

Emergence of Temporary Workers in Nissan after WWII : From 1948 to 1949

YOSHIDA Makotoⁱ

Abstract : This paper deals with the emergence of “temporary workers” (*Rinjiko*) in Nissan Heavy Industries Corp. (now Nisan Motor Co., Ltd) after WWII, in a chronological manner. The category of temporary worker first appeared in the labor agreements revised in February 1948, being defined as one of the types of employee to be exempted from Nissan workers’ union membership under the union shop agreement. At that time, the union did not assume that temporary workers were those who did the same jobs and were living under the same circumstances as union members. It considered them to mainly consist of both “seasonal workers (*kisetsuko*),” who were agricultural workers and worked for Nissan only during winter when farmwork was scarce, and “day laborers (*hiyatoi*),” who were non-skilled workers like janitors. The company started to employ temporary workers for overhaul work on U.S. Army automobiles in 1949, and their jobs were the same as the union members’. The company employed this type of temporary workers because it wanted to be free from union restrictions. Two union restrictions were targeted. First was restriction of recruitment. The labor agreements stipulated that the company should need the union’s consent to its recruitment plan. The company employed temporary workers for the first time soon after the union opposed its plan to employ 1000 (regular) workers in summer of 1948. The second was its restriction on personnel transfer. The union had approved personnel transfer firstly, but came to restrict it, and some conflicts occurred concerning transfers. The temporary workers were not union members, so they were utilized at the management’s discretion. In September of 1949, the company tried to fire them, but failed because of the union’s opposition in sympathy with them while it had no intention to organize them at that time. The displacement of many union members in October 1949 made the union stop thinking about the temporary workers. It was not until their number started to increase because of the Korean War special procurement in 1950 that the union began to deal with problems of temporary workers.

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i Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ritsumeikan University