



South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU)

FORWARD TO ONE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

SADTU PRESS STATEMENT

(Released after a special meeting of office-bearers of
the National Executive of SADTU, held in Johannesburg
on Sunday 19 May 1991)

SADTU WITHDRAWS FROM CONFERENCE ON VIOLENCE

The SADTU national executive has decided to decline the invitation by the State President to participate in a conference on violence and intimidation, arranged by the government.

While SADTU is very concerned about the violence in the country, the union is of the opinion that the government has not displayed a consistent commitment to fundamentally resolving points of conflict in South African society. As far as its operations within the arena of education is concerned, SADTU is dissatisfied with the serious lack of progress made with the demands of the education fraternity in respect of the education crisis.

There is still a serious shortage of books and stationery at schools under the DET, and government departments are harassing and victimising teachers in the most autocratic manner possible. Furthermore, SADTU is dissatisfied with the delay on the part of the government with regard to the union's official recognition. The union was also not consulted in the formulation of the recently announced salary increases for teachers.

SADTU is therefore of the opinion that it is such insensitive and undemocratic actions which breed an atmosphere of instability, conflict and violence in the country. The union therefore does not see its way clear in participating in the government's conference on violence.

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CRISIS IN KATHLEHONG

For the past number of weeks SADTU has been battling to negotiate a resolution to the education crisis in Kathlehong. Because of the limited success of the SADTU Kathorus branch to persuade the education authorities to institute democratic processes of conflict resolution in Kathlehong, a serious crisis of confidence in the DET had developed among teachers. As a result of this, Kathlehong teachers had contemplated strike action to highlight their grievances. This strike was averted at the last minute when the Kathlehong community undertook to embark on a last ditch effort to negotiate an acceptable solution to the problem with the Alberton office of the DET. The SADTU national office was also informed on Monday 20 May 1991 by the DET Deputy Director General, Mr. R. du Preez, that the DET had decided to lift the suspension of the Kathlehong teachers due to a legal snag which has occurred, and in order to attempt gaining an amicable solution to the problems of dissension and conflict in Kathlehong. SADTU hopes that the brief respite offered would provide an opportunity for the DET and SADTU to enter into constructive processes of conciliation, without sweeping legitimate grievances under the carpet.

SADTU ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCT

SADTU has demonstrated its commitment to acceptable standards of ethical conduct on the part of teachers by preparing a draft Code of Ethics for the consideration of its regions and branches. The draft document states that teachers should act responsibly in the discharge of their professional duties, and should act in a manner which maintains the honour and the dignity of the profession.

SADTU'S RECOGNITION

The SADTU regions and branches are discussing a campaign of mass action to promote the question of the recognition of the union. SADTU structures will be debating the kind of recognition which would empower SADTU at the negotiating table, and which would replace the present authoritarian style of negotiating by the education authorities with a democratic process of dispute resolution.

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SADTU MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

SADTU launched its Eastern Cape and Southern Transvaal Regions over the past weekend. The Northern Cape SADTU region will be launched in Barkley West on Saturday 25 May 1991. SADTU presently has more than 30 000 signed up members.

19 May 1991

SADTU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE



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1991 June 06

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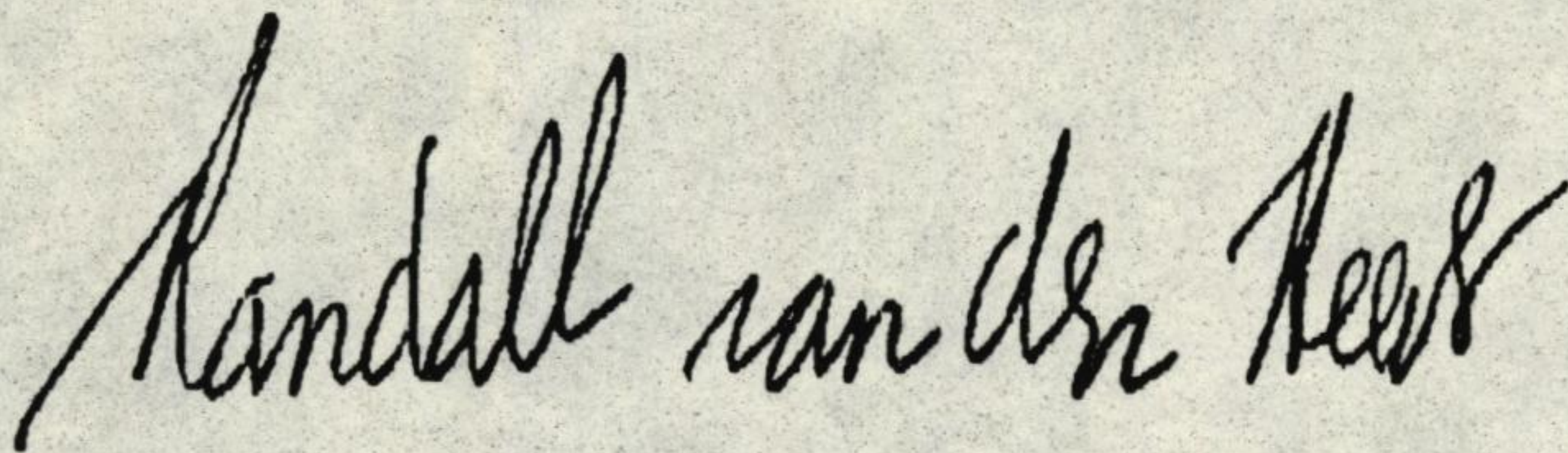
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SADTU PRESS RELEASE

1. SADTU has been negotiating the re-instatement of 8 dismissed teachers in Potchefstroom and Ventersdorp since January 1991.
2. The affected teachers, who were all permanently appointed teachers serving their probation periods, were dismissed after refusing to formally subject themselves to inspection by the DET.
3. SADTU has opposed the dismissals of the teachers on the following grounds:
 - 3.1 Some of the affected teachers had already been on probation for longer than the contractual period of 12 months;
 - 3.2 Many other teachers in the region had also not been inspected due to inspectors not wanting to venture onto many school grounds.
4. SADTU regarded the isolation of eight of its leading members in Potchefstroom as a blatant act of victimisation of SADTU members by the DET.
5. During the past six months SADTU has had many fruitless interviews with both the Potchefstroom Circuit Office and the Pretoria head office of the DET.
6. During the past month the SADTU initiative has had the support of the Diamond Fields Director, Mr. Merboldt, and a number of meetings also took place between his office and delegations of SADTU.

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7. However, SADTU has informed Mr. Merboldt that the very long time that it is taking to resolve this problem is taxing the patience of teachers to the extreme and that a very explosive situation was busy developing on the ground.
8. It comes as no surprise therefore that teachers have decided to embark on more direct protest strategies.
9. The DET has to decide whether they want to promote constructive dialogue by which disputes could be speedily resolved, or whether they prefer confrontation and conflict.
10. DET has had enough time to re-appoint the dismissed teachers; they have all the necessary documentation and motivation from SADTU. They should now simply go ahead and re-appoint the teachers, and finally resolve an ugly confrontation that is looming.



RANDALL van den HEEVER
GENERAL SECRETARY
6 JUNE 1991