

Greetings from the American Federation of Teachers
to the
Annual Convention of IFFTU

Charles Cogen, President
American Federation of Teachers
AFL-CIO

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It is a privilege and an honor for me, in absentia, to present to you a report of the American Federation of Teachers' progress during the past year. I regret very much that I am unable to be present and address this IFFTU convention in person. As your officers know, I had planned to attend this convention, but a last-minute invitation to participate as a panelist in a very crucial government conference on the education of disadvantaged, that is, poverty children, has made it necessary for me to cancel my original plans.

I am happy to be associated with you, my colleagues, who have for so many years been strong, active trade unionists and intent supporters of democratic ideals. In like manner, the strength of the American Federation of Teachers rests with its affiliation with the AFL-CIO, WHICH throughout its existence has fought to provide social and educational opportunities for all people.

During the month of June, I had the opportunity to visit Israel as a guest of Histadrut, to meet and converse with our distinguished Brother Levin, and to see at first-hand the effective operation of the trade union movement. I was thrilled by the great extent of union organization

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there, and by the remarkable accomplishments of both Histadrut in general and the Israeli Teachers Union in particular.

Throughout the years we have become acquainted with the teacher union and labor union efforts made by Penninger in Austria, Rostenstock in Germany, Thaver in Malaysia, and, of course, our distinguished retiring President, Pierre Raymond, and our devoted retiring General Secretary, M. Van de Moortel of Belgium.

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We in the AFT are grateful to these gentlemen who, together with former AFT President, Carl J. Megel, fought for and passed a resolution on teacher rights at the 1963 ILO Convention. This instrument insured that teachers have the right to organize into organizations of their own choice without coercion or intimidation; that they have the right to collective representation and to formulate contracts in their negotiations with their employers. This is a right and privilege which we in the AFT have fought for since our inception 50 years ago. The AFT has fought a great battle, and is winning these fundamental rights for teachers in many parts of the United States.

We sincerely regret the efforts of William Carr of the "company union" National Education Association to delete this instrument from the ILO declaration. We are aware that his failure was due, in large measure, to the efforts of M. Van de Moortel and other IFTU members who were in attendance. We are proud of your efforts. We compliment you for your results.

We assure you that the inspiration of your efforts will aid us in our continued progress in developing collective bargaining in every school district in the United States.

in the United States
 Five years ago teachers thought that collective bargaining was only for blue collar workers. In fact, most teachers knew very little about the process. Furthermore, teachers, like most public employees, were excluded from national and state labor relations laws. This situation is changing rapidly. Teachers are coming out of the dark into a new day where they will have most of the legal rights which other workers have enjoyed for many decades. Five of the 50 states

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now have good collective bargaining laws which include teachers. The right to collective bargaining on a de facto basis is recognized in several other states, and we anticipate that this trend will continue. During the past year, there were more than 60 representation elections, most of which, we are happy to state, were won by the American Federation of Teachers over our non-union opposition.

This year the AFT is celebrating its 50th, that is, golden anniversary. Special arrangements have been made for a celebration to be held at our Convention Banquet on August 24th. We invite each of you to send us congratulatory messages which I will be delighted to read to the assembled delegates and guests.

On this Anniversary we will have time to reflect upon the progress we have made and to report the extent of our gains. We are pleased to report that our membership is the highest in our history, and that we now enroll more than 10 percent of the teachers in the United States. While this percentage in terms of membership in your own countries is relatively small, you must not discount our organizational difficulties. Our competitor, the National Education Association, through its built-in company union, administrator domination, coerces teachers to join their organization, frequently as a prerequisite for employment.

Locals of the American Federation of Teachers, largely as a result of achieving collective bargaining rights, are doing an increasingly better job in elevating the economic and social status of teachers. Many school districts represented by the AFT now have salary schedules well above the \$10,000 a year level. New York City, for instance, has a top salary for a teacher with 13 years experience and six years of college training of \$11,750. Some smaller suburban districts go even higher.

Great improvements have been made in classroom conditions. For the first time in the history of the teaching profession in the United States, teachers are actually setting limits to the number of pupils they will teach at one time. They are also negotiating limits to the classroom day of a teacher. Many of the enervating non-professional duties, such as hall patrol, school yard patrol, ^{and} bus patrol have now been reassigned to non-professional personnel, giving teachers more time and energy to devote to their professional duties.

Through the efforts of our Washington Representative, Mr. Carl Meigel, and assisted by representatives of the AFL-CIO and the Government Employees Council, we have been able to secure passage of national legislation which provides nearly a \$1,000 salary increase for the more than 7,000 teachers who are now teaching in schools in our overseas bases. In so doing, we expect these teachers not only to provide better education for the children of our overseas personnel, but also to better correlate with the national educational interests in the countries where they are teaching.

One of the most serious problems concerning American education is that of educating the children of poverty, most of whom live in the slums of our large cities. In cooperation with the rest of the

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labor movement, we are continuing to work for legislation which would reduce or eliminate slums altogether. In the meantime, however, we did develop what we call an effective schools program for educating such children. The Effective Schools Program is "total education"--and elementary school with no class larger than 22 pupils and where a teacher has one period out of every four free from classroom or other duties. It is a school where a full range of supporting services--remedial, guidance, and psychological --are provided.

The American Federation of Teachers has also been active on the civil rights front. We support civil rights legislation, join with civil rights organizations in protest activities and, completely on our own, operate what we call Freedom Schools in southern states to educate Negro children in ways in which their inferior schools do not educate them.

The AFT is supporting our Government in its foreign aid program, through which more than \$300 billion has been spent since 1946 to assist various nations of the world in improving their economic, social, and educational status.

Accordingly, here in this historic city, all of us together can look toward the future with hope and anticipation. The great scientific conquests and the advancement in communications and travel have brought us into closer relations and greater interdependence.

We are delighted to join with IFFTU in its forward march. We warmly support the establishment of a full-time General Secretary.

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We encourage continued expansion and, especially, intensified emphasis upon organizational activities. In this effort, we pledge our support and our increasing help and assistance.

The American Federation of Teachers has long been interested in building true international cooperation among teachers, free from control or undue influence by school administrators or other educational bureaucrats. No other international organization, except IFFTU, is dedicated to this objective. This is why we are confident that ultimately this organization will become the worldwide voice of the teacher.

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