

Monday, July 9, 1956

This is written in regard to my former complaint filed . It is my sincere belief that I am continually and grossly being discriminated against.

In 1953 I filed an application for the aircraft assembly department. This application was filed at the factory employment office. Management steadfastly insisted that this application was misplaced and that they had no knowledge that it ever existed. As recently as two months ago the factory employment manager Ernst Riskoff informed my steward, Harry Douglas, that the application had been filed but due to the new system of upgrading through Norm Holtz's office factory employment could take no action on the application.

On or about February 21, 1956 I requested my foreman to give me an upgrading application for the aircraft assembly department. My foreman, S. Salo, agreed to give me the application. I was evaluated by my foreman on these eight factors:

1. quantity of work - Good
2. quality of work - good
3. Job knowledge - good
4. attendance and punctuality - good
5. care of tools and equipment - good
6. conduct on job - good
7. ability to learn - good
8. safety - good

After marking all these factors 'Good,' in the remarks column my foreman placed a notation which read: "This employee needs close supervision." This application was turned in to Norm Holtz's office in line with upgrading procedures. Sometime elapsed and other employees were placed in the aircraft assembly department. When my steward investigated the reasons for which I was not upgraded he was informed that I had no application in the office. Norm Holtz gave Salo back the application because he could not accept it with the notation that my foreman had placed on it. When my steward questioned Salo on the application Salo informed my steward that he would not remove the notation. Salo was informed by the Union that Robert Jones, the labor relations director ruled in a previous case that once an employee receives an application from his foreman the employee was automatically recommended regardless of what the foreman wrote on the application.

This was a point of procedure established by management. Salo claimed he had no previous knowledge of the procedure and stated that there was no further obligation to me. The Union took the matter up with Salo's superior, Superintendent Gerry Gerrow. The Union pointed out that it was impossible for an employee to be evaluated "Good" on the eight factors and still "need close supervision." In Superintendent Gerrow's disposition he overruled Salo. Mr. Gerrow felt that foreman Salo should have given me a good recommendation or no recommendation at all. He instructed foreman Salo to reinstate my application without any notation at all. Foreman Salo informed the Union and the superintendent that he could not reinstate the application because he had misplaced it or destroyed it and could not remember which he did or what happened to the application.

Note:- This is the final report concluding the one dated Monday, July 9, 1956

On July 25, 1956 the Union requested a meeting with Foreman S. Salo and Superintendent G. Gerrow and it was agreed and understood that L. Miller (I) would receive a new application.

After reading my complaint, G. Gerrow and S. Salo objected strongly to the charge of practicing racial discrimination. However, Gerrow did agree that something was definitely wrong with Norm Holtz' method of up-grading employees with less recommendation than I had. He said he knew also that it was ridiculous for a corporation as large as Ex-Cell-O to 'lose' applications continually. Gerrow felt that because I had been treated unjustly by Holtz that he would try to "right a wrong" by at least giving me a good recommendation. I received a new application. Half my problem was solved. The Union had won a new application but there still remains the up hill climb for a better job. I began my fight in 1953. My steward joined forces with me in February 1956 and now, six months later, we are just at the half-way mark.

I have no doubt that eventually I will get the up-grading, but my fellow white workers don't have to work nearly as hard or long as I to do so, nor do their applications get "lost". It seems to me that Ex-Cell-O Management tries to help the average white worker to get a better job, but that in order for a negro worker to do the same he must be exceptionally outstanding, above the white workers. I deserve to be rated as any "average" man, working with and being compared to "average" men.