

Emergence of Personnel Transfer at Nissan after W.W.II

YOSHIDA Makoto *

Abstract: This paper deals with industrial relations at Nissan Heavy Industries Corp. (now Nissan Motor Co., Ltd) during the early era after World War II, so as to explain the emerging process of managerial practice of personnel transfers within the company. Many factors after World War II, for example, the policies of GHQ against big companies in Japan, shortages of materials, etc, made it difficult for the company to manufacture automobiles, and to survive in the market. It tried to dismiss its workforce, but was not able to do so due to opposition by the Nissan workers' union. The union's power was so strong that the company gave up on doing it at that time. The union leaders, who understood that the company was in crisis and thought that it should enter into a new business field, i.e. overhauling the U.S. army's automobiles, suggested personnel transfer within the company as a means to reduce the excess workforce, instead of dismissal. The company agreed with them, and declared that it would transfer the workforce within the company, forcefully. Although the union leaders had proposed this action, opinions among their members were not coordinated. Rank and file members tended to oppose the transfers. They said that they were going to have to leave the company because of poor conditions of housing and transportation if their transfers meant that they had to relocate. Actually some conflicts occurred concerning transfers between plants, and the union insisted on restrictions on personnel transfer, which the rank and file wanted. Before 1953 when the union lost its power, the company had had little discretion over personnel transfers because of the union's restrictions.

Keywords: personnel transfer, automobile industry in Japan, history of industrial relations in Japan, Nissan Motor Co., Ltd.

*Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ritsumeikan University