

PEACE CORPS
volunteer
SEPTEMBER 1969



No room for PC

in Tanzania's policy of self-reliance

By RON HERT

The following is a report on the underlying factors governing the impending death of the Peace Corps in Tanzania. There has been a revolution taking place in Tanzania, albeit a peaceful one. Time and an increasing network of communications have spread the words and the mood which triggered this revolution to all corners of the globe, and there is every indication that the Peace Corps will be confronted with similar situations elsewhere.

This month the Peace Corps is being phased out of Tanzania, its once ambitious program now shrunk to less than 10 Volunteers and, by present indications, it is improbable that it will be asked to supply more. The general consensus revealed through termination conference reports over the past year has been that it is futile for the Peace Corps to continue to prostrate itself to the Tanzanian government, pleading for a revival of the program. Moreover, most Volunteers sympathized with the host's policies and sensitively bowed to its wish to be rid of the Peace Corps. The *New York Times* has reported that the Peace Corps was a "victim of overexposure in a harsh and agitated political climate," which to some extent is true, but which erroneously implies that the responsibility for this "climate" rests with Tanzania, exonerating the United States and the Peace Corps of anything but a passive role.

When Julius Nyerere led his countrymen to independence in 1961, he accepted President Kennedy's proposal of a Volunteer corps enthusiastically, and the Volunteers who entered his country's struggle against poverty, ignorance and disease were among the first in the world. But by 1967, he was complaining that



Photos by Black Star

Civil engineer Eugene Schreiber was one of the first Volunteers to go to Tanzania (in a group known as Tanganyika I). He instructed Public Works Department employees selected for advanced training.

the Peace Corps had "changed its character," that "some of its idealism has gone out" and that it had become a "problem." It is impossible to understand this drastic reversal without examining the Peace Corps program as it related to Tanzania's evolving foreign and domestic policies and her reactions to policies followed by the United States.

To uninitiated Western visitors who are unaware of the deep resentments left in the wake of Tanzania's particularly severe period of colonial domination, her policies often appear chaotic and recklessly paranoid. Because she had so little natural wealth to offer her British master, she consequently received very little development in return. Remarkably, she was the first of the East African colonies to win her independence and paradoxically, the least economically prepared to cope with her inherited responsibilities and problems. Much of her land, although fascinatingly beautiful, is largely unproductive and she lacks the large cash crops other developing countries are able to market abroad. Several years after independence, the majority of her 12 million people remain subsistence farmers in a culture in which the only domesticated creature used extensively in agriculture is the woman.

In the wake of freedom

Nevertheless, freedom has brought Tanzanians things they never enjoyed under a colonial power. School enrollments have doubled, communications have been extended to remote areas and most importantly, human rights have been secured for everyone in a population comprised of well over 100 different tribal and ethnic groups. Her capital, Dar es Salaam, retains its former East African charm with few of the modern, glass buildings, bubbling fountains and expensive monuments that mark the pretentious capitals of other poor countries. Her government, wholly committed to development for the masses, enjoys almost universal support and there is widespread optimism for the future.

Today Tanzania sits on the east coast of Southern Africa, an area seething in racial turmoil which threatens to erupt into war at any time. Only the young Tanzanian cannot remember when whites ruled his own land, and nearly everyone recalls the wholesale slaughter of Con-

golese by European mercenaries in 1967. South Africa, Southwest Africa, Rhodesia, Mozambique and Angola are all controlled by self-imposed white regimes which suppress indigenous majorities.

Tanzania has always stood resolutely and vociferously firm for African majority rule throughout the continent and has nurtured the dream of African Unity, even during periods of spiraling nationalism. It is no secret that Tanzania is a center for African revolutionaries and freedom fighters who cross her borders to infiltrate and disrupt the regimes to the south. There is constant concern of white reprisal, and a realistic distrust of how the Western powers will react in the event of all-out war.

These aspirations and fears have been reflected in Tanzania's attitude toward the major powers and the cold war, which she has insistently maintained is one of non-alignment. Nyerere summed up his own neutralist feelings when he said that, "When two elephants fight, it's the grass which suffers," and that Tanzania would never allow her "friends to choose her enemies." The West, however, reasoned that one must be either with you or against you and eyed the increasing presence of Chinese and other Eastern technicians and the mounting flow of Eastern military aid to African liberation groups with alarm. Tanzania is now the recipient of a very functional Chinese aid project which includes, among other things, the promise to build a railroad which the West deemed unfeasible, and although officially the government maintains there are no strings attached, many Tanzanians feel they now know who their true friends are.

Tanzania's hypersensitivity to economic exploitation and her fervor for unadulterated self-determination culminated with the Arusha Declaration of February, 1967. Briefly stated, this document forbade government leaders to operate businesses, hold investments, or to let property—in short, to have any income other than one moderate government salary. It also affected the nationalism of the "principal means of production," most of which had been controlled by outsiders, in order to "insure economic justice."

This was the non-Marxist socialism of Julius Nyerere, grounded in a wish to be self-reliant and placed in the

historical perspective that communal socialism was not new to Africa; on the contrary, capitalism had been the disruptive system superimposed on Africa by European invaders. In traditional African society, the land had belonged to the entire tribe, and every member had had an equal right and responsibility to gain sustenance from it. Nyerere wanted to re-establish this concept of brotherhood on a national scale. The amount of aid the wealthy nations were willing to give was not enough—and Tanzanians were not "makeupe" or "leeches"! Development could only come from the increased efforts of Tanzanians, and a more prudent use of available resources.

The American press became hostile, mocking and baiting in its limited coverage of these events. Simultaneously, Tanzania's more radical leftists, emboldened by the shift toward socialism, pushed loudly for more identification with other socialist countries. Tanzania had been growing more and more repelled by the onerous foreign and domestic policies pursued by the United States and their caustic criticism received top billing in the Tanzanian press. Soon there was rapid growth of acerbity between many Americans in the country and Tanzanians.

Watching U.S. troubles

As the civil rights movement took a back seat to rising black militancy, Tanzanians became increasingly aware of the inseparable relationship between the revolution in their own thinking and that developing concomitantly in black American minds. American black leaders came to link their struggle against oppression in the United States with the struggles of oppressed peoples in Africa and were successful. A black American fugitive sought asylum and the United States was refused the right of extradition. When cries of "black power" and "black pride" were voiced in Watts, Hough and Harlem, they were understood and echoed in Dar es Salaam. And, as black Americans sought their roots in Africa, they were attracted to this small, Swahili-speaking country with the courage to snub its nose at America.

No other issue produced a greater solidarity of anti-American sentiment, however, than the escalation of the war in Vietnam. To almost all Tanzanians—from house servants to intel-

lectuals—this seemed clear evidence of a predominately white belligerent, capitalist America forcing its will upon a small nation of yellow people, socialists on the other side of the globe of whom they knew or cared little about. To Tanzanians, this was merely an extension of a colonial war, and the identification was made with their own struggles to liberate Africa. Widespread popular support was expressed in financial gifts to the National Liberation Front, street rallies and formal protests at the American embassy. Soccer teams were named after the Viet Cong. The killing of Americans was cheered in war films. Moreover, the success that one small nation was having at forcing a stalemate upon the heretofore considered invincible America spurred a euphoric, nationalistic confidence.

As Tanzania found herself opposed

to the American Goliath more frequently, suspicion of CIA activity grew more acute. The exposure of the CIA's clandestine activities in the National Student Association and a list of other organizations increased doubts of whether the same government that allowed this to happen without censure was indeed sincere in its offer of an unviolated Peace Corps. As one friendly government official once told me, he did not want to believe that the Peace Corps had been infiltrated. But, because he could never be positive, and since the work performed by the Peace Corps was not indispensable, he would prefer that it were out of the country.

In addition, the publicity surrounding our tragic political assassinations, the rising violence in the U.S., and the reports of dissent and skulls being

broken by police billy clubs in the street contributed to the reassessment Tanzanians were making of the United States. And, as they were formulating and applying their socialist theories, they questioned the wisdom of allowing the "children of capitalism," particularly those from such an apparently violent and decadent society, to have an influence upon their youth. The Peace Corps, not insensitive to these developments, remained politically comatose while these eddies of mistrust slowly eroded its ability to survive.

Another American element

Meanwhile, two deeply damaging attitudes had been evolving within the Peace Corps itself, which in the last analysis caused it to be expendable. First was its tendency to remain a separate American institution

'A society of equal citizens'

We in Tanzania must accept the realities of our present position, internally and externally, and then work to change these realities into something more in accord with our desires. And the truth is that our United Republic has at present a poor, undeveloped and agricultural economy. We have very little capital invested in big factories or modern machines; we are short of people with skill and experience. What we do have is land in abundance and people who are willing to work hard for their own improvement. It is the use of these latter resources which will decide whether we reach our total goals or not. If we use these resources in a spirit of self-reliance as the basis for development, then we shall make progress slowly but surely. And it will then be real progress, affecting the lives of the masses, not just having spectacular show-pieces in the towns while the rest of the people of Tanzania live in their present poverty.

Pursuing this path means that Tanzania will continue to have a predominantly rural economy for a long time to come. And as it is in the rural areas that people live and work, so it is in the rural areas that life must be improved. This is

not to say that we shall have no industries and factories in the near future. We have some now and they will continue to expand. But it would be grossly unrealistic to imagine that in the near future more than a small proportion of our people will live in towns and work in modern industrial enterprises. It is therefore the villages which must be made into places where people live a good life; it is in the rural areas that people must be able to find their material well-being and their satisfactions. . . .

Our educational system has to foster the social goals of living together, and working together, for the common good. It has to prepare our young people to play a dynamic and constructive part in the development of a society in which all members share fairly in the good or bad fortune of the group and in which progress is measured in terms of human well-being, not prestige buildings, cars or other such things, whether privately or publicly owned. Our education must therefore inculcate a sense of commitment to the total community and help the pupils to accept the values appropriate to our kind of future, not those appropriate to our colonial past.

This means that the educational system of Tanzania must emphasize cooperative endeavour, not individual advancement; it must stress

concepts of equality and the responsibility to give service which goes with any special ability, whether it be in carpentry, in animal husbandry, or in academic pursuits. And, in particular, our education must counteract the temptation to intellectual arrogance; for this leads to the well-educated despising those whose abilities are non-academic or who have no special abilities but are just human beings. Such arrogance has no place in a society of equal citizens.

It would be a gross misinterpretation of our needs to suggest that the educational system should be designed to produce robots, who work hard but never question what the leaders in Government or TANU are doing and saying. For the people are, and must be, Government and TANU. Our Government and our Party must always be responsible to the people and must always consist of representatives—spokesmen and servants of the people. The education provided must therefore encourage the development in each citizen of these things: an enquiring mind; an ability to learn from what others do, and reject or adapt it to his own needs; and a basic confidence in his own position as a free and equal member of the society, who values others and is valued by them for what he does and not for what

outside the Tanzanian infrastructure. And second was the lethal "it doesn't matter what job a Volunteer does, as long as he does it like a volunteer" viewpoint so favored among Washington visitors and some in-country staff. These two attitudes, intricately interwoven, undermined every crucial function of the Peace Corps—communications with the host, planning, programming, training, and Volunteer performance and support.

Despite its long tenure in Tanzania, the Peace Corps never became a functional part of its host. In December, 1966, an extremely large and burdensome staff was distributed through four Peace Corps offices with no administrative connection to the host. Peace Corps responsibility was primarily either to itself or to the American embassy. Directors attended weekly embassy-team meet-

ings alongside *all* the heads of State Department agencies. Many staff families' social lives, and consequently their standards of living, revolved around those of the other U.S. government employees. The Peace Corps in the capital was just another element in the American community; and when tensions developed between the two governments, the Peace Corps' pleas that it was different lacked credibility.

But even more seriously, this separatism caused communications with the host to be at best confused, at worst nonexistent, which had marked effects upon the entire Peace Corps operation. Our group, Tanzania 13, provides excellent examples of how this syndrome operated. We entered training in October, 1966, about 160 strong—approximately 100 primary school trainees, 56 secondary school

trainees (of whom about 20 constituted a new program of stenographic skills teachers), and 4 lawyers.

The entire training situation was based upon a Parkinsonian schedule of inane lectures presented by misinformed people, but there was a particular abundance of idiocy associated with the commercial teachers program. The idea that a group of stenographic teachers could help allay the acute shortage of trained secretaries in Tanzania's government offices was conceived by Peace Corps staff in Dar es Salaam, but planning obviously had halted at that point. No criteria were drawn up for who would qualify for training, nor was any procedure of how to train them decided. No one at the training site was familiar with commercial practices in Tanzania, nor did anyone know the subject matter to be taught. Later, it was discov-

he obtains.

These things are important for both the vocational and the social aspects of education. However much agriculture a young person learns, he will not find a book which will give him all the answers to all the detailed problems he will come across on his own farm. He will have to learn the basic principles of modern knowledge in agriculture and then adapt them to solve his own problems. Similarly, the free citizens of Tanzania will have to judge social issues for themselves; there neither is, nor will be, a political "holy book" which purports to give all the answers to all the social, political and economic problems which will face our country in the future. There will be philosophies and policies approved by our society which citizens should consider and apply in the light of their own thinking and experience. But the educational system of Tanzania would not be serving the interests of a democratic socialist society if it tried to stop people from thinking about the teachings, policies or the beliefs of leaders, either past or present. Only free people conscious of their worth and their equality can build a free society.

—Julius K. Nyerere,
"Education for Self-Reliance,"
March, 1967

Volume VII
Number 10

PEACE CORPS volunteer

September
1969

PAGE

2 No room for Peace Corps

By Ron Hert

A returned Tanzania Volunteer tells why the Peace Corps is not invited back to this proud African nation.

9 Gamines

by Jon Sanger

A Colombian drive to help the boys of Bogotá.

16 Marshall Islands

A photographic portrait by former Volunteer Michael Ryan of the Marshalllese.

ON THE COVER: Photo by Jon Sanger of a gamines gang with Volunteer Tim Lyons near the Bogotá luxury hotel, Tequendama.

Published monthly by the Office of
Volunteer Support, Peace Corps,
Washington, D. C. 20525

Pat Brown, editor; Judy Thelen, associate
editor; Lynn Hennessey, editorial assistant.
Design by Paul Reed.

Correspondents: **AFGHANISTAN:** Don C. Yager. **BRAZIL:** Steven Totheroh, Mike McCullough. **BRITISH HONDURAS:** Lon Hanke. **CAMEROON:** Frances Carroll. **CEYLON:** Elizabeth Howze. **CHAD:** Jay Boekelheide, Tom Mann. **CHILE:** Charles Smith, Jr. **COLOMBIA:** Scott James. **COSTA RICA:** Roger Hamilton. **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:** Jonathan Lash, Bill White. **EASTERN CARIBBEAN:** William Carter, Bill Barrett. **ECUADOR:** Charles Creesey. **EL SALVADOR:** Ken Housfeld. **ETHIOPIA:** Susan Heck. **FIJI:** David Downes. **GHANA:** A. William Hunsicker. **GUYANA:** Paul Richard. **INDIA:** Richard McWilliams, Jonathan Lipsky, Charles Ryan. **IRAN:** Michael Sarka. **IVORY COAST:** William P. Carpenter. **JAMAICA:** Glenn Oshiro. **KENYA:** Bernice Ellenson. **KOREA:** Aaron Gurwitz. **LESOTHO:** Stephen Lehmann. **LIBYA:** Victor Gramigna, Patrick Hilliard. **MALAWI:** T. D. McCloskey, Jr., John Shannon. **MALAYSIA:** Sharon Clarke Oudemool. **MICRONESIA:** Chuck Freedman. **MOROCCO:** Kenneth Agata, Roberta Pries. **NEPAL:** Jonathan Fox. **NIGERIA:** Bob Larson. **PARAGUAY:** Suzanne Tingley. **PERU:** Lucy Conger, Karl Lorenz. **SWAZILAND:** Mike Ascolese. **TONGA:** Joella Bisson. **UPPER VOLTA:** Bob Singley. **VENEZUELA:** Edward Thiele.

ered that the British Pitman system of shorthand was common in Tanzania, while all but one of the trainees knew only the American system, Gregg. No one had ever questioned the necessity of shorthand in a country where middle management personnel were not accustomed to giving dictation, nor was the feasibility of teaching shorthand, which is phonetic, to young students to whom English was a third language and whose command of it was generally low, ever considered. No one had ever questioned the reactions of students who had been struggling all their lives to win a place in higher school to being forced to take courses which would not help them get there, but would rather train them for lesser positions. And finally, the schools that were forced to adopt this new program were not wisely chosen. My wife, for example, spent two years teaching 70 students, 90 per cent of whom were boys who considered this training women's work and either re-

sponded with disinterest or refused to attend the classes.

Emphasis on education

Even more illuminating, however, was the outcome of the primary school program. When the in-country director flew to the training site to supervise selection, he brought the news that Tanzania had refused the entire primary school group, which he attributed to the erratic policies of the host. But when the remainder of us arrived in the country, we discovered that Tanzania simply had enough manpower trained at this level and to accept expatriates would only deprive citizens of employment. This raises the serious question of whether Peace Corps Tanzania was simply ignorant of developments within the country or whether they were attempting to force Volunteers into the country in order to report an increase in Peace Corps activity which

would reflect favorably on their own management.

Many of these college-trained Volunteers were met with suspicion and envy by their Tanzanian colleagues, who were often only primary school graduates themselves, and a considerable amount of ill will and resentment was left behind when the program was canceled. Whatever the background of these programs, they were an unheeded early-warning signal of developments to come in Tanzania's attitude toward expatriate influence in her schools.

In 1962 there were 35 Volunteers in what is today Tanzania; by 1966 the figure had risen to 366, but then dropped sharply to 143 in 1968. In the early years, the Peace Corps had supplied diversified groups of skilled technicians such as nurses, surveyors and engineers, but the inflated 1966 figure reflects a large proportion of teachers at all levels, although there was a small group of Volunteers working on cooperative schemes and a

Young girls at the Meta Upper Primary School in Mbeya received sports training from Volunteer Frances Winzurk. A graduate of San Diego State College, she was part of Tanganyika III.





The high watermark for Peace Corps in Tanzania was in 1965-1966 when more than 300 Volunteers were serving there. In their off hours, they could enjoy a musical session with some of the youngsters.

few extendees from earlier programs.

But it was obvious that the Peace Corps had placed its emphasis on education. It had, no doubt, encountered difficulty in enlisting qualified people for jobs other than teaching, since its recruiting drives were concentrated on college campuses where they attracted mainly liberal arts graduates. The practical action seemed to be to capitalize on their academic training by making them teachers, which would not only supply teachers for the developing countries, but also provide experienced teachers for the growing shortage at home when they completed service abroad. It would also alleviate the need to provide them with skills training which no institution in the United States was adequately prepared to do. But it failed to take into consideration the strong desires of a highly nationalistic government like Tanzania's to attain self-sufficiency as rapidly as possible, particularly in the molding of her young people.

As late as August, 1968, a staff member told me that he had tried to gain acceptance for more secondary school teachers, but had failed due to the political situation. When I told him that according to a widely circulated government report, Tanzania estimated that she would be self-sufficient at this level by 1970, he admitted that he had not seen the report. Therefore, barring the introduction of new, diversified programs, the Peace Corps would probably have been reduced by about 75 per cent due to its ineffective communications and consequent shortsighted planning.

Question of credentials

The Peace Corps did, however, attempt to correct this error by proposing new programs to the host, but by then it was already too late. For there was also evidence that Tan-

zania had grown suspicious of the professional competency of the Volunteers she received from the Peace Corps. Thus, she demanded that our group forward diplomas for inspection before we would be accepted. Since independence, Tanzania has had the opportunity to educate and train a sizeable manpower supply for jobs that require limited technical acumen—exactly the type of position the B.A. generalist is best able to fill. Under her policy of self-reliance, Tanzania will temporarily sacrifice background standards in order to involve as many citizens as possible in the developmental process and then exhort them to perform their jobs in the manner that “doing it like a volunteer” implies. There are marked similarities between the “Peace Corps ethic” and that being expressed by Tanzanians.

What Tanzania wants and desperately needs is experts; and if the Peace Corps could have supplied them, it perhaps would still be a vital

force in Tanzania today. When Sweden sent a volunteer librarian or water development specialist, she sent people to whom these were chosen professions and who already had had professional experience and training. The same was true when Britain sent a volunteer veterinarian or cattle breeder. But when the Peace Corps provided a TEFL instructor, he had had no previous teaching experience, nor was he ever trained to teach English as a foreign language. And when it sent a Volunteer to help manage a cooperative tobacco scheme, he had, in fact, studied architecture and had grown up in a New York suburb.

The eventual performance of these Volunteers is irrelevant. What is relevant are the desires of the Tanzanian government, and it is no longer interested in providing an environment in which young Americans can demonstrate their creative flexibility. Britain has as great a political stigma associated with her as does the United States, but British volunteers remained in the country even after Tanzania had severed relations with Britain altogether because Tanzania was satisfied with their performance and felt she needed them.

When government leaders stepped up their denunciations of the Peace Corps, hardly anyone in the Tanzanian community defended it—because the Peace Corps had virtually no ties with the community. By concentrating on education, the Peace Corps had placed large clusters of Volunteers on school compounds in or near towns where they lived or associated either among themselves or with other expatriates. Volunteers who sought less affluent living conditions that would offer more contact with the surrounding community most often ran headlong into Tanzania's Orwellian bureaucracy, which, for the most part, expected Volunteers to teach and act like other expatriates.

The majority of Volunteers, recognizing the practicality of living in the school environment, resigned themselves to the European social setting and plowed their energies into their schools. But they were aware that the colonial-oriented school system was not providing a relevant educational experience for these children in a rural developing country, and they welcomed the President's call for reform in the school system. In a pamphlet entitled "Education for Self-

reliance," Nyerere pointed out that the nation had been spending 20 per cent of its entire national budget on an educational system designed to benefit only a few. Although only one of eight primary school students could hope to gain a seat in secondary school (and similar situations existed at successive levels), the chosen subject matter concentrated on grooming the minority for additional schooling. The majority left school with a sense of failure and returned to the land, which they had learned to detest, or worse, congregated in the towns where there was inadequate employment. Moreover, this minority who were allowed to continue their education at government expense smugly expected comfortable government salaries and the amenities of urban life which were only paid for by the toil of the rural peasant.

Program of self-reliance

If Tanzania was to become self-reliant, these educated classes would have to be used more wisely. Nyerere, therefore, asked that the schools adopt programs that would prepare the students for a life of service to their country and to cope with life in a primarily agricultural economy. First, the schools would become self-sustaining model socialist communities by introducing student-operated cooperative farms and businesses. And second, the schools would organize self-help projects such as adult literacy campaigns in coordination with the surrounding communities.

Because Europeans were often protective of the old system and because citizen teachers and students, who had long ago learned to consider physical labor demeaning, responded apathetically, Volunteers soon surfaced among the principal supporters of these new activities. Later, during a conference in the capital, the country's headmasters expressed a rather humiliating concern over this disproportionate presence of Americans. A program of self-reliance supported largely by outsiders was self-contradictory. Soon many Volunteers began to feel themselves squeezed out of participation in these activities, partly as an effort of their superiors to involve more Tanzanians, and partly because Volunteers often lacked the skills and knowledge necessary to make significant contributions.

To foster and sustain support for the government's new directives to

the schools, political orientation became a vital part of each student's education. Here they learned that the government's policies of socialism and self-reliance were weapons with which Tanzania could counter neo-colonialism and its attendant economic exploitation. But because the United States' interventionist policies on the world scene qualified it as the figurehead of all that Tanzania sought to combat, anti-Americanism found its way into the schools. A tense atmosphere surrounded the schools, and even though most Volunteers substantially agreed with the criticism being made of American affairs and were in complete sympathy with Tanzania's goals, in the eyes of many Tanzanians they were first and foremost Americans. Soon the Volunteers began to encounter harsh sentiments from their superiors, peers and sometimes even from students.

If the Peace Corps had early established closer ties with the Tanzanian government by fully involving Tanzanians in responsible roles in the planning, programming and training process, and if it had more actively sought to disassociate itself from the stigmatic American government, perhaps it could have avoided the errors which had placed entire programs in jeopardy. It could have predicted the increasing emphasis Tanzanians would place upon skilled technicians and responded by establishing a wider and more flexible base of operations and up-grading Volunteer performance, thus counteracting the rising distrust and anti-American temper.

Under present circumstances, however, it is doubtful if the Peace Corps, as it is now constituted, will enjoy a rebirth in Tanzania. Although Tanzania's nationalism often approaches chauvinism, she has not turned in upon herself. She is not an isolationist. President Nyerere has stated clearly that his government will continue to seek financial and technical aid from anyone willing to give it. But the technical aid will be in highly skilled areas in which she cannot possibly be self-sufficient yet. Doing it like a Volunteer will just not suffice there any longer.

The author recently returned from Tanzania where he taught English for two years. Prior to joining the Peace Corps, he worked as a copywriter for a major publishing company.



Even the slightest degree of regimentation, like lining up before classes, can frustrate these boys of Bogotá who have led independent lives on the streets.

Gamines,

boys who live in the streets of Bogotá, are making friends with volunteers—Colombian social workers and Peace Corps workers.

Behind the friendship stands a chance for rehabilitating hundreds of physically and psychologically abandoned youngsters who live by their wits.

The observation centers where such children can receive help have been open for a long time. But the public and both kinds of volunteers sat up and took notice last year when *gamines* were swept off the streets in large numbers and assigned to the centers until after the Eucharistic Congress and visit of Pope Paul.

One such center is Albergue Infantil, where most of the photographs accompanying this article were taken. Ideally, *gamines* are only expected to stay in a center like this for three months, until suitable homes are found. But not many homes are found,

and after years on the streets, *gamines* find it difficult enough to stay in a center with others of their kind, let alone reintegrate themselves into families. For one child Albergue Infantil is the only home he has ever known; he has lived there since its founding eight years ago.

In the accompanying article there is no suggestion that Colombia is the only place to have a portion of its youth begging on the streets. The social agencies have their eyes open in this case and are getting help from Colombian and Peace Corps people as well as others. It's a situation where children with needs and people with time and some skills come together. Then you add a little love.

The background information and some of the following photographs originally appeared in *Porvenir*, newspaper of Volunteers in Colombia.

During the campaign to get gamines off the streets, signs such as this one in downtown Bogotá asked "Where are the gamines hiding?"



Hiding them is not enough

No one knows for sure when the first *gamine* appeared on the streets of Colombian cities. The French term *gamin* or street urchin has been part of the Colombian vocabulary for at least 30 years. More than likely, it was the violence and civil disturbances here in the late 1940's and 1950's that escalated the problem by fostering a large population increase in poor sectors of Bogotá. The intolerable conditions in these neighborhoods were conducive to forcing desperate children out into the streets.

Social agencies, public and private, have been working on this problem for several years; but it was the Eucharistic Congress in August, 1968, that raised public demands for a more thorough approach to its solution. Three weeks before the Congress and Pope Paul's visit, police began rounding up *gamine*s and placing them in observation centers in order to keep them off the streets. When police continued this operation every day for two weeks, the *gamine*s realized that it was useless to leave the centers and so remained there through the Congress.

Signs saying "¿Dónde esconden los gamines?" (Where are the *gamine*s hiding?) began to appear on the outdoor walls of Bogotá. Many people felt that the *gamine*s were being jailed or placed in concentration camps, and publicity on the subject was generally unfavorable. Even those who knew where the *gamine*s had been taken objected on the grounds that this was a camouflage

maneuver for the Pope's benefit rather than a rehabilitation campaign. The facts are that in the weeks following the Congress the police threat ceased, and the streets again were filled with the ragged children.

When examined closely, what looks like the anarchy of *gamin* street living gives way to structures. *Gamine*s have had to unite to survive, and even in their primitive way, have a hierarchal system with values and status rewards. Their sub-culture is divided into self-sufficient units known as *galladas* or gangs with a pecking order according to physical prowess and age. The strongest and oldest boy is called *el vale* by the rest; but the smallest and weakest boys have a place within the system, too, since their weakness may increase their ability to beg. They are often subjugated to the stronger boys, however, and forced to hand over whatever they beg or steal.

Pulecio works alone

The hierarchy of a *gallada* is illustrated in the cover portrait. With 11 members, it is one of the larger gangs in the city. Pulecio is *el vale*, the leader. He's at the top of the picture, wearing a beret and resting his hand on Volunteer Tim Lyon's shoulder. He is small but achieved the position by virtue of his strength and nerve. Least influential is "Chupadado" (sucking his thumb in the front row). As the "runt" of the group, he is an extremely good beggar

and frequently brings in the high take for the day. The boys generally break up into pairs by day and come together at night to pool resources and sleep. Pulecio works alone.

On any afternoon in the main streets of downtown Bogotá, such gangs can be seen hanging from the backs of cars. In addition to sport, this is their main mode of transportation: Whenever a gang is going someplace, the boys wait for *el vale* to first pick a car to ride on. The ritual of the *gallada* requires that the leader must have a better car than the lesser boys. They wait behind and choose inferior models to ride on.

The high mobility of the *gamine*s throughout the city makes exact numeration difficult; the estimated numbers in Bogotá run from 500 to 5,000. The boys range in age from 4 to 15 years. At 15, they become legally responsible for their actions, and if caught stealing they are put in jail. Until age 15, they are passed through a variety of juvenile reform schools.

Their childhood experiences tend to make them anti-social, defensive, and distrustful of adults. They have developed a fast and esoteric jargon to enhance their comradeship with other *gamine*s and to increase their distance from the adult world. At the same time, they are completely love-starved and respond to the smallest touches of human warmth. It has been through this need for love that social organizations have worked on their rehabilitation.



Those who come to the centers shower up in preparation for a new set of clothes.

The rags of their former days get tossed in a basket and the gamines start fresh.



By JON SANGER

Bienestar Social, a government welfare agency, has the most experience in dealing with *gamines*. In December, 1967, it sponsored national volunteers from fields such as psychology, sociology, social work and education to go into the streets, establish contacts with the *gamines* and try to involve them in education programs.

The pattern of *gamin* rehabilitation generally is as follows: The child is picked up by the *policía infantil* and placed in a reception center. He may stay there for a maximum of three days during which time data is collected on him. From there he is taken to an observation center where he has regular classes and recreation activities, regular meals and a roof over his head. He is studied by psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers, and stays for a maximum of three months, more or less. Really difficult psychiatric cases are sent to a clinic for day treatment. Finally, the attempt is made to put him back into society as a functioning member. Because reunion with former families is so difficult, *hogares familiares* are set up. They usually are groups of about 15 boys living with a married couple, their surrogate parents. Older and better adjusted ex-*gamines* are placed in a residence akin to fraternities and housing about 35. The success of these reintegration programs has been moderate. Boys may go back to the street at any stage in the process. Bienestar reports that the majority of "post *gamines*" be-

come thieves or pimps or wind up in mental institutions. (Two youths, however, are outstanding reflections of rehabilitation. Both are studying now at the National University in Bogotá.)

The programs are crippled by their lack of qualified teachers. The *hogares familiares* have broken down in many cases because the married couples are usually university students who need the money and living quarters, but who are not social workers and have little background in handling children.

Focus on prevention

Until recently, Peace Corps participation in these programs had been marginal. Tom Harmon, in 1968, was the first Volunteer associated with the *gamines*. Tim Lyons has been working with *gamines* full time since September of that year. Bienestar is presently trying to develop a corps of 500 Colombian Volunteers (including some Peace Corps Volunteers), and Tim has been put in charge of organization, coordination and publicity for the new program. At present there are some 20 Peace Corps Volunteers working with Bienestar; six are full time. According to Bienestar director, Maria Teresa Gnecco Calvo, the new programs focus on preventing future *gamines*. Five neighborhood centers have been set up in several poor barrios. Furthermore, there are 29 preschool centers in Bogotá which help prevent *gaminism* by giving children a place for directed play while their par-

ents are at work. Both kinds of centers offer children classes in such things as cooking, manual arts, sports, dancing, music and theater. Volunteers can teach there according to their interest and experience.

The Dutch Government recently offered funds to Colombia to aid its *gamines*. This stimulated the first National Seminar on the Gamines Problem in January. It was sponsored by the Colombian Institute of Social Development, and public and private organizations that have been working with *gamines* participated. The seminar was a good sign. Knowledge gleaned from such disciplines as sociology, psychology, medicine and religion, and different kinds of organizations is being shared. The need for fewer haphazard efforts and more coordinated activity is self-evident.

Solving a problem that runs as deeply as this one into the core of Colombian society requires great human resources. Any theoretical rehabilitation or prevention plan will flounder unless adequate human resources are available to make the plan a reality.

That's where the Volunteers are at the moment.

The author and photographer, a Volunteer in Bogotá, has been co-editor of *Porvenir*, has worked with the *gamines* and has been assigned to film work for the Colombian Institute for Social Development.



Luis Alberto, 11 . . . abandoned by his parents when he was less than a year old and taken in by a family for his potential as a beggar . . . he had to bring home a certain amount of money from begging to be allowed to enter the house . . . without that sum, he slept in the streets . . . once he realized he could live in the streets and keep for himself the money he begged or stole, he left his home . . . he is a loner and finds it difficult to adjust to living with other boys . . . he has been in and out of the Albergue Infantil center at least six times . . . when he leaves, he gets clothing from garbage cans and handouts . . . he sleeps in an abandoned movie house in downtown Bogotá or in assorted church alcoves . . . Luis has no problem finding food for he has two *contratas*, guaranteed meals at an appointed time and place . . . many socially conscious city people maintain these arrangements with selected street boys . . . according to Luis, all his needs are adequately provided for in the streets . . . yet, when the pictures of him were taken, he had been camping out on the steps of Albergue Infantil for seven days, petitioning his readmission . . . and for the first time, he was being refused entrance to the center because of his many previous departures. He seems similar in many ways to "the artful dodger" in the movie version of Charles Dickens' story of Oliver Twist.

Bernardo, 9 . . . came to the Albergue Infantil center of his own volition after hearing of it from other *gamines* . . . he explained he had been kept sick deliberately to elicit more public compassion when forced to sit beside his begging mother . . . investigation verified his story . . . he has been in the infirmary at the center for several months, victim of malnutrition and tuberculosis.





Gustavo, 9½ . . . an illegitimate child, seriously beaten since an infant, and found to have epilepsy . . . he was taken out of school in the first grade to beg . . . he left his home for the streets and was picked up during the Eucharistic Congress and brought to a center . . . there he was discovered to be retarded.

Clodomiro, 9 . . . used to beat up his sister because she got better grades than he . . . then he was kicked out of school himself because he couldn't write on the blackboard with his right hand . . . this brought on beatings at home for not going to school . . . Clodomiro hates adults and older children . . . he is rebellious at the center and chooses to live in the streets up to three months at a time . . . with older companions he is aggressive and uses strong language . . . but at the center he seems to care for and defend the younger children . . . he came to the center voluntarily and does not ever want to go home.



Luis Antonio, about 8 . . . withdrawn and shy . . . his speech is difficult to understand because of damaged vocal chords . . . when he was first brought to the center, he communicated with raspy grunts . . . now, with careful listening, certain words can be understood . . . Luis refuses to talk about his disability but says he was kicked out of his house . . . a short time ago, he left the center after being repeatedly mimicked and teased by the other boys there . . . he lives from garbage picking and rarely begs for fear of ridicule.



Luis Alberto, "the artful dodger", sees Volunteer Tim Lyons as a friend. And Tim sees being a foreigner in Colombia as an advantage in working with *gamins*. "These kids reject all social values and the 'establishment' which creates them," Tim observes. "I'm not part of the system. In that sense, Peace Corps Volunteers have an advantage over the Colombian workers. We are something different and the kids confide in us."

Seniors rate Peace Corps

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the socially committed individual to go abroad when he feels so much needs to be done in the U.S.

This is a conclusion of Lou Harris pollsters who recently conducted a survey of 1005 seniors from 50 different colleges.

While the poll shows that during the last two years a consistent 13 per cent of college seniors have seriously considered joining the Peace Corps, it indicates that a growing percentage of seniors are considering VISTA and social work in the U.S. as post-graduation possibilities.

The seniors were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "There are enough serious problems 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." Agreement came from 45 per cent this year, 10 per cent more than in 1967.

This is the third poll conducted for the Peace Corps by Harris; in the first survey in 1966, 16 per cent of the seniors interviewed were seriously considering joining the Peace Corps.

The VISTA figure is nine per cent for 1969, compared to seven per cent in 1967, and there is less overlap than in the past between those seriously considering joining the Peace Corps and those seriously considering joining VISTA. This implies that Peace Corps and VISTA are not seen as equivalent forms of service to the same extent as in previous years.

It is possible that the increase in "serious consideration to social work" from 13 per cent in 1967 to 21 per cent currently also reflects this greater emphasis on domestic concerns.

The campus mood

As Harris noted, the Peace Corps' interest in the changing character of American universities is hardly academic. Well over 80 per cent of applications come from college graduates, and those who are seriously considering the Peace Corps tend to be drawn disproportionately from among the more active seniors. Consequently, any change in the college environment and in the size and nature of the activist groups can affect both the basic

techniques the Peace Corps uses to recruit on the campus and the type Volunteers it might attract.

In total, 35 per cent of the seniors in schools where protests have taken place indicate that they have participated in these protests. Nearly half of those seriously considering joining Peace Corps and more than half of those considering VISTA say they have been involved in some form of protest (from signing petitions and picketing to civil disobedience and going to jail). While 70 per cent of all the seniors indicate they favor the goals and demands of the protests—principally a stronger voice in formulating school policy—only 24 per cent of them support the tactics of protest.

Seniors and the military

In the space of 16 months (between the 1967 and 1969 surveys) there was a dramatic change in the attitudes of college seniors toward the draft and by implication the purposes which the drafted individuals serve. Resisting the draft is a criminal offense and yet half of all college seniors, fully aware of the illegal nature of the act, respect a draft resister more for the stand he is taking. That figure was only 29 per cent in 1967.

Of all seniors, 78 per cent think it would be a good idea for the Peace Corps to be considered a substitute for military service.

For male seniors seriously considering the Peace Corps, 20 per cent (versus 8 per cent in 1967) feel "postponing serving in the military until the Vietnam war is over" is a "very important" reason for joining the Peace Corps.

The possibility of two years in the Peace Corps plus two years in the military creates a block to interest. The proportion of men who indicate a "very important" reason for *not* joining the Peace Corps is that when they came back they would still have to go into military service has increased from 18 per cent to 23 per cent.

Thirty per cent of all senior men would be more interested in joining a three-year Peace Corps-VISTA combined program with a draft deferment. But 69 per cent would be more interested in the same combination with a draft exemption.

The seniors still consider the Peace Corps as the program doing the most to help the reputation of the United States in the world today, the Harris pollsters said. And when it comes to shortcomings, the Peace Corps is still blamed primarily for what it has not been able to do because of its size and amount of funds available, rather than for negative actions.

Peace Corps' image

It appears that the Peace Corps has avoided an Establishment identification. (Only one in seven seniors thought otherwise.) But the Harris people isolated three questions which they say point to potential problems.

First—19 per cent of the seniors agree that "the Peace Corps setup has become too bureaucratic to allow people to have any real initiative and new ideas any more." This is up from 12 per cent agreement in 1967. Even more striking is the increase in agreement with this statement among those seriously considering the Peace Corps—from 8 per cent to 22 per cent, and among the most active seniors—from 27 per cent to 40 per cent. There appears to be a growing feeling that the Peace Corps is encumbered with bureaucracy. This feeling has not yet reached serious proportions, but does present a potential problem.

Second—28 per cent of all seniors now feel that "the Peace Corps has become more interested in improving the U.S.' image than in really helping in other countries." The 1967 figure was 25 per cent.

Third—In 1967, 34 per cent of the seniors agreed that "it is still possible in the Peace Corps to say what you really think and nobody there tries to muzzle you." Today agreement is only 31 per cent.

Multi-national involvement

The ideas of cooperation with other nations and of the Peace Corps as an international organization have a highly positive appeal for the seniors. Given a choice between these two forms, they would prefer to see the Peace Corps as an American organization cooperating with similar organizations from other countries.

Finally, a great many indicated they would be more interested in the Peace Corps if they could be provided before training with a complete explanation of the area to which a Volunteer would be going and the job he would be doing.

The Marshall Islands



Young Lonne is well known in the village and is said to be an expert checker player.

re part of the vast Pacific area known as Micronesia.
aving passed through Spanish, German and Japanese possession,
ey are now governed as part of the U.S. Trust Territory.
he Peace Corps went to Micronesia in 1966.

Michael Ryan, one of the early Volunteers there, took the photographs
resented here of the people he knew on the islet of Kaven (Maleolap atoll)
n the eastern Marshall Islands District.

A centenarian, Rota doesn't
know his actual age because
time was marked by moons
when he was young and he has
no real concept of 'years'.
A strong and humorous man,
he sings chants in the old tongue
about the wars between the
Marshallese kings which took
place in his youth. When he sings
he lies down so as not to get tired.



Preparations for Mason's birthday feast. The Marshallese celebrate only one birthday per individual, and that is the first year. Here food is divided into baskets for individuals and families.



The major limitation to any kind of language program will always be the amount of interest that a village schoolboy can maintain in a language that he will probably never use. But that is another matter entirely.

FRASER A. LANG

Tehran, Iran

Top heaviness

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

The article written by the anonymous senior staff member ("The care and feeding of Peace Corps staff," June VOLUNTEER) is so true. He didn't mention the effect of over-staffing on the Volunteers. Many see the staff's 25 per cent productivity as laziness and the visiting of posts as larking around the countryside. Depending on the Volunteer, he either emulates the staff or works in spite of them.

I hope Mr. Blatchford will read the article carefully and make changing this situation his special goal. If he can accomplish this, maybe the Peace Corps will get off the ground and really do something.

MARIANN J. SCOTT

Delavan, Wis.

Second time around

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

I returned from overseas over three years ago, and I just got word of my first small victory. I never did learn the language very well, but I did things. One of my concoctions was a well drilling rig which worked just like the big ones, but mine was an Armstrong model made out of scrounged pipe. In one day it could punch a well to a depth that would take two or three weeks to dig with a hoe, (they never heard of shovels). I dug two demonstration wells and never had any takers. When I left it was rusting away beside my father-in-law's house (I married a local woman). I just received word that the set up has been resurrected and it is being used to drill wells regularly.

Now to get to what is really on my mind. All the Peace Corps had to do to keep me on was to take care of my family's medical expenses. I just couldn't afford to extend after I was married even though my effectiveness would have been far greater, partly because of my wife's help, and partly because of my experience. I

Memorandum

TO : The field
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: Goodbye to humdrum wells

DATE: September, 1969



Buck MacAdoo mostly dug wells when he was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger. But one rainy season he put his interest in art to work too—he traveled to about 20 villages, painting decorative designs on the wells he had helped construct. His procedure was simple: He would come into a village on a camel (or donkey or mule), roll out his mat and equipment, and ask the chief to choose one of several designs for the well. The designs were made by MacAdoo and ranged from pop art to the traditional. They included a Scotch plaid, figure 8's, a Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds, blue and yellow "amoebas"; and a dizzying pattern that horses shied away from but camels thronged around. The favorite of most chiefs (above) was a black and white circle pattern, splashed with vivid color. It reminded them of the "panges" the village women wore. Sometimes the villagers participated in the painting process. MacAdoo recalls that in one village they were so anxious to get into the act that he had to work very fast doing the "groundwork." He was painting a continuous replica of the Niger flag (a field of blue with a single orange circle) around the well. The villagers were so enthusiastic about the orange dot and its potential artistically that they could hardly wait for MacAdoo to finish the field of blue before dozens of them rushed forward, putting orange dots everywhere.

□ □ □

If you know Little Lulu's last name, Babe Ruth's first name, John Cameron Swayze's weatherman's name or the actor who played the neighbor to Ozzie and Harriet, you might have what it takes to complete "Triviacroctic." Something like a crossword puzzle, "Triviacroctic" has appeared in a Volunteer newspaper in India, *The Dravidian*, now known as *The Land/The People*. Its originator says it is based on useless but pleasant information, and that trivia is as basic to your understanding of American culture as Monopoly. A mystery prize goes to those who come up with the most useless but nostalgic answers.

would like to have another go, but of course I can't. I am married to a foreigner and have two children under whatever the age is. I think that the Peace Corps is still hung up on the image (though I know that the term has gone out of fashion) of the young Volunteer who will conquer the world armed only with bare hands and *savoir faire*.

I see that some others are thinking along my lines. The Atlanta RPCV meeting passed a resolution that "the Peace Corps should be allowed to utilize non-citizen residents of the United States as Peace Corps Volunteers," and that "Peace Corps policies could be carefully altered to accommodate married couples with children under 18, as long as the spirit of voluntarism is not lost."

Why not experiment and let some of the has-beens have another crack at it? And what a Volunteer my wife would make!

DONALD W. NICOL

San Diego, Calif.

Middle class agency

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

One of the basic problems that Peace Corps never sees fit to discuss with Volunteers is who receives the help that Peace Corps provides. In most cases in India it is the middle and upper middle sectors of the social and economic structure that are the recipients of whatever meager help Peace Corps provides.

Agriculture programs are designed to help farmers who already are in the top quarter with regard to rural income. In some cases, Volunteers are

put in the position of working with farmers whose income is 10 or even 20 times the income of the average middle-level farmer. Many of these rural plutocrats have incomes in excess of 100,000 rupees. (If you equate one rupee with one dollar you get a rough equivalent of purchasing power.) Nobody would think of providing help for farmers who have incomes of \$100,000 in the U.S. Meanwhile, the work that Volunteers are doing actually is widening the disparity between the haves and the have-nots in rural India.

More efficient producers (middle-level farmers and above) are going to push smaller farmers out of business. When mechanization comes, large numbers of agricultural laborers and small farmers reduced to the level of agriculture laborers will be thrown out of work. A number of Volunteers are placed in the position of continually quieting their consciences. One can make a relatively good case for the need to concentrate efforts in agriculture on efficient producers—but it still bothers many Volunteers that the vast majority of the population is either untouched or actually harmed by successful Peace Corps efforts to help the middle class. As present programs are designed, Volunteers have little opportunity to help the distressed segments of the population.

In certain cases where Volunteers have gone outside the stated program to offer really minimal help, Peace Corps has actually clamped down on these Volunteers, responding, admittedly, to local pressures. This seems to me to be a case where

Volunteers and Peace Corps in general can question our own priorities and those of the host country as well. In the case of rural India one palliative would be to provide programs in small rural industries based on agriculture. The urban economy is definitely unable to absorb even the present level of population increase. Vast migrations from the rural areas would surely spell disaster. There should be an increase in rural capital that would enable such ventures to be financed locally.

All of the above certainly opens the Peace Corps to justifiable criticism as a middle class American organization. Instead of promoting peace and harmony in the societies in which we work, some of our critics, some Volunteers and some Indians see us as promoting discord in the society. I would like to find out if Volunteers in other countries have some of these same doubts.

CHARLES RYAN

Tamilnadu, India

Hair! Hair!

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

Despite all the moaning and be-moaning heard from in-country and Washington staff about Joe Blatchford and the "new look", Joe's healthy side burns give me a better feeling than Jack's quasi moustache.

REGINALD DUSING

Chikwawa, Malawi

THE VOLUNTEER welcomes letters on all topics of interest to the Peace Corps. Letters are subject to condensation.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Name

Street or P.O. Box

City, State, ZIP Code

Effective date

Mailing label at right must be sent with all requests for changes of address.

PEACE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20525
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID