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**Management of industrial conflicts at work
places: a study of the Nigerian railway
corporation - eastern district**

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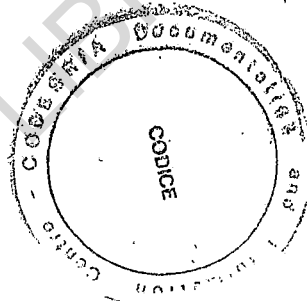
TITLE PAGE

MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICTS
AT WORK PLACES: A STUDY OF THE
NIGERIAN RAILWAY CORPORATION -
EASTERN DISTRICT.

BY

OKOLIE, EMMANUEL IKECHUKWU.

PG/MPA/91/12106.



SUB-DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA.

MAY, 1993

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PG/MPA/91/12106

BEING A PROJECT THESIS PRESENTED TO THE
SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES,
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PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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ADMINISTRATION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA
NSUKKA.

AREA OF EMPHASIS: PUBLIC PERSONNEL
MANAGEMENT.

MAY, 1993.

CERTIFICATION AND APPROVAL

We hereby certify as follows:

- i) that this research was carried out by OKOLIE, EMMANUEL IKECHUKWU (PG/MPA/91/12106) in the Sub-Department of Public Administration and Local Government;
- ii) that the work has been accepted as original and approved for the Sub-Department of Public Administration and Local Government, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

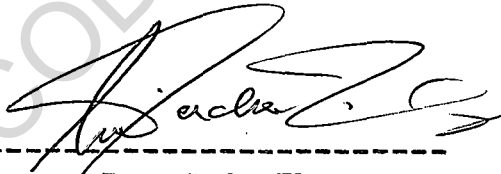
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DEDICATION

To all Victims of Conflicts;

To My late father - Mazi Okolie Nwodo;

To My late younger brother - Michael Chigbo

Okolie; and

To all those in authority who can bring about
genuine social change after reading this
work.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The success of this work has been due to the contribution of many people to whom I am greatly indebted.

I am profoundly indebted to my supervisor, Dr. C.O. Ejimofor, ^{for} ~~whose~~ painstaking guidance, attention and sincere academic suggestions in my project.

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I owe special thanks to my mother and younger ones who kept forte and see me through school in spite of the difficulties that faced me. I also

owe thanks to members of staff of most railway stations in the Eastern District and its Lagos headquarters for their unalloyed assistance, encouragement and support.

Above all, I am totally grateful and thankful with CODESRIA, Dakar-Senegal for both material and financial support, which made it possible for the successful completion of this research work.

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ABSTRACT

In most Third World countries like Nigeria, there had been continually industrial conflicts since the ninety-eighties. This work uses the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) to investigate extensively the causes of this hydra-headed issue; what management approaches used in resolving industrial conflicts in the NRC; and why its persistence? The point of departure of this work after reviewing literature was that, not much has been said with special reference to managing industrial conflicts in the NRC. The survey research method of investigation employed were the questionnaire and oral interviews. This was complemented with information from secondary materials like official documents. Simple percentage table were used in the analysis. The work reveals that the working environment at the NRC is not conducive for industrial peace. This is as a result of lost of interest by the government to the rail sector; poor method of payment of salaries, which is spasmodic. There are also sour relationship and poor communication between railway men and its management and these have affected

the workability of most approaches especially the collective bargaining. Therefore the order of the time is confrontation, violation of orders and threat. Alternatively, Situational Theory (S and T) Approach is suggested. This approach suggests that the management body should use their wits to note the nature of conflict and those involve and when it is appropriate to apply force or dialogue. This work advised government to stop saying something and doing something else in industrial relations.

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CHAPTER ONE
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Problems:

One of the fundamental problems presently posing a threat to the survival of Nigeria, as a country, and most Third-World countries are industrial conflicts at work-places. The labour force of most Third World countries are often confrontational in their approach to issues of which affect them as a group. Thus, if appropriate care is not taken, their activities can destabilize any state.

In the Nigerian Railway Corporation, for instance, the relationship between labour (workers) and the management has not been cordial in recent years. For quite some years after the establishment of the Nigerian Railways in 1898 till the early nineteen eighties, the corporation has enjoyed a relatively large measure of peace. But alas, the mid-eighties ushered in a new turn, that is, incessant industrial unrests, which have become the order of the day. For instance, from 1986 till date no year has past without the railmen embarking on one

type/form of strike action or the other to press home their demand(s). These resulted to the loss of million of naira which would have accrued to the federal government.

Historical facts revealed that in spite of various management theories applied in the NRC industrial conflicts, they still persist. The conflicts suggest the persistence of labour and management disagreement. This unfortunate trend of events and the sorry situation have forced some concerned individuals into asking questions aimed at finding the root causes of the numerous causes and how best to control and manage industrial conflicts in the NRC.

The researcher has for some time now been pondering over certain questions relating to the problems of the NRC vis-a-vis the research questions.

i) Have delays in payment of wages and salaries been the root cause of strike action in the NRC?

ii) To what extent do the government intervene in the management of the NRC industrial conflicts?

iii) To what extent can effective management strategy contribute towards the settlement of industrial conflicts in the NRC?

1.2 Objective of Study:

The recent industrial actions at work places all over the country and the NRC in particular have become a source of grave concern to most Nigerians including the writer. By this research, the writer intends to make researches into some of the probable causes and how best to effectively manage industrial conflicts at work places, especially in the NRC.

Specifically, the objectives of this study include:

- i. Identifying areas that cause industrial conflicts in the NRC. Put differently, why is it that in spite of previous attempts, industrial conflicts still persist?
- ii. Identifying management strategy that will be of immense help in the management of industrial conflicts in the NRC.

- iii. Highlighting appropriate solutions to industrial conflicts in the NRC.

1.3 Significance of Study:

From the stated objectives, it is expected that the result and the findings of this work will be of immense value to the organisation under study - NRC; to scholars, to other corporations and other developing countries - the Third World. This is because, this work will throw light on some of the probable ways of effectively managing industrial conflicts, with special reference to the NRC.

Specifically, the findings emanating from this research will hopefully be of particular benefit to the Nigerian Railway Corporation; as the management of the corporation will by the result of this work be equipped with better ways to effectively control further crisis situations. This we hope will create a peaceful working environment. Besides, other corporations may benefit from the lessons learnt from the study. Also, scholars will find this work valuable.

Hopefully, this study lay bare government and employees' deficiencies over management of industrial conflicts and emphasize on innovative and corrective solutions which will constitute a valid contribution to the management of industrial conflicts.

1.4 Literature Review:

A lot of researches have been undertaken by scholars on conflicts and conflict resolutions. But available literature has revealed that much has not been written in the area of management of industrial conflicts at work places with special reference to the Nigerian Railway Corporation. This will form our point of departure.

The review will comprise three sections. Section one will define the concepts or terms related to the work - management, effective management and conflict. Section two will examine the various causes of industrial conflicts at work-places. While section three will deliberate on some of the management approaches to industrial

conflicts at work places.

In the process of writing this work, some concepts have been used. Some of these concepts are of wide range of interpretation by different scholars. Therefore, to avoid ambiguity, it is pertinent to define some of these key concepts in the context they have been used:

Management

Different meanings have been attributed to the word 'management'. To Nwachukwu, (1988:3) management is a process demanding the performance of specific function¹. Koontz and O'Donnell (1972:42) regarded management as, 'a means of getting things done through with people.'² For Davis (1951:6) management is, "the function of the executive leadership anywhere".³ According to Desmond Keeling (1972:32) management is, the search for the best use of resources in pursuit of objectives subject to change.⁴ Infact, management means getting things done through adequate control of human and material resources.

Scientifically, it can be defined as the co-ordination of all the resources of an organisation through the process of planning, directing and controlling in order to attain organisational goals.⁵ It can also be seen as the supervising and co-ordinating of activities to attain optimum results with organisational resources. All these definitions are applicable in the context of this work, but more specifically management of industrial conflicts: with regard to the study of the NRC, the concept of management should be seen as a process involving controlling and handling of industrial conflicts at the Nigerian Railway Corporation work place.

Effective Management

Management is said to be effective when it achieves desired result. Management is effective when it draws out anticipated response(s). For instance, every corporation is made up of people. The work of effective management is centred around guiding, handling and directing a group of people toward achieving organisational goals. This task

entails a great deal of work: planning, organizing, directing and controlling. All these functions of management depend on and are bound by a common factor - effective communication.⁶

Conflict

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1985:178) defines conflict as to "be in opposition or disagreement (with)".⁷ Industrial conflict used in the context of this work means opposition or disagreement situation involving the workers and the management. It connotes a possible breakdown of law and order in the economic system. A conflict emerges whenever two or more persons (groups) seek to possess the same exclusive position, play incompatible roles, maintain incompatible goals, or undertake mutually incompatible means of achieving their purposes.⁸

On the other hand, conflict may result in the destruction or disruption of all or certain of the bonds of unity that may previously have existed between the disputants.⁹ Almost any aspect of

conflict, however destructive, requires interaction between the antagonists, considerable communication and the establishment and maintenance of many reciprocal ties and subtle understandings. Conflict thus functions as a binding element between parties who may previously had had no contract at all.¹⁰

What then are the causes of industrial conflicts/strikes or disputes¹¹ at work places?

Conflict may break out over the distribution of a great variety of scarce values and goods, such as income, status, power, dominion over integrity or ecological position In certain types of conflicts, such as modern management - labour conflicts, the antagonists may labour only a minimum of hostile emotion toward each other.¹²

Akpala (1978:259) was making the same point, when he re-echoed Mehrotra's causes of industrial disputes grouped into economic, moral and political. Some of the causes are independent of the job and still others are related to the job. According to Mehrotra, the economic causes of industrial disputes

relate to want of proper adjustment of wages to cost of living. While moral and political causes relate to working conditions and failures on the part of the employers to provide adequate measures for the welfare of the workders both inside as well as outside the establishment. Mehrotra expatiated more on the political causes emanates from the problem of differences in ideologies. One ideology for example, advocates that workers must strive to stop the employers' exploitative powers. Thus the reason for industrial unrest. A single strike or luckout itself can and often does have more than one cause and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between one cause and another. It is, however, possible to distinguish the major causes of conflict from minor ones.¹²

Flippo and Mun Singer, (1978:473) writing on what seems to be the etiology of conflicts stated that, conflict occurs when two or more people or groups perceive that they have

- (1) incompatibility of goals and
- (2) interdependence of activity.¹³

Conflict can manifest itself in many forms writes Kerr (1964:171). The means through which industrial conflict expresses itself are as in the ingenuity of man.¹⁴ Brett and Goldberg (1983:37) went further to explain that organisational structure inadequately designed causes industrial conflicts.¹⁵

In a cover story of Timesweek 15 June 1992 captioned Nigerian Railways: What Future? seems to elucidate Kerr's (1964:171) view when the paper notes that, "while Nigerian workers are fighting for higher wages in line with hard times, railway workers are still struggling to get old wages paid".

What are the causes of industrial conflicts in the NRC? The magazine gave the following reasons:

non-payment of salaries and allowances of Railway workers for months and the non-availability of locomotives and spare parts all deriving from utter neglect of the corporation by successive governments and partly perhaps, the inability of the corporation to move with the times.¹⁶

What are the management approaches adopted in dealing or managing industrial conflicts of Nigerian workers, especially as it affects the Nigerian

Railway Corporation? To answer this question, Ubeku (1975:211) made us realise that, "an aggrieved employee who feels he has a grievance against the organisation, like the NRC, as a whole, and to an extent that the grievance lingers, his effectiveness is in doubt. His morale is low and as a result his efficiency drops. It is in the interest of both employee and organisation that these grievances are managed effectively, to prevent the outbreak of serious conflict capable of disrupting the operations of the corporation which could lead to its collapse".¹⁷

Perhaps in reaction to Ubeku's advice, Flippo (1978:475) opined that, "whether stimulated, accepted or opposed, conflict that does develop must be handled in some manner."¹⁸ The approaches to managing, limiting and resolving conflict or preventing it altogether can be thought of in terms of their methods, immediate target and the sequence of assured and large desired effect.

In conflict resolution, or conflict management, and prevention, it was suggested that:

If avoidance of physical aggression does not successfully resolve a conflict, the use of a third-party to achieve settlement by arbitration, mediation, compromise or adjudication is likely. Certain institutionalised forms of resolution, such as councils, courts, go-betweens or "crosser" perform these functions. Anthropologists have significant note of the fact that the resolution and control of conflict need not necessarily be identified with specialised political offices.¹⁹

Flippo and Munsinger summarizes the above statement when they stated that, "the resolution of conflict can be approached in two ways:

(1) interpersonal and (2) structural.

Among the many interpersonal ways of dealing with conflict are the following:

- i. Force,
- ii. Withdrawal,
- iii. Smoothing,
- iv. Compromise,
- v. Arbitration,
- vi. Mediation,
- vii. Superordinate goals, and
- viii. Problem Solving.²⁰

They went further to expatiate those afore-mentioned terms as follows:

Force entails the use of superior power, issuing from authority or other sources, to compel one party to accept a solution. Withdrawal or avoidance of the other party is a commonly used device. If co-operation and close co-ordination are deemed essential, the organisation will be harmed. Smoothing is often used by managers to provide a semblance of peaceful co-operation - "we're one big happy family". Compromise entails sharing of values with neither party getting all it wants. This is the most typical of dealing with labour-management conflict. Both arbitration and mediation call for outside neutral parties to enter the conflict. The arbitrator has the authority to act as judge and issue a decision; the mediator can only suggest, recommend, cajole, and keep the two opponents talking in the hope of reaching a solution. The plea of a superordinate goal requires that both of the opponents be essential for the accomplishment of a superior and more compelling goal. The goal of winning a war has often been used to get labour and management to bury their differences in the interest of both parties.

Finally the preferred behavioral approach to conflict management is problem solving. The win-lose approach of the often used force method is replaced by a win-win philosophy of problem solving. As usually practiced, problem solving is characterized by such elements as an open and trusting exchange of views of facts and acceptance of such norms as the following (1) conflict is caused by relationship among people as is not within the person,

(2) rarely is one completely right and the other completely wrong and (3) granting concessions is not a sign of weakness or capitulation.²¹

They concluded by saying that conflict can also be managed by altering the structure and processes that have impact upon behaviour. Among these methods are the following:-

- i. Change procedure,
- ii. Change organisation,
- iii. Change physical layout and
- iv. Expand resources.²²

Fashoyin (1982:1) in a paper says that collective bargaining takes place when a group of workers, represented by a union, enter into negotiation as a bargaining unit with an employer or group of employers with the objective of reaching agreement on condition of employment for the workers concerned. To buttress his definition, he cited Prof. Dunlop's definition of Collective bargaining as, ... the ability of the two contracting parties to influence the wage, in terms of these three (taste of workers and employers, market conditions and pure bargaining power) factors especially in terms of the first two.²³

In an article titled "Managing the Public Service Institution: The Concept of Management by Objective", Druker, 1980, concluded that, to make public enterprises perform does not require 'greatmen'. It requires, instead a system. The essentials of this system may not be too different from the essentials in a business enterprise, though the application will be quite different.²⁴

Out of these management approaches adopted in resolving industrial conflicts at Nigerian work places, especially in the Nigerian Railway Corporation, NRC, collective bargaining technique is the most favoured one. This is because, the Nigerian Railway Corporation Ordinance of 1955, section 47 of the Ordinance reads, subject to other provisions of this part, the corporation may appoint and employ such servants and agents as it deems necessary for the discharge of its functions under this Ordinance upon such terms and condition of service as it may determine."²⁵ This means that the NRC was legally empowered to bargain collectively and reach agreement with the union NUR -

Nigerian Union of Railmen - operating therein on wage rates, fringe benefits etc. for its employees.

But how far has this much favoured technique been able to solve NRC industrial conflicts? The way things are going on the NRC now, it appears an effective means of managing industrial conflicts in the NRC has not been realised. The then Sole Administrator of the NRC was almost saying the same thing when he, Ogbemudia, said that there are two major problems of the railways. The first is the problem of management of both human and material resources. Then, there is that vital break in communication between the railway and those who are supposed to finance it.²⁶

However, the literature has exposed the following: that conflicts at work places are inevitable and that the etiology of most industrial conflicts emanates from poor funding and its consequent lack of welfare of workers. We discovered so far that no one single management approach has been perfected as to provide an effective answer

to the issue of management of industrial conflicts with reference to the NRC.

It is evident from the literature reviewed that it is only Munsinger and Flippo's work and few scholars that have attempted to work out an anti-dote to industrial conflicts at work places; while others made a passing statement or remarks, though with no special reference to the NRC. Therefore, in conclusion there is raison d'etre for a deep study on the issue of management of Industrial conflicts at work places. A case study of the NRC.

1.5 Theoretical Framework:

The ideal frame work for the study of management of industrial conflicts, which will give direction for our analysis is the systems theory. This is because when applied to industrial conflict management, "the systems approach combine the insights from both classical organisation theorists and human relations theorists and adds a new

dimension consisting of an emphasis on the interaction between a given public administration system, like the NRC, and its total environment.²⁶ According to systems approach theorists, "a system is made up of interdependent parts, has permeable boundaries, interacts with its environment by imparting inputs, while it exports out in order to maintain itself in a permanent equilibrium."²⁷ Akpala, on his part noted that: "a system is an integrative theory that attempts to present and operate organization as a unified, purposeful system composed of interrelated parts."²⁸

The genesis of the systems theory can be traced to the writings of Ludwig Von Bertallary, a German biologist in the 1920's. But it was only after the Second World War, that political scientists such as David Easton adopted the systems theory in the explanation of political events.²⁹

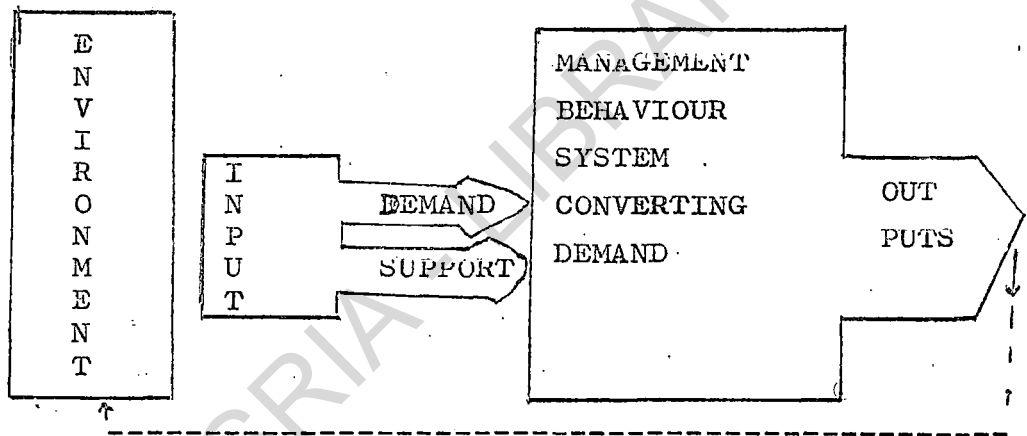
The basic concepts developed in the framework in the systems theory try to highlight the factors responsible for regulating and maintaining systems

and concepts which focus on dynamics of changes in the system.

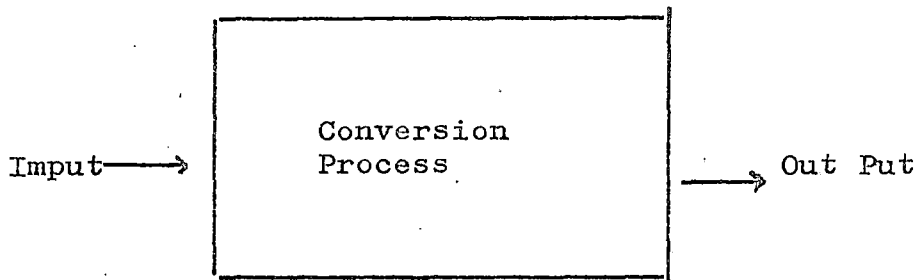
However, the scenario of the theory are as follows:

- i) A system comprises elements or parts, and have basic structure.
- ii) Each part of element of a system has an optimum value.
- iii) Every system seeks goals and tends towards systems stability.
- iv) Every system is governed by the law of economy - waste is avoided, and what is available is put to maximum use.
- v) The development of parts of any system is by differentiation rather than by multiplication
- vi) Each system is an integral whole and not an aggregate of parts. Furthermore, no part can be destroyed with impunity because destruction of a part affects the entire system.
- vii) Every system tries to provide the ideal correct or appropriate environment for its parts - sub systems. As a result of the fact that

each system expects each of its parts to fulfil its different functions within the system, it provides the social surroundings that is the environment or conditioning factors that facilitate role performance that gives maximum satisfaction.³⁰ The context of systems functioning can schematically be represented as follows:



Put in a different form, input enters the conversion process which finally comes out as the output, as it is shown in the diagram below:



Sources of both diagram are adopted from Lawrence C. Meyer, Comparative Political Inquiry, A Methodological Survey, III (The Dorsey Press) 1972, p. 3 for the one above, while the below is from Ladipo Adamolekun, Public Administration A Nigerian Comparative Perspective, Longman 1986, p. 15.

The survival of an open system depends on its ability to, ingest enough input from its environment to off-set its inputs plus the energy and the materials used in the operation of the system, that is a steady state.³¹

Therefore, if the environment is lacking, the sub-system will behave in ways which tend towards the disintegration of the system. (The stress is mine).

Accordingly, an enterprise will fail to "survive if its inputs do not at least equal its outputs."³²

The concept of systems approach is therefore necessary for proper identification and understanding of the various critical parts of a system that causes conflicts. Also, to know how these are inter-related or inter-connected to function for proper management of industrial conflict - the railway example.

Therefore, we can look at the case study as a sub-system of the entire Nigerian system or society. It is because of the fact that the public corporations form the sub-system of the entire Nigeria that any crisis in Nigeria industrial sector usually affect the entire system or country. Decisions of the NRC as well as the directives or regulations coming from the federal government of Nigeria influence the activities of the organisation directly or indirectly. Thus, the federal government has to provide a conducive environment for effective operation of the entire corporation (subsystem) if workers' industrial conflict are to be minimised.

The competence of this systems approach to management of industrial conflicts is not in doubt. It will help us to understand how management and government cope with industrial conflicts and the various conflict management strategies that have been put into practice to ensure stability of the entire system.

In applying this systems theory to this study, we are looking at the NRC management as decision making systems. This qualifies them to be regarded as government. Railway staff or workers as mentioned in the theory relate to the work force in the administrative set up of the government. Viewed in this respect, we are in a better position to investigate the role of effective management strategy to workers industrial conflicts, as the aim of every system is to ensure systematic stability.

1.6 Hypotheses of Study:

To enable us research into this work, some tentative answers to the research problems stated earlier are not only necessary but form the corner stone of this research.

The hypotheses are as follows:

- i) There is significant relationship between salary/wages and industrial conflicts in the Nigerian Railway Corporation.
- ii) Industrial actions by railway men contribute significantly to government intervention.
- iii) There is a positive relationship between the management strategy adopted and the management of industrial conflicts in the NRC.

1.7 Method of Data Collection and Analysis:

This study was conducted employing the survey research method of investigation. Use was made of primary source comprising questionnaire and oral interview. This was complemented with information from secondary materials.

Questionnaire administered to members of staff of the Nigerian Railway Corporation of the Eastern District with Enugu as its headquarters. The areas were chosen not only for the sake of convenience

but also it was felt that the factor of location will not affect the result of this study.

A random sample of two hundred and fifty questionnaire were used on the Eastern District of the NRC; out of which two hundred were returned. The questionnaire contains both structured and unstructured questions. It also contains multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. The questionnaire were designed to solicit information on the management of the NRC industrial conflicts.

Interviews were conducted with some members of staff and some executives of the Nigerian Union of Railway (NUR) of the NRC at Lagos and Eastern headquarters, Enugu, on the basis of ratifying the judgement of the sampling method.

On secondary sources, the work made use of official documents and records such as the annual reports and other publication of the NRC. Also useful were the writings of scholars and practitioners on Nigerian public enterprises and the NRC in particular. These constituted good check on data obtained by other methods.

Method of Data Analysis:

The data generated from the questionnaire were analysed using the simple percentage tables.

1.8 Literature Cited and Notes:

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5. C.C. Nwachukwu, Op. cit; p. 4.
6. The idea emanated from Nwachukwu, Ibid; p. 163; Koontz, Op. cit 1972:42 and A.S. Hornby et al, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English; Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 277.
7. A.S. Hornby, Ibid; p. 178.
8. David L. Sills (ed.), Encyclopedia of Social Sciences; Volume 3, 1956, p. 226.
9. D.L. Sills Ibid; p. 226.
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CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE
NIGERIAN RAILWAY CORPORATION (NRC).2.1 The Early Beginnings of the Rail
Transport in Nigeria:

To the best of our knowledge, the primary motive for building railway in Nigeria was economic. The British government might have administrative and humanitarian reasons, which to all intents and purposes were secondary.

Railway was mainly established to facilitate the exploitation and evacuation of agricultural and mineral resources for export to Britain. The building of railway in Nigeria by the British government, the then colonizing power, has administration in mind also. It was established to maintain links between the central seat of colonial government in Lagos, and other parts of Nigeria. The humanitarian factor often falsely cited as the rationale for the construction of railway is that it opened up the various interior parts of the country. That the railway would diminish social and tribal prejudices and also increase inter-course of various people.¹

Most history commentators have taken the above view with caution.

The railway construction proper in Nigeria actually started in 1893. During this period of railway construction in Nigeria, it has been noted that the planners were faced with problems arising from ignorance of the physical features of the country.

The first rail line was built between 1893 and 1909 and this linked the sea port of Lagos to Ibadan and Jebba. The rail line was necessary to facilitate the export of cocoa which was produced to a relatively large quantities in the western region. The second rail-line was built from Baro, a port on the Niger, through Minna to Kano; by the government of Northern Nigeria with funds got from its wealthier neighbour - The government of Southern Nigeria. This was completed in 1912.²

The Nigerian Railway Corporation was constituted on 3 October, 1912, by the amalgamation of the Lagos government railway and the Baro-Kano railway and was operated as a civil service department

designated the Nigerian Government Railway.

Progress of Rail Construction in Nigeria

<u>Section</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Distance</u>
Lagos-Ibadan	1893-1909	193km
Ibadan-Jebba	1901-1909	295km
Baro-Kano	1907-1911	562km
Jebba-Minna	1909-1915	255km
PortHarcourt-Enugu	1914-1916	243km
Enugu-Makurdi	1916-1924	220km
Kaduna-Kafanchan	1922-1927	179km
Kafanchan-Jos	Opened to traffic in 1927	101km
Kafanchan-Bauchi	1958-1961	238km
Bauchi-Gombe	1961-1963	166km
Gombe-Maiduguri	1963-1964	302km

Source: Booklet on the Nigerian Railway Corporation - NRC (Lagos: Railway Printing Press, 1978).

2.2 The Emergence of the Nigerian Railway Corporation - NRC:

From its early beginnings up to 1955, the Nigerian Railways was managed by a Railway Department which formed an integral part of the government. The Nigerian Railway Corporation as it exists today

was established by an Act of Parliament - Nigerian Railway Corporation Act 1955, as amended No. 20 of 1955. By this Act, the Nigerian Railway Corporation became a "corporate body with perpetual succession and common seal with power to sue and be sued in its corporate name and to acquire, hold and dispose of movable property for the purpose of its function under the Act."³

The reason for the transfer of the administration from government department to statutory public corporation does appear to be: the inadequacies in procedures and effectiveness of the bureaucracy consequent upon the changed circumstances of the post-war economic boom. In support of the above statement, one time minister of transport said on 4 April, 1955, that Nigeria has experienced a minor economic revolution, as a result of improved revenues.⁴

Secondly, when the Nigerian Railway Corporation was a department within the structure of the Civil Service, its revenue and expenditure formed part of the annual budgets of the government. In reaction to this policy, McPhee noted that the method is

unsatisfactory, since it hinders individual costing and a progressive policy based on actual result. He went further to say that "Railway have become a Milch-cow of the previous Treasury which used the railway receipts to meet deficit elsewhere and meanwhile starved the railway of its necessary rewards and extensions".⁵

2.3 Objectives of the Nigerian Railway Corporation:

The objectives of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) as stated in the Railway Act of 1955 are as follows:

- (a) to manage and operate the railway and provide reasonable facilities for the carriage of passengers and goods;
- (b) to control railway expenditures;
- (c) to ensure that, so far as is practicable, annual revenues are sufficient to meet all expenditures properly chargeable to revenues; and
- (d) to direct and control the expansion of the railway system.⁶

In summary, the objectives of the NRC has been reduced to "carriage of passengers and goods in a manner that will offer full value for money, meet cost of operation, improve market share and quality of service; ensure safety of operations and maximum efficiency, meet social responsibility in a manner that will meet the requirements of rail users, trade, commerce, industry, government and general public".⁷

2.4 Organisation and Management Structure of the Nigerian Railway Corporation:

The organisational structure of a corporation, like the NRC⁷ is a framework for carrying out responsibility, for the management, for the delegation of authority, for the co-ordination of activities. This view has attracted the 'sympathy' of most management theorists like T.H. Burhan and D. Bramley, when they observed that, "organisational structures illustrate the span of control of each managerial position and most important of all, enable the ultimate principle of organisation to be observed".⁸

In the same vein, in June 1955, the NRC undertook the responsibility for operating the railway. For effective execution of its primary objective of moving goods and passengers safely, efficiently and economically from one point to another.

The Nigerian Railway Corporation has a number of organs as illustrated in the Appendix. For the purpose of this study, we are going to expatiate on each organ in an descending order:

i) The Sole Administrator - SA:

The Sole Administrator who is the chief executive of the NRC is a recent creation. This post was created by the present military administration. Before this creation the corporation has a chairman and twelve members; 8 who are appointed by the Minister of Works: They represent different economic and social interests in the country. The major function of the Board is to lay down the general policy guidelines which the management of the corporation are expected to follow in the day-to-day running of the affairs of the organisation. The

day-to-day running of the corporation is directly under the general manager who exercises supervision and control over the acts and proceedings of all staff of the corporation in matters concerning the accounts and records of the corporation.⁹

Under the present organisational set-up, the Sole Administrator now performs the functions of the Board and the General Manager of the NRC.

Director Generals

These officers are in charge of the seven main departments of the NRC. (See Appendix) They are: Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering; Administration, Operation and Commercial; Finance, New Lines, Audit and Health Services.

The Civil Engineering department is responsible for the proper and efficient planning, design, construction, maintenance, renewal of all track works, buildings, workshop, offices, bridges, platforms, water supply and other civil engineering works.

The Mechanical/Electrical departments procures, repairs and maintains the rolling stock-coaches, wagons, locomotives - and provides as well as main-

tains the infrastructures of signalling and telecommunication facilities for safety, efficient and economic running of trains by the operating and commercial department.

The operating and commercial department has control over the movement and use of the rolling stock. It is also responsible for the acceptance and delivery of traffic.

The Finance Department

Provides the funds for the execution of the activities of the above-mentioned three departments.

The Administration Department is incharge of personnel and labour relations, manpower development and training estate and evaluation, public relations, purchasing, running of railway printing press amongst others.

The Health Department is in-charge of health matters such as the running and management of Railway hospital and other health related matters.

The Audit Department is in-charge of internal auditing of the account of the corporation.

The New Lines Department is in-charge of planning and construction of new lines.

The Secretary to the Corporation:

The scribe to the Nigerian Railway Corporation is in-charge of all matters concerning meetings of the Sole Administrator, Director Generals and other top officials of the corporation; preparing agenda for the meeting and ensuring that the decisions reached in the meetings are carried out.

District Managers:

The re-organisation of the railway for the purpose of promoting efficiency was effected in 1970/71 financial year. Four main Districts head-quarters at Ibadan, Zaria, Bauchi and Enugu and two sub-Districts with headquarters at Kafanchan and Minna were created.

District Managers were posted to man the main districts, with powers of Heads of Department on matters relating to the day-to-day running of their Districts. ¹⁰

Railway District Manager is equivalent in rank to a Head of Department and is directly responsible to the Director General on all matters in his district.

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CHAPTER THREE

LABOUR AND MANAGEMENT3.1 The Genesis of Labour Unionism in the Nigerian Railway Corporation:

Any attempt to study the process of labour and management relations in the NRC would be incomplete without the historical development of trade unionism in Nigeria. Trade unionism came into existence in Nigeria in 1912 when the Nigerian Civil Service union was formed.

The purpose of its formation was "to consider ways and means of inaugurating a league of civil service officials".¹ Prior to 1912, Nigerians organised themselves into craft guilds and as Yesufu noted, "group activity of that sort was strongly rooted in tribal structure and organisation...."² Therefore, craft guilds 'fathered' civil service into what is today known as Nigeria labour union.

The Trade Union Ordinance of 1938 was the first law in Nigeria to usher in legalised institutions of industrial relations. The ordinance defined trade

union as any combination whether temporary or permanent, the principal purposes of which are the regulation of the relations between workmen and masters or between workmen and workmen or between masters and masters are in restraint of trade.³

The Nigerian Railway Union (NUR) led the way in January, 1940 to register as a trade union under the Trade Union Ordinance, 1938. By the end of the year, 13 other unions had registered, including three railway unions and the Nigeria Electrical Workers Union.⁴

The unification or the amalgamation of different organisations or unions into one central labour force posed a great threat and problem to government. This was mainly due to political reason by then. This view was supported by Chief Dr. M.A.O. Imudu, one time labour leader of the NLC, when he said:

It is my greatest pleasure to live to see one labour centre, the Nigeria Labour Congress being realised after 50 years labour. I wish the NUR to stand firm to keep the Nigeria Labour Congress more united than you began it in 1978(?) In your time, these days you will need a stronger united NLC.⁵

As one of the oldest trade unions in this country, it is expected that they should have attained such level of maturity as to become a beacon of light to other unions in their conduct, organisation, has not been fully realised. It might be that the management has not created an atmosphere, conducive for effective co-operation. There was a provision in Nigerian Railway Corporation Act of 1955, section 5(b) (iv) which provides for appointing a person who should be meeting the minister, after considering any representation(s) made by labour organisation concerned. It is expected that the representative should have had experience of and to have shown capacity for the organisation of workers to serve on the board.⁶ The workers are called upon to take advantage of this opportunity to make meaningful contribution. But alas, the management appears not to be making good use of this section of the NRC 1955 Act.

W.H. Friedman and C.G. Rosberg (1960:20) writing on what should be the role of any trade union, like the NUR, quoted Julius Nyerere as once saying

that while it was one of the purpose of the trade unions to ensure the workers a fair share of the profit of their labour, this fair share must be fair in relations to the whole society. If it was greater than the country could afford, then, it was not a fair share.⁷ The NUR should re-consider this; while the government/management should be realistic in labour relations.

3.2 Process of Labour-Management Relations in the NRC During Industrial Conflicts:

Labour-Management relation connotes a relationship between workers, not as individuals but in their collective identity, and the employer. The concept is within the embrace of industrial relations and the common factor between both is the collective function of these workers in their interaction with the employer for determining and administering labour contracts, joint consultation and grievance handling.⁸

It is an established fact that Railway Management and the Nigerian Union of Railwaymen do not meet in

a vacuum. They have joint consultation on matters of mutual interest and most often on conditions of service, welfare, hours of duty; that is the major areas causing employees grievances. Some authors⁹ are of the view that industrial disputes arise because of grievances arising from communication problems. One example is lack of clarity in union/management agreements. The other is complaints arising from condition of employment such as wages and payment.

Dispute is the essence of industrial relations. Because of the structural features, industries necessarily create stratification which, in turn result in tensions among those stratified. This is because in many respects the aims, goals and interests of management and labour do not run parallel.

The problems enumerated above constrain policy makers to provide a system of trade dispute settlement that would protect the interest of the public. Nigeria has always, in predilection to state or statutory intervention, adopted a policy of

voluntary collective bargaining for the regulation of labour or industrial relations. It is in one sense a laissez-faire policy. The system of settlement of trade dispute based entirely on collective agreements or trade union directives seem to be only possible in countries, "where there is a long tradition of industrial relations geared towards co-operation rather than confrontation and where workers are deeply committed to the trade union."¹⁰ The practice is that once a union has been registered, the management and the union will then bargain collectively over matters pertaining to wages, hours of work and other conditions of employment.¹¹

Ideally parties to collective bargaining should come to the negotiation table with open minds, ready to listen to the suggestions and argument of the other party. "They are supposed not to have adamant position, but to shift their stand whenever convincing arguments are adduced by the opposite side".¹²

Accordingly, the state plays a major role in the settlement of trade disputes. This it does broadly in three ways: first, is the establishment of an appropriate legal framework for the institution and practice of industrial relations including collective bargaining. Second, is the establishment of minimum standards for conditions for employment where it seemed they were not adequately provided by collective bargaining, and third, the provision of peace-making services, both in the form of voluntary assistance and where dispute between parties seem to threaten national interests, in more authoritarian forms. The above forms of intervention are all to be found in the Nigerian industrial relations system.

Assistance in settling labour disputes is usually rendered by the Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity under the statutory power derived in the main from:

- i) Trade Dispute Act No 7 of 1976;
- ii) Trade Dispute (Essential Services) Act No 23 of 1976;

- iii) Trade Disputes (Amendment) Act No 54 of 1977; and
- iv) Trade Dispute (Essential Services (Amendment) Act No 69 of 1977.¹³

The normal methods by which assistance is given are by:

1. Conciliation,
2. Arbitration,
3. Investigation or Formal Inquiry, and
4. Reference to the National Industrial Court.

The Trade Disputes Act, 1976 acknowledges the role of voluntary grievance in the settlement of trade disputes and accordingly requires parties to dispute to first attempt settling their disagreements by the existing agreed procedures for settlement of dispute like:

1. Mediation

Under the Trade Disputes Act, if the attempt to settle the dispute through an enterprises's own machinery and procedures fails, or if no such agreed means of settlement exists, the parties shall within seven days of the failure (for where no such

means exist, within the seven days of the date on which the dispute arises or is first apprehended) meet together either by themselves or through their representatives, under the presidency of a mediator mutually agreed upon and appointed by or on behalf of the parties, with a view of the amicable settlement of dispute.¹⁴

2.2 Statutory Provision for Settlement of Trade Dispute:

The above procedure notwithstanding where a trade dispute is apprehended by the Minister of Employment, labour and productivity, the minister may in writing inform the parties of his apprehension and of the steps he intends to take in order to resolve the disputes like:

Conciliation

One of such steps is the appointment of a conciliator who shall look into the cases and circumstances of the dispute and by negotiation with the parties attempt to bring about a settlement.

Arbitration:

Industrial Arbitration Panel (IAP). Another way is by reference of dispute to Industrial Panel for settlement. The minister as already noted, does not, however, refer a dispute to the IAP unless and until there has been a failure to obtain a settlement by means of any agreed procedure within the enterprise concerned except where no such means exist.

The arbitrators at the IAP are drawn from government, employers and workers' representative with a lawyer as the chairman.

~~(Decision made by a judge or arbitrator)~~

Notice of the Award (Decision made by a judge or arbitrator) of the IAP are usually communicated to the minister within 42 days who in turn sends a copy of the award to the parties or their representatives. Any objections to the IAP award by any of the parties should be communicated to the minister in the specified manner within 21 days otherwise the minister if satisfied with the award, must proceed to confirm it and the award shall be binding on both parties to whom it relates. Where notice of

objection is given to the Minister, the Minister refers the dispute to the National Industrial Court for final determination.

National Industrial Court (NIC):

The Trade Dispute Act, 1976 established the NIC. The court is vested with exclusive and original jurisdiction in respect of disputes involving workers employed in any essential service. It has exclusive jurisdiction to make awards for the purpose of settling trade disputes; to determine questions as to the interpretation of any collective agreement, any award by the IAP or the Court itself and the terms of settlement of any trade dispute. The court has appellate jurisdiction in respect of cases which have been heard by the IAP and to which objections have been raised. There is no appeal to any other body or person from any determination of the Court.

The 1976 Trade Dispute Act still prohibits strikes and lockouts where an industry's voluntary machinery and procedure for settling disputes have not been exhausted including the use of mediation, or where the IAP Award has become binding or where

the dispute has been referred to the NIC and the Court had made ruling on the reference.

The system of labour and management or government relations over employees' grievances or industrial conflicts are just the same in the Nigerian labour force. The NRC inclusive, though there might be slight difference in the modus operandi as we are going to see in this work.

3.3 A Note on Stages of Negotiation Between the NRC Management and the NUR in the Face of Grievance:

The Collective Bargaining Agreement between the management of the Nigerian Railway Corporation and the Nigerian Union of Railwaymen which is operative from February, 1979, does not preclude any grievance from being handled with the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The organisational structure of the NUR is fashioned on the pattern of NRC's as discussed in Chapter Two of this work. The line of communication is as follows:

- (a) Chapter, (b) Branch, (c) District Council,
- (d) Departmental Committee in the Headquarters (Lagos only, (e) Central Working Committee (CWC),
- (f) National Executive Council and (g) Triennial or Emergency Conference.

It should be noted that District Councils are not under Departmental Committees and they (District Councils) communicates directly with the Secretary General.¹⁵

The Negotiating Machinery spells out the various stages of negotiation and consultation between the NUR and its NRC management. The first stage is the District Department Council. This is between District Head of Department and District Council of NUR. The second stage is the District Staff Council: Between RDM and District Council of NUR. The third stage is the Departmental Committee of NUR. The fourth stage is the Central Staff Council. This is between the Chief Executive of the NRC (Director General) and the CWC of NUR.

At the first stage only matters affecting a particular department in the particular District can be discussed.

At the second stage, matters on which agreement has not been reached at the first stage and any other matters emanating from the particular District (staff or operational/technical matters) can be discussed. Disagreements on staff matters at the second stage are to be referred to the fourth stage and not the third stage because staff matters from the Districts have been ousted from the jurisdiction of the Heads of Department.

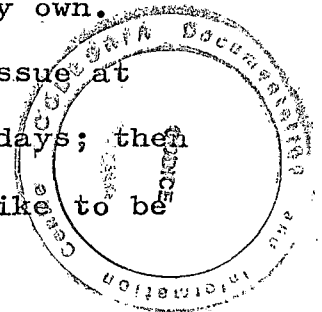
At the third stage, only matters with the competence of the Head of Department are to be discussed. These are policy matters or operational matters affecting a particular Department and of course, matters affecting the small retinue of staff under him.

At the fourth stage, matters on which agreements have not been reached at the lower levels and matters of a general nature are discussed.

After this 4th stage, if workers grievances were not resolved, the CWC will communicate the minister of labour over the issue at stake. "We use to exploit all the constitutional and other available means in an attempt to resolve any grievance. When it fails, we have no other alternative than to embark on strike".¹⁶

Now, for instance, first of all we use to give an ultimatum of 14 days. This is after we have exploited all available means within our reach. Then, the second ultimatum being a 7 day own. If the management did not address the issue at stake, on the expiration of the last 7 days; then the CWC will fix a date and type of strike to be embarked upon.¹⁷

Ubeku (1975:216) made an important observation when he said that, these disagreements may either be from interpretation of the collective agreement or the non-implementation of the whole or part of the agreement.¹⁸



3.4 A Review of Recent Labour-Management Relations in the NRC in the Just Concluded Industrial Conflict:

Labour and management relations in any organisation, like the NRC, connotes a relationship between workers in the collective identity and the employer. The common factor between both, according to Akpala (1982:27),¹⁹ is the collective function of the workers in their interaction with the employer for determining and administering labour contracts, joint consultation and grievance handling. In the light of this, how far has the relationship between the Nigerian Union of Railwaymen and its management been going?

In response, Mr. Nwajei,²⁰ the secretary to the NUR said that, the railway workers have been most patient. On all occasions when they went on strike to press home their demands, the workers usually exhaust all avenues including human endurance. Thus it is only when the railway management fails to live up to its obligations that the workers resort to a work-to-rule action.

In support, the Chief Public Relation Officer of the railway corporation, Mr. David Ndakotsu

agrees that the corporation has failed to meet the aspiration of the workers by not carrying out the decision of the National Industrial Court; the Industrial Arbitration Panel and the non-payment of the railwaymen's salary since January 1992.²¹ (up to June)

The relationship between the Nigerian Union of Railwaymen and the management of the Nigerian Railway Corporation has been full of confrontations, violation of orders, and threats. To buttress this view, Mr. Nwajei, explaining how they narrowly missed imprisonment, said that:

The management dragged them to the panel on May 16, the same day that the strike began... The summon to appear before IAP vested with powers by section 26, subsection (9) of the Trade Dispute Decree 1976 and its amendments, did not reach any of the executives but the panel still gave ruling two days later. It ordered all striking members of the NUR to call-off their industrial action and return to normal and full work immediately.

On receipt of the panel's order, we continued, the Central Working Committee of the Union met during which they resolved to call off the strike.

At the next appearance on May 12, their resolution to call off the strike which they submitted to the IAP, therefore saved them imprisonment for contempt of the tribunal.²²

Mr. Nwajei, noted that there is nothing that the union can do to call their striking members back to work for, "a hungry man cannot work". He regretted that the management which is on the receiving end has not called them to a truce meeting.²³ It is expected that during this meeting both parties should come with open minds, ready to listen to the suggestions and arguments of the other party, rather than being adamant whenever convincing points were made by any side.

What is more, the relationship of the railway management to its staff lacks credence. A case in point is the flouting of the NIC order by the railway management to pay the railway men all arrears and salaries owed them since January 1992. This was in April 1992 and by May, the Central Working Committee (CWC), in Abuja decided to continue their industrial action.²⁴

It is expected that by the end of the research a more favourable recommendation(s) will be made to be adopted in the management of industrial conflicts in the NRC. This we hope, will enhance increased productivity in the NRC.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In formulating questionnaire for this work, we took cognisance of the objective of study as stated in chapter one. Also, we had the hypotheses in mind. Specific questions were designed to test each of the stated objectives and hypotheses of this work. At the early stage of this work, we put forward three hypotheses that will enable us aim at finding out the best ways of managing industrial conflicts at the Nigerian Railway Corporation, NRC.

However, prior to our hypotheses testing, some preliminary questions, mainly bio-social questions, were asked that were primarily aimed at giving us an insight on the internal settings or workings of the NRC. Though they were not analysed. This is because, they did not elicit information leading directly to the objective of the project.

In the beginning of this research, we set out to determine how non-payment of salaries and other factors cause industrial actions in the NRC. To elicit information and data that would enable us

test the validity of the above, questions 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 were directed at this problem. The responses of these questions are pieced together in the following tables.

Question 8: Would you describe railway's working environment conducive for industrial peace?

A summary of the responses to question 8 is presented below:

4.1 Table 1

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Freq.
1.	Yes	13	6.5
2.	No	180	90.0
3.	Don't Know	7	3.5
		200	100

Analysis:

To analyse the data, we have constructed a frequency distribution table as shown above. The responses to question 8 show that thirteen, 13, or 6.5% of the respondents contended that the railway work environment is conducive for industrial peace.

While the majority of the respondents of one hundred and eighty, 180 representing 90% are of the opinion that the work environment of the railway is far from being conducive for industrial harmony. The remaining seven, 7, or 3.5% of the total respondents are still undecided.

Result:

From the above analysis it is clear that at present the railway working environment cannot guarantee industrial peace. The researcher went further to inquire why it is so.

Question 9: Do you think that the federal government has lost interest in the rail sector of the economy? Respondents were expected to say yes or no or to hold no opinion. A summary of the responses to question 9 is presented below.

Table 2:

4.2	S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
	1.	Yes	110	55
	2.	No	82	41
	3.	Don't Know	8	4
			200	100

Analysis:

As the table indicates one hundred and ten 110 or 55% of the total respondents strongly believe that the federal government have lost interest in the railway corporation. However, eighty-one 81 or 41% of the respondents opposed the view, by saying that the government still have interest in the rail sector. While only nine, representing 4% of the respondents refused to take a stand on government position.

Result:

The deduction from the analysis is that the majority of the respondents held the view that the federal government has lost interest in the rail sector of the economy. As a result of this the railmen are in a serious trouble for this would definitely affect their welfare. The respondents were further asked what the situation would lead to.

Question 10: Do you think that poor welfare of railway staff can contribute to industrial conflicts?

Respondents were expected to tick against Yes, not always or claim that they don't know. A summary of the responses to the above question is presented below.

4.3 Table 3:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	Yes	133	66.5
2	Not always	61	30.5
3	Don't know	6	3.00
		200	100

Analysis:

As shown in the table above a significant number of one hundred and thirty-three, 133 or 66.5% of the total respondents were of the view that poor welfare of railwaymen will definitely lead to strike action. While sixty-one, 61 or 30.5% were of the opinion that poor welfare of their staff do not always lead to strike actions. The remaining number of six or 3% claimed that they don't know whether poor welfare of staff can lead to industrial conflict or not.

Result:

The implication of the above analysis is that poor welfare of railwaymen or staff can spark-off strike action when other factors are present.

In pursuance of this point, we went further to ask question that will seek out what usually causes industrial conflicts in the NRC.

Question 11: Which of these do you consider the major cause of industrial conflicts in the NRC?

Respondents were expected to say or tick for promotion, method of payment of salaries, fringe benefits or management style as a major cause of industrial conflicts in the NRC. A summary of the responses to question 11 is presented below:

4.4 Table 4:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	None Promotion	10	5
2	Method of payment of salaries	105	52.5
3	Fringe benefits	15	7.5
4	Management style	70	35
		200	100.0

Analysis:

A breakdown of the figures as shown in Table 4 reveals that one hundred and five, 105 or 52.5% of the total number of respondents endorsed the view that industrial conflicts arise most often in the NRC out of the method of payment of salaries of workers. Also, a tangible number of seventy 70, respondents representing 35% suggested that the management style is also a major source of industrial conflicts in the NRC. A meagre number of fifteen 15, and ten, 10 respondents representing 7.5% and 5% respectively said that lack of fringe benefits and promotion are the major factors that cause industrial conflicts in the NRC.

Result:

From the analysis of the data thus presented above, it is obvious that an overwhelming majority of the respondents pointed their 'accusing fingers' at the method of payment of salaries to staff, as a major cause of industrial conflicts. While a reasonable number strongly suggested that the management style is another strong causative factor. Other factors like fringe benefits and promotion

though unpopular attracted the sympathy of some staff as being capable of igniting an industrial action in the NRC.

We went further to elicit information and data for clarification on how and why method of payment of salaries could be a strong point that could lead to industrial action in the NRC.

Question 12: How often are salaries of workers being paid?

In response to this question, respondents were expected to say either often, or occasionally or rarely. The responses to question 12 are summarised below.

4.5 Table 5:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	Often	5	2.5
2	Occasionally	121	60.5
3	Rarely	74	37.0
		200	100.0

Analysis:

The table above shows that out of two hundred, the total respondents, one hundred and twenty one respondents, 121, or 60.5 said that their salaries are occasionally paid to them rather as and when due. While seventy-four, of the respondents, representing 37% contended that they rarely receive their take home pay. While an insignificant number of seven, or 2.5% of the total respondents opposed others view and asserted that they are paid often.

Result:

We can deduce from their responses that there is no non-payment of wages/salaries in the NRC. Rather, almost all of them were of the view that either they are occasionally or they are rarely paid their take home pay. To all intent and purposes occasional and rarely payment of workers wages/salaries is one of the major causes of industrial conflicts in the NRC.

Having analysed questions eight, nine, ten, eleven and twelve of our questionnaire, we are now

in a position to make a general statement about the first hypothesis and objective: That there is a significant relationship between wages/ salaries and industrial conflicts and to locate other areas that cause industrial conflicts in the NRC.

After analyzing question 8, the view collated indicated that working environment at the railways at its present setting does not guarantee industrial peace. To worsen the situation, analysis to question 9 arrived at a sympathetic conclusion that the federal government ~~to~~ ~~the~~ has lost interest in the railway sector of the economy. What is more, the answers obtained from question 10 further corroborated the above assertion. This tells us that the welfare of railway staff have terribly degenerated to a very bad state. While the answers collated from questions 11 and 12 exposed the poor method of payment of salaries to workers, which was spasmodic as a major causative factor that usually spark-off industrial actions; after the NUR has exhausted all possible avenues

with the railway management. Other factors identified above may 'spark-off' an industrial action but not as spasmodic payment of salaries do.

Hypothesis Two:

Industrial actions by railmen workers contribute significantly to government intervention.

Four questions in the questionnaire were directed at eliciting information for proving the above hypothesis right or wrong.

Question 13: How would you assess federal government relationship with the railway management?

Respondents were expected to say that their relationship is either good, average, poor or undecided to make any comment. A summary of the responses are presented below.

4.6 Table 6:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	Good	20	10
2	Average	70	35
3	Poor	101	50.5
4	No comment	9	4.5
		200	100.0

Analysis:

From the table of analysis above, twenty, or 10% of the respondents say that there is a cordial relationship between the federal government and those assigned to manage the railways. While seventy, or 35% had the opinion that the relationship is average or at par. One hundred and one, 101, or 50.5% of the respondents state that the relationship between the federal government and the railway management is nothing to write home about. The remaining nine, 9, representing 4.5% of the respondents claimed that they don't know.

Result:

From the evidence before us in the table above, there is a relatively poor not too good relationship between the federal government and the railway management. This might be as a result of loss of interest by the federal government to the rail sector.

We went on to find out whether this poor relationship between the federal government and

the railway management also affected the relationship between the railway staff or union and its management.

Question 14: How do you see the nature of relationship existing between the railway management and the railway workers?

Respondents were expected to say whether the relationship is either cordial or not cordial or say they don't know. A summary of the responses to question 14 is presented in the table below.

4.7 Table 7:

S/N	Response	Frequence	Percentage Frequency
1	Cordial	15	7.5
2	Not cordial	181	90.5
3	Don't Know	4	2.0
		200	100.0

Analysis:

A breakdown of the figures as shown in Table 7 reveals that one hundred and eighty-one, representing 90.5% of the total number of the respondents

said that the relationship existing between the railmen and the management is not cordial. Fifteen, or 7.5% of the respondents opposed the view, and said that there is cordial relationship existing between them and its management. While the remaining four, or 2% of the total respondents refused to make any comment.

Result:

From the analysis of data thus presented above, there is enough evidence to conclude that there is sour relationship existing between the railmen and its management. And for all practical purposes, this is inimical to the growth of railway if not checked.

As a result of this, we went further to find out whether this sour relationship found to be existing between the federal government via the railway management down to the railmen affects railway funding.

Question 15: How would you appraise the present funding of the NRR?

Respondents were required to tick in favour or against or claim undecided of the present funding of the NRC. A summary of the responses are presented below.

4.8 Table 8:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	Adequate	61	30.5
2	In-adequate	130	65.0
3	Don't Know	9	4.5
		200	100.0

Analysis:

As shown in table 8, sixty-one, representing 30.5% of the total number of the respondents were of the view that the fund being allocated to the NRC by the federal government is relatively enough, to sustain the rail sector. While the majority of the respondents of one hundred and thirty, or 65% without reservation, said that the funding of the railways by the federal government is grossly inadequate. The remaining nine, or 4.5% claimed

that they cannot rate the funding as either being adequate or inadequate.

Result:

From the analysis of data presented above, majority of the respondents made it categorically clear that the funding of the railways by the federal government is relatively in-adequate and this may have a disastrous effect on the corporation anytime from now, if appropriate action is not taken.

One of the undesirable effects might be incessant industrial actions in the railway that will eventually lead viciously to unproductivity.

Federal government should often intervene in the affairs of the railways in the face of industrial conflicts. The next question tends to find out how true is the allegation made against the federal government.

Question 16: Federal government most often intervene only in the face of industrial conflicts in the NRC?

Respondents were expected to agree or disagree or claim having no opinion to the above question.

The responses are summarized below:

4.9 Table 9:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	Agree	136	68
2	Disagree	60	30
3	No opinion	4	2
		200	100

Analysis:

A breakdown of the analysis as shown in the table indicated that out of two hundred respondents, one hundred and thirty six, of them, representing 68% held the view that the federal government does not show concern in the running of the affairs of the railway, only intervening mostly in the face of industrial conflicts. A fairly large number of sixty, or 30% disagree with the above view, when they said that the federal government does not only intervene in the face of industrial conflict rather they show interest in the affairs of the NRC. While a negligible number of four, or 2% of the respondents held no opinion.

Result:

From the analysis of data thus presented above, it is clear that an overwhelming majority of the respondents were of the view that the federal government rarely intervene in the general affairs of the railways except in the face of industrial actions. In the light of this therefore, we may be right in accepting the above view as supported by the majority of the respondents.

Having analysed the four questions that are related to the second hypothesis, we may not be wrong if we come to the conclusion based on the outcome of the analysis of the four questions.

Question 13 sought to know the railway men assessment over federal government relationship with railway management. The result produced was that there was a poor relationship between them. This is viewed from the persistent complaint by the management that they lacked the financial resources to meet some of their financial obligation, like payment of workers' salaries.¹

In question 14, the responses revealed that the sour relationship existing between the federal

government and the railway management has seriously affected the management relationship with the railway men.

After analyzing question 15, we discovered that an overwhelming majority of the respondents representing 65% 'frowned' at the in-adequate funding.

While the respondents to question 16 say that the federal government rarely intervene in the running of the affairs of the railways except in the face of industrial conflicts.

It is obvious from the foregoing, that the responses to the four questions 13, 14, 15 and 16 on a general note underscored the federal government on the degree of involvement or commitment to the rail sector.

Hypothesis Three:

There is a significant relationship between the management strategy adopted and the management of industrial conflicts in the NRC.

To enable us elicit information either to prove or disprove this hypothesis, we have designed

five questions aimed at seeking the views of respondents to this issues.

Question 17: Do you think that lack of reliable communication from the federal government hinders management of industrial conflicts in the NRC?

Respondents were required to say whether it is true or not. The table below shows a brief summary of their responses.

4.10 Table 10:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	True	181	90.5
2	Not true	15	7.5
3	Don't know	4	2.0
		200	100.0

Analysis:

The table above shows that out of a total of two hundred respondents, one hundred and eighty one, or 90.5% responded in the affirmative. On the other hand, fifteen, representing 7.5% of the total respondents gave a negative response by saying

that lack of reliable communication on the government side does not hinder management of industrial conflicts. Four, or 2.0% of the respondents claimed that they don't know.

Result:

Judging from the responses as analysed above, one can reasonably say that lack of reliable information from government side jeopardizes any move aimed at resolving or managing industrial conflicts in the NRC. This might be as a result of conflicting information. Therefore, a reliable two-way flow of ideas and information between the authorities and railway men promotes an atmosphere of peace and harmony on the Nigerian Railway Corporation.

Question 18: By what method are trade disputes managed in the NRC?

Respondents were expected to say either the collective bargaining or the joint meetings of staff or hold the view that they don't know any method.

The responses are summarised below:

4.11 Table 11:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	Collective bargaining	175	87.5
2	Joint meetings of staff	21	10.5
3	Don't Know	4	2.0
		200	100.0

Analysis:

A breakdown of the figures as shown in the table above shows that only a small number of the respondents, numbering twenty one, representing 10.5% were of the view that joint meetings of staff have always been the steps usually resorted to in managing industrial conflicts in the NRC. On the other hand, as many as one hundred and seventy five, or 87.5% of the total respondents said that collective bargaining is the method used in industrial conflicts in the NRC. While the remainder of four, or 2% claimed that they don't know actually the method in use in the corporation.

Implication:

From the above analysis, the implication of the responses is that the majority held the view that the Collective bargaining is the method in use in managing industrial conflicts in the NRC. The joint meetings of staff might be a means to collective bargaining.

We went further to find out how effective this collective bargaining has been in managing industrial conflicts in the NRC.

Question 19: How would you assess the chosen method?

Respondents were expected to say whether the collective bargaining or joint meetings of staff is effective or not effective. The responses are summarized below.

4:12 Table 12:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	Effective	21	10.5
2	Not so effective	175	87.5
3	Don't know	4	2.0
		200	100.0

Analysis:

The breakdown on the table shows that one hundred and seventy five, representing 87.5% are of the opinion that although collective bargaining is in vogue in the NRC, it is not so effective in managing industrial conflicts. While twenty one, or 10.5% said the chosen method is effective. The remaining four, representing 2% claimed they don't know.

One thing that excited the researcher here, is that on a close observation, it was discovered that the number that supported collective bargaining tallied with those who said their chosen method has not been effective in managing industrial conflicts in the NRC.

Result:

From the analysis of table 12 it would not be wrong to say that the chosen method - Collective bargaining has not been so effective in managing industrial conflicts. Therefore, there is the need to suggest a new one or a modification of it for its effectiveness.

But why has the much talked about - Collective bargaining not been working. The next question tries to find out.

Question 20: During Collective Bargaining Over industrial conflicts, how does the management react or handle the situation?

Respondents were expected to say how the management handles the situation. Whether they are autocratic, democratic or cunning in handling the situation. The responses are summarized below.

4:13 Table 13:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	Autocratic	80	40
2	Democratic	15	7.5
3	Cunning	105	52.5
		200	100.0

Analysis:

As shown in table 13, eighty, or 40% of the respondents stated that the corporation's management

style during collective bargaining in handling industrial conflicts is autocratic in nature. While fifteen representing 7.5% are of the opinion that the management style is democratic. The remaining, though in the majority, of one hundred and five, or 52% strongly held the view that the management is cunning in managing industrial conflicts in the NRC.

Result:

What we can deduce from the analysis of table 13 is that the management is likened to the 'cunning old fox' in handling industrial conflicts in the NRC. For instance, in most cases the management are usually clever during collective bargaining at making statements that are capable of deceiving union representatives over industrial conflict resolution. It does appear that this cunning style of the management has been incapacitating the workability of the collective bargaining. As a result of this, what approach is capable of managing industrial conflicts in the NRC, for the purpose of industrial peace.

The next question tends to find out.

Question 21: What in your opinion is the best approach to managing industrial conflicts in the NRC?

Respondents were expected to suggest either effective confrontation or effective dialogue.

The responses are summarized below.

4.14 Table 14:

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
1	Effective Confrontation	97	48.5
2	Effective Dialogue	103	51.5
		200	100.0

Analysis:

From the table, this is the only time the respondents almost tallied in reaction to a question. Ninety seven, representing 48.5% were of the view that effective confrontation is the approach. While one hundred and thre, 103, or 51.5% of the total respondents were of the opinion that effective dialogue is the best approach.

To ratify the above statements, the researcher conducted an oral interview with some of the respondents² to the questionnaire and some of the union leaders. Most of those interviewed lamented over the bitter experiences of resorting to confrontation. Though they confessed, in most cases, it is a faster means to an end; but it does not pay off in the long run.

Result:

In the light of the above analysis one may be justified to accept the view that effective dialogue to a large extent is the best approach to conflict management.

References/Notes

1. This statement was said by Mr. David Ndakotsu the Public Relations Officer of the NRC, in Times week 15 June, 1992, p. 11.
2. Those interviewed included the following:
 - i) The Union District Secretary, Mazi Onyia
 - ii) The Union District Chairman and
 - iii) Some members of staff: Mr. Anioko of the Accounts Section, Enugu Railway Station; Mr. Festus Okorie, the Station Master (SM) of Aba Railway Station.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS.5:1 Summary:

As stated earlier in this work, the writer undertook this work with some specific objectives in mind. These were:

Identifying areas that cause industrial conflicts. Put differently, why is it that in spite of previous attempts, industrial conflicts still persist in the NRC?

Identifying management strategy that will be of immense help in the management of industrial conflicts in the NRC.

Highlighting appropriate solutions to industrial conflicts in the NRC.

The researcher did not lose sight of the existence of minor bottlenecks in the nature of limitations and delimitations. Some of which were inherent in such subject under investigation. With this in view, the researcher set out to formulate a workable hypotheses:

There is a significant relationship between salary/wages and industrial conflicts in the NRC.

Secondly, Industrial actions by railwaymen contribute significantly to government intervention.

Thirdly, there is significant relationship between the management strategy adopted and the management of industrial conflicts in the RCR.

In the literature review, the major terms and concepts as used or applied in the work were defined. We went on to discuss the subject at length, delving into such areas as the causes of industrial conflicts at work places and some of the management approaches usually applied in the 'face' of industrial conflicts. We discovered that no single management approach has been recommended by management scholars as best approach for managing industrial conflicts, especially in the NRC.

Since the NRC is the study area, we noted that as from thenineteen eighties till date, the railways is among other Nigerian public corporations

that has witnessed a greater number of industrial crises than others. We found out that during conflict management in the NRC, the NUR and Railway Management use Collective Bargaining which involves the following methods:- Conciliation, Arbitration and Mediation. It is disappointing to note that all these are not achieving the desired goal.

On reviewing management and labour relationship in the NRC we observed that the NUR took particular note of what the government or the management do or fail to do, that is, saying one thing and doing a different thing altogether. This influenced their interpretations and reactions to the much favoured collective bargaining via dialogue in the management of railway industrial conflicts. It was observed that as a result of this, the relationship between the NUR and the Railway Management is full of confrontations, violation of orders and threats.

Why all these? The researcher set out to collect and analyse data relevant to the testing of the hypotheses as stated in chapter one of this work. In analysing the data, extensive use was

made of statistical tables and procedure. Each hypothesis was tested for validity by analysing the responses to specific questions directed at eliciting information on the hypothesis.

5:2 Findings:

In the final analysis, the following findings were made:

As at the time of writing this work, it was observed that the working environment at the railways does not guarantee industrial peace and harmony. This was attributed to loss of interest in the railway sector by the federal government; resulting to a poor welfare of staff.

We found out that demand and poor method of payment of wages/salaries, which was spasmodic was/is a 'causative agent' to industrial conflicts in the NRC.

There is a sour relationship existing between the federal government and the railway management and this has affected the railway management relationship with the NUR.

It was discovered that the federal government hardly intervene in the running of affairs of railway management until things get out of hand.

We found out that low level of communication between the NUR and railway management via the federal government creates room for mutual distrust and suspicion and this jeopardises most attempts at resolving industrial conflicts in the NRC.

From the analysis of questions, both written and oral, it was discovered that collective bargaining is the most favoured or accepted means procedure in managing industrial conflicts in the NRC, but at present it is not so effective.

Finally, the railway union seems to be favouring confrontation to back up their demands. They were not oblivious of the fact that it was not the best solution to their problem. Some of those interviewed did say that the management is likened to the 'cunning old fox'. That is why they resort to the quick way of drawing attention via confrontation; though it sometime achieves results and at times has its own short-comings. To buttress this, Dr. Jide Malomo, Oyo State ASSU branch chairman, who stood in for Dr. Attahiru Jega, the ASUU national

Chairman, said in reaction to the Union's proscription by the federal government that, "there is no going back on the current strike action", Daily Champion, 24 July, 1992, p. 1. And by the end of the day it paid ASUU off though it was through dialogue at last.

5:3 Conclusion:

Based on the strength of the above work, management is seen as controlling, directing, co-ordinating and planning. And for some reasons industrial conflicts at work places especially in the NRC are inevitable. From the findings, in managing industrial conflicts in the NRC, no one approach has been able to effectively manage industrial conflicts in the NRC. Though, dialogue when effectively applied was generally accepted as the best approach to the management of industrial conflicts in the NRC.

5:4 Recommendations:

In the light of our findings we recommend that:

A somewhat approach to be known as Situational Theory (S and T) be applied in any industrial

conflicts especially in the NRC. This theory implies that, first and foremost, the management or the government must have wits to deal with crisis accordingly or meritoriously. The Management/Government should know when to shift at the appropriate time from one position or from a stand to another depending on the tasks or nature of problems being faced; and those (Union) involved and what type of approach to apply. Whether to use force or dialogue effectively.

This theory is borne out of the fact that those who supported dialogue and confrontation in the management of railway industrial conflicts were almost equal in number. This is as a result of the wind of change blowing across the country creating awareness.

Railway authorities (management) should note that the nature of conflict should determine the type of approach to be applied and if the situation tends to persist, they should try another means or approach. For instance, if the use of force fails to bring the situation under control; compromise or smoothing should be tried. One of them

definitely, will come up with the appropriate solution. To this extent, therefore, the need for effective dialogue or effective confrontation at all times cannot be over-emphasized.

As was revealed by this study, communication cannot be for its own study, communication cannot be for its own sake, but for the sake of what it is meant to achieve. For today we are living in a society of conscious individuals who are always alert to their immediate environment. Therefore, there is need for a reliable two way flow of information between the management/government and the NUR representatives. This will enable them relay to their colleagues the actual situation of things.

Because of the importance of railways to a developing country like Nigeria, the government should provide appropriate fund for the running of the corporation. First and foremost, the fund should address the issue of regular payment of salaries and allowances as and when due; and other enormous responsibility that would finally lead the railway corporation to the much sought peace - industrial peace.

5:5 Suggestions for Further Study:

Ordinarily, the geography of a study of this nature would be expected to cover the entire country since the NRC operates almost all over the country. But this was not possible with the obvious constraints of time and not much financial resources at the disposal of the researcher to carry out such a national survey.

The locale of the study, therefore, was mainly on the Eastern District of the NRC; with few visits at the Ebetu-Metta-Lagos, headquarters of the NRC, basically on the issue of how best to manage Nigerian Railway Corporation industrial conflicts.

An extensive research should be conducted in the future, on a similar work, covering the whole area/country. This will be to find out whether the work will replicate or produce the same result or not and if not why?

A research should be conducted to find out how effective this recommended Situational Theory (S and T) approach will be in the future, on the management of industrial conflicts at the NRC and other corporations mostly in the Third World countries.

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University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
Sub-Department of Public Administration
and Local Government

Research Project:

Management of Industrial Conflicts at Work
Places: A Case Study of the Nigerian Railway
Corporation - NRC.

Sir/Madam/Miss,

I am a post graduate student in the Sub-Department
of Public Administration and Local Government,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka. I am carrying out
a research on Management of Industrial Conflicts
at Work Places: A Case Study of the NRC. I have
chosen the Eastern District of the NRC for this
purpose.

This questionnaire is designed to seek your
views on the questions relating to this study which
is strictly academic. Your responses to these
questions on this subject would be treated with
high confidentiality.

Okolie, Emmanuel Ikechukwu.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Tick (/) to indicate your response.

1. Sex: (a) Male _____ (b) Female _____
2. Marital Status: (a) Single _____ (b) Married _____
3. Age: (a) 16-25 _____ (b) 26-35 _____
(c) 36-40 _____ (d) Above 40: _____
4. When did you join the Nigerian Railway Corporation: _____
5. What was your qualification then? _____
6. Since your appointment, how many promotions have you earned: _____
7. Do you have confidence in the railway union when it comes to labour matters? _____
8. Would you describe railway's working environment conducive for industrial peace?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____ (c) Don't Know _____
9. Do you think that the federal government has lost interest in the rail sector of the economy?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____ (c) Don't Know _____
10. Do you think that poor welfare of railway staff can contribute to industrial conflicts?
(a) Yes _____ (b) Not always _____
(c) Don't know _____
11. Which of these do you consider the major cause of industrial conflicts in the NRC?
(a) Promotion: _____
(b) Method of payment of salaries _____
(c) Fringe benefits _____
(d) Management style _____

12. How often are salaries of workers being paid?
 (a) Often _____ (b) Occasionally _____
 (c) Rarely _____
13. How would you assess federal government relationship with the railway management?
 (a) Good _____ (b) Average _____
 (c) Poor _____ (d) No Comment _____
14. How do you see the nature of relationship existing between the railway management and the railway workers?
 (a) Cordial _____ (b) Not cordial _____
 (c) Don't know _____
15. How would you appraise the present funding of the NRC?
 (a) Adequate _____ (b) In-adequate _____
 (c) Don't know _____
16. Federal government most often intervenes only in the face of industrial conflicts in the NRC?
 (a) Agree _____ (b) Disagree _____ (c) No
 opinion _____
17. Do you think that lack of reliable communication from the federal government hinders management of industrial conflicts in the NRC?
 (a) True _____ (b) Not true _____ (c) Don't know _____
18. By what method are trade disputes managed in the NRC?
 (a) Collective Bargaining _____
 (b) Joint Meetings _____
19. How would you assess the chosen method?
 (a) Effective _____
 (b) Not so effective _____
 (c) Don't know _____


20. During collective bargaining over industrial conflicts, how does management reach or handle the situation?

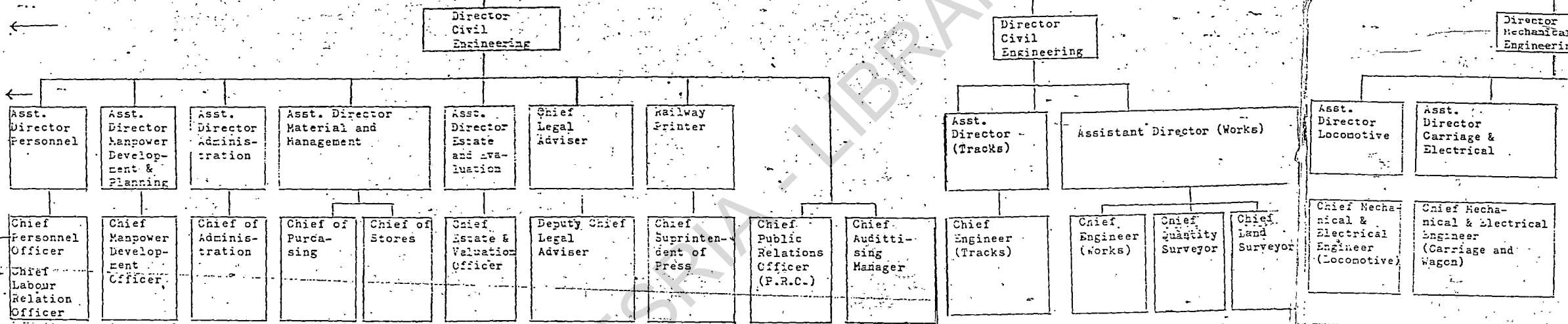
- (a) Autocratic _____
- (b) Democratic _____
- (c) Cunning _____

21. What in your opinion is the best approach to managing industrial conflicts in the NRC?

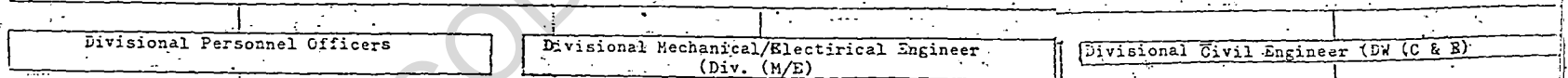
- (a) Effective confrontation _____
- (b) Effective Dialogue _____

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GL. 13



GL. 12

