along Liuyang River Road there were a number of factories with factory housing across the street from them. There was a very big street committee headquarters that managed them. It was under the northern district of Changsha. Each separate neighborhood underneath it had residents' committees. Some were ordinary residents, some were directly attached to the factory. So our dorm district was under both the factory and the Liuyang River street committee. There were about 1000 people in our residents committee area; 14 buildings in all. Not all factory families lived there. Some had families still in the countryside and lived in the single person's dorm. Others lived in the city, and biked in every day. Only a third group had their families in the factory.

Leadership: the residents committee runs government policies, like family planning; they watch bad elements. The residents committee office was next to the police office. They also mobilized people to go to the countryside, and to see if youth had come back illegally. On holidays, the cadres of the committee would do safety work--make sure people didn't start fires with lanterns, etc. They also handled political study.

The factory distributed housing, it was responsible for repairing it, the plumbing, etc., and for digging tunnels.

Distribution of Housing

There were three methods. First, if both husband and wife work in the factory, they have the best chance. But they register and are put on a waiting list. They register at the housing office of the administration department. So there is a lot of back door, not always connected with biao-xian. They give gifts to cadres that administer this. Cigarettes--good ones. Sugar. Because the economic conditions were so bad then, they would use their coupons to buy for cadres. Kerosene, sesame oil, bicycles. All these things are scarce, and they were given to cadres in this office. Tickets for basketball games, Peking Opera. This is very open. They walk into the office and openly ask about their housing assignment. The cadre will say "Oh, there are so many people in line, what can I do?" So you say, "Hey, there's a basketball game coming up, want a ticket?" "Yeah, make it two!" Then you'll offer him sesame oil later on. Of course he never would say that he would give you housing for this, but after a while he would suddenly find an empty room and give you the keys, cross you off the list. You really had to do this to get a place. The waiting list really didn't mean much. I had a friend who was too honest and never gave anything to the cadres. We all laughed at him behind his back, called him stupid--3 years and still no housing! To get married you need housing from the unit as well.

A second way to get housing is if you are transferred from out of town they have to give you housing. Otherwise you can't live and work there. If the factory doesn't give you housing they have to pay your hotel fees. I was put in this way because I came from Shuangfeng county. They put me in a room like this one with two other guys.

The third method: also going through the back door, but not through the housing management office. You do something for the plant director or party secretary of the factory, and you get your housing faster. But this way is very dangerous. It is hard to do it this way. It's too clear what is going on and it makes people angry. The method is the same with the top leaders, mainly giving gifts. Workers get mad at this, they're always quarreling among themselves over housing distributions.

Biaoxian also had an effect on who got housing. Those with good biao-xian were high on the list, those who were bad elements were low. There are always many people living in the city and that have to commute long distances. They prefer to live in the factory. For example, in my group, 3 workers lived in the city and wanted to move to the factory, they all registered and got in line. One had very bad biao-xian, the other two very good. So the leader of the shop gives opinions to the housing office. You see, the application is made through the director of the shop. The group leader gives a verification that housing is really needed. The forms then are sent to the shop and shop officials help the worker fill them out and send them back. So this one worker with bad biao-xian applied, but the shop head didn't really want him to get housing. After the application is made, the shop leadership has a meeting to decide if the person really needs housing. They don't necessarily approve the application. They may strongly support it if they do like the person. But if you aren't approved this way you can still go through the back door. This one worker who was not approved by the leadership, and had bad biao-xian, really knew how to give gifts and use the back door. He got housing faster, and it really was good housing, right next door to an engineer, much better than the other two workers were given.

The back door also works for the hiring of jiashu gong. You can request at the shop for these as well, and if they support you they will hire your family member as a temporary worker at low pay. Shop heads have a meeting to decide who really needs a job for their wife or child. This is one way that informing (xiao baogao) pays off. The informers get preference in this system. The upper levels don't know you; the shop leaders relay information, advice, recommendations.

Dining Hall

Usually it's the single worker who eats here. Those who have a family may simply buy a dish and take it home to eat. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, they served all three. The single workers' hukou was in the factory, and managed by the security department. Rice rations, meat, oils, peanuts, beans and all rations were handled by the dining hall. For people with families, the residents committee of the factory gave out tickets for rationed items.

You did have to pay for this food. I made 35 yuan per month, and lived in the single dorm. I paid 3-4 yuan each month for rent and utilities. Each month I spent 15-20 yuan to buy rice and prepared dishes. I bought toothpaste, soap, and so forth from the factory store. The factory store was run by temporary workers. I got haircuts in the factory's barber shop as well. They hired temporary workers and hired professional barbers to train them, and then they got them to cut hair in the factory. It cost about 20 fen. All these extra expenses cost about 5 yuan. They also showed movies in the factory every Saturday and Sunday. This was done by the union, tickets were much cheaper than public theatres, about 10 fen or 20 fen per movie. It was in a large meeting hall. I smoked, so I spent another 8 yuan on cigarettes.

I would usually keep about 5 to 8 yuan as emergency money. If I didn't need it then I would save it. I joined an informal credit pool among the workers (dahui). There was no interest, they just held the money. Like a lottery pool. Each worker would contribute 5 yuan each month, but get the pot only one month a year. You'd get about 60 yuan all at once. This was like an informal credit association run

entirely by the workers. This helps you buy a bicycle, which costs at least 120 yuan, or go to visit your family.

Distribution of Benefits

What benefits do workers value the most? First, work shoes and clothes. Second, the high temperature fees--ice cream, tea, beans. Third, medical insurance. You get free care, and dependents pay only 70 percent of costs. Its very cheap, but quality is bad. Good system, bad quality. Lending money to workers is a fourth. If you have an emergency like a death in the family, you can ask to borrow money from shop leaders, who decide. Only workers with good biao-xian get this. The shop used the control of housing, jobs for dependents, and loans to control workers. For loans, you have to fill out form and have them approved by group leader, then the shop office has a meeting to decide. You can't just go and apply directly to the union office. The shop leaders control the applications.

If you get it, the leaders tell you how your problem is now solved, and that this shows how the party is concerned about you and is taking care of you. Then you have to express your thanks to the party for caring for you. Later if you goof off at work, the same leaders will try to make you feel guilty and remind you of how the party took care of you in the past. Then you say, "I'm sorry, I apologize to the party and will work harder in the future to show my gratefulness." I had bad biao-xian so I never felt I could request a loan, I would feel guilty if I did.

Now this is the formal way. There are also the informal ways. You can go through the backdoor and use personal relations as well. The shop director (one of them liked me because I played on the basketball team and gave him tickets) would arrange a loan for me if I asked and told me not to tell anyone else about it.

There are two ways to get things. First is outstanding biao-xian. But this is very hard. You always have to be correct, support the leaders, and volunteer. If you make just one mistake, even one, then all of your efforts are wasted. So going through the back door is easier, actually you should say guan-xi. Back door is just one part of guan-xi.

Guanxi

You do things for the leader. Help him do work after hours, help them clean their room, help him buy lunch from the dining hall. This is building up guanxi, but it is not really called going through the back door. This is more an arrangement where "I use you" and "you use me". Not the same as the back door described before. It is more complex, a special social relationship. The back door is different in that you have a specific goal and you have to use gifts to get your purpose accomplished. The back door is simple and more concrete. This is not the same as political relationships between activists and party leaders. Sure there are things activists and party leaders do for each other, and they help each other out, but they also have a leadership relation as well. The party controls the activists too, and this is not guanxi. Some party members learn how to use guanxi, but there are also Lei Feng types who don't do it and don't even know how to.

Ganqing and renqing are not used when talking about guanxi in the factory. These terms have to do with personal relations. We did use the term yiqi; this has to do with people who like to help one another

and emphasize their guanxi. But I never used the term ganqing around the factory. That's only for family and friends. But People's Daily does criticize people for "putting ganqing in place of policy"--there they mean private relationships. So ganqing is not really a feeling, but a relationship that is private, not things done according to policy. You just could not say ganqing in Hunanese--that's the feeling between husband and wife. Perhaps it's more natural to say this in Cantonese.

Activists (3/29/84, 1.5 hrs)

Before the CR the activists were called "labor models" by the government, but individual workers still called them activists. Activist standards changed by the period. Before the CR, you had to have good class background, had to be Party or CYL members, worked hard, like a machine. Three functions of labor models: These were people who talked about the Party's policy and propaganda, gave speeches in group meetings. They report ordinary people's work habits and thoughts, utterances to the leaders. They also helped the party leader by having heart-to-heart talks with the other workers, influence them to become model workers too.

Model workers got an award at the end of the year, a towel, a notebook, Mao's works. They also showed their pictures on a bulletin board in the factory. Sometimes they would display them inside the factory, sometimes outside on the street. They also get to go to meetings that get them out of work, or can go travel to Peking.

During the CR these people became the conservative faction (baohuang pai) who defended the shop secretary, and shop head. The rebels (zaofan pai) hated them and attacked them. The rebels beat them up. Today the zaofan pai is gone, and the labor models are important once again.

During the CR period we didn't call model workers that, but we called them "wuhao gongren". So the five good workers replaced the old model workers who had been fooled by Liu Shaoqi. They had five new criteria: good personal habits, political thought, cooperation with other workers and leaders, revolutionary discipline (labor discipline), work activism.

After 1972 they started to rebuild the party organization. Some rebels went to jail, others were executed, and they rebuilt new leading bodies in the factory. They didn't establish the revolutionary committee until 1970. Gradually the rebel faction lost power. In name, they still sat on the RC, but in reality the army was in charge, along with the new party cadres transferred from elsewhere because they were hated in their old units. We called it the "great exchange of cadres", and some workers would bet on how long the new leaders would last in the unit.

The new activists came from among the old activists before the CR. They would watch over other workers and report on them. In reality the workers didn't hate the party leaders as much as the activists who were always reporting on them. Activists are key links between the masses and the top party leaders, who are distant from the workers.

Gugan fenzi and jiji fenzi are slightly different. A backbone is someone who has already applied to the CYL and Party. They are people who are in a period of testing by the party and by the masses. They are the most outstanding of the activists who are not yet in the Party or CYL. They are often young.

Every work group should have at least 3 or 4 activists, or else the Party won't have any voice in it. Two of them will be leaders; the group head or assistant group head. Everyone knows they are activists; they got awards at the end of each year. But if you pai ma pi without really being an activist, you can also be declared an activist temporarily. If you speak up in meetings, the other workers will make fun of you, call you "active Liang" (Liang Jiji).

The advantages of being an activist: if you are trusted by the party you feel happy, even though other people might hate you. This is a psychological feeling. You feel important, like a big man. If you're not trusted by the party you're not trusted by society. So you're very lonely if the party doesn't trust you. It makes you feel great; you talk with a deeper voice, you feel confident, strong, and stand up straight; you feel your life is peaceful, you feel proud. Even though the masses may play jokes on you and start rumors, and fight with you, you know these other fools are just stupid; you know that the party supports you.

Activists also get special treatment in material life. Maybe your wife has been living in the countryside for a long time; if you are an activist for a long time maybe you can get permission for her to move. You can get a ticket to buy a mosquito net. You can get ration tickets for many things, because money alone is not enough. Sometimes you get housing faster.

You are also very safe during the political movements. This is very important because you don't have to worry. You can also become an official later on. Important political positions always go to activists; head of the people's militia, head of the youth league, vice-head of the workshop. Even old activists may get promoted to be vice-head of the shop, not just young workers. There are also educational advantages. At that time only the activists could read cankao xiaoxi and other journals. Only they got to travel to conferences elsewhere and listen to speeches. At that time activists had the only real chance to go to college. That was the only way to get into college then--heads of work units chose gong-nong-bing students, based on their biao xian.

The difficulties of being an activist: people don't like you. As an activist you have to choose between supporting the party and your co-workers.. So there's no longer any trust or affection with the other workers. No more friends. They treat you like the Party's dog or slave. So you feel lonely. Sometimes they cry because of all the pressures. The workers are real tough on them. They'll say, "You ass kisser, why don't you give your wife to the Party secretary to screw!" I saw this happen once, and the guy just cried. But the shop director would always support the activists, and try to make them feel better. They would call a meeting to tell the workers to stop attacking and sabotaging the activists. Sometimes workers would fight with them over their reports about what people said in the shop.

Sometimes activists will also be criticized by the Party leaders because they have very high standards of conduct. Sometimes the party leaders take a dislike to a certain activist. Then it's really sad, because they don't get any support, either from the workers or the leaders. One roommate I had for a while, a group leader, he was a real activist. Every single night he wrote a self-criticism to send to the party. But the party leader just laughed at him. He cried

every night, always told me how hard it was to be an activist, and that I should never try to be one. Sometimes I really had sympathy with activists because they had it hard. I got along really well with this activist who was my group leader. I would help him out and give him soap because he was poor and had a lot of kids. But he was still an activist, and he sold me out once. Once I stole coal bricks from the shop and hid them in the dorm room, and he turned me in when the leaders demanded to know who had done it. But he felt bad about it, and was too ashamed to even look at me after that, and couldn't even speak to me. We couldn't room together after that, and he moved out. I felt sorry for him.

Some activists do give up. If something happens for them to lose face with the Party after many years, they might give up. Sometimes a worker who is an activist for many years, but whose wife never gets into the city, or whose daughter can't find a job, or never get an apartment, sometimes will say "shit! Why did I ever become an activist. Its not worth it! I quit!"

Are there personal relationships between activists and leaders? Yes! Absolutely! They are very close. That's why the workers tell them to give their wife to the Party leader to screw. They give gifts to the party leaders, and give small reports. There are very subtle private relations between activists and party leaders. Sometimes leaders would invite them to their house for dinner. Activists try to keep the relations private because the workers give them a hard time about it. As long as activists are trusted by the Party, these relations are close, but if the party changes its mind about you you lose face, and then the relationship ends.

Youth League (4/5/84, 1.5 hrs)

At the beginning of the CR the youth league organization was destroyed by the rebellion. But by 1972 when I got to the factory it had already been restored. There were three levels of the CYL in my factory. The Tuan zongzhibu was at the factory level. Then each shop had a tuan shibu. Sometimes in a work group that has a lot of youth leaguers, they formed a CYL small group within the group. You had to have at least three people to make a small group.

At the top we had the secretary of the general branch of the CYL. He was a member of the factory party committee, and worked full time at this post. The leader in our factory was promoted up from among the workers in the factory. He was 35 or so when he reached this position. He was a demobilized soldier who had joined the party in the army, he had been a paizhang (lieutenant). He worked for a short period in the shop and then became a helicopter cadre. He was very 'red': army, party member. He was about grade 17 cadre, full time professional.

There were six people, not professional, who were members of the Youth league committee (tuan weiyuan hui). They were workers, got workers salary. They each were responsible for one function. One for propaganda (weiyuan), organization (membership issues largely), baowei weiyuan (ran militia), laodong (shock brigades, volunteer labor), weisheng (inspected cleanliness of the workshop; this was the least powerful--did exercise drills and physical education, ran intramural basketball), and a vice-secretary (basically helped out the secretary).

They had an office in the headquarters building. They had newspapers, a tv, some flags, posters, etc. They used the office to have meetings in. They also had files.

Below was the youth league branch in the shop. The branch head was not necessarily a member of the general branch committee, nor were they necessarily members of the party branch committee of the shop. Sometimes they were not even party members, but were at least backbones. There were also several members of the youth league general branch committee who were activists, who had committee responsibility for some functions as the above level.

Under this level was the CYL small group of at least 3 people. One was a group leader. All of these people are ordinary young workers, including the shop CYL leaders. Some party, some not, but all are backbones. All this was after hours volunteer work. After the shift and weekends. A real sacrifice of time. They do a lot of things but have no functions for production. They support the party leaders and their policies.

Functions: most important is propaganda. Influence the after hours life of the workers. Their task is to influence the political thought of young workers and the way they do it is to control their after work activities. The propaganda weiyuan, for example, ran an artistic propaganda troupe. Did plays and performances at the holidays; New Year, spring festival, party holidays. The performances were designed to forward the party's ideals. They were jointly sponsored by the Union and CYL, but the propaganda weiyuan ran it. This arts troupe attracted young people to be involved in the spiritual life of the party. This is a spiritual life (jingshen shenghuo), that the party wants people to have.

There was also the Tiyu weiyuan. Every summer they organized a tournament in the shops. This is another way that the youth league influences after hours life. Not really connected with politics. But its like the party is the father and the youth league the mother, both are in charge of your lives. If young workers really don't want to do this kind of thing they don't have to. But if you refuse to take part too many times, you get a bad reputation among the party and CYL leaders. Then they call you "backward" and criticize you. They say you are very inactive in social and political life, which shows your thought is backward.

Another example. On sundays the CYL organized young workers to go together to go to the park and play, or go swimming in the river, or go to the museum, or listen to old revolutionaries tell stories about the old days--the key is that they do these things together. They don't want you to do things alone. They are afraid that otherwise you'll fall into bourgeois lifestyles. Collective life style is the point of all this, the activities themselves are not really all that important.

Are workers interested in these activities? Nobody wants to do it, they just feel they have to. They would rather help their parents do work around the house, or spend sunday with a girlfriend. They would rather have a private life. Ordinary workers don't want to go, and I don't think even the activists really want to go, but they are just doing it because it is expected of them. Yes a lot of people still went. Sometimes things like swimming aren't all that bad. But when

we did go we would just show up and get it over as quickly as possible and then go home quick. So we showed up so the youth league leader could report that there was high attendance. It was formalistic, superficial participation.

The second function is to support the party's policies. Every Monday morning we had production meetings before work. The party secretary would give a report, sometimes study documents from Peking. He talked about production plans, sometimes did mobilization work for a campaign. Each group then would talk about these matters separately in the group. Who volunteers to talk about these matters? Activists. The youth league members are models for the other workers. They don't really carry out party policy, they just support the party in carrying them out.

A third function of the CYL: to prepare new party members. They train the party members of the future. All of these activities are part of the training. Sometimes they recommend CYL activists for party membership. To join the party, you have to write an application to the party organization. Then the party organization sends a special person to be your 'godfather', to talk with you at least once a week and have you tanxin, or "give your heart to the Party". You have to tell this person all your true thoughts. He is a party member, sometimes the head of the CYL branch. This is a person you already know, he has perhaps recommended you for membership. Officially, he is called your rudang fazhan ren, and you are the fazhan duixiang. He is very close to you; this is the person you should send gifts to. He is responsible for cultivating you as a party member. This is also the time of testing (kaoyan shijian), and it lasts about one year, sometimes two. Youth league organization writes recommendation that helps out in the application process.

The CYL secretary for the factory is appointed directly by the party secretary. But the weiyuan of the committee are elected, and are reelected each year. But of course the party has to approve the members. At the beginning they have secret ballots for all these weiyuan.

Usually the general secretary of the CYL must be changed by the party. But there was one secretary who had a love affair with a girl whose boyfriend was off in Hangzhou. He was then criticized as a newly risen bourgeois element. They knew they were doing it because the housing is so crowded in the unit. They both lived in the unit. He was from the army, she was from the countryside but her boyfriend was off in college (sent by the factory to study). Rumor said she wanted to join the party so she showed her body to the guy. Others said she really loved him. When they found out what was going on, they accused him of using the party position for personal gain and he lost his position, and became an ordinary worker, then he married the girl. But they were both considered immoral, so they were ostracized socially and they had trouble getting a flat. Only after he wrote many letters of self-criticism did the party finally allow them to get married, and only after he begged and cried with the party secretary did he get housing (his wife was pregnant). This shows that "revolutionary" behavior is all false--he was the most active and revolutionary of all of us, but he was still human and fell in love.

Every young worker should be ashamed not to be a CYL member. They should at least try to join. If they don't they're not a good person. When someone has a bad family background you can't get in. I tried but couldn't because of my family background. There weren't a lot of CYL members in the factory. Many wanted to join, but couldn't. Only about 30 percent of the young workers in the factory were members. In our group of eleven, there were only two members. After they reach 35 they have to quit. But most quit before they reach 35, it takes so much time and there are dues. Those who fail to get into the party are very happy to quit the CYL. But if you quit too early, its bad biao-xian, and might be interpreted as distrust of the party.

Political Study (4/18/84, 2 hrs.)

This too was inspired by the red army. In my factory at the time we had two afternoons of study per week. If there was a political campaign, they might stop work and study all afternoon. Or once a year we took more time to pick labor models, and once a year we would sum up our own work, biao-xian, political thought and lifestyle. But generally we studied after work from 4-6 pm. I hear its been reduced lately to one afternoon each week at my old factory. It took place in the shop, in the work groups. But once a week, each monday morning before work, we had mass meetings in the shop to listen to speeches by the party leaders or hear documents. This was called "all-factory political study". Our meetings later in the week would simply repeat in discussions of our small group the same topic. We discussed and repeated what the party leaders had already said.

For example, the party secretary would tell us Monday about the wonderful experience of Dazhai: eight great points. Then later in the work group we talk about the Dazhai experience and how to apply it to the improvement of our own group and work. Generally, if there is no campaign, we studied people's daily editorials, and red flag. We would also study Peking documents; about Dazhai, Piling Piling, the educational revolution, etc. This was very boring because we already heard it once on Monday morning. Now we had to go over all of it again.

By the time the workers get to hear these documents, they've already discussed the same document in the party committee, among the party membership, among the youth league members, and shop cadres, before finally studying it among the workers.

We also studied advanced workers like Iron Man Wang of Daqing. How can I become more like him? We would also criticize each other. If a worker stole materials to make furniture for himself or fix his bicycle during work hours and was caught by the leaders, he would be used as a bad example and criticized by the party leaders on monday morning. So in political study the workers would then criticize one another in their groups. "Did you steal something too?" Then they'd have criticism and self-criticism. They would also have positive models. "Oh, comparing myself with Iron Man Wang, I feel guilty and unworthy." Or "even though I didn't steal something, I brought my kids into the factory to take a bath. This was bourgeois thought because they aren't covered by labor insurance." Or I would sometimes say, "I apologize to the party because during work I study english; even though I didn't steal anything my thought was still backward."

Or another would say "I feel sorry because I left the shop half an hour early yesterday." or "Although I didn't steal any state property, I did go to the clinic yesterday faking a bad leg just to get some medicinal wine."

The attitudes of workers toward criticism-self criticism: The backbones needed this. This is how they show how pure and honest they are in front of the party. Even if they didn't have any bad thoughts, they would confess anyway in order to appear honest. This gave the leaders a good impression. So the backbones enjoyed this and tried to find things to criticize themselves for. An advanced worker wanted to join the party and wrote reports to the party leader for two years trying to get in. One day he was in a great hurry to go to the office of the party leader to turn in 15 yuan he found in the street. They said "Wow! He's a real Lei Feng!" We had a big campaign to study him and praise him in the factory. He became a bid model in the whole city. Finally the city newspaper even sent a reporter to interview him. As it turned out, this was his own money he had turned in! How did we find out? His wife, who lived in the countryside, wrote a letter to complain to his leader that he hadn't been sending money back home to her for two months. When the leader read this, he felt strange. How could this be, the guy is a model? So then he asked the worker, and the worker confessed "I didn't send her the money because I gave the money to the party!"

There was another activist worker who would never go out with friends because he always stayed home to study Mao's works and write thoughts about Mao's works. They asked workers to write down every day their thoughts about Mao's works, then they'd make you a model worker that year. He was a model for several years in a row. So we all studied him in the factory as a great study model. So one day this guy had a quarrel with his roommate, who said he never saw him writing all these things and that they were fake. He gave a small report to the party saying that he felt the guy was a fake. So the party secretary confronted him and asked him whether it was true. He finally admitted that he didn't do it every day. He spent every weekend, all weekend doing it.

Another attitude toward study and criticism is: well, we have to go along even though we hate it, we know everyone is lying, but we have to go along to not leave bad impressions. Why get in trouble over this petty stuff? I had this kind of attitude. You had no choice. You had to say something. Even if you had a shy and quiet personality, you had to say something in the meeting.

A third attitude toward study is that workers who have an axe to grind or don't like someone can use this opportunity to attack their enemies. This is where the ugliness of human nature comes out. Someone would say, "Well, Li, your self-criticism is very shallow, and that means that your political thought is not very deep; you should study Mao's works, your thought is bourgeois. Like last week, you didn't go to the museum on the weekend, and told the group leader that your mother was sick. But I saw you in the park with your girlfriend later on. This shows you are backward!" Now in reality the guy is probably saying this because the guy he is criticizing went through the back door and got something before he did. So he thinks, "You won this one, but I'll fix you next time!" So the guy is embarrassed in the meeting and has to make a self-criticism.

Who organized political study? Usually the group leader is in charge. But sometimes one person is in charge of writing down what workers say. This is not necessarily a party member or an activist, but simply one who can write. I did this in my group. These are the minutes of the meeting (kaihui jilu). These records were sent to the shop director. This records had 3 uses. If you wanted to be a party member, this was proof of your political biao xian. If it was an important political campaign, they might put the material in your file, because it is important to know what your attitude is toward various campaigns. And also they used it for selecting advanced workers at the end of the year. So the leaders and security cadres will know what your attitude was during the PiLin PiKong campaign.

Workers attitudes toward political study became more bored and disrespectful during the time I was there. After the fall of the Gang of 4 workers criticized political study openly; said "why should we waste our time with this boring stuff all the time?" This is why the government reduced political study to one day after 1977. Sometimes in political study they just talk about anything that comes to mind now. They don't always do political study now as they did before. Women talk about kindergarten, workers talk about news. They don't refuse to go now, but they're just more lax in the meetings. So they watch the clock very carefully, and when the time is up they tell the group leader and he says "OK, suanle!" And then they head out the door. But never before the Gang of 4 fell did this happen. And they still think political study is important; at least sit down and talk once a week in the group, because after all there is still the four modernizations.

Dang'an

They begin in junior middle school. I actually saw them when I was a teacher. Already junior ms students have at least two pages in their files. When workers start work they already have a full dang'an. They can never see it. It is a state secret; only the security department cadets have right to see them (personnel department was merged with security in my unit).

Only 3 kinds of people can touch the dang'an. The party secretary can see it, but the shop director can't. Shop directors can only give reports to the factory party secretary, who decides whether to put the material in. Any of the party committee members can see the dang'an if they have an official reason. Otherwise its too secret. Second, the secretary in the baowei renshi ke can see it. These people are highly trusted by the party because they have to keep quiet about what they see. They would lose their job if they revealed information. Third, the cadres in the security bureau or police who are investigating you can see them upon orders.

I never saw my own dang'an. So how do I know what is in it? Well I saw the ones for the junior high school students I taught, so I can guess what's in mine. My mother was a rightist in 1957, rehabilitated in 1979. They showed the family the materials they were throwing out, and they burned the material relating to it; that's what being rehabilitated means. My mom said she couldn't believe the things that were in her dang'an. Her criticisms of the party then were very mild, really; you can read about them in my book. She told me in 1979 they had 5 notebooks worth of material on her that was being thrown out. All

the things that people said about her in criticism meetings, her self-criticism, and the authorities' investigation about her background. They had material on who her friends were, who she visited during different campaigns, how many times she had visited them, the party's judgment of her biao'xian in each campaign. This is why people always pay attention to political study; you have to be concerned about your dang'an. It seems to me that the party's most powerful weapon against the people is the dang'an. The leaders commonly warned workers that if they didn't shape up they'd put a report in their dossier.

Generally if you criticize yourself or just are criticized in the small group, nothing is put in your file. But if you are criticized at a higher level they do put it in your file. This is why so many rebel groups attacked the offices during the CR--they were really after the dang'an. They wanted to burn the dang'an. This was the main reason why rebels were imprisoned, even executed after the CR--for stealing and destroying the dang'an.

The party keeps the dang'an secret because they are full of lies. People would get very angry, I think, if they could see what's in their files. So the party must keep them completely secret. People are concerned about their dang'an because their units controlled everything--housing, travel, promotions, salary, residence of family members. If you want to visit another city, you need permission from the unit. If you have bad material in your file, then they might not be willing to let you travel, because you're suspect. "Oh, I know why you want to go there; you have a grandfather there who's an old landlord! You should cut off ties with these bad elements!"

The personnel department is in charge of the dang'an. That does not mean they just watch over the files all day. It also means they have to say something if the police investigate you. They are also in charge of writing an approval of you if you are going to be transferred or move. They write simple summary letters in simple language that characterizes the content of the file. Files are kept under combination lock. A second job was to grasp class struggle. If you were sent to do labor reform the personnel department gives them information on your background and case. Also if there is any stealing in the factory, they try to find out who did it. If there are counter-revolutionary graffiti written on the wall, like "Down with Mao", they investigate that. They would investigate by going through the dang'an and cross-examining all the bad elements first. These people know all the workers' materials. They know the good ones, middling, and bad ones, and the crazy ones. I know about these things not from experience but because people who were cross-examined told me about it.

For example, a worker stole some steel rods. The baowei ke people warned everybody to tell them they wanted a confession, or they'd call in the police. Then they'd launch an investigation. They'd call in activists and ask their opinion, they would try to talk to other workers to see if they knew. Then the good workers would be called in to be questioned. They would try to manipulate them: "This is when the party shows its trust in you. Do you want to join the party? Tell us, who did it? Who do you think did it?"

The security department also did security guard duty. They especially had to patrol the stores, especially the lumber which was very scarce.

Security departments are also in charge of recruiting workers for the PLA. Every year about 5 workers joined.

There are very few personnel in the security department. In our factory, there are three full-time cadres, all of them were demobilized soldiers with military training and military weapons skill. They knew how to use cameras, analyze footprints, etc. Basically they should be trusted by the Party.

One cadre, Mr. Liu in our factory's security department was very mean to workers. Once he had an affair with a married woman in the factory dormitory, where he slept with her. He was so dumb he forgot that everyone in the factory is watching one another. Of course everyone knew what was going on. The neighbors saw. He forgot that everybody is always watching. The neighbors heard them breathing hard and moaning at night, and then got up early to see who came out of her flat in the morning, since they knew her husband was living elsewhere. He was reported, criticized by the party leaders, and eventually he went to the farm himself.

Factions (4/23/84, 2 hrs)

There are really two kinds of factions. One has to do with politics, a second with Chinese traditions. The second kind existed before the CR and even before 1949. Before 1949 there was the baotou (gang boss) who ran everything in the factory. But the influence of the system still exists. People are accustomed to following powerful individuals. In our factory there were only a few shifu (masters) that are well known by all. We called them Zhang Shifu, Li Shifu, and so forth. These are the real leaders among the workers, and they're not appointed by the party. Workers follow them and admire them naturally. Why? They are fairly old, usually around 60. Their image is better if they are old. Second, their salary rank is higher than ordinary workers. So they have good skill level. And younger workers admire them. They don't always work that hard but they know how to do things and other workers are always asking their advice.

When the workers had dahui, these were the people who were trusted to hold the money. These guys really talked about yiqi. They used yiqi to gain support and help others. He helped them out, people sought his help and did things in return. They also have high morality (daode) and a lot of prestige. He will be listened to by all the workers. He helped mediate family problems, gave advice and so forth. If workers are dissatisfied with things, like if they want more money for the gaowen fei, this is the guy they talk to and ask to talk to party leaders; they never ask the group leaders or party secretaries. The party leaders will listen to these guys more; in fact they were a little afraid of these guys because they had so much influence among the workers. These old shifu are not party members and they don't care about position. They don't worry about being criticized by party members; they know they have support among the workers because of their morality. I know this because I was a follower of Liu Shifu in my shop.

These guys aren't afraid of the party leaders because they have the knowledge and skill needed to carry out tasks. The party needs them. Party members can make slogans, but these skilled workers are needed to get the work done. They also have daode; the workers really respect and trust them. If the party member tells a worker he should stop drinking and be nice to his wife, workers won't listen to him because they don't trust him. But the workers trust and respect the Lao Shifu

and will listen to them. The Lao Shifu-worker relationship (shitu guanxi) is more important than the party-worker relationship. This is real yiqi. The Lao Shifu takes care of the young single workers in the dorm; invites them to his home to eat and drink wine on the holidays. I was smart; so I gave my shifu gifts at these occasions. There are very close relations between these old shifu and young workers. Activists have shifu the first three years, but not always that close after that because the shifu are afraid the activists will report on them. But sometimes shifu can get information from their former apprentices who are activists about a campaign or a youth league or party meeting, and so they are very well informed about things.

The second reason party leaders are a little afraid of them is because of their moral authority. The shifu has this authority because he takes care of young workers like a father. They take care of their tudu. You stand up for each other in meetings and in front of leaders. For example, if young worker is in trouble for leaving early and then later quarrels with his group leader over it, the shifu will always help his worker out. He'll rush in and say "suanle! suanle!," calm the leader down, give him a cigarette, tell him to sit down and relax. Then he'll say something that backs up the worker's story, and say "If you want to criticize someone, criticize me." It doesn't matter if what the worker said was true or not--maybe the worker had been off gambling, but he'll still back up your story, and maybe ask you later where you'd really been. So workers naturally support these guys.

Generally there are about 3 or so old shifu in a shop. After the 3 year apprenticeship they usually still have yiqi. Most of them continue the relationship. Shifu will even introduce you to girls. My shifu tried to introduce me to a girl once. He also thought it was stupid for me to want to go to college. He advised against it and it was kind of a betrayal on my part for me not to take his advice. But when it looked like the factory cadres wouldn't allow me to go to college, and criticized me for wanting to go, the shifu stood up for me and argued for my case, saying "why don't you let him go? He's really smart!" Later when I got married several years later, my shifu was outraged when I didn't invite him to the wedding ceremony, but only to the reception. He broke relations with me over that.

These shifu really controlled workers, and really could influence their followers. Workers will do anything their shifu says, but not necessarily for the party leader. So the party leaders are extremely respectful and polite to the shifu, always asking for their opinions and so forth. Shifu are like the gentry of the factory.

Different shifu had different followers. They each had their own faction. A good party secretary knows what the factional situation is, uses one faction against the other in order to rule them. If you know the factions and you're smart you can control them this way.

There are conflicts among the shifu factions. There are technical competitions. Each shifu has pride in his technical ability and his ability to lead his workers, and sometimes they try to outdo each other in quality of work or ability to do a task. They check each other's work or ability to do something well. They criticize the other if its done poorly. They are also very mindful of their pay levels. Grade 6,7 or 8 makes a difference to them, so the shifu each try to show up the others; they are jealous of each other's ranking. The

higher ones want to demonstrate their ability, and the younger ones want to prove that they can do things as well as the higher grade ones. My factory was small, there were only about 5-6 shifu in the whole plant, and they had lots of followers.

When there are quarrels between tudi, sometimes the shifu are drawn in. Since they emphasize yiqi with each other, if you attack a tudi you attack the mianzi of the shifu. Often there is discord among the shifu because of their tudi.

If your shifu becomes a party member (one of the shifu in my factory became a member), the shifu then gets a lot of power because he can use the powers of the party to help out his followers. Then others will be jealous of the party member shifu. Also some shifu may have party members as followers, and this is a source of power and information.

My shifu had about 7-8 close followers. That was a lot. Not all shifu had followers. Some came from outside the plant and never built up a following. In this case people from outside may form a faction against the shifu groups. They opposed each other. The workers transferred in had built up no feelings with the shifu. They didn't learn their trade in the plant.

There are also political factions. This applied during the CR only. There was the conservative and rebel faction in my factory. The baohuang pai was formed by the activists and model workers and were a very small group. They defended party leaders. But this was also related to the traditional factions described already. In my shop, Zhang Shifu (the party member) became involved in the baohuang faction. He was in the party and loved the party. Liu Shifu disliked him for this, they had conflicts from before the CR. When Zhang Shifu became powerful and controlled the shop in the CR, he could give orders to Liu Shifu and show him up. It made him mad. When the baohuang faction lost Mao's support, Liu Shifu then supported the zaofan faction to get back at Zhang. Liu was smart; he didn't join himself, but all his tudi joined, and he gave them advice on what to do. That's how he got back at Zhang Shifu. So the political factions got mixed up with the traditional factions.

There was also Tian Shifu, the head of the Zhuzhou pai. This was a group of workers transferred from the Zhuzhou chemical plant. They all stuck together under Tian. People don't use the term pai when talking about these things, they just refer to people with the character de. People are Liu Shifu de (ren). People use very common language in talking about these things. De refers to factional ties in common language.

In the CR, the zaofan faction was made up of three kinds of people: 1) people oppressed by the leaders previously and who didn't like the party; 2) people with bad class background or who had made mistakes, people who had bad biao xian. Usually it was the people with bad class background who were the leaders. They got shot later. 3) Young workers. They were so young they didn't know anything. They just followed the shifu and others and didn't have any real reason to follow them. A lot of them just did it for fun. But the most important thing about the zaofan pai is that they were unhappy with the leadership and didn't like their followers who always reported on them.