

The Wage Grade System--The Breeding Ground of Revisionism

By "A Fictitious Old Man"

(Revised 11/30/23)

[Note: This article is available on the Internet in Chinese. It is a defense of the supply system and an attack on the wage system in the China. The author says that the main attacks on the supply system came from the army and from people returning from the USSR and trying to imitate Soviet methods. The article says that the data on the supply system comes from the works of Yang Kuisong, a well-know historian in China. The Chinese text appears to have been OCRed, and has some errors. Some doubtful translations are marked in the text.]

In dealing with the Gao-Rao incident [of 1953]¹, Liu [Shaoqi] and Deng [Xiaoping], Zhou Enlai, and Chen Yun made up the first-line party leadership, and Chairman Mao retired to the second line, concentrating his attention on studying the question of opposing and preventing revisionism from reaching China's implementation of socialist revolution. In his old age Mao Zedong said that the greatest mistake of his life had been setting up these two headquarters, the first and second lines. He stressed that this was the central reason for the Cultural Revolution, but opposition to the country's President [Liu Shaoqi] was also a motive.

The first-line team seized political power in order to meet the demands of the cadres. They moved immediately, first to implement grades in the army, and made military ranks and implemented a job grade salary system among the cadres. This work was entirely completed in 1955. The adoption of expanded rank differences, higher pay for higher work and materially higher "special supply", as well as forming privileged strata, made the party's senior cadre breed pleasure seeking and a style of life divorced from the masses.

With this move Liu Shaoqi gained support among the military and the cadres, especially among the higher level cadres, gradually forming a bureaucratic regime, producing a bureaucratic capitalist class, setting up a bureau-

cratic system, and forming its own political power base. In the Cultural Revolution an undying fight took shape, continuously cutting off all kinds of corpses [doubtful translation]. Chairman Mao launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which opposed their vested interests, thus of course moving back the direction of the Liu-Deng side.

Two years before his death, Chairman Mao published a series of sayings about wage grades, such as: "China is a socialist country, about the same as capitalism before liberation. Now it still implements an eight-grade wage scale, distribution according to work, and monetary exchange. These follow past society and do not have much difference". He even warned: "Compared with the Guomindang [Chinese Nationalists] this is not as good." [quoted from Mao Zedong, "About the key points of a talk on theoretical questions," December, 1974]

Just before his death Chairman Mao said: "All my life I did two [mistaken] things [The first was to let Chiang Kaishek escape to Taiwan, something everyone agreed with.] The other thing was to start the Cultural Revolution, which few (leading cadre) approved of and many opposed." Grades and graded wages, which formed the bureaucratic system, are the basic cause that created this result.

Loss of supervision by the masses, concentration of power, and high wages and benefits, once they are combined, will inevitably restore the whole society to the traditional "bureaucratic organization" which incubates and brings about a gradual political tendency to bureaucracy. In China's 2000-year-old society, despite emperors subsiding one after another, more court changes continually took place.

¹ In 1953 Gao Gang and Rao Shushi were accused of a conspiracy to divide the party and seize control of the party and the government. In March 1954, the Communist Party of China National Delegate Assembly adopted a resolution expelling them from the party.

Under the Confucian ethical code's cultural influence, a private, autocratic system of government was unalterable, and its characteristic feature was precisely the privileged grade system of highly concentrated power. China's revolution occurred in this kind of environment. Some people inside the group taking part in the revolution received this kind of deep-rooted influence. Privilege very much caters to their appetites, hence they consciously and unconsciously become captives of the capitalist-roaders, using their coming transformation of the Chinese Communist Party's character, and carrying out restoration. Capitalist-roaders, in order to consciously carry out this legacy, made this become China's distinguishing feature. They began by energetically carrying out a military rank system and a graded wage system.

The establishment of the military rank system. The military rank system is also precisely the typical example of a grade system.

Installing the military rank system can be traced back to Yuan Chong Northern New Army, the school established in imitation of the military system of the Western powers. The whole Guomindang army, including the local areas, practiced this system, formed separate Chinese historical warlord armed regimes, and also produced new Chinese characteristics. Only Chairman Mao established the Workers and Peasants Red Army and abolished this system. After the War of Resistance to Aggression broke out [in 1937], the Communist Party's military reorganized the national revolutionary armed forces' Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Route Army.

To cooperate with friendly forces and fight, the Eight Route Army headquarters set up a liaison mechanism, and prepared to carry out a military rank system. But thanks to the War of Resistance to Japan, it was too busy to take this into account. After the Southern Anhui Incident, the Guomindang suspended supplies to the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Route Army, and carried out an economic blockade. The military rank system was shelved.

The main reason was Chairman Mao's persistence in maintaining the policy of keeping his independence and initiative, setting up anti-Japanese base areas in the enemy's rear, and developing guerrilla warfare. Very seldom did coordination with the Guomindang army take place. Furthermore, a change of dynasty took place, and whenever a new dynasty is set up, those who have rendered outstanding service want rewards to be dispensed according to merit, and the share allotted to the king's past princes to be cast aside.

Chairman Mao marched into Beijing on the road through Xibaipo, and declared that [a policy that that of] Li Zicheng [(1606-1645), a military leader of a Ming dynasty peasant uprising] was inappropriate. Naturally he was not likely to dispense rewards according to merit. All those who have rendered outstanding service ["heroes"] expected to profit by it. Capitalist roaders who had served well took advantage of this mentality and pursued implementation of a military rank system and a cadres' grade wage system in order to buy popular sympathy.

Evaluating the top 10 generals from this point of view, only Luo Ronghuan and Chen Yifei came up from the ranks. Other people had different levels of attachment to the military rank system. Their grade wage and military rank not only determined lifelong wages and benefits. They were equivalent to the nobility of the feudal system except for not being hereditary, and in their uniforms they displayed unparalleled dignity. Thus they were vigorous practitioners of the military rank system. No one reported the story of the process of the policy decision to pursue the military rank system. But Chairman Mao chose to adopt a historical course that led from passivity to opposition.

First, he refused to accept the title of "generalissimo" and he did not accept ceremonial dress, but he was not able to ward off comparatively high army pay grades. Not involved in the evaluation process, Mao only said that high-ranking officers should use Su Yu as the head. In examining and approving the name list, he said that Lu (Zhengcao) has a wound, Pi (Dingjun) needs a raise, etc., and was regarded as a judge of reputation. [doubtful translation]

Up to 1964, under repeated criticism, he took charge of Lin Biao's work in Military Commission of the CPC Central Committee, and overcame the first-line group. The decision was made to abolish the armed forces military rank system, which received Chairman Mao's support. Deng Xiaoping from 1980 put forward and restored the military rank system, in order to strive for the support of the armed forces. In 1984 this succeeded.

From 1941 forward, the grade wage system consisted of Red Army and border area implementation of a supply system which did not have grade differences. In the War of Resistance Against Aggression period, Mao Zedong had made a comparison of the Chinese Communist Party cadre and their privileges with those of Guomindang officials. [Making fun of Confucius practices], he proudly claimed: "We encounter the Confucian understanding very little, we write essays and cannot write long ones", the Duke of Zhou [a political and literary figure thought to have influenced Confucius] and Confucius do not come here, and writing is not often done. Still our county magistrates, area chiefs, village chiefs, each month have a two Yuan allowance, They are also democratic, they can conduct difficult struggles and can help ordinary people. Certainly Duke Zhou and Confucius did not have border area government's honest county magistrates like this, who are democratic like this, and help the common people like this. But how about the Guomindang country magistrates?

"Each month they take a salary of 180 Yuan, and they can only marry concubines, play mahjong, take opium, and even practice corruption, extortion, oppression of the common people, otherwise they would not succeed. Why can there be such a difference? This is precisely because we and the Guomindang are different. We all come to revolution and revolution is life-threatening. [We are different because] we are prepared to sacrifice our lives, not to mention the very small matter of salaries?" Therefore Mao openly predicted: China's only hope depends on the honest, democratic cadre of the communist party.

In 1948, Zhu De, as the Chinese Communist party began to prepare to enter the cities, also definitely spoke about this:

"We are under the supply system. Making war does not ask for cash, cooks do not want cash, nothing needs cash. The revolution's success depends on this system, and the future construction of a new nation also depends on this system."

After Ren Bishi came back from the USSR, Yan'an's mess hall produced food divided into an ordinary dining room and a special dining room. Because Ren Bishi worked for the Communist International for several years, he was subject to the USSR's influence, adopted the USSR's grade system, and introduced it into the border area supply system, so that a ranked supply system resulted. For leaders, various supply subsidies increased differences of rank. This made Yan'an produce competition and discontent. Wang Shiqu wrote an essay describing the condition at that time as "clothes divided into three colors and food divided into five grades." Chairman Mao was very disgusted about this, and in March 1947, when Hu Zongnan's [a Guomindang general] troops occupied Yan'an, Mao Zedong indicated: This is a good thing. At least it "smashed a huge organization and stopped bureaucratic degeneration, and forced us to get past that kind of 'clothes divided into three colors and food divided into five grades' supply system standard and to change it."

In the seventh central committee second plenum, Mao said: "the supply standard is pretty good so that Nanjing and Shanghai aren't hit by a further increase. In 1949, the very day after Tianjin was liberated, it emerged after entering the town that the cadres carried out a system of payments partly in kind and partly in cash, and took over the personnel practice of a wage system, which formed a "two track system." Liu Qingshan and Zhang Zishan engaged in a "small treasury", which resulted in corrupt degeneration. The completion of the transformation of the supply system into a wage system was accelerated.

In September, 1948, when the central committee of the Communist Party of China began to

consider general work focal points and changed direction toward the cities for the first time, Bo Yibo put forward a clear and definite proposal: "The present system is wasteful in all respects, but cadres still think everywhere that insufficient support is given to them, that there is great disparity between the livelihoods of democratic personages [who had higher incomes] and cadres, and so on, and this has become a problem." It is necessary to put the salary system into practice, and this side of the problem can be solved.

Becoming the first new Chinese Ministry of Finance chief, Bo Yibo undoubtedly carried out the new salary system vigorously. He carried out the "new system" and received criticism. Deng Xiaoping replaced Bo Yibo and accelerated the implementation work on the salary system. On August 31, 1955, the State Council officially promulgated an order on a national scheme for work personnel, which completely put into practice a wage system and changed the temporary cash wage system. It gave clear and definite directions:

"The national scheme for staff supply (or full responsibility) system treatment methods at one time played an excessively large function in the past revolutionary period. But in the present socialist construction period, [the supply system] does not agree with the principles of 'distribution according to labor' and 'equal pay for equal work'. Therefore, the State Council decides that from July 1, 1955, the portion of the existing contract system practiced by the staff shall be replaced by compensation through wage benefits, to unify the treatment of state personnel system, and facilitate the construction of socialism." On these grounds the State Council also decreed a new wage standard, not only going a step further to increase the wage standard of the senior cadres, but bringing wage grades a step further and increasing up to a 30 level scale, with a highest wage of 560 Yuan and a lowest of 18 Yuan. To the highest wage was added a Beijing-area price subsidy of sixteen percent, for a total of 649.6 Yuan, and a lowest wage of 20.88, with a gap between the highest and lowest wage of 31.11 times as much. From an absolute number viewpoint, the lower staff smallest monthly income increase was only .23 Yuan, and the

senior cadre increase was a maximum of 95.67, which differ by a factor of 416 times.

It is obvious that the wage adjustment once again widened the gap between the distribution grades. This naturally initiated some problems. In each area of the whole country this wage scale reform encountered the problem of "a large decrease in income and also a harder job". Noting the various situations emerging in June 1956 full implementation of wage reform, the State Council once more in 1955 conducted some adjustment to the scheme of staff wage standards. One of the most important initiatives was to allow only small subsidies for a large number of township cadres who were enrolled as government staff, that is, to be compensated in the grade wage system. [doubtful translation] At the same time, the lowest grade of wages in the state staff scheme was raised from 18 Yuan up to 20 Yuan, but the highest wages and the lowest still differed by 28 a factor of times.

There were two main characteristics that resulted from the transformation of the supply system into a salary system.

The first was that from wage labor one kind of system resulted and from the fixed grade wage level cadre rank another kind of system resulted. A rising government official did not make a lot (assuming he was not promoted), a situation which was temporary, since naturally a raise in salary goes with a rise in rank. Wages and grade level became a cadre's lifelong system. Compared to feudalism's salary system, it was more reactionary.

Second was the increasingly large size of the grade differences. The higher the job level, the larger the difference. The lowest wage and the highest wage (not including the army senior officers) ratio was 31.11. The absolute value of the increase is 416 times as much. Compared with the Guomindang and post-war Nationalist government officials' salary standard, besides the president and 5 other department heads, there were 37 grades. Each grade's salary number differed by at least 5 Yuan and at most 120 Yuan, with the difference between adjacent levels being fairly equal. The ratio of the highest and lowest level was only 14.5 to one.

In '56, the Communist Party drafted and implemented a standard whose ratio of grade differences was 2.2 times as much as the Guomindang's. It also greatly exceeded the disparities in the capitalist countries' public servants' income distribution in Europe, America and Japan. In each capitalist country like England, France, and Germany, for civil servants, including magistrates, the highest and lowest wage difference is ordinarily only 8 to 10 times from highest to lowest, and America and Japan also have around 20 times as much. Afterwards Chairman Mao commented that in comparison with the Guomindang it was still not as good.

Third was that high-ranking cadres preserved the differences of the Soviet high-ranking cadres system. They continued to have and to constantly expand the "special supplements" of the supply system. For example, there were chauffeurs, secretaries, housekeepers, housing and all kinds of supply subsidies. In comparison, senior cadres carried out a system of high salaries and special supplements. Lagging behind the capitalist wage system and following the situation the Soviet revisionists, an armed bureaucratic ruling class was created.

Why can this kind of situation emerge? The basis of the government officials' regal magnificence was emulating Soviet experience. Because of the Soviet experience, the Communist Party of China finance and economics staff, in fact, from the beginning of the Yan'an period understood the wage system of production under capitalist conditions as the realization of socialist "distribution according to work" and regarded it as the most rational form of distribution.

Furthermore, they were convinced that because of the principle of distribution according to work, it was necessary to smash the popular egalitarian idea and distribution form among communist party members. Simultaneously, on the grounds of encouraging progress, they began to come over to the Soviet national scheme of work personnel implementation and copied the Soviet job grade wages system indiscriminately. Convinced that the Soviet distribution system could be the most rational and

most genuinely socialist distribution, the Chinese Communist Party at all levels of leadership, after entering into each big city quickly found themselves established the new distribution system, and had to enlarge the grade difference coefficients of all the different grades so that it could conform to the Soviet method which furnished a "rational" distribution standard.

If the expansion of a big grade compensation gap was supposed to encourage the desire of work personnel to do better and work actively, then there was an obvious problem with this new 1956 standard. This problem was that such a low difference in grades only motivated far less than the larger differences in the worker salary scheme of the Nationalist government period. Among the 1956 lowest 4 minimum grades, every grade differed only by 2 Yuan, then after that successively by 2.5 Yuan, 4 Yuan, 4.5 Yuan, 5 Yuan, and 5.5 Yuan. In the 1956 standard, at least in the lower 10 grades, such grade differences were even smaller and provided even less so-called stimulus to advance, to encourage the effect of policy of the more one works the more he gets.

They began by imitating the Northern Warlords and carried on the military system up to the present, combined with consulting their great disparities of the grade difference and fixed standards. In order to grab power and bribe those who had rendered outstanding service, the first-line leadership of the new regime put the military rank system into effect, and consulted the old type army grade differences to fix salaries. This was the reincarnation of feudalism and of the Northern warlords.

Marx and Engels on worker and cadre salaries

In 1848 Marx and Engels clearly put forward that even under the capitalist governmental system, in the struggle for the proletariat's most basic political rights, the communist party members also should persist in putting forward the political demand that "all official salaries should be the same," in order to restrict to the biggest extent the grade system which creates all sorts of degenerate abuse.

In "The Civil War in France" book, Marx thought that "under proletarian state power, public servants should implement a low salary system, because of the so-called "starting with each commune member, from highest to lowest, all public servants all only can receive the equivalent of workers wages." In the past, states' high government office holders and illustrious officials enjoyed all privileges as well as public subsidies, which disappear and die away along with these personages themselves."

After this, in European states all socialist parties or labor parties in their periods in power made great efforts to promote similar distribution means. In the 1980s, Poland's Solidarity leader Walensa, started a worker movement and restored the old capitalist order. Later he was elected President of Poland. He did not act to establish privileges for himself. After leaving office, he still worked as an electrician.

This kind of viewpoint of Marx and Engels was adopted by the workers' movement and influenced most European capitalist countries' governments' public officials up to now. Usually the difference in wage income is not very wide. In this side, Soviet methods and Marx and Engels envisaged that under revolutionary state power, public servants deserve compensation, but acted in a way that defeat the purpose. [doubtful translation] The USSR, which established the job grade wage system as well as party policy of a cadre internal distribution gap, created a huge special class, a bureaucratic class. This class was the social origin of Khrushchev's revisionist practice. It brought about the split in the international communist movement. Finally it brought about the change of flags [restoration of capitalism] in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the USSR.

Comments on the wage grade system's revision and Mao Zedong's reflections in "Mao's Manuscripts Since the Founding of the State", which included Mao Zedong's instructions and cables from this period, show that he obviously paid quite a lot of attention to land reform, the "anti-town" campaign, the "three antis" campaign, the "five antis" campaign and other political movements and political ideological problems.

After 1953, Mao devoted himself to the cooperative transformation, and laying down and carrying out the "general line". But he seldom took a specific interest in the implementation of the wage system and the question of differentiating cadres' income according to grade. Certainly after the Gao-Nao incident, he had already retired to the second rank. The military rank system and grade wage system were then firmly and definitely the most urgent issues for the first-line leaders Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping.

Mao did not want to intervene very much [in this issue]. Even building on Soviet experience was not criticized. In this period Mao Zedong seemingly did not understand everything very well, and he did not realize at that time there would be such serious consequences. Looking at his study situation at the beginning of the 1950s it is obvious that he still had not read through Marx's and Engels' above-mentioned book. Then also it was perhaps not possible for him to indicate objections about grade wage system's establishment for some important reason.

About this question Mao Zedong appears to have attempted nothing and accomplished nothing. He had no choice but to understand the problem as a problem about money itself. He spoke this way: "Money is a thing that is very disagreeable, but I take it, too, but do not have a method for handling it. Today, everyone takes it, but also does not have a method for handling it. Lenin also did not have a method for handling it. Anyway, we still must have it." However, Mao Zedong in the end was a convinced communist, whether or not he was clear about regarding socialism as the first phase of communism, at least [he realized that] the principle should be established that income distribution should be on a relatively equal basis. Moreover, his background was in a peasant family, and he lived early on in a relatively free and simple way. All his life "money was the most disagreeable thing" and all his life he did not take money home.

Besides throughout his life Mao wanted to expel Chinese traditional society, that kind fate of the feudal system bureaucratic political organi-

zation expressed by ... [translations of traditional phrases are omitted here].

He was even more reluctant to leave the Red Army period's supply system, and was not at all enthusiastic about implementing the wage system itself. But he consistently paid attention to his own experience, having gone through the revolutionary war years and tried out the supply system. At the heart of the Soviet stress on the importance of using the method of material incentives and relying on increasing the gap between grades in income distribution to motivate people to the maximum production activity, some could have doubts, and there should be no doubts. Still, in the Yan'an period, Mao Zedong expressed concern about the grade trends in the supply system, as well as about the huge bureaucratic organization it produced, and advocated streamlining the administration.

At the beginning of 1949 the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party moved to Beijing, and held a meeting in the Zhongnanhai Huairan meeting hall, where a high-ranking army officer proposed: for capitalists' meals 5 or 6 bowls are needed, while PLA meals are brine and a little pickled cabbage. This won't do. The army should have higher salaries. Many participants at the conference expressed support. Mao Zedong however, at once put forward a different idea. He straightforwardly refuted this principle: "This is just meddling. You have 5 bowls while we eat pickled cabbage. There is politics in this cabbage. There is a fine example in it. The PLA gets popular support from this cabbage. Naturally there are also other foods. Now the army's meals have improved, and they are already somewhat different from pickled cabbage. But basically we need to advocate hard struggle, and hard struggle is the distinctive character of our politics."

After the Soviet Communist Party convened the Twentieth Party Congress [in 1956], and later publicly admitted that Stalin's methods had serious problems, Mao was gradually able to speak up.

This warning by Mao Zedong about the role of wages obviously did not have any effect and in

1956, he announced a wage standard that had no different trend from the previous one. Mao Zedong was obviously not satisfied with this. A heavy curtain fell over wage reform, and in the eighth central committee second plenum he put forward a criticism. In the plenary session he concluded and specifically indicated his own view on this point : "Now comparing the salary that senior cadres take with the people's living standard, there is a great disparity at the highest level. In the future we can also consider decreasing some salaries."

He also mentioned that it is not only the question of salaries, in fact, but also questions of special treatment of senior cadres. "One question is the material supply, another is too many security guards. We must pay very close attention to additional changes, to set an example and call on the people to struggle hard, and share comforts and hardships."

In beginning to reflect on the experience of the gains and losses from the indiscriminate imitation of the USSR in the previous few years, he did not hesitate to begin to clearly put forward that the present wage standard makes the income gap too large. In 1956, the first wage system reform was comprehensively carried out, he particularly pointed out that within the party's upper level: "We always advocate hard struggle and oppose individual material interests above everything else." "Wages can increase some, but the main additions are needed at the bottom, to add to the workers side so that the distance between the highest and lowest is reduced."

After accepting Mao Zedong's criticism of the '55 reform scheme, small adjustments were included in the '56 reform. After Mao saw this, it was still proposed that the relative size of political staff wages differ by a factor of 25, which still appeared to large to Mao.

Mao Zedong once again proposed that the question was not only high wages, but also about special privileges. In the administration, there were more than 10 grades of senior cadres, who although they no longer enjoyed the privileges of the supply system, they were still enjoying discounted high-demand goods and a special supply of high-quality goods (some-

times called "special supplies"), and besides most, in accordance with their work relations, enjoyed secretaries, security guards, drivers, service, housekeepers, and cooks, as well as medical treatment and special vehicles, housing, etc., and every kind of special privilege, which other lower-level cadres did not have access to.

Implementing the military rank system and the grade system, with expanded wage gaps, can only bring about very abnormal phenomena. It was precisely in the senior cadre evaluation process where all kinds of problems occurred. Mao Zedong found that senior cadres' wages and privileges rose so high that all kinds of problem not only did not decrease, but instead they emerged in an endless stream. Because of small differences of grade and some disparity of privileges, some people had quarrels and complaints, and even burst into tears.

Mao Zedong was extremely disgusted about this. More than once he publicly criticized the party and said: Of course wages should increase, but "now it looks as if wages are not very suitable and already give rise to people's resentments. But even more surprisingly, high grades and wages, disputed positions, striving for reputation, and competing for advantages are increased by this thing. In the past, in the drive to do the utmost, in past times of class struggle and in struggle against the enemy, we had that kind of spirit of defying death, but now that spirit has disappeared in some comrades. They are particular about food, particular about clothes, comparing high salaries, crying ones eyes out at low-grade evaluations? It is said that they also do not eat for a few days. To fast and shed tears to support individual benefit, what is that? "

Under the efforts of the evaluation team and resolute implementation, wage grades became a irreversible reality. But as time passed, Mao Zedong more and more firmly believed that this might not necessarily be a kind of progress. He stated with certainty that communist party members had no choice but give in and act like this only because they wanted to accommodate themselves to reality [of the wage system]. But the result of making concessions is a grade system that is not much different from

the old society, which is a consequence Mao did not foresee.

About the wage system reform which brought about the grade system, Mao publicly said more than once: "The supply system changed into a wage system. Was that a necessary step? In any case that change had tremendous defects, and led to a grade system that had strict grades, too many grades, and evaluation which established 30 steps. This was a concession, and it was incorrect. Not only are senior cadres salaries very high, but even because of someone's high salary, someone else has a low salary, so big differences put some people into 'father-child [that is, unequal] relationships, or cat-and-mouse relationships'."

When all party traditions have been thrown away, the combined power of a highly concentrated grade system and wage system and creates high privileges, and cannot avoid making society revert to promoting the implementation of the traditional "government official standard" and establishing a bureaucratic political system.

This led to a gradual growth of bureaucratic policies. About this kind of tendency, Mao Zedong repeatedly criticized and many times initiated movements, developed rectifications, and even started the Cultural Revolution. Certainly after changes in the wage system, he constantly advocated carrying on the revolutionary spirit, and criticized the idea that "rash advance" is what develops that spirit. He drew up the general line of constructing socialism, whose two main expressions were "going all out and striving for the best" [rather than "rash advance"] and using revolutionary spirit as motivation. Time and again he stressed politics in command, in order to eliminate the negative effects of the wage system. He initiated the "Great Leap Forward", which fully aroused the people of the whole nation to the activity of building socialism.

Over and over again Chairman Mao proposed reducing the privileges of high-ranking cadres, even stressing the supply system's benefits, and going so far as once approving attempting a partial resumption of the supply system. Because of the mass campaigns of the Great

Leap Forward against the wage system, Mao definitely affirmed in October 1958 Zhang Chunqiao's essay praising the supply system and criticizing the grade wage system, and thought that "Zhang's essay is mainly correct." This is why "People's Daily and the "PLA Reporter" both launched an enthusiastic discussion, and most people thought that the supply system tradition should not have been suspended, affirmed that the supply system is revolutionary, and is the best kind of distribution system to advance toward the transition to communism.

Some places started implementing the supply system approach. But thanks to the group of first-line leaders, who were Left in form but Right in essence, the communist wind blew up. [Note: this seems to mean that the Right promoted excessive or inappropriate "communist" policies as a kind of sabotage.]

The supply system was practiced in the people's communes, and the magpie cry arose to abolish the "wage system". In the first 10 days of November [1958], Chairman Mao made a sober analysis and said for the first time at the Zhengzhou meeting: "We want to resume the supply system, but we want to continue to have a proper wage system, and retaining part of the principle of working more to get more is essential."

Under this kind of pressure from Mao Zedong, in February 1959, and again in October, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party twice ordered a reduction in the salaries of senior cadres. In 1959, an explicit order to reduce one to three grade party member cadres' wage standard, and leaders' 3rd level wage standards were merged, later reducing the one to three grade wage standards to 404.8 Yuan, and the highest to the lowest wage grade was a factor of 20.24 to one.

It is utterly clear that along with the split in the relations between the Soviet and Chinese communist parties and the later gradual recognition that Soviet socialism had already degenerated, Mao Zedong's concern about this issue gradually became more intense. He had already made a basic decision about the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's "revisionist"

trend, which was based on the knowledge that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's staff had already been transformed to enjoy high wages and high bureaucratic privileges.

Over and over again Mao warned: "A high salary stratum definitely has a low salary stratum, even if the latter is in the majority. Therefore, inside this society a high salary stratum is dangerous". As a result of Mao Zedong's personal revisions, the "Nine Comments" to the open letter from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [in 1963-4], prominently stressed this point. The open letter, after a detailed analysis of all sorts of manifestations of the USSR's privileged stratum, clearly showed the path: "There should be no salary system with high salaries for a small number of people. Salaries should be rationally reduced gradually and should not expand party, state, business or commune disparities in individual income between staff and the popular masses. All staff should be prevented from using their power to enjoy privileges."

Mao Zedong attached great importance to the emergence of the privileged stratum inside the Chinese Communist Party and tried hard to adopt measures that would guard against it. In 1966 at the start of the "Cultural Revolution," it appeared to Mao Zedong, who opposed the "revisionist line" and the "group in power taking the capitalist road," that group was precisely the representatives in China of this type of bureaucratic privileged stratum. He for a time envisioned and promoted that "cadres take part in labor" and "57 work school" would change the decision, but these were without effect. Mao Zedong tried to use the Cultural Revolution to change everything. But he met with strong opposition from senior cadres, and regretted leaving this world, looking on helplessly.

Extracted from <Remembering the Change of Weather [i.e., Restoration of Reactionary Rule]>

(Data for this article are drawn from the works of Yang Kuisong)

http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_601808d90100gtgq.html

(Posted Jan 18, 2010, also available several other places including:

<http://wengewang.org/read.php?tid=25132>)

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