TRANSCRIPTION OF NOVEMBER 17, 1976, INTERVIEW WITH MR. SHANKER, DR. RYOR, AND DR. OSBORNE, WITH MR. G. W. BONHAM.

(Bonham) With the rise of unionism in academic life, some have expressed the fear that faculty unionism is incompatible with professionalism and scholarly inquiry.

(Ryor) More and more teachers on all levels have come to understand that the political and economic atmosphere demands that they become very active and speak collectively. In that regard the collective decision-making process with the various administrations is not only professional but also very democratic. We don't believe that professionalism and unionism are mutually exclusive. We think there is a responsibility not only to advance the profession of teaching but to advance the economic standing of its practitioners, and to that end I don't think there's any problem at all.

(Osborne) It's important to remember that collective bargaining is a process, a procedure, not a matter of substance in and of itself. When considering whether or not collective bargaining and professionalism and scholarly inquiry are compatible one must look at the likely results of the use of this process. The experience of faculty unions thus far doesn't show that collective bargaining produces such changes in the working conditions of faculty as to make them no longer professional.

(Shanker) Raising a question like this is analogous to some of the questions raised during the rise of craft and industrial unionism, when some of the big powers in industry were certain that unionization would mean an end to productivity, that they would be required to keep incompetents, that America would fall behind the rest of the world, that there would be bloody revolution. As a matter of fact, if you take industries where that kind of conflict between adamant management and a strong union took place, let's say, the automobile industry, I think that we are all aware that if the automobile industry could press a button and do away with the union, it would not do so. These questions show a lack of understanding of what the bargaining process is. The bargaining process consists of a group of employees deciding whether or not they wish to be represented for certain purposes by a single organization. Should they make that decision, they then as a group decide what that organization should ask of the administration. By the way, should they ever decide to select another organization or none at all, the law provides them with ample opportunity to do so.

Then we have to look at precisely what have been the subjects of bargaining. Generally these are economic conditions. They deal with questions of salaries, pensions, and perhaps some questions of workloads, holidays, vacations, and due process procedures. What does this whole process have to do with whether professor X is working on the works of Emmanual Kant or someone else is going into the pre-socratics? What

affect does that have at all except that maybe he'll earn a little more money and perhaps if someone brings charges he'll have a slightly different procedure or an organization representative at his side. I see no incompatibility at all with professionalism.

(Bonham) The question that many people raise about the effect of unionization on faculty is that the rewards will be more equally distributed rather than awarded through merit. Is it true that a general leveling both in terms of opportunities and salary structures may be in the cards as one effect of unionization?

(Ryor) Certainly, as far as bringing an end to the vast disparities that exist. There's probably no other group of employees in the world where the rewards for performing the professional task itself are greater the further away you get from actually performing that task. There's been an atmosphere that the job of teaching students was not quite as important and somehow everybody had to have a special deal going and a private arrangement with the department head or the chairman. That has worked against the best interests of many of the professors and many of the instructors.

(Shanker) I don't think that one can say at this point that there will be a necessary leveling of salaries. That depends upon on how the teachers in each institution accept the fairness or unfairness of the structures that exist. If the disparities in income are viewed as the result of highly subjective decisions, as a system of arbitrary rewards and punishments, then there is

no question that the faculty will demand equalization. On the other hand, where the rewards are viewed as fair -- to the extent that there is a common perception that professor so-and-so is the outstanding person in the world on this subject and we are fortunate to have him in this institution and if he weren't here we wouldn't have the reputation that we have to attract the students that we have, to bring in the federal money that we have -- where rewards, even very great rewards are viewed as merited, teachers will accept merit as one of the bases for reward.

(Osborne) Our own organized chapters have not had as an overriding goal the equalization of salaries. On the other hand, where economics has been a principle issue either in the organizing or in the first round of bargaining, it's usually been precisely because of the preception that the existing system is grossly unfair; where a math teacher, for example, sees that the president's secretary makes more money than he or she does. They think the system's out of whack and they want to do something about it. It's not that they all want to make the same amount of money as every other member of the faculty so much as they want the faculty as a whole be returned to its rightful place, which is at the center presumably of the institution.

(Bonham) A recent column from one of the teacher newspapers mockingly quotes John Silber, President of Boston University. "There is nothing wrong with elitism," says Silber, "It is a principle of civilized society. As long as intelligence is better than stupidity and knowledge is better than ignorance, educational institutions must be run by elites." To which the columnist adds: "Thanks, John, that is bound to make us a lot of friends among those honest working

class people who aspire to have their sons and daughters attend our institutions." Now what really is wrong with elitism in the Jeffersonian sense?

(Ryor) That attitude itself is arrogant. There's nothing wrong with attempting to be whatever it is that's in us the best we can and attempting to elicit that attitude from children. The error is in assuming that one particular function on the face of this earth and in this economy and in our American society is holier than another. That's the attitude I find particularly obnoxious. It's not so much that one doesn't recognize that there are individual differences. The lack of dignity comes when people who hold certain positions -- whether its teachers, doctors, lawyers, plumbers, electricians — take that feeling of pride in their own work and impose it on society as being a superior contribution to the whole social structure.

(Shanker) We have to distinguish from among some of the many meanings of the word elitism. Obviously we want those who teach in our colleges and universities to know more about what they're doing than those who are coming to learn. There's no question that competence is valued, but there is a kind of snobbery. The public of this country supports institutions of higher learning -- both public and private -- and in order to get that public support one cannot just stand and crow about one's superiority. One has to develop alliances. One needs organization. The superior professor can't just walk around the streets shouting "give me, give me, give me," to a world where millions are unemployed, millions are suffering from discrimination, millions have

insecurities. Professors who talk about alienation in teachers don't know what alienation is until they have had to perform exactly the same task for 40 hours a week for 40 years of their lives with nothing at the end of it but social security. If the professor wants that public to understand what the academic life is, to understand why it's necessary, why it would be ruinous to increase the student contact hours and not provide time for research, you can't do it by shouting about elitism. You do it by belonging to groups that others belong to and sitting next to them and saying to the fellow next to you, "Listen, I'm a worker just as you are, and this is the nature of my work and to do it well I need the following conditions." If you don't do that, you won't last very long and neither will the institution. But I'm very much afraid that this attitude has already created a climate in this country of a feeling that professors don't work.

Part of the issue of unionism is that professors are afraid that if they engage in collective bargaining, people will think that they work for a living. It will lower their status to that of other workers. I submit to you that this is a period of time when it would be very good for the general public to believe that, indeed, professors do work.

(Bonham) All three of your organizations, have had enormous political impact, particularly in this presidential campaign. Jody Powell said after the elections that "the massive support from teachers was critical to our winning this very close election. All over the nation we turned to the NEA for assistance, we asked for their help and they delivered." There

are obvious quid-pro-quos. What do you expect from the Carter administration and who will have the inner ear on both the federal and state levels in terms of legislation and funding for education?

(Ryor) I don't think the inner ear will be the exclusive property of any particular organization or institution. I believe the NEA will play an increasing role not only in the politics of the nation but the politics of educational decision-making as it influences the finance of public education. There's probably no institution in or around education that depends more heavily on its grants from federal and state governments than institutions of higher education, particularly the private ones. We believe NEA offers unique opportunities in helping to lobby for the needed funds for universities and colleges. We have government relations offices in every state with effective lobbying efforts, and that affords higher education some unique opportunities.

In terms of policy development, it has been until perhaps the last 10 years the exclusive province of an administrator class, certainly at the university level. It's important to understand that teachers at all levels are increasingly impatient with their inability to affect their own destiny. Arbitrary and capricious decisions about tenure, increased reduction in force -- it all affects teachers at every level, seemingly without any due process at all. Those issues and the need to speak as educators who are trained and who have something to offer are going to lead to increased political activity and an increased share of the decision-making power. We certainly intend to have some of the ear of the administration in that regard.

(Osborne) It's very important to remember that higher education is never going to be a potent political force. The professoriat numbers, at most, 400,000 people. That's not the stuff of which grand political power blocks are made. Obviously, higher education management is an even smaller factor. The need for the professoriat to get involved in the political process is great, but I don't think that they are going to be successful in the classic political sense of winning elections for politicians and thereby cashing in on IOU's. The case has to be made by persuasion. Persuasion both of legislators and the general public rather than by the classic political system of alliances and power blocks. It's a tough problem, one the professoriat is just dimly beginning to perceive.

(Shanker) I'd like to question the statement and assumption that the fight for higher education until recently has been carried mainly by college and university administrators. There's a whole world of consumers out there who are interested in the expansion of higher education, a whole coalition around HEW. You've had civil rights groups who have seen expansion as an avenue of opportunity, you've had the power of the entire AFL-CIO which would like to see the children of workers have opportunities, and I would say that many of the great advances we've made would never have happened if you relied only on the professors or the administrators.

Now, as far as the administration is concerned, there is no question that teachers will have greater political influence. That does not mean we will be able to determine national policy. But we'll have a voice, we'll have a strong one. Care will certainly be taken in the development

of changes in policy to see to it that we are not hurt or that we're hurt the least. And as far as 400,000 people in higher education not being the stuff of power blocs, look at the maritime unions in this country, which together number perhaps 40,000, and look at the number of pieces of legislation, look at the grain embargo that resulted in negotiations with the Soviet Union. Now if you could have a group of 40,000 workers in this country exerting that sort of influence, then I would say that the professors of this country could be one of the most powerful political forces in the country.

(Bonham) Fred Crossland of the Ford Foundation recently wrote a major piece on unionization in Change and he predicted that the three major organizations you represent would "gradually end their well publicized and acromonious struggles for hergeminy and devise accommodations unthinkable today. It is probable that a single national union will ultimately emerge. Very likely it will have a long and cumbersome name incorporating traces of groups swallowed in mergers." Do you gentlemen have any ideas on this subject?

(Ryor) I tend to agree with his general premise. There is a community of interest among faculties at all levels in promoting those common needs. We have common needs in terms of finance, faculty protection, and due process, in terms of advancing the economic causes of education and of the faculties.

(Shanker) The sooner the better, especially in a difficult period like this. Had we all been together during the 60's we would have done better, but in a period

of declining population and birthrate, in a period of recession and unemployment, there is a strong tendency to take a look at those services that are expendable, and I think higher education is particularly vulnerable here. The first attack will be and has been in higher education, and I believe it is foolish and wasteful and indeed immoral at a time when many of our own colleagues are being laid off and our institutions are under attack for our organizations to be traveling across the country with crews of organizers and taking shots at each other's organizations, when actually 99 percent of the policies of our organizations are identical.

(Osborne) I don't want to comment at any length about the merits of a three-way merger. I think the trends will take care of themselves.

(Bonham) You're not willing to sign a compact today?

(Osborne) I'd sign anything, but it wouldn't be worth a nickel until some people out in the country were ready to support it. But I do want to make a point in behalf of the AAUP. We've only been actively in collective bargaining officially since 1972. We have been involved for 60 years, as all of you know, in such things as setting standards for due process, rights of faculty, an annual salary survey, and so on. They require a certain credibility and prestige to be maintained effectively. In order for our setting of standards to have any meaning, for example, we have to have a fairly broad base of support among the administrative community as well as among the professoriat. In order to do that we have to retain a certain degree of independence.

Since we have been active in collective bargaining, we have continued both roles somewhat to the surprise of some members of the academic community. And we intend to continue both roles. If there is a merger or alliance with either or both the NEA or the AFT, or for that matter with anyone else, it will not, I am quite confident, embrace the traditional function of the AAUP.

(Bonham) One of the central issues of unionization is its impact on the traditional power structure on campus. In the area of public institutions, who by your definition will be the employer and who the employee?

(Ryor) The board of regents is the controlling board of the university, and the administrators are indeed the employers. As far as the unionization of the higher education faculty is concerned, those higher education personnel who have the authority and the power to hire and dismiss faculty members, instructors, do not in fact belong in the union. I think that shared decision making will take on some meaning for what used to be called faculty senates, which haven't produced the kind of shared decision making that many higher education faculty would like to see. Every time there was a difference of opinion in that collegial relationship, the final answer always rested with the administrator. You were back to square 1. So to that end I think the collective process and the unionization of the faculties is going to serve to give faculty greater ownership in the decisions, and a greater sense of security in their own job function.

(Osborne) One of the criticisms of collective bargaining is that it produces a kind of rigidity. If the question, Who is the employer? requires a single answer, that's imposing on us an undue rigidity. There is more than one employer, particularly in the public sector. And it changes depending on the issue and it changes depending on the time. What the state labor law defines as the employer is not necessarily controlling. Usually the state labor law in a public sector will define the board of regents or the controlling board as the employer. But that doesn't mean that it is with the board of regents that the faculty bargaining agent will directly negotiate in the first instance, nor does it mean that an economic deal arrived at with that board will necessarily be funded by the legislature or approved by the governor. It is a very fluid process.

(Shanker) In the beginnings of collective bargaining in New York City, the board of education said "Look, we're the employer, but we get our funds from the City, so go to the City." Then we go to the Mayor and the Mayor says: "I have nothing to do with this. It's the Board of Estimate and the city council." And then they both say "But really, the schools are an independent agency, you've gotta go to the state commissioner or the legislature." And we ran to many different doors and in each place they pointed somewhere else. Eventually, with tough bargaining, someone decided who the boss was. They all remained the employer but they developed internal process of consulting with each other so that they could arrive at decisions.

The question within the university of who is management and who is employee is no different from questions that have had to be settled elsewhere. In collective bargaining, there are impartial boards that have looked at these questions for many years and we don't always agree with their decisions but they make them and ultimately someone will decide who is management and who is employee.

As far as other governing structures are concerned, such as faculty senates, there is no question that in a certain small number of elite institutions and maybe a few others, there is a real governing structure in which faculty have power collectively. If those institutions do unionize, I predict that they will limit the areas of collective bargaining so as to preserve collegiality. But for the most part, faculty senates don't have this power. Many of them have been defunct over a long period of time, they have had massive nonparticipation. They don't have the wherewithall in terms of energy, they don't have it in terms of staff, they don't have the things that you have to have. In these institutions the existence of an old defunct senate is certainly no bar to moving ahead toward unionization.

(Bonham) In higher education we face the prospect of an aging faculty. Many institutions are 60 or 70 percent tenured, with little movement in and out. In that context, what hope do you see for institutional flexibility and self-renewal?

(Shanker) I don't accept the notion that we have to have a shrinking system of either higher education or elementary and secondary education. It would be

terrible if we started becoming cannibalistic and deciding who should be pushed off the cliff to make room for someone else so that we can renew ourselves. Here's a case where our whole society has a stake. And I think that there's an appeal out there to millions of people who feel sorry that they stopped their education. I think that that ought to be one of the great thrusts in the Carter administration, for the education community, for the producers and the workers in education, and also for the consumers. An opening up of higher education, a kind of second chance for everybody on a GI Bill concept that wouldn't cost much more than what we are spending now to keep people idle. What we are doing now is very much like what we did in the 30's. We had millions of starving people and we plowed the hogs under in order to raise the price of hogs instead of buying the hogs and giving them to the starving people. We are doing something similar in keeping people home at subsistance levels but keeping them away from those institutions that could flourish with that same money.

(Ryor) I second that. We oppose sacrificing the experienced teacher for the sake of economy and hiring younger faculty members and instructors who are indeed not only plentiful right now but much less costly in terms of beginning salaries. There is a need for renewal and reexamination, but university faculties are capable of that renewal effort, given the resources and the monies to decide for themselves. When you are talking about 300,000 qualified, certified, degreed people walking the streets who are capable of

teaching and who cannot find work, then we have to look to federal government to respond to that. For every one percent of unemployment you have something like a $16 billion loss to our economy, $14 billion in buying power, and another $2 1/2 billion for welfare and supportive services to keep these people on a subsistance level. There is no dignity in that. I think it would be much more useful to invest in getting those people back to work and making them productive, taxpaying citizens.

(Osborne) You're not going to settle across the bargaining table at the University of Michigan what to do about the fact that there are not enough faculty jobs, and so I think it is unfair and hypocritical of administrators to suggest that the unions are somehow responsible for the institutional inflexibility they find themselves stuck with. It really isn't the unions' fault.

(Shanker) Could I add one more thing? Some university administrators have talked about flexibility in terms of being able to get rid of some of the older people for a number of reasons. That's an outrageous thing to talk or think about. Let me go to an area that's far removed from education -- the coal mines. I think that we would all agree that a 20-year-old coal miner could dig a lot more coal than a 60-year-old coal miner. But you know, years ago we decided that it was really a matter of public policy in this country that if you take the best from a person when they are more vigorous, then you owe that person something later on. For college and university people to be talking about this as a possibility shows that for some of them, at least, their morality is below that of the rest of society.

(Bonham) As you know, 70 to 80 percent of the total cost of higher education is labor, essentially teaching and administrative. How far do you feel we ought to go in terms of measuring faculty workloads, faculty effectiveness, faculty productivity?

(Ryor) When we talk about productivity in education, the word has taken on a meaning that I think it doesn't have. If you are talking about a teacher working more hours, I think that is a legitimate item for collective bargaining. If we're talking about the incidents you mentioned earlier -- of the older professor who has had a good deal of experience who perhaps has a teaching assistant and is only teaching a class or two a week -- there isn't anything inherently unhealthy about that in terms of teaching load, particularly if in fact their supervisory responsibilities for the teaching aids are wide. They're doing not only useful but also very necessary work. I think there is a need to look at the differences that exist in not only teaching loads but in salaries as they apply to those teaching loads. The internal matter of fair and equitable practices in rewarding faculty members inside and evaluating them is a very deep concern. I think of legitimate concern for the bargaining process.

(Osborne) It's important to remember that teaching isn't the only function of the university professor. Undoubtedly, there are abuses, but it may be and is often the case that he's teaching less because he's doing a lot more research, and not because he's getting older and less productive. So I don't know how you measure professorial productivity. That's why I tend to agree that it is

an ideal subject for collective bargaining, because bargaining can treat it on as local a level as possible and on as equal a basis as possible. But there's been a tendency instead to be simply vindictive. State legislators, state executives, and to some degree the public take great pleasure in saying that son-of-a-gun professor teaches six hours a week. What kind of a workload is that? Which completely misses the point. The professoriat's got to get up on its hind legs a bit and persuade people that what they're doing is worthwhile.

(Shanker) We should also be very concerned with the fact that in education, when there is talk about productivity, it generally means making life more difficult for the employees. That has not been the American tradition. Productivity in our society has generally come about through the simultaneous improvements in the lives of employees and the introduction of technology in which the employees have shared. Generally, the transition has generally been labor-saving, and has been negotiated so as not to provide massive unemployment. If there is truly an interest in productivity and not just in increasing human misery for a certain group of people, then we ought to say, Are there things we can do through the use of certain techniques that would provide an education for more people without making individual work longer or harder? And if there are, and if that creates dislocations in employment, can this be done through attrition and so forth? And we have to ask ourselves something else, for after all, there is this heavy investment of tax money in higher education. Have we really

performed a great public service? Suppose that tomorrow we could find a way of running all our institutions of higher learning with 100,000 professors instead of 400,000. Have we really done something socially worthwhile to have 300,000 more unemployed people in this country collecting welfare and not paying taxes? I would say that if we had a society where there was overall labor shortage and the question was why should one waste the time of a mathematician or a psychologist teaching X number of hours when out there are 50 other tasks that he could be doing to enrich the life of the country and other people, then there ought to be very, very great pressure to improve the techniques. But to improve techniques of the university so that we can throw people out of work? I don't see it.

(Bonham) You are talking about goals of higher wages and better working conditions for faculty. How does this really square with a declining financial base for many institutions? What is a practical solution to this growing dilemma of making ends meet?

(Ryor) There are a couple of aspects that have to be looked at. One is the whole question of financial patterns of colleges and universities. There is not a uniformity in higher education financing as there is perhaps in the common school setting, but we are moving forward with research in that area to see if we can find some common trends. In the interim, I think the whole process of education must be supported in different ways. I think it's critical that the federal government play a larger role in the financing of public

institutions, particularly the higher education institutions, and to bring not only some uniformity but also some equity to the financial process.

(Bonham) When you are talking about increased federal support, are you talking of student grant support or direct institutional support?

(Ryor) Well, both. I don't know at this point which is the most efficient or the most reasonable. But in the interim, it's critical that we move on both fronts. Obviously the cost of higher education is becoming burdensome for middle and low income families.

(Osborne) Assuming that we are in collective bargaining in an institution that has a declining financial base, I think unions are probably as willing to be flexible as are the administrators and perhaps more so. The AAUP is willing to concede the potential hypothetical necessity for terminating tenured positions in a financial crisis or when a program is abolished. We don't take a hard line saying that you must get rid of all the untenured and all the young before any of the old and tenured may be removed. Naturally, we come to that place slowly and without any great joy, but we nonetheless recognize that higher education simply cannot be viewed identically with a factory and that the work force is not fungible at least not to the degree that it is in other industries.

(Shanker) There are very great variations in these crises. There are areas in the country that are not in a crisis at all. There is great prosperity, there is a lot of oil around, or very wealthy agricultural areas where there is tax

money around. In those places, there is no need to talk about bargaining in a crisis. At the other end we have the largest city in the country in the hands of an outside control board and still on the edge of bankruptcy and default, so what one means by crisis there is going to vary very, very greatly.

I think teachers and professors have this view of what they think is the universal pattern of collective bargaining, and the pattern is always one of a wealthy employer and a powerful union and if the union wants to shut the plant down they always get what they want. Of course it isn't so. If that were so, workers would be five times as wealthy as they are now, life would be rather different. There are many marginal industries in this country. There are many places where if the employees bargain hard they drive their employer out of work and non-union employer survives. There are other places where if you bargain too hard the industry just disappears and you get a flood of foreign imports. You get employers who decide to move to another place and set up different operations. There are always tremendous constraints on the bargaining process. What we as teachers are now facing are problems that unions have faced for over a hundred years. If the professors of this country are to have the same intelligence, -- political intelligence -- as steel workers and auto workers, and as miners and yes, as elementary and secondary school teachers, they better get into a labor movement that's concerned with restoring the economy, with restoring the $16 billion of taxes for each 1 percent of unemployed. That is where the answer is. And they can be very effective if they do that. But to try either to assert

individual professional elitism or to say that professors can do everything by themselves is silly. Professors can't do it by themselves, teachers can't do it by themselves. You need a broad coalition of everybody who works for a living in this country. That's the only way we're going to be able to turn it around.

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