

The American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy

OFFICIAL ORGAN, THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

VOL. V. No. 7

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER, 1916

50 CENTS A YEAR

The Union of Unions

The Strength a Union gathers thru its own
Struggle to win its Rights it may keep—
and little think of giving Strength to other
Workers

The Knowledge a Union gains of ways to
better work conditions it may secrete for
its own uses—and little care how other
Workers learn their lessons

The Ideals a Union develops leading to Better
Service, Cleaner Citizenship and Happier
Living it may limit to its own horizon—
and little imagine their value to countless
human beings beyond

Break down the narrow confines of your
province

Rend the hardening mould of your spirit

Stand forth and embody the best in Unionism

Be a member of the Union of Unions.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE N E A, 1916

RESOLVED, That the National Education Association again declares its belief in equal suffrage for man and woman and urges upon its members the support of such measures as will hasten the consummation of this end.

RESOLVED, That the National Education Association calls the attention of the American people to the fact that teaching is a profession demanding for its successful practise a technical training that will put the teacher in possession of professional standards; that these professional standards can be maintained only by the employment of superintendents, supervisors, and teachers who have unquestioned professional qualifications for their work; that the members of the teaching profession can have and serve but one client, the public; that the public, therefore, owes a duty to itself and the members of the profession to see to it that only professional considerations enter into employment, retention and dismissal of teachers. The association believes that the public can elevate and strengthen the professional status of teachers and thereby serve itself by securing legislation that shall embody the following provisions:

1. The powers and duties of superintendents of schools should receive definition by legislative enactment. Definite professional qualifications should be required of all appointees to office. The term of the superintendent of schools should be not less than three years; the power of nominating all teachers and members of the educational staff should be given the superintendent.

2. The tenure of office of teachers should, after a probationary period, be permanent. Removal should be possible only for inefficiency, immorality or grievous neglect of duty. Salaries should be fixed so as

to insure to teachers a standard of living in keeping with the professional demands made upon them. Retiring allowances or pensions should be provided either by state or local action.*

RESOLVED, That the National Education Association gives expression again to the consciousness that the school is an institution developed by society to conserve the well-being of humanity, and that on this solid foundation all subordinate aims and uses of the schools should be made to rest. Assembled as it is in a time of world-wide disturbance, doubt and uncertainty, and of consequent national concern, the association affirms its unswerving adherence to the unchanging principles of justice between persons and between nations; it affirms its belief that the instruction in the school should tend to furnish the mind with the knowledge of the arts and sciences on which the prosperity of the nation rests and to incline the will of men and nations towards acts of peace; it declares its devotion to America and American ideals and recognizes the priority of the claim of our beloved country on our property, our minds, our hearts, and our lives. It records its conviction that the true policy to be followed both by the school and by the nation which it serves, is to keep the American public school free from sectarian interference, partisan politics, and disputed public policies and that it may retain unimpaired in its powers to serve the whole people, while it recognizes that the community or the state may introduce such elements of military training into the schools, as may seem wise and prudent, yet it believes that such training should be strictly educational in its aim and organization, and that military ends should not be permitted to pervert the educational purpose and practises of the school.

* Compare resolutions on page 12.





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PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION OF TEACHERS*

JOHN DEWEY

Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University

WE HAVE heard a great deal about preparedness, and newspapers have subjected us to a kind of hysteria on preparedness in the last few months and weeks. Now, I do not think that I exaggerate in saying that an army of teachers is more important in any kind of preparedness that is worth while than an army of soldiers and a navy, without any disrespect to the latter.

Now, supposing some gentleman, entirely outside of the army and navy—his first name might possibly begin with J and his last name with L—should decide, because of dislike of the color of certain persons' hair or of their religious persuasion or of their economic views, that certain of the generals and colonels and captains in the army should be dismissed. Can you imagine such a thing as that happening? But somebody entirely outside of the actual and active profession of teachers does take such a position, and then when he is asked for his reasons, states that he is not obliged to give his reasons! That he happens to occupy an official position and he has prepared this list and those people are to go!

* From Address delivered at Mass Meeting called by the American Federation of Teachers during N E A Convention, New York, July 6, 1916.

Why and how was such a thing possible? I think that we might as well admit that the teachers themselves—not these teachers, but the teachers who have not organized and who have not become conscious of their professional interests and of their responsibilities to the public—are in large measure responsible for such a thing being possible. This situation indicates a certain defect in the past with ourselves as teachers. We have not had sufficient intelligence to be courageous. We have lacked a sense of loyalty to our calling and to one another, and on that account have not accepted to the full our responsibilities as citizens of the community.

To my mind, that is the great reason for forming organizations of this kind, and organizations which are affiliated with other working organizations that have power and that attempt to exercise the power like the Federation of Labor, namely, the reflex effect upon the body of the teachers themselves in strengthening their courage, their faith in their calling, their faith in one another, and the recognition that they are servants of the community, and not people hired by a certain transitory set of people to do a certain job at their beck and call.

On a sign downstairs is the statement that all visitors must apply at a certain

office before going about the building—a reasonable regulation. There is the further statement that this regulation applies also to the employees of the Board of Education. I am told that this refers to steamfitters and janitors' assistants. But the distinguished representatives of the Board of Education have more than once referred to the teachers and defined the duties of those teachers in terms of "employees of the Board of Education."

This is a common thing; it is even known in colleges. Now, there is a certain sense in which I am an employee of a certain Board of Trustees. There is a certain sense in which you teachers are paid employees of certain Boards. But to define the rights, the duties and the responsibilities of the teaching profession on the basis of these official bodies who happen to have the control of appointment and fixing of salaries is, as has been well said by someone else before me, like regarding the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States as hired employees of the President and the Senate, because they happen to be the immediate parties concerned in their selection and appointment.

As the President and the Senate who confirm the nomination of a Supreme Court Justice are simply trustees for certain public interests, so this school board and even such sublime and lofty characters as the President of the Chicago Board of Education, who is not obliged to give reasons for his actions in dismissing faithful and competent teachers, are trustees on behalf of the public to provide a machinery for the appointment of certain persons who are then to be not their servants, but the servants of the community, of the whole community, and not of any particular class interest within it.

As the history of the Chicago Federation already shows, the great reason for the spread of these federations and for their affiliation with the general Federation of Labor is that it will strengthen in the teachers the sense that they are the servants of the community, that they

are responsible to the community; and it will give them the backbone and the courage to look the facts of the situation in the face and to go ahead and do the right thing.

Upon the whole, we have two kinds of teachers' associations. There are the purely pedagogical associations, those that discuss methods of teaching the alphabet and penmanship, and the multiplication table. Nobody ever heard of those associations getting into any trouble, so far as I know. They are a very good thing. They serve a very useful purpose. There isn't a sinister interest in the United States that isn't perfectly willing to leave in the hands of the teaching body the ultimate decision on points of that particular kind, which come to be known as "pedagogy" and "pedagogical methods." There is no certainty, there is no likelihood, however, that the views of the body of teachers, in most of the cities and towns of the United States will at the present time have any real, positive, constructive influence in determining the basic educational policy of the schools of their communities, so far as a more general aspect of education is concerned. As to things that in the long run affect the life of the community, that affect the relations of capital and labor and so on, the discussions and deliberations of these purely pedagogical bodies are, as we all know, practically impotent.

On the other hand, there are organizations which do not call themselves unions, which do not in any way affiliate themselves with labor unions and federations, which have performed a needed and a useful task in protecting certain personal interests of teachers, in protecting their salary interests, the tenure and security of office. Strangely enough, some of the leaders of these organizations who have done this purely personal work of looking after the personal interests of a teacher, seem to look with considerable horror upon a federation which shall actually come into relation with a labor union. I don't know why.

But there we have had the situation on the one hand of organizations of teachers dealing with purely pedagogical subjects and on the other hand of organizations which are really of a protective nature looking after the personal interests of a body of teachers.

Now, as I see it, organizations such as are represented here tonight must attempt to get those two things together, to bring together the educational interests which now are discussed in a purely theoretical way, and these other more practical concerns. We should have an organization which shall not on the one hand merely discuss somewhat minute and remote subjects of pedagogy with no certainty as to how their conclusions are going to take effect in practise, nor simply look after the personal and more or less selfish interests of teachers on the other hand. But we should have a body of self-respecting teachers and educators who will see to it that their ideas and their experience in educational matters shall really count in the community; and who, in order that these may count, will identify themselves with the interests of the community; who will conceive of themselves as citizens and as servants of the public, and not merely as hired employees of a certain body of men. It is because I hope to see the teaching body occupy that position of social leadership which it ought to occupy, and which to our shame it must be said we have not occupied in the past, that I welcome every movement of this sort.

Objections are frequently made—generally, I think, of a very snobbish character—against these federations, because

of their affiliation with labor unions. I won't stop even to argue against the merely snobbish features of that matter. I would like to point out that these labor unions are engaged in useful service; that they also are servants of the public and it may be that if the more enlightened, more instructed—that is to say, the more lettered portions of the community like the teachers—put themselves fairly and squarely on a level with these other bodies of people who are doing needed and useful service, that they will hasten the time when all of these unions will look at all of their work and labor, not merely from the standpoint of their personal interests and the protection of these personal interests, important as that is; but also from the standpoint of service to the general public.

There is one other thing I want to say. Why is it that teachers—who have not had to live by the labor of their hands and suffered the privations and difficulties of many of the members of the trades unions—have found it necessary in the time of need and extremity to turn for active support, not to manufacturers' associations and bankers' associations and lawyers' associations, and the so-called respectable elements of the community, but have had to turn to these bodies of organized labor? I think that is cause for shame and humiliation on the part of the so-called respectable classes; but, I think on the other hand, it is a source of pride and self-respect for the members of these labor unions and is a reason why every teacher should feel proud to be affiliated with the labor unions.

THE UNION MOVEMENT AMONG TEACHERS*

CHARLES B STILLMAN

President American Federation of Teachers

SINCE so many teachers' organizations

*From Address delivered at Mass Meeting called by the American Federation of Teachers during N E A Convention, New York, July 6, 1916.

have been in evidence this week, you have probably heard the questions, "Why the American Federation of Teachers?" and, "Why an Affiliation with Labor?"

Our movement originated in Chicago,

and there it has never been considered in the least obscure. In fact, in every city into which it has entered it has shown vigor and vitality. I am of course a partizan; and where democracy is concerned, I would be ashamed to be anything else. But I want to read to you one sentence from *Harper's Weekly*, an unbiased, disinterested source, concerning the work of the Chicago Teachers' Federation:

The work of the Chicago Teachers' Federation has put millions into the city treasury for the relief of taxpayers. Their agitation has given the electorate a new conception of taxation. Their efforts have corrected many evils that cankered city and state officers and courts, and out of it all has come a better, finer Chicago and a school system so much better than the old that comparison fails.

Now, if you add to this statement the fact that in the last two sessions of the Illinois Legislature organized teachers have successively defeated the Cooley Dual System Vocational Education bill, designed by the manufacturing interests to furnish a constant supply of cheap, skilled, easily exploited labor, incapable of effective citizenship, you will have sufficient reasons for the deadly opposition manifested this morning by the President of the Chicago Board of Education. Sufficient reasons—yes! But reasons that would scarcely do for public consumption.

We, in Chicago, early realized that the last line of defense for popular government was the teachers. Those of you who heard Scott Nearing yesterday morning, remember how he proved that the press, the bar, the pulpit have very largely gone over to the enemy; have been practically bought up; and the schools are now under attack thruout the country. We reached, not in an excited way, but thru calm cold thinking, and after we had reached, we came to hold with religious fervor, the conviction that if democracy is to be attained in this generation or the next, it must be thru

aggressive, free teachers, and a social vision directly and organically bound up with contemporary life. These teachers must work thru the schools chiefly, but must be free to work thru all the avenues of citizenship.

One of the inspiring things to me in the Chicago situation is the response I found in a mass meeting of over five thousand citizens to the statement that the parents of Chicago have a right to know that their children are not daily exposed in the class room to an atmosphere of servility. And when the parents of the country, not only applaud but act to secure protection for their children from the taint of that servility, we shall have a democracy. But, who are the parents of the country, and particularly, who are the parents of the children in the public schools? Laborers, overwhelmingly! And when, feeling our responsibility, we thought it criminally reckless to go it alone, and effectively aligned ourselves with the parents of the vast majority of our children, in order to resist class domination, then we were emphasizing class lines, as you heard this morning.

"No; we are a profession. We must not associate too intimately with the parents. We must maintain a scholastic aloofness from life." There is no class distinction in that. I submit that our enemies, under the guise of decrying class lines, are insidiously appealing to and inflaming all the wretched snobbery and class prejudice that is still so powerful in our profession and in our country.

Fortunately, no genuine, highly vitalized movement toward democracy can long remain a local movement in this country. That is one of the signs of promise that we so sorely need on occasion. And after correspondence extending over a year, and national in scope, a convention met on the 15th of April in Chicago and organized The American Federation of Teachers. On the 9th of May, we received our national charter from the American Federation of Labor.

Very rapidly we added local federations; one in Oklahoma City; one in Gary, Indiana; one in Scranton, Pennsylvania (working to the East, you see); one in Washington; one in New York City; besides the three in Chicago—and despite the supreme efforts to kill us, at the present time in Chicago, and perhaps partly on account of that, for “their knocks are boosts,” as one of our leaders is fond of saying. I am in a position to know of various large groups who have almost completed arrangements for organization, and you will hear more of them during the course of the next year.

Now, just a word of what we do and do not stand for. We do not stand for the protection of incompetents. That the unions do stand for such protection is one of the most frequent charges against us. No one suffers as much as we do from the incompetent teachers—not even the Board of Education. The associates of that incompetent teacher pay the price of her incompetence; and we have never yet defended an incompetent teacher and never expect to. In fact, we have refused to take up the cases of incompetent teachers. But we do insist that a profession—that empty term they are so fond of handing to us in lieu of something to live on, altho we can hard-

ly blame them when we see so many teachers greedily swallow it—we maintain that a genuine profession must have a voice in the determination and application of the standards of its own efficiency. The lawyers have such a voice, and the doctors also; and the teachers alone, among the professions, remain inarticulate, without any chance for a hearing.

Another point that is raised against us. We are not negative obstructionists. The chief tragedy in the Chicago school system during the last few years is not a personal tragedy—has little reference to personality. It is the criminal waste for the community, in forcing the teachers to defend what they innocently had thought won permanently by the Bill of Rights or even the Magna Charta, and to be questioned only in Prussia or Russia.

To put one of the most highly skilled class of workers in the community on the defensive, when their every nerve is demanding release to attack the vital constructive educational problems—they saw cringing submission on every hand. That shameless community waste is one of the chief crimes for which the interests of Chicago will ultimately be held responsible.

THE CONTROL OF THE TEACHER'S JOB*

WILLIAM MCANDREW

Associate Superintendent, New York

I KNOW the teachers of Chicago like a book. Chicago is my own town, where I did my first teaching and where I, by a Chicago schoolboard, was changed, between three o'clock of a Thursday afternoon and five o'clock of the same day, from a worker in a school filled with the most affectionate friends a man could ever have, to a man without a job, turned upon the street. No questions;

no reason; simply, you had disobeyed an impossible order of the superintendent, which was that a lie should be signed to a diploma for the son of a powerful book company who had not completed his work and yet whom the superintendent and the chairman of the high school committee of the school board had promised should be graduated.

Superintendents, teachers, principals in Chicago have been treated with that same high-handed tyrannical manner of management that was given to me in Chicago twenty-seven years ago. The

* From Address delivered at Mass Meeting called by the American Federation of Teachers during N E A Convention, New York, July 6, 1916.

act is not only tragic; the act of the Chicago board is not only cruel, but it is worse than that. It is stupid. What superintendent, what school board, wants children of its city taught by persons who are stultified and weakened by being put into a position where they dare not, and then later on cannot, express an independent opinion? The management of any school system, by this body before me, would be many hundred per cent more intelligent if the intelligence of the whole body were used than if the school system were managed by the most intelligent person in this audience. For it always stands to reason that the intelligence of the whole teaching force must be immensely superior to that of any one person who is running it.

I remember the first teachers' convention that ever I attended. I stood next to Jim Ashley from Ann Arbor, a railroad man, who, pointing to the body of teachers, said, "What a bunch of cheap skates!" And when you looked at the men that were in the group of teachers in Michigan at that convention thirty years ago, you were forced to admit by the cringing looks upon the faces of many of them, that they were a lot of cheap skates. What made them cheap skates? They had been shifted from town to town with no sense of tenure. If the wife of the president of the school board did not like the kind of dress that the schoolmaster's wife was wearing, he was dropped at the end of the term and someone else was put in. If he did not promote, whether he knew anything or not, the son of the leading member of the school board, his name was dropped at the end of the session. And the school board of the second city in the United States has dropped to that same cross-roads method of petty tyrannical management of their people.

It is a good thing for us, however, occasionally, to meet with crises of this sort, as Doctor Dewey has emphasized. For another reason why this act is so tremendously stupid is

that there is nothing that has happened in America within the last three or four years that will do so much towards driving teachers into all sorts of unions and federations, which the persons who are responsible for this act are attempting to aim at. It is one of the most efficient boomerangs devised by the mind of man to secure exactly those results which the persons who are attacking them think they will cure. And it is good for the Chicago Teachers' Federation, because there is nothing in the world so good for an organization as a little martyrdom, a little persecution, altho it does seem as tho the Chicago Federation had really more than its own share.

One of the best and strongest developers of your character that I know of is trouble; and instead of side-stepping trouble, it seems to me that it is the proper point of view for a person who wants to get out of this world all that is coming to him, to go out and look for trouble, and if you do not see a good, nice, fat trouble walking around the street, go pry around and see if you cannot run one loose and grapple with it a little bit. That has been the experience of mankind from the beginning.

Don't you remember that one of the greatest of all teachers spoke of the effect of trouble, and to the effect that when everything goes right the people are praising you and are telling you how glad they are that you belong to the federation. That is not the time for you particularly to rejoice. But when men speak evil of you and spitefully use you, then what should you do? "Rejoice and be exceeding glad," for that very act which you are experiencing is placing you along with the greatest in the world, for "so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." And after a few good sound slaps from a low-ebb president of a Chicago Board of Education, after a wrestle with any sort of a Board of

Education, you find the tremors of youth running thru you so that you can stand up before an audience, like that grand young woman, formerly a neighbor of mine, Mrs. Young of Chicago, and feel that it is good to wrestle even with the Chicago school board.

Now, we are taking up a collection for the people who are suffering from the strike. We ought to take up a collection of expressions of good will and cheer for those vanguards of preparedness—the teachers of Chicago.

PROFESSIONAL CO-OPERATION*

OSWALD SCHLOCKOW
Principal P S 109, Brooklyn

IDEALISM HAS long held that the only true service a man can render is *free* service, that free service is happy service, and that only happy service can be efficient service; and the wise and far-seeing administrator has always applied this ideal to the particular sphere of his endeavor. Human progress may, in fact, be measured by the extent to which this conception of freedom has been successfully applied in our social institutions, and every effort to extend its application to new conditions deserves the encouragement of every thinking individual who realizes that only *free* men and women can *serve*—that all others are condemned to labor and toil.

We are assembled here to pour the new wine of democratic initiative into the old bottle of school organization—to apply the conception of free service to the public schools. This and every other school district in the city will offer unnumbered opportunities to teachers assembled in general meeting for discussing and considering various matters that concern their personal and professional interests in their particular schools or the school district at large; the presence of colleagues engaged in common work, the encouragement given by fellow workers, should be incentives to free speech, to coöperation, and to the display of courage to do things. Only the

isolated man is weak; union gives the strength and courage to convert thought into speech and speech into action. In this way the teacher may become a potent factor in shaping the educational policy of her school and her district and incidentally to point out such defects of organization and practise as need remedying; it is hoped that such defects pointed out publicly by hundreds of teachers conversant with the conditions of their districts will be effective in securing the prompt attention of those in authority.

Nor need there be fear of a conflict with existing professional associations. These concern themselves almost entirely with matters of city-wide importance and offer no help to the class teacher who in a particular school may be confronted with conditions that impair her efficiency and destroy her peace of mind. The Teachers' District Assembly will be content with a more limited sphere of action in the school district, but by reaching the individual teacher may develop a sense of professional solidarity which is absent in the larger associations. In carrying out this primary function of appealing directly to the teacher in her "home" district, the Teachers District Assembly may truly claim to be a Teachers Town Meeting.

Were the usefulness of a Teachers District Assembly to stop here it would fall short of what the educational theorist has in mind in furthering teachers' participation in school management. It

*Read at meeting to organize Teachers District Assembly, 16 May, 1916, under the auspices of the Committee on School Problems, Brooklyn Teachers Association.

is interesting to note what diversified possibilities a Teachers District Assembly promises to him who has faith in the power of large numbers to serve a common cause. I, personally, read a deeper meaning into the true function of an assembly like this than that it shall serve merely as a means of furthering the personal interests of the teacher. I should not like to think that the Assembly we are organizing to-day will be merely a rallying-point for the discontented—a sort of educational cave of Adullam where are gathered all the unhappy, the disgruntled and the disappointed—for whom indeed it is to be a haven of comfort but by whom it should not be controlled. As a supervisor, I should like to see this Assembly take a broader view of school practise and by emphasizing common duties rather than by asserting individual rights help to strengthen our schools by establishing a closer bond of common interest between teacher and supervisor.

I am divulging no secret when I state that under present conditions the interests of teachers and supervisors are not always identical. We make too frequent use of the pronoun "I" in our school practise—*my* school on the part of the principal, and *my* rights on the part of the teacher. The teacher frequently feels no vital or personal concern about the general welfare of the school and assumes the attitude of a mere worker by thrusting upon the supervisor the responsibility of enforcing rules for the general welfare. The teacher may even take a mild pleasure in occasionally outwitting those in authority; the supervisor responds by issuing additional restrictions to circumvent the teacher, who in turn develops greater ingenuity to defeat the aim of the supervisor; thus there is established a conflict which leads to ever increasing regulations and a corresponding development of subtlety to evade them successfully, similar to the rivalry between armor-plate manufacturers and projectile makers in the attempt of each to overcome

any advantage gained by the other.

This conflict of interests between supervisor and teacher leads to waste of effort and to a state of mind that is hostile to successful school administration. It is one of the purposes of those interested in the movement we are starting to determine whether there can be effected a conversion of the singular pronoun *I* into the plural *We*—from *My* school to *Our* school, as much the teachers' as the principal's. This change of viewpoint would mark one of the greatest advances in school practise converting the school from an autocratic into a cooperative institution in which everybody will be possessed by one common purpose—where superintendent, principal and teacher will have only one aim: to serve the schools and the children. Under such a regime there can be no abuse of power or of conflict of interests; there may be leadership, but leadership does not mean domination, but co-ordination of effort. And the effort of the teacher will be recognized as important as the effort of the supervisor and for some purposes more so. The supervisor is simply *Primus inter pares*—the first among equals—not the fountain head of all wisdom.

In order to establish a closer relationship between teacher and supervisor, this Assembly must ultimately become a forum where superintendent, principal and teacher can assemble for free and fearless exchange of opinion, a neutral ground where all can meet to discuss frankly the questions that concern them all; then will it be transformed from a teachers' into a coöperative assembly.

Several supervisors have expressed the fear that the opportunity offered to teachers may result in creating discontent and lead to unwarranted criticism. This is indeed a possibility and perhaps a probability, for pain is incident to growth. Are we certain, moreover, that the peace and quiet which some advocate are desired because they benefit the schools or because they will make life

(Continued on page 109)

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(Affiliated with American Federation of Labor)

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A NEW OUTLOOK

THE MEMBERS of the Teachers Union of the City of New York who remained in town the first week in July to attend the Conference of the American Federation of Teachers and gave their services to make the Conference a success, received their reward in meeting and learning to know fellow unionists from Chicago, Washington and Scranton, as well as prospective unionists from many other towns. An important cohesive element in the union movement is the fact that teachers who have worked for the day of professional freedom to come find themselves on such occasions on terms of intimate friendship with persons formerly unknown to them. And the end of solidarity is hastened by the existence of a counter movement to destroy the union by means that appear even to indifferent outsiders to be "raw." A remark made at a meeting this year by Mr Edward King, a faithful friend of unions everywhere, is especially apt. He said that teachers should put their unions into good shape, and leave it to their fool enemies to give them plenty to do.

That the Chicago Board of Education gave the American Federation of Teachers plenty to do in dismissing brazenly forty of its members without sound cause is now well known to the interested public throughout the land. The rawness of the act served to bring the national union and its purposes to the sympathetic attention of leading educational experts and thinkers, and to draw from them valuable expressions in the way of public support.

The teachers who were elsewhere than in New York during the N E A Week should not be slow to realize that the union movement already has become a force to be respected and to be reckoned with when it can deserve the support of so eminent a social philosopher as Professor John Dewey. THE AMERICAN TEACHER is gratified to present to its readers the address made by Professor Dewey on the occasion of the Mass Meeting of the American Federation of

Teachers, held at the High School of Commerce, July 6, 1916. It is certainly scarcely less gratifying to be able to present the outspoken remarks of Acting City Superintendent Wm. McAndrew, of New York, who spoke extemporaneously on the same occasion. The address made by Mr Wm E Grady, Principal of P S 64, Manhattan, will appear in the October number.

The encouraging aspect of the present stage of development of the union movement is that the fight for professional rights has established a secure foundation thru the conviction of thinkers outside our ranks that we are fighting a clean fight for human rights. On that and on our sincerity and straightforwardness will grow steadily our professional rights. And the fine thing about it all is the apparent gratification on the part of our friends that we have the fight in us.

BUSINESS AND EDUCATION

As a successful but still modest business man, Jacob M Loeb, president of the Chicago Board of Education pleads for a welcome to the business man in public service, "for the very capacity which has made for the development and success of his business will make for the good and betterment of the public service." This and more he said in oblique defense of his arbitrary action as President: He had made out a little list of some 68 teachers to be summarily dropped from service, without notice, and most of them in direct repudiation of the recommendations of the Superintendent—40 teachers rated as "good," "excellent" or "superior"—for reasons sufficient to himself, but reasons that he did not deign to reveal even to the fellow members of the Board in meeting or in committee. It is admitted that the efficient teachers in this list, all of them members or officers in the Federation, had drawn upon themselves the displeasure of the President because of their public activities as good citizens. The

President acknowledges, in his address, that the business man is not qualified to select school teachers; but he assumes authority to dismiss over those who are qualified—"trained educators, the general superintendent of schools and his staff." And he goes on to say what a wicked, wicked thing is the union, seeking justification for his high-handed and cold-blooded procedure in his successful business experience with hiring and firing.

The successful business man has capacity. Capacity is needed in the administration of public affairs. Therefore let the business man do it. The successful business man is commonly characterized by selfishness. Public affairs require devotion and disinterestedness. Therefore keep the business man out. One argument is about as logical as the other. The politician, who often combines selfishness with incapacity is not to be tolerated. The well-meaning but incompetent sentimentalist should of course be excluded. Mr Loeb's mistake is in assuming that the capacity which has made for the success of a business is necessarily capable of contributing to the public advantage.

Business has come to be on the one hand so exacting that only people of real capacity can succeed in it; and on the other hand so essential to the very life of the nation that it tends to assume the focus of our concerns. As a consequence of the central position of business and of its control for private ends, we are permitting ourselves to be reduced to mere instruments in the hands of the managers. We permit business men to appeal to us to sacrifice human affairs in the interest of business; we let pass without protest the common plea that men and women and children *must* continue to labor and subsist under sub-human conditions because "business" requires it. Hours and wages and sanitation and recreation and the growth of the spirit are all well enough in their place—but they must not interfere with "business." We make the mistake of forget-

ting the ends in our concern for the means. Business is very important, and capacity for business should be conserved and cherished: but business is for the people. Now we let those who control business control our lives. They have been controlling us economically; now they seek to control us spiritually and politically.

Let business serve the community; let labor and science and art serve the community. But we cannot permit business to control the community, for that means letting Jacob M Loeb and his fellow exploiters control the rest of us for their private benefit.

NEWS LETTER FROM CHICAGO

AT THE first joint dinner of the season, the Chicago Federations of men teachers and of women high school teachers to the number of one hundred and thirty listened with interest and enthusiasm to a discussion of the overthrow of the merit rule, resulting in the dismissal of fifty or more teachers who had been rated as efficient.

Mrs Ida L M Fursman, President of the Chicago Teachers' Federation, said that the discharge of these federation teachers would do an immense amount of good. It had already produced in the teachers themselves a spirit of comradeship, a determination to stand together, an enthusiasm for the great principle for which they are suffering that was wonderful. Then the news of the discharge had created such discussion over the land and the feeling of insecurity everywhere felt among even excellent teachers had given a great boom to organization, and thirdly, this event was helping to separate education from the cloister, where it began and to which it still clings. Teachers are now being forced to realize their kinship with that great body of working people who never know at what moment they may lose their jobs. They are feeling life as they never felt it before, and deep sympathy and brotherhood are the result.

Mrs. Fursman sees in the fight for or-

ganization the determination of teachers to be heard on matters which they understand better than any one else, and glories in the fact that the Chicago group is standing like a rock for that right, tho many know that they could get back by renouncing their affiliation with the Federation.

Mr Greenacre, the lawyer who has fought the teachers' legal battles for a dozen years, said that the question of the right to organize is to be argued in Ohio and Illinois courts about the middle of October. He believes that the courts will sustain that right as over a dozen groups of public employees are already in possession of that right. Discussing the rescinding of the merit rule, Mr Greenacre read from the brief of the Board's lawyer the plea that the death of the merit rule saved money to the taxpayer. As it is, teachers long in the service and nearing the maximum must be retained. If there were no merit rule, these teachers could be discharged. This course would also save pension money, as the great majority of teachers would not teach long enough in Chicago to reach eligibility for that. It would be a good thing if that plea could be printed and scattered over the land, that teachers everywhere might know just what school boards, as at present constituted, think of increasing experience, efficiency and age.

MARIAN C LYONS,
Representative.

PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION

(Continued from page 106)

easier for some one? I welcome the storm that leaves the atmosphere clearer and the soul of man refreshed.

Pessimists have predicted that a movement such as this, demanding the personal coöperation of the teacher and sacrifices of time and comfort cannot succeed; that our teachers as a class are too narrow-minded to concern themselves about professional questions; that they will display a sporadic interest only in matters affecting their material interests; for aught I know, these critics

may be right. Yet if our experiment should prove a failure, if in the course of a few weeks or months nothing but the vestiges of the structure remain, wise supervisors will begin anew to study how to arouse in teachers the spirit that will make for coöperation and responsibility. Paradoxical as it may sound, teachers may have to be forced to be free, for only free service is happy service, and only happy service is efficient service.

The Brooklyn Teachers Association relinquishes all control over this organization; but in watching the development of the experiment, it hopes to be able to start similar Assemblies in other school districts of the boro.

I take great pleasure in reading to you from letters received from men of light and leading, whose opinions should convince us, if this were needed, that our efforts are worthy of success:

I am interested to learn of the effort of the Brooklyn Teachers' Association to develop the spirit of democratic initiative and responsibility among the teachers of the city, by the organization of Teachers' District Assemblies in which the class teacher is to have opportunity for the discussion of school problems affecting her school or district. I believe that such an organization on democratic and representative lines, would be of much value to the teachers and to the school system. My impression is that in such an organization, the unit of representation should be the school and that representatives of the school should be organized in district assemblies, which in turn should be represented in some central organization. It seems to me that such a plan would best promote and unify the confidence and coöperation and professional spirit of the teachers. I suppose something of this sort is what the Brooklyn Teachers Association have in mind. If so, I am heartily in sympathy with their purpose.—WILLIAM G WILLCOX, President, Board of Education

I am in hearty accord with the purpose which you say the Brooklyn Teachers Association has in seeking to develop the

spirit of democratic initiative and responsibility among the teachers of the city by the organization of district assemblies, in which the class teacher may discuss school problems. I have been hammering as hard as I could in favor of that and kindred ideas since I have been in the Board, and so it is with great reluctance that I decline your invitation, inasmuch as the purpose of your meeting is very close to my heart."—T W CHURCHILL

I am very glad to hear that the Brooklyn Teachers Association is interested in organizing District Assemblies in which the class teachers can make their experiences felt and can express their judgments on educational matters. I have long felt that one of the greatest wastes in education lies in the fact that class teachers are so much under direction from above, and have so little opportunity to affect educational administration, including decisions as to curriculum and methods of teaching, etc. In my judgment they should, thru authorized Councils or Assemblies, have the right and the duty to initiate changes in these respects, and should have a voice in all decisions. Such a method would not only stimulate observation and reflection and secure a utilization of much experience that now goes to waste, outside the individual teacher's own work, but would promote initiative and intellectual independence and courage. As I have said before, much which is called the concentration of responsibility is really a scheme for the diffusion of irresponsibility.—JOHN DEWEY

Just as a teacher's point of view should be considered by those holding executive and administrative positions, so the pupil's point of view should be considered by the teacher. In the best school there is a coöperation between principal and teachers, and in the best class this same spirit of coöperation exists between teacher and pupils. The same principle applies wherever there is organization and system; for example, in the case of the City Superintendent and the Associate and District Superintendents. There should be no clash of interests, but coöperation for a common purpose.—CHAS W LYON, District Supt.

**Official Section of the
TEACHERS' UNION OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK**

Published by the Union through its Press
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COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS intended for publication in this section must be submitted to the Press Committee by chairmen or members, and must fall under one of the classifications mentioned below.

ANNOUNCEMENT

In accordance with the agreement entered into between the Teachers Union of the City of New York and THE AMERICAN TEACHER, we are devoting four pages of the present issue to matters of special concern to the Union. Inasmuch, however, as the Council of the American Federation of Teachers decided to make this periodical the official organ of the national organization, new arrangements will have to be made that will enable each of the various Locals to receive adequate representation in the pages of THE AMERICAN TEACHER.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT*

*To the Members of The Teachers Union
of the City of New York:*

ON MARCH 10, 1916, The Teachers' League held a large meeting at the Washington Irving High School for the purpose of launching the Teachers' Union. The meeting was an important success, in point of numbers and en-

* Annual Report of the President of The Teachers' Union of the City of New York, made June 16, 1916.

thusiasm. The Union was given a good send-off.

Within three months the Union has completed its organization, adopted its Constitution by a referendum vote, elected its officers and its Executive Board, established its headquarters office and has nearly completed its affiliation with the American Federation of Teachers and thru that organization with the American Federation of Labor.

While still in an unorganized condition, the Union gave a considerable amount of time and energy to working in the interests of the teachers in fighting the Lockwood-Ellenbogen Pension bill. The work of the Union and its members was of great importance in aiding in the defeat of the bill. Since the defeat of the Pension bill, the Union has considered taking steps to cause the restoration to the depleted teachers' pension fund of the City of New York of large sums of money believed to be improperly turned into other channels. It is to be hoped that this effort on the part of the Union will be carried on expeditiously and skillfully.

The Union has undertaken also to manage an important Conference of the American Federation of Teachers to be held in New York during the week of the meeting of the National Education Association. The main object of this Conference is to extend to the outermost confines of the country the influence of the union movement, and to encourage teachers everywhere to aid in developing their own professional independence, and in securing control in all important relations over their own work, their privileges and responsibilities.

Altho the Union will have many enthusiastic meetings and will give abundant opportunity to all its members to speak their minds freely, it cannot be doubted that the substantial work of the organization will often be done quietly by committees working while others may be talking.

It may be well at this time to point out the scope of the work that may be done by the standing committees, and the splendid opportunities awaiting members who really would like to serve the common purpose.

The Membership Committee is partially organized thru the activities of the school representatives. Well informed representatives can reach the individual teachers, but the success of representatives here and there has little effect beyond the individual school. A comprehensive committee must be organized to carry the success of the active representatives over into other schools. Successful methods of getting members must be made known to others, and greater effectiveness must be brought to bear upon the membership problem. The Committee on Revision of the Constitution is considering the proposal of having a Vice-President for each boro, with the chief function of acting on a central membership committee of five.

The Press Committee is organized, but it is small. It must be larger, and must have a well-defined responsibility of reporting all meetings promptly and accurately. It must also be given the duty of keeping the Union before the public at all times by means of interesting accounts of the Union's work. The Press Committee has undertaken the management of the official section of *The American Teacher*. This is very important work, and will prove interesting to those who like to present their ideas in the form of writing. More willing workers are needed on the Press Committee.

The Auditing Committee and the Finance Committee while inconspicuous are necessary. The business reliability of the Union is fundamental. Those members who are fond of having a sound financial underpinning for an organization, and are able to plan and protect the financial policy of a

great Union are urged to give some of their time to this work.

The Committee on Legislation is not yet organized. Other work has seemed more urgent. This committee will have a great deal of power, and will naturally be composed of those members who like the aggressive work of fighting for an immediate object, and of dealing with men and measures in contest with similarly aggressive opponents. The Union will doubtless need many members on this committee. The difficulties of the Union with regard to the proper attitude of its members in legislation are still to come. However, there would seem to be no doubt that the Union is not a political organization, and cannot therefore engage to protect the political interests of any individual legislator or group of legislators who give their votes in favor of any cause supported by the Union.

The Committee on Investigation has been handed down from the Teachers' League and is supported by a good record of work already accomplished. The continuance of its work, with a final recommendation for action to uncover the wastes in the business of the City may be looked for during the coming school year.

The Pension Committee is the largest committee of the Union. In addition to being a large committee, it must, in view of the considerable responsibilities involved in the construction of a sound pension bill for the consideration of the Legislature, be also a well-informed committee. I would suggest that every member of the Pension Committee study pensions as if he were about to take an examination for promotion, which promotion he was really expecting to secure. With full understanding of the principles of a sound and a fair pension, and with established confidence on the part of Union members that the interests of no special group

of teachers or officials or life insurance company would be subverted, the Union's Pension Committee has before it the possibility of being of great service.

The Teachers' Interests Committee is primarily a grievance committee. As such it will have charge of cases involving alleged discrimination or unfairness. The Union's attitude may well be one of receptivity toward all grievances of its members. It should stand for fair treatment by officials, and also for the privilege of representation on committees of the Board of Education that conduct the trials of teachers. Standing, as it must for fairness to teachers, the Union may often also represent the public point of view in being fair to the children. From the beginning it may be well to take the stand that the Union, consistent with the policy of fairness for all, can not protect or excuse incompetence or dishonesty, or palliate unprofessional conduct among its members. In this way only is it possible to develop professional standards that will command public respect.

The Committee on Course of Study is still unformed. There is an important field here, and one that has not been cultivated by the persons who know the field best. The most important principle for the Union to act upon is the principle of making the studies actually fit the pupils for living. There should be no traditions in the way of working out this important purpose.

The Committee on Education is being organized. The name of the committee may not be altogether satisfactory, but that may be altered as we find a better one. There is a set of problems which this committee or a branch of it may well work out. The League has handed down a few pieces of work which should be continued. They are closely connected with the general problem of improving the professional fitness of teachers. One of

these is the sabbatical year, another the idea of establishing a system of exchanging teachers. Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles, California and Denver, Colorado, already have an arrangement by which teachers of one city may go to another city and teach while the salaries continue to be paid by the city to which the teachers belong. One of our members has proposed that the Union establish a system of lectures on methods of teaching, and on educational policies or on educational history and ideals, managed and given by our own members who believe themselves equipped for the work. Attendance upon these lectures might ultimately be made equivalent to attendance upon college lectures and might be credited toward graduation in a college. A portion of this idea has already been planned by the League. It occurs to me that the Committee might be called the Committee on Professional Improvement.

The Committee on Trading Discounts is not yet formed. The London Teachers Association, an organization of 19,000 members, has a well organized department of trading discounts. That organization has already been of great assistance to us in the work of organizing our union. We may well look to them for experience and definite information as to how by coöperative buying we may save thousands of dollars to our members annually.

The Committee on Rules is now at work on the Revision of the Constitution. It is possible to waste a great deal of valuable time in modifying a constitution. In order to reduce the time consumed in activity of this sort to a minimum it would be well to have the Committee on Rules, acting as a permanent committee, receive all proposed amendments to the Constitution or the by-laws, consider them and report back to the Executive Board, with their approval or disapproval. The Executive Board could then approve or disapprove the report. If ap-

proved, the amendment should then be submitted in referendum vote to the members. An amendment to the Constitution under our present form of government would have to be made in order to carry these suggestions into effect.

The Committee on Social Activities has been organized, and has begun its work by aiding in the social arrangements for the National Conference. The Committee will naturally go further into the possibilities of the situation. For example, get-together meetings and the cultivation of the social amenities would be undertaken under the guiding hand of this committee. Entertainments for the purpose of extending the acquaintance of the members, and also for the purpose of raising funds or carrying on propaganda would give this committee plenty of interesting work to do. In the not distant future let us look forward to the possession of a club house all our own.

The Committee on the School Council, not yet brought together, may benefit by some work already done by the Committee on Professional Interests of the Teachers' League. The school council may well be looked upon as an institution that has come to stay. For the members of the Union it may be the only practical way in which they may put into effect in their own schools the ideals they have worked out in the Union.

As I have pointed out, we may give a great deal of time to talking about the union movement and about the things we want the union to do for us as a group, or individually, but the real evidence of progress will likely take the form of concrete accomplishments by the Standing Committees. Let each of us get on some one of these committees, and stay by the work, endeavoring to subordinate personal idiosyncracies to the general good, and to build up work that will

be a veritable monument to the profession.

Respectfully submitted,
HENRY R LINVILLE,
President.

OUR REFERENDUMS

THE UNION is testing the use of the referendums as a means of democratizing the control of our organization. In their few months of official existence two matters have been subjected to this treatment—the construction of a constitution and the selection of officers. The process of conducting a referendum is common place enough and not at all spectacular. Yet by this humble device the Union has been lifted to a unique position among teachers' organizations. The individual secret ballot has placed the control squarely in the hands of the membership. No "clique" can rule, except it be the "clique of the majority."

Special interest attached to a certain article that established eligibility to membership in the union. The framers of the constitution had decided views as to the desirability or undesirability of the different classes of school employees as members; but they did not wish to impose those views on the membership. The ballot was so arranged as to permit a separate vote on each class of employees. The answer was emphatic. Substitutes, clerks, librarians and teachers-in-training may join, but principals and assistants and superintendents may not. On the one side are the supervising staff extending and entrenching their arbitrary powers and burdensome supervisory details —on the other side, the teaching staff laboring at tasks made more irksome by the exercise of those powers. It means the teachers are aware of the divergence of interests—that in the movement to rectify existing abuses, the main reliance is to be placed on those who suffer thru these conditions.

With this number the AMERICAN TEACHER ceases to reserve four pages for the exclusive use of The Teachers' Union.



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What They Say

PEDAGOGIC CENSORSHIP

Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

IT HAS BECOME a habit with us to go to the successful bankers, automobile manufacturers and railroad owners for advice on all matters of domestic and foreign policy. The theory being that wealth and power, no matter how acquired, endow the owner with omniscience. It is also becoming more and more general for insignificant individuals occupying temporary authority either thru election or by self-appointment to determine for us what we may say, and sometimes that we may not speak at all "in this place"; what pictures we may look at; what we may print in our magazines; and to which places we may travel.

Within the last few weeks two school administrators have seen fit to go outside of their field—namely, the managing of the complicated affairs of a large institution—to determine what their students should read or look at. The schools—Hunter College and the Washington Irving High School in New York City—are both schools for girls, headed by men who, it seems, imagine that it is their bounden duty to cast a shadow over all things not dainty, sweet, and demure that girls are like to look at. Girls, they believe, are weak and defenseless and they must not be allowed to see such shocking things as a group of unemployed people depicted on canvas, or to read that one of the usual by-products of military camps is prostitution.

Of course the girls are possessed of normal vision—even if their principals are not—and they see poverty, wretchedness, unemployment and worse in their own homes, their friends' homes, in the streets—everywhere in fact. They see all the ills and evils the present industrial system produces. There are no principals conveniently stationed thruout life ready to let their broad shoulders cast a welcome shadow over the unwelcome truth. If the painting, "Am I My Brother's

Keeper" does depict wretchedness in London, why not have the girls see it; realize that the same evil exist right here; compare it with the benches in Cooper Square park filled with similar people and have them begin to think a way out—a remedy for this most crying of evils? If the painting is not artistic, does not fit in with the general design of the Municipal Art Commission for the decoration of the Washington Irving High School, why not have this body of experts decide the matter? Let us have an end to people with some authority interfering with matters that they are not at all capable of deciding.

B. M.

IS DESTRUCTIVE CRITICISM UNWEL- COME CRITICISM?

Very many of our present offerings of so-called vocational education are only shams, but sufficiently good imitations of real vocational education to deceive the taxpaying public. I am skeptical when it is asserted that the study of Latin is essential to a comprehensive understanding of our own English tongue. We drive our boys and girls hard up the steepes of Latin, French and German, but we are forced to fall back on mystical and uncertain faiths in the endeavor to justify our driving of these youths up these steepes. We wish we could prove that the hundreds of thousands—nay, millions now—of American men and women who have sometime and somewhere studied Latin, are better users of the vernacular because of that study.—DAVID SNEDDEN, State Commissioner of Education, Massachusetts, in address at December Meeting of The Associated Academic Principals at Syracuse, N. Y.; quoted in The School Bulletin of Syracuse, for January, 1916.

Editorial Comment of The School Bulletin: His criticism was destructive, not constructive.

Start the year right. Send in 100% subscriptions.

**Resolutions Adopted at a Mass Meeting Held During the
N E A Convention, New York, July 6, 1916, at
the High School of Commerce; Called
by the American Federation
of Teachers:**

IT IS THE SENSE OF THIS MEETING

- THAT** the social and technical efficiency of the public schools depends upon the establishment of high personal and professional standards for the teaching staff;
- THAT** persons of independence can be obtained for the teaching and supervising staff only with the establishment of secure tenure based on quality of service;
- THAT** adequate professional standards can be maintained only thru the control of personnel by educational officers engaged in continuous and professional service;
- THAT** the attempt to control the personnel of teaching and supervising staff by changing lay boards is a serious menace to the efficiency of the public schools, as well as an affront to American ideals of independence and fair dealing;
- THAT** we protest against the appointment or dismissal of teachers and supervisors by lay boards, as tending to place the professional staff at the mercy of sinister and unscrupulous interests;
- THAT** we call upon public spirited citizens and school patrons to resist the encroachments of partizan, sectarian or commercial interests in the control of the public schools;
- THAT** we condemn the efforts of special interests to wrest from the educational authorities the control of the public schools;
- THAT** we protest most emphatically against the arbitrary and discriminatory dismissal of efficient and superior teachers by the Board of Education of Chicago, by methods and for motives contrary to sound public policy;
- THAT** we send to the Chicago Teachers' Federation fraternal greetings and expression of good will, with the sincere wish that the stand taken by that organization for professional interests will meet with abundant success;
- THAT** these resolutions be published and that copies thereof be sent to the chief educational authorities of the several States and to the U S Commissioner of Education.