

THE OTTAWA CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD ORGANIZATION OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The Fourth Delegate Assembly of the World Organization of the Teaching Profession was held at Ottawa, Canada, from July 17 to 22, 1950. The delegates to this conference from the Philippine Public School Teachers Association were Mr. Jose Y. Tuazon, Superintendent of Schools for Mindoro and Member of the PPSTA Board of Directors, and the undersigned.

From what had been stated in written material on the WOTP and what had been said in the Fourth Delegate Assembly, I gather that the main purpose of the WOTP is to use education as a means of promoting international understanding, peace and goodwill. To many of us who live and work quite remote from the actual scene of operations of the Organization, it is not easily clear why and how we should participate in the activities of this Organization of teachers. It has been our privilege to see the Organization at close range, to study its program and procedures quite intimately, and are therefore in a position to state in what way the organization can be of help to us who live and teach in the Philippines.

It is doubtless clear to all of us that time and events are moving with such rapidity toward a world decision as to which of two ideologies—Communism and Democracy—will survive to determine the shape of the future and how humanity will fare in the generations that follow the present. While the decision will perhaps be determined by the

use of arms, it is doubtless true that the strength with which the democracies can win the gigantic struggle will depend to a large degree on the kind of thinking and belief that dominate the life of the people in the democracies. If their thinking is haphazard, if their attitude with respect to the issues of democracy vs. totalitarianism is not clean-cut and devoted, and if they are not convinced in all sincerity that democracy is a cause worth risking life for, then in the inevitable struggle, the democracies will participate just halfheartedly. This is so evident in the present Korean war. Many nations and many peoples seem to be paying mere lip service to the cause of democracy, because to them making democracy live has not yet become an obsession.

Peoples throughout the world have to be educated in the ways of democracy if they are to become crusaders and knights on its behalf. In the Philippines there is danger that some of our people do not really understand what democracy really means, and we are in grave peril of succumbing to the insidious influences of subversive elements. The teachers and educators of the Philippines have a duty to so teach, live and practice democracy that it can become a passion for our people. The strength of democracy throughout the world lies in the individual strength of nations and persons in their belief that democracy is the way of life they want to lead. And so education throughout

the world must be engrossed in teaching people the democratic way of life, so that democracy can be strong in its struggle against the communistic ideology.

The participation of our Association in the conference of the WOTP should result in a conviction that our efforts in teaching democracy should be greatly intensified. Attendance in the conference by delegates from the PPSTA results in a personalized contact with others from the far reaches of the world who believe in the same things with respect to democracy, and this personalized contact drives home the conviction more effectively than can remote-control correspondence that the whole democratic world must renew and ever strengthen the drive to spread the gospel of democracy to all peoples.

One of the most inspiring speeches that the Philippine delegates heard at the Ottawa conference was the one delivered by Dr. William G. Carr, Executive Secretary of the WOTP (also Associate Executive Secretary of the NEA), which I am enclosing with this article, with the request that the two articles be published in the Philippine Educator simultaneously. Dr. Carr expresses more effectively than my futile words could do what should be desirable goals for the world organization of the teaching profession. I invite particular attention to the discussion of the second practical goal which deals with the defense and rights of teachers and children everywhere in the world.

And now this article proceeds to relate the extent of participation which the PPSTA representatives took in the deliberations of the WOTP Conference.

In the first general session of the Assembly, when it considered the draft constitution of the proposed world Confederation of the Teaching Profession, the undersigned was the very first

speaker, when he criticized the proviso in the draft which contained the following statement:

"The Confederation shall exclude from its debates all questions involving political or religious controversy, and shall make no racial discrimination."

Your delegate objected to this proposed provision. Let me quote from what an Ottawa newspaper reported on this particular phase of the discussions:

"Attacking the proposed ban, Marcelino Bautista, of the Philippine Public School Teachers Association, declared that if political controversy were banned, the organization would miss an opportunity to enlighten the world on the vital conflict between Communism and Democracy, which is now raging . . . Mr. Bautista felt it was the duty of an international teachers' organization to disseminate information on this subject."—From *the Evening Citizen, Ottawa, July 18, 1950.*

Other delegates followed up this trend of thought. Among others who spoke, Dr. Carr of the NEA stated that political questions that affect the welfare of teachers and the education of children should be discussed by the organization. When the committee designated to submit a report on this matter appeared in the general session, it recommended the following proviso, which was approved by the Assembly:

"Political and religious questions shall merit debate in the World Confederation of the Teaching Profession if these affect education." . . .

We thought that the new statement was decidedly more liberal and in consonance with the spirit of the teaching profession, and so the Philippine delegation voted approval.

On July 18 and 19, portions of the general sessions were devoted to the

giving of reports from various countries on what is being done to promote more effective public relations for the schools. Mr. Jose Y. Tuazon, with very little preparation, submitted a report for the Philippines. He elaborated on a very brief report on the subject submitted by the Executive Secretary-Treasurer to the WOTP before he left the Philippines. Mr. Tuazon improved upon the brief report by throwing in plenty of spicy humor which clicked very well with English-speaking portion of the audience. Mr. Tuazon dwelt at length on the survey conducted under the auspices of the Joint Congressional Committee on Education, in whose technical staff the PPSTA was adequately represented, to determine what the people wanted to do about their schools. "No nation to our knowledge," asserted Mr. Tuazon, "has ever conducted as nationwide a survey of what the people wanted to do about their schools as it was done in this instance in the Philippines." He emphasized the fact that it was through the teachers' efforts that the public forums conducted in connection with the survey were well attended and therefore successful. "We have a very large percentage of illiteracy," continued Mr. Tuazon, "and we have such meager elementary school curriculum that we had to enlist the cooperation of the people to provide a more adequate edification so that illiteracy may be wiped out. The will of the people as indicated in the forums was submitted for consideration by the Congress of the Philippines. Among other things the people expressed the willingness to pay more taxes if these taxes are used for school purposes exclusively."

Mr. Tuazon's report, which lasted about one-half hour, was well received by the Assembly. The very long applause that followed was an indication of how favorably it was received.

The next instance in which the PPSTA delegation actively participated

in the discussions was when Dr. F. L. Sack, Vice-President of WOTP and official observer of the organization at Unesco, attacked "Unesco's fine speeches that disregard reality." (quotations from the *Globe and Mail*, July 20). Dr. Sack is one of Switzerland's top-ranking educationists. Among other things, Dr. Sack objected to Unesco's close identification of literacy with world peace. "After all, the people who threaten us today all are extremely able to read and write." The *Globe and Mail* reported that:

"Marcelino Bautista of the Philippines took exception to Dr. Sack's remarks regarding literacy and peace. 'Communism spreads in areas which are poor physically and intellectually—so that is a threat to peace,' he said."

Your delegate argued that if some of the so-called educated peoples of the world are now causing trouble, it is because they have succumbed very easily to indoctrination. If educated people can be so easily indoctrinated, it would seem that those who are illiterate have much less chance to resist indoctrination.

The undersigned read a prepared speech lasting about forty minutes on the subject "Philippine Educational Effort in the Promotion of International Understanding, Peace and Goodwill." This report has already been submitted to the PPSTA Office. It is hoped that the report will be published in the *Philippine Educator*. Regarding this report, let me quote from an item published in the same daily referred to above:

"In a moving address on education in his country, Mr. Bautista said that the gravest threat to the Philippine effort to promote international understanding, peace and goodwill stems from the meager elementary curriculum offered. Because of limited resources the government ten years ago reduced the elementary

curriculum from seven to six years and generalized the two single-session plan, in which a teacher handles two classes a day for about 2½ hours each session...While the curriculum covers six years, actually the children receive only the equivalent of about three years of schooling, he said."

The quoted statement is of course not new to Philippine readers. The quotation is included in this report merely to stress the point that the newspapers of Canada considered what we said in the conference as worthy of reporting.

There was one other occasion when your delegate took part in a discussion, and that was when the committee on salaries submitted its report to the general assembly. The report recommended that merit be discarded as a means of determining promotions in salary. Many speakers favored the recommendation claiming that in their particular schools or school systems, many deserving teachers failed to get promotions in salary because the merit system was used. This was somewhat perplexing to the PPSTA delegates, and so we asked what was meant by the merit system. We stated that in the Philippines we are trying to work out a system of promotion based on merit alone. It turned out that what is commonly known as the merit system in many countries is that of basing a teacher's eligibility for increase in salary upon her rating in efficiency alone. We informed the general assembly that what we mean by merit in the Philippines is based on at least four factors, to wit: efficiency, attainment, length of service, and civil service eligibility. The majority of speakers did not favor the efficiency rating as a factor in determining salary increments. As finally approved by the general assembly, the recommendation was worded as follows: "Merit system rating by other than objective measures, such as training,

length of service, and degree of responsibility is fraught with danger when used as means of determining differentials in salary." To which, the PPSTA delegation was in unanimous accord.

The undersigned acted by designation as one of the "rapporteurs" in the sectional meeting on public relations. He was the one who read the committee report to the general assembly. Herewith enclosed is a copy of the report. It is nothing new in the material. The undersigned was responsible in including in the report bibliography the book entitled "Public Relations for America's Schools," A.A.S.A. Yearbook, 1949, National Education Association. The wording of the part of the report entitled "Why Public Relations?" with the exception of item 5, was supplied by the PPSTA delegate. This report was approved in whole by the General Assembly.

Mr. Tuazon attended the section committee on the draft constitution. The most controversial question discussed by the committee centered on the nature of the proposed World Confederation of the Teaching Profession. I have to take a few paragraphs to explain this controversy, as it is quite involved. Instead of a World Organization of the Teaching Profession, it was proposed even as early as the Third Delegate Assembly at Bern, Switzerland that a Confederation should be formed to consist of the WOTP, the IFTA (International Federation of Primary Teachers Associations—European), and the FIPESO (International Federation of Public Secondary School Teachers Organizations—European) as integral federations. To those not familiar with the European situation with respect to teachers organizations, it may be said that primary teachers are not in close professional association with secondary teachers. The training of these two groups of teachers as well as their sta-

tus are different, and so the primary teachers of Europe have a different federation from the secondary teachers. The Executive Committee of the WOTP worked at great length some time last year to seek some kind of fusion in the European associations but to no avail. For the sake of unity, the Executive Committee favored the retention of the integrity of these federations equal in category to the WOTP. Thus there are three federations in the proposed Confederation.

Your PPSTA delegate objected to recognizing the European federations as such and he favored the manner in which national associations of teachers are and have been taken in as national member organizations. Many delegates including the PPSTA delegate did not see any point in recognizing the European federations as distinct members of the world organization. Your PPSTA delegate remarked, "I really do not see why we give such importance to the European federations. They are much smaller in number than the membership of the WOTP, and yet we are recognizing them as distinct and separate members of the proposed World Confederation of the Teaching Profession." Dr. Russell, President of the WOTP, answered that for the sake of effecting world unity, the Executive Committee acceded to the demand of the European federations. This little trouble was reported by the Canadian newspapers as follows:

"The draft constitution in its present state proposes that the two federations should maintain separate entities within the confederation. This situation did not win wholehearted agreement from WOTP delegates in today's session. Alfred Buhagiar of the Malta Teachers Union contended a fundamental principle was at stake—the principle of unity within the teaching profession. To win the trust of the two federations, we are asked

to pay a high price,' he said... 'It is like building a house on shifting sands.' Nor was the Canadian delegation in favor of this division. However, it decided to concede it in the interest of unity."—The Globe and Mail, Ottawa, Canada, July 21.

The Malta and Canadian delegates did not like the tendency of the European teachers to segregate themselves in two groups—the primary and the secondary. To secure unity in the profession, they believed that the barriers between groups of teachers should be erased. Many delegates including yours from the Philippines felt that perhaps by allowing the federations to join the world organizations as they are integral entities—eventually these barriers would be removed. In other words, as they associate more with other groups in the world organization, they will realize the need for complete union and fusion, which they would not do if they were denied the opportunity to join the world organization.

The undersigned now tries to pinpoint outstanding benefits accruing to the PPSTA for sending delegates to the WOTP Conference.

1. It may be immodest to make this statement, but it must be made to justify Philippine representation in the Conference: our participation enhanced the prestige of the Filipino teacher in the eyes of the world. There were 27 nations represented, and there were about 200 delegates. There were about 500 people in the assembly room during the general sessions. Dr. Sack, the Vice-President of WOTP and delegate from Switzerland, remarked to the Philippine representatives during a recess: "I always learn something important from both of you whenever you get up to speak." From Dr. Givens, Executive Secretary of the NEA and delegate from the United States, "You boys have done exceedingly well in both

your remarks and your speeches." From many other delegates and other members of the audience: "Your English is remarkable, and you express your ideas in such effective manner." Dr. Russell (President of Columbia University), President of the WOTP: "We certainly appreciate the marvelous speech delivered by Mr. Bautista." Of Mr. Tuazon, from several people: "You certainly have the American humor and some of your own." (It does sound very bad that I should make these reports myself, but as the adage says, "If no one praises you, who will?") It is the fervent wish of your delegates to the 1950 Conference that the record will be excelled by those who succeed us. Our faith in that is great.

2. Our faith in democracy has been strengthened. It is our wish that we could transmit (but how futile are our words!) to our colleagues in the Philippines what new inspirations we have acquired to work more eagerly and more strenuously than ever before in making democracy permeate the processes and activities of our schools so that they can in turn teach democracy where it is most sorely needed. It is our conviction, as a result of our attendance in WOTP Conference, that education for democracy is the only salvation from impending catastrophe. Peoples everywhere must be made to believe in and live democracy so that their combined strength can resist totalitarianism. This is the cry heard from all over the world as we heard it in that conference.

3. The intermixing of peoples from different parts of the world, accepting one another on the basis of their individual worth, is a great objective lesson in international understanding toward peace. It is impossible for people who meet and intermix in the manner we did at WOTP to misunderstand one another. In face-to-face relations, where every one has a chance to be heard and to be judged according to the merits

of his convictions, there can be no cause for misunderstanding. In the discussions, at the conference table, on the platform—there is every chance for one to seek enlightenment and the truth. It is almost inconceivable that misunderstanding should ensue. Which leads us to wonder why in the Security Council of the United Nations there should be such grave misunderstandings resulting in grave threats to peace. There could be only one answer: some one is deliberately distorting the truth and refusing to see other point of view! Would teachers be more capable in solving the problems of the world, we wonder.

4. We learned quite a bit from the skill with which Dr. Russell and other leaders of the Conference maneuvered the discussions so that there might be no cause for personal rancors. The remarks from the leaders indicated the high intellectual level in which the discussions were to be carried on, and so there was no opportunity nor desire on the part of the Assembly to incite animosities of any kind. Diplomatic skill is something that one can learn from seasoned educators and statesmen. This observation brings home to us very effectively our own personal shortcomings in this regard.

5. The depth of thought and the wide span of information made available to us in the discussions show to what extent we personally have neglected our contact with intellectual matters. Education, we are now convinced, must not confine itself to the professional accoutrements thereof; there are other things in the intellectual and cultural world of affairs that condition education. And we are convinced that teacher education in the Philippines must give greater emphasis on the enrichment of the teacher's cultural background.

6. The public relations program of the PPSTA is totally inadequate. (More of this in a subsequent article on the

NEA) We wish merely to point out at this point that we are not doing many desirable public relations activities which are necessary in order to secure more benefits for teachers and more adequate education for our children. The enclosed report of Dr. Givens on the public relations program of the NEA was the most comprehensive public relations report given in the Conference. It is requested that it be published in summary form for the enlightenment of school officials and others interested in developing an adequate public relations program for Philippine schools.

7. The reports of school conditions in other lands have driven home to us this outstanding fact: that there are other school systems elsewhere far more backward than ours. And so we take no little pride in the fact that we are doing a marvelous piece of work compared to that obtaining in other more "civilized" countries. These reports are significant in another way: no one in the Conference tried to hide the deficiencies of his school system. The delegates were outspoken in their criticisms of their own schools, although, as expected, they were also quite liberal in their praise of the points of strength. We are now glad to report that we did not have any guilty conscience when we pointed the defects of our own school system. One sour note: We had worked on the July issue of the *Philippine Educator*, which was a special issue dedicated to the WOTP Conference, so that it might be available at the Ottawa Conference. The Board of Directors of the PPSTA wired to the undersigned that the issue should not be released to WOTP delegates because some parts of it would constitute bad publicity for the Philippine schools. By some uncanny and unexplicable twist of fate the copies intended for the WOTP

Conference which were shipped from Manila on May 13 never reached the Office of the WOTP at Washington, D.C.

8. Reluctantly we claim that our attendance at the WOTP Conference made the Philippines better known by other nations and other peoples. We tried our best to impress those we came in contact with that we are fair samples of the Filipino race. We easily made friends, and they liked us for that. Many people went out of their way to please us. Several Americans and Canadians offered their personal cars to take us in sightseeing trips; some invited us to eat with them. We may say with pardonable pride that we "sold" the Philippines in these contacts. The Michigan teachers were our hosts at the Ottawa Conference. They gave us \$70 each (Canadian currency-, for our expenses at Ottawa. We have thanked them in an official letter. We suggest that the Board pass a resolution of thanks, c/o Mr. A. J. Phillips, 2707 E. Saginaw St., Lansing, Michigan.

In closing this report, may I reiterate the recommendation that we try our best every year to send delegates to the World Organization of the Teaching Profession. The expense is large, but the dividends are great. The delegates will return to the Philippines richer in experience, broader in their outlook, more sincerely interested in the cause of education for democracy, and, above all, will take greater pride in their own country and everything that is dear to it.

(Sgd.) MARCELINO BAUTISTA
*(Executive Secretary-Treasurer
 on leave)*
*Delegate to the WOTP Conference
 for 1950*