



CADRE: What do you think's going to happen in the election—have you been following that?

Acorn: In the election I'm advocating for one thing—the NDP is not in it, I mean the NDP supporters have realized that they have been trying to go behind the banner of a party which they really don't believe in. And they are socialists and the NDP is social democrat, dominated by a really brutal social democratic bureaucracy; and looking back, I think it's even been dishonest for socialists to masquerade behind such a party. I think about

Island politics right now that all opponents of the lib cons should go to the polls and mark "Power to the People" or "The Plan Belongs to the People" or any way of spoiling their ballot which strikes them. But don't stay away from the polls. A record of say, five hundred spoiled ballots would attract attention.

CADRE: Are your sympathies with the Waffle group in the NDP, that faction?

Acorn: Ah... well, the Waffle group is... a very peculiar position. It's the activists of the NDP. The people who are doing the work, who are socialists, and they're voted down by paper ballots and bloc ballots of American unions. And actually the Waffle group represents the opinions of probably the majority of NDP members. I put that question to Professor Watkins myself, and he said that I was probably right.

CADRE: What do you spend most of your time doing?

Acorn: Right now I'm spending most of my time worrying.

CADRE: You've talked to me before about the Plan, could you summarize your feelings about it?

Acorn: Well, you see I'm not talking all horse-shit, I mean I did write a letter to the Guardian about two weeks ago, in which I advocated that slogan I told you before, "The Plan Belongs to the People," that it shouldn't be co-opted by frustrated free-enterprisers that want to make a lot of money at the people's expense, and that I did a lot of outline of a constructive program, as far as I could. But it was suppressed, as I pointed out — look, if they'd asked the people, they'd never have started to build a marina where there was no water!

Now the question of the people versus the experts comes up here. There's too many experts, too many people that have set themselves up as experts simply on talk, and actually are no experts at all, who are swarming over here and getting enormous salaries. As a matter of fact I added up that list of experts employed by the provincial government, which was printed in the Guardian, and it added up to more than a million dollars a year. Now, how much money is left for actual projects?

CADRE: Have you met many people from the university here, or do you have any opinions on the university?

Acorn: I'll tell you an exhibit I saw three nights ago where a man named Cassidy, representing himself as an expert on linguistics appeared, and gave us a long dry speech, mostly very elementary, including an anecdote which implied that farmers couldn't read. And then came the question period. Expert Cassidy had suddenly found to his surprise that he was in a group where linguistics was a hot issue, and a social issue; and I think about two people had a chance to speak. And as soon as this linguistics expert realized that he was faced with a social issue, that it was a question of our identity, he ran like a rabbit, and Baker covered his rear.

CADRE: What do you think that indicates about the university?

Acorn: It indicates that the university what the situation is with most universities here and in the US too, they're frauds.

There was a time when universities were places which were for the very few who would be leaders of the community, and they were taught to think. In the past twenty years more and more people from the middle class and the lower middle class, and the working class too, have been going to the

universities and the emphasis has been put into making the university into glorified high schools where people are fed propaganda, to prevent the lower class students from thinking. Oh, I could go on with this!

I read as far as I could a book by a poetry teacher called Beum. This man was apparently determined to go down with the ship of iambic pentameter. He dismissed the question that the English language at present has three levels of stress, probably four, in one sentence.

Having dismissed this question in one sentence, he then started to jam English poetry into the procrustean bed of iambic stress which acknowledges only two levels of stress in English.

Now that wasn't the limit! As far as I read his book, and it was very difficult task to read, there was hardly a single line he quoted which had any significance to human life at all.

In other words, what this man was doing was, consciously or unconsciously, in writing that book, was trying to create a bunch of specialized idiots that didn't know anything but their specialty, and wasn't even doing that.

CADRE: What do you get if you get the Governor General's Award?

Acorn: Well... talk of low wages! 2,500 dollars, which you might consider would be for a book which I have spent a lifetime producing.

Actually I think that there's a list of seven names of poets in the list of candidates, and everyone they considered deserving of getting an award should get an award, actually—

CADRE: You don't believe in competition?

Acorn: I believe in competition for quality, to serve the people. I don't believe in dog-eat-dog, everything you get being taken from somebody else.

CADRE: Are any poets you know working class, besides yourself?

Acorn: Almost all. The top poets? The top poets come from the working class, just Purdy and myself have stressed it...

Now I don't know about the rising generation. Poetry has become fashionable. There's a lot of middle-class kids going into it.

CADRE: Have you read Katharsis?

Acorn: There's one coming out, isn't there?

CADRE: Yeah, that'll be the third. Have you read the other ones?

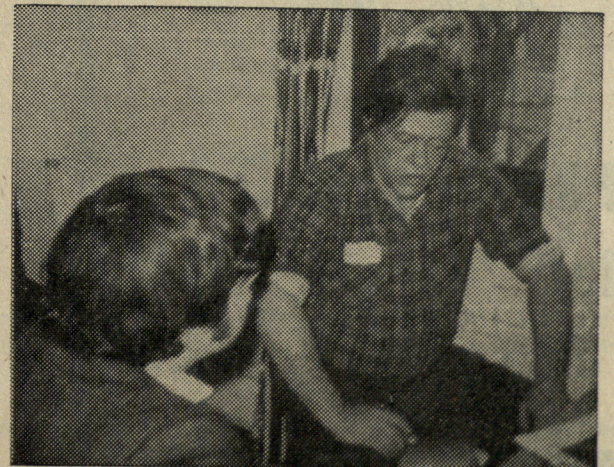
Acorn: I read the first issue and I told the people there that they were imitating Toronto poets and don't do that. And the second seemed to show some improvement — about the third — there's a short story of mine in it, so....

CADRE: Do you have that poem that you wrote today with you?

Acorn: It's not exactly a poem it's sort of broken up soliloquoy.

You only learn to stand it better
That is, unless, instead of gaining consciousness
The pain of life does not decrease
You let yourself lose consciousness
Finally becoming (man has that capacity too)
Stupidier than any animal.
I have deliberately (it's always deliberate)
Gained consciousness and I
Have no regrets.

Of course you realize I write much more poetry-type poems than that.



INTERVIEW BY

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