DECISION-MAKING IN THE FACTORIES

Looking at the available sources, it is obvious that "workers' control" in China is strictly on a consultative and technical level. Workers may suggest new forms of doing old jobs, better allocation of resources – but *never may they run the factories on their own.* As Richman stated: "It is similar in many respects to the philosophy of 'consultative direction,' 'participative management,' 'bottom-up management,' or 'grass-roots budgeting,' under a balanced system of centralization and decentralization of authority, found in a growing number of American companies."[27] And further: "It seemed clear during my visit to China that *the regime was not willing at that that time to have the workers actually play dominant roles in the management of their enterprises . . .* "[28]

Goldwasser and Dowty go on and on about the marvelous workers' participation in management; but participation is still just participation – it is not a substitute for the "real thing" – collective management. They cite examples of workers' participation – most of which concern workers' suggestions for increasing productivity. They also cite the activities of the Workers Representative Congresses as further proof of worker control (see below),[29] and also that workers *discuss* wage increases.[30] Louis Kraar likewise talks about workers participation in increasing productivity and technical innovations. But when you read the fine print, one thing becomes clear: workers can talk, suggest and "participate" all they want (within CCP limits, of course) – but when it comes to the actual making of decisions – that is up to the Party Committees and other Party authorities. Only if a suggestion is ratified by Party superiors can it be instituted.

In the early 60's it was "qualified managers and experts making the final decisions."[31] In the mid-60's authority was switched upwards to the State planners, with the Party Committees at the factories retaining some control.[32] As to the determination of wages – the results of the discussions must be approved by the Revolutionary Committees – or they are sent back for further talk.[33]

If anyone thinks that this form of workers' participation is "revolutionary," just take a look at the March 26, 1973 issue of *Newsweek* magazine, "The Job Blahs: Who Wants to Work?" wherein various experiments on the assembly line are discussed. The Chinese system is no more revolutionary than the experiments of such prominent Reds as General Motors, Ford Motor Co., Monsanto Chemical and the Travellers Insurance Company: once again the dichotomy between "workers' control" and "workers' management" is emphasized.

COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

We have seen that of the two committees, the Party Committee calls the shots; that workers' participation is limited to actually nothing more than an extended version of the Bosses' old Suggestion Box, with about as much power as the slips dropped into the box have. That the Maoist system is a dictatorship *over* the proletariat becomes absolutely conclusive when we examine the so-called "elections" to the Party Committees and the (powerless) Revolutionary Committees. Goldwasser and Dowty write that the representatives are chosen

> . . . on the basis of being good workers, having close relations with the masses of the workers in the factory, and being diligent in the study of Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Chairman Mao. The workers have discussions in their shop groups and make nominations. The names are then discussed by everyone, *including the Party organization* in the factory . . . After the discussions representatives are chosen by an election among the masses of workers.
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> In Tangshan, we visited a Rolling Stock Plant which manufactures locomotives and railroad coaches. They have a slightly different method of choosing representatives which is called the 'two times up, two times down' process. First, workers in each section of the factory have discussions and put forward names of people for the revolutionary committee. The names are sent up to the leading body, which holds its own discussions and sends its opinions back down. This process takes place twice; thus the 'two ups and downs.' (In some places this is done three times.) After the final discussion, they agree on a group of people for the committee, but *no vote is taken* – it is all handled by discussion. They said it does occassionally happen that some names are put forward by the workers but not approved by the leading body. In such cases they come to agreement through further discussion. They said they judge people according to 'how they fit into the class struggle and the struggle between the two lines,' and whether they are 'continuing the revolution.' *Here the PLA members are also discussed by the workers but the PLA has the final say on who their representatives are.*[34]

This is workers' democracy, where workers representatives have to be thoroughly indoctrinated in the ruler's ideology, and further must first be approved by others than the workers themselves?

Goldwasser and Dowty further state that members of the Party Committee are chosen in the same way,[35] and that "The Party committee is often chosen at a congress of all Party members in a factory, involving extensive discussions and elections."[36]

Richman writes that

> . . . The workers, and other personnel, supposedly elect the directors, vice directors, and group leaders (who are like front-line supervisors or floor foremen). They may play the major role in the selection of group leaders, but it is doubtful that they do so, regarding the higher-level managers. The elections, not surprisingly, are under the direct leadership of the enterprise party committee, and appropriate higher-level administrators and party committees above the enterprise also formally approve the election of directors and vice directors. I was told that such formal higher approval is almost always given.
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> There seemed to be a general reluctance on the part of the managers and Reds interviewed to discuss the mechanics of these elections. When I pushed for more details, some of them seemed to get embarrassed or upset. It seems that there are several after-hours meetings and screening sessions involved in coming up with a slate of managerial candidates. By the time the list of candidates is processed through the formal worker and staff representative conferences of workers and staff and party committee meetings, and then is presented to the electorate, there is typically only one candidate for each position. But, I was told, "employees can still vote 'yes' or 'no' for each candidate." What if the majority vote in a specific case is "no?" I