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# The Cadre Management System, Post-Mao: The Appointment, Promotion, Transfer and Removal of Party and State Leaders

Melanie Manion

Post-Mao politics in the People's Republic of China has been largely the politics of reform. Probably crucial to the success of all other reforms is the major effort to restore and develop the Party's cadre management system. Indeed, this very argument is reflected in the recent official appreciation in China of Stalin's dictum "cadres decide everything," accompanying the recognition that the current modernization drive requires massive qualitative elite transformation and that deficiencies in the cadre system have prevented such a transformation.

An important product of the effort to reform the cadre management system is the January 1983 version of *Dang de zuzhi gongzuo wenda* (*Questions and Answers on Party Organizational Work*) edited by the Research Office and Organization Bureau of the Central Organization Department.<sup>1</sup> Briefly, this handbook is a collection of current guidelines, policies and regulations governing both the general operation of the Party as an organization and the specific Party function of cadre management. The particular value of the handbook derives mainly from the subject and quality of the latter category of material; it includes relatively detailed information on cadre recruitment criteria, training and evaluation methods, contents and maintenance of personnel dossiers, lines of authority over cadres and veteran cadre management.<sup>2</sup> The publication of this material – in unclassified form by an unquestionably authoritative source – marks a significant break with past official reticence on what has been properly considered a sensitive subject. Although the 1983 handbook is no more than a handbook, a reference book of codes governing cadre management and not an empirically derived survey of the Party's work in this area, it offers us remarkable insight into the formal system, as

1. Communist Party of China, Central Committee, Organization Department, Research Office and Organization Bureau (ed.), *Dang de zuzhi gongzuo wenda* (*Questions and Answers on Party Organizational Work*) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1983). Hereafter cited as Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*. In English translation see my selections of handbook material on cadre recruitment and management in *Chinese Law and Government*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (1984). The selections include material on which this article is based as well as material on cadre recruitment credentials and management of retired cadres. The editor's introduction to the selections compares the information available in the 1983 handbook with that available in previous handbook editions and similar publications.

2. The Central Organization Department did not include this kind of information in its two earlier versions of the handbook, which contain but a short chapter each on cadre work. Roughly half of the 1983 handbook concerns cadre management; this at least partially explains why it is published as a first edition, instead of a newly revised version. See Communist Party of China, Central Committee, Organization Department, Research Office (ed.), *Dang de zuzhi gongzuo wenda* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1959); and Communist Party of China, Central Committee, Organization Department, Research Office (ed.), *Dang de zuzhi gongzuo wenda*, 2d ed. (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1965). The 1959 edition is translated into English in *U.S. Joint Publications Research Service*, No. 7273 (1961), pp. 1–156.

conceived in the early post-Mao reform period, for controlling personnel assignments – a system characterized by one of the few scholars to treat the subject at length as the most important of the key “watchdog” units ensuring Party leadership.<sup>3</sup>

Based on information in the 1983 handbook and accounts in the Chinese press<sup>4</sup> this article examines the formal rules of the system by which leading cadres in Party and state organs at various levels are appointed, promoted, transferred and removed from office. After reviewing the historical context in which the system is emerging and the institutional framework for managing leading cadres, I discuss *nomenklatura* and leading cadre reserve lists, regulating authority over leaders and prospective leaders respectively. I then outline the basis for decisions on leadership changes (i.e. through appointments, promotions, transfers and removals): personnel dossiers, which contain the documentary basis for such decisions, and the different forms of cadre evaluation – the general *jianding*, the work-orientated *kaohe*, the political *shencha* and the comprehensive *kaocha liaojie* – reports of which constitute a large proportion of the dossiers’ contents. Finally, I examine the role of personal recommendation in leadership changes. The system revealed is neither as centralized as crude measurements have suggested,<sup>5</sup> nor as institutionalized as the rhetoric of the current regime demands.<sup>6</sup> Rather, it combines contradictory urges towards centralization and fragmentation, towards institutionalization and personal intervention.

### *Historical Context*

The current system-building in the appointment, promotion, transfer and removal of leaders is part of an overall post-Mao attempt at organizational rationalization in cadre management. This attempt is informed largely by two legacies – that of the system as it functioned from the mid 1950s to the mid 1960s, and that of institutional demolition and then stunted reconstruction which occurred during the Cultural Revolution.

3. A. Doak Barnett, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China*, with a contribution by Ezra Vogel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 20.

4. I scanned the *Renmin ribao* (*People’s Daily*) and *Guangming ribao* (*Guangming Daily*), 1980–82 (representing the last three years of Song Renqiong’s four-year leadership of the Central Organization Department) for articles on cadre management in general and specific accounts of cadre appointments, promotions, transfers and removals. Among literally hundreds of articles, I found only 56 which specified very precisely agents and their roles in cadre management; these specific accounts both corroborated and supplemented information in the 1983 handbook.

5. Harry Harding correctly focuses on centralization of authority to approve appointments as a critical formal indicator of centralization in cadre management; however, the contents of the 1983 handbook allow us to refine that measure. See his *Organizing China: The Problem of Bureaucracy, 1949–1976* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981), p. 76.

6. See Deng Xiaoping, “Dang de guojia lingdao zhidu de gaige” (“On the reform of the system of Party and state leadership”), in *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan, 1975–1982* (*Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, 1975–1982*) (Heilongjiang: Renmin chubanshe, 1983), pp. 286, 288. This speech of 18 August 1980 is available in English translation in two parts; see *Beijing Review*, Vol. 26, Nos. 40, 41 (1938), pp. 14–22, 18–22. See also *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1984), pp. 302–325.

The period of the early to mid 1950s saw the major development of systematic cadre management practices. The Party specified more clearly the criteria for cadre appointments and promotions, there was an increased effort to expand training to help cadres acquire necessary technical and political credentials, and a formal network of parallel Party and state institutions for cadre management was set up.<sup>7</sup> By the end of 1955 all Party and state cadres had been assigned a rank on a graduated salary scale. A range of ranks was fixed for each office.<sup>8</sup> Authority over personnel assignments appears to have been highly centralized, with Beijing's control reaching down to the county magistrate.<sup>9</sup> Probably a *nomenklatura* system along Soviet lines – parcelling out authority over all important offices among the various Party committees – was developed during this period; certainly Deng Xiaoping in his 1956 report to the Eighth Party Congress suggested such a practice had been introduced.<sup>10</sup>

In one of the few studies on the subject, A. Doak Barnett indicates (on the basis of interviews with former mainland residents) that, by the early 1960s, China's cadre management practices had matured into a powerful, Party-dominated system.<sup>11</sup> The personnel dossier and cadre evaluation systems were well developed. Cadre appointments, promotions, transfers and removals were deliberated and conducted in an atmosphere of secrecy. Considerable personnel overlap existed between the Party organization departments and parallel state personnel departments, although institutionally the organization departments were more powerful. While personal factors (including family connections) were not ignored altogether, it seems that performance, both technical and political was more important in determining career advancement.<sup>12</sup>

From what we know the Party's cadre management system was shattered in the Cultural Revolution with the onslaught on the Party apparatus and many of its leaders. An Ziwen, then head of the Central Organization Department, was branded a "counter-revolutionary revisionist" and fell in September 1967; the first reference after 1967 to an existing Central Organization Department was not until 1972 and the department head was not identified officially as such until 1975.<sup>13</sup>

7. See Harding, *Organizing China*, pp. 72–78.

8. The Civil Service ranks are listed by office in U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Foreign Demographic Analysis Division, *Administrative and Technical Manpower in the People's Republic of China*, by John Philip Emerson, International Population Reports Series P–95, No. 72 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1973), pp. 14–16.

9. "Guowuyuan renshiju zuzhi jianze" ("Organic regulation of the State Council Personnel Bureau"), 1955, c. 1, in *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo fagui huibian (Collected Laws and Regulations of the People's Republic of China)*, Vol. 2 (Beijing, 1956), p. 103.

10. See Deng Xiaoping, "Report on the Revision of the Constitution of the Communist Party of China," in *Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, Vol. 1: *Documents* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1956), pp. 221–22.

11. This paragraph is based on Barnett, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China*.

12. On this issue, see also Michel Oksenberg, "The institutionalization of the Chinese Communist Revolution: the ladder of success on the eve of the Cultural Revolution," *The China Quarterly*, No. 36 (1968), pp. 61–92.

13. The Chinese press began referring to Guo Yufeng as the "responsible person" of the Central Organization Department soon after it was re-activated; he was identified as its head in 1975.

Leadership changes during this period were very politically charged and irregular. A large number of purge documents were generated at all levels, with investigations conducted by non-Party special case groups (*zhuan'an zu*).<sup>14</sup> Kang Sheng appears to have been a major force in personnel matters, although his role remains to be clarified.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to purges and the general de-institutionalization of organizational work, the Cultural Revolution generated newly recruited and promoted leaders at all levels. It was this legacy which initially pre-occupied the post-Mao regime: the first few years saw waves of investigations, arrests, dismissals, rehabilitations and new appointments.<sup>16</sup> Only in mid 1980 did Song Renqiong, as head of the Central Organization Department, finally announce a readjustment of priorities in organizational work, shifting attention away from the resolution of problems "left over by history" towards the new tasks of the period.<sup>17</sup>

Foremost among the new tasks has been qualitative elite transformation to propel China's modernization drive. Current policy calls for a gradual reshaping of the entire cadre contingent and, more urgent, a change in composition of leading groups at all levels – in the direction of a revolutionary, generally younger, more knowledgeable and more professionally competent elite corps. Elite transformation has been a critical impetus for the restoration and development of the cadre management system for two main reasons.

First, the deficiency of the organizational system has been identified as a serious obstacle to elite transformation. In his August 1980 speech to an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau, Deng Xiaoping called for "drastic changes" in the "unsuitable organizational and personnel systems," complaining that China had "no regular methods to recruit, reward and punish cadres or for cadres to retire, resign or be displaced (*taotai*)."<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, elite transformation is seen as a continuous process which requires a system to guarantee that it survives this critical transitional period and the leaders who dominate it. As expressed by Song Renqiong, elite transformation is no campaign and no mere response to current exigencies. It is, rather, a process which must be institutionalized (*zhiduhua*).<sup>19</sup>

14. Central Organization Department, 1983 *Handbook*, pp. 282–83; and "Communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," *Peking Review*, Vol. 21, No. 52 (1978), p. 14.

15. Reference is made to the "grave damage" of organizational work by Kang in the Cultural Revolution in Central Organization Department, 1983 *Handbook*, p. 11.

16. For an interesting analysis of leadership shuffles immediately after the arrest of the "gang of four," see Earl A. Wayne, "The politics of restaffing China's provinces, 1976–1977," *Contemporary China*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1978), pp. 116–65.

17. Song Renqiong, "Renzen jie jue zuzhi gongzuo mianlin de xin keti" ("Conscientiously resolve new problems in organizational work"), *Hongqi*, No. 16 (1980), p. 2.

18. Deng Xiaoping, "Reform of the system of Party and state leadership," pp. 286, 288.

19. "Anzhao geminghua nianqinghua zhishihua zhuan yehua de fangzhen jianshe hao ganbu duiwu" ("Build a cadre contingent according to the guidelines of a revolutionary, younger, more knowledgeable and more professional corps"), *Renmin ribao*, 2 October 1982, p. 2.

### *Institutional Framework*

According to the 1980 handbook the fundamental principle of cadre management is, and always has been, *Party* management.<sup>20</sup>

*Party Committees.* Party management of cadres in leading offices is governed by an elaborate division of responsibility among the various Party committees. In principle, no leader's appointment, promotion, transfer or removal can be effected without the approval (*pizhun*) of the appropriate Party committee.

For the management of leading cadres, the most important Party committees are those which are territorially based – the Central Committee nationally and the local Party committees down to the county level. (Refer to Figure 1 for territorial levels.) These Party committees are the legitimate decision-making agents for leadership changes. However, they are also often unwieldy in size and may meet infrequently;<sup>21</sup> it seems likely that their standing committees or, at the central level, the Secretariat play a crucial role in these decisions. The extent to which the decisions are *pro forma*, while undoubtedly varying from case to case, is clarified somewhat by examining the roles of other institutional agents, particularly the organization department.

Of questionable importance in the management of leading cadres are the primary Party committees (and subordinate Party general branches and Party branches) formed in functional departments of the Party and state. Neither the 1983 handbook nor accounts in the Chinese press suggest that primary Party committees have much authority over leadership changes in these organs, although they do play a role in cadre evaluation.<sup>22</sup> Unlike primary Party committees in enterprises, those in Party and state organs do not “lead” the work of their offices. Although they may “assist” department heads in improving work, their main task is to assure the proper functioning of the Party as an organization – by supervising Party members with regard to observance of membership responsibilities.<sup>23</sup>

Overseeing the work of primary Party organizations in Party and state organs are the Party Committee for Organs Directly Under the Central Committee and State Organs Party Committee at the Centre and the Party committees for organs directly under the provinces at the provincial level (with one Party committee overseeing primary Party organizations in both Party and state organs of each province). These Party committees (which are not established at lower levels) have authority over the establishment of subordinate primary Party committees, which work under their direct leadership.<sup>24</sup> Probably these Party committees also have

20. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 88.

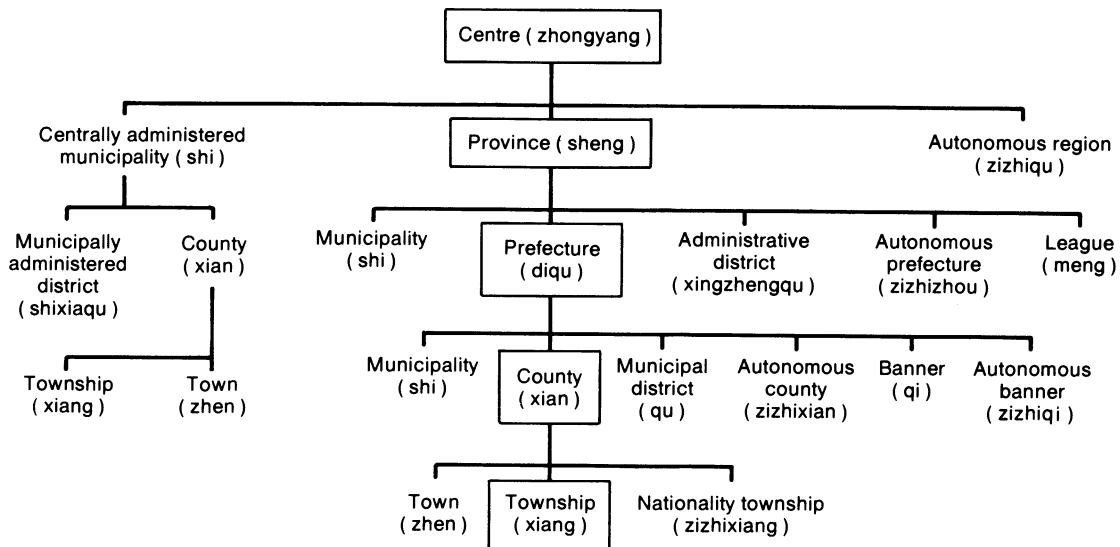
21. Local Party committees, for example, can meet as infrequently as once annually. Constitution of the Communist Party of China, 1982, c. 4, art. 26.

22. In enterprises, however, primary Party committees do have authority over “middle-level cadres.” Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 92.

23. Constitution of the Communist Party of China, 1982, c. 5, art. 33. Even in enterprises, the leading role of the primary Party committee is being redefined. See Jin Qi, “Reforming enterprise leadership system,” *Beijing Review*, Vol. 27, No 25 (1984), pp. 4–5.

24. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, pp. 180–81, 182.

Figure 1: Territorial Levels for Cadre Management



*Note:* The most numerous units are those with boxed titles. Equivalent units are placed at the same level on the figure. Prefectures, administrative districts and leagues are not considered regular levels of the Party and state hierarchy and do not have Party or people's congresses; they do, however, have fairly developed administrative structures to supervise subordinate organs on behalf of provincial-level leadership structures. Party committees at the township level are primary, not local, Party committees.

authority (shared with territorially based Party committees) over leading offices in subordinate primary Party committees, but they definitely have no authority over non-Party offices.<sup>25</sup>

*Party Fractions.* Party fractions (*dangzu*) are established in all non-Party leading organs. These include: (1) at the Centre, state ministries and commissions, bureaus and economic management organs directly under the State Council; (2) at the provincial level, state departments (*ting*) and bureaus; (3) in municipalities under provinces, state commissions, offices and bureaus; (4) at the prefectural and county levels, political-legal departments and organs of the state, people's councils and political consultative conferences; and (5) mass organizations at all levels noted above.<sup>26</sup> Membership of the Party fraction may overlap with that of the primary Party committee: Barnett's informant from a ministry stated that the five Party fraction members were all members of the ministry's Party committee. Formally, the Party fraction guides (*zhidao*) the work of the Party committee; Barnett's informant described the Party fraction as "the real center of power and authority in the ministry, more important even than the Party Committee," and it was believed to meet very frequently.<sup>27</sup>

It seems quite probable that Party fractions play the main role in the management of leading cadres at middle and lower levels of state organs – division and section levels of ministries, for example. Primary Party committees are unlikely to play this role: it is known that they do not lead professional work in these organs and that Party fractions are formally superior to them and were indeed relatively much more powerful in the past. Territorially based Party committees definitely do not play this role: their cadre management authority does not routinely extend down to these levels of leadership.<sup>28</sup> Further, authority over the appointment, promotion, transfer and removal of many main leading cadres in state enterprises rests with the Party fractions of functional departments at the central and lower levels;<sup>29</sup> thus Party fractions in state organs do have cadre management as one of their responsibilities. This responsibility probably extends as well to the management of less important leading cadres in state organs.

*Organization Department.* Much cadre management work is done by the organization department, one of the Party's most important departments,<sup>30</sup> and the only one particularly assigned to personnel matters.

25. *Ibid.* p. 115. The discussion of the appointment and removal of a provincial department (*ting*) head makes it quite clear that the Party committee for organs directly under the province plays no role; it is neither the Party committee "at the same level" nor that "at a higher level" referred to in the handbook. From the context, there can be no doubt that the reference is to two territorially based Party committees.

26. *Ibid.* pp. 181–82.

27. Barnett, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China*, p. 24.

28. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 92.

29. *Ibid.* pp. 116–18. The involvement of the Party fraction in selecting cadres is also discussed in "Xuanba nianfu liqiang de jishu gupan ren dangwei shuji changzhang" ("Selection of 'backbone' technical workers in the prime of life for Party committee secretary and factory head"), *Guangming ribao*, 16 June 1980, p. 1.

30. Even the most rudimentary Party branch committee with only three members always assigns one member to organizational work. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 193.



The entire hierarchy of organization departments – from the Central Organization Department down to the organization departments of the various local and primary Party committees – is linked in a professional relationship (*yewu guanxi*). Thus there is no direct line of command, bypassing the Party committees, from the Centre to the lower levels of the organizational system. It is difficult to interpret what this implies for cadre management practices.

Certainly the Central Organization Department establishes cadre policy and convenes conferences to discuss and guide policy implementation (although it seems that such conferences do not occur regularly or frequently).<sup>31</sup> Moreover, in guiding policy implementation, the organization department of each Party committee regularly investigates, supervises and pushes forward (*ducu*) work done by the organization department of the Party committee at a lower level; the organization department at the lower level in turn keeps the organization department of the higher Party committee in touch with its progress by reporting on its work and asking for instructions on professional matters.<sup>32</sup>

To what extent does guidance on professional matters effectively become leadership? It appears that even on policy matters the organization departments at the various levels find their interaction circumscribed by the lack of a formal relationship of leadership directly linking them. The 1983 handbook notes that “*with the authorization (shouquan) of the Party committee at the same level, the organization department of a Party committee can make suggestions in the form of decisions and instructions to the organization department of a Party committee at a lower level.*”<sup>33</sup> If guidance on policy implementation is so circumscribed, it is doubtful that matters regarding particular leadership changes flow downward any more smoothly through the organization departments alone. But, while this challenges the notion of a powerful, centralized organizational system, it is not incompatible with a conclusion placing the *separate* organization departments at the pivot of power over cadres.<sup>34</sup> The nature of the relationship between the various Party committees – formally the decision-making agents for leadership changes – and their respective organization departments is central to this conclusion.

The relationship between a Party committee and its organization department is one of leadership (*lingdao guanxi*), a term the Party reserves for the most authoritative kind of linkage between two bodies. Like other Party departments the organization department is an operational (*banshi*) department, which conducts its work under the leadership of the Party committee to which it is attached.

In most newspaper accounts examined for this article, the Party committee “analyses” and “decides” upon leadership changes. However,

31. From July 1978 to June 1983, presumably a critical period in organizational work, the Central Organization Department convened only three national conferences.

32. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, pp. 8–9.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 8 (emphasis added). For an example of the kind of instructions the Central Organization can issue to lower levels, see *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: China*, 15 February 1983, pp. K18–19.

34. See Barnett, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China*, p. 152.

a few accounts describe transfers conducted by the organization department – without even mentioning the role of the Party committee.<sup>35</sup> More often though, it is evident that the organization department's power stems from its dominant role in collecting, selecting and storing the information upon which decisions are based: the organization department plays the dominant role in cadre evaluation and is solely responsible for maintaining cadres' personnel dossiers.

*Other Party Departments.* Although the organization department is clearly most responsible for cadre management among the functional departments of the Party committees, the work can be shared with other Party departments. The 1983 handbook notes the endorsement of two alternative arrangements for the division of cadre management responsibilities among Party departments: cadre management is either centralized in the organization department or divided among the other Party departments. If cadre management is centralized in the organization department, "attention must be paid to bringing into play the roles of the other departments of the Party committee." If cadre management is divided among the other departments of the Party committee, "attention must be paid to strengthening the centralized leadership of the Party committee and the centralized synthesis (*zonghe*) of work by the organization department."<sup>36</sup>

Curiously, there is no discussion of *criteria* for the division of cadre management responsibilities. In the Soviet Union this issue of internal centralization (i.e. in the organization department) versus decentralization (i.e. among the other Party departments) was debated for years. Policy was revised and reversed several times.<sup>37</sup> However, both arrangements outlined in the 1983 handbook do give the organization department a relatively dominant role. Further, while the organization department's role is nearly always noted in Chinese newspaper accounts of leadership changes, rarely are the other Party departments mentioned. Of course, this may simply indicate that current practice in China is to centralize cadre management in the organization department.

*Personnel Department.* Parallel to the Party organization departments, the state structure has its own hierarchy of personnel departments.<sup>38</sup> As with the Party structure, the Personnel Bureau (of the Ministry of Labour and Personnel) at the Centre is linked to personnel departments at lower levels in a professional relationship.

Personnel departments work closely in co-ordination with organization departments. The principle of Party authority over cadres implies at least

35. See, for example, the description of a county Party committee secretary's transfer to Shanyin county, Shanxi province in "Yanbei er qian duo zhong qing ganbu zou shang lingdao gangwei" ("More than two thousand Yanbei young and middle-aged cadres take up leading posts"), *Renmin ribao*, 17 August 1982, p. 4.

36. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 88.

37. Bohdan Harasymiw, "Nomenklatura: The Soviet Communist Party's leadership recruitment system," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1969), pp. 496–97.

38. In fact, the state structure has several kinds of personnel departments. Workers, technical and specialized cadres and civil servants are managed separately under the leadership of the Labour Bureau, the Science and Technology Commission and the Personnel Bureau respectively. Of these categories, this article deals with civil servants only.

a tacit understanding that personnel departments accept the leadership of Party committees.<sup>39</sup> A factor complicating any assessment of the personnel department's role is personnel overlap in the leading groups of state personnel departments and parallel Party organization departments. Such overlap was common in the past<sup>40</sup> and likely still exists, although there has been an effort in recent years to reduce concurrent Party and state offices generally so as to separate Party and state functions.

Personnel departments participate in various forms of cadre evaluation and co-operate with organization departments in executing procedures for state leadership changes. Whatever the extent of personnel overlap, personnel departments and organization departments are institutionally distinct and often institutionally independent in their work. A good example of this is the selection of new leaders in Yuncheng prefecture, Shanxi province.

In the course of evaluating cadres for professional titles in the social sciences, Yuncheng personnel departments discovered 183 cadres with leadership potential. They recommended these cadres to various county and prefectural departments; after the organization departments conducted screening (*kaocha liaojie*), only 55 were promoted to leading offices.<sup>41</sup> Less than one-third of those recommended by one institution were found acceptable by the other; different roles yielded different conclusions.

### *Nomenklatura System*

Like its Soviet counterpart, the Communist Party of China uses a *nomenklatura* system to regulate authority over Party and state "main leading cadres" and other important individuals.<sup>42</sup>

The Russian term *nomenklatura*, meaning "a list of positions, arranged in order of seniority, including a description of the duties of each office," generally refers to the lists of offices controlled by the various Party committees.<sup>43</sup> In China the Central Committee, each local Party committee and some Party fractions have such a list of office titles (*zhiwu mingcheng biao*, i.e. *nomenklatura*)<sup>44</sup> describing the offices over which the

39. This understanding is made explicit in a description of the personnel department's role in the selection of cadres for leadership, discussed at a national conference of personnel department heads. See "Jiji peiyang xuanba zhong qingnian ganbu dao ge ji lingdao gangwei shanglai" ("Enthusiastically cultivate and select young and middle-aged cadres to take up positions of leadership at all levels"), *Guangming ribao*, 9 June 1981, p. 1.

40. Barnett, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China*, p. 25.

41. "Yuncheng diqu xuanba yi pi youxiu zhong qingnian ganbu dao lingdao gangwei" ("Yuncheng prefecture selects a group of outstanding young and middle-aged cadres for leading posts"), *Guangming ribao*, 26 August 1982, p. 2.

42. In addition to Party and state leaders, leaders in state enterprises and institutions and important scientists, technical experts, professors, writers, artists, performers and athletes are listed on *nomenklatura*. Central Organization Department, 1983 *Handbook*, pp. 93, 94.

43. Harasymiw, "Nomenklatura," p. 494.

44. Interestingly, Franz Schurmann notes that the Chinese translate the Russian *nomenklatura* as *bianzhi* (a term usually used to refer to the authorized number of personnel in a unit). See *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, 2d ed., enl. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 186, n. 7. Clearly though, the handbook's use of the term *zhiwu mingcheng biao* corresponds to the use of the term *nomenklatura* in the Soviet literature and

Party committee has authority. The appointment, promotion, transfer or removal of any Party or state main leader requires the approval of the Party committee controlling the *nomenklatura* on which the leader's office is listed.

The term *zhiwu mingcheng biao* is not used with reference to offices below those which come under the authority of the Central Committee, local Party committees and some Party fractions.<sup>45</sup> To refer to the system regulating authority over all cadres (regardless of rank) the term *ganbu guanli quanxian* (cadre management jurisdiction) is used. The term *zhiwu mingcheng biao*, then, is appropriate only for discussion of main leading offices; this accords well with the usage of the Russian term *nomenklatura*.<sup>46</sup>

*Procedures.* *Nomenklatura* authority over a *non-elective* office implies ultimate authority to approve or veto any appointment, promotion or transfer to, or removal from, that office. Typically, the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority receives a written proposal from a subordinate Party organization, explaining the change of leadership requested and the concrete reasons for it. The proposal is accompanied by materials from recent screening and these materials must include opinions of the ordinary masses; a Cadre Appointment/Removal Request Form is also completed and submitted. The Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority can change proposals submitted for approval and can initiate appointments, promotions, transfers and removals involving offices listed on its *nomenklatura*.<sup>47</sup>

Although many leaders in state organs are, in principle, appointed by a people's government, these leaders are also listed on *nomenklatura*. Procedures for leadership changes for these leaders are implemented through parallel Party and state channels – with ultimate authority resting in the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority over the particular office. The process illustrates well the bureaucratic intricacies of the Party–state relationship in personnel matters and the unquestionable dominance of Party institutions in such matters. Consider, as an example, the appointment of a bureau head for a prefectural-level (state) administrative office (*xingzheng gongshu*).

The prefectural Party committee submits an appointment proposal, with the necessary accompanying materials, to the provincial Party committee; at the same time, the state office submits an appointment request – in the name of the bureau – to the provincial government. After the provincial Party committee approves the appointment, its organization department notifies the (state) personnel department at the prefec-

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by Sovietologists. See Harasymiw, "Nomenklatura," p. 494; Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Prefects: The Local Party Organs in Industrial Decision-Making* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 115–16; and T. H. Rigby, "The selection of leading personnel in the Soviet state and Communist Party," Ph.D. diss., University of London (1954), p. 331.

45. Party fractions in state functional departments have *zhiwu mingcheng biao* listing main leaders in state enterprises and institutions under dual leadership (*shuangchong lingdao*). Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, pp. 116–18.

46. see fn. 44 *supra*.

47. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, pp. 114–15.

tural level to report to the provincial government, requesting the appointment. The provincial government then makes the appointment<sup>48</sup> (see Figure 2).

If the leadership change is one which must be decided by the standing committee of the local people's congress (e.g. the appointment of a secretary general or department head at the provincial, county or township level), procedures for approval are first conducted through Party channels and then, once the superior Party committee has approved the change, submitted to the standing committee for decision. After the standing committee approves the appointment, the request is submitted to the superior government for its approval.<sup>49</sup>

*Nomenklatura* authority over an *elective* office – Party or state – has somewhat different implications. Before the election takes place, the list of candidates is submitted to the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority and, as with appointees, a Cadre Appointment/Removal Request Form is completed and submitted. The Party committee conducts a political investigation (*shencha*) of the candidates. Election results for leading Party offices are reported to the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority for approval; those for non-Party offices are reported merely for the record (*beian*).<sup>50</sup>

A Party committee can exercise greater control over elective offices listed on its *nomenklatura* through its authority to transfer leaders and designate new leaders if the local Party congress or people's congress is not in session. The decision to transfer or designate leaders is simply transmitted downward through Party or state channels for implementation.<sup>51</sup>

*Nomenklatura Overlap.* In very many cases, there is *nomenklatura* overlap: offices are listed on the *nomenklatura* of two or more (but usually two) Party committees. Where there is *nomenklatura* overlap, the subordinate Party committee makes proposals to the superior Party committee regarding leadership changes for offices listed on both *nomenklatura*. Ultimate decision-making authority is vested in the superior Party committee; no leadership change is valid without its approval.<sup>52</sup>

Of course, proposals for leadership changes do not have to originate with the subordinate Party committee. The superior Party committee can initiate leadership changes, a personnel department can make proposals and individuals are encouraged to recommend suitable leaders. A leading cadre can propose a change of office for himself: Zhang Shigong, a Xinjiang

48. Based on information in *ibid.* p. 115. Procedures differ slightly for the appointment of standing committee members of the Party commissions for discipline inspection, presidents of people's courts and chief procurators of people's procuratorates; before the Party committee submits an appointment proposal for these cadres, it obtains the agreement of the commission for discipline inspection or Party organization of the court or procuratorate (respectively) at the next higher level.

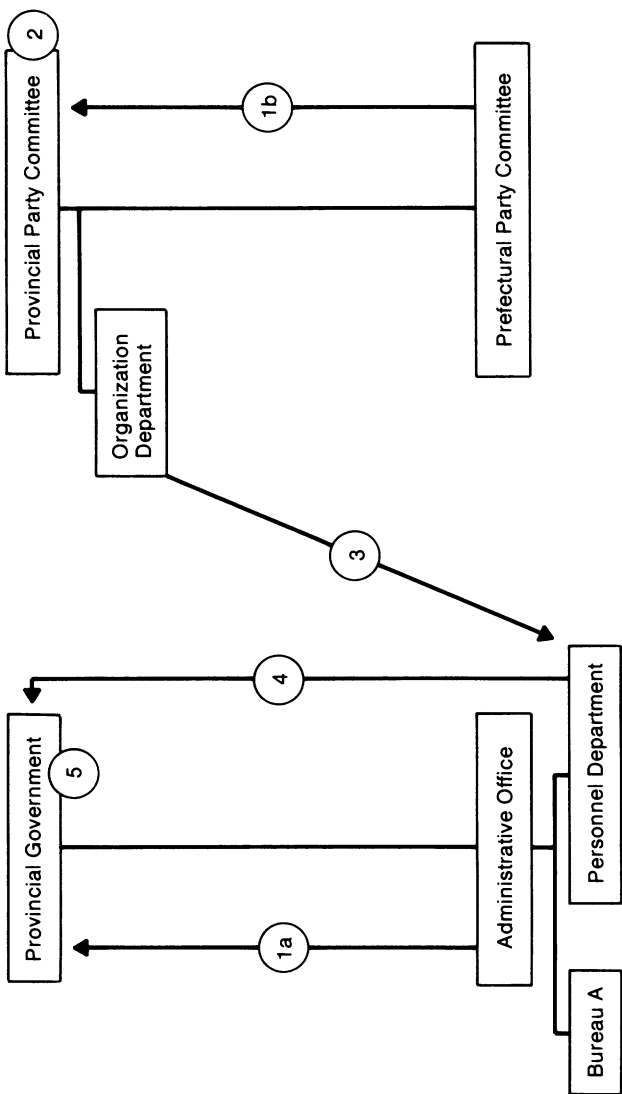
49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.* p. 118.

51. *Ibid.* pp. 118–19.

52. In state enterprises and institutions under dual leadership, the relationship is somewhat different. See *ibid.* pp. 116–18.

Figure 2: Appointing a Head For Bureau A



*Procedures:* (1a) Submission of an appointment request, in the name of Bureau A; (1b) submission of an appointment proposal; (2) examination and approval of the appointment proposal; (3) notification to report to the provincial government; (4) report to the provincial government; (5) appointment of Bureau A head.

Party committee secretary, wrote to Hu Yaobang in May 1980 requesting Central Committee approval to retire from office.<sup>53</sup>

If virtually anyone or any unit can propose a leadership change, what is the role of the subordinate Party committee and the significance of *nomenklatura* overlap?

In assessing the significance of *nomenklatura* overlap, an important factor to consider is the control of information. Regardless of the origin of a proposal for leadership change, the subordinate Party committee cannot be bypassed in the process of considering a cadre for appointment, promotion, transfer or removal because it is responsible for conducting cadre evaluation (with the exception of the *jianding*), upon which decisions on leadership changes are based. The subordinate Party committee – more specifically, its organization department – provides much of the information contained in the cadre's personnel dossier. Thus the division of labour characteristic of *nomenklatura* overlap disperses control among more agents and levels of agents than would occur if the *nomenklatura* were not shared. Control over the office is less concentrated.

From another perspective, the superior Party committee possesses ultimate decision-making authority over offices listed on shared *nomenklatura*; thus the superior Party committee routinely maintains some control over the office. This fact is particularly significant when the investment in time and personnel required for cadre evaluation is considered; without delegating responsibility for cadre evaluation to another agent, could the superior Party committee control the office at all? Is the alternative to less control no control – that is, no routine control? The division of labour characteristic of *nomenklatura* overlap facilitates a longer extension of control.

*Nomenklatura and Negotiation.* A Party committee has ultimate authority to command the appointment, promotion, transfer or removal of any leader whose office is listed on its *nomenklatura*. How is this authority used?

The *nomenklatura* system governs authority over *regular* leadership changes. When there is unusual change in political orientation at the Centre, as has occurred after Mao's death and the arrest of the "gang of four," corresponding changes in leadership at lower levels are likely to follow soon after. The Centre may bring about massive, rapid leadership changes from the top down throughout an entire unit or region if political reliability is a particular issue. A rather spectacular example of this occurred in 1982 when, with the assistance of a central work team, more than 90 per cent of cadres at the provincial, prefectural, county and

53. "Zhang Shigong zhudong shenqing lixiu dedao dang zhongyang pizhun" ("Zhang Shigong takes the initiative to request retirement and obtains approval from the Party Central Committee"), *Guangming ribao*, 2 July 1980, p. 2. For an account of a similar case, see "Huangbei xian kewei zhuren Yao Chenfeng shenqing dang peijiao" ("Huangbei county science commission director Yao Chenfeng requests a supporting role"), *Guangming ribao*, 16 July 1980, p. 2.

commune levels in Hebei province were dismissed, retired or transferred out of the province.<sup>54</sup>

Most leadership changes are not nearly so drastic. Accounts in the Chinese press suggest that a Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority may negotiate with leaders at the level of the office whose leader is being changed – even if these leaders have no authority or formal role in the leadership change. This negotiation for support makes intuitive sense: particularly if only one or a few leaders are being displaced, remaining co-leaders can undermine the new leaders' performance by withholding a critical resource – their personal support. (It seems such a tactic has been adopted by some leaders to subvert, without openly opposing, the current policy of elite transformation.<sup>55</sup>)

This process of negotiation is probably most important when a new leader is promoted from within the unit. For example, the Siping Municipality Party Committee in Jilin province wanted to promote more technically qualified cadres to leading offices in bureaus of its municipal industrial system. Municipal Party committee members went frequently to the industrial bureaus to “analyse” concretely with leaders there the candidates for bureau-level offices. The Party committee decided to appoint a young bureau technician as deputy bureau head of the Second Light Industry Bureau, but bureau leaders (who had no formal authority over the appointment) opposed the choice, finding the young technician arrogant and opinionated. Only after cadres from the municipal Party committee, its organization department and the personnel department had spent much time discussing the matter with bureau leaders and achieved a consensus of views (*tongyi le kanfa*) was the appointment made.<sup>56</sup> A command approach would undoubtedly have made the young technician's task of leadership very difficult indeed.

*Two-levels-downward Principle.* Leaders in Party and state organs are listed on *nomenklatura* according to the principle of Central Committee and local Party committee authority over leading offices at the two next lower levels of the territorial and functional hierarchies (the latter term referring to the hierarchy of offices within each of the Party and state functional departments). This arrangement is supposed to produce an optimal scope of management:

. . . [Party committee] management of cadres at the next lower level only is inappropriate to work requirements and also facilitates the development of some

54. He Teng, “Hebei de nongcun gaige” (“Hebei's agricultural reform”), *Zhengming*, No. 74 (1983), pp. 20–22.

55. See the Commentator article, “Yao rang zhuan ye ganbu zai qi wei neng mou qi zheng” (“Allow professional cadres to play the role which accords with their post”), *Renmin ribao*, 1 November 1981, p. 3.

56. “Pochu jiu de guannian he kuangkuang shuli xin de yong ren guandian” (“Eradicate the old notions and conventions, establish a new view of personnel placement”), *Guangming ribao*, 27 June 1980, p. 1. The Jilin Provincial Party Committee later used a similar process of negotiation to “strengthen” the leading group of Siping prefecture; see “Jilin xuanba sanshi ming zhongnian ganbu danren di xian zhuyao lingdao zhiwu” (“Jilin selects 30 middle-aged cadres to take up leading posts at the prefectural and county levels”), *Renmin ribao*, 5 February 1982, p. 1.



malpractices. To extend the [cadre management] jurisdiction three levels downward, however, would result in too large a scope [of management], too many [cadres to manage]—in practice, it would be impossible to exercise management or to exercise good management (*guan bu liao guan bu hao*). With the extension of management jurisdiction two levels downward, the Party committees at different levels can separately exercise responsible management over main leading cadres at various levels and in different departments. This is instrumental in preventing the development of any possible erroneous tendencies.<sup>57</sup>

The problems inherent in the limited scope of a one-level-downward principle for *nomenklatura* authority are obvious. First, from the perspective of the Centre, management of cadres at the next lower level only releases many – presumably, in 1983 at least, too many – leaders from central control. Secondly, the development of a strong network of favours and obligations and the abuse of power may be facilitated by an arrangement which so tightly couples a leader's career opportunities to the immediately superior Party committee. This is suggested in the above citation. The involvement of more agents (i.e. Party committees at the first and second levels upward) and ultimate authority vested in a more distant agent (i.e. the Party committee two levels upward) may somewhat check these tendencies.

The extension of control three levels downward would imply a highly centralized system, insofar as *nomenklatura* authority is used as the measure of control. This was the system that emerged in the 1950s. At current levels of personnel, such an arrangement would involve the Central Committee (or whichever body at the Centre actually makes such decisions) in routine decisions on the appointment, promotion, transfer and removal of about 450,000 cadres.<sup>58</sup> These numbers are presumably what the 1983 handbook refers to as “too many cadres” to manage well, even given the division of labour characteristic of *nomenklatura* overlap.

*Rank Equivalents.* Based on the principle of *nomenklatura* authority over leading offices extending two levels downward, the 1983 handbook states that the Central Committee controls (by territorial hierarchy) offices at the provincial and prefectural levels and (by functional hierarchy) offices at the ministerial and bureau levels “in Party and state organs at the Centre.” Provincial Party committees control (by territorial hierarchy) offices at the prefectural and county levels and (by functional hierarchy) offices at the provincial departmental (*ting*) and divisional levels “in organs of the provincial Party committees and provincial people's governments.”<sup>59</sup>

This wording suggests that the *nomenklatura* system does not operate according to rank equivalents. The Central Committee, for example, appears to control central bureau heads and prefectural commissioners but not provincial department heads – even though these three offices are

57. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 92.

58. Song Renqiong gave this figure for the number of cadres above the level of deputy county head and deputy section head. *Xinhua News Agency*, 23 February 1983, p. 4.

59. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 92.

equivalent in rank.<sup>60</sup> Yet the wording does not clearly exclude the possibility that rank equivalents are operative.

Two other sections of the 1983 handbook clearly support an interpretation of the *nomenklatura* system based on rank equivalents. At one point the handbook notes that the appointment of a provincial department head is approved by the Party committee superior to the provincial Party committee (i.e. the Central Committee);<sup>61</sup> at another point it states that regular rotation (*dingqi jiaoliu*) of provincial department heads (as well as prefectural-level leaders) occurs on a national scale, implying that these cadres are managed centrally.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, logic suggests that rank equivalents are operative. Using the example of provincial department heads, without Central Committee control it would be difficult (if not impossible) from a bureaucratic perspective to arrange inter-provincial transfer of provincial department heads or transfers among provincial department heads, prefectural commissioners and central bureau heads.

*Nomenklatura Authority from Two Perspectives.* Based on the principle of *nomenklatura* authority extending two levels downward and using rank equivalents, we should be able to construct the *nomenklatura* of the Central Committee and local Party committees at all levels insofar as leaders in Party and state organs are concerned. The Central Committee's *nomenklatura*, constructed accordingly, lists all the offices noted in Table 1 and (presumably) offices superior to those noted – state councillors, for example.

With somewhat less confidence, it is also possible to detail the lines of authority over leading cadres in a particular Party or state organ. Based on certain assumptions about the roles of the State Organs Party Committee, Party fractions and primary Party organizations,<sup>63</sup> Table 2 notes which Party organizations have authority over which leading cadres in a hypothetical (central state) ministry.

### *Leading Cadre Reserves*

To facilitate the appointment and promotion of suitable leaders, cadres are selected for specific leading offices and entered on leading cadre reserve lists (*lingdao ganbu houbei mingdan*).<sup>64</sup> Reserve cadres undergo training and cultivation to prepare them for their respective designated offices.

60. I asked several residents of the People's Republic about rank equivalents for leading cadres. Their conception, based on knowledge of specific leadership transfers, did not differ from that obtained by using a listing of Civil Service salary ranks. For a current listing of these ranks by office, see *Zhonggong nianbao* (*Yearbook on Chinese Communism*) (Taibei, 1978), p. 16. This listing differs only slightly from that for 1955 and 1956 in U.S. Department of Commerce, *Administrative and Technical Manpower in the People's Republic of China*, pp. 14–16.

61. See fn. 25 *supra*.

62. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 103.

63. These assumptions are stated in the section on institutional framework *supra*.

64. The reserve list system is not new. Carl E. Walter notes that reserve lists were established in the banking system in 1954. See his "Party-state relations in the People's Republic of China: the role of the People's Bank and the local Party in economic management," Ph.D. diss, Stanford University (1981), p. 168.

Table 1: Party and State Leaders on Central Committee's *Nomenklatura*

<i>Party</i>	<i>State</i>
Centre:	
Director, deputy directors of General Office*	Secretary-general, deputy secretaries-general of National People's Congress (NPC)‡
Heads, deputy heads of departments, commissions, research centres, committees†	Standing committee members of NPC‡
Advisers to departments, commissions, research centres, committees*	Chairmen, vice-chairmen of NPC committees, commissions‡
Secretary, deputy secretaries, standing committee members of Central Commission for Discipline Inspection†	Director, deputy directors of NPC General Office‡
Heads, deputy heads of bureaus, groups directly subordinate to Central Committee*	Directors, deputy directors of NPC offices‡
Heads, deputy heads of Central Party School, <i>Renmin ribao</i> , <i>Guangming ribao</i> , <i>Hongqi</i> *	Secretary-general, deputy secretaries-general of State Council (SC)‡
Directors, deputy directors of general offices of departments, commissions, research centres, committees*	Ministers, vice-ministers of SC ministries, commissions†
Heads, deputy heads of bureaus under departments, commissions, research centres, committees†	Advisers to SC ministries, commissions*
Secretaries, deputy secretaries of Party Committee for Organs Directly Under the Central Committee, State Organs Party Committee†	Assistant ministers of SC ministries, commissions‡
Members of Party fractions in state organs†	Director, deputy directors of SC General Office‡
Secretaries, deputy secretaries of primary Party committees in Party, state organs†	Directors, deputy directors of offices, bureaus, agencies, committees directly subordinate to SC‡
	Directors, deputy directors of general offices of SC ministries, commissions‡
	Heads, deputy heads of bureaus under SC ministries, commissions†
	President, vice-president, advisers of Supreme People's Court†
	Procurator-general, deputy procurators-general, secretary-general, advisers of Supreme

## Province:

Secretaries, deputy secretaries, standing committee members of Party committees†  
 Heads, deputy heads of departments\*  
 Secretaries, deputy secretaries, standing committee members of commissions for discipline inspection†  
 Chairmen, vice-chairmen, standing committee members of Party advisory commissions\*  
 Secretaries, deputy secretaries of Party committees for organs directly under the provinces†

Governors, vice-governors†  
 Advisers to government\*  
 Directors, deputy directors of general offices of government‡  
 Secretaries-general, deputy secretaries-general of government†  
 Heads, deputy heads of provincial departments†  
 Chairmen, vice-chairmen, secretaries-general of Chinese people's political consultative conferences\*  
 Presidents, vice-presidents of people's courts†  
 Chief procurators, deputy chief procurators of people's procuratorates†

## Prefecture:

Secretaries, deputy secretaries, standing committee members of Party committees†

Commissioners, deputy commissioners†

*Sources:*

\* Estimated rank equivalents based on ranks listed in *Zhonggong nianbao* (*Yearbook on Chinese Communism*) (Taipei, 1978), p. 16; Constitution of the Communist Party of China, 1982; and miscellaneous accounts in *Renmin ribao* and *Guangming ribao*, 1980–82.

† Communist Party of China, Central Committee, Organization Department, Research Office and Organization Bureau (ed.), *Dang de zuzhi gongzuo wenda* (*Questions and Answers on Party Organizational Work*) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1983), pp. 92, 115, 180–82.

‡ Rank equivalents based on ranks listed in *Zhonggong nianbao*, p. 16.

Table 2: Cadre Management Jurisdiction Over a Ministry's Leaders

<i>Central Committee</i>	<i>State Organs Party Committee</i>	<i>Ministry Party Fraction</i>	<i>Ministry Party Committee</i>
Party fraction members* Party committee mem- bers* Ministry advisers† Assistant ministers‡ General office directors, deputy directors‡  Bureau heads, deputy heads*	Party fraction members* Party committee mem- bers*	           Division heads, deputy heads§ Section heads, deputy heads§	           Party general branch com- mittee secretaries, deputy secretaries* Party branch committee secretaries, deputy secretaries*

*Sources:*

\* Communist Party of China, Central Committee, Organization Department, Research Office and Organization Bureau (ed.), *Questions and Answers on Party Organizational Work*, pp. 92, 180–82.

† Estimated rank equivalents based on ranks listed in *Yearbook on Chinese Communism*, p. 16.

‡ Rank equivalents based on ranks listed in *ibid.*

§ Assumptions noted in text, p. 209 *supra*.

The lines of authority for the management of reserve cadres are not the same as those regulating the management of either the reserve cadres' original offices or the offices for which they are being groomed. Based at least partly on recommendations from the ordinary masses, the leading body of a unit draws up a tentative reserve list for leading offices at the unit level. This list is submitted for approval to the Party committee at the next higher level, which assigns its organization department to screen the proposed reserve cadres with the help of the parallel personnel department. These two departments select suitable prospective leaders and the tentative reserve list is resubmitted, with appropriate revisions, to the Party committee for discussion. The Party committee fixes the final reserve list. Once the list has been established, reserve cadres are trained for office. Responsibility for training the cadres rests with the Party committee which established the final list. This Party committee regularly checks up on the cadres and makes "timely adjustments" to the reserve list: reserve cadres may be appointed or promoted more quickly than originally anticipated or dropped altogether, depending on progress achieved in the training period.<sup>65</sup>

Training is supposed to take into account the reserve cadres' qualifications at the time the list is fixed and the requirements of their respective designated offices – with a view to eliminating the gap between the former and the latter. This may require formal education (including courses at a Party school)<sup>66</sup> or practical work experience at a lower level. A period of probationary leadership is sometimes arranged.<sup>67</sup>

The eventual appointments or promotions must still be approved by the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority over the office. Given the structure of authority governing the selection and training of reserve cadres, the Party committee which has been responsible for the cadres up to this point will sometimes be the subordinate Party committee sharing *nomenklatura* authority over the office. With reserve cadre training completed, it seems less likely that the subordinate Party committee's proposal for reserve cadres' appointments or promotions would be completely rejected by the superior Party committee sharing *nomenklatura* authority over the office. Thus approval may be *pro forma*. If this is so,

65. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, pp. 82–84.

66. Education standards for leading cadres have been formulated. The handbook states that leading cadres under 40 years of age and lacking the level of education of a junior secondary school graduate must attain this level within two to three years; those who have attained this level but lack professional or technical knowledge must attain the level of a technical secondary school (*zhongzhuan*) or tertiary-level technical institute (*dazhuan*) graduate within three to five years; and all cadres recruited to leading positions in the future must have obtained the level of education of a senior secondary school or technical secondary school graduate. *Ibid.* pp. 42–43. As well, newly recruited main leading Party and state cadres at the provincial and prefectural levels must undergo training at the Central Party School; those at the county level must undergo training at a provincial-level Party school; and those at the commune level must be trained at a prefectural- or county-level Party school. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: China*, 7 March 1983, pp. K10–12.

67. See, for example, "Xingang chuan chang ganbu houbai renxuan daixing lingdao zhiquan" ("Xingang boat factory cadre reserves are selected to function in a leadership capacity"), *Renmin ribao*, 23 November 1982, p. 1.

authority over appointments and promotions in Party and state organs may be regulated more by a one-level-downward principle of management than is suggested by the formal principle of *nomenklatura* authority for these offices.<sup>68</sup>

### Personnel Dossiers

The documentary basis for decisions on leading cadre appointments, promotions, transfers and removals is contained in their personnel dossiers (*dang'an*), maintained by the organization department.<sup>69</sup>

Although many of the documents contained in the dossiers are written by the cadres themselves, the contents of all cadres' personnel dossiers are classified as Party secrets (*jimi*). Consultation of personnel dossiers is strictly controlled. The dossiers are not generally lent out; when an organization needs to consult a cadre's dossier, it sends a Party member cadre to the unit where the dossier is maintained. When a dossier must be transferred, a confidential post is used. Cadres are not allowed to consult or borrow their own dossiers or those of relatives. In fact, it is forbidden for anyone to keep any dossier or dossier materials privately.<sup>70</sup>

A cadre's personnel dossier follows him through each change of office; it is maintained by the organization department of the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority over the office. (Although the 1983 handbook does not specify at which level personnel dossiers are maintained when *nomenklatura* are shared, probably the superior Party committee assumes this responsibility.)

The actual handling and supervision of the dossiers is the work of staff specially assigned to the job. Generally there is one cadre working full-time to manage each thousand dossiers. At the county level (the basic level for the maintenance of cadres' dossiers), at least one cadre is assigned to work full-time on dossier management even if less than a thousand dossiers are managed at that level.<sup>71</sup>

The management of such sensitive materials requires staff with impeccable political credentials. Those assigned to work with cadres' dossiers must be Party members with "a strong Party spirit," able to observe Party discipline and keep Party secrets and possessing a relatively high level of education and work competence. The job is not purely clerical: while carrying out the routine work of dossier maintenance, cadres are supposed to familiarize themselves with the contents of the dossiers in their charge so that they can help those doing cadre work by providing information and suggestions as required (*tigong qingkuang*).

68. "Genchu paixing baozheng gaige" ("Eradicate factionalism, guarantee reforms"), *Renmin ribao*, 21 March 1983, p. 3.

69. According to Barnett's informants, the organization department maintains only the dossiers of Party member cadres, while those of non-Party members are maintained by the personnel department. The 1983 handbook does not make this distinction. Barnett, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China*, p. 49.

70. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, pp. 280–81.

71. *Ibid.* pp. 277–78, 279.

Relative stability of personnel makes this task easier; thus dossier management staff are not supposed to be frequently transferred.<sup>72</sup>

The current problem in personnel dossier work is not simply the establishment of standards and the upgrading of management methods, although this is certainly one focus of the work.<sup>73</sup> What are referred to as unjust, false and wrong (*yuan jia cuo*) cases of the Cultural Revolution generated a tremendous amount of documentary materials which were filed in cadres' personnel dossiers: "For each cadre 'investigated' there are tens, hundreds, even thousands of documents. . . . Most of these investigation materials are exaggerated, false, duplicated or useless. . . . To sort out these materials conscientiously is an important part of implementing fully the Party's cadre policy."<sup>74</sup> The political sensitivity of this task should not be underestimated: the contents of personnel dossiers are central to decisions on cadre appointment, promotions, transfers and removals. A dossier purge of Cultural Revolution documents is required to rescue some potential leaders from political limbo. Yet such a purge must be carefully controlled.

The ultimate decision on what happens to Cultural Revolution documents contained in a cadre's personnel dossier rests with the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority over the cadre's office. Each Cultural Revolution document must be examined and returned to the cadre in whose dossier it was filed, kept in archives as an historical record or destroyed. (At least two persons must be present when materials are being destroyed.) Some material is an awkward legacy – containing notes and comments written by Party cadres during the Cultural Revolution. The 1983 handbook points out that such material may be "unsuitable" for the cadre's perusal; it is suggested that the materials be destroyed after "explaining the problem" to the cadre involved.<sup>75</sup>

All of the following documents, the contents of which often overlap, are filed as issued in a cadre's personnel dossier: (1) recently completed Curriculum Vitae Forms (*lǚli biao* and *jianli biao*); (2) Cadre Registration Forms (completed when assigned to a work unit); (3) autobiographies; (4) recent *jianding* reports; (5) a *jianding* report from school, written at the time of graduation; (6) *kaohe* reports; (7) conclusions on political investigations (*shencha*), re-investigations and rehabilitations as well as the investigation reports, the official views of the deciding Party committee, the main evidence supporting the conclusions, any materials provided by the cadre under investigation, the cadre's personal views on the conclusions and main materials for appeal; (8) applications for Party and Communist Youth League membership, opinions on becoming a full member and application and approval materials for withdrawal from the

72. *Ibid.* pp. 277–78.

73. This is part of the general concern about "scientific management" of documentary materials. A national conference on dossier management was convened in August 1979 and a basic text on dossier management was revised in September of the same year. See Chen Zhaowu (ed.), *Dang'an guanlixue (Dossier Management)*, 2d ed. (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1980).

74. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 282.

75. *Ibid.* pp. 282–83.



Party or League; (9) official notices of disciplinary actions resulting from violations of Party discipline or state law, conclusions on re-investigations and rehabilitations, investigation reports, the official views of the superior Party committee and the cadre's self-examination reports; (10) Cadre Appointment/Removal Request Forms; (11) Party Congress Representative Registration Forms; (12) People's Congress Representative Registration Forms; (13) Promotion of Title/Academic Status/Rank Approval Forms; (16) Investigation Forms for Personnel Leaving the Country; and (17) Retirement/Resignation Approval Forms.<sup>76</sup>

### *Cadre Evaluation*

The appointment, promotion, transfer and removal of leading cadres is based, in principle at least, on their qualifications and performance as evaluated regularly in four main ways, varying in terms of examining agent, principal focus and scope.

*Jianding*. Of all the forms of cadre evaluation, *jianding* (assessment) takes place at the lowest level of organization, the cadre's unit. It is distinguished most from other evaluations by the active participation of the cadre being evaluated. *Jianding* begins with the cadre's self-assessment, probing his work, activities and thought. This self-assessment is presented for discussion to fellow cadres, workers and staff in a small group meeting. After group members comment on the self-assessment, the unit Party committee decides on an official *jianding* – based on the self-assessment and discussion – to be filed in the cadre's personnel dossier. First, however, the official *jianding* is shown to the cadre being evaluated; if the cadre disagrees with the Party committee's summary and evaluation, his own views are filed in the dossier with the official *jianding*.<sup>77</sup>

Although it appears that *jianding* was previously conducted annually,<sup>78</sup> the 1983 handbook states that it is currently conducted once every two to three years (although more frequently if the cadre is newly appointed, promoted or transferred from another unit or has been on study leave or short-term assignment).<sup>79</sup>

*Jianding* is supposed to serve several purposes – it is seen as a method of educating, supervising and screening cadres: “In the course of *jianding*, cadres arrive at a correct understanding of themselves and can [thus] develop their strengths, overcome their weaknesses, raise their ideological and professional levels and continually improve their work. [At the same time,] the Party organization can systematically gain a comprehensive understanding of the cadres.”<sup>80</sup>

76. *Ibid.* pp. 283–84. For an idea of what some of these standardized forms include, see extracts of Zhang Chunqiao's *luli biao*, *jianli biao* and Party Congress Representative Registration Form in Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian (Central Committee document), 1977, No. 10, in *Zhonggong yanjiu*, Vol. 14, No. 7 (1980), pp. 164–74 passim.

77. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 99.

78. Barnett, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China*, p. 50.

79. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 98.

80. *Ibid.*

*Kaohe*. The 1983 handbook describes *kaoche* (assessment, i.e. of competence) as an important part of the cadre system reform, closely linked to the responsibility system. *Kaohe* is conducted annually or every two years. The content and standards of assessment take into account the basic requirements for leading cadres, as outlined in the new Party Constitution,<sup>81</sup> as well as requirements specific to the type and rank of office held.

*Kaohe* is conducted under the direction of the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority over the cadre being assessed; when *nomenklatura* are shared, the subordinate Party committee directs the assessment. The Party committee in charge assigns its organization department to work with the parallel personnel department in forming an ad hoc assessment group – composed of cadres in the organization and personnel departments and leaders and qualified personnel working in the cadre's unit – to conduct the *kaohe*.<sup>82</sup>

The assessment group considers five areas in its evaluation of the cadre: (1) virtue (*de*), focusing on political standpoint and character; (2) ability (*neng*), focusing on professional ability and management skills; (3) work attendance (*qin*) and attitude towards work; (4) achievements (*ji*), focusing on specific achievements in work and general work efficiency; and (5) achievements in studies (*xuexi chengji*), encompassing results in political, theoretical and professional studies. The assessment group collectively completes a written assessment, which is filed in the cadre's personnel dossier after the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority over the cadre being assessed has examined and approved it. When there is *nomenklatura* overlap, the superior Party committee must examine and approve the *kaohe* report.<sup>83</sup>

*Shencha*. *Shencha* (investigation) may be the most critical basis for deciding on changes of Party and state leaders because its focus is solely political. The 1983 handbook cites the Central Committee Decision on Cadre Investigation of November 1953, noting that its spirit remains the valid basis for current investigation work: "The purpose of cadre *shencha* is to understand cadres comprehensively. The focus of *shencha* should be political; *shencha* should clarify the political background (*zhengzhi mianmu*) of each cadre."<sup>84</sup>

Political investigation is described as extremely serious work, inseparably bound up with Party policy. Thus it is hardly surprising that it is the work of the organization department alone. Repudiating the practices of earlier periods, the Central Organization Department has established as the primary principle of investigation work: "Cadre *shencha* work is part of the routine work of the Party organization department. Do not adopt the [mass] campaign method to conduct *shencha*."<sup>85</sup>

In the current period, *shencha* involves investigation to discover: (1) any hostile or "bad" elements who infiltrated the cadre ranks in the past; (2)

81. Constitution of the Communist Party of China, 1982, c. 6, art. 35.

82. Central Organization Department, 1983 *Handbook*, pp. 93, 97.

83. *Ibid.* pp. 96–97.

84. *Ibid.* p. 151.

85. *Ibid.* p. 152.

rebels who rose to power in the Cultural Revolution by following the groups centred on Lin Biao and Jiang Qing; (3) those whose way of thinking is seriously factionalist; (4) beating, smashing and looting (*da za qiang*) elements; (5) those who oppose the line established by the 11th Central Committee at its Third Plenary Session in 1978; and (6) those who have seriously violated the law and disregarded organizational discipline. Also included as tasks of *shencha* work are: (7) investigating and dealing with those with serious bourgeois liberal tendencies and cadres who are politically unreliable; (8) clearing up facts about cadres' past; (9) investigating cadres with regard to their ideology, moral character and work behaviour; and (10) resolving problems "left over by history," including reversing unjust, false and wrong verdicts.<sup>86</sup>

*Shencha* is conducted by the organization department of the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority over the cadre under investigation; when *nomenklatura* are shared, the organization department of the subordinate Party committee conducts *shencha*. The official conclusion is discussed and decided upon by the Party committee (and approved by the superior Party committee when *nomenklatura* are shared). Probably because these politically orientated conclusions are so critical in determining career advancement possibilities and are most often focused on specific problems (unlike e.g. *jianding* and *kaohe*), an attempt is made to resolve any difference of views between the organization department providing the information to the Party committee and the cadre under investigation. The cadre can appeal to a superior Party committee for a re-investigation of his case. If the appeal does not produce the change desired, the cadre retains the right to have his views filed in his dossier with the official conclusion.<sup>87</sup>

*Kaocha liaojie*. The least focused form of cadre evaluation is screening (*kaocha liaojie*, literally investigation to understand). The departments which conduct screening are the same organization and personnel departments responsible for *kaohe*. However, accounts in the Chinese press always note the role of the organization department in screening and usually neglect to mention the personnel department. Moreover, in discussing personal recommendation, the 1983 handbook notes that "the *organization department* conscientiously conducts screening."<sup>88</sup> In all likelihood, the organization department has main responsibility for screening leading cadres.

Although screening is evidently an evaluation quite distinct from *jianding*, *kaohe* and *shencha*, it seems to encompass all the contents of those other forms. In distinguishing screening from the other forms of evaluation, we should note that the other forms occur either regularly or as specific problems arise and all three other forms produce evaluation reports or conclusions which become part of the normal contents of personnel dossiers. Screening, however, is a continual process; the organization and personnel departments are supposed to develop a

86. *Ibid.* pp. 151–52.

87. *Ibid.* pp. 93, 153, 158.

88. *Ibid.* pp. 114 (emphasis added).

comprehensive basic view (*jiben kanfa*) of each cadre so that they can contribute to decisions on leadership changes. Screening does not necessarily yield written documentation, nor are screening materials necessarily filed in cadres' dossiers. The 1983 handbook states that "any (screening) materials which have not been studied, summarized and put in order by the Party organization . . . – such as tapes of conversations, public opinion surveys, report materials, etcetera – are not placed in cadres' dossiers. Instead, they are preserved in some other manner by the organization and personnel departments."<sup>89</sup>

Screening methods range from scanning the contents of personnel dossiers to searching for "living" materials, through discussion with cadres' superiors and subordinates, evidencing character, qualifications and potential. Screening is screening for office; it is "the basis for the correct selection and promotion of cadres and their rational deployment."<sup>90</sup> The only stipulation placed on screening materials is that they include opinions of the masses.<sup>91</sup> The "basic view" of a cadre acquired through screening can be the obstacle or gateway to higher office at the time of leadership changes: for example, a *Guangming ribao* article describes how an experienced, well-educated technician who had made major professional contributions was blocked from a position of leadership because his improper choice of friends (*shehui guanxi fuza*) caused the organization department to consider him unsuited for leadership.<sup>92</sup>

Table 3 summarizes the different forms of cadre evaluation and the roles of various agents in evaluation. It is difficult to rank the evaluations in order of importance to decisions on leadership changes: the *jianding* may be the best indication of how people in the cadre's own unit will respond to his assumption of a leading office; the *kaohe* takes on special significance due to the current policy of professionalization of leading groups; the *shencha* is clearly vital to maintaining a politically reliable elite; and the *kaocha liaojie* guarantees that aspects not covered or emphasized in other forms of evaluation will not be overlooked. Even if we assume (probably mistakenly) that all forms of cadre evaluation weigh equally in considering a cadre for leadership, one agent emerges as more important than others in the provision of information on cadres – the organization department (of the subordinate Party committee in cases of *nomenklatura* overlap). This should not, however, obscure the equally obvious fact that the work of collecting, selecting and approving the information which is filed in personnel dossiers as evaluation materials (upon which decisions on leadership changes are based) is divided among several agents and levels of agents.

89. *Ibid.* p. 285.

90. *Ibid.* p. 106.

91. *Ibid.* pp. 90–91.

92. "Rizhao xian dapo lao kuangkuang dadan xuan xian ren neng" ("Rizhao county breaks with old conventions, boldly selects the virtuous and appoints the able"), *Guangming ribao*, 28 July 1980, p. 1.

Table 3: **Cadre Evaluation**

<i>Agent</i>	<i>Jianding</i>	<i>Kaohe</i>	<i>Shencha</i>	<i>Kaocha liaojie</i>
Cadre's unit	Cadre presents self-assessment; small group discusses it; Party committee writes formal assessment	Leaders and qualified personnel participate in ad hoc evaluation group		Leaders and masses give their views
Organization department of subordinate Party committee		Organization department forms ad hoc evaluation group which includes department cadres	Organization department conducts investigation	Organization department conducts screening
Parallel personnel department		Personnel department cadres participate in ad hoc evaluation group		Personnel department cadres participate in screening
Subordinate Party committee		Party committee examines and approves evaluation report	Party committee discusses and decides on formal investigation conclusion	Party committee uses screening materials in considering cadres for office
Superior Party committee		Party committee examines and approves evaluation report	Party committee examines and approves investigation conclusion	Party committee uses screening materials in considering cadres for office

### *Personal Recommendation*

Party policy on the role of individuals in the appointment, promotion, transfer and removal of leaders is summed up – if not clarified – in two principles.

First, personal decision (*geren jue ding*) on such matters is strictly prohibited:

We promote cadres so that there can be successors to the Party's cause who will lead the people in realizing the Four Modernizations. The promotion is by no means intended to replace a certain leader occupying a certain office or to carry out some unfinished cause to which a leader is personally committed. . . . Personal decision on cadre appointments, utilization and promotions facilitates [the development of] a self-interested perspective, the abuse of position and power to place in office intimate friends and the development of personal influence. This not only violates regulations on Party life, but also makes it easy for unsuitable cadres and even opportunistic elements seeking personal gain to infiltrate our cadre ranks and leading groups. This is extremely dangerous. . . . We must put an end to personal decision on cadre appointments, utilization and promotions. Through the organizational system we must end appointments on the basis of favouritism.<sup>93</sup>

Secondly, personal recommendation (*geren tuijian*) is not only permitted, but strongly encouraged. Personal recommendation to the Party organization of qualified personnel is not only "consistent with organizational principles and thus should be permitted," but also is considered as "the duty of each Communist Party member, particularly leading cadres": "To know of someone and yet not to recommend, . . . to stifle talent – is detrimental to the Party's and the people's cause."<sup>94</sup>

In principle, the process of screening by the organization department and collective decision-making by the Party committee prevent personal recommendation from becoming personal decision. The 1983 handbook warns against treating these processes as mere formalities.<sup>95</sup>

Still, personal recommendation by a leading cadre can be a very potent force. Chinese press accounts suggest that a transferred or retiring leader is in a good position to name a successor and convince those with doubts to agree to his choice.<sup>96</sup> One account which does not involve an incumbent choosing a replacement reveals that a leader can enhance his ability to persuade by supplementing regular information-gathering procedures. The first secretary of a large steel enterprise's Party committee confronted opposition among fellow committee members to his choice of a certain young cadre as enterprise deputy manager. "He is good

93. Central Organization Department, *1983 Handbook*, p. 113–14.

94. *Ibid.* p. 114.

95. *Ibid.*

96. See "Zong gongchengshi Liu Dachun ren Xi'an shi keweizhuren" ("Chief engineer Liu Dachun is appointed Xi'an Science Commission Director"), *Guangming ribao*, 9 July 1980, p. 1; "Liu Lanbo li jian Li Peng xin buzhang tiaoshi zhong dan" ("Liu Lanbo recommends Li Peng, new minister takes up heavy burden"), *Renmin ribao*, 23 August 1981, p. 1; and "Lao tongzhi tuixuan youxiu zhongnian ganbu ren shiwei shuji" ("Old comrade chooses an outstanding middle-aged cadre for municipality Party committee secretary"), *Renmin ribao*, 21 October 1981, p. 3.

at technical work, but not suited for leadership,” committee members argued. In the Party committee meeting, the first secretary “took out first-hand materials obtained from *his own screening*” of the cadre and “used the facts” to prove the cadre had leadership ability; Party committee members then agreed to the appointment.<sup>97</sup>

The legitimization of personal intervention through the practice of recommendation appears to open up possibilities for abuse of power and conflicts with the regime’s stated aim of institutionalizing cadre management. At the same time, however, it introduces flexibility into leadership changes, counteracting the systemic tendencies towards fragmentation of authority over leading cadres structured by *nomenklatura* and personnel dossier maintenance practices. Leaders are encouraged to reach down and across bureaucratic levels and units to set in motion leadership changes. Given the current urgent demand to bring younger cadres into leading groups at all levels, this kind of flexibility can have a positive impact on the pattern of promotions.

The *nomenklatura* and personnel dossier maintenance systems tend to draw a Party committee’s attention to a recruitment pool of leading cadres one or two levels below it. As a result, promotions are likely to occur in a step-by-step pattern: qualified young cadres will gain important leading offices gradually, as they advance from one level to the next. But, according to Deng Xiaoping, China cannot wait for such cadres to advance through the ranks in such a fashion; young cadres must be boldly promoted, even if it means circumventing regular practices (*poge tiba*).<sup>98</sup> Thus, redefining and essentially rejecting his own “staircase theory” of cadre promotion criticized in 1976, Deng argued in August 1980: “We cannot confine cadre promotions to the current system of step-by-step promotion of Party and state cadres from the district level, to the county level, to the prefectural level, to the provincial level in that order. . . . We must really promote outstanding young and middle-aged cadres, promote them quickly. . . .”<sup>99</sup> As Deng himself demonstrated with his selection of Wang Zhaoguo, deputy director of the Second Automobile Factory, to work at the Centre, personal recommendation is one method of circumventing the rigidities of the step-by-step promotion pattern.<sup>100</sup>

### Conclusion

To what extent has the system revealed in the 1983 handbook been the blueprint for cadre management practices in the past few years? While a

97. “Magang yi pi youxiu zhong qingnian ganbu zou shang lingdao gangwei” (“Group of outstanding young and middle-aged cadres take up leading posts at Ma Steel”), *Renmin ribao*, 25 October 1982, p. 4 (emphasis added).

98. Deng Xiaoping, “Reform of the system of Party and state leadership,” p. 283.

99. *Ibid.* p. 284. In 1976 Deng’s staircase theory (*taijielun*) contradicted the prevailing effort to replace veteran cadres with younger, less-experienced cadres who were being promoted several steps at a time to important leading posts.

100. As of May 1984, Wang heads the Central Committee General Office. Deng appears not to consider Wang’s promotion an example of the “helicopter-style” promotion he criticized in 1976 and again in 1980 in *ibid.* See his reference to Wang in “Lao ganbu di yi wei de renwu shi xuanba zhong qingnian ganbu” (“The primary task of veteran cadres is to select

good answer to this question awaits further research of a different kind, the recent experience of Party rectification in China is suggestive in two ways.

First, conclusions drawn in the course of the Central Organization Department's own internal rectification, as reported in a September 1984 *Renmin ribao* article,<sup>101</sup> suggest that the cadre management reforms detailed above have not made much progress since the January 1983 publication of the handbook. Using as a criterion a series of "important directives" on organizational work issued by the Secretariat in April 1984, the Central Organization Department evaluated its work since the historic Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee. Progress under the leadership of Hu Yaobang and Song Renqiong was affirmed; leadership in organizational work since February 1983, however, was criticized. Without referring explicitly to Chen Yeping (who replaced Song as department head in February 1983), the evaluation cited the ideology and style of work of the Central Organization Department as the main reason for lack of progress in organizational work nationally. Specifically, the leadership was criticized for its bureaucratism and lack of both an emancipated outlook and boldness in innovation. The evaluation noted that the programme for reforming the cadre management system proposed under Song's leadership had been neither carefully studied later nor given concrete leadership in implementation.

At about the same time as the Central Organization Department was evaluating its work, the Secretariat adopted a policy of reducing the scope of cadre management authority by changing the two-levels-downward principle to a one-level-downward principle.<sup>102</sup> This innovation and the replacement of Chen Yeping with Qiao Shi may signal a new direction in cadre management practices. Whether the leadership will turn to other aspects of the 1983 handbook or draft a new document is as yet unclear.

Secondly, while the Party rectification of the Central Organization Department may illuminate in its conclusions the recent history of the cadre management system detailed in the 1983 handbook, the contents of the handbook illuminate little about the current Party rectification on the whole. The handbook describes a regularized bureaucratic system for managing cadres and is of limited utility in our attempt to understand episodic campaigns such as the current rectification. The Party rectification, which will undoubtedly alter the recruitment pool for leaders, suggests that official endorsement of a return to the pre-Cultural Revolution general regularity in cadre management practices does not necessarily entail the abandonment of problem-orientated campaigns as a supplementary method of dealing with the cadre question.

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young and middle-aged cadres"), in *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping*, p. 341; and "Zai junwei zuotanhui shang de jianghua" ("Talk at a symposium of the Military Commission"), in *ibid.* p. 366. These speeches were made on 2 July 1981 and 4 July 1982 respectively.

101. "Zhua lingdao banzi tiaozheng baozheng gaige kaifang shunli jinxing" ("Grasp adjustment of leading groups, ensure reforms and 'open door' can be carried out smoothly"), *Renmin ribao*, 13 September 1984, pp. 1, 4.

102. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: China*, 25 July 1984, p. K1., citing Beijing Xinhua Domestic, 19 July 1984.