

Positions Held: 1) Copy clerk, Plant office, Electric Motor Factory,
Fujian, 1970-75

1) County / (100)

none mentioned

Occupational History (5/28/80, 2.5 hrs.)

The informant studied Chinese language and literature at a university, studying for 5 years and graduating in 1968. He studied Chinese classics for the first 3 years, then went to modern Chinese literature and foreign literature. Among the foreign authors he remembers studying were Balzac, Mark Twain, and Turgenev. After graduation, because of the cultural revolution, he was sent down to a commune for one year of labor tempering (duanlian). He did this for a year, during which he became the commune scribe (wenshu), copying orders and documents. Then he was transferred to a county level reporting group (baodao zu), which did service work for the local party committee. They collected information about agricultural production, the implementation of policies, model factories, communes, workers, and peasants.

In 1970 he was transferred to a factory and worked there until 1975. This was an electrical machinery factory administered at the county level. It had 80+ workers, and around 100 employees in all. They were under the county industrial bureau. They made water pumps and small motors for tractors and trucks, these were electrical motors. He worked as a copy clerk in the plant office.

In 1975 he was transferred to a county upper middle school where he taught Chinese until he came to Hong Kong legally in 1979, April. His work experience was in Fujian province.

Wages and Employment

During his two years in the commune and the press office he got 45.5¥, which was the trial period wage for university graduates. In 1970, he was finally raised to grade 21 administrative cadre, 55.5¥, because they hadn't gotten around to it during the CR. They delayed the automatic promotion for the trial employees. After this, there were no raises. There were no wage readjustments from 1970-75 in the factory. There were no bonuses. They did have supplementary wages for those who moved in from different wage regions.

They had temporary and contract workers who came from both the communes and from residents' committees in the towns. Contract laborers often stayed on for years and were finally put onto the permanent wage bill when the plant received permission to enlarge the permanent workforce. Contract workers were hired because they could not get bureau permission to hire more permanent workers. The contract laborers and temporary laborers could both come from either city or countryside. Contract workers got 30¥ a month, and got some of their medical expenses paid for, and free medicine. Temporary workers did not get these benefits.

Plant Structure and Management

The plant had an office, in which he worked. He was a copy clerk. There was a secretary to the plant party secretary who handled internal party work. There was a party secretary, who was the head of the revolutionary committee, who was the top leader in the factory. There was one vice-secretary who was a vice-head of the revolutionary committee, and one vice head of the RC who was not a party secretary. There was also a statistician and a cashier in the office. This was the plant headquarters.

Below there were about 3-4 workshops of various sizes. The largest had over 40 employees, the smallest about 6. The big shops were not divided into small groups. But there was an informal accommodation where every 6 machines in an area, including their operators--say 3 masters and 3 apprentices--would

have one among them who was reliable, had good guanxi with the shop director. You could call him a group leader, because he served as a conduit of the shop directors orders to the workers. These same people were also responsible for arranging group study. They were usually party members but if a group didn't have party members, they would certainly appoint someone who was a youth league member or an activist.

The shops had a director, and two vice-director. One handled politics, the other technology. The shop director was also the branch party secretary.

The revolutionary committee had 8-9 members, most of whom were party members. The party secretary was the head, and also acted as plant director. There were 3-4 shop directors on the RC. One of the vice-directors of the RC was a vice-party secretary. Another vice-head was an old experienced manager who was vice plant director before the CR. There were 2 mass representatives--one was an old worker, another was an activist who was a female. She has since come to Hong Kong.

In fact, the party secretary ran everything. The old vice plant director had an office, but no power (youzhi wuquan). There was what was known as the policy, "the party leads everything" (dang lingdao yiqie), and "unified leadership" (yiyuanhua lingdao). There was also a party committee. The party committee specialized in worker's political thought, and political campaigns. And the RC handled production. But in reality, the RC was under the leadership of the Party Committee, because the party led everything. The RC was not the same level of leadership as the party committee, they were not equal in power. The RC was under party committee orders. There were also a few administrative 'groups' (zu). He remembers the technical (jishu) group, the logistics (houqin) group, and the storage (baoguan) group.

Campaigns

When they had political campaigns, the top ordered the party committee to hold X amount of meetings, and write up Y amount of reports, and they complied. The 'cleaning of the class ranks' campaign near the end of the CR was just like the campaigns Stalin ran in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s to 'clean out anti-Soviet class enemies'. They killed a lot of people in the USSR then. They didn't kill many in China, but he feels that the campaign was even more severe than the soviet one because they seized, investigated, struggled, and imprisoned so many people. Given China's large population you could probably say this movement was more severe than the Soviet one. China represents an 'expansion of the suppression of counter-revolutionaries' (sufan kuoda hua).

This movement was run while he was still in college. When he was in the factory, the most outstanding campaign was the criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius campaign in 1974, and the criticism of water margin in 1975. They met in the evenings to study usually, but during these campaigns they often stopped production to hold mass meetings, put up wallposters, go to a criticism rally. In those days the leaders didn't need permission to stop production. The biggest problem in production during that period was that it wasn't planned very well. They often had to stop production to wait for materials.

Social Relations

Workers often didn't come to work then. Social relations were very complex. Workers didn't mind each other, and cadre's didn't manage the workers. Work activism was lacking. Several reasons for this. People's living standards were getting lower, and it was hard to buy commodities. Wages were fixed, and did not vary by attendance, or by how hard you worked.

The other half of it was that there were poor relations between cadres and masses. The political campaigns and accusations which often turned out to be false made people hold anger in their stomachs toward cadres. If they have anger in their stomachs, they won't work hard. Also, leading cadres were afraid to handle production too well, they didn't dare grasp it too firmly. They stuck to politics because it was safer. If they were afraid to grasp production, they were just as unwilling to urge the workers to work hard and come in on time.

Factions--there were none in name. But they still had remnant feelings. This had an affect on people's mutual relations. This would set up barriers between people. The affect his had on things in the factory was that whenever an important matter came up, these informal (wuxingde) groups would get together and come up with different opinions. If a political campaign came up they would go after one another, criticize others for their political thought.

They did criticize people during the LinBiao-Confucius campaign, for their thinking. They did during every campaign in the early 1970s. If they didn't how could the party secretaries report a success? They usually would criticize people for things they said to their friends, their life-styles, their attitudes. At these times "suspicions turned into crimes"--it was enough just to be accused or suspected. So under these conditions it was easy for these two factions to go at one another. In fact, none of these people ever had any real problems. In many cases, the only reason there was suspicion about their present thinking was because they had made mistakes in the 1950s or at other times. These criticisms varied in their seriousness. Least serious was in the small groups, to make a self-criticism. Most serious was the all-plant mass criticism meeting, and the organization of special investigation groups. These movements would end without any real conclusion. They would criticize, investigate, but never tell the people involved whether or not in reality they did have a problem. His plant was relatively good, they only did this to one or two people during the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius.