

# Harvard One Up On Peace Corps

## Radcliffe Girls Go Along, Help in Africa Project

The first Peace Corps unit will go to work in Tanganyika this fall. This is what they'll find—as told by a group of Harvard students who beat them to the spot.

BY SMITH HEMPSTONE  
Daily News Foreign Service

DODOMA, Tanganyika.—The Peace Corps will blaze a trail to the new frontiers of Tanganyika this fall—only to be greeted by the Swahili equivalent of "Kilroy was here."

The unkindest cut of all is that the group anticipating the work of President Kennedy's peace corpsmen hails from Mr. Kennedy's alma mater.

It all started when 13 Harvard students decided they wanted to spend the summer helping an underdeveloped country. The Rev. Ronald Maitland, Harvard's Episcopal chaplain, agreed to act as adviser.

Not to be outdone, and perhaps faced with the prospect of a dateless summer, six Radcliffe girls said they would like to come along.

\* \* \*

TO MEET A \$33,000 budget, the boys and their families raised \$10,000. The remainder was provided by foundations and business firms, the largest contributor being the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co.

The youngsters had considered joining Crossroads Africa, an organization that



takes American college students to Africa to work as laborers on community projects.

"But," says senior Haven Roosevelt (a grandson of FDR), "we decided there were plenty of people in Africa capable of wielding a

shovel and that we might be of more value using our education on a slightly higher level."

"Project Tanganyika," as the group was called, first thought of going to Kenya but decided the political situation was too unstable.

Instead, the students, through the African American Institute, offered their services for two months to the Tanganyika government. The offer was snapped up.

### Project Split Into 4 Groups

Project Tanganyika split into four groups assigned to the towns of Tanga, Dar Es Salaam, Moshi and Dodoma.

Here in this central Tanganyika railtown are Roosevelt (of Hyde Park), Chicago-born sophomore Robert Bennett (now of Kalamazoo, Mich.) and senior James Fawcett (of Tyringham, Mass.)

Fawcett teaches English and arithmetic in a primary

school during the day and at an adult education center at night.

Roosevelt and Bennett spend most of their time overseeing the distribution of 3,000 tons of American surplus corn to primitive Wagogo tribesmen, whose land has been withered by a devastating drought gripping Africa this year from Algeria to South Africa.

Each Wagogo adult gets a pound of corn a day; children half a pound. In return for this, the Wagogo men work on roads and dams.

\* \* \*

ALTHOUGH THE African is naturally courteous, the Harvard boys are finding it takes time to win their confidence.

To date, the Peace Corps has received little publicity here and that has been unfavorable. The Tanganyika African National Congress, a minor political party that holds no seats in the national assembly, is spreading a whispering campaign to the effect the corpsmen are coming to plan subversion and facilitate the establishment of American neo-colonialism.

The Swahili translation of "Peace Corps" into "Peace Army" has done no good, either.

The Harvard men assert that

their welcome has been warmer once they've established the fact that they are not peace corpsmen.

The trio assigned to Dodoma had a barrier of their own creation to overcome: They traveled by bus from Nairobi to Dodoma. Since whites invariably travel by private car, the Africans first suspected them of being plainclothes British police.

## *Dodoma Official*

### *Hails Students*

But if some Tanganyikans still have their reservations, Dodoma's African district commissioner (one of the first blacks to achieve this rank), M. C. Othman, has nothing but praise for the girls and boys of Project Tanganyika.

"If the Peace Corps does half as well," he asserts, "we'll be happy."

As for the Harvard boys, they think "it's great to be doing something where you're really needed."

Although they took the precaution of learning a little Swahili before coming out, they have discovered to their surprise (as the peace corpsmen will to theirs) that many rural natives speak not a word of this lingua franca.

\* \* \*

THEY have been "amazed" at how far the Tanganyikans still have to go in regard to education. (This British-administered East African trusteeship territory gets its independence in December) and "disappointed" at the amount of minor African corruption they have encountered, although they recognize that much of the latter stems from poverty.

The boys are enthusiastic and hope to put the summer scheme on a regular basis. Several have made plans to return to Africa to work after graduation.