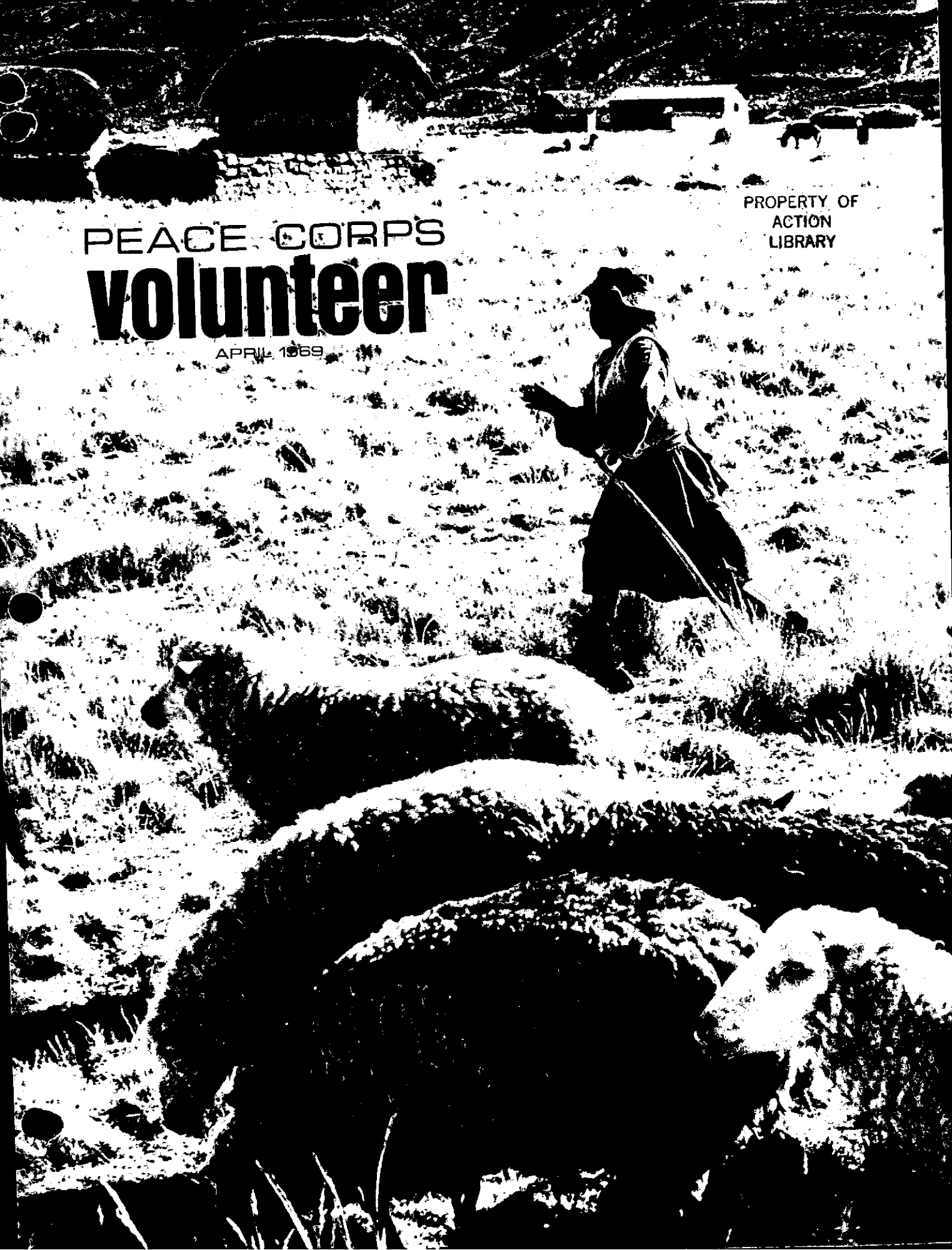

PEACE CORPS

volunteer

APRIL 1969

View of 'the States' by Host Nationals as recruiters

For the first time in Peace Corps history, host country nationals have been traveling the U.S. college circuit, recruiting Peace Corps Volunteers. The 23 host nationals, the first of whom began recruiting last fall, have represented 14 countries where the Peace Corps serves: Afghanistan, Cameroon, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Korea, Liberia, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey. They are educators and administrators, most of whom have worked with the Peace Corps in the past, either in training programs or overseas operations.

As recruiters, the host nationals have been assigned to work with returned Volunteer recruiters throughout the U.S. They have visited college administrators and faculty, talked with students, addressed assemblies, manned recruiting booths, passed out Peace Corps literature.

In December, the Office of Public Affairs sponsored a "completion of service conference" at Peace Corps headquarters for the first group of 10 recruiters. Sy Greben, director of the Office of Public Affairs, asked the host nationals to talk about their reactions to the recruiting experience and to the United States.

In their statements, adapted here, eight of the recruiters reminisce about happenings—satisfying and dissatisfying, expected and unexpected—during their travels around the U.S.

JOHN EXETER,

Guyana:

It is difficult to describe this whole thing without spending two or three years. I read a book written by some American about the lonely crowd, but it had not seeped through to me. So when I arrived here, it surprised me. I came to the Peace Corps office and met the sort of atmosphere that I experienced at home. Then I went out into America and the strangest things happened. Let me tell you a story.

Often I traveled on a bus, and I saw people get into that bus and sit down and they would have a newspaper in front of them and they were reading,

"Completion of service conference" held at Peace Corps headquarters for 10 host country nationals who recruited during the fall.

Photos by Kay Muldoon

"He gets on that bus, and he doesn't communicate with the person next to him."—John Exeter

you know, and you got the impression that if someone came along, they would sort of boil over if this passenger put his face in front of them. This was strange to me. They got on the bus and there was no communication of thought; everybody stayed in his own corner like there was a little invisible wall around him. This surprised me a great deal because where I come from, you get on a bus, and believe me, a lot of things happen.

Another thing which surprised me a little bit—you might not think this is so funny—was your electric toothbrush. You know, "American gadgetry," I was informed by movies, and one sort of expected it. But the electric toothbrush . . . now if I were making a serious comment to the people who are my own friends and my own countrymen, I would say: I hope those people do not eventually become radishes. And if I were talking to Americans, I'd say I laughed when I saw it and I am sorry that I did—I didn't mean to.

You see, you go to campuses and talk to engineering students and you know they want to pick up certain bits of knowledge and this kind of thing to go on to the pursuit of material things. This student isn't particularly concerned about being himself, about being a whole person; he is concerned about getting that job for $11,000 or $15,000, and all the other things coming into being. And then, of course, he gets on that bus, and he doesn't communicate with the person next to him. It was so strange to me; this is why I laughed at the electric toothbrush.

There were other incidents that I ran into, but I don't think I ran into any discrimination. I was walking one night about 11:30 and I had lots of pillows and stuff under my arm and this policeman came up to me and said, "You, there!" (Those of you who have been to Guyana know that policemen do not say, "You, there!"). My reaction was one of a Guyanan reacting to one of his own policemen: "What do you mean by 'You, there?' You better address me properly, please." I suppose I could have been thrown into the clink. In any case, we sort of solved the problem. I suppose I did not react like I should have reacted.

I had heard about black America—I had talked to black Americans in the Peace Corps—but then you go and travel here and you notice that something is a little different. They say, "Hi, brother!" At first, I was a little

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Pat Brown, editor; Judy Thelen, associate editor; Trish Worthen, editorial assistant. Design by Paul Reed.

Correspondents: **AFGHANISTAN:** Don C. Yager. **BOLIVA:** Kevin Lynch. **BRAZIL:** Steven Totheroh, Gary Duncan. **BRITISH HONDURAS:** Lon Hanke. **CAMEROON:** Frances Carroll. **CEYLON:** Elizabeth Howze. **CHAD:** Jay Boekelheide, Tom Mann. **CHILE:** Charles Smith Jr. **COLOMBIA:** C. Cowan Geisler. **COSTA RICA:** Roger Hamilton. **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:** Jonathan Lash, Bill White. **EASTERN CARIBBEAN:** William Carter, Thomas Appel. **ECUADOR:** Charles Creesy. **EL SALVADOR:** Ken Housfeld. **ETHIOPIA:** Susan Heck. **FIJI:** David Downes. **GHANA:** A. William Hunsicker. **GUATEMALA:** Marilyn Farley. **GUYANA:** Paul Richard. **HONDURAS:** Mike McKinney. **INDIA:** Richard McWilliams, Jonathan Lipsky, Charles Ryan. **IRAN:** Michael Sarka. **IVORY COAST:** William P. Carpenter. **KENYA:** James Kushner. **KOREA:** Mark Brown. **LESOTHO:** Stephen Lehmann. **MALAYSIA:** Sharon Clarke. **MOROCCO:** Lambert Bokern, Roberta Prees. **NEPAL:** Jonathan Fox. **NIGER:** Rusty Jorgensen. **SOMALIA:** Terry Deutsch. **THAILAND:** Bob Harcharek, Robert Carney. **TOGO:** William Emmet, Douglas Sloane. **TONGA:** Joella Bisson, Tom Karlow. **TURKEY:** Stephen Franklin. **UPPER VOLTA:** Bob Singley. **VENEZUELA:** Edward Thiele.

ON THE COVER: Photo by Joan Larson of a girl tending sheep on the Bolivian altiplano.

bit surprised at this—this is just like in Guyana, you know. Then after a while you start to pick up a few things. As a matter of fact, I'd read *Soul on Ice* and *Black Power;* these are necessary reading. Among the young there is this sort of "in-group" thing. I went to San Jose and we blacks all sat at the same tables. Nobody said anything, but one Peace Corps Volunteer (recruiter) who did not in the least look like anyone at the table sat down, and before I knew it the others at the table just glared. I was totally unprepared for that.

After a while you become a member of the in-group. You learn the meaning of words like "honky" which you are incidentally told never to tell to anyone. And you begin to learn how these people feel—the younger ones I am talking about. I think things will get better; maybe they will get worse, but I think they'll get better.

MOHAMOUND SAMATER,

Somalia:

I think one thing I will be taking home is the spirit of the American college student today. I was able to communicate with them fully. We were at Cornell some time ago, and before we went there we were told we were going to get a very bad reception; but we actually ended up getting a higher view from Cornell than any other place. I even had a chance to talk to students who were much against our going there, and after about three or four hours of talking, they agreed that there were many things in the Peace Corps—as in any other organization—which need changing. It is not all clean and good. There is always something wrong with it . . . I think that is the type of spirit in students that one remembers, and you find this the minute you are truthful with them.

SARA ADAMS,

Liberia:

I have been exposed to many fine schools. First I went to Atlanta, to Morris Brown College. There I found that the majority of the Negro students did not know much about the Peace Corps, and that is probably why many of them had not joined. Some of them said it was because of economic reasons, that it was easier for a white student but that there had been many sacrifices on the part of their parents to send them to school and they had to get jobs and help other brothers and sisters go to school. One girl said maybe the reason they didn't join the Peace Corps was they were not adventurous enough. That could be true.

I want to thank whomever thought of the idea to bring us over here. And then I would like to make a suggestion. I know that returning Peace Corps Volunteers can't all work in the Washington office, but I wonder if you have some way of putting them to work so that they get to talk to Americans. You know, I came here before I found out that my country is more pro-Peace Corps than America. You have your own political and social reasons for that, but what I am trying to say is it might be a good thing for Public Affairs to think of some program for educating the American people of the value of the Peace Corps.

Some students come up and they say, "I have heard about the Peace Corps but I don't know anything about it; I have always wanted to join, but I understand they don't take Negroes or they don't do this and they don't do that." They are confused. There should be something to

"Peace Corps is not all clean and good. There is always something wrong with it."—Mohamound Samater

encourage these students—your own people should encourage them—to have them come over and help us. Your people need to know what the Peace Corps is all about; the majority of criticism against the Peace Corps is because (this is an elementary observation) the powers that be in your country look at people strictly from the political aspect. Maybe people need to know, via TV or radio, just what is happening to the Peace Corps.

I want to let the Liberian people know, if I have the chance, first of all about the attitude of the black Americans toward Liberia. We Li-

berians are placed in a very embarrassing position; I don't think the American blacks like us very much because I think they feel that we lean too much toward America. Of course, I have to clear that up in their minds.

For example, even though Howard University is a militant school, and we had difficulties trying to get adjusted, we finally were allowed to have a booth in the student center, and because of the influx of people asking us about Peace Corps, I think the black leaders were really surprised at the response. From among their own ranks kids came and wanted to know about it. I do know that we have given the students food for thought, because as nearly as possible we tried to explain all aspects of Peace Corps. For myself, I tried to explain to them what Peace Corps meant to us in Liberia, and I told them the reason I would like to see them in the Peace Corps. I said, "Even though you consider the Peace Corps part of the system, you cannot ignore the fact that 65 or 70 per cent of Howard is part of the system, and until you get to the place where you are strong enough to do these things for yourself, you can't live in a vacuum."

"I found the people with long hair . . . more concerned with what is going on."—Aydin Comelek

"I came here before I found out that my country is more pro-Peace Corps than America."—Sara Adams

This "black universe"—it isn't possible without first getting rid of all of those who look different from you and that is impossible. I had to go back and say, " 'No man is an island unto himself.' How can we believe in isolationism when we can't do all we want to do by ourselves? Even when you join us in Africa, we can't get everything; we won't have all the qualifications."

These students have their reasons to feel the way they do—legitimate, tangible reasons—and you don't get annoyed or you don't feel badly. You just begin to reassess your own thinking and wonder what it is all about. I think Peace Corps is not going to be left out in this attempt toward understanding among the American people.

AYDIN COMELEK,

Turkey:

In Turkey we had seen these pictures of clean-cut American boys with crew haircuts and ties, all very clean and nice. But when you go to universities, the people who actually come and talk to you for hours are the "creeps," girls with bell-bottom slacks and boys with long hair; these are the ones who are really thinking beyond Nebraska or beyond South Dakota. I found that most, 8 of 10 who came, were the people with long hair. I think they are much more concerned with what is going on than are the clean-cut. . . .

In one class I talked to people who were rejecting Peace Corps because they thought it was part of American foreign policy. But any time you can get across to them that the Volunteers are responsible to their own host country principal of their own school, the students feel much better; this is because they don't know this and it is something that Peace Corps should get across to those people.

AMARE GULILAT,

Ethiopia:

One of the things that surprised me when I arrived in the Midwest—this was actually a shock to me—was that many of the people I talked to about the Peace Corps had personal ideas about it which I didn't expect. Many young men had reservations about the Peace Corps; they had their doubts, they wondered whether what the Peace Corps is trying to do abroad is sincere and honest. Some of them came up to me and said frankly: "Isn't the Peace Corps just another way of expanding American imperialism? You people over there in Ethiopia, I don't think you know what you are doing in accepting Peace Corps Volunteers." And some others said the Volunteers are not good Americans; they are radicals in most cases. These people said, we don't approve of them, and so on.

I expected people to have the idea that the Peace Corps is meant for good

"I feel that more black people should participate in the Peace Corps idea."—Amare Gulilat

purposes, in favor of the countries abroad at least. I don't mean these students' feelings were shocking in the sense that I didn't like to hear them. In fact, people are saying what is in their minds. But it is just that I didn't expect this and when someone tells me that the Peace Corps is no good, it is really something. So I began to talk about Peace Corps personally and what the people in Ethiopia think about Peace Corps. . . .

Some people who spoke against Peace Corps in terms favoring Ethiopia seemed to think that we cannot stand on our own and so whatever the Peace Corps does, whatever the United States government does, we are very passive to it. But when I told them what the Peace Corps Volunteer does over there is just done as an individual, giving service the way I, a host country representative, may have wanted him to do, then they begin to think about it. They think people in Ethiopia, in any other part of the world, cannot think for themselves, and this is a surprise to me. How can you explain this? I was glad to hear this from them, but at the same time I wasn't prepared to answer them. . . .

I am actually disappointed that we don't have more black Americans in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia. More black Americans should go out and participate in the things and the cultural values of the other side of the world. I remember when I was at Ohio State University 10 years ago—I was surprised to find that black Americans didn't want to be called black at that time. Really! We had furious arguments. I came from Africa and we wanted to be called black; we enjoyed it. But here the American didn't want to be called black. And so we used to tease these people—the familiar word here was colored. So now after 10 years I come and find here that the American wants to be called black. This kind of thing must have come from Africa. I don't mean to emphasize any differences between black and white people, but I feel that more black people should participate in the Peace Corps idea. . . .

IADSIRI LIENGJAYETZ,

Thailand:

While I was tending the recruiting booth on the campus of a Catholic college, one young Catholic brother came by and I talked to him. We got along very well indeed. We talked and talked about the Peace Corps and various things. And then he asked me, "What are you?" And I said, "Buddhist." His eyes got big: "Buddhist, in real life!" he said. And I thought, I have educated somebody to something different.

Among the questions that always came up from the students in the universities I went to were two very good ones. One of them was: "Should the black American be recruited into the Peace Corps—does the Peace Corps have the right approach toward the black American? Does a society which is separate and unequal have the right to recruit the black American into the Peace Corps?" Another question that always came up, and one which I thought about for a long time, was: "Are developing countries using the Peace Corps Volunteers they get in the right way? Do they ask for Peace Corps Volunteers so Volunteers would fit into the country's priority for national development?" I would like to talk about that for hours on end, and I would like my colleagues to talk about it and tell all of us what they think. Do they think that their separate governments are independent of foreign interference, and are capable and progressive enough to use the Volunteers in ways that they think are good for their national development, or do they ask for Volunteers simply to keep in good relations with the United States government?

SAMUEL BOATENG,

Ghana:

When I went to the South, I found much had been achieved by the civil rights movement. I was able to find accommodations without difficulty . . .

but I thought how surprising it is that people think of America as a country of affluence. Very rich. In fact it was down in Mississippi where, when I closed my eyes, it was just like being in Ghana. I saw where blacks lived, I saw their poverty, and when I came back this time, I realized that America too has her problems. This has helped me to correct whatever impressions I had of the country when I came here in 1966. Then another thing which struck me: I found the black students always talked about color discrimination and the sort of indignities they had been living under. Coming from a country where we are all black and you don't think of color, I

"Coming from a country where we are all black, you don't think of color."—Samuel Boateng

was amazed to find that this was something which was engaging so much of the blacks' attention. I began to understand why there was the desire for the civil rights movement—to have social justice, equality with the white.

JAMES FUNNA,

Sierra Leone:

I worked on the Pacific coast. I covered Washington state, Colorado, Idaho, Arizona, California. To me, the American society is not a dream come true, because I once lived with Americans. And seeing the West Coast, and seeing those illustrious buildings of the great universities of the West, I thought: I have learned from them far more than I have learned from any book in my life. I learned first that there is a great capacity for expansion in the United States. Let us take intellectual expansion, wherein the universities are open to various fields of knowledge and this is why they are very much concerned, or very interested when they have a visitor among them. I took it as one of my basic routines to visit presidents of the universities, various chairmen, the deans, press, and so on, to get my message across. First, they want to tap from foreigners their impressions about the Peace Corps, and of course it was obvious that nations that are recruiting have accepted a Peace Corps program; this is public policy.

No sooner was it announced that an African principal was in the compound then everybody wanted me to see his class to give first-hand information about my continent. So I find that the Americans are preparing to accept change, but it cannot be sudden; it is a gradual process. It takes time; they are aware of it. They saw it with me and I saw it with them.

Seeing an Indian reservation and seeing some of the ghettos, I have come to the conclusion that the American is selfless. He is not selfish. If he were selfish, he would pour all his resources into his own house and forget about other people. I met so many students who said, "This Peace Corps deal is nothing. We have our own problems at home so why don't we solve them first?" And I said that you don't have to be selfish, since you have the capacity to expand. You can help those abroad, and at the same time, help those at home. Now I have also learned, especially from the black students' unions where I was invited in most cases, that Americans like the opinions of foreigners. What is your opinion about the black students' movement? Black students' union? I was asked. Well, my opinion is simple and clear—any union is accepted within the United States as long as it is not meant to destroy the structure of American society. If it is for progress, well and good. Some asked for my views about black history, black studies, and whatnot, my being an educator. Well, I am all for this because it provides a scope for research, for intellectual advancement and so on.

But, I was also in favor of a certain philosophy for writing history, I told them, and some of them accepted this. We are now writing African history to make the African look big to the world. Europeans are writing their own history to make the European look big to the world, that he brought about all civilization, etc. But we are widening the gap by writing two separate histories. I suggest that after all the research has been done in all

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"And I thought, I have educated somebody to something different."—Iadsiri Liengjayetz

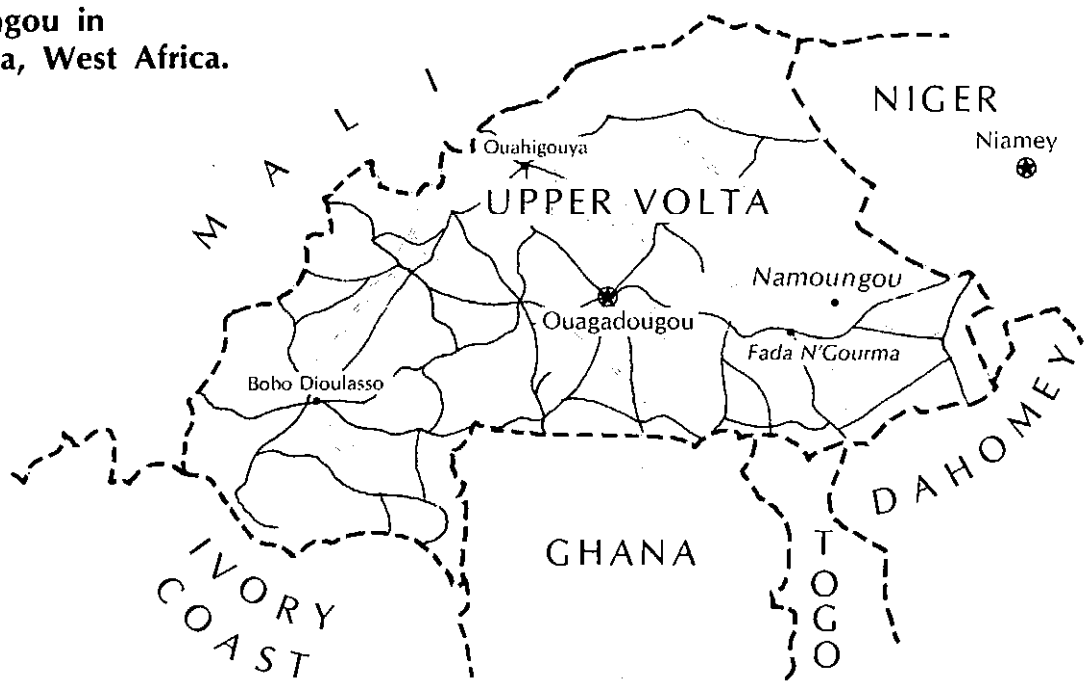
Namoungou— **gambling on education**

By MICHAEL PATTON

Yesterday was Sunday, market day at Namoungou. The men and women from the surrounding villages bring millet, sorghum, baskets, mats, millet cakes and millet cider to the market. From Fada, the largest town in the area, come cloth, sugar, salt, oil and small parts for bicycles, and a few pots. The people sit under the trees and bargain over prices, gossip and drink millet cider together. Yesterday I went to Namoungou; but I didn't go for the market.

As I rode along the bumpy, red-laterite road on my motorbike, I didn't expect to be writing this report today. I was going to Namoungou for a meeting with all the family chiefs to discuss the school-to-school program. This was the fourth meeting we had scheduled. At the other meetings the chiefs never came. This was to be the final

In his application for School Partnership funds Volunteer Michael Patton traces the stormy history of school plans for the village of Namoungou in Upper Volta, West Africa.



try; if no one came this time, I had told the head chief, we'll just forget the whole idea.

It's about an hour's ride to Namoungou—if there are no flat tires, broken chains or other problems. On the way I had plenty of time to think about Namoungou, about the school, the people and about development in Africa. I thought about the chiefs, the schoolteacher, the young students. It occurred to me that the small village of Namoungou represents many of the complexities, difficulties, frustrations and hopes that are a part of most attempts at change in West Africa. It is as important to understand the many things that go together to make up a development project in an African village as it is to construct a school in such a village. Therefore, as I saw the first round huts of Namoungou in the distance, I decided that I would write this report to explain what has happened in the village . . . whether the chiefs came to the meeting or not . . . whether the people decided that they wanted a new school or not. And so:

Pascal, the schoolmaster

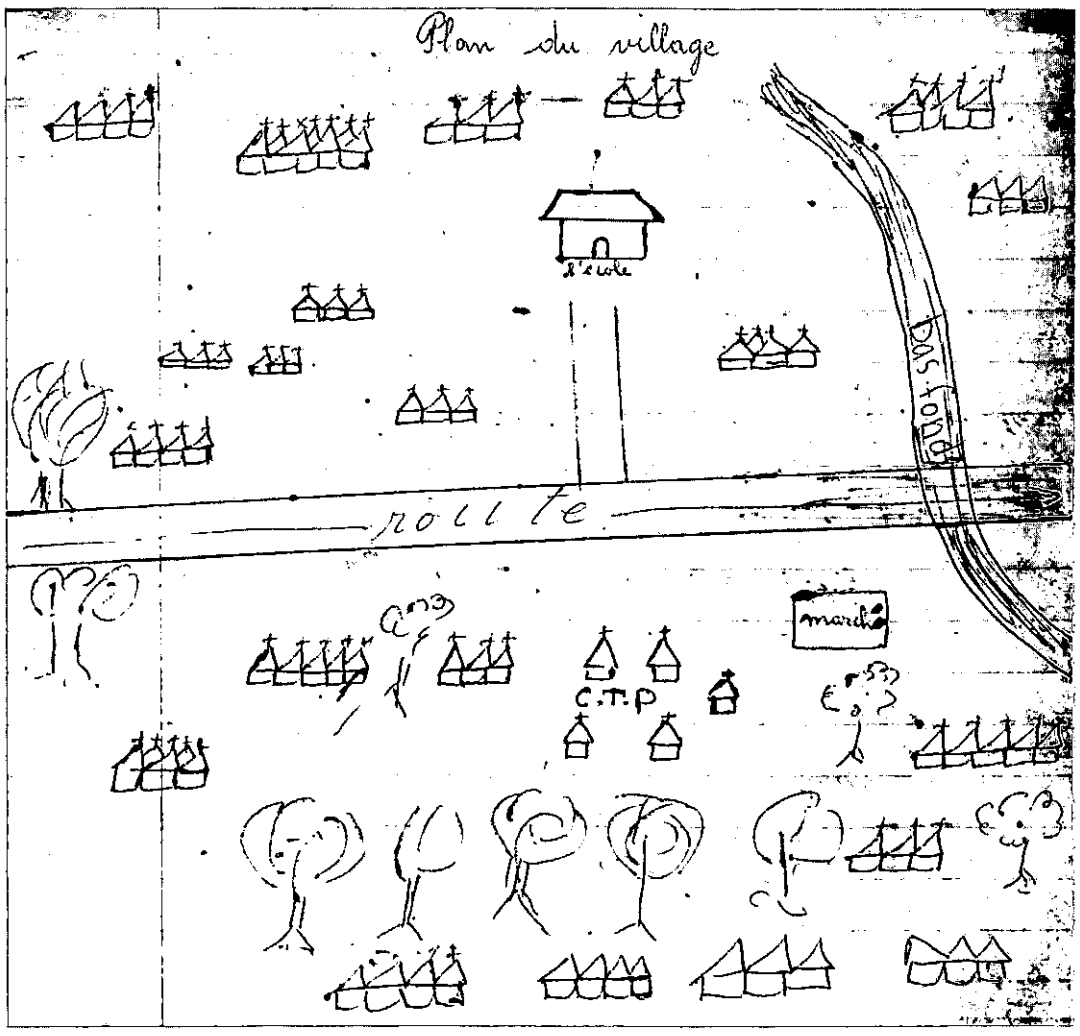
Pascal has been a teacher for six years. Before he came to Namoungou, he taught in a village 130 kilometers from his hometown of Fada N'Gourma. He was only 21 when he arrived in that village, and the people didn't understand what the school was for.

Soon he had visited all the parents and students, had explained why he had been sent and had become acquainted with everyone there and in nearby villages. If a student was absent for several days at a time, Pascal would ride his bicycle to the youngster's home to find out why he hadn't been at school. Often he found that the parents had kept their son home to work in the fields. Pascal would alternately argue and joke with the parents until they let him take the boy back to school.

Pascal and his wife had two children of their own while he was assigned to that village. The first girl died of measles after two years; the second girl died the following year—he doesn't know what from.

Except for an annual visit from the director of the rural school program, Pascal was left on his own. Then last year the director told Pascal that he was being moved to Namoungou to start a new school. Another teacher was sent to replace him even though the people asked the director to leave Pascal there. Pascal looked forward to the move. He liked the challenge of starting a new school, and he wanted to be closer to his relatives in Fada.

'The village of Namoungou lies exactly halfway between the capital cities of two West African countries. Some 260 kilometers to the west is Ouagadougou, the capital of Upper Volta; 260 kilometers to the east is Niamey, the capital of Niger. I live in Fada N'Gourma, Upper Volta, 30 kilometers west of Namoungou.'



Drawing of his village by a student of Namoungou's rural school shows the main road (route), creek (bas fond), market (marche), school site (l'ecole) and village huts.

When Pascal arrived in Namoungou last April, he had no school building, no students and no support from the villagers. He asked the head chief to have the people construct a small place out of straw mats where the children could study. When the villagers were asked to meet together about the school, they refused to come. Pascal explained the situation to the commander who is the head of the local government. When the commander came to the village, the people refused to meet to hear him. The next day the commander sent a policeman to force the people to build the straw school.

This was finished in late May as the rains began. But Pascal still had no students. It was the beginning of the planting season and all of the boys were needed to work in the fields; they had no time for school. Pascal tried to explain why the government wanted the school in Namoungou. The people wouldn't listen. A month of arguing, pleading and explaining brought him only two students.

Again Pascal had to call on the commander. A policeman was sent to order the people to come to the office of the commander in Fada N'Gourma. The commander told them that if they didn't send their sons to the school he would put them in prison.

So the students began coming. By the end of June Pascal had 30 (if they all came, which didn't happen very often).

There have been no hard feelings between the people and the schoolmaster. He has a job to do and they accept the school as unavoidable fate. "*Otienu,*" they say. "God wants it that way."

The school

The school at Namoungou is not like schools in the United States, at least not like today's schools. It's more like one of the old one-room schoolhouses that first brought education to the countryside of America. All the boys are in the same grade regardless of age. They are from 12 to 16 years old; there are no girls. Pascal is the only teacher.

They are all members of the Gourmanche tribe of Upper Volta. The language they use is almost musical to an English-speaking person because they don't just say words but they say them in different tones. The same word spoken in a high pitch means something completely different if it is said in a lower pitch.

The official language of Upper Volta, however, is French. During the school hours the students can speak only French. If someone says something in Gourmanche, the student nearest him gets to give him 10 light slaps in the face. I forgot the rule one day and said something in Gourmanche. The students hesitated. Then Pascal nodded with a smile and they lunged forward trying to see who could get to me first. It seemed like they all got there at once, so they decided that each student would get to slap me once. Unfortunately for me, all the students were there that day.

There are no chairs in the school. They sit on mud bricks and use their laps as desks. Each student has a small chalkboard and chalk to write with. They have no paper, pencils or books. In the morning school begins at 7 a.m. They study simple French—reading, writing and speaking. They also do simple arithmetic and a bit of geography and history of Upper Volta. This session ends at noon.

At three o'clock they come back to study agriculture, the most important part of the school program. All of the people in the village are farmers and 95 per cent of all the people in Upper Volta are farmers. They grow everything that they eat, mostly millet and sorghum with a bit of peanuts, corn and some beans. They do all their work with a long knife and a short-handled hoe. The ground is hard and not very fertile. Each family can barely cultivate enough to feed itself. They seldom have much left over to sell.

The students study simple techniques of modern agriculture: why it is important to plant in straight lines, how to use a donkey-plow, and how to grow new crops like cotton, sesame and soybeans. They grow gardens, raise chickens and learn how to protect them against insects and disease. The students will try to sell what they grow so that they will have money to buy new agricultural materials.

I first saw the school when I went to Namoungou to spray insecticides on their small cotton field. I was very impressed as all the boys jumped to their feet and said: "*Bon jour, Monsieur*" ("Good morning, sir"). However, in his hurry to jump up, one boy bumped against a log supporting the straw roof and part of it collapsed on his head.

It was in that moment that I thought of the school-to-school program.

I explained it to Pascal after I had made several visits to the village. He was very excited about it so we went to see the head chief. He, too, was enthusiastic. We agreed to call a meeting of all the people in Decem-

An American "partner" in the school-to-school program begins his acquaintance with Africa.

Photos by Steven Prindle

Fox Lane pupils examine African artifacts supplied by the Peace Corps and displayed here by their teacher.

ber after the harvest was finished and the rains had ended. I looked forward to the day that the villagers would meet, but at that time I didn't know the history of how the school had begun or the history of the head chief.

The chief

Guieba, the head chief, is a tall man, taller than most of the Gourmanche people. He's a great storyteller and actor, as are most chiefs. He seems to know a thousand wise proverbs, and he loves to tell stories illustrating the truth of the proverbs.

In December I asked the chief when he was going to call that meeting of family chiefs to discuss the school. We set the meeting for the next market day. I waited in the village all that day, but the family chiefs never came. Pascal and the head chief explained that there was still a lot of work to be done in the fields.

We tried again early in January with the same result. This time Pascal explained to me part of the troubles that the school had had getting the straw shelter and students. We tried calling a third meeting. Some family chiefs came, but still fewer than half.

That time I got angry. I told the chief that if he didn't really want a new school, he should just tell me and I wouldn't bother him. "The school's not for me; it's for you. If you don't care, then I don't care either," I said.

Sadly the chief began telling me what he felt like in his position. He said something like this:

"I can't command the people anymore like I could before independence came. In the old days we could force people to do things that had to be done for the village. If someone refused, we could punish him. When the chiefs' council met to decide something, that was final. But now things are different. Now the government is the only one who can punish people. Now there are courts and laws on paper. There are policemen to force us to do things whether we want to or not.

"I can't make the chiefs come together. And they know that even if they decide not to do something, it doesn't make any difference; they'll be forced to do it anyway. So when they know that I've called a meeting to discuss the government, they don't bother to come. No, it's not like the old days when the chief and his council could command."

I waited until the other people around had added their opinions and support. The chief made a lot of sense. Their lives are hard and their sorrows great. They are completely dependent on nature. If the rains don't come, if the insects destroy their crops, if a new disease sweeps through the region, they could starve. Over 50 per cent of their children die before they are seven years old. In order to face the hardness of their way of life, they simply accept the things that come with "*Otienu.*"

I explained to the chief that this time there would be no policeman. The commander had offered to furnish a policeman if I needed one. But I told him that the program didn't work that way—either the people would build the school themselves because they wanted it, or else there would be no school. But it was difficult to explain because there are no phrases like "community spirit," "self-help," "mutual cooperation," and "general welfare" in the Gourmanche language.

I told the chief to explain to everyone that the school would be their school, that there would be no policeman to force them, and that if they didn't want to build the school, then they wouldn't have to. I asked him to call one more meeting. If no one came, I promised him it would be the last.

The people of Namoungou

That week I visited many of the parents. I knew most of them, but for some reason I had never talked about the school with them. I suppose that I wanted the chief to arrange everything without pressure from me. This time the people talked about the school themselves. I told them what I had told the chief. I didn't try to persuade them; I just ex-

plained how the project would work.

They knew me by now, and I knew the complete history of the problems of the new school. One man told me that he wanted his son to know French so that he could read the papers when the government came to make them pay the taxes. But, he said, he was afraid that his son would leave the village if he could speak the "white man's words."

I know what he meant and what he feared. Many young men run away from their villages to look for work in the big cities so that they will have money to buy a bicycle and support a wife. It was a real fear, and I had no answer except that his son might run away anyway. Yes, he agreed, but the chances were greater if he knew French.

Another man told me that he was glad that his son could learn the new ways that would help them grow more food, but he was afraid that his son would no longer listen to him after he went to school. Respect for the elders of the village is extremely important in Africa. Yet, after a few years of school some boys refuse to listen to their fathers. And the fathers could do nothing because, as the chief had said, only the government could force people now. Even a man's son could make him go to court.

These are not just the problems of the village school of Namoungou. These are the problems of education everywhere in Africa, everywhere in the underdeveloped world, indeed, everywhere in the world. In the United States it's called the "generation gap." In the villages of Upper Volta it doesn't have a sociological label; it's only an expression of fear on an old man's face.

Yet, the people don't have enough to eat many years because they've been following the same simple method of agriculture that their families have followed for a thousand years. There are new things like plows and bicycles that the people want and that will make their lives easier, but they must have money to get these things. There are medicines to get and things to learn about sickness and disease so that their children won't die and so that their crops won't be wiped out.

The students have begun to understand this other side. They like school. They want to learn about new things, and they want to have a better life than the hard, poor life of their fathers. Their fathers are beginning to see this; it fills them with a kind of pride, and also with a kind of fear.

These, then, were my thoughts as I traveled the bumpy, red road to Namoungou yesterday.

The meeting

Pascal came out to meet me when he heard my motorbike. I realized when I saw him that he would be more disappointed than anyone else if the school wasn't built. Pascal likes teaching, and he's good at it. He believes in the importance of education, and he wants a permanent school in Namoungou.

We went to see the chief. He offered us some millet cider and we drank it out of small calabashes. Gradually people began to assemble around us as they always did when a visitor came to the village. The women stayed in the background but the children were everywhere. The men sat on the ground in a large circle. This time there were many more men than usual.

After a long time of drinking and gossiping, the chief said to me, "You can tell us now; we are here to hear your words."

I asked him if all the family chiefs were present. No, he replied. They weren't all there. But, he laughed, he couldn't ever remember when everybody came to a meeting. Most of them were there. That seemed to satisfy him, so it satisfied me.

I didn't talk long. I explained that there were students in the United States, my home, who had cement buildings; and they wanted other students to be able to have cement buildings so that they could have school even in the rain. I told them that the government had put the school in Namoungou so that they could learn to read the papers that came from the government and keep from breaking laws or being tricked. I reminded them that two years ago they had had bad rains and the crops were poor. If the United States had not sent grain to them, many might have starved. Only if they learned new and better ways of farming could they be sure to grow enough to keep them safe from famines.

Then I explained what work they would have to do if they decided they wanted the school, but I added that they wouldn't be forced to build it. If they decided not to do it, that would be the end.

When I stopped, they discussed the school among themselves. They went through the history of the school, of Pascal's arrival and of my first visit to the village. They talked about why the school was bad and why it was good. There were may proverbs cited and much that I didn't understand. After 45 minutes the chief turned to me and said: *"Ti ba tiene"* ("We are going to do it").

I told them that I couldn't promise that the materials would come, but that I would write to the school in the United States and I would explain to them what the chief had said. I told him that the people should begin making the *banco* bricks immediately as proof that they were really going to work. They talked about that and agreed to begin making bricks the next day.

The village cannot furnish 25 per cent of the cost of the school, but the bricks and the sand and gravel that they will gather will constitute a large investment not translatable into dollars. The people also will provide all of the manual labor for the building. The commander has agreed to pay transportation costs to get the construction materials to Namoungou and to send a mason to direct the building of the school.

I expect it to be very difficult to maintain interest in the school. But I think the people will do it; and in their own way, I believe that the villagers of Namoungou want the school. They're not enthusiastic and excited about it, but they know that it will make the lives of the villagers better. They know that they want that, but they're not sure they want all the other things that come with it.

The school will bring more than a permanent building to Namoungou. It will begin a process of building a sense of community spirit and cooperation that has been lost in the changes brought about by independence. It will give them a new community pride, though they won't call it that; and they won't be conscious of a distinct new feeling that could have a specific name like "pride." Nevertheless, I believe it will be there.

It will mean more to the students and to Pascal than to the villagers. To them it will say that what they are doing is important and lasting. It will tell them that people they don't know yet believe in them. And as contact is established between the two schools, it will open up to them greater aspirations and greater confidence.

There's one more thing. Just as I had to tell the people of Namoungou that they might not get the materials to build their school, so I must tell you that even if you send those materials, the school might not get built. I don't believe that that's a serious possibility, but it is a possibility and therefore needs to be said. Any development project may fail for any number of complex and confusing reasons. Many of those reasons I've listed already.

There is a risk. But I believe that it's a risk well worth taking, just as the men of Namoungou are taking a risk in having their sons educated. You'll be able to share, not just in the building of a school, but in the building of a community, of pride, of confidence and of hope.

EDITOR'S NOTE—The Peace Corps director in Upper Volta, Thomas Fox, strongly endorsed Patton's application for funds and forwarded it to Ian Smith in Washington. In February Smith, Peace Corps' School Partnership director, matched Patton's request with Fox Lane Middle School in Bedford Village, N.Y. The sixth, seventh and eighth graders at Fox Lane had raised $500, put it together with $500 from the PTA and had forwarded $1,000 to Smith in January in hopes of becoming a partner with an African school. The youngsters are continuing their money-raising projects this year to pay back the PTA.

The School Partnership Program, with the help of Volunteers in the field and cooperating schools in the U.S., has enabled 835 new schools to be built in 41 foreign countries since 1964 when Peace Corps started it. The overseas community is expected to provide approximately 25 per cent of the total construction cost, plus the labor, the land and a teacher. The average contribution from a U.S. partner school is $1,000. In this case, the money from Fox Lane School is earmarked for construction materials which include lumber, nails, screening, roofing, reinforcing rods and three tons of cement. The one-room schoolhouse will measure slightly more than 11 x 5 yards when it is completed.

Continued from page 7

fields, then—either for black history or white history, African history or European history, Latin American history and so on—all the great historians of the world should meet in a panel and not write about the development of one group of people or one tribe or one race, but write the true history of mankind as it is. This will narrow the gap, because each day our problems are growing larger and larger. We talk about international peace. We can finish that battle in the classrooms with the right type of textbooks. But if the textbooks show two varying philosophies—the African as the greatest man who has produced causes, like his independence, or the white man as the greatest man because of his scientific achievements—the polarities are so great that we shall never get what we call world peace. That is one of the things I discovered.

I have learned quite a lot from this experience and I hope the host national recruiters program will continue, so that people from other parts of the world can come and see where the greatness and the weakness of the United States lie. I think that everyone will go home with the impression that she is really great.

Letters *to the Volunteer*

Bitter spice

To The Volunteer:

With regard to Sol Chafkin's review of *Agents of Change* (November Volunteer): I have not read the book, but can only wonder at Mr. Chafkin's familiarity with the Peace Corps if the conclusions of the book as he stated them were such a surprise to him.

Peace Corps' Office of Planning and Program Review must indeed be a long way away from the field. The quotations from the book given in the review express what have been some of my views of the Peace Corps and my Peace Corps experience for some time. The Peace Corps does not add more than "a subtle spice" and this "spice is most likely to be tasted in the Volunteers' own society." Mr. Chafkin's concern that if this is true, "we may see a decline in Peace Corps applicants" should be stood on its ear. Perhaps there would be fewer maladjusted Volunteers if they were given the straight story from the very beginning! Mr. Chafkin's counter-argument that "Countries continue to ask for Volunteers and Congress continues to appropriate money for the Peace Corps, so the Peace Corps must be doing something right" is just too facile.

To me there is nothing more obvious than the book's statement that "Americans are getting a very special kind of education at a bargain price: this is the clearest result of the Peace Corps experiment." But this moves the reviewer to broach what he calls the "unthinkable"—and here Mr. Chafkin hits his head on the nail—"Is the Peace Corps using the third world for U.S. ends and is this not at least as objectionable as the interventions which the authors urge the Peace Corps to avoid?" The answer to this question is not necessarily a resounding "YES!" But I find it "unthinkable" that such a question be "unthinkable."

How long will it take Peace Corps Washington to come around to asking some of the hard questions that this book forced Mr. Chafkin, a former director of the Office of Planning and Program Review, to face apparently for the first time? Must we all go on putting one foot in front of the other without asking why?

As for the "spice" in our own country, Mr. Chafkin's slurring over this point again seems typical of Peace Corps Washington, whose attitude is reminiscent of those white middle class parents whose children disappear into Greenwich Village. A group called the Committee of Returned Volunteers

is now in its third year of existence and has branches across the country—all achieved without any cooperation from Peace Corps Washington and more often with its active discouragement and opposition. We are your children and are sorry if the spice is too bitter! Could you not at least take note of us in THE VOLUNTEER?

JOHN J. KULCZYCKI
Former Volunteer

New York City

Rejecting rituals

To THE VOLUNTEER:

As a returned Peace Corps Volunteer, I often meet with other returned Volunteers, and we discuss our eagerness to live again in another culture. We are discontented in America, but we don't exactly know the basis of our discontent, except perhaps, in a rejection of Americans' social rituals and norms.

I found one explanation in *Black Skins White Masks,* a book by Frantz Fanon. He is quoting from O. Mannoni's *Prospero and Caliban—The Psychology of Colonization:*

"What the colonial in common with Prospero lacks is awareness of the world of Others, a world in which Others have to be respected. This is a world from which the colonial has fled because he cannot accept men as they are. Rejection of that world is combined with an urge to dominate, an urge which is infantile in origin and which social adaptation has failed to discipline. The reason the colonial himself gives for his flight—whether he says it was the desire to escape from the cradle of the 'ancient parapets,' or whether he says that he simply wanted a freer life—is of no consequence. . . . It is always a question of compromising with the desire for a world without men."

We alienated ones could assume the position of the colonial.

SANDY COMSTOCK
Former Volunteer

Washington, D.C.

A program ends

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I wonder what Peace Corps Washington wants and upon what it bases its judgment of success and failure.

This past November a group of 29 specially recruited Volunteers working in rural youth development (4-C clubs) terminated their two-year service in El Salvador. They were mostly Volunteers with rural or 4-H backgrounds who came with the special mission to better the 4-C clubs throughout the country. Upon their arrival it became evident the job was greater than they had been led to believe. The supposed clubs did not exist except on paper. The Volunteers, who were placed with local host agencies, began developing club work. This led them into leadership training, community action and awareness, project work for educational and economic gain and democratic development of ideas and actions through club meetings, activities, projects, etc. The group was headed by a Contractor's Overseas Representative, an agricultural technician with much experience and understanding of the Latin culture and environment. At the conclusion of the two years almost every Volunteer had felt he had contributed quite a lot to his community and agency, although he was not satisfied that the work was completed. It was just the opposite, considering the situation upon their arrival; it was evident a two-year program was just the beginning.

The Volunteers had become aware of this situation almost a year before their completion of service. Their concerns expressed to staff and passed on to Washington went unheeded. At this time Peace Corps Washington decided the COR program was too expensive, although I do not understand their reasoning when they have to turn right around and hire another staff member to replace the COR. The expenses of salary, housing, transportation are the same whether COR or regular staff member. If anything, a COR should be less expensive due to his previous acquired experience, which deducts the expenses necessary to train and orient a new staff member.

The Salvadorean government requested another large group to continue the work begun. The agriculture extension agency stated there had been fewer problems than with previous smaller groups of four or five who had been assigned continuously to it since Peace Corps entered the country. They were especially pleased that clubs had begun to function and successful project work had increased from 10 to 60 percent in two years.

Thus, I ask, what does Peace Corps Washington want? Apparently we were the victims of the termination of the COR program. However, I question the policy of leaving a job half finished. Admittedly, 10 Peace Corps Volunteers were assigned to work in agriculture extension as replacements for the terminating group; however, this is only a token effort to make it appear the program is continuing. I further question Washington's cutting off all COR programs because some were more expensive or less successful than others. I question Peace Corps Washington making decisions or not making them from their desks in Washington. There was nobody from Washington, that we Peace Corps Volunteers were aware of, who came here and spoke with Salvadorean officials or heeded their desires or wishes. There was nobody from Washington who visited these poor rural communities and noticed the smile upon a youth's face as he described his corn or chicken project. I repeat: upon what bases are program decisions made?

LEROY MABERY

Santa Tecla, El Salvador

On jobs for women

To THE VOLUNTEER:

As a female Volunteer in Korea, I'd like to comiment on Sally Yudelman's article, "Finding jobs for women" (October VOLUNTEER). What she said about female Volunteers in Latin America seems to be true here also. I agree with her completely that we need: "a structured job . . . counterpart, supervision . . . and specific skills." The unusually high number of premature terminations among Korea Volunteers is strong evidence of this.

I am now the only nurse left of four who came over to participate in the rural health program. We all had several changes in our original job description. I owe my being here yet to one of the staff. We have all learned, too late, where the nurse belongs: "*not* in health posts," where we were all assigned originally. I was not adversely affected by rural placement since I was not alone.

In general, Miss Yudelman's suggestions should have more thought given to them, and should be used by the directors.

KORRINNE KANNE

Kwang Ju, Cholla Namdo
Korea

Separate standards?

To THE VOLUNTEER:

Thank goodness that Peace Corps, realizing the difficulties "minority Volunteers" may have in performing their jobs or in maintaining satisfying social relationships, does not refrain from placing them in these situations. To do so would be contrary to all we believe is good about our country.

In contrast, Sally Yudelman's belief in turning down female applicants when they "are not acceptable to host country people as community development workers" (October VOLUNTEER) is one of many manifestations of a Peace Corps tendency to overcomply with host country traditions about women's roles.

Often the discrimination seems generated by Peace Corps itself. My experience as a single girl working on a rural water system in Ethiopia has shown that my host country counterparts are much more willing to accept my role than are many of the people in Peace Corps staff.

Women and "minority Volunteers" do have unique difficulties here and no doubt elsewhere; and certainly we should all be prepared for discrimination. But why is it that when discrimination is racial, we view it as morally wrong and place Volunteers according to our beliefs in the equality of races; and when discrimination is sexual, it is viewed as a sacred cultural value and we endorse that discrimination by placing Volunteers according to the host country view of the inequality of the sexes? Is this the kind of example we want to give?

KARIN BASCOM

Choncho, Ethiopia

Invest in each other

To THE VOLUNTEER:

A shared concern! How is it being met?

Former Volunteers hold within themselves a rare investment. That investment is the concern of many who still wonder how they can share what they have with other Americans. We need to explore those avenues which might lead to a more responsible sharing. Such identification would provide for another type of investment—the investment of Americans in each other.

JOHN G. ANDERSON
Former Volunteer and
staff member

Edison, N. J.

Memorandum

TO : The field
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: The eighth birthday

DATE: April, 1969

A birthday toast to Jack Vaughn and the Peace Corps is offered by Chilean Ambassador Domingo Santa Maria as the organization celebrated its eighth year during March. In addition to Peace Corps staff, officials of the Chilean Embassy and the Smithsonian Institution joined in. A permanent display case for a street-level Peace Corps office window on Connecticut Avenue was donated by the Smithsonian and decorated the day of the party with a collection of Chilean folk art and photographs.

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Letters addressed "Peach Corps" and "Peace Core" don't even raise an eyebrow in Peace Corps Washington mail rooms anymore. But staff members recently were a bit surprised to receive a "personalized invitation" from a record company's automobile sweepstakes addressed to: "Mr. Peace Corps, 806 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C." The letter read: "Dear Mr. Corps: In Washington the Corps family has been selected to receive this lucky number. Nothing to buy, of course, just a chance to win a new car. But please act now; the Corps family could be a winner."

□ □ □

Surrounded by a herald, four flower girls, three cape holders and six escorted ladies-in-waiting, Volunteer Judy Redmond was crowned Her Majesty Judy I of Pespire, Honduras, at the town's annual fiesta held in January. In a prior week of heavy voting, the 3,200 local citizens—casting votes at one *centavo* each—gave Judy 30,000 votes, 18,000 more than the runner-up, undoubtedly making her the first *gringa* to ever receive the town's highest honor. Here Queen Judy receives her crown from her predecessor, former Queen Olga Salazar.

Blatchford succeeds Vaughn

President Nixon has replaced Peace Corps Director Jack Vaughn with the founder and executive director of ACCION, a volunteer community action organization described at times as "a private peace corps."

The new chief, Joseph H. Blatchford, 34, arrived at Washington headquarters in mid-March as the Peace Corps celebrated its eighth year. He is the third and youngest man to run the Peace Corps.

There was no immediate word of what Vaughn, 48, would do after leaving the Peace Corps.

Blatchford, a Berkeley Law School graduate and former UCLA tennis team captain, is from San Pedro, Calif. Before receiving his law degree he served briefly as an administrative assistant to a New York Congressman. On leave from ACCION last year, he ran on the Republican ticket for Congress from California's 17th District but was defeated by Democrat Glenn Anderson, 77,250 votes to 73,351.

Blatchford's "private peace corps" came about after he toured Latin American cities on a goodwill tour in 1959. He decided there was a role to be played by a private organization in people-to-people programs. In 1960, he drafted details of what was to become ACCION (the Spanish word for "action").

Writing in an ACCION publication several years ago, Blatchford said, "The real test began in July, 1961, when a group of American and Venezuelan businessmen heard out the idea and pledged $90,000 on the spot to see it through its first year. With that, 30 volunteers, recruited from California colleges, arrived in Caracas on one-way plane tickets for a 15-month stint in the poor areas throughout Venezuela."

According to Terry Holcomb, an official of ACCION International in New York, some 1,000 staff members and field workers from 9 countries participated in the program between 1961 and 1968, with 3,000 companies investing $8.6 million in cash contributions and services over the same time period. In addition to Venezuela, ACCION has been involved in self-help projects in Argentina, Brazil and Peru.

Vaughn turns over to Blatchford the supervision of 11,488 Volunteers and trainees in 59 countries.

Vaughn was directing U.S. aid missions in Senegal, Mali and Mauritania in 1961 when the first director, Sargent Shriver, chose him to oversee Peace Corps' Latin American region which had only 78 Volunteers at the time. He held that job until April, 1964, when President Lyndon Johnson asked him to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Panama. In 1965, he became Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs and U.S. coordinator of the Alliance for Progress.

On Jan. 17, 1966, Johnson asked Vaughn to return to his "first love" by becoming director of the Peace Corps, which at that time served in 45 countries. Under his leadership there has been an emphasis on the need for better programming, more in-country training, integration of host nationals into more training and overseas staff positions and general tightening of administrative details.

—Los Angeles Times

Joseph H. Blatchford

In a final cable sent overseas, Vaughn said:

"To all Volunteers and staff—Would you please post on an older bulletin board this message of my impending departure from the Peace Corps. Before you I had not known of a group or an idea so right for dealing with the ills of our time. Before you I had not been associated with individuals who gave me so much pride and kindness. I send you my love, repeat love, and best wishes. May you find Peace."

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Blatchford's appointment was announced at press time for THE VOLUNTEER. Further information on the new director may be expected in future issues.

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