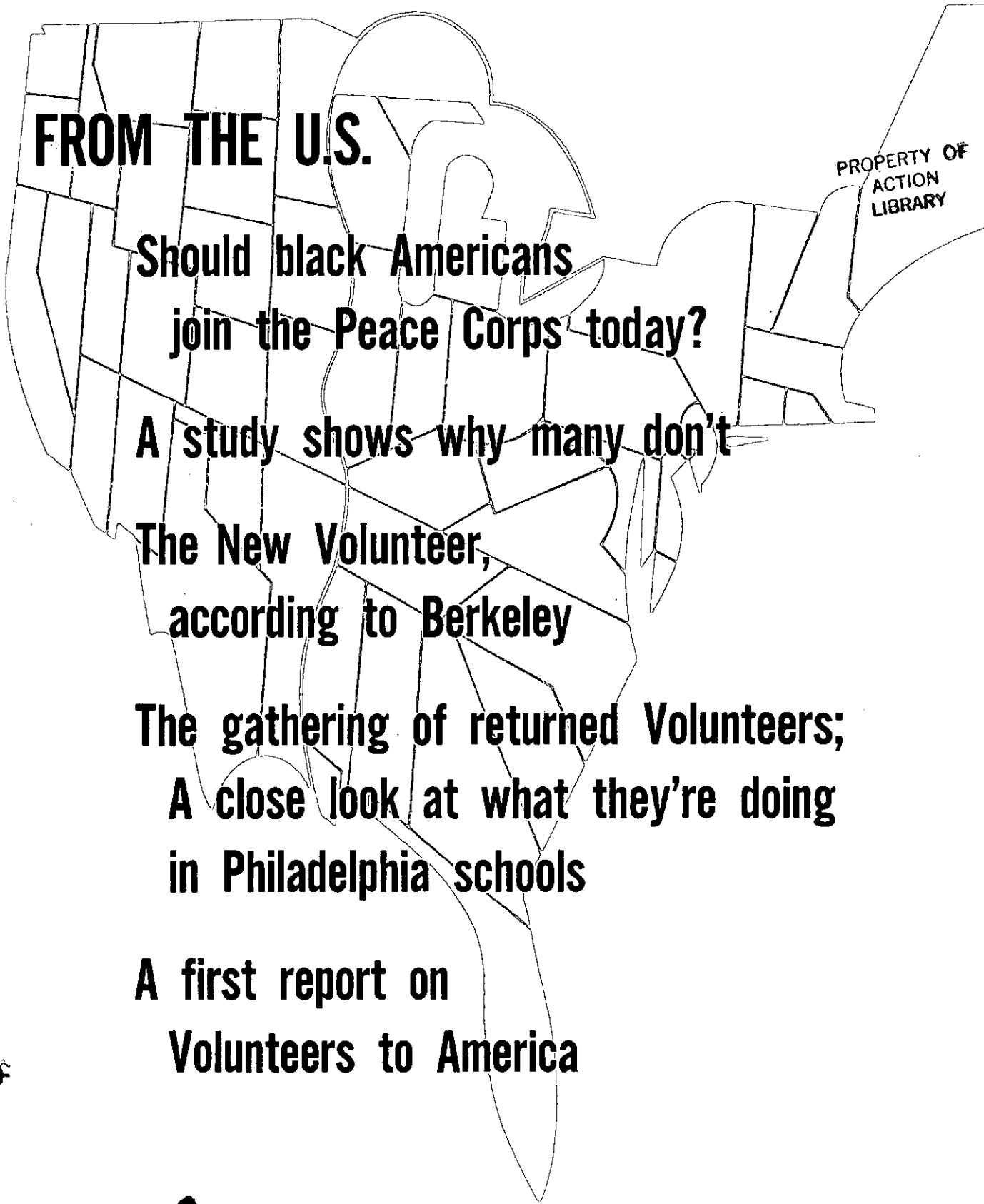
PEACE CORPS
volunteer
JULY - AUGUST 1968



FROM THE U.S.

Should black Americans join the Peace Corps today?

A study shows why many don't

The New Volunteer, according to Berkeley

The gathering of returned Volunteers; A close look at what they're doing in Philadelphia schools

A first report on Volunteers to America

'The greatness to bend history'

Senator Robert F. Kennedy saw the Peace Corps as a living testament to the ideals of his brother's administration and as a reflection of the best of the American character.

He frequently wrote and talked about the Peace Corps. Visiting with Volunteers in Tanzania in June, 1966, he said:

"The Peace Corps shows what we stand for; not a selfish society but a society that's interested in other people. So if it wasn't for you and those like you in all parts of the world, not only would people be much less well off . . . but also the United States would be in a far more difficult position. I think the whole country owes you a debt and that's why I'm delighted to see you."

In his last book, *To Seek A Newer World*, Senator Kennedy wrote:

"To the extent that the young only mirror dissatisfactions common to their elders, they are raising matters that should concern us in any case. To the extent that they demand the observance of long-proclaimed ideals, they perform for us the ancient service of the prophets. And as they ask for opportunities to contribute to mankind and shape their own fate, as so many have done in the Peace Corps, or in the civil rights movement, they lend greater urgency to a concern that all of us share: that our lives should make a difference to ourselves and our fellow men."

His address to South African students on their Day of Affirmation in 1966 has special applicability to the Peace Corps. Senator Edward Kennedy read this speech in a eulogy at his brother's funeral on June 8. In part, Robert Kennedy had said:

"Some believe there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the enormous array of the world's ills. Yet many of the world's great movements, of thought and action, have flowed from the work of a single man. . . . Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of those acts will be written the history of this generation.

"Few are willing to brave the disapproval of their fellows, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality for those who seek to change a world that yields most painfully to change. And I believe that in this generation those with the courage to enter the moral conflict will find themselves with companions in every corner of the globe."

At left, Senator and Mrs. Robert Kennedy receive gifts in the southern region of Mbeya, Tanzania, during a trip to the area in the summer of 1966. The senator's gift is a traditional cane; Mrs. Kennedy holds a local statuette. At right, the senator talks informally with a group of PCVs.

Photos by Bill Pumphrey

from the U.S.

To the Peace Corps, the United States is the sending country. In this issue THE VOLUNTEER looks at the U.S. in that special role.

The following section contains a variety of pre- and post-Peace Corps attitudes toward American society. There are views from the campus, the source of new Volunteers; and the city, where many returned Volunteers are trying new tasks. From the vantage point of volunteer service, we focus on the dual dichotomy between black and white, rich and poor. And finally, a reverse perspective—the sending country turned host.

Black graduates see the Peace Corps as

A costly interlude

To most Negro college seniors in the class of '68, the Peace Corps represented a two-year interlude which they could not afford. And of the relatively few who did plan to join the Peace Corps, more than half did so because they thought the experience would be helpful in preparing for their futures.

These were the results of a Louis Harris poll conducted on 35 predominantly Negro campuses in March. The study was a follow-up to the December poll which surveyed the attitudes toward the Peace Corps of more than 1,000 seniors in 50 schools across the country (see THE VOLUNTEER, June). In that study, white students had comprised 96 per cent of the sample, their actual proportion of the U.S. college population. In the later report on Negro schools, the Harris pollsters compared the results of the two studies.

The number of Negro Volunteers in the Peace Corps has always been small. While the agency does not keep statistics on the race of Volunteers, some staff members estimate that about 5 per cent of all Volunteers are Negroes. It is further estimated that at least one-half of these are graduates of Negro colleges.

On these black campuses, according to the Harris sample, the Peace Corps has made little impact. In March, only 9 per cent of the Negro seniors were seriously considering join the Peace Corps, compared with 13 per cent of the white seniors polled in December. And of the black seniors seriously considering the Peace Corps, only 7 per cent actually expected to join after graduation.

Not a high priority

"It (Peace Corps) has not reached the students in a way that would convince them it is a high priority choice," said the report. This observation is reiterated throughout the study.

Two major conditions of being black in a white-dominated society kept the Negro seniors away from the Peace Corps, according to the poll. One was career pressure. The other was race. For both black and white seniors, career considerations were the most important factors in holding down interest in the Peace Corps. But for the black seniors, the career pressures were more intense; the career options more limited.

Sixty-eight per cent of the black seniors (compared to 44 per cent of the whites) were concerned about getting a good-paying job. Ninety-three per cent of the black seniors (compared to 72 per cent of the whites) thought planning immediately for a future career was very important.

In addition, the black seniors listed equal job opportunities and discrimination as their two most serious problems. And these factors had influenced their choice of careers. While, as with white seniors, graduate school was the favorite choice for next year, the great majority of black seniors planned to pursue careers in teaching, social work, and government—areas where they felt discrimination was lowest and their job opportunities

Volunteer Janet Sledge works with Head Start-type programs in the slums of Kingston, Jamaica. A graduate of Illinois Teachers College, she says she joined the Peace Corps "to take the chance to better myself as an educator working with children of a different background and culture."

would be as good as for white seniors.

While white and black seniors shared the same "main reason for not joining the Peace Corps"—"low pay"—blacks chose it by a greater majority than whites (two out of five blacks compared to one out of five whites). And lost income and career delays were behind many of the other reasons given by blacks for not joining the Peace Corps. One-half of the blacks, for example (compared to one-third of the whites) said they would like to start making money. More than 40 per cent of the blacks said they had financial burdens and could not afford to spend two years in the Peace Corps.

Race was the other major, if not the overriding, issue in the lives of black seniors. When asked what two or three things were most hurting the reputation of the U.S. in the world today, nearly twice as many blacks as whites mentioned racial problems. Although they were concerned about the Vietnam war, 93 per cent of the blacks (compared to 56 per cent of the whites) said the combined total of racial problems, lack of concern over poverty, and riots outweighed the war in hurting the reputation of the U.S. abroad.

Racial problems have rallied more students to activism in black schools than have any issues on predominantly white campuses, said the pollsters. As a consequence, Negro activists outnumbered white activists by more than two-to-one.

Lack of correlation

While there was a slight tendency for interest in the Peace Corps to increase as students became more active, the Harris pollsters noted no significant connections between interest in the Peace Corps and the black seniors' region, sex, major and degree of activity. Among white seniors, some categories had expressed more interest in the Peace Corps than others.

This uniformity among black seniors carried over into civil rights goals as well. More than nine out of ten black seniors chose an integrated society over a separate black society. And nine out of ten felt the way to reach that goal involved working with whites rather than in all-black civil rights organizations.

The seniors also wanted peaceful integration. The leader they most respected, Martin Luther King, Jr., was a man who believed in nonviolence. But, the study observed, "in their frustration at the inequities they face, they are becoming increasingly open to the possible use of force."

The most serious effect of racial problems on the Peace Corps was the fact that black seniors felt there was too much that needed to be done at home. Almost seven out of ten black seniors agreed that "there are enough serious problems facing Negroes in the U.S. and someone who is really concerned about helping others should be working against these problems here rather than going abroad with the Peace Corps." Only one-third of the white seniors agreed.

The Negro seniors did view the Peace Corps positively, although remotely. Almost 90 per cent of the

blacks (compared to 80 percent of the white seniors) gave the Peace Corps a high rating. But when asked what two or three things were most helping the reputation of the U.S. in the world today, the black seniors chose foreign aid first and the Peace Corps second (white seniors had picked the reverse order).

In addition, the poll noted that questions about the Peace Corps' major accomplishments evoked more personal responses from the white seniors than from the blacks, who listed activities not particularly unique to the Peace Corps: helping to improve the standard of living in underdeveloped areas and providing education to wipe out illiteracy. By contrast, the white seniors listed first the opportunity for personal contact and the development of mutual understanding.

In the category of failures, 38 per cent of the Negro seniors (compared with 25 per cent of the whites) agreed that the "Peace Corps has become more interested in improving the U.S. image than in really helping other countries." There was also more uncertainty among blacks than among whites that "it's still possible in the Peace Corps to say what you really think and nobody there tries to muzzle you."

The study noted that, despite the distance black seniors may have felt from the Peace Corps, they "quickly recognize(d) that the Peace Corps can open new horizons and remove some of the restrictions that have been imposed on them."

'Up and out' motivation

The importance of learning about other cultures and the sharply higher responses of Negroes compared with whites on the elements of travel (32 per cent to 14 per cent) and "gaining experience" (23 per cent to 10 per cent) indicated, said the study, "that the theme of 'up and out' can have real impact on the black campuses."

"If the Negro senior is to become interested in the Peace Corps," said the study, "he must see it as a meaningful step into his future, not as a pause or a testing of his mettle before the inevitable confrontation with society.

"The Peace Corps can offer them (Negro seniors) new options and new opportunities that a discriminatory society is reluctant to provide," said the pollsters. "But," they added, "the Peace Corps has not been successful in communicating this to black campuses."

In conclusion, the pollsters noted several factors which may have influenced the results of the later study:

- The sex ratio in the Negro schools was 57 per cent female, 43 per cent male, compared with 33 per cent female, 67 per cent male in mostly white schools.
- The socio-economic status of the families of the Negro seniors was much lower than that of the families of the white seniors interviewed.
- During the time lapse between the studies, the following events took place: the January Tet offensive in Vietnam, the abolition of military deferments for most graduate students, widespread demonstrations and violence at a number of Negro colleges.

The pollsters also noted that the March study of Negro seniors' attitudes took place before the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

Reuben Johnson, Peace Corps deputy director in Botswana, teaches science to adults one night a week. Before joining the Peace Corps staff, Johnson was a science teacher in a Newark, N.J. high school.

Needed: abroad or at home?

Should black Americans join the Peace Corps today, or should they stay at home to work in domestic problems? According to a recent Louis Harris poll conducted on 50 Negro campuses (see page 4), this is the most serious question now facing the potential black Volunteer.

Here THE VOLUNTEER *presents a discussion of that question, by three persons representing different points of interest: a returned Volunteer, a host country national, and a U.S. community action worker. The respective participants are Earl Brown, a Volunteer in Tanzania from 1964-1966 who is now working toward his master's degree in urban development at Hunter College in New York; Oumarou Youssoufou, first secretary of the Embassy of Niger; and Mrs. Willie J. Hardy, director of Washington, D. C.'s Community Action Project.*

The discussion is an adaptation of a taped interview prepared for the Peace Corps Office of Public Information by Washington radio station WOL. The half-hour tape has been requested for airing by 136 college radio stations, 95 commercial stations and 27 Negro audience stations.

Dewey Hughes, director of Public Affairs for WOL, is the moderator.

Moderator: How do you feel about recent, black college graduates working in the Peace Corps overseas rather than in domestic problems at home?

Mr. Brown: I speak in reference to my own personal experience, and how I feel differently now than I did two years ago. I feel that I have a broader perspective, a broader scope, that I know myself and my values, and that I'm prepared to work in domestic problems. I worked in domestic problems before I went into the Peace Corps, so you might say I took a leave of absence from America to step away and to really find out where I stand and what I am. As a result of this experience—the travel that is involved, the fact that you meet and make contact with new people, a new language, a new culture, and the fact that you create what I call real understanding among people—you are no longer an American, you're Earl Brown, a human being. When you find yourself, then you're ready to really do some work on domestic problems.

Mrs. Hardy: I think it's great when you can be Earl Brown and not an American, because I think being a black American has real problems to it. I think it does no good for black college graduates to go abroad, rather than work in domestic problems. There are so many problems domestically that black college students ought to be taking care of, as their own thing. I'm sure that it's great to go away; I wish I could be in some parts of black Africa so that I could really be Willie Hardy, rather than an American, black Willie Hardy, which is certainly different. We've had black people go abroad before in the armed forces and they were still black Americans. As an individual, you can probably get exposed. But I don't see that this does any good for black Americans who must then return here. You've been abroad and now you're back, and maybe you're not Earl Brown right *now*, that free man who felt free and exposed to other cultures. You're back to the same culture, being the low man on the totem pole.

Mr. Brown: I went abroad. I think I found my niche, which is urban planning.

Mrs. Hardy: Can you develop now or get involved in urban planning right here in Washington, D. C. as a result of your experience abroad?

Mr. Brown: I think I can, yes.

Moderator: It brings us back to the old familiar questions. Why don't we first take care of, since we've been neglecting them so long, the problems at home? It seems somewhat crazy to be wandering off somewhere else helping to create harmony among other people when you're leaving a situation at home in mass confusion. How do you feel about this?

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ON THE COVER: A preview of a special section on the U.S., starting on page 4.

Mr. Brown: It is, I must admit, rather ironic that an international organization came into existence before a national one. I don't negate in any way the job that has to be done in this country, the attitudes that must be changed. I will be working for that. But on the other hand, I think we're living, whether we like it or not, in an international setting. When we really look at America, in terms of the total world picture, we're a very small part of that picture. In order to develop what I would like to have—peace in the world—then we're going to have to create understanding outside of our own territorial boundaries.

Mrs. Hardy: Don't you think we ought to do something here first? We're going abroad to sell some brotherhood and goodwill to foreign people whose language we can't even speak. And here Senator (Theodore) Bilbo (D.-Miss., 1935 to 1947) did everything he could to make us ashamed of being black, and so have many white Americans. I have some real hang-ups about the whole way America treats black people.

Mr. Brown: Well, I have some hang-ups about that, too.

Mrs. Hardy: Yes, so let's spread a little goodwill here. Then we can more afford to go. Any African nation that really knows how its black brothers are treated here would have some real hang-ups if we went over and started telling them how they could best do things. These developing countries are talking about freedom. They're talking about sustaining themselves. They're talking about being their own masters. We black people in America cannot talk about that, and I don't know what we could possibly give a country that's talking about that kind of thing.

Moderator: Mr. Youssoufou, how do you feel about the hang-ups black people are having in the U.S., and promotion of the Peace Corps and international harmony?

Mr. Youssoufou: I cannot really say because this is purely a domestic problem of the U.S. and I am by no means authorized to get involved in internal American problems. However, I'm not speaking now as the First Secretary of the Niger Embassy, but as a private individual, black African in Washington, D. C., who has had a lot of relations, official and very private, with Peace Corps members – black and white – in my country for the past three years.

This is a very difficult and very complex question. The lady and the gentleman represent two opposing points of view, as I see it. Some feel they should remain at home and handle their own problems; while others feel there is an education in going out. As a result of traveling to about 15 different countries in Europe and in Africa the past seven years I have been working with the government, I think I share Mr. Brown's opinion. The importance of traveling and of exchanging views with people cannot be overemphasized.

We are discussing a two-year tour of a Peace Corps Volunteer. We are not talking about a Volunteer going to live abroad. We are talking of a black American who would go to Africa or to other parts of the world. I think he learns quite a lot about his origin and about his values—what he's worth. Thus, I think it is very important for American Negroes or black Americans to go to Africa, to see it, and to come back. It helps to show them their origin is something they can be proud of, that it is very important, and that these people they left thousands and hundreds of years ago are now developing and coming into world politics, talking of freedom, and organizing their own affairs. It is very important for young American Negroes to go and see this because it will contribute to their progress here in the States when they come back. Because most of my American friends—not most, all of them—I don't know any American friend that disagrees with this—think that when Americans travel abroad and come back to America (this is true not only of Americans, it is true of us, it is true of the French, true of every nation), they are very different from a person who has never left the States. You see, it isn't that the person who has traveled is more intelligent or

Volunteer Sondra Kinder (left), photographed here with PCV Diane Hostetter, works as a poultry extension officer at the government farm in Ajnala, India.

Photo by Mike McKinney

Volunteer Norman Powell plays with two of the boys who live at a home for abandoned children in Honduras, where he works.

smarter. It is simply that this man, in traveling, has seen things, has had discussions with new people. It is very, very important.

Mrs. Hardy: Yes, I agree with you.

Mr. Youssoufou: I don't think it is neglecting your problems here. In that case, you could say, "Why do Africans leave their countries to learn?" They abandon their countries—literally abandon them. When you go to study in Europe, you go for five, six years—some go for ten years. But it is worthwhile because when you come back to Africa, you can do quite a lot. So, I think it's a kind of education—it's like going to school.

Mrs. Hardy: May I agree with you? But what I'm talking about is the finished product. I know people who have been to Africa and have returned with more knowledge of their culture. But when they came back to America and wanted to act out this culture, they often ended up in a frustrated bag. America is not ready to accept the black man. We're talking now—all over America—about black power. The whites have interpreted this to be violence. The word black some of us are just beginning to proudly use. On a radio program recently, I was using the same word; I talked about black people. Yet a nice white lady called in and said, "I've always been for the Negro, but you mustn't use that word 'black.' It sounds so . . ." and she took about five minutes to decide how it sounded, "so threatening." This is the way it is.

When we come back, we're more frustrated than we were before, because we now know about our culture. We want to tell it to other people. We want to talk about the same thing you're talking about, brother—freedom—have something to say about our destiny, and we're more frustrated because America is not ready to accept this. I agree that everything you say is beautiful. I, too, want to go abroad and take my six children. I want to come back and be able to contribute something. But I don't want to come back to the white man's hold on me which says you cannot use this; we're not ready for this. When we talk about black power, it's being defined for us as a very derogatory term. When we decide to use the word black to refer to ourselves, whites get hung up on this. When we talk about freedom, they say we're talking about segregation of the races again, or we're talking about violence. It just makes us more frustrated.

Mr. Brown: Well, I have to disagree, I'm afraid. Quite frankly, I don't feel frustrated at all. I am demanding dignity and I'm going to have it. I'm not asking that you give it to me. I am saying, "It is mine and I'm going to take it." This was not a feeling I had two and a half years ago. I got this feeling in a little village, talking to elders, farmers, herdsmen, who were proud of what they were. And I don't feel any frustration at all. I'm telling white America, "This is what I am, and this is how you'd best look at me from here on in."

You made a point before of going and preaching Americanism. I did not join the Peace Corps for America; I joined the Peace Corps for Earl Brown. I did not go and say, "I'm from America; we do it this way, therefore, you should." That's not my point at all. I did go, though, to a school and say, "I fit that general mode of teacher; I understand you need a teacher. I might be of some service."

It's far from me to go anywhere in the world and say that we don't have problems. The day of painting a pure picture of America is long since passed. I think Volunteers are very critical of America, as a matter of fact. It's like looking at a painting sometimes. When you step away from it, the light shines just a bit differently and you get a greater perspective on it.

Mrs. Hardy: You said that you are not frustrated. How can you translate and get other black people in America to get that feeling that you have? Can you talk to a group of teens—a group of young adults—and translate this feeling to them and tell them what

Brenda Schoonover started as a PCV in the Philippines. Returning home, she was in a teaching intern program at Cardozo High in Washington. She went on to be an associate director in Tanzania and was director of the School Partnership Program when she left the Peace Corps.

freedom is and how they must do it? We cannot all go abroad. But we all have this frustration and if you tell me that you've been abroad and you've seen black people exercising their freedom, participating, and you're not frustrated, then maybe we're talking about degrees of frustration.

I'm quite sure you know that black people in America cannot do what my brother on my right over there can do. We're not about to run any city, state and this kind of thing. We're not independent and we can never be independent, as long as we have the system. I'm sure you must agree with me when we say the words black power are what my brother has in his country. How do the whites interpret that to you?

Mr. Brown: Well, I'm not concerned about how the whites interpret black power. That's their problem. Black power means something to me.

Mrs. Hardy: What I'm trying to do is get beyond you. I'm trying to get to how you can do this for my six children. How can you translate this?

Mr. Youssoufou: I think I agree with Earl. Is it really important what other people think of you? Or is it important what you know you are and what you are persuaded you are? I think what Earl is saying and what I'm trying to say is you are the ones to know what you are. This is a very important first. And then, what other people think of you is a different problem. Because, according to your point, you prefer that black people remain in America, so that they never realize what they are and be frustrated.

Mrs. Hardy: Oh no, no, no.

Mr. Youssoufou: That's what you are saying, in reality. Earl and I are for the point that young, black Americans should go outside, that going out will really show them what they are. This is not only true with Negroes, it is true with white Americans, too.

Mrs. Hardy: My point is, what can they do when they return with all the knowledge about who they are. To send a man to black Africa and bring him back—it's cut off like that . . .

Moderator: I think what Mrs. Hardy is saying is that when you go over to a country, you feel this while you're there two years. When you return to America as a black person, you come back to your neighborhood, I don't care what your background is or on what level you are, you run into obstacles—doors being closed in your face—whether you're qualified or unqualified. I think Mrs. Hardy is trying to say, "Why go and be introduced to this beautiful world and come back to find that it's not beautiful here?"

Mr. Youssoufou: So, don't go.

Mr. Brown: Well, why not go?

Mrs. Hardy: Maybe the solution to that is that the Peace Corps needs to do a follow-up and have the same kind of program so that this brother can bring back the feeling he got through paid experience and have it here in America.

Mr. Brown: Let's look, for example, at returned Volunteers in general and at black returned Volunteers. Take the area of employment—black returned Volunteers are now employed in the poverty program, Job Corps, in communities; many of them are going back to schools because society says you must get a master's or something.

Mrs. Hardy: Here we go. This is what I'm talking about. But what is the Peace Corps going to do for you to help me and others come into that feeling that you have now that you've traveled abroad? The Peace Corps cuts off its thing as soon as you get back.

Mr. Brown: Well, most Volunteers voluntarily cut the umbilical cord because they are individuals. You cannot channel them all into a given type of situation. Each person is going to have to find his niche. I think I found my niche and I think most black returned Volunteers find their niches.

Mrs. Hardy: Do you think that the Peace Corps ought to have a follow-up program so that your niche can be realized by more of your black sisters and brothers here?

Mr. Brown: I don't think that's the Peace Corps' problem. That's Earl Brown's problem.

Mrs. Hardy: Oh, I see. Their problem is to send black people abroad so that they can get involved in this thing over there and find their niche and come back and take a government job or something—which doesn't help us black people at all.

Mr. Brown: No, we don't necessarily take a government job. May I use a personal example? I was born and raised here in Washington, went to inferior secondary education schools in the Northeast. No one in my life had ever told me that I could do anything more than be a minister, a mortician, or work in the government as a messenger or a janitor. "But," I said, "there's more—there's got to be more, somewhere. And I've got to find it." I did not sit there and hold my hands. A lot of doors slammed in my face. I applied to the Peace Corps—never thought I would be accepted. But I said, "All they can tell me is no." So I applied. Let's jump to me now. I'm back after this experience. I know Earl Brown. My place is in the community and this is where I'm going, not in industry, not in government, but in the community. In order to do that, though, I'm going to have to prepare myself more. Just going abroad is not enough. You need to understand the power structure and you need to work within it to change it. This is how I see it.

Mrs. Hardy: Is that what happened in the Belgian Congo? They worked within the power structure?

Mr. Brown: No, I'm not saying this is the only way. I look at this whole problem in America, for example. We need what I would call, for lack of a better term, people who are going to keep the problem before America. But we also need people who are able to negotiate, who are able to

open these doors, who are able to attain these positions of power. All of us have to work together. Your way is your way. My bag is my bag.

Mrs. Hardy: Could I just talk about you a little bit more? How do you plan to go into the community and try to get for us what this brother is getting for his people or his people have?

Mr. Brown: Well, I hope one day to stop some of our urban planning people from dislocating thousands of Negroes and building roads for the convenience of the suburbanites.

Mrs. Hardy: Yes, I know. How can you, Mr. Brown. . . .

Mr. Brown: Well, first of all, there have been many people before me—I might ask you why some of the people who are older than I am haven't done it. . . .

Moderator: In summary, let's hear from each of you about recent, black graduates working in the Peace Corps rather than in domestic programs here at home.

Mr. Youssoufou: The experience of traveling is very important; as Earl has said quite correctly, it forms the personality of the person. Africans are very anxious to know more about this very big population that is outside Africa. I think it is very important to go out, to get to know where one's origin and culture are. Then it is very important, when one comes back, to share this knowledge. I'm sure it could be of great use to the community.

Mrs. Hardy: I agree with the idea of travel. I think that it is most important. And I do not want anyone to misunderstand what I am saying. If you can go abroad to find out who you are and what your background is through the Peace Corps, that's one way of doing it. But I've seen Peace Corps Volunteers return. They've lived here a year, two years after coming back from the Peace Corps and nothing has changed. I would suggest that the Peace Corps or domestic programs follow up what the black brother has learned and found of himself abroad, so that we black Americans might enjoy the same thing that our black college students found the black people overseas doing. As it is, I think the Peace Corps is an ineffective program for American black people.

Mr. Brown: Whether we like it or not, we live in a competitive society. We're going to need experience and exposure. I think the Peace Corps is simply one vehicle to get that exposure and to develop sensitivity, perspective, scope and leadership. I think that when these young black graduates return, they know themselves, they know what must be done, and they're willing to get in there and do it. I think leadership is a very important aspect of that. All of a sudden you're given a lot of responsibility. People are asking you questions and you must develop leadership. I know that I did. I don't think I would have developed that working as a messenger or working in the government as a clerk.

Peace Corps Volunteer architects John Phillips (left) and Thomas Sheehan help design public housing on Saipan in Micronesia. They are part of a major program in the islands which includes PCVs with various technical and professional skills lacking in the area.

Bridging the gap: Peace Corps staff meets

The New Volunteer

"The New Volunteer" — Berkeley style — was introduced to about two dozen Peace Corps staff members who recently gathered at the University of California.

The meeting had been arranged by university officials who felt the Peace Corps needed to know what Berkeley students thought about world events, American society, war, sex, education, and individual rights. Why? Because the Peace Corps would be, in fact, already was, dealing with a new kind of Volunteer in the recent college graduate; and because the student attitudes and opinions at Berkeley were likely to be reflected on campuses across the U.S.

Many of the Peace Corps staffers did not find "The New Volunteer" all that new, but almost all were intrigued with the new way they got to know the Berkeley prototype, and the things they learned in the process.

The four-day conference was a mixture of formal presentations and casual give-and-take. Housed in the "Center for Human Interaction," the Peace Corps participants sallied forth each day to engage in activities planned by university officials and students.

The first event set the scene: The participants viewed a movie on violence; a montage of old newsclips depicting many forms of self-destruction. When the lights came on, the Peace Corps members were asked by the students: "You laughed at certain parts—why?"

Thus the conference began on a "we-they" theme, according to Deputy Director Brent Ashabranner, one of the participants.

(The next day, when the same film was shown again, no one laughed. The students then queried: "You laughed last night. Why not today?")

The formal agenda of the conference was played out in a meeting room where two squares of tables—one inner, one outer—had been arranged for seating. The squares were equipped with microphones, and a kind of built-in inhibition toward open conversation, said one participant.

In the conference room, the participants listened to lectures on music, drugs, politics and revolution —all designed to clue in Peace Corps staff on student thought in those areas.

But most of the participants agreed that the best part of the conference was what took place outside the meeting room, where the "we-they" feeling dissolved. On their own, small clusters of Peace Corps staffers and students gathered for lunch on Telegraph Avenue and dinner in students' apartments. They walked the Haight, visited the Straight Theater, and picnicked on campus.

"The whole thing was one-fourth facts and three-fourths personal relationship," said one Peace Corps participant.

And most of the other Peace Corps members agreed that personal exchange was the most effective kind, individual gains the greatest ones to come out of the conference.

On the following pages, four Peace Corps participants give their views of the conference, with an effort to assess where the Peace Corps does, can, or should stand with students like the ones they met at Berkeley.

The assemblage of Peace Corps staffers and Berkeley students meet—some in shirtsleeves, many of the floor—for a discussion.

Photos by John Pearson

A formal session: ". . . the student activists, the 'New Volunteer,' the Peace Corps staff, people aged 30+ and 30—, people hostile and people friendly, people disturbed and people disturbing . . . all began to find each other and found we were much more alike than we were different."

What direction change?

The New Volunteer at the Berkeley Conference drew many an adjective from those who struggled through the four days. "Disgusting." "Informative." "Exhilarating." "Historically repetitive." "Frightening."

At one time or another, he was each of these to me.

His *viva yo* stance was disgusting; so was his involutional egocentrism, his lack of drive toward even his own stated goals, his duplicity in congratulating himself for snatching an NDEA scholarship while decrying any participation in the evil "system," his fatuous display of a can of S.S. Pierce lobster bisque he'd goldbricked from the parental pantry leaving half of the delicacy on the cruddy communal sink to the delight of the cockroaches, defeating thus the parental pantry, his pad-partners who might also cherish this bit of despised elegance, and himself. *Viva yo! Viva ninguno.*

He was certainly informative. Even to those of us who weren't as archaic, apple-cheeked and sealed-in-wax as the conference formula implied we were, he brought much new information . . . the meaning of music in his life, his views on drugs, the squarish image of the Communist in his eyes, the allegiance he can marshal to a communal life (even though desperate at times), the courage he has to attack head-on the windmills he sees in his path. For one, I was happy to see these new dimensions on an age group which only 15 years ago was fearful to stand up and be counted.

Most of all he was exhilarating. Not that he planned to be, or intended to be, for he was undoubtedly primed to gadfly the stately elders who had come to watch him in this contrived laboratory. He was exhilarating because he was a real human being. And the conference ended not on an evangelistic motif of go-forth-and-be-saved, Peace Corps!, but rather on a theme of all-people-can-reach-each-other. A hackneyed theme, but some of the overtones were Wagnerian.

Thus, he was historically repetitive. For the conference became a truly traditional Peace Corps experience. The whole film was played over again. But like all Peace Corps experiences, no one knew exactly when and how the lights went out and the film began. First, there was the culture shock of the new setting and the strain of the new dynamics; there was the exploration, the tentative reaching out and withdrawing, trying to find ourselves and "why we were there anyway." There was the "imperialistic" group who knew all the answers and pulled the strings to thrust the participants toward the previously set "goals" we were to attain.

Then, suddenly there was the delicious harmony of discovery into which, left alone to our own integrity and our unique honesty, we stumbled. Suddenly the student activists, the "New Volunteer," the Peace Corps staff, people aged 30 + and 30 —, people hostile and people friendly, people disturbed and people disturbing . . . all began to find each other and found we were much more alike than we were different.

The Peace Corps, after all, *is* people. The New Volunteers are people. And when people truly get together, it's the same lovely lullaby reaching back to the roots. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

He was also frightening—frightening because he is indisputably new. If the Peace Corps cannot appeal to him, then the Peace Corps must certainly change. And if it *can* appeal to him, it must equally change. So will he! Change is always frightening, even when it leads to rich mutuality.

What direction the change? From the experience of this intense microcosm of Peace Corps experience at Berkeley, the change must be toward melting of boundaries. The workable harmony demanded a loss of self—of self-image, self-conscientiousness, self-aggrandizement, self-saving. Until both students and staff quite forgot their external roles, they had little to say to each other.

Is it possible that, in spite of our much-repeated "Peace Corps *is* the Volunteer," the Peace Corps may be inadvertently striving to maintain itself as an entity separate and apart from the Volunteer, an institution to be submitted to, to be conformed to? So long as the Peace Corps has its separate muscles to flex, its own self to exhort, perhaps it can't attract the New Volunteer—nor maintain the allegiance of the Old one.

—Vera Vinogradoff

Maureen Orth, regional public affairs representative for the West, joints the discussion at the New Volunteer conference. To her immediate right is Edwin Barker, deputy director of the Office of Planning, Program Review and Research.

Feelings vs. facts

Two incidents occurred at the Berkeley conference which have major implications for Peace Corps staff-Volunteer relations. A student said, "I feel that the Peace Corps has all the trappings of a bureaucracy and is no different from all the others we have been dealing with." When asked for evidence to support that feeling, the student replied, "I don't need to supply evidence. The facts are not important, it is my feeling that counts." Naturally, many of the conference participants were upset and unsatisfied by this reply.

In another instance, one of the deans of the University of California, who deals directly with the students, gave a talk on student attitudes and behavior. After his talk, one of the students said, "If you know all that about us, why are we having such difficulty in working together?" Later in the discussion, the dean said, "I came here to listen and I am not going to reply," whereupon he shut up and did not say anything for the rest of the afternoon.

What do these incidents tell us? First, the students feel that personal feelings are more important in relationships than Platonic truths. In discussions and negotiations, students want to be considered according to their feelings rather than according to the quality of their information. They think it is each person's task to find out what the other feels, then discover ways to deal with those feelings. Arguing on facts while ignoring perceptions and experiences leaves students with the feeling that the authorities do not care about them and usually leads to a breakdown in communication and a block to creative solutions.

The second incident points out a major weakness in the administration's attempt to deal with students. The dean must have felt that he was making a major concession and adopting an enlightened position by listening to anyone who came into his office. Yet, by not giving anything of his own feelings and positions on issues, he missed the whole point. Students are not satisfied with merely being heard, they expect to be talked to. They want a reciprocal relationship in which the authority (whoever he may be) acknowledges the students' importance by trying to convince them of his point of view as well as being persuaded by the student's point of view.

It was evident at Berkeley and is evident from reports about Columbia, that students are very aware of the decision making process and want to be a part of it. An open door policy, where the administrator says that he will listen to anyone, is not an adequate response to the students' demand for participation. The impression such a policy conveys is that the administration continues to be the final authority and the students' role is to supply information, the ultimate use of which is beyond the students' control. The students demand that they be a part of the decision making process, that their judgments and recommendations have equal influence in the final decision, and that they be there when the decision is made. When a student (or a trainee or Volunteer) makes some statement, it is not enough for the administration to say, "Hmm, yes, I understand. Thank you!" He must reply with his own thoughts, saying, "That's crazy, because . . ." or "I agree with you and furthermore . . ." Without giving of his own feelings, he cannot show the respect that students are demanding.

Students are surprisingly sophisticated about the decision making process and workings of university administrations. In the past, Volunteers may have learned about organizations after they joined the Peace Corps, now they

come in experienced in confrontation with authority. They may have misconceptions about our bureaucracy, but we can expect that they will learn at a rate alarming to some. They are suspicious and will not be satisfied with gestures which have the appearance of meeting their demands but are really stalling devices. They are becoming increasingly aware of their power and more sophisticated in using it.

For Peace Corps staff, the implications are clear. Where staff suspects problems, they cannot assume that they can handle them by being a bit more clever than in the past. Staff must include trainees or Volunteers in the decision making process as genuine equals. It must be willing to present and defend its convictions in situations of conflict. The staff should not wait for Volunteers to come forward with problems, but should actively solicit trainee or Volunteer opinions and deal with them openly. If the staff makes a decision that counters the Volunteers' opinion, it should explain why the Volunteers were overruled. If the staff and Volunteers disagree, the staff should be willing to change its mind and should try to show Volunteers why they should change their minds. The New Volunteer will not be put off by, "If you knew what I know . . ." His response will be, "Why don't I know?" Tell me and we'll talk about it!"

—Carl Hosticka

Style needs updating

The Peace Corps people and the students had a human encounter that went beyond mere intellectual discussion of the conference topics. In spite of this, I am disturbed by what seemed to me to be the smug attitude of most Peace Corps officials in attendance and their resulting failure to understand the import of what the students were saying. The students were saying that the Peace Corps is outdated, and what we have failed to grasp is the urgent need for an ideological and institutional updating in the Peace Corps today.

I deliberately choose to use *outdated* rather than *irrelevant* because it is clear that the call to action which the Peace Corps sounds is highly relevant, to a struggle of both domestic and international dimensions.

Ideologically, the students showed this is 1968, not 1962. That great wave of middle class idealism on the part of young Americans which has sustained Peace Corps since 1962 is ebbing; for the American student middle class in 1968 has lost its self-confidence. Vietnam, urban rebellions, and political assassinations have taken their toll.

Yet, these issues relate to the Peace Corps in a social rather than political sense. The students don't really connect us with these issues politically. They see the Peace Corps as part of a social movement and it is as such that we seem outdated to them. Their experience here in the U.S. is demonstrating that middle class student involvement with the problems of poverty and social injustice must be based upon a middle class-poor alliance (read Peace Corps-peasant) in both ideology and action. Yet, the Peace Corps still tries to communicate with them in language with a distinctly WASPish and strictly middle class ideological accent.

They have not only lost confidence in the middle class, they also reject a great deal of the middle class value system. Perhaps more accurately, they espouse a "post-modern" middle class value system. It is more than anything else a rejection of middle class conventionalism in patterns of dress, speech, personal behavior, and social attitudes.

The students clearly manifested a hostility toward institutions in general and big ones in particular. Initial hostility toward the Peace Corps staff people as institution members and a

A number of the conference participants reported their most meaningful contacts came outside the conference structure. Robert Steiner, regional director for North Africa, Near East and South Asia, and Vera Vinogradoff (right), of the Division of Research, lunch with two student participants.

strongly negative reaction to two University of California vice-chancellors who spoke were clear indications of this attitude. Their institutional frame of reference is the university and they find it oppressive. It doesn't allow them to participate in its management and it often tries to limit severely their personal freedom. They project that image upon the Peace Corps and then draw back from us. Their distaste for institutions seems to have overridden earlier views of the Peace Corps as being a different sort of institution. Now they consider volunteer service and ask themselves if it can be done in the Peace Corps without being frustrated by the institution.

The changing attitudes of today's prospective Volunteers and the demands of American society call for specific action from the Peace Corps, based upon new ideological perspectives and institutional responses. The two are closely interrelated. We need to seek out more Puerto Ricans, Afro-Americans, and Mexican-Americans because we need them more than they need us. We need to recruit and advertise, espousing a more open commitment to the poor of the world on their own terms, a concept unsettling to the smug charity mentality of the conventional middle class. We must demonstrate that we can assist in the struggle in the U.S. by working out joint programs with the Teacher Corps and VISTA and by setting up hiring sessions where inner-city and rural school officials can have access to large numbers of returning Peace Corps teachers. We must push harder for a reverse Peace Corps that would bring more Volunteers from other countries to work with our people in the U.S.

On the institutional side, we need to communicate that Peace Corps Volunteers overseas experience the greatest personal freedom they will know in their lives, that they assist in programming, planning, training, and in a host of other participatory and decision making roles within the institution. We must show that we believe in non-authoritarian leadership by overseas staff, that we support Volunteer advisory councils, etc.

Most important of all, we need to demonstrate that we can bring an institution close to the people and break down bigness and impersonality. We need to bear witness and show that middle class coat-and-tie conventionalism needn't obscure our unique qualities. We can do a lot of this by getting out of a big office building in white, downtown Washington and into a series of streetfront offices in the inner city where we belong. It's a gimmick if we do it to try to look good; it's something else if we do it because we believe that's where a peace movement's headquarters belongs.

—Charles E. Costello

Confronting concepts

The point of the conference seemed to be to acquaint some perversely selected "fat cat" Peace Corps bureaucrats with the "New Volunteer." How much any of us learned was largely a function of our general familiarity with students and Volunteers. I, for one, learned a lot about some Berkeley students. To what degree generalizations from Berkeley students to Peace Corps Volunteers are warranted is unclear to me, but I suppose it's reasonable to assume that some propositions are generally true. What are some of these? Consider some polarities which, in a rather crude fashion, represent widely divergent ways of perceiving, relating and feeling about the world and about oneself.

Berkeley students are suspicious of and hostile to any concentrations of power. Institutions, to the degree they reflect ways of looking at the world to the exclusion of other ways, are invariably corrupt. The monolithic, unresponsive, rigid and self-perpetuating character of church,

". . . We need to demonstrate that we can bring an institution close to the people and break down bigness and impersonality. We need to bear witness and show that middle class coat-and-tie conventionalism needn't obscure our unique qualities

Bag lunches, such as this one on the Berkeley campus, brought conference participants, both students and staff, closer to bridging the generation gap.

family, state and university are perceived as dehumanizing, incompatible with freedom, individuality, personal growth and honest spontaneity. In Rousseauian rhetoric, power exercised through established institutions, we were repeatedly told, stifles life instead of enhancing it, and destroys ultimately the simple freedom and childlike innocence of the primitive in a state of nature.

The alternative to our present arrangement is anarchy—but apparently not of the traditional sort. If authority or leadership is necessary, then its foundation must be the charisma and personality of the leader whose power is a function of the degree to which others *decide* they are obliged to allow the leader his role. But established, institutionalized authority whose foundation is age, or paper credentials, or, most offensive of all, the role he plays as a result of his position in a bureaucracy, is unacceptable.

Given such sentiments, other propositions are predictable and, as a matter of fact, are often expressed by Berkeley students.

One is that Berkeley students tend, following Plato, to draw a polarity between intellect and feeling. Much of their antipathy toward the university stems from what they perceive to be the institution's parochialism. "Education" is the development of those rational faculties which prepare students for a social and economic system whose character they have learned to abhor. The university is seen as an agent of the *status quo*, as an instrument for the perpetuation of an empty, unfulfilling, mean and narrow life. The development of mind becomes the denial of soul. A man's ability to love and care for others ought, they argue, to take precedence over his ability to accumulate weath, status and power. This view, in its cruder terms, takes on some of the patina of the older, rather moldly, quasi-Marxist concept of alienation.

The emphasis on the immediate gratification of wishes stands in sharp contrast to the older cultural norms of delaying today's gratification in order to assure tomorrow's reward. This view, generally associated with sexual gratification, is more broadly conceived by some as contrasting with the attitude of the older generation who dealt with the repressive mechanisms of industrialized society by saying, in effect, "I will allow the system to mold my character and determine my life, but secretly and privately I will retain my integrity, my personality, my individual uniqueness, and work within the confines of the world I live in." This view, students claim, is the ultimate illusion and the most pathetic. What then can one do, one asks?

The grey locution, "doing your own thing," appears to be part of the answer. If fulfillment and satisfaction are not to be found in the conventional world outside, then this growing fatalism alleges, we must seek fulfillment within ourselves. The turn to drugs, the turn to Eastern mysticism, are manifestations of the new subjectivism. Some of the more perceptive students see even what appear to be (from the outside) greater political militancy and the tendency to seek a political solution as utterly non-political in fundamental character. Confrontations with college deans or Pentagon officials are more in the tradition of "giving testimony" in the old Christian sense than as efforts to effect political change. Students are more fearful of the possibilities of Eichmann-like guilt than they are hopeful of social and cultural transformation.

The banal truth, if there is a truth, probably falls between these dramatic extremes—as usual.

—Joseph S. Murphy

Editor's note—THE VOLUNTEER also *invited a number of the student participants to contribute their thoughts on the conference. Most declined, due to final examinations. The invitation remains open.*

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS: Vera Vinogradoff, *formerly with the Office of Selection, is now in the Division of Research, Office of Planning, Program Review and Research.* Carl Hosticka, *who was a Volunteer in Nepal, is a member of the Fellows program.* Charles Costello, *also in the Fellows program, was a Volunteer in Guatemala and has been assigned to Colombia as an associate director.* Joseph Murphy, *formerly director of the Virgin Islands training center and an associate director at the Job Corps, was recently named Peace Corps country director in Ethiopia.*

RPCVs: beyond the third goal

The Peace Corps was little more than six years old when those who had served as Volunteers began to outnumber those who were serving. Since then, the numbers gap has steadily widened. Today there are more than 10,000 Volunteers in the field, compared to more than 23,000 who have returned—most of them after two years of service.

Along with a growing strength in numbers, there is among returned Volunteers in the U.S. a growing trend toward organization. Many RPCVs, especially those who live in large cities and university communities, are opting for a collective "returned Volunteer" voice; they are getting together to study, speak and act on a variety of international and domestic issues.

Most widely known among such groups are the Committees of Returned Volunteers in New York City, Boston, Madison, Wis., Washington, D. C., Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, and Bloomington, Ind. Representatives of these eight groups met in Madison in late spring to discuss the formation of a national organization.

Of the prospective "federation," National Interim Chairman John McAuliff wrote in the June issue of the New York CRV newsletter: "We do not aim at maximizing our numbers by becoming an alumni club or a latter-day Foreign Policy Association of all *concerned* former Volunteers. Instead, we see the CRV as a vehicle for those who share an organizing principle and a political perspective and who are seeking a lever on American society, and for those who are committed to doing sustained long-term work on major foreign and domestic issues."

The base, and the "expertise," of the national group would be the same as that of the local groups now in existence—the voluntary, overseas service of its members.

Many of these returned volunteer groups include former members of organizations other than the Peace Corps, such as the Experiment in International Living, Crossroads Africa, etc. But the vast majority of most groups are Peace Corps veterans. And while mixed membership (and legal technicalities) deters the organizations from invoking the Peace Corps in their names, the size of the Peace Corps representation often makes the connection unavoidable.

Most returned Peace Corps Volunteers historically have rejected formal organization. Statistics show that most still do. But the numbers of the organized and their RPCV sympathizers, while proportionately low, are now estimated to be in the several thousands; it is evident that many returned Volunteers have in the past year or so found reasons to join returned volunteer groups.

Opposition to the Vietnam war has probably been the major catalyst in bringing together RPCVs, at least among the earlier groups. In a few instances, petitions and position papers against the war were the only organizing forces, with "ad hoc" groups disbanding when the petitions had run their course. An important exception to these short-lived groups, and the pacesetter for many of the seven other groups now considering a national commitment, is the New York Committee of Returned Volunteers.

The New York group was formed in 1966. It received national prominence about a year later when it published a position paper on Vietnam, and invited returned volunteers across the country to affirm the anti-war position stated (the CRV recently announced that more than 2,000 returned volunteers have sinced signed the paper).

The Presidential election is an example of a more recent concern of organized returned Volunteers. Members of the Madison Committee of Returned Volunteers canvassed and campaigned for Eugene McCarthy prior to the Wisconsin primary this spring. Madison RPCVs also campaigned for a "yes" vote on the referendum calling for a Vietnam ceasefire and withdrawal.

The Washington, D. C. committee became one of the most active CRV groups to support the Poor People's Campaign. Washington members comprised teams of speakers who addressed interested civic and church groups on the goals of the campaign. They assisted the campaigners in Resurrection City, lobbied for the poor on Capitol Hill, and participated in the Solidarity Day March.

The foreign-based service which brought together the returned volunteer groups has perpetuated an interest in foreign affairs. Most of the groups have subcommittees divided by world regions, such as the four areas in which the Peace Corps serves: Africa, Latin America, East Asia-Pacific, and North Africa, Near East, South Asia. These subcommittees often serve their organizations in both informational and political capacities. They effect a range of activities from scheduling speakers on a given topic to writing position papers based on their research (and volunteer experience) and opinion.

Many group members are convinced that a publicly united, returned volunteer effort is a potential political force that returned volunteers ought to use in order to effect change. For others of today's joiners, it is a time of testing, a trial membership to see what can be accomplished, at what price to individuality. Many in this latter group have already retreated, seeking to "do their own thing" in anonymity.

Others, some of whom disagree with various goals and tactics of the CRVs, have joined colleagues in local efforts: a more comprehensive local community involvement, aiding Peace Corps recruiting efforts on the local campus, or serving as a social contact through which returned volunteers in the vicinity might share common interests.

Even more difficult to assess than the effect of the RPCV groups is the effect of the individual RPCV, and it appears that the majority of RPCVs have chosen—either purposely or by default—to make their contributions in an individual manner. One of the largest gatherings of RPCVs in Washington, D. C. was a luncheon at which Sargent Shriver spoke. In part, the luncheon had been advertised: Pay at the door. No bylaws. No officers. No dues.

Finishing out the year, RPCVs teaching in Philadelphia were called together to talk about the results of their experience. Several program changes for the following year were discussed.

Teaching in the ghetto

By DEAN M. GOTTEHRER

"Can a PCV from a Small Overseas School Find Success, Love and Happiness in a Large Eastern City?"

This was the question posed in a memo from Robert W. Blackburn, former deputy Peace Corps director in Somalia, and now the Peace Corps' voluntary "man in Philadelphia." Sent to terminating education Volunteers around the world in April, 1967, the memo called Philadelphia "the one city where you can teach in a climate of change, teach kids who need you and will respond to you, work on your graduate degree and make over seven thousand United States Dollars per annum in the process."

Blackburn, director of Philadelphia's Office of Integration and Intergroup Education, answered his own question with a "yes." After one school year's experience with close to 200 returned Peace Corps Volunteers who responded to the call, the answer more properly is a "maybe."

The RPCVs' experience has been as varied as they are themselves. It has been plagued with many unexpected problems, from lack of student discipline and uncooperative principals to a fear of living in the ghetto. Lack of program supports hindered effective use of the RPCVs and slowed their efforts at change.

The Philadelphia experience began in early spring of 1967. Spurred by a teacher deficit that fluctuated between 800 and 1,200 teachers a year, Blackburn met with a dozen RPCVs then teaching in Philadelphia to debate making a direct teaching invitation to Volunteers in the field. The decision to invite was made; the memo, which included a blank contract, was sent. There were no interviews, RPCVs were placed on the third step of the salary scale, and draft boards were informed at the RPCV's request.

The response was larger than ever anticipated, with close to 75 RPCVs able to attend the month-long, paid, summer orientation and a total of almost 200 finishing out the school year. Approximately 60 per cent taught in elementary schools, and most of the RPCVs taught in inner-city ghetto schools.

According to Blackburn, only 10 per cent of the RPCVs met the stringent certification requirements of Pennsylvania, the remainder being appointed as provisional teachers with two years to acquire their certification.

The motivation to teach in Philadelphia was mixed among the RPCVs interviewed. Some went there because of a dedication to teaching, others because it was a place to land.

Robert W. Blackburn, director of the Office of Integration and Intergroup Education and former deputy director in Somalia, says teaching techniques learned overseas are not transferable.

"I thought it would be a very interesting job and that I would be qualified for it," says Linda Wycoff, who served in Turkey and taught at Landreth Elementary. "I had taught in a different country and I knew that teaching in ghetto schools would be quite different from what I was used to, but I was terribly cocksure and I thought I could do pretty well."

The orientation program, generally conceded by the administration and teachers alike to have been a failure, tried to relate the overseas experience to the domestic task. It failed because it was more an orientation in bureaucracy for new teachers than specifically tailored to the needs of PCVs returning from overseas. It will be changed next year to deal with the criticisms of the RPCVs. But reforming the orientation will not easily solve the problem of relating overseas to domestic teaching situations.

Blackburn, clarifying the problem, says, "What you learn in overseas teaching is not transferable. Classroom techniques have to be re-tooled, re-thought; new techniques added. The Peace Corps notion, the Peace Corps stance towards children—those things are transferable."

Barry Weisenfeld, who served in the Philippines and taught a class of mentally and emotionally retarded children at George Washington Elementary, reflects an important attitude for a ghetto teacher. He sees the main transfer from the Peace Corps experience as a willingness "to accept learning disabilities." Says Weisenfeld, "I don't think I ever once looked at a kid and said 'He can't learn.' I know of other teachers who have."

Another problem which some RPCVs related to their Peace Corps days was that their early expectations in Philadelphia were high, higher than what has been accomplished. After a while, as in the Peace Corps, expectations were scaled down. But, as Louis Paff, an RPCV who served in Liberia and taught at George Washington Elementary, puts it, "I assumed that since I would be working in my own country it would be easier and therefore I should get more done. Peace Corps made it a little bit harder for me to realize that the aspirations were too high."

Turning on kids

Blackburn comments that the average PCV was not a "conspicuous" success overseas and should not "delude himself that by dint of his overseas experience, which was probably a mixed bag, he is ready to come into the urban school and turn on kids." Blackburn does believe that "RPCVs are the single best pool of people from which to find the most conspicuously successful career teachers."

The RPCVs teaching in Philadelphia ran into a wide gamut of problems for which they feel their Peace Corps experience did not prepare them. Louis Paff states a major concern of most RPCVs interviewed—discipline problems.

Overseas, the Volunteer teacher's major classroom problem was attempting to change modes of learning and thinking. The Philadelphia problem was getting students quiet and attentive so that teaching could begin. The problem was not the existence of a blackboard jungle atmosphere, but rather the deadening responses to the deadening educational forces worked on black children. As Jonathan Kozol points out in *Death At An Early Age*, having been educationally damaged by irrelevant and meaningless attempts at education, black children will only respond to books, things and ideas that are relevant to their experiences and lives.

The RPCV who entered an inner-city school without having previously taught in similar situations probably had not worked out solutions to the problems and did not have the devices created through years of experience, tested in classroom use. His successful overseas experience raised false expectations about his abilities at home and gave him a confidence verging on arrogance. He tried to work out a system of classroom management. As with all new teachers, it may have been authoritarian or democratic. In Philadelphia, this year, it was more often domination by loud voice and ruler.

"Failure is just inherent in the job (of teacher)," says Dennis Fox, a returned Volunteer from Ethiopia I. The teacher must tread the middle ground of acknowledging his mistakes, but not feeling guilty about them, Fox adds.

Aside from discipline, there were other classroom problems worrying RPCVs. They were upset by the prevailing attitude on teaching methodology from the administration, which they read as placing a premium on classroom silence. Linda Wycoff says, "As long as they keep these children quiet and give lip-service to caring, it doesn't matter to them."

RPCVs also complained about instructions to keep orderly classrooms and about the amount of paperwork they were required to do. One RPCV felt he should be getting two salaries —one as a teacher, the other as a secretary.

Racial overtones a concern

Racial overtones in disciplining were also a concern. Paul Vesce, an RPCV who served in Malawi and taught math at Franklin High, poses this situation: "Say a white teacher disciplines a black kid, he has got to be worried about what the repercussions of this are, perhaps not from the other black teachers in the school, but from the people outside—local community groups, parents groups, whoever is doing things politically."

The racial situation also intruded in the administration of the schools. Larry Boehme, an Antioch-Putney intern who served in Colombia, describes the situation in his school: "The black teachers are very resentful of the ineptitude that's going on. They have all the reason in the world to be. They see white people making the decisions. You see the destruction done to these kids. It's just not a pretty picture. So people are really up tight against one another. Our black teachers are saying now, 'Okay, we have black children, why can't we have a black, all black school?' "

At the same time, there were RPCVs who were not confronted by racial problems. Fred Renken, who served in Colombia and taught at Sulzberger Junior High, comments: "I never did look at my class as being black, although everybody is. Race never entered my mind until they kind of mentioned it. They said, 'This is kind of like "To Sir, With Love," only in reverse.' "

Dealing with principals was another of the returned Volunteers' biggest problems. The most knowledgeable and vocal RPCVs may have encountered outright hostility. Principals have little choice in the teachers assigned to their schools. Some were reluctant to concede any value to RPCVs as teachers. Some principals interviewed came close to charging the RPCVs with incompetence and said they lacked experience. One principal was happy to have ex-Volunteers teaching in his school and encouraged them to use their overseas experience

School districts offered help recruiting RPCVs

Director Jack Vaughn, in an effort to create an awareness of returned Volunteers as potential urban teachers, recently offered to assist the school superintendents in six large U.S. cities in "approaching Volunteers during the next few months as they make post-Peace Corps plans."

Vaughn wrote the superintendents that returned Volunteers "have made commitments to be 'where the action is'—and for many of them this implies an urban situation. . . ."

"The Volunteer teacher supply, obviously, is relatively small compared with the nation's (teacher) shortage," Vaughn added. "We feel it is important that this country's educational systems make the best use of this small, but potent, resource."

All of the six school districts, Chicago, St. Louis, New York, Los Angeles, Detroit and Cleveland, have responded to Vaughn's offer of assistance. One other, Minneapolis, not included on the letter called to find out why and also responded to the offer.

Other cities with recruiting programs actively seeking RPCVs are Washington and Philadelphia. Washington schools recently sent Ed Winner, director of the Cardozo project which served as a model for the National Teachers Corps, to several African countries, Korea and the Philippines in search of terminating Volunteers to take positions teaching in Washington's ghetto schools. Winner came back with 30 signed contracts and another 120 applications.

The Philadelphia situation, specifically examined in this article, is slowly changing. Because of extensive domestic recruiting, Philadelphia is no longer facing a huge teacher shortage. The only vacancies projected for the future are those caused by normal retirement and teacher turnover. Therefore, Philadelphia is only interested in teachers for its shortage areas: elementary teachers with a degree in that area, junior and senior high math, elementary and women's physical education, junior high music and special education.

New York State has also held several yearly conferences bringing sizable numbers of teachers to New York City to meet with recruiting personnel from various school districts around the state.

in the classroom and at assembly programs. Volunteers felt the most interference from principals in the areas of teaching methodology and curriculum.

An RPCV who has had more experience in the Philadelphia schools than any other returned Volunteer, having taught there 17 years before joining the Peace Corps to serve in Ethiopia, says the problem with uncooperative principals lies in Philadelphia's having been "a closed system for a good many years." Roberta Kramer, an Educational Improvements Program specialist at George Washington Elementary, says there is a built-in decline in the quality of principals because the examining boards are composed of principals who never pass anyone better than they are. "Frequently, teachers," she says, "are much more progressive, much more liberal and innovative than principals."

Another part of the problem, according to Linda Wycoff, "is the bureaucracy of the whole school system. It's not being able to say what you think; not being able to talk out your problems with the administration."

Dr. Mark Shedd, superintendent of Philadelphia schools, acknowledges that what is bothering large numbers of RPCVs is "the whole *Up the Down Staircase* bit. They get terribly upset about conditions within large high schools and junior high schools especially, the paper and the red tape and the whole business of the dehumanizing influences at work on teachers and kids. They seem to be very sensitive to the human needs of kids. The kinds of questions they ask bore right in on the things we're doing that we should change."

Comments Blackburn: "As 200 people within 18,000 professionals, RPCVs are not turning on the system. And no system should expect to be turned on by a small cadre of returned Volunteers. But they can make a special little contribution to the system."

Dr. Shedd, described in the recruiting materials as "a young, iconoclastic, Harvard-trained superintendent," supports Blackburn.

Institutionalizing change

"If the system is going to change," says Shedd, "it's going to change at the middle management level, district superintendents and principals. There is no question about it. . . . If the Peace Corps returnees and other new people coming into our system are really interested in having change become institutionalized, they have got to begin to influence and influence strongly."

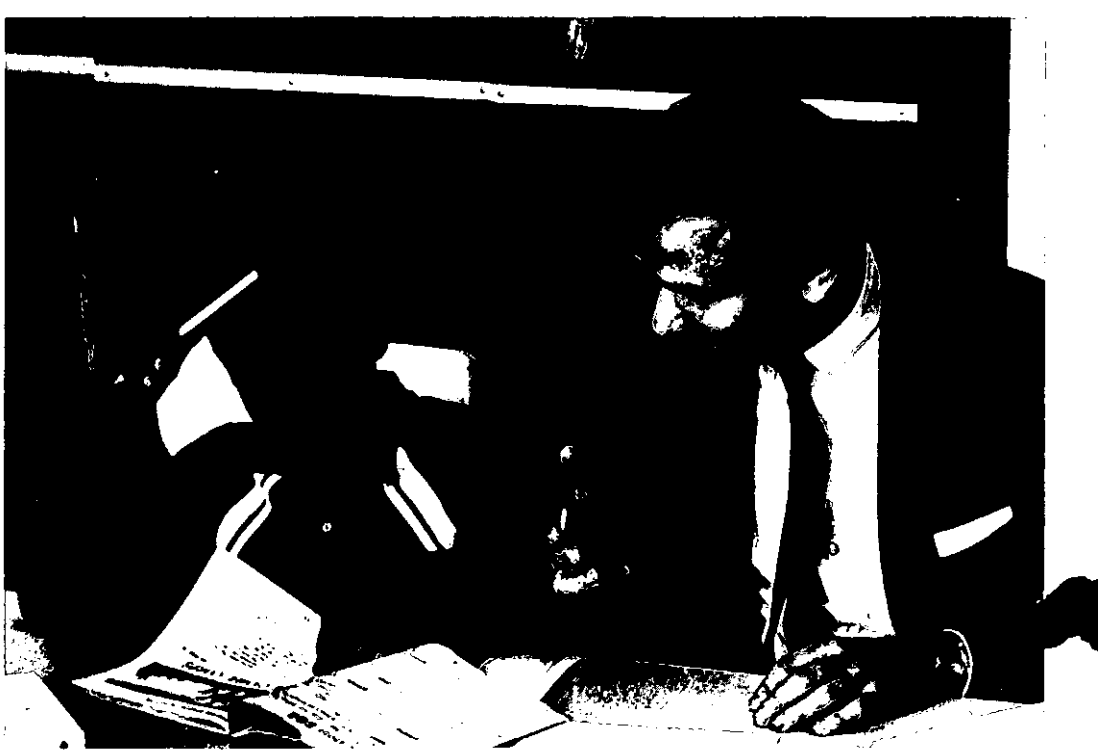
In the spirit of Peace Corps, the RPCV teacher has tried to buck the system and change things. He has met opposition to his efforts.

But Blackburn does not see the situation as hopeless. An RPCV could buck the system and "could carry it through and win, because at the top level there are people saying 'That's what we want,'" he says.

Most RPCVs did not express a willingness to fight the system and take it all the way to the top. Some were unsure of their footing because they lacked experience. Others were fighting to get out from under paperwork and planning. Still others were exhausted from their overseas "wars" and appeared to have lost the lust to do battle.

Very few RPCVs continued in the Peace Corps style by living in the ghetto neighborhoods where they taught. There was a fear of the ghetto which developed perhaps before Peace Corps service. A typical attitude is expressed by Linda Wycoff, who says she would not want to live in the ghetto "unless I were married. I'm just a little afraid to live in this community by myself. I think there is much more crime and violence here and I am just not brave enough to go out and do that."

"Fear is really built up so much in everything around Philadelphia," explains Roberta Kramer, "that it is very hard . . . not to ever develop these attitudes because you constantly hear that women should not go here at night alone and should carry things in their pocketbooks."



Barry Weisenfeld, an RPCV who served in the Philippines, sees the main transfer from Peace Corps experience as a willingness "to accept learning disabilities."

Wayne Guise, who served in the Philippines and taught instrumental music this year in six schools, lives in his schools' community with his wife, Ann, who was not a Volunteer. "I had preconceived notions, because I had heard so much about South Philadelphia before I ever got here," says Guise. "It was all very negative. I expected things to be much, much worse than they turned out to be."

The teacher's mental attitude seems to be the deciding factor in overcoming the fear. "People who start out being scared," says Roberta Kramer, "usually end up with all the proof in the world that they were right in being scared. If you are not scared at the beginning, then you find out there is nothing to be afraid of. I'm not saying there is no reason to fear, I think people are rather sensible to be afraid in certain situations, but I think the fear needs to be a knowledgeable fear."

A number of RPCVs solved other problems by swallowing their fear of the ghetto and moving into the community. Wayne and Ann Guise, for example, see two areas of benefits to living in the school's community. They know the parents of their students rather well and are also able to attend community functions outside the school.

Asked why he chose to live in the community, Guise answers, "In the Peace Corps I lived on the school compound where I taught. Mixing with the community was part of the Peace Corps job. In being forced to do it, I found out what the reapings of this can be." Guise says that if it hadn't been for the Peace Corps, he probably would not be living or teaching in a ghetto area.

While the Peace Corps has a strong tradition of living in the community and community involvement, this tradition clashed with a different custom in the teaching profession.

"For many years in the teaching profession," explains Roberta Kramer, "there has been a very strong feeling against living in the community in which you taught, because the relationship which existed between teachers and children was that you really were not interested to have the children know what you did outside of school. For instance, I smoke. To have my children in school see me smoke outside of school, when I first started to teach, would have been thought quite terrible. If you are a woman and you drink, under no circumstances would you want a child to know that you drank. This was in days gone by. You did not live where you taught, out of your own preference. There was no desire to become friendly with the children—there was every desire to remain aloof from them."

Ann Guise is an example of today's opposite. "The children come to the house at any time of the day or night," Mrs. Guise explains. "If my hair is in rollers, they see my hair in rollers. They understand it. I go to the same stores they go to; I put up with the same problems. There's a common bond, something that ties us together that I don't think any of the other teachers are able to get because they they don't mix with the parents. The parents feel that the other teachers are being pretty snotty and that they think they're better than they are."

Rick Hall, who served in Bolivia and was a community intern at the Ludlow Community School, comments on the differences between community involvement in the Peace Corps and here: "I thought that after having been in Bolivia two years," Hall says, "and speaking Spanish and everything that I wouldn't have too much trouble identifying with Spanish-speaking people. But going through the whole process of identification with poor people is still a tough thing. It's somewhat different here than it is in overseas situations. There you're the strange and special one. Here, you're not quite so special; much more resented and with much more reason."

Hall concludes, "I still feel the need to have another set of friends outside of the area to go to."

Empathy vs. professionalism

The question of empathy with students versus the qualifications of a professional confronts some returning Volunteers thinking about teaching. The RPCVs in Philadelphia left no question as to what was needed.

Stanley Field, a Nigeria I Volunteer who taught this year at Fels Junior High says, "You need empathy to know the community. Then once you know your students you are able to follow it up with your professional attitude. If you don't have the empathy and you have the professional attitude, you might as well forget it. If you have the empathy, but not the professional attitude, then you are not going to be able to follow up on what you feel and respond. The two have to work together and then you are a complete teacher."

The idea that empathy was enough for a teacher, if it ever was a valid idea, no longer is. Today, all teachers in the ghetto, especially white teachers, to be valued by the community and to feel they are doing effective jobs, must bring the best professional qualifications to the job.

An RPCV speaks about acts of trust

I drove my car to school and never locked it. I was always sloppy enough that I didn't lock cars. After awhile, I began to realize I was known in the neighborhood because I didn't lock my car and would sometimes send kids to get things from it.

Almost every teacher in the school who locked his car everyday had the car broken into or ruined on the outside. Only once in the 17 years I taught in that school did a child go into my car without my permission. I figured the car wasn't worth that much if it meant so much to the kids, and it obviously meant a good bit to them.

It's very strange some of the little things that you do that make so much difference to these kids, because they are not used to people treating them this way. Anything you do which is an act of trust, I would say, nine times out of ten you get back a decidedly good response. *—Roberta Kramer*

In spite of some qualities of excellence RPCVs and other new teachers brought to their jobs, there was an element of failure. There were moments when progress appeared limited, if it indeed existed. There were days when the children seemed oblivious to the classroom and days when the teacher probably wished he were not a teacher.

Dennis Fox, an Ethiopia I Volunteer who has since taught in Job Corps Centers, Washington, D. C. and this year was at Elverson Elementary, says, "Failure is just inherent in the job.

"The most important thing a teacher can do," to cope with his failures, says Fox, "is to be perfectly honest about what he's doing and what his class is doing. If they're not learning, don't say they're learning. It's no crime not to be learning. Many other people have failed. You should not feel guilty about failures, because teachers have many more failures than successes, that's all." Fox says the teacher has to tread the middle ground between feeling guilty about mistakes and quitting, or justifying them and becoming a bad teacher. The middle ground is saying "I'm doing it and it's wrong."

Yet, many stick to teaching. Asked why, Fox responds, "I get a lot of joy out of teaching, that's the only reason I'm in it. But my joy is not so much from how well I teach words, or reading, or math, my joy is from the interaction with kids."

In view of the small consolations which the RPCV finds teaching in the inner-city school, is there a way to reduce frustration with a different structure and direct efforts towards the ideal situation for any new teacher?

Blackburn sees the Teacher Corps model as the ideal. "That means a reduced teaching load, a seminar relationship with other new teachers and a master teacher, a relationship in teaching with a team leader or a master teacher, an obligation to prepare curriculum materials and work with the kids outside of the school setting. Someday," according to Blackburn, "urban systems, as all school systems, will do this for their new teachers. Until they do, it's a question of giving new teachers what supports you can."

Philadelphia, at this point in history, is not in a position to place all new teachers on a footing similar to the Teacher Corps model.

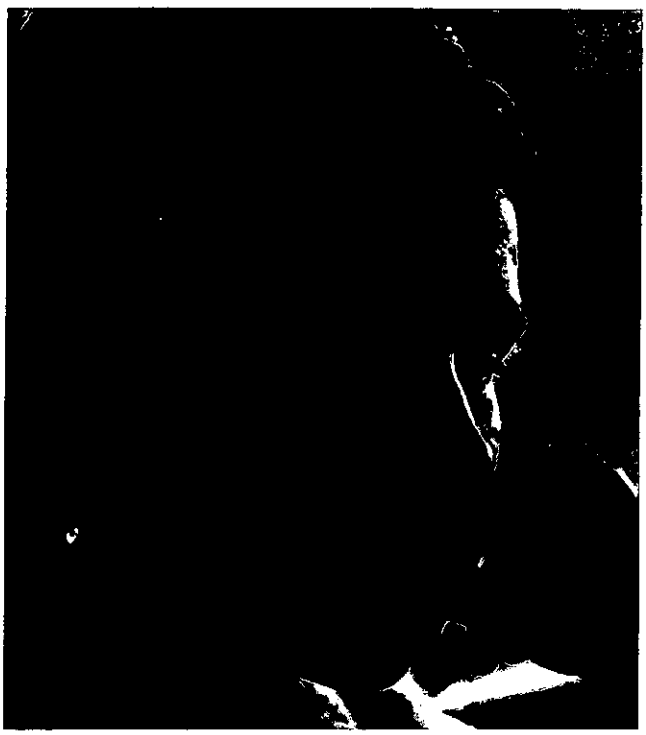
Short of placing new teachers on that type of footing, Blackburn recommends "they ought to have every new teacher including RPCVs, the summer before they assume regular long teaching duties, receive at least a month to a six-week long orientation which includes actual teaching experience with the kids. They should have seminars and should be acquainted with the whole paraphernalia of the system and should get a good insight into its God-awful rigidity.

"They should have actual teaching contact with the kinds of kids they are going to work with in the coming year," Blackburn adds. "They should be able to experience some of the frustrations and some of the opportunities that working with these kids provide. And then, during the fall there ought to be in-service programs developed in concert with the new teachers—the new teachers ought to have a heavy say in what it is that they are getting."

Program goal: protection

Blackburn sees the goal of this program as protecting the new teachers "from such a shattering collision with the inadequacies of the system and the learning disabilities which kids have incurred, that they just take a walk at the end of a year or two."

Most RPCVs interviewed who were new to teaching argued for greater supports on a continuing basis. Meetings during the school year were called to provide an opportunity for



One of the problems Philadelphia RPCV teachers face, says Linda Wycoff, who served in Turkey, is the school system's bureaucracy.

"I had taught in a different country and I knew that teaching in ghetto schools would be quite different from what I was used to, but I was terribly cocksure . . ." says Linda Wycoff.

what Blackburn calls "less in-service training and more meet(ing) together from time to time to see where it's at." But the RPCVs want access to people who can give them the advice and training which would help them solve their problems.

Blackburn concedes that while the situation is improving, it is still inadequate in providing individual school level supports. He also points to the irony of saying "that our supposedly seasoned veterans of cultural dissonance overseas who have had two years of teaching need almost more precious careful handling than these greenhorn teacher college graduates who come out dewy-eyed from Podunk State and go out into the urban system. It is a little ironic, isn't it."

He agrees that it is true, "but it's a far cry from the American expectation which is 'Yeah, you get these kids from overseas, they've worked in Africa (i.e. with black people), and you whap, throw them right into the roughest urban schools and say 'Not only survive, baby, but swing, baby.' I think that it is unrealistic to expect that they'll swing first shot out of the box. The absolutely amazing thing is that some of them do."

On the other hand, Blackburn does not want to send RPCVs into the best schools. "They are not tender plants," he says. "They have to be hardheaded, thick-skinned if they are going to stay in this urban system. Urban teaching is a very special kind of a professional life and its not the life for every RPCV

The Teachers Incorporated: a possible solution

One solution to the myriad of problems returned Peace Corps Volunteers and other new teachers face in ghetto school teaching has been proposed by Roger Landrum, an RPCV teacher who served in Nigeria and is a former Peace Corps staff member.

Landrum has established The Teachers Incorporated, a private, non-profit organization developing projects of teacher recruitment, training and educational development for inner-city and suburban areas.

The Teachers Incorporated is operating from a storefront at 24 East 125th St. in New York.

Recruiting teachers primarily, but not exclusively, from three groups—former Peace Corps Volunteers or other bachelor's degree holders with cross-cultural or direct action experience, recent master's in teaching graduates and experienced teachers—The Teachers Incorporated will train them for 10-12 weeks this summer.

The training institute, patterned after several training programs Landrum developed and directed for Peace Corps, will consist of four different components. First is a planned approach designed to deepen knowledge of the community—its ideas, people, organizations and resources. During the institute, the teachers will live with families in the neighborhood in which they will teach and will also be assigned to local community action projects.

The second component is a workshop in subject specialization on curricula now in use in the schools which will also encourage experiment and development of new curricula. Third is a workshop and supervised teaching designed to meet classroom difficulties as they occur during summer teaching in storefronts and apartments. Finally, there will be seminar groups on critical issues in urban affairs and education led by professionals. There will also be a lecture series and dramatic and artistic presentations designed to provide deeper insights into the urban condition.

Once teachers are working in the schools, The Teachers Incorporated plans to continue a series of in-service training programs to be developed in conjunction with the teachers.

In attempting a comprehensive approach to deal with the problems of new teachers, "The Teachers Incorporated intends to bridge the gap between the school and the community, between the teacher's background and those of his students, between the parents' sense of vital interests and the teacher's," according to a description of the project.

While it will only begin to function this summer, The Teachers Incorporated program for new teachers appears to offer a more encompassing and potentially more effective program than has appeared to date. It also seems to be trying something difficult to accomplish—to learn from the past mistakes of others.

who got interested in teaching while he was overseas. For those who are in for the long pull, they have to have the stamina and the inner-directedness to stay in some of these great gray schools where the dead hand of a boring administration is very present."

RPCVs would advise present Volunteers contemplating teaching in ghetto schools to realize that it is different from Peace Corps teaching. They add that a two-year Peace Corps experience does not count for very much in meeting the rigorous tests of ability in an urban school system. Teaching in Philadelphia, the Peace Corps Volunteer should expect his struggles with bureaucracy and should not expect a lot of support in dealing with any problems he may encounter.

The ingredients for success which Blackburn sees are "a combination of attitude and techniques. The fundamental attitude most people have tended to have towards Negroes is that there is something wrong with them. 'They've made the mistake and they're a Negro.' It's sort of not by accident of birth, but by error of birth. Another feeling is that the poor child is culturally deprived. In fact, black children in this city are bi-cultural. . . . Kids in the cities learn a thousand things as they grow up that are terribly important. The positive aspects of their environment are rarely built upon by teachers. Teachers look upon them as disabled, as limited by an act of God and housing segregation. There is only so much you can do with them. This fatalism runs deep."

While the final statistics will not be in until schools starts again in September, turnover may prove to be a problem—perhaps because of a mobile attitude which colors an RPCV's ties to any job.

Joan Kibbey, who served in Colombia and taught at the Lea School, expresses it in these terms: "There are so many people who have been freed like us from the actual need to make a living. Now, we're pretty much independent of that, we know we can go any place and get a job, even if we don't teach, we'll get something. Money is not our primary concern. Now we have time to stop and say, 'Well, what about people?'"

Peace Corps is attempting to encourage other school systems to actively recruit PCVs to be ghetto teachers (see box page 21). In view of this, it is important to learn from the experience of Philadelphia and other cities which have employed large numbers of RPCV teachers. This must be done to fully utilize RPCVs' experience and manpower and also to guarantee as low a turnover as possible.

Learning and judging from the Philadelphia experience, the ideal program for new RPCV teachers would begin with at least a month of orientation designed to re-orient the Peace Corps experience to the ghetto. In some respects it should be like a Peace Corps training program, incorporating cross-cultural studies, technical studies and a period of field training. Cross-cultural studies would equip the RPCV teacher with the knowledge of black culture, thought and aspirations which would enable him to live in the ghetto and involve himself in the community on a meaningful basis; technical studies would help RPCVs adapt and retool teaching methods learned overseas to the ghetto and its children; field training would place the teacher in the classroom and give him an opportunity to try all he has learned while living in the ghetto and still having access to professional advice.

In-service training

Once the teachers begin teaching, either on an intern or regular basis, there would be a program of in-service training or support, structured by the new teachers and staffed by the Board of Education with people requested by the new teachers. Such a program would also require better placement, perhaps in the form of a site survey, followed by an interview between teacher and principal to lessen tensions which inevitably develop between teacher and principal when neither has had any say about the new teacher's presence there. Finally, there would be active encouragement of the new RPCV teachers to involve themselves in the ghetto community and to be involved by their principals in developing innovative methods and curriculum changes.

It would be unfair to try to judge, on the basis of one school year, whether the Philadelphia experience is more a success or a failure. As with any beginning Peace Corps project, it is a first effort on which to build. It needs nurturing, reforming, remolding and some restructuring in order to be considered successful. The open invitation issued by Philadelphia and its subsequent experience will provide the foundation for improving similar efforts in other cities with large inner-city school problems.

Dean M. Gottehrer, associate editor of THE VOLUNTEER, *is an RPCV who served in the Colombia educational television project during 1965-68. Before joining the Peace Corps, he was general secretary of the United States Student Press Association. For this article, he visited Philadelphia several times to talk with RPCVs, principals and administrators.*

Telling it like it is

After the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I had the children write what they thought they were supposed to be doing to make this a better world for them to live in. One girl came up to me after class and was practically in tears.

She said she couldn't write it because everyone would hate her. I said, "Well, I'm not going to hate you and nobody else is going to read it." She said, "Well, we're moving next year to Vermont and the reason we're moving is because my mother doesn't want me to go to an integrated school. I feel so terrible because I feel that I'm going to believe what my mother does and all my friends are going to hate me." She is white. This child, with both black and white classmates, hearing one thing at home and seeing another at school, was really in conflict.

I said, "Well, you're not going to be a little girl all your life and you can make up your own mind some day. You must listen to your mother now because she is your mother, but you still have your own ideas about your own principles."

I don't think it was much consolation to a little fifth grader with a big problem. —*Joan Kibbey*

Photo by Paul Conklin

Volunteer to America Hwang Byong-nam, a social worker from Korea, was assigned to work with the local community action program at an Indian reservation in Cherokee, North Carolina.

Volunteers from abroad

How do you take on a host country like the United States? When the idea of a reverse Peace Corps was first broached, humor columnist Art Buchwald underscored that question by hypothesizing about a frustrated foreign volunteer who couldn't get his host country nationals to grow their own vegetables cheaply; the Americans insisted on buying all their food frozen and wrapped in cellophane.

Buchwald's tongue-in-cheek prediction was not too inaccurate. The Volunteers to America who served in the U.S. during the past year encountered some strange problems in this supermarket society. But the real irony lay outside the frozen food syndrome. As it turned out, there were more similarities than there were differences between being a volunteer in the U.S. and being a volunteer overseas.

The difficulty of adjusting to a new culture, the lack of host agency support, underemployment ranging to no job at all, lack of understanding from the host nationals—the problems were the same.

"If I had closed my eyes, I could have sworn I was back at my assignment talking about social and political problems of the Philippines with my co-teachers," says Merritt Broady, a former Peace Corps Volunteer who visited a number of VTAs at their sites in the U.S. "The words the Volunteers to America used were the same and they described the same inequities I had found abroad."

There may be one unique difference. Many Americans do not adapt easily to the idea that they need help—especially from another country. "Foreigners working *here*, serving *us*?" was not an atypical reaction.

The 64 Volunteers to America who have just completed their year of service in the U.S. comprised the first major experiment with the exchange Peace Corps idea (a smaller group of five Indians spent one year doing community action work in the U.S. during 1965-1966). Sponsored by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the pilot VTA program attracted volunteers from 12 countries, including two where the Peace Corps does not serve—Argentina and Israel. Present plans for next year call for a program of about the

same size, including more than 20 extendees and 42 new volunteers. Japan, represented in the recently arrived contingent, is the third non-Peace Corps country to send volunteers to the U.S.

Administratively, there are some major differences between the VTA program and the Peace Corps. VTAs are not selected exclusively by the donor country. The U.S., through its United States Information Service representatives, assists in the selection process. VTAs serve for only one year, with the possibility of a one-year extension. In contrast, two-year service in the Peace Corps may be supplemented by extensions and re-enlistments.

VTA financing comes from three parties. The donor country pays for international transportation. The local agencies in the U.S. to which the VTAs are assigned pay living allowances. And the State Department covers the costs of U.S. travel, health and one-month's training and supportive expenses. In the case of Peace Corps finances, the greatest portion of funds comes from Congress, although host governments do contribute.

In contrast to the large number of different programs which employ Peace Corps Volunteers, VTAs have been assigned to only two types of programs—teaching and social work.

And finally, there is a difference in staff support. The 64 VTAs were assigned to 36 sites in 13 different states. While few Peace Corps country directors cover a region as large as the U.S., VTA is administered by a one-man office in Washington and several universities in the field. In practice, VTAs probably get the greatest part of their support from people in the community to which they are assigned, and from each other.

After administration, however, the similarities to the Peace Corps prevail.

"Do you like our food, country, men/women?" "Why don't you marry an American so you won't have to go back to your country?" VTA or PCV, the questions upon arrival in the host country were remarkably alike. Further, the VTAs were fielding questions this year which were put to PCVs in the early days of the Peace Corps: "Why are you here?" "Aren't you needed more at home?" "Doesn't this program contribute to the brain drain?"

The VTA teachers encountered the same classroom problems here that plague Volunteers overseas.

Alba J. Giovacchini, a VTA from Argentina, works with children at a day care center for pre-school children which she organized in Miami.

VTA teacher Sam Dogbe of Ghana receives a document of appreciation from some of his students in Temple City, California, where he was assigned.

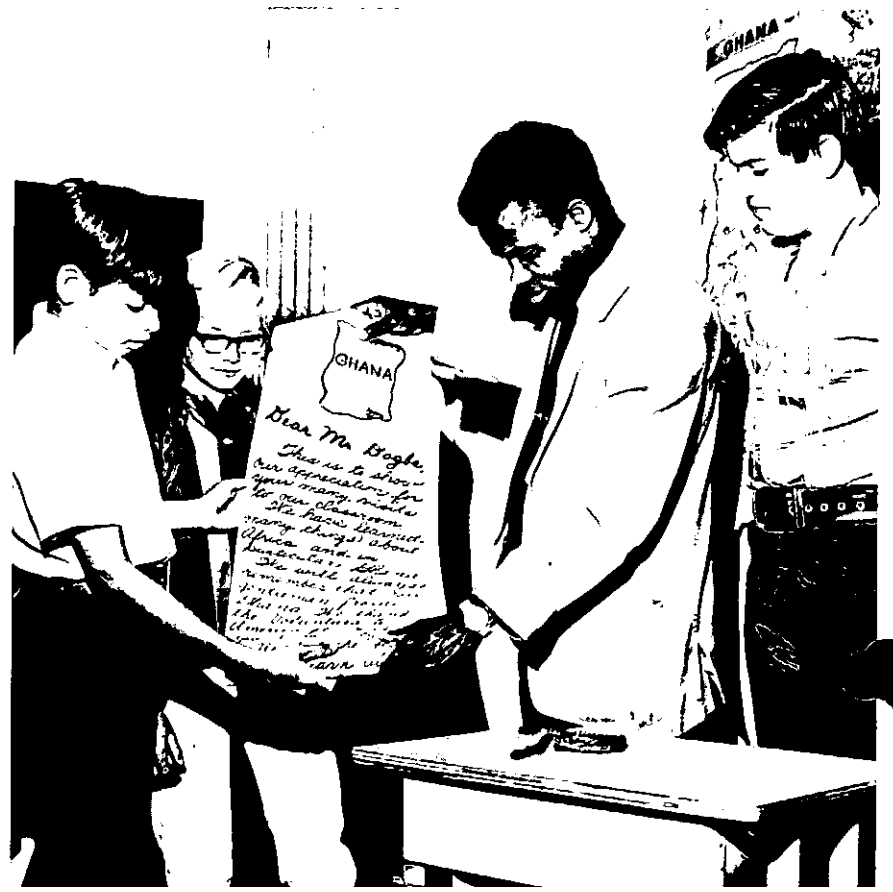


Photo by Paul Conklin

VTAs Otto Benevides Nieto (left) of Colombia, and Rene Casaclang of the Philippines, both assigned through VISTA as block workers, discuss their roles during a walk through East Harlem in New York.

First, they were assigned to local school districts, which did not structure classroom assignments for them. Thus, some of the VTAs worked as full-time teachers, while others served as resource people to a number of schools in the district. Overall, their areas of teaching competence ranged from the arts and social sciences to programs for the mentally retarded.

Here, as overseas, the need for flexibility became apparent. Some of the teachers were doing something quite different from what they had been trained to do. There was, for example, the Ethiopian science teacher who worked in history and geography classes, and the Venezuelan who temporarily took over a course in American history due to a teacher shortage in his tiny Ozark mountain town. There was the situation where the man who requested a VTA has left town and his substitute didn't know anything about the request until the VTA appeared with baggage in hand.

Other VTAs were frustrated in their assignments due to a lack of understanding on the part of the school districts as to the function of VTAs. In these cases, VTAs were often taken purely as cultural ambassadors. Many ended up touring their town's school system with slides of their countries, singing native songs on request. Most felt they could have made a more effective contribution.

There were also cases where U.S. teachers felt threatened by VTAs working in their classrooms as specialists, especially the Spanish teacher who was not fluent enough to carry on a conversation in Spanish with a VTA from Latin America.

Planning was a problem

Lack of teacher planning was another problem. A VTA from Iran who took turns visiting schools with a VTA from Latin America had this to say: "When Pedro is in school they are studying the Middle East, and when I'm there they are on Latin America."

There were some successes. Sam Dogbe from Ghana, with the cooperation of the University of Southern California and several returned Peace Corps Volunteers from Africa, initiated an African studies curriculum for

Temple City, California. Temple City was anxious to nurture its area studies program and encouraged Dogbe. Dogbe, who has five years of teaching experience, gave short courses on Africa in elementary and secondary schools. He was also building an African resource library.

Shula Katz from Israel and Susan Lucero Funes from Argentina discovered in Hancock, Michigan that a receptive community and a concerned superintendent motivated them to try more.

Miss Katz was helping Hancock develop a program for mentally retarded children—her field of specialization. Miss Lucero worked to improve the level of Spanish instruction in the area. Both VTAs traveled to five surrounding communities, teaching handicrafts and social sciences as well as their specialties. A measure of their success is that both women are extending for a year, and Hancock has asked for another VTA.

Like Peace Corps Volunteer teachers, many VTA teachers were active outside the schools. A VTA from Honduras tried to create a bilingual environment in a tense, low income area in Philadelphia by teaching Spanish to black students and English to Puerto Rican students. To establish rapport with the parents of her Puerto Rican students, a Colombian VTA taught their mothers to make handbags for sale.

Social work successes

VTAs who did social work also produced some successes in difficult parts of the country.

Rene Casaclang of the Philippines, assigned through VISTA to Block Communities Inc., New York, applied his eight-year experience in community development to an East Harlem block. He chose one that had the dubious distinction of being ranked among the ten problem blocks by the area police precinct.

Casaclang organized discouraged tenants to tackle their major problems one by one. A sanitation drive involved most block residents. It established a committed organization as well as regular sanitation department service.

Said Casaclang: "For a street with sidewalks generally littered with broken beer bottles, tin cans, waste paper and other forms of garbage and for corridors, stoops, alleys, and backyards with the same . . . the community shined. . . . The impact of the

Tigabu Truneh, the only Volunteer to America from Ethiopia, works with some students in Avon, Connecticut, where he was assigned.

VTAs Benjamin K. Mbroh, a Ghanaian art teacher assigned to the Oklahoma City schools (left), and Hector Pulido Espi-

drive was not only making the community cleaner . . . but an awakening among the people to community participation. People who had feared to come out of their apartments after dark started attending the Monday night meetings. One could see new faces in those succeeding meetings, interacting with the others and discussing common problems."

His wasn't the only success. Another Filipino Volunteer organized a credit union on a Cherokee Indian reservation in North Carolina and two VTAs taught English to migrant workers' children and helped them with regular, compulsory classes they couldn't understand.

There were familiar problems with U.S. social work, too. VTAs complained that though their suggestions for change may have been "good ideas" in the words of their local sponsors, implementing them was a possibility often ignored. In this regard, American red tape sometimes compared favorably with the variety VTAs knew at home. One VTA who had worked with Peace Corps Volunteers in his own country said he understood for the first time why PCVs didn't accomplish more, sooner.

All the Volunteers to America made a lot of other important discoveries about their host country. "Evidentally, the U.S.A. is not what Hollywood and the TV films so eagerly try to show," one VTA said. "The U.S.A. is a giant and, as with everything that is of such a fantastic proportion, can't be perfect, but it is deeply human and worthy of being loved. The only way to understand it is by living and working here."

Seeing the danger of stereotypes,

PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM

- To provide the United States with needed skills, experience, and viewpoints, particularly in the field of education and in the solution of the problems of poverty.
- To provide participants with experience that will be valuable to themselves and to their own countries.
- To enhance mutual understanding of peoples, cultures, and nations—between the United States and the countries represented in the program, as well as between the individual participants.
- To promote the concept of voluntary service by young people as a useful tool in solving national problems and as a broadening and valuable individual experience.

—From the Volunteers to America Handbook, May, 1968.

nosa, a Colombian assigned to a teacher improvement project in Edinburg, Texas, work together during their training.

Photo by Paul Conklin

Photo by Allan Dean Walker

Zenon Adobas of the Philippines, one of five VTAs assigned to an Indian reservation in Cherokee, N.C., distributes some books.

the VTAs assumed the continuing task of trying to erase the American images of their own countries. Examples were the little boy in Oklahoma who quite seriously asked a VTA from Ghana to convey his regards to Tarzan when he returned to Africa. In another instance, a student in Pennsylvania asked an Iranian VTA if he rode camels and where they were parked. Some Americans were amazed that an Argentine could have red hair or that an African could use a knife and fork with expertise and speak perfect Englist as well. But some of the questions VTAs faced were relevant. They explained to curious students the system of government in their countries, analyzing the historical and socio-economic factors involved and also explained their countries' policies, foreign and domestic.

Although aware they were part of a successful experiment, many Volunteers to America felt the program should be streamlined from selection to support.

Selection inquired into the applicant's professional experience, motivation and English ability. Resources were not available, however, to sponsor an informational campaign that would attract more applicants.

Orientation in the donor country varied from two hours to two months. VTAs at a mid-year conference agreed a more comprehensive instruction program should emphasize English and area studies, including courses on their countries and U.S. culture.

The consensus of VTA teachers indicated a preference for more practical experience during their U.S. training. They suggested more active teaching roles, conferences with master teachers, and assistance in developing a materials unit for later use. On the job, many felt they were underemployed; not well utilized as a resource person in the school system.

The need for more administrative support seemed to be a major concern. Unlike most PCVs, many VTAs experienced a lack of necessary organizational backing.

The VTAs applauded elements of training and actual work situations that promoted close interactions with Americans, such as seminars and living with families. Their suggestions and criticisms were directed toward a strengthening of the program.

Other program strengths could be provided by merging the Volunteers to America program with the Peace Corps, it has been argued. A number of VTAs, along with past and present Peace Corps Volunteers and staff, have suggested that such a merger would be mutually beneficial. The Peace Corps' experience with all phases of voluntary service, from selection to staff support, would be most helpful to VTA, say advocates of the liaison. They add that VTAs returning to Peace Corps countries would be excellent candidates for Peace Corps staff positions, thus reinforcing the Peace Corps trend toward employing host country nationals as staff.

One Peace Corps Volunteer states a more direct reason for the two programs to get together: "A kind of reverse Peace Corps to the U.S. is a natural expansion of our present Peace Corps idea," he says. "It would be our best expression of the open and honest exchange which we are trying to effect through the Peace Corps."

Information for this article was compiled by Judy Barry, a returned Volunteer from Colombia who is a writer in Washington, D. C., and Merritt Broady, currently an associate Peace Corps director in the Philippines. A former Volunteer in that country, Broady interviewed a number of Volunteers to America at their U.S. sites while he was a member of the Peace Corps Fellows program in Washington.

Mohammed Hajipoor Moghadam, a VTA teacher from Iran assigned to the Hempstead, New York schools, teaches a geography class.

Photo by Paul Conklin

"My supervisor is really a great guy," says a Peace Corps Volunteer in India. "He knows his stuff, he gets things done, he's always very friendly. But he never asks me how, or even what, I am doing."

Another Volunteer encountered a different type of problem: "My block development officer is doing nothing," says the Volunteer, "but he is very concerned about whether I am doing my work or not."

The supervisor of a third Volunteer took a great deal of interest in the Volunteer's work for the first few months. "We spent hours together, talking, eating, and touring," the Volunteer reports. "Then there was a sudden change. Now he doesn't take any interest in me or my work. I don't understand why."

Why are some supervisors unconcerned, some over-concerned and some no longer concerned about Volunteers? This is a question asked repeatedly by Volunteers and Peace Corps staff.

Statistics from Peace Corps completion of service conference reports give some idea of the dimension of the problem. At conferences held during 1963 through 1966 more than half of the Volunteers—and, in the earlier years up to 70 per cent—considered "lack of support from host country officials" a problem—for many a major one.

I have talked recently with a number of government officials in India about this problem. Here I present their points of view. Although the officials quoted are involved with Peace Corps Volunteers in India, most of what is discussed is probably common to all the countries to which Volunteers are assigned.

Understanding our hosts

By M. K. PATHIK

Generally speaking, host country nationals recognize various categories of foreigners who visit India—tourists, technicians, missionaries, businessmen, students and diplomats. The A. B. generalist who comes to India to help in that country's development is certainly a relatively new category and one quite unique to the Peace Corps and a few other recently established volunteer organizations.

Considering this, it is not difficult to understand the confusion among the various people with whom Peace Corps Volunteers come in contact. Who is the individual Volunteer, why has he come, what does he expect or what should be expected of him? In many cases, supervisors are baffled by new Volunteers and do not know exactly how to regard them. This problem is often intensified by the fact that the Peace Corps Volunteer may be the supervisor's first experience with a volunteer or, for that matter, any foreigner.

Volunteers' co-workers are faced with the same dilemma, and from the beginning, no one in the host country agency knows exactly how to relate to the Volunteer. The supervisor, understanding neither the Volunteer nor the agency which has sent him, finds it difficult to work out an effective relationship with him or to find him a suitable job assignment. For the supervisor, there is a unique change in the job assigning responsibilities—he has to find a job for a man, not a man for a job.

Recognizing the task

Many supervisors, and the Indian public in general, have the impression that Peace Corps Volunteers are sent to India as technical assistants. Their concept of the Peace Corps is based on Peace Corps publications which have described the organization as an agency which would "provide technical help through American Volunteers to those countries requesting such help." Furthermore, in most developing nations, the United States is highly regarded for its technical advancement and, therefore, the people sent are expected to be technically advanced and highly qualified.

Many other supervisors and co-workers come to realize and accept the limitations of Volunteers in language, technical know-how and cultural understanding, but they have certain expectations from Volunteers with regard to general behavior and attitude. Although technical knowledge is important to the success of Volunteers, overall they are judged more by their general behavior and attitudes than by their job skills.

For example, one official refused to accept two new Volunteers because, he said, "They do not know how to behave properly." The Volunteers, a married couple assigned to his agency,

were seen embracing each other on the side of a playground. The information reached the supervisor and he naturally reacted according to his own cultural norms. The Volunteers were asked to change sites.

Another official, one who had spent a few years in the United States, talked favorably about the work habits and efficiency of the American people: "They have technical know-how," he said, "but it is their attitude which is most conducive to the development of our nation." And many other supervisors have said that they are not overly concerned with Volunteers' proficiency in language or technique (which they can learn) but, "they must be hard working, punctual and well organized."

Another aspect of problem is that Volunteers sometimes expect all job difficulties to be worked out before they ever reach their site: "Isn't the Peace Corps staff supposed to explain to the host country officials the purpose and role of Peace Corps Volunteers before we arrive?" they say.

Yes, staff visits a Volunteer's site many times before a Volunteer is sent to work there. But to explain the abstract role of an unknown Volunteer is not easy. Every individual has certain individual capabilities and work styles, which he will employ after learning first-hand what the situation at his site requires. Peace Corps staff can give general information about the educational and training background of Volunteers and explain the role and responsibility of the Volunteer. In the final analysis, however, it is the supervisor and the Volunteer who will have to establish the role and the job assignment.

Though the Volunteer who made the above query did not realize the impossibility of complete staff briefing for the receiving agency, he did recognize that stateside training could never give Volunteers a full picture of what India is really like. "Volunteers don't realize it unless they are here," he said. The same is true of Indian supervisors and agency staff—they cannot know the Volunteer (or what jobs he is capable of doing) until he is on the site.

Recognizing, therefore, that neither the Volunteer nor his supervisor can know exactly what to expect before the Volunteer arrives, it is not difficult to understand that sometimes both Volunteers and supervisors have difficulty initiating a relationship with each other. Neither one is sure what the other expects, nor do they understand each other's personality or cultural background fully enough to approach a working relationship with ease or confidence. Language, ego, shyness and various other factors may also complicate the initial attempts at communication.

The basic difference between one society and another is the way in which people relate to one another, and this factor has often raised another complex situation. Just as the married couple was rejected by Indians because they related to each other in a manner which was not acceptable in Indian society, Volunteers are often rejected by supervisors because they relate to the supervisors in an unfamiliar and culturally different manner.

Many new Indian administrative officials who are between 25 and 30 years of age are treated with a fatherly attitude by their elders, including the head clerk and other subordinates. The paternal attitude of supervisors vis-a-vis co-workers often creates a difficult situation for the young Volunteer.

'For the supervisor, there is a unique change in the job assigning responsibilities—he has to find a job for a man, not a man for a job.'

In the United States, young people can disagree and express themselves quite freely with their parents or senior officials. Though the official or parent may not like being contradicted, he respects, to a great extent, the value of free expression. Indian officials, however, and older people in general, will not only reject a young man's idea, but if he expresses his opinion strongly, they will reject the person himself as well. The problem for the Volunteer is not the substance of his argument, but the style and manner in which it is presented.

My relationship with my father is the best example I can give in this regard. My father is 54 and an educator. I am 29 and have just started my career. We often discuss topics of common interest. Though he has great regard for me, his reaction to my expression of strong disagreement with his opinions would be, "You young people know nothing, but talk too much."

Some officials have reacted in the same manner to my ideas. However, I have learned to overcome their initial rejection by employing a style suitable to the situation.

Many supervisors and elders with whom young Volunteers work say that Volunteers don't know how to talk. The phrases young Americans use lightly are often taken very seriously by Indians: "It's nonsense," "I disagree," "You're wrong" are too direct to be accepted by many Indian elders and officials.

The attitude of elder officials towards young men cannot be changed overnight. It is part of a long acculturation through which these elders have lived. The result is that many Volunteers resent their supervisors or avoid them to escape being "fathered." If the Volunteer rejects this approach, the supervisor, in turn, loses interest in the Volunteer and ignores or neglects him.

"Volunteers are too aggressive and they argue too much," said one senior official. He explained that a Volunteer must accept the fact that he is young, a foreigner and a Volunteer: "One has to accept what he is and handle the situation according to his or her capacity."

Though age is a stigma in most traditional societies, elders do bow their heads to young leaders and, if given due respect, they will often "come around" to recognizing the capabilities of young men. One does not have to break social norms to be an effective reformer. And differing views can be expressed if the Volunteer is sensitive to the style in which the views are presented.

On the administrative side, the fact that Volunteers may receive a higher salary, special trips for conferences, longer and more frequent vacations than their fellow workers are instances which, in themselves, set the Volunteer apart from the host country staff. Often a Volunteer's salary is much higher than his counterpart's. Usually the individual Volunteer identifies more with the Peace Corps than with his assigned agency. In some cases, he feels only minimal responsibility to the host agency. This attitude makes it difficult for the supervisors to help the Volunteers or to make them part of the agency's work. Supervisors and co-workers expect Volunteers to work within the boundaries of the official structure.

The author (above, standing) participates in a meeting of Cleveland community action workers in 1965. For a year he served as a volunteer to the U.S. He is now on the Peace Corps staff in India.

"Volunteers seem to believe in complete independence," said one supervisor. "Though they are trying, they don't seem keen to work under administrative discipline. They do not like to keep daily diaries and reports about their work. They have no schedule. Their co-workers have to follow these procedures, so they must too."

Another highly competent and well-qualified official in charge of six Volunteers said, "If I am late for a meeting, the Volunteers complain. But if they are late, they expect to be excused because they are 'volunteers.' Somehow they regard themselves as special entities, but I expect them to function as a part of the agency."

Supervisors often feel that Volunteers need to understand them and their limitations as much as the supervisors need to understand the Volunteers. In the words of one official, "If Volunteers recognize our limitations and frustrations, they will be able to adjust better and will be less frustrated." Another commented, "I wish these boys had worked with government before. They don't realize the limitations within which we must function. I've been in this post for 15 years. I'd like to do more, but I'm bound by administrative red tape and protocol."

A third supervisor added, "This Volunteer has come for only two years. In that time, he wants most of the problems solved. I and many others have been working in this area for 10 to 15 years. . . ." His facial expression seemed to complete his thought: "It just isn't that easy."

Volunteers' frustration

Many Volunteers become frustrated because they can't keep up their enthusiastic pace. Snags and difficulties slow them down. A few supervisors anticipate this. When they say, "Let's see how much one can do in two years," they are challenging the Volunteers. At the same time, they don't really want the Volunteers to succeed. In the back of their minds remains the concern, "What if he is successful? What effect will it have upon me?" If the Volunteer and the supervisor can't work out a mutual approach to the job, the supervisor will often lose interest in working with the Volunteer and just say, "Let him try on his own."

While Volunteers are overseas for a short period of time and are buoyed by their youth and enthusiasm, supervisors and co-workers are often "stuck" in their jobs for life. Volunteers do have something to fall back on—they will return to the U.S. to make a new start, probably in an entirely different field than the job they were doing as Peace Corps Volunteers. The temporary aspect of the Volunteer's assignment and his commitment make him bold enough to care little about any risk or failure in his job. Indian counterparts, however, cannot afford risks, end runs or an anti-bureaucratic approach to their work.

Volunteers often criticize government red tape and administrative ob-

stacles. One older official who had spent time in Great Britain, the U.S., and Canada sarcastically offered a reminder to these Volunteers. "What about bureaucracy in the States?" he asked. "I don't think you're doing any better than we are." His remark is supported by the experience of five Indians, myself included, who worked as exchange Peace Corps Volunteers in the U.S. anti-poverty program for a year. Oddly enough, we expressed frustrations in our work experience almost identical to those most commonly cited by Peace Corps Volunteers in India.

Despite a similarity in problems, Volunteers and supervisors often view these problems and their solutions differently. As one supervisor noted, "Volunteers usually have a typically American approach to problem-solving. They choose the most logical, short-term, and expensive approach. Supervisors can find the Volunteers practical solutions most impractical."

In India, for example, two major problems are a shortage of food and an excess of animals. Some Volunteers have proposed that Indians eat beef and thus solve both problems at once. The supervisor's reaction is obviously negative. Chances are that he is a vegetarian and, even if he isn't, he knows that beef-eating or even just cow-slaughter are violations of long-standing cultural norms in India.

According to supervisors, Volunteers stress details that, though relevant, are not as important as the Volunteers emphasize. For example, many poultry Volunteers have spent a great deal of time trying to convince farmers to debeak chickens. But listen to this argument from former Volunteer David Szanton, who evaluated the work of one poultry project:

"Even assuming debeaking would increase profits, in relation to other factors which go into making an Indian poultry operation a profit or loss, debeaking is a minor matter." As Szanton notes, farmers here are still necessarily much more concerned with "initial cost of chicks, the toll of disease and the cost of feed and litter, the rate of laying and the price of eggs" than with whether chickens will peck each others' feathers out if they are not debeaked, especially since Indian birds seem to be much less aggressive than the American birds Volunteers are trained with.

'To explain the abstract role of an unknown Volunteer is not easy.'

Szanton continues, "Nonetheless, Volunteers stress debeaking. Why? One, because their heavily technical orientation blinds them to its marginal value, to the economic and cultural context in which the technological item must work (this myopia pervades many other aspects of their activities). Two, and most sadly, simply because it is tangible, something which gives a much needed sense of accomplishment, something the Volunteer can count to show himself how much he has done. That it may be irrelevant to the Indian farmer is irrelevant to the Volunteer."

Officials often express disagreement with a Volunteer's approach. As one Indian professor said to Volunteers, "we cannot always accept your ways. We know what is needed for our country. We are trying, but it takes time. It's not so easy, and equipment costs money."

Another problem commented on by many officials is "bypassing" of supervisors by Volunteers. Some Volunteers have a tendency to overlook their immediate supervisors and to try to make direct contacts with higher authorities. In some cases, this has enabled Volunteers to move faster, but it has created a gap in their relationship with their supervisors.

'Sahib complex'

Minor issues may also create some gaps in a supervisor-Volunteer relationship. For example, to Volunteers, calling officials by their first names is a mark of friendliness. This is acceptable in the U.S., but in most traditional societies it is annoying to most of the officials. A few may accept this, and others may learn to accept it, but most will always prefer to be called by their surnames.

It is not uncommon for the supervisor-official to have what in India might be termed a "sahib complex." As the "in-charge" of the agency to which a Peace Corps Volunteer is assigned, the official has been the top man and the only authority. The title "sahib," meaning "respected sir," is his. But suddenly, because it is always used for Westerners in India, he has to share it—and the respect it designates—with a probably young, inexperienced Volunteer. Indians in general (especially the lower and middle classes) have a built-in respect for

'The problem for the Volunteer is not the substance of his argument, but the style and manner in which it is presented.'

Westerners which automatically deems any fair-haired newcomer a sahib and may well put the official and the Volunteer in a very strange relationship with each other. More than one supervisor has commented, "He (the Volunteer) is a big sahib." What they mean is, it's difficult to work with an extra "sahib" in the agency.

Except for a few, most officials have certain psychological requirements in relation to their subordinates. They have a need to be recognized as authorities and expect the public, especially their subordinates, to treat them as officials. In general, Volunteers do not recognize supervisors' expectations in this regard.

Whether the supervisor resents a second sahib or not, he may resent Volunteers for the extra "push" they put on getting things down. Some officials want to take their jobs easy, but Volunteers want them to work faster. Some don't want any extra responsibilities, and the ideas and proposals of Volunteers may seem like extra work. If the supervisor already has difficulties with his existing staff, the addition of a Volunteer becomes an extra burden, especially since the Volunteer is likely to be relatively frank and outspoken.

Barring all personal or interpersonal problems of supervisors and Volunteers, officials at many levels may be doubtful as to who the Volunteer is. Political rumors often make a Volunteer's position uneasy.

"Is Peace Corps an undercover application of American foreign policy and politics?" "Is the Peace Corps Volunteer a helping hand or a CIA agent?" "Why aren't Peace Corps Volunteers allowed to visit or work with the needy people of the border areas?"

These questions and many others of a similar nature have been raised over and over again at many times and in many places. They have certainly created confusion and, in some cases, suspicion regarding Volunteers' motivations.

"He (the Volunteer) is doing very good work, but I still don't know his intentions," commented one supervisor.

"He (the Volunteer) is a wonderful person, but what is the Central Intelli-

gence Agency?" said another.

These kinds of remarks indicate the suspicion on the part of some supervisors toward the Volunteers in their charge.

Whether or not Volunteers and supervisors resolve the problems of relating to one another and respecting the other's position within the agency, supervisors may still feel hesitant to trust Volunteers with jobs of responsibility. Generally, they cite four reasons for this. First, they sometimes feel that Volunteers are not qualified in terms of specific job skills. Second, the Volunteer's proficiency in the language is not sufficient to carry out particular duties related to the work. Third, Volunteers often seem too young to be entrusted with major responsibilities. And finally, supervisors feel they can never have full control of the Volunteers since they are not directly employed by the agency.

Even if a Volunteer makes every attempt to speak respectfully to his supervisor, difficulties with language may create a barrier for both parties. The supervisor may be proficient in English, but he probably won't understand many common "Americanisms" and may have difficulty following an American accent. The Volunteer, on the other hand, usually isn't proficient in the local language or dialect, so communication becomes a chore, and neither the Volunteer nor the supervisor is interested in pursuing it.

'A Volunteer must accept the fact that he is young, a foreigner and a volunteer.'

A typical official, the average Volunteer supervisor in India, has far from an easy or enjoyable life. At home he has to maintain a standard by properly educating his children, marrying his daughters in gala tradition and paying large dowries, entertaining for long periods of time many distant relatives and friends and, overall, "keeping up with the Joneses." On his very low government salary all of this is burdensome, if not nearly impossible.

At his office, he is treated as an ordinary man by higher government authorities and probably does not get the kind of respect or cooperation he needs from his subordinates. He has to follow and enforce all kinds of rules and regulations which he may not even believe in. He is expected to coordinate office activities, face political pressures, and produce results. He is forced by the government hierarchy to do things he knows will not work and is expected to be successful at it. Along with the difficulties imposed on him by his superior, he has to deal with a staff which, whether qualified or not, probably does not agree with his approach, interests, or work philosophy. He probably either does not know how to utilize their abilities or makes no effort to, since he wants to do everything himself. Most likely he lacks not only self-confidence but confidence in others.

With the problems of his home, the government hierarchy, and the staff he either cannot or does not want to trust, many officials eventually succumb to administrative difficulties and maintain their positions only for the sake of a job. Usually it is not that they are unqualified, for most begin their social service careers with enthusiasm. Many have invested a great deal of their initial drive and interest in the same jobs with which they now seem disinterested and unconcerned. Some have been very productive in the past and then, hindered by more and more barriers, have given up or slowed down to a pace Volunteers consider sheer idleness. Others are still trying hard, but just can't untangle the red tape that keeps them bound to their desk and offices.

It has not been my purpose here to give solutions to the problems discussed above, but instead to offer an awareness of what may underlie strained supervisor-Volunteer relationships. There are solutions, but they will vary according to individual situations and can best be dealt with in the field, by the Volunteers themselves.

The author is a special assistant on the Peace Corps staff in India, where his main concerns are programming and Volunteer conferences. Mr. Pathik was one of the five Indians who came to the U.S. in June, 1965 as forerunners of Volunteers to America, an exchange Peace Corps. During his year here, Mr. Pathik did community action work in Cleveland. He was formerly assistant national secretary of the India Branch of the International Voluntary Service Organization.

Musical notes reminiscent of Ravi Shankar and the Beatles sounded in Peace Corps headquarters during two recent noon-time concerts. The performances were part of a cross-country tour arranged by returned Volunteers Jack Kolb (Nepal) and Ronald Gillespie (India) for two visiting Indian musicians. Here Shyamadas Chakrabortty plays the sitar and Nava Kumar Panda performs on tabla (Indian drums). Kolb, in the center, accompanies them on the tamboura.

Photo by Carl Hosticka

KING FUND GOAL SET

Peace Corps Volunteers, staff and friends of the Peace Corps have contributed more than $8,000 toward the Martin Luther King Jr. Education Fund. The perpetual fund, established at Morehouse College in Atlanta by former Peace Corps Volunteers, will be used for educational needs to be determined by the college.

A goal of $10,000 for the fund has been set, and the deadline for receipt of contributions is August 31. Checks or money orders made payable to the Martin Luther King Jr. Education Fund may be sent to: Mr. Jerry Norris, 806 Connecticut Ave., Room 720, Washington, D. C. 20006. Overseas, a Peace Corps staff member in each host country has been appointed to handle contributions from Volunteers and to assist in converting host country currency transactions to U.S. currency.

DRAFT DEFERMENTS

Volunteers are reminded that draft deferments and permits to leave the U.S. generally expire after one year.

Marthanne Parker of the Peace Corps Legal Liaison office in Washington has advised Volunteers to ask their local boards for extensions of these deferments and permits about one month before the expiration date. The requests should include a description of the Volunteer's current Peace Corps assignment.

Copies of all requests to local boards should be sent to the Legal Liaison Branch, Office of Selection, Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525. The Peace Corps will confirm to the local board the Volunteer's continuing Peace Corps status, says Mrs. Parker.

CORRECTION

In "The Peace Corps on campus" (June), the chart at the top of page seven was incorrectly titled. It should have read: "Not wanting to work for the government is a very important reason for *not* joining the Peace Corps." The word *not* was inadvertently deleted from the printed text.

LETTERS TO THE VOLUNTEER

Sincerity needed

To The Volunteer:

I cannot agree with several of the opinions stated in Robert J. Attaway's letter titled "Love taken to task" (April).

I do not think it is fair to equate love with "missionaryism" and I have no idea what was meant by his term "condescension." To my mind, love implies a relationship between people which is basically a very real part of the Peace Corps.

I've never read any Peace Corps directive, advertisement, or suggestion to the effect that "In the Peace Corps, all you need is love," but I feel that each Volunteer has the freedom to view his community through the eyes of a lover without necessarily being labeled a "passive idealist" because of his viewpoint.

I would further take issue with the opinion that ". . . get(ting) hung up on concepts of 'love' and 'caring' . . . inhibits rather than frees, makes rigid rather than flexible. . ." I think getting hung up on a motivation "of self-interest and little else" is much more inhibiting and decidedly more rigid than a societal motivation could ever be.

Lastly, this Volunteer does *not* concede that "a good Volunteer can be any type of person going overseas for any reason." Volunteers, as I view them, should be special people, highly idealistic, strongly motivated. They are successful in proportion to the degree of their individual sincerity.

Dom S. Gulotta
Saõ Miguel dos Campos
Brazil

Also defends love

To The Volunteer:

I noticed with no little interest the letter by Robert J. Attaway (April) christened "Love taken to task." It ably expressed something which I nevertheless fail to understand. Why, for example, is "love" a revolting word to some people, and why does it seem to imply condescension? How is it that terms like "caring" and "doing good" are somehow thought to be connected to pomposity and piety?

Perhaps the problem lies with the fact that labels do not actually participate in the objects to which they point, especially when those objects are dynamic, profound and multifaceted realities that can only be known through experience. In any case, in his near religious zeal to praise the virtue of selfishness as a better stimulus for getting things *done*, I cannot help feeling that Mr. Attaway has both confused love with a mere word, and has greatly undervalued the importance of a genuine other-directed concern, whatever it may be called.

I do not deny the contention that many people have often done undesirable things in the name of "goodness," but that is no reason to deride either doing good or talking about it. As Bertrand Russell emphasizes, the kind of life we need is one "lived in love and guided by knowledge." Certainly, with advances in science and technology, contemporary man finds himself steeped in knowledge (I am not so sure this is true of the Peace Corps), but let us hope there is still room and time for love. And just so there is no misunderstanding, I am not talking about a term.

Donald C. Smith
Jayaque, El Salvador

For self-selection

To The Volunteer:

The two articles on assessment (April) offer opposing points of view. One proposes selection at the initial staging level in training, a period lasting perhaps four days. The other proposes a long-term involvement with trainees and either "low key, nondirective operations," or a division between counseling activities and assessing activities of the psychological staff. I reject both of these concepts and return to the cry of many trainees and Volunteers—a cry which was to some extent echoed by our head psychologist in training—the call for self-selection.

I cannot imagine how a competent psychologist can maintain that he is able, in four days, to measure the ability of an individual to function for two years as a Volunteer, unless the trainee shows *severe* symptoms of

neurosis, and this is quite rare (Often the person with the worst problems is the most difficult to detect).

A second difficulty of this approach is that it leaves out variables and differing criteria and maintains that the Peace Corps experience has a certain set of characteristics, and that personality traits can be matched up to these characteristics to see if the two jibe. This is patent nonsense. I live in a small village where no more than three people speak English, and am engaged in a program to increase rice production. The strains and stresses of this existence are very different from those of a teacher with two roommates, and living in the capital city, or a Volunteer working with ten other Volunteers on a construction project, etc.

The article by Mr. Gilgoff comes closer to my way of thinking in that it recognizes the negative effect psychological assessment has on the trainees and on the psychologists' ability to "get through" to trainees. But he is being overly optimistic in thinking that toning down assessment or that the separation of the psychological staff into the roles of counseling and assessment will alleviate the problem.

The prospective Volunteer enters training with the strong desire to spend two years as a Volunteer. If this desire fails, if he sees that Peace Corps is not for him, he resigns. But if the desire remains strong, for whatever reason, he will suppress his problems, if they will be a detriment to his acceptance as a Volunteer. If there is *any* psychological assessment, the psychologist will always be seen as a threat whatever he is called, whatever he says his role is. We all have inner conflicts, neurotic tendencies and we will attempt to hide them when to show them will cause us harm.

Another difficulty of this approach is that it often relies on the information supplied by technical staff, rather than the psychological staff, because the psychological staff is necessarily limited. Returned Volunteers are not equipped in any way to make psychological judgments—yet this is what they were called on to do in our program. Many of these returned Volunteers had had severe difficulties of their own in service; some could not be called Volunteers who adjusted to their environment. Often their recommendations to the psychological staff were based more on per-

Memorandum

TO : The field DATE: July/August, 1968
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: A mud hut in Manassas

Volunteering is big business nowadays. The International Secretariat for Volunteer Service reports that as of last January 1 there were 20,372 volunteers from 31 nations assisting 75 host countries in their development programs. In addition, 18 nations had 62,750 skilled or trained volunteers serving domesticallly in national development programs. And another 89,361 volunteers in 22 nations were serving in civic service groups aimed at skill and citizenship training (such as national youth service organizations, Job Corps, etc.).

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Here's an answer for Peace Corps critics who say programming is vague and Volunteers generally unskilled. The Tehran, Iran office, apparently not subscribing to either charge, recently cabled these instructions to Peace Corps headquarters: "Invite one French Horn." The sought-after instrument was scheduled to join a clarinet, a flute and a trombone—all accompanied by Peace Corps Volunteers—in the Tehran Symphony Orchestra.

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The story of a big switch: When he was an associate director in the Philippines, P. John Taylor lived four minutes away from his office in a four-bedroom, three-bathroom house with a living room, dining room, kitchen, and a carport for his Peace Corps jeep. He employed a maid and a houseboy. Since coming back to the U.S. in February, Taylor has changed his ways. He and a friend, who is also a former associate director in the Philippines, now rent a two-bedroom cabin (above) in woodsy Manassas, Va., 30 miles from the Washington Peace Corps office where they work. In contrast to Taylor's former home in the Philippines, the cabin has a small living room and a kitchen, and one bathroom. No houseboy. No cook. "My roommate does cook fairly well," says Taylor, "but he is dirty in the kitchen." Is the change in living quarters a testament to the high cost of living in the U.S.? No, Taylor pays less rent here than he did in the Philippines. What, then? Taylor smiles. "We couldn't resist—it was so Peace Corpish." Oh yes, the car. Well, there is that difference in commuting distance. . . .

sonality clash and compatibility, than on any real measure of the capabilities of a trainee, and when we received "feedback" from the psychologists, we were amazed at some of the judgments.

A proposal of psychological self-selection must be unpalatable to staff, yet it is the most effective method of selection. Freed from the pressures of maintaining an image, of playing games in sessions with psychologists, a trainee is able to explore himself with the help of the psychologist, and to arrive at an honest, realistic assessment of his own ability to function as a Volunteer.

STEPHEN M. ABRAMS
Port Loko, Sierra Leone

PCV secretarial role

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

I feel that the letter published in April from Colombia Volunteers Gail Littler, Ginny Berardi, Olivia Smith, and Kathleen Beecher calls for a response.

It is true that the Volunteer secretary has a tough role to play, but I don't agree with the implications that she absolutely *cannot* effectively be a staff member and a Volunteer. I agree that the position is at times an awkward one to fill, but I do not feel it is an impossible one.

It is a well-known fact the Volunteer secretary is at times made to feel like she is a "fifth wheel," beginning with training and continuing throughout her Volunteer service. If she trains with a group of "worldwide" secretaries, she has no real country identity until she actually arrives in country; if she trains with other Volunteers going to the same country, she receives little training to prepare her for the actual job she will be expected to do.

After arriving in country, the secretary is confronted with many questions, some of which were brought out in the Colombia letter: How important is the question of confidentiality? Should a secretary be able to cut her hours or be able to do more versatile work, such as community development or literacy? Should secretaries have an extra clothing allowance, entertainment allowance, etc.? These questions and others must be resolved in trying to determine the individual role of the Peace Corps Volunteer secretary.

As a returned Volunteer secretary (Nepal), I have been appointed coordinator for Peace Corps Volunteer secretaries. I would very much like to hear from Peace Corps Volunteer secretaries now serving overseas who have ideas, suggestions, opinions, or just want to blow off steam.

DIANA L. OPPEDAL
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On in-country training

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

The present tendency of the Peace Corps to utilize the country of assignment as the training site for future Volunteers, as noted by Alexander Shakow (April), is a statement of our most laudable ambitions.

In concurring with Mr. Shakow, however, the Peace Corps must accept the demanding responsibilities for the planning which these programs involve. Unless we are to lose our six years of training experience, the in-country training plans must be at least as good as the best of our university training efforts. Formal outlines of training priorities must be undertaken for eight-week programs—and, with equal deliberation, each two-week training session must be formulated.

Focusing on Mr. Shakow's question, "What do we expect trainees to learn in country?", such plans must seek to justify proposed schedules in terms of desired results. Formal university training programs, where they have been successful, have been so because of their goal orientations: to produce Volunteers who could function professionally, linguistically and culturally at a certain level.

To meet the same requirements with in-country training programs requires even more careful planning. Such plans must take into account the numerous uncontrolled variables which training in the host country automatically presents. The in-country situation is more stimulating—and at once more distracting—for trainees and staff alike. The Peace Corps must be even more thoroughly aware of the direction of each in-country training effort than was necessary with the controlled environment of university programs.

This, as Mr. Shakow points out, requires well considered staffing. It also requires at least as much lead time and pre-planning as a good university program.

MOLLY HAGEBOECK
Alaminos, Laguna
The Philippines