IN WITH THE NEW
Nigeria XI & XII Are Coming

Approximately 240 volunteers will be arriving in Nigeria in the next two months. 60 are expected in August to begin work in agriculture and rural development. 180 will take up teaching posts in September.

It is felt that agriculture and rural development are areas where outside help can make significant contributions. Some of the anticipated projects the volunteers will undertake are: Demonstrating up-to-date farming methods at farm training centers, dairy work, organization of farm youth clubs, tsetse eradication in the Hadejia Valley (North), farm machinery maintenance demonstration and training, village water supply construction and conservation, village-level public works, and organizing participation by villagers in development schemes. The primary aim of the program is to work at the grass roots level. Thus, there will not be duplication of US/AID efforts. Eight weeks training is taking place at Central State University (Ohio) and six more weeks will be spent in Nigeria (some will be trained at the Awgu Community Development Training Centre in the East). Experiment in International Living is providing training and overseas assistance. Language training in Hausa, Igbo, or Edo will be more intensive than that provided for school teachers. In a departure from past groups, the agriculture people will not need university degrees. Sufficient experience is the major requirement. In view of the duties and living arrangements available, few single females will be utilized.

The teachers are currently training at Columbia University. Job assignments are currently being worked out.
FROM
STICKNEY
WITH
LOVE

Little is known about Ben Stickney's past. One day he came into Abuja like some sort of Johnny Appleseed. Only he carried basketballs. Since then he’s become something of a town legend, and coach is a title only less esteemed than waziri. In Abuja the basketballs seem to grow on trees.

While the town is now chiefly noted for its team and its pottery, its past is rather heroic. It was a Habe stronghold during the wars of the nineteenth century. Never were the Fulani successful in their insolent attempts—the last in 1893—at capture, and only with the coming of the British was the town’s independence lost. Her emir, Ibrahim, was slain in battle, and the date, 1902, not forgotten. Ben Stickney arrived in the autumn of 1962.

Abuja teams have become the standard bearers of a past sung with pride in the bush metropolis. Her sneaked men, garbed for battle in the pre-shrunk, pre-run, red and white uniforms of her coach, are the vanguard of a sophisticated citizenry. Courts are being built in the town to feed talent to the secondary school. In Abuja only football is for losers.

It was to an unknown North that the Abuja team set out recently. An invitational tournament had been announced at Zaria, and the location alone was enough to inspire the team's supporters, conjuring up as it did thoughts of the past. To many of them it was an ancestral home. They traced their lineage to the Habe ruler of the city, Muhammed Makau, who had been driven from prayer beyond the Zaria walls by the Fulani invaders, and who had settled finally in Abuja. There were many miles of rail on which to consider that past; the players arrived to the expected sneers of their Fulani competition. Mutterings of 'bushman' greeted Coach Stickney as he tried to make contact with his fellow volunteers over the pre-tournament evening festivities. As he put it later, the drying reception more than anything else solidified his boys.

Ben said that he didn’t get much sleep that night. He saw to it that his team ignored the Indian movie down the road. In interview he described the scene next morning as the tournament got under way.

The breeze was slight over the fields as the players emerged from the buildings. Indian music blared like bagpipes. Barefooted students watched silently as horseless heroes threw introductory epithets at opponents. The rituals of warmup were followed; dormitory windows filled with faces before the coming spectacle. The tournament procession began.

From the blue van of Katsina Training College came iron mallams whose forebears had forged the intellectual greatness of the region. From Maru came men of the teacher training frontier force, proud of their isolated heritage of scholarship, their literacy in the Sokoto Empire. The toughened feet of the Kaduna teams came next, Kaduna, new seat of regional power, identitiless child of Englishmen and Fulani. Coach Stickney and his team grew quiet at their entry. They had prepared themselves for such competition. Stickney sent the waterboy off for cigarettes. The following Zaria teams would be no problem. Victory over the Sardau's own men from Government College would be as sweet as it would be easy.

There was a delay as the Abuja team withdrew to its dressing hut for some last minute instructions, a chicken, a few pills, “just to help the boys along”, the coach commented later.

"Abuja Potters" read the scarlet letters on the shirts that emerged. Few on the courts bothered to notice. Coach Stickney wiped the stains from his hands. The cry that was to haunt the weekend of losers echoed in the clipped accents of the bench, “Wake up, Abuja”. Morning, noon, and night that cry would be repeated, in coaches' ears would be shouted. Parrots trained would seem to sing “Abuja”. From the years past the spirits of battle came to watch, but a little way over the players’ heads.

Little remains to be said. The days that followed are a blur of jumps, whistles, sun. One remembers the archers of Maru lobbing set-shots from the outside, their rising from the dust at the game's conclusion. One remembers the tenacity of the PSS Zaria team, aggressive in defeat; and through it all the land of the Sultan being ravaged. Abuja awake, “Big Samuel” laying in basket after basket, commanding the field with Mohammed Usman, later voted the most valuable player, by his side; Coach Stickney walking off across the fields as the games went on, perhaps returning for the quarter breaks, enthralled by the cloudless sky, the slight breeze in the dried grass, quoting poetry softly to himself.

He was quiet after the last contest. Victory was his by one point. He sent the waterboy off with some celebration money, hoarded from his meager allowance, arranged for a wire to be sent to the school, to the emir. The emir would go for the trophy. He thanked the Peace Corps referee he had known in training, promised to send him some beer mugs from the pottery, a few Playsboys. Usman shouted the concluding, traditional Anglo-Saxon phrases of consolation to the losers, and melodramatically the crushed expatriot coach of the losing team announced he would return to the Isles in June. The teams hushed. An era was passing. Stickney took his foot from the man's throat.

Continued on page 10
In Search of Cosmopolis

For the record, the first voyage of the Blue Fringe was a miscarriage of hope. From Ikoyi, the intrepid crew embarked on their trip one fine March morning, a three to four knot wind blowing out of the northeast. The bilges were laden with bread, potable water, The Life of Byron Part II, warm Fanta, tuna fish (canned) and toilet paper—the complete boat. The destination for the day was at least Badagry (thirty miles due west by lagoon) or even Porto Novo, Dahomey. Other ports of call subsequently were to be Cotonou, Lome, Tema and possibly Abidjan.

But the wind was fickle (i.e. it blew constantly from the west an hour after the hoisting of jib and mainsail), and the tidal current was maliciously in the wrong direction always, so that as the sun dipped below palm and mangrove the mud banks of not Porto Novo, not Badagry, but alas, Apapa loomed up. It had taken eight hours to go eight miles.

The boat was beached. A cold dinner was eaten (the landlubber first mate forgot how to light the kerosene stove and had lost the directions). They sacked out on the deck. At midnight it turned chilly. A storm was imminent. Some friendly neighbourhood fishermen took them into their hut. They stayed dry but received 1523 mosquito bites apiece. They left early next morning. Got eight more miles in eight hours. Then quit.

They turned back. With the wind astern they returned all the way in two and a half hours. The skipper was silent. His thoughts were of a different time when on a cold, snowy, winter’s night, during his college days, he had shot for the wrong basket. That is the way it is.

* * *

Togo is a wonderful place. We took the road which runs from the Dahomey border to Lome. Cruising along at thirty miles an hour the scenery the whole width of the country was idyllic. The road parallels the ocean 300 yards away. The water, which had a clarity and a rich variety of colours simultaneously, ever so gently unwound itself as it climbed part way up the wide, sandy beach. Nearer were coconut palms. Thatched fishing villages, and barebreasted women. Delightful.

In Lome we stayed at the Peace Corps rest house. There we met Bill Outen, a real live fisherman—Peace Corps volunteer who was in Lome that week for some ostensibly reason. He told us that Togo is a land of 37 Peace Corps Volunteers. A reasonable number we thought. Some teach, some are in public health and some fish. The last category interested us, so he elaborated.

Ten fishermen originally came over. Only two were left by the time of our visit (April). Most were to introduce modern ocean fishing techniques to local fishermen using a power boat which they expected to be supplied by the Peace Corps. It wasn’t. So instead they learned a lot from the local people, like how to get a half ton hollowed-out boat through the very rough surf and into the ocean. Bill said that the man in charge, standing on the beach, continued on page 8
FROM EAST AFRICA

(Editor's note: the following are brief extracts of a letter the Franks sent us while on their tour of East Africa)

Salisbury: Spent a long afternoon with the American Friends Service Committee man there, whom we had visited 2 years ago as well. He is pretty discouraged at the turn racial matters have taken, the breakup of the Federation with so much ill feeling all around, and the continuing stupidity of Field and the white settler government there. They have about given up on avoiding a major conflict, feel that the fate of both Southern Rhodesia and South Africa is inevitable war of the most gruesome kind, tho' not too soon. They have decided to end their work in Salisbury, as there is relatively little for them to do now of the kind that was so productive a couple of years ago, and are transferring to a work camp and seminar centre in Northern Rhodesia. They are both tired and discouraged, it was rather a depressing visit.

Dar-es-Salaam: Dar itself looks like a movie set; people of every colour and costume and tongue go about their business there. We got a strong Hemingway or Bogart impression every minute: broad paved streets and sidewalks, so that ambling about was fun and easy; hotels with courtyards or patios full of bearded derelicts and exotic ladies; a harbour full of modern yachts and Arab dhows and ocean vessels; throngs of Asians going down to the shore, saris blowing in the breeze, to enjoy the sunset every evening; open bazaars and shops, African markets with tall Masai men and women wearing huge loop earrings and red and black clothes; an extensive and elegantly modern University rising on a huge hill 8 miles outside of town, looking back toward the ocean, still under construction, to open in July; mud houses with tile roofs, mosques in nearly every block, a promontory of old German and new British administrative buildings, set off by the State House in their midst. And in the midst of it all, the New Africa hotel, ancient German monstrosity, with long tile corridors, wasted and inefficient space, delightful courts and indoor and outdoor tables and drinks, tile floored rooms, ceiling fans, beds too short and verandahs too long. In other words we suffocated in style each night, and forgot it each day drinking long lemon-limes on the front cafe-terrace while we watched the world go by.

Safari in Kenya: In the plains live the Masai tribe, unattracted by modern life, proud and convinced that their nomadic cattle-herding way of life is the best. It's a peculiar combination—they live on the one hand among dangerous game, and on the other among millionaire tourists, and manage to cope handily with both. They are doomed, like all traditional ways of life in this world I suppose—the British government gave them a reserve and a lot of coddling because they were admired by the British settlers, but the new nationalist governments can't afford that expense, or the luxury of encouraging tribalism and separateness. But for the moment they are rather spectacular—almost the only really indigenous looking tribe we have seen (though we haven't been up country really either in Tanganyika or Kenya, so it isn't fair to say). Most East Africans wear western dress, compared to West Africa it is disappointingly drab here—but the Masai, both man and woman wrapped in a rust coloured cape, muscular and lithe, hair pasted over with ochre mud, beaded and wearing loops of elephant hair earrings, standing in twos and threes in an empty landscape raising a spear in greeting, are magnificent.

Nairobi: We've had a fine relaxing time in Nairobi. Jim Culpepper not only took us into his delightful house, but moved out to a friend's himself so we would have room! Went to see Ezekiel Mphalele, the South African writer who is running a cultural center here similar to the Mbari in Ibadan. Good talk about local art, writing, music, theatre, etc. We have had a long list of names to look up—including some Ford Foundation people, AID, University, etc.—spent one evening going to a lecture by Carroll Baker (if you can believe it) who is making a movie with Robert Mitchum nearby, and going out to dinner after with other members of the cast (a USIS sponsored affair) including Orlando Martins, a Nigerian character actor we had known in Ibadan. So go to see Mr. Moses when it appears.

Gina and Murray

LETTER FROM BANGKOK

I read in the December issue of The Tilley Lamp of an educational newsletter you are thinking of putting out. If you do, could you send us one. We are trying to get one going here, but right now just include material in the Journal, of which I am editor. I have regretted the lack of co-operation amongst volunteers teaching in one country. It might also be fruitful to exchange information amongst other countries in which the Peace Corps is teaching.

We have about 280 volunteers in Thailand, about 200 of whom are teaching English in secondary, teacher training and higher schools. We have just formed a council of volunteers called an English Council, and hope to be able to initiate projects and share information. I have heard that PC Washington is discouraging volunteer attempts to co-ordinate efforts, however. For example, the Volunteer Education Committee organized a year ago in the Philippines has been quietly stamped out. I agree volunteers should not spend all their time co-ordinating, but I also think the volunteers who are able to help outside their own specific teaching role should be encouraged to do so. Most of us don't know much about teaching until we are nearly ready to go home. What a pity if we go home without sharing what we have learned.

We are also planning to publish a TELF Handbook, trying to compile some of the useful experience of volunteers teaching in Thailand, for other volunteers, and new groups.

We would like to see anything you have done in the teaching area. Even if we can't use it directly it might give us an idea for doing something comparable.

While I have you—would you like to trade some stamps? Send me a couple of hundred used Nigerian ones, and I will get some used Thai ones from my students and send them to you. I'll start getting them together now, and send them.

Mark Hawthorne
THE COOKING CORNER

I received an impassioned letter recently, not from my mother. A volunteer complained that my recent recipe for varennikas, while very tasty, took seven hours to prepare. Personally, that seems like a trifling criticism. At home we must waste almost that much time every day reading things like the New York Times and worrying about the Bomb. But, I have tried to make amends. In this issue we present a tasty, easy and relatively quick recipe for pecan pie. Blake Patterson has kindly contributed it after making exhaustive tests. It is delicious.

Pastry Shell (unbaked) a pinch of salt
3 eggs 1 cup golden syrup
½ cup sugar ½ cup melted butter
1 tsp. vanilla 1 cup shelled pecans

Make the pastry shell in the usual way (sic). Beat the eggs and add the sugar, vanilla, salt, syrup and butter. Place the pecans in the bottom of the pastry shell and pour in the filling, wetting all the pecans. Cook for one hour in a moderate oven. If the pecans toast before the filling sets (it should be rather firm even when hot), cover the pie during part of the cooking time.

Blake mentions that Pecans are sometimes available at Kingsway. People in Ganye please note. He says for variety you can replace the pecans with ¼ tsp cinnamon, ¼ tsp nutmeg, ¼ tsp cloves, ¼ cup chopped walnuts, and ¼ cup seedless raisins. Does that help?

Ed Gruberg

* * *

A PETROL PRIMER

(in which the poet, after travel throughout former British and French colonies, nostalgically recalls the ease with which he ordered petroleum products in his native land. . . )

Upon that long-departed shore
Gas was gas and nothing more.
Reason ruled from pole to pole
And gasoline was not "petrol".
Gas was used to heat a stove,
Not to make a diesel move.
Diesel fuel was fresh and clean
And never labelled "kerosene."
Children laughed with effervescence;
Drivers did not order "essence."
"Petrole" on a gallon tin
was not a sign for kerosene.
But here confusion numbs the soul:

to essence—petrol—gas—diesel—kerosene—petrole.

Steve Clapp

WEDDING

PCV Mary Smith of the Government Girls Secondary School, Kano, was married on March 30 to John T. Clouse of the Project Mercury Tracking Station. The ceremony was held at the Our Lady of Fatima Church. PCVs Lucinda Boyd, Alice Sherlock, and Frank Gaudiano participated in the service. A reception followed at the groom’s home, where the heat of the late afternoon was eased by a luxurious spread of meats, salads, cakes, and drinks. After traditional toasts, poetic invocations, and offertory songs and dances, the couple escaped in a shower of groundnuts. Honeymoon destination guesses ranged from Bermuda to Bauchi and Kaduna. The reception continues at the groom’s home.

ENGLISH TEACHERS

Reports have come in from various sources on an outbreak of partisanship in the field of English analysis. The futile debate between supporters of structural linguistics and the traditional grammar has evidently begun again. The British Council, among others, appears to have supported the linguists at the expense of classical reason, and it seems only fair to comment on the extravagance of their position, as well as to caution volunteers not to bow too readily to this instance of the new. While an important contribution to the study of English, structural linguistics complements rather than replaces the traditional grammar. However inadequate the person, place, thing, or concept approach, it is not invalidated by locational patterns. Any teacher uncertain of the worth of tradition in this instance should compare for use Paul Robert’s Understanding English, a linguist’s reformulation, and John Warriner’s English Grammar and Composition. The February 1964 English Journal, perhaps available through your representative, contains a brief article on the case for synthesis. As usual exclusiveness is not the answer, but has evidently been promoted by linguistic fundamentalists at recent inservice training courses. The British Council case for Shakespearian is superb.

D. S.

* * *

WEST COAST ROAD

Along the Ilaro Road
The riotous forest beggars symmetry.
It tumbles over everywhere
As if out of inside cupped hands
And calls out that
The traveller has only to reach out
To pull it over and around him.

Steve Clapp

Ann Hilferty
EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

“What Can Be Done About History?”

By Roger Leed

(Editor’s Note:) This is the first of what we hope will be a continuing series of articles by volunteers, dealing with various aspects of education in Nigeria. Please send in articles).

The various prescriptions for up-dating history teaching seem almost hoary—especially in view of what the Phelps-Stokes Report had to say on the subject in 1921: “artificiality and...wholly irrelevant elements...are too frequently dragged from supposedly high places in distant parts of the world to confuse the minds of the African youth.” No one disputes Africanizing the syllabus, modernizing methodology, or making changes in the School Certificate Exam. This unanimity profits us little since the net result has so far been meagre indeed. Perhaps the agreement is actually only on what is to be done and not on how it is to be done.

One way to realize history’s potential involves two major changes to the WASC, and through it, to content and method. The exam, regardless of what apologists may say, dictates what occurs in the classroom. Suitable modifications in it, followed up if necessary by the Ministries, could emancipate history from “artificiality” and irrelevancy.

It is justifiable to take your lower forms on an excursion through “world” history, but who can vindicate the hours he spends drumming the dynastic marriages, territorial feuds, and innumerable treaties of European and British history centuries back into the heads of his hapless students? This is not only irrelevant but unteachable.

Viewed in the absence of more current and comprehensive history, it is inexusable as well. The natural instinct is to rise to the defense of one’s subject—after all, Charles V, Richelieu, and Cromwell were not dull people, nor were their respective epochs uninteresting. For today’s students, however, it is more interesting and most necessary to learn about Lloyd George, Gandhi, Woodrow Wilson, Lenin, Sun Yat-sen, Atatürk, and Padmore. The Council surely won’t maintain that significant events in history have confined themselves to Europe and Africa.

The paper on the Development of Tropical Africa is perhaps the most ill-conceived of the exam’s five offerings. The student is left in the dark about pre-European-contact Africa, traditional African polity and culture, and the independence movements. Britain was and is an influence in Nigeria, but to hand it two of the four sections set is rather outlandish.

What most curbs the teacher’s freedom to depart from the syllabus and traditional methodology is his class. Students know, minutely, what is on the syllabus. They more frequently than not object to extraneous material and in any case nearly always ignore it. This attitude, while it takes much satisfaction out of teaching history, is certainly quite practical and understandable. Students must be excused for concentrating on what they must know, as opposed to what they ought to know.

The resolution of the above problems could be brought about chiefly by modifying the exam, assuming history teachers would measure up to the opportunity.

The first innovation ought to be a compulsory core-program in history; the second, the setting of questions which are more brief and which expect less detailed knowledge but which at the same time involve the application of inductive and deductive reasoning.
Now that English has become an ordinary paper it is an opportune time to consider what, in fact, should be required for taking a School Certificate in Nigeria. It isn’t within the scope of this discussion to make a comprehensive proposal. It shall be asserted merely that no one can represent himself as educated unless he knows the rudiments of his country’s history, is conversant with contemporary world affairs, and familiar with the history of the colonialism he reads so much about in his newspapers. These subjects ought to comprise a compulsory paper in the WASC. Passing the paper would not testify to any special competence in history.

Section One of the paper would deal with African history, with emphasis on West Africa; Section Two, with Nigerian history; Section Three, with World Affairs since 1884, with emphasis on the British Empire and Commonwealth.

There are sound reasons to consider a compulsory paper in Civics, which would include 1) history of democratic theory, with special reference to Britain, 2) the nature and purpose of government and the role of the citizen, and 3) Nigerian government and legal process. The necessity for this paper will depend on how successfully the subject can be done at the primary level.

A compulsory paper is the first step; changing the offering of optional ones is the second. There’s no need for British or European history before 1815. The Age of Discovery and the Industrial Revolution can be covered in the lower form world history survey. The Development of Tropical Africa should be made into a genuine African history paper, without undue European intrusions. Nigerian history should be a paper, and there might be three or more general papers: World Classical Civilizations, World History to 1500, and World History since 1500. This range would give principals, teachers and students scope.

How, it will be asked, can students possibly deal with any optional papers in addition to the compulsory one? How will there be time to spend at least a year in revision? The first question is legitimate, the second isn’t. One object of the change would be the elimination of the cramping year. The broader the subject, the less profitable cramping becomes. Since reasoning will figure more importantly in the result, the student will be required to learn to think about history—and that can never be crammed.

The subject matter will be made manageable by the new standards applied to setting questions. In the first place, the student will answer more questions: short answer and multiple choice in the main. Senselessly detailed knowledge will not be expected. Rather, the student will be presumed to have covered the prescribed syllabus in its entirety and have understood what he learned to the extent of being able to distinguish relationships, make comparisons, and draw conclusions from data. There will be no place for regurgitation. The exam will be designed to catch those who have intensively prepared some areas and left others untouched: even distribution of questions and few, if any, options will penalize them. Surely the Council, having shored on the English paper, cannot continue to require history candidates to expose their knowledge in essays. Those who would object that the above objectives cannot be realized in an examination may refer to the various nationally administered U.S. examinations which do, in large part, accomplish what is set out here.

The final overwhelming advantage to such a procedure is the relative objectivity that marking can attain. Precise questions require precise answers and can be precisely marked. With the candidate’s future hinging on the marker’s state of temper, objective marking seems imperative.

What can this new exam do for the teacher? He will have all the scope he could desire, his subject matter will be relevant, and he can go far towards eliminating the artificiality from his teaching. Learning could no longer be confined to pure memorization—papers will be too broad. Outside reading will pay dividends. The set questions will include art, literature, architecture, philosophy, etc. and thus permit less time to be devoted to military campaigns and political intrigues. In fact, the exam ought to lean heavily towards the history of ideas.

The teacher can assign reports and research papers confident that the work involved will help the student over the exam. Visual aids and model-making will prove very helpful with the questions on art and architecture. Schools which now consider a blackboard and chalk the sole requisites of teaching history will be forced to invest in teaching aids. Dictated and copied notes will become so inadequate that, God willing, teachers might abandon them altogether. Other subjects, science and literature among them, will become relevant to history so that history can reinforce students’ interest in these fields. The core paper will have the virtue of being intensely interesting to students—this initial experience will in many instances carry over to optional papers and make the teachers’ assault on boredom more effective.

New and better texts will be required, with clearer writing and reasoning, more illustrations, and more exercises. Judging by the present situation, it seems that out-dated history legitimizes out-dated texts. School libraries will have to acquire reference books; students will find library reading a necessity and not an indulgence.

The cult of examsmanship will be seriously weakened. Those schools not fortunate enough to have an experienced crammer on their staff might do well by just paying attention to good teaching. The atmosphere in the classroom will be liberated: a dialogue method will become extremely useful in conveying the reasoning skills now required.

Something can be done about history. The Council must be willing to make departures—it won’t do to continue with timid and half-hearted modifications. The Phelps-Stokes Report sets out the end to be achieved very well, and it’s time we heeded it.
COSMOPOLIS From Page 3

has to estimate the distance between the third and fourth wave out. If he feels it is sufficient, everyone jumps in and starts paddling for all their worth. Bill was at the bow his first time out. After going a way it seemed that a serious error had been made—he saw a huge wave, just about to break, approaching a few feet away. He turned around and to his chagrin, saw that the boat had been evacuated. He dove out immediately. The wave crashed flinging the boat as if it were a paper weight. Luckily it only scraped his side. At this point he figured it was time to move up to the hinterland. He has been building and cultivating fish farms since.

* * *

Cohen and Weiss are both about 5’ 5” and have full beards. The former used to belong to the staff club at U.C.I. where he had swimming privileges. Weiss felt it was a waste of money to also join. When he wanted to go swimming he would tell the man at the entrance that he was Cohen. This worked fine for a while. But one day, unbeknownst to Weiss, Cohen was already there standing a few feet inside. The man was a bit confused seeing Weiss. Cohen happened to turn around and in the nick of time realized what was happening. He ambled up to the man, gently put a hand on his shoulder and said “It’s all right, I’m Taiwo, he’s Kehinde.”

* * *

Our worst suspicions were confirmed the other day when we visited the new West African computing centre of IBM. Prominently displayed on the wall were seven words we had never seen before. Sure enough, written in seven different African languages was the word THINK.

* * *

“Wahab Omotosho, the foremost and only boxing promoter in Ibadan presents international boxing…” Sitting at ringside we chewed our white cheroots (7/6d for fifty) and scanned the house. Obisesan Hall had been transformed for the evening from a four customer performance cinema to a cacophonous, bouyant sports arena. The place was nearly filled. Some people were even sitting on the railings of the walkways dangling their feet two stories above the floor. The ring was a jerry-built affair: the footing seemed slippery, the ropes looked as rough as barbed wire and the glaring ring illuminator dangled perilously seven feet above.

Out came two welterweights—Thomas Saibu (West) and Trouble Power, the “Showboy of Onitsha.” The fight was a six round phlegmatic affair, Saibu winning a unanimous decision. The centre of our attraction was the referee Armstrong Duduman whose full time job is clerk over at the University of Ibadan. He was a man of infinite sensitivity. Each collision of skin and glove sent him wincing. Aloof throughout, he never came within five feet of either boxer even during clinches. We felt relief for him when he finally stepped down after the fight.

Two bantamweights entered next. We immediately shouted John Adebisi. Wearing a mauve robe with matching trunks, he bowed flamboyantly to the crowd and strutted to his corner. He gave us one bad moment when his second helped him put on his gloves before he had removed his robe. After some consultation and a few well placed tugs the garment came off. He could fight. He won by a TKO in the fourth round, shook everybody’s hand, bowed low to the crowd and departed.

Then the crowd hushed as the contenders for the international contest came through the ropes. There was Orlando Ramos, a tall slim graceful Nigerian and Dave Mitchell (wearing Adebisi’s robe) from Liverpool. Mitchell, it was immediately obvious, needed five months complete bed rest and nutritious, easily digestible food. Then with a bit of luck he might be able to open up a small, nonambulatory fish & chips stand in Soho. But box? Good grief. He was at least forty, knock kneed, barrel chested, muscleless and flabby (Armstrong Duduman now sitting next to us said that it was rumoured that Mitchell was a sailor from a ship tied up in Lagos and had lost some kind of bet).

Fortunately Ramos sized up the situation. He refused to throw any punches and slowly backtracked around the ring. Even this ploy wasn’t sufficient. By the fourth round Mitchell was so tired from moving after Ramos that he appeared imminently on the verge of total biological collapse. Ramos saved the day by suddenly sprawling out and taking a ten count. Although some sneered, a majority of the crowd gave a rousing cheer. Sportmanship still means something, at least at Obisesan Hall.

* * *

We reprint in full a conversation we overheard in front of the U.C.I. bookstore between an expatriate wife and a taxi driver.

“Where?”
“Bodija. How much?”
“One pound.”
“No, six pence.”
“Enter.”

* * *

FRUSTRATION

2 + 2 = 5
north is down
south is up
the mind is
not in the chest
Oh,
is because.

Maryagnes Thompson
No Room at the Inn

(Editors' Note: A Correspondent from the East sent us this report).

On a Sunday afternoon I was sitting in the Resthouse, working my way through last year's New Yorkers, when I heard a motorcycle pull up. It sounded like a Jaguar X-K missing a muffler. There were heavy feet on the stairs and the Old Man of the Mountains came in. He was covered with laterite dust, the same colour as his undisciplined beard. His skin was cracked and leathery and he dangled his crash helmet by the chinstrap.

—Same old place, he said.
I introduced myself.
—How long you been here?
I said ten months, a little smugly.
—What about you, I asked.
—I'm out. Been seeing Africa. Nigeria I.
I stared at him. I knew there must have been a Nigeria I but somehow I never thought I'd see one. I wasn't really sure they existed.
—How about a beer, he said.
—Well there's the CRH, the Placia... .
—Naw. Drag one out of the frig.
—They don't have beer in the frig, I said. Did they use to?
—Well I'll be damned. How about some chop, then?
I started to name some places but he interrupted.
—Don't they have any chop in this hole either?
—You can sign up for breakfast, I said helpfully.
—Well look, you hungry? Let's get a vehicle and hit the Rest House. Where're the keys?
—A vehicle?
—Yeah. The keys. They in the office?
—Sorry, I said. We don't have vehicles here to use. Besides, the office is locked.
—This is the Peace Corps (he gave it the ps) isn't it?
—Where do I sack?
—You sign that book and give your money to the steward in the morning.
—My what?
—Your money.
—I gotta pay? Who says I gotta pay?
I pointed to the rule sheet on the door.
—Christ, he said. You sure this is the Peace Corps—not AID?
—Anyway, I don't think you can stay here, I said.
—What?
—If you're on official business you have first choice. Non-PCV's aren't usually permitted...
—Tell me, he said. You staying here?
—We're supposed to stay in local hotels if we aren't on business and I generally do whether I am or not. I'm down at the Atlantic-just came to read magazines. Come on, he said, let's get out of here.
As we went out he was cursing under his breath.

STICKNEY From Page 2

The pennants were varied that flew from the conquerors' standards that day: Government College, Teachers' College, Technical College, Secondary School, Zaria, Maru, Kaduna, Katsina. An illustrious chapter would be added by the old men of Abuja to the mighty chronicle. Praise would be spread of the team, of its coach. He of the basketball would be sung in the bush as a sultan, Of noble birth from both his father and mother: Of noble birth indeed, of noble birth from both his parents.

History turns warriors to athletes. The conversion wrought was complete. Stickney relaxed during the interview, and tried to shrug off credit with a glass of beer forced on him by one of the reporters. Observers thought in vain of past NIT, NCAA championships in the New World for a tournament that could compare. After a two hour post-championship practice—there were already exaggerated rumours of a team in Maiduguri—the team ate, drank, and headed for the Kaduna swimming pool. Tournament promoter and coach Jimmy Garofalo waved without enthusiasm as they went off. Go home, Ben Stickney, he muttered under his breath, you've done your job. Rare have been the holy days that surpassed the next few in Abuja. Stickney even thought about packing up his Lenin poster and moving on. The seeds had borne fruit.

—Don Scharfe

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THE TILLEY LAMP

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