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SADTU NEWS

Newsletter of the South African Democratic Teachers Union

A REVIEW OF SADTU CONGRESS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Third SADTU Congress, held at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park, was attended by over 800 delegates, representing 100 000 teachers country-wide. Delegates were elected at Branch level, ensuring grass roots participation in the highest decision making body of the Union. The Congress served to confirm SADTU's position as the largest teacher Union in the country, and demonstrated a strongly unified focus around the theme: "Unionise and Re-construct for Teacher Empowerment".

The success of any Congress must be measured against the aims it sets itself. Our Congress had two aims: to elect new leadership for the next two years, and to adopt resolutions which would inform the direction and programmes of the Union in this period. While we successfully completed the former task, we could only make a start on the second aspect - confirming the fact that the period we are entering is far more complex than before, and in need of extensive analysis and debate. We therefore mandated the SADTU National Council to formalise the adoption of resolutions arising from the reports. A Special National Council was convened on 25/26 August, with extended participation by regions, and the Congress report can now be finalised.

2. REPORT

This Third SADTU National Congress had many positive aspects. One was the high level of discipline; delegates were together throughout the Congress, and all participated fully in the debates. Branches should know that their delegates represented them in an exemplary manner, and that this was noted by all the international guests who attended. Also important was the fact that the discipline was self-imposed by delegates, and the chair was seldom required to call for order. We have become very "professional" in our approach to Congress!

This professionalism was not only evident in the attendance figures: it could be seen in the

high quality of the debates which took place. Regions had obviously spent time in preparing delegations, and speakers made their points well. The commissions, although short of time, entered into a number of critical issues, some of which were resolved in discussion, while others had to be referred to further forums. It was important to note that the Secretarial and Financial reports - key Congress documents which are often the source of controversy - were adopted unanimously, for which the Secretariat and Treasury should be complimented. The portfolio reports were likewise adopted, giving credit to the Vice-Presidents responsible for these.

The second major feature was the high level of support which we received for the Congress. The presence of international allies, comrades from government and the labour movement, as well as student and NGO representatives, confirmed our place as the legitimate voice of teachers in the country.

The guest speaker, Prof Pai Obanye, set a reflective tone for the Congress. He was followed by two unscheduled speakers. One was the

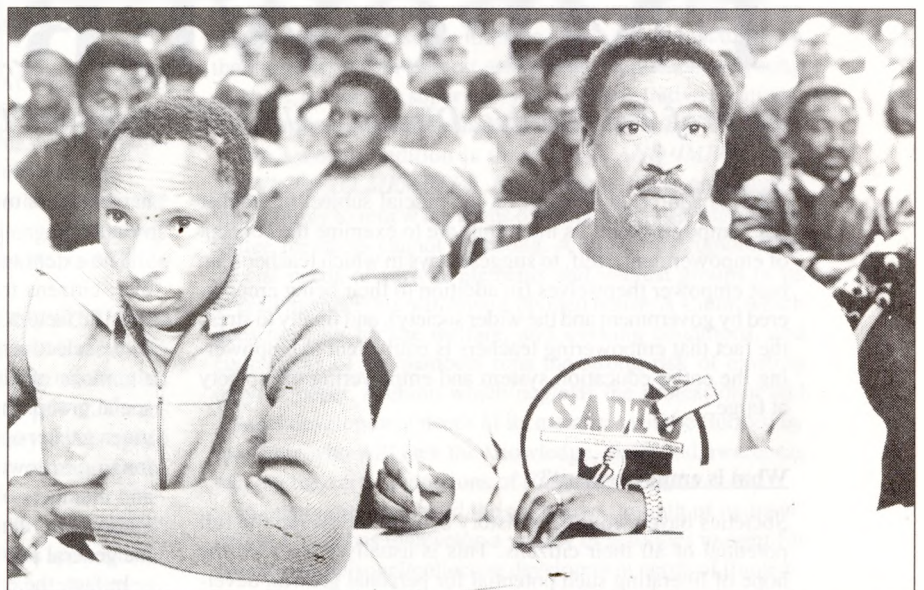
Honourable Minister of Education, Sibusiso Bengu, who flew to Johannesburg especially to be with us - a measure of the importance which he attaches to this constituency of teachers, and of his willingness to work with us on the challenges in education.

The other speaker was Tom Bediako, General Secretary of the All Africa Teachers Organisation (AATO), and the African representative of E.I. He drew on all his experience to guide us through this tough period. His indictment of reactionary teacher organisation received much support, as did his warnings to fence-sitters. He urged the new South Africa to avoid the pitfalls of structural adjustment, and warned that a strong labour movement was the key to this.

3. RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions were adopted in respect of a number of key areas. These included:

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Members of SADTU at their National Congress in the World Trade Centre, Kempton Park, Johannesburg on the 13/7/1995

EDITORIAL

Another momentous occasion has come to pass and that is the 1995 SADTU Congress. Without any doubt the 1000 strong delegates representing approximately 120 000 teachers comprised the largest gathering of educators in South Africa.

This Congress had to take stock of its achievements, consolidate its gains and charter its way forward in this period of educational transition. The core resolutions adopted pertained to the development of the Union's organisational capacity, its Negotiations Strategy, its participation on the Education Labour Relations Council, Rationalisation, Affirmative Action, the RDP with special emphasis on education, School and Institutional Governance, Teacher Appraisal, relations with the State and organs of civil society, formulation of gender policy, women abuse and family violence, child abuse within the school, national and international relations.

These resolutions must be explained and clarified to the membership as they become our guiding beacons when we interact with authorities and national, provincial and international formations. They further dictate our internal modus operandi. The main custodians of our resolutions and the SADTU Constitution are the site stewards and we salute them for their sterling work and we look forward to their leadership in this major phase of the transformation of education in particular, and of society in general.

We can unequivocally place on record that our standpoints are dictated by members professional interests and free from all party political considerations. Our task is to safeguard the interests of our members regarding their conditions of service and to enhance the promotion of pedagogical and organisational development of the education sector. A better status for the teaching profession and the provision of improved working environments remain our primary objectives.

Another highlight in the Union's calendar has been its participation at the first world Congress of Education International (EI) held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in July 1995. The Union was for the first time exposed to global trends in education and the state of trade unionism worldwide. SADTU can bask in the glory of taking its rightful place in the international arena of education.

We look ahead, confident of our stature and resolute in our purpose. We have a vision for the next three years - and we will pursue our goals and objectives - knowing that Congress has given us a fresh mandate and also designed a clear set of guidelines within which to operate. ♦

Viva SADTU!

*Reg Brijraj,
Vice-President for Media*

TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

By Prof. Pai Obanye, Director - UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa

This address will dwell on the crucial subject of teacher empowerment. Its intentions are to examine the concept of empowerment itself, to suggest ways in which teachers can best empower themselves (in addition to their being empowered by government and the wider society), and finally to stress the fact that empowering teachers is equivalent to empowering the entire education system and empowering the society at large.

What is empowerment?

Societies have throughout history sought to develop the full potential of all their citizens. This is usually done with the hope of liberating such potential for personal growth, development and self-fulfilment. It is then expected that the collective strength of the potential of individuals so nurtured will be

harnessed for overall societal regeneration and continuous development.

The extent to which individual societies have empowered their citizens to the fullest has tended to vary according to specific factors. Authoritarian regimes have, in general, tended to be selective in the process. Selection could be based on situations of birth, religious beliefs, colour, race, ethnic or social group. In caste systems, members of higher castes are given greater opportunities for empowerment than persons belonging to lower castes. In monarchies, princes, princesses, and members of their related families and court/palace officials usually have greater chances of being empowered than the general populace.

In fact, the extent to which a society is democratic can be measured by the extent to which various groups in the society (men/women/youth/elders/the high/the low/rulers/citizens/em-

players/workers etc.) are completely empowered.

In many instances in the history of the development of humanity democratic-type changes have been brought about by some mode of empowerment of the masses. Examples can be seen in such cases as the French revolution, the anti-colonial struggle in most parts of the third world, and the anti-apartheid struggle here in South Africa.

So far, we have answered the question "What then is empowerment?", but only implicitly through illustrative examples. In more explicit terms, empowerment is a combination of:

Knowledge: In the broadest sense of understanding the world around us and internalising the habit of seeking for knowledge.

Awareness: In the broadest sense of being able to see the relationship between ideas, concepts and principles and more importantly discovery of oneself.

Encapacitation: In the broadest sense of using knowledge to gain more knowledge, using the awareness to become more aware and most importantly bring about positive change.

Will power: In the sense of being ready to apply one's knowledge, skills and strength, and to persevere in doing so, for the purpose of engineering positive change.

A very common saying that every school child memorises says *KNOWLEDGE IS POWER*. The saying is an apt illustration of empowerment beginning with knowledge.

Another common saying known to school children is *UNITY IS STRENGTH*. Applied to the topic of our discussion, this is a way of saying that a single person's power can achieve very little. Individual power has to be transformed into collective strength for meaningful impact.

In summary, *EMPOWERMENT* involves developing and liberating the potentials of every individual to be fully aware of the major issues at stake in one's own life and in the wider society and to mobilise individual potential for the collective good of society.

Teachers as individuals and as organised groups need *EMPOWERMENT* for reasons that will be discussed later. Since teachers are themselves practical persons, it will be necessary at this point to go into the practicalities of their empowerment.

How can we empower people?

The question is best answered by going back to the elements of the process of empowerment earlier discussed: knowledge, awareness, encapacitation and will power.

Thus, first of all *WE MUST GIVE THE TEACHER ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE*. In this respect, the teacher requires:

A sound general education: exposure to various ways of knowing and practical training in the art of life-long learning.

A curriculum that emphasises awareness buildings: the use of questioning, discussions, exposure to challenges of various methods - all this to enable the teacher to develop self-pride and self-confidence.

Second, *WE MUST OFFER THE TEACHER SPECIALISED KNOWLEDGE*. In this connection, the emphasis is on ensuring the professionalisation of teaching. Making teaching an all comers affair is a way of eroding teachers' power. Teachers will become a powerful group the day they take steps to become the only acknowledged specialists in matters of education.

Third, *WE MUST OFFER TEACHERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIFE-LONG SELF-IMPROVEMENT*. This applies to the area of general knowledge (for that helps to raise awareness). It also applies to specialised knowledge (because this helps to incapacitate).

Fourth, *TEACHERS MUST BECOME MORE AWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRIVILEGES*. This applies to their rights and responsibilities as citizens, as workers, as specialised professionals. This is an attribute that teachers must build in themselves, by taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by society for self development, in terms of knowledge, skills and awareness.

Fifth, *TEACHERS MUST GET ORGANISED*. An individual teacher who is well- educated, skilled, professionalised, with a high degree of awareness and a highly developed self-concept can be said to be strong. However, as again every school child would say, *A TREE DOES NOT MAKE A FOREST*. A single teacher, however empowered, cannot make such difference to the conditions of teachers and of teaching unless that teacher helps in empowering others and joins forces with those others to build the collective strength of teachers.

Thus, the task of empowering is both that of teachers (individually and collectively) and that of society. The latter cannot however be fully engaged in empowerment, if the former fails to get itself strong and organised.

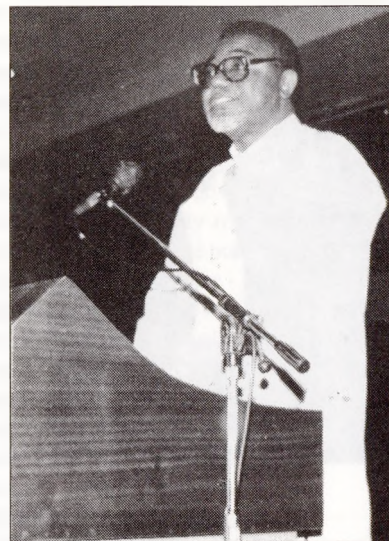
Here lies the needs for *TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS AND TEACHERS UNIONS*. Generally speaking, teachers associations are intended to serve more specific and relatively narrow interest group needs while teacher unions are expected to be more all-embracing. In ideal situations the associations emanate from or form parts of the whole (the Union), for which they serve as special think tanks and pressure groups. It is not just sufficient for teacher unions to exist, they have to be strong. The strength of a Union will depend on the extent to which its functioning meets a certain number of conditions.

The first condition is *MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH*, and this has several dimensions: the total number of registered members, the percentage of total population of teachers and other education professionals who are registered and active in union activities, the extent to which there is unity among various sectors of the profession within the Union (the extent to which the union brings all interest groups - women teachers, young teachers, teachers in supervisory and administrative positions, other forms of special groups - within its hold.)

The second condition is the *RANGE AND IMPACT OF SERVICES TO MEMBERS*. A union that meets only once a year, simply to renew the terms of office of its executive committee members cannot be strong. A Union that ignores the special needs of various elements and interest groups in its overall membership will have a divided house. A Union which does not care for the welfare, and working conditions, and civic rights of its members runs the strong risk of existing only on paper. A union which neglects the professional and general development needs of its members will be flooded by members who will lack the knowledge, skills and awareness that are the very foundations of Empowerment.

In other words, to build the collective strength of its members, a Union has to develop a variety of activities to cater for the varying personal/collective development needs of its members. The extent to which a Union is able to do this is a good

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

By Duncan Hindle, President of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union

It is my honour, on behalf of the National Executive Committee, to extend a warm welcome to our special guest Professor Obanye, to our many honoured guests, to the former Office Bearers of the Union, to our honourable members of parliament and to numerous representatives of allied organisations. These include local structures in the political, labour, and educational sectors, and also representatives from international teachers federations and their affiliates. It is also a great honour for me to welcome to this Congress over 800 SADTU delegates - the largest gathering we have ever convened. I also wish to convey our appreciation to all who made this major event possible.

It is a particular honour today to welcome you to the first "post-apartheid" Congress of SADTU. Barely seven years ago a small group of banned activists, led largely by our current General Secretary, were participating in teacher unity talks. These were supported by the international teacher bodies WCOTP and IFFTU,

and facilitated by COSATU. By no stretch of the imagination could we have believed that we would be having nearly a thousand delegates at our Third National Congress in 1995, under a democratic ANC-led government. While these recent times have been euphoric, they have brought their own contradictions and complexities, which are not as easy to analyse. The release of President Mandela in 1990 seemed to set the stage for an easy walk to freedom, but it has been, and is, a hard and confusing road.

Cde Willy Madisha and myself were elected late in the term of office to act in the position of President and Deputy President until this Congress. We appreciate the enormous honour, and we trust that we have served the Union by at least bringing together this Congress. I must also place on record the appreciation of the Union for all the work done by the members of the NEC past and present, and by all other Office Bearers and officials of the Union. Your efforts have kept the Union on track in these confusing times, and teachers have demonstrated their confidence in you by signing up for the Union and doubling our membership in the past two years.

The issue of leadership is a difficult one for the Union. Since the last Congress in 1993 we have lost two sets of leadership. In 1994 the President and General Secretary left us for parliament. During this year the President and Deputy President have both left us for positions in government. Other national and regional office bearers have also been appointed to various offices, and more still will be. These departures have all carried the blessing of the Union, and it is indeed an honour for a young Union like ours to be providing senior leadership in education. They have had their costs, but the Union has borne these willingly because of the liberatory moment.

However a strategic analysis should be conducted by this Congress to guide the future release of senior leadership - assessing the gains and the costs in an objective fashion. We may find that we have erred in the past by allowing the State to choose who they want and appoint them where they wish, rather than strategically deploying our human resources in identified key areas of government.

Despite these setbacks, the Union has developed in size and in stature. In a previous Presidential address to this Union, Cde Shepherd Mdladlana described himself as the taxi-driver: the membership calls the destination, and the President leads by selecting the route. The story was a good one, and kept the union firmly on a democratic road. What is now apparent however, is that the Union has grown up and earned its own license. The quality of leadership which is emerging from the structures of the Union indicates that members are no longer just passengers - they are decision makers at every turn and every level of the Union. The region has reached maturity and drives itself. And it is not longer a taxi, crammed with activists, but a thundering express which is taking all teachers aboard.

From this position of strength, few would doubt that SADTU has the capacity to make or break education in this country. As the largest single Union, as an alliance partner of the ANC, and as an affiliate of COSATU, our overwhelming commitment is to the Reconstruction and Development Programme, and especially towards the reconstruction and development of education. This commitment carries huge responsibilities. We are bound as professional educators to inform education policy. With students, we represent the mass base of popular education, and it will be our task to see the progressive policies of peoples' education implemented.

This requires a massive shift in the orientation of SADTU. In part, it is a question of image: the consistent daily development work of the Union, which is what most members spend most of their time doing, is just not as newsworthy as the one day they take to the streets.

But this is not just about the image of the Union, but something in the consciousness of each and every member. The focus of our work, the content of our programmes, the action part of mass action, must be on curriculum and professional development. We sit on national committees developing policy in these areas, and we must do so with a strong mandate. As we have done in other areas, we must speak with the authority of 100 000 teachers. The solid base we have built must be a platform for the real task of the Union to deliver on the educational demands of our people. The Union must know exactly what kind of education it wants, and then use our undisputed strength to fight for it.

This new task involves constructive engagement in positive and negative forms. Where policies deserve to be defended, SADTU will stand rock solid by the ANC-led government. But where policies are indefensible, positions are weak, or practices are unacceptable, then SADTU will assume its fighting character, whatever the source of these policies,



position or practices. Our support for the ANC in government is not unconditional; just as we acknowledge the leadership of the ANC in the struggle for liberation, so we need to be recognised as a crucial ally in the education terrain. We will be informed by our principles, and by our knowledge and experience of education. Our independence will never be compromised.

Just as we are bound to continuously assess our relations with the ANC in government, we must do the same with all other organisations with whom we work. It is said that Joe Slovo had on his wall a poster which read:

"Class consciousness is knowing which side of the fence you are on. Class analysis is knowing who else is on your side."

I think we can justly claim to be on the side of the many, and we seem to have many on our side. On the local level, our commitment to the ANC-led democratic alliance stands as a central pillar of the Local Government Elections in November, in which teachers will play a major role. Our affiliation to COSATU stands firm, although our participation at all levels has not been as it should be. These bonds must be strengthened if we are to give practical effect to the integration of education and training, and the blurring of a teacher/trainer distinction.

We cannot stand aloof from the shopfloor, from ABET and from skills training. We shall be defining the notion of a teacher, and of teaching by our practice. I should add that we are also neglecting our responsibilities towards the creation of a giant Public Service Union. Federation policy, and worker interests demand a single Union and we must participate more fully in this process.

On the international front, SADTU is recognised by the Southern African Teachers Organisation (SATO), the All African Teachers Organisation (AATO) and Education International (E.I.). To E.I. and its affiliates, and the funding consortium in particular, we record our most sincere thanks. You were there when we needed you most, and you have stayed with us. Our affiliation to E.I. is a mighty symbol of hope, which makes us proud of our calling. There can be little in the world that cannot be changed with the shared commitment of 20 million teachers; E.I. is therefore a hope for a better world, nurtured by committed and caring teachers.

The continental links are also very important as we recover our identity as a nation, and as a profession. Our particular struggle in South Africa stands like a beacon around the world, but we must recall that many in Africa have walked the same road, and many still do, and we would do well to listen awhile. Without presuming anything, we must also begin to discuss our willingness and ability to put forward our leadership for positions in international teacher structures, as well as our own federation. This should never be seen as a loss to the Union - the individual and the Union both grow enormously as a result.

Our relation with other teacher organisations are problematic, but they also present many opportunities. NAPTOSA is a difficult organisation to analyse because of its contradictory nature. On the one hand, it represents the class interests of the white middle class represented by bureaucrats and apartheid lawyers, in pursuit of conservative values. Even among these groups there is no coherence with APEK and CCTO reportedly very uncomfortable with the reactionary leadership of the confederation.

On the other hand, affiliates like NATU and CATU carry with them the interests of rural African teachers in two of the

poorest provinces. Their interest is in basic resources like classrooms and qualified teachers, and the retention of privileges via Model C Schools and the suchlike. The professional and wage interests of these two groups are simply incompatible - it is hard to understand what else besides their opposition to SADTU keeps them together. It is our duty to liberate these colleagues from continued colonialism. Make them class conscious and they will do their own analysis. But do it now, before Local Government elections!

Recruitment among this sector is one opportunity that arises. The Labour Relations Act has also allowed us to organise in previously neglected terrain, including the historically white schools (some of whom are signing up en masse), independent or private schools, as well as in Early Childhood Educare. Colleges of education also need attention. Our membership is open to all educators - let us fulfil that vision. But in doing so, we must be prepared to acknowledge the special interests that these may bring to the Union, and provide a basis for these to be considered. We may have to restructure ourselves to ensure that we fairly address the needs and interests of a wide range of membership, without sacrificing the essential solidarity which a Union embodies.

Besides recruitment, the operation of the Union has become a critical area of concern. As the education partner of government committed to consultation, we are increasingly relied upon for inputs and commentary on many aspects. The politically informed responses of the past will no longer serve - we need something far more sophisticated. We have grown up, and should reflect this new status. Not through a boardroom approach, but by noting the crucial distinction between being a mass based and a populist organisation. Our base will remain with the masses, but we must exercise responsible leadership through the careful consideration of all matters. I am therefore pleased to announce that the Union has agreed in principle to establish a Research Office to service the needs of the Union. This should contain full time staff, as well as opportunities for temporary secondments and attachments for members to work on particular projects.

I have no doubt that this Union will continue to grow. It will grow in terms of membership, and also respect of infrastructure which is needed to serve a large and diverse membership. It will also grow in its style of operation, as we have the benefit of experience to draw on. We will also have to change in line with the new order. This latter development path will be the hardest of them all, for there is no obvious road to follow. We will have to re-evaluate ourselves after each step of the way, and plan the next step forward.

So in congratulating the new leadership which will be elected at this Congress, and wishing them well in their new tasks, I have to also say that their period of office will not be an easy one. When a baby is young, it is easy to care for because its needs are simple. The adolescent years are the hardest, as the child undergoes a confusing transition. The Union is now a thriving (and sometimes rebellious) teenager - and her adult character will be informed over the next few years. We hand her to you, in the trust that you will develop in her three things: An awareness of where we have come from; A continued commitment to fight for equality and democracy; and A love for learning.

This Congress will lay the basis for your work over the critical phase. I urge you to contribute, and return to your schools enriched by the experience, and with a renewed commitment to the aims and objectives of this Union. ♦

ADDRESS TO SADTU NATIONAL CONGRESS

John Gomomo, President of COSATU

I am greatly honoured to have received an invitation to your Congress. I am excited to be one of your guest speakers. Your Congress comes in the middle of our LRA Bill campaign. This is one - if not the most - important campaign ever to be undertaken by COSATU. It is important because, one does not get the opportunity to influence and shape the LRA every five or ten years.

The LRA Bill is itself a victory for our struggles as workers and for the democratic forces in general. We are today talking of the LRA Bill due to the fact that there is a democracy in the country. That democracy is guided by the RDP, a brain child

of COSATU and its alliance partners.

We are in the process of shaping the LRA that may stay with us for as many as fifty years. We together with NACTU and FEDSAL have submitted six strategic demands which we are now backing with action. They are:

1. Majoritarianism
2. Centralised Bargaining
3. Full right to Strike
4. No Scab Labour
5. No offensive Lock-Outs
6. No dismissal for fear of irreparable economic harm
7. Duty to Bargain
8. Union based Workplace Forum

We can not afford to loose a single of these demands. This Congress faces a challenge. That Challenge is to develop further strategies on how we can take this campaign forward. Most importantly it

gives you an opportunity to educate your national leadership on the demands contained in our labour memorandum.

We have twice already shaken Business with our effective action on the 6 and 19 June 1995, but I am convinced that we will need more drastic action in order to get rid of the arrogance of big business.

In my view there has been progress in the negotiations between labour and government. Almost all Labour's substantial issues have been satisfactorily addressed by the government. There is only one main issue that still must be addressed by the government negotiators - the scab labour issue. I do not have any hope that Business will ever drop their arrogance. They are simply too used to getting things their way. They have accumulated privileges for over 300 years. The real question therefore is: does the government, in particular the ANC, have the guts to force change into the unwilling and backward thinking business community? The events in the next

few days will answer this question.

We have started trilateral negotiations today. For the first time we shall confront the issue of scab labour. We are eager to know if the ANC, our alliance partner, will dump us in order to please Big Business.

Comrades we are now 15 months into a democratic South Africa. We have seen how former liberation activists have changed and become politicians. We have seen and now know which leaders and organisations follow their principles and which organisations take a particular line because it seems popular at the time. The same positions vigorously presented yesterday get dropped the next day if there are a few clouds.

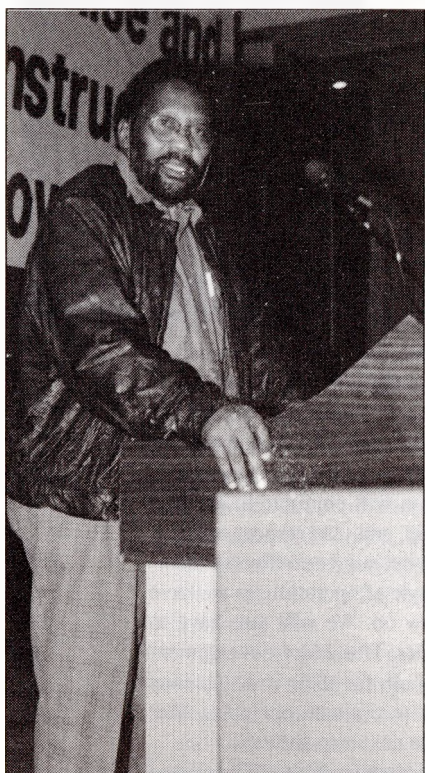
The ANC which crushed all other Micky Mouse political parties in last year's election, did so carrying the hopes and aspirations of millions of the disadvantaged communities on its shoulders. The RDP has directed the ANC to redress imbalances caused by centuries of oppression. Much has been done already in this direction. Though we never expected three hundred years of oppression to be changed in 15 months, we however do feel that with better co-ordination, planning, clear strategy and better communication with the public the government can do even better. For example how many South Africans know that the NP ran a debt of R300 billion that we now have to pay. How many South Africans are aware of the fact that 91% of the total budget of South Africa goes to repayment of this loan and departmental salaries. How many know that we have only 9% of the total budget to spend on RDP priorities.

But we must not only blame others for any failures or tardiness in development South Africa has experienced, we need to relook at the commitments we have made. We need to ask ourselves questions about the reconstruction of our country. One of those questions is: is it realistic and possible to expect 400 men and women alone to reverse the demolishing of our country that took 350 years? Can the reconstruction of a country be a matter left to the politicians, or is it the responsibility of the entire society? This is a hard question which may appear to be unfair - in particular for the people who stay in Mshenge Ville or Mandela Park squatter camp. But lets face it all our people must be motivated, educated and encouraged to play a role no matter how minimal their contribution is. What makes this debate lack direction is that Big Business makes little (or no) contribution to the betterment of workers condition. They pay low wages, enforce long working hours and ensure no minimum standards of health and safety. They see their contribution to be maximum profits and chasing paper on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange!

Your Congress faces amongst others these challenges. In line with your theme for this Congress - "Unionise and Reconstruct for Teacher Empowerment" you should follow the example of COSAS with the adoption of their code of conduct for students. The whole nation is looking at your Congress for a contribution to reconstruct our devastated society.

On behalf of COSATU and its membership I wish you luck and a fruitful Congress.

Amandla awethu! ♦



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Prof. S.M.E. Bengu

Comrade Chairperson, Comrade delegates and friends, it gives me great pleasure to have been able to finally attend this historic Congress, even though I have only come at the end.

I regard this conference as very significant indeed. Not only is it SADTU's first conference after the election, but it is also the first such congress after SADTU's full participation in the Education Labour Relations Council. I therefore believe that the conference could not have come at a more opportune moment. It allows SADTU to take stock of the progress that has been made with regard to the transformation agenda to which the Union gave its full might during the election, and to evaluate the extent to which the interest of the members have been served to date.

I am sure that Congress has been able to look at both these aspects with close scrutiny, and SADTU will now emerge with new zeal and a fresh mandate to use all its energy in strengthening the hand of the progressive forces in the agenda of transforming education and addressing the interest of its members. Allow me to add my voice to the reflections that you have had in the last two days and the mapping of the way forward that you have now emerged with.

True to our philosophy of life long learning, we have not stopped learning. One of the critical lessons of the period between April 27 last year and now has been that government cannot function properly without strong organisation to support it. The education wing of the democratic movement outside government has been weak. This has led to us getting mixed messages and receiving conflicting advice from the alliance partners. As a result our decisions on many matters have not reflected a coherent approach reflective of consensus positions within our forces. I hope that SADTU emerges from this conference ready to take its rightful place in co-ordinating the education front of the alliance and in winning over many other people to the cause of transformation.

Another lesson we have learnt is that transformation requires involvement of a different kind to the one we are used to. It requires input, deep thinking, research, reflective analysis and hands on experience. What emerges from this realisation is the need for education structures to build capacity beyond leadership levels and to empower the membership in general. Teachers should be enabled and empowered to participate meaningfully in shaping the content of education. SADTU therefore needs to consider more seriously the question of teacher participation in policy debates and related areas. I personally expect to see more involvement of teachers in policy forums at all levels. Let the teachers speak about education without any shyness and say what they think freely.

When it comes to the defence of the interest of members I would like to share with comrades my reflection on the processes around the last round of salary negotiations. This last round of talks have been an important learning experience for us. When the process began we hardly knew that the process of developing mandates in government entailed. During the process itself, I and my colleagues in government tried everything we could to get a better deal for

teachers. The two Deputy Presidents added their weight to these efforts and together with the Minister of Finance they explored all possible avenues. In the end it became clear that the constraints on government did not allow for a better offer than the one finally tabled. I therefore want to stress that I and my colleagues in government

do not by any means regard the final offer we made as one to be proud of. It was not the best offer, but the best we could come up with under the circumstances.

However, as I said earlier we have learnt some lessons. One of the lessons we have learnt is that it is important to make input on proposals for improvement of conditions of service very early in the budget cycle. This time we prepared in time for this input, and I can assure you that it may be possible for us to come with a better offer in the next financial year. We are committed to ensuring that the points that were agreed upon as a basis for improvements in the 96/97 period are all met. It is my strong belief that the central role that teachers play in the human resource development programme which is the cornerstone of our reconstruction and development programme must now begin to be recognised and acknowledged.

I want to suggest another angle to the defence of the members interest by SADTU. I believe that part of that defence entails the development of quality teachers whose commitment to education can-

not be faulted. It is not in the interest of SADTU or its members to defend rights without ensuring that those rights, while due to the members, are also well deserved. SADTU's commitment to teacher development, and to create a new teacher for our country will earn it a special place in the hearts of all our people. I am convinced that as Congress ends we are all ready to embark on a serious programme of empowerment of the teachers of our country.

Finally I want to congratulate the outgoing members of the National Executive of SADTU for leading the union through the transition, and for ensuring that more and more teachers were unionised. They need to be commended for moving forward in spite of the loss of some members into government at various levels. I also want to congratulate the newly elected Executive. I want to assure them that the task that lies ahead is still very huge. We have only started on the road to a one education system. We owe it to all those who have lost their lives in the struggle for a democratic education system, and to the millions of our people young and old, and to generations to come, to make sure that we continue on this road. It is not a smooth one. It has many potholes but we dare not fail. We are partners in this endeavour. I want to emphasise that if we fail, we fail together.

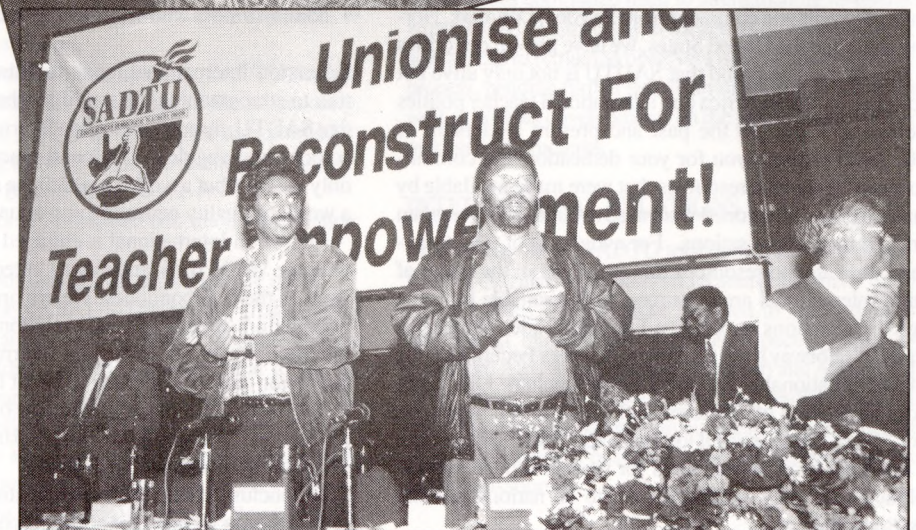
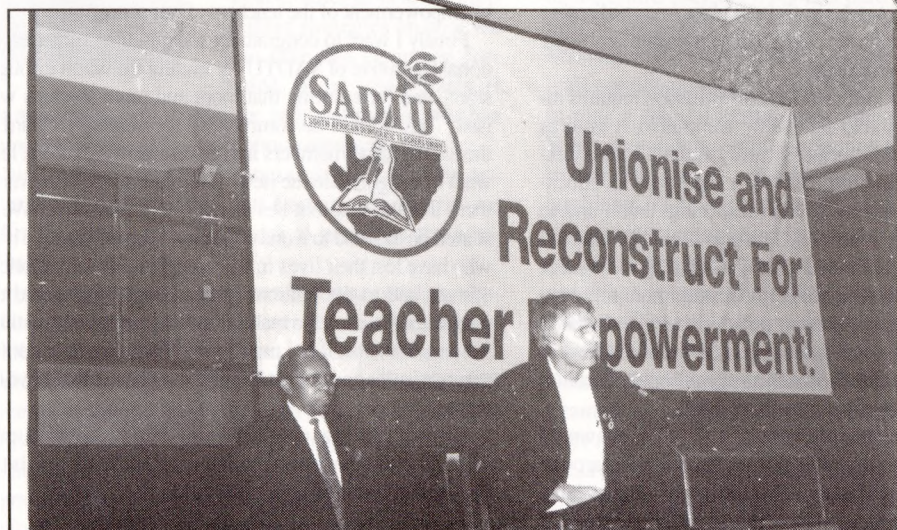
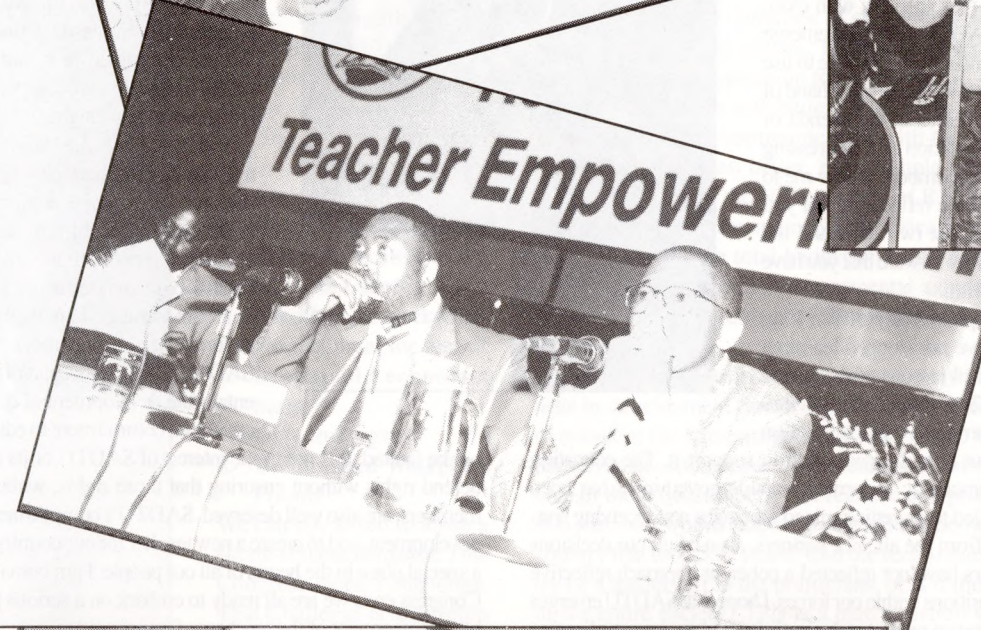
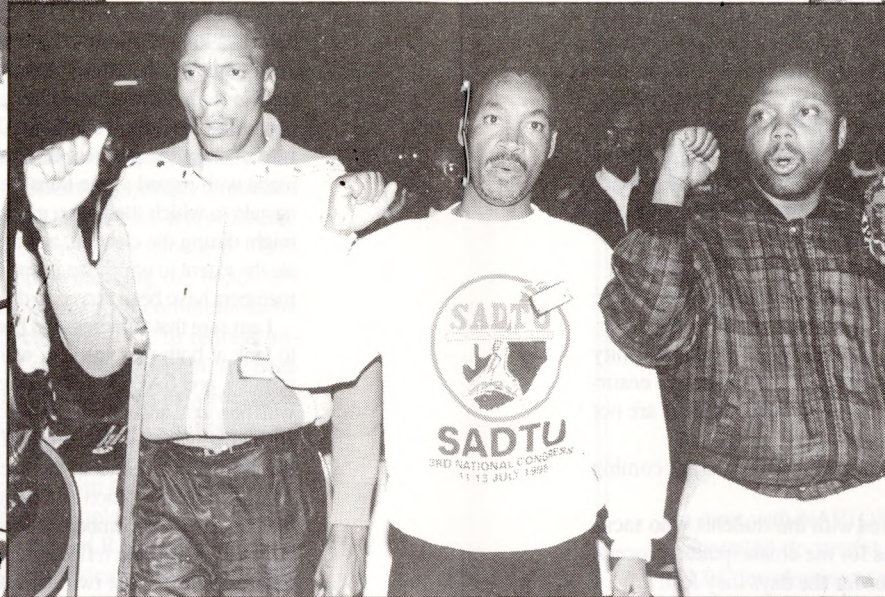
If I am regarded as commander-in-chief of all the education forces of this country, then the only command I have for you is the one that comes from you and your conference.

**"FORWARD TO EDUCATION RECONSTRUCTION AND
TEACHER EMPOWERMENT!" ♦**



CONGRESS PICTORIAL

11-13 JULY 1995



MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY

Tom Bediako, Education International

Comrade President, Honorary Members of Parliament, the Guest Speaker, Members of SADTU National Executive, distinguished guests from afar and near, comrade delegates and observers from all branches of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, on behalf of Education International and the All African Teachers' Organisation I bring you special greetings and a message of solidarity. The two organisations I have mentioned, Education International and AATO wish to congratulate you and all the people of South Africa for your heroic struggle for liberation and independence. Your achievement can be described as one of the wonders of the world in living memory.

The Education International and the All Africa Teachers' Organisation also wishes to congratulate the founders and current membership of SADTU for the unbelievable and spectacular achievements of this young but giant teachers union - a union which can be described as the only authentic, non-racial, non-sexist, non-sectoral national teachers' organisation in South Africa. SADTU was born and bred in the people's struggle for a non-racial and democratic society.

The Education International which comprised of WCOTP and IFFTU are proud to be associated with the birth and growth of SADTU. As pointed out in the various reports to this Congress, the Education International Consortium which started with Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Canadian and Australian teachers' unions, have demonstrated their solidarity in various ways to SADTU. We in the Education International have also gained enormous experience in being partners in your struggle to build a formidable organisation - an organisation dedicated to quality education, promotion of human and trade union rights and national reconstruction.

I am personally happy that people and organisations who had sleepless nights and days in trying to raise seed money and other international support for the conception, birth and steady growth of SADTU are alive and here today to see for themselves what can be done by dedicated men and women who despite oppression and depression have a vision and a realistic dream of building this strong and viable organisation - SADTU.

To my colleagues and comrades from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Australia and the United States, we have proved our critics wrong and we must be proud that SADTU is not only alive but it is becoming a giant in Africa and international teacher politics and professionalism. To the past and present leadership of SADTU, AATO salutes you for your dedication and commitment to ensuring that the resources that were made available by the countries I have mentioned were used to build and strengthen teachers and their organisations. For avoidance of doubt, permit me to indicate the resources that are listed in the name of Education International are resources made available by some member organisations especially Lararfurbundet (Sweden), Norsklaerlag (Norway), the Canadian Teachers Federation, the Australian Educational Union, the Danish Teachers' Union, the American Federation of Teachers and a few others. Again on behalf of AATO, I wish to say it loud and clear that we are grateful to you and Education International for your continued support and solidarity not only to SADTU but to 40 national teacher organisations in Africa.

To the SADTU delegates assembled here, at the inception of this organisation you made some political and social choices in terms of identifying yourself with the liberation struggle and

building a new South Africa. You made a commitment to promote and protect an effective unified education system and a strong teachers' union - a union which will stand on the two legs of professionalism and trade unionism. To me the two are inseparable: a person cannot be a good professional without ensuring that s/he has at least the basic necessities for survival and good working conditions, but neither can the person claim to be a good trade unionist if s/he cannot deliver the goods in the classroom and enhance the status of teachers through exemplary life. Education International would urge you among other things to take decisions and adopt resolutions which will empower you to empower others.

As SADTU you should:

- Consolidate your political, social, professional and economic gains;
- Develop new relations with the Government of National Unity - maintaining your independence but at the same time ensuring that the aspirations of teachers and other workers are not sacrificed;
- Learn to forgive but never to forget where you are coming from;
- Continue to identify yourselves with the students who sacrificed their education and lives for the emancipation process. We should put in an extra hour for the days they lost;
- Accelerate your membership mobilisation and conscientisation so that SADTU can become the most representative union - negotiating for not less than 60% of teachers in South Africa by the year 2000AD;
- Develop the capacities of both men and women who are capable of representing teachers at all levels of decision making in education;
- Generate additional resources to provide services which are identified by the membership, to address the needs of the disadvantaged and to extend solidarity to countries like Mozambique, Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia and even beyond the borders of Africa; and
- Take a leadership role in bringing into being new educational administrators who will identify themselves with SADTU.

Education International looks forward to SADTU's contribution to strengthening the world teachers' movement. We wish that SADTU, through Education International, becomes a strong actor in our struggle for a fair and peaceful world, a world of not only the rich, but a world in which the strong supports the weak, a world of quality education and equal access.

Education International is engaged in a continuous dialogue with the World Bank and other United Nations Agencies. Our work in the ILO continues. We are opposed to all kinds of discrimination, child abuse and violation of trade union rights. In the first Congress of Education International, we shall map out our vision and strategies for the next three years.

AATO is expecting the teachers of South Africa to play a leading and meaningful role in our struggle for the eradication of poverty, disease and ignorance.

In conclusion, on behalf of Education International, we wish to assure you of our support and collaboration in translating into reality this vision for SADTU.

The struggle of teachers and other workers of the world continues unabated. ♦

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EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

On the matter of educational policy development, the first call of the union was for greater transparency in these processes, and the urgent establishment of consultative structures for education. The Education Policy Bill promises a National Education and Training Council, and we have urged its formation.

In its consideration of education and the RDP, SADTU focused specifically on schools in informal settlements, and in rural areas. A call was made for RDP funds to be directed to these schools for purposes of redress, and also for them to be recognised so that they may obtain teacher salaries and other resources.

On the issue of school governance the Union concretised its proposals regarding appropriate structures, defining a PTSA as an elected structure of equal parts, with the Principal an ex-officio member. The Union was clear that such structures should have no formal power in relation to the employment of teachers, although they may advise the Department on such matters.

The Teacher Appraisal project was considered, and we resolved as follows:

- to proceed with the pilot programme for the rest of 1995;
- to propose a national conference before the end of 1995; and
- to meet with NAPTOSA to hear their objections to the negotiated document, before introducing it into the ELRC for adoption as a collective agreement, for implementation in 1996.

The demise of the NETF and its curriculum sub-structure, have left a partial vacuum in the area of curriculum development. Short term processes will have to continue, while fundamental restructuring is undertaken. SADTU is covering the short term by establishing more than 40 National Curriculum commissions, and replicating these at all levels of the Union. In addition, a national policy conference next month will prepare for participation in the drawing up of an integrated curriculum for education and training.

An historically neglected area has been that of Learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN). SADTU reaffirmed its call for the rapid mainstreaming of learners within SEN, to avoid further marginalisation.

In relation to the education bureaucracy, SADTU stressed the need for a more radical restructuring of the bureaucracy, on affirmative action principles. The Union also pointed to the urgency in setting up of effective provincial education departments, which we believe should involve:

- massive cutbacks in the bloated education bureaucracy; and
- a demand for thousands of teachers to equalise ratios.

On a human rights theme, SADTU noted with great concern the apparently escalating levels of family violence and the sexual abuse of children. SADTU accepted that it was responsible for ensuring that its members were aware of these issues and their implications, and could deal with them in their classrooms. We also accepted that teachers would have to educate communities in relation to such practices. This aspect will become part of a national campaign flowing out of the Congress.

GENDER

SADTU noted some of the gains made in respect of gender equality in service conditions, including agreements around pension funds for women educators, housing subsidies for married women, and maternity leave. These represent a small breakthrough, but their effect will be small to begin with. Further negotiations will be held on the basis of the gender desk policy document, which National Council called for.

In relation to the State's Gender Equity Unit, SADTU noted with concern that this was not yet established, despite promises in the first White Paper last year. Given the size of the task, the Union called for it to be set up and to commence work immediately.

LABOUR FRONT

SADTU adopted a Negotiations strategy for the next three years, compiled by the National Secretariat. This includes an approach to salaries and service conditions, but also makes provision for "time off" for union officials. A proposal from the State in this regard was noted by Council, and referred to Provinces for discussion.

The Union also gave consideration to various issues relating to the "harmonisation" of the ELRC with the provisions of the LRA, and the contradiction around the existence of two chambers - the PSLRC and the ELRC - when our money comes from one allocation.

STRENGTHENING THE UNION

Council approved Constitutional changes which will involve the introduction of an extra layer of organisation at Provincial level, with "Regions" between these and the Branches. Some Provinces now have in excess of 40 Branches, which need constitutional sub-structures for effective communication, consultation and organisation.

This restructuring which shifts the focus of delivery to Provinces and Branches, and could also provide for Union demarcations which correlate with those of the new Department. As a further amendment, National Congress will only be called every three years, and not two as before.

BONDS WITH COSATU AND PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS

SADTU has committed itself to strengthening its interaction with COSATU, especially at local and provincial levels. We also agreed to remain as observers in the Public Sector Unity process, pending further debate amongst our membership, as well as broader developments on the public sector bargaining process and structures.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In assessing these, SADTU took particular note of the low level of organisational skills and resources in many Southern African states, and therefore resolved to work towards the building of international relations, especially with SATO (Southern African Teacher Organisation) and AATO (All African Teacher Organisations). We also resolved to build on our international links through our membership of Education International, and if possible to use our position to influence the organisation. ♦

BREAKING INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES

The First World Congress of Education International (EI) which was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 19-23 July 1995 was one of the most significant international assemblies of educators ever. This Congress brought together approximately 260 teacher organisations from 141 countries, representing more than 22 million educators worldwide. This was the first world Congress of teachers to be hosted on African soil.

The Congress emphasized the need for solidarity in the face of intensified onslaught on trade unions and the transgression of fundamental human rights particularly in Africa, Asia and South America, on the one hand, and the continued decline of the status of teachers internationally, on the other hand. The theme of Congress was "Educators United, Ready for Change". Implicit in this theme is the imperative to consolidate and expand the network of international solidarity and cooperation development, and that it was incumbent for educators to play a key role in the changing global situation.

A high-powered eight-person delegation led by the SADTU President, Cde Duncan Hindle, attended this World Congress. The South African delegation was given a rousing and tumultuous ovation, not only in recognition of SADTU's role in education but also in appreciation of the role played by all South Africans in the democratic and peaceful transformation of South Africa. The birth of a new and democratic South Africa has accelerated the momentum towards the democratisation of Africa and it is seen as a beacon of hope by those who yearn for and cherish democracy and its ideals.

Amongst others, these are some of the key themes which Congress adopted resolutions on:

- * Trade Union and Human Rights;
- * Public Education;
- * Equality of Women;
- * Status of Teachers; and
- * Development Cooperation.

2. TRADE UNION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Congress noted with serious concern the continued violation of trade union rights in a number of countries. The reluctance of many governments to recognise trade union rights including international labour standards (particularly the standards provided by the Convention #87 on the right to organise and Convention #98 on the right to collective bargaining) are shown by the increase in the number of complaints lodged with the ILO Freedom of Association Committee.

Below is an overview of some of the trade union and

human rights violation cases against EI affiliates and/or their individual members.

2.1 Africa

Ethiopia: the government jailed, dismissed and transferred union members and froze the union's bank account.

Rwanda: more than 14000 teachers were assassinated during the civil strife in this country.

Zaire: the government has failed to pay salaries to teachers and other public servants since February 1994.

Gabon: military troops shot a member of the Executive Committee of the teachers union.

Nigeria: After the military take-over, union leaders were imprisoned and the unions were put under administrators named by General Sani Abacha's military junta.

2.2 Asia-Pacific

South Korea: 350 members of the Korean Teachers Union (Chunkyojo) who were dismissed in 1989 have been offered reinstatement on condition that they would sign a statement declaring not to be members of the union.

Burma: all trade union activity is illegal.

Australia: the State Government of Victoria introduced legislation in 1992 which violates ILO Conventions 87 and 89.

Indonesia: the government detained leaders of independent unions after demonstrations in Medan in April 1994.

2.3 Europe

Turkey: the Turkish government detained a leader of EGIT-SEN in May 1994 after she attended a union meeting.

ex-Yugoslavia: the government continued the banning of Albanian as a medium of instruction in Kosova (Serbia); refused to reinstate 26000 teachers

dismissed in 1990 and pursued its policy of intimidation, arrest, and detention of members of the Kosovan Teachers Union.

United Kingdom: the government has enacted eight laws which have a limiting impact on union activities and rights.

Bulgaria: the government adjusted the country's labour legislation in 1995 thereby removing some bargaining rights for public sector employees.

2.4 Latin America

Nicaragua: the government dismissed officers of ANDEN in 1993 and further refused the union recognition.

Haiti: the education union CNEH continues to operate in a clandestine manner.

Guatemala: the government suspended the constitution of the country and banned all organisations including teachers organisations.

Bolivia: the government arrested and detained 360 educators and other trade unionists after it had declared a state of siege following a six week teacher strike. An ICFTU delegation visited Bolivia and two members of the delegation were detained and deported.

2.5 North America and the Caribbean

Canada: the Provincial governments of Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Yukon, Quebec unilaterally imposed restrictive legislation on conditions of service of teachers.

Barbados: the government imposed significant changes to conditions of teachers through legislation.

The Congress concurred with the view that an international campaign should be vigorously launched against the violation of trade union and human rights particularly in third world countries.

Furthermore, the Congress noted a growing trend of right-wing extremism, ethnicism and xenophobia i.e. intolerance against ethnic minorities from other countries. Mass migration from unsafe to safe areas, from poor to rich countries, high unemployment rates and deteriorating social conditions are viewed as the principle causes of extreme nationalism, xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism.

The Congress unanimously agreed to use education as a tool to combat all these unacceptable trends.

Delegates further reaffirmed the collective rights of indigenous peoples including the right to cultural identity.

3. CHILD LABOUR

Congress focused on the continued violation of Children's Rights particularly in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Columbia, Peru, the Philippines and South-East Asia. A unanimous decision was taken to campaign against child labour and the violation of children's rights.

4. PUBLIC EDUCATION

Congress noted that programmes for "economic reconstruction" and "structural adjustment", imposed by the international financial institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank, impounded excessively and negatively on the public sector leading to extensive cuts in education spending. It was further noted that the debt crisis currently being experienced in the third world and parts of Eastern and Central Europe has led to the privatisation of state assets including education, in order to liquidate this debt.

Congress resolved that all nations should mobilise to guarantee public education for all; that a concerted effort be made to ensure a substantial write-off of the total burden of debt; that the World Bank and IMF should change their policies by taking into account the views of the ILO, ICFTU, and EI at the international level and the views of the social partners at the national level. In other words, this should mean that these financial institutions should consult teacher organisations on matters affecting education.

From the afore-going it is evident that educators all over the world are united in their demand for state funded public education. This is unequivocally a clear message to those who want to privatise education and present it as a market-driven commodity rather than as a fundamental right. SADTU's campaign against Model C schools should not only be viewed against national dynamics but also within the context of international trends.

5. EQUALITY FOR WOMEN

One of the strong features of Education International is its forthright policies on gender issues. This is reflected in the composition of women educators in the leadership echelons of the EI. To a certain extent, it was also reflected in the composition of various delegations to the Congress.

The Congress adopted a resolution entitled "Policy Declaration On Women In Education And Teachers Organisations", which states :

"Considering that education no matter what form it takes, is still contributing too often today to the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes and sexist behaviour, thereby aggravating the existing inequality between men and women, EI calls attention to the urgent need for action on the part of organisations of teachers and educational employees in the following three fields : (A) Within the Educational System; (B) Within Organisations of Teachers and Educational Employees and (C) In Society as a Whole."

Congress also unanimously adopted a resolution urging all member organisations to combat all forms of violence against women and girls through the implementation of a long-term plan of action which will :

- * wage the struggle in cooperation with women's organisations and organisations for the defence of human rights;

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- * determine a strategy aimed at the teaching profession in liaison with organisations for the defence of human rights; and

- * cooperate with organisations of parents.

6. STATUS OF TEACHERS

Congress noted that the vast majority of teachers do not receive the moral and material recognition appropriate to their level of qualifications and responsibility. This is worse in the third world where the majority of teachers live below the bread line. Delegates further acknowledged that the low salary of teachers in most countries creates situations of low regard, demoralisation and even precariousness in developing countries, which affect teachers morale and dignity.

The Congress resolved that all teachers must receive initial higher education level training before starting to teach, as well as regular in-service training which will allow teachers to keep abreast of developments in their respective fields. Delegates also emphasised the need to ensure that teachers and the education personnel must be able to live with dignity from their work, without having to take a second or third job to obtain a decent salary. Lastly, the need to give value, status, recognition and dignity to the function that teachers perform was reaffirmed.

7. DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The Congress noted the need to consolidate and expand the network for development cooperation with specific emphasis on the third world and parts of Eastern and Central Europe. The objectives of such development cooperation has to relate to the promotion of the North South dialogue; to build strong trade unions and to ensure a collective effort. Multi-lateral and bilateral programmes within the ambits of EI's policies should focus on trade union education, professional development and other activities of development cooperation.

These activities should be aimed at boosting the capacity of beneficiaries in order to deal with a number of challenges in their countries. They should create a base from which budding teacher unions can build on so that in future they can be able to sustain these projects on their own. A dependency syndrome should not be allowed to perpetuate itself.

As the late Cde Samora Machel said "development cooperation should not be an act of charity but it should be an act of solidarity".

8. CONCLUSION

The EI First World Congress was indeed a worthy learning experience for all of us from South Africa. It exposed the SADTU leadership to the international plain and its dynamics. Through this Congress we have forged new relations and consolidated existing ones. The Congress proved that international solidarity transcends the boundaries which separate the human race. ♦

NEW CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

~ JULY/AUGUST 1995 ~

The following constitutional amendments will find application until the next SADTU National Congress:

1. The SADTU Regional Committees will now be known as the SADTU Provincial Committees. Likewise, the Sub-Regional Committees will be called the SADTU Regional Committees.
2. The SADTU National Congress shall be convened at least once in three years.
3. The SADTU Provincial Conference shall be convened at least once in two years.
4. The SADTU National Council shall be convened at least once a year.
5. The representative structures of the Union, in order of priority, are:

National Congress

National General Council

National Executive Committee

Provincial Conference

Provincial General Council

Provincial Executive Committee

Regional Annual General Meeting

Regional Executive Committee

Branch General Meeting

Branch General Council

Branch Executive Committee

Site Meeting

Site Committee Meeting.

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measure of the extent and strength of its influence.

The third condition is the *ORGANISATIONAL AND FUNCTIONING METHOD OF THE UNION*. Teachers' unions should radiate democracy and transparency in all their operations. This is the safest way of giving a sense of belonging to its members. It is also good training for members who will be expected to play leadership roles in schools and in other aspects of national life.

The fourth and most important condition is the *VOICE OF THE UNION* on a variety of national issues. Top of such issues is the Union's voice in matters affecting education. In many countries of the world, teachers have not been placed at the centre stage of educational decision making. This has had the disastrous effect of all top-down approaches to development. Money has been wasted on conferences, new programmes and reform projects which have had no impact at the school and classroom levels.

A Union, to be credible, has to build up the professional knowledge, skills and awareness of its members to enable them to become the authority on educational issues. It has often been said that *EDUCATION IS TOO IMPORTANT TO BE LEFT ONLY TO EDUCATORS*. Proponents of such a theory should, in view of the disaster that has fallen education in our time, be reminded that *EDUCATION IS TOO SERIOUS A MATTER TO BE TAKEN TOTALLY OUT OF THE HANDS OF ITS ONLY PROFESSIONALS - THE TEACHERS*.

It is also important that the Teachers' Union has a strong voice in the all-embracing labour movement of each country. Since all socio-economic issues are interrelated, workers in various sectors need to act as a single force. Teachers as builders of human beings need to be strong in such a united force of workers to ensure respect for themselves and the respect of all other sectors for the Education sector.

Above all, a Teachers' Union should have a voice in *WIDER NATIONAL ISSUES*. In Africa, issues like democracy, human rights, structural adjustment programmes and all their not-at-all-happy consequences should be studied and addressed by Teachers' Unions. The overall socio-economic climate of a nation has strong influences on the development or non-development of education. It does impact, one way or the other, on the life of teachers - as workers and as citizens. Moreover, teachers (as moulders of human beings) have to be concerned about the overall welfare of the citizenry. Teachers are educating the young to facilitate their entry into active life. For that reason, they must show concern for the type of life and society that the young are likely going to find themselves in.

In summary, empowering the teacher is a two-way, mutually interactive process which involves giving the individual teacher the tools to become a strong active member of a strong union. To be considered strong a union should meet the conditions earlier enumerated. All these conditions combine to give the Union a *VOICE*, in educational, in labour and in wider socio-economic issues. This *VOICE* is the Union's ultimate strength.

Why empower the teacher?

It can be seen from the points made at the beginning of this address that empowerment is in fact synonymous with education. When we educate the teacher, we improve the chances of children in schools being better educated. The better educated the citizenry is, the greater likelihood of its contributing to overall societal development.

Empowerment implies the development and the liberation of talents. Teachers are the primary actors in the process of

talent cultivation. A democratic society strives to harness the talents which teachers and schools have cultivated for popular participation in development.

Such participation means involvement in policy discussions/policy formulation by enlightened minds. It means participation in the task of societal development by skilled hands. It also means enhanced creativity by persons who have been allowed the free exchange of ideas and the free exercise of all types of talents, including the talents that go with creativity and entrepreneurship.

In other words, empowerment makes for the full development and full utilisation of talents to build up societal strength for development in the true sense of the term. Therefore, a society which seeks to empower its teachers will in fact be empowering itself, while a society which neglects the empowerment of its teachers will simply be weakening itself.

Conclusions

In concluding, one would like to relate the foregoing discussion to the situation in the Republic of South Africa. South African teachers (of all persuasions) were subject to the process of empowerment in varying degrees over the year. The part played by teachers in the struggle for a democratic South Africa will one day be subjected to detailed, analytical study. There is however no doubt that their influence on children, parents, and entire communities helped in raising an awareness of the evils of apartheid.

The level of awareness in teachers was strong all along and this resulted from the rigorous empowerment programmes mounted all over the country from the 1970s. The 1980s saw teachers' unions training their members in trade union rights and in professional/academic skills. The mobilisation against unjust education laws and practices that followed had its impact on subsequent political developments.

One good move for which South African teachers must be congratulated is the creation of SADTU itself. The road was rough, but the will to trudge on was there, on all sides. In the end, the coming together of all races became a reality among teachers even before it became so in the wider South African society.

Today, one is very delighted to be addressing the third Congress of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union.

It is however necessary to stress that for SADTU (as for other teachers' unions in Africa) the task of empowerment has only just begun. We need to satisfy the yearnings of all those who struggled with us to install a just educational system. We have to arm ourselves with appropriate knowledge, skills awareness and will power (in other words empower ourselves) to influence and monitor the evolution of the system.

We need to meet the yearnings for knowledge and professional certification of our members who are yet to become professional teachers. We need to meet the demands of our younger members who are looking forward to us radiating democracy and transparency in our running of the union. Our women members have always been a pillar of strength; we need to work hard towards their full integration into SADTU and their full involvement in union activities.

In short, we still have a lot to do to give us the *VOICE* we need to become fully involved in pioneering the development of a democratic South Africa. In the area of education, in particular, South Africa is embarking on profound reforms. We should avoid the mistakes made in the past by many African states and ensure that teachers play a centre-stage role in the great reform efforts that lie ahead. ♦

SOME OF THE KEY RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE JULY 1995 SADTU NATIONAL CONGRESS

1. The National Media Committee was mandated to conduct a feasibility study with a view to determining the Union's communication needs and to develop a strategy to meet and enhance those needs.

2. That a Collective Bargaining Conference be held to formulate the Union's strategy in salary negotiations and as back-up, to set up its own research unit.

3. That the Union embark on a plan of action to publicise the plight of teachers operating in squatter camp schools and expose the difficult conditions under which pupils have to learn and teachers teach especially in relation to the 1996 examinations.

4. That the harmonisation of taxation, housing subsidies and pensions should be phased in over a period of time. Further, that the rationalisation of the Pensions Schemes should be transparent and inclusive.

5. The Union was mandated to negotiate special offers and discounts with business houses and chain stores for the benefit of its members.

6. The State was called upon to seriously implement affirmative action programmes to circumvent the reactionary attitudes of the old bureaucracy and to also undertake the fundamental transformation of that bureaucracy.

7. SADTU was mandated to play a constructive and supportive role in the Local Government elections. Further, that it convenes teacher forum meetings to sensitise members on the importance of these elections.

8. The National Gender Desk was directed to formulate policy on all

gender issues that would bind and commit all members of the Union. Further, that vigorous programmes be initiated to empower women and conscientize members on gender issues.

9. SADTU undertook to work with COSATU, NGO's and other relevant organisations to highlight the problem of women abuse and family violence by organising workshops and seminars aimed at educating teachers and the community on that subject.

10. SADTU should play a key role in building the All Africa Teachers' Organisation (AATO), the Southern Teachers' Organisation (SATO) and Education International (EI).



SADTU NATIONAL OFFICE BEARERS 1996-1999

President. Duncan Hindle

Deputy President. Willy Madisha

Treasurer. Lisebo Mabote

Vice President for Education. Glenn Abrahams

Vice President for Media. Reg Brijraj

Vice President for Gender. Pinky Mbowane

Vice President for Culture. Willy Lefora

Vice President for Marketing and Benefits. J.J. Mbana

Vice President for Sport. Bafundi Makubalo

General Secretary. Thulas Nxesi

Assistant General Secretary. Mxolisi Nkosi