
PERSONAL DATA

Age: 39

Sex: Male

Education: University Graduate (Shanghai Jiaotong)

Total Years Relevant Experience: 12

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1976 Year Left China: 1976

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: Southeast Asia OS, returned 1950s

Class Background/Political Designation: OS

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Researcher, Shanghai Electrical Machinery Scientific
Institute, 1965-672) Research Technician, Electric Furnace Research
Institute, Xian, 19673) Electrical Machinery Plant, Fuzhou, 1968-76
a) Worker, casting shop, 1968-71
b) Technician, Technical Department, 1972-76

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

1) Ministry (#4 Machine Building)

2) Ministry (#4 Machine Building)

3) Municipal

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

worker in casting shop, 1968-71

APPOINTMENTS: 2

TOTAL HOURS: 5

PAGES TEXT: 6

Occupational History (6/4/80, 2.25 hrs.)

The informant is 39 years old, an overseas Chinese from Southeast Asia who returned to China in the 1950s. He graduated from Shanghai Jiaotong University in 1965 (July) and was lucky to be assigned to a research institute in Shanghai, the Electrical Machinery Science Institute. The institute had 3000 employees, which included 5 experimental factories under it. He worked in one of these small factories as an experimental researcher. He did designing, set specifications for new products, and built prototypes. Then he tested them to be sure that the specifications were proper. At that time he was a technician. The institute was under the national #4 Machine Building Ministry.

One and a half years later, in 1967, when the cultural revolution came, it was decided that overseas Chinese cannot work as cadres in key point units, so he was transferred to Xian, to an electrical furnace research institute, still under the #4 Ministry of Machine Building. The institute had 400-500 employees.

He did not like Xian. It was too cold, too windy, and too dusty. There were no public buses to the institute. Also he just couldn't digest the wotou (cornmeal bread)--it made him sick. So after just 8 months he left for Fuzhou where his mother lived on overseas remittances. He went on his own and planned to live with his mother. He knew that afterwards it would be hard to find another job, because the state had not arranged his transfer.

Looking for work on your own is hard. He relied on personal connections plus his status as an overseas Chinese. First he had the overseas Chinese affairs bureau write him a letter of introduction. Then he had friends in administration who helped him. One was the head of the personnel department of the civil administration bureau(min zheng ju), and another worked in the Electrical Machinery Industrial Bureau. They arranged an introduction to an electrical machinery factory under the bureau in Fuzhou. The factory had about 300 employees. He worked as a technician in the technical department of the factory. He worked there until 1976, when he applied to come out to Hong Kong.

Wages

When he first graduated from college and began to work at the institute, he made 58¥, but had no fixed grade. After one year he was made regular (zhuanzheng) and got 65.7¥. He is not clear about what the grades involved were, but he knew that the high school level technicians made less. He says they didn't often talk about these matters in China. Also, he never experienced a wage readjustment during the entire time he worked in China, so he does not really understand how these grades work. He kept the same wages when he was transferred to Xian, but his wages were set anew when he went to Fuzhou, and he made 58¥, a reduction. This was according to the Fuzhou grades.

There was no wage readjustment for technicians while he was in China. But in 1972 there was a small readjustment just for workers. This was for workers of low wage grades.

Bonuses

They had quarterly bonuses in the research institute for all workers and staff before the CR, but afterwards none. They assessed in groups, separated bonuses into three grades, and distributed them at the end of the quarter. The highest was about 12 ¥ per quarter, the lowest about 5¥. By the time

he got to Fuzhou, there were supplementary wages to take the place of the old bonus income. Every worker and staff member got 4.5¥ per month. This was said to be because of a rise in the price of grain.

Discipline, Punishment

If you were absent from work without leave, they could deduct 1¥ per day from your wages. If you asked for personal leave, they would also dock your wages. But this was not the same for cadres. They did not deduct wages--only workers'. Generally, if you had a doctor's certificate, you could stay away from work with full pay for as long as you needed--up to a year.

If your work is bad then they just criticize you in your small group meetings. Everyone would raise an opinion about your work. This wasn't too bad. But it became real embarrassing at the mass criticism meetings of all the employees. These became common during the cultural revolution, and they still had some in the 1970s. They had criticism in small groups all the time.

There were some workers, very few, who because they argued continually with others and often just didn't show up for work, were transferred elsewhere. This was a contradiction with the leadership. This happened especially after the cultural revolution when factionalism was so prevalent. He never saw a worker expelled, nor a cadre for that matter.

Cadres were commonly transferred for bad behavior--most often illicit sex, and also for other kinds of problems, but never simply for bad work. There were also cases of cadres being sent to jail for disputes arising out of sexual affairs. In one case a cadre had his ear cut off by an angry husband, and later was sent to jail when the cause of the husband's anger was found out.

Temporary and Contract Labor

There were none in his institutes in Shanghai and Xian. They did have them in Fuzhou. There was no distinction between temporary and contract workers. They came from the resident's committees, from among youth without work or university places. In form, they signed a contract, but in fact this was an assignment. They signed contracts for what he thinks was 3 years, after which they were made permanent workers. They were paid about 28¥, the same as a grade 1 worker. They had them the entire time he was in Fuzhou. Sometimes the dividing line between contract and permanent workers was a vague one. They did odd jobs, just about any kind of work, and they participated in all meetings and political study. The main difference was in welfare. They weren't eligible for wage raises. They only got half of their medicine paid for, got no supplementary wages, and no other subsidies or supplements. They just got their wages.

Work Schedule

They worked from 7:30am-11:30, and from 1:30pm-5:30. There was a two hour break in the middle, and they usually had 3 meetings a week after work, at least two hours apiece. They started around 7pm. Sometimes they would start right after work and didn't get to eat. During the two hour break in the middle, they ate lunch and rested. They had a second shift which came later in the evening, but they only had a one hour break.

Shanghai Research Institute (6/5/80, 2.75 hrs.)

The institute had over 2000 employees. It was led by a party committee. There was an organization department which handled party cadre personnel, but

their functions were not public so he does not know much about it. There were four vice Party secretaries, and one head secretary. There was also an institute committee (suowei hui), which handled the administrative side. There were three vice directors and one head director, but other people were moving in and out.

There was a personnel department, which handled non-internal party cadres, who were not covered by the organization department. A security department did investigations of individuals, cooperated with the municipal public security department. Ordinary individuals' files were kept in the personnel department, but special files kept on those with historical problems and crimes were kept in the security department. The finance department did accounting, handled relations with the banks. The supply and sales department took care of processing supplies for the work of the institute, and materials for the experimental workshops, while things like desks and office equipment were handled by the general affairs department. The technical department in general handled the technical side of work in each of the 5 research offices. Each of the engineers who headed the research offices were members of this department, along with about 10 assistant technicians. They did drawings and made research reports. There were also small technical departments in each of the research offices which had relations with the main technical department. Finally, they had a general affairs office, which handled the canteen, and construction work. There was also a labor union with few responsibilities, just ordinary welfare and family affairs.

In each of the 5 research offices was located its own small factory which was completely devoted to research, not to the production of commodities for sale. These factories were dispersed in different areas of Shanghai. There was an Automation Research Office, an Electrical Equipment Research Office, a Middle- and Small-scale Electrical Motors Research Office (this was his own unit, it had over 200 employees), a Metal Alloys Research Office, and an Electrical Converter Research Office (converters for turning AC into DC).

The head of his electrical motors research office was an engineer who was also a member of the general Technical Department. They had their own office, it was really a technical department, or a general office. They had two administrative personnel, and also several technicians, who did designing work, and assistant technicians who made copies of the designs. The factory was divided into several shops. A metal working shop had lathes and drill presses. A casting shop and an assembly shop were also there. And they had a testing shop where they tested the motors. The technicians worked in the offices, but also were continually going to the shops to direct the work, especially in the testing shop.

The shop workers were not organized into small groups. Instead, they had masters who were responsible for 2-3 apprentices. Each shop had from 15-25 employees, including the apprentices. The heads of the shops were skilled old workers who participated in production and were not administrators.

The Xian Research Institute

This institute had 400 employees. They just had a branch Party office, with one branch secretary and two vice branch secretaries. It had all the departments of the Shanghai institute except no organization department. They were divided into two research sections--articles for daily use, and national defense. These research sections were not divided into shops, and there were no workshops or factories. They just had skilled workers and technicians working together in the offices. The general responsibilities of both of these research institutes was to do the tasks assigned by the #4

Ministry of Machine Building. This included coming up with new product designs, according to certain broad specifications, and to design, test, and build prototypes. The institute therefore did not have a quantity of targets to meet each year, but just had to show certain progress in its researches.

Goods Ordering Meetings (dinghuo huiyi)

Each year the #4 Ministry would hold a goods ordering meeting in a Peking hotel. All the units in the system would send representatives. The institute would send technicians, about 2-3, because they knew a lot about the specifications of the equipment that they needed to buy. The production units would send people from their sales and supply departments. But the institute just went there as a buyer.

They would prepare for these meetings by looking at the yearly catalog, several volumes in all, which listed all the units in the Ministry's system which produced certain articles. These catalogs would list the units, the products, the specifications (very detailed), and the room number where negotiations could be arranged at the hotel. The representatives would then look up these people at the hotel, discuss, and in the end sign contracts. The negotiations were over specifications, number, and date of delivery, not over price, which was set by the ministry.

When they concluded a contract, payment was made by a bank certificate which authorized the state bank to transfer funds to the account of the selling unit. Prices were set in another catalog, and they just looked them up. This catalog was also supplied by the ministry. The setup of the goods ordering meeting, he says, is similar to that which I describe as having seen at the Canton Trade Fair. Each unit had a set office, placard, and a place where they could talk and negotiate.

The people who participated were all from the #4 Ministry system. Others could not attend. If the ministry needed other goods, its own people would order them from other ministries. Informal, private arrangements were important in concluding contracts for articles, which were in short supply and which you couldn't buy on the market or by private back door arrangements. So if you wanted a few more of these certain scarce items in your procurement contract you find out what kinds of things the man needs for his personal use. Sometimes also the buying plant will throw in some articles that the selling plant needs to sweeten the deal.

Fuzhou Electrical Machinery Factory

There were over 300 employees. They had a party branch, a personnel-security department, a general affairs, sales and supply, finance, and technical department. The head was the plant director, who was the head of the RC, and who simultaneously was the vice party branch secretary. The vice-head of the RC was the head of the security-personnel department. The rest of the members of the RC were representatives from the staff departments. They were not necessarily leading cadres, but were all party members. The mass representatives were old workers, but they also happened to be shop directors. There were not other mass representatives--of youth, of the women's committee. All the members of the RC had to be party members.

Below were several shops--the casting shop, metalworking shop, a small shop called the quality testing office, an assembly shop, and a 'liason' (menlu) department (bu) which handled sales and the repairs of products after they left the plant. The heads of the shops were half non-productive. Half of the time they worked on the shop floor. There was no office, no shop technicians, no statisticians or any other administrative

personnel. The biggest shop was the metalworking shop, over 100 people. The shops were divided into groups of about 15-20 workers apiece, but varied according to the process of production in each shop. While he worked in this factory, he worked in the Technical Department the entire time. His work was very much the same as in the Shanghai research institute.

Cultural Revolution in the Factory

When he first got to the factory, production was just starting to improve. It was 1968, after the high tide of the movement. Factional fights had been fierce, and production had completely stopped for a while. Before he had left the Shanghai research institute they had sent a number of leading cadres (party secretaries), technicians, and two engineers to do labor reform. They were all sent to Chongming Island, to a labor reform camp. The two engineers finally came back in 1970. Their historical problem had been a foreign education--one in England, the other in the US. There were a lot of cases like this.

When he first got to Fuzhou, the same thing had happened to many of the leaders and technicians, but they were not sent to rural labor but to manual labor in the casting shop--this was the most difficult work. By the time he arrived they had already established the RC, and a military representative was acting as the vice-head. But the PLA representatives all left in late 1971 and early 1972, after the Lin Biao incident. There was no formal Military Control Committee, only 1-2 representatives of the army at any given time. This plant was too small to have a military control committee. When he first arrived, there was no party branch in existence. This was not formally re-established until after the PLA representatives left in 1972.

At that time the head of the RC had been transferred in from another plant, and all the original plant secretaries had been transferred elsewhere. Units traded party secretaries very commonly at that time, because so many of them had been struggled. So the head of the RC did not become the vice-secretary of the party branch until later, and the new head of the party branch was transferred in from elsewhere.

They did not abolish departments, but for a while most of the staff workers and technicians participated in full-time manual labor in the shops. There was no work for them to do in the offices. They mostly returned to the offices in 1971.

Campaigns: They had a "cleaning of the class ranks campaign". There were two sorts of victims. One type was those with historical problems--those who had some connections with the KMT before liberation, etc. Another types was those who had stolen things or engaged in illicit sexual relationships or other undesired behavior. Many were criticized in this campaign. Most were ordinary cadres--technicians, and also workers. Some of these people were expelled from the plant and sent back to their home villages--about 8-9 people in all. They did finally return after they were rehabilitated around 1973 or so.

They also had an "anti May 16 elements campaign", whose target was people who had been active during the cultural revolution and who had travelled elsewhere, organized fighting groups, shot and beaten other people. Some were expelled and sent to the countryside, and some were put in jail. These were the young, daring leaders of the factions. The movement took place after the cleaning of the class ranks campaign. A few typical leaders of factions who were responsible for deaths during the CR were sentenced at public denunciation meetings and afterwards shot. These were well-publicized, not meant to be secret at all.

There was also a "one strike, three anti" campaign (yida sanfan), which in fact was about the same thing as the cleaning of the class ranks campaign. He doesn't remember much about these things, because he was not interested, and tried to avoid the meetings.

There were study campaigns only after the death of Lin Biao. They didn't have any criticisms within the plant of specific individuals. It was all study--Lin Biao, Confucius, etc. During these campaigns, sometimes they used a lot of work time for meetings, and stopped production to meet in the afternoons for two hours. But after the Pi Lin campaign there was no more meeting during work hours. They waited until after work.

Factions in the early 1970s

There were leftover factions in the factory, and they exist right up to present. There no longer were formal organizations, but they have the personal connections (siren guanxi) left over from the previous factions. The two sides did not get along. They would try to promote their own people and build up their own power bases. This was not necessarily a young-old cadre split. It was based on personal connections. The differences were striking around 1970, and the two sides criticized one another in the cleaning of the class ranks. But by 1975-6, the differences and conflicts were not apparent on the surface. But it still surfaced in the way people talked about one another and in their opinions towards one another.