

PERSONAL DATA

Age: 43 Sex: Male

Education: Industrial college graduate (machinery)

Total Years Relevant Experience: 12

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1979 Year Left China: 1979

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: unknown

Class Background/Political Designation: worker

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Technician, Production Department, Tractor Building
and Repair Plant, Guangdong, 1968-79

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

1) County/(200)

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

fitter for 8 mos. in 1968 as part of labor tempering

APPOINTMENTS: 2

TOTAL HOURS: 4

PAGES TEXT: 5

Occupational History (5/28/80, 2 hrs.)

The informant studied in the machinery department of an industrial college for 5 years, where he learned both the theory and operations of designing and building machinery. The purpose of his training was to train people who could themselves repair, make drawings, and lead technical work. He graduated in September 1967, and awaited his job assignment at his university for several months, during which time he played a lot of basketball, saw a lot of movies. He was 30 at the time.

Before going to college he worked for a period after primary school, when he was an apprentice in a printing shop for about 6 months in the 1950s. Then he returned to middle school and eventually to college. So he had a worker class background, and was fairly lucky as a result in college admissions and job assignments.

In early 1968, he was assigned to a Tractor Building and Repair Factory in a county seat in rural Guangdong. The factory was run by the county industrial bureau. It had over 200 employees, and was fairly large for a county-level enterprise in Guangdong. When he first went there, he was a fitter (qiangong) for a while, in order to familiarize himself with the production process. It also had the function of having him work together with the workers, explain to workers the diagrams if they had any questions. He did this for about 7-8 months. Then he was transferred to the Production Group (shengchan zu), an administrative department. His job was to make drawings for spare parts and distribute them to various shops, and help them in carrying out the tooling if they weren't sure how to do it.

The production group enlarged over the years, and finally 1976 they changed the name to 'section' (gu). The production section was divided into 4 parts--products, equipment, quality, repair and maintenance. There was also worker training. He was in the products section and also was involved in training work, teaching technical education courses for workers. He did this right up until he came to Hong Kong legally in 1979.

Wages

When he first graduated from college, he was given a grade 22 administrative cadre scale, 45¥. Why not assigned a technical cadre scale? He does not know, since some were assigned to technical grades. They just didn't pay that close attention, maybe it was an administrative error. Anyway, his pay was the same as a grade 13 technical cadre, except he was about 5¥ lower. He doesn't know what the lowest grades are for technical or administrative cadres.

After a one year trial period, he was made regular (zhuanzheng), and raised to 54¥, but still had the same assigned scale. Basically this is an automatic raise for all except those who have made political mistakes. He was not given a raise right up until he came to Hong Kong in January 1979.

In 1973, they had a wage readjustment for low grade workers who had low incomes, like those who were still grade one--but only workers. In 1978, there was a wage readjustment according to work contribution, whether your work was good or bad. They also considered length of service, their political behavior, personal life, like illicit sexual relations. They had assessment meetings at various levels--small groups, shifts, shops, general meetings for the entire plant, and finally closed-door decisions by the leading group in the plant. At each step they discussed, pulled out a few names from the nominees. They met four days a week after work for several

weeks to discuss, assess, nominate people for raises. Of course people had arguments over differences of opinion and over reasons given for opposition to individuals. This was natural. But this was not a major problem. The highest wage in the plant was a grade 7 worker whose wages were 70+¥. He was an old, experienced worker.

Bonuses

They always assessed for year-end bonuses from 1968 onwards. They looked at political performance, birth planning, attendance and leaves, unity with coworkers, and work performance, personal life, etc. They assessed in the groups, and sent names upward for approval. They divided workers into three grades. Only about 1% did not get bonuses. The rest were divided into 3 grades--20¥, 15¥, and 10¥. They included considerations of one's personal life in the discussions--whether or not you get along with your coworkers, whether you have had illicit sexual relations. Sometimes they had two bonuses per year, with one coming at the middle of the year, but this was not common, and it was not connected with the plant's profitability. The plant usually lost money anyway. They all said that in the plant--the plant leaders told him this. But they never had monthly bonuses right up until the time he left. The plant received supplemental funds from the state every year. They did have a bonus for overfulfilling quotas for about one month in 1974, but it was junked after that because they said material encouragements were no good.

Discipline

Work activism was about average, not really good, not really bad. But work efficiency was low because they often had to stop work and wait for materials. This was a constant problem. They had to wait for their purchasing agents (caigou yuan) to get whatever they needed before they could continue.

For poor work or misbehavior, the first step is to criticize in the small group. If the person doesn't reform, they will criticize at progressively larger meetings--shift, shop, all-plant. If this still doesn't work, then they will give a warning (jinggao). This means that the leaders talk to you and tell you not to do this anymore. The last resort is expulsion. But the managers need permission from above levels to do this.

Nobody was fired for any reason while he was in the plant. But they did have criticism of one person at the all-plant level for stealing things. He tried to sell materials to another plant and got reported. Generally speaking, they don't punish people, but give them education.

Temporary and Contract Workers

They had both kinds of workers in his plant. Temporary workers were paid and hired by the day. Contract laborers were longer-term, and paid by the month. They had temporary laborers from 1968 when he came to the plant, but during the wage readjustment of 1973 they turned all temporary workers into permanent ones. But in 1976 they started using contract labor.

The temporary workers were assigned by the cities, while contract workers came from the countryside. Most temporary workers were paid the same wages as regular workers, and they had grades just the same as permanent workers which were assigned them by the labor bureau. They were mostly grade 1, and some went up to grade 3. While they worked they got the same fringe benefits as regular workers, but could be terminated at any time, along with the benefits.

The contract workers came from agricultural villages. They were paid grade 1 wages, 29¥, but there was a breaking in period of 18¥ for a while. They did not sign contracts, there was no fixed period. You could be terminated at any time, but some have been working there for years and are still there. There's not much difference in the two systems except in where workers come from and return to. Temporary workers could stay in the city afterwards. Contract workers had to return to the village when they were done with work.

Cultural Revolution (5/29/80, 2 hrs.)

When he first came to the plant the cultural revolution was still going on. Production was just average, not too bad, not too good. The biggest problem was to get materials because sometimes they had to stop to wait on materials, while they sent several purchasing agents (caigou yuan) out to look for goods.

The two factions had already been united when he arrived. They were still investigating the cases of suspected capitalist roaders. One cadre had stood aside, the top man--the branch party secretary. They had already established the revolutionary committee, it had 7 members. The head was a former vice branch party secretary who had been appointed by officials above. One vice-head of the RC was another of the previous vice branch secretaries. A worker was the other RC head. There were four other members, and they were all shop directors. In his plant, shop directors were considered workers, thus worker representatives.

The members were picked at mass meetings. They were nominated by the top people in the plant, then they listened to the masses' opinions on these nominations. Then the upper levels had to approve. In reality, they simply picked the people who got along well with the top leaders--the party secretary was still in power.

They did have 'army representatives', and their power was considerable. They had directed the establishment of the revolutionary committee.

They also had two people, ordinary cadres who were relatively old, who were doing manual labor because they had participated in the KMT before liberation. These two, plus the old party secretary, were struggled repeatedly and later sent to do manual labor. All other cadres participated in manual labor for a while, but were not struggled.

When they 'struggled' somebody, they had a large meeting where they shouted accusations at the person on a stage. If they refused to admit these accusations were true, then they would be shouted at by everyone at the meeting. They had a 'cowshed' at the beginning, but had already abolished it by the time he got there. The dorms were very close and they didn't need them. These people were not beaten. They did stay in these 'cowsheds' for a brief period earlier. These two were finally rehabilitated in 1973, but not until after they had, along with the former party branch secretary, been to the May 7 cadre school in the countryside for about 2 years. After 1973, the 2 were sent back to ordinary cadre work. The former party secretary was rehabilitated in 1973 and in 1975 was promoted to be assistant bureau head.

The PLA representatives did not leave until 1977, but they did not have much real power after 1973 or so. They just did investigation work. They had a 'cleaning of the class ranks' campaign. This was Lin Biao's idea. They investigated people with historical problems--landlords, traitors, etc. Then they sent them back to their home villages. They had this campaign, studied the documents, etc. but such a small plant at the county level did not have many of these kinds of class enemies. So no one was attacked. The county

bureau knew the history of all the cadres--they didn't need to investigate. They also had an "anti May 16 elements" campaign. But this too was just study. How could there be people connected with Peking in such a small plant in a small county seat in Guangdong?

The 1970s

By 1970, the problems with production had largely returned to normal. The biggest problem was waiting for materials. Workers stopped work to wait for materials at least once a week. It was very common for a shop to halt production to wait for materials to arrive. This is because the state would give them X amount in targets, but not provide them with sufficient materials to meet the target. So the purchasing agent had to travel around looking for the needed materials. The most common practice was trading one product for another. Money was not often used because people were always searching for something for their own plant, so they used trades. This practice is widespread.

They had a campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, and to criticize Deng. They had study meetings, read the documents, but never attacked or criticized anybody within the plant. They had these meetings every day after work for 2 hours, except for Sunday, Saturday, and Wednesday. They just did a pro-forma job. Why would they want to criticize Deng? They liked him. But if they didn't criticize him, and didn't speak up, they would themselves be criticized. So they just gave formalistic criticism, and didn't really believe what they were saying. They would mouth slogans they read in the newspapers, or would copy the newspaper documents when it came time to compose an essay.

When the Gang of Four fell, there were no changes in the leading cadres. They criticized the Gang of 4, of course, they had no choice, just like before. But there were no real followers of the Gang of 4 in their county seat--the leaders in their unit just listened to order from above. They did not criticize for very long, however, or very busily. Also after early 1977 the amount of political study declined. By 1978 they still met every day after work, except Sunday, Saturday, Wednesday. But the amount of time was reduced to 15 minutes or so. Also they spent more time on production matters, and they began to hold technical study sessions for all workers, one every week, for an hour and a half or so. Before the Gang of 4 fell there was no technical study, they didn't dare talk about it. So the 'stinking intellectuals', the technicians like me, began to teach these classes.

Plant Organization

During the post-CR period the leading group was the RC, but in 1978 they abolished it, and changed to the plant director system. The above levels appointed the head of the RC, the branch secretary, to also be the new plant director. The above levels also sent in a new vice-director from another plant. Then they separated the party and administrative organizations.

When he first started work in the production group in 1969, the group had only about 3 people, all the other cadres were doing manual labor. By the time he left there were 8. They divided up labor among them (see the introductory section). He worked in the products section, and sent down diagrams and processing cards to the shops. After work was finished, the filled out cards were returned to him. Most of the written reports were handled by the planning section (gu), and by the statisticians. Aside from drawing these technical diagrams, he also went to the shops to make sure the workers knew how to read them and produce the parts.

Of course they had the 'three-in-one' (sanjiehe), but this was nothing special. When he went down to the shop to make sure his diagrams were understood and carried out, wasn't this an example of the triple combination? He met with leading cadres at the lower levels and with workers.

They never had a workers' congress, even most recently, and the union had no real power right up until he left. They were talking about reviving union functions when he left, but these things take a while to actually carry out. They never had elections for shop directors or group leaders. These people are appointed from above.

Factions

After the CR, of course they had remnants of old factions. It meant that there was ganging among those who were on the same side earlier, but the relations between people on different sides were not so close. But this was not a political problem. And the problem was not a serious one, since their town was just a small one.