

One man's experience

We spoke with David Berkowitz (Mitre Corporation, Bedford, Mass.) about his experiences as a Peace Corps volunteer. He lectured at the University of the South Pacific (Fiji) from 1970 to 1972 and conducted laboratory sessions such as the introductory electronics lab shown in the photograph. He reports that he had an excellent experience during his stay: "If you elect to work as a Peace Corps volunteer, it's immediately much more of an experience than just going somewhere and lecturing. It implies getting much more into the culture, learning the language and having a living experience." Berkowitz, however, cautioned prospective volunteers that there can be a great financial sacrifice involved, especially for a more established scientist. He was with his wife and two children and had to live frugally, which did have an advantage—their living style was more comparable to local people and helped to reduce social distance.

Berkowitz talked also about his students: "They were extremely well motivated. They were eager to learn and their eagerness helped them to overcome great obstacles insofar as preparation was concerned. Mostly they were very weak in mathematics."

An important project that Berkowitz worked on involved increasing educational communications in the Pacific. PEACESAT (Pacific Educational and



Communications Experiments with Satellite) uses a NASA synchronous satellite to allow students on islands many hundreds of miles from Fiji to talk with faculty at the university. "It is illustrative of the fact that in many of the developing regions, communications out to the region are very poor, and frequently nonexistent," he said. "The influence of the university is felt only in the local metropolitan area, unless something is done to increase communications."

—RAS

in teacher training during a Peace Corps stint in northern Peru (1969-71). Watson reports in the October 1973 issue of *The Physics Teacher* that the Peruvian physics teachers initially did not know their subject matter adequately—Spanish editions of the PSSC text were to become a cornerstone of the subsequent enlightenment. Team problem solving, daily quizzes and practical methods of constructing laboratory equipment from available materials all helped to make the Peruvian teachers more effective. Watson comments that these techniques served well with much carry over into the classrooms throughout Peru.

Depending on the physicist's training, different levels of teaching are possible. Elementary schools, high schools and universities have openings. Depending on the requirements of an area, a bachelor's degree or master's degree is needed for the high-school level and a master's or PhD is needed for the university. In some areas where university teachers are scarce, the Peace Corps volunteer may teach classes in addition to his training teachers.

Physicists who become Peace Corps volunteers have, for the most part, been recent degree recipients. A pro-

gram to encourage even more young physicists to go overseas is being developed by the Committee on International Education in Physics of the AAPT. A Peace Corps Science Associates program where a postdoctoral fellow spends the initial or middle two years of a four year university fellowship in the Peace Corps is one of the possibilities that the committee is considering. A university commitment of this sort would help to alleviate a major problem that some Peace Corps physicists might have—finding a job after being away for two years.

Committee Chairman Michael Moravcsik (University of Oregon) commented to us about another issue of concern. Most countries must initiate requests for Peace Corps volunteers. In many cases, local governments have never had PhD physicists as Peace Corpsmen and do not think to request them. One solution proposed is that US scientists use contacts they have in various developing nations to stimulate requests, particularly for physics activities other than teaching (including research and applied science projects).

Peace Corps volunteers sign up for a two-year stay. Husband and wife teams are acceptable; only a limited

number of positions are open to couples with children, however. Orientation and language training is done as much as possible on site. All expenses are paid and \$75 a month is put away for the volunteer until he returns. Interested? Write to Action, Washington, D.C. 20525 or call toll free (800) 424-8580.

—RAS

Four USSR hunger strikers interrogated by police

Early in December four of the seven Soviet scientists who went on a two-week hunger strike last June (*PHYSICS TODAY*, September 1973, page 78) were interrogated by the police. They were told they are being investigated on charges of parasitism. The four men, physicists Mark Ya. Azbel and Alexander Voronel, cyberneticist Viktor Brailovsky and mathematician Alexander Luntz, had lost their jobs when they applied for exit visas to Israel. In a related matter, a Sverdlovsk engineer, Leonid Zabelishensky, who had been teaching computer theory, lost his job and was sentenced on 17 December to six months for parasitism.

Azbel and Voronel, who have been appointed professors at Tel Aviv University, have also received job offers from the University of Washington. Azbel is an eminent solid-state theorist. Voronel has been collaborating for a long time with Moshe Gitterman in research on critical phenomena.

Gitterman, who was also one of the hunger strikers, was allowed in September to emigrate to Israel, along with his wife, two children, aunt and mother. He is now a professor at Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv. When Gitterman visited the US in November we discussed the question of why Voronel has not been permitted to leave. For the last 12 years Gitterman and Voronel have studied the same scientific problems, working in the same room at an "open" institute, and publishing their results in the open literature. Gitterman is completely puzzled that he was given permission to leave whereas his closest friend and collaborator has been waiting to go to Israel since March 1972.

Weinberg appointed to US energy R&D position

Physicist Alvin M. Weinberg has been appointed director of the energy research and development office in the Federal Energy Office. Weinberg was director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory from 1955 through 1973 and is succeeded there by Herman Postma (see page 83). Since 1 January Weinberg has been director of the new Institute for

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