
PERSONAL DATA

Age: 38

Sex: Female

Education: lower middle school graduate

Total Years Relevant Experience: 24

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1980

Year Left China: 1980

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: Peking native/Mother pre'49 returned OS

Class Background/Political Designation: OS/KMT (father KMT official)

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Apprentice, worker, Telecommunications Equipment
Factory, Peking, 1957-62

2) Worker, Auto Sheet Metal Plant, Peking, 1962-64

3) Worker, Metalworking, Auto Parts Plant, Peking, 1964-80

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

1) Ministry (#4 Machine Building)/(5000+)

2) Municipal, collective/(@100)

3) Municipal, collective/(@200)

APPOINTMENTS: 3

TOTAL HOURS: 7

PAGES TEXT: 6

Occupational History (6/15/80, 2.5 hrs.)

The informant has an office worker (zhiyuan) class background. Her mother was a returned overseas Chinese before 1949, and her father was a KMT official. She started work at the end of 1957, after graduating from lower middle school at age 15. She was an apprentice worker in a factory for three years, during which time she lived in the collective dormitory, with eight girls to a room. She was unable to get into upper middle school because her father had been a member of the KMT, and also because she had overseas Chinese ancestry. Her father was sent to a labor reform camp, so she stayed with relatives in Peking. She was introduced to a factory there, where she took an examination and was admitted to work. This was a telecommunications factory (youxiandian chang). They made switchboards, telephone components, telegraph equipment. It was a new, large plant built in 1957, and was directly under the #4 Machine Bldg. Ministry. It had over 5000 employees. It was a modern plant, and the shop she worked in had one desk for each worker, where they made small electrical components by hand and with the aid of tools. The shop was air-conditioned, humidity-controlled, and they all wore white lab coats. These were good working conditions. She worked here for about six years. This plant was located in the eastern suburbs of Peking. She decided that since she had just gotten married and was going to have a child, she should move into the city near her new residence. So in 1962 she gave up her job, moved into Peking, and went to work in a small collective auto sheet metal parts fabricating factory in Peking. She worked there for a couple of years, then transferred in 1964 to a larger metalworking factory within the same system of collectives (there were 10 in all, and they all were under Municipal management). This new collective plant was larger, had several hundred workers. It also made parts for autos--electrical parts. Later it grew and turned into a state-run plant, and made electric adding machines, some of whose parts were imported from France. She worked in this plant until March 1980. In the first collective factory, she was given work as a statistician--an office staff job. In the second factory, she was first given work handling the groups of students coming to the factory for stints of manual labor--she was given this light work because her health was bad at the time. Later she went back to work as a regular production worker after the Cultural Revolution.

Wages (6/17/80, 2.5 hrs.)

During her apprenticeship period, the first year wage was 16¥, second year 18¥, and third year 21¥. After these 3 years they took a simple test which was not the primary criteria for promotion. The major consideration was work performance, and also some politics. You can't make any political errors. Other than this you will be made a full worker. Over 99% make it.

Then you become a grade 1 worker, 35.5¥. After one year they are again raised according to regulations, to grade 2, 41.71¥. Most workers were of low grades, since this was a new plant, but there were a handful of higher grade workers. One old fellow was grade 8, a 'worker engineer', and a veteran of the labor movement. He took part in the 'February 7' Strike (er qi bagong) in Changxindian before liberation.

In 1962 or so there was a large wage readjustment. In 1972, there was another wage readjustment for the low paid. At this time she was working in the street factory in Peking. She was not given a raise, but says that

these wage readjustments do effect the collective sector also, its just that their method is different. She personally did not receive any raises after reaching grade 2. She was not given a raise during 1977-78 or 1979-80 because she had been on sick leave for many months running over a period of the past 2 years. There was no problem with livelihood because for most of the period she still received overseas remittances.

The collective factories she worked in had a system of monthly wages, just like state industries. But the amount at the grades were lower. Grade 1 was 35.5¥. Also there were no workers over grade 4 or so. The two collective factories she worked in were both the same. When she was transfered to the collective sector here wages did not change. In fact, they did not change right up until she left.

During most of her past two years she was on sick leave, and got 60% of her wages because she was originally in a state factory and a union member. She relates a long story about how she didn't get along with the uneducated 'red' leader and just didn't feel like working, and also about how she used connections with high level cadres in the Instruments Bureau to get her exit application approved.

Bonuses

In her state enterprise before the CR, they had bonuses divided into 3 grades, assessed monthly, and connected with politics, work performance, and attendance. They discussed in the small groups, made selections, and sent the names to the section where the leaders discussed the names over again, then to the shops where they would weed out names. The bonuses were 8, 6, and 4¥. Only a few didn't get any bonuses. That was if you came late, didn't meet quotas, caused accidents, or were lazy at work. They did not have monetary bonuses quarterly or at year's end. These were started after 1977. In their plant before the CR, the quarterly and yearly prize was as a result of advanced worker competitions, and they gave prizes like pots, towels, or sports equipment.

In the collective factory before the CR, they had quarterly bonuses which were small--5¥ and below, divided into three grades. There were no bonuses during the CR, while they restored them in 1977.

In the state enterprise, during 1961 or so, they had piece rates for about one year. This was a basic wage plus a piece bonus for overfulfilling targets. People were getting bonuses of up to 35¥ a month and adding them to a basic wage of around 40¥. But after a year they discontinued this because central policy changed. They were quite willing to work overtime in these circumstances. Their state factory had very few temporary workers.

Discipline, Punishments

They had criticism and self-criticism meetings, warnings, recordings on a person's file. After three official recordings, you could be expelled from the plant. She can think of two examples of this from the collective factory under the instrument bureau. One young girl had a boyfriend, got pregnant and didn't think much of it. They held a series of criticism meetings against her and she became embarrassed. She was about 18, her boyfriend 25. Normally they would let them get married but this time they didn't. She stopped coming to work because of the embarrassment. Later she was fired for being absent without leave. In another case, in the same factory, there was another young girl worker who was caught stealing radio tubes by her group leader. She was criticized. But she wasn't very smart, and figured since everyone else stole things it would be all right, so she kept at it. She was caught again, accused of corruption,

and sent to jail. This was severe because unlike labor reform you don't return to your unit when you are released from jail. Firings, in general, were rare. She only is aware of about 5-6 people in her whole experience who were fired.

Worker Motivation

In her experience in the large state factory, there were no real problems with worker activism. They did not ask for a lot of sick leave, worked hard because their income would be affected if they didn't. In the collectives, after the cultural revolution, workers did not work hard at all. Right up to 1978 they came late, asked for a lot of sick leave and were absent without leave, dragged things out at work, went out in the middle of the day to do the shopping, etc. The leaders just didn't worry about it. The leadership was in disorder anyway, and they were interested mainly in holding meetings. They figured it was all the state's money anyway, so why worry about it.

Communications Equipment Factory, Shop Management

Her section had about 200 people, and it was divided into about 6 groups. The small groups ranged from 28-50 people or so. Hers was around 28-30. The group leader was in charge, and they also had a youth league group leader and a party small group leader within the group. These two organizations were the backbone elements, the activists. They held their own meetings to discuss problems, and raised issues at the group's meetings for the general membership. When people needed to be criticized, they were there to talk and lead the criticisms. Her group leader was a party member, as were most of them. Group leaders were appointed, not elected.

There was a group leader and vice-leader. They oversaw production, solved problems, went to meetings. They were said to be production workers, and were indeed workers, but they had no quotas, and did not often do work. Most of their work was leadership work, meetings, etc. They also had several workers who did management work in the small group in their spare time. They were called the 'eight personnel' (ba da yuan). They did not get extra pay for this, but were appraised highly for bonuses.

They had a wenti yuan (文体员) who handled cultural and recreational activities. They register members for dancing troupes, basketball matches. They sign people up, pass out tickets, work with the union organization on this. The 'union committeeman' (gonghui weiyuan) handles the distribution of fringe benefits like hardship supplements, borrowing money from the unions' savings association. The statistician (tongji yuan) records progress in completion of the plan--how many products, how many above the quota, how many up-to-standard, how many wasted. This person was given a small amount of time during the shift also to fill out daily reports, so this was not entirely spare time. The 'attendance checker' (laoqin yuan) takes attendance--late arrivals, early departures, sick leaves. These are simple records. These records form the basis for wages at the month's end. These records are sent up to the section, then after collation, up to the shop. The 'propaganda worker' (xuanchuan yuan) is a youth league member. He or she is responsible for making reports on political matters, speeches, reading documents at meetings. If there is a good experience in the group, he will make a good report, sometimes will take up the microphone of the section's public address system and report himself on these accomplishments at the end of the shift. The 'health worker' (weisheng yuan) takes care of small illnesses--headaches, monthly sickness. This person kept a small medicine box. The idea was to save clinic trips for workers. The 'women's committeeperson' (funu

weiyuan) handles women's problems, birth control work, and very simple reports. There may have been one or two other minor 'yuan', she does not remember. They didn't always stick to the number eight closely.

They always had this system when she was there. Some plants have this system, but the yuan don't really have anything to do. This was in a large, centrally administered plant. They had this same sort of thing in the collective plant (it was a large collective). But there were fewer yuan because there were fewer fringe benefits to manage. But there was no fixed system or organization. Often this was just the activists or the youth league members who help out.

Quality inspection: In the state-run telecommunications plant there was about one quality inspection worker (jianyan yuan) for every four workers. This person was under the Quality Control Department, not under the section or shop leader. These people were nominated by the section leadership, and were originally ordinary workers. Their technical level was fairly high. They checked every single piece that others did. If they found a bad piece they would put it back on the conveyor belt with a note. They had control numbers for each worker to know whose responsibility it was. These quality control workers also record how many sub-standard goods each person turns out. He just keeps the records. The pieces that aren't up to standard are sent back to the same worker for repairs. Not until it passes his inspection is a piece counted as completed for purposes of quota fulfillment.

Quotas (6/17/80, 2 hrs.)

They had quotas set by middle-level departments in the plant. If you met them or overfulfilled by a bit, then you would be assessed favorably for a bonus. But if you didn't, you would be assessed unfavorably. Other than that there were no real consequences. It was not until the early 1960s that they had monetary bonuses in the state factory anyway, and then piece rates for a short while, and quarterly bonuses after that. So quotas were not of much use. They were not hard to meet anyway.

While she worked in the collective plants there were not any quotas at all. How did they judge worker performance? That was precisely the problem. They couldn't. They just looked at one's political biaoxian. If your relations with the leader were good, then you would be assessed as a good worker. The situation was laughable in the collectives after the CR. Waste was terrible and so was quality. But no one did much about it. When they sold the adding machines they did manage to finish they made a lot of money. So who cared? When the time came to distribute bonuses in 1978 they were giving bonuses to workers that were doing the equivalent of 2 hours of work per day.

The quotas were handled very tightly in the state-run plant before the CR. There was only a target for output, not for quality. If you failed to meet quality standards, then you were held back from meeting the output quota until enough of your pieces passed inspection.

Great Leap Forward

The biggest effect was that they produced even more, made even more money in the factory. They worked 16-18 hours a day, and were paid no overtime. They wanted to serve the country and become advanced workers. They overfulfilled targets by a great deal. Quality was still all right. They also hired a lot of new workers, about a couple thousand, during this period. They came both from cities and from rural villages. During 1962 they had a movement to send these people back to the villages they came from. They sent back about 1000 people at that time. During the

Great Leap period they worked almost double time for over one year. In other times 9-10 hours a day was commonplace.

Cultural Revolution

They had the normal sequence of politics, beginning with the Four Cleans Movement, which she says actually was the start of the CR. After the 16 points came out in 1966, workers began to organize, left the factory whenever they pleased, put up wallposters, beat leading cadres, and beat one another. Production stopped completely from 1967 all the way to 1970-71 in her collective factory.

There were two factions. The first group was organized and controlled by the Party committee at the beginning. It was full of communist youth league members. But after the work teams were called back another group organized itself to oppose the party. But after a while both factions opposed the party leaders as well as each other.

By 1972-3, most of the old leading cadres had returned to work, and had been rehabilitated. In 1968, they established a revolutionary committee, which took several months. Then they ran the cleaning of the class ranks campaign. In this campaign they investigated people with bad class backgrounds and historical problems in the factory. They had struggle meetings where the accused were forced to 'do the airplane', and were not allowed to return home for the period of the investigation. They also sent people elsewhere to investigate cases. Shortly after this they ran an 'anti May 16 elements' campaign, where they went after members of mass organizations for their historical problems. They tried to give her trouble during this campaign because of her father's historical problems, but she would not confess. They eventually never really cleared up her case through investigation.

In 1968 the PLA representatives were sent to the Eastern District of Peking to run a movement among the collective enterprises. They started with a 'great alliance'. Then they transferred leading cadres--plant directors and party secretaries--back and forth between enterprises to become leading cadres on the revolutionary committees. All the members of RCs, including the mass representatives, were party members. They had to be. But once they entered this committee they were no longer representatives. Their mass organizations were dispersed when the great alliance was formed. PLA representatives came to the plant and established the RC, and stayed on for two more years. After the end of the cultural revolution the factionalism was more serious than at the beginning. This is because now the factions were among the people and not within the national leadership.

Such factionalism exists right up to today in the collective factory, but it now is not so striking as it was at the end of the cultural revolution. It affects people's attitudes towards one another. Also it comes out in petty corruption on the part of some cadres which is supported or not reported by others. Worker's don't have any trust in their leaders as a result. They see the favoritism and the special favors they take for themselves. People are continually trying to think of ways to enter the party, enter the communist youth league, and move up. There were also many opportunities for leaders to do business on the side with other units, communes, and gain personal advantage from this. She didn't see such things happening in her large state-run factory before the CR.

In her collective plant she says production didn't really begin again in earnest until 1978, and then it only got a little better. The leadership was so bad before that the production situation was very poor, and you could almost say there was not production during the entire 1970s.

After the Gang of Four

After the fall of the Gang of Four, there were changes on the surface. There was a supposed reorganization of the leading group. But in reality there were no major changes. They thought it was laughable. The leaders ran a very mild criticism of one another, then delivered impassioned denunciations of the Gang of Four, in complete reversal of their previous positions. But all of this made no difference to the people. The Party Committee still runs things according to their wishes. All this rehabilitation of people from the 1950s like Peng Dehuai--workers don't understand the meaning of this all too well. All they know is that they still have to smile and agree with everything the Party says and only then can they go about their own business.