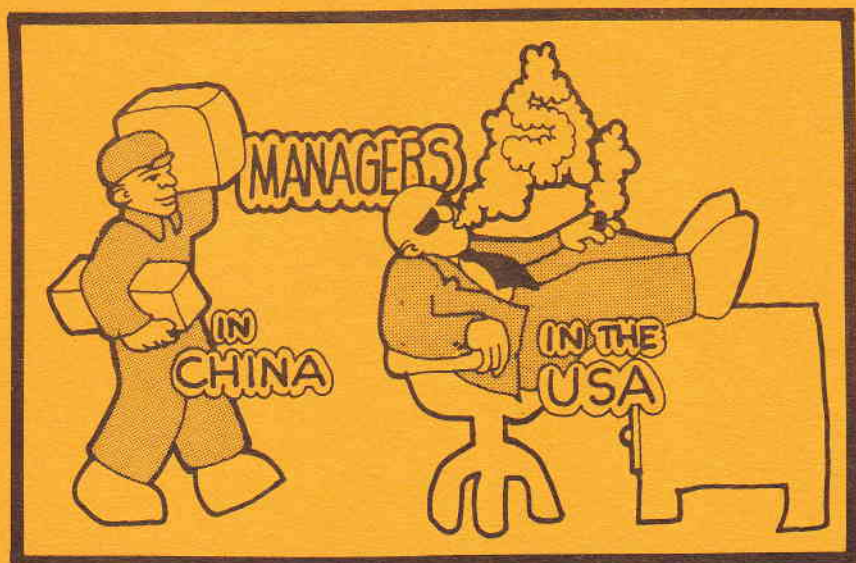


IN CHINA, MANAGERS WORK!



text by

U.S.-China Friendship Association
of the San Francisco Bay Area

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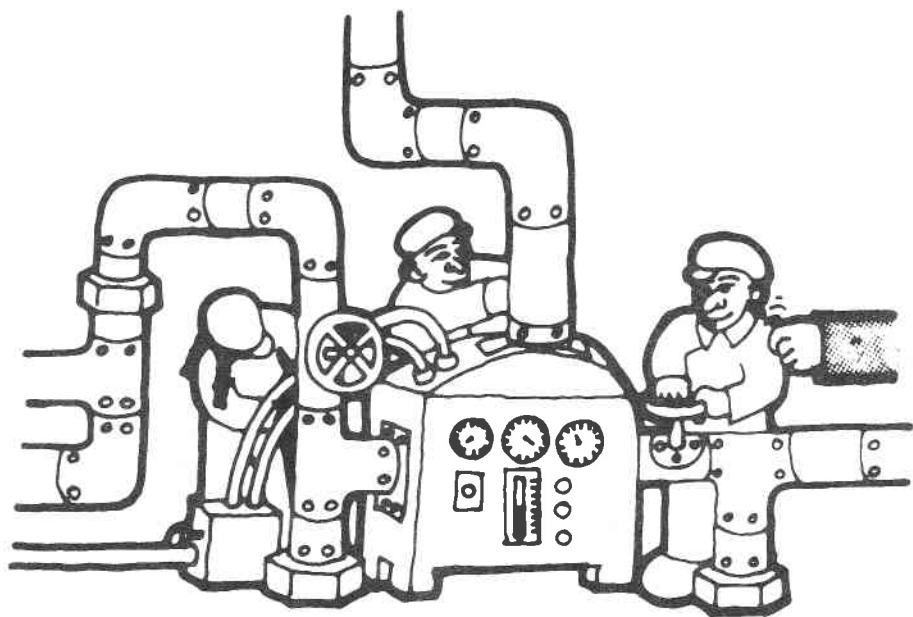
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How can the Chinese afford to have their experts do manual labor? What is the "secret" of the discipline and dedication of workers in the New China? These are some of the questions answered by this pamphlet.

The text originally appeared in the October 1971 U.S.-China Friendship Newsletter. It is based on discussions with recent visitors to China, and on material which has appeared in the New York Times (June 27, 1971) and in Chinese publications such as China Reconstructs and China Pictorial.

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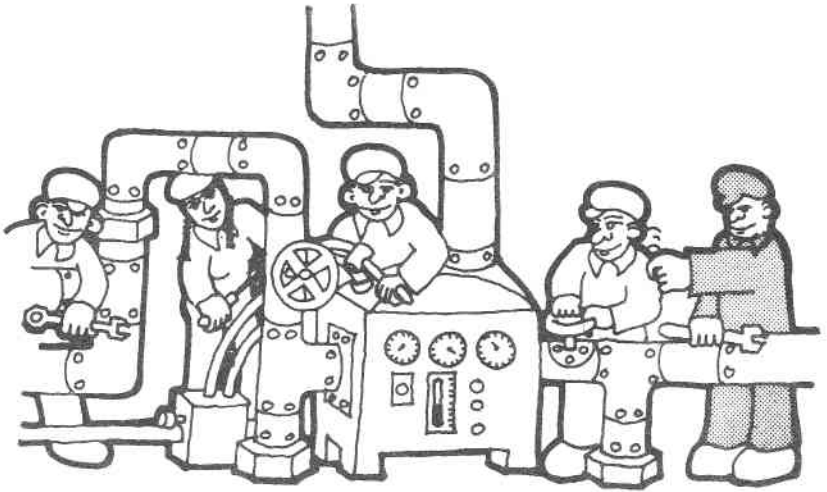


Some mornings when Chou Chieh-hsu gets to the Peking chemical factory where he works, he finds the manager of the plant standing right alongside him.

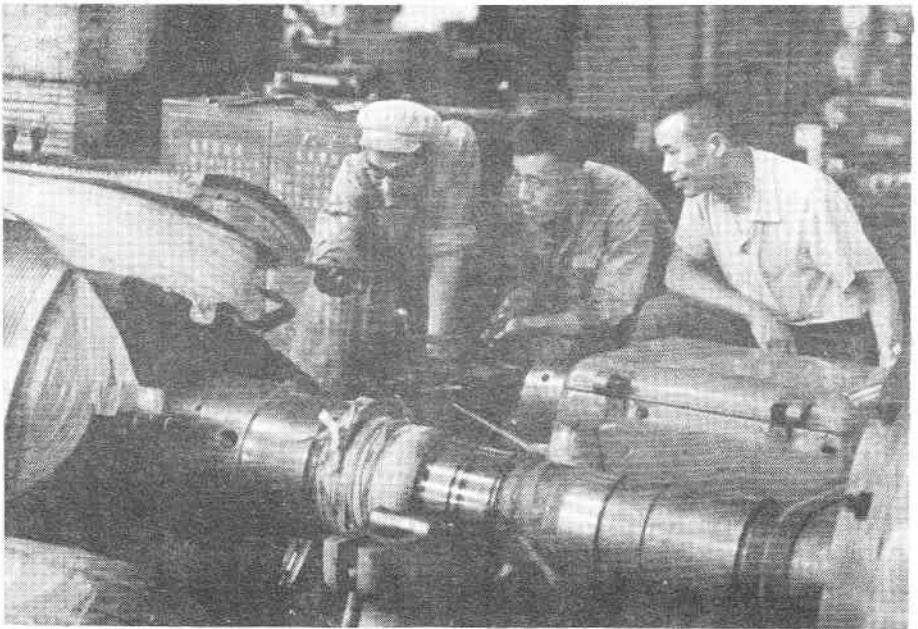


Is the manager there to chew out Chou Chieh-hsu about something Chou has done wrong? Is he checking up to make sure that worker Chou is doing his job properly?

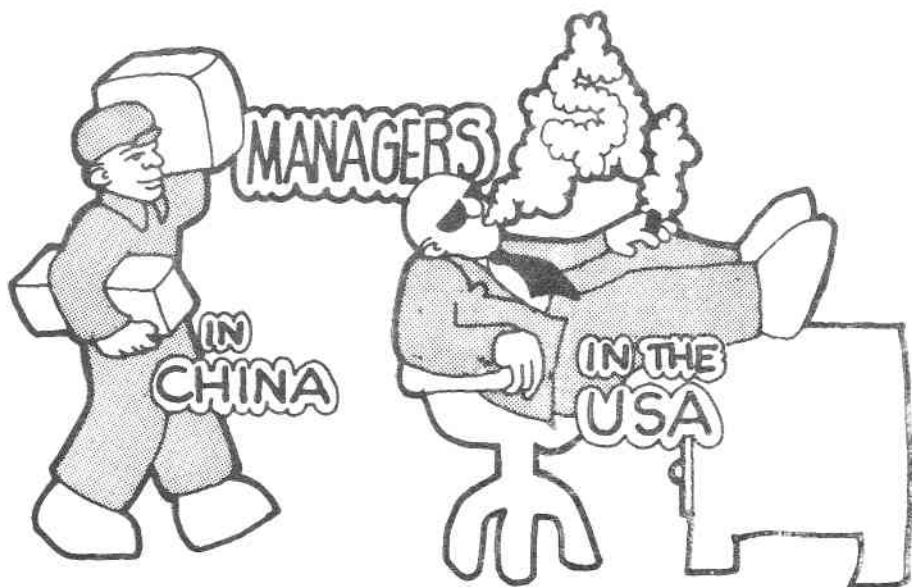
Did the manager come by, all spic-and-span in a suit and tie, to find out "what it's like" in the factory by looking around?



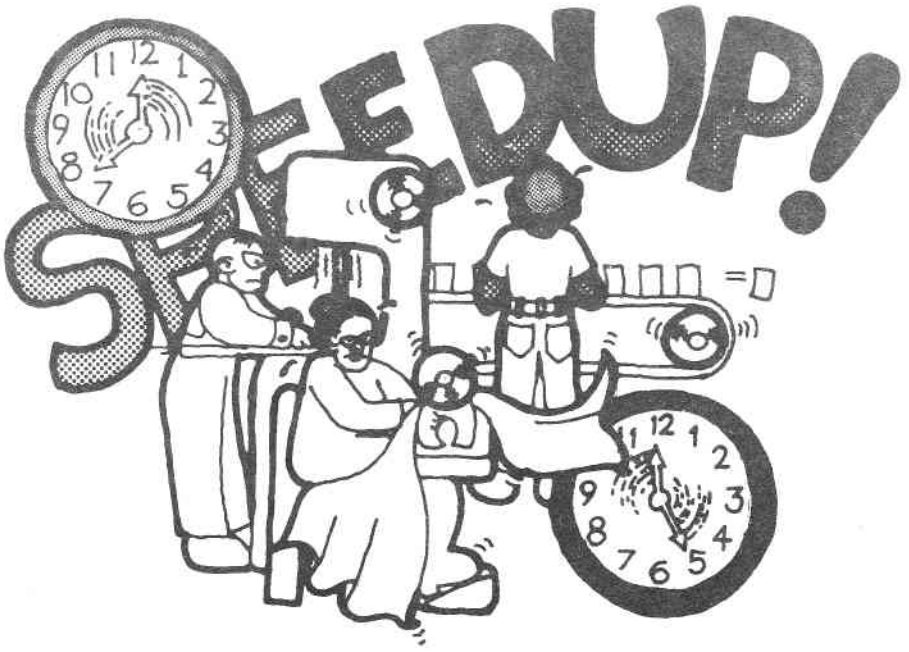
No. In fact, the manager of the plant is dressed in the same heavy work clothes as the other workers, and he is standing around waiting for Chou -- foreman of a crew of ten men who repair and install machines -- to tell the manager what work to do for the rest of the day.



He will work with his hands, and by the end of the day he will be as tired and as dirty as the other men and women of the plant -- and as proud of his contribution to the well-being of the Chinese people.

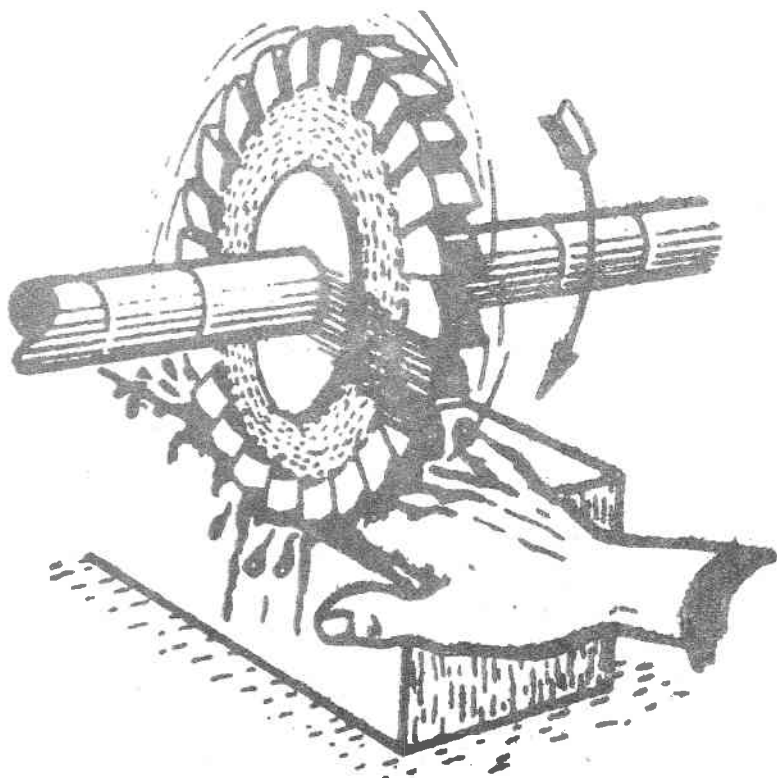


In China these days, it is standard operating procedure for managers, technicians and top officials of all sorts to spend a big part of their time doing manual labor in a field or factory. It is also one of the big differences between the way production is organized in China and the way it is done in all capitalist nations, including the United States.



Anyone who has ever worked in a plant in America knows how it is done here. You get to work a little bit early, so you can be sure to punch in on time, because a couple of latenesses (whatever the reason) usually means you get canned. When the bell rings you step up to your machine and begin work. For most people there are two main things to be said about what they do for the rest of the day: It is dull, and you are pushed to do it faster all the time.

And because of these two facts, even a simple task becomes dangerous. On an average working day in the U.S., 55 people are killed in industry and 27,000 are injured.



When you work in a factory in the U.S., no one ever asks your opinion about how the job could be done safer, or how the product could be improved. Usually, factory workers do know what becomes of the part they are making, and how it fits into the total product -- but it is not because the management tells them. Employers believe that the opinion of their employees are, ultimately, irrelevant.

To understand how different work is in China, let's go back to Chou Chieh-hsu's manager, the man who was going to do manual labor for the rest of the day.

If you told a "highly trained" technician or manager in the U.S. that he should spend a quarter or a third of his time doing ordinary physical labor, he would regard this as an insult or a punishment.



But in China, hard work is not considered beneath anybody's dignity. And "managing" is not considered so hard that everyone can't learn how. By having the responsible officials do ordinary work, as well as "manage", the Chinese make sure that their officials understand what really goes on in the plant, and that these leaders don't think of themselves as bosses.

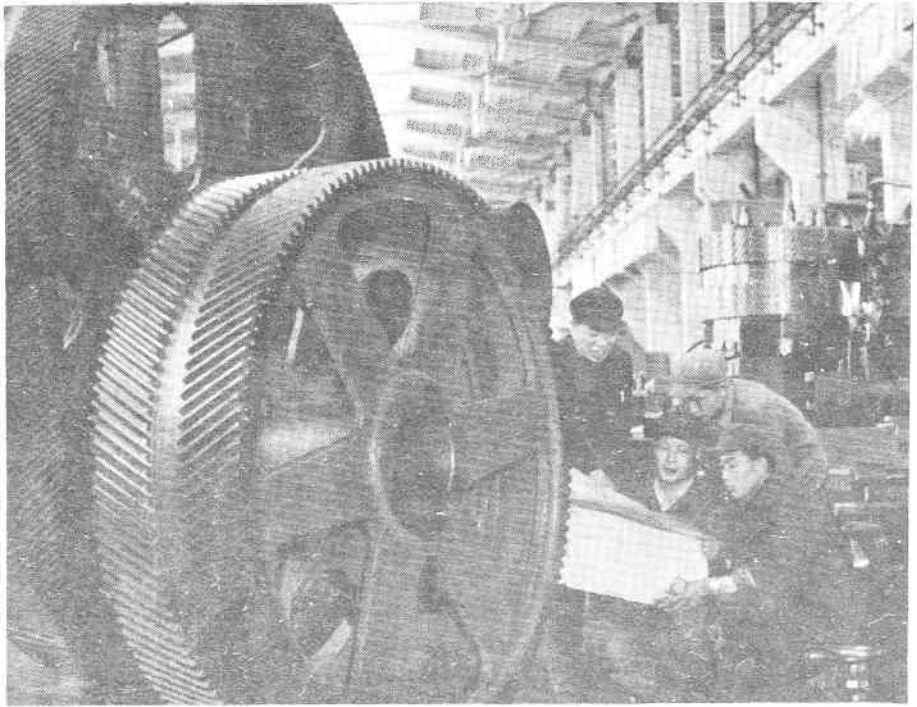


No manager can afford to ignore safety problems, for example, when he is right out there on the assembly line himself.

If you are a "regular" worker, by the same token, you are not likely to be overawed by someone you see regularly doing the same kind of work you do yourself.

But isn't this "inefficient"? Isn't it a waste of the individual's valuable skills? How can a poor country like China afford to "waste" the precious time of her scarce experts?

The answer is that China denies that it is really efficient to run industry the "American Way", by having a few experts tell a lot of other people what to do. Real efficiency, the Chinese have learned, comes from unlocking the imagination and the inventiveness of all workers. Efficiency comes from unleashing the sense of responsibility and the creative power of a people who rely on their collective ability to solve problems.

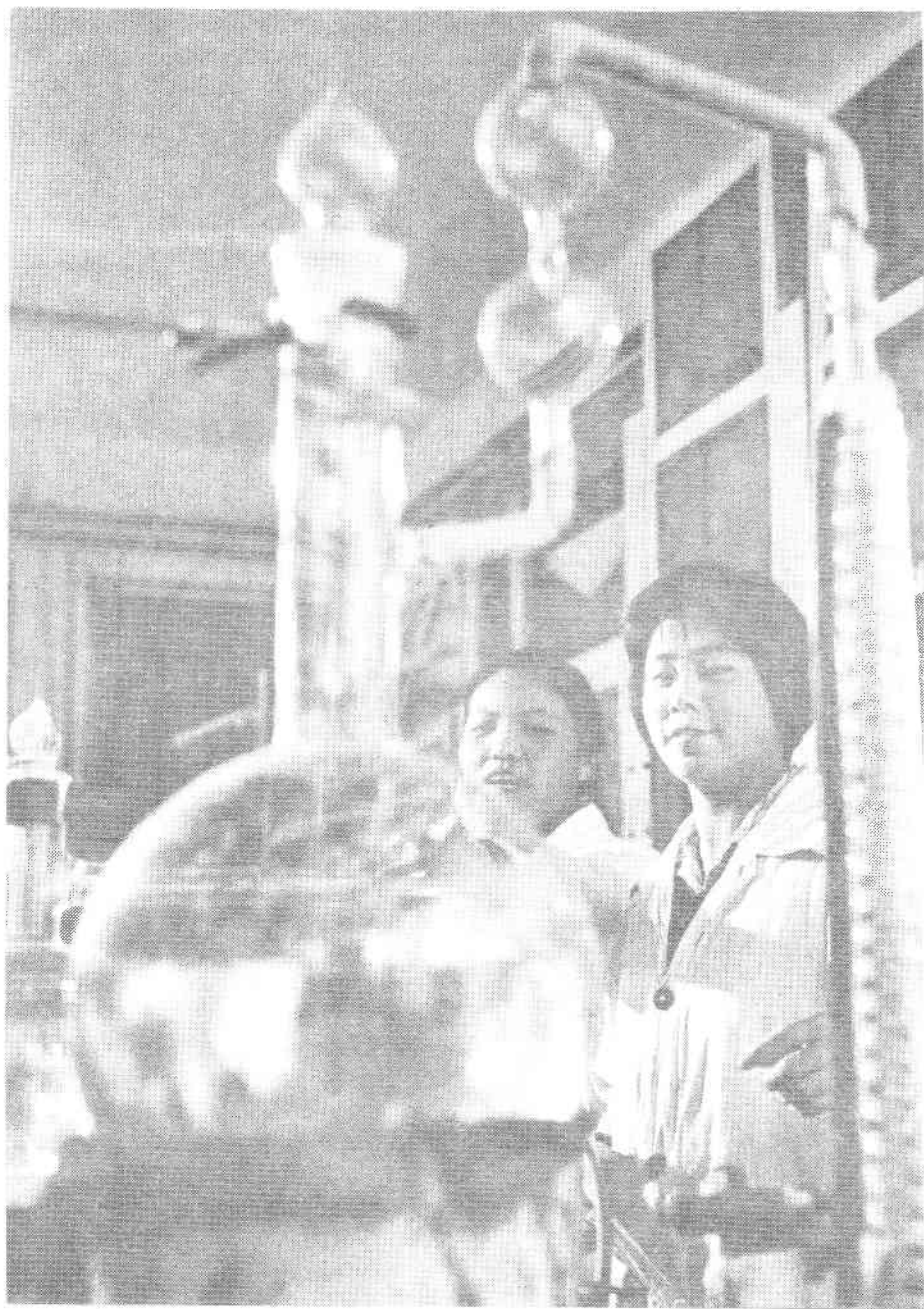


What does this mean in practice?

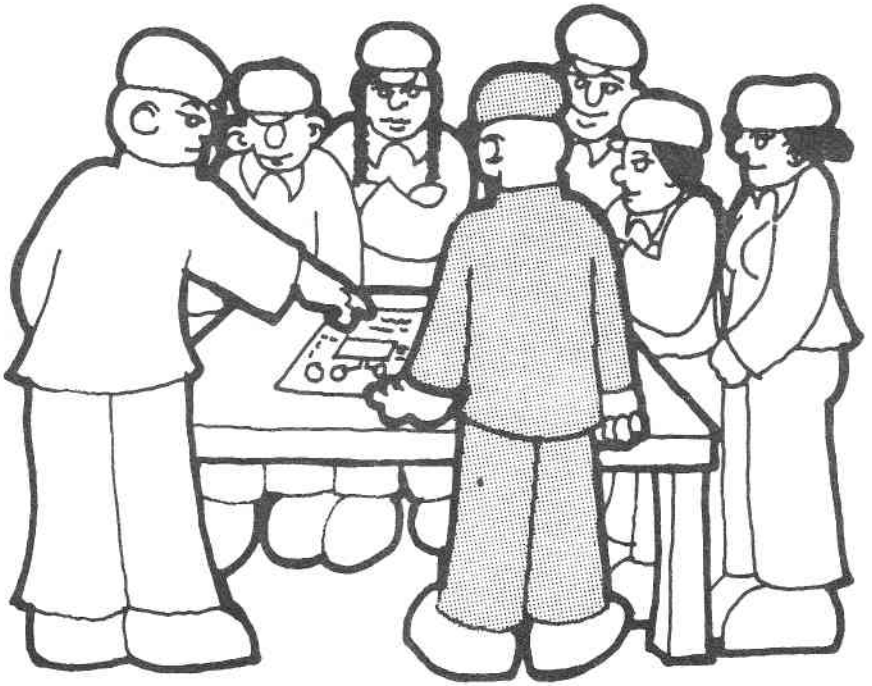
In a factory like the one Chou Chieh-hsu work in,
 -- the workers themselves meet regularly to discuss the organization of work in the plant.



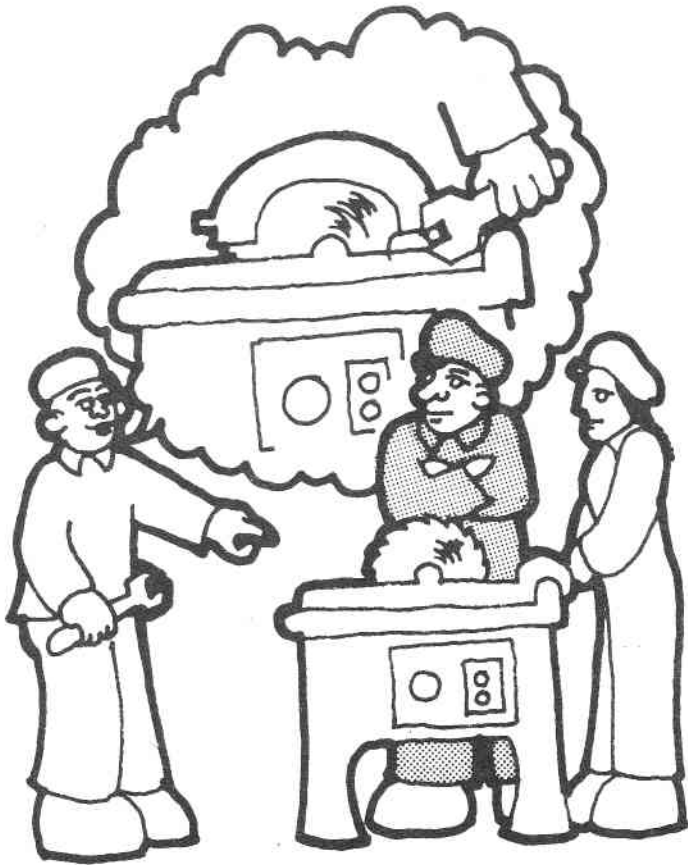
-- they appoint and criticize managers.



-- they select their fellow workers to be trained as technicians or experts.

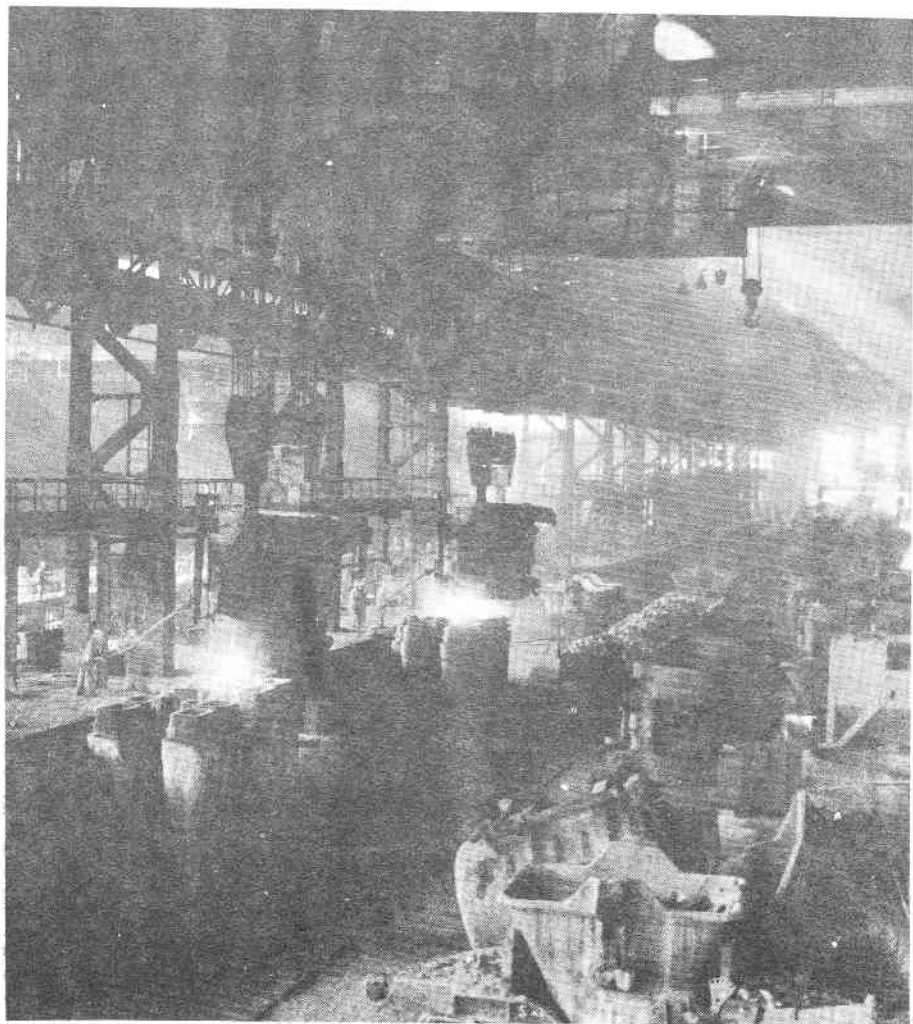


-- they evaluate production targets and plans for new products.



-- and, when a problem arises (whether it be how to eliminate pollution or how to make cold-rolled steel), they are expected to come up with a solution by applying their practical knowledge, by experimenting, evaluating and re-evaluating their experience.

In such a situation, leadership means knowing how to tap the ideas and energies of more people. And there can be no more efficient way of doing this than for managers to unite with ordinary workers in day-to-day work. This is what Chairman Mao has in mind when he tells people to "learn from the masses."

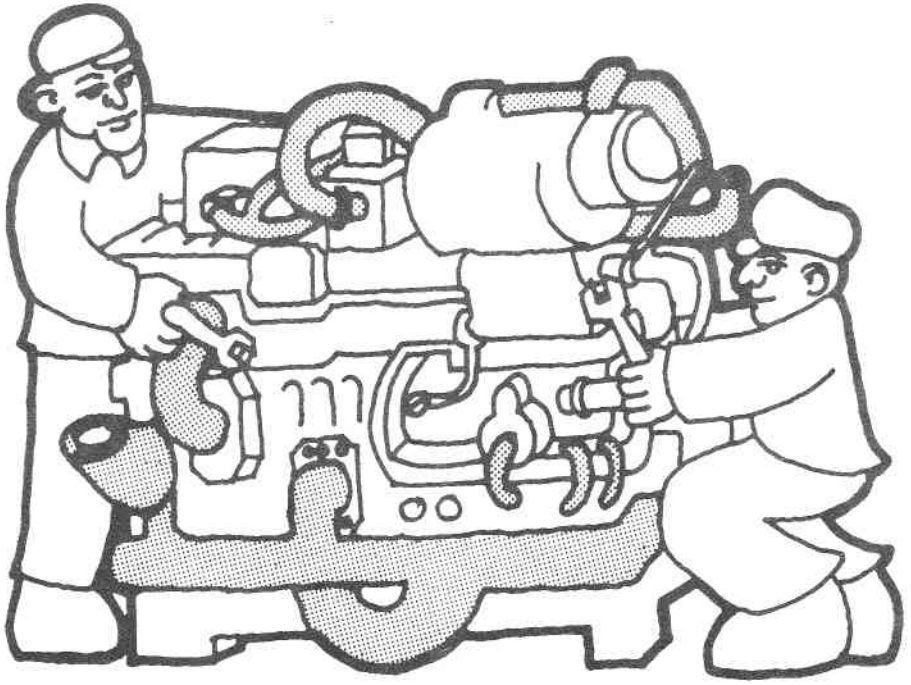


It works.

* In a steel mill in northeast China, steel workers succeeded in producing a cold-rolled steel on their own, the first ever produced in China. Before the Cultural Revolution began in 1965, "experts" told them that this was impossible for a country as backward as China.



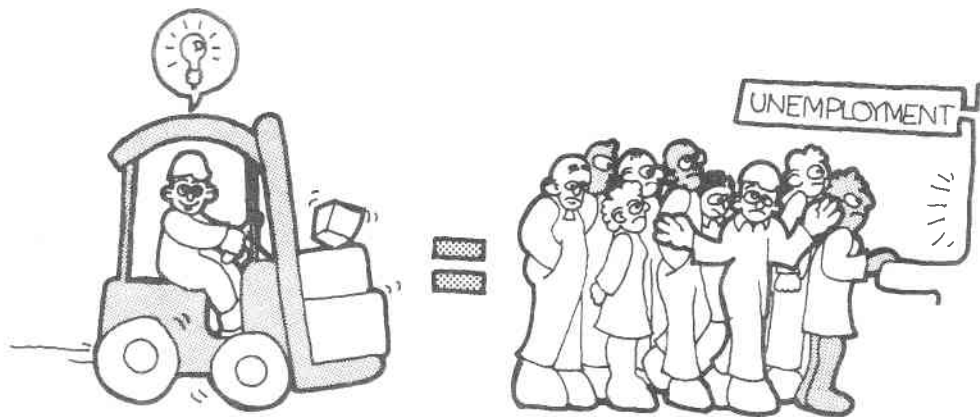
* In Tientsin, workers have established a large number of small enterprises using "waste" products as raw materials. The purposes are, on the one hand, to practice thrift by making scarce resources as useful as possible; and on the other hand, to eliminate a source of pollution.



* The machine tool industry is being modernized, not through importing new equipment, but largely on the basis of self-reliance.



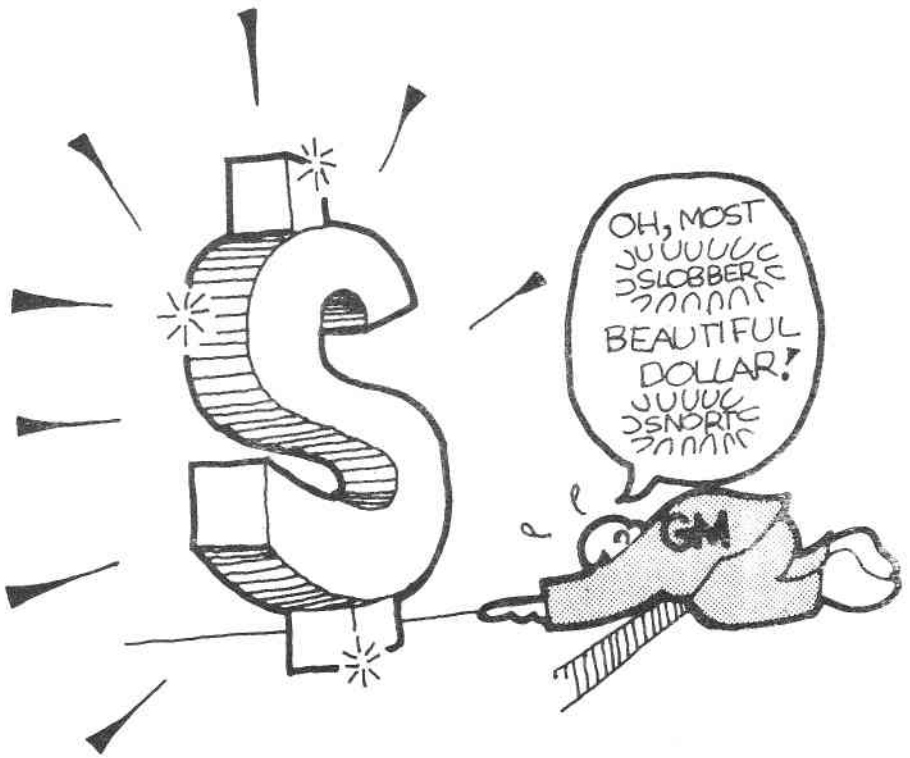
* In Southeast China, workers and peasants are making their region more self-sufficient by searching for their own coal and iron. Rather than wait years for "expert" prospectors and geologists to hunt for the ores, literally millions of ordinary workers and peasants were taught how to recognize coal and other ores, and mass mineral searches turned up enormous reserves.



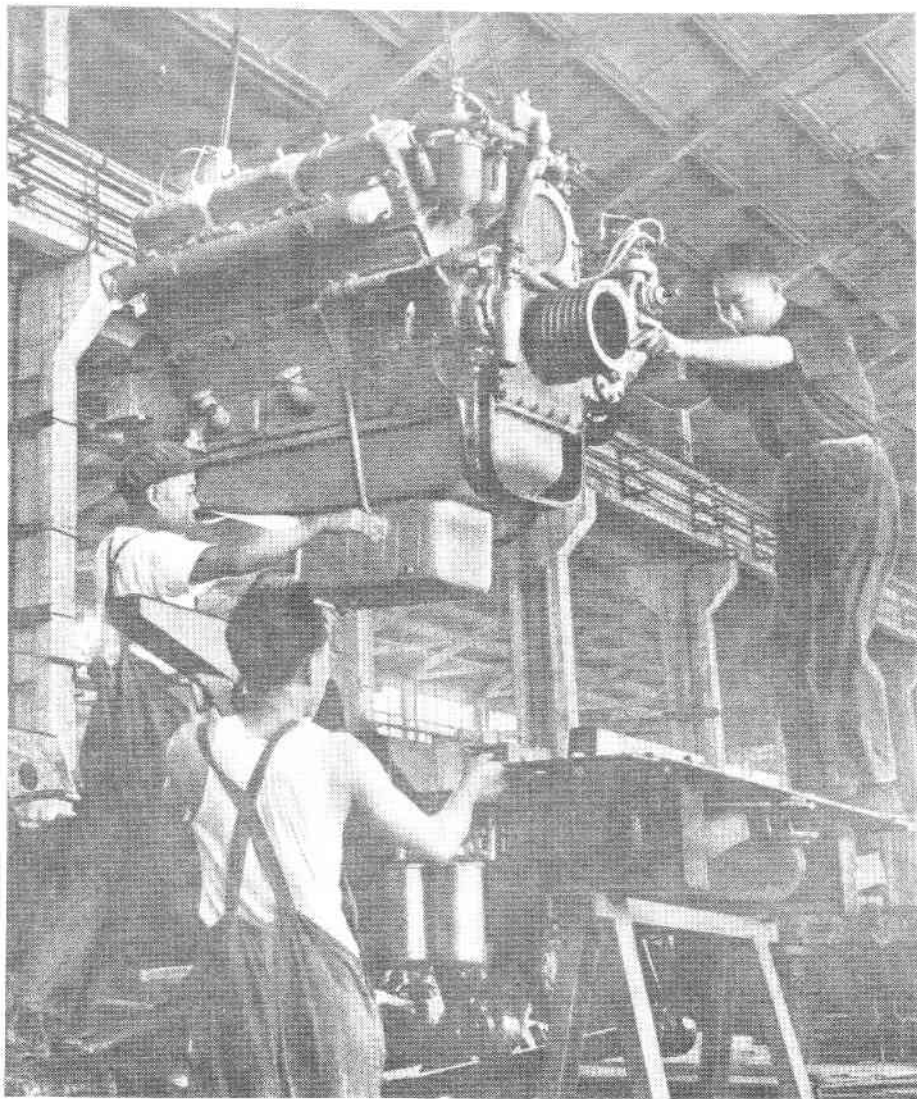
In America, workers are not interested in making production more efficient because it is not in their interest to do so. If they think of a really important time-saving innovation, someone else -- the owner -- gets most of the benefit, and the probable result is more unemployment.



And the companies themselves are not interested in making better products, because the faster things wear out or break down, the sooner people will have to buy more, and this means more profits.



"General Motors long ago recognized that it wasn't in the auto business," the Wall Street Journal wrote very recently. "Rather, its business is making money, using products as the means."



This idea of producing things for profits, rather than for people to use, is the basis of our entire economic system, and it is at the root of most of our problems as a country. In China, by contrast, they do not organize production -- or any other part of life -- for the profit of a few, but for the use and benefit of the whole people.

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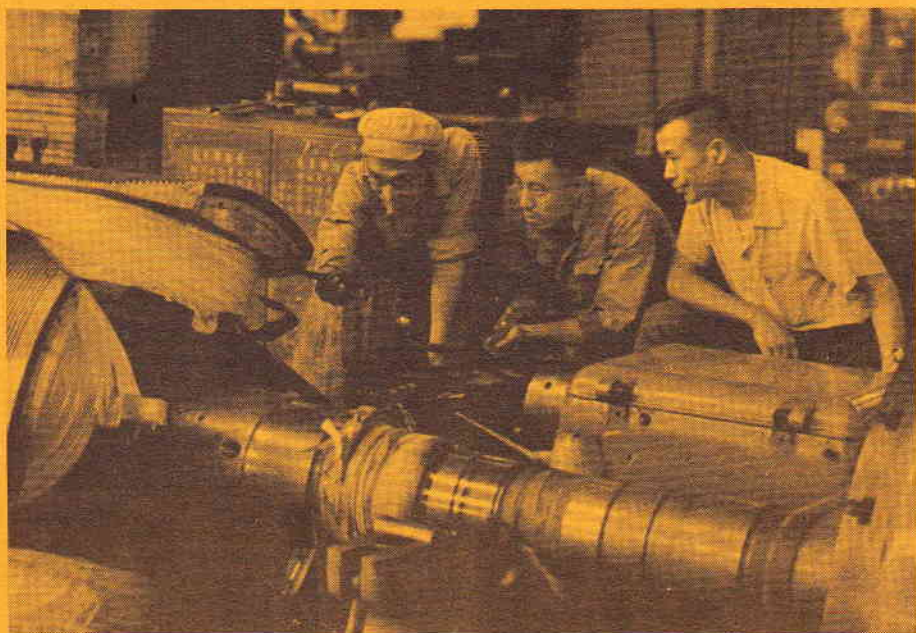
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When worker Chou (pronounced "Joe") gets to work in the morning, he finds the manager waiting for him. But the manager isn't there to give orders, he's there to work!
What?!

See inside for a lively description of factory life and worker participation in today's China. The illustrations combine the work of an American cartoonist with actual photos of work in China.