

# THE PEACE CORPS AND THE REVOLUTION OF WIDENING CONCERN

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American writers and statesmen have been quick to observe dramatic mid-century changes in the attitudes of other peoples, particularly in the former colonial nations and have dubbed these "the revolution of rising expectations" and "the revolution of freedom." We have not been as quick to discover and analyze a revolutionary development which has been fast overtaking my countrymen, a revolution of widening concern for the welfare of all humanity.

What do I mean by the revolution of widening concern? I mean, that for certain historical and sociological reasons, an increasing number of Americans are concerned with the welfare of an increasing number of people all over the world. This concern, moreover, is not just the result of fear of nuclear war or communist success. It is not a question of what our statesmen are fond of calling enlightened self interest. It is not the concern of the patrician for the less fortunate, the patronizing benevolent concern of the well-to-do for the poor. These factors undoubtedly are present in the attitudes of many Americans as they approach their responsibilities in world affairs. The concern of which I speak is

qualitatively different from anything that has gone before in international relations. It is a genuine concern for the welfare of others stemming from an ever deepening recognition that we are no less American for being part of the family of man.

To my mind there is no more significant or rousing manifestation of this revolution in attitudes than the Peace Corps of the United States.

Let me quote from the letters of Peace Corps volunteers in the Philippines:

A girl from Negros Occidental writes, "I often sit down with X, Y, and Z and marvel how very lucky we are. You've visited our wonderful house by the sea and know what excellent living conditions we have. Of course, there are many nights that we have no water and others

when the electricity goes off, but the good parts far outweigh the bad. The people have been grand to us... They bend over backwards to be kind to us and ask for nothing in return but a smile, a friendly word, or our friendship. For example, Y decided to build a chicken coop. Soon after she mentioned it for the first time, a load of bamboo was deposited in our yard and a carpenter appeared. We convinced him that we weren't too crazy in that we ourselves, wanted to do the actual work. The principal, mayor and others offered to pay the carpenter, but we said it wasn't the money we were thinking of, but the fact we wanted to do the work. Finally, when Y did begin splitting the bamboo, choosing a site, and building her now famous coop, several neighbors came to help. We don't like to appear un-

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material welfare, paying scant attention, if any at all, to what may happen to our land and people.

We realize the disadvantages of ultra-nationalism. We are convinced that the foreign capitalist could help us; but let us not forget that he could also hurt us. He could be a benefactor when in the pursuit of his enterprise he ob-

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serves our laws, assumes social responsibilities, and shares with us justly the proceeds he derives from his venture. But he could be our worst enemy when disguising himself as a friend he follows a career of illegal exploitation of the economic opportunities that he meets within our shores. He could thus become an undesirable example to

grateful but we want them to know we aren't afraid of hard work and don't place ourselves on a pedestal above them.

"We've been concentrating mainly in English, as the children need to get used to our speech patterns, intonations, and pronunciation before they can possibly grasp scientific concepts. As it is, I'm quite busy with my seven fourth grade classes and some teaching in grades three, five and six. I work mostly with three fourth grade rooms and once a week visit the other rooms."

From Sorsogon another girl writes, "Bulusan is a beautiful fishing village—the ocean is minutes away — really perfect. Our house is right on the river and we have the most terrific view from our kitchen window — women beating their clothes and kids

bathing. I have taken many pictures of the same scene to send home — we never seem to tire of the country scenes.

"We gave a Christmas party for the poor kids here who have no Christmas. We had about 80 wrapped toys and candy balls and about 150 children showed up! It was great fun—we made some good old-fashioned chocolate fudge with pili nuts. This was quite a production on a native stove. A and B came from Santa Magdalena for Christmas. The day after Christmas we all went to Sorsogon to start on our work project.... We went to Casiguran and worked on a cement fence the PTA is building around the school to keep the carabaos out! We had some good fellowship and hard work. I have blisters all over my hands and sore muscles to prove the latter! It was a

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many of our people who are just beginning to realize the numerous possibilities of improving their material condition.

When we condemn selfish aliens in our country we should not forget that in many cases they are not operating alone. Some of our countrymen may be their partners or allies. They give them aid

and comfort. It is not, therefore, unkind for us to regard these partners of alien economic invaders as enemies of the nation, traitors to the people's cause. They are just as wicked as common criminals and are no better than Communist spies who work to subvert our democratic institutions.

But these elements are not the only factor that casts a

good time and we learned a lot that will come in handy in our next projects. It was really a gas to watch the townspeople watch American women digging ditches and mixing cement.

"Now we are back in Bulusan. I am trying to get a fence built around the yard so that I can have a garden. It is best to plant in January, so I have been told, and we want to have the whole bit organized by then. We hope to build a chicken coop out there, too, and have a few chickens because eggs are imported to Bulusan.

"Our work in the school should really begin to shape up in January. We have observed class already and will be ready to start work when school opens again. We will be working for 15 minutes in each English class throughout the day. During the free

45 minutes we will work with individual pupils who are having much trouble. Then, three times a week for half an hour we will conduct a speech clinic for the teachers."

One Peace Corps volunteer is starting a language center in Negros Occidental. By language he means both Filipino, in which he is fluent, and English. He writes, "This center will be located in the Central School, where I'm assigned and will be geared to the needs of the 104 language teachers... My aims are quite modest. They are starting a language library, not just for books but also charts, flash cards and other devices for teaching Tagalog and English... original research... and in-service training... Although this sounds ambitious it's really not going to interfere with the regular work. .

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dark shadow on our path to a better state of affairs. They are not the only cause of our social and political bewilderment. Equally inimical to a sound program of national development is the appearance of a phenomenon among our countrymen which, for want of a more readily available name, I would call political obfuscation and cultural

blindness. It is a fast-growing malady affecting more and more people in our midst. It manifests itself in the form of either a voluntary refusal or just plain ignorance on their part to realize the limitations of their abilities, their capacities, their qualifications for specific tasks and positions. No office or employ-

Two teachers are already helping quite a bit."

English and science are the main subjects volunteers teach but they are used in the schools in other ways, too. A girl from Negros writes, "Have a few interesting things to report. Perhaps just the slightest little sign of progress thrills and encourages us these days, I don't know. Anyway the evening meal, when we all finally return home, is mixed with much school chatter. We have all discovered in our language classes that these children can be creative... And, they seem as pleased with their success as we are.

"The field is wide open. In the past two weeks I've seen so many opportunities for creative development that I hardly know where to begin much less how to relate them

to you. But, I'm sure you already know that.

"Right now I'm in the process of constructing (or trying to construct) a scaled enlarger that does not require a lens. I'm using some native bamboo stalk that we got from the school yard... the idea comes from a toy I remember from my childhood... If it works, I'll see, if with my help the boys can think out this problem and construct one of their own. Then we can use books and trace large maps for the school rooms. This way we do two things at once.

"As for the actual native materials for art projects I'll send you a list right soon. A lot of them are so obvious—the bamboo, the palm and others. We worked with it all last week in girl scouts..."

All of the volunteers help in teaching English and science.

ment seems to be beyond their inadequate educational qualifications and experience. The illiterate driver, the nightclub crooner, or even the clown believe that they could qualify for any public position of responsibility, whether it be that of city mayor, provincial governor, congressman, or senator. Completely ignorant of the character and

nature of these positions and unaware of the responsibilities these involve, they present themselves as candidates for these exalted offices. They have no idea of the problems that a high government official has to face and solve. Their main interest is to hold the post, to bask in the glamor of public office, and to  
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They must spend at least 20 hours a week in the schools on that job. They have learned to love Filipino children, but they have developed other interests, too, as members of the communities in which they live as these letters reveal.

"I have been quite thrilled with the possibilities in this elementary gardening program... the soils are... washed out.... To interest the kids we have got to build the soil... we want to set up school gardens and home gardens with Bulganban banana suckers so that the idea of setting up a cooperative marketing system for the kids may in a year or two start producing some income for these barrios from sales to Japan."

That particular volunteer from Negros Oriental is interested in agriculture. Here is a letter from one boy interested in rural health on Masbate.

"Coordinating the efforts of PACD, USIS, and the public health people here, it has been possible to launch what appears to be an effective campaign of inoculation and education against cholera. In the schools, I have busied myself with the treatment of yaws, tropic ulcer, scabies, conjunctivitis, and trachoma. I have been able to obtain pro-

mises from NWSA to provide a source of pure drinking water for the barrio where I work. In cooperation with the Municipal Health Officer, I am working to provide pure drinking water for the poblacion of Milagros, as well."

From Camarines Sur, a female Peace Corp volunteer says, "Four of us will be doing health work (during the summer vacation) in some of the isolated barrios of our area. After some concentrated study and compiling of materials, we will go live in these barrios and conduct seminars in simple first aid and basic medical care. We plan to work closely, etc."

These are seven volunteers speaking, but the letters are taken from their files by random. There are dozens of similar letters from the 181 Peace Corps Volunteers now in the field in the Philippines. Communism is never mentioned in these letters. There is no feeling of sacrifice or paternalism in their pages. But there is the same deep sense of community with others which Peace Corps volunteers everywhere almost take for granted. This concern is not something which Peace Corpsmen preach about. They do not proclaim the brotherhood of man. They do not even think about it.

very much. There is no martyrdom, no strings, and no chauvanism in genuine concern for others; volunteers do their jobs quietly and conscientiously without feelings of sacrificing, without demanding any tangible return, and without boasting.

This does not mean that I lack pride in the volunteers. I cannot help but feel proud as a member of the human family when I see the ~~impetus~~ to service without theatrics, strings, or egotism reach out across national boundaries. I have seen volunteers giving love as well as lessons to their pupils. I have seen them devote their spare time to community activities or public health in the barrios. I have watched them dress wounds,

plant seeds, help others start a small business, and do dozens of useful things in a matter of fact way—in addition to their teaching English and science.

The spread of human concern is something with which we are all familiar. At the political level we might call it the integrative impulse, and define it as the motivation to be associated with and to influence and be influenced by others outside of the basic political in-group.

The integrative impulse is something that is especially felt by the youth of all nations. The youth are breaking with the past. They want to reach out for new patterns of human relationships. The Communist movement had

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use its powers and facilities to enrich themselves.

How many of those who spend large sums of money and work hard to get themselves elected to a public office could tell us exactly why they want to be so elected and what specific objective do they intend to accomplish in a public position? If elected as official candidates of a party, do they understand the party platform and do they mean to live up to its principles? To say that their aim

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is to serve the people is no better than to offer a vague and meaningless excuse which no thinking man could in conscience accept; for every intelligent citizen should know that he could also serve his people and country without having to hold a public office.

So many of those who wish to hold public positions seem to overlook the fact that for one to fill any of them properly he has to be prepared educationally, experientially, and morally. But they refuse

precisely this appeal to youth because it seemed to be saying to young people—reach out for association with others, extend your horizons, enlarge your influence, and unite against your elders and the patterns of life they have laid down. Communism appealed to the integrative impulse in youth, but failed to appeal to their impulse for freedom, and nowhere in the world, except perhaps in Latin America, are the Communists still gaining ideological adherents as they were ten years ago.

The integrative impulse appears in different ways. Among Asian and African youth the thrust toward integration is through nationalism; among European students and young businessmen and professionals it is toward a federated Europe; in the United States of America an

ever growing number of young men and women have extended their concern to the family of man.

It is a *revolution* because at the political level it is something quite dramatically new in international relations. It is not the concern of the colonialist or imperialist who wants to control; nor is it the familiar concern of the missionary who wants to spread his version of ultimate truth. This *revolution* of widening concern is based on a simple truth which everyone recognizes in the abstract but which few feel deeply at a personal level. That truth is emblazoned on the wall of the lounge at International House on the University of the Philippines College of Agriculture campus at Los Baños in the statement, "Above All Nations Is Humanity."

That truism, implicit in the

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to admit their limitations. Moved by an erroneous conception of democracy and equality, they imagine that the physical ability to sit in an official chair gives them the capacity and the wisdom to exercise faithfully and effectively the functions and duties of the office. We need to know and to respect the basic principle that a public

office is a public trust. A moral crusade is a farce if this ethical conception is overlooked. Popularity is not necessarily a substitute for morality. Democracy does not guarantee equality of ability and character. It merely gives us the assurance of equality of opportunity and equality of treatment before the law.

Is it any wonder then that



teachings of all of the great religions, is now a part of the thinking of the men responsible for the conduct of foreign relations in my country. President Kennedy has emphasized it in speech and action repeatedly. It may not always be a perfect guide for day to day decisions, but it is the standard of conduct to which American statesmen would like to respond.

President Kennedy and other foreign policy spokesmen repeatedly stress that our major foreign policy goal is to establish the understanding and legal instruments necessary to bring into being a genuine community of man. For those are the two fundamental bases of community. There must be a true understanding of common interests, of our essential unity with all members of the human family including the Chinese and

Russian people. This is the functional approach to community which has been the source of the Marshall Plan, President Truman's Point Four, the Food for Peace Program, U.S. support of United Nations Specialized Agencies, the international programs of the great foundations, and the Peace Corps.

President Kennedy has proposed an international Peace Corps because he wants to see Americans working and living together in terms of volunteers from many nations. In his message to the United States Congress setting forth the initial program of the Peace Corps, he said, "Let us hope that other nations will mobilize the spirit and energies and skill of their people in some form of Peace Corps —making our own effort only one step in a major interna-

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we face today a crisis of leadership? The direction of public affairs, of economic policies, of educational programs should be aimed at well-studied and well-defined attainable goals. With pedestrian minds and inexperienced hands, it is not possible to expect a high degree of stability and order in the management of the essential institutions of

our country — be they governmental, economic, educational, or social.

But again, there are certain fundamental principles of public morality and certain techniques of operation which should be learned and understood. But even more than only learned, they should be deeply respected and strictly

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tional effort to increase the welfare of all men and improve understanding among nations."

Understanding which transcends national boundaries and cultural traditions is a goal of the Peace Corps. Without that fundamental consensus on the essential unity of man, legal instruments to enforce peace cannot long be sustained. But without a system of law and enforcement which makes the use of war as an instrument of national policy far less probable than at present, understanding and consensus are impeded. That is why our President persists in his quest to endow the United Nations with the capacity to make and enforce world law to prevent war. In his speech last fall to the United Nations he said, "To destroy arms is not enough. We must create... worldwide law and law enforcement as we outlaw worldwide war and weapons."

That there has been and is continuing a revolution of widening concern among those of President Kennedy's generation and among the generation which followed his seems clear to me. In retrospect, it now also seems clear that such a development *should* be taking place in the United States.

There are four basic reasons why Americans are now reaching with hands of friendship to build the community of man. Only one of these reasons is a reaction to factors outside of the United States. It is our desire to preserve and promote freedom against tyranny. A small group of men have already imposed tyranny on millions and would impose it on the rest of us in behalf of an ideology that has clearly failed in practice. We have learned to value freedom deeply as have all peoples who have experienced it; and we recognize that our freedom depends on the development of world understanding and institutions which make both tyranny and war highly improbable.

Even without the threats of Soviet and Chinese imperialism, the Peace Corps and similar programs would have been established. The revolution of widening concern which is growing in the United States includes concern for all of humanity not just for peoples living under friendly governments. There is considerable curiosity about and concern for the Russians, Chinese, and Cuban people in the United States. We all remember that in 1947 when the then American Secretary of State Marshall proposed the

program for cooperative economic assistance which bore his name, the Soviet government was invited to participate. Similarly, President Kennedy's plan for a Peace Corps under U.N. auspices is for all member nations.

Why does the impetus toward integration in the United States take this form? Why is the span of our concern global? The answer lies in the historical and social traditions of my country. In the terms of social history these traditions can be labeled American pluralism, pragmatism, and messianism.

Ethnic religious, and racial pluralism is one of the great clues to American life and a significant factor in understanding our revolution of widening concern. Few foreigners realize that we are a nation of recent immigrants. Even before the 19th century

our population was diverse. Although predominantly of English origin, our nation included substantial African, French, Dutch, and other minorities. With the great immigration flow from Europe beginning in 1820 we absorbed millions of Irishmen, Germans, Poles, Russians, and Italians. Between 1820 and 1920 nearly forty million Europeans arrived on American shores. Asians came, too, as a glance at our populations in California and Hawaii reveals. In Hawaii, for example, there are approximately 70,000 Filipinos, half of whom are American citizens.

Out of this melange was forged the nation we now know as the United States. We have learned that diversity of population and tradition is compatible with mutual understanding and consensus. Our religious plurali-

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observed in the management of the affairs of a democratic society. The head of the state, notwithstanding the best of intentions, could be frustrated in any attempt to carry out his most carefully studied plans and policies if those who are expected to give him assistance ignore them when they find them ill-adapted to their own personal ambition.

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Hence, even knowledge, skills, techniques, and other forms of know-how necessary to give us the aptitude and power to accomplish any work, task, or assignment, will still fall short of enabling us to achieve the high objectives we intend to reach. In addition to all these, we need an attitude of nobility, a spirit of self-restraint and sacrifice, a willingness to

sm is almost as great as our ethnic diversity. We have a Catholic President and our oldest Supreme Court judge is Jewish even though we are a predominantly Protestant nation. A sizeable Buddhist minority and dozens of small sects flourish under our laws. Americans may act alike to you, but we embrace traditions from every major area in the world. We believe we are much richer for having nearly twenty million Americans of African descent, the inspiration for American jazz, who are no less American by linking us to the peoples of Africa just as the descendants of Asia and European immigrants tie us to those continents.

For generations, our people looked inward with a policy

that was incorrectly called "isolationism." It might better have been labeled "continentalism." We were busy exploring and exploiting a continent with people who had for the most part rejected their old countries to make a new life in the United States. This rejection of Europe reinforced the warning of our first President against entangling alliances with European nations. For some groups—primarily the Irish—and German-Americans the rejection of Europe was more specifically revealed in hostility towards England, the only nation with which the United States could realistically have been allied. A continuing formal alliance with England might have prevented World War I and the rise of Hitler,

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forego unworthy aims, the courage to resist corruption, a deep sense of responsibility. These are the indispensable attributes which we would want to suggest to those amongst us who wish to hold positions of authority, influence, and prestige whether in the government, in industry, in business, and in other areas of society. Knowledge is indeed essential. Physical energy and drive are needed. But above all these, the moral

force of character is indispensable.

A prominent American scholar, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., recently wrote that "ours is an age without heroes," and that in America today no towering figure appears on the public scene. No Roosevelt, no Lincoln, no Woodrow Wilson, no Jefferson, or Franklin, may be found among its national leaders at present. Do we not find a corresponding vacuum in our

but it would have produced extreme tensions between ethnic groups in the United States. Now we are secure in our Americanism and the age of continentalism or isolationism is over. Not only is our alliance with England and Western Europe accepted, but we go out to the rest of the world as a part of the family of man, knowing from first hand experience that the realization of unity within diversity is possible.

The development has never been more evident than in the recent commencement address given by our Attorney General, Robert F. Kennedy, at Nihon University in Tokyo. Mr. Kennedy, whose grandparents were Irish immigrants to the United States, and whose father was often called an isolationist, stated

that, "The resources of the earth and the ingenuity of man can provide abundance for all—so long as we are prepared to recognize the diversity of mankind and the variety of ways in which peoples will seek national fulfillment. This is our vision of the world—a diversity of states, each developing according to its own traditions and its economic and political problems in its own manner, and all bound together by a respect for the rights of others, by a loyalty to the world community and by a faith in the dignity and responsibility of man."

With the end of isolationism and the maturing of Americans it was perfectly natural for them to want to make the world, including those areas from which their forebears

own country today? As we look around us, we do see some good and able men. But we do not find it easy to see any commanding personality with the vision, character, and nobility sufficiently great and inspiring to stimulate and to awaken the heart and soul of our nation to the realization of our potentialities for excellent achievements. The role that was played by Quezon, Tavera, Osmena, Juan Sumulong, Recto, and Laurel in the respective heydays of their

career appears too enormous for many leaders today; but we need to have someone to play a like role if our country is to prosper.

The circumstances and conditions of present-day Philippines have greatly changed. The political independence of the country has created new problems. It presents new challenges to the ability, the sense of honor, and the spirit of patriotism of our leaders. These men are expected to set  
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had come, their home. That is what we have done in the Peace Corps. Here in the Philippines, we can visit households of American Peace Corps Volunteers of Dutch, Polish, French, Italian, German, African, and even Mexican, Syrian, and Lebanese descent.

Our volunteers of Jewish background work easily and effectively with our Jewish volunteers. They take pluralism for granted, and they find it easy to live among Filipinos and in other countries where they are located. They have learned again as they learned in the process of becoming Americans—that the human family is one. The basic emotions and drives are human, not French or American or Filipino.

Our volunteers can make the world their home because of their own experience with pluralism. They reach out with Peace Corps programs because of another American tradition, pragmatism. Our overriding commitment is to freedom, and we are notoriously experimental. We are a nation that learns through trial and error. We are feeling our way in the world, but we believe there are human problems of disease, hunger and misunderstanding toward whose solution we desire to

contribute. We recognize the importance of bridging the gap between the richer and poorer nations since no basis for understanding among nations can exist when so much of humanity is deprived. The rapid economic development of this and other nations in the Southern half of the globe is a problem which challenges Americans. In this country there are eight Peace Corps volunteers deeply concerned with the economic decline of "their" island. I said "their" island, because they already feel as though they belong there. I have heard them discussing the possibility of introducing new crops or new cottage industries to stem the migration of their neighbors to other provinces. They will work together with Filipinos in trying new seeds and in surveying markets for new products to solve the island's basic economic problem.

Americans are notoriously practical, and the practical man might be expected to remain in comfort at home and solve problems there rather than travel half way around the globe to live in the villages and barrios of Asia. Americans are practical in their resistance to orthodox ideologies, but they are also extremely idealistic. If being practical means being cynical,

they are not practical. A nation of poor immigrants that has made good is not cynical. If being practical means they are non-ideological, that they are pragmatic and experimental, then they are decidedly practical. What could be more practical than trying to learn about the world by making the world your home?

American idealism, indeed messianism, is the third national characteristic which gives rise to the Peace Corps. Americans believe in their revolution, a revolution which our nation of immigrants celebrates just as strongly as if their ancestors had actually dumped the tea in Boston Harbor. We avoided entangling alliances with Europe precisely because we were afraid that somehow the fruits of revolution would be won away from us in diplomacy, although our diplomats always proved themselves to be shrewd bargainers when necessary, and even though we were happy to encourage revolution in Southern Europe and Latin America.

We have found periodic ways to refresh our zeal for freedom to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. In this century our revolution was renewed twice through Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom and aborted quest for a

League of Nations and Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and United Nations. Both Wilson and Roosevelt shared the traditional American optimism that our revolution for freedom could be exported to new worlds.

American messianism received a sharp but temporary blow in the intransigence and growing power of Soviet Russia, developments which stunned and confused many of us. We discovered that the Soviet revolution was not like our revolution for freedom at all. It was naive of us as a nation not to make the discovery much sooner, but we will admit to naivete as a national characteristic, too. Once recovered from the blow, our idealism reawakened, we were prepared again to proclaim our revolution.

The Peace Corps volunteers are not the conscious messianic instruments of revolution for freedom, but they are products of that continuing revolution and of the deep American conviction that it ought to and can be shared by everyone. By freedom Americans have always meant more than freedom from authority. They mean freedom to choose in the broadest sense. Freedom of choice depends upon equality of oppor-

tunity, and that is the other part of our revolution proclaimed in Jefferson's words that all men are created equal. Equality and freedom are a sham for babies born in disease or poverty, for children whose fathers are underpaid or cannot own land, and the idealism or messianism of young Americans speaks again through the Peace Corps to these issues as Americans from Jefferson

to Roosevelt have spoken before.

To say that the Peace Corps represents America's revolution of widening concern is really to say that it is the application of our oldest revolution and most vital concern on a world scale. Peace Corps volunteers then, as incongruous as it may seem, are the products of both our pragmatic and messianic traditions.

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*Professor's Wife (reading the paper over his shoulder) — "One Wife Too Many" — I suppose he was a bigamist.*

*Absent-minded Prof. — Not necessarily, my dear. — Penn State Froth.*

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*The young couple sat in their six-by-eight "garden."*

*"I see by this medical work," said the lady, "that a man requires eight hours' sleep and a woman ten."*

*"Yes," agreed the man; "I've read that somewhere myself."*

*"How nice!" said the lady. "You can get up every morning and have the fire made and breakfast ready before it is time for me to get up!" — Minneapolis Tribune.*

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*Agatha: How did Freddie lose all his money? Preferred stock?*

*Harriett: No, preferred blondes. — Life.*

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*Hubby — What a wonderful morning! I could dare anything, face anything on a day like this.*

*Wifey — Fine! Come on down to the dress shop. — Life.*