

PERSONAL DATA

Age: 36

Sex: Male

Education: Technical school graduate

Total Years Relevant Experience: 8

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1972

Year Left China: 1972

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: Indonesia OS, returned 1950s

Class Background/Political Designation: OS

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Oil Refinery, Maoming, Guangdong, 1965-72
a) Electrician, 1965-70
b) Staff member, Purchasing Dept., 1970-72

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

1) probably Province/(3000)

APPOINTMENTS: 2

TOTAL HOURS: 3

PAGES TEXT: 4

Occupational History (6/19/80, 1.5 hrs.)

The informant was born in Fujian, moved to Indonesia early in his childhood and came back to China in his early teens. Because his father was a classmate of Liao Chengzhi, he was able to get into the special Peking #27 Middle School. After graduation from lower middle school in 1962, at age 18, he was assigned to a technical middle school at Maoming, Guangdong province. He graduated in 1965, after three years of study. In 1965 he was assigned to work at a large integrated Coal Mining Complex of 12,000 employees, the main industry of Maoming. The complex included coal mines, coal processing and transport plants, electrical generation plants, and machine building plants. He worked in an oil refinery which made oil from coal, and which employed 3,000 people. He was an electrical worker for 5 years, then from 1970-72 he worked in the purchasing department (caigou ke). He came out legally in 1972, again through personal connections that his father had with top leaders in Peking. His application for an exit visa was processed in only 5 days.

Wages

He attended technical middle school, so after he graduated he was a technical worker, grade 3. He went through a trial period (jianxi) for one year at 42¥, and one year later, he was made regular (zhuanzheng) and got 56¥. There were no wage readjustments while he was at the plant. He did not have to go through an apprenticeship period, which was one year, because he went to technical school.

Before the cultural revolution they had a yearly testing system for raises which was set by the Petroleum Ministry and which was independent of the national wage readjustments. If you tested well, you had a good work and political showing, then you would be raised 5¥. They just increased the wages, did not change the wage grade. This practice was abolished in 1966.

They had bonuses until March 1966. He was an electrician, so in his group the bonuses worked like this: If he was repairing motors that day, they would give him a quota of 10 to repair. If he fixed more, he would get 20¢ per motor over the quota. This was a sort of piece wage (jijian gongzi). They also had a contract (baogong) system. They were given X number of days to install a piece of electrical equipment. If they finished early, they would work on other things and thus get more money. He could increase his monthly wages by about 14¥ per month this way, and got about 70¥. New workers were eligible for bonuses during their trial periods.

There were no supplementary wages after they abolished the bonuses. If they were in need of money, they had to ask their group leader for a supplement. They also had moral incentives before the CR, they selected advanced workers and gave them towels, thermos bottles, and publicized their names. After 1966 they discontinued this.

Discipline and Attendance

Before 1966, they would deduct wages if you were at work less than 25 days a month. They would deduct according to 1/27 of your salary, or in other words, a day's wage. If you ask for sick leave or personal leave, you were not docked wages, but for personal leave you were limited to 1 day per month.

If you worked poorly or engaged in bad behavior, first they talked to

and educated you. After that, they gave you warnings. After the third warning, if you have not made a self-criticism and improved, they would suspend you for three months, after which they would return you to work. This was suspension without pay. This was not rare. They did this for those who were absent without leave, gambling, fighting and arguing with other workers. After one month they gave you a chance to come back and do a self-criticism in front of a mass meeting. If after you come back you do the same thing all over again, they can suspend you for another 3 months without warning. After the fifth suspension, the plant can get permission from the Municipal Labor Department (Chu) to expel the worker.

In all his time there, only 3 workers were expelled. One for gang fighting, another for gambling, and another for illicit sexual relations. These were all repeated offenders. This was just in his shop. He does not know about other shops.

After 1966 all of these regulations fell into disuse. There were no penalties for poor attendance, no firings, warnings, or suspensions. It was like this right up to 1972 when he left. This also had a bad effect on attendance and work activism, because there were no punishments or changes in wages regardless of your behavior. There was another aspect to the problem. Before the cultural revolution workers could raise their livelihood problems--housing, food, pay--with their union representatives in the shop, of which there were many, or with the branch party secretary when he came down twice a week for chats with workers to find out about livelihood problems. But after this time there was no union, and the branch secretary was in trouble. Workers could not raise these livelihood issues then. It was said to reflect capitalist thought.

Contract Workers (6/21/80, 1.5 hrs.)

All the contract workers came from the villages. There were two types. First, workers aged 15-18 signed 3-year contracts, and got 1.5¥ for each day they showed up, or about 30+ ¥ a month. They were called 'young workers' (qing gong), and they came from families in villages that were in economic difficulty. If their performance was good, they could be made into permanent workers, starting out as apprentices. About 30% of the staff in the enterprise were these kinds of workers. They did moving work, pulled coal carts, etc.

Then there were the 'contract workers' (hetong gong). Their contracts are signed for 5 year periods. They have a letter of introduction from their communes, undergo a physical exam. They do heavy manual labor in factories and mines, things that younger workers can't do. Their wages were about 60¥ a month, but 20¥ of that went to their brigade in order to buy grain. Only about 5% of these workers are ever turned into permanent workers. They get no fringe benefits, these are the responsibility of their brigades.

These workers can be fired for violating rules and regulations of the enterprise, but few were because they had few opportunities in their home villages, so they normally worked much harder than the permanent workers. They had a lot of contract workers when he got there in 1965, but they stopped hiring new ones after the CR began. Then the ones they still had were all left over from before. Some used guanxi to get changed to permanent workers. There were still a lot left in 1972, when he left, but this was largely because the leadership was paralyzed by the cultural revolution and they couldn't really cut away excess workers.

Work Experience, 1965-70

He worked in the oil refinery as an electrician in the generator plant, and he traveled around to different units where repairs and installations needed to be done. He worked in the electrical team, about 15 workers, and sometimes they had to work up to 18 hours a day on repairs and installation, and worked up to 30 days a week. There was no overtime pay. But there was a lot of rest time during the day when there was nothing else to do.

There were no fixed quotas. Workers were judged based on how much work they completed, how well they finished the job. They had an engineering department which had university trained technicians who inspected their work. They also had apprentices (tudi) who were there to help them out.

They had a group leader who did regular work assignments, filled out reports, and communicated with the above leadership. There was no vice group leader. No workers were appointed to help group leaders. There was a person above the group level, at the zhong dui level, who appraised workers for prizes and advanced worker awards. The group leaders were at least communist youth league members if not party members. Their overall workshop, called an 'attack group' (tuji dui), was split into 18 groups in all. They were 'shock troops' specialized in different kinds of repair and installing work.

Cultural Revolution

The cultural revolution did have a big impact on their enterprise, despite its remote location. They had two factions, and a number of top leaders were knocked down. He was not at his plant from January 1967 until 1970, so he is not too clear on the sequence of events within the enterprise. He went on an 'exchange of experience' all over China on the trains, for free. He went to Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Shanghai, Peking, Guangxi, Wuhan and other points. He was in Wuhan for a couple of days in the Summer of 1967 during the uprising there, but got out quickly. They were shooting at one another and once a bullet whistled past his head. After that he decided to leave immediately. Later, on a boat from Wuzhou in Guangxi down the Pearl River towards Canton, he saw some rebels shoot down and sink a large passenger ferry with anti-tank rockets stolen from a train on its way to Vietnam. The ferry sank immediately and 1000 people were killed. The river flowed red with blood and there were bodies everywhere. There was no special reason for these young rebels to do this. They just wanted to try out these modern weapons.

About 80% of the workers in his enterprise left like this. That is why it took them until 1971 to establish a revolutionary committee. When he came back in 1970 there was a Military Control Committee (junshi guanzhi weiyuanhui) in power in the plant. There were a lot of soldiers in the city then to protect the oil and coal production.

The head of the eventual revolutionary committee was a PLA officer. The vice-heads were: a) the original party secretary, b) one leader from each faction, c) two surviving old cadres. They still had a party committee and power was held by the party secretary, but practically all the party's activities had stopped. This was for the coal oil refinery plant. The members of the RC were ordinary workers, cadres, and workers from each of the factions. There were over 200 members of the RC for the whole refinery, which had 2500 employees. The leadership as a proportion of employees increased greatly during this period, because everyone was pulling their own people up into the leadership.

The PLA was in charge of establishing the RC. They selected the members, and each faction chose their own delegates in a haphazard way. The called

the PLA cadres 'san dian hong' (three points of red), meaning that they had 3 stars on their uniforms, one on the cap and one on each point of their collar. They did what the PLA people said, even though they didn't really understand production. They were a pretty uncultured bunch, not very bright, mostly from the countryside. The plant was running at about 30-40% of capacity during this time.

Purchasing Work, 1970-72

When he first returned to the plant he was sent to the purchasing department (caigou bu). They got all kinds of equipment and material by trading with other units. The material they used was gasoline, coal oil, chemicals for making chemical fibres (which they traded with units in Shanghai), and small gauges. They were interested mostly in trading for motors and machinery. This was entirely outside of the plant, and was all by barter.

The leaders of the purchasing department were new cadres, young, from the leadership of the rebel faction. They were running a kickback scheme in the process of making trades. Since gasoline was in short supply, they could do well in bartering it away. Then they had a way of getting ahead of cash after raising the price of the goods. If a machine was worth 8,000¥, they would call it 10,000¥ and keep the extra 2,000¥. The leading cadres were running this operation, and all the personnel in the office were getting paid largely in order to keep them quiet. They knew how to manipulate numbers and get cash from the finance department. The informant's wages were normally 56¥, and he got an extra 70¥ per month this way. There was also a lot of 'gifts' being given to the cadres to cement deals, things like cigarettes that made one's life easier.

He went out twice on buying trips, both times to Shanghai for machines. When he got there he would call up the sales office of an enterprise on the phone, talk to people to see if they needed what he had and if they can get him what he needs. If possible he goes there bearing gifts like cigarettes, chats with the person, tries to establish a good personal relationship. He will keep these contacts and they come in handy later. Then when he concludes a trade both sides will jack up the value by a certain amount, sign and chop each other's bill of sale, and use the "you buy mine and I buy yours" method. No contracts are signed. They take the bill of sale back to the finance department of the enterprise, and get the cash, pocketing the extra. Then the materials are packed away on a freight train for the destination. They built up links (guagou) with certain heavy machinery plants in Shenyang, Shanghai, Wuhan, and Guangzhou, and went back repeatedly to the same plants.

When they went on these trips the purchasing agents went in pairs and were paid 15¥ apiece per day for expenses. They rotated people on these trips, never sent the same person all the time, because this would make the detection of corruption more difficult than if a few people were regularly involved. So they kept changing the faces to avoid suspicion.

He thinks that the plant leadership knew about this corruption but that they were all supporting one another among the leadership. Leaders were all the same. Only if a problem was very big would it become known and reported. When this happened, it affected all the other plants with whom they dealt. People got in trouble throughout the network of links.