

Albert Shanker speaks

ADDRESS BY ALBERT SHANKER, AFT PRESIDENT,
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PRESIDENT SHANKER: Thank you Bill.

Delegates, today my message will be divided into three parts. I would like first to spend a few minutes reviewing the activities of the AFT over the last years. Then I would like to devote a little time to the current Presidential election campaign, and I would like to conclude with a general overview of what is happening and what is likely to happen as we progress with education reform.

First, let's take a look at some of this year's highlights for the AFT. Our membership grew by 10,000, a number which at first glance may appear small compared to some of the extraordinary growth years of a decade or more ago. When compared with the problems faced generally by unions within our country, however, a different message surfaces: out of some 100 national unions in the United States, only six showed an increase in membership this year. We can therefore be proud that we are not only bucking the prevailing trends but that we also showed significant growth.

It would be well to note that in order to increase our membership by 10,000, we had to organize many more than that, somewhere between 30- and 60,000. Due to continuous retrenchment in many of our districts, as well as to constant turnover in our locals, where people leave or retire, we must organize

between 20,000 and 50,000 new members each year to retain our present size. A growth of 10,000 these days is quite significant.

The State of Florida led the way with 5,500 new members, followed by New York with 4,000; California with 3,000; Louisiana with 1,200; and a number of other states coming along.

We also won bargaining elections involving some 15,000 teachers. Since we won most of these elections in places where we still have very few members, we can reasonably expect that over the next year or two the 15,000 new teacher we are now representing will become members.

We have experienced growth in all sectors of our union. While most of it has been in the teaching field, of course, we've scored some considerable successes with paraprofessionals, school-related personnel and higher education people, especially those in community colleges.

We grew by 20 percent in health care, winning elections in Vermont, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, New York and New Jersey.

Bear in mind that last year the National Education Association announced that they were going to "take us on" in St. Louis, Kansas City, Albuquerque and Oklahoma City. Indeed, they did, and the results were uniformly in our favor: in St. Louis and Kansas City, the NEA failed to get enough signatures to bring about an election; in Albuquerque and Oklahoma City, where they did get enough signatures, we defeated them overwhelmingly.

Clearly, then, and despite the general misfortunes of labor in America and NEA opposition this past year, the AFT continued to organize, grow and enhance its reputation for excel-

lence in education.

I would like to turn now to the national elections. We have great reason to be proud of our activity in the campaign so far. Our delegation of 130 was the largest single AFL-CIO union delegation to the Democratic Party convention in San Francisco this past July. Other unions, some more than twice our size, sent half as many, or less, delegates to the convention. Our substantial representation was no small accomplishment and indicated clearly the breadth and depth of your support, your activity, your commitment and the excellence of AFT leadership at the state and local levels throughout the country.

I think it is important to spend a few minutes analyzing our current position and future purpose in this campaign.

Many of our members have questioned the wisdom of our pre-convention endorsement of Democrat Walter Mondale for President. Why, it's been asked, wasn't there an opportunity for the members first to vote in the primaries? Then we could have endorsed the winner of the Democratic primaries instead of trying to pick somebody earlier.

Those who would ask such questions obviously forgot the events of 4 years ago, when a sharply divided labor movement needlessly exhausted precious time, dollars and energy deciding whom to support, Ted Kennedy or Jimmy Carter. At that time, different questions were posed: Why don't all unions unite behind and work for one candidate? Why are we fighting each other? Why are we depleting, rather than marshalling our formidable resources and strength against our real opponents?

I think it is clear now that we have chosen a correct strategy. The Democratic primary presented several candidates touting anti-labor and anti-teacher union slogans. Had Walter Mondale, on the other hand, been beaten because of his general agreement with and sympathy for education and labor issues, a potentially devastating message would have been sent to public officials of both parties throughout the nation: support for the teachers and organized labor does not necessarily mean victory at the polls. Indeed, it could spell certain defeat.

That would have been the result of a Mondale defeat. It would have had a measurable impact on every state legislature, city council and school board member in the country. The unified campaign, therefore, was extremely important.

Concerning the substantive issues of the upcoming election, Mondale's speech at the Democratic convention scored right on target. True, people are feeling better about the economy, and there is a reason why. If I purchased hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of goodies on credit and brought them home, everybody in my family would feel much better until the bills started coming in. That is basically what is happening nationally. There is a considerable amount of spending above what is being taken in, and a huge deficit is being run up. It is like buying on a credit card: one enjoys his present purchases, but eventually the bills have to be paid. Mondale has brought the issue squarely before the American people. Somebody is going to end up paying this huge bill, and it is not going to be the poor. They don't have anything.

There are very few present programs that can be cut further without literally starving people to death. Indeed, even elimination of these programs, save basically middle class programs like Social Security, wouldn't balance the budget. Either the debt will be paid by the middle class, people like us, or we will again resort to corporate taxes and taxes for the very wealthy.

It is a very clear issue which so far has caused great confusion and consternation among the Republicans who have not yet decided whether additional taxes are needed or whether the budget should be balanced. Certainly, they are on the defensive on this issue.

It is extremely important for us to keep emphasizing this and several other issues to our members. The main point, of course, is that Ronald Reagan's reelection means not merely 4 more years of the same but more like 24 more years of Ronald Reagan, because of the strong probability of his additional appointments to the United States Supreme Court. Every major issue in recent American history--labor relations, integration, women's rights, the death penalty, one man/one vote--every basic decision which could not be settled by Congress was somehow, at some point, settled by the Supreme Court of the United States.

One vote prevented passage of collective bargaining legislation. Future decisions on agency's fees, school prayer and tuition tax credits may be so determined.

Often the Supreme Court of the United States assumes a legislative function. It makes laws. Ronald Reagan's reelec-

tion would no doubt result in the appointment of anti-labor, anti-civil rights and anti-women's rights adherents to the highest bench in the land. Even with a future Democratic, pro-labor President and Congress it would take decades to undo the potential damage of a "Reagan Court"--an issue vitally important to the future of the entire labor movement.

As I noted earlier, our membership increased this year by 10,000. Unfortunately, the AFL-CIO over the last few years has lost several million members, and it is declining in both absolute numbers and more rapidly as a percentage of the work force in the United States.

There are reasons why that is happening. Partly, it is due to the closing of certain industries, or to the shifting of others to Taiwan, Hong Kong or elsewhere. Other industries have been victimized by rapid automation. In a few years, for example, America's auto industry is not going to have a million and a half members. It might have 200,000 people and quite a few robots in automated plants. The point is clear: the transfer abroad or automation of a unionized industry means definite loss of members, unless you organize an equal number somewhere else.

The interpretation of labor law is also a major problem. For the first time, America has seen the appointment of members to the National Labor Relations Board that were actual employees, advocates and leaders of anti-union consulting firms.

After assuring an anti-labor philosophy on the NLRB, additional obstacles to equitable solution of labor questions are often constructed. Long, inexcusable delays between Board

decisions are permitted, even encouraged. Often, people who believe in the union lose faith, as events stagnate or drag on interminably. Then during the election, the employer may give some people raises, fire others, reorganize the entire place and disseminate all sorts of anti-union literature.

It's a very difficult situation which very few of us have ever faced.

Then, should the union win the election, the employer may still refuse to sit down and bargain. He may first fire a few people and then claim it is an inappropriate bargaining unit. He may suggest a comprehensive review. Eventually, after four or five or six or seven years of apathetic review under the National Labor Relations Board, the union receives a certificate saying that, while the union was absolutely right, nevertheless, the union no longer exists.

The NLRB may reinstate the person fired seven years earlier, but meanwhile the union has lost all of the original believers who couldn't wait seven years. They lost their faith in the union's ability to effect change or to achieve justice. If our present labor legislation, which essentially says that any employer who defies the law will be guaranteed success in destroying the union, remains unchanged, then further decline of the union movement is inevitable.

What can we do? First, we should question whether any important social/labor legislation enacted over the past years, from the creation of public schools in America, occupational safety, Medicare, Social Security, civil rights, indeed any piece

of decent legislation in this country could have passed the Congress of the United States without the existence of a strong AFL-CIO. Ask ourselves how different this country would be today without a strong lobby of that kind. Then ask ourselves further what this country will be like 20 or 30 or 40 years from now if the current trends continue--and they will continue, barring the presence of an equitable umpire. Under the current administration and national labor relations order, unfortunately, the umpire almost invariably sides with the employer, thus beating the life out of the union.

There is also no doubt as to what will happen to us and to our collective bargaining rights if the union movement as a whole continues to dwindle.

How did we achieve collective bargaining? Were we so powerful, were we so strong? No. Members of the AFT won collective bargaining because other workers in our society won it first. Indeed, early collective bargaining victories by the automobile, building trades and garment industries enabled us, later, to approach our employers, the boards of education, and say, "Look if it is good enough for everybody else, why can't we have it too? It is a right that all workers ought to enjoy in a democratic society."

Our rights to collective bargaining were essentially established and created by the power of the rest of the labor movement, and in the example they set and the laws they helped enact. Our achievement was a footnote, an extension.

Yes, we struggled for the right to bargain

collectively. Consider, however, that if it was so difficult to win initially, how difficult it will be to protect, preserve and, indeed, extend in those states and locations that still don't have it. Imagine how difficult a situation it will be if, ten years from now there is no union movement of 13 million in this country, but rather a union movement of six or seven million out of a work force that is even larger than it is today?

On the educational front, there is no doubt that with Ronald Reagan as President, the Supreme Court will eventually decide on school prayer, tuition tax credits, vouchers and numerous other related issues. Four more years of Reagan could prove disastrous to education and labor in America.

Therefore, the vital question we must address is, is it possible to defeat Ronald Reagan and is it possible to elect Walter Mondale?

I have sat out campaigns in the past because I thought they were hopeless, and I have advised locals and others accordingly. However, I do not share the general pessimism concerning the upcoming Presidential election.

I think that we and the Democrats have a good chance of winning. Let's remember that millions of Americans who voted for Ronald Reagan four years ago have been unemployed for the last four years. They have changed their minds. Let's remember, furthermore, that Ronald Reagan was not elected with an overwhelming mandate. He received a mere 51 percent of the vote, a one percent margin. With two candidates against him, the subsequent splitting of the vote made his margin look substantial, but on

his own he got 51 percent of the vote.

Consider all the American Presidential elections since 1960. Only two were decided by more than one percent of the vote, and in each the American people believed that one of the Presidential candidates was an extremist. I refer to the Goldwater election in 1964, where the American people believed Goldwater to be far out on the right, and the McGovern election in 1972, where the majority of American people felt McGovern stood far out on the left.

The Kennedy-Nixon election was decided by one percent of the vote. The Humphrey-Nixon election was decided by one percent of the vote. The Carter-Ford election was decided by one percent of the vote. And in the last election Ronald Reagan again achieved victory by one percent.

There is no reason to believe that any large group of Americans believe Mondale is a way-out, left-wing character. Ronald Reagan is trying to make that his campaign theme, but it is going to fail.

All evidence, therefore, indicates that this election is likely to be decided by one percent.

Take a look at the registration and turnout figures. Undoubtedly certain states, and all their electoral votes, will be won by small margins--some by as little as 9,000 or 15,000 votes. These are the type of votes that we can register and bring out, providing we make every effort to register all our members. With 100,000 of our members unregistered as of today, this must be a top priority between now and election day.

The election margin is going to be very narrow, and will be decided by voter registration and turnout and, of course, by dollars. Often the last three weeks of the campaign, and which candidate can purchase more television time, can be decisive.

As an organization, we must conform to the Federal Election Commission guidelines concerning contributions. Certainly, we are going to donate the maximum amount of money. In addition, you can encourage each individual teacher to take two or three or five or ten dollars and put it in an envelop--individual contributions are perfectly legal and perfectly permitted--and send it to the campaign.

Unions are limited. Organizations are limited. But individuals are not.

Democratic support is broadly based. I can assure you that the AFL-CIO, the Democratic Party, civil rights groups and others are working together. It is definitely a campaign we can win. It is going to be very close, and the future of the world and our country will depend on the outcome. Our efforts will make the difference, and we intend to be every bit as effective as we were in our primary campaign. We learned a lot of things in the primary. We learned where we were more effective, where we were less effective.

We intend to work closely with the rest of the labor movement to make this campaign victorious.

A Mondale-Ferraro victory would be wonderful for the nation and for American labor. Moreover, won't it be gratifying to see the media headlines underscoring the vitally important role

played by the AFL-CIO and the American Federation of Teachers in their victory? Wouldn't it be nice to prove wrong all the pollsters and pundits who claim that labor movement support spells political suicide? Wouldn't it be nice to reassert the message that support of the labor movement in this country means you have an excellent chance to become the next President of the United States?

I would like to move now to the question of school reform, and in my notes I have two different titles for this. Section 1 is called Round 2 and the other is called Step 2. Part of what I want to talk about is whether this is going to be another round in the boxing ring--whether we are involved in a continuing fight where eventually one side gets knocked out--or whether this is going to be another progressive step towards achieving something lasting and worthwhile.

As we review this past year, it is clear to almost everyone that we were right in resisting the temptation to criticize the many recently released reports on education in America.

Instead we examined the existing and potential dangers--tuition tax credits and vouchers, a future referendum in Colorado, an unsettling situation in California, the tax credit decision in Minnesota, the introduction of some private schools run by big corporations like ITT, and the introduction of tuition tax credit legislation in more than half of the legislatures of this country.

We examined carefully those dangers, and we determined that this is not an auspicious time to become embroiled in a

heated, and potentially divisive national contest over public education. Such behavior would surely damage our reputation for objective and fair analysis, while simultaneously projecting an anti-reform image.

Instead we are going to seek accommodation with positive reform. We are going to try to attract a large infusion of money into public education. And we are going to try to solicit broad public support.

In a way, 1983-1984 has been a "tale of two unions," the AFT and the NEA. One, the NEA, looked at these reports and responded traditionally. They launched a negative barrage. Consequently, they have been singled out and criticized by newspapers, magazines, radio stations, legislatures, governors and business groups for their harsh negativism and general anti-education attitude. Such criticism has been quite damaging, not only to the National Education Association but, regrettably, to public education in general.

Indeed, I have attended countless top-level meetings this year with legislators, governors, business people and other education groups where the NEA was not even invited because of their closemindedness and negativity.

The NEA remains rigid, stil opposed to test accounts, still opposed to standards, and still arguing against any governmental role in efforts to solve the discipline problems in schools.

Somehow they think the general situation is improving by itself. Only a few months ago, they debated in their own

newspaper whether it was important for students to study English grammar. That is where they are.

In contrast, we held numerous thought-provoking conferences across the country. I addressed the Governors' Conference, the Lieutenant Governors' Conference, the State Legislatures' Conference, major business groups in the country. Perhaps I should print somewhere the schedule of my appearances this year before various educational, governmental, business and public groups. Clearly, we have provided the leadership on the issue of school reform, and it has paid off.

Only two weeks ago the new Gallup Poll disclosed a 35 percent increase in the number of people who said the schools should be rated A or B--a 35 percent increase, a reversal of many years when the public felt the schools were getting worse. Suddenly, 35 percent switch and say the schools are either very good or excellent.

We have witnessed a tremendous growth of interest by the business community in educational issues. You will hear on Wednesday from the chief executive officer of Metropolitan Life Insurance Company about their involvement.

Many states have witnessed the enactment of laws which seek to tighten or upgrade standards and testing for teachers. Many have received substantial increases in education budgets. I would like to mention a few.

While we don't endorse all aspects of their education reform program, the State of Florida nevertheless this year added about \$500 million to the education budget. That represents an

expense of over \$5,000 for every teacher in the state.

The State of New York also experienced reforms on the board of regents and added approximately \$500 million in state aid to education, about two and a half times the usual increase.

The State of Texas, supported exclusively by one teacher organization, the AFT, received an increase over three years of almost \$3 billion. In addition, a legislated statewide minimum salary for teachers increased from just about \$11,000 to a legislated minimum of \$15,200. Teachers throughout Texas are getting increases, many of them \$5,000 or more, as schools open this week and next week. On the statewide salary schedule, the number of salary steps for minimum to maximum was reduced from 26 steps down to 11.

Now, mind you, when I said 15.2 to 26.6, that is a statewide minimum. Local districts can add their own money to that, and most districts do. Texas also has legislation limiting class size in kindergarten through second grade to 22 students. Pre-kindergarten classes are provided for students from poor families. There are limitations on the number of interruptions allowed in the classroom, and special facilities are provided for continuously disruptive students.

Reform legislation and budgets have been enacted in other states, but the foregoing examples will suffice for now.

Step 1, it is important to note here, is incomplete. Step 1 has taken place in a number of states. Some states have a two-year or three-year program. Many states have established commissions which are still to report. This is an on-going

process, this business of securing and maintaining higher salaries, standards, testing for teachers, promotional standards for youngsters, required courses, special programs for discipline problems.

In fact, education reform will most likely sweep across America over the next two or three years, leaving no state untouched.

Now, let's look at the future.

Last year, I stuck my neck out. We had quite a few debates over education reform at our regional conferences and elsewhere. I am going to do it again this morning. I am going to do it, not because I relish the thought of spending the next year engaged in the same kind of hot debates as last year, but because there are a number of prospects on the horizon which demand our attention.

We are entering a new phase of school reform. Last year, significantly, the governors of a number of states altered radically their traditional positions on public education. Formerly, we or the school board proposed a program to the governors, and they provided, in mechanical fashion, an increase in state aid each year. That is the way it went for years. This last year was markedly different: Governor Alexander of Tennessee, Governor White of Texas, Governor Graham of Florida, the legislature and governor in California, to name but a few, took an extraordinarily and commendably active interest and part in the promotion of public education programs. Not only did they sponsor and authorize programs which provided billions of dollars

for public education but they signed bills calling for testing, standards and required curriculum.

Keep in mind, however, that there is another dimension to this positive interest in education on the state level. A governor who takes a prominent role in education reform, advocating additional funding, soliciting public support is, in effect, assuring his/her constituents of substantial and noticeable progress in their schools, among their children in the foreseeable future. In short, the governor is saying, "Trust me, conditions and schools will improve, test scores will increase, discipline problems will disappear. Approve the necessary funding and I will pass the legislation assuring effectuation of these reforms."

That is essentially what those governors did--oversimplifying a bit, but very close.

Will these laws produce all that promised improvement? I don't think so. It is good that students are taking an extra few years of mathematics, some science or more English and fewer soft courses. Nevertheless, the three years of math could all be remedial arithmetic--it all depends on the context.

Certainly, students will score better on the current multiple choice tests, especially as teachers are pushed more to train children on how to pass these meaningless tests. When we are finished, though, none of these students will know how to write a composition or essay or formulate a coherent argument. They will just know how to pass these particular tests.

In a sense, the initial reform emphasis has both a positive and negative side. Dr. Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie

Institute said it well. We needed these laws, rules, impositions, and regulations because the education community was failing in its efforts to create, maintain and enforce necessary standards.

Unfortunately, the broad national emphasis on reform applies exclusively to--nay, singles out unfairly, we believe--teachers. Nobody, that is, in the state legislatures is passing laws telling a doctor which pills to give to a patient. Nobody is passing laws telling a surgeon whether he should cut to the left or cut a little to the right in a particular type of surgery.

Complicated fields, requiring profound expertise and training, such as medicine, the law and teaching, do not lend themselves to simple, outside review and suggestion. We wouldn't expect a legislator, no matter how learned, to offer advice on a person's legal problem or medical ailment or learning difficulty.

You can't get the right prescription through legislation. You can only get it through intelligent judgment of individuals, and that is why this whole set of rules and regulations is destined to fail.

Any attempt to treat all children the same, as these rules and regulations do, is a form of educational malpractice. A school system run that way will produce disappointing results.

Returning to the state sponsored education programs, what further developments can we expect? I am talking about the programs that allocated substantial money, the ones which express clear belief in education, the ones which seek to attain better

schools. Why did these reform-minded individuals take such action? First, they believe in education. Second, the spate of reports stressing "a nation at risk," dictated that somebody do something to rectify that perilous situation. With the President of the United States running around the country debating merit pay, vouchers and tax credits, governors were under intense public pressure to act.

State leaders thus did the popular thing. The public wanted somebody to act on education, and they acted. Now they are having some second thoughts, not as to whether they should have been interested initially in education reform but about what happens if their programs, backed by substantial infusions of money, fail to produce definitive and discernible, positive results within a few years. How will the public react? Rest assured these governors will do one of two things. They will not stand still. They will not continue to come up with money for the same system.

There is already discussion among governors about providing radical alternatives to public schools. Included in these discussions is the notion that if the public schools can't succeed, why not allow private corporations to set up schools; why not enact some form of vouchers or tax credits at the state level; why not provide additional, more stringent regulations; why not merit pay; why not measure teachers' performance in terms of standardized tests of students.

In other words, state lawmakers under extraordinary pressure to deliver for the public investment which they advocated

and sponsored. Unless someone offers them intelligent, creative solutions and ideas on the future of education in American, they will eventually resort to one or several of the ideas currently floating around. This is certain to make education more mechanical, to make the school more like an education factory, with the teacher more like an assemblyline worker who is closely monitored in terms of small measurable units of output.

Concurrently, another reality in education is unfolding, and Ernest Boyer partially touched on it: the coming teacher shortage.

I would like to refer all of you to a booklet just released this morning. It is one of the best pieces of educational literature to come forth in a long time. We will try to get enough copies of this for all delegates before the convention is over. Released at 6:00 p.m. last night, it is entitled, "Beyond the Commission Reports: The Coming Crisis in Teaching." Linda Darling-Hammond, who will participate in one of our convention workshops, authored the report, which was published by the Rand Corporation.

This small booklet demonstrates carefully that the outstanding teachers we were once able to recruit and keep in our schools are now leaving rapidly. Beyond this, fewer teachers are entering the field, and the test scores of those that are indicate that their abilities do not match the abilities of the teachers they are replacing.

Furthermore, there are other discouraging statistics: teachers who score the highest in terms of academic ability tend

to leave within a few years. Teachers who are at rock bottom of academic ability stay forever.

The report also notes that, in a recent year, we produced 1,400 math and science teachers in the entire country. That is one teacher for every 12 school districts--not schools, school districts--in the United States. The same year we produced 1,400 school math and science teachers, 18,000 left.

So we can talk about requiring students to take math and science, but if we are losing 18,000 teachers at a time when we are taking in 1,400, we know what the results will be.

Why aren't people choosing teaching as a profession? One answer is poor salaries, and this report does call for a salary range starting at \$20,000 and peaking at \$50,000. We can and do support that. It is encouraging that someone from the Rand Corporation supports it. I see more and more things like this. Let's be perfectly honest, however: even a salary schedule of 20 to 50 thousand dollars would not solve our problems. Major corporations in America today successfully attract teachers who won't accept \$13- or \$14,000 annual salaries with offers of \$19,000 per annum. Surely, the minute we offer \$20,000, many of these corporations would offer \$22- or \$23,000. They will be a step ahead of us. We will still face a shortage, because there just aren't enough college educated people in these areas to go around.

Moreover, prospective teachers today are looking beyond the salary question. They are looking at the increased regulations and supervision of the teaching profession which were

included in many state reform programs. Indeed, one of the unmistakable messages embodied in such legislative programs is that teachers are not to be trusted, that educators and schools are not to be trusted, that everything must be mandated by legislation; furthermore, that essentially the people in education are irresponsible, that they have to be told everything, that they have to be governed by rules and regulations, or otherwise, they will not get it right. Not very many self-respecting, intelligent people are going to enter a field where nobody has any confidence in them and where everything they do is subject to legislative overview. That is what we mean when we say we are not treated with professional respect.

Professional respect means we are allowed to exercise judgment; that we make decisions and that we are not just carrying out someone else's orders and following someone else's rules and regulations. This is one of the key issues before us, ranking alongside the salary and discipline issues. All three must be solved.

Additionally, there are two important facets to the working conditions of teachers which, if not resolved, will mean another major teacher crisis with all its attendant negatives: the hiring of emergency, temporary and substitute teachers.

One day, the public's focus and interest is on standards. The moment additional teachers are found, however, standards will be forgotten, and teachers will once again be given the "temperature test"--they will stick a thermometer in your mouth, and if you are alive, you are a teacher. Standards won't

mean anything when that happens.

What I have said in terms of professional judgment sounds good. I received some applause, but it is going to be very difficult for us to do. If we are not going to be bossed around by somebody else, then the bossing and the deciding will have to be done by us.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT SHANKER: Such a development will mean great change. It is nice to talk about professionalism with slogans. It is much more difficult to talk of implementation and execution.

We would all do well to examine programs like the one that has been developed by our own local in Toledo. It is quite complicated but it embodies the things we are talking about. In Toledo, there is recognition that the skills and expertise of individual teachers vary widely, ranging from unacceptable to excellent. Given this recognition, certain outstanding teachers, specially selected and trained to help probationary teachers in a kind of internship program, play a significant role in deciding which probationary teachers should and should not be granted tenure. After spending considerable time with such young or inexperienced or troubled teachers, these "consulting interns" offer their recommendations to a board comprised jointly of union and school representatives. A further review takes place, with the ultimate decision resting in the hands of the superintendent.

This notion of limited peer selection and review, as we know, represents a very unusual, non-traditional role for teachers. Not so, however, in other professions, such as

medicine, law, and in some colleges and universities where peer review is an essential ingredient of professional status. But if we are truly talking about professionalism--not having someone standing over us making rules, telling us what to do, of gaining some control of our own activity--then we had better look very closely at the Toledo program and others like it.

We, as teachers, can do what doctors, lawyers and others do. We can select the outstanding from among our own ranks. We can form professional committees which exercise real judgment and influence decisions concerning textbook selection, curriculum, peer training and evaluation, school programs and allocations. We can recognize excellence without having some principal or superintendent advising us. We can select people on the basis of excellence and not on the basis of popularity, favoritism, or even on the basis of union activity.

Ideas such as these create several problems and needs. For one, we must determine how to create independent professional groups of teachers, who are most likely union members but who nevertheless function independently. We must analyze and outline the basic parameters of this dual role. Establishment of professional credibility and objectivity is essential, as is the formalization of a universally accepted and respected code of ethics or standards.

Certain questions will definitely arise: How can we involve directly teachers who are members of the union in matters concerning teacher job security? Would a teacher who is a union member be able and willing to deem another teacher unqualified

and vote for dismissal? Isn't it the union's job to protect and defend the union member's job and his right to due process?

How do you maintain both these functions simultaneously? How do you maintain a union function and assure the right of teachers to due process, and at the same time, have teachers who are members of the union effectively make a decision that somebody should not be retained?

That is one of the potentially troublesome issues that we must examine if we are serious about initiating an era of professionalism. A series of other problems arise, some of them in the legal domain. For example, do we lose our right to collective bargaining if we involve ourselves in a process of peer review? The recent decision concerning Yeshiva University is instructive here. In effect, the Yeshiva decision classified faculty members as management--thereby stripping them of their collective bargaining rights--because of their presumed broad influence within the academic community. Will the institutionalization of peer review, in any form, engender similar questions for teachers and the AFT?

The proposed professionalization of teachers will affect administrators as well. Should teachers, through their own committees, decide to review and oversee the professional activities of their peers, a substantial reduction in the traditional scope of responsibilities of administrators will result. In short, many present administrators will become unnecessary. Indeed, the previously noted Rand report captures this very point in its suggestion that monies now used to pay administrators

become part of a compensation package for teachers, thus defraying the overall costs of the program.

We must also face the reality that teachers, having received generally poor treatment from students, parents and the public as a whole over the years, have a very low professional ego.

Two pieces of evidence underscore this reality. A poll conducted a number of years ago asked teachers and school superintendents this question: To what extent do you think that parents and the general public ought to determine what textbooks should be used in schools, and how should the curriculum be organized?

Imagine if one asked similar questions of doctors, dentists and lawyers, namely: to what extent should your clients determine what pills you should give, or operations you should perform; what legal advice, or what strategies should you employ in court. Surely, the spokespersons of these professions would protest that such issues are the exclusive province of they, the professionals, and it is precisely that reason which leads patients or clients to seek their counsel.

The customer's role should never be confused with the professional's role. Unfortunately, in the poll cited, a majority of teachers and school administrators argued that parents and the general public ought to have a controlling decision-making power in those professional areas. Indeed, a more recent poll conducted by Louis Harris reinforced this conclusion.

Teachers were asked: Would you rather be evaluated by fellow teachers or by your principals and superintendents? The

majority of teachers answered they would rather be evaluated by their principals and superintendents.

So we are confronting a serious problem. The governors are definitely going to act, not necessarily this year but within the next year or two or three. Step 2 or Round 2 in school reform will occur and will lead to one of two things: either we disabuse the public of the current, mistaken notion that teachers are mere bureaucratic functionaries and act decisively to improve the profession ourselves, or others--most likely the governors and state legislators--will impose stronger management upon us, or entrust the future of public education to the vicissitudes of the so-called "free marketplace."

Accomplishing these reforms will not be easy and will take time. They represent ideas, however, which deserve our present attention because the choice before us is quite clear.

Assuming additional professional responsibility will enhance the public power and prestige of teachers. Pervasive improvement of teacher working conditions--allowing for greater exercise of judgment, expanded collegiality, elimination of current counterproductive duties--will render the teacher's life more attractive to its present and future practitioners.

Another issue on the horizon is the tremendous scope and nature of the changes of work force jobs about to take place through automation. This will result in growing unemployment, not only of auto and steel workers but perhaps of many doctors, lawyers and professional people as computers take their jobs.

In this regard, a series of massive changes will affect

public education, teachers, the public school and our union. In order to prepare for these changes, I will recommend to the Executive Council of the AFT the creation of a structure similar to that created by the AFL-CIO.

The AFL-CIO created a Committee on the Evolution and Future of Work to explore and determine effective ways in which to adjust and build a trade union movement designed to meet future challenges.

The AFT will create a Commission on the Future of Education to determine the means of dealing with the problems of professionalizing teaching, problems of new technology and threats imposed by tax credit vouchers and privatization.

Also within the scope of the AFT's Commission on the Future of Education will be a number of exciting prospects, all destined to influence profoundly the fortunes of the AFT, professionalization of teaching and the American labor movement. A number of major recent studies point to the growing realization that comprehensive career retraining, perhaps twice or three times in a worker's life, will become commonplace in America's future employment structure. Technological advancements, automation, foreign competition and other factors will combine to reduce, eliminate or transfer the functions of many blue collar jobs and even more white collar and professional jobs, including medicine and law. Necessarily, this will lead to the establishment of various institutional mechanisms to assist in America's retraining and relearning, and most assuredly, to a massive expansion of national education.

Also, recent studies, particularly those conducted by the High Scope Educational Research Foundation in Ypsilanti, Michigan over the last two decades, demonstrate clearly the importance and effectiveness of early childhood education programs. No longer considered "experimental," such programs are certain to win increasing public support in future years. This, too, will contribute to an outflow of positive attention on educational issues.

Finally, certain prominent national leaders and legislators have actively supported AFT-suggested programs which seek to attract young, talented people into the teaching profession. One piece of legislation, the "Talented Teachers Act," would create thousands of scholarships of up to \$5,000 per year to encourage the best high school students to attend college and then enter the teaching profession for two years for each year they receive the scholarship. Only students who have graduated in the top ten percent of their high school class would be eligible. The bill also provides fellowships to two outstanding teachers in each congressional district, allowing them a year's sabbatical for professional growth.

So while there is much to be concerned with, there is also much to be excited about.

I would like to conclude by noting that this is for me, and for you, therefore, an anniversary. I am now completing my 10th year as president of the American Federation of Teachers.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT SHANKER: Just a few weeks ago, I completed

my 20th year as president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York City.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT SHANKER: Many years ago, we accomplished something that was seemingly impossible. We envisioned something that did not exist and knew that if we believed strongly enough and worked hard enough, we could create it.

At the time, there really wasn't a union, just a handful of believers. Many teachers were reluctant to move towards unionism, but we believed, and we struggled and we worked very hard, and we built a great organization, one of the major forces on the American scene today.

In those days, it was impossible to convince teachers they needed the union or that unionism was appropriate for them. Today, it is very difficult to find a teacher in America, whether in this or the other union, who doesn't believe in the principle of union, who doesn't accept it as axiomatic.

This morning I presented you with a few views which may seem as unpopular, perhaps as unbelievable today, as collective bargaining was 20 and 30 and 35 years ago.

The idea that teachers in a teachers' union might play a role similar to that of other professions is not an easy one for us to accept. Nor is it one which we have actively sought. Some of us may have as many objections and feel as uncomfortable with the notion as our colleagues felt with collective bargaining 20 or 30 years ago.

Nevertheless, one of the reasons that some workers in

our society elect not to join unions is their strong desire to satisfy two sides of their lives in their jobs. Yes, they want more money, better pensions, better working conditions, and protection. So they want a union. But they want more than a union. They want an involvement. They want to have some control over their work life.

They don't want to be pushed around. They don't want to be hemmed in by rules and regulations. They want to be treated with respect. It may very well be that a movement towards professionalizing teachers will serve to show other workers and other unions that it is possible to create a model where a union is not looked upon as merely a negative, job-protecting, self-interest device, but that a union really has two primary functions: one is for protection, security and economic well-being, and there is nothing wrong with those--they are an indelible part of the American way of life. The other side represents standards, excellence, professionalism, participation and self-governance.

Indeed, American workers consider the assurance of fair, reasonable and professional working conditions so important that greater emphasis on this issue in forthcoming years may prove to be a major success to AFL-CIO organizing campaigns, particularly in the white collar job sector.

The task before us is as difficult as the one we faced in the past. As I see it, though, the professionalization of teaching in the next 10 or 20 years is every bit as essential to the future of public education as was the establishment of the union 20 or 30 years ago to the preservation of the public school

system then.

I am sure all of you who have taken unpopular union positions before, after debating and rethinking these issues will once again champion this--admittedly an unpopular course--and help us to reinforce education, not only through a strong union but as a great and respected profession.

(Standing ovation)

End.

AS/jm

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