

THE COGEN-PROGRESSIVE ADMINISTRATION

What is in store for the AFT during the next two years? Here is my basic program:

1 - Continuation of our vast organizing campaign through the Co-Org Program, without any reduction of levels of support in accordance with agreements with participating locals, state federations, and area councils.

2 - Further development of AFT professional activities through the AFT councils on Effective Schools, Professional Standards, and Teacher-Supervisor Relationships.

3 - Increased cooperation with AFL-CIO bodies; strengthening of the new Council of AFL-CIO Unions for Professional, Scientific, and Cultural Employees, which was inaugurated under my stimulus.

4 - A balanced operating budget and reduction of the carry-over deficit without any increase in AFT per capita.

5 - Increased support of local union collective bargaining through increased services in negotiations, a national AFT Strike Fund, and continued emphasis on collective bargaining rights through AFT research and our improved public relations activities.

6 - Strengthening of state federations through establishment of a National Advisory Council of State Representatives, and assistance in coordination of state federation activities, as well as continuation of Co-Org support.

7 - Further development of the greatly improved AFT research program, including the AFT Research Grants.

An AFT President running for re-election must run on his record as well as state his plans for the future. This I am proud to do. During the past two years we have been able to respond to emergency after emergency and at the same time develop a coherent and cohesive AFT policy which has made teacher unionism a national movement - not just a local phenomenon reflecting the desperation of teachers in a few cities and school districts. This national movement has resulted not so much from my individual effort as from the team approach we have followed. We have built a movement through the cooperation of an outstanding national Executive Council and an outstanding staff at headquarters and in the field, and by seeking the understanding and cooperation of thousands of local and state leaders.

At the same time we have kept internal politics to a minimum. Most of the important decisions of the Executive Council during the past two years have been supported by vice presidents from each of the two AFT political caucuses. We have placed strict injunctions on our staff against involvement in internal politics, and both financial aid and staff services have been given without regard for political considerations.

The development of the Co-Org program probably stands as our outstanding achievement of the past two years. We assumed office in 1964 faced with an unprecedented opportunity for AFT growth. The great impetus of the New York City breakthrough in 1961 was behind us. Ahead of us lay challenges in Philadelphia, Boston, Hartford, Detroit, Chicago, New Orleans, St. Louis, and many a smaller district. But our income was severely restricted.

We met the challenge of opportunity by boldly adopting a plan which

in the past two years has placed two dozen new organizers on the staffs of state federations and locals. These dedicated men and women work under the direction of local and state union bodies; we have increased organizing service without endangering local autonomy.

To accomplish this plan we have been able to induce our AFL-CIO-IUD friends to double their support - and we have not feared to adopt temporary, emergency deficit financing. AFT financial policy and budgeting have been regularized by placing them on a 3-year plan. The 1965-66 budget carried a planned deficit. The 1966-67 operating budget will be a balanced budget. By July 1, 1968 we will be able to begin reducing our carry-over deficit.

In the meantime, AFT membership has risen by more than 28,000 members, and last year we showed the greatest growth in our history. Even more important, the depth of commitment of members and locals has increased. Before the 1964-65 school year a scant half dozen locals had collective bargaining rights. Two years later there are five times that number. We will continue to do everything possible to accelerate this trend.

Next to the Co-Org Plan, our greatest achievement during the past two years has been our new and noticeable emphasis on professional and intellectual concerns. "Effective Schools" has become a national by-word. The change in format and emphasis of the AMERICAN TEACHER has elevated the sights of teachers everywhere, and the new journal, CHANGING EDUCATION, has won plaudits from some of the outstanding leaders of our profession.

We are now building a new national Council on Professional Standards. Our intention is to enlist the best thinking of outstanding members of our profession throughout the nation in order to establish professionally sound standards for teacher certification, internship, and in-service development, class size,

teaching hours, pupil-teacher relationships, and all the other conditions which go to determine the quality of education. As we move into the collective bargaining era, with increased power and responsibility for teachers, it is absolutely imperative that guidelines be established.

Finally, I want to touch on a third major aspect of my administration which involves a basic purpose of the AFT. We cannot be content with only winning more benefits for teachers and with improving the quality of education. We must look outward as well as inward. Schools are social institutions. The AFT, like most unions, is deeply concerned with social progress. During the past two years we have intensified our civil rights involvement and cooperated with the rest of the labor movement in a host of social reform endeavors. Minimum wage legislation, programs to eliminate poverty, improvement of social security, tax reform, Medicare - these and many more programs supported by the labor movement have been supported by the AFT, too, and we intend to do even more in the future.

Lack of space impels me to indicate in capsule form a few of the many miscellaneous items that have characterized my administration: raising AFT influence and recognition through my election as a vice president of the Industrial Union Department (IUD) of the AFL-CIO, a member of the National Board of ADA, and of numerous other important organizations; enhancement of our public image through our policy of responsible militancy combined with the new degree of professionalism previously mentioned, and publicized by an improved public relations set-up; conduct of numerous institutes and conferences by the AFT, and participation, by invitation, in many conducted by universities; initiation of a broad college organizing campaign, to which we gave impetus

by a national College Conference and by universal support of the St. John's University strike.

The AFT has now become an organization of power and responsibility. To the teachers of America we offer a hope and a promise. We are moving toward our goals with steadfast purpose and accelerating speed. Surely this is no time to change direction - to retrogress or risk the gains we have made. With your continued support we will keep moving ahead.

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