

New Letter Sent To Hess Chairman

The following letter was sent Oct. 18 to Leon Hess, chairman of the board, Amerada Hess Oil Corp. It was signed by 41 priests, Sisters and lay persons under the coordination of the Office of Human Development.

Dear Mr. Hess,

We wish to express our disappointment at your refusal to respond to our letter of Sept. 9. We asked to hear your side of the story and met only silence. So our questions remain unanswered in regard to your dispute with the FIGHT organization.

We want to share with you our position on this conflict which still troubles the community. Again we extend an invitation to you personally or in writing to explain your point of view. We seek understanding and truth which are the foundation of both local and national community.

First, as people who attempt to create church, we should speak up when people's dignity appears to be ignored. This was the main reason for our involvement. Some serious questions remain unanswered:

1. We understand that you requested from FIGHT a potential manager for the West Main Street station. FIGHT gave the name of a person with industrial experience but none in managing gas stations. Do you have training programs for new managers? Was this manager offered an opportunity to take it? When your problems arose with the manager's performance, and training was suggested by Minister Scott instead of firing, why did you refuse? Is it possible that if the manager had been offered training at the onset, this whole dispute might have been avoided?

2. There were other employees at the now dismantled Hess station. Were they given notice that the station was to be dismantled? Were they offered jobs at other Hess gas stations? To us they seem to be working people caught in a dispute, and your actions pushed them out of jobs with little apparent concern for their families. In our original letter we expressed concern for the independent dealers hurt by the boycott. But we are more concerned for those who lost jobs because of this dispute.

These questions touch basic issues of employer-employee fairness. Both of us, of course, are concerned with justice in this area.

Secondly, we sent you a letter asking that you give your

viewpoint on questions being asked in a local community. We has a real desire to be fair and not act on only one side of a story. You told Father Mulligan that you had a policy of not offering this type of explanation. How can a community form a balanced opinion if you will not share the reasons for your actions? Or are we to conclude that corporate institutions are so impersonal that they don't have to offer explanations to anyone? Hess seemed remote to us throughout this dispute and one felt that far away decisions manipulated the feelings of the local community. Minister Scott did come to us to say what he was doing and why. Was not our request to you for your viewpoint a fair one? If not, why not? We suggest you re-examine your policies in this area.

Thirdly, the manner in which you resolved the dispute seems singular. There was no notice given to any of the parties that a decision had been made. You stated that there had been extensive negotiations locally. Did you talk to the local dealers who had been hurt by the boycott? Could you not have met with us? It seems at least a phone call or a brief meeting with Minister Scott to inform him of the decision face to face would have been in order. Your actions seem to us to make all these parties non-persons in your eyes. Also, the resolution of the dispute seems designed to promote division in the black community.

A settlement of a dispute should be fair and leave all parties convinced they have been heard. A good settlement should be one that is explained openly in terms of justice. Our concern for justice and the dignity of persons urges us to state that the patterns of negotiations used in this particular dispute were not constructive and do not promote a climate of understanding among all parties. For us, the local community still seems divided and upset over what has happened. We ask you for a response to this letter as a step toward the honest sharing for which we hope.

Fr. Francis H. Vogt, Sister Virginia Taylor, Fr. Edward Golden, Fr. P. Paul Brennan, Sister Marie Martin, Sister Jean Malvaso, Sister Margaret L. Snider, Dr. Joseph A. Torma, Diane Cusolito Noonan, Sister Mary Ann Weiland, Sister Frances Sweeney, Carol Schwartz, Fr. Douglas C. Hoffman.

Fr. John D. Dillon, Sister Annette Truby, Fr. Laurence Tracy, Fr. Raymond H. Booth, Sister Carol Fox, Fr. Edward A. Zimmer, Fr. Ronald Stacy, Sister Barbara Moore, Fr. Paul Treemesser, Fr. Anthony J. Valente, Fr. David J. McCarthy, SSCC, Sr. Carol Datz, Fr. Daniel C. Torrey, Fr. Paul J. McCabe, Fr. Neil R. Miller, Sr. Rita Sullivan, Sr. Patricia Austin, Sr. Marie Clare Stoe, Sr. Betty Mulcahy, Fr. Charles E. Collins, SSCC.

Fr. Michael J. Mahler, Fr. Philip J. Bilotte, Sister Mary E. Wintish, Sister Patricia Flynn, Fr. Charles Mulligan, Sister Grace Miller, Judith Wehlin, Sister Judith Reger.



Cardinal Cooke Presides at Sullivan Rites

Cardinal Terence Cooke (center), making his first public appearance since contracting malaria on a trip to West Africa, presides at the funeral of Broadway columnist and TV personality Ed Sullivan in St. Patrick's Cathedral. Msgr. Eugene Clark (left), communications director of the New York archdiocese, and Msgr. James F. Rigney, rector of the cathedral, stand next to Cardinal Cooke. A columnist for the New York Daily News for more than 40 years, and perhaps the most famous impresario of television entertainment, Mr. Sullivan died of cancer Oct. 13 in New York. He was 72 years old. (RNS)

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