

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
October 1, 1975

TO ALL BRANCH ORGANIZERS AND TRADE UNION DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

The Political Committee voted at its meeting on September 12 to initiate a campaign to win teachers in the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association to active participation in the struggle for equal educational opportunities, including school desegregation, bilingual programs, etc.

The enclosed three items are initial materials to help comrades in the beginning stage of this campaign:

- 1) a proposal by Jeff Mackler for the organization of a national AFT committee to desegregate public education;
- 2) a resolution adopted by the Washington Teachers Union;
- 3) a draft resolution for the organization of national AFT and NEA committees to desegregate all public and private schools.

There are a couple of adjustments to Comrade Mackler's proposal that the Political Committee recommends. One is that we try to initiate this campaign in the NEA as well as the AFT. Although the NEA has adopted much better positions on school desegregation than the AFT this campaign would offer a useful way to educate and win support and contacts around this issue. In New York City this activity will be conducted in both organizations because the UFT is affiliated to both the NEA and the AFT.

The second adjustment is that we call these committees something like Committees to Desegregate the Schools rather than Pro-Busing Committees. This will broaden the appeal for teachers who want to fight racial inequality in education. It will show that these committees are not only concerned with busing, but the broader issues involved in the fight against racism as well. The proposed resolution is of course firm and clear on the busing question.

This material should be studied carefully by those involved in this work in your branch. We are anxious to receive your estimate of the possibilities in your locality of reaching and working with teachers who may be interested in this necessary project.

The proposed resolution is a draft only. It will need to be adapted, expanded, altered in such ways as are necessary to suit your local situation, depending upon whether the teachers you are working with are members of AFT or NEA. The only requirement is that whatever local draft is used, it should be

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a clear statement against segregation and in support of busing for this purpose; and it should call upon all teachers, in their own self-interest and for the development of quality education, to support the struggle against racism in the schools, thus preparing the way for a national coalition of teachers for desegregation of public education.

Comradely,

Doug Jenness
Doug Jenness
National Office

COPY

September, 1975

Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades,

During the SWP Convention, comrade Eric Martel of the Washington, D.C. branch suggested a key area of work for our teacher comrades for the coming year. Eric's suggestion was discussed among most all of our AFT members and met with unanimous approval and enthusiasm.

At Frank Lovell's suggestion we are submitting the proposal for your consideration.

A key focus of discussion at the recent Hawaii AFT Convention was the busing question. The Shankerites opposed any and all resolutions submitted which:

1. supported busing
2. opposed racist attacks on Black students and the Black community
3. supported any form of action on the part of the AFT which sided with the victims of racist violence, etc.

In the course of the debate it became clear that the Shankerites, emboldened by the huge mechanical majority they held, were anxious to do battle on any and all issues which related to the struggles of oppressed minorities and women. While they had their way at the AFT Convention, we believe they are not representative of the views of the approximately two-thirds of the AFT locals who did not attend the convention.

We propose to begin now a one-year campaign specifically designed to reverse the AFT's position on busing. The campaign would begin with the setting up of an AFT Pro-Busing Committee consisting of the Presidents of several AFT locals, perhaps thirty. Our AFT comrades would have no trouble in securing these endorsements.

The campaign would center around a single resolution which we would urge be adopted by as many AFT locals as possible. We would mail the resolution to all AFT locals and request that they send it in to next year's AFT Convention in Miami. By the time of the convention, it is not unlikely that nearly 100 locals and several State Federations will have passed the resolution.

Our committee would set up a booth at the convention and direct all energies to securing delegate endorsement of the resolution. Forums would be scheduled, a newspaper printed, etc. In effect, our campaign is structurally similar to the work we did on the Vietnam resolution at the 1972 AFT Convention.

Our comrades viewed the work around the Pro-Busing Committee as an ongoing project. We would set up a speakers bureau to motivate the resolution before AFT locals throughout the country. Funds would be raised for regular mailings.

In those locals like UFT, where a resolution supporting busing will not be passed our comrades would consider setting up Pro-Busing Committees to collect signatures on petitions which would also be publicized at the convention and elsewhere. Such committees could function effectively in several of the large, pro-Shanker locals.

The committee would call attention to AFT members, the positions of groups and organizations supporting busing including SCAR and the NAACP. Comrades in unions outside the AFT could pass the resolution which we would use as additional ammunition against the racist Shankerite sentiments.

Comrades should be aware that the Hawaii Convention anti-busing position effectively reversed the long-standing position of the AFT in favor of busing. Obviously, we would reprint previously adopted convention resolutions to make this point.

We have not yet prepared the actual text of the resolution. I will send a proposed draft to you and several teacher comrades for prompt consideration.

The above outline of the kind of work we can do in the AFT obviously does not exclude the many forms of work which we have and will carry out in the future. The anti-racist fight against Shanker will give us an important opportunity to meet potential members of the SWP.

Comradely,

s/ Jeff Mackler
Oakland-Berkeley Branch

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING DESEGREGATIONAdopted by Washington, D.C. Teachers Union, Sept. 22

Whereas, the racist antibusing forces in Boston, Louisville, and Prince Georges County are escalating their offensive against the right of Black children to attend the school of their choice; and

Whereas, the National Student Coalition Against Racism has called for activities and resolutions in support of desegregation and an end to racist attacks in Boston especially during these beginning days of classes; and

Whereas, the W.T.U. has previously endorsed and urged membership participation in the May 17th, 1975 demonstration in Boston in support of school desegregation, sponsored by the NAACP and the National Student Coalition Against Racism;

Be It Therefore Resolved, that the W.T.U. reaffirm its position in support of Boston desegregation and send a telegram to President Ford, Boston Mayor Kevin White, and Mass. Gov. Michael Dukakis to demand implementation of school desegregation and enforcement of the law with all necessary force; and Be It Further Resolved,

That the W.T.U. endorse and encourage its members to attend the second national conference of the Student Coalition Against Racism to be held in Boston October 10, 11, 12 to plan future activities in support of school desegregation.

DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR NATIONAL AFT/NEA COMMITTEES
AGAINST SEGREGATED SCHOOLS

Whereas: The public education system of this country is under severe and sustained attack, conducted from behind the facade of the current fiscal crisis; and

Whereas: This attack takes the form of teacher cutbacks, enlarged classroom size, curtailment of remedial guidance courses and bilingual education, free lunch programs, and student busing programs; and,

Whereas: The most disruptive and divisive weapon in the concerted attack on the free educational system is the virulent racist drive to retain segregated, sub-standard schools in violation of federal law and court orders; and

Whereas: Teachers, their students and the parents are the first direct victims of the campaign to lower educational standards and keep schools segregated; and,

Whereas: We in the teaching profession are convinced by training and experience that federal funding is necessary to maintain and improve education; that students of all races suffer from segregated schools; that without desegregation, education will deteriorate further; and that the segregated housing patterns in all metropolitan centers and in most districts make busing for purposes of desegregation necessary; therefore, be it

Resolved: that we, (members of), support busing as a means to desegregate public schools and help achieve equal educational opportunities.

Resolved: that we support all efforts for federal funding of public education and bilingual programs as the only means to raise the standard of education and improve the classroom conditions of teachers and their students; and be it further

Resolved: that we forward copies of this resolution to all local locals and chapters of our (national or state organization) and request their response with a view to establishing a national coalition of teachers for desegregated schools; and be it finally

Resolved: that we request the endorsement of this resolution by our national organization and that it be given the widest possible circulation, publicity, and implementation.

Submitted by ----

signed.