

Textile Firm Found Guilty Of 'Bad Faith Bargaining'

Atlanta (RNS)—J.P. Stevens Company has been found guilty of bargaining in bad faith with union employees at seven of its plants at Roanoke Rapids, N.C.

An administrative law judge of the National Labor

Relations Board called for sweeping sanctions against the company and charged that it approached labor negotiations with all the tractability and open-mindedness of Sherman at the outskirts of Atlanta.

Judge Bernard Ries' NLRB

bench is located in this Southern city, burned to the ground by General William T. Sherman in 1864. Judge Ries' ruling, tantamount to a lower court decision, decrees that Stevens must pay costs of the union, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union of America, in negotiations and labor board hearings.

The company was ordered to pay costs incurred by the board itself plus back wages to Roanoke Rapids employees who were docked after they voted to unionize.

Union officials, the judge said, must be allowed access to Stevens plants to talk to employees.

The judge also told the company to end bad-faith bargaining and coercion of employees exercising their rights under labor law. Judge Ries recommended that the company be ordered to mail employees notice of the labor board

decision finding the company guilty of violating the law.

The Stevens Company said in a prepared statement that "based on our preliminary review of his recommendations, it appears that (the judge) has completely misunderstood the facts involved in the Roanoke Rapids negotiations."

While the company said it was "reviewing in detail" the decision, it left no doubt that the ruling would be appealed to the National Labor Relations Board itself.

The ruling follows a decision earlier this month by the labor board to seek, if necessary, a nationwide injunction against the Stevens Company, ordering it to stop interfering with the rights of workers to organize and telling it to bargain collectively under the terms of the National Labor Relations Act.

Eight Protestant church

organizations and seven Roman Catholic orders have taken some action on the dispute, from internal study programs, to shareholder actions, to joining a nationwide boycott of products of the textile firm.

The union won a representational election

among the 3,000 employees at the plants in 1974 and has not been able to negotiate a contract with Stevens since.

Judge Ries said his ruling applies not only to the seven Roanoke Rapids plants but to all J.P. Stevens plants, employing about 45,000 workers.

The Church 1978



Fr. Andrew Greeley

One of my friends who is of Hispanic background recently expressed bafflement over my concern for the institutional Church. "What difference does the institution make," she wondered. "Is not the Church the mystical body of Christ, after all-God's people?" Why was I worried about such things as inept catechetical directories, unrepresentative tent shows, unprofessional litigation with the teachers' unions and church music publishers?

After thinking about her comment for a while, I decided that in most countries of the world her position would make sense. The concern of American Catholics about the ecclesiastical institution is unusual. We cannot be indifferent to it, we are caught up in a love-hate relationship with it. Even those who leave the Church, who attack and ridicule it, cannot get it out of their systems. Such writers as James T. Farrell, John (Last Catholic in America) Powers, and Tom McHales bitterly attack the Church in their writing but still can't get it out of their systems.

I don't think one has to search very deeply for an explanation. The Church is an organization, and most particularly as our neighborhood parish was a critical institution in the immigrant experience. It was an extremely important part of our lives whether we liked it or not, even when we realized it or not. The parish got into our bloodstreams; we care about the Church as institution because the Church as institution is part of Reality for us.

If you care about the Church as institution, your concern is in your bloodstream like an infection. You can't help but be dismayed when you watch that institution tear itself apart, make itself look ridiculous and absurd, destroy its credibility and importance, and betray its promise and its possibility. It is painful to watch a parent commit suicide.

All this is by way of preliminary to wondering whether quick-fix solutions for the present malaise in the Church will ever be abandoned. Each year it seems to be a new catchword, a new slogan, a new enthusiasm, a new attempt to dodge away from problems, to avoid complexity, to escape responsible thought. Last year it was the Call to Action, before that it was the Third World, liberation, salvation history, sensitivity training, and all the other

mindless enthusiasms which have beset us since the end of the Vatican Council. This year the quick-fix is evangelization, which is more mindless than most of the previous fixes.

We are now to go out and reclaim the "unchurched" from among the alienated. It is not especially necessary to understand who the unchurched are or why the alienated might be alienated; it is not necessary to test our assumptions that the unchurched and the alienated are just sitting there passively waiting for us to evangelize them. We don't have to comprehend the nature of the religious difficulties of our time, we do not have to be sensitive to the depths of human problems of meaning and community, we do not have to rework and represent our teachings so they are pertinent to human needs. All we have to do is go out and EVANGELIZE!

Try, if you can, to look at the Catholic Church from an outsider's point of view. The Church has preached since Leo XIII on the right of workers to join unions and the obligation of employers to pay a living wage. At present the Church is engaged in very contentious litigation against the right of its own school teachers to form a union and against the right of church musicians and church music publishers to collect the fruits of their work. If you were unchurched or alienated, would you seek religious leadership from an organization engaged in such hypocrisy? Would you turn to an organization which was so insensitive, so confused, and so hypocritical?

If you were an unchurched person looking for an exciting, illuminating, encouraging religious vision to pass on to your children, would you be attracted by the 200-odd pages of blah in the Catechetical Directory—especially when you are told that some of the Blah now has to be memorized? Would you be willing to accept the leadership of men who made themselves look so ridiculous on the abortion issue during the presidential campaign but who, on the other hand, speak no words on the subject of anti-Catholic prejudice in America? Would you be willing to join an organization which by its own admission is staffed in many important places with incompetents and even deranged people and still refuses to remove them?

How dare we go out on the housetops and evangelize, urging other people to remove the mote of irreligion out of their eyes when the beam of hypocrisy, incompetence, mediocrity, and stupidity has virtually blinded us?

Periodically, I get letters from pious nuns warning me about the dangers of being bitter. Let me reply to all of them with one sentence: Anybody who is not bitter about the present state of American Catholicism doesn't love the Church.

Rhodesia Bishops: 'Oppressed Must Be Liberated'

Salisbury (RNS) -- Rhodesia's remaining four Roman Catholic bishops (two black, two white) declared here that while there should be no recourse to violence, justice requires that "the oppressed" be liberated and "unjust inequalities" be removed.

The prelates' declaration came in the form of "guidelines" for the formation of a Christian conscience on socio-political matters.

Their brochure entitled "United by Consent" was issued at a time when the people of the breakaway British colony face what the bishops described as tough political decisions about their country's future.

Prime Minister Ian D. Smith's white minority government has announced its intention to transfer political power to the black majority. But negotiations are proceeding slowly between the government, representative of 270,000 whites, and moderate black nationalist leaders who claim to represent the country's 6.2 million blacks.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe's (Rhodesia) Patriotic Front, an alliance of two other black nationalist leaders and their guerrilla forces, has refused to negotiate and has continued to engage in sporadic warfare with government forces.

The Catholic bishops did not suggest any specific political solution, saying that each Christian is free to choose the "political party and program" he or she thinks best. Noting that "political decisions" should be made "in accord with personal conscience," the prelates, addressing themselves primarily to Rhodesia's 570,000 Catholics, insisted that for Catholics "the judgment of their conscience may not be

separated from the magisterium of the Church."

They said that there are "a variety of values deserving of Christian support," among them, "liberty, justice, peace, educational freedom, and minority rights."

A Christian, said the bishops, cannot in good conscience contribute to the establishment of any type of totalitarianism, "no matter by what name it is called."

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