

# The National Teacher Corps and Resistance to Professional Education in the 1960s

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**Introduction.** Student resistance to professional education takes various forms, from simply refusing to study, skipping classes and dropping out to such disruptive behavior as vandalism, arson, armed assault and gang activity. Seventh-grader Moses Finch (1969) at Eutaw, Alabama's Carver Training School, where Teacher Corps interns were then student teaching, recorded with his own spelling, a resistance song:

Unpatrichartic to teachers

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the burning of the school, we have torchard every teacher, we have broke the golden rule, we have poisen every principal that ever led to school, our truth is marching on.

Glory glory ha-le-lu-a, my teacher hit me with the ruler, I waited at the door with a loaded 44 and she wasn't there no more.

We have put them in the prisons of a hundred circling camps. They have tried to attack us but they never had a chance. They waited at the gate with loaded 48, but we outnumber them 8 by 5.

Resistance to professional education has a long history. The agrarian leader Gerrard Winstanley (1609-1676) during the seventeenth-century English Civil War speculated that only in the Garden of Eden was there no resistance. This was because, in Adam's day, "Society was egalitarian, since every man was his own teacher and ruler, and in no way imposed his will on another man" (Elmer, 1954:209). For Winstanley education was not associated with being a profit-making commodity but rather with the "truth" as described in

the scriptures, something that was nurtured in egalitarian family relations, something that rejected the “envy, fame and wealth” associated with commerce (Goble, 1887:168, 256).

In recent times, professional education has used the military-connected “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” (Pub. L. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425) to undermine student resistance. This article reviews a predecessor to this conflict that involved the first contingent of Alabama Teacher Corps (ATC) interns during the 1960s. The article is divided into two parts. The first part looks at the pre-service part of the program and includes a description of the Teacher Corps and the influences that brought it into existence. The second part describes the in-service portion of the program and includes a description of the school district where the interns did their student-teaching.

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The contest between the interns and professional education in both pre-service and in-service arose because the recruits did not go along with the prevailing emphasis on competitiveness, test scores, and the student minority who were college-bound. The ATC student-teachers focused on those whom “the establishment” relegated to second-class citizenship. These students and their parents wanted apprenticeships, vocational and technical programs, guaranteed jobs, living wages, and economic security. While the pedagogical hierarchy paid lip service to it, the student-teachers and their second-class, or more accurately, working-class, students created their own curriculum, not unlike that of nineteenth-century educator Bronson Alcott, which included on-the-job-training, risk-taking, art and music education, acting exercises, learning through experience, tolerance, physical education, recess and teaching by encouragement (Dahlstrand, 1982; Haefner, 1937). The interns were intolerant of the boredom, indignities, passive resistance and “waiting until

being old enough to move on with life,” which was the essence of education for many students.

The ATC’s promotional literature summarized its mission as working “in the spirit of the Peace Corps” among the second-class students, especially those who were dropping out (Corwin, 1973:5, 346). A federal government “Great Society” program, the Teacher Corps trained 25,000 teachers between 1965 and 1981, when it was folded into the education block grant program. (Hayes, 1995). Some states retained it, and a national version of it exists in the AmeriCorps program.

The sociologist Richard Corwin (1973), in a comprehensive study, maintained that while the ATC and similar programs ostensibly promoted resistance, they were intended to protect the pedagogical hierarchy from being leveled by anti-market forces. Corwin wrote of the Teacher Corps’ origins:

But the key is that the need for educational reform had become a matter of bitter *public* controversy that had nearly paralyzed the local institutions. . . . *Federal intervention was a way of heading off these more radical efforts.* By creating a special office to administer the program, subject to congressional control, Congress assured that control over education would be retained in the hands of the middle-class professionals and bureaucrats instead of either the low-income clientele, whom the program was designed to serve, or radical reformers representing them (pp. 382-383, italics in the original).

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If those in Congress had reasons for establishing the Teacher Corps, many recruits had their own ideas about the program. The ATC recruits were college graduates who identified to a greater or lesser degree with the resistance of their students and local communities against the professional snobbishness and against the military-industrial complex to which they felt education was subservient. They believed in modifying or replacing the market system, as had been accomplished in other parts of the world. They

were young and without mortgages, family obligations and health problems which made them well-suited, as the hierarchy put it, to be “naïve about local minority groups and conditions in the local community” (Corwin, 1973:338). They were basically working for free, so that when fired or forced out, as many were, they moved on with little difficulty.

The initial location of the ATC was at Livingston State College in Livingston, a town of 2,000 people in Sumter County, Alabama. Now called the University of West Alabama, in the late 1960s the school had a full-time enrollment of 1,500 students. On September 30, 1968, the ATC’s first 27 interns started a semester of full-time graduate courses there. After the fall semester the group was then split into three teams and assigned to the neighboring school systems in Greene and Marengo Counties to practice teach for 20 months ending on August 31, 1970. The teaching was supplemented with a single academic class one evening per week at the college. The program included a stipend of \$65.00 per week for each intern. Before it was discontinued in 1972, four contingents completed the two-year cycle. Each contingent had progressively more blacks, with half those in the fourth contingent being so.

**Influences.** In their relations with the college faculty, local teachers, students and communities, the ATC resistors were influenced by the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War. The dissidents viewed the civil rights movement as glamorous and wanted to be part of the heroics in leveling the still-segregated educational system. In addition, a majority were military-age males. For most Selective Service Boards, the ATC was draft deferrable. Nevertheless, the interns resented both the government for reducing them to potential cannon fodder and professional education’s “business as usual” support of the war. They complained that in their ATC employment they were as much prisoners as their second-class students. But for the draft, they would have been elsewhere.

The local professionals maintained that because the interns were reluctant to compromise with the established system, they achieved nothing (Corwin, 1973:187). But the resisters had the daily example of Vietnam, where communist intransigence against military professionals did achieve success. The interns admired the Cubans, whose revolution had brought universal literacy. For the preceding 400 years, the compromising Cuban professionals had not achieved this (Jolly, 1964:165, 253). A month before the ATC commenced, the interns had the example of activists putting the Democratic Party on the defensive at the Chicago convention from August 25 to 30, 1968. Two weeks after the ATC started, the “GIs and Vets March for Peace” in San Francisco on October 12, 1968, brought 500 active duty military and 15,000 civilians into the streets. A week seldom went by during the entire program when there were not protests somewhere. Further, in the view of the interns, their resistance in fact did account for some advances and contrary to the professional criticism, they were working “within the system.” The problem was that the hierarchy had trouble abiding educational amelioration, whether within or without the system.

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Along with Vietnam and civil rights, another influence on intern resistance was the legislation that established the program. Despite the recruitment advertising, the program as implemented was perceived by the interns not so much as helping to improve poverty education as increasing professional salaries. Influencing if not originating the legislation were teacher organizations such as the National Education Association (NEA), whose mission was to maximize federal money for their constituents. These organizations had no history of concern for poverty education (Spring, 1988:51). Historian Jerome Murphy (1974:55) commented on the economic motives of the professional associations in

promoting poverty legislation such as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965:

As far as the educational associations in Washington were concerned, their primary interest was general support for on-going public school activities. Although they accepted the poverty theme as a necessary compromise to achieve aid for the public school system, their emphasis was on breaking barriers to federal aid, on the grounds that this would be a major step toward general support at a later date. Furthermore, they were reluctant to oppose a strong President at the height of his political power.

Because reform legislation was popular, the professionals adjusted their lobbying.

The NEA influence in the Teacher Corps legislation was evident in the funding of college education departments and the school districts. The federal contribution per ATC intern was \$4,780 in 1968. The legislation had no accountability requirement to modify education and poverty schools. In effect, it was as if the professionals were impoverished and were the ones needing federal money. Within a year of the program's establishment, the intern resistance brought additional legislation aimed at tightening administrative control and giving the professionals sole power to determine curriculum and fire student-teachers (Corwin, 1973:315).

With a national total of 1,500 participants annually at its peak in the 1970s, the Teacher Corps was smaller than such federal education programs as the land grant colleges that began in the nineteenth century and the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (G.I. Bill). Seven million or half the World War II military benefited from the latter. The Teacher Corps was even smaller than the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program, which in the 1970s was providing 20,000 scholarships annually and the National Defense Student Loan program (NDSL). The NDSL, which after 1972 was the National Direct Student Loan program, financed 1.1 million students annually. There were similar educational programs but with less benefits for the Korean, Vietnam and Iraq War vets (Greenberg, 1997). The

Teacher Corps was also small in comparison with social service programs such as the Peace Corps, which averaged 8,000 volunteers annually and VISTA (Crook, 1969).

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**Pre-service Resistance.** Initially, the intern resistance began at Livingston and was directed against the faculty group who brought the program there. The faculty were straightforward about their motives, none of which involved helping poverty education. Kenneth Orso, the local Teacher Corps' first director, lamented, that the faculty had applied for the program because the university was "financially strapped" and in need of federal money. He continued, "It isn't a matter of what we want, but what we can get from Washington" (Corwin, 1973:211). Faculty member Howard Fortney was complimented by his fellow educators as "one of the best money raisers in the state of Alabama" (Cook, 1972). It should not be surprising, that after bringing in the program, the local officials sought to modify it to "fit local needs." The national guidelines, if not legislation, called for the establishment of a community component. This was suspended. When some faculty disputed the suspension of the community component, they were forced to resign.

Had the faculty who were forced out remained, they would have been allies to the intern resisters. But the dispute and resignations occurred prior to the arrival of the student-teachers. The faculty throat cutting was described by Corwin (1973:219-220, see also 214):

Eight university faculty members resigned because of a rift with the college administration over control of the program. The administration charged that these faculty members did not fit well into the progressive team-teaching procedures that were being fostered and wanted a degree of latitude that would have culminated in a haphazard program. The professors said that the administration was attempting to use team teaching as a method of forcing them to conform to conservative Southern biases and, in particular, to dispense with the community component of the program.

The administrators understood from the start that non-Alabama interns would cause trouble. But their effort to keep them out was frustrated by the program's late funding, which forced the university to rely on the national intern pool, maintained by Washington, in order to have a full contingent of students and full funding for the fall of 1968. A report summarized:

Nearly half of the 27 interns (11) were drawn from this national pool; six of these were from the North. Most of the interns (80 percent) were white and male. Slightly over half of them had majored in the liberal arts, and one half of these had majored in the social sciences (Corwin, 1973:212).

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The resisters were often a minority among the interns. Many of the student-teachers were neutral toward the professionals. The women and older men in the program were not threatened by the draft and many supported the Vietnam War. Nevertheless, there were women, older men and Alabamans among the resisters, just as in the nation-wide civil rights and anti-war movement. The intern neutralists viewed the program as a way to obtain a masters degree at government expense and become professionals. They did not want to work in poverty schools. Like the Livingston education department that administered the program and the lobbyists behind the program, the main reform they believed in was increasing their paychecks. Seventeen of the 27 Alabama interns were often with the majority. They were recent college graduates, mainly from Alabama, married, living off campus with their spouses and not eating in the cafeteria. To the extent they socialized, they did it among themselves. They did not want "politics" and were distressed to the extent that the minority's antics threatened the program's existence.

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The resisters were not without variety in their beliefs, but most saw education as something more than a money-making enterprise and were serious about working in poverty

schools. They included Courtland A. Ball, Terry Hamner, Ray Latham, Joel Millers, James Leroy Morrison, Ed Terrar, Monty J. Thornbourg, Jim Wallice, and Richard F. Yarzub. They were single, dodging the draft and living on the second floor of Webb Hall while at Livingston. The officials characterized them as being from the “North” but Latham was from Birmingham, Alabama, and a graduate of Livingston University. Thornbourg, Millers and Morrison were from California and Hamner was from Missouri. Morrison had just spent a year as a Vista volunteer in West Virginia. He was acknowledged by the resisters for his leadership in fighting the established order. For three years he had been hounded by his California draft board, which refused to recognize him as a conscientious objector.

In the program there were like-minded young females: Patricia Dawson (Muron) from Demopolis, Alabama, Susan Kirk from Fort Worth, Texas, Carol Roland from Boligee, Alabama and LaVerne Turner (Capel) from Tampa, Florida. There were also married resisters: Spence Clabo from Johnson City, Tennessee and his wife, Jackie, and Roy Myers from Cullman, Alabama. Roy was a middle-aged military-retiree with a cardiac disability (Anonymous, 1968d).

The resistance started during the first week of pre-service. The interns found that despite course titles about “Disadvantaged Children,” the program featured traditional material with no effort to address the second-class students. In addition, teaching these courses were faculty who had never been in a poverty school or studied the problem. A study of the program summarized the problem:

In many cases, only the titles of the courses had been changed. Many interns still felt that the content of the classes was not relevant. It was charged that the university faculty members were unaware of many differences that might be required in teaching in low-income areas and that they were inflexible about the available alternatives. Most the faculty members were local people.

Their husbands or wives were employed in the town, and they did not want social change (Corwin, 1973:223).

The bogus program led to a strike that lasted two days, during which the interns bargained for individual reading and self-study time, community involvement and more problem solving. A later study of the program commented on the strike, "A two-day strike (a 'mini-sit-in') was staged by the interns early in the program. In university courses they wanted less structured and more problem-oriented courses, more integration among the courses and separate units, and more individual reading at their own pace. They also unsuccessfully tried to eliminate the thesis requirement and to change the timing of the general exams. They wanted to be involved in planning for the courses" (Corwin, 1973:215).

The curriculum against which the interns fought consisted of three courses of four credits each (Terrar, 1968a:v. 6, p. 53, October 23; Terrar, 1968e). Illustrative of the curriculum was Margaret Lyons's psychology course in child human development. For 40 years her students had been mostly white female undergraduates preparing to teach elementary school for a few years before marrying and retiring to be housewives. Lyons was a grandmotherly woman who had not kept up. Many of the interns had taken psychology courses and some had majored in it. Lyons was the butt of their jokes. Intern James Morrison, a psychology major with a particular interest in the work of Jean Piaget (1996-1980), complained that Livingston was not even giving them the know-how to teach normal children. One of the interns, as quoted in Corwin (1973:215-216), noted, "Most of the professors view the Teacher Corps as a 'handout'; they have little inclination to put much into it, and the ones who try lack the know-how."

On the positive side, the resistance brought new courses during the program's second year. These were on black history and literature, on the psychology of teaching the disadvantaged, on the sociology of poverty education, on teaching science in poor schools and an individual reading course.

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Along with curriculum resistance, the interns agitated about racial segregation. This brought opposition. The faculty maintained desegregation was irrelevant to improving education and, if anything, segregation was an asset in attracting federal funds. It also provided the faculty employment in helping to establish and staff the segregated private schools that were replacing the besieged public schools. Starting in 1964 Alabama provided \$185 per pupil in tuition grants for parents who wanted to send their children to private, non-parochial schools. The \$185 was the amount the state spent per year on a child in public education (Ashmore, 2008:94). Part of the Livingston the faculty was behind a new private elementary school in the town. They maintained that their children could not obtain quality education in schools that were 80 percent black (Corwin, 1973:243).

The intern strike during the program's first week included protests against the segregation-motivated lack of community involvement. Despite officialdom's disapproval, the resisters made desegregation activities part of their own curriculum. This started with fighting the college's lingering segregation. Livingston had been all white until the previous few years, when a small number of blacks gained admission. Most visible were several obese black football players. A number of black Teacher Corps recruits were among the university's first black graduate students and team leader Robert Brown was the first black to have anything like a faculty position.

Black and white activists made it a principle to eat with each other in the cafeteria and socialize in the dorms and town. For this they were regularly harassed (Terrar:1968a:v.6, p. 52, October 23) At night their windows were stoned and threats yelled. Intern Jon Parris, who generally attempted to steer clear of activism, but who was caught in the middle, resorted to firing a fake gun to run off the harassers (Terrar:1968a:v.6, p. 56, December 2). In town, the interns' mixed-race activities drew notice. People in passing cars yelled obscenities. On one occasion as several recruits were walking along the road, a carload of locals pulled along side and stopped. Betty Ethridge, one of the black undergrad walkers stopped and said, "Let them get a good look." Teacher Corps recruit Jim Morrison later commented with admiration, "Betty has balls" (Terrar:1968a:v.6, p. 53, October 23)

Despite the harassment, the conditions were better than earlier in the decade when activists were killed or jailed. Activist Terry Sullivan spent four months in Parchman Penitentiary in 1961 for riding a bus with blacks (Sullivan, 2006:3-4). His arrival at Parchman was described by an historian:

As they got off the trucks, they were surrounded by men who brandished guns and spat at them and cursed. Two white men, Terry Sullivan and Felix Singer, refusing to cooperate, kept going limp as guards tried to move them along. They were thrown from the truck into the wet sand-and-gravel drive, dragged through wet grass and mud puddles across a rough cement walk, into a building. Then a guard in a Stetson hat approached them carrying a long black rubber-handled tube. It was a cow-prodder, battery operated, which sears the flesh with an electric charge. When the two men refused to undress, the prodder was applied to their bodies. They squirmed in pain but would not give in. Their clothes were ripped from them and they were thrown into a cell (Zinn, 1964:56).

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The conditions at Livingston were also better than being in Harlem, where black and Puerto Rican students in October 1968 had police in their classrooms to prevent them from resisting the careerist teachers imposed by their school board (Williams, 1968:v. 33, no. 107,

p. 11, October 2). The conditions were much better than being in Vietnam, where each of the interns had buddies and family. Thirty Americans and ten times that number of Vietnamese were dying there each day. The resisters generally saw the war and segregation as having the same source and much preferred fighting it in Alabama. Paul Booth at the time was a national leader of the anti-war Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Some of the ATC interns were SDS members. Booth (1968:14, October 21) orated about activist philosophy:

We are prepared to work and die for liberty as our generation has done in Mississippi and Alabama, but we are not prepared to decimate other people's societies. We are anxious to build villages; we refuse to burn them. We are anxious to help and to change our country, we refuse to destroy someone else's country. We are anxious to advance the cause of democracy; we do not believe that cause can be advanced by torture and terror.

Complementing their local resistance during pre-service, the interns joined in more wide-ranging activities. During their first month in Livingston the national and local political campaigns were in full swing for the November 5, 1968 elections. The resisters had little interest in the presidential candidacies of Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey and George Wallace. But some did pass out literature for and attend rallies as on October 26, 1968 for the candidates of the National Democratic Party of Alabama (NDPA) (Terrar, 1968b, October 27). The NDPA was a split-off from the old-line George Wallace Democratic Party. Among the black candidates for whom some of the interns canvassed was William Branch. He was fighting five whites for west Alabama's Fifth Congressional district.

The interns also joined in the activities of Alabama's established civil rights and anti-war movement. One of their earliest and most enduring allies among the local activists was John "Johnny" Greene (1946-1990), a Livingston undergraduate who some, in admiration,

called “communist John.” (Greene, 1977). Greene’s family had a cabin situated by a lake on a farm near Demopolis. The activists spent some of their weekends there and enjoyed the weather, scenery, companionship and political strategizing (Terrar, 1968a:v.6, pp. 50-51, October 14). Another ally was the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) chapter located 60 miles north at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Early on, the interns helped start a SSOC chapter at Livingston that focused on antiwar agitation (Terrar, 1968a:v. 6, pp. 50-51, October 14; Terrar, 2007:10). The activities of the resisters were always as much social as political, including trips to the Mobile sea shore, which was three hours or about 170 miles south. A number of times after class on Friday the interns would pile into Dick Yarzub’s shiny new Pontiac Grand Prix, of which he was much proud, and head for the seashore. There was good seafood, conversation, bonfires and skinny dipping after dark. A closer destination was the state park system along the Tombigbee and Black Warrior Rivers among beautiful trees and wildlife, they would barbeque and campout.

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Those interns with a religious bent found allies at church. For Catholics there was the small chapel of St. Francis of Assisi in Livingston and a larger one with several daily masses at the University of Alabama’s Newman Center. Blacks and whites attended services and social events. The priests and nuns attached to these churches, including Sister M. Annette of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, Sister Mary Estelle, RJM and Sister M. Julien, VSC, were involved in civil rights work. In the fall of 1968 they ran a series of “Human Understanding Workshops.” The one on December 13, 1968, which some of the interns attended, was at St. John the Baptist Church in Montgomery. The interns took their sleeping bags and slept at the convent. The program consisted of a panel of black and white mothers

who spoke of their efforts to raise their children not to be racists. The workshop announcement stated:

They are “just women” . . . not experts in any subject but themselves. They do not quote statistics or national trends. But their charm and understanding of others make them “special” and worth knowing. The panelists let you into their lives, tell you their problems, their goals, their achievements. You “meet” their families. . . learn their backgrounds. You may not agree with the beliefs of each woman, but you feel you know her and why she holds them. After their presentation, a question period is held. Your questions are answered. You won’t get an “official” answer. . . but it will be what each woman honestly thinks and it may surprise you! Whether you go away agreeing or disagreeing with what you’ve heard. . . chances are you’ll see a different side of people from a fascinating new angle. . . and learn much about your fellow Americans (Anonymous, 1968e, December 13; Annette, 1968, December 4).

Livingston’s United Methodist Church, which was pastored by Rev. Love, was similarly teaching against racism. One of the interns performed there in the fifteenth-century morality play, *Everyman*, which was part of a Christmas program in December 1968. *Everyman*, the hero, found that heaven consisted in helping others, not in market-place greed.

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In seeking coalitions, one of the interns, soon after coming to Livingston, wrote an inquiry to a litigation project at Emory University Law School in Atlanta, which was involved in a number of western Alabama school desegregation cases. Emory never answered the intern’s inquiry, but they sent a copy of it back to the Livingston administration. The authorities were distressed with the meddling (Terrar, 1968:v.6, p. 51 October 14). They warned that county school boards were capable of booting the program out even before the interns arrived.

As the pre-service resistance evolved, so did faculty efforts to control it. One of their tactics was the employment of a psychologist to silence and weed out the troublemakers.

This was similar to what was done in the public schools against budding dropouts. Ritalin (methylphenidate) and similar drugs were not yet widely used to numb resistance. The employment of psychologists against the opposition was common not only among educators but among corporate employees, the military and in the church. Peace Corps psychologists were used to screen out recruits who did not understand their role as imperial missionaries.

Bethany Rodgers (2009) commented on the resistance to this abuse:

In the Peace Corps, meanwhile, officials placed such a strong accent upon psychological tests that they spawned mini-revolts by the volunteers themselves. Unlike mission boards, which typically administered the tests before applicants entered the service, the Peace Corps gave the tests as part of pre-service training and “de-selected” volunteers who failed. At Peace Corps training sites, then the staff psychologist became the most feared and reviled figure in the agency. “I’ve grown more wary of the headshrinkers on the University of California campus where I’m training, than in Africa (where they’re supposed to have the genuine articles),” quipped Arnold Zeitlin, on his way to Ghana. At Zeitlin’s training, volunteers receive 11 hours of “psychological inspection” to just an hour of physical examination. Like C.R. Thayer’s “sentence completion” exercise, many of the Peace Corps tests aimed at identifying “abnormal” volunteers; for all the agency’s talk about rugged individuals and new frontiers, critics noted, its mental-health tests prized conformity above all else.

With no tenure, the interns were subject to summary dismissal. The psychologist, Dr. Newland, came to the campus first in early November and again in December 1968. He himself, as an “Elmer Gantry” figure, became the butt of resistance. Some refused to meet with him or be tested. Others confronted him with arguments about his legitimacy. To the extent he was able, Newland had the interns answer questions such as, “Which of your fellow participants will most likely have problems in the community.” The militants at the top of the list were “maladjusted” and ripe for termination. Richard Corwin in his study summarized the bogus psychologizing, “Most teachers and many professors regarded the interns as naïve, irrational and disrespectful trouble makers. Interns were often treated as ‘hippies’ or as ‘outsiders.’ These diagnoses received official confirmation after a

psychologist diagnosed some of the interns as being ‘maladjusted’ upon learning of their letters to Washington, D.C., criticizing the program; some teachers construed ‘maladjusted’ to mean ‘schizophrenic’” (Corwin, 1973:243).

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In the end on November 3, 1968, several interns were given an ultimatum to hand in a letter of resignation within a week or be terminated from the program. In one case, the stated ground for the dismissal was that the intern appeared to be a civil rights worker and therefore biased and unlikely to succeed. A number of interns put their own future on the line by signing a petition against the ultimatum, including Dick Yarzub, Court Ball, Jim Wallice and Jim Morrison. Three older interns offered themselves as “bondsmen” for the threatened intern. These were Roy Myers, the preacher Winfred Easley (1922-2003) from Millport, Alabama, and John A. Zellhoefer from Carmel, California, who had been a corporate executive (Terrar, 1968c; Terrar, 1968d; Terrar, 1969b:3). That the activists had already shown their ability to shut down the program during the first week may have also helped save the intern.

The officials were also conciliated with gestures. The condemned intern cut off of his beard and wrote an appeal that promised to conform. In the appeal he stated, “Teacher Corps in general and I in particular have a choice. Either we can confine our activities or role to improving the quality of teaching in the local high-schools, or we can leave. The local community is just not ready for the social change role of the Teacher Corps” (Terrar, 1968c:19). The conciliation did not assuage those intern neutralists who feared their careers were being compromised by association with the program (Terrar, 1968a:v. 6, p. 41, September 16). The neutralist concern was well founded. At the end of the program none were offered jobs where they student taught.

**Student Teaching and Civil Rights.** In January 1969, after a semester at Livingston, the interns were split into three teams and dispersed nearby to school districts in Greene and Marengo Counties. Many of the dissidents were assigned to Carver Training School at Eutaw in Greene County. This was a black school containing grades one to twelve. The interns worked mainly in the high school section, which included grades seven to twelve, although they also tutored some younger students. There were 3,000 black and 530 white public school students in Greene County. Serving them were three comprehensive schools along with a number of elementary schools. One of the comprehensives, Eutaw, was formerly all white, but in 1966 a limited number of black students were admitted.

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The integration of the white school followed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub.L. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241, July 2, 1964) as enforced by the federal courts in *Hutton v. Kuykendall*, Civil Action No. 65-580 (U.S. District Court, Alabama Middle District, 1965). The county superintendent in answer to an order to form a plan for desegregation, filed a “Freedom of Choice Plan” for both teachers and students. This plan on appeal was rejected in *U.S. v. Board of Education*, 396 F. 2d 44 (U.S. Court of Appeals, Alabama, June 3, 1968). The court ruled that the Board did not meet its obligation by shifting the responsibility from itself to the black students and teachers (Gignilliat, 1968: 27-54; Ashmore, 2008:94). The ATC team leader in Greene County was Robert Brown, a black. He was a veteran math and science teacher formerly at Greene County Training School (Paramount) in Boligee. He was popular with the resisters. The other two teams were assigned to black schools in Demopolis (U.S. Jones) and Linden, which were in Marengo County.

As at the college, remuneration, not concern for poverty schools, was the focus of the Board of Education and administrators in bringing in the program. They received two-thirds

of the federal subsidy, with the other third going to the college. They called the interns “free teachers.” Even better, the board was under court pressure from the federal court because of *Hutton v. Kuykendall* to integrate their faculty. The white interns did this. In addition to judicial pressure, the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act applied pressure, in that it required school districts to file a desegregation plan to receive funding (Ashmore, 1968:94). This was significant for the Greene County school administrators, as they were fond of obtaining federal educational funding. Thirty-seven percent of their budget came from Washington, D.C., making them among the national leaders in this category. The national average was seven percent. Alabama received \$2.50 for each dollar it paid in federal taxes. Greene County was receiving closer to \$10.00 for each dollar it paid (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1967:2; Anonymous, 1968f:47; Grant, 1974:68).

Black educators in Greene County such as Robert Brown were annoyed that the administrators used their first “poverty” funds from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to construct a new office building for themselves complete with wood paneling, air conditioning and wall-to-wall carpeting. They maintained it was they, not the students, who were impoverished. Title I and III of 1965 ESEA was designed like the annual rivers and harbors bill; its funding was distributed throughout the nation’s 27,000 school districts in virtually an everybody-gets-his-share, pork-barrel manner (Pettigrew, 1967).

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The interns were to a greater or lesser degree aware that their school districts were, between January 1969 and August 1970, at the center of the civil rights movement, which by then was focused on electoral politics. Greene County, like other Black Belt counties, had a population that was eighty percent black, but a county government, school board and

administrators who were white. Local civil righters complained that poll taxes, literacy requirements, vouchers of good character from registered voters, along with black and white servility, cynicism, indifference and opportunism, and more heavy-handed measures were used to maintain the system (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1967:61). Backing them up at the state level was a similarly complected set of office-holders. They served an economic system dominated by those like the Morgans, Vanderbilts and Rockefellers and their corporations, United States Steel, the T.R. Miller Company (lumber), the L & N (Louisville and Nashville) Railroad, the Bloedel Macmillan Packaging Corporation (paper mill), the Robbins & McGowin Company (department store) and the Hainje's Home Furnishing and Luttrell Hardware Company (Zellner, 2008:38). These interests used their legislative influence and the state Constitution of 1901 to enforce a regressive income tax system, including a high sales tax on base necessities and low property taxes (Hamill, 2006:760, note 207).

Despite their advantages, the white office-holders in the Black Belt during the latter half of the 1960s were in retreat. Encouraged by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, local and outside activists in 1965 and 1966 had increased the black Greene County voter registration from 275 to 3,781, which was well above the white registration of 2,300. The Greene County population in 1966 was 7,800 black (72 percent), 2,900 white (27 percent) and 10,700 total. The U.S. Justice Department sent federal registrars to Greene County. The registration drive was led by the Greene County Civic Association and the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Both these organizations were established and led by William McKinley Branch (b. 1925), a black preacher at Ebenezer Baptist Church. He was also a junior high school teacher in the Greene County

school system until he was fired for his activism. The leader of the outside help was Hosea Williams (1926-2000), who headed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). He worked with Branch, as he did with local leaders throughout the Black Belt (Ashmore, (2008:93; James, 1993:212; Gaillard, 2004:319; Cashin, 2008:182, 195, 199).

In addition to voter-registration activities, blacks started what became an eighteen-month economic boycott of Eutaw's businesses, including the Merchants and Farmers Bank, the A & P and Foodland grocery chains, Banks Department Store, Bill's Dollar Store, the Yellow Front and the recreational facilities (James, 1993:216). Carver students from all levels skipped school to carry signs and join daily protests, marches and picketing at the courthouse. Some were organized by Andrew Marisette to harass and rip up the shopping bags of boycott violators (James, 1993:213, 219).

[RGC, p. 233]

At the height of the struggle, Governor George C. Wallace obtained an injunction in federal court banning civil rights leaders, specifically Martin Luther King, from encouraging the children to stay out of school to participate in the marches. But students continued to demonstrate. Two churches, one white and one black, were burned down within an hour of each other (Jenkins, 1969:62). The Eutaw events were a microcosm of the national battle. In the summer of 1965, there were 34 people killed and 4,000 arrested in the Watts-Los Angeles resistance. In the summer of 1966 there were pitched battles in Chicago and Cleveland with multiple lootings, arsons, killings and arrests (Zinn, 1980:201-202).

The 1966 activism in Eutaw was intense, but it only started the process of black electoral progress that was still not complete in 1971. Black candidates did poorly in the May 3, 1966 primary and the November 8, 1966 general election. Along with farmer cynicism, many were also indifferent to electoral politics because they feared the white

establishment or they had a stake in the existing order. Their enemies called them “house Negroes” and Uncle Toms. They included domestics, employees and merchants such as O.B. Harris, a former teacher in the Greene County schools.

Because not all the eligible black voters registered and because many who did register did not vote or voted for the white incumbents, only one Greene County black was elected in 1966. This was the Methodist preacher-farmer, Peter J. Kirksey. He joined the five-member School Board (James, 1993:253, 289). After the blacks in west Alabama gained full electoral success in the 1970s, the class divisions that limited them earlier remained prominent. The commercial interests that had used the white politicians recruited blacks to play a similar role. A participant, Randall Williams (1985:3), commented, “The outcome of the voting rights revolution in Alabama has been a bitter factionalization within the Black Belt counties.”

Likewise the educational struggle remained after the blacks gained control of the Board of Education. The black professionals matched their predecessors in seeking federal funding that benefited themselves rather than the students. One of their projects was to bring in the U.S. Department of Defense’s Junior Reserve Officers Training Program (JROTC). Martin Luther King, as in his speech, “Beyond Vietnam—A Time to Break Silence” on April 4, 1967 at Riverside Church in New York City, had described such U.S. military activity as the “greatest purveyor of violence in the world” and condemned it for the “cruel manipulation of the poor” in taking young black men who had been crippled by capitalist society and sending them overseas to kill and die for extortionist landlords (Jackson, 2007:323-326; *Coleman Washington v. Wiley Kirksey*, 811 F.2d 561, US Court of Appeals, 1987).

[RGC, p. 234]

What the ATC interns observed in the Eutaw students and parents in January 1969 was mainly cynicism about politics. The majority were or wanted to be subsistence farmers. They had or wanted to have their own way of life, which was independent or on the margin of the political and economic system. One such farmer commented, “We always raised our food. We had cows for meat, plenty of milk, butter, eggs. We had grit meal, ground our own for our bread” (O’Foran, 2006:59; Gaillard, 2004:319). The government claimed that three-fourth of the farmers lived below the poverty line and were uneducated (Corwin, 1973:243). But the farmers had their own scripture-based, labor-value ideas about poverty and education. Like their ancestors, they equated impoverishment with the market system and the lust for wealth (Moreland, 2008; Smyre, 1999). In 1967 those who were not fortunate enough to own their own place and had to plant a cotton crop in order to pay rent, had their worst year since 1895 because of draught and freezing. Many ended up being evicted.

The local black leader, William Branch, like Winstanley in the seventeenth century and the Irish in the mid-nineteenth century, observed that agrarian reform and an end to the market, not civil rights, was needed (Ashmore, 2008:197). Tenant farmers throughout the Black Belt were hurt not only by poor crops but feared change because the cotton they had grown for generations was being squeezed out by soybean, cattle and timber. Landlords no longer needed tenants and continued to rent only from a sense of obligation. Black militancy was the excuse they needed to evict. There were multiple evictions in the spring and summer of 1966 (James, 1993:210, 216).

The same pattern of large-scale black voter indifference might have prevailed in the 1968 elections, except that the incumbents shot themselves in the foot. The blacks who ran in the May 7, 1968 Democratic Party for the four seats on the Greene County Commission

and the two school board openings were defeated. Less than half the registered blacks turned out. As a result, the activists in the summer of 1968 joined the new National Democratic Party of Alabama (NDPA), a statewide political organization that sponsored 110 candidates for state and local office. At the general election on November 5, 1968 the chief Greene County elected official, Probate Judge Dennis Herndon, left the six NDPL blacks off the ballot because of a technicality.

This brought national attention to the county. There had been a standing U.S. Supreme Court order to include blacks on the ballot. Herndon was held in contempt of court and fined \$5,400, and a new election for Greene County was ordered. (*In the Matter of James Dennis Herndon*, 325 F.Supp. 779 [Alabama 1971]; O'Foran, 2006:72; Terrar, 1969a:36). This resulted in the election on July 26, 1969 of blacks to the two open School Board seats. Leading up to the special election, many civil rights leaders, including Coretta Scott King and Ralph Abernathy, visited Greene County and addressed rallies at the First Baptist Church and at the courthouse in Eutaw. At the inauguration of the successful black candidates on August 11, 1969, U.S. Senator Birch Bayh, a Democrat member of the Public Works Committee, was the guest speaker. In spite of the campaigning, of the 3,800 registered blacks, 400 voted white and 1,450 did not vote at all. Of the 4,500 votes cast, the NDPA received 2,350 votes and the whites 2,150. The blacks won by 200 votes (Galphin, 1969). This was the first time since Reconstruction that blacks had control of such Alabama governmental bodies.

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The two newly elected blacks, along with Peter Kirksey, who had been elected in 1966, brought a black majority to the five-member school board. Four blacks were also elected to the five-member County Commission. The blacks elected to the School Board

were Robert Hines and J.A. Posey, both farmers. Those elected to the County Commission were Levi Morrow, a dry cleaning business operator and cattle farmer with 600 acres, Vassie Knott, a preacher, and Frenchie Burton and Harry C. Means, both farmers and Tuskegee Institute alumni. The School Board eventually appointed Robert Brown to be the superintendent of education. He had been the Greene County Teacher Corps team leader and then the principal at Greene County Training School (Paramount) in Boligee. He served from 1970 to 1980. Brown was allied with the political leader Spiver Gordon (James, 1993:292; Cashin, 2008:194-196). William McKinley Branch became the new probate judge.

**Resistance.** At Livingston, the professional educators had the upper hand, but this was less the case in the county school districts. Nevertheless, in the process of fighting to preserve their prerogatives over the 20-month course of the in-service program, the school boards fired a number of activist interns for various transgressions.

Traditionally the Black Belt agrarians self-educated themselves in their homes and churches, not unlike the nineteenth-century Abraham Lincoln tradition or the early Soviets or the contemporary home-schoolers. The Soviet pedagogue Viktor N. Shul'gin in the 1920s defended the ideal of self-education and advocated, as did many Carver students in their actions, the "withering away of the school," since it was an appendage of the market system. As he stated, "In reality men learn not in school but in life, not only in childhood, but throughout the whole of life. . . Labor is to us a means of inducting children into the working world family in order that they may participate in and understand the struggle of the masses, follow the history of human society, acquire working, organizing and collective

habits, and come into the possession of the discipline of work” (quoted in Price, 1977:198-199).

[*RGC*, p. 236]

A majority of the Alabama farmers only paid lip-service to professional education, attending classes three or four months out of the year and from a young age spending the bulk of their time laboring or in leisure pursuits (Keyserling, 1968:5). Unlike market-dominated cities, rural Alabama provided abundant work and other activities on and off the farm, so that there was no need for educational babysitting to keep youth off the streets (Anderson, 1988:203; Spring, 1988:93). In addition the agrarians’ subsistence life style undercut what historian Joel Spring (2006:4) calls the “educational security state” and “industrial-consumerism.” Spring maintains that at the beginning of the century working people anticipated that industrialism would provide them with optimum leisure. But using professional education as an adjunct, capitalism had throughout the twentieth century attempted to subvert industrialism for profit-making. Instead of creating leisure, those who were seduced by market advertising went to school and then worked endlessly in order to consume unnecessary commodities.

In resisting industrial-consumerism the farmers had an even smaller regard for professional education than the interns. Because there were no kindergartens, the children avoided school until age six or seven. There were no truant officers, so many stopped attending by the sixth grade (Philpott, 1968; Richardson, 1965[1]:342; Braddock, 1968[4]:10). The Alabama Educational Association (Anonymous, 1968g:10-11) complained because a quarter of Greene County students were failures in the pre-induction and induction mental tests of the Selective Service. But this seldom bothered those who saw nothing to be

gained by going to Vietnam. They were satisfied that tenth grade youngsters performed at sixth grade levels (Anonymous, 1968b).

The “poverty children” were sometimes more clever than their teachers. Educators complained they abandoned problems as soon as any difficulty was encountered in attempting to solve it. When questioned for an explanation, the children sensibly responded, “Who cares?” or “What does it matter?” (Deutsch, 1968:269). At the beginning of the century urban migrants fresh from the farm, as reported by Harvey Kantor (1982:30-31) had similarly found that professional education did not matter, “Many children disliked school intensely. Helen Todd, a factory inspector in Chicago, interviewed 500 working children in 1908; 412 she reported, stated that they preferred to work in a factory rather than go to school, even if their families did not need the additional income. In Milwaukee in 1922, the school system offered working children 75 cents a day—comparable to a young worker’s average wage—to attend full-time public school; out of 8,000 youth, only sixteen accepted the offer.”

Greene County Community resistance against professional education was reflected in the county school operations. The Alabama Education Association (AEA) formula for obtaining higher teacher salaries was to maximize the number of students in a school. A standard high school, according to the AEA, should contain a minimum of 100 pupils enrolled in the twelfth grade. The optimum size was from 800 to 1,200 students with a minimum-maximum range of 500 to 1,500 students (McClurkin, 1966:12). For the students, such factories meant rising before dawn, riding buses for an hour or more, not being able to participate in extra curricula activities, competition with only a small percentage being successful and teachers who did not know or care about the lesser performing majority or

their communities. Greene County had three high schools with fewer than 50 pupils in the twelfth grade (Anonymous, 1967:44; Richardson, 1965:347). From the AEA perspective, these schools were a failure because the teacher salaries were minimal. But the schools were convenient to the communities they served and the competition was minimized.

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Community antagonism to professional education was also reflected in Greene County's vocational education programs. The Department of Education at Livingston offered no preparatory courses in it and the AEA professionals were snobbish toward such programs, but Greene County offered classes in agronomy, drivers education, typing, brick laying, welding, home economics, physical fitness, choir and band (Anonymous, 1968a). It was in part due to the working class boycott of professional education at the beginning of the century that schools began, as one historian put it, to "offer a practical relevant education to thousands of youth bored by the classical curriculum" (Kantor, 1982:36). Had the academics, such as W.E.B. DuBois at the beginning of the century, had their way, the students would not have been allowed to dirty their hands in wood and metal shops. DuBois catered to the "talented tenth," the "race leaders" that wanted to integrate blacks into the market system (Anderson, 1988:104; DuBois, 1903; Aptheker, 1973:[1]:53). But many of the farmers were closer both to John Bunyan (1628-1688), who condemned the market and also to the utopian Soviets, who maintained, "We are not supporters of the thesis that an existing society can be changed through the school. To make the school the embryo of a future socialistic order is impossible for the simple reason that the school cannot be independent of its environment" (Pinkevich, 1929:153).

Along with smaller schools in the neighborhood and vocational education, there was community resistance to the professionals over curriculum issues such as religion. Public

school bible reading, hymn singing, praying and sermonizing were outlawed by the Supreme Court in *Engle v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962) and *Abington School District v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963), but were a regular part of the Carver curriculum and, from the student perspective, often the best part. The weekly school assemblies in the gymnasium included hymn singing and bible reading. The daily classroom activity of those teachers with a religious bent started with prayers. The farmers were Baptists and Methodists. For many, religion was the center of life both inside the home where they had daily family worship and at public events such as political meetings, sporting events, Fourth-of-July barbeques and other celebrations. In the late 1960s the white dominated school board and administrators held office because they were able to win a percentage of the black vote. It would have been political suicide for them to meddle with the agrarian constitution, even if personally inclined to the Supreme Court's market Constitution (Reese, 1985).

[RGC, p. 238]

The agrarian resistance to the professionals made Greene County a comfortable place for the interns. One of the early intern battles at Carver concerned student nutrition. Of 300 Greene County school children surveyed in 1968, half were eating no breakfast and a third no lunch (Kuykendall, 1968; Anonymous. (1968c:5). Thirty percent of the county's black women had lost one or more children during their first year of life and fifteen percent of the children had distended stomachs due to malnutrition.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program, popularly called the "Free Lunch Program," helped address this problem. In January 1969, soon after their arrival in Greene County, team leader Robert Brown discussed with the interns in an off-the-record manner, the lunch program. He voiced the bitterness in the black community based on their suspicion that the administrators at the Board of Education were

personally profiting by charging for what should have been free meals. It was difficult to know the truth about the alleged cheating, since the Board kept the school budget a secret even from the school principals. Conspiracy theories and mistrust were rampant among the whites and blacks (Terrar, 1969a:3).

In spite of its popular name, the program provided subsidized, not free, meals to children who passed a means test. In the black schools, the program was funded both by Title I of the 1965 ESEA and by the USDA's National School Lunch Program. In the white schools the program was funded solely by the USDA and in disproportionately greater amounts compared to the black schools. Similar complaints about the lunch program were made in many Alabama school districts (Gale, 1967; Terrar, 1969:19-20). Brown maintained there was overspending of USDA funds in the white schools and subsequent kick-backs to the superintendent (Terrar, 1969:3).

Based on these charges, the interns lobbied politicians and officials in the state capitol at Montgomery and in Washington (Terrar, 1969b:35). Those contacted included Governor Albert Brewer. Their inquiries brought a year-long investigation by the USDA's Office of Inspector General, which produced improvements for the children, including the provision of free lunches to 500 children who had been entitled to but not receiving them.

The Assistant Secretary of Agriculture summarized the results of investigation:

The Inspector General's report upheld your allegation that no totally free meals were served although the policy statement of the Greene County schools made provision for this. We must emphasize, however, that while charging the majority of the children 5 cents for their lunch was an action inconsistent with the family size-income scaled included in the Greene County policy statement, there was absolutely no misuse or mishandling of funds by any Greene County officials (Lyng, 1970).

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One of the interns stuck his head out too far. In March 1969, the Teacher Corps at Livingston fired him for engaging in community activity going outside the chain of command in complaining. The black parents for years had complained within the system. The team leader himself, a teacher in the county for 20 years, feared to confront the administration. For the whistle blower the firing was not much of a loss. He was frustrated with his lack of success and had stayed with the program mainly because he liked his fellow resistors and wanted to help maximize their impact. Being fired for trying to obtain food for children was an honorable way out (Terrar, 2007).

Another intern resistance project focused on encouragement of the dormant Parents-Teachers Association. After several meetings, this organization was petitioning the mayor to repair and pave roads, hook up city water supplies and provide other municipal services to student households. The activists also joined in the continuing fight against Jim Crow. They attended SCLC-led marches and demonstrations as at Selma and Montgomery in April 1969. Locally, they challenged the system by visiting student homes and participating in their churches and social activities. Several interns who shared a house, including Jim Wallace and Terry Hammer, were evicted by their landlord only a few weeks after their arrival. This was because after having had a meal with some of their colleagues, one of their neighbors observed Jim Wallace bussing on the cheek black intern Carol Roland as they were saying their goodbyes in the driveway. Dick Yarzub committed an even greater sin when he later married a local black.

**Relations with Teachers and Principal.** The interns' relations with their principal and black teachers were less smooth than those with the students and their families. Unlike the college and county administrators, the ATC provided the principal, R. H. Young, and the

twenty Carver teachers no compensation. The teachers viewed the program and desegregation as a threat. The white interns would take their jobs. Even the teachers who were in resistance to the professional money-grubbing did not want the program. A study of the ATC commented on the ambivalent support or lack of support of the local principals for the program:

The degree of support given to the program by the principals ranged from opposition to mild neutrality. In view of their dependence on the white community in a racially tense situation, the principals were not in a secure position. At least one principal, although he supported some of the activities, lamented that the interns had come with a purpose in mind and were determined to carry it out regardless of local conditions (Corwin, 1973:243).

[RGC, p. 240]

Martin Luther King encountered similar ambivalence among black professionals and, as Thomas Jackson (2007:195) points out, by 1965, “he decided his greatest levers of power lay in mobilizing poor black people in their communities against specific forms of concentrated poverty, institutional racism and disempowerment. . . King sought to strengthen the linkages between the war against racism and the War on Poverty and to extend its scope into areas it had not ventured: income support, jobs creation, and poor people’s political empowerment.”

Added to the problems faced by the Carver principal was that he had relatively little power over the interns, since they were assigned by and their stipend paid for by the Board of Education. In the years following the initial cycle, the principals gained from the national Teacher Corps the right to pass on those who would serve in their schools. One of the conflicts at Carver came when the interns supported student activists in establishing a student council. The principal feared, as he put it, and as the activists hoped, that they “might become linked with the explosive black militancy that was rising in the community”

(Corwin, 1973:210). The students were vaguely aware of the 1966 Chinese Cultural Revolution and its program of popular education, which as historian Robert Garcia (1999:13) puts it, blurred the distinction between teacher and student. The Carver activists joked about the need of sending Principal Young off to a factory or farm for re-education.

Another area of resistance was the casual dress and egalitarian ways in which the interns related to the students and teachers. If Principal Young and a few like-minded teachers had had their way, the school would have been more formal and business-like than it was. The ATC egalitarianism was disruptive of the prisons described by one account of the western Alabama schools:

The teachers' almost universal preoccupation with cognitive achievement, discipline, and regimen created a stifling and dogmatic environment that assaults human dignity. A depressing lack of enthusiasm for learning and the dismal disrespect that prevailed between teachers and student in the public schools was repeatedly impressed upon me. Too many schools were run on blind, deadly routines, girded by little more than a preoccupation with order. With few exceptions, monotonous regimentation could be observed (Corwin, 1973:116-117).

The ATC egalitarianism found a counterpart in those students who were chronically defying the corporate dehumanization. Carver seventh-grader Eliza Byrd in March 1969 reflected, with shades of Emily Dickinson:

[RGC, p. 241]

#### I'm Somebody

I'm somebody, are you?  
 Are you somebody too?  
 Hold your head high and do not  
 feel shy. Be somebody too.

How good it is to be somebody,  
 To be respected and not rejected.  
 It's great to be somebody.

I could tell you,

What makes me  
What I am.

But I don't  
Really want to—And you  
don't give a damn (Byrd, 1969).

While their relations with Young were contentious, the initial hostility to the interns by the Carver teachers in many cases became amicable. The interns were not student-teachers in the sense of having their own classes. They helped in the classrooms of experienced teachers, who shared their techniques and used the interns as aides, paper correctors, schedule arrangers, and one-on-one tutors in reading and math. Intern Susan Kirk, a college art major from Fort Worth, Texas started a new art program, which the principal felt had a good effect on the whole school. One of her popular projects during February 1969 involved student-made Valentine Day cards.

Over a twenty-month period the interns also set up a cross-age tutoring program in which slower elementary students were taught by high school students. Intern Jim Wallace, an Eagle Scout, helped establish a Boy Scout troop. Others helped with the student newspaper, a literary club, a dance troupe that performed African dances and took the children on field trips. The literary club encouraged the students to submit their prose and poetry to the local weekly, the *Greene County Democrat*, which regularly published them. At U.S. Jones Comprehensive School in Demopolis black intern Ernest L. Palmer wrote and produced "Blacks in American History." This was a seven-act play covering 200 years of black history. In its production it employed the entire student body and faculty. It was good enough that it could have served as a lesson plan and activity for the celebrated National History Standards developed by Gary Nash (1997) and his colleagues under the auspices of the National Center for History in the Schools. The play featured among others the

American Revolutionary, Crispus Attucks, plantation slaves, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. Palmer was assisted in staging the play on February 12, 1969 by interns Jon Parris, Gene Brewer, Polly Barnes, Peggy Boney and many teachers. The school band and concert choir joined a large cast drawn from the student body (Anonymous, 1969).

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One of the interns summarized his schedule on a normal school day:

Period I: art class for 9<sup>th</sup> grade—12 students present. We made mobiles, woodcuts, collages.

Period II: art class for 10<sup>th</sup> grade—17 students. Activities were same as in Period I.

Period III: Civics, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 8 students, teamed with Terry Hammer. Taught the Constitution; used three tapes from the media center which talked about the Constitution. We announced that their next test would be Thursday, and we would let them use their notebooks.

Period IV: English, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 15 students, Edgar Allen Poe's *The Bell's* [*sic*], was sung by Phil Ochs, and then the students wrote songs and recorded them on a tape recorder (Terrar, 1969c).

On the negative side, the interns made little progress in helping what the professionals called failures. Both the budding dropouts who had only limited reading and writing abilities by the seventh grade and also the illiterate adults, who some of the interns taught in an evening literacy class at the school, needed skilled, patient remedial help. The non-professional Cuban *alfabetizadores* in 1960 had voluntarily taught in rural areas when some 9,000 unemployed professional urban teachers refused to teach in such areas. Within a year 700,000 illiterates (70 percent) of the farmers learned how to read and write (Lorenzetto, 1965:15-16, 40, 43). But the Alabama *alfabetizadores* had no such success.

They learned the hard way the lesson which a more recent educator summarized:

The ideas that self-discovery is the most efficacious mode of learning, that most learning can be characterized as “natural,” and that cognitive components should never be isolated or fractionated during the learning process have been useful as tenets for comprehension instruction, but are

markedly at variance with what is now known about the best ways to develop word recognition skill. Research has indicated that explicit instruction and teacher-directed strategy training are more efficacious and that this is especially true for at-risk children, children with learning disabilities, and for children with special needs (Stanovich, 1994:259).

Those involved with the Alabama literacy speculated that they were have done better had they enjoyed such as the free boarding schools (*escuelas en el campo*) in Cuba, which provided intervention on a 24-hour basis during the school week, with weekends spent at home (Jolly, 1964:165. 253). In these schools students received stipends and divided their time between mental and manual labor (20 hours of study, 20 hours of remunerated work), not unlike the medieval monastic ideal of “work and pray” (*ora et labora*).

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Among the experienced teachers at Carver there were several who did work with the illiterates. Ms. I Neal, a life-long teacher, was one of them. She knew their families, and they became her family. She did not think the children had to wait until they were adults to start thinking. She resented “the survival of the fittest” morality of professional education. She had a low regard for Principal Young, who had been out of the classroom for years and who regarded education as a business. She complained that children should not be tested and graded like cattle.

**Conclusion.** In recent times, working people have protected their educational values by modifying or eliminating the market and establishing societies with government-guaranteed jobs, housing and health care along with free education at all levels. This has required the rising up as a class. The Alabama blacks had their agrarian version of minimizing the market and its educational pollution. The interns would have been poor educators had they not supported the resistance which they found in their local school and community.

From the professional perspective, the Teacher Corps in Alabama and elsewhere brought mixed results. It did not reduce dropout rates or increase test scores, which for them was equated with improving poverty education. But from the start, the primary purpose of the program for the professionals was federal funding, not dropouts. For the intern resisters, the ATC was a success not only in giving them an opportunity to be educators but because it helped them avoid the draft and confront the enemy in a small way in the college, schools and civil rights movement, all with a federal stipend and the friendship of their colleagues.

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