

PERSONAL DATA

Age: 29

Sex: Male

Education: middle school, incomplete

Total Years Relevant Experience: 7

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1978 Year Left China: 1978

Initial Immigration Status: unknown, probably legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: China native/OS connections unknown

Class Background/Political Designation: unknown

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Coal mine, Heilongjiang, 1972-78
a) Coal miner and repair worker, 1972-73
b) Procuring agent, Supply Department, Office
worker in Finance and Personnel Departments,
1973-78

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

1) Ministry/(15,000+)

APPOINTMENTS: 1

TOTAL HOURS: 3

PAGES TEXT: 3

Occupational History (3/8/80, 3 hrs.)

He worked from 1972-78 in a coal mine in Heilongjiang. There were 15,000 or more workers and staff in the mine bureau, which included four mines in all. This was under the Coal Mining Ministry, and the mines were begun in 1958. In the mine he worked in, there were over 5000 workers and staff. He had been an intellectual youth in a village for 3 years, then sent to the mine. He had earlier studied in middle school for one year before the school was closed during the Cultural Revolution. After that he was sent down to the countryside.

When he was first assigned to the mine, he did 6 months of manual labor in the coal shafts. Then he was transferred to the machinery repair department, responsible for the maintenance of machinery, as a repair worker. This was above ground. One year later, he was transferred to the supply department, but was still considered a worker. This was part of the policy of 'using workers to take the place of cadres' (yigong dai gan). His job was to travel around and conclude contracts for materials and supplies needed by the mine. Diesel, fuel, and machine oil were the main things. He carried out this business with other units that his mine already had good relations with. Usually he went to places like Shanghai, Zhejiang. He did this work for 3 years. He also worked for 6 months in the finance department, and half a year in the personnel department.

Wages, Labor

Starting workers at the mine began at grade 4, 52¥. There was also a regional supplement of 10%, and other supplements. It all came to 80+¥ per month for a new worker. Workers above the ground start at grade 2, 39¥, with a regional supplement of 10%. There were no grade 1 workers, quite a few grade 7's, but 5 and 6 were the most common. There were only two grade 8's, and about 25 grade 7's.

There were no raises during the period he worked there. When he was shifted to above-ground work his wages were dropped to grade 3, at 46¥ plus the 10% supplement, which made over 50¥. While he was there, there was only one wage readjustment, in 1977. Earlier he had heard from older workers that there were many readjustments before the CR, in 1960, 1962, 1964. In 1977 they were allowed to give raises to 46% of the workers. First, those who had worked over 7 years and were still grade 2 were raised to grade 3. Among those left over, they raised by one grade according to work activism.

There were no bonuses during this period, and they still hadn't instituted them when he left in June 1978. He had heard that they had piece rates during 1962-3, but that they stopped them soon thereafter. This was pay according to the number of tons of coal moved, and called the 'bao gong' system (a kind of 'contract labor' system). Money was paid according to output.

Temporary laborers ordinarily were not used. But they did hire some in 1976, because there were production problems. They were hired from villages, worked for a fixed period of one year. Their wages were slightly higher than ordinary workers, and the better ones were kept on as regular workers thereafter. This was specially permitted because normally this was illegal.

Yes, there was an effect on worker activism of this condition where there were no raises for years. First, workers hadn't had raises for a long time. Second, if you worked hard you still got the same wage as those who didn't. There were other effects besides slow work. Waste went up. People didn't care if they wasted materials or if they broke something. They just

got a new one. They would use machine oil for their fires to keep warm. They also asked for sick leave for even small things, especially if they had good relations with the doctor.

The cadres knew this was a problem, but they were also pretty mediocre (mama huhu) themselves. Why? Cadres knew that during the Gang of 4 period to be too hard working would be to risk putting production in command and having a label put on you. This was called the 'theory of putting production first'. His mine lost money every year. They lost about 2¥ for each ton of coal mined. The state set a target on the loss rate for each ton, but the mine 'surpassed' this target too. It still didn't matter. They were given supplementary money and the leaders were never punished for this. There were also too many workers above the ground, and not enough below. He thinks this is due to 'going through the back door'. Workers gradually were able to use connections to get transferred to the top, and this happened to the point that there were too many up there for the work to be done.

Mine Organization

The group (ban) was the basic unit, about 15 workers. The group leader (banzhang) is appointed by the mineshaft supervisor (jing zhang), who is equivalent to a department head level cadre. There is also a vice group leader appointed in the same way. The selections in both cases are actually made by the branch Party secretary. These group leaders are not always Party members. The basic criteria is that they are active in labor. Their responsibility is to direct workers, and keep an eye on safety conditions. Every 3 groups comprises a section, with a section chief (duan zhang) who leads 3 groups, and who is partly separated from production. There are no offices below the ground. There are many sections. Above the sections were mineshafts (jingkou), and there were a total of 8 mineshafts in his mine (kuang). The mineshaft supervisor (jing zhang) was equivalent to department head, while the mine director (kuang zhang) was equivalent to a bureau level department (chu) head.

The groups divide labor internally. One worker minds the electrical generator. Another two set the dynamite. Others drill, others dig the coal and put it in carts, and the carts are taken to the surface. Other workers are responsible for building tracks, and installing beams. These workers work in a different section, the basic construction section. Responsibility systems--workers are not allowed to smoke or sleep in the mine. Workers are not responsible for anything else except work.

Union and Party Organization

They had a union, which did not cease functioning during the period, but it had no real power or functions. They did a few things like extra-curricular activities for workers, and handled welfare arrangements. They never had a workers' congress. They did have a militia.

There were very few party members among the workers. There were about 600 or so workers in his mineshaft, and only about 15 Party members. The branch party office was located along with the mine shaft office. There was a mine revolutionary Committee (kuang geming weiyuan hui) in his mine, which was named the 'East Wind' mine. The RC had 10+ members. The Party secretary was the chairman, the mine director and vice-director were vice heads. The other members were leading cadres from other units. One was a mass representative, a former member of the rebel faction. There was no factionalism in the mine left over from the CR. The plant did not have any production problems during that period aside from the many accidents which claimed a number of lives every year.

Political Study

Every day before work for one half hour they would have political study, usually newspapers or documents. They did not have small groups. Before the shift, more than 100 workers from the mine shaft would assemble in the hall and the shaft supervisor, a party member, would read the documents. Workers didn't really listen, some slept. This form of political study did not change, even when there was a movement like Pi Lin Pi Kong, the criticism of Deng, or the criticism of the Gang of 4 (which also saw wallposters put up by workers). These kinds of movements did not influence the mine very much. There were no real changes in the mine after the Gang of 4 fell. No changes in leadership or in organization up to the time he left.

Administration

The mining bureau was organized as follows. It was under the Coal Ministry in Peking. Their mining bureau (kuangwu ju) was under a municipal government. There were four mines (kuang) in the bureau. There was also a coking plant, a machinery plant, and an electrical generation plant.

There were not enough cadres to go around in the department offices of his mine, so a few workers, like the informant, worked in the offices as workers. They kept their worker grades and pay but did desk work. Since they didn't have fixed positions, they moved around a lot.

There were few apprentices in the mine, just for skilled work like installing electrical equipment. Miners did not go through an apprenticeship period.