

Older Persons  
Programs

### Older Persons Programs

Recognition, increasing to full awareness as time passed, of the particular problems of the older poor, was part of OEO's programming right from the beginning. There were figures to show that over six million poor Americans were over 65. Of Americans between the ages of 55 and 64, there were 2.7 million poor. In 1968, Miss Genevieve Blatt, the newly appointed OEO Assistant Director for Older Persons Programs, estimated that at least 30% of all older Americans could be called "poor" by the minimum standards of OEO. And, she said, if slightly more liberal standards of "near poverty" were applied, the figure rose to 43%. "These older Americans, who bear the double burden of poverty and old age, account for at least 20% of all the poor in the country," she said, adding that, "the addition of their dependents would, of course, increase this figure."

### Foster Grandparents and Early Programs

In August, 1965, President Johnson announced OEO's first 21 Foster Grandparent demonstration projects. The program proved so successful that by the end of Fiscal 1967, 65 Foster Grandparent projects in 38 states and Puerto Rico, employing 3,927 Foster Grand-

parents, were serving 8,000 children in 156 institutions, public schools, Head Start, home and programs, at a cost of \$8.3 million.

Under a contract with the Administration on Aging of HEW, the program recruited, trained and employed low income men and women over 60 years of age to work with neglected, deprived, mentally and physically handicapped children. It had two functions: to help older men and women supplement their income as well as provide them with a feeling of usefulness; and, to provide affectionate and caring individual attention to children deprived of such care and attention. The Mayor of Dixon, Illinois, provided a representative reaction to the Foster Grandparent's program when he wrote OEO:

First of all, I wish to extend the appreciation of the Dixon Community to those people who are engaged in this effort from the surrounding communities, and the testimony they have given concerning the effectiveness of the program and the return they have experienced as senior citizens in having constructive work to do.

I was interested in what had been accomplished with the children in a short space of time, and what affection, love, patient and enduring care can accomplish in recovering a child that is apparently lost. These foster grandparents can take a much more detached view in their relationship to the child as against a parent. They can give the benefit of the extension of their love and affection through training by the staff at the State School in the work of handling these children. Basically, I see a real benefit to the taxpayers, for

this kind of program could make these children less in need of total care, could make the work of the people in the State School more productive because of the help of these foster grandparents, and hopefully could return some of these children, as they mature, back into society to perform tasks within the limits of their ability.

The OEO experience showed that many Foster Grandparents, through their training, were able to find permanent employment subsequently as house mothers in colleges, teachers aides in university laboratory schools, aides at brain damage institutes, hospital aides, and caring for other elderly persons and retarded children in their own homes.

#### Project Green Thumb

In 1965, following an amendment to the EOA introduced by Sen. Gaylord Nelson, OEO set up a demonstration program called Green Thumb in Minnesota, New Jersey, Arkansas, and Oregon. The project was to test the training and future employment possibilities of over 300 older men with low-incomes and farming backgrounds as workers in community development and beautification projects. Green Thumb was planned in conjunction with state highway commissions, park and maintenance departments and soil conservation districts. It was

financed with \$768,000 in OEO funds and \$680,000 in state and local contributions. The project was developed and sponsored by Green Thumb, Inc., a subsidiary of the National Farmers Union. The demonstration program was so successful that it became part of Operation Mainstream, administered by the Bureau of Work Programs of the Labor Department. In 1968, the project was employing 1,200 older men in 14 states and the expectation was that 2,000 men would be employed by the end of the year on highway beautification and community development projects.

In cooperation with the Public Health Service, OEO developed a \$1.0 million pilot project for various methods of training Home Health Aides, with recruitment directed primarily at the over 45 age group. By June 30, 1967, 2000 persons had been trained in 12 demonstration projects. And, at the end of Fiscal 1967, 200 OEO-financed Senior Citizens Centers and Multi-purpose Centers all over the country were serving approximately 150,000 older persons. CAAs in 45 states, Puerto Rico and Guam initiated programs designed to meet the needs of low-income older persons.

Older Persons Office

The appointment of an Assistant Director of OEO, with the mandate to coordinate older persons programs, was authorized by the 1966 amendments to the EOA. The appointment was made and an overall office established just before the end of fiscal 1967. Another spur to OEO activity in aiding the older poor was provided by the 1967 amendments which required not only a national special program for them, to be known as Senior Opportunities and Services, but removed legislative earmarks which had previously channelled most OEO funds automatically into programs for younger persons. Specific references were also inserted into many different sections of the act to make it clear that all OEO programs should serve the older poor as much as possible. Unfortunately, the mandate of 1967 was not only unaccompanied by new funds, but it was enacted so late in the fiscal year that the total amount of funds available to OEO for all purposes was substantially reduced. As a result, the special older persons program could not be funded at all. The best that could be done for existing programs was

to keep them going at current levels with occasional modest expansions where funds could be retrieved from closed out projects.

Project FIND (Friendless, Isolated, Needy and Disabled)

Authorized as a demonstration project during the 1967 fiscal year, the project actually got underway just as the year was ending, but was extended for an additional year. Employing 372 older people who had the assistance of 60 volunteers as canvassers in 12 communities in different states, Project FIND had, by the summer of 1968, reached about 25,000 older Americans in their homes, noted their needs and had taken steps to offer specific help. Similar projects with private or other agency funding, were begun in a dozen other communities, using Project FIND guidelines. "When this special demonstration project is completed," said an OEO report\* "a landmark report on the older poor will be available, based on the statistical data gathered. It should provide, for the first time, reliable information on a national scale regarding the actual number, identity and needs of the older poor.

---

\* The Old Who Are Poor, Report to the President's Council on Aging by Genevieve Blatt, June 20, 1968.

## Regional Specialists in Older Persons Programs

### NCOA Specialists

Working with Community Action Agencies, the Older Persons Programs at the local level were aided by the technical assistance available for the first time in 1968 from Regional Specialists assigned to the seven OEO regions by the National Council on the Aging, under the terms of its Project FIND contract with the OEO. Well versed in how to organize and promote programs for the elderly, these specialists travelled throughout all the regions, aiding local Community Action Agencies who wanted to do something for the older poor. They helped with the establishment of senior centers, senior sections in multi-purpose centers, food programs, transportation services, employment referral and job development plans, home repair and home-help services and home-health aide programs.

### Regional and Staff Conferences

Besides their direct work with the Community Action Agencies, the Regional Specialists helped to mobilize community services of all kinds

for the older poor. Through conferences, attended by representatives of all appropriate governmental and private agencies, information was disseminated and interest stimulated regarding Older Persons Programs. Four Regional Conferences were held in Minneapolis, Minnesota; New Orleans, Louisiana; Berkeley, California; and Washington, D.C.; ten State Conferences, in North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Arizona, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, Texas. One-hundred-two special training conferences, primarily for OEO personnel, were arranged, and approximately 8,800 people took part in the sessions. These included 22 special state meetings, and sixteen meetings for people from two or more states. In addition, individual assistance was given to 767 different state, regional and local agencies.

#### OEO Regional Specialists

In 1967-68, each OEO Regional Office assigned one of its staff members to look after Older Persons Programs in the region. The special representatives worked with the Regional Representatives of the National Council on the Aging and were instrumental in bringing about

a greater awareness on the part of OEO regional and local staff members regarding OEO's obligations to the older poor. It was hoped that the specialists would eventually be assigned full time to Older Persons Programs.

#### Other Programs

##### Special Community Action Programs

In the so-called national or special programs handled as part of the Community Action Program, OEO reported progress toward the involvement of more older people. In Head Start and Follow Through programs, for example, many older people worked as paid or volunteer teacher's aides. In the Neighborhood Health and Legal Services programs, older people likewise worked as aides of various kinds. In Upward Bound, Family Planning and related programs, some older people also served in various capacities.

##### VISTA

In VISTA the number of older persons working as volunteers, as well as older persons served by VISTA Volunteers of all ages, increased

steadily. With a VISTA staff member designated to coordinate these efforts more and more use was being made of, and more and more services given to, older men and women. In 1968, 602 VISTA Volunteers, or 16% of the total, were over 50 years of age, and 88 VISTA projects, or 20% of the total, served older persons.

### Job Corps

In the Job Corps, too, a staff member was also named to see to the involvement of older people in that program. One thousand five hundred sixty-nine (1,569) older people, or 16% of the total staff, are now employed at the various Job Corps Centers, serving as instructors, counsellors, and in other capacities. Each Center was directed to explore ways and means of making its training helpful to the older poor in nearby communities. As a result, Job Corps boys did home-repair work, Job Corps girls worked at hair-styling and beauty care. Students of cooking and baking provided food, and new ways were being found constantly to help nearby older persons.

### Delegated Programs

Although the Neighborhood Youth Corps and other programs delegated to the Department of Labor's Manpower and Work Experience Programs were organized mainly for younger people, older persons were serving as instructors, counsellors, recruiters and the like.

The Labor Department made three new contracts for the specific purpose of providing training and employment opportunities for older people. One, with the National Council of Senior Citizens, for Senior Aides, another with the National Council on the Aging for Senior Citizen Community Service Workers. These would allow for the training and employment of approximately 800 older men and women in various needed community service projects. The third contract extended Project Green Thumb.

Similarly, the Department of Agriculture, through Rural Loans, Food Stamps and other such programs, served a great many of the older poor. And the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, not only through all of its Health and Rehabilitation Services and the Social

Security System, contributed greatly to aiding the older poor. Other agencies participated in the effort but lack of time and staff prevented the coordination which should be given by the OEO to these efforts, and lack of funds prevented their expansion.

#### Other Efforts

Besides trying to coordinate other agency efforts OEO participated actively in the work of the President's Council on the Aging and its various committees and in the pertinent work of the Economic Opportunity Council. It also sought the aid of an Advisory Committee on Older Persons Programs, which consisted of nationally known experts. It also used the National Council on the Aging during 1967 to conduct a special one-day orientation conference for the members of the national OEO Administrative staff to acquaint them with their obligations and opportunities in serving elderly poor, and another two-day orientation session for the national training staff.

#### New Programs

As the 1968 fiscal year came to an end, each of the OEO regions was authorized to fund special new Older Persons Programs in various

amounts, depending upon the interest expressed in each region.

This became possible because of the availability of approximately \$2.8 million which had been reprogrammed from funds previously reserved for other uses. A new national demonstration program was also initiated, intended to provide special facilities for Legal Services for the older poor.

#### The Future for the Older Poor

In view of the fact that, at the very least, 20% of the poor are old and 30% of the old are poor, it was obvious in 1968 that current OEO programs for the older poor actually helped very few of the older poor who needed help. A large amount of new funding, possibly earmarked for the purpose, would be needed if a substantial number of the older poor were to receive the help they needed, and much more funding would be required if all were to get the help they need.

#### Possible New Programs

There were two new programs contemplated in 1968, on a demonstration basis. They would be part of the Senior Opportunities and

Service Programs.

One called Operation Late Start was based on the concept that old age can last a long time and that the person entering it needed preparation, especially if he was also poor. Just as a deprived child was prepared for school in a Head Start program, so neighborhood groups of impoverished older people would be prepared for their old age by being given (1) a thorough physical checkup and whatever treatment or appliances might be needed to put them in good physical condition, (2) at least one nutritious meal a day to maintain their health, and (3) the information they needed as to how to live in decency, dignity and independence, either through augmenting their income, or through learning how to obtain needed services in lieu of augmented income. Medicare benefits would finance the first phase, the use of surplus foods and school and church facilities would take care of the second, and retired teachers of all kinds would handle the third in existing community facilities. In Late Start neighborhood groups of 25 to 30 members, older men and women who were poor would be prepared for the ten, twenty or thirty

years they had yet to live by being informed about such subjects as budget buying, money management, home and furniture repair, food and nutrition, updating of skills, and the like.

The other program envisioned would provide Foster Grandsons and Foster Granddaughters for the older poor, assigning responsible teenage volunteers to individual older people, with the young volunteers promising weekly or twice-weekly or even daily visits as required. They would check on the older person's needs, do small chores and errands, and report other needs to a responsible adult in the neighborhood headquarters, for handling.

The third program was to provide Older Persons Programs Specialists for Community Action Agencies, possibly using VISTA Volunteers for this purpose. These Specialists would explore all community facilities available for the older poor and develop ways of making them known to the older poor in the community. Among the VISTA Volunteers, there were many who would welcome the training needed and the experience available in this special assignment, and, with this training and experience behind them as they return to

their own communities after volunteer service, they would be of inestimable value in developing interest in the needs of the older poor throughout the country.

American Indians,  
Migrant and Farm Workers

### American Indians, Migrant and Farm Workers

The two poorest groups of citizens in the country were the American Indians and the migrant and farm workers; the one relegated to reservations from which they could not move for a variety of stringent reasons, the other always moving and always homeless or dependent on seasonal work. In America, only the Indians were poorer than the migrant workers and their families. And, despite the fact that they were nominally wards of the government, there was no one poorer than the Indian. Both groups suffered extreme deprivation in every category and sub-classification encompassing the statistical definitions of malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, and early death.

There were special branches within CAP to devise, advise, fund, and otherwise look after programs designed specifically for both groups.

### Indian Affairs

The first tribal CAA was funded in December, 1967. From the beginning the overriding concept of the OEO Indian Division was

that things would not be done for the Indian people, but rather that they would do what was required for themselves. The tribal councils would have direct contact with a special office in Washington staffed by persons with experience in the special problems of Indians, many of them Indians themselves. Implementing the OEO approach--a diametrically different one than that of other government efforts--was not simple. Tribal councils weren't accustomed to handling funds and running their own economic programs. But, given the impetus and the support of OEO, they caught on quickly. In 1967, there were 61 community action agencies representing 108 Federal Indian reservations in 19 states. Total funding through fiscal 1967 was \$44,729,276 (including Head Start programs.)

A major point of the OEO Indian Division philosophy was that each Indian tribe would operate at its own level of program sophistication and that program development itself would be an educational process. Another point was that provision of broad-based, meaningful work experience programs in the hard core areas of long-term

unemployment could be an effective means of upgrading attitudes toward work, managerial experience, developing administrative capability, motivating all family members in upgrading education, work habits and skills, and effecting visible improvements on the reservations in sanitation, home repair, cleaner and safer places to live.

A sequence of operations was evolved that proved effective.

The Program Development stage was a concentration in obtaining the widest possible community involvement. This was given impetus by contacting the elected tribal council, most of whose members came from the poor, to arrange meetings to discuss community action in the various districts of the reservations. The meetings resulted in the formation of planning and advisory committees and finally in the preparation of the initial application for a grant.

The Program Operation stage followed, during which attention was given to effectuating an operation capable of performing the obligations to the participants and at the same time of performing

the necessary functions of reporting and maintaining a high level of fiscal control and responsibility. This stage emphasized developing broad-based work experience programs.

The next stage that usually evolved was an attack on specific problems in manpower. It called for the utilization of all the resources available of the tribe, state, and Federal agencies. Utilizing these resources, training programs were designed which had dual goals; long term permanent employment skills, and improvement of conditions in the reservations in housing, health, education, and community facilities.

In one special program, to cite an example, the Minnesota Home Building Skills Training Program on three reservations trained 90 long-term unemployed men in the basic home construction skills in cooperation with CEO, HAA, BIA, USPHS/DIH, MDTA, BAT, and three offices of the Minnesota Building Trades Council.

In an earlier program for 30 men, 27 obtained immediate employment at the completion of the training with 9 men receiving journeymen

certification and 18 getting apprenticeship certification at prevailing union scale rates.

The length of time it took an individual tribe to advance through the stages varied sharply. The prime factors were the remoteness of the reservation from areas of employment opportunities, location of industry on reservations, nearness of colleges, universities and vocational schools, and the capabilities of the governing bodies.

Preschool education for Indian children had been a long recognized need by Indian and other educational specialists. Prior to the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act the Indian preschooler was overlooked since BIA schools served only children past the age of 6. Head Start became part of every Indian CAA program. The Indian Head Start program had a built-in flexibility that stimulated innovative approaches geared specifically to the particular needs of the Indian pre-school child and his parents who also became participants.

In 1967 there were 50 full-year Head Start and 17 summer Head Start programs operating on Federal Indian reservations in 17 states. The program served 9,929 Indian preschool children annually.

Evaluation of Indian community action programs was continuous and the OEO Indian Division followed through on recommendations by structuring a specific time schedule to assure that the grantee took the necessary steps to improve and strengthen its program. Training and technical assistance were provided to the programs through a group of universities, many of whose staff members were Indians cognizant of the problems on Indian reservations. The consortium made every effort to foster and encourage local initiative, insure that local control of the programs was retained and maintained by the tribes, and encouraged involvement of as many tribal members as possible.

#### Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers

Cognizant of a situation wherein more Federal money was being allocated for the feeding and care of migratory birds than for

migratory humans in the United States, Congress specified in the EOA of 1964 that OEO was to implement programs for them. They included specific mandates for education, day-care, sanitation and housing.

Migratory workers had been hopelessly and continuously relegated to a cycle of poverty as well as a virtually utter isolation from the rest of the society in which, nominally anyway, they lived. There were approximately five million men, women and children among the seasonal farm workers. Migratory workers and their families added another two-and-a-half million. Unskilled, uneducated and unequipped to meet the demands of a mechanized and swiftly industrializing economy, this group of forgotten Americans faced unique cultural, social and economic barriers. Exempted from the benefits of most social legislation, they had only recently been included under the minimum wage law, and then at a lower rate than that extended to industrial workers. They were not a part of, nor could they, because of the circumstances of their lives, participate in the advantages of normal communities. Ex-

cluded from almost every segment of society, living in substandard housing with little or no sanitation facilities, unable to overcome language barriers in many cases, underemployed and underpaid, they remained hopelessly bonded to a way of life which was harshly primitive. Even their limited farming skills were becoming obsolete in an era of intensified agricultural mechanization. The migrant worker and the farm worker faced not only meager incomes but the distinct prospect of no income at all. He was prepared for neither off-the-farm jobs nor for skilled farm work.

OEO's objective was to prepare him for self-sufficiency before he became a total dependent on welfare rolls. The OEO Migrant Division felt that such preparation was, in the long run, the most economical use of public money. Major emphasis was therefore placed on pre-vocational training and permanent housing rather than on temporary services. In adult education there was instruction in the better use of limited income; for heads of households, special stipend programs operated to enable them to obtain better jobs or enter job training programs; there were remedial education pro-

grams, educational services for children, housing, sanitation and community and day-care services. By 1967 there had been programs conducted in 38 states by 118 agencies at a cost of \$32,993,105, with 250,000 migrant and seasonal farm workers and their families receiving direct benefits.

As a side issue, it was expected that the various adult education programs would ultimately pay for themselves through taxes realized by increased earnings. A survey made in February, 1968, showed that 661 trainees had obtained high school diplomas through OEO programs; 1,739 had gone to more advanced technical training; 4,552 obtained upgraded jobs; and about 1,200 persons had been prepared for MDTA programs in the state of Texas alone as soon as they began operation.

Children of migrant and seasonal farm workers received supplementary educational services designed to advance them toward their proper grade levels. For more than 25,000 migrant children, as of February, 1968, OEO programs had provided \$7.2 million in day care services.

To meet housing needs, OEO programs provided 1,600 temporary units, set up on public land, to shelter families as they moved with the crops. Funds were also provided to enable 600 families to learn housing techniques that enabled them to build their own homes.

The self-help housing programs were operated in cooperation with the Farmers Home Administration which provided loans for building materials. By the February report date, 315 families had obtained such loans and were building their own homes, with scores of others awaiting loan approval. Another 720 families had improved their housing, and 798 had located adequate housing through OEO programs.

In 1967 OEO mounted Project H-E-P, a 12-month high school equivalency program in 11 colleges across the country. Designed to give at least 550 young adult farm workers, who were high school drop-outs, the opportunity to complete their high school educations while learning a job skill, to get a job or go on to college, it showed immediate results.

Another 1967 model project made it possible for 211 families to remain in classes during the regular out-migration period through a tie-in with other government agency programs. The Migrant Compensatory Education Program made it possible for migrant heads-of-household to receive full-time education, and for their children to attend special classes while participating in Neighborhood Youth Corps programs. The package-program enabled entire families to subsist, receive education and experience a secure break in the migration cycle. This program was considered to be especially significant in view of the continuing acceleration of agricultural technology which decreased job opportunities for unskilled workers.

Delegated Programs

DELEGATED PROGRAMS

The 1964 Economic Opportunity Act gave the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity the authority to delegate programs to other executive agencies for administration and operation. At the outset, six programs fell under this category, and were delegated on October 24, 1964, under an order signed by the President and Sargent Shriver. It was believed, wrote an OEO official, "to be the first time within the Federal government that such an arrangement has been used on such an extensive scale." Subsequent experience proved it to be "an interesting demonstration of coordination, with OEO seeking to maintain influence over the programs' direction and proportionate role in the War on Poverty, and the departments carrying out the day-to-day operations."<sup>1</sup>

The early 1964 projections concerning the organization of the poverty program focused upon two possible structures.<sup>2</sup> The first cast the Director as chief advisor to the President on the strategy of the anti-poverty war, functioning as a focal point for "achieving voluntary coordination among various agencies."

---

1 Robert C. Crawford, Narrative Memorandum of the Office of Governmental Relations, August 7, 1968, p. 4; Federal Register Document 64-11087, filed October 28, 1964.

2 The following is taken from a Budget Bureau memorandum entitled Organization of the Poverty Program, February 6, 1964.

By the terms of this arrangement, the programs would be administered by the established bureaucracies, and all funds would be appropriated to them.

The second proposal, favored by the Budget Bureau and eventually accepted in modified form, would place the Director of the poverty program at the head of an operational agency with "newly appropriated funds and some access to existing agency funds." The rationale behind the second route lay in its ability to bring together program packages, or "several different programs and sources of funds in a way which no existing agency could provide."

The anti-poverty agency would be assisted by a "Federal Council on Economic Independence," composed of the Director, the Secretaries of Labor, HEW, Agriculture, Commerce, and Interior, the Attorney General, the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, and the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. The Council would help coordinate the activities of the various Federal agencies in the overall attack on poverty. Funding would be accomplished by the Bureau of the Budget apportioning funds "from regular agency accounts for use in programs approved by the Director." The rationale behind this procedure was that individual antipoverty activities were part of a package "which must be treated in one piece." Lastly, the proposal recommended

that to "the maximum extent feasible," the Director should utilize existing agencies "for the detailed operation of the program which he has instituted or approved."

The Task Force and "its opposite numbers in the poverty-concerned agencies throughout the government" had to resolve the issue of interagency coordination. The President had said the anti-poverty program should not become a "series of uncoordinated and unrelated efforts," and to this purpose the Director would be his "personal chief of staff for the war against poverty."<sup>3</sup> The Task Force had early rejected the idea of a one-title bill, and while community action was the heart of the anti-poverty program, additional programs were added in February and March, 1964. "The very idea of a massive, coordinated attack on poverty," wrote one OEO official, "suggested mobilizing under that banner all, or as many as possible, of the weapons that would be used." A job section (Job Corps and NYC) was provided; a college work-study program, "borrowed from a pending education bill," was added; a "second job title authorized 100 percent federal financing temporarily for the work and training programs for welfare recipients that had been authorized by the Public Welfare Amendments of 1962 but were moving slowly because of the requirement

---

3 A. Yarmolinsky, "The Beginnings of OEO," American Academy of Arts and Sciences Seminar on Poverty, (unpublished), p. 16.

of state or local financial participation," was also included. The Department of Agriculture persuaded the Task Force of the need for a "rural title," for a small loan program for farmers and rural businessmen. The SBA also worked with the Task Force devising an "employment and investment incentives" title, including a liberalized small loan program for low-income businessmen. The House added an Adult Education program, taken from a pending education bill.<sup>4</sup>

During the summer of 1964, while the anti-poverty bill was debated in Congress, "officials from Labor, HEW, Agriculture, the Small Business Administration, and other agencies, met with Task Force members. . . in prolonged sessions characterized by an air of somewhat strained politeness."<sup>5</sup> The proposed Office of Economic Opportunity, it was agreed, would operate the Job Corps, Community Action, and VISTA. It was agreed that the work experience program, the rural loan program, the work-training program and the small business loan program would be managed by HEW, Agriculture, Labor, and the Small Business Administration, respectively. The March Congressional Presenta-

---

4 James Sundquist, "For the Poor, Opportunity," (unpublished) pp. 142-143.

5 Yarmolinsky, "The Beginnings of OEO," p. 17.

tion specifically designated these categories as delegated programs.<sup>6</sup>

"It was not clear," wrote Adam Yarmolinsky, "how large a role OEO, which did not even exist, would play in the day-to-day management or in the determination of overall policies for these programs. Nor was it at all clear what role OEO would play in working out relationships with already existing programs, that were already a part of the on-going war against poverty." During the 1964 hearings, this confusion of intent was illustrated by the following exchange between Congressman Goodell (R-N.Y.) and Director-to-be Shriver:

Mr. Goodell: I think you realize this, you are superimposing a program here over a great many existing programs with some different accent upon it. Perhaps this is a good idea, but we have to understand the administrative lines that are going to exist here. You apparently object to our granting the discretion here directly to the Secretary of HEW under the work-study program instead of giving it to the Director. If we accept the criteria, I think we would trust the Secretary of HEW to handle it himself.

Mr. Shriver: One of the things that has happened, I think, many times in the past is that by fragmenting the authority you don't get a focused program. It is like taking General Motors--General Motors has 150 divisions but they still have a General Motors Corp.

---

<sup>6</sup> The War on Poverty: A Congressional Presentation, March 17, 1964, pp. 23, 27, 40, 44, 48, 55.

Mr. Goodell: You do conceive that you are going to have the authority over these programs and be able to impose this onto the Secretaries if they disagree with you?

Mr. Shriver: No, there will be no imposition here. This is not arm's length bargaining.

Mr. Goodell: What you are asking for gives you as Director this authority. Now, you can cooperate with them without that authority. If you want to impose it upon them, then you have to be granted the authority.

Mr. Shriver: What you have to have, as in any organization which has divisions in it, including business organizations, you do have to have that degree of interest and control which enables the program to be carried forward exactly on target. There is no point in having the responsibility for something without the authority with respect to the way it is carried out.<sup>7</sup>

The basic concept of the delegation approach was that it made sense to utilize structures and skills that already existed in other Federal agencies rather than to create another bureaucracy within OEO to administer all of the programs in the EOA. By and large, the six original delegated programs were developed in the agencies which eventually operated them. While this concept seemed to make sense (especially to the Congress which saw it as a

---

<sup>7</sup> Hearings before the Subcommittee on the War on Poverty Program of the House Committee on Education and Labor, 1964, Part I, p. 78.

means of keeping administrative costs down), it really created a series of complex administrative relationships, each different and demanding a novel set of dealings between OEO and another agency. On the whole, it did work, overcoming severe difficulties, largely due to the dedication, comprehension and cooperativeness of the men and women on both sides of the relationship.

The delegated programs consisted of the following:<sup>8</sup>

College Work-Study Program: "a major effort to halt the waste of human resources that inevitably occurs when talented young people don't go to college." Families with incomes of \$3,000 or less could not be expected to finance the higher education of their children. To assist the support of students from such families, HEW would provide a "financial base for the able but extremely needy student," supplemented by loans or limited scholarship grants. "In addition to enabling a wider range of students to attend college through financial assistance, the program would sharply reduce the heavy debt load that often weighs on the student who is least able to bear it." The

---

8 For a description of the Neighborhood Youth Corps, see pp. 95-102 of this manuscript. The following capsule summaries are taken from: the March, 1964-1967 Congressional Presentation, and the 1965-1967 Annual Reports of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

program limited work time to fifteen hours per week. On campus work would include service-type jobs, as well as some more sophisticated work. The program would encourage the expansion of off-campus employment. Summer jobs would also be provided. Grants would cover up to 90% of the students' wages, usually at the rate of \$1.25 per hour. Participating colleges determined the eligibility criteria of students, defined the jobs and supervised the student employees.

Adult Basic Education Program: "the first Federal effort to help schools teach adults to read, speak properly, write and do arithmetic well enough to qualify for jobs or job training." Funds were granted to the states (90% of the cost paid by the Federal government), and individual projects were operated by local school systems. CAP and VISTA coordinated with the adult education program, as well as state welfare offices and employment services, state universities and private organizations such as the Urban League. Classrooms were located in school buildings, tents, churches, private houses, union halls, and so forth. State plans were drawn up by the individual states, and were approved by the Commissioner of Education. Guidelines were established on March 17, 1965.

Rural Loans: "a vital lever in lifting rural families from the rut of poverty." Rural loans were more flexible than regular farm operating loans in that they may be repaid over a longer time period at lower interest, could be used to buy small parcels of land, finance small rural businesses, and could establish a credit service for cooperatives serving the rural poor. They were known as Economic Opportunity Loans. Individual loans were limited to \$2,500, and had a maximum repayment period of 15 years at 4 1/8% interest. Cooperatives had a maximum 30-year repayment period at the same interest. The Farmers Home Administration made the loans available, and provided guidance and supervision for the use of the money. The program was intended to compensate for the lack of resources on the farm, particularly land and capital.

Small Business Loans: OEO funded a program which set up the Small Business Development Centers, "a unique community organization founded on the principle that small business is part of the War on Poverty." SBDC's were intended to benefit those unable to meet the normal credit eligibility required to obtain SBA loans. They would aid in putting an incipient business on its feet, enable existing businesses to expand where there was a need for growth, provide for in-

creased employment, and increase management skills through a counseling program. Loans were subjected to approval by the SBA, and money came from the SBA revolving loan fund. Administrative support was drawn from local CAP's, Area Redevelopment Administration, and public and private foundations. The SBDG's were set up in or near anti-poverty target areas of the community. Loans were made on the basis of the feasibility of the proposed enterprise.

Work Experience: a program that "provided funds to states, counties and local communities for projects offering on-the-job training in constructive work." Trainees attended basic literacy classes, received vocational instruction and counseling, and a wide range of social services. It was intended to benefit unemployed parents and other needy people on welfare, who suffered from educational deficiencies. Participants received a living allowance and additional payments for transportation to centers, and so on. Work experience projects were operated by state, county, and municipal welfare departments. Typical training provided experience in the service trades, sales and clerical positions, hospital work, rural construction and highway beautification. Initially conceived as a program to promote "family unity through jobs," work experience for

the unemployed was a way by which to restore a sense of purpose and usefulness, a sense of dignity and hope. A by-product of the program would channel available but unused manpower to unfilled jobs. I would aim at those bypassed by the MDTA, the "lower ranks" of the unemployed, the uneducated and the unskilled.

One of the novel features in the delegated relationship was the joint development of the regulations for the operation of the programs. In the case of the six original delegated programs, there were crash efforts to get such regulations together so that the programs could get moving. Meeting after meeting was held and great differences of opinion and approach between sovereign agencies were discussed at great length and compromised. Ultimately, the program regulations were signed by both the Director of OEO and the head of the delegate organization, and the programs were on their way. This was a complicated process, and brought totally different concepts together from a variety of agency backgrounds toward the common goal of eliminating poverty. There appears to be no record in the history of the Federal establishment of such detailed and in-depth joint program regulation development.

In a speech on the floor of the House of Representatives in April, 1967, Congressman Hechler of West Virginia said:

An unusual administrative feature ought to be highlighted here in connection with NYC--as with the work-experience, rural loans, adult basic education, small business loans, and college work-study programs. This is the device of program delegation from one Federal agency to another. Under this arrangement, OEO and the other departments and agencies administering these six programs had to achieve joint development of policy, the provision of spaces for personnel, the budgeting and transfer of funds, the reconciliation of differing administrative requirements between OEO and the administering unit, the establishment of day-to-day relationships between numerous offices in the respective agencies--counsel, finance, program groups, program evaluation, reporting, auditing, and so forth--and many other difficult and complex administrative regulations.

Again, I know of no previous instance in which a new agency has ever had to develop and maintain such a close and complex maze of relationships with established organizations, with their diverse traditions, ways of doing things, attitudes, and so forth. In fact, it is only natural that each of the agencies involved in this rather unusual delegated relationship, like every other agency in this town engaged in work of a social program nature, may have looked upon OEO as an upstart and threat to their own particular interests.

Given these difficult circumstances, I think that we, the Congress, ought to afford special commendation, not only to OEO, but to its associated agencies as well for making this arrangement work. It is a technique in the area of public administration which has not been widely employed, and the agencies drawn together by it have blazed a trail in this area which I am sure will be analyzed, chewed over, and pondered by political scientists in the future. I am certain that the valuable experience gained will lead to more and improved relationships of this sort in other areas in the future.

In addition to the original six delegated programs, authority in the manpower area and Head Start Follow-Through have been delegated in intervening years. Similarly, a number of the original delegated programs were taken from OEO and placed in their entirety in other executive agencies. On November 9, 1965, for example, by the provisions of the Higher Education Act, administration

of the College Work-Study program was transferred to the Office of Education. Similarly, on November 3 of the following year, the Adult Basic Education program was altered slightly and given to the Commissioner of Education by the Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments. At the time of these spin-offs, OEO's position was less that of opposition than conciliation. It was conceded that the two programs, educational in nature, logically belonged in HEW. The only concern was whether the guideline strictures, regarding the application of poverty criteria in the administration of the program, would be preserved and maintained. Congressional comment on the transfers hinged around the need for the delegated arrangement as well as the difficulties in coordinating the program to the satisfaction of the states. Under the new provisions, the states would have a more effective voice.

Again, in 1966, Congress transferred the administration of the Employment and Investment Incentives program (Small Business Loans) from OEO to the Administrator of the Small Business Administration--excepting section 402b relating to grant support. Here, OEO gave no opposition, and, in fact supported the move. Said Shriver: "Given the limited amount of funds at our disposal to help people out of poverty, we felt our directly-related programs probably should take precedence, with loan pro-

grams and their improvement to reach the more disadvantaged being left to other agencies with this broad responsibility." And later: "We are considering. . .whether to ask Congress to relieve us of the program (SBA) in our FY 1968 legislation when Congress took care of the matter in its own way in the FY 1967 bill."<sup>9</sup>

In 1966, Congress authorized the delegation of job and manpower programs to the Department of Labor. These included Operation Mainstream, New Careers, a Special Impact program, and the Concentrated Employment Program (CEP). In March, 1967, the Labor Department organized the Bureau of Work Programs within the Manpower Administration to administer these delegated programs, including the Neighborhood Youth Corps. During negotiations (involving the White House, the Bureau of the Budget, and OEO), Labor and OEO experienced differences in opinion regarding the proper authority in the administration of the programs. In OEO, it was felt that Labor's ties to the Employment Services prevented the programs from reaching the needy poor people for whom they were intended (the antagonisms dating back to the Task Force days continued); while Labor raised the old cry that "Manpower is Labor and Labor is Manpower." In the end, the status of the programs was jointly constructed in the form of the delegated arrangement.

New Careers was designed to help meet the critical manpower shortage in health, education, welfare, and public safety staffs, and operated as part of the Concentrated Employment Program. Operated by the Bureau of Work Programs in the Labor Department, New Careers aimed at

---

<sup>9</sup> Statement by Shriver before the Select Committee on Small Business, U.S. Senate, March 15, 1967.

meeting these shortages by training a corps of skilled professional support personnel.

Operation Mainstream concentrated on rural areas and older people, drawing rural Americans out of isolation and financial depression into the "mainstream" of economic growth. The program was delegated to Labor's Bureau of Work Training Programs, and focused on beautification projects.

The CEP was designed as a delivery system, drawing from other programs such as New Careers to succeed. The program, delegated to the Manpower Administration of the Department of Labor, and often working through local Community Action Agencies, was intended to bring together all manpower resources and focus them on the worst poverty areas with the highest concentrations of unemployment. Thus, the program may fan out into educational, work, training, and on the job programs, using whatever is necessary to get people ready for good jobs and placed in these jobs.

All of these programs are coordinated with and tied into other Labor Department manpower resources, such as MDTA (Manpower Development and Training Act) programs, local and State Employment Services, apprenticeship and training and outreach centers.

It has become apparent through years of experience in dealing with delegated programs that the success of the inter-agency relationships varies greatly depending upon the nature of the program itself as well as upon the attitude of the agency to which a particular program is delegated. Some departments desire as free a rein in program operation as possible under a delegation of authority while others

prefer to work closely with OEO on program matters. Sometimes conflicts occur. Nevertheless, the coordination of the activities is much greater than would be the case were the programs being operated by separate organizations without the common legislative authority. Through this pioneer exposure to delegated relationships, OEO and the associated agencies have attained a considerable awareness of the advantages and disadvantages which result.

In the course of administering the delegated programs, the

old-line agencies often took a look at their standard operation procedures and decided that they could do things better. Again as Congressman Hechler pointed out in his speech on the "Miracle of OEO" when he referred to the Title V, Work-Experience program being administered by the Welfare Administration in HEW:

In administering the program, Dr. Winston has initiated significant changes in the traditional Federal-State-local public welfare operating procedures. For example, combined meetings have been held involving Federal-Washington and regional personnel, and both State and local government personnel. This is a departure from traditional practice in a Federal program of grants-in-aid to States.

A system has been established wherein copies of policy, procedural, and other material on the program sent to State agencies is dispatched directly from Washington to the local public welfare agency rather than sending everything through the State agency, with the result that the word gets down to the projects faster than the flow from Washington to the local level ever went before.

The program is featuring the employment of poor people in some Title V projects as subprofessional personnel and other workers in local welfare departments. Any of you familiar with the welfare system will recognize this as a fresh approach. Likewise, the Commissioner has been encouraging the use in Title V of specialized caseloads, which means that a social worker will have only Title V participants assigned to him rather than a mixture of Title V, AFDC, aid to the blind, aid to the permanently disabled, and so forth. This has resulted in a high degree of understanding and complete familiarity with the Title V Program, its operation and potential among the caseworkers assigned.

Also for the first time, the Welfare Administration is using the services of ad hoc outside consultants in Title V who are called in from time to time to advise the program staff on various aspects of vocational training, educational activities, child day care, and so forth.

Title V has also successfully developed and used a simplified method of determining the financial eligibility of potential enrollees which requires a minimum of detail and expense. The use of this technique frees the caseworker from administrative details and permits him to spend more time providing counseling and assistance to the enrollee.

These changes represent advances in the administrative practices of old-line agencies that, while they might have occurred ultimately, certainly were spurred to the fore as a result of OEO's concern and leadership action for better economic opportunities for the poor.

VISTA

Volunteers in Service to America

The essential structure of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) was outlined almost step by step in a program prepared by the Administration of President Kennedy under the title of the National Service Corps. Although VISTA was to be incorporated into the EOA of 1964 with so little friction that it could serve as a model to illustrate how congenial the legislative process can be, its prototype was throttled in the House Committee on Education and Labor the previous year. Introduced to a hostile Congress on April 11, 1963,<sup>30</sup> the National Service Corps bill was passed in the Senate on August 14, by a marginal vote of 47 - 44. The House Special Labor sub-Committee reported its bill to the full House Education and Labor Committee on December 11. Then, repeating the fate of much Kennedy Administration legislation, it never was reported out of the committee. Under the stimulus of the Johnson Administration however, and the increased awareness of the facts of poverty in the

---

<sup>30</sup> In the Senate by Sen. Harrison D. Williams (D, N.J.) and in the House by Rep. Frank Thompson (D, N.J.)

country, the situation, only a year later, was entirely different.

It is clear nevertheless, that VISTA was launched with remarkable organizational and structural facility because a charter of precepts and a mode of operation based on the remarkable success of the Peace Corps, had been outlined earlier. The entire program, in fact, had been pre-mounted.

A preliminary study group, headed by the President's brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, searched the need for and the outline of a National Service Corps. Then, on November 17, 1962, President Kennedy established a Cabinet-level Study Group<sup>31</sup> chaired by the Attorney General to study "the feasibility of such a program patterned after the Peace Corps."

The President asked the Study Group to consider all aspects of a National Service Corps. The Attorney General's preliminary report had said: "The President's challenge to all Americans to ask what they can do for their country has had an initial answer in the exem-

---

<sup>31</sup> Including: The Secretaries of Interior, Labor, HEW, and the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, The Director of the Budget Bureau and the Director of the Peace Corps. Added afterward were the Secretaries of Agriculture and Commerce; the Director of the Veterans Administration and the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission.

plary support of the Peace Corps. But for many Americans there is still a paradox -- a desire to serve but no clear path to meaningful volunteer commitment. We need to offer visible avenues for service to these people. The Attorney General's report had suggested that the Corps be open to all ages; that the period of enlistment be for one year; that it be relatively small; and that pay should cover living expenses with a modest separation allowance. All of these provisions, with very slight modification, were later incorporated into VISTA.

The Study Group worked from its formation on November 17, through the fall and into early winter. On January 14, 1963, it sent its report to the President, strongly recommending the creation of the program. It had, at the behest of the President, looked into areas in which the program might be most useful; probable volunteer response; the relationship of the program to public and private agencies at the Federal, State and local levels; size and composition; training requirements; and estimated costs. The next day, in his State of the Union Message, President Kennedy said:

The overseas success of our Peace Corps volunteers... suggests the merit of a similar corps serving our own community needs...

Following up, on February 14, in A Message from the President of the United States Relative to Our Nation's Youth, he added:

Through the years millions of Americans have served their communities through the willing donation of their time and skill to voluntary private service organizations. But in a population growing in numbers, urbanization, and the recognition of social problems, we need not only more professional personnel--but an even greater number of dedicated volunteers to support the professional in every area of service.

I, therefore, recommend legislation to establish a National Service Corps--a small carefully selected volunteer corps of men and women of all ages working under local direction with professional personnel and part-time local volunteers to help provide urgently needed services in mental health centers and hospitals, on Indian reservations, to the families of migrant workers, and in the educational and social institutions of hard-hit slum or rural poverty areas.

The areas of service mentioned by the President became, under VISTA, the five fields of its main emphasis: Urban slums, depressed rural areas, Indian reservation, migrant worker camps, and mental health.

A continuing Study Group staff was formed to develop the program. The group agreed at one point that in about three years time the number of volunteers should be about 5,000. And, in July, 1968, VISTA had 3,204 volunteers in the field and 1,828 in training for a

total of 5,032.

The Study Group was aware that 5,000 -- even 50,000 -- volunteers "could not alone solve the problems facing America's needy citizens, and it felt that effective solutions can be achieved only through the personal concern and involvement of millions of additional Americans working on the problems in their own communities. It was agreed that a program of modest costs would serve to stimulate the interest necessary to generate new voluntary efforts among those Americans now serving, as well as those who do not know how or where to help their fellow men help themselves."<sup>32</sup>

As it continued its work the Study Group documented: The purposes and goals for the proposed Corps; the areas of need; shortages in the helping professions; the favorable response of the public, civic and medical organizations and institutions, the press, and state and local governments. Fifty project models were presented showing the need and precisely what volunteers could do to help in

---

<sup>32</sup> "Information on a Proposed National Service Program." S.1323, H.R.5625, prepared by the President's Study Group on a National Service Program.

the five major categories of aid proposed; eligibility and terms of service were worked out as were details for recruitment, selection and training. Finally, budget estimates and administrative structure were detailed. It seemed that everyone in the country and every major organization, with few exceptions, was in favor of the program except the Congress.

The provision calling for the establishment of VISTA in the anti-poverty package which became the EOA of 1964, went through the House of Representatives and the Senate with virtually no disagreement. Considering that it was essentially the same proposal which had failed to gain approval one year earlier it was further testimony to the impetus of the Johnson Administration in activating social legislation.

#### VISTA in the Field

By the time VISTA was two months old it had already received more than 4,000 applications for service. At that time, on December 12, 1964, President Johnson welcomed the first 20 VISTA Volun-

teers at the White House as they were about to enter training. The President told them "Your pay will be low; the conditions of your labor often will be difficult. But you will have the satisfaction of leading a great national effort and you will have the ultimate reward which comes to those who serve their fellow man!"

By the end of FY-68, more than 13,000 Americans had enlisted in VISTA, 40 percent of them having either re-enlisted for a second year or extended their periods of service for periods of months. VISTA Volunteers were serving on 447 projects in 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam and American Samoa. They were working in more than 1,000 communities; in every case at the invitation of local sponsors, under local supervision and in projects specifically approved by the Governor of the state involved. Only the state of Mississippi had denied their services. The demand for Volunteers rose steadily as the program became known and by 1968 VISTA had received formal requests for 23,170 Volunteers to serve on 1,992 projects, or nearly four times more than its budget could support.<sup>33</sup> Wherever they had served,

FOOTNOTE from page 418

---

33 Budget obligations: FY-65 - obligated 3.2 million  
66 - " 16.0 "  
67 - " 26.0 "  
68 - " 30.0 "

in almost every instance, more Volunteers had been asked for than it was possible to supply.

The Volunteers ranged in age from 18 to 86; 16 percent were over 50 years of age. Many were retired professionals and teachers, widows and widowers, craftsmen and farmers. Fifty-three percent were between 20 and 24; 24 percent between 25 and 49 and seven percent between 18 and 19. In 1968, 51 percent of the Volunteers were male and of all the Volunteers 80 percent had attended a college or university. After a year of service, 1968 records showed that 27 percent re-enrolled; 13 percent extended their service; 29 percent went on to college or graduate school; 8 percent entered the helping professions; 7 percent found jobs within the OEO structure; about 10 percent entered military service; and 6 percent were retired.

#### VISTA Associates

In the spring of 1966, it became apparent from the volume of mail received that among those willing to serve were many who could not volunteer for a full year of service. The VISTA Associates

program began as a demonstration project that summer to test the effectiveness of tapping the talents of persons willing to serve for shorter periods on a full-time basis. The Associates program brought to bear on carefully selected problem areas the impact of large numbers of persons who might otherwise not have been able to participate. Graduate students, teachers, lawyers and others volunteered to devote their summers. During the first summer, 500 VISTA Associates were concentrated in four adjoining Appalachian states. The following summer the program grew to 2,000 Associates serving on selected Indian reservations and in urban areas. In 1968 the program was fully operational with 92 projects in 40 states and encompassing summer service as well as short-term service during other times of the year.

#### The Citizen Corps

The idea for a Citizen Corps arose in the Fall of 1966 as a device to further utilize the spirit of voluntarism evidenced by the receipt of more than 150,000 letters expressing interest in the

program. President Johnson, who had welcomed the first full-time Volunteers two years earlier, officially launched the Citizen Corps in an open letter. He wrote:

If half the young people in our high schools and universities, and only one American housewife out of every three would volunteer a few hours each week, this could provide a personal tutor for almost every potential high school dropout; a teacher's aide for every Head Start child; a personal counselor for mothers who are struggling to rear families in poverty...I urge you to join the VISTA Citizen's Volunteer Corps--a new and promising project to enlist public-spirited Americans in the effort to improve life for all our people.

The program concentrated on local efforts from which everyone would benefit: The community by the infusion of needed services; the sponsoring agencies by having access to previously unavailable manpower; the American public by being given a meaningful channel for its social concerns; VISTA, by enlarging its outreach and thus stretching and increasing the impact of the limited funds at its disposal. Volunteers in the Citizen Corps served without stipend or remuneration of any kind. (Full time VISTA Volunteers received living expenses and a monthly stipend of \$50, held back until completion of service.) In 1968 there were more than 50,000 VISTA Citizen Corp members serving alongside VISTA Volunteers in communities

across the country.

### Questions Without Answers and Problems

Because of the ground-breaking nature of its assignment and the difficulty of obtaining reasonably qualitative information in its early stages, VISTA improvised policy as it went along and incorporated successful results into its methods. There were questions: Was the basic purpose of VISTA to give advocates to the poor against the "establishment?" Or, was it to provide manpower to hard-pressed public and private agencies? There were people among the staff, and among the Volunteers in greater numbers, who came to the conclusion that the systems established to "deal" with the poor were not only ineffective, but actually added to the dependency of the poor. Others argued that it was unfair to judge all established agencies in a lump; they thought systems could be improved from within; that significant changes in a welfare department, settlement house or educational system had a greater pay-off, since the agencies were permanent and effected large numbers of people steadily. The types

of projects funded, the selection of Volunteers, and the training given them depended on how VISTA resolved such issues and each one received different consideration.

Another question was, should VISTA be limited to community development and community organization tasks, or should the program also include social services, counseling, tutorial activities, and referral to social agencies?

The EOA called on VISTA to contribute to alleviating the problems of mental health. A number of Volunteers and staff members thought such activities dissipated the central mission of the organization and that, with the limited pool of manpower available, VISTA ought to fund only those organizations that provided for citizenship development. Many of those who saw VISTA as a force for social change rejected the "Mickey-Mouse" approach of traditional social work, a term developed by the Volunteers. If that point of view had held it would have made little sense to recruit senior citizens and persons committed to working with young children.

A number of considerations attendant on directions of thought

in the field of social work came to rest at VISTA's doorstep. Throughout the field of social work it was increasingly thought, for example, that local inhabitants of the neighborhoods being served should be invited to become part of the service system. But, could they become good Volunteers? Some experts said only Negro workers could operate effectively in Negro neighborhoods. Should VISTA assign white Volunteers to Negro neighborhoods? Should Volunteers be recruited from among the poor themselves? Should integrated teams be assigned to work in slums? From the beginning, VISTA assigned white Volunteers to Negro neighborhoods despite a general apprehension on the part of the official leadership of the communities. There were risks. And, failures. But VISTA accepted as an important goal of its program the bridging of differences and the breaking down of ghetto walls. It was VISTA's decision to continue the policy of integrated voluntarism while waiting to see if the separatist movement in the city slums would grow so as to make it impossible. VISTA felt that the lessons which might come from its experience would help the social welfare field determine its course

of action on matters affecting the composition of staff and assignments. And, there were the questions as to whether Volunteers should be assigned in teams or isolated so that they became individually assimilated into the communities. To what extent could Volunteers be trained in a relatively short period of time (most training programs were six-weeks long,) to tackle some of the most complex problems of society in distress. There were no blanket answers but daily experience, successes and failures, gradually began to develop a beginning expertise in selection, training and, most importantly, the matching of individual Volunteers with the nature and the location of the work to be done. There was, for example, the case of an early Volunteer who arrived at a training site in Florida, spent half an hour looking around, said he had to have his car serviced and never returned. The following morning he called VISTA in Washington and complained to the director of training that, among other things, the housing was run down, the food bad ("baloney and dried bread"), that there were a bunch of desks sitting in the middle of the yard, and that workmen were "leaning on their shovels at \$4.00

an hour." He concluded that the place was a "mess," and that as a taxpayer he felt someone in Washington should know about it. His conversation was laced with such phrases as "nigger beatnik with a goatee," "worst kind of bums," "bunch of people drinking wine," and "sea of mud in a nigger community." Finally, he said "he didn't need a whole lot of instruction anyway."<sup>34</sup> The complainant was 51. The VISTA official explained that the site was desirable because it physically approximated areas in which the Volunteers would be working, although bad food and other allegations of disorder and insufficiency were not included in the training plan. The fact was that conditions at the camp had improved since the previous training cycle; a new sewage disposal system installed, the dining hall enlarged and the desks were being unloaded from a truck. The problem, as it turned out, was the Volunteer and not the camp. By the following year the selection system had been improved so that it was no longer likely that a person with such ideas would be accepted for

---

<sup>34</sup> Internal memorandum, January 5, 1966.

training.

VISTA training however, continued to be realistic. A basic precept of the entire program, one modelled on the Peace Corps experience, was that the VISTA Volunteer would live in the community in which he worked and that his food and accommodations would be similar, if not identical, to those of the community residents'. As a rule, the result of the stipulation was an entire new network of communication, the discovery of new interests, new talents, new responses and new leadership, previously undiscovered. One case upon another illustrated that it was the ability of the Volunteer-- through his or her living-working relationship with the people served--that had been the link between the poor and their newfound ability to solve their own problems. The residential requirement was not without inherent problems. Volunteers found that they were on probation in the communities until they had proved the sincerity of their intent and the meaning of their presence. The sudden arrival of Negro Volunteers on an Indian reservation or a white Volunteer in a Negro ghetto or a Puerto Rican in an Appalachian hollow

needed a good deal of accommodation by all concerned. But, the adjustment process proved to be a two-way street, in most cases, and VISTA's experience proved to be remarkably parallel to the communication achieved by Peace Corps Volunteers in foreign lands.

Persons long acclimated by sometimes bitter experience to suspect the motives of the newcomers, particularly those promising "help", came to recognize in the VISTA Volunteer a new kind of person, remarkable for his sincerity. The misunderstandings which did arise-- anticipated by VISTA and realistically faced by the Volunteers-- were, considering the situations they encountered, remarkably few.

In those incidents where individual and particular projects clashed, the sponsoring community almost invariably chose to continue to host Volunteers and the Volunteers chose to continue their residential involvement.

One incident which created more furor than most involved two young female Volunteers who were assigned to the Red Cliff Chippewa Indian reservation, Wisconsin, in the first week of October, 1965. The Tribal Council had asked for Volunteers to set up day-care and nursery school programs and sports and recreation projects. In

the next 10 weeks the Volunteers, 20 and 22 years old, began a day-care center, a youth activity program to include both study hours and recreation; started a community newspaper to inform residents about programs; recruited for the Job Corps, and established a warm relationship with the young people of the reservation. Several community leaders, however, resented the Volunteers and five weeks after their arrival their presence was put to a test before the Tribal Council. The Council voted to support the Volunteers. A month later, in December, the same council met and reversed its position. VISTA recalled the Volunteers. In January, following another meeting, the Council asked VISTA to return the Volunteers and two weeks later they did, to take up the work they had begun.

In February, 1966, four Volunteers in New York City became active in the anti-Vietnam War movement, used an apartment paid for with federal funds, for end-the-war activities, and issued public statements in the name of VISTA Volunteers. They also sent a letter to the President announcing a march on the White House to be organized by "VISTAs for Peace." VISTA called the Volunteers to Wash-

ington and, at the same time, OEO propounded a policy declaring guidelines for political involvement. This said that VISTA Volunteers as individuals had the same right as any citizen to protest or to express their opinions on public issues so long as their activities did not interfere with their work. But, Volunteers could not use the name of VISTA to propagate individual views. In a hypothetical question and answer sheet, VISTA said:

Q. Will action be taken against VISTA Volunteers who march and protest publicly against the U.S. involvement in Vietnam?

A. Of course that is a matter for his superiors and each case would be judged on its own merits. But, generally speaking, a Volunteer who takes part in a legal demonstration--as an individual--without invoking the name of the public antipoverty program for which he works would not be subject to any action. If a Volunteer were to use or display in some way the name of the program in an effort to publicize his personal views, it seems to me that he would be deliberately violating the agency's rules.

A story in the Washington Star of February 7, 1966, quoted an

OEO spokesman as saying the four were told at the Washington meeting that they were "entitled to propound any point of view they wished, as individual citizens." They were told they would be asked to resign or be fired if they continued to use their VISTA affiliation in public protests of U.S. foreign policy. The story said, "An OEO official said limitation of the Volunteers' right to free speech was 'the farthest thing from our minds.' The decision to forbid identification with the poverty program was made because OEO could not allow 'any small group of volunteers acting as a spokesman for all VISTAs in any manner.'" The Volunteers refused to accept the OEO decision and were discharged.

In the summer of 1966 shots were fired into the home of two VISTA girls living in Chesapeake County, Virginia, in a rural area near Norfolk. The girls were working as volunteers with a Head Start program sponsored by a Negro church and primarily serving Negro children. The program however, was integrated in that there were five white children among the 40 attending the school. The girls were not at home when someone got out of a car and fired a

number of .22 caliber shots through the flimsy walls of their frame house. Efforts to find the attacker were unsuccessful but the sheriff's office gave the girls protection and helped to locate them in another house in a nearby but less isolated section of the community. The girls remained on the job and completed their tours without further harrassment.

In the Appalachian regions of West Virginia and Kentucky, there were more complicated actions of resistance, one involving a young man working in Pike County, Kentucky. The Volunteer was deeply involved in efforts to stop strip mining operations in the county which caused landslides to destroy homes and farmland. The Volunteer had been helping people in the hollows to organize and seek help from the State legislature. Other persons were working in the county to oppose the strip-mining companies, notably the Southern Conference Educational Fund, an organization charged with being associated with Communist organizations. Local law enforcement officers raided the Volunteer's home in the middle of the night and seized a number of books there. The local prosecuting attorney charged that the police had seized a "carload" of Communist literature

in the raid. Further investigation, however, revealed that the literature was a collection of textbooks and histories, including several on the works of Marx. Also included were a number of conservative books and a copy of Senator Goldwater's Conscience of a Conservative. The Volunteer was charged with sedition under a state statute. The charges were later thrown out by a higher court. The charges, however, did not turn the people of the hollows against the Volunteer. When the prosecuting attorney later ran for office and relied to a considerable degree for support on his raid of the Volunteer's home, he got less than a majority in his home county.

Other Volunteers also encountered severe opposition from the officials of the area when they attempted to secure an equitable distribution of Federally-funded free school lunches for poor children. People had complained that no matter how poor they were their children were not getting free lunches. In a number of schools Volunteers learned, lunches were being distributed to all children, whether poor or not, at reduced prices. OEO investigators were told by one principal that he saw no reason why his children should

have to pay more for a lunch in order that some others would get free lunches. Complaints were made that the Volunteers were unkempt, rude, that they had attempted to persuade people to turn against officials and that they had interfered with the administration of the schools. A storekeeper complained that a Volunteer had attempted to persuade a family not to trade at his store. It developed that what the Volunteer had done was to offer transportation to the family so that it could shop at another town where prices were considerably lower. One school principal was irate because Volunteers, who had wished to discuss a food-distribution plan, appeared at her office after she had refused to see them.

The political and social structure of many Appalachian communities along with the interests of mining corporations together formed an almost impenetrable power-complex controlling the lives of their inhabitants. This coalition of mutual interests formed the bulwark of opposition to VISTA. As always where OEO community action programs began to take effect, subtle, complex, and powerful

forces became exercised. A good illustration of how the power-structure in a remote Appalachian county might be organized was given by Haddad in his Harper's Magazine article.<sup>1</sup> Haddad wrote:

In one Appalachian county, for example, the 'boss' is a woman Superintendent of Schools. (The school system represents one of the few sources of jobs and contracts in depressed areas.) She is also the wife of the Judge of the Circuit Court, an aunt of the County Court Judge and mother of the Assistant School Superintendent and State Senator. Another relative runs the county newspaper. The chairman of the Poverty Program is a cashier at the family bank. The executive director of the program was fired recently and replaced by a nephew of the 'boss'.

This family, according to a local newspaper editor, controls not only school and courthouse patronage, but also highway, parole, probation, and welfare jobs. They also own some school buildings and the garage where the school buses are repaired.

In those areas where there was coal to be exploited--largely through the ravaging processes of strip-mining--the indigenous power structure, as a rule, used its strength to support the activities of the coal corporation.

The strip-mining corporations, operating under "broad form deeds" were empowered legally to take the minerals from beneath

---

\* "Mr. Shriver and the Savage Politics of Poverty," Harper's Magazine, December, 1965.

the surfaces of land owned by farmers. Strip-mining is an operation which rips out the seams of coal lying just beneath the top soil surface of land. The Kentucky Court of Appeals had ruled that the deeds, most of them written long before surface mining became common, were valid. State courts of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Colorado and other states had ruled in favor of the land-owners. But, in Kentucky, coal operators could ride over a man's land, traverse the hills with broad gashes, destroy crops and timber as well as homes and buildings, and pile up tons of loose gravel and earth which frequently slid down the steep slopes to bury homes and property underneath. For years farmers and land owners had watched helplessly as strip miners tore at and destroyed their property.

In the Spring of 1967 two farmers in Pike County, Kentucky, brought the issue to a head when they warned that mining tractors would have to go over their bodies in order to get at the coal beneath their land. Governor Edward T. Breathitt finally intervened in favor of Jink Ray, one of the land owners. Others

were banding together for court actions. In July Robert Holcomb, president of the Independent Coal Operator's Association representing the strip-mining interests, had called for an investigation of VISTA and Appalachian Volunteers, a private organization supported largely with OEO funds. Holcomb charged both organizations with openly advocating "that citizens violate state law and court decisions in the Jink Ray case.

At about the same time an Appalachian Volunteer field worker and a husband and wife team working for the Southern Conference Education Fund, were arrested in a nighttime raid of their homes in Pike County led by County Attorney Thomas Ratliff, who was the Republican nominee for the office of Lieutenant Governor. The workers, all of whom had been active in organizing protests against strip-mining, were jailed and charged with sedition. The charges were later thrown out by a higher court. The issues, however, generated a good deal of heat and both Governor Breathitt and Governor Hulett C. Smith of West Virginia, complained to Shriver; Breathitt about the Appalachian

Volunteers and Smith' about "immoral" conduct of other Volunteers.

On August 18, OEO issued a release stating that charges against "a few" Appalachian Volunteers were being investigated and that 95 VISTA Summer Associates working under AV sponsorship would leave West Virginia by August 27, the remaining 31 being natives of the state. What the release did not point out, however, was that the VISTA Summer Associates would have terminated their terms of service by the end of August anyway. The release concluded by stating that "these young people are Americans of quality and their contribution to OEO programs is proving to be a major factor in winning the War on Poverty." The OEO release, however, was widely interpreted in the press as indicating that the Appalachian Volunteer organization would be cut off from Federal funding. The situation was clarified on August 27, in a letter from Shriver to Gov. Breathitt:

I appreciated the opportunity to review with you on the telephone yesterday our previous discussion about the Appalachian Volunteers, Inc., program. I think it helped greatly to clarify our earlier understanding.

I was gratified to learn of your strong support and endorsement of the VISTA Program in Kentucky and of your hope that it can be effectively expanded. We will do all we can to meet your wishes in the matter.

I was also pleased that you confirmed my earlier understanding that your immediate concern was directed to the summer associate volunteers trained by Appalachian Volunteers, Inc.

As I told you yesterday, we have taken specific steps to meet your concerns. 120 summer volunteers are being terminated this week and they will not be replaced. Furthermore, there is no intention to reestablish a summer volunteer program in Kentucky next year. In addition, a training program with Appalachian Volunteers, Inc., which was to have started on September 14, has been canceled. I think we both agree that these steps will do a great deal to resolve the issues which originally concerned you. . .

An internal memorandum at the time \* cited a report on the Appalachian Volunteers program by Harvard research psychologist Robert Coles which said:

The AVs, during the summer of 1966, dealt with as vexing a series of problems as now exists in American society, and did so with the most astonishing combination of tactfulness and competence that I have yet to see from American students in over eight years of work in social psychiatry.

The memorandum continued:

pro In addition to significant contributions, such as VISTA, the Breathitt County cooperative, and the community intern program, the AVs have literally transformed the Raleigh County (West Virginia) CAA from one of mediocrity at best to probably the most effective rural CAAs I have been able to identify. . .Raleigh is truly a model rural CAA. I think the Regional Office will support this view. RSS (Shriver) has publicly stated his high regard for the AVs on numerous occasions.

---

\* August 22, 1967, from Gerson M. Green to Bill Bozman, deputy director of CAP

What the AVs have achieved in Raleigh County is beginning to be repeated in other areas with poor-to-mediocre CAA's. The AVs are key to dealing with the problems of this region. There is no other comparable organization in existence now, nor can we expect the development of such organizations without the AVs leadership and support. I repeat, the AVs is the most significant program serving a low-income white population that is currently operative, and it is operating in the most apathetic and leaderless rural poverty area in the nation.

Clarification from VISTA itself came in a lengthy telegram

from Acting Director Padraic Kennedy to Senator Robert C. Byrd on

August 21:

First of all, Gov. Smith has not spoken out against VISTA. As a matter of fact, only last Friday evening, in a formal press conference, he stated: 'As you know, our experience with VISTA in West Virginia has been highly successful, particularly in the field of mental health, where VISTA Volunteers are performing great services to the citizens of many of our communities.'

The Governor specifically pointed out in his press conference that he was not directing his criticism against the VISTA Volunteers or the VISTA program as a whole. His major concern was with a few alleged incidents involving the Appalachian Volunteer program. . .

At Governor Smith's request and with his full cooperation, a special OEO team is conducting an investigation into complaints involving certain Appalachian Volunteers. We have made it perfectly clear to the Governor that as far as VISTA is concerned we are dedicated to making sure that VISTA Volunteers continue to give the same kind of service in West Virginia that he commended. We have told him that we would take immediate action in any specific case where a VISTA Volunteer is personally identified as acting in a way that is out of keeping with the standards and ideals of VISTA.

Early in the controversy, Milton Ogle, director of the Appalachian Volunteers, had said that the organization would remain

in Kentucky, "with or without federal funds." The attacks on the AVs, Ogle said, "convince us that we're doing something right. Our staff in Kentucky has been working closely with a great many eastern Kentuckians who are backing us up right down the line.

"We have a commitment to these people and we intend to keep it. We will continue to work in eastern Kentucky. We will investigate fully the charges brought against us and we continue to welcome any investigation of the organization." A report issued by the AV at the time stated that "there may be more coal in this case than communism. . .By helping the very many eastern Kentuckians who are threatened by strip mining, we have found ourselves opposed to the very few eastern Kentuckians who profit from it."

On September 6, Shriver sent Ogle a letter:

There have been, apparently, some misunderstandings on your part regarding the action taken by OEO to terminate the Kentucky Summer Associates program conducted by Appalachian Volunteers, Inc.

In order to clarify the decision, I am attaching a copy of my letter to Gov. Edward T. Breathitt which states the specific action taken by OEO at the Governor's request. I understand my staff had discussed this with you. . .The decisions, as you can easily see, do not effect the year-round CAP program of AVs, the Outpost Education program operating in Kentucky, or any programs conducted by AVs, Inc. in West Virginia.

I have been personally concerned that you and your associates fully understand the specific details of our action, relative to the summer associates program. The most important points, I believe, are that no contract between OEO and AV has been terminated, and that no Volunteers were ordered withdrawn in advance of their termination dates.

And a final summation of the matter was presented in a memorandum from George D. McCarthy, OEO Assistant Director for Congressional Relations, to Senator Joseph Clark, on September 25, 1967, which said:

. . . In West Virginia, when there were charges against some Appalachian Volunteers, Governor Smith requested the OEO to conduct an investigation in cooperation with his office into the allegations. The OEO sent a team to meet with the Governor in Charleston and to look into the complaints. I understand that while there were a few instances in which Appalachian Volunteers showed poor judgment, on the whole the investigation indicated that they were doing a good job in serving the people of West Virginia. I think it is also interesting to note that on September 2, 1967, an editorial in the highly respected Charleston Gazette urged that the "Governor should invite more Volunteers in '68." The point of all this is that the task of helping the poor to really help themselves is difficult and people who dedicate themselves to this can periodically expect to run into opposition and criticism. The Appalachian Volunteers are no exception.

As for Kentucky, all charges and criticism made about the AV and VISTA programs there have been investigated by the OEO Office of Inspection. To date, there is no evidence that any violation of local, state, or federal law has occurred.

Boiled down to its essence, the bitter controversy ended with the termination of only the Appalachian Volunteers summer associates program, a minute part of its activities. OEO continued to fund

the substantive, major community action programs of the organization.

Despite sporadic signs of hostility, however, the Volunteers managed to win acceptance from a very large part of the population. They were also able to remain and to continue their work in the great majority of these counties.

On March 24, 1966, Mississippi Governor Paul E. Johnson vetoed a VISTA project in the state. The move became a blanket veto and, as of the summer of 1968, Mississippi remained the only state in the

nation not to have VISTA Volunteers working in it. Governor Johnson's veto applied to a project involving Saints Junior College, a predominantly Negro school in Lexington. Under the College's supervision, and as approved by VISTA, four to six Volunteers would have conducted preschool, day care and adult literacy programs in a project called Second Start. The Governor's letter to VISTA Director Glenn W. Ferguson (appointed Ambassador to Kenya in October, 1966)<sup>35</sup> said:

Mississippi is not participating in the VISTA Volunteers program, whether it be Saints Junior College, of Lexington, Mississippi, or some other place in the state.

We have had various authorities from the Washington Office of the OEO here before, and each time have advised them that we are not ready to participate in the VISTA program.

I strenuously protest any VISTA Volunteers being assigned in the State of Mississippi; and I do not consent to the referral or assignment to duties or work of any VISTA Volunteer under the application of the Saints Junior College in its Project Second Start.

There were problems of a different variety, including insufficient supervision for many Volunteers and a lack of understanding by sponsors of what VISTA was supposed to be doing. Training in

---

<sup>35</sup> Ferguson was succeeded by William H. Crook in March, 1967. Crook was appointed Ambassador to Australia in June, 1968. Padraic Kennedy, a former Peace Corps official, acted as Director between Ferguson's departure and Crook's appointment and again after Crook had left to take up his ambassadorial post.

too many instances wasn't relevant to the community Volunteers were assigned to and numbers of Volunteers should not have been accepted for service for a variety of reasons including lack of maturity, judgement and humility or, hardening of attitudes in an area where openness and flexibility were indispensable.

An attempt to meet some of these institutional problems was made in January, 1967 when VISTA decentralized many of its functions to regional offices. Regionalization brought not only cost-savings and greater management efficiency but also physically located VISTA staff in proximity to Volunteers for greater communication, field support, in-service training, and project development. Regional training centers were established and equipped to train persons in the very community in which they were to serve. Finally, substantial improvement was made in the selection process which better assured the motivation and quality of the Volunteers for the work assigned them.

An early assessment of VISTA by the magazine writer Andrew Kopkind was generally critical but ended with a post on the back.

Kopkind noted that a contingent of Volunteers were dismissed by the city of Newark administration "presumably, for getting in the way" by insisting on working with a Negro activist group founded by Students for a Democratic Society. Kopkind thought that many Volunteers were being wasted and cited one girl Volunteer who "wound up acting as an interior decorator for a settlement house director," and another who "turned out to be a glorified chauffeur for his agency chief. Many more are involved in busy work, and some in not very much work at all."

But, in the most primitive areas--among the Eskimos, or in isolated rural communities--the volunteers are providing services and a contact with the rest of the world that no one else has done...In the places where young VISTAs work with the young poor--in a semi-recreational way--there are immediate benefits; dropouts are dropped back into a more constructive life. For the elderly poor, or the mentally ill or retarded, and to a large extent the rural poor, no amount of 'community action' can make a difference in their lives; they need the kind of simple individual attention that VISTAs, and very few others, are willing to provide.<sup>36</sup>

Kopkind concluded by quoting a VISTA girl from a small town in the Midwest: "The first thing that happened was that we found out how

---

<sup>36</sup> The New Republic, March 19, 1966.

bad life can be. I guess that's the first step. I hope in a year we can find out what the second one is."

#### Evaluation and Achievement

Until recently, VISTA's capacity to record and quantify the impact of the Volunteer had been limited. In the early days, achievements were highlighted by examples of success gleaned from individual Volunteers. Beginning in 1968, VISTA developed techniques for the retrieval of data on the quantitative accomplishments of Volunteers and the analysis of those factors which affected accomplishments. The range of Volunteer activities was determined and a framework for planning and programming within the OEO PPB System was established. A wide-ranging survey was made to assess the accomplishments of Volunteers in quantitative terms and the resultant cost-benefit of their achievements. While the information had not been fully analyzed by August, 1968, it was felt that a great deal had already been learned about VISTA activities and impact in certain areas.

In one project on New York City's Lower East Side, for example, Volunteers sponsored by a CAA, Action for Progress, were reaching thousands of Spanish-speaking residents in an attempt to solve the problems relating to slum housing. Four Volunteers, it was shown, had:

--assisted over 530 families with their housing problems on an individual basis. Over half of the cases resulted in tangible improvements in apartments and buildings;

--formed 15 tenants councils with over 200 families which were serving as vehicles to press slum landlords and the city to face many of the problems of substandard housing on a neighborhood level;

--relocated 80 families who had been evicted, to larger and more adequate apartments;

--placed three buildings under tenant management. The buildings had been in receivership under the N.Y.C. Housing Code. Money paid in rents was being used to maintain and rehabilitate the buildings. The incremental cost of the project, which provided measurably better housing for the inhabitants, was only \$11,000; the benefit to residents from the activities of VISTA Volunteers was \$273 for every \$1 invested by VISTA.

In the light of such information, VISTA began to shift its planning and allocation of resources orientation from a concentration on tract (urban, rural, Indian, migrant, mental health,) to a consideration of functional areas of activity such as housing, health, income and employment, education, etc. The retrieval and analysis of data then in process was expected to enhance and faci-

litate the shift in planning emphasis.

There were earlier examples of effectiveness. Examples:

In New Hampshire, 33 Volunteers worked with more than 16,000 persons in a twelve-month period; involved 80 percent of them in specific community betterment or self-help programs; increased the net worth of community facilities by an estimated \$160,000 and found jobs for 87 poor people, reducing the welfare roles and increasing the incomes of the poverty communities by nearly \$250,000 a year.

In West Virginia, an average of 100 Volunteers assigned to the State Department of Mental Health, worked in 50 of the state's 55 counties and served in every mental hospital and clinic in the State.

In one year's time they had been in contact with more than 45,000 of the families of the institutionalized patients. As a result of their efforts, more than 600 patients were released and more than 1,000 chronically ill patients remained in their homes rather than in State institutions for an average of three months longer than they otherwise would have. State officials estimated that the work of the Volunteers resulted in a direct savings to taxpayers of the

State of more than \$485,000 in a single year--an amount equal to 17 percent of the entire mental health budget of West Virginia.

Twenty-five Volunteers worked on bail bond projects in San Francisco, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Miami. They interviewed more than 27,000 prisoners awaiting trial who were too poor to afford bail. As a result of the interviews, 7,000 prisoners were recommended for release pending trial of whom 5,600 were actually released with 97 percent of them reporting for later trial. Savings to the cities were estimated at more than \$2 million based on the amount it would have cost taxpayers to keep the defendants in jail awaiting trial. Additional savings in terms of income earned by these defendants (and welfare that would have otherwise been given to their families) more than tripled that amount.

Volunteers on a rural project in Santa Clara, California, organized a self-help housing project; initiated a mental health project funded by the National Institutes for Mental Health for \$168,000; generated a \$10,000 grant from the Ford Foundation and \$750,000 from HEW for a medical clinic for migrants; and formed a

senior citizens group which found jobs for 60 persons.

In New York City in one summer, Volunteers conducted recreational programs for 9,000 children and teen-agers on 50 separate blocks in the city's slums. An average of 4,100 teen-agers participated six days a week through the summer. The cost of the program--credited by the Police Athletic League with cooling tempers and reducing tensions throughout the area--came to 98 cents per day for each child, or 16 cents an hour.

In a rural community of North Carolina, Volunteers organized a crafts fair in which 50 residents exhibited and sold their products; helped set up nearly 200 small home industries; established cooperative stores serving the entire county of 9,000 residents; and obtained donations of materials totalling \$9,485, clothing worth \$4,000, cash donations totalling \$5,000.

In the Fall of 1967, when Congress let lapse the continuing resolution which permitted Volunteers to receive subsistence allowances while it considered legislation, VISTA Director William Crook wrote each Volunteer and told him that he might soon be without his

living allowance. Crook asked them to remain on their jobs as long as they could.

The first reaction came from Volunteers themselves. But, it was quickly followed with offers of support from governors, mayors, industrialists, lawyers, businessmen, sheriffs, clergymen, community organizations, and the poor themselves.

There was, to begin with, a telegram--to be followed by hundreds of others--from a group of Volunteers in San Antonio: "We will stay because the poor must stay," they said.

A group of 29 Volunteers in Denver sent a telegram to the President: "We want you to know that we intend to keep our commitment to the people with whom we live and work--in spite of the fact that Congress has not kept its commitment to them or us," they said.

In Cotulla, Texas, where six Volunteers were helping 50 Spanish-speaking children in pre-school programs, the community pooled its resources to keep them there. "If the Volunteers have to leave," said Father Joe Daspit, their sponsor, "we will be lost without them,

because we have no other resources."

A county sheriff in St. Albans, Vt., opened his jail and put up four girl Volunteers, on a strictly open-door basis, he said.

In Kentucky, a landlord gave a volunteer two months of rent-free housing. The Housing Authority of McKeesport, Pa., provided apartments and in Franklin County, Md., a local hotel offered two Volunteers free rooms.

Volunteers working with the Philadelphia Bar Association on a bail bond project were offered the use of the city jail, but the Bar Foundation came up with a grant to support them for two weeks.

The governors of Hawaii, Alaska and Florida, Mayors Lindsay of New York City and Barr of Pittsburgh pledged support.

In Arizona, a group of lawyers pledged \$2,000. A group of businessmen in Baltimore raised a \$6,000 weekly fund for the city's 94 Volunteers. The Associated Press reported that 25 New York City Corporations had agreed to back VISTA with a \$100,000 fund.

"Everybody seems to love the VISTA Volunteers except their government," read the lead of a Chicago News story.

In Chicago, Volunteer Frank Torres, 18, of New York City, said, "I guess most of us feel that if the people we work with can live in poverty without money, we can do the same."

#### New Directions

Exploring new directions, VISTA in 1968, was recruiting, training, and assigning Volunteers who could contribute specific technical skills to community development efforts. Volunteers were being recruited from such graduate schools of business as Stanford University to assist in the development of credit unions and cooperatives; architects and urban planners from Harvard, M.I.T., and Yale; and social workers from the University of Maryland School of Social Work. It was experimenting with "education in action" programs such as the VISTA Legal Fellows-Master of Law Program in which students would study at George Washington and New York Universities in curricula especially designed to train them for field work as VISTA lawyers. It was also developing new projects utilizing a team concept wherein a group of Volunteers representing a variety of skills

would work together on a multi-pronged approach to the complex problems of poverty. It was combining its efforts for impact on specific problems with the Community Action Program in a special planners project, and with the National Alliance for Businessmen in a potential project to assist hard-core unemployed.

There were two major by-products of VISTA's development.

Through highlighting the problems of poverty in communities throughout the nation on a person-to-person basis Volunteers were able to channel the concern of citizens and private organizations into hundreds of thousands of manhours of service and millions of dollars in cash-or-kind contributions to the War on Poverty. And, service had a profound effect on the Volunteers themselves. Thousands had already been motivated to enter the helping services which were notoriously under-manned throughout the nation. The effects of their service would become a permanent part of the awareness, the motivation, and the conscience of the country.



### Job Corps

The Job Corps, "one of the most extraordinary emergency efforts in the Free World," frequently has been compared to the New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps. Its origins, however, are more diverse, and its objectives more far-reaching and ambitious. Focusing on teenagers whose birthright and background foreshadow a life of poverty, the Job Corps would create a "clean, healthful Job Corps center where massive injections of remedial education and job training would turn them into law-abiding, tax-paying good neighbors." Supervising the operations of the centers, universities and business corporations would apply their "brainpower and administrative ability" in the introduction of new techniques and a flexibility that the public schools had not adopted. At the outset of the program, officials of the Office of Economic Opportunity hoped for speedy, visible results to demonstrate the success of a nationwide strategy to increase the earning power and social adaptability of a critical segment of the nation's population.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the formalization of the Task Force in February, 1964, planners in the poverty war had emphasized youth as the place "where the poverty cycle could best be broken." It was thought that services, such as improvement of health, education, training, welfare and rehabilitation, would prepare youth for employment as adults.

---

<sup>1</sup> John Bainbridge, "The Job Corps," New Yorker, May 21, 1968 (reprint - no pagination); Christopher Weeks, Job Corps: Dollars and Dropouts (New York: Little Brown & Co.; 1967), pp. 5, 6.

This approach, however, was opposed by Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz, who maintained that while conventional techniques were desirable, they would produce no visible results. "Poverty is, by definition, lack of income," he said, "and income comes from jobs." Thus, the priority item must emphasize employment. In February, the Labor Department pressed for a program which embodied a section of the Youth Employment Act that had been stalled in the House Rules Committee. Emphasis was placed on youth training in large "urban" training and remedial education centers.<sup>2</sup>

The Youth Employment Act had its roots directly in the old Civilian Conservation Corps. In 1942, the Corps had officially died, only to be resurrected again several times in the ensuing decades. Senator Hubert Humphrey, spelling out his recommendations in a Harper's Magazine article entitled, "A Plan to Save Trees, Land and Boys," in 1958 and 1959 proposed legislation designed to put unemployed young men to work in woods. Faced with a general lack of Congressional interest and Administration opposition, the two bills failed to pass. In 1960 the Democratic party, with an eye toward the elections, "started to sift through the possibilities for new proposals on which to build their platform."<sup>3</sup> The Democratic platform of that year included endorsement of the Humphrey program, and in 1961, Humphrey, testing Kennedy support, forced the issue by submitting his bill on the day the 87th Congress opened its doors.

---

<sup>2</sup> James Sundquist, "For the Poor, Opportunity," Politics and Policy: The Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson Years (unpublished), pp. 141, 142.

<sup>3</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, p. 35.

President Kennedy, David E. Bell, and the Bureau of the Budget, "unconvinced that the Conservation Corps concept by itself was an adequate answer to youth unemployment," had decided on a small, experimental Youth Conservation Corps of 6,000 members, with another 50,000 to be employed in local public service and on-the-job training programs. Accordingly, these provisions were incorporated into the Administration substitute Youth Employment Act. The Act reflected to a large degree the influence of Dr. James Conant's study presented to the National Committee for Children and Youth, in which he upheld the environmental and cyclical view of the "culture of poverty." In his testimony before the Congressional committees reviewing the measure, Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg quoted Conant's findings. The Congress, rejecting the Kennedy bill, revised the scope of the program, but the final reported bill was killed by the House Rules Committee.<sup>4</sup>

Three days before Johnson gave his first State of the Union message, the Labor Department submitted a report entitled "One Third of a Nation," of the Task Force on Manpower Utilization, established by President Kennedy to evaluate the Selective Service rejection rates. It was hoped that the consequent evidence could be used in support of his youth-employment proposals. The report was one of the few available data sources from which the poverty Task Force could draw. It showed that across the country one-third of the 18-year-old draftees and volunteers could not qualify for the Armed Forces

---

<sup>4</sup> Sundquist, "For the Poor, Opportunity," p. 134; Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 33, 35.

entrance requirements. It stated that "a major proportion of these young men are the products of poverty. They have inherited their situation from their parents, and unless the cycle is broken, they will almost surely transmit it to their children." Wirtz and Selective Service Director, General Lewis Hershey, reasoned that since Armed Forces mental requirements were geared to eighth-grade levels, the rejectees were potential poverty victims, for they would be disqualified from decent jobs.<sup>5</sup>

The Task Force also discovered that close to 750,000 young people dropped out of school every year before obtaining a diploma, and that one out of every six dropouts was unemployed. In urban areas, the proportion was even higher, close to fifty percent. One out of every four young persons coming into the labor force each year was without a high school diploma. The Task Force predicted that if current trends continued, in five years there would be almost "one and one half million unemployed youths--without adequate education or training, without jobs, and without a future." The need, therefore, was to formulate a program which would prepare these young for jobs that would merit decent wages.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, p. 68; Moynihan wrote: "The study revealed, for example, the disproportionately high rates of Negro failure on the mental test, the great importance of family size for all races, and the sharp differences in rejection rates not only among races, but among regions of the nation." Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Professors and the Poor," Commentary, August, 1968, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, p. 69; Congressional Presentation, 1964, p. 12.

The Task Force concentrated on the 16 to 21 age bracket--dropouts not yet in the labor market. This choice was dictated "not so much by their potential for violence, which had not yet become apparent (the first long hot summer had not yet begun), but rather by the fact that these young people had clearly identified themselves as needing help." To prevent an environmentally determined continuation of poverty, the Task Force fixed on the idea of residential centers "offering school dropouts a chance to live, learn, and work in a completely new environment where they would be prepared for a productive role in society."<sup>7</sup>

The Youth Conservation Corps-Hometown Employment Program of the Youth Employment Act had been incorporated into the President's 1964 budget, to be funded by \$160 million in allocations. But Shriver reacted negatively to the Corps "largely out of intuition and an innate distrust of the conservation agency bureaucracies whom he felt would control it." At a February 4 meeting, he responded enthusiastically to the urban residential center plan to "enroll high-school dropouts whose family and community environment made it nearly impossible to help them while they lived at home." To Shriver, the urban boarding school idea had the potential to reach into every county and town in the country with at least some small impact. It would involve nationwide recruitment, and would affect every "pocket" of poverty that might otherwise be bypassed. To some extent the program resembled the residential

---

<sup>7</sup> Adam Yarmolinsky, "The Beginnings of OEO," American Academy of Arts and Sciences Seminar on Poverty, (unpublished), p. 7; Congressional Presentation, p. 12.

vocational schools aspect of the 1963 Vocational Education Act, but it had been formulated by Adam Yarmolinsky and Secretary of Defense McNamara, who proposed utilizing obsolete military camps and the resources of the Department of Defense to operate large-scale training centers.<sup>8</sup>

The difference between the Task Force's program and the antecedent Conservation Corps was a desire to "help kids, not trees." The Kennedy bill had divided the Corpsmen's work week between 35 hours for work and 10 hours for education and training. Shriver and the Task Force decidedly gave priority to the kids: "There was never any question but that the Job Corps was a program designed primarily to solve the nation's youth problem; any conservation work accomplished in the process was simply an incidental benefit-- a by-product subsidiary to the main task."<sup>9</sup> Few proponents of the Youth Conservation Corps had viewed their program as an anti-poverty measure, except insofar as a rural or forest environment and work experience would somehow "inspire the enrolled youths to despise their juvenile delinquent, slum-ridden neighborhoods," and impell them to achieve higher goals. The conservation lobbies, called to testify for the Kennedy bill, were not called upon for the Job Corps.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, p. 71.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> Charles E. Wingenbach, "Guide to Job Corps History" (unpublished), p. 1.

The Task Force's choice of a Job Corps carried with it certain decisions of priorities other than "trees versus kids." Within the context of an all-out war against poverty, a decision had to be made whether to prepare jobs for people, or people for jobs. The Task Force decided on the latter partly because "this was thought to be the less difficult task, and in part because it was thought that the first increment of new jobs would come from the proposed new tax cut, which was part of the same legislative program." It was felt that "while the jobs created by the tax cut were picking up the first wave of newly trained people, new programs could be developed and launched for the second wave of qualified job applicants, who would not be ready for some time."<sup>11</sup>

The Council of Economic Advisors had similar expectations. In response to the query--"Why train these young people when no jobs exist for them?"--a staff memorandum, circulated among the Shriver Task Force, explained that the high unemployment rates resulted from "the inadequate level of demand" plaguing the economy. The tax-cut was expected to create "approximately 1.7 million new jobs" in 1964 alone, with increases in the succeeding years. Thus, with the continued rapid pace of economic activity, "quick implementation of the Job Corps and related programs will begin producing trained young people just as the economy becomes most ready to absorb them." Moreover, the memo concluded, "we can gear our programs such that people will be prepared for the specific types of

---

<sup>11</sup> Yarmolinsky, "The Beginnings of OEO," p. 6.

jobs that will be opening up, whether it be during the next year or the next decade, ever recognizing the need for developing a flexible labor force that will be readily adaptable to our ever-changing world.<sup>12</sup>

Shriver expressed yet another point of view in response to those who held that only a planned economy would suffice to achieve maximum employment and eliminate poverty. "Right now," he wrote in December, 1964, "there are hundreds of thousands of jobs open in our economy, but poor people lack the qualifications to fill them." The first order of business should be to "fill the jobs which are already open in today's labor market," and hence the need for the Job Corps and other work-training programs. New Jobs could be created and the economy could be expanded without altering its basic structure; therefore, he concluded, "I am optimistic that we can complete the job of eliminating poverty without moving to a planned economy, and I will operate the poverty program on that

---

<sup>12</sup> CEA staff memorandum, "Where are the Jobs Coming From?" April 4, 1964, pp. 1-5; Michael Harrington wrote that it was good under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 that people were to be trained for jobs, "but in addition, jobs must be created for which people can be trained." Cited in Ferman and Haber, Poverty in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. x; George H. Esser, in the winter of 1966, wrote that programs designed to provide the poor with minimal skills "do not assure that there will be a job on the other end of the pipeline. They do not even insure that the training provided is for skills that will be in demand. And even if the skills lead to jobs, there is no assurance that the jobs will pay a wage calculated to lift the family or the individual out of poverty." George Esser, "The Role of a State-wide Foundation in the War on Poverty," Anti-Poverty Programs, (Law and Contemporary Problems), School of Law, Duke University, Winter, 1966, p. 98. This became a perennial critique, especially after the Viet Nam war spending cut-backs were felt in the economy.

assumption until there is firm contradictory evidence."<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the economic theory behind the Job Corps, there were political considerations as well. Shriver was ever mindful of the President's directive to "come up with programs that would produce visible results quickly," as well as the need to demonstrate that poor people could change, and wanted to change. Other sections of the Economic Opportunity Act appeared to have little prospect of quick results; however, the Job Corps seemed to have "the greatest potential," and became that segment of the poverty program counted on to produce the early, and necessary, success.<sup>14</sup>

While the details were being mapped out, the Task Force searched for an appropriate name for the program. The roster of titles grew daily--American Youth Corps, Youth Opportunity Corps, National Youth Corps, Opportunities for Young Americans, National Training Corps, and so on. By the end of February, at a staff meeting, Shriver reviewed the list of potential names and said, "Nuts. Let's just call it the Job Corps. That's what these kids are really interested in--a job." Staff members objected to the name, feeling it had no "ring," or appeal; but Shriver prevailed.<sup>15</sup>

Early in the planning stages, the question arose as to which department would direct the program. The logical choice was the

---

<sup>13</sup> Shriver letter to John Withall, December, 1964.

<sup>14</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 73-74; Yarmolinsky writes: "Primary, but by no means exclusive, emphasis was on the Job Corps as a striking, if relatively expensive method of qualifying for the labor force young people who had dropped out of school and were about to drop out of society." "The Beginnings of OEO," p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, p. 76.

Defense Department, which had the necessary logistical capacity, disciplined nationwide organization and professional training expertise. A "think" paper had already been circulated in anticipation of that Department's role in administering and monitoring the program. The projected outline envisaged Army execution, Defense coordination, and a civilian Youth Corps division to handle the educational-vocational aspect of the program. While "not an unreasonable suggestion on the face of it," the prospective military role "aroused violent emotional reactions among those who had been traumatized by World War II basic training." One Defense Department staff member felt it would "scare the hell out of a substantial number of liberals," who would be fearful of the Administration drafting dropouts into a militaristic society, "totally regimented according to Washington directives." Moreover, disaffected Labor Department planners whose Youth Employment program had been lifted out of their jurisdiction also objected.<sup>16</sup>

The issue of the role of the military was exacerbated by an Evans and Novak Washington Post column, and so sensitized the planners that, within two weeks, a new direction had been taken. This new tack emphasized the civilian administration of the educational aspects of the program, and limited the military role to logistical support and administrative backup. Shriver, testifying before the House Committee on Education and Labor, stressed the non-military

---

<sup>16</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, p. 78; Yarmolinsky wrote that Labor "made no bid for the new residential urban training centers." "The Beginnings of OEO," pp. 12-14; and Moynihan wrote, "Pride of place was given to the Labor Department's Youth Employment Act which, with minor changes, became Title I of the proposed bill." Commentary, p. 22.

nature of the Job Corps. Enrollments would be voluntary, trainees could resign at any time, and no standard "tour of enlistment" had to be completed. Secretary McNamara stated, "these are civilian, not military camps. They are designed to fit men for participation in our civilian society, not for participation in our military forces. Therefore, I think it is quite appropriate that a civilian agency and not a military agency be in charge of the camps. Task Force staff felt that Congress certainly would have rejected a military-run Job Corps; thus the issue was decided on the basis of "political necessity."<sup>17</sup>

Initial projections of the Job Corps program aimed at the lowest end of the spectrum of teenage poor. The planners envisaged 100 conservation centers under the Agriculture and Interior Departments, located on government-owned land such as parks and forests. These would be small--100 to 200 youths--and isolated, providing basic education, training, and work experience programs. Those with the most severe educational gaps and least ready for vocational training would be assigned to the conservation centers. The objective was to involve the enrollees in a rounded living experience, enabling them to profit from a cooperatively-oriented society. Half their time was to be spent on conservation projects through which they would learn simple skills.

---

<sup>17</sup> Evans and Novak, Washington Post, February, 1964; Statement of Sargent Shriver before the House Committee on Education and Labor, Hearings, 1964, p.1510ff; Statement of Robert McNamara before the House Committee on Education and Labor, Hearings, 1964, p.126; Weeks, Job Corps, p. 80.

By May, both Agriculture and Interior submitted plans for 308 proposed conservation center locations capable of holding 40,000 enrollees. The estimated costs for construction ranged as high as \$1 million each, four times the amount budgeted by Job Corps for construction. Administratively, there was some advantage in the establishment of the conservation centers, in that the machinery and capabilities existed in the old-line Federal and State conservation agencies, along with a regionalized system for the delegation of responsibilities.

The other portion of the Job Corps program--the urban residential centers--clearly was its most innovative feature. It was to be a wholesale experimental program of compensatory education, vocational skills training, and development of social skills and attitudes. These were to be constructed on vacant and obsolete military bases, and would receive the more "advantaged" of the target group, up to 1,000 or 2,000 youths per center. The emphasis here would be on-the-job training at a higher level, with supplemental educational programs. The objective was to produce young men able to begin apprenticeships, or to move on to more advanced training in a regular vocational school. Since the urban training centers rested on no philosophical, administrative or educational precedents, some experienced administrators saw the program as a potentially "horrendous disorganization into which millions of tax dollars could be poured with no assurance of success and an attraction for a variety of

impractical theorists and opportunists."<sup>18</sup>

The Task Force planners, throughout the spring and summer of 1964, had to face specific questions of "power and policy," as well as Congressional review. Decisions had to be made on the design standards for constructing and renovating centers, recruitment and selection criteria, transportation, allotment procedures, medical support, center staffs, educational materials, equipment, purchasing procedures, clothing, and a host of logistical minutia. Specific answers were required for the allocation of corpsmen to conservation or urban centers, the propriety of utilizing profit-seeking corporations with universities and non-profit organizations to manage the centers, Job Corps' competition with schools and labor, and the critical issues of placement and costs. The Job Corps created an enormous challenge, but its planning staff was the most understaffed and overworked, and bore the greatest responsibility for producing successful results.<sup>19</sup>

On March 25, Shriver announced the appointment of Vernon Alden, president of Ohio University, to head the sub-group planning the details of the Job Corps. Alden's academic credentials were ideal to defend against any "frontal attack" from hostile educational institutions in the states, or the National Education Association,

---

<sup>18</sup> Wingenbach, "Guide to Job Corps History," pp. 2-4; The War on Poverty, (Congressional Presentation) March 17, 1964, pp. 14-22; Letter from Sargent Shriver to the Honorable Charles S. Gubser, October 5, 1964.

<sup>19</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 106-107; Lewis Eigen and David Gottlieb, "Pluralism in the Job Corps," American Child, March, 1965, pp. 19-20; Wingenbach, "Job Corps History," p. 4.

since the Job Corps looked suspiciously like a federally-operated public school system that would compete with local school systems.<sup>20</sup>

In April, Alden outlined a typical arrangement for a university-contracted Job Corps center:

Let us say a job training center was set up at Camp Kilmer next to New Brunswick, New Jersey, and we developed a prime contract with Rutgers' University. We would say to the people at Rutgers, 'We will deliver 2,000 people at Camp Kilmer on such a date. We will take responsibility for housing, clothing and feeding these people. We will give you the responsibility for developing a new education program which would include supervision of work, physical fitness and basic education and vocational education. You would have the responsibility for developing the basic materials although you can avail yourself of materials developed by Zacharias of MIT, and people working closely with Frank Keppel and with others. You would recruit people on your own faculty on a part- or full-time basis. You will avail yourselves of the rich resources of the teachers, colleges, and other educational institutions in New Jersey. You will avail yourself of people in the secondary school system maybe people who are retired teachers, maybe people who have retired from the service at the age of 45 and are productive and have ideas. You will pull in social service workers, returning Peace Corps volunteers, even alumni of Job Corps, and develop an imaginative, creative, new educational program.'<sup>21</sup>

At this stage of the planning, it was agreed that universities would be contracted to run the centers--the logical outcome of a basically educational program. Universities had experience in experimental projects, and a number had been involved in former governmental programs, though mostly in overseas efforts such as the Peace Corps and AID. There was, however, recognition of the drawbacks inherent in university involvement. With only "limited experience

---

<sup>20</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, p. 89-90; A Job Corps official recalls that "the public school systems saw any large-scale educational program . . . as a rival Federal system which would take badly-needed tax dollars and personnel away from them." Wingenbach, "History," pp. 2-3.

<sup>21</sup> Statement of Vernon Alden, testimony before the House, Hearings, April, 1964, p. 1523.

in training people for sub-professional jobs," universities were unlikely to be able to "spare the resources required in the operation of a training center." Further, the universities had "little or no experience with the target population of the Job Corps."<sup>22</sup> Initial apprehensions, as it developed, were borne out in later experience.

Business enterprise was brought into the Job Corps through the person of John Rubel, vice president of Litton Industries, and a member of Shriver's Task Force, and through the formation of a Business Advisory Committee, looking towards the time when business would be called on to provide jobs. Rubel convinced Shriver of business' ability to run the centers through a "systems capabilities" planning and program technique--under a general framework, specialists would perform specific interim tasks, continuously evaluating and modifying the system in light of on-going analysis.<sup>23</sup> Rubel foresaw three types of centers: one run by federal employees;

---

<sup>22</sup> Eigen and Gottlieb, "Pluralism," p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Birch Bayh, (D-Ind.) had written to Shriver in mid-March, suggesting that the Litton "systems approach" to educational training would be useful in the poverty program. Bayh indicated that Humphrey "has also expressed his interest in and support of this concept." Letter from Birch Bayh to Sargent Shriver, March 13, 1964; "'Systems Approach' may be defined as setting forth specific, predefined training and educational objectives, and combining the techniques of system analysis, learning theory and instructional technology to develop and implement learning systems which are validated and demonstrated to be maximally efficient and effective before use in a given instructional setting." Memorandum For the Record: Highlights of Visits to Three Job Corps Sites, USAFI, and Project PEACE, (Summary of findings) October 27, 1966, p. 3.

one by the universities; and one by corporations. It would be experimental and competitive to see which one worked best. To Shriver, business involvement offered a way to channel Job Corps graduates into industry, and would obviate an unweildy government bureaucracy.

The issue of profit versus non-profit management, however, "ranged the partisans of business enterprise against the champions of liberal tradition." Some Task Force members were appalled at the prospect of private enterprise exploiting the poverty war for profits, while others conceded that industry, by virtue of its training experience, management capability, extensive resources, and placement potential, was a logical choice. One acknowledged drawback was industry's "philosophy of training," which was to "select those people who are most likely to succeed with existing training methods." The Job Corps philosophy, on the other hand, said in effect, fit the training to the man; whereas industry traditionally fit the man to the training. Shriver, however, was determined and in the spring went before the Business Advisory Committee to suggest the possibility of business involvement: the reaction at that point was "restrained."<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Eigen and Gottlieb, "Pluralism" p. 21; Apprehensions about corporate participation in the Job Corps were reflected in the press. The Washington Post headlined a front page story "Big Business Seeks Profits in Poverty," in early 1965. The issue recurred in 1967 when the New Republic quoted one critic as saying, "the whole thing sounds like a government project to protect business against the risks of having a social conscience." By April, 1965, 32 companies had applied for Job Corps contracts. Washington Post, March 5, 1965; New Republic, "Drumming Up Votes for the Poverty Program," June 17, 1967, pp. 7-8; "Big Business Enlists for the War on Poverty," Trans-Action Magazine, June, 1965, pp. 3-9; Yarmolinsky, "The Beginnings of OEO," P. 12; Weeks, Job Corps, p. 101.

By May, Task Force aides alerted Shriver to the need for a larger planning staff for the Job Corps. Vernon Alden had spent less time in Washington because of university commitments, and consequently was out of touch with what was going on. Poverty Task Force sessions were held frequently, and in April, Education Commissioner Frank Keppel began attending meetings. Keppel designated Wade Robinson, a Harvard University faculty member, former school dropout, and planner for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Cooperative Educational Research Program, to attend. Robinson and Yarmolinsky agreed to give the task of designing the entire Job Corps educational program to the Office of Education under Keppel. At the same time Alden was "phased out" of the picture.<sup>25</sup>

The Job Corps program took shape during the legislative scrutiny of the Economic Opportunity Act. The planning staff grew in size as planning experts in counselling, education, testing, and a variety of other areas were contacted. Harold Brewster, Director of Employee Relations for IT&T, headed the planning, recruitment, screening, and selection assignment of Job Corps applicants. Dr. David Gottlieb, another former school drop-out and Professor of Sociology at Michigan State University, joined as a program analyst. Wray Smith, previously with the Peace Corps' training program, was recruited; and David Paynter, professional baseball pitcher and school superintendent, came to administer and coordinate the con-

---

<sup>25</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 142-145.

ervation centers. Definitions of responsibility were established in the matters of recruitment, the designing of centers, and allotting funds for equipment and supplies. Access to Office of Education funds allowed the initiation of pilot projects run by contractors on an experimental basis, as well as the preparation and testing of new educational materials. The results were encouraging.<sup>26</sup>

It was decided that the conservation centers were to be designed and run entirely by Job Corps personnel according to standards and criteria set up by Job Corps directives. Since the urban centers would be run by private contractors, responsibility for their management was left to the companies. By July, however, while a few contractors had expressed "skeptical interest," none were involved in the program. Shriver had wanted the centers to open either in September or October, but the universities indicated that thorough planning, taking up to six months, was required for the program to even be proposed. It became obvious to some that if Shriver's time schedule was to be met, the centers could not be run by the universities alone.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 145-146; A 17-year-old delinquent who participated in a Job Corps pilot project in Philadelphia said: "Maybe I'm wrong, but I think this program was to draw people together who probably would fight on the outside. . . I just came back from my graduation, and I saw something I either never saw before or never cared to look. I saw my mother being proud of me, maybe it might seem stupid, but it made me feel good." Shriver Speech, September 9, 1964, before the Awards Dinner, New Orleans Press Club.

<sup>27</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, p. 146.

In July, Federal Electric Corporation, with experience in staffing and administering large-scale government programs, expressed an interest in the Job Corps. To diversify operations in view of expected Defense Budget cutbacks, the company found in the Job Corps an ideal project. Robinson dispatched Lewis Eigen, an educator from Temple University, to meet with the Federal Electric staff. Ten days later, the corporation submitted a list of 115 assumptions for confirmation or modification covering nearly every phase of the operation. By August, basic guidelines for the centers had been worked out between Job Corps and Federal Electric staff, which became the working guidelines for negotiating with other contractors.<sup>28</sup>

In the meantime, Lyle Spencer, president of Science Research Association and consultant to the Task Force, arranged with Eigen for his company to establish a center. Rutgers and Oregon University soon began work on a program, with Litton Industries following suit. By mid-November, a dozen potential contractors were formulating proposals, including Philco, Sperry Rand, Southern Illinois University, and the Texas State Education Agency. By the spring of 1965, "the line of contract applications had quadrupled in length, and several more of the top corporations in the country had jumped on the bandwagon." One commentator remarked, "there have been three waves in the war on poverty. First came the do-gooders like Michael

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 147-152.

Harrington, who roused the American conscience. Then there came the Government programs, Sargent Shriver and the business establishment to legitimize it. Now we're getting the deluge of 'operators'--many of whom have been operating in the hard-sell atmosphere of the Pentagon. Those are the boys who are knocking at the poverty door."<sup>29</sup>

The Job Corps was formally presented to Congress in March, 1964. Its details were spelled out in the Congressional Presentation and the bill itself. In the first year the Job Corps was to build toward an enlistment of 40,000 young men, "those whose background, health and education make them least fit for useful work."<sup>30</sup> In more than one hundred camps and centers the volunteers' programs would be divided between the conservation projects and the job training centers. Participants would enroll for two years and be assigned to one of the two types of centers. Justification for

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 152-153; An anti-poverty war "insider" was quoted as saying: "The trouble is that the blue-chip contracting types have the technology but don't fully understand the problems of the poverty subculture--delinquency, drop-outs, and education. On the other hand, the anti-poverty people know all the woes of poverty but don't really understand the complex industrial technology. The result could be a '\$100 misunderstanding' in multi-million dollar scope." Laurence Stern, "Big Business Sees Profits in Poverty," Washington Post, March 7, 1965.

<sup>30</sup> Shriver called them "young Americans sometimes classified as 'social dynamite.'" Speech before the Joint Session of the West Virginia Legislature, March 1, 1965. He also was predicting a Job Corps of 100,000. See speech before the Advisory Council, May 5, 1964; Louise Lander (ed.), War on Poverty. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1967), p. 10; see also December 2, 1964 OEO press release, Singletary.

removing these youth from their native environments and placing them in remote centers was because some were in the migrant labor stream-- "at home nowhere"--others lived in communities lacking adequate "resources and concern," while still others came from impoverished rural areas, isolated mountain hollows, and urban ghettos: "the spark of motivation is not likely to be ignited in the same communities which have so long stifled it."<sup>31</sup>

Recruitment would be handled by the United States Employment Service, public schools, Armed Forces Examination Centers, boy's clubs, churches, and other public and private agencies. Mentally retarded or emotionally unstable youth and narcotics addicts would be "referred to appropriate existing rehabilitation facilities." Indicative of the caution of Job Corps policy at the outset, the Task Force did not contemplate "arrangements which would permit a juvenile court to commit a youngster to the Job Corps." Minor offenders, through juvenile court referral, might qualify for participation. However, in the case of young men in correctional institutions "who have made a successful appearance before a Board of Parole, but who are being held because of failure to obtain employment," Shriver wrote that each case must be considered on its own merits; however, the Job Corps should not be regarded as "a placement opportunity for institutionalized youths. . ." If, after careful screening and consultation with the proper authorities, a

---

<sup>31</sup> Congressional Presentation, 1964, p. 12.

clearance is obtained, an individual in these circumstances might enter the Corps.<sup>32</sup>

The conservation camps were to provide more than simply work experience and basic education: they were to "change indifference to interest, ignorance to awareness, resignation to ambition, and an attitude of withdrawal to one of participation." Under the general supervision of OEO, enrollees would work under the Forest and Park Rangers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Land Management, Reclamation, or Sports Fisheries and Wildlife. A variety of work experience programs would be available, and the educational program would attempt to bring the enrollees up to minimal levels. Staff would be recruited from many sources, and would undergo a "special, intensive training course" to prepare them for their work in camps.<sup>33</sup>

The urban training centers, initially conceived as involving from 500 to 5,000 enrollees, and eventually pared to approximately 2,500, would be communities "larger than 80% of the townships in the United States, larger than 70% of all American cities," with populations "greater than 99% of the secondary schools." The major emphasis in these centers would be on vocational training and "basic educational improvement in preparation for permanent employment." Skills taught would vary from center to center, and would

---

<sup>32</sup> Congressional Presentation, 1964, p. 13; Letter from Sargent Shriver to the Honorable Gus Carr Anderson, May 27, 1964; Letter from Shriver to Roy Wilkins, December 7, 1964.

<sup>33</sup> Congressional Presentation, 1964, pp. 14, 18; Staff personnel to administer conservation centers would be trained at Santa Rosa, California, with the cooperation of the University of Oklahoma; Lander, War, p. 109; In December 1965, 34 Job Corps enrollees would be trained as center staff.

be incorporated into a rounded program of health training, recreation, counseling and physical fitness programs. The Job Corps would award "diplomas" (General Equivalency Certificates) which would identify "specific labels of educational and occupational accomplishment." Enrollees would receive living allowances ranging from about \$30 to \$50 a month, and each member would receive a separation payment of \$50 per month. Enrollees could allot half of this amount to a dependent, and if he did, the Office of Economic Opportunity would match his contribution. The total Job Corps budget estimate came to \$191 million.<sup>34</sup>

It was recognized early in the planning stages that the Job Corps' potential as a "revolutionary educational innovation" would encourage questions and controversy. For this reason and others a program of evaluation was established in order to determine, for example, the average yearly earnings of a Job Corps "graduate" for five years after leaving the program, the basic skills and educational gains per enrollee, and differences in attitudes that might take place. One measure of the success of the program would be assessed by the "style of life adopted by the Corpsmen once they have completed their training and returned to their homes or other communities." This would require a post-training follow-up, a

---

<sup>34</sup> Congressional Presentation, 1964, pp. 19-20; Eigen and Gottlieb "Pluralism," p. 21.

design that was contemplated and formulated at the outset.<sup>35</sup>

Shriver began his testimony before the House Committee on Education and Labor with general operational descriptions, stressing the basic underlying concepts of the Job Corps program. He had hardly begun his testimony when Edith Green, the "Gentlelady from Oregon," asked why women were excluded from the Job Corps. The Task Force had not considered a residential program for girls. The initial thinking had been to limit the program to young men because they were typically people who had dropped out of school and thus the labor market. Statistically, young men had "bulked several times as large as young women" in cases of juvenile delinquency, crime and unemployment. But Shriver eventually acceded to Mrs. Green's demand, and by the first week of hearings she had gained an "ironbound commitment."<sup>36</sup>

The task of planning women's centers fell to Dr. Jeanne Noble, Associate Professor of Human Relations at New York University, who was

---

<sup>35</sup> Eigen and Gottlieb note that the CCC and NYA under the New Deal, from a lack of analysis and data, provided little in the way of knowledge about their impact. Thus, a "body of knowledge with great potential value for helping youth has been lost." The Job Corps, "must not repeat this mistake." see: Eigen and Gottlieb, "Pluralism in the Job Corps," *American Child*, March, 1965, pp. 22-23; and "Job Corps Evaluation Program Design and Procedure" January, 1965, prepared by Gottlieb, Chief of the Research and Evaluation Unit of the Job Corps; Lewis Eigen, Director, Office of Program Development and Analysis of the Job Corps; Lewis Guttman, and Walter Stellwagen.

<sup>36</sup> Hearings, House, 1964, p. 64ff; Yarmolinsky, "The Beginnings of OEO," p. 12; Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 90-91.

recommended by Edith Green. In May, with a free hand to set up guidelines, she immediately formed a staff composed of women taken from military and educational institutions. Noble decided that contracts should be drawn with universities, education organizations and other private groups. To focus national attention and stimulate widespread involvement, she promoted a national conference held in Washington, D.C., attended by interested groups with diverse ideas. With the personal endorsement of Mrs. Johnson, more than one hundred attended on July 29 and 30. The conference consensus was that the centers should be small and located near downtown urban areas, a decision which presented a problem to the planners, since it would require ten women's to every one men's center. Since the target was 7,000 girls for the first year, it meant that one women's center would have to open every ten days throughout the first year. Profit returns would be smaller and the projected costs higher, with the result that corporations expressed little interest in the distaff projects. Consequently local school boards and agencies like the YWCA, neither ideally suitable, were the first contract applicants.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to the requirement to enlarge the scope of the Job Corps program to include women, Congress further modified the original legislative proposal. Alphonzo Bell (R-Calif.) introduced an amendment that would prevent enrollment of high school graduates

---

<sup>37</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 154-159.

except in unusual circumstances, and prohibit enrollment of youths unless local high school authorities concluded that it would be impractical for them to continue their education or training locally. Representative Thompson (D-N.J.) had this stricken since it could lead to discrimination in the South. Senator Javits (R-N.Y.) added a measure authorizing the Job Corps to make grants to state youth and conservation agencies to operate centers, and Senator Prouty (R-Vt.) required that Job Corps applicants would be free from inquiry into their political affiliation, and could not, except as individual citizens, participate actively in political campaigns.<sup>38</sup>

Objections were raised at certain points concerning the implications of the program. Many middle-aged or older Congressmen remembered the CCC's with a nostalgic approval, even if they weren't entirely convinced that any sort of revival of the program was called for. Some, of course, were overtly hostile. Senator Lausche (D-Ohio) questioned the cost per trainee,<sup>39</sup> while Senator Tower (R-Texas) attacked the Job Corps as simply "renaming the old Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's." The Job Corps was doomed to fail, he said, and hardly worth the effort, since it would cost more to rehabilitate one corpsman than it cost "to send a student

---

<sup>38</sup> Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1964, p. 225.

<sup>39</sup> In the Congressional Presentation, 1964, estimates ran from \$4700 to \$5200 per trainee per year. Shriver spoke of a "less than \$5000 investment in a Job Corps youth." See speech before Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, D.C., April 18, 1964.

to Harvard or Yale."<sup>40</sup> Shriver called the comparison "superficial, invidious, and inaccurate." The real question was whether it was worth "investing tax revenues in education and training to keep these young men and women off tomorrow's relief rolls, and out of tomorrow's courts, and get them into tomorrow's ranks of productive citizens and taxpayers. That is what the Job Corps is all about."<sup>41</sup>

Senator Robertson (D-Va.) brought up the race issue, warning that centers would be integrated: "This means, of course, that in the South, at least, there will be what amounts to segregated camps, because only one type of citizen will attend." In floor action, Representative Howard W. Smith (D-Va.) said that any Southerner who planned to vote for the bill would abet implementation of the civil rights bill; thus, it would "not be very popular south of the Potomac." The critical challenges came, however, on the issue of a governor's veto, but were resolved in a Smathers-Humphrey compromise, which granted veto power to governors with the qualification that if the veto was not forthcoming within thirty days after federal

---

<sup>40</sup> This was typical of the Conservative criticism of the Job Corps. See also Carl Madden, "The War Over Poverty," Law and Contemporary Problems, Duke University, pp. 55-56; Yarmolinsky writes that this was "a charge that overlooked both the contribution of a university endowment, and the value of stronger motivation and previous training, in reducing the cost of higher education." See "The Beginnings of OEO," p. 13; The Harvard vs Job Corps cost issue was to plague the Job Corps for some time, and as late as 1968, many who favored the program were uneasy at the inordinate cost.

<sup>41</sup> Shriver Letter to The Washington Post.

notification, centers would be established in that state.<sup>42</sup>

The division of resources between conservation and urban training centers became an issue affecting the conservationists "whose primary interest was in preserving natural resources." The conservationists believed they "had the bill blocked," contingent upon an amendment introduced by Congressman Saylor (R-Pa.), which required 40% of the enrollees to be assigned to separate Youth Conservation Camps within the Job Corps. The amendment "soothed the ruffled feelings among the conservationists who had seen their prize Youth Conservation Corps swallowed up in a Job Corps that was to be dominated by the large urban training centers." Finally, Rep. John Bell Williams (D-Miss.) inserted a requirement for a loyalty oath and a signed affidavit disclaimer, plus a pledge of allegiance to be made by enrollees. "Staff members from the poverty task force in the gallery gasped," wrote Deputy Director Christopher Weeks. "A pledge of allegiance, OK. But to ask a sixteen-year-old high school drop-out to file a non-Communist affidavit seemed ludicrous."<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> To some extent Senator Robertson's unwitting prescience exceeded his moral judgment, as the 1965 Gottlieb report indicated. Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1964, p. 227; The South saw the Job Corps as "an ingenious Federal wedge to achieve integration--and, more dangerously, to integrate and forge a radical Populist alliance between the very poor blacks and whites." Wingenbach, "Job Corps History Guide," p. 3; Roy Wilkins, NAACP Executive Director, expressed his concern to Shriver that boys with police records resulting from civil rights demonstration would be barred from the Job Corps. Shriver's reply assured Mr. Wilkins that such would not be the case. Letter from Shriver to Wilkins, December 7, 1964.

<sup>43</sup> Yarmolinsky, "The Beginnings of OEO," pp. 11-12; Sundquist, "For the Poor, Opportunity," p. 149; Weeks, Job Corps, p. 139-141.

A subsidiary issue had arisen during the summer concerning which federal agency would conduct recruiting and screening for the Job Corps--the U.S. Employment Service or Office of Economic Opportunity instrumentalities operating in competition with the old line state agencies to reach out for a new clientele. Both the Job Corps and the USES had been negotiating the subject without resolve. Shriver opposed having the Employment Service handle the task, preferring instead local agencies or even Job Corps neighborhood centers patterned after the Peace Corps' technique. A conflict emerged out of the Labor Department's announcement of a major new program calling for the establishment of "Youth Opportunity Centers" in slum neighborhoods in over one hundred cities: To some extent, these would be the Department's equivalent community action program agencies. Since CAP and Labor were "locked in a jurisdictional battle," the Employment Service (part of Labor) "felt no compunction to complete its negotiations with Job Corps." The Budget Bureau, opposed to duplication, eventually intervened and forced a compromise solution: The Job Corps could set eligibility criteria with advice from Labor, and would rely primarily upon the Employment Service for recruitment and screening, with provisions for special recruiting efforts after joint consultation. It was to

be a dual operation utilizing Employment Service facilities.<sup>44</sup>

By mid-October, the situation changed. Shriver had disliked the idea of depending on the Employment Service, which he felt was incapable of reaching into the pockets of poverty nationwide.

Shriver, Wade Robinson, and Otis Singletary, who had been brought in to be Director of the Job Corps,<sup>45</sup> decided to set up a Peace Corps-style recruitment drive, by which simple applications were to be sent directly to Washington on postcards. These were to be in the Employment Service's Job Corps packets.

During December, 1964, pilot projects intended to test "audience reaction" were initiated in Baltimore and two Appalachian counties. The results were positive, and accordingly, kits were

---

<sup>44</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 180-182; The New Republic reported that the United States Employment Service was "resolutely middle-class in its outlook. . . Job Corps aides now tell of conversations with state employment service officials who are dumbfounded by the idea of trying to recruit any but the best qualified youth." Patrick Anderson, "Job Corps--What Boys Will it Take?" New Republic, February 20, 1965, p. 15; Reportedly, hostility between Labor and OEO lingered. A Reporter article stated that "in the halls of Labor, for example, Shriver's recruitment drive for the Job Corps is termed 'unconscionable' and 'more cynical than anything else that's been done'; and the dedication of the 'fair-haired boy's staff,' which has a reputation for working far into the night, is not altogether praised." Barbara Carter, "Can the Job Corps Do the Job?" The Reporter, March 25, 1965, p. 24.

<sup>45</sup> Singletary, appointed Director on October 10, 1964, was described as "a leading southern educator," Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and a noted historian whose works include Negro Militia and Reconstruction, the 1955 Montcade Award winner as the best book on military history. OEO Biographical release, October 10, 1964.

sent out to state Employment Service centers and other organizations nationwide which could be relied upon to reach the target population.<sup>46</sup> Recruitment and screening for women would be handled by the Women in Community Service (WICS), a cooperative merger of the National Council of Catholic Women, the National Council of Jewish Women, the National Council of Negro Women, and the United Church Women. By January, 1965, the Job Corps was receiving an average of 15,000 applications per week. By the end of June, more than 234,000 inquiries had been acknowledged.<sup>47</sup>

On August 15, 1964, prior to the distribution of preliminary materials to the press, and before any advance notice had been given to Governors, Senators and Congressmen, President Johnson announced at a press conference the locations of the first proposed twenty-two Job Corps conservation sites.<sup>48</sup> The list had been narrowed down from over three hundred suggested locations, and the selecting had been made in secret. There was an abundance of possible sites

---

<sup>46</sup> These included: YMCA, YWCA, The Urban League, Council of Southern Mountains, Boys Clubs of America, and major religious groups. See Job Corps Screening Handbook, March 1, 1965, and Placement Manual, October 5, 1965.

<sup>47</sup> By 1967, WICS operated 114 offices nationwide; A Nation Aroused, First Annual Report, p. 21; Shriver's testimony before Senate subcommittee, Hearings, 1965, p. 29.

<sup>48</sup> Test of Johnson's August 15, 1964, Press Conference; Among the governors involved were Albert Harrison of Virginia, (a conservative Democrat), Nelson Rockefeller of New York, William Scranton of Pennsylvania, Paul Fannin of Arizona, Tim Babcock of Montana, and Mark Hatfield of Oregon.

from which to choose--national parks, forests, seashores, reclamation areas, and wildlife refuges--but there were dissuading factors "which were often pushed aside in the ranking of priorities," such as the remoteness of some sites, "the questionable adaptability of turned-off, urban males to the wilderness scene," as well as the resources and attitudes of the rural communities. Selection was done on the basis of location, costs, available facilities--medical, recreational--attitudes of local citizens, and the poverty of the locale. As Weeks put it, "all other things considered equal, we prefer to locate a Job Corps center in an area where the economic impact will tend to benefit an area which is now poor or partly poor."<sup>49</sup>

More difficult was the choice of the urban center sites. Job Corps planners often discovered that the only available locations were remote, even rural, deactivated military bases and "second-rate downtown hotels." An official recalls, "The relatively small anti-poverty program could seldom pick and choose, because the choice sites were, more often than not, in demand for industrial complexes, for renovation or destruction by urban renewal, or even for other Federal or local agency's operations."<sup>50</sup>

The Executive and Congressional mandates had urged speedy implementation of the Job Corps program. Consequently, inadequate consultation with community authorities sometimes resulted. Preliminary community relations evaluations had been undertaken, but often

---

<sup>49</sup> Wingenbach, "Job Corps History," p. 5; Christopher Weeks before the Senate Subcommittee Hearings on S. 1759 (Amendments to the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act): Select Subcommittee on Poverty of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare 89th Congress, June 28, 29, 1965, p. 167.

<sup>50</sup> Wingenbach, "Job Corps History," p. 5.

the anxieties of local citizens, the indigenous political complexities, and peculiar local laws and customs "were either lost in the shuffle or ignored." Significantly, no camps were proposed for the Southern states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia or South Carolina, reportedly because of "anticipated opposition to the requirement that projects be integrated."<sup>51</sup>

Late in 1964, the Job Corps had already been exposed to local community hostility. On November 25, Shriver announced the start of the first Job Corps projects. Governors of fourteen states waived the 30 day veto period to approve the setting up of thirty-two conservation centers. But a proposal to establish a center at Yorktown, Virginia, erupted into what was known as the "Battle of Yorktown" incident. Misinformation, racial prejudice, an equivocal stance by the governor, and resistance on the part of local officials resulted in a defeat for the first center in that state. The crux of the issue was local fear of "an onslaught of out-of-state Negroes--especially those who might be shipped in from Northern ghettos where there had been racial unrest and scattered riots."<sup>52</sup> Shriver attempted to calm the situation by announcing that ethnic balances would be maintained, no center would be thrust upon an unwilling citizenry, and a 35% quota for Negro corpsmen would be imposed at the camps.

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6; Lander, War, p. 110.

<sup>52</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 170-178.

While the Yorktown defeat, fortunately, set no precedent, it did, however, raise serious questions for the Job Corps administrators.<sup>53</sup> Shriver had stated that the Job Corps was in effect designed for "the kind of American who could be welcome anywhere in the United States," during the Yorktown imbroglio. Applicants would be "carefully screened to make certain that he was of good moral character and sincerely desired a chance to prepare himself for the responsibilities of citizenship." It became a matter of policy to carefully screen applicants on the basis of their physical, mental and emotional capabilities, with specific attention being given to their police records. Handbook guides differentiated between serious and minor offenses, automatically disqualifying those convicted for such crimes as rape, arson, murder, grand larceny, and so on. Minor or "isolated incidents of anti-social behavior or offenses," however, would not be regarded as grounds for ineligibility. The success or failure of the Job Corps, cautioned the screening handbook, "depends on the job done by the local screening agencies."<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 178. Ironically, the Yorktown affair "drew the attention of local officials in poverty-stricken southwestern Virginia who actively and later successfully sought the establishment of a Job Corps conservation center in the Jefferson National Forest."

<sup>54</sup> Shriver-approved information release by Department of Interior; See also December 6, 1964, OEO Press release; Job Corps Screening Handbook, (OEO publication) March 1, 1965, pp. 5-21, 30. The Job Corps aimed at young persons who come from impoverished environments characterized by high unemployment rates, discrimination, substandard housing and schools, disruptiveness, "depressed neighborhoods where indifference or rebellion are bred and where crime and vice flourish," isolation from employment, educational, cultural, religious and other institutions of society.

Liberals and skeptics of the programs objected, primarily on the grounds that the original intention of the Job Corps, as stated by the President in his March address to Congress, was to seek out those "whose background, health, and education make them least fit for useful work," as well as those "alienated and disadvantaged, both economically and culturally," who "have had failure as a constant companion."<sup>55</sup> The issue was, as one liberal journal put it, who to enroll? Shriver's statements seemed to indicate that the Job Corps' range of selection would be "absurdly narrow," since the majority of slum youth had police records. Rather, the war on poverty should "welcome into its programs young people who are not welcome anywhere in America," including "hoodlums from Harlem, and spics and wops and the dirtiest white trash. It must come to grips with the prejudices of affluent America, not run with them."<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Johnson's March 16, 1965, message to Congress, "The American Promise."

<sup>56</sup> Patrick Anderson, "Job Corps--What Boys Will It Take?" New Republic, February 20, 1965, p. 15; James Ridgeway, "Poor Chicago: Down and Out with Mayor Daley," New Republic, May 15, 1965, pp. 17-20; As Louis Harris was to tell the House Committee in its 1967 hearings: "That is the trouble. Everybody wants to show such a good record by avoiding all the tough cases that therefore the tough cases just wander free and then they cause all the damage." David Gottlieb, analyst for the Job Corps, in a report entitled "A View from the Bottom: The World of Disadvantaged Youth," stated: "It is apparent that if the Job Corps has the responsibility for working with the most disadvantaged socially alienated of American youth, it is in fact reaching its proper target population." Program Development and Evaluation, Job Corps, Office of Economic Opportunity, p. 26.

There had also been reports that Job Corps officials, in the face of local protest, "usually withdraw without much argument," on the grounds that there were plenty of available camp sites, and therefore no need to put a camp where it was not wanted. In the fall of 1964, the Job Corps had decided on a site for a large urban center in an unused Veteran's Administration hospital in Nashville, but because it was located in the middle of a "comfortable middle-class neighborhood, and not far from the wealthiest section of Nashville," the governor and local officials were reluctant to approve the operation, and the Job Corps "quietly dropped the VA hospital from its plans."<sup>57</sup>

In mid-December, President Johnson announced plans for establishing three urban centers at Camp Gary, in San Marcos, Texas, Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and Tongue Point Naval Station in Oregon. The first conservation center to open was Camp Catoctin, Maryland, in January, 1965. Ouachita, Arkansas, and Winslow, Arizona, soon followed suit. Enrollees were assigned partly on the basis of pre-

---

<sup>57</sup> Anderson, "Job Corps--What Boys Will It Take?" p. 15; In an effort to present to the public and a skeptical Congress a non-controversial picture of the Job Corps, Shriver repeatedly emphasized the following point: "They told us, no town or city would welcome the creation of a community of two hundred school drop-outs in its vicinity. . . But already, they have been proven wrong." See Speech before the National Conference on Poverty in the Southwest, January 25, 1965. In the 1965 Congressional Presentation the Job Corps said, regarding local opposition, "in most cases, the Job Corps, with the help of clergymen and community leaders, has been able to prove to (those) objectors that, far from being intrusions, the Job Corps centers may well bring with them the eventual rewards of a new highway. For when you relieve the poverty of some, you augment the prosperity of all," p. 21.

ference, and partly to establish a balance of urban, rural, white, and Negro proportions.<sup>58</sup>

At the outset, the experience with the new enrollees was eye-opening. At Catoctin, for example, a young Job Corps enrollee failed to eat for several days. When a counselor questioned him, the young man broke down and cried: "My teeth hurt so much when I eat that I was afraid you would find out and send me home." A dentist removed seventeen teeth. He found the infection had spread throughout the young man's body, affected his ears and eyes, his weight, his view of life. Another corpsman, with tears streaming down his cheeks, read the first book he had ever held and the first words he was ever able to read: "I am not an ant. I am a man."<sup>59</sup>

Job Corps officials discovered that enrollees viewed the Job Corps as a last resort. At Catoctin, for example, one corpsman drew an outline of a prospective Job Corps shoulder patch, and within the circle of the design he wrote the words, "Your Last Chance." Findings of the first thirty enrollees revealed that many had never seen a doctor or dentist in their lives. Some slept in beds for the first time in their lives at the center, and many had never had a balanced diet. Many lived in broken homes or with adult surrogates. Some had moved about so frequently they never had a chance to find

---

<sup>58</sup> Johnson's press release, December 16, 1964; Maurice Botkin, "Oregon Screens for Job Corps," Employment Service Review Magazine, 1965, p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> William Haddad, "Mr. Shriver and the Savage Politics of Poverty," Harpers Magazine, December, 1965, p. 49; OEO Draft Speech, 1966.

roots in any neighborhood or in any one school. Their reasons for dropping out of school were due to falling behind in their studies, but primarily because of economic deprivation and the necessity to work.

Without exception, the enrollees were highly motivated, "highly desirous of learning a trade and of learning more in the basic education areas." Their grade achievements were low, indicating a potentially higher performance capability. "They have already learned," wrote one Job Corps analyst, "that this life of the streets, a life without education, a life without a trade, that a life of law violation is no answer. . . My only hope is that the adults who are going to be working with them, that the society that is going to be dealing with them, invest only half as much desire and energy in order that these youngsters might attain success in the Job Corps and later in their adult lives."<sup>60</sup>

In its first year of operations, the Job Corps found that of the first 10,000 Corpsmen, at 48 centers in 26 states, two thirds came from sub-standard and overcrowded housing. Forty percent came from families receiving public assistance, while sixty percent were from families whose primary wage earner was unemployed. One half came from homes where the parents' education level was eighth grade. Only fifty percent of the Corpsmen had completed sixth grade, and ninety percent had never held a regular job. Many were apprehensive

---

<sup>60</sup> David Gottlieb, "The First Thirty," Corpsman Report #1, Program Development and Analysis Division, OEO publication, January 27, 1965.

about the program, and felt that the Poverty Program would disappear after the news stories had been written and the pictures were taken.<sup>61</sup>

Shriver had predicted early in 1964 that by June 30, 1965, if Congress acted with speed to pass the bill, 40,000 applicants would be in the Job Corps. By December, 1964, given the enormity of the planning task and construction problems, the sights were lowered to 25,000. By March, 1965, in light of the slow progress, the objective was lowered again to 10,000. What became known as "Operation 10,000" went into effect. By midnight on the last day of June, the target was met, but at the expense of a great deal of effort spent on the logistical problems of building, staffing, equipping, transportation, housing, clothing, food, and so on. The normal problems of launching the program were compounded by the vast influx of new enrollees coming in to meet the target deadline.

Partly because of the initial burdens of getting established, the shortages in equipment, and the high-powered publicity campaign to applicants, many corpsmen became disillusioned by the disparity between the reality of what they found and their own high expectations. Corpsmen discovered that center life was "no tea party," and that it was a "rough, tough society in which raw power tended to set the pecking order despite the presence of resident workers and counselors in the dormitories."<sup>62</sup> Homesickness, racial confront-

---

<sup>61</sup> A Nation Aroused, 1965, p. 22; Haddad, "Savage Politics," p. 50.

<sup>62</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 208-209.

ation, administrative entanglement, frequent lack of adequate facilities and equipment, all contributed to the frustrations and difficulties of the inception of the Job Corps program. Its birth pangs were at once the subject of controversy and debate, in the press, in Congress, and within the Job Corps itself.

Within the first year, reports indicated that dropouts from the centers were high. Incidents of violence involving Corpsmen made headlines. In some communities, hostility to the presence of Job Corps centers was flagrantly obvious. New management was required to salvage two centers "that were clearly floundering." Congressional watchdogs exposed internal administrative foibles, adding fuel to the doubts of many as to the program's worth. And to top it all, some Job Corps enrollees publicly expressed their disillusionment. Said one, "the Job Corps--its the biggest lie of them all."<sup>63</sup>

By early June, the effects of the "mismatch between expectation and fact were already evident in Job Corps centers." The New York Times disclosed that fifty of the first one hundred and sixty-two corpsmen sent to Camp Catoctin had dropped out. Soon after a news service clip exposed the first of many incidents that were to plague the Corps--several corpsmen at the Atterbury center in Indiana had been arrested by the FBI and charged with committing a group sexual assault on a fellow trainee. Deputy Director of the Job Corps Christopher Weeks wrote, "no one in the Job Corps was surprised at

---

63 Ibid. pp. 7-8.

the fact that incidents involving Corpsmen started happening inside centers and in communities nearby. These were expected, given the habits of the young men and women being enrolled. But that did not make these cases any easier to explain to Congress, the press, or irate local citizens, when they occurred."<sup>64</sup>

Sporadic outbreaks of rowdiness, brawls, and violence beset Job Corps Headquarters during the summer of 1965, concurrent with Congressional hearings on the 1965 Amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act. The largest issue to first concern the Congressmen, however, was the drop-out rate. In May, 1965, Newsweek reported that 17.5% of recruits who had entered the Corps since January (385 of 2,268) had dropped out.<sup>65</sup> Shriver immediately launched a statistical survey to determine the actual rate, the reasons, and the general implications. No one had really known what rate of drop-outs was to be expected, or whether it meant serious programmatic weaknesses.

By mid-June, the OEO survey showed that of the first 6,000 enrollees, 1,100 had dropped out, been discharged, or left for medical reasons. Three quarters of the drop-outs had spent less than a month in the Corps, and the typical drop-out stayed only a week or ten days. If a recruit remained for at least thirty days, the chances for his staying on were substantially greater. On this basis, of the percentage who remained more than thirty days, only 200 had left, or a 3.2% drop-out rate. "If you are as old as I

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp.205, 210.

<sup>65</sup> Newsweek, May, 1965.

am," Shriver told the Senate Subcommittee on Poverty, "you will remember the days when there was a law coming in to permit the sale of 3.2 beer because it was generally agreed, I think, that 3.2 beer was weak enough so that it was practically harmless to anybody who imbibed it. Well, that actually is the drop-out rate, 3.2, in the Job Corps."<sup>66</sup>

Shriver stated that the major reason for dropouts was homesickness, and in some cases urban youths could not adapt easily to a rural environment. Some, he admitted, were disillusioned: "They drop out because the program does not live up to their expectations." In light of the nature of the youths with which the Job Corps worked, he said, it was remarkable that the percentage was so low. College freshmen, the Peace Corps, and even the old CCC had higher rates. Deputy Director Weeks attempted to put the dropout rate into perspective by pointing out that the Job Corps enrolled not just the "marginal candidates, but the young men in America who have grown up in the worst circumstances (and) who have failed almost literally everywhere along the line. For him one new failure is nothing new." Thus, to reach this kind of person at all is an achievement, and for him to drop out is to be expected.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Senate Hearings, 1965, p. 32

<sup>67</sup> Shriver said that 40% of all Job Corps enrollment was from the South. The overall dropout rate was 12%. Speech before the Dekalb County Educators, Arkansas, August 26, 1965; Senate Hearings, 1965, pp. 33, 38, 164.

Still, the dropout rate developed into an irksome problem that was taken up by the program's critics and a hostile press. In June, it was reported that at Catoctin, 30% of 162 enrollees dropped out. Al Maxey, Camp Director, stated that it was due to an inadequate and poorly trained staff as well as to the corpsmen's misconceptions about the program. Life magazine, in a July editorial, reported a 17% overall dropout rate, but concluded that if the 83% who stuck it out became self-supporting, "the Job Corps will have brilliantly justified itself."<sup>68</sup>

Whatever the varied reports of the rates were, and they were varied and many, it was still, in 1965, difficult to make any meaningful calculations of dropout rates. To some extent, it was partially a symptom of the painful build-up phase of the program. Officials admitted to inadequate preparation, delays in processing, mis-screening and misinformation, malassignments, and mismatching of enrollees to the proper areas as contributing factors. Weeks said that by 1966 a clearer picture emerged: One out of six recruits would leave before a month's time. Of the remainder, one of eight would drop out. After twenty months of operation, the rate leveled off to a fairly constant figure roughly equivalent to the rate of the first few months. In early 1966, the Job Corps required new recruits to sign a pledge to remain in the Corps at least 90 days, "but this did not significantly affect the situation."<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Editorial, Life Magazine, July 16, 1965.

<sup>69</sup> Wingenbach, "History," pp. 6-8; Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 207-209.

The Job Corps experienced headaches with corpsmen misbehavior during the first summer. In June, at the Tongue Point center near Astoria, Oregon, Governor Mark Hatfield called for federal intervention to maintain discipline and control as a result of two fist fights with racial overtones, involving two boys in each case. The corpsmen had been aroused and milled about uncertainly for several hours during the night. A major outbreak was barely avoided, but the incident was stopped without any outside help. The Camp Director said that fights at the center were "no more serious than those they have every day in public schools."<sup>70</sup> At Lewiston, California, residents complained of an incident in which a corpsman fired a pistol in a downtown parking lot. Local newspapers charged the enrollees with drinking, brawling, and the camp with lax administration and a lack of facilities. San Francisco papers inflated the incident into national significance, and Senator Murphy (R-Cal.) read it into the record during the Senate hearings. Shriver testified that the President of the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce had indicated his support for the Job Corps, and an OEO reply to the charges downplayed the knife fight as "horseplay by two friends during which one accidentally cut his finger on a knife lying nearby."<sup>71</sup>

At the Atterbury, Indiana center, following the sodomy arrests, a series of incidents provoked a good deal of comment. The facilities

---

<sup>70</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, p. 211; OEO Memorandum on U.S. News and World Report article, "Poverty War Out of Hand?", August 24, 1965, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 210-211; OEO Memo August 24, 1965, p. 5; Senate Hearings, 1965, pp. 84-89.

had been inadequate from the start, and the Midwestern Education Foundation, contracted to run the center, was forced to change directors three times in four months. The Job Corps' policy to delay sending enrollees to the center until administrative problems had been worked out, led to a situation whereby the staff-enrollee ratio was approximately six to four. The center also experienced a high dropout rate and nearby community hostility. Shriver informed Job Corps Director Otis Singletary that "he should have no qualms about drawing up a recommendation that a prime contract be canceled if he is sure there is little or no change of a viable, productive program getting under way soon." Subsequently, the Midwest Education Foundation contract was allowed to expire, to be replaced by Westinghouse.<sup>72</sup>

In August, the Breckinridge center, located near Morganfield, Kentucky, and run by the Southern Illinois University, was torn by a riot in which several people were injured. Shriver and Job Corps Director Singletary de-emphasized the affair, pointing out that the press had "grossly exaggerated the situation," ignoring accomplishments in other centers. Singletary publicly asked, "Are we supposed to move these kids from their homes and turn them into little angels? A lot of good things do happen to them, but the walls don't come tumbling down." Administrative changes took place at Breckinridge after a Job Corps investigation, and, like Atterbury,

---

<sup>72</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 211-212, 221; Buffalo Courier Express, August 8, 1965; UPI newsclip, April 15, 1965; Richmond News Leader, August 24, 1965; Chicago Tribune, August 26, 1965; Daily Register, December 3, 1965.

the Southern Illinois contract was allowed to expire.<sup>73</sup>

A July incident occurred at Camp Gary, near Austin, Texas, in which five Chicago enrollees were charged with felonious assault after attempting to hold up two enlisted men from Lackland Air Force Base. Two of the airmen were shot. Other incidents at Collbran, Colorado, Redding, California, and Cottulla, Texas, involving a beating, marijuana possession, and burglary, again made wire service headlines, and illustrated the problems of discipline that plagued the Corps in its first year. Shriver, responding to unfavorable publicity, pointed out that "to read some newspapers one would believe that the Job Corps is characterized by riots, fights, violence and mismanagement. The facts, however, reveal that. . .less than 1% have ever been involved in any disturbance," and that most people have never heard of the centers in which "nothing" ever happened--"nothing, that is, except education, work, and rehabilitation of youngsters formerly out of work and out of school."<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Shriver statement at Press Conference at Breckenridge, August 21, 1965; Letter from Samuel Yette, Special Assistant to the Director, OEO, to Mr. Grant Dillman, News Editor, UPI, September 1, 1965; An internal memo stated: "We are agreed that response to press inquiries should point out that the joint decision not to renew is no reflection on Southern Illinois University, that Job Corps is an experimental program and changes were anticipated. The decision does not imply that there is anything inferior in universities operating Job Corps centers." Undated memo from Ernie Gross to Mr. Herbert Kramer, Director of Public Affairs, OEO; Shriver expressed the view before the House Appropriations Committee that corporations ran centers more efficiently than universities.

<sup>74</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 211-215; Richmond News Leader, August 24, 1965; Shriver speech before the Chicago Anti-Poverty Conference, December 6, 1965. Incidents also occurred at Camp Parks, California; conservation centers in Arkansas, Oregon and the Heber center in Arizona involving arson, sodomy, and rape.

Official OEO policy was to downplay the incidents, to show they were no worse than many unreported occurrences on college campuses. In Job Corps centers, top management worked out ways to get back-up control forces into centers quickly in the event of future outbreaks. Permissiveness, as it was applied to Corpsmen discipline, was cast in dispute, and the order of the day became "tighten up." If the lack of a high degree of efficient administrative coordination and direction produced the early unfortunate experiences, the Job Corps did profit from the early mistakes, and began establishing clear definitions and divisions of responsibility down the line, as well as improving auxiliary aspects of the overall program--community relations, counseling, integration of program components, and so on.

A segment of the nation's press came down heavily on the Job Corps partly because of the incidents and partly out of general disagreement with the poverty war. A good deal of the criticism stemmed from the "outrageous costs," a sore point of the Air Force Times which pointed out that graduates joining the armed forces would "take a cut in pay." Typical cavils ranged from charges that the Corps was a "hoax on the public," an "elite club of culls" training an "army of drones and bums who will expect to get something for nothing," to pious outrage concerning textbooks which attempted to make subject matter realistic in terms relevant to the trainees. Much of the press reportage was inaccurate, such as charges that Job Corps paid money for rental of motels, brass buttons for uniforms, tuxedo rentals,

and transportation for Hawaiian fruit pickers to California. The Southeastern Regional Director of Public Affairs, Dupree Jordan, summed it up when he wrote, "unfortunately, it is usually the unfavorable and the spectacular that makes the headlines."<sup>75</sup>

In the 1965 Congressional session, Republican opponents of the program stressed the negative aspects of the Job Corps, emphasizing the reports of fighting, drinking, and other abuses by enrollees. Additional grievances included placement of graduates, the speed with which the Job Corps' centers were established, and the overall cost of the program.<sup>76</sup> Significantly, however, the Job Corps suffered only minor changes in the 1965 Amendments. The Director of OEO was required to issue regulations preventing displacement of

---

<sup>75</sup> See letter from Dupree Jordan, to the Editors, Atlanta Journal, December 24, 1965; The Wall Street Journal, March 2, 1965; Washington Tribune, March 4, 1965; U.S. News and World Report, June 14, 1965; Texas American, June 20, 1965; Pennsylvania American, July 7, 1965; Danville Commercial News, July 12, 1965. On the textbook issue, what inflamed some editors was the following extract from a basic reading text: "Together Pete and Joey slugged away at Hank until his nose was bleeding and one of his eyes was black and blue. Then Pete landed two blows in the pit of Hank's stomach and Hank doubled over. He slumped slowly to the sidewalk. The fight had ended." Said the Lynchbury, Virginia News, "Good training--for murder." October 3, 1965.

<sup>76</sup> Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1965, pp. 405-420; House Hearings, 1965; Senate Hearings, 1965; on placement, Shriver said, "We never guaranteed people a job on graduation from this program." See also: Job Corps Placement Manual, October 5, 1965, p. 2. On speed, Shriver said, "I don't think we have moved too rapidly with the Job Corps. Today there are about 8,000 youngsters in the Job Corps. That is a modest accomplishment by comparison with the need. . . (He had been criticized for over-recruiting--See: Newsweek, March 29, 1965); on cost--January, 1966, OEO stated that the total cost of Job Corps was \$251,008,844. Cost per year per enrollee estimates in June, 1965, was \$4,482 in conservation camps, \$4,377 for urban centers, and \$4,443 for women's centers.

employed workers or interference with existing contracts for services by the Job Corps. Cuban refugees were authorized to enroll in the program, and payments to individuals or organizations as compensation for referring candidates to the Corps was prohibited. The affidavit requirement was deleted, Federal Employees Compensation was extended to enrollees, and males were limited to the Youth Conservation Camps.<sup>77</sup>

The House Committee majority report stated that the Job Corps had made "an impressive beginning," but cautioned against too much reliance on camp building and not enough preparation for jobs. Failure to establish Job Corps centers for women in adequate numbers was a "great disappointment." The minority report charged that public relations oversell had resulted in great number of applicants being turned away from the program, "further battering the shattered self-image of often-rejected youth." It would be a "thoughtless act," it continued, to add more to the camps until "the results of this program can be analyzed." Finally, it stated that in light of the absence of a comprehensive evaluation of the program, there was no justification for doubling existing authorization.<sup>78</sup>

Between the 1965 and 1966 Congressional sessions, the Job Corps continued to be plagued with incidents, providing opponents of the program with grist for their mill, and adding to a hostile legislative attitude. Faced with the burdensome task of allaying Congressional anxieties about the program was the new Job Corps Director,

---

<sup>77</sup> Economic Opportunity Amendments, 1965.

<sup>78</sup> Report of the House Majority, 1965; Report of the House Minority, 1965.

Franklyn A. Johnson. Johnson, a noted scholar and College President, replaced Singletary, who had returned to his post as Chancellor of the University of North Carolina.<sup>79</sup>

In November, OEO announced that the Job Corps would lay out close to a million dollars to pay round trip fares for trainees to spend their Christmas vacations at home. While there was little government expense involved, the leave program helped "sharpen the image in the minds of the public that their money was being spent to fly poor kids across the country by jet." Letters and Congressional inquiries flowed into the Job Corps headquarters. The Washington Post reported that Job Corps officials "wore smug little smiles" as they announced that 90% of the 13,500 trainees had returned. An illustrative case exemplified corpsmen's motivation to return: A boy who had left home to join the Corps "with his parents drunk and throwing beer cans at each other," returned for the Christmas vacation to find his parents still drunk and still throwing beer cans. After a few days, he called his camp director and said he was returning early. He had developed new attitudes

---

<sup>79</sup> Dr. Johnson, a native of Rochester, New York, attended Rutgers University, Harvard, and the London School of Economics. He served with distinction in the Army during World War II, receiving the Silver Star and the Croix de Guerre. He served with the Central Intelligence Agency for two years, taught at Rollins College, became President of Jacksonville University (which, under his direction became an accredited institution), and was named President and professor of government of California State College at Los Angeles in 1963. OEO Release, January 5, 1966; White House Bulletin, October 19, 1965.

recognizing that the old way of life was not good enough any more.<sup>80</sup>

On the day that Shriver made a dedication at the Fort Custer center near Kalamazoo, Michigan, some sixty trainees were involved in a brawl with local youths and police. Kalamazoo police chief Dean Fox contended that the unrest "did not result until the Job Corpsmen arrived." OEO replied that the "police have had previous calls in response to fights in that neighborhood before the Job Corps began visiting the city." Shriver dismissed the incident as no worse than some fights he had seen when on Navy shore duty in World War II. On the following day the OEO was "shocked" at the news that a Chicago trainee at Camp Gary was stabbed to death in an Austin street brawl after a local YWCA dance. Incidents at Fort Rodman, Mountain Home, St. Petersburg and Charleston, West Virginia, throughout the winter of 1965 and 1966 cast the Job Corps into general disrepute and provoked one commentator to exclaim, "I feel the situation is building up to an explosion."<sup>81</sup>

At Fort Rodman, near New Bedford, Massachusetts, an incident involving corpsmen, local youths and police resulted in unfavorable press reportage of cost, disciplinary, and administrative problems at the center. The city council voted unanimously to ask President Johnson to remove the center, whereupon camp director Jerome Zeigler, assuring local citizens that "immediate steps" were being taken to

---

<sup>80</sup> Washington Post, January 11, 1966; Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 6, 1966.

<sup>81</sup> Lander, War, pp. 115-116; OEO press release, November 13, 1965; UPI newsclip, November 13, 1965; Chicago Tribune, November 25, 1965; OEO statement, November 27, 1965; UPI news clip, November 27, 1965.

improve discipline, publicly invited a full-scale investigation by state officials. In the spring, the center became involved in the local Congressional primary.<sup>82</sup>

On July 19, 1966, the Job Corps Center for Women in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, was served with a warrant that charged it with being a public nuisance. Twenty residents had complained that corpswomen were loud, profane, promiscuous, sometimes drunk and on the streets after curfew. The center offered training in nursing, cooking and secretarial skills to about 300 teen-age dropouts. C.M. Horned, the center's director of community relations, said the problem largely resulted from the fact that the center was located in the heart of a residential neighborhood, suggesting that OEO avoid placement of this type in the future. He stated that community residents were unused to interracial dating and were "very concerned" about it. (approximately 60% of the center corpswomen were black)<sup>83</sup>

Similar community-center difficulties surrounded the St. Petersburg women's center, operated by the Pinellas County school board, and led to a new contract with the Delta Educational Foundation, and the relocation of the center at a new site. A Job Corps official recalled, "St. Petersburg, despite the beginnings of a good program on-center, was a case of bad site location, lack of understanding and support by the School Board contractor, and a generally hostile

---

<sup>82</sup> Lander, War, p. 117; Internal OEO memo for the Director from Bill Mullins, April 5, 1966 (Shriver wrote that it was an "incredible stupidity by Zeigler"); New Bedford Standard Times, March 24, 25, 27, 30, 31, 1965; Weeks, Job Corps, p. 216.

<sup>83</sup> Lander, War, p. 120.

environment which should have been avoided at all costs."<sup>84</sup>

At the Mountain Home conservation center in Idaho, a trainee was knifed by a corpsman who, it was later disclosed, had three previous felony convictions in California, and had jumped probation in one county. The Job Corps was thus put into a position of having transported a convicted criminal across state lines. Worse, the corpsman had been identified as having "leadership capacities," and had been promoted to a Corpsman Leader. The incident reached national proportions when Congressmen Goodell and Quie criticized the Job Corps for having provided the boy with a lawyer and a psychiatrist. The Women's Job Corps center in Charleston, West Virginia, made the New York Times after a razor fight left one girl with a slashed chest. The center was reportedly "struggling with trouble," as a result of charges of prostitution, drunkenness, lesbianism, thefts, truancy, shoplifting, and fighting. One Job Corps official responded to the furor by stating, "society has failed them. . . their families, the schools, the police, sometimes psychiatrists have had a crack at them and lost. They've dropped out of school,

---

<sup>84</sup> A Catholic nun who volunteered to work at the St. Petersburg center said, "none of these stories are true. . .the girls are some of the most wonderful people in the world." Shriver speech before the Ohio Catholic Education Association Convention, September 25, 1965; War on Poverty, p. 121; Chicago Tribune, July 21, 1966; Telegram dated July 26, 1966, from Paul Schrimpf to Herbert Kramer; St. Petersburg Times, May 14, 1966; UPI news clip, February 23, 1966; See also OEO fact sheet in reply to House Minority Report No. 1568, September, 1966.

they've gotten into trouble, they can't find or hold an adequate job."<sup>85</sup>

Finally, in April, 1966, a Job Corps recruit, who had shot a lady in Billings, Montana, and had been sent to Breckenridge to await trial, went AWOL, stole a car, and smashed it head on into a car containing a family of four, all of whom died. Senator Mansfield wrote to Shriver, "I do not like admonishing the Job Corps. . .but it seems to me that there is something wrong." Lee Metcalf, junior Senator from Montana, was less restrained: "This incident is wrong and really burns me up." Congressional hostility was exacerbated by the incidents, and attacks were launched against the Job Corps screening mechanisms, permissive administration in the centers, and so forth. In view of the general atmosphere surrounding the Job Corps during the fall and winter period, the leaking of the Kilmer report to the press provided ironic commentary on the nature of the double-edged sword with which it had to contend.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, p. 224; OEO reply to Quie and Goodell, September, 1966; Testimony of Congressman Gibbons, Congressional Record, February 8, 1966; Washington Post, February 8, 1966; UPI release, February 10, 1966; Job Corps Bulletin No. 66-42, "Bail Bond for Job Corpsmen"; Lander, War, pp. 116-117.

<sup>86</sup> Wingenbach, "History," p. 10; Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 224-225; Internal memo to Jim Kelleher from Ernie Gross, April 16, 1966; In light of the incidents, the Job Corps developed a policy on such matters as attorneys, bond and bail. On bond: "It is the Job Corpsman who pays for the bond."--The Job Corps furnishes the cost to be repaid by the Corpsman. "This policy is followed under the accepted principles of jurisprudence that there is an assumption of innocence on the part of the person charged with the crime and that, except in capital cases, the accused is entitled to go free on bond." Letter from William Phillips, Assistant Director for Congressional Relations to the Honorable Andrew Jacobs, March 12, 1966.

On November 17, 1965, Joseph Loftus of the New York Times disclosed the contents of a September 30 report that was extremely critical of the Job Corps camp at Kilmer, New Jersey. Federal Electric Corporation had contracted with the Rutgers Advisory Committee for advice on curriculum and teaching methods. The report was comprehensive in scope and sharp in its severe criticism of "flagrant deficiencies" such as overcrowding, high absenteeism, little learning, slow implementation of some vocational programs, inadequate recreational facilities, physical violence, and failure to understand the nature and life styles of a poverty culture.

Center officials were indicted for an excessive concern to maintain a "good front," subjecting the corpsmen to a "kind of middle-class colonialism" and the "value system of the Kilmer staff." The original goal--"to provide the corpsmen with marketable skills"--was "no longer the foremost consideration." Camp officials equated success with "social control over the behavior of the corpsmen."<sup>87</sup> To place "low-income, school dropouts in an abandoned Army post, is a chancey proposition."

The Kilmer report challenged the entire philosophy on which the Job Corps was planned and approved by Congress, charging that disadvantaged teen-agers could not be "resocialized" in the centers. "It is well known," it stated, "that corporate hierarchy and military hierarchy are modeled after one another." The vestiges of

---

<sup>87</sup> Weeks, Job Corps, pp. 226-227; Lander, War, pp. 117-119; Joseph Loftus, "Kilmer Job Corps Advisors Find 'Flagrant Deficiencies' at Camp," New York Times, November 17, 1965; New York Times, November 18, 1965; New York Times, January 23, 1966.

military procedures--"recruiting, induction, passes, terminology (AWOL), and the substitution of campuslike controls"--should be eliminated. It concluded by recommending that the "autocratic-authoritarian type of administration should yield to a type of approach which would serve as a model for future democratic living by Corpsmen," and urged "the removal of all vestiges of military procedures."<sup>88</sup>

Actually, the Job Corps had implemented two contrasting philosophies in the administration of the camps. The first held that a non-authoritarian, generally permissive framework was the answer for "youths to whom authority has been 'The Man' and for whom the overly-structured nature of our institutions has been destructive." The other, such as Kilmer, veered toward a paramilitary institutional setting whereby orders were given and obeyed, rules were established "so as not to confuse the boys," and attempts were made to simulate classroom and industrial shop settings realistically. There were no precedents, and eventually "most of the better parts and practices" of both approaches were assimilated into the current Job Corps program.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> "What's Wrong with the Job Corps?" U.S. News and World Report, December 27, 1965; Madden, "The War Over Poverty," p. 56; Shriver stated that OEO had a tendency to fund its own critics: "Some professors at Rutgers University recently criticized a Job Corps center at Camp Kilmer. That criticism made page one of the New York Times. We paid for it." Speech before the Chicago Anti-Poverty Conference, December 6, 1965.

<sup>89</sup> Wingenbach, "History," p. 7.

In addition to the Kilmer document was a Job Corps report on the dropout rate which implied it had assumed racial overtones. The New York Times revealed that whites were dropping out of the Corps four times as rapidly as Negroes. The majority at women's centers was Negro, and at Camp Kilmer, two-thirds of the camp was Negro, as compared with two-fifths before the Christmas furlough. David Gottlieb reported that the high incidence of white dropouts was due to their predominantly rural background. White recruits were less travelled, less adaptable, generally from intact families, and more subject to homesickness. Negroes in the Corps tended to come from urban environments, giving them a greater mobility and adaptability. They came mostly from broken homes, and thus had less to return to. "A black Job Corps would be a terrible, terrible thing," Gottlieb stated. "Nothing could be worse than to create a program that has broken down racial walls and then let it turn into a segregated system."<sup>90</sup>

The Office of Economic Opportunity subsequently attempted to recruit more whites and balance the ratios by writing to principals of rural high schools, working through 4-H clubs, and sending state employment staff into the field. Moreover, the Job Corps initiated a "Corpsman advisor's system" at four centers in January, 1966, in which an adult "big brother" was assigned to entering enrollees on a one-to-ten basis.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Lander, War, p. 112; New York Times, January 12, 1966; New York Times, February 5, 1966.

<sup>91</sup> Lander, War, p. 113.

The cumulative impact of the Job Corps incidents--opening the centers, the conflicts with local communities, costs, dropouts, and so on--had created a public image that was hardly creditable. The early troubles gave rise to a plethora of editorial comment taking both sides of the disciplinary issue--either accusing the Job Corps of "soft" and "lax" disciplinary policy, or waxing vigorously on the "totalitarian" nature of the camps.<sup>92</sup> In the flurry of press reportage about incidents and scandals, real or contrived, the sense of the Job Corps--its meaning and purpose and impact--was somehow lost to many.

Editors and unfriendly Congressmen portrayed the Job Corps as "an expensive boondoggle which ships juvenile delinquents and hoodlums across the country by jet, mollycoddles them in camps which are shot through with gang fights, looses them each weekend on defenseless communities to riot and vandalize private property, and shows no notable success in turning them into better, more productive citizens." Part of this image resulted from the adage that "bad news makes good reading"--thus, a sensationalist press made hay with scandals but too infrequently reported the good work accomplished. As Oliver Wendell Holmes said, a half-truth is like a half-brick: it could be thrown a long way.

Moreover, the Job Corps was scrutinized more closely than many other parts of the anti-poverty program, because it was a federal

---

<sup>92</sup> For typical press attitudes on Job Corps discipline see: "Job Corps Called Lax on Behavior," New York World Telegram and Sun, February 8, 1966; "Job Corps Called Soft on Trainee Behavior," Cleveland Press, February 8, 1966.

agency directly responsible for its acts. The Job Corps, a "foreign agent" in most communities, was more susceptible to criticism by an indignant citizenry. Finally, the Job Corps, in the first two years, before it had a chance to solve many of its problems and clearly profit from early mistakes, was the victim of too optimistic expectations.

It should be emphasized that the early troubles--disciplinary violations, administrative obstacles, racial confrontations in the centers, community antagonisms, operational deficiencies, and so on--were often inflated in the glaring light of publicity. To some extent the weight of colored reportage helped result in a distorted perspective, and mere "flurries" became major scandals. Judgments frequently were non sequitur: affirmation of the Job Corps' worthlessness emerged from the accumulative frequency of incidents, without regard for the totality of the programs' purposes, the nature of the target group affected, or the uncertainty of the criteria used in measuring the program's impact and ultimate success. Lost in the miasma of public controversy was the fact that Job Corps centers, whatever their artificiality and inherent weaknesses, whatever the tensions and conflicts, were microcosms of society writ large. Within the latter perspective, and given the Job Corps' essential experimental function, final assessments must wait, as it were, until the final score is in.

Given the public attitude, the Congressional session of 1966 proved critical for the very survival of the Job Corps. The central issues focused upon by friends and critics alike were costs, extravagant staff salaries and nepotism, discipline, the dropout rate,

and graduate placement. Disapproval of the Job Corps program in Congress led to a "broader attack on the OEO for alleged inefficiency, lack of administrative expertise and financial mismanagement."<sup>93</sup> The Job Corps, to allay Congressional anxieties, prepared answers to each of the charges. Under the title "Mythology of a Mandate," the OEO stated, "the War Against Poverty has taken the field with broad-ranging effect, a whole new mythology. . . Compounded of a potpourri of misinformation and misunderstanding, ignorance and ignobility, novelty and nonsense, the myths have sometimes obscured the meaning of the fast-moving anti-poverty programs."<sup>94</sup>

The Job Corps, it stated, had been charged with contracting out to private industry, suggesting high profits and unscrupulous motives of blue chip corporations exploiting the "ever-expanding social legislation market." However, the highest fixed fee in any contract was 4.7%, a profit margin far lower than in many other fields. Industries had demonstrated a concern for the potential human resources that Corpsmen represented for the future. Moreover, it was to their

---

<sup>93</sup> A charge was made against a "politically-arranged lease agreement in Charleston, West Virginia, and against exorbitant salaries in Gary, Texas; Washington Daily News, March 17, 1966; "Can the Job Corps Meet Its Mark?" The Weekly Newsletter for the Industrial Relations/Personnel Field, January, 1966; Baltimore Sun, May 29, 1966; Washington Post, May 5, 1966; Congressional Record, Senate, May 12, 1966, pp. 9899-9904; Congressional Record, Appendix, May 16, 1966, pp. A2627-2629; Congressional Quarterly Almanac, pp. 250-265; Typical of opposition tactics was Representative Charles S. Gubser's accusation that the Job Corps spent "at least \$8,000" to fly 40 workers from a Job Corps center in Hawaii to pick asparagus in California." See: OEO Press Release, June 9, 1966, and "Rips 'Joy Ride' for Job Corps Crop Pickers," Chicago Tribune, June 9, 1966.

<sup>94</sup> "Mythology of a Mandate," OEO Publication, June 1966.

own interest to develop expertise in training and education which could be invaluable in the transition of their own employees displaced by an improved technology. As Shriver told Yale lawyers, "American industry is changing when the president of General Electric can be photographed proudly in a Job Corps center in Iowa, surrounded by 300 giggling teen-age girls."<sup>95</sup>

Regarding the "lack of discipline" at the centers, "Mythology" gave comparative figures for the overall 16-21 age group arrest incidents. Statistically, the Job Corpsmen should have had 906 arrests in an 11 month period, according to the FBI, and an expectation of 80% offenses involving larceny, assault, and auto theft. Actual arrests totaled 834, and the latter percentage was 50%. Thus, Corpsmen responded better to discipline and order than their contemporaries, regardless of background. Most of the incidents would not have received attention had they involved college students or servicemen in the same communities.<sup>96</sup>

On the issue of high salaries, a perennial complaint, OEO

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 6; Erwin Knoll, "Progress on Poverty," The Progressive, July, 1965, p. 13; Mr. Ketchersid, Director of the Kilmer center run by Federal Electric, spoke on the issue of business involvement. "It occurs to me," he said, "that nobody questions whether McGraw-Hill or any other company that publishes textbooks should make a profit on that operation. In other words, if it is improper for an organization in our economy to make a profit from operating a center of this kind, isn't it equally improper for a company to make a profit from the sale of textbooks?" John Bainbridge, "The Job Corps," The New Yorker Magazine, May 21, 1966.

<sup>96</sup> "Mythology," p. 6; Memo from Frank Johnson to Lew Eigen, "Job Corps Arrest Records," February 10, 1966.

pointed out that salaries were "hammered out with stringent control by a Contract Officer considered one of the toughest in the federal service." Job Corps teachers, unlike their conventional counterparts, worked year-round, week-long, without tenure; thus, different demands were reflected in salary. Moreover, the locations were frequently remote and hours especially long. The Job Corps "must seek the best and most dedicated teachers from a profession noted for dedication, but not noted for the highest pay scale." General costs per trainee per year were expected to be returned in five and a half years "in taxes and productivity when he enters the labor market."<sup>97</sup>

OEO, commenting on the cost issue, said that critics had indulged in a "new numbers game," relying on "oversimplified" arithmetic--taking the total amount of money spent and dividing by the number of graduates. This, of course, did not account for capital outlay. There was no question that the Job Corps was expensive, but the "real question" was "how much would it cost to leave these unemployable young people on a human slag heap. It would certainly cost the nation more to care for them in tomorrow's courts and prisons or on tomorrow's welfare rolls." Shriver had remarked, "the total waste in the War Against Poverty in one year is a lot less than the cost of one B-52 bombing raid from Guam to Viet Nam and back. And when they miss the target, which they sometimes do, they have wasted

---

97 "Mythology," pp. 4-5.

more money in one day than we've wasted in one year."<sup>98</sup>

Shriver repeatedly attempted to put the program into perspective by stressing its potential worth. The challenge, he said, was to create a Job Corps attitude and ideal that embraced every young person in need, a sense of community where enrollees came together and discovered the true meaning of society and themselves. The Job Corps existed to provide an environment of warmth, compassion, reaching out and understanding, as well as special opportunities that would hopefully be transferred to the larger society. The Job Corps would function as a catalyst--centers as focal points for creativity. Training centers were, above all, learning laboratories. Businesses, schools, other government agencies, unions, and churches--all had become involved, and many had learned to benefit from the techniques employed at the centers. Thousands of visitors per month inspected the centers, and the State Department scheduled them as regular stops for foreign visitors, in response to foreign requests.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> OEO Draft reply to queries on costs per Job Corps Graduates, June, 1966; The New Republic noted that Job Corps' 359 graduates had gone into the Army: "While half the boys can't pass the armed service entrance exams when they join the Corps, \$11,251 may seem a high price for getting them up to buck private level." Editorial, "The More Glorious War," New Republic, March 26, 1966, pp. 7-8; Speech before the Governor's Conference on Community Action Programs, January 21, 1966.

<sup>99</sup> Speeches before the United Church Women, January 28, 1966, and before the Yale Law School Association, April 29, 1966.

Senator Dirksen had opened the 1966 Congressional session with the prediction that the Job Corps would be a major issue. He had ridiculed the progress of the Breckinridge center, which had "graduated the vast number of 8 out of the camp so far," and accused it as a major example of "boondoggling" in the anti-poverty program. Examining the overall graduation and dropout rates, the OEO suggested that they required revision, particularly in light of the fact that the Job Corps dealt with 100% dropouts. The retention rate was 70%; 1,000 corpsmen per month were graduating, two-thirds of whom found gainful employment, while 23% entered the armed forces. Volunteers for the Job Corps, it was necessary to remind the critics, were seldom oriented towards the normal middle-class society. Some were "diamonds in the rough," and others have grown up in an environment of crime, ill-health, deficient schooling, and a disruptive family life. All enrollees were culturally and economically deprived of "the fruits of the affluent society."<sup>100</sup>

Discipline in the Job Corps rested on the basic purpose of the program "to prepare for the responsibilities of citizenship young men and women." Such preparation requires learning what responsibility is, recognizing others' rights, and adherence to high standards of conduct. It also is based on participation, "wherein freedom of expression and individuality are encouraged and the person gains by

---

<sup>100</sup> "Mythology," p. 4; Lander, War, p. 113; UPI release, January 22, 1966; OEO response to House Report #1568, September, 1966, p. 5.

practicing the vital knowledge he or she must have of oneself and society." Job Corps discipline was geared to parallel the "real world," recreated by the World of Work implemented in the centers. Corpsmen attended citizenship courses, had a student government, participated in "problem-solving" sessions, and lived under the center's system of penalty sanctions. Job Corps' goals were "positive citizenship-oriented behavior, not merely to prevent incidents from occurring." While incidents were to be expected, "the great majority of corpsmen are moving forward steadily to increased employability and active citizenship."<sup>101</sup>

In November, 1965, the Job Corps had announced a program for placement of graduates, stating that the "rate of graduates will increase rapidly until the spring of 1966, when it is estimated 5,000 young men and women will be graduating from centers each month." In December, a second release revised the estimates downward, and in January, 1966, a third release stated that "by July, 1966, it is expected that Job Corps will be graduating about 4,000 per month." The Labor Department, it concluded, estimated that for the next ten years, business and industry would have as many as a million job openings to fill every year in about thirty fields, "nearly every one of which is part of the curriculum in one or another of the Job Corps centers."<sup>102</sup>

---

101 "Mythology," pp. 19-22.

102 Letter from William G. Phillips, Assistant Director for Congressional Relations to the Honorable Andrew Jacobs, March 12, 1966.

It was also reported that more than ten thousand jobs had been stockpiled, with training needs and qualifications being checked. Job stockpiling had begun with the assistance of Vice President Humphrey, who had written to more than six thousand employers urging them to hire Job Corps-trained men and women. He had written that "to take their place in today's world involves much more than being motivated and having training--they need the opportunity of a permanent, worthwhile job." In view of an encouraging response, Shriver stated that "by being able to show them concrete proof that meaningful jobs are available at the end of their training, we. . . increase their already substantial motivation and determination to succeed."<sup>103</sup>

In Congress, Sen. Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania attacked the Job Corps as condoning "race friction, crime and violence." Shriver, testifying before the House ad hoc subcommittee on poverty, admitted that some centers were not operating to capacity, specifically citing the Camp Breckinridge experience. But, he added, "we are changing contractors as a result of this performance." As of June 30, 1966, the Job Corps was operating 106 centers, including 86 conservation camps, 8 urban residential centers for men, 11 for women, and one special training center. The Corps had enrolled 57,430 recruits and was training 28,547. The total cost to the Job Corps was \$499,404,998. The cost per trainee per year was \$9,945, but

---

<sup>103</sup> N. Tina Schweitzer, "Is the Job Corps Conservation Program Working?" American Forests, August, 1966, p. 47.

was expected to drop to \$7,765 by December, 1967.<sup>104</sup>

An investigative task force under the aegis of Adam Clayton Powell issued a report that was withheld until September 19. In the report, the Job Corps "scandals" were said to have "received publicity far beyond their significance." It noted that initial grievances and problems had arisen in the Corps because of the haste with which the centers were established. It warned against outside political interference: "When the choice of staff plus policy is taken away from the center and director and placed in the governor's hands (Atterbury) or given to a county school board (St. Petersburg) problems are imminent." It suggested that there was a "conceptual problem" in rural centers, and that enrollees there were not being taught marketable skills.<sup>105</sup>

During the 1966 session, Republicans attempted to spin-off the Job Corps to the Labor Department. In view of the misbehavior of some enrollees, amendments were submitted (and rejected) that would require enrollees to undergo physical and mental examinations, fingerprinting, and thorough investigations of their backgrounds to

---

<sup>104</sup> Kopkind, "Poor Politics," New Republic, June 25, 1966, p. 16; Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1966, pp. 6, 252; Congressional Presentation, 1966, pp. 15-30; Second Annual Report, pp. 17-21, 95-99; In the March hearings, Edith Green revealed the disparity between original projections and actual costs: In 1964 it was thought that it would cost about \$4700 per enrollee per year, but it had actually worked out to approximately \$12,000 per enrollee per year, including capital outlay costs per center; Weeks, Job Corps, p. 229.

<sup>105</sup> Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1966, p. 8; See also: Joseph Kahn, "Secret Report Cities Scandals at Job Corps Center," New York Post, March 8, 1966; Almanac, 1966, p. 8; GOP National Committee, "The Alleviation of Poverty," pp. 4-5.

determine the existence of criminal records and probationary restrictions. Any Job Corps recruit found to be convicted of a felony would be immediately discharged.<sup>106</sup>

The Republicans singled out the Job Corps as that program in the anti-poverty war that had "failed more noticeably" than any other program. They introduced their own substitute version of the Job Corps within the context of the GOP anti-poverty strategy, recommending that the Job Corps be transferred to the Labor Department. A Republican National Committee memorandum called for a "Realistic Crusade," urging that the Corps be run by the Defense Department. The Office of Economic Opportunity summed up the Republican attack as a "carefully-planned attempt to destroy public confidence in the Office of Economic Opportunity." Poverty memoranda, "spilling out of Republican congressional offices with increasing rapidity as elections draw near," resembled "hit-and-run guerilla warfare," ignoring the facts in a partisan campaign to get votes. One editor commented: "Whether it is due to television commercials or what, there has arisen in our country in recent years the myth of instant success. If something doesn't succeed glamorously almost at once, there is a tendency to discard it. Yet

---

<sup>106</sup> Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1966, pp. 256-258; "The Alleviation of Poverty--A Realistic Crusade," Republican National Committee release, July 8, 1966, pp. 1-2; OEO, searching its files, circulated these 1965 words of GOP opponent Albert Quie: "Also, I would like to bring up a point about the Job Corps to see if we are going to actually list the real problem children. I will be looking forward to looking a little more closely at the Job Corps to see if we are hitting the real, tough-nut problems or if we are going to take the cream of the crop to make the program look well."; Memo, February 10, 1966.

everyone should realize that rehabilitating youngsters who have never had a chance at all can be no instant proposition."<sup>107</sup>

Administration requests for \$228 million for the Job Corps were cut back. With the earmarking provisions, "under no circumstances" could funds be transferred within OEO to increase the final authorized sum of \$211 million for the Job Corps. The Congress limited the number of enrollees permitted in the Corps, twenty-three percent of whom were to be women. The cost per enrollee was to be reduced to \$7,500. Albert Quie introduced an amendment requiring Job Corps officials to stimulate formation of "indigenous community activity" in center implanted areas, to insure a "friendly and adequate reception of enrollees into community life."<sup>108</sup>

Congress required the Job Corps to place enrollees in centers within the same geographic region as their home in order to interdict the "jet-set Job Corps." OEO was subdivided into seven such regions. Standard enforcement procedures were to be maintained in all centers, and the Job Corps was to carefully guard against violating parole and probationary procedures of states by transferring recruits across jurisdictional boundaries. Finally, Congress required the Job Corps to set up four pilot demonstration projects providing youth employment and training on a combined residential

---

<sup>107</sup> "Comment by OEO spokesman on Republican National Committee Report," OEO release, July 8, 1966; Editorial, American Forest, August, 1966, p. 18.

<sup>108</sup> A Job Corps official had been quoted as saying, "we've been made to feel unwelcome in every one of the 103 towns where we've placed one of our camps." Lander, War, p. 117.

and non-residential basis. These were to be conducted under the Job Corps and the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and when the latter was involved, the Secretary of Labor would be given joint authority over the projects.<sup>109</sup>

The 1966 Congressional Amendments to the Job Corps were designed to insure tighter discipline, better evaluation,<sup>110</sup> and a different method for assigning enrollees to centers. The stringent earmarking provisions and the authorization cutbacks appeared to many, as the New Republic put it, "one step forward, three steps back."<sup>111</sup>

In the summer and fall of 1966, three times as many corpsmen were in the Job Corps, and there were no riots. By the turn of the new year, the Corps' management had clearly learned lessons in preparation, better training procedures, and discipline. Yet, in the President's major message on poverty delivered in March, 1967, entitled "Message on America's Unfinished Business: Urban and Rural Poverty," the Job Corps was singled out as needing "tighter cost

---

109 Economic Opportunity Act, 1966, as Amended: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1966, pp. 250-251.

110 A&R Report #8 (Evaluation and Research Branch, Plans and Evaluation Division, Plans and Programs Directorate, Job Corps, OEO), April 19, 1968. "Job Corps Evaluation, Research and Program Projects." By 1968, a listing of abstracts of studies and projects conducted for the JC included: evaluation of procedures and methods of selection and assignment; input processing; enrollee processing; census comparisons of JC enrollees and target population; dropout rates; corpsmen advisory system; education programs; on-the-job training programs; general training curriculum; administration manuals; half-way houses (Project Threshold-1969); urban center feasibility study; staff training procedures; human relations of staff; manpower utilization and effectiveness of conservation centers; system of analysis of JC accidents; testing; follow-through studies; etc.

111 Kopkind, "Poor Politics," New Republic, June 25, 1966.

controls, firmer discipline and more effective recruitment."<sup>112</sup>

Edward K. Shanahan wrote that continued hostility to Shriver and the poverty program, and the GOP intention to push for an entirely new program involving the abolition of the OEO, the spin-off programs to other agencies, and the phasing out of the "troublesome" Job Corps, had impelled the White House to send to Congress a "completely rewritten poverty bill which places extremely heavy emphasis on tightened administration of such controversial programs as community action and Job Corps."<sup>113</sup>

The Administration bill requested authorization for the Job Corps of \$874 million (including job training programs). It recommended more stringent administrative controls--screening and selection procedures--and barred persons with histories of anti-social behavior. Curriculum and disciplinary standards would be maintained, advisory councils would be created to promote better relations between centers and communities, and a new placement system would be set up. The bill required a systematic evaluation of the centers' effectiveness, required better coordination with state agencies, and set maximum capacity at 45,000. Of the enrollment, 23% were to be women, and costs per enrollee were to be kept to \$7,500. Both employees and enrollees were banned from partisan political activity.<sup>114</sup>

---

112 President's Message on Unfinished Business, Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1967, Appendix A, p. 31.

113 Edward K. Shanahan, "Drumming Up Votes for the Poverty Program," New Republic, June 17, 1967, pp. 7-8.

114 Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1967, p. 1058.

Hearings on the Administration bill began in June, at which time the Republicans re-introduced the "Opportunity Crusade," the GOP alternative to OEO. It had been drafted by Congressmen Quie and Goodell, and would eliminate the Job Corps, setting up instead an Industrial Youth Corps, which would grant employer tax credits to stimulate business participation in the creation of jobs for unemployed slum youths.<sup>115</sup> In the House hearings, Goodell asserted it was unwise to place "rejects from society" into isolated camps, urging instead they be integrated into vocational centers with high school graduates. William Kelly,<sup>116</sup> Director of the Job Corps since January, replied that it would be a mistake to put the poor into general vocational programs. "If you don't concentrate on the poor," he said, "somehow the resources aimed at helping them will go somewhere else."<sup>117</sup>

Admittedly, Kelly went on, the Job Corps had suffered its "share of failures," but the value of the Job Corps was in its promise for "human renewal," restoring enrollees' dignity, health,

---

115 Ibid., p. 1070.

116 William P. Kelly, an M.A. graduate of Ohio State University, held various positions with the Department of the Air Force until 1959, when he became Chief of the Procurement and Logistical Assistance Branch of NASA. In March, 1961, he was appointed Director of Contracts for the Peace Corps. After two years, he accepted a position with the Agency for International Development. In 1964, with the establishment of the Office of Economic Opportunity, he was appointed Assistant Director for Management. On December 2, 1966, he was appointed Acting Director for the Job Corps, pending confirmation by the Congress, which came on March 7, 1967. OEO Biographical Sketch.

117 Hearings, House, Part I, pp. 110-121.

respect for law and order, and proper social behavior. The Job Corps, he said, "made one mistake. We had no notion of how poor the poor were. . . it would be a national tragedy to abolish the Job Corps." Thirty percent of the enrollees could neither read nor write; eighty percent had not seen a doctor or dentist.<sup>118</sup>

The Job Corps had discovered that two thirds of the graduates interviewed said that the Job Corps had "enhanced their chances for success, and if they had it to do all over again they would choose the Job Corps as the instrument for helping them escape the poverty circumstances in which they live." The value of the Job Corps was further emphasized by changes in the draft classification for males. In a survey, it was pointed out that 22% of the graduates had undergone rises in classification, thereby improving their options for military service. Seventy-five thousand had graduated from the Corps, of which 76% had found jobs, 14% had returned to school, and 10% had gone into the military. The cost per enrollee had dropped to \$6,950 per year and was expected to decline further by 1968. In light of the summer riots and public concern for law and order, Kelley assured the committee that the Job Corps had been found to be "a very good neighbor."<sup>119</sup>

In the Senate, it was reported that the Job Corps enrollees' average age was declining, and that there was a substantial increase in the proportion of Negro and other nonwhite enrollees, posing the

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 118-121; Job Corps Evaluation Data, March 31, 1967, pp. 1-10.

threat that centers would "reach a state of de facto segregation." Senator Carl Curtis (R.-Neb.) attempted to kill the Corps by proposing an amendment that would eliminate authorization and transfer funds to HEW vocational programs. Senator Clark, in opposition to the Curtis amendment, said the Job Corps "is directed to the poor, no to the middle class. This is a poverty bill." The amendment, he continued, would "strike at the heart of one of the most important and one of the most successful programs to take young boys and girls off the streets and turn them from potential juvenile delinquents into useful citizens." The amendment was defeated.<sup>120</sup>

An issue raised during the session concerned the publication of a report made by the Government's General Accounting Office, which was critical of some aspects of the program, particularly with Litton Systems Incorporated, which ran the Parks center at Pleasanton, California. The Washington Star described the report as a "devastating picture of high costs, waste and disciplinary problems." To some extent the unveiling of the report in the highly charged atmosphere of the 1967 Congress was, as Parks Camp Director Robert Bransom charged, "a totally political effort to scuttle new appropriations." As OEO pointed out, the report, at the time it was deliberately circulated among Congressmen in October, was 14 months old. Moreover, most of the critical recommendations had been acted upon.<sup>121</sup>

---

120 Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1967, p. 1077.

121 UPI release, October 27, 1967; John Beckler, "Waste, Heavy Costs Laid to Job Corps Center," Washington Star, October 26, 1967.

Predictably, eight Republicans of the House Committee on Education and Labor produced in October a massive dissenting report, urging a Job Corps phase out and transferal to an expanded vocational education program under HEW. The effect of the Job Corps it said, "has not been without drama. It has been a dramatic flop with overtones of classical tragedy." Yet, in the House an amendment to spin off the Job Corps to HEW was defeated by Southern Democrats, one of whom justified his vote on the basis of personal animosity to Harold Howe, of the Office of Education: "The best thing I can think of to do," said Joe Waggoner (D-La.), "is to keep all the trash in one pile; do not scatter it."<sup>122</sup>

The Job Corps got \$295 million for fiscal year 1968. Congressional delay for appropriations for most government debts incurred during the fiscal year 1968 forced OEO to suspend hiring to fill vacancies, to halt new contracts and purchase orders, and suspend negotiations for a grant for the Job Corps center at Atterbury, Indiana, which was out of money (the grant was to be for \$6.7million). CBS News reported that some centers had asked how to buy food for trainees and had been told--on credit, "which may or may not be legal."

The Amendments made no radical departures from the Administration-proposed bill, with the minor additions requiring that 40% of male enrollees be assigned to the conservation centers, the estab-

---

<sup>122</sup> Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1967, p. 1076.

lishment of an experimental program involving the operation of community vocational education schools and skill centers in urban areas, and the permission for the Director to cooperate with states in the administration of state-operated Job Corps centers. In December, the House had earmarked authorized funds, but the Senate and Conference committees eliminated that provision. The Conferees also agreed on a \$1.8 billion authorization, a \$26 million reduction from the Administration's \$2.06 billion request.<sup>123</sup>

In the hearings, it had been noted that the Job Corps had a "new look," and a better overall image. Edith Green, at one point, said, "The Job Corps does have a different face since Mr. Kelly has come in." And the majority report expressed satisfaction with the "noticeable improvements in this year's programs as compared to that of last year." Shriver, in a Face the Nation broadcast, emphasized this point. "The Job Corps, too, has gotten straightened out," he said. "They call it, in fact, the new Job Corps. You remember, I suppose, it was about two years ago there were lots of disturbances and riots in the Job Corps? Very few people stop to remember now that it has been two years since there has been any such disturbance in the Job Corps, despite the fact that we've got the same kind of youngsters in the Job Corps as are causing trouble on the streets."<sup>124</sup>

Partly responsible for the improvements was a series of Louis Harris research studies undertaken throughout the year. The

---

123 Ibid., pp. 1058, 1086.

124 Ibid., p. 1076; Transcript of Face the Nation as broadcast over the CBS television network on Sunday, August 20, 1967.

results demonstrated the need for a "new orientation" in the overall program. Subsequently, changes were made and announced publicly.

Among these were:

Job Corps Screeners have been instructed to give recruits a clearer picture of the Job Corps on initial contact; the orientation program has been changed to try to make it more effective; the Job Corps behavior code has been tightened up; discharge authority at the centers has been facilitated to move faster to enforce discipline; efforts have been instituted to obtain greater minority representation on center staff to alleviate problems of racial tension; an effort is being made to improve the feedback to corpsmen on how they are doing while at the centers; the time between the initial screening and assignment has been shortened; and new corpsmen have been assigned to centers nearer their homes.<sup>125</sup>

The Harris survey, moreover, indicated that increases in rates of pay were higher for graduates than for dropouts, higher for dropouts than for discharges, "and even higher for discharges than those who never went to the Job Corps at all."

The Congress had been informed of other developments. The Job Corps was profiting by support and involvement of professional groups. By 1967, business had become increasingly more receptive to the Job Corps. A February meeting of corporation executives representing RCA, U.S. Industries, Xerox, Burroughs Corporation, IBM,

---

<sup>125</sup> Statement of Louis Harris before the Committee on Education and Labor, Hearings, Part IV, p. 3376; Weeks, in his book Job Corps, charged that OEO had "unsuccessfully" tried to suppress the Harris survey which he said indicated that unemployment among graduates was higher than before they enrolled. Harris, in his testimony, said: "I would say this is not true. I would say that, in fact, as I remember it, 38% of the dropouts were unemployed at the time we interviewed them as against 41% before." Hearings, Part IV, p. 3384; Shriver and William Kelly politely denied Weeks' charge of "suppression," Hearings, pp. 3431-3432; Hearings, Part IV, p. 3377.

Litton Industries--all operators of Job Corps centers--approved a resolution supporting the Job Corps and pledging "the skills and resources of our organizations to its further progress." Montgomery Ward president, Robert E. Brooker, along with Kaiser Industries' Edgar Kaiser, ITT President Harold Green, and the New York Stock Exchange President Keith Funston all made public appeals in support of the Job Corps program. Indicative of business involvement was an incident that occurred in December, 1966. Representatives of Pratt and Whitney Company, manufacturer of jet engines, visited the Kilmer center in New Jersey. They hired 21 Job Corps enrollees on the spot at salaries ranging from \$2.77 to \$3.19 per hour in jobs which varied from carpentry work to cooking.

The Job Corps programs had had an impact upon other institutions. For example, the Department of Defense was using Job Corps techniques and materials as part of its new educational program for lower-category youth, indicative of the Corps' "echo effect." Office of Education Commissioner Harold Howe pointed to the powerful impact upon the entire elementary and secondary education establishment of the various OEO programs. Job Corps educational material had been distributed to over eighty-four educational systems, including public, parochial and teacher institutions. By 1967, over half had incorporated the materials. Because of the existence of Job Corps centers, Howe said, educational institutions had "living laboratories" in which to do research, train social scientists, teachers, and so on. Centers were learning laboratories for those engaged in the

study of human relations and improvement.

It was pointed out that Job Corps volunteers learned to read 25% faster than the national school norm, while mathematical comprehension was obtained at an even faster pace. Enrollees entered the Corps with an average 6th grade educational level, and left after nine months with a 1.6 year increase. Obvious Job Corps gains were in improvement of physical and mental health of enrollees, reductions in crime, juvenile delinquency and civil disturbances, and lower rates of family break-ups and other social ills.<sup>126</sup>

In 1968, given the background of the average enrollee in the centers, the Job Corps' burden remains great indeed. Corpsmen's profiles illustrate the persistence of the problems faced by the planners in 1964. Six out of every ten come from broken homes, while 63% come from homes where the head of the household is unemployed. Sixty percent lived in substandard housing and 64 percent were asked to leave school. Eighty percent had not seen a doctor or dentist in ten years, and half the male recruits of draft age were found to be unfit for military service for educational or health reasons. 62% read below the 4th grade level, while more than 30% are illiterate. Thirty-three percent had records of anti-social behavior or had serious convictions. Employment records of enrollees showed that 60% made less than \$1.25 an hour in low level

---

126 The Watershed: A New Look at the War on Poverty, OEO Publication, 1967; Internal memorandum from Marshall Peck to all OEO Regional Public Affairs Officers, March 14, 1967.

jobs with little or no chance for advancement.<sup>127</sup>

The Job Corps has learned that the 16-21 year-old illiterates can be successfully educated, and that their lack of achievement was not due to innate deficiencies, but to their poverty condition. Essentially, enrollees showed the need for a structured and organized program, incentives for learning, and a demonstrable relevance between education and a trade or real-life experience. The Job Corps centers were instructed to encourage the "dignity and respect" of Corpsmen, to develop the idea that Corpsmen were "valued and cared about and that they in turn respect and value themselves." This "individualizing" approach attempted to respond to their every individual need. Staff activity should aid the "growth promoting experience" of Corpsmen--"one where he becomes more responsible, more self-confident, more self-reliant, more able to deal with other people." The center, in turn, should make possible "positive adjustment and constructive psychological growth." Failures should be minimized, and a fusion of discipline and permissiveness should be stressed. A Job Corps Health Program Manual stated that "the approach which advocates firm, consistent, but non-punitive limit setting in the context of relationships with Center staff which are supportive, giving, and meaningful to the Corpsman," should be used in disciplinary situations.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> Job Corps Reports, March, 1968; Draft--Job Corps Annual Report FY 1967; Jobs and the OEO, internal memorandum, March 1, 1968.

<sup>128</sup> Job Corps Health Program Manual: Part II Technical Supplement, OEO publication, December, 1967, pp. 1-10.

Emphasis at the centers is on individual attention, group participation in decisions, and a system whereby Corpsmen are informed of their status and progress. Educational programs are self-paced, the materials relevant, and the teaching techniques up-to-date. Internally, Corpsmen are instructed in the art of responsible citizenship, through such activities as student-government, group discussions and community involvement.

At the women's Job Corps centers, trainees derived benefits from three basic programs: basic education, vocational education, and a home and family life program. A Job Corps brochure explained the programs:

**Basic Education:** The basic skills required for all other learning, such as reading (remedial, intermediate, developmental), writing, speaking in groups and conversational abilities, mathematics, social studies and elementary science are taught by qualified instructors in small classes. Field trips highlight classroom subjects--such as a visit to explain voting registration and use of the voting machine, to a bank to explain budgeting and saving, concerts and tours of art galleries to awaken an appreciation of art and music. Optimum opportunities are made available to Corpswomen for self-teaching and continual learning processes through audio-visual materials, programmed study courses, libraries, special tutoring, and group activity at the center and in the community.

**Vocational Education:** Vocational interests of the Corpswomen are explored in the first few weeks of basic education and guidance counseling. Training courses provided by the centers include secretarial, business and clerical, data processing, retail sales, food preparation and service, health and paramedical services, fabric arts, dress designing, graphic arts skills, cleaning and laundry trades, cosmetology and child care, driver education, and industrial electronics. A major part of the vocational supervisor's job is exposing the girls to a wide variety of job opportunities, developing interest and skills needed to pursue vocational inclinations. Another prime function is training in job applications, good work habits, and instilling pride in a job well done.

Home and Family Life: The broad scope of the homemaking program is aimed at developing women who can create happy, healthy homes--not just clean houses. Striving for good interpersonal relationships in a home environment is an underlying goal of this program. In small groups Corpswomen learn to shop wisely, to prepare attractive nutritious meals, and to preserve food; health, grooming, care of the home; buying, repairing and caring for clothing; child care and development; home decorating. A by-product of home and family life courses could be the pursuit of careers, for example, in dietetics, food preparation, child care, or tailoring.<sup>129</sup>

In March, 1968, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America voted to manage training programs at thirteen centers, and to place graduates at minimum starting wages of \$2.50 an hour. Some 840 unemployed and disadvantaged were to be recruited for the centers. They would undergo 52 weeks of training in order to qualify for entrance into the Brotherhood's regular apprenticeship program. Other Unions have combined to assist in training and job placement with businesses, state and local and the federal government. The types of skills offered at the men's urban centers include training for employment as office machine operators, cooks, hospital orderlies, carpenters, electricians, retail sales clerks, heavy machinery, automotive mechanics, maintenance and repair, landscape/nursery occupations, electromechanical assembly and repair, data processing, building maintenance, mechanical drawing, laundry and dry cleaning, printing and duplicating, and a variety of other occupations.<sup>130</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup> "Facts on Women's Centers of the Job Corps," OEO publication, March, 1967.

<sup>130</sup> "Brotherhood's Job Corps Training Program Launched in Washington Ceremonies," OEO publication, June, 1968.

By January, 1968, forty-five Corpsmen from centers across the nation made up the first class at the Kilmer Police Training School under a contract with the Police Athletic League. At the 1967 Convention of the National Police Conference on PAL and Youth Activities, Job Corps Director William Kelly stated his desire to see established a National Police Cadet Academy. Subsequently, studies were made which pointed to the need for police departments to overcome the fears and prejudices of minority groups regarding the enforcement of the law, and to become integrated on a larger scale with members of society who came from the lower economic status. It was felt that OEO, through the Job Corps, could best meet this need. Accordingly, the Police Training program was set up, whereby Cadet Corpsmen received instruction in all phases of police work--fingerprinting, traffic control, radio communication, first-aid, photography and legal procedures in courts. Courses in physical fitness, self-defense, typing, driving and basic education supplemented the program. (Placement was to be guaranteed for those who successfully completed the program.) Kelly described the program as "one of the most dramatic things that has occurred in police-people relationships."<sup>131</sup>

Job Corps trainees have been involved in an endless variety of tasks which contributed immeasurably to the improvement and beautification of communities (as well as to improved center/community

---

<sup>131</sup> Law and Order, January, 1968; The Corpsman, June 1, 1968, p. 7.

relationships). Corpsmen have assisted in raising money for charitable causes, donated blood to hospitals, helped underprivileged youngsters during seasonal celebrations such as Christmas and Easter, rescued accident victims, fought fires and floods, preserved and improved natural resources, organized cleanup drives in local communities, helped build recreational facilities, repaired public buildings, landscaped parks and grounds, adopted Vietnamese children through the Foster Parents Plan, and have generally earned the gratitude and respect of communities nationwide. Conservation work performed by the Corps was estimated at over \$46 million in such projects as fire suppression, road building, park development, fish and wildlife development, reforestation, and timber preservation.<sup>132</sup>

A Louis Harris study of January, 1968, indicated that 76% of male graduates were working, in school, or in the military. Graduate incomes have risen, and wages average \$1.80 an hour. There still existed formidable problems in the matter of employment. Unemployed graduates cited three major reasons for their status: 23% said they had no way to get to work; 27% cited racial discrimination; and, 42% said employers demanded high school diplomas. The Job Corps acted to have the Employment Office pay readjustment and final living allowances, and worked to minimize employer requirements for high school diplomas. The Wall Street

---

132 "Job Corps Youth, Neighboring Communities Help Each Other," OEO Publication, January, 1967; "Job Corpsmen Serve Local Communities," February, 1967 to November, 1967, OEO publication.

Journal wrote that the Job Corps "gets surprisingly high marks: 60% of the 159 companies hiring Corpsmen rate them satisfactory workers." The hope is, of course, that a momentum would develop among corporations and businesses and unions that absorbed corpsmen, to perpetuate a successful placement program.

Corps-sponsored follow-through programs attempt to soften the "shock" of returning to society as a productive worker. The Joint Action for Community Service (JACS) and Women in Community Service are two volunteer organizations involved in such a service. JACS established offices or voluntary workers in every state and major city in the country, providing such services as assisting graduates in finding jobs, places to live, medical attention, borrowing money, and furthering their education through scholarships. When Corpsmen leave the centers, they are instructed to fill out a "holler Help" card, in order to avail themselves of the service. Gate Houses have been set up to provide "direct and centralized Job Corps professional support services in cities with the heaviest concentrations of returnees, unique problems, or inadequate facilities."<sup>133</sup> In August, 1968, OEO announced that 37 Job Corps men and women entered college as four-year New York State Scholarship students in the State University of New York in Albany. These young people had enrolled in the University's new Education Opportunities Program, designed for youth with environmental handicaps who show

---

<sup>133</sup> The Corpsman, June 1, 1968, p. 15.

promise for higher education and who otherwise might not be able to continue their studies. Personal counseling would be afforded to the students by JACS and WICS.<sup>134</sup>

Since 1966 the Job Corps and the National Education Association had cooperated in an exchange program designed to allow maximum utilization of the new techniques and materials developed and tested by the Job Corps in its work with disadvantaged school dropouts, known as "Project Interchange." The Project began in the summer of 1966, when 21 public schoolteachers left their classrooms to take part in the experiment. For one year, they would teach at Job Corps centers, after which they would return to their school districts "and work toward putting into practice new approaches, techniques, ways of thinking about, feeling about, and dealing with disadvantaged students." The Project was intended to "provide a crossover, an interchange of approaches, philosophy, and techniques between public schools and the Job Corps." The ultimate goal was to "eliminate the problem of providing education and training for the dropout by helping young men and women stay in school."

Participants were briefed in various ways--freewheeling discussions with Job Corps teachers on a variety of subjects and topics which they might encounter, such as sex, racial differences, the correlation between poverty and stupidity, violent and deviant behavior, and so forth. The teachers were lectured to by sociologists,

---

<sup>134</sup> "Job Corpsmen and Women Awarded Scholarships to College," OEO fact sheet, August 5, 1968.

anthropologists and psychologists. On location, teachers participated in group counseling sessions, student government meetings, work programs with the trainees, and were involved in establishing harmonious center-community relations. At the end of the year, superintendents and administrators of the teachers' school boards were brought to the centers to engage in discussions and face-to-face communication in order to understand the experiment--an experiment that won unanimous approval by all concerned. It was learned that the Project had a multiplier effect, in that new programs were established as unique problems were faced. For example, in Seattle, an educational employment center was set up to keep potential dropouts in school, and to assist those who have already dropped out. "Project 100 (150)" was another effect--a duplicate, but summer-only program begun in 1968. Project 100 administrators received more than 8,000 applicants. Elsewhere, criteria were developed in an effort to identify and deter potential dropouts. Modification of instructional material and procedures occurred in an attempt to make school programs more relevant to students' needs. Teacher-training workshops emerged to revise curriculum and activate an adult counseling program.

Project Interchange proved more than satisfactory, as participating teachers responded with a good deal of enthusiasm.<sup>135</sup>

---

<sup>135</sup> Carl E. Minich, "Project Interchange: Bridging the Gap Between Job Corps and Public Schools," Audiovisual Instruction, February, 1968, pp. 138-140; Project Interchange, First Year Report, October, 1967; Project 100 (150), Interim Report, June 15, 1968.

The status of the Job Corps today remains in considerable doubt.<sup>136</sup> Evidence of Congressional intentions to transfer the program to the Labor Department, or to close out the program entirely on the grounds of its dubious value, leave its future the subject of speculation. More important, in the summer of 1968, applications fell sharply, the result, perhaps, of psychological factors in the uncertainties of an election year that witnessed two assassinations of public figures high in the minds of the young. In addition, potential enrollees have undoubtedly been funneled off into any number of other available training programs. Enrollments at the centers thus were less than capacity, and the special problems relating to the kind of administration--permissive or authoritarian--remain.

In the turbulent mid-sixties, shaken by urban uprisings and the rhetoric of social and political radicalism, the Job Corps, however limited its mark, plays an important, if unobtrusive, part. In light of the lessons Job Corps has learned through trial and error, and in view of its admitted imperfections, it is important to bear in mind its impact on the youth for whom it, after all, exists. As one Corpsman has put it: "I was sliding down, down, but now I feel like I'm climbing up in life."

---

136

On September 25, 1968, a Conference Committee approved a study to be completed by June, 1969 to determine whether the Job Corps should be phased out in favor of residential skill centers available to all young people. The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 House Report directed the Commissioner of Education to study the means by which "the existing Job Corps facilities and programs might be transferred to State or joint Federal-State operation in conjunction with the residential vocational schools program." At this writing, no final action has been taken. See: Memorandum for all OEO employees from Bertrand Harding, September 25, 1968; Vocational Education Amendments, 1968, Report, July, 1968, p. 15.