
PERSONAL DATA

Age: 43

Sex: Male

Education: Technical school graduate

Total Years Relevant Experience: 13

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1967

Year Left China: 1979

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

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

Class Background/Political Designation: unknown

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

- Positions Held: 1) Machine Tool Manufacturing Plant, Tianjin, 1955-67
- a) Shop electrician, gear-making shop, 1955-60
 - b) Asst. Shop Director, gear-making shop, 1960-64
 - c) Union administrator, Plant Director's Office, 1964-67
- 2) Member, Worker Propaganda Team in Tianjin Middle Schools, 1967-72
- 3) Public Health Worker, Chinese Traditional Medicine, Tianjin, 1972-79

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

- 1) Municipal/(2000)

APPOINTMENTS: 2

TOTAL HOURS: 4

PAGES TEXT: 4

Occupational History (4/5/80, 2 hrs.)

The informant worked in a Machine Tool Manufacturing Plant in Tianjin from 1955-1967. The plant had around 2000 employees and was administered by a Tianjin Municipal industrial bureau. After graduating from a middle-school level technical school (zhong zhuan) in 1955, he was assigned to this plant as an electrician. He was an electrician from 1955-1960. In 1960 he was promoted to shop director (chejian zhuren), and he did this job until 1964. In 1964 he was transferred to work in the plant headquarters office, directly under the plant director. The office had several people who did administrative work--personnel, welfare, etc. His job was to handle union administration and personnel. The office was called the 'factory affairs office' (chang wu bu), and its job was to assist the plant director, give reports and advice. He did this work until 1967.

In 1967 he left the factory as a member of a worker propaganda team. His team went to middle schools in the city, and he was very busy doing this until 1972. He gave political education, taught some technical classes at a technical school (high school level). After 1972 they disbanded the worker propaganda teams, but he did not want to return to the plant since there was no more work for union officials, and he did not want to be an electrician again. So he asked permission to study and work at a Tianjin district public health station. He had studied traditional Chinese medicine as a child with his father, and was able in 1972 to take night courses at a public health office. After that he worked at a district public health hospital, seeing and treating patients, for five years. He left legally for Hong Kong in 1979.

Wages

While he was working as an electrician, his chief job was to repair electrical breakdowns on the production line, and to install things. He had graduated from technical middle school, so there was no apprenticeship period for him. He was first a grade one worker at 32¥ after he graduated. After one year, he was given a raise according to regulations to grade 2, 36¥. He was raised to grade 3 in 1957, in his third year of work, and made 39¥. Then he was promoted to shop director. He kept his grade 3 worker wages for one year, then changed to cadre wage. In the 1963 wage readjustment he was formally changed to a grade 21 administrative cadre, and was given a raise to 62¥.

There were wage readjustments in 1956--a big one--a small one in 1959 for a limited number of enterprises, and one in 1963. After this things did not change for over 10 years. Once the CR started, there were no wage changes until 1978.

Bonuses

They had quarterly bonuses before the CR, but had no monthly bonus. Each quarter the small group would meet to assess workers for bonuses. They separated themselves into 3 grades, based on work attitude, numbers of days of leave, etc. The amounts were 15, 10, and 5¥. About 40% of the workers would get a bonus. Most of this 40% got grade 2 (10¥). This bonus system was abolished in 1967. After the CR (he was not in the plant then) many factories switched to supplementary wages where everyone got the same amount and they were not sorted into 3 groups. There was no way to give bonuses out because the center would not allow it. Workers tended to like the supplementary wages better, because they don't waste time appraising in meetings and there is less chance of an unfair appraisal, and no arguments

every month over 2-3¥ of bonus.

Temporary and Contract Workers

They did not ordinarily employ these kinds of workers unless they were building an addition to the factory. They would be invited from the city or from the countryside, and they had both temporary and contract workers. They were not factory workers. They got contract workers from the communes, and signed a contract specifying length of service and type of work. There were very few of these kinds of workers.

They also did odd jobs (zagong), and whatever types of small repairs needed to be done. These people were employed not within shops but outside the shop structure, by the entire plant. There is an opportunity for these people to become regular employees, but this is rare. As far as he knows, they never abolished this system of contract labor.

Firings, Discipline

No workers were ever demoted or fired for bad work in his experience. If some worker is doing a bad job, they try to understand the objective reasons, and talk with the person, find out what is wrong. If he is a repeated offender, they might have the person make an account of himself in a small group meeting. In his own shop, no one was ever fired, demoted, or transferred as punishment-- during the entire 1955-67 period.

The Gear Manufacturing Shop, 1955-64 (4/7/80, 2 hrs.)

He worked in a gear-making shop (chi lun chejian) which had over 200 workers. His first job there was as the shop electrician, to repair electrical equipment within the shop. He maintained the electrical system. They had a place to take broken equipment to work on but this was not really an office, just a place to work. There were three electricians in all. They also had 3 technical workers who repaired machinery. These 6 people comprised a 'repair group'. There were 3 of each kind of skilled worker because one worked on each of three shifts. The shop director makes sure that there is at least one of each type of repair worker for a shift, so production does not have to stop for repairs. The group was under the direction of the shop director.

There was also a repair shop (weixiu chejian) which was all-plant in nature, and which handled machinery and equipment repairs which were more serious and complex, and which could not be handled by the repair groups of the shops. The repair shop made spare parts from raw materials, and dis-assembled and repaired machines. How to decide if a factory should have a repair shop? First, you have to have the space. Second, you have to have the equipment, and kinds of machinery necessary to make parts. Third, you have to have people with these technical skills, and fourth, you have to have the raw materials. Small factories don't have these conditions and don't need to set up repair shops. Repair groups in the shops can usually handle their problems.

Shop structure: There was a director and two vice-directors. These leaders handled all leadership work. They needed no technicians or other experts to help them with this. The directors worked mostly on the shop floor. The only paperwork they had to do was to fill out the daily production report, which was basically to add up all the forms handed in by small group leader and vice-leaders, who did most of the assist work in shop management. The shop director was usually concurrently the party branch secretary. The 2 vice-shop directors usually handled most production work. The shop director called lots of meetings to handle problems.

The shop director's main job was to oversee overall production process, and to oversee people's ideological thought. The vice-directors rotated on the 2 shifts. The shop director does not rotate shifts, just works days. They had one person (yuan) responsible for health (first aid) and also statistics. He was the one who added up the forms and reports. They also had a part-time person like a propagandist (xuanchuan yuan), who was writing, talking, and who was a worker who used off-hours to help with ideological work. They held a lot of meetings, for lots of purposes. Production problems, planned birth, political campaigns, etc. These were the shop director's responsibility to oversee.

Below the shop were several production groups. They had group leaders and vice leaders. They are both full-time workers. Not necessarily party members. They did not need any technicians or inspectors in the small groups. The group leader was experienced and should know these things. If he didn't, he had no business being the group leader. The group leader's responsibilities were: to set production plans and make arrangements for the day, to decide how long to have to produce certain parts before being finished; to have forms on the completion of quotas and production situation filled out every day. They use off-hours for this.

Sometimes there were meetings after shifts with the shop director to discuss plan completion, tasks, technical questions about the production of certain items. The group leader's job is to meet with and explain, talk things over with workers, find out whether they can work overtime, etc. If there are disagreements with workers, or expected problems in convincing workers to do something, they work especially hard at these talks.

For example, when they call meetings to 'introduce tasks' (jieshao renwu), to tell workers of pressing production matters, they first contact the party members and youth league members and explain the policy and problem to them. The job of the party members is to help convince the other workers. But when introducing tasks, asking for overtime, they need meetings also to explain the reasons to workers. If they don't do this kind of ideological work, things won't work out. They can't just sit in the office and give orders. So the shop director/branch secretary's job is very busy. He has to continuously combine ideological work with production tasks.

This is important in the case of overtime because there is no basic overtime wage, although some plants have small overtime supplements. Some places did have basic overtime wages in the past, but they were abolished later. Generally, people were to work overtime because it was a political responsibility (renwu). The CYL members were quite willing to be activists in overtime work because they wanted to join the Party. They wanted to be selected advanced workers (xianjin gongzuozhe).

The group leader also is responsible for quality inspection. There is also a quality inspection in the factory's storeroom (canku). Bigger plants had Quality Inspection Departments (jianyan ke). There was never any '5 personnel' (wu da yuan) system in his factory as far as he can remember. Some plants used this, but not all of them implemented this kind of system. This is true for other policies too. For example, now they are saying that factories should implement the Yugoslav method. But this is only in experimental plants. Many leaders have not been ordered to implement this. You can't really tell what the method is by reading newspaper articles. So factories find it hard to carry it out, and just wait for concrete orders from above. How do you implement bonuses, how to carry out elections according to this new method? It is hard to say just by reading the papers. Also, will a plant director be willing to be removed from his job in an election if the plant is unprofitable?

Great Leap Forward

There were no major changes in plant organization during the Great Leap Forward, at least within the shops. But they did send groups of technicians from the departments to work alongside the workers and learn about actual conditions, about technology and about the machines. Many of them knew how to draw diagrams, but really did not understand the machines. So they went on a rotating basis, but did not have fixed production assignments. They did try to make steel for a while, but this wasn't that big of a change for the factory, as compared to a school or a commune. In these units they stopped studying or planting to do this. But in the factory the biggest change was that they didn't go home at night to rest, they just kept working to either produce more machines or work on the steel furnace they built.

Assistant Shop Director's Responsibilities

Why was he selected for this promotion? He does not know for sure himself. He got along very well with others in the shop. Also, he was a member of the shop's basketball team, and was pretty good. A lot of people liked basketball in his shop. After promotion, his wages stayed the same until the next wage readjustment, when he was raised a bit, but not that much. But he was switched at this time to the administrative cadre scale.

His job: if there was propaganda work to do, he did this; if he had to write slogans, he did this; if they had to hold a meeting of any sort, he did this. Generally, he did whatever he had to do to get production done. If there are any problems of any sort in the groups that they need a higher-up to decide or solve, he would go down and talk the problem over with them, and try to arrive at a solution. Also they would relay responsibilities to the group leaders.

Some days production would go smoothly. Other days there were all kinds of problems. Then you would be real busy. There could be a problem of any sort--meeting the quotas, monthly output, quality, etc. The work was very flexible in nature, and he did a wide variety of coordinating types of work.

Plant Office

There was a secretary, typist, and a person who did liason work with the departments. There were other staff members with substantive responsibilities. There was one person for the union (himself), one person for technical matters, one for security, and the three others. He was promoted to this office because he was very active in union activities--basketball team, acting troupes, etc. And he took an active part in union meetings. The general task of this office was to handle communication with the departments, give orders, hear problems when the plant director was not available. The work of the union was livelihood, labor welfare, insurance, and after-work activities. During the middle of the CR he was selected to be a member of the worker propaganda team which was sent to schools, since he had a worker background and a certain cultural level. Orders came from above to establish the team and send them out, so he went. As it turned out, he never returned to the factory to work.