

Saturn contract questioned

NLRB juggling complaint about GM-autoworker deal

STEPHEN GOODRICK

We have seen the future — and it stinks.

Last year General Motors Corp. unveiled its new Saturn auto plant and with it, its much ballyhooed "labor-management contract of the future."

If the agreement between GM and the United Auto Workers union is any example of what's to come, American workers are in trouble.

Why? Because the so-called "contract of the future" at GM's new Saturn plant is nothing more than the same old, run-of-the-mill, management-crawl-in-the-bed-with-labor forced unionism sellout that unions hoped to make legal under a President Walter Mondale.

Fact: GM and the union have publicly stated that the bulk of the workers hired will be UAW union members.

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legal as if GM had announced that only whites would be hired.

Now the National Labor Relations Board must decide what to do with a complaint filed by the National Right to Work Foundation against General Motors and the Auto Workers' union over this celebrated "contract of the future."

Makes you worry what the future holds, because the two have already agreed on a union contract even before a single worker has been hired or expressed a desire to be unionized.

What if the workers don't want to be represented by the UAW? Or, what if, God forbid, they should not want to join a union at all?

The decision at this point is up to Mrs. Rosemary Collyer, general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board. And, for advocates of worker rights in labor relations, there is a real cause to be worried.

Although Mrs. Collyer herself is not well-known, she is a veritable "labor czar." The general counsel not only directs the entire national field

staff of the board, but has unreviewable authority to decide which cases the board will hear.

When the administration appointed Mrs. Collyer, pro-worker advocates had hopes for a more receptive ear, but thus far those hopes have been dashed.

In her short, but ignominious term at the NLRB, Mrs. Collyer has managed to avoid siding with employees' rights in just about every significant case she could get her hands on.

Like when Dr. Robert Roesser, a professor of electrical engineering at the University of Detroit, complained to the board that the union dues he was compelled to pay as a teacher were being used by his union to support abortion — a position he found abhorrent to his personal beliefs. Mrs. Collyer refused to allow the NLRB to hear his complaint.

Or last year during the AT&T strike, the Communications Workers of America adopted their own slogan of "Reach Out and Sue Someone." They attempted to get courts to fine employees who continued to work. Again, all of the employees' cries for protection fell on deaf ears at the Labor Board.

And when Mariene Swanson, a registered nurse, sought to avoid paying dues to a militant union calling for a strike on St. Joseph's Childrens Hospital, Mrs. Collyer — who wasn't even a party to the case — went out of her way to file a brief in opposition to nurse Swanson's claim!

Which goes to show that Mrs. Collyer is incapable of distinguishing between a laborer and a labor union boss.

Now Mrs. Collyer has had the Saturn complaint — an open-and-shut case of discrimination against non-union employees — on her desk for more than three months and cannot figure out what to do with it.