

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
March 1, 1976

To National Committee Members, Organizers, and Trade
Union Directors

Dear Comrades,

Attached for your information is a letter by William Simons, president of the Washington D.C. Teachers Union (WTU) that was mailed out on union stationery to 250 of the largest AFT locals east of the Mississippi. The mailing also included the attached article on busing by Simons. Also included were the proposed resolution on busing and list of endorsements for the Committee on Desegregation and Equality in Education which you have already received.

A Committee on Desegregation and Equality in Education has been established in the WTU and members of the Committee are organizing to follow up the letter by calling AFT locals to inquire whether or not they want speakers, etc., to explain more about the Committee.

The WTU committee is also working on a pamphlet on busing that can be utilized to help win more members to the Committee. They will have a literature table at the next monthly meeting of the local.

Comrades are urged to send us reports about the progress of this Committee in your area.

Comradely,

Doug Jenness

Doug Jenness
SWP National Office

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THE WASHINGTON TEACHERS' UNION

Washington D.C. 20036

February 7, 1976

Dear

A national committee, the A.F.T. Committee on Desegregation and Equality in Education, has been initiated by officers of the California Federation of Teachers and myself. Its primary purpose is to place the A.F.T. in the forefront to support busing as a positive means of achieving school desegregation and equal educational opportunity. This position would conform with the action taken by the AFL-CIO at its convention last October. We are asking you to join us in this effort.

There are several ways you may be helpful in achieving this objective. First, we would like you to add your name to the list of endorsers of the enclosed resolution. Second, it would give greater impetus if your local endorsed the resolution and submitted it to the A.F.T. for the 1976 Convention by July 19th. Third, establish an ad hoc committee on school desegregation in your local. In addition to working towards the goal of having the A.F.T. take a positive position on school desegregation, this committee can carry on educational activities within the local and in conjunction with local community groups which have a similar objective. Finally, we would hope that you would assist with a financial contribution which will be used to disseminate information to all AFT Locals. Checks can be made out to the AFT Committee on Desegregation and mailed to me at the Washington Teachers' Union.

It is hoped that you will join us in this effort to keep the AFT in the forefront in the fight to achieve equality in educational opportunity. Your favorable response will be welcomed.

Fraternally,
s/ William H. Simons

WASHINGTON D. C. TEACHER - NOVEMBER 1975

"From the President" by
William Simons, President WTU

One of the gnawing issues confronting the body politic of the United States is the question of busing. Over twenty years have passed since the initial decision was rendered and still here are those who would rather spend their efforts accentuating the negative than working toward the fulfillment of making this country "One nation. . . indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." The busing issue is only symptomatic of the major barrier which prevents this nation from fulfilling this commitment. That barrier is racism.

Each and every elected official has taken an oath to uphold the laws of the land. The law which currently exists provides that busing is an appropriate means to secure quality education for all children. It is the responsibility of all elected officials, including the President of the United States, to utilize the total resources available to uphold the laws of this nation. While it is appropriate for those who disagree to seek a change in the law, nevertheless it is their responsibility to enforce the law until it is changed. Certainly, it is understood that even if there were positive attitudes exhibited by the government it would not put an immediate end to the lawlessness which is occurring in such places as Boston and Louisville. However, it would provide a standard to which all could repair.

To the credit of the labor movement, George Meany, President of the AFL-CIO, wasted no time in condemning the recent demonstrations in Louisville and in Washington, D. C., against so-called "forced busing." Meany noted that the AFL-CIO at its recent convention in San Francisco reaffirmed its support of school busing for the purpose of securing quality education for all children, when ordered by the courts. Meany further noted in a letter to Kentucky Labor Officials that: "We understand the emotionalism that has swept over your area as a result of the court's decision. . . . But we recognize as well that that emotional response has been fanned into hysteria by members of the Ku Klux Klan, the American Nazi Party, discredited dissidents from the Boston area and other extremists who prefer to exacerbate hatred rather than seek sensible readjustments and resolution of legitimate grievances." Meany further stated that ". . . the labor movement's responsibility is to seek workable

schedules, to minimize friction and to make the busing system work as it was intended. . . for the benefit of children who need and deserve the highest quality of education available regardless of their race or color."

Where does the Washington Teachers' Union stand on this issue? Why does the Washington Teachers' Union concern itself with this issue when it is not a matter of contention in this city?

There should be no doubt in anyone's mind about the position of the Union. It has been involved in many efforts to insure quality integrated education for all students and has reaffirmed its position on many occasions. While busing is not an issue in Washington, D. C., the Union must concern itself with the broad spectrum of problems which do have an impact on education.

If the current wave of anti-busing hysteria is placed in its proper perspective it would then be seen as a part of an overall strategy to turn back the clock. A hard struggle which endured over 50 years was necessary before the infamous separate but equal decision of the Supreme Court was reversed. The decision of 1954 was significant not only for its reversal of the separate but equal doctrine in education but also for its catalytic effect in producing legislation and court decisions which removed barriers in other areas.

If those who would reverse the decisions which ordered busing should prevail, this would be but a prelude to the erosion which would follow in other areas. In rapid succession the domino theory would become a reality. One by one each of the recently won civil rights would be under attack. This cannot be permitted to happen.

Only a concerted effort will foil the grandiose plan to reimpose the shackles upon those citizens who after nearly 200 years are still wondering when and if this country will indeed be "One nation. . . indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."