ADRA'S
GLOBAL VILLAGE

GATEKEEPER OF UNDERSTANDING

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GATEKEEPER OF UNDERSTANDING

FOREWORD

In 1991 a group of students from La Sierra University in California, gathered around a campfire on a floating island in Lake Titicaca. (After you read this book you will appreciate how very careful one must be when building a campfire on a floating island.) They had come to Peru to help build a floating school out of wood and metal for the children who lived on the floating island. It was a life-changing event for the students, and they began talking about how wonderful it would be if everyone could come to Peru for the same experience.

As it turned out, they couldn't think of a way to bring everyone to Peru, so they thought of a way to bring a part of the experience to everyone. And that is how the idea for Global Village was born.

At first they thought they would just build a totora reed hut, like the ones they were surrounded by, and use it to help explain what life was like for people who lived in one.

Things kind of snowballed from there.

So now there is Global Village, an ever-expanding and evolving experience whose purpose is to help the people of the world understand and appreciate each other.

Surely you can see how important this is; that's why you have a copy of this book. Besides, what could be more interesting than learning more about people, their families and homes, their clothes and food, their problems, hopes and beliefs?

We can't learn everything about the people of other countries and their cultures. We can, however, do our best to try to understand why they do the things they do. And if we are really ambitious, we can help children learn and understand, too.

Why should we try?

First, because maybe we can learn from other cultures—a way to do something better, a heightened appreciation for nature, family or life itself.

Second, the more we understand others the better we can get along.

And third, when we understand others better, we can help them more.

ADRA is a humanitarian organization dedicated to this philosophy. That is why ADRA has developed, and sponsored and supported Global Village from the beginning. ADRA believes that when

people learn about each other and understand the process and importance of development, the quality of life will improve around the world.

At ADRA's Global Village in 1992, representatives from the United States Agency for International Development, US AID, visited ADRA's first Global Village and declared it to be one of the most effect means to educate elementary and middle school students they had ever seen. In fact, US AID funded a grant to ADRA to develop the materials in this book. It is offered in order that all who visit ADRA's Global Village come away with a greater appreciation of the people ADRA's Global Village represents.

We hope that by reading this book you will understand more about the people of the world, you will celebrate the ways in which we are all different and all alike, and you will become an even better citizen of our global village.

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GLOSSARY

Aguayo— a brightly colored shawl worn by the women of the altiplano

Altiplano— the plateau between the two ranges of the Andes. In Spanish *alti* means "high" and *plano* means "flatland"

Ayllu— a clan; a group of families who work together

Balsa de totora— small boat woven of totora reeds

Campesinos— country people, peasants

Chicha— fermented drink made from corn

Chuño— important food staple made of dehydrated potatoes

Cordillera— the ranges of the Andes where they divide in two

Feria— an open-air market, held once a week in many villages

Mate de coca— tea made of coca leaves; a good cure for soroche

Mestizos— people of mixed Indian and European ancestry

Oca— a plant that is like a potato

Papas— potatoes

Quinoa— a nutritious grain

Quipu— a knotted string used for record-keeping

Soroche— altitude sickness

Titicaca— means jaguar rock; the jaguar was the symbol of the Inca

Totora— a reed that grows on the shores of Lake Titicaca

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THE LAND

THE ANDES is the world's longest mountain range. It extends about 4,500 miles along the western edge of South America. Because the mountains reach from Colombia in the north to Chile in the south, the Andes Mountains are often called the backbone of South America. In the southern part of Peru, the mountains divide into two parallel ranges. The western chain, known as *Cordillera Occidental,* runs along the Peruvian and Chilean coastlines. The eastern range, called both the *Cordillera Real* and *Cordillera Oriental,* is an immense network of towering mountains stretching from Peru to Argentina. Most of the mountain peaks have snow year-round, and some are active volcanoes.

Between these two parallel mountain ranges lies a vast, high plain. These highlands are called the *altiplano,* which means "high plain" in Spanish. The altiplano is a windswept, bleak, treeless tableland, about 500 miles long and 80 miles wide. The Andes are the second highest mountain range in the world, with some peaks rising to over 21,000 feet above sea level. The altiplano, averaging over 12,000 feet, is also one of the world's highest regions. This plateau is actually higher than many of the peaks of the Alps.

The geography here is unique, peculiar and severe. To the west of the altiplano, the Andes give way to steep canyons; some of them plunge twice as deep as the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Beyond the canyons there are arid foothills leading to a coastal desert so dry that in some places the annual rainfall is usually zero inches. To the east of the altiplano, the Andes slope away toward a tropical, heavily forested hilly region—and a deep, dark jungle if there ever was one.

Vegetation is scarce on the altiplano. It is cold, there is not much rain, and it is always so windy, not much will grow. Eucalyptus trees were introduced to the area, and some scraggly clusters of them have survived. Other than that, trees are rare. About the only natural vegetation are tough grasses and resinous plants. Ichu grass is the most common plant. Llamas and alpacas will eat it, but it is too tough for other animals. It is good for thatching roofs, though.

The most prominent feature of the altiplano is *Lake Titicaca,* the largest lake in South America. At 12,500 feet above sea level, it is the highest navigable lake in the world. Although there are higher lakes, they are nowhere near its size. With a length of 138 miles and an average width of 37 miles, it is larger than Puerto Rico. In 1862 several steamships were carried piece by piece up the mountains and reassembled, so some of the lakeshore towns have steamship service.

Lake Titicaca is not only large, it is also very deep—deep enough to have its own legendary monster. Because it is so deep, its volume of water is large enough to maintain a warmer temperature than you might expect in a lake two miles above sea level. This affects the air and land surrounding the lake, so the climate there is not quite as cold and harsh as the rest of the altiplano. This is not to say the lake is warm—the water is quite cold. It is just not as cold as it would be if it were not so deep.

The lake is fed by streams from the mountains and by the summer rains. Only one river drains from Lake Titicaca, the Desaguadero. There are no other rivers on the altiplano, only lots of little streams of melted snow running down from the mountains.

Lake Titicaca's clear, shimmering, deep blue waters provide a breathtaking contrast to the snowcapped Cordilleras and the rugged altiplano. The air is unusually clear and the sunlight is especially luminescent. It cannot be denied—the scenery is spectacular. The lake is an oasis for wildlife, especially birds, who love hiding in the *totora reed* that grows along the shore. Lake Titicaca is a sacred place for the people of the altiplano. According to legend, the god Viracocha rose from the lake, as did the first Incas.

The lake is dotted with about 40 islands, some inhabited, some not. On some there are the ruins of stone temples or ancient terraces. The Isla del Sol—Island of the Sun—is the most celebrated island, the legendary birthplace of the Incas. The Incas are said to have dumped a great deal of their gold, silver and jewels into Lake Titicaca rather than give it to the conquistadors. No expedition has uncovered it yet.

Lake Titicaca is shared by two countries: it lies half in Bolivia and half in Peru. Most of the people who live in the Lake Titicaca region are Aymara Indians. The Quechua Indians populate the rest of the altiplano. The altiplano supports about 70 percent of the Bolivian population and over half of the Peruvians.

Historically the isolation of the altiplano was thought to provide a sanctuary. The ancient Indian civilizations believed their setting made them unconquerable. Today, as their descendants continue to eke out a living farming the same rocky, unproductive soil, many see the isolation caused by the rugged landscape as a formidable deterrent to communication, trade, transportation, education, good health and a better way of life.

ANIMALS

THE ALTIPLANO is the home of the llama. The altiplano and the llama were made for each other. The llama has lots of thick, warm wool to protect it from the altiplano's harsh winds and

freezing temperatures. Llamas can go for long periods without needing to drink. And llamas are happy to eat ichu grass—one of the few things that grow in the altiplano—which is so tough and forbidding no other animal will eat it.

There are no llamas in the wild; they are completely domesticated. They depend on people and people depend on them. Their relationship is truly symbiotic. The llamas even provide a certain measure of faithful companionship for their owners. Llamas are very useful to the Indians of the altiplano, a vital part of the Andean economy.

Llamas are the ideal pack animals for the altiplano. They are surefooted while climbing steep mountain paths. They have carried heavy loads for people for hundreds of years (but only at about 15 miles a day, tops). Like camels, llamas can go for long stretches without drinking, but they are much smaller than camels (they weigh a maximum of 400 pounds) and they cannot carry huge loads. And they never, never will carry a person, not even a tiny child.

Furthermore, llamas absolutely, positively will not carry what they consider to be an excessive burden. And when they get tired, they simply sit down and refuse to budge. They do not suffer ill treatment gladly. Llamas, when annoyed beyond endurance, have been known to scornfully spit in the face of their provoker. Because of their long, graceful necks and elegant bearing—they are often thought of as regal creatures.

In addition to their importance to transportation, llamas provide Indians with wool. If it were not for the llamas' wool, Indians would not be able to survive the formidable climate of the altiplano. Alpacas, the llamas' close relatives, are also domesticated, and their wool is considered finer. Alpacas are kept mainly for their wool; they are not pack animals. Llama wool is comparatively coarse, but it is used for blankets, rugs and clothing. The vicuna is an untamed relative whose wool is the most luxurious and highly valued of all. Vicuna are endangered and under government protection, although they can be temporarily rounded up and shorn in seasonal hunts.

Llamas also very provide Indians with fuel for cooking and warmth. Llama dung, when dry, does not smell and does not smoke badly. It is also useful as fertilizer.

Llamas, being such useful creatures, are rarely killed for meat. Occasionally a llama may be butchered for a festival, with the entire community sharing in the meat. However, when a llama dies, the meat is eaten, and any leftovers are carefully preserved by drying them in the sun. After it dies, the llama also provides a valuable hide.

Other animals also are herded in the altiplano. Sheep are important, and so are goats. The pasture is not very good for sheep or goats, however, and flocks do not thrive. Some families have dogs as pets or

to help herd. Most Indians of the altiplano keep a bevy of guinea pigs in their house to supply the little bit of meat in their diets.

Beyond this, there are not a lot of animals in this part of the world—some rodents, a few birds. It is not a very hospitable place.

CLOTHING

NO DOUBT about it, the people who live on the altiplano have to wear clothing. The weather is so unfriendly to humans—to all life, actually—that bundling up against the elements is an absolute necessity.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of native dress of the altiplano is the hat. Everyone wears a hat—men, women and children. You know that old saying, "If you're cold, put on a hat." Well, these people know it and believe it. Hats are essential for keeping out the fierce winds that whip across the plains. And in the daytime, when the sun shines without mercy, hats shade their eyes, protect their skin and cool their heads.

Men and boys usually wear cone-shaped knitted woolen caps with long, warm earflaps to protect against the cold. But the hats for women deserve a couple of paragraphs of their own.

Hats of all shapes and sizes are worn by the women of the altiplano. In many cases, the different styles identify which villages the wearers are from. In the Lake Titicaca area, many of the Aymara Indian women wear bowler or derby hats. It is said that bowlers first came to the area when British workers built the railroads in the early 1900s. The women claim to prefer the bowlers because of the protection they offer from the cold and wind, but they will not deny that they also find them very fetching.

The round, black felt bowlers are often made by the wearers, as are the straw, wool, patterned, beribboned, embroidered or sequined hats worn by the various women of the plateau. The hats offer more than protection; they are also a symbol of wealth or position. A man's status can be ascertained by the number of hats his wife owns. Some hats even employ ribbons to indicate whether the wearer is single, married or widowed. No matter how poor she may be, an Andean woman will never go out bareheaded.

One important item of clothing for men of the altiplano is the poncho. A poncho is like a blanket with a slit in the middle for the head to poke through. Woven from llama wool, it is heavy and warm enough to provide protection against the extremes of the climate. Men also wear simple baggy trousers, often made from cotton that has been traded for wool at the market.

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Instead of a poncho, a woman will probably wear a large shawl, called an *aguayo*. Besides providing warmth, the shawl is very useful for hauling goods to be sold at the market or snugly and safely carrying a baby (wrapped very tightly, so its little soul will not escape). Traditionally, the women wear brightly colored skirts that are gathered at the waist and very full, a look which is achieved by wearing several layers of skirts and petticoats. Blouses are usually made of cotton. Little girls usually wear smaller versions of their mothers' clothes; even the hat is the same, although it may be a hand-me-down and thus rather too big.

Usually men's clothes are a dull brown—the natural color of the llama wool. But at fiesta time men might wear bright red or green jackets with embroidered bell-bottomed pants and dazzling new hats. Women also get all decked out in splendor at festival time. Their best hats are heavily decorated with sequins and pearls. Their skirts may be of silk or velvet, and will be poofed out with up to 20 petticoats. Their blouses will be covered with embroidery, ribbons and sequins. A good deal of a family's meager income is spent on clothes for fiesta time.

The women of the household make all the family's clothing; even the fabric the clothes are made of is homemade. The wool comes from llamas and alpacas. The cotton comes from the valleys and is traded at the market. Most Indian women are either spinning wool into yarn or knitting at all times, even when doing something else, like walking or herding. Unless it is going to be brown, black or white, the wool is dyed with vegetable dyes before it is spun. After it has been dried in the sun and combed, the wool is wound around the wrist or held on a distaff—a stick with a fork at the top. The wool fibers are pulled out by the right hand and spun clockwise on a wooden spindle, then wound into skeins or balls. Some people let the spindle hang free so it looks rather like they are playing with a yo-yo. The threads are pulled fine or thick, depending on what is going to be woven.

Women weave on simple wooden looms. The fabric they make is warm and durable, often with bright colors and attractive patterns. Some villages have distinctive weaving designs. If they are not spinning or weaving, Indians are knitting. Even boys are taught to knit and have been seen doing so while they are playing soccer. The sweaters they make can be sold at the market.

While they are at home, Indians prefer to go barefoot, in spite of the cold weather and the rough terrain. Kids play soccer barefoot. Visitors to Lake Titicaca have been amazed to see the natives rise at dawn and break the ice with their bare feet to free their reed boats or draw water. Away from home Indians wear sandals. Often they are

made of llama hide that has been cut to the shape of the foot and tied on with string or leather. Sometimes the sandals are made from the rubber of old tires. This may explain why they prefer to go barefoot.

DAILY LIFE

THE PEOPLE of the altiplano get up before dawn. The women rise first, adding llama dung to last night's fire and blowing on the embers. Huddling in their shawls, they put water on the clay oven to boil (it takes forever at that altitude) and begin to grind corn or *quinoa* on a big flat rock.

If they live on the lake, the men break up the ice at the water's edge with their bare feet, then push out in their totora reed boats to fish with nets or check their fish traps. They check on the sheep and llamas and prepare for the day's work in the fields.

The children also have early morning chores, such as fetching water, gathering fuel, peeling potatoes and helping with the younger children.

As soon as the sun shows above the mountain peaks, it is bright daylight because the air is so thin. The sun warms the air quickly and the bitter cold vanishes.

The sheep begin to stir. Llamas open their eyes at sunrise but sit still with their legs folded under them until their herder arrives to take them to pasture.

Breakfast is eaten shortly after sunrise. It usually involves potatoes, but may also include corn meal mush or toasted quinoa kernels. To drink there is always *mate de coca* (coca tea with lots of sugar). There is no table; the food is set on a mat and is eaten outdoors, unless it is raining. The family huddles low around the food and eats quickly.

When there is lots of work to do in the fields or at home, children stay home from school and help. If they can be spared, they go to school, usually from about nine to four with a two-hour break for lunch. After school there are more chores. If they have free time, children enjoy playing soccer, cards or war games. They like to make music and dance and chase each other around. Very young children play around the house; their mothers watch them while they work. Little boys like to play with slingshots, toy bows and arrows, and digging sticks. Little girls like to pretend to cook and play with dolls made of grass or clay. By age seven they take on their share of the chores. They learn to herd and work in the fields and fish. They learn to spin, weave and cook.

The highland woman is nearly overwhelmed with work. She is responsible for running the household. She must prepare the food,

look after the children and animals, collect fuel, collect water, spin, weave, make the family's clothes, wash those clothes, help in the fields, gather totora reeds, clean the house and barter in the market. When she goes out to the market or the fields, she carries her latest baby with her on her back. If her hands are free while doing any of this, she spins wool. If she has any extra time, she makes something she can sell at the market—sweaters, rugs, blankets, pottery. That's how she "fritters" her time away.

Men also work very hard. Their work in the fields is backbreaking. They dig up the soil with primitive wooden hoes. Their work is discouraging as well; all too often the crops do not survive the cold, the low rainfall or the poor soil.

Lunch is a haphazard kind of meal. Those who are working out in the fields and those who are herding are usually too far away to come home for lunch. They will often just take something simple with them (like a potato) and stop briefly to eat it and drink some water from a nearby stream.

Market day is the fun and exciting social occasion of the week. Most larger villages host open-air markets, called *feria*, once a week. Merchants come from other areas to set up shop in the village plaza. Local people also bring items to sell or barter, often walking many miles from outlying villages, carrying their bundles on their backs or leading a llama. Some take the bus to the market, bringing whatever they have to sell with them, including chickens and llamas.

At the market there are stalls selling fruits and vegetables (very expensive because they must be transported over the mountains), household goods (plastic buckets, candles, transistor radios), clothing (sandals, hats, ponchos, cotton), animals (llamas, sheep, chickens, wool, hides), food (homemade pies, chuños, oca, corn, quinoa, fish and potatoes, of course), drink (*mate de coca, chicha* beer), and handicrafts (pottery, beads, sweaters, blankets, rugs). These handcrafted items are skillfully made from basic materials, using simple techniques. They are often both beautiful and useful.

Families eat most of what they are able to grow, so not much is left to sell in the market. However, without the markets, many Indians would be even more poverty-stricken. It is one of the very few ways for them to make money. Having said that, much of the trading that goes on at the markets does not even involve money. Whenever possible, goods are bartered or exchanged rather than bought with money. Often the little money that is obtained is used to buy coca leaves, which is brought in from the foothills to the east.

The market is a meeting place—a time to see friends and catch up on gossip. It is an essential part of village life.

It is usually dark by the time the family eats supper. When the sun goes down, it gets cold immediately, so the evening meal is usually eaten indoors. After supper family members pull the llama pelts down from the rafters and sleep in a heap on the raised-mud sleeping platform. The more bodies that huddle together, the warmer they sleep. The guinea pigs scamper about. It is very, very dark. The wind blows. Other than that, it is very quiet.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION is free and compulsory for the children of the altiplano. Peruvian children between six and 15 years of age must go to school, and in Bolivia, those children between seven and 14 years. This is the law. But the law is easier to make than to carry out. On the altiplano, the burden of education is staggering.

The obstacles to be overcome were set in place long ago. The Indians of the altiplano have been largely ignored by the various governments since the Spanish conquest. The conquistadors were determined to convert the Indians to Christianity, but saw no need for any further education. In colonial times, education was only available to the sons of the upper class and was completely private, either from the church or a tutor. After independence, hacienda owners limited their workers' access to workers'schools; an educated populace would have threatened the landowners' way of life by expanding the workers' options for earning a living. Before 1952, only 15 percent of Bolivia's rural children went to school.

Chronic political instability has hindered the progress of education. Even though everybody wants free, quality education for all, political coups get in the way and governments must keep starting over.

The remoteness of the altiplano affects the quality of education. Most cities and towns have schools, and in the past 20 years or so governments have built many schools in rural areas. But there are still many children who live too far from a school to attend. Indian communities have built many of the schools in anticipation that the government would provide a teacher. But there is a shortage of teachers, especially ones who are willing to live in isolated areas. Books are supposed to be provided for children, but many rural schools do not have any money to buy books, pencils or paper.

More than 40 percent of Peru's population is under 15 years of age. Because of this, some schools are very crowded and the children attend in shifts. There are morning, afternoon, and sometimes even evening sessions.

Even though school is compulsory, the law is not strictly enforced. In order to survive, families often need the children to help out, especially in rural areas. School is a luxury they cannot afford. Only about 40 percent of rural children continue their education beyond third grade. Even those children who do not drop out entirely often miss days when they cannot be spared at home. Dropout rates are highest for girls. The poorest families really rely on their daughters for help with chores and child care. Too often the feeling is that an education is not going to do a girl any good anyway.

The high dropout rate may also be attributed in part to the fact that instruction is given in Spanish in most cases. Not only do the children have to learn to read and write, they have to do it in Spanish. Recently, though, there are signs that bilingual education is making inroads.

Those who can afford it send their children to private schools, most of which are run by the Catholic church. Others send a son or daughter to the city to live with relatives and attend schools there, which are much better, offering more subjects and preparation for further education. This way the child has a better chance of going on to secondary school. Still, secondary education lies beyond the reach of most residents of the altiplano.

Because so many adults did not have the chance to go to school, the literacy rate for the area is less than 75 percent. There are a few government-sponsored classes that teach reading to adults. One way to overcome the difficulties caused by geographical isolation is teaching by radio, which is starting to become quite important. Radio schools can reach everywhere, and most families have a radio.

FAMILY

ON THE ALTIPLANO, the family is the most important entity. Society is thoroughly oriented to family, kin and family ties. Traditional families are large, stable, close-knit and extended. The extended family is the basic family unit, consisting of a man and his brothers, their wives, sons, and unmarried daughters. And, of course, lots of grandchildren.

The father is the head of the family. The mother is responsible for running the household. The children are expected to work. The more children there are, the more work can be done, and the greater security there is.

Each nuclear family usually lives in a separate house, often one of a group of houses clustered around a patio shared by the rest of the extended family. In a compound like this, the work can be shared, and it is natural and easy for family members to help each other.

In Incan society, the basic unit was the *ayllu*, a clan or group of families. The people of the *ayllu* worked together at planting and harvesting. They helped each other build their houses and herd animals. They celebrated feast days together. These community ideals remain today, and many Quechua Indians still work together and help each other. Instead of each family working alone in its field, the entire village will work on each field in turn. The good times and hard times are shared by everyone, and that makes the hard times easier to bear.

Loyalty and responsibility to the family are granted the utmost significance. Family and community offer a safety net against uncertain economic circumstances. The family is stable and will always be there. The family can be trusted to provide help when it is needed. The family is always consulted when important decisions are to be made.

The bonds of kinship are so strong that often people seek to form ties of kinship with those to whom they are not related. This is accomplished through the relationship of a child, the child's parents and the godparents. Those in this relationship show the highest regard and loyalty for each other. Godparents are usually chosen at a child's baptism, and they have specific rituals and obligations to perform. The relationship lasts forever, continuing even if the godchild dies.

Godparents participate in their godchild's wedding ceremonies and do all they can to insure the success of the marriage. Marriage is the most important social event in a person's life. Marriages on the altiplano involve an elaborate series of rituals, including courtship, betrothal, several different wedding ceremonies, several different feasts, a planting ritual and a roofing ritual. It can take a year or two to get it all done, but when it is completed the couple is able to function autonomously as a true part of the community.

When Indians leave the altiplano to move to the city, they leave most of their family and community behind. They are still desperately poor, but now they must experience the bad times alone. It is much harder.

FOOD

AS FAR AS FOOD is concerned, there is not an abundance of variety in the altiplano. There is not an abundance, period.

The people are subsistence farmers. What they grow, they eat. Farming is an iffy proposition in the harsh climate. Too often, crops are frostbitten or wiped out by hail. What do grow most reliably in

that altitude are tubers, namely potatoes (or as they say, *papas*). Potatoes have been the basic staple and most important crop of the Indians of the altiplano for hundreds of years. Potatoes originated in the Andes and are now the world's fourth biggest crop. They grow over 200 varieties of potatoes in the highlands, as well as other hardy root crops such as *oca* and ulluco.

Potatoes are eaten at nearly every meal. They are boiled. They are put into soups. They are eaten in stews. But the most ingenious form potatoes take is as *chuños*. *Chuños* are surely the world's first freeze-dried food; they have been made since ancient times. They are processed in June, the Andean winter, when the days are warm and sunny and the night temperatures fall far below freezing. Small potatoes are spread on the ground and left outside to freeze overnight. In the morning, as the sun thaws the potatoes, they are gathered into little piles and the women squeeze the water out of the potatoes by stomping on them with their bare feet. Then they are spread out again to dry; this process may continue for several days. When they are completely dehydrated, they become chuños; as such they will keep for many months. If they are ground into a white, light-textured flour, they will keep almost indefinitely. Chuños usually go into the soup of the day or can be cooked into a sort of porridge. They seem to be an acquired taste, but they are undeniably filling.

Another advantage to chuños is that they can be cooked relatively quickly. It can take about an hour to bring a pot of potatoes to boil at those high altitudes. In fact, before there were clocks, this was used as a unit of measurement for time. If you said, "I'll come in three boilings," you meant you'd arrive in about three hours.

Corn is another important staple in the Indian diet. It is not hardy enough to be grown everywhere in the altiplano, but conditions are generally sheltered enough around Lake Titicaca for farmers to try to produce some corn. Corn is eaten fresh, dried, and as cornmeal, and is used to make the primary intoxicating beverage of the altiplano, *chicha*. To make *chicha*, corn is ground, boiled and fermented—and the results are quite potent.

Several grains are grown in the highlands, including barley and *quinoa*, a highly nutritious grain that grows well in high altitudes and tolerates frost. Its seeds are yellow and spherical and are eaten as a cereal, cooked in the ever-present soups, or ground into flour and used for thickening those same soups. *Quinoa* is high in fiber and rich in protein, which is sorely lacking in the highland diet. Lately quinoa has become a rather chic health food item in industrialized countries.

Along with potatoes, corn and grains, the Indians eat some beans and squash, with chili peppers, salt, and perhaps onions used as

seasoning. These items are nearly always found cooked in a soup. There is potato and barley soup, chuño and barley soup, potato, corn and bean soup—the possibilities are endless. Once in a great while a hard-boiled egg might be cut up into tiny pieces and added to the soup. Even more infrequently, the soup will contain a little meat, most likely guinea pig.

Meat is eaten rarely, usually to celebrate a festive occasion like a birthday, wedding or holiday. Guinea pigs are really the only regular source of meat. They are said to be delicious when roasted. The little rodents are kept in the houses where they eat food scraps and scurry around. Their principal advantage is that they multiply quickly. One obvious disadvantage is that they are awfully small. A sheep will be slaughtered for a very special occasion. A llama will be killed only if it is really old and about to die anyway. Any leftover meat is cut into thin strips, pounded between two stones, and dried in the sun. This meat is called charqui, which is where our word "jerky" originated.

The people who live on Lake Titicaca are fortunate in that they can catch fish from the lake to eat. In many families, the father or oldest brother goes out early every morning and nets some fish for the day's meals. The Peruvian government has stocked the lake with trout to supplement the supply of native fish.

Most people of the altiplano do not have a nourishing diet. They do not get enough protein. Milk is not generally available—the climate is too cold for cows and the pasture is too thin. Fruits and green vegetables cannot be grown in the harsh climate and are too expensive for the average family to buy. (Transportation is so difficult, it costs a lot to bring them from the lowlands.) The people are almost always hungry. Their typical diet supplies about 1500 calories a day—about half the calories consumed by someone in the United States. Many of them depend on coca leaves to relieve the feelings of hunger and fatigue that result from this meager diet. However, coca leaves do not do anything to relieve malnutrition.

HEALTH

MANY LOWLANDERS who travel to the altiplano become incapacitated by the high altitude and the lack of oxygen. Visitors are usually able to acclimatize themselves and overcome this altitude sickness, called *soroche*, after two or three days. Typical symptoms of soroche include headache, shortness of breath and fatigue. Sufferers are told to rest, breathe deeply, and drink some tea made of coca leaves. Most tourists never do adjust completely and find any physical exertion is extra difficult.

PERU

Indians born in the altiplano have adapted completely to the high altitude. They are accustomed to the amount of oxygen in the air and can work all day or dance throughout fiesta without being slowed down by the thin air. Genetically, the Indians have developed large lungs in wider chests. They are used to living with less oxygen.

But their bodies have not figured out a way to get used to living with less food. Malnutrition is the most serious health problem in the altiplano. There never seems to be enough to eat, and people are always hungry. Mostly what they eat is carbohydrates, and mostly those carbohydrates are potatoes—a wonderful food, but not enough on their own. Proteins and fruits are too expensive; families do without. Children especially are undernourished, and so they get sick easily.

Water is another major health problem. Potable water is only available to about five percent of rural residents. The water is often contaminated and untreated and can carry diseases like hepatitis. Unsanitary living conditions often contribute to the swift spread of disease. These two scourges—poor sanitation and malnutrition—are largely responsible for the high infant mortality rate.

In Peru, 84 of every 1,000 babies die. This death rate is very high. In Bolivia it is even worse: for every 1,000 live births, 124 babies die before they are one year old. On the other end of the scale, life expectancy is low. In Peru life expectancy is about 62 years; in Bolivia, about 54 years. Bolivia has some of the worst health indicators in the Western Hemisphere. Epidemics of diseases like cholera, whooping cough and measles continue to break out.

Health care is available in the cities. But those who live on the altiplano have little access to medical services. Many little towns will have a medical clinic; sometimes they are well-equipped, sometimes not. The government runs most of these clinics; others are operated by church or international aid programs. The clinics offer treatment and advice and are especially popular among mothers with babies and young children. Health workers give vaccinations and teach classes on the importance of diet and hygiene. It is not easy for the government to find doctors, nurses and dentists willing to staff these remote clinics.

There is another roadblock to bringing health care to the altiplano. Many of the Indians are not convinced that modern medicine is any better than the ancient remedies. Because of deep-rooted superstitions, the services of witch doctors are still in demand. Many Indians believe that disease is caused by evil spirits or the curse of a sorcerer. If that is so, modern medicine is useless; the illness can only be cured by magic. The plants used by healers are thought to have magical properties.

Actually, many of the plants used by the diviners do contain healing properties. Knowledge that has been passed down through

generations enables the healers to diagnose some ailments and use the correct herbs to cure them. The power of the patient's superstition is also a tremendous aid to the success of the cure.

Many of these cures (herbal medicines, animal parts and such) are for sale at the weekly markets. In fact, the medicine man often sets up shop on market day. He may be requested to divine the future by reading tea leaves, or he may be asked for advice on how to cure a fever, dispel fright or win back a straying spouse.

A particular tribe of Aymara Indians, the Callawaya, are famous in the altiplano for their knowledge of healing. They travel throughout the area dispensing medicine and charms to cure illness or attract lovers, whatever is needed. Their medicines and herbs are gathered from the mountains and jungle and are a closely guarded secret. Some of the remedies are burned, some are buried, others are swallowed.

All sorts of leaves are used as medicine: quinua leaves help a swollen throat, yucca leaves boiled with salt are good for rheumatism, and apichu leaves get rid of ticks. Coca leaves are the most important medicine, and are used to cure everything from hemorrhages to diarrhea.

Coca leaves are used for more than mere medication. Coca is regarded as a necessity by many of the poor people of the altiplano, rather like coffee in the United States or tea in Britain, but with more effect. When they chew the dried coca leaves, they are less bothered by cold, hunger and fatigue. Coca numbs the senses. Many Indians chew coca leaves from morning until night, keeping a small pouch of coca leaves with them always so they can replace the chewed leaves with fresh ones when needed. A family will buy the leaves by the bushel and divide them up, the adults chewing about a half pound a day. Considering their income, coca leaves are an expensive purchase. Coca is the raw material for coca paste, from which cocaine is produced. It is addictive. Over the years it can cause degeneration of sensory perception and general physical deterioration. And it stains teeth green.

Coca has developed into a tremendous dilemma for Peru and Bolivia. Foreign governments, frustrated by cocaine trafficking, are pressuring for coca-growing to be wiped out. Coca farmers are resisting violently—coca is known as green gold. And now the local people are becoming cocaine consumers as well as exporters. In the cities, youth are becoming addicted to coca paste and to cigarettes made of a cocaine by-product, both of which contain toxic impurities. Youngsters employed to stomp on the leaves absorb acid through their skin and usually become addicted, so they are able to work all night.

Coca is not just a harmless stimulant that helps poor people get through the day. It is an overwhelming problem.

HISTORY

ARCHEOLOGISTS think that the first people to live on the altiplano were wandering hunters who gradually learned how to raise animals and grow potatoes and grain. A civilization grew up around Lake Titicaca sometime before 800 A.D. The ruins of their massive buildings, made of stones cut to fit exactly together, can still be seen at Tiahuanaco at the southern end of the lake. Many of the stones are covered with carvings and have been fairly well preserved in the dry atmosphere.

By 1300 the altiplano was ruled by the Aymara tribe. During the 1400s the great Inca Empire conquered the area and took over, extending its dominion over much of the western part of the continent.

Inca civilization flourished during Europe's Dark Ages, but the Empire of the Sun was not dark. The strength of the Inca Empire was its ability to provide all of its people with sufficient food, clothing, shelter and justice. It also had a very effective army. The Inca system of benevolent socialism required everyone to work hard and follow strict laws. The Lord Inca, the emperor, was considered to be divine and everything belonged to him—the people, the land and everything of the earth, including immense amounts of gold and silver. People were grouped into social units called *ayllu*. In the *ayllu* system, a number of families lived in an area and shared the land, animals and crops. They were taxed in terms of service—a portion of their time was spent planting the state crops, building and repairing roads or bridges, constructing buildings, or serving in the courier service or military. Under this system, terraces were built in the hillsides of the altiplano; some are still in use today. Water from the top of the mountains trickled down a stone irrigation system from one terrace to the next, sparing the topsoil from erosion.

The Incas spoke Quechua, a language that had no written form. Messages were sent by courier, who memorized the communication and ran up and down the mountainsides to deliver it. Records were meticulously kept by an elaborate system of knotted strings, called *quipus*, tabulating data on such things as births, crops, livestock and weapons. Evidence of their skill as builders remains in the palaces, roads and terraces still in existence. Much of Incan civilization remains in the altiplano. Many Quechua Indians still live in *ayllu*, working together. The language is still spoken and many customs continue to be followed.

In the 1530s Spanish conquistadors arrived in South America to search for gold and silver. They conquered the Inca Empire (which

was distracted by a civil war), seized its treasures, destroyed its cities and made its people slaves. The Indians were forced to work in the gold and silver mines. Their land was taken from them and they became laborers on the new estates. For three centuries the Spanish kings sent viceroys to govern their colonies and soldiers to make the people obey the laws and pay taxes.

In 1820 the Spanish colonists began to fight for independence, led by the combined armies of José de San Martin and Simon Bolivar. The Spanish forces finally surrendered in 1825, but independence brought neither peace nor justice. Descendants of the former Spanish masters seized power, perpetuating the exploitation of the land and its people. Since the gold mines were barren, the Indians were now forced to work on large *haciendas*, or plantations. The countries underwent myriad boundary disputes, and there was constant squabbling among the aristocrats for control. The governments were in chaos for over 100 years, frequently alternating between military and civilian leadership, and usually changing by force.

Both Peru and Bolivia are republics now. Both have a constitution and a president. Both are struggling to bring change, reform and opportunities to their people. For most of their history, the Indians of the altiplano have remained outside of society—poor, passive and without hope. Governments have paid their isolated rural communities little attention. Now efforts are being made to improve communication, transportation and education, to bring the Indians into greater contact with the nation and the times.

HOUSING

INDIANS LIVE and work outdoors most of the time. They only go inside at night or if it is raining. In the altiplano houses are built of whatever material is available. Trees will not grow in the highlands, so wood is expensive and used sparingly—perhaps as a door frame or lintel. Most families build their homes of adobe bricks. To make adobe bricks, clay dirt is dug up and mixed with water. Straw which has been cut into tiny pieces is added, then it is packed into wooden frames. The frames are removed and the bricks are left to dry in the sun for about a week. The blocks are weatherproof enough to last several years, although the daily temperature extremes and fierce winds ensure that houses are constantly in need of repair.

The roof of a poor family's hut is usually made of thatch. The tough grasses of the altiplano make good thatch. As the thatch ages, it drops dust and bits of dried grass into the house, so it is impossible to keep clean. (At least there are no vermin—it is too cold.)

Wealthier families may have a roof of tiles or sheet metal. Houses near Lake Titicaca are often thatched with totora reed.

Houses on the islands of Lake Titicaca are sometimes made of totora reed instead of adobe. As a matter of fact, a few of the islands themselves are made of totora reed. Five hundred years ago, when the Incas conquered the altiplano, a tribe called the Urus refused to submit. They escaped onto the lake and found ingenious ways to survive. Totora reeds are hollow and float well, so the Urus were able to create their own islands of refuge by piling up the reeds. Since then, the Urus have been maintaining their floating islands by periodically laying down new layers of totora to replace the ones on the bottom that are rotting. They cannot take the ground that they walk on for granted. They have to watch where they are going and take care not to step in a soft spot lest their feet sink through.

When totora reed is used to build a house, it is woven tightly to make square mats. These mats are tied together with totora reed ropes to make the walls. The resulting conical huts are quite picturesque. The thatch is made from totora, the mats for the floor are made from totora, the furniture (such as it is—a sleeping mat) is made from totora. Totora reeds rovide a livelihood. They are harvested to make boats and fish traps as well as houses. Dried reeds are burned as fuel for cooking. Wet reeds are fed to the llamas. People eat the roots. And totora is used to make souvenirs to sell to tourists.

Additional building materials on the altiplano include stone, mud and sod. Whatever they are built of, most homes are small and only have one room. The doorway is low and may be covered with a hide or piece of sheet metal (since wood is so expensive) to keep out the wind and the dogs. There are no windows. This is to help keep evil spirits away. But more importantly, windows would let in the cold and wind, especially if they broken by the area's frequent hailstorms. On the altiplano the most important function of a house is to keep out the cold and wind. This does not mean that it is warm inside. It is nearly impossible to be warm enough at night on the altiplano. But it is not as cold inside the house as it would be outside.

There are no chimneys or smoke holes either, for the same reason. In the morning and evening, when cooking fires are burning, the houses all look like they are on fire as smoke filters through the thatch. Those who live in totora reed houses have to be careful not to set the house on fire. Those who live on floating islands have to be careful not to set the island on fire.

Because there are no windows or chimneys, it is very dark and smoky inside the houses. It usually does not smell very good either. The family's bevy of guinea pigs scurries around inside the house, and if there are any chickens they might share the space as well. It is

hard to air the place out because the door is the only way light or air can enter. People are used to the smell, but their eyes are often red from the smoke.

The floor is usually hard-packed dirt. Furnishings consist of a clay hearth and sometimes a dried-mud sleeping platform where the entire family sleeps together. It is the best way to keep warm. A bed is made of a llama skin that has been folded in half—the bottom half is the mattress and the top half is the bedspread. There are no tables or chairs. The family eats from a mat spread on the floor. Clothes might be hung from wooden pegs projecting from the walls. Niches are built into the adobe to serve as shelves for cooking utensils, dishes, yarn, spindles, festival clothing, musical instruments or dried llama dung for the fire.

Families that are not so poor may have more than one room, some furniture, a tin roof, a wooden door or windows. Extended families sometimes will live in compounds, with several huts built around a patio. One of the huts might be designated as the cooking hut. Everyone in the family shares in the hard work.

A typical village on the altiplano may have a church, a school, a store (which only opens when a customer knocks), a post office (which may deliver about 10 letters a week to the entire district), and a local government office (where the mayor and town council meet and the justice of the peace settles arguments). Most villages do not have telephones, cars, electricity or plumbing. Water is sometimes available at community faucets, but it usually must be hauled from a stream.

LANGUAGE

THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES of Peru and Bolivia are Spanish (the language of government, commerce and education), Quechua and Aymara. People of European descent and mestizos (those of mixed ancestry) speak Spanish. Quechua and Aymara are the Indian languages spoken by about half the population.

Quechua is spoken by the majority of Indians. It was the imperial language of the Incas, and most of the peoples they conquered took on their language. But the Incas allowed the Aymara Indians of the Lake Titicaca region to continue to use their own language, primarily because of their geographic isolation. Thus, the Aymara language has survived domination by the Inca's Quechua and the conquistador's Spanish. Today Aymara is spoken by about a million Indians of the altiplano around Lake Titicaca.

Many Indians speak Spanish as a second language. They help to bridge the gap between those who speak only Spanish and the million

or so who speak only Quechua or Aymara. Government officials need to be bilingual in order to deal with the Indians on the local level.

Quechua and Aymara are sister languages which are alike grammatically and phonetically. They are said to be easy to learn and speak because words are formed logically and simply; they develop like trees from simple roots. In Aymara, 82 words are derived from the root word *ali*, which means plant. In Quechua the plural of most words is formed by adding *cuna*. For example, *runa* means man and *runacuna* means men; *kay* expresses abstraction, so *runakay* means humanity. Their vocabularies are not especially large, but they are rich and varied and provide for what is important: Aymara has about 200 nouns for the potato, covering all sizes, colors and textures. The languages often use onomatopoeia, words that sound like the things they name. In Quechua, the word for baby is *huahua*. In Aymara some birds are named after their call—*lekeleke* and *kotchitchi*.

Language is a living thing, and the various languages tend to infiltrate each other. When Spanish and Quechua are intermingled, the dialect is sometimes called Quechuañol. Both Aymara and Quechua borrow extensively from the Spanish vocabulary, simply adding indigenous suffixes.

Further examples of the intermixing of the languages are the so-called social dialects. There are three Aymara social dialects: patron, radio and missionary. Patron Aymara is used by Spanish speakers in authority over Indians who only speak Aymara. Its lexicon is limited and relies heavily on contributions from Spanish. Radio Aymara is used by radio announcers who are native speakers of Aymara but are translating directly from a Spanish text. It tends to follow Spanish linguistic patterns and also borrows many Spanish words. Missionary Aymara also superimposes Spanish onto the Aymara language.

Language has played a key role in the formation of ethnic identification and race relations. Until recently only a very few Indians spoke Spanish; because of this, they were vulnerable to the mestizos and whites who controlled government, trade and society. Many still feel that learning Spanish is just one more step toward severing their ties to their Indian identity. Others feel that learning Spanish is an important key to a better life.

TWO MYTHS FROM LAKE TITICACA

THE ORIGIN OF THE INCAS

VIRACOCHA EMERGED from the cold waters of Lake Titicaca. He first created a world without light or warmth, peopled with men of enormous size. When the giants angered him, he destroyed them in a flood. He then created a new world, with sun, moon and stars.

The first Incas were created on the Isla del Sol—Island of the Sun. Manco Capac and his sister-wife Mama Occlo rose out of Lake Titicaca. The Sun God instructed them to show the people how to build villages and plant crops. He promised to keep them warm, help the crops grow and come around every day to see that things were going well. They were given a golden staff and told to wander until they found a place where the golden staff would sink into the earth when thrown to the ground. They built the city of Cuzco in this fertile place and began the Incan civilization.

THE ORIGIN OF THE COCA PLANT

ONCE SOME MEN traveled across the mountains to the jungle. They were used to the bleak landscape of the altiplano, so they were amazed by the productive soil and luxuriant jungle vegetation. They decided to clear a spot to plant a field, so they set a fire. It got out of control and soon a huge fire was spreading through the jungle.

The smoke reached to the mountaintop dwelling of the Snow God, who began to have trouble breathing. He angrily ordered Thunder and Lightning to put out the fire with a storm. The men were very afraid and hid in a cave. They came out after the storm and discovered that the fire had destroyed every bit of vegetation.

For days they searched for something they could eat. Finally they found a bush with bright green leaves. They quickly picked some leaves and began to chew them. Incredibly, they were no longer hungry or tired or cold. They picked all of the leaves, dried them, and brought them back to their village in the altiplano. Ever since, coca has been esteemed as a sacred plant.

OCCUPATIONS

MOST OF THE INDIANS on the altiplano are subsistence farmers, as were their fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers.

When the Incas ruled, all the land technically belonged to the Lord Inca. Each person was assigned a little plot of land and also spent some time working on the local government plot. Careful records were kept of all harvests, and food reserves were stored for times when the harvest failed. The Indians had to work very hard, but there was always food enough for everyone.

When the Spanish took power, they appropriated the land, organizing it into huge estates. Those Indians who were not forced to work in the gold and silver mines were forced to become workers on these haciendas. After independence, there were power struggles for the land, but the Indians were not included. Despite recent governments' efforts at land reform, most Indians remain landless today. It is legal for them to own land now, but most are unable to come up with the money to buy it.

Most altiplano farmers are sharecroppers on land that belongs to someone who lives in the city. In many cases the landowner supplies the seed and the farmer and his family prepare the soil, plant the seeds, tend the plot and gather the harvest. Then half of the harvest belongs to the landowner and half to the farmer.

Most families farm on several small plots of land which can be one to two hours walking distance apart. This strategy helps deal with the very risky business of farming on the altiplano. The soil is poor, the rainfall is unreliable, and disaster can strike in the form of hail, frost or mudslides at any moment. By cultivating small amounts of a crop in a variety of different regions, they lower their chances of total loss. In addition, the environment can change quite a bit within short distances in the altiplano. For example, corn may be grown in one area, yet a mile away it would not be possible. Other crops might include quinoa (a nutritious grain), barley, beans, *oca* (a root vegetable) and potatoes, potatoes, potatoes.

Herding is another form of insurance against unpredictable weather. If the crops fail, llamas and sheep can save a family from complete destitution. Potatoes can only be grown as high as 12,800 feet, but llamas can graze on the tough grass that is able to grow at altitudes above that. If the family does not own land for grazing, they will "sharecrop" for their herds as well. The farmer's family cares for the herd of the landowner, and in exchange can graze

their five or six sheep and llamas on the landowner's pastureland. Children are very useful to watch over the herds.

Animals are raised for their wool. Women spin the wool, then weave or knit all the clothing for their family. Extra wool is knitted into sweaters to sell or trade in town. The supplemental income generated this way is so important, the Indians are spinning or knitting every possible moment—while walking to the fields, while tending the sheep, while resting.

As necessary as animals are for survival, the barren landscape really cannot support them. Overgrazing is common, lessening the fertility of the soil even further. The soil is exhausted, yet the farmers of the altiplano use less fertilizer than anyplace on earth. It is too expensive to bring commercial fertilizers to such a remote area, and while the animals do their part to provide organic fertilizer, it is not nearly enough. Dung must be used for cooking fires as there is no other fuel. Even so, the sparse pasture does not inspire great output.

Farming is done by hand; very few farmers have oxen or tractors, and most lack the technical knowledge and money to make the land productive. Traditional, primitive farming methods predominate. Farming methods on the altiplano have not changed much since the time of the Incas. Some of the terraces the Incas built are still in use, as are pipes and channels of their irrigation system. Because of this, crops can be grown on steep, rocky land and in places where there is not much rain.

At potato planting time, the entire family goes to the fields. The farmer digs up the soil with a wooden hoe or spade. His wife follows, putting potatoes into the holes. Someone behind her covers the potatoes with dirt. While working in the field, many workers chew coca leaves so they will not get as tired.

Most of what is grown is eaten by the farmer and his family. In a good year, about 30 percent of their yield can be sold to truckers or at the market. Most families go to the market on market day. They spread out a rug and sell anything from boiled fish and potatoes to sweaters and clay beads. The market is an important weekly event, a good time to bargain, visit and gossip.

Around Lake Titicaca fishing and boat building are important occupations. Trout have been introduced to the lake and are thriving, along with schools of smaller native fish. The fish are caught with hooks, nets and traps. Sometimes the Indians fish at night, using lanterns to attract the fish, then shooting them with arrows. For hundreds of years the *balsas de totora* have been built from bundles of the totora reed that grows on the shores. Now wooden boats are also built.

Most of the Indians on the altiplano are farmers. But they also are herders, weavers, peddlers, builders, hunters and gatherers, and

whatever else it takes to stay alive. They work very hard for very little return. Every year, many leave the altiplano for what they hope will be greater opportunities and a better life in the city. Some families send a son or daughter to work in the city during the slow months of the farming season. Some work as servants during the day and attend school in the evenings. Even though life in the city slums is difficult too, many never return to the altiplano.

PROBLEMS

OF ALL THE PROBLEMS the people of the altiplano face, the most pervasive is poverty. These poor people are very poor indeed. Most of the few possessions they have—their house, clothes, food—they make with their own hands. Most of their time is spent trying to get enough food to stay alive. Most of the time they are hungry.

The standard of living is extremely low. Housing is miserable, clothing is often insufficient for the severe weather, the water is not safe to drink, and food is inadequate in variety, nutritional value and amount. Many Indians have no land of their own, but sharecrop for large landowners who live in the city. Education is not available for many of the country people; neither is medical help. Housing is insufficient. Life is not easy.

A big part of the problem is the hostile environment. Only about six percent of the altiplano is suitable for farming, and most of that land is of poor quality. The weather is harsh, wiping out crops unpredictably and unmercifully with frost or hail, flood or drought. There are frequent earthquakes, mudslides and even volcanoes. The chances of bringing in a bumper crop are slim.

The magnificent snowcapped peaks of the Andes are breathtaking, but they pose an overwhelming obstacle to progress. Because of the mountains, the people of the altiplano are isolated. The rugged terrain presents a formidable roadblock to the development of a transportation network or infrastructure of any kind.

Because the altiplano is so remote, governments have largely ignored the highland people since the Spanish conquest. Neither Peru nor Bolivia has had long-term governments since independence. Continual changes in government have not inspired confidence from foreign investors, who are also put off by the huge foreign debt and the revolutionary movement called Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), which uses terrorist attacks in its efforts to overthrow the government of Peru and create a communist state.

There are other difficult problems: unemployment, hyperinflation, overpopulation, coca cultivation, alcoholism. The Indians say they chew coca leaves to help them bear their hunger, cold and fatigue. The state of torpor it produces may also help them forget their many other seemingly insurmountable problems.

About 40 years ago the governments started to introduce reforms and work with people for change. Some Indians were able to regain land that had been taken from them. Some communities worked together to build schools or clinics. Some villages have community water faucets now.

But for people coping with unrelenting, desperate poverty, the reforms are too little too late. Many *campesinos* are leaving the altiplano to seek a better life in the city. Few find it; the shantytowns on the edges of the cities are crowded and filthy, and there are no jobs.

The people of the altiplano are hard workers. They are resilient. They help each other. Most of them will stay with the land that their people have been a part of for centuries.

RECREATION

LIFE ON THE ALTIPLANO is hard, so Indians look forward to festivals as a time when they forget about being hungry, cold and tired. At fiesta time everyone eats and drinks well, everyone wears their most festive clothes and everyone dances for days. The celebrations offer a chance to escape from bitter reality.

The festivals have many origins. Some holidays, like Independence Day, are observed throughout the country. Other celebrations are regional; for instance, most towns hold an annual festival to honor their patron saint. These and many other festivals are built around the Roman Catholic calendar and religious events, but the church is not paid a great deal of attention beyond that initial catalyst. Other festivals stem from ancient Indian traditions that celebrate planting or harvesting seasons. These pre-Incan ceremonies have merged with Catholic holy days, so most fiestas include both Christian and pagan rites.

The celebrations often go on for several days. The carnival before Lent lasts for a week, as does the festival celebrating the birth of Manco Capac and Mama Occlo, the first Incas. The fiesta of the Virgin of Candalaria, the town of Puno's patron saint, lasts for most of the month of February. If you take into account the time spent in organization, preparation and recovery (and the fact that there is at least one festival or holiday each month), it becomes apparent how popular and important the fiestas are in the life of the Indians of the altiplano.

PERU

Carnival is so important, families will borrow money that takes all year to repay in order to celebrate in style. An ornate costume used in a processional dance is often worth more than all the rest of the family's ordinary clothes. In some cases, an individual assumes sponsorship of a community festival, bearing most of the cost. This represents an enormous financial sacrifice, but contributes significant prestige and social standing. Friends and relatives help provide food, drinks and money.

Different festivals are celebrated with different customs. During the San Juan festival, when it is very cold, fires are lit in doorways. People leap over the fires to bring good luck and warmer weather. During Alacitas, an Aymara festival celebrated in the Lake Titicaca region, a tiny figure called Ekeko is thought to bring good luck and material goods. What is given to Ekeko in miniature during Alacitas is supposed to be returned in full size during the year. People crowd the market to buy tiny houses, televisions, and animals for their little little Ekeko figures.

The festivals feature much pageantry, music and dancing. The villages and towns are filled with people as parades wind through the streets. While brass bands march and blare, dancers in brilliantly colored costumes leap and whirl. These costumes are often elaborate, imaginative interpretations of animals or demons rendered in dazzling sequins, light bulbs, feathered headdresses and grotesque masks. The procession of dancers can continue through the streets, along the shore, around the stadium and in the village square for days, as long as the music keeps playing and the *chicha* (a fermented corn beverage) keeps flowing.

The Incas believed it was necessary to get drunk at certain religious ceremonies. The Indians of the altiplano continue to observe this custom. Huge amounts of *chicha* and *pisco* (fermented grape juice) are consumed at fiestas. Coca, believed to have magical properties, is also a part of the festivities, enabling the revelers to dance without stopping for days. There is special food, often even meat, and enough for everyone to eat their fill.

Dancing has played an important role in altiplano life, and the people love to dance, even when it is not fiesta time. At any excuse—a boat is sold, the rain arrives, a lamb is born—musical instruments are brought out and dancing begins. Dance competitions are very popular, and dancing is the program of choice that school children perform for visitors. There are hundreds of different kinds of dances; some are performed only in certain regions, some are performed only on certain occasions, and some have special significance. The various dances have different origins extending from ancient times through Incan and Spanish influences. There is the slow and solemn dance of

the llama herdsmen, who circle around the impassive animals to the sound of soft flutes. The steps of the *huailla* are light and very fast, as if the dancers' feet are beating the soil to smooth it after planting. The *cueca* is a graceful courtship dance of waving handkerchiefs and stamping feet. The cueca was imported from Spain and is similar to the flamenco; however, the music is played on a *charanga*, made from the hollowed-out shell of an armadillo, as well as a guitar.

All this dancing requires music, which is an important part of altiplano culture by itself. The people express many of their sorrows and joys in their music. The music of the altiplano is powerful, rhythmic and hauntingly beautiful. Some instruments show a Spanish influence, such as the brass and string instruments, but the most music is played on traditional instruments of the region. The most famous is probably the *zampoña*, or panpipe, which produces mournful pentatonic melodies. Made of wood or bamboo, a panpipe can range in size and pitch from tiny and high to huge bass pipes almost as tall as the musician. There are many other kinds of *flautas* (flutes), from the *tarkas* (large, square, wooden flutes) to the simple penny whistles called *quenas*. The *sicu* is made from the totora reeds along Lake Titicaca and the *piruru* is carved from the wing bone of the Andean condor. The flutes are accompanied by all kinds of percussion instruments, including tambourines, shakers, bells and all sizes and shapes of drums (made of everything from tin cans to llama hides) beating out that all-important rhythm.

Music and dancing may be the national pastime, but soccer (*futbol*) is the national obsession. Soccer is played by professional teams, who are idolized, but it is more than a spectator sport. Nearly everyone enjoys playing soccer, but especially children. If they do not have a soccer ball (and they usually do not), they play with a ball made of rags or yarn. Soccer is practically all that is ever played at recess, and it is their favorite respite from work. Children play it while they are herding and even while they are spinning or knitting. They will play on any spare patch of flat ground. Children too little to play soccer like to play with whatever they can find—pebbles, bottle caps or homemade dolls, like children everywhere.

People enjoy watching and participating in races—foot races, horse races, boat races, swimming races. The waters of Lake Titicaca are so cold, it is a surety that the swimmers are swimming as fast as they can. Another important source of entertainment is the street market. Families go to the market to buy and sell, but also to visit and gossip. Some people are highly skilled in the art of haggling and will attract a crowd just listening to them perform.

Televisions are very rare, but many families have a radio. There are programs in Spanish and the Indian languages. Music is popular,

of course, but there are also educational programs. Radio can overcome the remoteness of the area and has the potential to bring the rest of the world to the altiplano.

RELIGION

AT LEAST 95 PERCENT of the people of the altiplano are Roman Catholic. Protestant churches are an active, but very small, minority. Catholicism is the official state religion of Bolivia and Peru, and as such has special privileges. For instance, the Catholic religion is taught in public schools throughout the area. However, people are guaranteed freedom of religion and are free to follow a different religion if they want to. This is what a lot of the Indians are doing in reality, considering the versions of Catholicism they are practicing. The Indians are professed Roman Catholics, but they blend Catholicism with their traditional beliefs. Christianity has not completely replaced the old religion.

When the Spaniards conquered the Incas, the Indians were forced to become Christians. Missionary priests came along on the very first expeditions, preaching the gospel while the conquistadors searched for gold. To help the Indians adjust to their new religion, the church allowed them to adapt some of the local legends and customs to Christian beliefs and ceremonies. In addition, because the altiplano was so remote, there were not many priests in the area, and the church exerted a weak presence there. As a result, the Indians developed their own brand of decidedly unorthodox Catholicism.

Many Indian Catholics continue to worship the Inca gods, which are represented in the world around them. *Pachamama* (Mother Earth) is particularly honored because she brings the harvest. Specific places, such as mountains, caves and lakes, are seen as the hiding places of spirits known as *achachilas*.

The ancient religion teaches that everything is alive and everything has a soul—rock, potato, llama or person. In some cases this soul is collective; the spirit of the rocks may inhabit all rocks. In this line of thinking, one is never alone. These spirits of nature abound all around, and their favor must be sought. These entities may be good or bad; they may reward or bring harm. Nothing escapes their attention, and they are very demanding.

Under these pantheistic conditions, everything has a profound, though usually hidden, meaning. Every circumstance, no matter how small, is meaningful. Nothing happens by chance; everything is interconnected. Every word and gesture sets in motion endless repercussions. (For example, an Indian will not swear. He is sure to be

heard and punished.) The whole of existence is engulfed by a network of ritual that must never be overlooked.

Because of these beliefs, Indians are devoutly superstitious. Before they drink anything, it is a habit for the people to sprinkle a few drops on the ground as an offering to Pachamama. They watch and interpret the movements of animals and events in nature. They see omens in many things, like rainbows, falling stars or the shape of a cloud. A hooting owl or a howling dog foretells a death. It is a bad omen to see a snake, lizard or spider around the house. Indians keep talismans for protection and comfort: beans, pebbles, little statues and (most precious and magical of all) bezoard stones—the stones formed in a llama's stomach.

An eclipse of the moon is seen as an especially bad omen. Indians believe that during an eclipse, the moon (which is the wife of the sun) is being attacked and eaten by a great serpent or mountain lion. To save her, the people shout, blow trumpets, bang drums, explode firecrackers, beat their dogs to make them howl, and shoot arrows and wave spears at the moon. This works. Every time, the serpent or mountain lion is frightened away and the moon is saved.

The people believe in magic and visit sorcerers for healing, help and advice. Magicians read tea leaves, mumble incantations, induce hypnotism, make voodoo dolls and that type of thing. Some sorcerers even specialize—in casting spells, healing, telling the future, or affairs of the heart. Those who practice evil magic are hated and feared. The people believe in evil spirits and are terrified of them.

Music, dancing and festivals were an important part of the old religion, and they have survived and even thrived through time. Life is hard for the people of the altiplano. They are always cold, always hungry, always tired. They live hand-to-mouth, and too often the hand is empty. Festivals are what they look forward to, the focus of social life. Even the most nominal church members (the men) participate enthusiastically in church festivals. Most major festivals are aligned with the Catholic liturgical calendar and linked with a traditional agricultural festival such as harvest or planting time. Many towns have a resident Virgin who needs a special week-long festival in her honor.

Festivals are celebrated with a great deal of pageantry. Everyone wears their best clothes. The churches are decorated with fresh flowers. There are parties, parades, races, clowns, lots of drinking, music and dancing. During a religious procession, the Virgin statue may be carried high on a platform on a tour of the various churches, complete with trumpet fanfares, banners, and altar boys swinging pots of incense. Participants are filled with Christian fervor. Pilgrims from all around the area will come to pray for a favor. Mayors of nearby

villages will also have a solemn procession, wearing special hats and ponchos and carrying a silver staff of office. There are exuberant parades featuring extravagantly costumed dancers that can go on for days. These festivals are also popular with tourists.

Rituals that are less Catholic may include small offerings burned to honor Pachamama; flowers and confetti scattered about the house to bring good luck; incense burned to appease evil spirits that control frost, hail and lightning; and a charm bundle of bread, flowers and other offerings that is tied to the back of a sacrificial llama, whose blood is sprinkled on the ground and whose meat is roasted for the feast.

The Indians of the altiplano are not being inconsistent when they mix the old and the new. They take whatever parts that are helpful or appealing to them and make them their own. They will accept modern medicine, but they also continue to consult folk cures. In the same way, indigenous ceremonies are mixed with portions of Roman Catholic rituals. Pachamama, the ancient tribal mother goddess, is transmuted into the Virgin Mary. Religious processions are surrounded by dancers in bright costumes spinning wildly to traditional Indian instruments. In pictures in the churches, Baby Jesus wears a little woolen cap with earflaps.

THE PEOPLE

IN PERU AND BOLIVIA, society is divided into three categories: white (those of European descent), Indian, and *mestizos* or *cholos* (a mixture of the two races). The Indians can usually be easily identified by their clothing, language and lifestyle.

The great majority of the residents of the altiplano are Indians. There are not many cities in the highlands, so people are often called *campesinos* (people of the country).

The two main Indian tribes of the altiplano are the Aymara and the Quechua. Traditionally the different tribes do not intermarry, thereby keeping their distinct languages and traditions. They also live in different areas of the altiplano. The Aymara are concentrated around Lake Titicaca, where they have lived since long before the Incas, while the more numerous Quechuas are spread throughout the highlands and valleys. The Aymara and Quechua are said to have different attitudes. Quechuas are considered to be more cheerful and outgoing. The Aymaras are thought to be more conservative.

Yet Indians of the altiplano share many characteristics. Most are subsistence farmers and herders of llamas and alpacas. Most Indian families are at the bottom of the economic scale, working the poor

soil of land they do not own. The social life of both the Aymara and the Quechua is family oriented. Their physical characteristics are similar. They have brown skin, straight black hair, dark eyes and high cheekbones. Because of the altitude, the highland Indians are short and stocky, with deep chests and well-developed lungs to obtain sufficient oxygen from the thin air. The faces of the campesinos of today look very much like those of the ancient statues carved in stone.

On Lake Titicaca there lives an almost-extinct tribe called the Urus. They live on artificial floating islands, which are actually very large rafts made of the totora reeds that grow abundantly along the lake. They began their unique floating life centuries ago to avoid Incan domination. The Urus have intermarried with the Aymara Indians and now speak Aymara. About 30 years ago a Seventh-day Adventist missionary built a clinic and school for the Urus and floated it out to them on a raft of oil drums. Only about 300 people still live on the floating islands, and that number is diminishing as people leave to live on shore.

The Urus' lives are completely dependent on totora reeds. The reeds are harvested and used for building houses, boats (*balsas de totora*), and the islands. The layers of reeds that become waterlogged and rotten at the bottom are replaced at the top. The people also use reeds for fodder and fuel, and the roots are eaten, but mostly, the Urus eat fish. (These fish have been caught in traps made of totora, from boats made of totora, with sails made of totora).

TRANSPORTATION

GEOGRAPHY has affected every aspect of life on the altiplano, and transportation is no exception. The rugged mountains, deep gorges and rough terrain have made an efficient transportation network extremely difficult to develop. Thus, much of the area has always been isolated and remote.

The Incas were able to build some good roads, otherwise they would never have been able to rule over such a large empire. Archeologists are still discovering the great Inca Highway, two nearly parallel roads that ran from north to south with many connecting crossroads. Citizens were drafted to spend a portion of their time working on the roads. Many of the roads were paved with cobblestones. In the mountains, tunnels were dug and wide stone steps constructed. Over the deep chasms, swinging bridges were built of plaited and twisted fibers. Many of these bridges are still maintained by the local people; they must be replaced every year because the fibers deteriorate.

PERU

Other than walking, buses are the most common form of transportation in the altiplano. They are crowded, old, slow and unreliable. However, they travel just about everywhere and are very inexpensive to ride. Often the bus is a truck: the deluxe versions will have simple wooden benches; in ordinary trucks you just climb in the back and hope you do not sit next to the llama, especially when it starts to rain.

Horses and mules provide a few people with transportation, but llamas are never ridden. There are trains and airplanes, but the average citizen cannot afford a ticket.

Water transportation is very important around Lake Titicaca. Because of the elevation, trees do not grow on the altiplano, so wooden boats cannot be built. For over a thousand years Indians have been weaving the totora reeds that grow on the shores of the lake into small boats called *balsas*. The boats are used for fishing and travel.

Making *balsa de totora* is time-consuming and difficult. After the reeds are gathered and dried in the sun, some are chosen for the body of the boat and others are braided to make the long rope that holds the boat together. The reeds are splashed with water and beaten into shape with a stone. The reeds are arranged into four cigar-shaped bundles and the ropes are pulled tight to lash them together. The two larger bundles form the bottom of the boat. The balsas look bulky, but they are light (about 45 pounds each) and easy to navigate. They can be poled in shallow water from a standing position or paddled in deep water while kneeling or sitting. The larger balsas may have a sail, also made from totora reeds.

Balsas deteriorate in the water, gradually rotting and becoming waterlogged, so they are carried onto shore to dry out after each use. If care is taken so that the family llama does not eat the boat, it can last as long as a year. Wood is brought over the mountains these days, and wooden boats last longer, so *balsas* are not being built as much as they once were.

There is public boat transportation on the lake as well. This service is usually provided by motor boats that hold about 20 passengers, traveling between towns on the shore and the various islands. They are not expensive, but there is a hydrofoil that is expensive. It is also a lot faster.

In 1862 a fleet of five steamships was built in Scotland, sailed around Cape Horn to Peru, then dismantled and carried by mule up the Andes to Lake Titicaca. The pieces were reassembled in Puno and began providing steamship service to towns on the lake. The steamships recently went out of business, but they may begin again.

WEATHER

THE ALTIPLANO is in the southern hemisphere, so winter is from June to August and summer is from December to February. These terms really aren't descriptive of the seasons of the highlands. They are more fittingly called the dry season and the rainy season. The dry season occurs during the winter months and the rainy season coincides with the summer.

The reason there is no real winter or summer is because the altiplano lies in the tropics. Of course, the altiplano is much too high for it to feel like the tropics. If the altiplano were not so near the equator, however, it would certainly be too cold at those altitudes for any agriculture to exist. The rainy season is the time when crops have the best chance for success.

The climate is generally cool all year round. Even during the rainy season (summer) the nights are always cold. And the term "rainy season" can be a bit misleading. Even though it is the tropics, there is never a great deal of rain. The term "dry season" is very apt, however.

The most amazing thing about the weather on the altiplano is the daily sharp fluctuation of temperature. There is a greater difference between the temperatures of night and day than between the temperatures of a summer day and a winter day. The temperature during the day is really quite pleasant, usually between 50° and 60°F. The sun beats down strongly at those high altitudes, and because of the clear atmosphere you can get a serious sunburn. Highland people have skin that is chapped, leathery and dark.

During the day it can feel quite warm, and men may take their ponchos off when they work in the fields in the sun. But the minute the sun sets, things rapidly go to the other extreme. The thin air does not retain heat, and the temperature quickly drops, usually to just above freezing. In the winter, of course, temperatures fall to well below freezing, and every month usually has at least one frosty night. People go inside after dark and shut the door tight. They wear lots of clothes, cover up with animal skins and wool blankets, and the whole family sleeps together. The more bodies you have around you, the less cold you will be.

The bitter cold is intensified by harsh, piercing winds from the south that sweep across the plain. It is so windy, so regularly, that trees will not grow on the altiplano. If there ever were plains that were windswept, these surely are.

There is not a lot of snow, but hailstorms are frightening, and they are all too frequent. Hailstones can be huge and can cause a great deal of damage to crops, herds and any people unlucky enough to be

caught out in a storm. Most houses do not have windows because the hailstones would just break them; then the people would be even colder at night.

The area around Lake Titicaca is spared some of these incredible extremes. Because it is so deep, the lake exerts somewhat of a moderating influence on the climate. Areas near the lake also get more rain. Farmers are even able to grow corn and wheat in sheltered areas of this region. But even here the sun is blinding and the nights are bitter cold. The temperature still falls to around freezing most nights, so no one is growing any oranges.

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PERU

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

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GLOSSARY

Absolute poverty— The income level below which a minimally nutritionally adequate diet plus essential nonfood requirements are not affordable

Appropriate technology— A technology that utilizes locally abundant resources

Aquifers— Naturally formed underground reservoirs—porous layers of rock that contain groundwater

Developed countries— Nations with relatively high per capita incomes; also called First World countries

Developing countries— Nations with relatively low per capita incomes; also called Third World countries

Infant mortality rate— The annual number of deaths of infants under one year of age per one thousand live births

Low birthweight infants— Babies born weighing five pounds, eight ounces or less who are especially vulnerable to illness and death during the first month of life

Malnutrition— Failure to achieve nutrient requiements, which can impair physical and/or mental health. Malnutrition may result from consuming too little food or a shortage or imbalance of key nutrients

Multinational corporation— A company with subsidiaries, investments or operations in more than one country

Nongovernmental organization (NGO)— Not-for-profit, voluntary organization established by private initiative; also known as private voluntary organization (PVO)

Nonpoint source— Water pollution that comes from large, nondistinct areas, such as when chemicals used for farming seep into groundwater

Point source—Water pollution that has a single identifiable source, such as an industry pipe that discharges waste into the water

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Stunting— Failure to grow to normal height caused by chronic undernutrition during the formative years of childhood

Sustainability— The capacity to shape economic and social systems so as to maintain both natural resources and human life

Under five mortality rate— The annual number of deaths of children under five years of age per one thousand live births

Underemployment— A situation where a large portion of the population is not fully employed year-round

Undernutrition— A form of mild, chronic, or acute malnutrition which is characterized by inadequate intake of food energy, usually due to eating too little

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

DEVELOPMENT is the process of improving the quality of human lives. It is a dynamic process of change and growth involving many areas, including income, health and education. Development means more than economic growth or an increase in per capita income. It means the realization of human potential and the satisfaction of basic human needs, as well as institutional and structural change.

Development is a process that helps people remove the obstacles that prevent them from achieving their full potential.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs, also known as *private voluntary organizations or PVOs)* have a long history of providing services to the poor people of the developing world. However, the involvement of large-scale foreign aid in development is a relatively new phenomenon. The first major government aid program was the Marshall Plan, initiated by the United States at the end of World War II. Combining both humanitarian and political objectives, its purpose was to both rebuild Europe and block the spread of communism.

Because of the success of the Marshall Plan, many development programs were modeled after its large-scale capital development. It was felt that building highways, dams, factories and other modern infrastructure would create economic growth and raise everyone's income. In reality this economic growth failed to trickle down to the poor, and in the 1970s development programs began to shift toward direct assistance designed to meet basic human needs at the local level.

Many development agencies (both governmental and NGOs) no longer feel it is sufficient to simply transfer what worked in Western Europe to the Third World. They have learned there is more to development than inputs of capital, resources and technology. They realize that each nation, each village, has its own special set of needs, which must be met in a unique way. A country and its people will not necessarily develop just because you come in and build a bridge for them.

In fact, the Third World is littered with inoperative water pumps, broken-down tractors and failed dams. This does not mean that the technology is too complex for the people, or that they are too lazy to take care of things. In many cases development systems are not used and fall into disrepair because of the top-down approach that brought them there. A project has a top-down orientation when it is imposed from the outside with no input from the community it is supposed to benefit. When a community feels no ownership of or responsibility for a project, and may not even value it, the project is not likely to succeed.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

It is the local people themselves, not those trying to help them, who have the most important role in development. Successful development is generated from within the system of the participants. A successful program works toward solving specific perceived needs—the people must want the problem to be solved and they should help choose which problems to solve. The community itself must be the primary organizer, decision maker, maintainer and overseer.

The primary role of government agencies, donors and advisors should be that of facilitator. Once it has been determined what the community wants and is able and willing to maintain, they facilitate the efforts, from planning and design through implementation. The facilitators provide vital support with training, information, and technical and managerial assistance. They are also useful for helping cut through red tape. The ideal development program involves a partnership between the indigenous organization and the outside organization, drawing on the strengths of each.

The advantages of the bottom-up outlook are considerable. Projects are more likely to meet perceived needs and to be used. Investments are more likely to be well-spent. Projects are more likely to continue to function and to be maintained. Local culture and customs are more likely to be considered. The community's resources are more likely to be efficiently utilized. But, most importantly, the people of the community are empowered through their participation.

Recipients of aid must be personally involved if self-reliance is to be achieved. The goal of development is not to develop a community, but rather to teach them a process by which they can develop it themselves.

People and governments have given aid for a variety of reasons, involving both humanitarian concern and self-interest. However well-meaning it may be, traditional aid has been subtly but deeply infused with paternalism, economic imperialism, sexism and racism. It is paternalistic to give things to or do things for people. It is paternalistic to see poor people as having no resources and to treat them as the objects (rather than the subjects) of development. Many organizations are realizing that it is not only ineffective, but detrimental to give away aid. As the old saying goes, "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime." To extend the metaphor—if you give him too many fish, he can lose all interest in learning to fish. Traditional aid creates dependency instead of empowerment.

Sometimes it is necessary to give aid away; for example, in disasters. Relief work and development work (even though both have the goal of helping people) are near opposites. Relief work is immediate and temporary; development is chronic and long-term. Relief is

concerned with survival; development wants to improve the quality of life. Relief is done *for* people, who are dependent; development is done *with* people, who are self-reliant. Once relief work has finished mopping up, then development can step in.

Development organizations are learning that paternalism does not work. They are learning to be flexible, to respect traditions and customs, to listen to the people they are trying to help. They are finding ways to motivate people, to involve them in planning, to increase participation and enthusiasm. They are helping people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems.

SUSTAINABILITY

ONE OF THE dominant concerns of development is *sustainability,* which is the ability of a project to continue after the NGO leaves. It seems like a simple enough idea, but the more one looks into it, the more complex and involved it gets. *Sustainability* involves many things.

Sustainable development looks to the future. It is a strategy that manages all natural and human resources, as well as all financial and physical assets. Its goal is perpetual well-being and improving quality of life. *Sustainability* requires that current decisions do not damage prospects for maintaining or improving living standards in the future.

Sustainable development follows paths of social, economic and political progress that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It does not support itself through heavy borrowing that leaves the next generation saddled with debt. It invests in education so that the next generation will have the skills it needs to maintain this quality of life.

Sustainable development recognizes that we live on a planet with finite resources and a fragile environment. It does not implement practices that deplete the soils, forests, oceans or energy. It ensures that future use of these natural resources is not impaired. Sustainability recognizes limits. Development must take place, and be maintained, within limits set by social and physical laws.

The idea of sustainability is idealistic—it reflects the importance of equity among people around the world. The idea of sustainability is practical—it reflects the necessity of spreading a reasonable level of prosperity to the developing world in order to protect the ecology, provide security and preserve the prosperity of wealthy nations. Third World diseases, wars, population growth and environmental problems cannot be ignored and confined to the Third World forever.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

If a development project does not last, it was all done for nothing; time, resources, and energy were simply wasted. And so development organizations strive to make their projects sustainable. They have developed many strategies to do so.

First of all, it is important to involve the recipients in the planning so that the project fulfills a perceived need and is compatible with community values. If a village does not feel it needs a new well, people may continue to use the traditional water source. If women are not allowed in public, a women's enterprise cooperative will not be sustainable.

Planning helps a project move in the right direction and get off to a good start, but sustainability also requires support once the project gets going, in such things as training, monitoring, troubleshooting and evaluation. Successful projects create a sense of ownership among the people and mobilize them on their own behalf.

A project has a better chance of being sustainable if it starts out small and grows slowly. Small programs are more flexible and responsive; they are better able to meet specific needs. In the Third World, obstacles seem to occur much more frequently and unexpectedly—breakdowns, illness, impassable roads, communication failures. What should take one hour often takes two or three. If a project is too big at the start, these obstacles can build up and derail everything. People working with a small project stand a better chance of putting out the fires and learning from the mistakes. Small projects can grow and evolve over time—and survive.

A sustainable project will use *appropriate technology*. An *appropriate technology* responds to the needs of the project. It also must be available and accessible, reliable and maintainable. The technology must be obtainable locally or the community will not be able to sustain the project. The best technology is simple and inexpensive, whether it is a pump or a thresher, seeds or a bullock. People sometimes get carried away with technology; a project is at risk when the focus is on the technology instead of the goals.

If a project results in some sort of recognizable success early on, it has a better chance of sustainability. There is nothing like immediate reinforcement to fire up enthusiasm and encourage participation. Sustainability requires the enthusiasm and participation of the community in great amounts.

One of the most important steps toward sustainability is the development of local leadership. The goal of a sustainable project is to phase out outside supervision once it is succeeding and turn over management, decision making, and responsibility to the community. Lasting improvements are only possible if the desire to sustain them comes from within the community itself. If the local leaders are

self-confident and capable, the project has a better chance of being permanent. In addition to technical training, the development of leadership involves teaching the importance of motivation, cooperation and mutual support. Even a well-designed project can fall apart if the humans involved get sidetracked by factions, jealousy or destructive leadership. Natural leaders can be nurtured to acquire the knowledge and experience they need.

INTEGRATION

DEVELOPMENT is not an easily compartmentalized process. Everything that happens affects many other things. A development project, rather than merely producing more rice or improving health, for example, has a multiplier effect. A project is able to not only change the direction a community is heading—toward or away from poverty, toward higher or lower birth rates, for example—it can exponentially expand it. A community does not just grow or fail on a direct line. It is more like a spiral—a spiral upwards or downwards that grows as it includes every aspect.

For instance, a family living in *absolute poverty* is hungry. Its members do not get enough to eat. When the father does not get enough to eat, he is weak. He does not have the strength to work hard; therefore, he cannot earn enough to support his family. When the mother never gets enough to eat, her body cannot recover from her pregnancies. There is no time for rest; there is too much to do. When she is pregnant or nursing, her body takes nutrients from her and gives them to the baby. Often there are not even enough nutrients for the babies; many suffer from *malnutrition* before they are even born. And the children never catch up.

But the effects of hunger do not end with these obvious signs. Malnutrition leads to more types of illness. A child who is malnourished may be unable to survive childhood illnesses that well-fed children can just shake off. And illness leads to more malnutrition. A child with diarrhea loses more nutrients, making it even harder to recover and raising chances of becoming sick again. This deadly dance of malnutrition and illness pulls families farther into the widening downward spiral.

Because so many young children die, families may feel they must have many babies to ensure that some will live. So their family may become much larger than they can hope to provide for and they become even hungrier and poorer. And the population of the village and the nation and the world becomes even greater, heading toward that number which cannot be supported.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The spiral continues with education. Children who do not get enough to eat have trouble concentrating; malnutrition affects learning ability. When children are ill they miss school. Sometimes they miss so much that they drop out. Their best chance for a better life is lost.

This spiral destroys both the ecology and the human spirit. The desert grows and the environment is destroyed as people burn trees for fuel and overuse the soil. Families are split up when the father goes to the city to look for work. The spiral expands to include loss of land, unemployment, and political oppression. The spiral means that the poor get poorer, the sick get sicker, and their numbers increase hourly.

In this setting a drought, the loss of a job, the death of a goat, could be the last straw. Even a seemingly small setback or emergency could signal the end. The poor are completely vulnerable to disaster—there is no safety net.

However, the spiral can be reversed. That is the aim of development. A good development project can turn the tide and send it spiraling upward.

For example, a child survival project starts immunizing children. They no longer get measles; that is one less thing for their bodies to fight. So they get stronger and can better resist other diseases. The project teaches oral rehydration so that children can recover from diarrhea quickly. Families are taught the causes of diarrhea; sanitation is improved and clean drinking water becomes a priority.

Because their children are surviving, parents do not feel pressured to have so many. Because there are fewer mouths to feed, there is more food to go around. Parents and children have more strength to complete their tasks. As children become healthier and stronger, they can do better in school, thereby enhancing their development of skills for future employment. Better health leads to better education, which leads to even better health.

Improvement in health leads to improved social and economic development. Good health drives further positive development that—unlike a road or dam that deteriorates over time—continues to expand into future generations.

This upward spiral grows, too—improving more lives as it progresses. When different types of projects are added, the spiral grows even wider. Communities become self-confident and empowered to take responsibility for their own development in other areas. Humans are a resource of tremendous potential, energy and ingenuity. The possibilities are vast.

There are scores of different kinds of development projects and many different ways to help people improve their quality of life and achieve their potential. In this section we will discuss three: child survival, clean water and small enterprise development.

CHILD SURVIVAL

EVERY YEAR in the developing world, nearly 13 million children under the age of five die from preventable infection and malnutrition. Those who survive face repeated onslaughts of disease. Child survival is the use of simple, cost-effective interventions to treat and prevent diseases and save lives. Its goal is to promote the health and well-being of one of the world's most valuable resources—its children.

Child survival activities include increasing vaccination coverage, expanding the use of oral rehydration therapy to treat diarrhea, improving nutrition by encouraging breastfeeding and growth monitoring, and reducing high-risk births. These interventions have saved the lives of millions of children because they are able to reach into the communities and are delivered by health workers with limited training.

The best indication that child survival programs are working is the *infant mortality rate*: fewer children are dying. Fewer children are disabled by disease, their chances for good health are improving, and their potential has a better chance of being fulfilled. But these gains are in danger of being lost if health delivery mechanisms are not sustained. And the programs must be extended to those not yet reached. The task is far from finished.

The challenge is to preserve and build on what has been accomplished, while turning over management and responsibility to communities. Lasting improvements are only possible if the will to sustain them comes from within communities themselves. Successful child survival programs create a sense of ownership, mobilizing communities on behalf of their children. Successful programs address local needs and make the best use of available resources—especially human resources.

So much can be done for so many at so little cost. The potential for improving the health of the world's children is enormous.

DIARRHEA

DIARRHEA, whether through direct or indirect effects, is a leader among the major causes of early death and stunted growth among the children of poor communities. In many countries, more children die from diarrhea than anything else. In the developing world, diarrhea is more than an inconvenience; it is the biggest killer of all.

In the early 1980s, approximately four million children a year were dying from diarrheal disease. In 1985 the technique of oral

rehydration therapy (ORT) was introduced and put at the disposal of many of the developing world's families. The development of oral rehydration solution (ORS), a combination of glucose, salt and water, was originally created to prevent dehydration and death from cholera; however, it was also found to be effective in managing acute dehydrating diarrhea. Now ORT is preventing about 3,000 child deaths each day.

Diarrhea can kill children by draining too much liquid from the body. This deadly dehydration of the body's vital fluids can be treated by putting water back into the body. Oral rehydration therapy involves increased fluid intake and continued feeding when a child has diarrhea. ORT neither cures nor prevents diarrhea; it simply treats the deadly dehydration and malnutrition caused by diarrhea.

It is essential that children with diarrhea drink extra liquids to replace what is being lost. For example, they can drink water (from the cleanest possible source), weak tea, green coconut water, breast-milk, gruels, the water that rice has been cooked in, or fruit juice. This forestalls most dehydration.

However, if the diarrhea does not stop, the child may need to be treated with an oral rehydration solution. ORS packets can be purchased (they cost under 10 cents a dose), but it can also be made easily at home. The measurements that mothers are instructed to use vary from the precise (4 level teaspoons of sugar and 1/2 level teaspoon of salt dissolved in one liter of clean water) to the general (a 3-finger pinch of salt, a scoop of sugar, one glass of boiled water). There is even a special plastic ORS spoon with a correct-sized scoop on either end. The water replaces the lost liquid. The salt replaces that which is being lost from the body. The sugar helps the salt and water to be absorbed by the intestines and provides energy for the body.

Oral rehydration therapy also stresses continued feeding during and after bouts of diarrhea. Food can help to stop the diarrhea. But even more importantly, diarrhea can lead to serious malnutrition unless a special effort is made to keep feeding the child during and after the illness. Diarrhea reduces appetite and inhibits food absorption, robbing a child's body of nutrients. It is a vicious cycle—recurrent diarrhea is a primary cause of malnutrition and malnourished children are more likely to die from diarrhea. Babies should continue to breast-feed when they have diarrhea, and children should be tempted to eat as frequently as possible. Extra feeding after the diarrhea stops is important for a full recovery, to help the child catch up.

Diarrhea is a result of fecal germs that enter a person's mouth; it spreads, for example, in dirty water, on hands or by flies. The main causes of diarrhea are poor hygiene, lack of clean drinking water, poor nutrition, and the trend towards bottle-feeding rather than

breastfeeding. If these causes can be dealt with—if germs can be stopped from entering the child's mouth—diarrhea can be prevented. Clean drinking water and improved latrine sanitation would result in dramatically fewer cases of diarrhea. Education about hygiene is an especially important preventive measure.

Some people do not know about oral rehydration therapy; some people ignore it. Some doctors are not convinced that such a simple approach could be best (and it is true that one out of 10 cases requires further medical treatment with antibiotics). Yet, most medicines for diarrhea are either useless or harmful. In most cases, ORT is substantially more effective and less costly than other treatments.

It is hard to imagine, but something as simple, preventable and treatable as ordinary diarrhea is still claiming the lives of more than two million young children a year. Treatment is simple, readily available and very inexpensive, yet more than 200 million children suffer bouts of potentially life-threatening diarrhea without proper treatment. This should not be happening. No one should have to die from diarrhea.

ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTION is one of the most common causes of illness and death in developing countries, particularly among young children. Now that oral rehydration therapy is reducing deaths from diarrhea, acute respiratory infections are the leading cause of death among children under five in some countries.

Coughs and colds can develop into pneumonia. Pneumonia and other acute respiratory infections kill approximately three million children each year. Most of these deaths could be prevented.

The best strategy for dealing with acute respiratory infections seems to be quick identification and treatment. If problems are recognized early enough, they can often be solved with prompt treatment of mild cases at home—before they get worse. Correct diagnosis is especially vital for serious cases that can threaten a child's life. Then, more than a correct diagnosis is needed; in severe cases medical help and low-cost antibiotics are also necessary. Health workers should have access to the low-cost drugs that can prevent pneumonia deaths. These antibiotics can be made available at negligible cost.

Millions of deaths could be avoided if parents knew when a cough or cold was becoming a serious infection needing medical attention. Community health workers can teach parents what to do

about coughs and colds and how to recognize when it is essential to get trained medical help. For instance, a child with a cough who is breathing much more rapidly than normal is at risk and should be taken to a clinic quickly.

Families can help prevent acute respiratory infections by making sure that babies are breastfed for at least the first six months of life (breastmilk helps protect against infections) and that all children are well-nourished and fully immunized. Immunizations protect against some of the most common causes of serious respiratory infections, including whooping cough, tuberculosis and measles. Families can also be taught the dangers of overcrowding, smoky surroundings and coughing and sneezing around others.

MALARIA

MALARIA is an infection of the blood; malarial parasites are spread from person to person by the bite of a mosquito. An attack of malaria usually begins with a chill, followed by a high fever, and the attacks may occur every two or three days. The disease is particuarly dangerous in children under the age of five, who are easily weakened by the repeated fevers.

The most obvious method of preventing malaria is to prevent people from being bitten by mosquitoes. Young children should be protected from mosquito bites, especially at night; babies should sleep under mosquito nets. Mosquitoes can also be warded off with repellents, fumigants and screens on windows and doors. Communities can prevent malaria by getting rid of stagnant water where mosquitoes breed.

In places where malaria is common, pregnant women and young children should take antimalarial medicine. Pregnant women are more than twice as likely to suffer from malaria, and the disease is more dangerous during pregnancy. A child with a fever believed to be caused by malaria should be given a full course of an antimalarial drug. Children recovering from malaria are extremely susceptible to malnutrition and dehydration, and stunted growth and development.

In 1955 the World Health Organization set out to eradicate malaria. The two-pronged attack set about to combine spraying of the insecticide DDT with the use of antimalarial drugs. The results have been disappointing. Each year there are still 100 million malaria infections and more than one million malaria deaths worldwide, many of them children. The tools currently available to fight this disease remain ineffective. The mosquitoes keep developing resistance to insecticides and the parasites develop resistance to the drugs.

Malaria is a moving target, with both parasites and mosquitoes adapting, changing and evading the effects of drugs and pesticides.

A dramatic resurgence of malaria-related illness and death has occurred. In Africa, nearly 30 percent of all child deaths are attributable to malaria, and an estimated 3 million newborns suffer complications of *low birth weight* as a result of maternal malaria infection. Effective prevention of malaria depends upon community action. In areas where malaria is common, all families and communties should have access to information on preventing and treating the disease.

AIDS

IN EVERY NATION, HIV/AIDS is increasingly significant, and the outlook is increasingly bleak. Now affecting millions of children, HIV/AIDS threatens to erase many of the gains made in child survival, reversing hard-won gains in reducing child mortality. This is particularly true in geographic areas where the challenges to child health remain greatest; in several African countries AIDS is overtaking measles and malaria as a leading killer of children.

Most AIDS victims will continue to be in the developing world and most will be women and children, since the rate of infection in women is rising steeply. There is a one-in-three chance that a child born to an HIV-infected mother will have the virus. Most babies infected with the virus die before they are three years old. If a mother is infected with HIV, there is also a risk that breastfeeding may give the virus to her baby.

Children who manage to evade the virus are nonetheless at risk because of their parents' inability to care for them. Millions of children will be orphaned by AIDS during the 1990s.

There is no vaccination or cure for AIDS. For now, education is the only effective weapon to combat the epidemic and to warn potential victims of their risks. Public health workers and others hope the integration of three intervention—increased condom use, behavioral change, and treatment of other sexually transmitted diseases—will reduce the number of women infected and thus the number of children infected or orphaned by AIDS.

IMMUNIZATIONS

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT goals of a child survival program is to vaccinate children to protect them from diseases that are dangerous killers of infants and young

children. Measles, polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, and tuberculosis are the six major diseases that are prevented by immunization.

Immunization has made major inroads into territories formerly held by these life-threatening diseases. The proportion of the world's children vaccinated against them increased from 20 percent in 1980 to 80 percent in 1990. The campaign against these six leading disease costs about $5 per child, and prevents about 5 million deaths each year. But the battle is not yet won—20 percent are still unreached by immunization and millions of children are still dying from these preventable diseases. And the gains are fragile—vaccination rates can quickly slip back down.

It is possible for the gains to be total and complete. In 1977 the world witnessed its last case of smallpox. This success laid the foundation for an expanded international immunization effort attacking other diseases. The development and testing of new and lower-cost vaccines may lead to more successes.

Immunization is a minor intervention, compared to the major results. But it has several aspects that make it particularly tricky to pull off. First of all, it is complicated. There are several different vaccines that need to be given; with some of them it takes several vaccinations (with a gap between each dose) before a child is fully protected. Even when vaccination services are available, many infants are not brought for the full course of vaccinations. Parents have to keep track of why, when, where, and how many times each of their children should be immunized.

Another problem is that the injections make the kids cry and sometimes make them sick—they may develop a fever or rash and become irritable and cranky for a while. It is hard to watch and most parents need to be convinced that this is good for their child.

The saddest problem with vaccinations is that if the disease strikes before a child is immunized, it is too late. It is vital to immunize children early in life. All immunizations should be completed in the first year or, if for some reason they have not been, as soon as possible.

MEASLES

THIS MOST DEVASTATING of the major childhood diseases is a relatively minor illness in industrialized nations. However, measles is a major cause of death, malnutrition, and disability among the children of poor communities in the developing world.

Measles is a viral disease that still kills more children every year than all the world's wars and famines put together. Measles kills 10

percent of the children who catch it; even children who survive are weakened by the disease. They may not grow well and they may die later from malnutrition or other illnesses. Measles can also cause blindness, deafness and mental disability.

Measles is very infectious—the virus is spread through the air—so many children in a community can be affected at the same time. A child who is not immunized is very likely to get measles. Malnourished children are particularly likely to suffer badly or die from the disease.

A single injection of a vaccine will prevent children from catching the measles. For the first few months of life, a child has some natural protection against measles that may prevent the measles vaccination from doing its job. But after about nine months the natural protection comes to an end; then the child should be immunized against measles. Vaccination programs prevent many deaths and disabilities each year from measles. Measles can be stopped.

TETANUS

TETANUS is caused by bacteria that live in the soil, especially soil that contains the feces of animals. If the tetanus germs enter a cut or wound, the person may get the disease. Tetanus kills most people who become infected and is a major killer of the newly born. However, there is a vaccine and tetanus is entirely preventable.

Tetanus is of particular importance to mother/child health because newborns and new mothers are particularly vulnerable to tetanus. In many parts of the world, mothers give birth in unhygienic conditions, putting both mother and child at risk from tetanus. If an unclean knife or unsterilized scissors are used to cut the umbilical cord, tetanus germs can come in contact with the unhealed cord or birth canal.

Two interventions will prevent tetanus: immunization and clean birth practices. The immunization of women before or during pregnancy protects both the mother and the newborn and is one of the most cost-effective interventions to prevent neonatal mortality. In addition, all infants should be given a series of three vaccines against tetanus during the first year of life. During childbirth, all women should be attended by a trained person who can ensure clean hands, a clean delivery surface, and a clean cutting and care of the umbilical cord. Presently only about half of all births in the developing world are attended by a trained person.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

POLIO

IN 1991, HEALTH OFFICIALS IN PERU recorded what is hoped to be the Western Hemisphere's last case of polio. Polio-free zones are also being created in Europe, northern Africa, southern Africa and the Middle East.

It is possible, it is within our grasp, to eradicate polio from the earth. The rapid rise in polio immunization throughout the world has gone a long way towards defeating a virus that has crippled uncounted millions of children in this century. Worldwide immunization coverage continues to spread.

Polio can paralyze lungs and limbs, disabling a child for life. The disease organisms are found in feces, and the virus is often spread by flies. Improved hygiene can reduce the spread of polio, but vaccination can prevent it. A child in the Third World who is unimmunized will almost certainly be infected with the polio virus. The polio vaccine is usually given in three doses by drops in a sugar lump or drops in the baby's mouth.

No child anywhere on earth is safe from polio until the very last case is recorded. But when polio is eradicated, there will no longer be a need for immunization against it. The savings in vaccination costs and, best of all, in human suffering will be immeasurable.

NUTRITION

CHILDREN get sick if they do not have the right amount and kinds of food. Poor food and frequent illnesses lead to malnutrition and hold back the physical and mental development of millions of children. Throughout the world, one out of every three children is malnourished.

Malnutrition increases a child's susceptiblity to illness and is a contributing factor in up to 60 percent of child deaths; it is estimated that 15 million children under the age of five die each year of disease related to malnutrition. These children come from the world's poorest and most powerless families—you don't hear much about them. Malnutrition is a silent emergency; hunger is an invisible killer.

Many children suffer from chronic hunger—they have never gotten enough to eat. This chronic deficiency causes listlessness, muscle wastage, and failure to grow. They are unable to think clearly or work productively; their potential is unfulfilled. They are more vulnerable to infection and other illnesses, and they recover more slowly and with greater difficulty. Diseases that a well-nourished child would

quickly throw off (like measles, diarrhea or respiratory problems) often mean death for children who are malnourished.

The causes of malnutrition are many. Some parents are unable to feed their children properly because of drought, famine, war or absolute poverty. Many households run short of food between harvests. But many malnoursished children live in homes with adequate food supplies. Young children do not need much. Most parents either grow enough or earn enough to provide an adequate diet for their young children, if they know about the special needs of the young child. This malnutrition is preventable. Parents, even poor parents, can prevent most child malnutrition if they know how.

The focus of many child survival programs is to improve nutrition. Some of these interventions include promotion of breastfeeding, growth monitoring, correction of micronutrient deficiencies, improved infant and child feeding practices, supplementary feeding programs, and nutrition education.

Malnutrition can begin before birth. Children born into conditions of deprivation are likely to be underweight at birth because their mothers are also undernourished. In many developing countries men receive first choice of the family's food. As a result, women have far lower levels of nutritional intake than men. Some child survival programs offer supplemental feeding for both mother and child.

These low-weight babies are likely to remain malnourished in the crucial early years of life. During the first year the tiny stomach requires constant feeding. Brain development is nearing completion and the fledgling immune system is weakest. The most severe effects of mental and physical *stunting* occur during this first year. Even if nutrition improves later, the child is likely to suffer from below-normal growth and development.

The bodies of undernourished children struggle to conserve energy. Their metabolism drops. They borrow from reserves—depleting muscle instead of fat and slowing bone growth. Malnourished children do not run and play; they stand, or sit, or just lie down.

It does not take much to improve a child's nutrition level. Babies need breastmilk. Special care needs to be taken when weaning foods are added. Small children have small stomachs and need to be fed often. Young children need more energy and a small amount of extra fat in their diet. The greater the variety of food the child eats, the better. Children need extra food after an illness. These simple health messages can help parents prevent most child malnutrition.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

BREASTFEEDING

CHILD SURVIVAL programs place great emphasis on promoting the importance of breastfeeding. Babies fed on breastmilk have fewer illnesses and less malnutrition than babies who are bottle-fed on other foods. If all babies were exclusively breastfed for about the first six months of life, the deaths of more than one million infants a year would be prevented.

Mother's milk is the cheapest and best food available for a baby, the best food a child will ever have. It contains the required nutrients in the right proportions. It is clean and free from pollutants and germs. It is the baby's first "immunization," for it contains antibodies that give the child protection against many diseases. It does not have to be prepared, is always available, and provides comfort as well as nutrition. Breastmilk is the best possible food for a baby—all substitutes are inferior—and no other food or drink is needed for about the first six months of life.

Babies do not even need additional water; breastmilk contains enough. In fact, water can be harmful—if the water is contaminated, the risk of getting diarrhea and other illnesses increases.

Bottle feeding is a special threat in poor communities where parents may not be able to afford sufficient milk formula. It is expensive, and to make it go further parents may dilute the formula with extra water—so the child gets even less nutrition. Sanitary conditions often make baby formula a recipe for disaster; mothers often do not have clean water to mix formula with and may not be able to sterilize feeding bottles. Cow's milk can be dangerous as well. It may not be clean and healthy, it can quickly go bad, and it does not provide as many nutrients. Neither baby formula nor cow's milk can give babies any special immunization against disease; on the contrary, bottle feeding can lead to serious illness and death. In a community without clean drinking water, a bottle-fed baby is many times more likely to die of diarrhea than a baby fed exclusively on breastmilk.

Sometimes new mothers lack confidence in their ability to breastfeed. They need the encouragement and practical support of fathers, health workers, relatives and friends. They need assurance that they can feed their babies properly with breastmilk alone. Mothers who are breastfeeding also need extra nutrition, as well as time and opportunity to feed their babies.

Breastfeeding comes with an added bonus. It is a natural form of contraception, giving a mother 98 percent protection against pregnancy for an average of six months if the baby is breastfed frequently and exclusively.

Breastfeeding should continue well into the second year of a child's life. Although children need additional foods after about the first six months, breastmilk is still an important source of energy, protein, and other nutrients that help protect children against disease during their second year, and longer if possible. The earlier a child is weaned, the greater risk there is of serious illness. Weaning, in most of the Third World, invariably means increased exposure to polluted water and malnutrition.

In the developing world, where the majority of women keep their babies with them all the time, baby formula has little convenience value; however, it is a kind of status symbol, a proof of progressiveness and modernization. It is a very dangerous status symbol. The decline in the practice of exclusive breastfeeding is being challenged—the free or subsidized distribution of infant formulas to new mothers in hospitals and maternity clinics has been banned in many countries. People and governments are beginning to see that encouraging mothers to continue breastfeeding and discouraging bottlefeeding can have an enormous impact on the health of the world's children.

GROWTH MONITORING

AN IMPORTANT nutrition-related activity of many child survival programs is growth monitoring, which serves as an early warning of malnutrition before it becomes severe. The invisible slowing of normal growth happens long before a child becomes malnourished. Growth monitoring can detect early growth failure and alert mothers to malnutrition before it becomes evident.

Regular monthly weight gain is the most important sign of a young child's overall health and development. Growth monitoring consists of measuring, recording and interpreting a child's weight over a period of time. Two items are needed: a measuring instrument (usually a weighing scale) and a form of serial record (usually a weight chart or graph). Two or three consecutive weighings at appropriate intervals can be plotted on the growth chart; the slope of the line made by joining these points gives a line that enables a mother to see her child's growth. An upward line means the child is growing satisfactorily. A flat line is a cause for concern. A downward line is a sure sign that something is wrong.

Growth monitoring can only measure growth and warn of possible trouble; it does not reveal the causes. Children fail to grow for three main reasons—inadequate diet, illness, or a lack of attention (or a combination of all three). In order for growth monitoring to be

valuable, the reason the child is failing to grow must be determined and something must be done to correct the problem.

The mother and health worker need to discuss the situation (for example, what and how frequently the child is eating, whether the child is bottle-fed, how often the child is ill, if food and water are clean, if the family is using a latrine, if the child has worms, if the child is alone too much) until the causes have been discovered. Then a plan of action can be laid out. Perhaps the child should be breastfed more often, or needs to eat leafy green vegetables every day, or should eat more often, or needs deworming medicine.

Another important goal for growth monitoring is to promote and sustain good health and growth for young children; nutrition education is often delivered at the same time. Weighings should start at birth and continue monthly during the first six months. Because growth during this period is usually good in breastfed babies, mothers get positive reinforcement and gain confidence from the outset. As the babies get older, suggestions and guidance concerning the introduction of other foods can be given at appropriate times, promoting more positive growth. Other actions can include advice on improving the diet, supplementary foods or vitamins, immunizations, and the management of infections (especially diarrhea).

Growth monitoring is an essential part of health supervision and promotion for young children vulnerable to malnutrition.

MICRONUTRIENTS

MICRONUTRIENT deficiencies have profound health consequences. Iodine, vitamin A, iron, and other micronutrients are essential for biological function. Their deficiency frequently results in severe health problems. In areas of the world where micronutrient of deficiency is prevalent, supplements and other interventions to correct deficiencies can prevent a great deal of suffering and save thousands of lives.

Iodine deficiency is the world's major cause of preventable mental retardation. Because their mothers lack iodine, at least 30,000 babies are stillborn every year and more than 120,000 are born cretins—mentally retarded, physically stunted, deaf-mute or paralyzed. Even when they are born normal, young children whose diets are low in iodine are held back by reduced intelligence, living out their lives trapped in mental dullness and apathy. Lack of iodine creates a loss of potential, locking entire communities in poverty and underdevelopment; people are less able to learn in childhood and less able to earn in adulthood.

Iodine deficiency disorders could be prevented by something as affordable and manageable as iodizing all salt supplies. It is relatively simple and costs only about five cents per person per year. Within a year of the use of iodized salt, no more cretins are born and goiters begin to shrink. Children develop energy and perform better at school. Iodine deficiency could be brought to an end.

Vitamin A deficiency could be virtually eliminated as well. Severe vitamin A deficiency causes blindness in an estimated quarter of a million children a year; it is the leading cause of blindness in developing countries. It is also a major cause of impaired growth, ill health, and early death among the world's under five-year-olds by making them more vulnerable to other diseases like malaria, diarrhea and respiratory infections. Vitamin A deficiency can be a significant, yet quiet and indirect killer of children.

Vitamin A supplements can reduce illness and impact the mortality of children at risk. Many child survival programs distribute vitamin A capsules and devise long-term strategies to change diets and increase production and consumption of vitamin A-rich foods, like green leafy vegetables and orange-colored fruits and vegetables.

Iron is another micronutrient whose deficiency brings about a great deal of ill health. Anemia is commonly due to iron deficiency, and is closely associated with a poor diet caused by poverty. Anemia is common in children in developing countries, but is even more widespread among women. It is estimated that half of the female population and around two-thirds of pregnant women in the Third World are anemic. Because the mothers are malnourished and anemic, many infants fail to thrive, and even die.

SAFE MOTHERHOOD

EVERY YEAR, half a million women die from problems associated with bearing children, leaving behind more than one million motherless children. Each time a woman in a developing country becomes pregnant, she runs a risk of dying that is up to 100 times higher than that of a woman in a developed country. Maternal health is poor in most developing countries, and childbirth complications are a leading cause of death among women.

Reasons for these high rates of maternal mortality are many. In addition to the poor diet and unhygienic living conditions most poverty-stricken inhabitants suffer, women's lives are often shortened by the constant strain of pregnancy and breastfeeding. They do not get the extra nutrition and rest their bodies need. The risks of childbirth can be drastically reduced by going to a health worker for

regular check-ups during pregnancy, but many women do not receive pre- or postnatal care. In addition, many pregnant women are not vaccinated against tetanus, some have malaria, and most are anemic.

Perhaps most dangerous of all, half of all births in the developing world occur without the assistance of a trained attendant. Most women are helped at childbirth by traditional healers or midwives—women within the community who have experience assisting at deliveries but often are unaware of the dangers of unsafe birthing practices. A trained birth attendant would know how to keep the birth clean and reduce the risk of infection. If a serious problem arose during childbirth, like hemorrhaging, or if the baby is being born in the wrong position, a trained person would recognize the signs and know how to get medical help. Many women die or suffer permanent damage to their health because they did not have access to quality health care.

The problem is not just inadequate health care but also social, cultural and economic factors. Many women are subjected to harmful traditional practices—obstructed labor is often due to deformities resulting from traditional practices such as female circumcision. Cultural attitudes in many places dictate that women fast, or at least not gain much weight, in order to not have too big a baby and thus a difficult delivery. Most women are denied equal social, legal and economic status and are excluded from decision-making processes. Women's health is not a priority in many developing countries. Cultures around the world view women mainly as child bearers and rearers.

Reasons why women die and suffer ill health include poverty, being neglected as children, being underfed and overworked, and marrying while adolescent. Having babies while too young or too old, and having more than four children, increases the health risks of pregnancy and childbirth. A woman's body can easily become exhausted by repeated pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and looking after small children.

Unwanted fertility is a major cause of pregnancy-related deaths. Women are sometimes denied access to adequate family planning and maternal health services. A disproportionate number of deaths during pregnancy and childbirth are the result of women who do not wish to become pregnant or who seek illegal and unsafe abortions. Illegal abortions carried out by untrained persons kill between 100,000 and 200,000 women every year.

Family planning could prevent perhaps as many as one quarter of all maternal deaths. Check-ups during pregnancy can help to detect high blood pressure, anemia and malaria—all major causes of maternal death. Preventing high-risk births is far more cost-effective than treatment.

The key to successful safe motherhood is to bring knowledge and technology to women so they become informed about safe

motherhood practices. To make full use of this knowledge, women need the support of their husbands and communities. Many mother/child health programs teach safe birthing practices and maternal care to midwives, traditional birth attendants and community health workers. They are taught how to identify high-risk pregnancies so that mothers can be referred to clinics for safe delivery. Families are taught about child spacing to help children grow healthy and strong.

BIRTH SPACING

FAMILY PLANNING is one of the most powerful ways of improving the health of women and children. Too many children, born too close together to mothers too young or too old, increase the risk of infection and disease and account for approximately one-third of all infant deaths worldwide. Family planning can help prevent the deaths of millions of children and hundreds of thousands of women each year. Birth spacing helps ensure the health of both infant and mother.

The length of time between births has an impact on three lives: the mother, the child already born, and the next child. A mother's body needs time to recover fully from pregnancy and childbirth; her health is at risk if the next birth follows too closely upon the last. One of the greatest threats to the health and growth of a child under the age of two is the birth of a new baby; breastfeeding stops (raising the risk of malnutrition) and the mother is not able to give the older child as much care and attention, especially during illness. If the mother has not recovered from the birth of a previous child, there is a higher chance that the new baby will have a low birth weight; such babies are less likely to grow well and more likely to become ill. The risk of death for young children is increased by about 50 percent if the space between births is less than two years.

Closely spaced births affect family health, and so do births that begin when the mother is young and continue until she is in her late thirties or forties. Becoming pregnant before the age of 18, or after the age of 35, increases the health risks for both mother and child. Babies born to mothers too young or too old are more likely to be born too early and to weigh too little at birth. The birth itself is likely to be more difficult, and the risks to the mother's own health are also greater.

Some child survival projects offer family planning services to give couples the knowledge and means to plan when to begin having children, how far apart to have them, and when to stop. It is important that such services be adapted to each country's cultural, religious and social traditions. Effective contraception helps women control their

own lives, helps parents achieve the size of family and spacing of children they can raise with good health and educational opportunities, and lowers the rate of population growth.

However, it takes more than contraception to affect population growth—the population has to want to have smaller families. As long as child mortality rates remain high, Third World parents do not want to reduce their fertility rates. High child death rates lead parents to compensate by having many children. Although it may seem logical that reductions in child mortality would lead to *increased* population growth, actually the opposite is true. When families are confident that more of their children will survive, their desire for large families declines and they take steps to reduce family size. Improved child survival, coupled with a strong family planning program, results in declines in birth rates.

The education of girls has also been shown to be one of the most basic determinants of fertility decline. Educated women are more likely to marry later, have more awareness of family planning possibilities, leave more time between births, and have fewer children in total.

Fewer and more widely spaced births improve the health and nutrition of women and children, and also mean more resources and time for the care of each child. Children of small families are more likely to develop well, physically and mentally, and are more likely to enroll in school and to remain there for more years. Family planning can bring significant improvements in health, nutrition, education and the quality of life for both mothers and children.

SYNERGY

CHILD SURVIVAL interventions save lives. And the wonderful thing is, the interventions work together, each one improving the effect of the other, so that as a whole they do even more good than the sum of their parts.

For instance, immunization leads to improved nutrition. Frequent illnesses can result in malnutrition: they reduce appetite for days at a time; they inhibit the absorption of food; they consume calories in fevers and fighting the disease; and they drain away nutrients in vomiting and diarrhea. When children are frequently ill, they are pushed into a downward spiral of malnutrition and further ill health. Vaccinations prevent many of these illnesses. The gains made by immunization also represent a significant gain against the fundamental problems of malnutrition and poor physical and mental development. These are steps toward eradicating the causes of poverty and underdevelopment.

This same downward spiral can be seen in the relationship between diarrhea and malnutrition. Acute cases of malnutrition in Third World children typically follow bouts of diarrhea. It is this downward spiral, rather than any individual cause, that results in so many millions of children failing to survive their first five years or failing to grow to their full physical and mental potential. If diarrhea could be stopped, nutrition would be improved—then learning would be accelerated, with lifelong consequences for the children and community.

Child survival programs contribute to progress in education. The cumulative impact of disease and malnutrition in the early years holds children back throughout their schooling. Children who are healthy grow and learn better. Sound nutrition improves their cognitive development and school attendance, thereby enhancing development of skills for employment and increasing prospects of becoming productive members of society.

There is an interdependence of good health and good sanitation. The lack of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities can have devastating impacts on the health of children. Improved water and sanitation, along with hygiene education, reduce disease and death among children and improve the environment, while simultaneously improving the well-being of women, who are the principal providers of care to children suffering illness and who also often spend much of their energy and time gathering water for their families. Dirty water and unhygienic environments are a prime source of disease, with all that implies for child mortality, fertility rates, population planning, and development programs overall.

Child survival interventions work together. Better child health reduces child deaths and makes family planning more acceptable. Child spacing improves the health of women and children. Breastfeeding prevents disease and malnutrition. Good nutrition is excellent armor against disease. One good thing leads to another.

The health of a child is an essential building block for the health of the family, the community and the country. The health of a country's children is a prerequisite for successful, sustainable development. Investments in child survival are investments in the future.

WATER

WATER IS THE MOST PRECIOUS resource the earth provides to humankind. It is an essential ingredient for all life; all people, animals and plants need water to live. Humans can only survive a few days without water, and water is used in virtually every human activity.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

About 97 percent of the earth's water is in the salty ocean. Salt water cannot be used for drinking, washing or cooking. It cannot be used to irrigate crops or water animals. Of the remaining three percent that is fresh water, three-fourths is permanently frozen in glaciers and polar ice caps. Therefore, all the available fresh water represents less than 1 percent of the water on earth.

That is all there is for us to use. That's all there ever has been. The very same water we have now has been on our planet since the beginning of time. There is no new water. Our water is used over and over again; none is lost, none is gained. This is possible because of the water cycle. You remember: water evaporates, condenses into clouds, and then it rains. Over and over, since time began, the same water in an endless cycle. It cycles through humans, it cycles through plants and animals. Underground or in the ocean, it just keeps cycling.

That is how it purifies itself. The water cycle is a natural machine, constantly distilling and pumping water through the system. Water can be filtered through the earth; impurities stick to pebbles, grains of sand and soil. Particles of matter settle to the bottom of rivers and lakes, and the water in them becomes cleaner. Water can also be processed by microbes in natural self-purification. In addition, water evaporates from lakes, rivers and oceans, leaving salt, minerals and other impurities behind. Sometimes, if there are lots of people in the area, this self-purifying capacity is exceeded, and man-made filters are needed to clean up our water.

There are more people on earth than ever before. Agriculture and industry are using more and more water. This greater consumption is threatening to deplete the total water supply. International conflicts over competition for water supplies are a distinct potential unless steps are taken to conserve this dwindling resource. For the most part, water is a renewable resource. However, if water is used faster than it can be replenished naturally, it will be depleted both in quantity and quality and could eventually be changed into a nonrenewable resource.

Humans use billions of gallons of water each day. There are three main groups of users: agriculture, industry and communities. Throughout the world, agriculture is by far the main drain on the water supply. Traditional forms of irrigation require an enormous amount of water and waste a great deal of it. Industry uses water in large amounts, mostly for cooling during the production of energy, but also for processing, cleaning and removing industrial wastes. A smaller amount is used by communities for drinking, cooking, bathing, laundering and flushing.

Water use varies from country to country because water is not evenly distributed around the world. Local availability of water varies widely; some areas have a plentiful supply of water and

others are constantly vulnerable to droughts. The water supply can fluctuate according to the season of the year. Use also varies according to living standards. People in developing countries often use very little water—perhaps five gallons per person each day—because water is scarce; people in industrialized nations may use up to 125 gallons or more per day.

Though some take more than others, the need for water is worldwide. Developing water resources is a very important element in development because other development activities depend heavily on it, particularly mother/child health and agriculture projects.

There are two basic problems when it comes to water and development: scarcity and pollution. These two related issues of quantity and quality face each person daily. For some the problem is solved instantly whenever they turn on the faucet. For others it is a time-consuming daily challenge.

Water shortages occur when we use water faster than it can be replaced, when demand exceeds supply. People gather water from many different sources, and supplies vary from place to place and time to time. Water can be collected from local rivers or piped in from remote mountain streams. Water is stored in reservoirs created by building dams. Rainwater is collected in tanks or cisterns. In industrialized countries, water is usually delivered to homes through the municipal water system or through wells that tap into groundwater *aquifers*.

Groundwater is found beneath the earth's surface; *aquifers* are naturally formed underground reservoirs—porous layers of rock that contain water. The level that underground water reaches is called the water table. In rainy weather water seeps down into the earth and the water table rises. During dry spells water can flow away or evaporate and the water table drops. It also drops when water is pumped out of the ground.

A water shortage can occur when there is less rainfall than usual; reservoirs and cisterns dry up and the water table goes down. A water shortage can be created when groundwater is mined faster than it can be replaced. The waters deep underground are ancient reserves built up over centuries; tapping them is like draining a non-renewable reservoir of fossil fuel. A water shortage can occur when poor people, to get enough food and fuelwood, strip the land of trees and let their livestock overgraze grasslands, thus increasing the severity of droughts; when land is stripped of vegetation, it cannot absorb as much rainwater.

The search is ongoing for a solution to water shortages. Rivers are dammed to create reservoirs, often depriving communities downstream of what people see as their fair share. Wells are dug deeper into

the groundwater aquifers below, which are tapped faster than they can be naturally replenished. Scientists have tried for years to discover a cheap way to produce fresh water from seawater; there are desalination plants in several desert nations. Scientists have even tried to figure out a way to tow a piece of a glacier to a place where it is needed and melting it down for water. But these schemes are very expensive.

The most logical solution to the water shortage is to conserve. Increasing the efficiency of water consumption makes more sense than trying to increase the supply of water, which at best will merely postpone a crisis. Agriculture must increase the efficiency of irrigation. Industry needs to find ways to use the same water again and again. Individuals need to pay more attention to what they use at home. Humans need to develop respect for this most precious of resources instead of taking it for granted; we must learn to take care of it and safeguard its purity.

In addition to wasteful consumption, water is threatened also by the related problem of pollution. The supply of usable water is diminished by pollutants; if we pollute water faster than it can be purified, eventually there will not be enough water. Therefore, water quality is a big worry. For centuries people have treated the water supply as if it would last forever. They have wasted it and abused it for the sake of convenience, hoping that water in the lakes, rivers and oceans would magically absorb and make disappear whatever garbage or poisons were dumped into them. Now we are beginning to realize that this renewable resource is neither bottomless nor immune to abuse.

Water pollution creates many ill effects, both for the ecology and the health and lifestyle of humans. Pollution that gets the most press, the kind we are most afraid of in the developed world, is industrial pollution. Many industrial processes produce waste, and some of it is hazardous and persistently toxic. Sometimes industries dump waste directly into nearby rivers and oceans; sometimes industry buries waste and it leaches into the groundwater; industry spills it, for example, in disastrous oil spills; sometimes pollutants enter the water cycle by way of the atmosphere—water gathers impurities from smoke and fumes when it falls as rain. Many *developed countries* are passing laws to prevent this. As controls get stricter, some companies look to the developing world for places to relocate their industrial plants or even for places to dump their hazardous waste; *developing countries* do not have such strict environmental regulations. The treatment process required to detoxify chemical waste is expensive; however, it is more expensive to clean up the problems it causes later.

When pollution has a single identifiable source, such as an industry pipe that discharges waste into the water, that is called a *point source*. Agriculture also creates a tremendous amount of pollution, but it comes mostly from *nonpoint sources*—large, nondistinct areas—such as when chemicals used for farming seep into groundwater. Runoff from croplands and barnyards, carrying chemical pesticides and fertilizers as well as animal waste, also contaminates streams, ponds and lakes. *Nonpoint sources* of water pollution are more difficult to control.

Municipal pollution comes from both point and nonpoint sources. The major *point sources* are sewage treatment plants, which take raw sewage from homes, offices and factories and try to neutralize chemical and bacterial contamination. They remove most, but not all, of the pullutants and dump the wastewater into local rivers, lakes or oceans. Heavy rains can overcome the capacity of the plants, causing the overflow of raw sewage to dump directly into the local water supply or seep into the ground without treatment.

Even nontoxic, fully biodegradable pollution can cause problems. Sometimes, when a great amount of organic waste from industry, agriculture or municipal sewage end up in lakes or coastal areas, it leads to what is called eutrophication. Algae and microorganisms feed on the organic pollutants, which is usually a very good thing—they help purify the water. However, the algae also consume large quantities of oxygen. If too many organic nutrients lead to too many algae, the resulting oxygen depletion can kill fish and other aquatic creatures, and eventually the lake itself.

In the developed world, the most serious threat to water is contamination with hazardous chemicals. Most developing countries do not have restrictive environmental controls. They face severe industrial contamination; however, their most serious probem is more often water contaminated with untreated sewage. Water is polluted with germs, and these germs are even more deadly than chemicals. Human excreta contain some of the most vicious contaminants known. Throughout the world, clean, safe water is rare.

The Third World population grows and grows, waste treatment is practically nonexistent, and water pollution by organic wastes is widespread. Untreated sewage often is dumped into nearby rivers and streams that also provide drinking water. Coastal cities get rid of untreated sewage in the ocean, where people swim, wash and fish. As a result, millions of people—children in particular—die each year from water-related diseases that can be prevented by proper sanitation facilities. People in these countries still suffer diseases eradicated in developed countries long ago.

Lack of both sanitation and a safe water supply is a serious health problem. Water quality plays a significant role in the transmission of

disease—provision of clean water could save more lives than any other single measure. In developing nations, more than a billion people struggle to find water and are affected by disease spread by polluted water. Because they do not have access to clean, safe water, people have no choice but to drink water that many of us would not even step in. Drinking such impure water causes devastating, often fatal—and preventable—diseases.

Diseases in which water is a significant factor are of several types. Some—such as typhoid, cholera and infectious hepatitis—are waterborne and thus affected mainly by microorganisms and the bacteriological quality of the drinking water. Other diseases—such as scabies, yaws, leprosy, trachoma and dysentery—are water-washed and are affected by water used for personal hygiene. Another group—including schistosomiasis and guinea worm—is water-based and requires direct contact between people and infected water. Water-related diseases—such as yellow fever, malaria, dengue fever and sleeping sickness—are transmitted by insects that breed in or near water sources.

Poor water supplies are strongly correlated with a high incidence of intestinal infections such as amoebiasis and hepatitis A. Disease-generated malnutrition (like malabsorptive hunger, where the body is incapable of absorbing nutrients from food that has been eaten) is often due to parasites in the intestinal tract and is common where water is contaminated.

Diarrhea, one of the primary killers of children in developing countries (millions each year), occurs as a direct result of not having access to clean water.

Some diseases can be spread or introduced into areas as a result of the development of water resources. The creation of reservoirs and irrigation canals that trap standing water, combined with the widespread lack of sewage treatment or plumbing in many developing countries, has created favorable conditions for the spread of disease. A prime example is the spread of schistosomiasis, also known as bilharia, a debilitating tropical disease of the blood caused by parasitic worms. Schistosomiasis, estimated to afflict more than 200 million people worldwide, infects the intestines or bladder, causing swelling and inflamation. Eggs pass out with the urine, hatch on contact with water, and develop further as parasites in water snails. There they pass through another phase before boring into the legs of anyone standing in the water, then traveling to the intestines or bladder. There the worms live for several years, capable of laying several hundred eggs per day.

Guinea worms produce larvae in blisters on people's legs, which burst on contact with water. Guinea worm disease is transmitted exclusively by water (people ingest the worms by drinking infected

water) and could be completely eradicated by an improved water supply. The hookworm clings to the stomach wall with a fearsome set of teeth and lives by sucking blood. Its eggs pass out in feces and, if people do not use latrines, larvae hatch and live in the soil, boring through the skin of the feet of the next person to come by. There are plenty of other gruesome parasite infestations related to water and sanitation, but you get the idea. Access to clean water and sanitation can break the cycle and prevent these diseases.

Most people who live in rural areas of developing countries do not have plumbing, do not have piped-in water, do not have municipal or government water and sanitation facilities. Fetching water can involve a long trek. Many people spend hours each day trying to find water, often taking it from unsafe streams and rivers. Many traditional wells are shallow and unprotected. Water holes serve as combined well, bath, laundry and toilet. In some places the water source must be shared by people who come from all around the countryside. Animals trample around while using the same source, often contaminating the water. Water-borne diseases are thus transmitted from person to person and village to village.

But in some ways it is even worse for the very poor in Third World cities. More and more people flock to cities in search of jobs. With no money and no place to live, they put up flimsy shacks in unofficial shantytowns. Usually the people who live in these squatter neighborhoods have no access to water and must pay high prices to buy water of questionable quality from private vendors selling water from tank trucks or oil drums on wheels. Any streams that may run through these cities are almost unbelievably filthy, yet some people take their water from them. If shantytown dwellers are served by any sort of water system, it is more than likely just one faucet for the entire community—a faucet delivering a trickle of water that is probably contaminated—to a very long line of people. Nor are there latrines or communal toilets. Urban sewage is usually dumped untreated into local rivers, which are used as sources of water by other people.

Providing water for the family is seen as women's work throughout the Third World. Sometimes children help. Fetching water can take up to five hours a day; some women spend up to half their work time collecting water to maintain minimum levels of hygiene and welfare. During the dry season it can become even more time-consuming; they may have to walk 10 to 15 miles to the nearest source, which is often reduced to a trickle, thereby making it yet more difficult. In the early morning and evening they walk to the stream, then stagger home with the heavy pots balanced on their heads or with cans slung from bamboo poles. When women are asked about their needs, improved water supply usually tops the list.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Though providing access to clean water can make such a tremendous difference, it is not a simple act. If you remember, the disease schistosomiasis was spread through water development projects. Developing water resources must be well thought out, must use means appropriate to the local situation, and must involve a high level of community participation (including women, who are largely responsible for managing water supplies and sanitation, not just community leaders, who are usually men). Many water development projects have failed because the community was unable to sustain the system or because it was not what they needed or wanted. Development of deep water wells, handpumps, water reservoirs, irrigation systems, sewage and storm drainage projects, and potable water projects can serve to make safe, clean water accessible to all. This works only if these methods are produced thoughtfully, using *appropriate technology*, and only if the communities they serve feel a sense of ownership.

Education must go hand in hand with development if the benefits of clean water are to be fully realized. Village health workers can teach about germs and drinking clean water and washing with soap and water. Traditional beliefs can be an obstacle to good health—the germ and worm theory has to overcome deep-seated convictions that diarrhea is caused by cold drafts or an enemy practicing sorcery. Sometimes villagers must be convinced of the link between private excretory behavior and community health.

Even education must be appropriate to the situation. For instance, women are taught to boil water to kill germs, and that is very good advice—unless there is no fuel with which to boil water. And it does not help to know that one should wash with soap and water if both soap and water cost hard cash and no one has any.

There is no doubt the benefits of improving a community's water supply are enormous. The effect on health is the most dramatic and important benefit, but it also improves the quality of life in many ways. Time is saved in the task of getting water, including walking to and from the source and waiting in line. This is time that can be spent on crops, children, education or trade. Energy is also saved, for carrying water-laden containers long distances is strenuous work and can even be crippling over time. Indirectly, an improved water supply can promote economic development and relieve poverty; by improving health and saving time and energy, people can be more productive.

But mostly, people want safe water so their children will live. Clean water means less disease, better hygiene and better health. It means increased crop production and better nutrition. It means more time to spend on gardening and family. It means increased income. Clean water means a chance for a longer, healthier life.

SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

SMALL ENTERPRISES are a distinctly human endeavor. They have been around since history began, a testimony to the indomitable human spirit. Some prosper, others do not, but people keep starting them.

An economic activity or business is considered to be a small enterprise when it is small in scale, employing only a handful of workers—perhaps even just one. A small enterprise has only a small amount of capital, and incomes are nearly always small as well. The equipment used by a small enterprise is usually rudimentary and its technology is typically low level.

A small enterprise used to be the only kind there was. Now small enterprise must coexist with large enterprise, which is dominant even in the developing world. Apart from agricultural work, all enterprise seems to be divided into two sectors. In one group, often called the formal or modern urban sector, there are the huge *multinational corporations*, the large-scale factories and commercial establishments, and the government offices and public services. Enterprises in the formal sector are often established with foreign investments, using imported technology and production methods. Employees in the formal sector usually work for wages and are generally skilled or semi-skilled. Their employment is fairly reliable and regular, and they may even be organized into unions.

The other group is known by many names: informal or backward sector, petty production, spontaneous business, self-employment, traditional manufacturing, small enterprise. This category is a sort of catch-all for economic activities that do not fall into the formal sector. There are nearly as many types of small enterprise as there are enterprising people, and this sector covers an enormous range of economic activities.

Some small enterprises are involved in manufacturing. Artisans such as leathercrafters, potters, basket weavers and jewelry makers create many kinds of handicrafts. Shoemakers, dressmakers, rugmakers, cooks and blacksmiths produce objects in their homes or small shops. Everything from palm-leaf roofing panels to tortillas to religious objects are manufactured in the spirit of small enterprise.

Some small enterprises are involved in trading. Sometimes those involved in manufacturing also sell what they make. Other traders buy items to sell for profit. There are street hawkers who walk up and down the neighborhoods, selling their wares. There are roadside

vendors selling fruit or drinks or snacks from stalls. Some sellers set up stalls on market day; others sell out of their front room window. Everywhere, men, women and children peddle sweets, gum, cigarettes, newspapers, toys.

Some small enterprises are involved in services. Laundry women, shoeshine boys and household servants make life easier for the upper classes. There are also hairdressers, tailors and garbage pickers for the common people. Porters, coolies, rickshaws and taxi drivers take care of transportation needs. Maintenance is cared for by the bicycle and car mechanics, the watch repairers, the carpenters and the myriad others who can fix just about anything. If you want your picture taken or a letter written, you can go to the market and a photographer or scribe will take care of your needs. The marketplace is also a good place to find a fortune teller or medicine man.

Despite this considerable and amazing variety, small enterprises have similar characteristics. Because these enterprises are small, they are more flexible than the formal sector. A big company may be able to buy expensive technology, but then it is stuck with it and feels obligated to use it even after the market calls for change. A small enterprise adapt quickly and can be more immediately responsive to change. Small enterprises are also more likely to be innovative and inventive. These informal businesses are less likely to be run by committees, so they are more likely to come up with good ideas more quickly and more often. If the idea turns out to be not so good, the loss will probably be small; big companies cannot risk failure, so they often fail to introduce new ideas at all. It is easier for a small enterprise to use its imagination.

The informal sector is able to fill many of the economic niches left vacant by large corporations. It provides real and necessary services and products, helping to hold down the cost of living and usually increase the quality of life for its customers. Small enterprises are market-driven and in tune with local needs. Competition is fierce, so it is a matter of survival to keep the customer satisfied. Small enterprises are eager to provide convenience for their clients and keep costs down so they can offer the best price.

Small enterprises are efficient. They make frugal and productive use of the resources and energy at their disposal. They use local materials—they cannot afford imported ones. They are masters of recycling the waste products of the formal sector. A village shoemaker makes sandals out of old car tires. A blacksmith forges funnels out of used tin cans. A market vendor offers pieces of cardboard, newspapers and gunny sacks (you can use them to build your house) or empty cans, bottles and jars (you can use them to store your savings or cooking oil).

This recycling extends to technology. Those in the informal sector who need equipment often use secondhand equipment—they do not have the capital for new. It is not unusual for a factory worker to save to buy some old tools, train a son or nephew to help, set up a shopfront and open for business. Technology used in small enterprise is of necessity small-scale, innovative and appropriate (as opposed to sophisticated, costly and transplanted).

There is one area where small enterprises are not as efficient as the large factories: small enterprises employ many more people for each unit of output. They are labor-intensive. Rather than using machines to do the work, traditional labor-intensive production methods are used. This is good. Developing countries need work for their unemployed workers and often do not have the money needed to buy machinery. Small enterprises are a very good way for developing countries to make the most of their most plentiful resource (workers) without using much of their scarcest resource—money.

Even though it is labor-intensive, a small enterprise (being small) does not employ many people. However, there are many, many small enterprises, so collectively they provide an important source of income opportunities. In many Third World countries about 50 percent of the urban labor force works in small enterprise. Many who work in the informal sector have migrated to the city because there is no work, opportunity or land for them in their rural villages. In most cases, neither is there any work, opportunity for them in the formal sector of the city. To survive, they turn to the informal sector and generate their own employment opportunities.

Small enterprises can be a form of trade apprenticeship, providing training and helping to develop entrepreneurial skills in perhaps the cheapest and simplest way—on the job. The informal sector does not require diplomas, but that does not mean the workers have no training. Small enterprises can contribute significantly to community human resources, teaching technical, commercial and managerial skills.

Because small enterprises are human in scale, they are less impersonal than the big companies—the employees all know each other and are more likely to be involved in the entire manufacturing process. Relatives and friends typically make up the work force in a small enterprise. While progress and modernization are destroying many of the ties and loyalties of the family, small enterprises can strengthen the family as they work together. There is usually enough work to keep everyone involved, from the youngest to the oldest and even the handicapped.

Some informal enterprises involve more women than men. The flexibility of this type of work gives women a chance to fit it in along with their housekeeping and childcare responsibilities; many small

enterprises are situated within or very near the home. The less restrictive atmosphere of the informal sector also offers more opportunities for women to participate in income generation. Often there is a great deal of similarity between a woman's work in a small enterprise and her traditional domestic work, such as cooking, cleaning and sewing. For many women who have become the heads of households, the informal sector is their only chance at survival.

Small enterprises have many positive characteristics. However, life in the informal sector is not a bed of roses. There are some definite drawbacks.

First, there is income. Unfortunately, that idea of flexibility also extends to income. A very common characteristic of informal sector work is that profits or earnings are irregular. They are also low. Even when a wage is regular (like for a housemaid) it is usually well below the minimum earned by formal sector workers.

This type of work is precarious in other ways as well. In addition to instability of income there is insecurity of work opportunities. Small enterprises are continually in danger of extinction, vulnerable to all sorts of environmental and economic disasters, such as drought, fire, accidents and arbitrary closings by local officials. Many are dependent on chance demand and chance encounters. Small enterprise is typified by fluctuating and discontinuous employment.

Workers in the informal sector have no benefits—no paid holiday, maternity leave, pension or social security. Working conditions may be hideous—with a crowded and dangerous sweatshop environment or with no shelter from the blazing sun. This sort of employment has very little organization of any kind. Unionization is extremely rare, so employees have few rights. But neither are the small business owners organized. They have little power over the well-organized middlemen who supply the raw materials at excessive prices and buy back the finished work at low prices. Middlemen control the prices, the sources and the power; they act in collusion. The workers are scattered and unorganized, with little power.

In the unorganized sector of the economy, the law of the jungle prevails. Competition is cutthroat; only the most inventive or ruthless survive. The reluctance to organize reflects an individualistic attitude which, combined with the large numbers of small enterprises in the many branches of economic activity, tends to produce intense competition.

This is exploited by the middlemen and subcontractors who bring prices down so low that the small enterprises can only continue to operate if they use very cheap labor. They can do this because there are far too many workers chasing far too little work. And the work-seekers keep coming—waves of refugees from rural poverty. Intense competition is one of the main reasons income in the informal sector is so low.

For the most part, the government offers no support or protection. Many governments see the informal sector as a nuisance—a transient, deviant sort of economic activity. The myriad small enterprises are difficult to keep track of and are therefore often conveniently ignored by official causes. But most informal workers prefer this neglect to the active suppression governments execute on small enterprises sometimes.

Many types of small enterprises operate on the margins of the economy and some even operate on the margins of the law. There are differing degrees of illegality, ranging from working without a license, nonpayment of taxes or noncompliance with safety requirements, to serious criminal offenses like extortion, prostitution, or drug trafficking. Because of this, and because they are unofficial and unorganized, small enterprises often suffer a good deal of government discrimination, restriction, and even outright harassment.

When governments want to crack down on informal businesses they can resort to any number of bureaucratic regulations (registration, licensing, inspections, taxation) or policing (fines, confiscation, closure, arrest, imprisonment). Regulation of small enterprise offers an enterprising, crooked official ample opportunity for petty corruption. Most informal businesses accept the fact that hands have to be greased in order for them to ply their trade. They have learned to live with constant risk and uncertainty.

Rare indeed is any sort of government support for small enterprise in the form of promotion, incentives or positive controls. There are few policies or planning strategies to encourage employment generation, economic growth, higher status or improved working conditions for the informal sector. If there are policies concerning small enterprise, they are more likely to involve suppression, segregation, reduction of opportunities or a bulldozer.

The characteristic that probably is most responsible for the widespread proliferation of small enterprises is that they require an absolute minimum of start-up capital and skills. The barriers to entry are so low that virtually anyone can set up a business. Some small businessmen are able to scrape together the start-up money on their own. Others are able to borrow it from relatives.

However, some are so poor they cannot find the money or credit they need. The government has no assistance for them. Banks will not give them any credit—their broken-down old machines and ramshackle shanty do not qualify as collateral. They seldom keep books, except in their heads. Small enterprises are a decided credit risk.

Some *nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)* have decided small enterprises make a good credit risk. They see small businesses as the most efficient way to create jobs and generate income, as the ideal

place to try out small-scale technology and approaches. They recognize that with upgraded skills, training in management, and available credit, the enormous resources of the informal sector could be a valuable ally in the drive for economic and social growth. They hope that effective small enterprise development programs will help change the prevailing negative view and low priorities assigned to small enterprises.

Lack of small amounts of capital is what is holding most small businesses back. Credit is their most important need. For people in *absolute poverty,* the struggle to put food on the table does not leave even a few extra dollars to invest in a business. When emergencies arise, the poor are forced to borrow money from local moneylenders who charge outrageous interest rates. If they have a product to sell, they often have no choice but to sell it to a middleman, no matter how pitifully low that price is. Many small businessmen are in debt to the middleman, the suppliers of raw materials, or the moneylender.

One thing small enterprise development programs seldom do is give money away. They loan it—and the business owners are expected to repay their loans. The capital disbursed is quite small—from as low as a few dollars to a high of $500. And money is not the only loan commodity. Seeds are loaned to farmers who might otherwise have to go in debt to the moneylender. Animals like cows and chickens are loaned to help farmers get involved in income generation.

Loans are granted to individual borrowers and also to cooperatives. These self-formed credit groups are sometimes known as solidarity groups. They are usually made of five to 10 owners of small enterprises who accept collective responsibility to pay the loan made to the group. Each group member uses his or her portion of the loan to invest in his or her individual business. The group is responsible for paying back the loan; if one member defaults, the loan is repaid by others in the group. Individual members who do not pay are often eliminated from the group. Groups that do not pay back their loans are eliminated from further participation in the program. This results in a low default rate, avoiding the depletion of the loan fund. The group loans also serve to develop solidarity in the community, as do other small enterprise development projects.

Women especially have a difficult time getting the credit they need to develop a small enterprise. In many countries women are not allowed to own property and have no collateral, therefore they have no access to commercial credit sources. Often they were denied the chance to go to school, so they are illiterate. Even though they are offered little support from society or their families, many women are resourceful enough to help their families survive, and even improve

their quality of life, if only they can get started. Successes in small enterprises have the potential to increase women's self-confidence and change traditional attitudes.

Some small enterprises need loans to get started, others need technology. Many people spend a large percentage of their daily income to rent the equipment they need—a rickshaw, a sewing machine, a shoeshine kit. Because all the rest of their income has to go for food, they can never save up enough to buy their own means of production.

Another need is for business skills like keeping records, marketing and management. Many small enterprise development programs offer training in these areas as a part of the loan package. When organization has a chance of improving the business environment or the community, small enterprise development programs sometimes help organize cooperatives or joint ventures.

Small enterprise development can help start new small businesses and improve or enlarge established ones. The results can have far-reaching impacts on fundamental areas of life, including health, education, nutrition and social status. Participants are given the chance to take control of their own lives. They not only earn a better living for their families, they earn dignity and self-reliance.

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REFUGEES

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BACKGROUND

THROUGHOUT THE AGES, refugees have fled their homeland, leaving everything behind; they have suffered from hunger and cold and disease; they have struggled with poverty and oppression. But in previous centuries, refugee populations fell through the cracks. They straggled in and wandered about—their numbers were relatively few. Some were able to find refuge, join their host community and begin to support themselves. Others merged with the itinerant poor of their new country and struggled to eke out a hand-to-mouth existence. Many refugees were not able to survive the hunger and disease; winter usually killed them.

There were not hundreds of thousands of refugees located in one place, because they usually died not long after becoming refugees. There were no refugee camps or social services; pre-modern society was generally indifferent to outsiders. Governments certainly felt no obligation to them. Sometimes governments welcomed them as an asset to the working population. Sometimes they were suspicious of outsiders and saw them as a threat or as competition. Usually refugees were ignored and left to solve their own problems, or to die.

In years past, refugees were not that different from the rest of society. Almost everyone was living on the edge of subsistence. Almost everyone lived under oppression of some sort. The term "refugees" did not even develop until the 19th century.

People became refugees for many familiar reasons—famine, war, oppression—but the circumstances were different. War was different. Pre-modern armies wanted the local inhabitants to stay put. They were dependent on them for supplies, food and shelter. They did not see any sense in driving villagers away before the harvest. There was no scorched earth. All the same, many refugees fled because of war. Oppression was different, too. A great many refugees were expelled because their rulers deemed that their religion challenged existing political authority. During the Reformation in Europe, Protestants were exiled from some countries and Catholics from others. Jews have been driven out of many different nations for centuries.

Perhaps the modern international refugee crisis began with the Jewish expulsion from Eastern Europe that began in the quarter century before World War I, a mass exodus of about 2.5 million Jews. This was the moment when modern Europe began to be aware of a large-scale refugee phenomenon. Adding to this awareness was the great influx of Irish, Italian and many other refugees coming to the U.S. during World War I. At about the same time, the old empires (Hapsburg, Ottoman and Romanov) began to crumble, releasing

another flood of refugees. The revolution in Russia added still more refugees, as did displaced civilians of World War I.

The International Committee of the Red Cross assembled a meeting of humanitarian organizations in Geneva to discuss the vast proportions of the refugee problem in post-World War I Europe. They urged the League of Nations to appoint a Commissioner for Refugees to coordinate aid, protection and repatriation. In 1921 the Norwegian polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen took on that role and became the first international official solely responsible for refugees. His office provided travel papers, known as Nansen Passports, for millions of refugees, which went through several restructurings and was often simply called the Nansen Office. Nansen's mandate was vague, and everyone assumed it would be temporary. He was to solve the problem of Russian refugees in Europe. When that was taken care of, that would be the end of that.

But, of course, that was not the end of the refugees. They kept coming—from Armenia, Greece, Macedonia and all over Eastern Europe. Then World War II broke out, and wave after wave of refugees fled to the West. During World War II, the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Agency was created as an office of the Allied powers to deal with some of the consequences of the war, including refugees.

After the war, millions of people voluntarily returned to their homelands. Others were unwilling to return to countries under Soviet domination, although many thousands were sent back anyway. The number of refugees continued to climb astronomically; some were still adrift and unsettled after the war, others were newly expelled from the East. A peculiar characteristic of this new type of refugee was that they had nowhere to go. Powerless and demoralized, no one wanted them.

At the dawn of the Cold War there was a flood of refugees out of Soviet-controlled Europe. In 1951 the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created. It was primarily concerned with the problem of displaced persons after World War II and with people fleeing communism, mostly in and from Europe. Its terms referred only to events occurring in Europe before 1951.

But there were refugees who were not displaced by World War II. There were also refugees beyond those in Europe. And there were refugees who were fleeing other oppression besides communism. In 1967 the U. N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was amended by a protocol that removed its limitations of time and geography. Convention and protocol remain the principal international standard for defining, protecting and aiding refugees today.

There have always been refugees, but the 20th century may be known as the era of refugees. At first everyone assumed that the refugee situation was an extraordinary occurrence that required only an ad hoc response. But now it is obvious that refugees have become a routine feature of our world. The sheer numbers of them are vastly greater than the world has ever seen before. Such huge numbers of refugees are not able to blend into society or be assimilated. Thus, they remain homeless and displaced for much longer than in times past. And collective alienation is one of the hallmarks of our time.

There have always been refugees.And there always will be, unless governments can become peaceful and just, society can become honorable and supportive, and human nature can be modified.

DEFINITIONS

REFUGEES ARE PEOPLE who have crossed international boundaries to escape war or persecution. They have been forced to leave the country in which they once lived to seek sanctuary and protection elsewhere.

The United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, written in Geneva in 1951, defines a refugee as:

> *"any person who...owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence...is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."*

In other words, a refugee is someone who has left his or her homeland because of a well-founded fear of persecution, or a person whose life or freedom is threatened because of who they are or what they believe. The spirit of the Convention is that every person is entitled to freedom from persecution and should receive recognition and assistance from the international community to achieve that freedom. Refugees should be able to make a claim for the protection of their human rights based on their humanity, not on their nationality.

The U.N. Convention also calls for the protection of refugees against **refoulement.** This means that no refugee with valid objections should ever be compelled to return to his or her country of origin. The Convention addresses the principle of nonrefoulement by saying:

REFUGEES

No Contracting Party may, by expulsion or return, place a refugee in any way, within the borders of any territory where his life or liberty be endangered for reasons of his race, religion, nationality, belonging to a determined social group, or because of his political opinions.

A refugee should be protected from expulsion from the country of refuge and should not be forcibly returned to the frontiers of territories where life or freedom would be threatened. The nations that have signed the Convention have agreed that they will not expel or return (refouler) refugees against their will to a territory where they fear persecution.

The U.N. definition above describes the **political refugee.** However, reality is not as simple as a definition. In actuality, merely fleeing war or a repressive government is not enough to ensure refugee status. The government of the country of asylum must agree that the government of the country that has been fled is repressive. If the government of the country that has been fled is friendly with the government of the country where asylum is sought, potential refugees may be labeled **economic refugees** and denied asylum, even if they left because of persecution.

A government cannot give military and economic aid to a country and then accept political refugees from it. It raises too many embarrassing questions; e.g., why are we giving them military aid if they are violating the rights of their citizens this badly? To accept their refugees is, in effect, to admit that their government is repressive.

It all comes down to politics. If a country does not want to grant asylum to certain refugees, but has signed the U.N. Convention promising to extend refuge, all it has to do is declare that the refugees are not refugees—they are economic refugees or even illegal aliens. Other ways to avoid accepting refugees include offering temporary protection only, sending asylum seekers back to safe countries they have traveled through, requiring visas to prevent the refugees from even reaching the border to ask for protection.

Economic refugees are seen as being a sort of second-class refugee—individuals who are unwilling to accept the hardships of the development process in their homeland. The international community has no common policy toward economic refugees. But impoverished countries are often more willing to accept refugees without attempting to distinguish the political from the economic.

People who flee across borders for reasons other than fear of war or persecution are said to be living in **refugee-like circumstances.** They often have been displaced by profound economic and social

turmoil or natural disasters. For political reasons, they are often not recognized as refugees by their host governments.

First asylum is the place where refugees stop and seek acceptance. They are not in a position to make a decision about first asylum. When they are fleeing, it is the first point where they can at least stop and ask for safe haven.

Internally displaced persons are individuals who have been uprooted but remain within their own country's borders. They have been displaced against their will from their home communities and means of survival. Internally displaced persons are people who flee their homes for the same reasons as refugees, but who do not cross an international border. They are not legal refugees because they are still within their country's jurisdiction.

The concept of sovereignty means that no one has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of another country; therefore, the international protections extended to refugees do not apply to internally displaced persons.

Exiles are individuals who have left their native country for political reasons, usually after having been involved in revolutionary activity. Many of them are free to choose the path of exile or reject it.

Refugees are different from **immigrants.** Immigrants come of their own free will, looking for a better life. They deliberately choose to leave their homelands and carefully plan where they want to resettle. Refugees are driven from their homelands because they fear persecution or war. They do not voluntarily choose to leave; they are forced to do so in order to protect themselves. Immigrants come because they want to. Refugees come because they have to. Immigrants want a chance for a new life. Refugees want a chance for life itself.

Some refugees stay near the border of their country, hoping for **repatriation;** that is, they want to return to their homeland. When conditions improve and refugees return to their country of origin, of their own free will, it is called **voluntary repatriation.** When refugees are forced out of a country of asylum, back into the country where they still fear persecution, it is called **involuntary repatriation.** The ideal resolution to any refugee situation is for all refugees to be voluntarily repatriated.

Approximately 70 to 80 percent of all refugees are women and children. There is usually a higher proportion of orphans, widows, the ill and handicapped, and the elderly in a refugee population than would be found in a typical population in a developing country. They have no political clout and are the most vulnerable of this extremely vulnerable population. They are more likely to suffer from hunger, health problems and violence than any other population group. They

have been forced to leave behind their homes, livelihoods and possessions, so they are the poorest of people, without resources. They have suffered drastic upheavals in their lives, their situations are uncertain, and their fate impinges substantially on the societies in which they find themselves.

There is a smaller percentage of men because many of them have usually been killed by soldiers, policemen or rebels. Or they are away fighting in the wars. Refugee families are often scattered, torn apart, fragmented. In many cases women must make the decision to abandon their country and everything familiar to flee their homes, often under extremely chaotic conditions.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has the principal task of protecting the rights of refugees. This involves three main areas. First, the Commissioner must offer refugees protection. They must be safe from attack and forcible repatriation. Second, the UNHCR must provide refugees with material assistance such as food, shelter, clothing and medical care. Finally, the UNHCR must try to find what it calls a long-term durable solution for the refugees. This could involve voluntary repatriation, permanent settlement in the country of first asylum, or resettlement in a third country.

The UNHCR was established as an attempt to discover ways to deal with the problem of refugees in Europe after World War II. That flood receded and now it is the Third World that is awash in refugees. Perhaps refugees could be considered a Fourth World, one whose inhabitants have no representation, no protection, no rights and no control.

Global security depends on helping refugees meet their immediate needs and eventually become self-sufficient again. Millions of uprooted, desperate people can only make further conflict and instability inevitable. The world has an interest in taking care of its refugees.

AFRICA AND REFUGEES

AFRICA IS HOME to about half of the world's refugees. If there is a reason to become a refugee, that reason exists in Africa. Throughout the continent, people become refugees because of war, repression, government brutalities, persecution, declining economies, poor weather, natural disasters, famine, disease, ethnic strife, nationalism and abuse of power.

REFUGEES CREATED BY WAR

THE MOST PROLIFIC producers of refugees are wars that seem to be permanent fixtures of the African landscape. There are wars of all varieties: long-standing ethnic rivalries, tribal clashes, border disputes, civil wars, military coups, revolutions, guerrilla combat, petty struggles and intractable conflicts. Africa usually has several wars raging at any given time. In these countless struggles for power and control, it is the people who suffer, who must flee their homes to save their lives.

Rwanda has a long history of bloody conflict between the ethnic Hutu majority and the ethnic Tutsi minority. For years the Hutu-dominated government refused to allow the (mostly Tutsi) refugees to return, claiming that Rwanda was overpopulated. Then a group of Tutsi Rwandese, who had been exiled in Uganda, invaded Rwanda in 1990; the government decided to allow the exiles to return. Negotiations began on how to share power and combine armies, but human rights abuses—including rape and murder—continued, creating a climate of terror.

In January 1993 government and rebel troops went on a rampage, pushing hundreds of thousands of people out of their homes to live in crowded, makeshift camps on the outskirts of the capital. In August 1993 both sides signed a peace accord, requesting that UN peacekeeping troops monitor it. A transitional government was installed. Many of the internally displaced persons returned home.

Then in April 1994 the mysterious crash of a plane carrying the presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi set off a bloodbath in which an estimated 500,000 Rwandans, mostly Tutsis and moderate Hutus, were slaughtered by a hard-line extremist Hutu regime. In the most dramatic civil strife in recent history, ethnic hatreds ran unchecked in hundreds of thousands of revenge killings. Nearly two million Rwandans fled to Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire.

Refugee camps were hastily organized under extremely inhospitable conditions. The situation was completely chaotic. The most vulnerable, especially the children, died by the thousands because water was not available. Soldiers and militiamen, who had planned, ordered, and led the genocide, escaped to the camps as well, where they terrorized the refugees, grabbed more than their share of relief food, and tried to take control of the camps. They also spread rumors and launched raids so that the refugees would be afraid to return to their homeland.

SOMALIA: AN EXAMPLE OF REFUGEEISM IN AFRICA

WHEN IT COMES to world tragedies, Somalia's recent history puts it right up there at the top. In 1991 several rebel armies, organized along clan lines, overthrew the dictator and then turned their guns and artillery on each other. The bloodthirsty tribal fighting plunged the country into anarchy and famine.

By late 1992 as many as half a million people died due to violence, famine and disease. Half of all the children under age five died. More than four million Somalis needed food aid, and more than 1,000 people were dying from hunger each day. One million Somalis fled the country on foot and by boat, and two million became displaced within Somalia. All semblance of government ceased to exist. There were staggering numbers of weapons. Factional armies and gangs of bandits stole relief supplies and ruthlessly did whatever else they wanted.

Refugees remained in flux, going home when things calmed down but fleeing back to Kenya or Ethiopia if the fighting or banditry became too volatile.

The United States was persuaded to send 20,000 troops to Somalia in December 1992 to protect relief efforts and try to patch the country together. UN troops also arrived, as did nearly $4 billion in international aid. But the gunmen and militias did not fade into the background. A political resolution to the conflict between the heavily armed factions eluded international mediators. The peacekeeping troops became targets and several nations began to withdraw their troops. Relief workers and their food shipments again came under attack. Somalia, as savage and chaotic as ever, became a violent no-man's-land that ceased to exist as a nation.

WAR AS A FORCE FOR REFUGEEISM

DURING THE 1980S so many weapons were exported to countries like Somalia that fighting could continue indefinitely without additional imports. Conflicts driven by ethnic rivalry, distrust, power, control of resources or resentment of authoritarian government are likely to continue indefinitely as well.

These human-made emergencies—war, conflict, power struggles—are increasingly consuming the resources available to bring

relief. In 1992 most of Africa's food aid requirements were for people living in regions devastated by decades of war. Even after the fighting ends, wars leave a cruel legacy of destruction that takes years to repair.

Rwanda and Somalia are just two examples of war in the countries of Africa. The people of Sudan have been ground down by seemingly endless civil war and inflexible government policies. Liberia's civil war has degenerated into ethnic massacres by soldiers on all sides, leaving nearly three-quarters of the country's people uprooted. Zaire seems to be in perpetual meltdown with two rival governments, two competing monetary systems, and Zairian soldiers at times fighting and killing each other. There are more examples; tomorrow there will be more still.

RAIN AND HARVESTS AS FORCES FOR REFUGEEISM

THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA depend on rainfall to create pasture for their animals and to irrigate their crops. If the rain does not fall one year, and they are unable to grow crops, villagers have to eat the seed grain they set aside to plant for the next year's harvest. If the drought lasts two years, they are then completely without food. Severe droughts and the resulting famines place millions of Africans at risk of starvation and force many to leave their homes. Every year there is a drought somewhere in Africa. Late and insufficient rains also lead to crop failures and reduced harvests and refugees.

The Ethiopian famine of 1984 received major media coverage, which instilled some guilt in the Western world and resulted in aid being sent to hastily mounted relief programs. Ethiopia had been suffering through a bitter 10-year-old civil war, and the government was preoccupied with its attempts to suppress a secessionist rebellion in Tigre and Eritrea. The communist regime was intensely suspicious of the intentions and the effect of Western agencies giving aid to both sides of the conflict.

Millions of people stood on the edge of death from a famine caused by drought, civil war and agricultural exhaustion. Ethiopia was a parched landscape of famine, sickness and death. There was no food. Relief workers were not handing out supplementary food—they were feeding people totally.

It was not an easy thing to feed people. The government was suspicious and uncooperative, and not open to criticism. The army diverted food for its soldiers. The government tried to prevent distribution of food to civilians in opposition to it, exploiting the food for

political purposes. A big problem existed with transportation—no roads, no trucks, no parts to fix broken trucks—so there was no good way to get the food from ports to the victims. Masses of food had been sent, and hundreds of thousands of lives were saved with it, but difficult logistics prevented it from being distributed quickly enough.

Many of the famine's refugees gathered in and around the white tents of the camps and feeding shelters. The government wanted them to go home, but most no longer had any homes to go to—they had sold all their possessions and even sold their houses for firewood. Others still had their homes; they came to the camps to get their meager rations of food each month. The number of people in need of food far surpassed the amount of food that could be brought in. Sometimes only the neediest could be chosen from the crowds of hungry people waiting outside the camps. Many could not survive the wait. To make matters worse, sometimes disease swept through the crowded camps—cholera was the deadliest.

By the time the rain returned in the late spring of 1985, millions of Ethiopians suffered from severe hunger and tens of thousands died of starvation.

EXPANDING DESERTS AS A FORCE FOR REFUGEEISM

THE SAME DROUGHT that struck Ethiopia affected other countries as well. The people who are most likely to suffer from drought live on the edges of deserts where adequate rainfall is never certain from one year to the next. Millions of Africans live in the Sahel, a sandy strip of land along the southern edge of the Sahara Desert that is frequently parched by drought. Many years pass when no rain falls at all.

Agriculture is pretty much out of the question in the Sahel, so the country is populated mostly by nomads and their herds of cattle, sheep and goats. Even nomads are finding life in the Sahel increasingly difficult. Weather patterns are changing and droughts are becoming more and more frequent. The Sahara Desert is spreading; plant life on the fringes of the desert dies and sands blow south.

In the bad years, thousands of people die before rains return. Plants die, herds die, and people face hunger and death. When nomads come to the refugee camps, they suffer. They are accustomed to living in wide open spaces, and now they must live crowded together in dirty, miserable conditions. Diseases spread rapidly, killing hundreds, especially children. As one dry year follows

another, nomads begin to lose hope of ever returning to their old way of life. When rains finally come, most nomads resume their old life. But some stay in the villages and look for work. They cannot take the uncertainty anymore.

REPATRIATING REFUGEES

MOST REFUGEES just want to be able to go home. But repatriation is not easy. Many returnees find that, because of the brutal destruction of war, home is not what it used to be. Towns, markets, schools and clinics have all been destroyed. They face the arduous process of rebuilding everything. Landmines as a remnant of war are another major frustration to rehabilitation and repatriation efforts. Some refugees are too eager to return home before conditions are safe; they are forced to return to exile.

Africa's refugee situations are in constant flux. Significant numbers of refugees repatriate each year and begin the long, difficult process of resettlement. Even more significant numbers of refugees are newly uprooted from other countries, other wars, other famines. Many an African country hosts hundreds of thousands of refugees from numerous other countries, while at the same time thousands of its own people seek refuge in neighboring countries. Sometimes refugees will flee to another country, only to be forced to escape back home when war flares up in their country of asylum. The mixture of so many different groups of refugees, new and old returnees, and internally displaced persons makes Africa an often bewildering blend of uprooted populations.

Traditionally, Africa has been a model of generosity in its treatment of refugees. The African states remain remarkably open to cross-border movements of refugees, despite the trend in the rest of the world to close doors to refugees—and despite the fact that they are some of the world's most impoverished countries and have their own serious problems of overcrowding and land shortages. Perhaps they have been so uncommonly tolerant of refugee influxes, in part, because the borders inherited from colonial times were not true dividing lines in the first place. Many times those who flee are welcomed by members of their own ethnic group, even if they have crossed an international border. In Africa, not all refugees are forced into crowded, dirty camps. Sometimes they are taken into homes, squeezed into the houses of the local population. Now, this is slowly changing.

The historical hospitality of Africans is beginning to wear thin in some quarters. Hospitality is not enough if there is nothing to share. Unable to meet the needs of their own people, African governments

are continually faced with hordes of refugees who pour across their borders, usually without warning. In some countries, international refugee assistance may allow a higher standard of living for the arrivals than that experienced by permanent residents. To avoid tensions, local inhabitants have to be incorporated into refugee aid programs. Occasionally, local officials have to be restrained from pushing refugees back across the border, especially since those refugees are often bound to face persecution and repression if they are forced to return. Usually, however, local resources are simply strained further until refugees can be repatriated or can achieve self-sufficiency in their new environments.

Refugee situations in Africa are more massive and complex than any statistics could hope to reveal. Safety and survival for the refugees seem more elusive than ever.

CENTRAL AMERICA AND REFUGEES

IN THE 1970S the people of El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua began to demand political and social reforms. In an effort to crush the growing strength of popular opposition, governments responded by mounting oppressive campaigns of violence and repression. This very thorough silencing of dissent featured the indiscriminate extermination of the population. Armies killed thousands of citizens suspected of political agitation in massive counterinsurgency programs directed against those who had organized against the government.

In the 1980s increasing numbers of Central Americans began fleeing their countries in panic—fleeing civil war, revolution, violence and persecution. Tens of thousands of civilians were abducted, tortured, or killed by death squads. Their homes were destroyed, their crops were burned, they were driven off their land. They lived with the constant fear that they would be killed. To save their lives, they left.

The death squads were bands of soldiers, unofficially sponsored by government security forces. Their assignment was to murder government opponents suspected of revolutionary associations, including teachers, peasants, professionals, priests and nuns. Towns full of civilians were attacked; trucks surrounded the towns so no one could escape; planes dropped bombs, and machine guns were fired from helicopters; then soldiers swept through the villages, tossing grenades, burning houses and shooting, stabbing or clubbing everyone they could find.

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The national army carried out a particularly savage campaign of terror and dislocation against Indians in the highlands of Guatemala, burning hundreds of villages and massacring inhabitants. The highlands became a rebel guerrilla stronghold. Rebels forced peasants to give them food and money, so the army killed the peasants or chased them from their homes; that way they would not be able to give the rebels any help.

The army enlisted informers who became known as *orejas*, which means ears. The orejas spied for the army, reporting on the activities of their neighbors. Those suspected of subversive activity were tortured, their wives and daughters were raped, their children were threatened. Some people left home in the morning to go to work or school and were never seen again, joining the ranks of the *desaparecidos*, the disappeared.

Parents feared their sons would be forced to fight for the guerrillas or that they would be conscripted into the army. Guerrillas would come into villages at night and, pointing guns at heads or holding knives to throats, tell young men they would be killed if they did not join. Just as frightening was to lose one's sons to the army's *el cupo*, the grab. The military went into rural villages on busy market days, sealed off all roads, and began a search through the streets and houses. Any young man who could not immediately prove that he was under 18 was taken away for recruitment.

Many people of Guatemala and El Salvador left their countries because of the massacres, the violence and the threats from rebel and government soldiers. They saw neighboring villages wiped out. They saw neighbors murdered. They saw crops burned and animals killed. Fear took over their lives. They felt they had to leave if they wanted to live. Some were dispersed, homeless throughout their country; others fled their homeland entirely.

They fled on foot for the most part. Some were able to pack a small bag, others were only able to escape with their lives. They traveled exhausted, frightened and under cover of darkness. Some were wounded or injured during their flight across the border.

Many refugees traveled to Honduras first, because it borders both El Salvador and Guatemala. They went because it was there, not because it was a particularly safe haven. Some of the refugee camps in Honduras were more like detention camps. Many were run by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, but they were subjected to the control of the Honduran army, which was aligned with the regimes from which the refugees had just fled. Raiding patrols regularly crossed the border to attack and abduct refugees from the camps.

The vast majority of refugees living in the camps were women, children and elderly peasants from rural areas who were seeking

safety from the bombings near their villages. Life in the camps was wretched. Shelter was provided by tents or ramshackle huts the refugees cobbled together with whatever they could find. The camps were overcrowded, hot and dirty.

There was very little food and no clean water, which led to malnutrition and disease. The most serious and pervasive disease was malnutrition, but almost all the refugees were suffering from at least one other affliction, such as malaria, dengue fever, tuberculosis, parasites, diarrhea, respiratory conditions or shrapnel wounds. Many deaths resulted from uncontrolled diarrhea stemming from unsafe water, intestinal diseases and parasites. Medical care was inadequate—there just were not enough doctors or medical supplies—and the camps were so crowded that contagious diseases and infections spread rapidly. Staying alive was a daily struggle.

Some were able to avoid or escape the Honduran refugee camps and make their way north into Mexico. There were refugee camps in Mexico, too. The Mexican government found itself totally unprepared for the sudden and massive movement of refugees across its borders. Some of the refugee camps received help from the United Nations. Other settlements sprang up and struggled on with no help. The refugees lived in flimsy bamboo huts, obtained their water from a river, and did their cooking over an open fire—when they had food and firewood.

One of the worst things about living in the refugee camps was the boredom. There was nothing to do, day after day. Women spent a lot of time waiting in long lines to collect a little bit of water. A few of the men were able to get jobs on nearby plantations; they were lucky. Others spent their time searching the surrounding jungles for roots and leaves to eat. Most just sat and waited. Everyone was anxious, tense and insecure, not knowing what would happen.

Many refugees caught their breath at the resettlement camps and then continued to move north, trying to keep one step ahead of Mexico's immigration authorities. Many ended up walking the entire length of Mexico. Some were able to pay a smuggler, known as a *coyote*, to lead them across the border into the United States. Others tried to cross on their own.

They were not welcome in the United States either. Few Central Americans could obtain legitimate visas to the United States. Without documents they were at the mercy of whomever they came in contact with, including unscrupulous coyotes, Mexican and U.S. border patrols, and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Some Central American refugees found mercy in the sanctuary movement, a loose network of church congregations that helped guide them across the U.S. border and protect them from

deportation. Participants in the sanctuary movement risked jail terms and fines for smuggling refugees into the country and harboring them.

The U.S. government has generally denied refugee status to applicants for political asylum from El Salvador and Guatemala. They are treated as economic refugees and illegal immigrants, not as political refugees. The United States only offers asylum to those who can prove a well-founded fear of persecution. In the view of the U.S. government, most Central Americans have no right to refugee status because they face no mistreatment based on their political or religious beliefs. The INS believes their primary motivation in coming is to seek a higher standard of living, not to escape political repression.

Therefore, most Central Americans are in the United States without documentation, living with the constant worry that they will be deported. Their illegal status affects every aspect of their lives, from jobs and housing to medical care and education. Other refugee groups who escaped from communist countries have benefited from English classes, job training and other government programs, but undocumented migrants must learn to survive in their new culture without this help. Most of them just want to be legal; they wish they could be granted extended voluntary departure status, which would allow them to stay in the U.S. and work until the violence at home subsides.

The majority of Central Americans still dream of going home. They say they would go back to their homeland if the political situation improved. They watch what is happening to their country and feel helpless and frustrated. When they first become refugees, they huddle on the border, hoping they can go back, resisting efforts to relocate them farther from the border. As circumstances force them farther and farther from their home, they become lonely and homesick. They wonder if they have made a mistake in leaving, until they meet someone who has come from someplace near home, who tells them that the day after they left the soldiers returned and killed everyone. Then they know they have not made a mistake, but still they long to go home to their country, their families, their people and their way of life.

But that possibility is still in the future. By the time it happens, there may not be anything to go back to.

Things seem to have settled down in Nicaragua since the 1990 elections. A civilian president has been elected in El Salvador as well, and the death squads are being somewhat restrained—but they still exist. There is a civilian government in Guatemala, but it does not seem to have control over the army. Deeply concerned about the spread of communism in Central America, the United States government does not want to do anything to encourage political

instability. But it has decided to withhold military training funds and equipment to demonstrate displeasure at ongoing abuses.

Refugees are nothing new in Central America. Since the time of the conquistadors, refugees have fled from natural disasters, hunger, poverty, dictators, exploitation and oppression. For centuries the elite have controlled the land and the economy. Dictators have controlled the political process. The military have controlled the elite, the dictators, the peasants and anything else they want. Peace and justice will not come easily to Central America.

CUBA AND REFUGEES

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY 1959, dictator Fulgencio Batista fled Cuba, and rebel forces led by Fidel Castro took over. Cubans began to leave the country, first in a trickle, then in a flood; most of them fled to the United States. Among the first anti-Castro Cubans to leave were officials of the Batista government. Soon they were joined by those who had been anti-Batista but now feared the decidedly leftist direction Castro was heading. Some were businessmen, landowners and middle-class professionals threatened by the radical reorganization instituted by Castro. Others fled as political exiles, for it was dangerous to speak out against Castro.

The more ardent of the political exiles became involved in anti-Castro activities.

In 1961 new U.S. President John F. Kennedy approved a plan for the invasion of Cuba. The invasion force consisted entirely of exiled Cubans, trained by U.S. agencies in Guatemala. On April 17 about 1,300 exiles landed at Bahía de Cochinos—the Bay of Pigs. It was a fiasco. The expedition had been poorly planned, the exiles inadequately trained, and the troops were taken prisoner. They were eventually ransomed for $53 million in medical and food supplies. The debacle boosted Castro's popularity and provided fodder for a wave of propaganda condemning imperialist aggression.

Then in October 1962, U.S. intelligence produced evidence that the Soviets were building missile sites in Cuba. Kennedy placed a blockade around Cuba against delivery of the weapons and prepared for an air attack on the island. The world held its breath. Finally Soviet premier Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles if the U.S. promised not to invade. A dangerous confrontation had come to a peaceful end, but many Cuban exiles began to lose hope that the Castro regime would be overthrown. That was the end of the first wave of refugees; Castro canceled air flights to the United States after the missile crisis.

After that, Cubans wishing to leave had to depart in secret by whatever means they could. Often this was by small boat, sailing directly from Cuba to Miami, usually at great risk. These Cubans were the first boat people; only a few thousand managed to enter the United States this way. Others were able to fly to a third country, such as Mexico or Spain, then enter the United States from there.

The second wave of Cuban refugees began in 1965 when Castro indicated his willingness to permit the departure of Cubans who wanted to leave. U.S. President Lyndon Johnson established an airlift between Cuba and Miami, and for the next eight years flights took off daily, bringing 368,000 Cubans to the United States. The airlift ended in 1973, and once again Cubans wishing to come to the U.S. had to travel to another country first or risk travel by small boat.

Not all these Cuban refugees were politicians, intellectuals or the wealthy. People from all walks of life were unhappy enough about the changes Castro was bringing to their country to leave. They were given refugee status by the United States, because they came from a repressive regime considered hostile to U.S. interests, but many of them also sought economic opportunities. As political refugees they were able to receive support from the federal government. Even the formerly wealthy needed assistance—Castro let the people go, but not their assets.

The third wave of Cubans arrived in 1980. In 1979 Cuba decided to allow Cuban Americans to visit their homeland; thousands did. They told their relatives and old friends about their success in the United States. Perhaps this was the stimulus for what happened next.

Peru's embassy in Havana had been reluctantly giving asylum to those Cubans who entered after eluding Castro's guards. Cuba took exception to this; during the dispute, somehow Castro's guards were withdrawn and tens of thousands of Cubans began jamming the building, overwhelming the embassy's ability to cope with them. Castro got angry and said that anyone who wanted to could leave from the nearby port of Mariel. Word spread and the crowd grew. Boats from the United States began to arrive at Mariel and started ferrying Cuban refugees to Florida. Thousands of Cuban Americans raised money to buy, rent or hire boats and travel to Mariel to bring out their relatives and friends. The U.S. administration was unprepared for this freedom flotilla, and reception centers in Florida became overburdened. Reports arose that Castro was emptying the jails and sending criminals and the mentally ill, so the United States finally negotiated a halt to the exodus, but not before about 130,000 had arrived. It took awhile to place all the refugees in local communities. Some had been criminals in Cuba and were therefore inadmissible under U.S. immigration laws. They were kept in federal prison until Castro finally agreed to take them back five years later.

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A fourth wave of Cuban refugees was thwarted in the summer of 1994. Thousands in makeshift boats and rafts fled Cuba in hopes of reaching U.S. shores. Over 28,000 of them were picked up at sea and taken first to Panama and then, after their welcome in Panama expired, to the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. The U.S. government, fearful of an anti-immigrant political backlash, decided to prohibit the refugees from coming to the United States even while waiting for political asylum. The administration wanted to actively discourage the refugees' hopes of immigrating to the United States, but was unwilling to return them by force to communist-ruled Cuba. Efforts to encourage voluntary repatriation have not been very successful. Other nations have been asked to take some of the refugees; the U.S. has offered to pay transportation and resettlement costs. Probably most of the women and children will be paroled into the United States under special humanitarian provisions.

Even though escape by boat is very dangerous, and, if survived, would most likely mean ending up in a detention center, scores of refugees continue to attempt to leave Cuba in this way. They set off for Miami, Key West, the Bahamas or the Cayman Islands in little boats and homemade rafts. Even though there is little hope that they can escape being picked up by the Coast Guard or the Immigration and Naturalization Service, or sharks, there is even less hope in Cuba.

When Cuban refugees first began to come to the United States they focused their attention on freeing their homeland from Castro. They did not think of their stay in the U.S. as permanent. Many did not even buy houses. When they got together they would say to each other, "We will celebrate *La Nochebuena* [Christmas Eve] in Cuba this year." The fall of Castro was expected at any moment.

As time passed and it became clear that Castro would not be overthrown, their state of mind gradually changed from that of refugees to immigrants. They began working extra hours at extra jobs to put themselves through school. They learned new skills and began to speak English and climb the ladder of success. Many no longer want to return to Cuba. They are Cuban Americans now. They realize there is no boat that can take them back to the Cuba they remember; such a boat would have to travel back in time.

EUROPE AND REFUGEES

BEFORE WORLD WAR I, Europe was not disturbed much by refugee problems. There were refugees, but not great masses of them, and they usually took care of themselves by dying, settling down, moving on to America, or eventually going back to their homelands. If refugees are educated and have skills, they are not the same type of problem as those who come uneducated and unskilled. The educated and skilled Jewish refugees, for example, brought fewer problems to a country than other refugees might.

REVOLUTIONS AND COUNTERREVOLUTIONS

THE REVOLUTIONS and counterrevolutions of the 19th century produced their share of exiles and refugees, but the majority of pre-First World War European refugees were Jews who had been expelled from Eastern Europe. Many Jewish communities were evicted by brutal pogroms—collective attacks by the local population against Jews, usually abetted by the police, military and government. The Jewish refugees were not welcomed as they stumbled into Western Europe, dazed and exhausted. Some stayed in France, Belgium and Holland, but most went on to America. They caused no great refugee crisis, and Europeans did not have to worry about their responsibilities to them because America, the great escape valve, received virtually everyone who came.

The years just before World War I saw the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the nationalism, repression and wars that resulted. Another inevitable result was hundreds of thousands of refugees, caught on all sides of the dispute, attempting to escape the advance of the armies. By the time World War I broke out in 1914, the Balkan Peninsula was teeming with refugees, displaced persons and war evacuees hoping to escape what promised to be a ruthless occupation. The winter cold killed many of them and a typhus epidemic finished off more. Europeans were not greatly affected by the Balkan refugees, who were mostly contained on the Balkan Peninsula.

Only after World War I did the refugees wandering about the continent constitute such huge numbers that the international community could no longer deny their need for assistance. The bulk of the

refugees were victims of territorial changes inthe new nation-states. Some of the refugees had fled direct persecution, revolution or war. Others had been deliberately cast out by rival national groups. Nearly all of them had to fend for themselves. Their presence created chaos, friction and resentment within the areas where they gathered—starving, sick, exhausted and desperate. Orphans and lost or abandoned children wandered the countryside. Famine uprooted yet more people, setting them adrift in search of food. Cholera, typhus and smallpox devastated the refugees and panicked the settled populations. Winter brought indescribable suffering.

In 1921 the League of Nations appointed Fridtj of Nansen as Commissioner for Refugees to coordinate aid, protection and repatriation for the Eastern European refugees. Everyone thought it would be a temporary commission to take care of a temporary problem. It was not. Situations kept arising that caused additional throngs of people to flee and seek refuge: pogroms in Russia, fascism in Italy, civil war in Spain, the Nazis in Germany.

The world was shocked by the speed of the Nazi blitzkrieg into Poland in 1939. Hundreds of thousands of refugees fled south in confusion. When the Germans invaded Western Europe the next spring, waves of refugees from Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg surged into France, joining the French population as it moved into Southern France. Many were Jewish fugitives, desperately trying to escape the Nazi advance. Some areas were practically deserted. The last year of World War II produced millions of new refugees. The armies that brought liberation found hordes of refugees underfoot.

After the war, great masses of displaced persons headed back to what remained of their homes and countries. Some refugees had been so shattered by the war that they refused to go back, remaining on the soil where they had been liberated. Other refugees remained in camps for years before a way was found to provide them with homes. The war may have been over, but political conflict was not, and the conflict continued to drive some Europeans from their homes even as others were trying to resettle.

For the first time in refugee history, medical technology was able to prevent widespread outbreak of epidemic diseases among the refugees. But famine and starvation were not so successfully tamed. Crops had not been planted. The infrastructure had been smashed. Europeans were hungry. Many were fed from America's bounty.

THE COLD WAR AND REFUGEES

WHILE THE REFUGEES from World War II were still being resettled, another wave of refugees began to grow from the Cold War confrontation between the Soviet bloc and the Western powers. Hundreds of thousands of people from the Soviet Union and Soviet-dominated countries left their homes, often in stealth, seeking asylum in Western Europe and elsewhere. Western authorities usually accepted them as refugees because of the repressive nature of the communist regimes from which they came and the likelihood of persecution if they returned.

Because of a breach in the "Iron Curtain" security system, a great number of fugitives poured into Berlin. Thus, in the summer of 1961, East German police sealed the exits from their half of Berlin and within a matter of hours the Berlin Wall snaked its way across the city. Anyone crossing from east to west now had to deal with watchtowers, barbed wire and armed guards. The exodus was reduced to a trickle.

By the early 1960s, the era of the European refugee appeared to be over. Refugee agencies turned their attention to the Third World, where liberation movements were driving out the crumbling colonial empires and creating millions of desperate new refugees. How had the European refugee crisis been solved? How were the refugee camps emptied and millions of uprooted civilians resettled or assimilated after such colossal upheaval? Part of the answer lies in the economic recovery and prosperity that provided favorable conditions for integrating the uprooted people, both in Europe and overseas.

The stabilization of Europe and the absence of armed conflict between the European countries also enabled the recovery. The majority of European refugees in times past had been from Eastern Europe, but that flow was stemmed by the firm control of the Soviets and their allies over their societies.

When the Soviet Union started to fall apart in 1989, so did that control and stability. Ancient animosities that had been contained by the Soviet bloc and kept in check by its armies suddenly erupted in long-suppressed hatred and violence. Once again refugees are desperately trying to flee Eastern Europe. Most of today's migrations are caused by forced expulsions and by political, ethnic, religious and nationality-based violence and persecution.

While the Western countries of the European Community are strengthening their ties to each other and harmonizing their policies, fragmentation and growth of subnational loyalties continues unabated in Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe divides itself into

smaller and smaller pieces, shoving out anyone who is not the same; Western Europe pulls together, building a fortress against anyone seeking asylum. The refugees are caught in the middle with nowhere to go. Fear of large-scale migration has led the countries of Western Europe to view refugees as threats to national security. Those governments that have had generous asylum policies feel they must restrict entry or else be left to bear the refugee burden alone as other countries close their doors.

The greatest pressure results from the influx of millions of people attempting to flee the genocidal violence of the republics of the former Yugoslavia, particularly Bosnia and Croatia. Many are trapped, homeless, inside their homelands, but those who do escape are not often welcomed. Most European governments, unable to stop the violence and unwilling to accept so many refugees for permanent settlement, have instituted visa requirements preventing former Yugoslavs from entering. Those refugees who do succeed in entering are usually offered temporary protection only. Under temporary protection the refugees are not allowed to seek permanent asylum; they can stay for awhile in hopes that a political solution can be found for the conflict in what was once Yugoslavia and they will be able to return home. However, the ethnic cleansing campaign of the nationalist Serb forces, designed to kill or drive out non-Serb populations, raises serious questions as to whether very many will be allowed to return home, if and when that happens.

Other Eastern European countries are experiencing armed conflict, turmoil, unemployment, hunger and poverty. Former Soviet republics such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Chechnya are torn by war. Hostilities will cease, then flare up again, each side blaming the other for starting it. Thousands of families are so hungry in Romania, Albania and other countries that parents surrender their children to orphanages because they cannot afford to feed them. Hunger, joblessness and poverty are forcing many people to join the refugees who have been uprooted by war. Many of these displaced people move from place to place, from Armenia to Azerbaijan to Russia, displaced time and time again. Sometimes they are able to return home, until war breaks out again.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent, the United Nations and other agencies help build camps, set up tents and deliver food parcels, but many refugees lack the most basic needs for shelter, food, sanitation, medicine and clothing. In some of the war zones, aid is not even allowed in. And no one seems to be able to broker peace.

When the Cold War ended, there was hope that a new era of global cooperation was beginning. Instead, old wounds were opened,

new conflicts arose and huge numbers of refugees were uprooted. And instead of becoming stronger, international cooperation in sharing the refugee burden grew weaker. The safe countries pulled together—but they united to close doors rather than open them.

INDOCHINA AND REFUGEES

THE COUNTRIES of Indochina—Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos—have suffered decades of war. These wars have caused several million people to flee their countries, seeking refuge from the fighting, persecution and violence. After World War II, the French were determined to regain control over their colonies in Indochina. However, the Vietnamese wanted independence; they fought for it and eventually won it from France. But there were two governments that wanted to take over—a communist government in the north and a regime that was not communist in the south. There were supposed to be elections in 1956 to decide who would rule, but instead hostilities escalated and war broke out.

The United States had been sending money and military advisers to South Vietnam since 1954. In 1961 President Kennedy agreed to send troops and more weapons. The war and U.S. involvement in it continued to grow; by 1968 there were more than a half million U.S. troops in Vietnam. The bombing spread to Laos and Cambodia.

The Vietnam War became a subject of bitter debate in the United States. Congress argued, students protested, thousands of young men refused to serve in the armed forces. Several years of peace talks led to a cease-fire agreement in 1973, and the United States brought its troops home. Even though both North and South Vietnam signed the peace agreement, they continued the struggle. In 1975 Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese forces and the entire country came under communist rule.

Up to this point millions of Indochinese had been driven from their homes: pushing southward in a panic to escape ahead of the troops, fleeing rural areas to settle in slums on the edge of cities, camping along the road or in the jungle without shelter. However, these internally displaced persons had not chosen the extreme route of abandoning Indochina forever, despite the devastation of war. The fall of Saigon and the onset of communism changed that, bringing the first wave of Indochinese refugees.

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Americans were caught off balance by the collapse of the South Vietnamese Army. They did not have time to wrap up their affairs or ensure the safety of those who had worked with them, who were now compromised and in danger. It was widely believed that the new government would kill anyone who had been associated with the governments of South Vietnam or the United States.

Saigon turned into a nightmare as thousands of people desperately scrambled to get out. They swarmed outside the U.S. embassy compound and at the airport. They clambered into small boats and escaped by sea, hoping to be picked up by American ships. They paid whatever it took to get out; some even took over boats at gunpoint. During an 18-hour emergency airlift, U.S. helicopters plucked people from rooftops while Marine guards tried to hold back the hysterical mobs trying to escape. Most Americans and thousands of Vietnamese were rescued and flown to U.S. naval ships offshore, but many high-risk Vietnamese were left behind.

In the following days, Vietnamese refugees began appearing at ports throughout Asia. These countries of first asylum could not accept the refugees permanently—they were overcrowded already and they felt the other nations of the world should do their fair share. Many of the refugees were channeled into hastily organized receiving camps in Guam, the Philippines, Thailand or Malaysia.

The camps had been literally thrown together overnight, so many were overcrowded and lacking in sanitary facilities, food and medicine. Initially the refugees sometimes had to live in flimsy shacks made of whatever they could find, but soon tents or barracks were set up. In the camps, which were run by the United Nations, refugees were interviewed and given medical examinations.

Most of the first-wave refugees were then flown to a reception center in the United States. Life in the centers was not easy. The refugees were anxious (they did not know what would happen to them next), lonely (for family, friends and familiar customs left behind), confused (the refugees and the people who were trying to help them often did not speak the same language), and bored (most of the time there was nothing to do but wait).

The reception centers had schools for children and offered classes for adults in English, American culture and vocational training. Volunteer agencies looked after the refugees and helped them find sponsors, who had to promise to help the refugees find housing and jobs, learn English and get their children into school. Thousands of individuals, families and organizations such as churches, volunteered to serve as sponsors to help refugee families relocate in the United States. By December 1975 all the first wave refugees had left the centers. Everyone thought that was the end of that.

Meanwhile, back in Vietnam thousands of people who had not been able to get out were sure they would be killed—and many were. To bring about peace and order, the new government set out to get rid of anyone who had been powerful in the South Vietnamese government or military. Those who were not killed were sent to grim re-education camps where they were reformed with forced labor and indoctrination in the new communist values.

In the name of peace and order the Viet Minh government was also determined to get rid of everyone who was not full-blooded Vietnamese. This especially applied to the ethnic Chinese, in part because the governments of Vietnam and China were quarreling. The communists also wanted to restructure their society to eliminate the business class, which was largely made up of ethnic Chinese. The Chinese were harassed and persecuted, but they were allowed to leave the country if they paid for the privilege. In this way the Vietnamese government was able to get rid of them and confiscate their wealth and property in the process.

The South was harshly brought into line with the closely controlled North. People were forced to relocate from the cities to unsettled areas to work on collective farms. The communists weakened the primary social unit, the family, teaching children to inform on their parents. The authorities cracked down hard on dissidents and discriminated against those who were known to have wartime connections. The government took over farms and businesses, while mismanagement and corruption flourished. Economic conditions deteriorated and food became very expensive. Faced with unrelenting repression and hardship, in 1978 a second wave of Vietnamese began desperately looking for a way to escape.

For many, that way out was by sea. The government would not allow planes to land in Vietnam, so most of those who fled had to use boats. They became known throughout the world as the boat people.

Some boat departures were sanctioned by the government, although they would not admit it, and all the arrangements were made more or less covertly. The ethnic Chinese (and many ethnic Vietnamese who had their identification papers changed to make it look like they were Chinese) paid an intermediary the exit fees in gold. There were usually other bribes to be paid as well. After gathering at transit camps and providing their documents, they were crowded into boats and shoved off. At checkpoints on the way out, authorities often relieved them of any valuables they had managed to bring along. Passengers were told that when they arrived wherever they arrived, they were to say that they had left clandestinely.

Every kind of floatable vessel, from small wooden fishing boats to rickety freighters, was used—many had seen better days and were less

than seaworthy. Some of the boats were specially outfitted for the refugee business, with a slot for each passenger and funnels to bring ventilation to those below deck. Other boats were barely patched together, and escapees squatted on open decks or lashed themselves to the sides. Once the boats were loaded, officials invariably put additional groups on at the last minute—people they had recruited on their own, so they could pocket their exit fees. As a result, most boats were packed with three or four times the number of people they could safely carry. The more people that could be crammed into a boat, the more money could be collected.

For their money, passengers got nothing more than standing room on a boat. There was no assurance they would reach another country or that that country would take them in. Often there was not even a definite destination. All they were paying for was a chance to leave.

At one point shadowy intermediaries of the Vietnamese government arranged with international racketeers for huge cargo ships to take away thousands of refugees. These packed freighters threatened to overwhelm countries of first asylum and upset resettlement programs. There was such an outcry from the world community about this wholesale trafficking in human lives that the big boat trade was stopped.

The first wave of Vietnamese refugees had been, on the whole, an elite group—mostly well educated and urban, although there were uprooted peasants, as well. They included members of the South Vietnamese government and military, Buddhists and Catholics who feared religious persecution by Communists, employees of American companies and ethnic Chinese who had been in business in South Vietnam. This second wave, the boat people, included some elite, but a great many were fishermen and farmers, limited in education and occupational skills. The ethnic Chinese were allowed to leave—in fact, they were virtually forced out—but the ethnic Vietnamese were not.

Ethnic Vietnamese had to use bribery and cunning to get out. Their boats left clandestinely. Many of these boat people took enormous risks even before they got into the boat. It was nearly impossible to travel about in Vietnam. Would-be refugees had to either bribe or slip by informers, police and military patrols, and risk being shot or arrested if discovered. Coast patrols declared open season on those attempting unapproved departures.

The refugee business attracted many racketeers and confidence men who took people's life savings without any intention of arranging for their escape. The victims were not exactly in a position to complain to the police. Those who were actually able to secure passage were unable to take many possessions with them. Most likely they had to sell everything they owned just to get on the boat. Some

families pooled their resources and were able to raise the money to send two or three family members out. Many of these people never saw their families again.

The clandestine boats were also totally unsuited for ocean travel. The boat people left Vietnam on anything that could float—junkets, other sailboats, fishing boats, homemade rafts and even oil drums that had been tied together.

These boats were often unimaginably crowded as well. People could be jammed in so tightly that they were unable to move; at least this made it unlikely they would fall overboard. Some of the boats were so overcrowded that they literally burst apart at the seams.

Few boats were equipped for the voyage. Some of them had engines, but they often ran out of fuel or broke down. Then the boats just drifted helplessly, their passengers hoping they would drift to land or that a passing ship would rescue them. Food and water were scarce and sometimes lacking altogether. The lack of food and water was hardest on the small children. When they died, their bodies were buried at sea. Sometimes the boat people caught jellyfish and dried them in the sun. All they could drink was urine or sea water—which only made their thirst worse—unless it rained.

Rain could be a mixed blessing; it was often accompanied by storms. Bad weather and rough waters sank many of the boats. From April to October, typhoons regularly swept the area with driving rain and winds up to 150 miles an hour. The flimsy refugee boats set out anyway; no one knows how many were tossed like toys by the waves and smashed to bits. The refugees were so desperate to leave that they also tried to escape during the northeast monsoon, with its torrential rain, strong winds and sudden squalls.

And if unsafe, overcrowded, ill-equipped boats and terrible weather were not bad enough, the refugees were also threatened by pirates—Thai fishermen who for centuries have held second jobs as pirates to supplement their income. Refugees presented a sudden opportunity, and pirates began pursuing them with zeal. They chased the refugee boats, surrounding or ramming them to stop them. Then they would rob the passengers of whatever possessions they had.

Nearly all refugee boats were attacked by pirates, usually more than once. In the first attack the pirates usually just stole valuables like jewelry and gold and then left. In second attacks they took food and any other possessions left on board, leaving the victims with nothing but the clothes they were wearing (and sometimes they even took that). In subsequent attacks, if there was nothing left to steal, the pirates would often beat or kill the men, assault the women, abduct the girls, and disable the boat, leaving those refugees still alive to drift on a sinking ship.

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The refugees were completely vulnerable to these attacks and had no recourse. The Thai government was officially against this piracy, but did not do anything to stop it. Overwhelmed by refugees, Thailand's priority was to deter the boat people from invading their country. They allowed the pirates to continue in hopes this would dissuade the Vietnamese from setting out.

The boat people knew before they left about the danger of pirates, weather and untrustworthy boats. They heard radio broadcasts and read letters from friends and relatives. They were extremely afraid and anxious. But still they left their country, because they would rather go anywhere than stay.

There is no way of knowing how many boat people were lost at sea. They left stealthily. When they died at sea they left no evidence. Their boats were broken up or sank. Their bodies were eaten by sharks or fish. Most estimates are that only about half the refugees who set out from Vietnam ever made it to another shore.

At first the boat people headed for Thailand, the nearest landfall. But as word of pirates spread, many began sailing for Malaysia instead, in spite of the additional distance. (Many were unable to avoid pirates and were attacked anyway.) Those leaving Northern Vietnam usually headed for Hong Kong, often in sailboats without motors. For the most part, the refugees were inexperienced sailors. Some had only a vague idea where they might be headed. These boating novices often made navigational blunders or were blown off course and ended up lost, drifting across the South China Sea. They ended up in the Philippines, Brunei, Singapore or Indonesia.

Merchant ships have a tradition of rescuing victims of shipwrecks, and some refugees who foundered at sea were picked up and dropped off at the next port of call. Some ships had trouble trying to unload refugees as more and more countries refused to allow them ashore unless they had guarantees of resettlement elsewhere. The humanitarian tradition of rescue began to wear thin; some cargo ships were ordered by their owners to ignore any boat people they might encounter, and others sailed out of their way to reduce the odds of encounter.

After undergoing the anxiety of escape under cover of darkness, and surviving the terror of storms at sea, pirates, and horrible hunger and thirst, many boat people now had to experience the disappointment of rejection. None of the countries of Southeast Asia wanted them. There were too many of them; they were arriving much faster than they could be resettled. The refugees were too poor; they had nothing. They might have health problems and spread disease. They might be communist insurgents. Also, these countries of first asylum were angry that the Vietnamese government was exporting its own people for profit, under conditions that endangered their lives.

These developing countries were already too crowded and poor. Their own problems were overwhelming, and they were not able to take on the burden of caring for refugees. They began devising ways to force the refugees to sail toward other destinations.

Singapore has a land area of only 227 square miles; it felt it was too small to accept any refugees. Singapore was the only country to turn the refugees away from the start. The boats were intercepted, provided with food, water and fuel, and sent on their way.

After awhile Malaysia and Thailand started turning away boats, too. They set up sea blockades to prevent refugees from coming ashore, although their few patrol boats could not prevent many landings. Some refugee boats were towed back to open waters. Refugees were only allowed to land if their boats were considered unseaworthy. This led to the dangerous practice of the refugees making holes in their boats as they neared land. Then all the passengers would have to bail out and flounder to shore.

The only port where refugees were welcome was Hong Kong. The British colony established camps for the refugees and even became a second port of asylum for refugees who had first landed in Malaysia or other countries. Hong Kong, already one of the most crowded urban districts on earth, became so filled with refugees that there was no more physical room; some had to remain onboard their boats in the harbor until accommodations could be built.

Hundreds of thousands of refugees were pouring out of Vietnam. The influx was so massive that it threatened the stability of Southeast Asia. Then Vietnam invaded Cambodia, flooding the region with even more desperate refugees. The refugee situation was becoming a matter of worldwide concern. Other nations began putting pressure on Vietnam to stop exporting refugees. At a conference in Geneva in 1979, the Vietnamese government (never admitting to its policy of expelling its people) agreed to try to put an end to the boat traffic, and set up the Orderly Departure Program so that people could leave in a legal and organized way.

After that, any new arrivals were genuine escapees. Organized departures became a thing of the past. A bamboo curtain was lowered over the country. Only in the most remote coastal locations was it sometimes possible to sneak past the guards and their guns. Thailand and Malaysia once again allowed refugees to land without obstruction. Merchant ships once more were willing to rescue boat people.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees sent workers to set up and run refugee camps throughout Southeast Asia. Other private relief organizations came to help. The camps were a place where refugees could seek safety and wait for a new home.

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But most countries did not want the boat people. Voluntary repatriation to Vietnam was out of the question—those who fled would have been killed or at least jailed if they returned. The countries of first asylum were unable to provide permanent homes on a significant scale. Nations from farther away were showing a marked reluctance to share the burden. All the organizations could do was take the refugees to temporary camps and keep looking for places where they could find final asylum.

Malaysia transferred some refugee camps from their place in limbo on the beaches to offshore islands. One camp was built on a rocky, waterless, tiny island to hold 5,000 people. In the summer of 1979, 45,000 people were struggling to survive in this slum of makeshift tents and lean-tos. The camp was hot, smelly and without adequate sanitation. The water was polluted with human waste; disease and malnutrition claimed many victims. People had to depend on relief organizations for the little bit of food given them to eat, and sometimes the camp guards charged them for that.

Life in the refugee camps was almost as difficult and dangerous as the boat trip. There were so many people, it was impossible to meet everyone's needs. The camps varied widely, from brick and concrete shelters in Hong Kong to barbed-wire pens on the beaches of Malaysia, to sprawling, alternately dusty and muddy settlements in Thailand.

It seemed like there was never enough food. Water was scarce as well. Usually clothing and medicine were completely lacking. As time passed, the camps became more organized and living conditions improved somewhat. Barracks replaced the shanties. Food arrived in adequate amounts. Sanitation improved. Medical clinics were set up and were reasonably well-staffed and stocked.

Schools were built in many of the camps. Some camps had primary school for the younger children and cultural orientation classes for teenagers and adults. Some taught English language courses, and a few even had recreational or vocational programs.

For most of the refugees, more than anything else, life in the camps was boring. There were no jobs to be had, and the refugees were not allowed to leave the camps to look for work. Because there was nothing for most of the refugees to do, some became restless and frustrated. The monotony, hopelessness and squalid, crowded conditions turned some camps into breeding grounds of discontent. Gangs formed, and many people were afraid to leave their huts after dark. The camps guards did not always make the refugees feel safer; sometimes they mistreated the refugees, making the camps seemed more like prison camps.

Tensions were also high because everyone was anxious over their future and the uncertainty of where and when they would be going.

Local people often developed resentment and ill feeling toward the newcomers. As time dragged on and prospects dimmed, the refugees could only continue to hope that some country would let them in.

As with the first wave of Vietnamese refugees, in order to go on to another country, each refugee family had to have a sponsor who would help them get to their new country and get settled. In the camps the refugees were questioned by immigration officials about their reasons for leaving Vietnam. Nearly all were accepted by the U.N. as political refugees. Caseworkers also tried to find out if they had any relatives already in the United States or another country. Sometimes the process of getting applications approved and the search for sponsors took months, even years. The camps assumed a permanence that nobody was happy about.

It was not just the boat people who were trying to find refuge, although they received more publicity. Not everyone left Indochina by boat—hundreds of thousands fled over land. They were all competing for space and sponsors.

Not long after communists gained control of Vietnam, they also took over Laos and Cambodia. In 1975 the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot took over Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge implemented one of the most ruthless and bloody revolutions in history. Their radical, ultranationalist policies shattered the old society virtually overnight. Entire classes of the population—former government and military workers, students, intellectuals and professionals—were systematically killed. Religion was banned, schools were abolished, books were burned, cars and machines were abandoned; all vestiges of Western influence and modernization were eradicated.

The country, renamed Kampuchea during the reign of the Khmer Rouge, was turned into one vast work camp. People were driven out of the cities and towns—there were to be no cities in the new Kampuchea—and sent to work zones in the countryside. These forced evacuations left tens of thousands dead from starvation, exhaustion and exposure.

The Khmer Rouge sought instant reversion to an agrarian society without a trace of modernization or foreign influence. The population was put to work in collective farms, planting and harvesting rice. Family life was destroyed: husbands and wives were separated and children were taken from their parents, brothers and sisters. Everyone worked from before dawn to after dark on the prison farms. They were given hardly any food, and they survived only by surreptitiously scavenging bugs and grubs. The rules were enforced by young teenaged boys with automatic weapons. Any resistance, complaint or criticism was reported by informers and met with death, usually by bludgeoning, although another common execution involved shooting people so they toppled into mass graves.

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The purges and mass executions, along with starvation and disease, took an appalling toll. No one knows just how many Cambodians died in the three-and-a-half years of Khmer Rouge rule; the country was completely cut off from the outside world and little news seeped out. Most estimates suggest that as many as one-third to one-half of the seven million people who had lived in Cambodia died or were murdered by the new government.

While the Khmer Rouge were in power, relatively few Cambodians managed to escape through the jungles, mountains, land mines and security patrols. Many who were able to escape found sanctuary in Vietnam, as curious as that sounds. Any departures were brutally opposed. The Khmer Rouge pursued escapees across the border, killing them on Thai soil. They publicly executed recaptured fugitives as a warning to others who might be tempted to try.

Then on Christmas Day in 1978, Vietnam invaded Kampuchea. The fighting created chaos and turmoil throughout the country. To escape the danger, peasants fled in all directions, many hiding in the mountains and forests. Battles raged on for months. Crops were neither planted nor harvested—to go into the fields was to risk being shot. By September the country was in the grip of a disastrous famine. The half-starved population milled around the country, trying to avoid the fighting, locate relatives and forage for food.

Hundreds of thousands of refugees surged out of Kampuchea, fleeing war and famine. Most took refuge along the border with Thailand. Those who reached Thailand were often totally exhausted and near death, staggering on pitifully thin legs and ridden with disease.

Shortly after the communist takeovers of Vietnam and Cambodia, the Pathet Lao communists began to flex their muscles in Laos. War swept the country and thousands of people who were not ethnic Laotians sought exile elsewhere, along with members of the former government and military.

The new government set up re-education camps, strangled private enterprise, eliminated any remnants of Westernization, and severely restricted all personal liberties. But the main target of their reforming fury were the Hmong, the tribe who lived in the mountains of the north. The Hmong had helped the South Vietnamese and the Americans during their war against the Viet Minh. With the North Vietnamese victory, the Hmong were marked for annihilation. Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces attacked the Hmong in their mountain villages, using aerial and artillery bombardment and chemical weapons. They mined escape routes, ambushed survivors as they fled, and pursued them all the way to Thailand.

Traveling through the wild and rugged terrain, it could take six months for a group of Hmong to travel to the border. They were

weakened by exhaustion and had to forage for food, scratching around for bark, roots and insects. They were forever being delayed by detours over mountains and through jungles to avoid security patrols.

Some Hmong were able to run this gauntlet successfully, only to be shot by the Laotian border police as they tried to swim the last few hundred yards across the Mekong River to freedom. For others a combination of bribery, stealth and luck gained them passage across the border. Most of those who made it to Thailand were suffering from severe malnutrition—many of the children failed to recover and died in the camps.

The Cambodians and Laotians were fleeing war, persecution, famine and communism. Furthermore, many of them no longer had a home in their homeland. After Vietnam invaded Cambodia, thousands of villagers tried to return to their former homes. However, the Khmer Rouge had razed the country so completely, many Cambodians could not even find, let alone recognize, the villages and homes in which they had spent their lives.

The Thai government did not want either the Cambodians or the Laotians declared refugees, for fear that its already overburdened agencies would be required to undertake the tremendous task of caring for them, perhaps even permanently. Thousand of Thai villagers who had lived along the border were displaced by the massive influx of refugees. The situation was out of control and no longer containable. Thailand labeled these new arrivals illegal immigrants, hoping to drive them back to their homeland. Anyone judged to be an economic refugee was forced from Thai territory at the point of a rifle. No one volunteered to return—they knew they would probably be shot if they went back. Even more, Thailand wanted to prevent more refugees from entering the country. It was afraid that if these refugees were included in the resettlement stream it would attract many more. To discourage this "pull factor," many of the "illegal immigrants" were placed in detention centers. Because they were denied refugee status, they did not receive United Nations protection, nor were they allowed to resettle abroad.

These unwanted refugees were herded into crowded, squalid camps behind tall chain-link fences. They were forbidden to leave the camps, and try to start a new life in Thailand or abroad. There they remained in limbo indefinitely, not knowing what the future would bring.

The refugee camps, both in Thailand and along the Cambodian border, were often horrific places. At times the only preparation made for a group of thousands of refugees was that the jungle was bulldozed and a barbed wire or chain-link fence was put around the area. Relief workers worked hard to pull the camps into shape, but even the best were austere and nothing more than basic.

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As the camps struggled into existence, refugees used twigs, branches and plastic sheeting to erect the most basic shelters for themselves. Those who were a little stronger were sometimes able to build flimsy thatched shelters. As time went by, thousands of small huts were crammed and jumbled together.

Sanitation was minimal. Garbage lay over the ground. Flies covered everything like a black film. If a stream ran through the camp, it was doubtless filthy and half-filled with sewage. Usually there was no running water. Tanks were filled daily by relief workers, but they ran dry early and people had to bathe and wash their clothes in the foul stream.

The refugees were suffering from malaria, dysentery, typhoid, tuberculosis and war wounds. Prolonged malnutrition had caused dehydration, kwashiorkor (a disease of protein deficiency), and marasmus (a condition in which the body feeds on itself and wastes away). Some were so frail they lay helpless in bundles of rags, unnoticed by the overworked staff and too weak to ask for rice and medical treatment. Sometimes it was difficult to tell who was dead and who was alive. There was little treatment or medicine available. Doctors would come to some camps for a few hours to try to run a hospital, but they left before dark. It was too dangerous to stay.

It took a long time to get institutionalized feeding programs set up along the border. As the programs got going, some food was distributed free to the ordinary people for whom it was intended. Some was sold to them by corrupt warlords. Some ended up in the marketplace, and some was even sold a second time back to the food programs. There was not enough food, but at least there was some food. Many refugees were fed regularly for the first time in years.

There were guards at the detention centers, which were little more than prison camps. These arrogant and menacing young soldiers prowled around the camp overseeing food distribution, arresting newcomers and occasionally shooting those who tried to leave. The guards often treated the refugees like animals, and many suffered under their extortion, robbery or assault.

People can bear just about anything if they know it is going to end. These refugees had no such assurance. They were held for long periods, sometimes years. Slowly the world realized what had been going on. Slowly the doors were opened to take the refugees in. Slowly the camps began to empty.

The story of the Indochinese is the story of people rejected. First, and most painfully, rejected by their homelands—the countries of their birth, their ancestors, their families. The countries where they knew when the rains would come, how the birds sang and where the sun came over the mountains. The countries where, finally, there was

no hope and no future. Rejected next by neighboring countries where they sought safe haven—rejected as a burden and a nuisance. Ignored and rejected, initially at least, by nations with the capacity and heart to save them, in hopes that the problem would just go away. It is the story of refugees throughout history.

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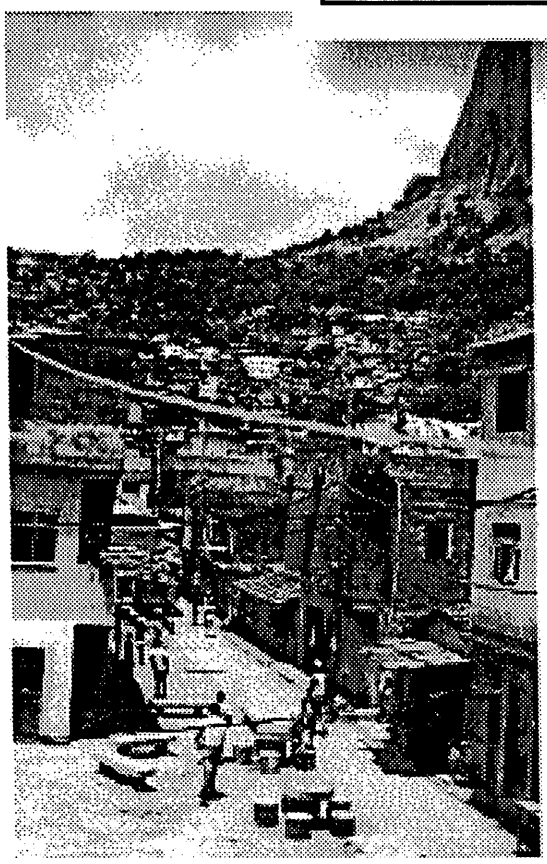

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GLOSSARY

Baiana— a woman from the northern state of Bahia

Bandeirante— early explorers of Brazil's interior regions, literally "flag-bearers"

Bossa nova— a more complex form of the samba that de-emphasizes the tune

Caboclo— Brazilian of mixed blood, with European and Indian ancestry

Cafuso— Brazilian of mixed blood, with African and Indian ancestry

Candomblé— African religion; rituals involve spirit possession

Capoeira— an acrobatic sport mixing dance and judo devised by African slaves

Carioca— a resident of Rio de Janeiro

Cassava— the plant from which manioc flour is extracted

Churrasco— a gaúcho barbecue

Dende'— a type of palm tree; oil from it is a key ingredient in Bahian cooking

Favelas— slums in Brazilian cities

Futebol— soccer, the national sport

Gaúcho— cowboy of Brazil's southern plains

Macumba— an African cult in which initiates seek possession by the spirits

Maloca— a communal house for several families of Amazonian Indians

Maté— a bitter herb tea

Mulatto— Brazilian of mixed blood, with European and African ancestry

Pampas— the grasslands of southern Brazil

Paulistas— residents of São Paulo

Samba— a style of music and dance brought to Brazil from Africa

Sertão— dry and arid backlands in Brazil's Northeast

Tanga— tiny little bikini worn on the beaches of Brazil

Vaqueiro— cowboy of the Northeast

BRAZIL

THE LAND

BRAZIL IS GIGANTIC. It covers half of the South American continent, and its borders touch all of the other South American countries except Chile and Ecuador. If you were to put a map of Europe over a map of Brazil, a great deal of Brazil would show around the edges. Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world; if it were not for Alaska, even the United States would be smaller. At Brazil's northeasternmost part, you are closer to Africa than to its southern border.

Furthermore, most of this vast territory is potentially useful. Brazil has no inaccessible mountains, burning deserts, or frozen wastelands. Granted, the deep, dark jungles of the Amazon are very deep and dark indeed. But there are no extremes of topography to even compare to the Andes Mountains that lie to the west. Most of the country is either an elevated plateau or a low plain, averaging only a few hundred feet above sea level.

Brazil's Atlantic eastern coast stretches for over 4,600 miles, the world's longest continuous coastline. This magnificent coast is notched with coves and peninsulas, creating gorgeous bays and golden beaches. Although this seaboard accounts for less than 10 percent of the land, more than 1/3 of the population live here, especially around the natural harbors.

Connecting the ocean to the interior are extensive river systems, not only the mighty Amazon but also the São Francisco (which is wholly within Brazil, looping from the arid Northeast to the temperate Southeast) and the Rio de la Plata system (the Paraguay, Uruguay, and Paraná rivers), among others.

Brazil's immense size enfolds many contrasts, ranging from wild frontiers and unexplored jungles to vast farmlands and modern cities. These areas have such different characteristics, they almost constitute five nations within one. Therefore, Brazil has been divided into five geographical regions, each with its own distinguishing features: the North, Northeast, Central West, Southeast, and South.

THE NORTH

THE NORTH region consists of the Amazon Basin. Covering nearly half of Brazil, this wilderness is bigger than the country of India. Over four hundred years ago Spanish explorers searched Amazonia for the mythical El Dorado, a city filled with gold. One of the wildest, most uncivilized places on earth, this

largely unexplored territory of jungles, rivers, and swamps is still one of the world's last great frontiers. Travel is pretty much restricted to boats, helicopters, or airplanes that can land on the rivers. A few roads have been hacked through the jungles, but they have proved very costly, both in money and human lives.

Nature rules Amazonia. The jungle dictates how life can be lived. Because of this, the Amazon plain is one of the most sparsely populated areas in the world. More people live in Chicago than in all of Amazonia.

The North is dominated by two features: the Amazon River and the Amazon jungle.

Think of Amazonia as resembling a leaf, with veins of more than a thousand rivers converging on the central rib of the great Amazon River. The Amazon itself is a little shorter than the Nile, so it may not be the world's longest river, but it carries more water than any other river in the world. With its tributaries (many of which are mighty rivers in their own right), there is no doubt that it makes up the world's largest river system. It is estimated that it carries to the ocean 80 percent of all the fresh water in the world. Every second it sends 80 million gallons of water into the Atlantic.

The Amazon begins high up in the Peruvian Andes, over four thousand miles from the Atlantic Ocean. By the time it reaches the ocean, the force of the river causes tidal waves 12 feet high, pushing back the salt seawater for 200 miles offshore.

The Amazon is so wide, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the river from the ocean. It is 200 miles wide at its mouth, and even a thousand miles inland, it is seven miles wide at places. There is an island at the river's mouth that is larger than Switzerland. Near Manaus, the yellowish brown, muddy waters of the Amazon meet the black, clear waters of the Rio Negro at the Meeting of the Waters. Both rivers are about two miles wide at this point, and they converge in whirlpools of brown and black. Because of their differing velocity and density, they flow side by side for more than five miles before mixing.

The Amazon River is the highway to the interior. Oceangoing ships can travel the Amazon's entire length within Brazil because the Basin is very flat, and the gradient of the watercourse drops very gradually. It is a good thing that the Amazon runs so close to the equator, otherwise this flatness would cause the area to be permanently flooded. But because the northern and southern tributaries rise in different hemispheres with different rainy seasons, only about half of the rivers are in flood at the same time.

The Amazon jungle, that enfolds the river, is the world's largest tropical rain forest. Much of this primary rain forest is unexplored. From above, it looks like an endless green, bumpy carpet, veined with

silvery rivers. The tops of the 200 foot trees pack closely together, forming the forest canopy, which supports monkeys, birds, and snakes. Lower down is a second layer of trees, more tolerant of shade and housing their own wildlife. Winding through these layers are many climbing plants. The forest floor is dark and gloomy; only about 10 percent of the sunlight penetrates this far.

The forest floor is uncluttered, because everything in the rain forest is consumed within the ecosystem. Every living thing is mutually dependent in this jungle balancing act. Nothing is wasted. Even a falling leaf is recycled before it hits the ground.

The soil is thin and infertile because so little sun reaches the ground, so little vegetation recycles into the soil, and the heavy rains carry away valuable soil nutrients. The rain forest has been described as a desert covered with trees. The jungle is luxuriant only because it uses its resources so efficiently and only when the balance is undisturbed. If large areas are cleared, rain washes away the soil, turning the land into an actual desert. Scrub and small trees may grow back in this wasteland, but the big trees will probably never return. Huge areas of the rain forest are cleared for cattle ranches and farms, but often they are abandoned within a few years because of the poor soil.

Some of the world's most unusual plants grow in this jungle in astonishing variety. Botanists have identified more than 3,000 species within a single square mile; many more have yet to be classified. Scientists believe this tropical forest could contain species beneficial to humans; international pharmaceutical companies send employees to search the jungle for plants that might hold a cure. Mostly they are discovering how much they have yet to discover.

The abundant vegetation of the Amazon jungle is important in sustaining the world's ecological balance; it is said to be responsible for replenishing nearly half of the world's supply of oxygen. Since this rain forest is so huge, and since it is almost solidly covered with green plant life that is busy either growing or decaying, oxygen is released in enormous amounts. If the Amazon jungle were not there to consume carbon dioxide and release oxygen, the amounts of these gases in the earth's atmosphere might change dramatically, affecting the entire planet and its weather.

For centuries the Amazon Basin has been home to scattered groups of Indians. Most live along the rivers in houses of thatch or planks built on stilts, so they are above the seasonal floods. Sometimes these houses are communal, with sections for each family to sling its hammocks. Modern Brazil scarcely affects these people, although the primitive cultures are increasingly affected by outside forces and development. Explorers still find Indians who have never

met an outsider. Many live by hunting and gathering food, as they always have. The government has set up reservations to protect the Indians and the environment in certain areas.

Scientists are finding that the Indians may be the shortcut to unlocking the forest's secrets. The first explorers found Indians using as medicine a white crystal taken from the bark of the cinchona tree. Hundreds of years later this crystal was named quinine after it was "discovered" that it protected people from malaria. The Amazonian Indians use more than 1,000 native plants for medicinal purposes. Western doctors are learning the value of these plants. Of the 3,000 plants identified as having anticancer properties, 70 percent come from the rain forest.

The Amazon still has many treasures to offer—treasures with much greater potential value to mankind than the El Dorado for which the early explorers searched.

THE NORTHEAST

THE NORTHEAST region of Brazil was the first area settled by the early colonists. This geographical area, twice the size of Texas, is made up of nine states and forms South America's hump.

The area's first export was brazil wood, which gave the country its name, but soon timber was eclipsed by the even more lucrative sugar trade. A narrow strip of land along the coast is fertile. Sugar, cotton, and cacao plantations still thrive here if there is enough rain.

The coastal cities feature a lot of history, including splendid colonial-era architecture. This region is the place where the cultures of Europe and Africa first came together on the continent, and it is still an important cultural center. The majority black population in the Northeast has retained many African traditions and continues to have a profound influence on the rest of Brazil in terms of art, music, philosophy, and religion.

This has been called the Golden Coast, not only because of the income it produced for the early colonists, but also because of the lovely coastline. The white sand beaches and palm-fringed lagoons make it a popular tropical spot for tourists. It can still claim the title of Golden Coast for its beaches, but the area is no longer wealthy. In fact, the Northeast is the poorest section of all Brazil.

Inland, the terrain rises slightly to become a plateau. This is the immense, dry back land known as the *sertão*. It was first settled as a cattle-raising region, but it has never prospered. The *sertão* is a giant dust bowl of arid savannah, scrub, cactus, and thornbushes.

The quirky climate is the main problem. The average rainfall is 49 inches, which may seem like a lot of rain. However, the sertão experiences drought most of the time. Rain never falls during the first six months of the year. Then, when it rains, it pours. A few hours will produce most of the rainfall for an entire year. The sertão is stricken by severe drought every eight to 15 years, and then devastated by floods.

The droughts between 1877 and 1919 caused two million deaths. In 1984 a five-year drought ended in flash floods that left 150 people dead and 700,000 homeless. During the droughts, thousands move south to crowded cities or to the Central-Western frontier. Even though life is very difficult for the inhabitants of this region, they tend to be stubbornly loyal to their harsh land. Most return when they have saved up some money or when they hear that the rains are falling at home.

Most of the people who live here struggle to eke out a living with subsistence farming or by cattle raising. The Northeastern version of the Brazilian cowboys are called *vaqueiros*. They drive their scrawny cattle long distances in search of pasture.

Nearly one-third of all Brazilians live in the Northeast; the vast majority of them are extremely poor. Even if they migrate to a different part of the country, it is easy to tell where they come from. Their thin wrists and gaunt faces—the result of malnutrition as children growing up in overcrowded homes—mark them for life.

THE CENTRAL WEST

THE CENTRAL WEST region encompasses many contrasting environments. It is both huge and remote; the only region more so is the Amazon region, its neighbor to the north. It is a wild frontier, with large tracts of territory that remain unexplored.

Most of the region sits on the Central Plateau, a huge savannah covered with scrub brush, grass, and small trees. The plateau has rich red soil, but it is suitable for crops only when it is properly plowed and fertilized.

The northern part of this region is covered with dense tropical forests. In fact, another name for the Central West region is Mato Grosso, which means "thick forest" in Portuguese.

The southern part of the region is dominated by the Panatal, the world's largest wetland—it is the size of South Dakota. This wild marshland of rivers and lakes is one of the last virgin wildernesses on earth. In the rainy season the area around the Paraguay River becomes a huge swamp. From above, the land looks like an

enormous quilt of circles and ovals separated by crisscrossing blue, green, and brown rivers and streams. These shapes are created by large patches of colorful flowers and by thousands of ponds and marshes scattered across the lowlands.

The Panatal is a wildlife paradise, inhabited by millions of animals, birds, and fish. In the rainy season over 350 types of fish thrive on the plants in the swollen rivers and crystal-clear lakes. The shores are populated with many rare and wondrous animals, including jaguars, peccaries, and alligators. When the dry season arrives and the water level falls, many fish are trapped in the landlocked lakes, becoming easy prey for the over 600 species of birds that nest there during this time. This region is made up of several huge national parks. The wildlife is protected by game laws, but poachers take their toll.

In 1960 the government built Brasília, a brand new capital, from scratch in the southeastern corner of the Central West region; it was hoped that this would spur development and growth in the area. It took awhile, but in the 1970s the Central West boomed. The Central West is Brazil's fastest-growing region, although its population still represents less than seven percent of the total. People from all over Brazil are moving to the area. Some move to Brasília. Others are pioneers in the rugged frontier zone. Some try their luck at prospecting for gold or diamonds. The area is not unlike the Wild West. Guns are the law in some frontier towns. Landowners still hire pistoleros to keep squatters off their property. The region is becoming a major cattle raising area, and increasing amounts of land are being cultivated.

THE SOUTHEAST

THE SOUTHEAST is the heart of industrial, commercial, and contemporary Brazil. This region has only 11 percent of the nation's land, but 44 percent of Brazil's people live here.

The coastline presents Brazil's most important port. Early settlers were discouraged from exploring too far beyond the coast by an escarpment that rises as high as 9,500 feet, just inland. Behind this barrier, there is a vast tableland that stretches to the Amazon.

The country's two largest cities, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, are in the Southeast region. São Paulo is not on the coast. It is inland, up on the plateau, and it was settled by bandeirantes. It still has an independent frontier spirit. São Paulo was a small town until the coffee plantations moved in during the 1870s. By the 1920s it had overtaken Rio de Janeiro as the most important industrial center in Latin America. Now São Paulo is the business capital of Brazil, the largest

city in South America, and the fastest-growing city in the world, according to some sources. The city moves at a frenetic pace; the residents, or *paulistas*, seem to be always in a hurry. São Paulo has a temperate climate that attracts immigrants, and hydroelectric power is readily available; these have been factors in its industrial production and phenomenal growth.

Rio de Janeiro ranks as one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Nestling between green hills and the turquoise ocean, the city stretches along a magnificent bay of gorgeous beaches, including Copacabana and Ipanema. The beaches are an integral part of the life of the city and its citizens. Inland, the city has a backdrop of mountains, many with curious shapes. On Corcovado Mountain, the world-famous statue of Christ the Redeemer spreads its arms to the city. Pão de Açúcar (Sugar Loaf Mountain), a bare granite rock at the entrance to Guanabara Bay, has become an easily recognizable symbol for the city.

Rio de Janeiro was the capital of Brazil for years, and it remains an important cultural center; Rio is still the soul of Brazil. The residents, known as *cariocas*, are devoted to beauty and glamour, and they spend a great deal of their time enjoying life. This theatrical air is nearly overwhelming during Rio's Carnival celebrations. Rio continues to grow rapidly, especially in the favelass, or slums.

THE SOUTH

THE SOUTHERN region of Brazil has more variety in topography, vegetation, and climate than the other regions. There are beaches along the coast, flat plains on the elevated plateaus, rolling grasslands, forest-clad valleys, and evergreen-forested mountains. Because it is located below the Tropic of Capricorn, the four seasons of the year are distinguishable. Occasionally it even snows in the mountain areas.

More than half of the population of the South are descendants of European immigrants, mainly from Germany and Italy. Many settled here because it reminded them of the Old Country. They put up houses and other buildings in styles reminiscent of home. German is still widely spoken. Most people in this part of the country lead modern, comfortable lives. The wealth is derived from the land. It is an agricultural region of cattle ranches, coffee plantations, productive farms, and vineyards.

The southernmost tip of Brazil, with its flat *pampas* grasslands, is *gaúcho* country. These Brazilian cowboys spend their lives raising cattle on this vast prairie.

The most notable geological feature of the Southern region lies on the border between Brazil and Argentina. At the Iguaçu Falls the combined waters of some 30 rivers and streams drop in a system of 275 waterfalls spread over a three-mile semicircle. Most of the falls plunge over 200 feet, and the noise is thunderous. The water churns into masses of white foam and the mist creates beautiful rainbows. The most spectacular cataract is Garganta do Diablo (Devil's Throat), where four falls curve around a 350-foot drop. These are the wildest waterfalls in the world. When Eleanor Roosevelt saw them, she said they made Niagara Falls look like a kitchen faucet.

ANIMALS

BRAZIL is a treasure trove of animals, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, and other living things. It is estimated that half of all the species in the world live in the Amazon Basin. A great many strange creatures exist among the Amazon's 10,000 known species; many more have yet to be discovered. Some will die out before they are known about.

The creatures sort of live in layers in the rain forest. The trees grow densely, and their tops form a kind of roof called a canopy. The animals that live in the canopy of the rain forest like a lot of light. Colorful parrots flit among the treetops, and monkeys play among the high branches. There are many types of monkeys: woolly monkeys, spider monkeys, marmosets, and howler monkeys, whose screams can be heard for miles.

A little lower in the trees, beneath the canopy, other creatures make their homes. There you can find the coati, a relative of the raccoon but with a longer tail and snout. Sloths live there as well, the two-toed and the three-toed and the arboreal. Sloths have no single relative in the animal kingdom; however, they are curiously human-looking in a furry sort of way. Sloths spend their time upside down, making their way very slowly along the branches as they feed on leaves.

The floor of the rain forest is called the understory. The animals that live in the understory like darkness. Snakes slither silently among the hanging vines. The anaconda, the largest snake in the world, can be 40 feet long and can easily swallow an animal the size of a pig. Giant armadillos, with their shell-like, flexible armor, forage for food among the trees. Anteaters, five feet long, lumber through the forest, often with their cubs on their backs. They poke about with their snouts, looking for anthills to wipe out, so they can collect the ants

with their long, thin tongues. Tapirs, South America's largest mammals, also use their flexible snouts to sniff out food—they like to eat fruit and leaves. The tapir looks like a pig, but is actually related to the horse and rhinoceros. Ocelots slink among the trees. Graceful jaguars prowl the forest floor at night or watch and wait in trees to pounce. Jaguars, the biggest and most powerful wild cats in all of the Americas, are equally at home in the water and often catch fish.

Another animal which is an expert swimmer is the capybara, the world's largest rodent. At four feet, 100+ pounds, it is a rat to be reckoned with. Actually, capybaras are kind of cute, in a guinea pig sort of way. They live along the riverbanks and are semiaquatic, with slightly webbed feet. They move much more gracefully and swiftly in the water than on the land.

The rivers are home to thousands of different kinds of animals, fish, and sea creatures. Alligators and caiman lurk in the waters. Sharks, sawfish, and other fish that normally live in saltwater can be found as far as 2,000 miles from the ocean. Electric eels inhabit the rivers, killing their prey by sending out a powerful electric shock. The notoriously fierce piranha use their triangular, razor-sharp teeth to tear meat apart. A school of hungry piranha, which can number hundreds of fish, can reduce an animal, or a human, to a skeleton within seconds, churning up the water as they devour its flesh. They share the dark, murky water with snakes and giant horned catfish that can weigh up to 400 pounds. It is not a good idea to go swimming in the jungle rivers.

There are gentle, friendly creatures in the water. Freshwater dolphins leap and somersault in the rivers of the Amazon. Manatees, those gentle giants also known as sea cows, live in the Amazon. They feed voraciously on plants, helping to keep the rivers from being choked by vegetation.

Amazon bird life is exotic and diverse. There are 319 different types of tiny hummingbirds alone. Some birds have extraordinary plumage, including big-beaked toucans, parrots, and the scarlet ibis. There are storks and parakeets and the brown-crested hoatzin, which gives off such a foul smell, its nickname is the stinkbird. The birds are well-adapted to life in the forest. For instance, the macaw uses its beak and feet for climbing if the jungle is too dense to fly in. They are living in bird paradise with plenty to eat and plenty of places to live.

The Amazon Basin is home to about 700 species of mammals, 1,800 varieties of birds, and as many as 1,500 species of fish and other aquatic creatures. There are innumerable spiders and insects and butterflies; scientists estimate there are around 15,000. Many of these creatures are unlike those found anywhere else in the world.

The Amazon Basin has been an exotic Eden for its wildlife. Its lush tropical forests and rain-fed rivers have provided a stable environment where its creatures have flourished undisturbed for thousands of years. Now men are clearing the forest to build roads and dams, mines and ranches. The habitats of many animals are threatened.

Many species are interdependent, and the loss of one can lead to the loss of another. For instance, the sloth cannot easily cross new roads and can be cut off from its traditional grazing grounds. In turn, this deprives plants and insects that depend on the nutrients in the recycled foliage provided by the sloth. Other species are threatened by hunters, who want to sell them as pets or who are after their meat or fur. There are laws to protect the animals, but the rain forest is so huge they are almost impossible to enforce. Scientists fear that some species will not be able to adapt and will become extinct. Everyone loses.

CLOTHING

FOR THE MOST PART, Brazil is a modern, industrialized country. Most of the people dress like the people in other modern, industrialized countries. Women wear dresses or skirts and blouses; men wear pants and shirts. Poor people wear whatever they can.

Because the climate is so warm, most people wear lightweight clothing year round. People who work outdoors often strip down to a pair of shorts. People who work in offices will wear suits and ties, but in general clothing is informal, as in most tropical climates.

There are some noteworthy regional variations in clothing. The gaúchos of the southern plains wear special clothing to protect them from the blazing sun, biting insects, and scratchy bushes on the cattle range. Their hats have wide brims to keep out the sun. Their bombachas, very baggy, balloon-pleated pants, tuck into tall leather boots that have circular spurs. A leather apron that protects their legs hangs below a wide leather belt decorated with silver medallions and coins. Their ponchos double as sleeping bags when they are out on a cattle drive. A scarf is also useful for shooing unruly cattle. The gaúchos wear their traditional clothing with pride.

Some of the Indians of the Amazon Basin wear very little indeed. Men and women are content with a small loincloth. Children are happy to wear nothing at all. They adorn themselves with beads and necklaces. Nose and lip plugs are another form of decoration—sticks about four inches long are poked through the nose and just under the lower lip. For celebrations they paint their faces and bodies with designs and patterns, and decorate their hair with feathers.

Cariocas, the people of Rio de Janeiro, are concerned about being fashionable and like to be well-dressed. They feel it is very important to look good. Girls are taught early to wear makeup and jewelry. Women are anxious to keep their beauty, and they dress to exude style and charm. Men like to dress fashionably as well, but they don't try to compete with the more fancy clothing of their female companions.

On the beach, men and women alike wear the very scantiest of bikinis. The *tanga,* or string bikini, certainly provides opportunity to get a good tan, and it became popular worldwide after its first appearance in Rio. The sun worshipers on the beach are not wearing much more than their fellow citizens in the jungle. But they are a lot more self-conscious.

DAILY LIFE

MANY BRAZILIANS rise early, especially those who live in the tropics. They get up before sunrise to take advantage of the hours when the weather is best, before it gets too hot. Early in the morning, city children from wealthy families are driven to their private schools. Poor children in the jungle may walk along raised wooden sidewalks above the mud to their simple village schoolhouse. At the same time, one father may be already hard at work in his air conditioned office, while another is chopping down the undergrowth with his machete, clearing space to grow food. One woman may be on her way to get her hair done at the beauty salon, knowing that another is cleaning her house and will have her lunch ready for her.

Most Brazilian families eat lunch together. Brazilian children usually come home for lunch, finished with school for the day. After lunch, it is the custom to take a nap until around two in the afternoon. Then schoolchildren do their homework and play with friends, while their parents work a second shift, often until seven or eight in the evening. This routine just about allows for two days within each single day, with people working when the climate is least oppressive.

Brazilians like to stay up late, relaxing and visiting with friends. Supper is eaten quite late, and people often go out dancing or to parties or family gatherings. Most Brazilians place a lot of importance on enjoying life.

Daily life varies greatly, depending on where in Brazil the people live. People along the northeast coast might earn their living working on plantations or fishing. In the poor areas further inland,

people might try to make a living raising cattle, but the terrible droughts drive many of them to the cities in search of better lives. In the cities many poor people end up eking out a rough existence in the favelas. Some head for the interior of Brazil in search of land for small farms. Others find opportunities in the south in the mines, on cattle ranches, and on plantations.

The Indians of the Amazon Basin have a unique and isolated culture that is slowly disappearing. They lead a simple life as hunter-gatherers. They usually settle by a river in groups of 50 to 100, in large communal houses with sections for each family to hang its hammocks. Nearby, a small patch of ground is cleared by slashing and burning the trees and undergrowth. The Indians grow basic crops like plantains, which can be prepared in many different ways and are a part of every meal, and manioc, a tuber whose bitter poisons must be squeezed out before it is edible. Most of their food comes from the jungle and must be gathered. The forest provides fruits, nuts, frogs and edible grubs for gatherers skilled enough to find them and knowledgeable enough to distinguish the poisonous from the nonpoisonous. If they want meat for dinner, they must hunt deer, tapir, capybara and other wild animals. More likely they will eat fish, which they catch in many different ways: shooting with bows and arrows, using hand-woven baskets as nets, paralyzing with poisons from jungle plants, luring with lights or special sounds, and trapping.

Nearly all work is done communally. Men hunt, defend the tribal territory, and build houses of grass and wood. Women gather food from the jungle, tend the garden, care for the babies and cook. Children swim in the river, play in the jungle, look for good things to eat, practice shooting bows and arrows and help their parents.

At night, after the evening meal, when the youngest children are asleep, families sit by the fire or swing in their hammocks telling stories. Sometimes they paint their faces and bodies with crushed seeds in designs of the jungle and gather to dance arm-in-arm and sing songs that celebrate life and give thanks for life's gifts.

Political structures are basic, and there is no real hierarchy within a tribe, only family ties. The one person in the community with a specialized role is the shaman, a healer and the intermediary between the tribe and the spirits.

The people of the tribe live in close proximity, yet also in close harmony. The Indians are a part of the jungle, and the jungle is a part of them. Everything they need they get from the jungle. However, their society makes no serious inroads on the forest's resources. Every 10 years or so the group abandons its settlement and moves to another part of the jungle. After they are gone, the forest soon reclaims the land.

EDUCATION

UNDER THE BRAZILIAN CONSTITUTION, education is free and compulsory for all children aged seven to 14. However, over one-third of the Brazilian people are illiterate, and more than 40 percent of school-aged children do not attend school. Families dream that their children will get a good education so they can get a good job, but the task of educating Brazil's children can sometimes seem like an impossible dream.

Many children never get the chance to go to school at all. Several areas of Brazil do not have schools. Not many teachers are willing to go to some of the remote interior regions, and there are not enough funds to meet the educational needs there. Educational opportunities are usually better in larger cities.

Millions of children only attend school for a few years. Then they must drop out to earn money to help support the family. In the cities they become invaluable breadwinners as soon as they are old enough to carry a shoeshine box or a tray of snacks to sell. In the country they are needed to help on the farm or around the house. Their families cannot afford to let them go to school, even though it is free. The children do not earn much, but all the small sums together may make the difference between survival and the disintegration of the family.

Children drop out of school for other reasons, most of which are generated by poverty. Some children have a hard time studying; it is difficult for them to concentrate because they are hungry. Others do not have time to study; they must go to work after school. Many times they just give up and drop out. Or they get discouraged and do not go back if they fail year-end exams. Those who do not pass these standard final exams must repeat the entire year.

Perhaps so many fail the exams because they have been inadequately taught. The quality of instruction in Brazil's primary schools is extremely low. Teachers are paid very poorly, and this translates into low professional standards. Teachers often work long hours, teaching one age group in the morning and one in the afternoon. When this happens, children may receive only two or three hours of schooling a day.

Because about half Brazil's people are under 18 years of age, the educational system is overwhelmed. There are never enough schools, teachers, funds, books or equipment.

Until recently, education was considered a privilege of the wealthy. Well-to-do parents often sent their children to Europe to study classical civilizations and proper social etiquette. Even today, many privileged young adults study abroad, come home with a master's degree from a famous European or North American university,

and glide into a high-powered job. The Brazilian educational system has always been tailored for the upper class, and it has been nearly impossible to broaden the base.

Public education was restructured during military rule in 1971. The Brazilian system of education now includes eight years of primary school (known as First Grade), three or four years of high school (known as Second Grade), and the university level (known as Secondary School). First and Second Grade education are the responsibility of the state and municipal governments and the federal government is in charge of the universities.

Public primary schools are free for everyone. Private primary schools have a much better reputation, so families that have money for tuition and books send their children to private schools. The school year starts in March and runs through the middle of December; summer vacation lasts through January and February. The school day starts early—often at seven or seven-thirty in the morning. Required subjects include Portuguese, literature, math, history, social studies, science, English and physical education. Of those who complete the first year of school, less than two thirds go beyond the fourth year and less than one quarter go on to high school.

Students who pass exams and can afford to stay in school go on to Second Grade for three or four years. Because so many teenagers work, progress is measured in classroom hours rather than school years. This system allows students to learn at their own pace. The majority of secondary schools are privately operated, mostly by the Roman Catholic church. Since the restructuring of the educational system, Second Grade has focused on vocational training. Students who choose vocational training can specialize in such areas as industry, agriculture, education and commerce.

Only a small number of students are able to attend Brazil's universities and colleges. Those who live in the cities stand the best chance. Children of the urban elite are expected to aim for university. Every January, young people crowd into halls to take the vestibular, a very difficult exam that determines whether they will be admitted into a university. Some students study for an entire year before taking the exam. Even so, many must take the exam more than once before they pass it. Different schools within each university require different exams. For instance, someone who wants to study biology will take a different exam from someone who wants to study nutrition. Tuition for the public universities is low due to heavy government support. Because there are not nearly enough places to satisfy demand, competition is stiff, especially for schools of medicine, engineering and economics. Many young people still attend universities in Europe or North America.

Education is important for adults as well. In some cities the government provides evening classes to teach people to read and write. Another program enlists college student volunteers to spend their summer vacations teaching in the Amazon rain forest. Courses taught by radio also reach Brazilians in remote areas.

The educational picture in Brazil is discouraging, but not impossible. There have been some successes. The literacy level, which stood at 40 percent in 1940, is steadily rising. The educational system in Brazil will continue to gradually improve, but only at a tremendous cost and with the dedicated efforts of educators who refuse to be ignored.

FAMILY

FOR A BRAZILIAN, the most significant relationships are found in one's family. Families are extended and frequently large, and the bonds are extremely tight.

Young people usually continue to live with their parents until they are married. Even then, if they do not earn enough to start their own household, married children will continue to stay in their family homes. Once they do move out, they usually do not move far. It is common for families to live close to one another, ideally right next door or on the same street. Aunts and uncles and all the cousins congregate at grandpa and grandma's, walk in and out of each other's houses, watch each other's kids, help each other, share what they need, work together and play together.

Big families are common, especially in the country. Many people have five to 10 children; in the poor rural areas there can be as many as 20 children in a family. Poor Brazilians feel the more children they have, the more insurance they have against hard times when they get old. Wealthy and middle-class urban dwellers will sometimes only have two or three children.

Because of large families and frequent visits by relatives, children are never alone. There is always someone with whom to play. There is always someone to babysit. Babies especially receive constant attention. Someone is always holding them, and if they decide to cry, they become the center of all attention.

Few parents raise their children with strict discipline. If children misbehave in public, they are usually ignored. It is felt that if the children have no way to entertain themselves, they will be bored, and it is inevitable that they will act up. Unless the family is very poor, children are not usually given chores until they are teenagers. They are free to play and study and socialize. Wealthy

teenagers are not allowed to work while they are going to school; that would indicate that the family needed money.

Women usually marry young; men wait until they are a little older. Dating usually begins around the age of 17, often in groups. When things start to look serious, the boy is invited to his girlfriend's home.

Many middle- and upper-class Brazilian women lead lives of leisure and self-indulgence at the beaches, malls and beauty salons. They do not work, and they have servants to take care of the cooking and cleaning. The average well-to-do family has two female servants, one of whom lives in the house. Even lower middle class families often have a maid. The domestics often have a close relationship with the family for whom they work; they play an especially important role in the upbringing of their employer's children.

Families who can afford to, have nannies to look after the children. Those who cannot afford a nanny can count on help from relatives, especially grandparents. It is not unusual for grandparents to stay with the family to look after small children while parents are at work. Brazil has a social security system, but most of the elderly still depend on their children to support them.

Godparents are a very important part of family life in Brazil. When a man agrees to sponsor a child at baptism, he becomes the child's padrinho, or little father, and the child's parents' compadre, or co-father. Godparents and their families become accepted members of the family of the baptized child.

As you can see, the Brazilian idea of family goes beyond the immediate family. Relatives stay in touch with each other; even distant cousins and in-laws see each other often. For some, attending baptisms, weddings, and other family events can occupy so much time that outside relationships are difficult to maintain.

In colonial times, the parentela, or extended family, embraced not just blood relations but also in-laws, adopted children and godchildren. The family patriarch used his family's loyalty to secure his position and interests in the community. The more relatives he could muster, the greater his sphere of influence. Family connections still make a big difference. Many a job has been acquired because a relative pulled a few strings.

Brazil's cultural emphasis on family unity makes its problem with homeless children all the more tragic. Under the stress of poverty, some families disintegrate. Parents are completely unable to support their children, so they abandon them to live on the streets. These children scavenge garbage, shine shoes or pick pockets in order to survive. This is such a violation of everything Brazilians hold dear about the family, that they cannot even bear to think about it. The problem is getting worse.

BRAZIL

FOOD

THE FOOD OF BRAZIL reflects its people. Just as the people are a mixture of European, African and Indian ancestry, the ingredients and preparation of their meals have been influenced by the immigrant, slave and native populations. The Indians cultivated the *cassava* plant and developed the process for extracting manioc flour from it. The Portuguese brought beans and rice with them. Manioc, beans and rice are still the staples of the Brazilian diet. The African slaves introduced a type of palm oil called *dendé*, cooked with bananas and coconut, chili peppers and spices. Then they put it all together, so it tasted very good.

The various influences have all blended; however, the degree of influence of each varies from region to region. Slaves first worked on the plantations of the Northeast, thus, the dishes of this area have been most greatly influenced by African cooking. The people living in the cattle country of the South eat much more beef than the national average. Many of the tribes who live deep in the Amazon rain forest are hunters and gatherers, each day collecting from the jungle and rivers the food they need to eat. In contrast, middle-class city dwellers cook with processed foods from the supermarkets and eat out often, choosing from a wide variety of restaurants featuring, for example, Chinese, French or Italian menus.

The most distinctive and exotic regional cuisine comes from the Northeastern state of Bahia. This unique way of cooking evolved in the kitchens of the colonial plantations. The black cooks modified traditional Portuguese and local Indian dishes to suit their own tastes, introducing the hot peppers, okra, ginger and dendé oil of their native Africa. Beef was hard to come by, so the slave cooks turned to seafood, which was plentiful in the coastal waters. Wheat flour was a luxury, so they used manioc flour. Flavoring came from the spices of Africa and from local products such as coconut milk.

Vatapa—a stew of fish, shrimp, ginger, and coconut milk mixed with bread and served over rice—was devised by slaves to make the most of what food they could find. Pirao, a porridge made from manioc and fish broth, often accompanies a seafood dish. Other typical Bahian dishes include sarapatel—made from the liver and heart of a pig or sheep, mixed with tomatoes peppers, onions, and the fresh blood of the animal—and xinxim, chicken in a thick sauce of ground cashews, onions, tomatoes, and spices.

Someone eating Bahian food for the first time may be a bit put off by its appearance. Everything is mixed together, usually into a

stew that is served over rice or cornmeal; it does not always look appetizing. But the flavors are so rich and intricate that the cuisine has developed quite a reputation. *Baianas*, women of Bahia, sell these dishes along the streets of the cities. *Baianas* also have a reputation as the best bakers of sweets in Brazil.

In the sertão, the dry interior of the Northeast, refrigeration is scarce, and so are fresh meat and fish. After slaughtering a cow, the ranchers make carne de sol (sun-dried, salted meat) by rubbing salt into the meat and hanging it on racks to dry in the sun and wind. The meat must be soaked overnight before it can be cooked. Another traditional dish in the sertão is buchada, in which goat's liver, heart and tripe are stuffed into the goat's stomach; it is then sewed shut and cooked for several hours.

In the south, *churrasco* is a very popular meal. It was created by the *gauchos* of the *pampas*. Beef is cut into large chunks and sprinkled with lots of salt. The beef is threaded onto long skewers and slowly grilled over glowing coals. Most southern towns have restaurants called churrascarias, where churrasco is served on an all-you-can-eat basis, and is the menu of choice at the many festivals and celebrations. Families also cook churrasco at home; many have a special barbecue room attached to their house so they can have churrasco year round, even in the rainy season.

Although Brazil has a huge variety of regional specialties, there is what could be called a national dish: *feijoada*. In many restaurants and homes, feijoada is traditionally served for lunch on Saturday. Feijoada is a stew made of chunks of beef, pork, sausages, tongue, various other dried and smoked meats, and the ear, foot and tail of a pig. This is served with black beans over rice along with kale or other greens and slices of oranges. Brazilians linger over this meal for two or three hours and then usually take a nap.

Feijoada was developed during colonial days. The master's family ate the best cuts of meat and gave the slaves the leftovers. The slaves cooked them with beans and spices, and after a while the people in the big house started wanting to eat it too. Now there are several different versions. Feijoada consists of black beans and rice. Feijoada tipica contains the traditional "leftover" meats including tails, tongues, eyes, and ears. Feijoada moderna uses more conventional cuts of beef and pork.

Besides rice and beans, another staple eaten throughout Brazil is manioc flour. The native Indians have been making manioc flour for centuries. It is prepared from starchy roots of cassava plants, which are peeled and chopped. The roots contain prussic acid, which is poisonous, so the poison is squeezed out in a press. The paste that is left is put through a sieve. The thicker part is fed to the cattle; the thin

paste is boiled and stirred until it has been roasted dry. This powder is manioc flour. When it is toasted, it is called farofa, and Brazilians like to sprinkle it over just about everything they eat. Farofa is an important accompaniment to feijoada.

Breakfast is a moderately sized meal for most Brazilians. Usually it consists of bread and butter or rolls filled with cheese or ham, along with fruit and juice. Breakfast coffee is half coffee and half hot milk, heavily sugared.

Lunch is the big meal of the day, generally taking up to two hours. Employees are often allowed to eat this meal at home. In middle-class homes and restaurants, lunch usually consists of a meat dish accompanied by rice, beans, manioc flour and vegetables. Poor people live more simply on just rice, beans and manioc flour, although sometimes they have fish. Some poor families feel lucky if they eat meat three times a year.

Many people have a snack between lunch and dinner, called a lanche. Every town has a lanchonette, or snack bar, selling pastries, hamburgers and fresh-squeezed juices. Street vendors selling snacks are everywhere, as well.

Dinner is served quite late, often not before 8:30 at night. It is usually lighter than lunch, often just a salad, chicken or fish and dessert.

Brazilians bake up some delicious desserts, but a favorite choice is fresh fruit. Fruit is plentiful, cheap and delicious. Going way beyond apples, oranges and dozens of different kinds of bananas, the jungles are full of exotic tropical fruits. A favorite that grows throughout the country is the goiaba, known as the guava in English. Brazilians believe it stimulates the appetite and aids digestion. The graviola is from the same family as the pineapple, and its white, creamy meat tastes like a cross between a banana and a pineapple. It is oval with a pale green skin and weighs a pound or two. Jabuticaba is a red or black berry that once grew in the wild but is now cultivated. It makes good pies and jelly. Jenipapo is a brown-skinned fruit that grows in the Amazon. The Indians use its dark pulp to paint their faces. It tastes sweet and sour and is kind of watery.

Guaraná is another fruit that grows in the Amazon. From its seeds are made the national soft drink. It is very sweet and very popular. It is thought to be effective in combating diarrhea, as is água de coco, green coconut juice. Guarana' comes in a glass bottle, but água de coco is drunk straight from the coconut: the top is chopped off with a machete and the milky juice is sipped through a straw.

Besides fruit juice and soft drinks, Brazilians drink a lot of coffee. A mandatory part of any meal, social event or business meeting is the cafezinho, which means "little coffee." This very strong brew is served in a tiny cup with a lot of sugar. Sidewalk bars and cafes are

found on almost every street corner, and Brazilians spend a lot of time talking and laughing while drinking fruit juices, tropical milkshakes and coffee. Beer is very popular, as is cachaca, a strong alcohol made from sugarcane, which is mixed with lime or other fruits and sugar.

In southern Brazil, a bitter herbal tea called *maté* is served hot, often in chimarrão gourds. It is made from the leaves of a tree and looks rather like chopped up grass. Maté can be drunk through a metal straw that has a filter at the end to strain out the bits of leaf. Gaúchos drink it while sitting around the campfire waiting for their churrasco to finish grilling. Maté is an essential part of the menu when churrasco is served.

Eating is such a social occasion in Brazil that good manners are especially valued. For example, it is not considered good manners to pick up food with bare hands. A fork and knife are used to eat everything, including oranges, sandwiches and pizza. The proliferation of fast-food restaurants is slowly changing this way of thinking, but many people still carefully wrap a napkin around their hamburgers before digging in.

It is also considered rude to eat in public. If a snack is purchased from a street vendor, it is usually eaten on the spot rather than while walking down the street. This custom originates from the belief that food should be shared. Whether it is a meal or a candy bar, a Brazilian will offer to share with any friend who comes along. Unless there is a really good excuse, it is also rude to say no. Hosts are expected to provide more than enough food for their guests, and the guests are expected to try to eat it all.

The food of Brazil reflects its people—adventurous, varied, complex, lively. All blended together.

HEALTH

THE HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE of Brazil varies from region to region. Those who live in remote areas often do not have access to health care. They must rely on traditional medicines, travel great distances to a clinic, or wait for a traveling doctor to come by.

The cities have modern hospitals and clinics; their health problems stem more from the unsanitary conditions found in the shanty towns, or *favelas*, that encircle Brazil's large cities. Hundreds of thousands of people cram into a jumble of shacks made from cardboard, packing cases, and sheets of corrugated iron, each shanty leaning on the next for support. In some urban areas, 30 percent of the population live in *favelas* without sewers or running water.

Often, the only way human waste and garbage are disposed with is by a heavy downpour of rain that washes it down the street.

Diseases spread easily and inevitably under these conditions. Some diseases, such as smallpox, malaria, yellow fever and plague, have been brought under control. There are still many cases of influenza, dysentery, measles and other contagious diseases. AIDS is becoming a very serious health problem in the urban areas. The government is working to provide better sanitary conditions as well as more hospitals and clinics.

The nation is relatively wealthy, and a Brazilian's income group definitely influences his health and life expectancy. For a child born now, life expectancy is about 65 which is above the Latin American average. But Brazil's infant mortality rate is high and is on a worrisome upswing. The infant mortality rate dropped steadily after the 1940s, but in the 1980s it began once again to rise. Perhaps this is because of the concurrent explosive growth in the favelas, but the rate is high in rural areas, too. In the poor Northeastern region, there are as many as 140 deaths in every 1,000 live births. The birth rate is much higher in rural areas; rural families average six children compared with three in urban families. The high birth rate affects infant mortality. Malnutrition is a serious problem, as well, both for rural and urban dwellers, especially children. There is rarely enough variety in the diet of the poor people, and often there is simply not enough to eat.

HISTORY

PEOPLE have lived in Brazil for thousands of years. Little is known of the history of these scattered tribes of South American Indians. Some roamed across the land, gathering wild fruits, hunting in the forests, and fishing along the rivers; others were farmers, who remained somewhat settled, living in villages of long, thatched houses that were occupied by several families. Before the arrival of European explorers and colonizers, it is estimated that Indian natives numbered between two and five million.

Then Europeans began their Age of Discovery. In the late 15th century, explorers set out in search of direct routes to Asia and its valuable trading markets. The two greatest imperialist rivals were Portugal and Spain. Columbus's discovery of North America (sponsored by Spain) threatened to set off hostilities. In 1494 Pope Alexander VI, hoping to maintain peace, drew a line through a map of the Atlantic. He persuaded Portugal and Spain to sign the Treaty of Tordesilas, agreeing that all newly discovered lands east of the line would belong to Portugal and those to the west would belong to Spain.

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In 1500, Admiral Pedro Alvares Cabral set sail from Portugal for India, via the coast of Africa. Somehow he found Brazil. No one knows why Cabral strayed so far off course; he was an expert navigator. Perhaps he secretly intended to explore the west all along. Cabral and his men landed, claimed the land for Portugal, made friends with the natives, and explored the coast for nine days before continuing on to India.

Cabral's glowing descriptions of the new territory inspired other explorers to sail to Brazil. They hoped to find gold and jewels, but they had to be satisfied with a special tree whose wood was used to make a bright red dye. The Portuguese name for this tree was pau-brasil; the explorers named the new country after this tree.

Portugal did not pay much attention to Brazil until King João III realized that if he did not act, other Europeans would begin to take over the area. He decided to found a colony. In 1530 the first colonists were shipped from Portugal with seeds, plants and domestic animals. Their mandate was to establish permanent settlements. In 1534 the king divided the land into 15 "captaincies," or districts, stretching inland from the coast. The captaincies were hereditary, royal land grants that were often larger than Portugal itself. In 1549 the captaincies were united under the rule of an appointed governor general, and a colonial government was set up in Salvador da Bahia.

The colonists found the land was good for growing sugar, and that Brazil was a natural stopping place for ships following the trade routes from Europe to Africa and Asia. They worked hard to develop large sugar plantations along the northeast coast. Europe wanted sugar.

The major difficulty was a scarcity of labor. At first, the settlers tried to force the native Indians to work on the plantations. Huge numbers of the Indians died of measles, small pox, and other imported diseases to which they had no resistance. Many others were killed while fighting against the slave-hunting expeditions. It is estimated that as many as two-thirds of the native population was liquidated in less than a century. The Indians also made unsatisfactory slaves because they knew the land; once they were enslaved, they were able to escape into the forests.

Therefore, the colonists began bringing in ever-increasing numbers of African slaves to work in the plantations. The African slaves did not come willingly either. Many died crossing the ocean in the horrible conditions of the holds of the slave ships. Those who made it were more resistant to disease than the Indian slaves. They also were stronger and able to work harder. Because of these slaves, the plantations produced substantial wealth for their masters. By the time the slave trade was abolished in 1850, an estimated 3.6 million slaves had been brought to Brazil.

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In 1590 Portugal and Spain were linked together under the Spanish crown. Brazil became a target for Spain's enemies. The Dutch seized the opportunity to invade and occupy parts of Northeast Brazil. The French and English also sent expeditions. In 1640 Portugal recovered its independence and the colonists in Brazil claimed all the territory they were occupying, even though much of it was west of the Tordesilas Line. Spain did not argue, so Brazil kept its new western boundaries. The Brazilians threw out the Dutch and took back their plantations.

Meanwhile, frontiersmen were exploring the hostile interior in search of slaves, gold and adventure. Known as *bandeirantes*, or flag-bearers, these colorful and legendary soldiers of fortune established settlements that helped support Brazil's claim to lands far west of the Treaty of Tordesilas. The *bandeirantes* often had European fathers and Indian mothers, but their ranks included men from every shade of Brazil's racial mix. They were independent, tough, fearless and greedy. They traveled in large bands, armed to the hilt with swords and pistols in their belts, bows in their hands, knives hanging around their necks, rifles over their shoulders, and cartridge belts around their chests.

As the demand for sugar began to decline toward the latter part of the 17th century, many colonists joined the bandeirantes and headed into unknown territory. Their trailblazing served as a rudimentary communications network, opening the country and unifying it as well.

When the demand for Indian slaves dropped off, the bandeirantes concentrated on prospecting for gold. Gold was discovered in Minas Gerais in 1693, setting off a gold rush that drew thousands from all over the colony and Europe to Brazil's South-Central region. Boom towns sprang up overnight, and conditions were lawless and turbulent. Diamonds and other precious stones were also found, encouraging the flood of fortune seekers. Gold quickly replaced sugar as the major source of wealth in Brazil, but in the long run, gold played havoc with the Brazilian economy. The inflation it caused contributed to the impoverishment of both Brazil and Portugal.

Some of the gold rush towns survived, settled by true pioneers. Newcomers did not establish plantations; they set up shops and small farms to provide goods and services to the prospectors and other new residents. Some diversified into cattle ranching; the growing population in the interior needed meat, and the cattle industry flourished. The population, enlarged by unprecedented immigration, shifted from the Northeast to the Southeast. As a result, the capital was moved to the port city of Rio de Janeiro.

By the late 18th century, Brazil no longer wanted to be a colony of Portugal. The Portuguese authorities put taxes and duties on all

commerce, prohibited manufacturing and burdened the economy with innumerable restrictions. Resentment simmered and there were several independence movements, but nothing really came of it until Napoleon invaded Portugal in 1807.

When Napoleon invaded Lisbon, the prince regent, Queen Maria, and the royal family (and 15,000 members of the royal court) escaped to Brazil. Rio de Janeiro became the seat of power for the Portuguese Empire. The prince (Dom João, the future King João) fell in love with his country of exile. He established an effective system of government and introduced a number of progressive measures. He began to see the world from Brazilian eyes. He legalized Brazilian trade, established industries, and founded schools, hospitals and libraries. In 1815, Brazil became equal with Portugal when the prince formed the United Kingdom of Brazil and Portugal.

In 1816 the queen mother died and the prince became king. Napoleon had been defeated, but the new king did not want to go back to Portugal. Finally in 1821, he returned to rule from Portugal. He left his son, Prince Pedro, behind to rule Brazil, counseling him to declare Brazil independent when the time seemed right.

The Portuguese parliament was hostile and tried to return Brazil to colonial status. On September 7, 1822, Pedro declared Brazil independent from Portugal. He assumed the position of Pedro I, Constitutional Emperor and Perpetual Defender of Brazil. But the perpetual defender was not popular and only lasted nine years. He ruled harshly and absolutely, and Brazilians wanted more participation in government. Brazil's leaders finally forced Pedro to abdicate and return to Portugal. He left behind his five-year-old son as heir.

For nine years, Brazil was ruled in the little boy's name by regents, who did not do a very good job. In 1840 the 15-year-old prince became Dom Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil. He was up to the challenge. He ruled well for 49 years as a respected and temperate monarch. Pedro II brought unity and order to the nation, which flourished under this new stability and political maturity. He was a progressive and enlightened ruler, supporting the building of roads, railroads and telegraphs. He encouraged industry, agricultural growth and immigration. Most of the new immigrants went to work on coffee plantations; coffee had overtaken sugar and gold to become the outstanding export crop. Brazil became prominent in international affairs, and foreign investors took an interest in Brazil's resources.

Pedro II introduced many social reforms, but there was one blight on his reign: slavery. He felt it was an abomination, but he was afraid that sudden abolition would have dire economic, social and political consequences. He took steps to eliminate slavery gradually, beginning by declaring the slave trade illegal in 1850, then giving freedom at

birth to the children of slaves in 1871. Many Brazilians were ashamed that theirs was the only Christian nation that still permitted slavery, but the plantation aristocracy would not give way.

In 1888 the emperor went to Europe for a vacation, leaving his daughter acting as regent. While her father was away, Princess Isabel, an abolitionist, signed a law which freed all slaves in Brazil. Many landowners were ruined, and they turned against the monarchy. They turned to the military, which had increased in stature through its defense of the country in border disputes and had begun to get involved in politics. Shortly after his return from Europe in 1889, Pedro II was overthrown in a bloodless revolt and sent into exile.

The military declared Brazil to be a republic and took over the government. The transition was not smooth; the next 40 years were somewhat disorderly. By 1893, there was a president and Congress, as well as regular elections and a constitution. But regional rivalries, especially between the plantation aristocracy of the North and the industrialists of the South, made their jobs difficult. This gave the military an excuse to intervene and play an active role in politics. Between 1889 and 1930, 13 presidents held office.

During this time immigrants continued to stream into Brazil. Some made their fortune on the latest export sensation: rubber. Demand for rubber had increased sharply with the advent of motor cars, and for a while the Amazon forest was the only place to get rubber. But the rubber boom only lasted a few years. While it lasted, people swarmed into Manaus, a boom town on the Amazon River, to seek their fortune.

During World War I, Brazil remained neutral until repeated German submarine attacks on Brazilian ships forced it to side with the Allies. After the war, discontent and rebellion churned within the military. In 1930 presidential candidate Getúlio Vargas lost the election. He convinced the military to support him and seized control of the government by force. Vargas dominated politics for the next 20 years. He represented a new kind of leader, a populist who depended on the support of the urban masses instead of the rich landowners.

Vargas took over during troubled times. Brazil was suffering through the Depression along with the rest of the world. There was a great deal of internal political strife and hysteria about communism. Vargas's first goal was to achieve national unity by revising the constitution and weakening the powers of the individual states. When he was threatened politically, he dissolved the uncooperative congress, declared a state of emergency, rewrote the constitution, canceled elections, and became a dictator. Civil liberties were curtailed and the press was censored. However, Vargas was able to introduce many social reforms and encourage diversification of

agriculture and new industry. He legalized labor unions, passed a minimum wage law, and helped Brazil work its way out of the Depression. Because of this, he had tremendous support from the masses.

Brazil joined the Allies again in World War II. By the end of the war, discontent with the Vargas dictatorship emerged. People wondered why they were fighting fascism abroad while living with it at home. In 1945 the military ousted Vargas to restore democracy. Vargas staged a comeback and was elected president in 1950, but his administration was accused of mismanagement, corruption and scandal, and he was pressured to resign. He did so by committing suicide.

During the 1950s, Brazil grew rapidly. Vast sums of money were spent on building power plants, factories, highways and other economic projects. This set the stage for future growth, but placed the nation deeply in debt. The most amazing project was the construction of Brasilia, a new capital city, in the wilderness of central Brazil. Envisioned by President Juscelino Kubitschek, Brasilia was begun in 1956 in the middle of nowhere. All supplies and workers had to be airlifted in, at astronomical cost. The new capital was inaugurated in 1960. When Kubitschek stepped down from the presidency in 1961, the nation was in economic chaos. Borrowing so much money had brought rampant inflation. Considerable social and political unrest flourished.

In 1964, military forces, convinced the country had become ungovernable, took control of Brazil. The next 20 years saw a succession of military men ruling Brazil. At first, the economy improved, and there was industrial development. The 1970s was the decade of the Brazilian Miracle. But it did not come without social cost. Political freedom disappeared, thousands of people were forced into exile, censorship was imposed, and dissent was dealt with resolutely and harshly.

The government continued to borrow heavily to pay for big development projects. Then the economy stopped growing in the 1980s and Brazil again found itself unable to pay back its loans. The people demanded a new government. In 1985, under pressure from demonstrations and strikes, the military handed power back to a civilian president, Tancredo Neves, chosen by an electoral committee. Neves died before his term began, and José Sarney, his vice presidential candidate, became president. Sarney was unable to curb Brazil's inflation or lower its foreign debt.

In 1989 the people elected Fernando Collor de Mello as their new president. After it was revealed that he had looted public funds for his personal enrichment, he resigned in 1992, hours before Congress was almost certain to impeach him. He was succeeded by his vice president, Itamar Franco. The Supreme Court later cleared Collor of

corruption charges for lack of evidence, but the judges threw the book at the treasurer of his presidential campaign, sentencing him to seven years in prison for falsifying official documents.

Politically, Brazil has been almost everything: a colony, a kingdom, an independent monarchy, a republic, a dictatorship, a military dependency, and a democracy. In spite of all this upheaval, the country has remained unified and hopeful for the future.

HOUSES

IN BRAZIL'S COUNTRYSIDE, farm families often live in small houses of stone and mortar covered with stucco and lime. Houses in the hot, dry Northeast are often made of adobe and wattle—woven branches plastered with mud. Roofs usually have clay tiles. Houses in the country often have no running water or electricity. The people use tin cans to bring water from the nearest stream or spring, where they also do their washing.

Many Brazilians sleep in hammocks hung from posts, an Indian artifact that has been adopted throughout Brazil. Light, portable, and ideal for use in a hot climate, hammocks are just as comfortable as a bed. In addition, they can be folded away in the daytime, creating much more room in the house.

In the Amazon region, villagers build simple houses of palm leaves, tree branches and mud, with a mud or wood floor and a thatched roof. Because the villages are always near a river, and because it rains so much, the houses are often on stilts to avoid floodwater. Indian tribes traditionally live in large communal houses with sections where each family can sling its hammocks.

In Brazil's cities, people live in high-rise apartment buildings or in single family houses. Wealthy families live in large houses in the pleasant part of town. They have cars and servants and all the modern luxuries. Middle-class families live in more modest houses or apartments, but even lower middle-class workers normally have a maid.

The contrast between the living arrangements of the rich and poor in Brazil is striking. The modern buildings and skyscrapers are surrounded by favelas, or shantytowns. From a distance, the favelas may appear rather picturesque as they cling to the mountainside, but in reality these slums are grim and tough and not romantic in the least.

A favela can spring up almost overnight, often on land that is too swampy or steep for development. The cramped, homemade shacks of the favelas are made of discarded packing cases, old corrugated iron sheets, and cardboard that has been scavenged from

garbage dumps. The people even use parts of broken-down cars, street signs, and plastic, patching it all together with string, nails and tape. Each shanty leans against the next for support, and thousands of people cram themselves into this jumble of shacks. The foundations are precarious at best; landslides and floods can cause widespread devastation.

Only a tiny proportion of favela households have running water, sewage facilities or electricity. Inhabitants use tin cans to carry water they have taken from public fountains or fire hydrants to their houses. The smell that comes from the unpaved alleys between the shacks is overpowering. The only way human waste and garbage are disposed of is by a heavy downpour of rain. Residents are always on the lookout for ways to improve their homes, picking up bricks or concrete blocks to strengthen the walls, adding a pen in the back for a chicken or goat. Sometimes favela dwellers can get electricity by hooking up illegally to the national grid or by connecting to the supply of neighboring houses (for which they are charged premium fees).

The favela dwellers often do not have access to medical facilities. The crowded conditions and appalling lack of sanitation inevitably bring widespread disease. The health clinics that do exist are often closed because the health care workers stay away; they are afraid they will be caught in the crossfire of the drug wars.

Crime is a serious problem in the favelas. Under the stresses of poverty and horrible living conditions, many families disintegrate. Every day there are hundreds of hold-ups; every year there are thousands of murders. The people of the favelas, Brazil's "Third World," look down at the "First World" glittering below them, but they cannot have any part of it. Yet, the favelas keep growing bigger year by year as landless peasants exchange the crushing poverty of the countryside for urban squalor.

LANGUAGE

THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE of Brazil is Portuguese. Brazilians are the only Latin Americans who speak Portuguese instead of Spanish. Like every other country in South and North America, they inherited their language from European colonizers.

Brazilian Portuguese has a different character from its European mother tongue. It is softer and more musical. A visitor from Portugal would probably still be able to communicate, but allowances would have to be made for different accents, pronunciation, idioms, and even vocabulary and usage.

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The Portuguese language spoken in Brazil has been greatly influenced by the indigenous Indian languages. The colonists first survived by trading with the Indians; in order to communicate, they learned an Indian language called Tupi-Guarani. The colonists began using Indian words for unfamiliar plants and animals, and as the need arose, they borrowed many other words as well. Today the Indian languages survive only among a few tribes in remote parts of the Amazon Basin. Many of these Indians speak Portuguese as well as their own language. These native languages are being recorded before civilization causes them to vanish.

African languages have also left their mark on Brazilian Portuguese. Many words have been derived from the languages spoken by the African slaves who were brought to Brazil. Brazil's Portuguese has also absorbed the flowing rhythms of African speech, especially in Bahia and Rio, where the African heritage is most prominent.

Other immigrant languages have influenced this Portuguese as well. Especially in the South, the vocabulary and cadence of the language reflect the influence of the German, Italian, French and Spanish immigrants.

All these influences and modifications have been absorbed into one language. Rather than fracturing society, they have blended it together. The Portuguese language has served as a crucial factor in building national unity. There are regional differences and accents, but no substantial regional dialects. Everyone speaks Portuguese.

The Portuguese alphabet has only 23 letters: "k", "w", and "y" only appear in foreign names. Pronunciation is similar to English with a few differences. For instance, the letter "x" is pronounced like "sh". The letter "c" can have a hard or soft sound. When it appears as a cedilla (ç), it is always pronounced softly. For example, the word for sugar, açucar, is pronounced ah-sue-kahr.

Portuguese uses three accent marks: the circumflex (ˆ), the acute (´), and the tilde (˜). The circumflex and acute show the syllable that is to be stressed, and the tilde gives the vowel a nasal sound.

MYTH

BRAZILIANS LOVE to tell stories and make jokes. One of their favorite targets is their own shortcomings. Here is a joke that illustrates their good-natured brand of humor.

On the seventh day, while God rested after creation, the angel Gabriel stopped by to compliment Him on His work. However, Gabriel had a question: Was it fair that God concentrated so much

natural beauty, so much gold, so much rich soil, so many lush forests and golden beaches in one country? Was God being partial toward Brazil?

"Don't worry, Gabriel. Things will even out," God told the angel. "Wait until you see the lazy rascals I put to live there."

OCCUPATIONS

WHEN WE LOOK BACK over the history of occupations in Brazil, it is possible to see the country making one mistake over and over. Instead of developing its options, Brazil would pin all its economic hopes on a single export commodity, only to see the market collapse, leaving the nation to search desperately for an alternative. This roller coaster ride of boom and bust started when the first adventurers began exporting brazilwood, practically ignoring the rest of the area's vast resources.

Once they discovered that sugar could be profitably raised and exported, brazilwood was abandoned, and everyone started sugar plantations. Sugar was planted, reaped and milled by thousands of African slaves until the sugar market went bust in the 18th century. Other crops had not been developed, because they would not have brought in the high profits the plantation owners sought.

Many of the ruined sugar barons then joined the gold rush, causing a shift in population from the Northeast to the South. This helped settle that part of the country, but the gold was depleted before the century ended. Those who had made any profit from the gold then began coffee plantations. The coffee boom, like sugar and gold before it, stimulated a further influx of new immigrants.

As the coffee plantations began hitting their stride, the rubber boom flashed through the Amazon region. In the last quarter of the 19th century, world demand for rubber increased because of the advent of motor cars with rubber tires. Rubber trees grew wild in great abundance throughout Amazonia. The entrepreneurs moved in to seek their fortune and began living it up. The center of the rubber boom was Manaus, which changed nearly overnight from a small, isolated jungle town to one of the grandest and most extravagant places on the continent.

In 1913 the Brazilian rubber bonanza suddenly died as a result of competition from rubber trees that had been smuggled into the Far East. Many families went bankrupt immediately; they abandoned Manaus and moved South.

Coffee was still selling; in fact, there was a growing demand for it. The Brazilian government began borrowing huge sums of money to

build an elementary infrastructure of railways and ports. When the worldwide recession of 1929 triggered a collapse in the price of coffee, not only was the country once again devastated by a single crop that had gone bust, but they were also saddled with a large foreign debt.

Hindsight makes it easy to see the mistakes that were made, but at the time, it must have seemed like a good idea to plant sugar, or mine for gold, or tap rubber, or grow coffee. In the 1930s, however, the government began to see the importance of diversification.

The government began developing roads, railways, communications and electricity in order to develop industry. Farmers began raising more cattle and growing cocoa, cotton, oranges and other crops.

Now Brazil is the leading industrial nation in South America. It employs over 25 percent of the population in industry. Brazil is very rich in minerals, and oil has been found offshore. Hydroelectricity is fast becoming the major power source for the country. Brazil's natural resources are immense. But its most vital resource is still the land.

Brazilians farm and graze about 20 percent of the land. Agriculture employs about 30 percent of the total work force. The country's farmers no longer focus on one major crop; now a wide variety of crops are raised, from soybeans to bananas. Brazil does not need to import food; in fact, nearly 40 percent of export income comes from agriculture. The rich soil and warm climate ensure that agriculture will always be an important part of Brazil's economy.

The problem remains that most of the land is owned by a few rich landowners. There are many small farmers, but the amount of land they have is only enough to grow what they need to eat, with none left to sell. Most farm work is still done by hand. Only the big farms can afford machinery.

The former boom products still play a role in the economy. Plantations still grow sugar and coffee. Brazil is the world's second largest exporter of both. Gold miners, called garimpeiros, still prospect along the rivers for gold. It is rough, rowdy, dangerous work, very much as it was years ago. Rubber tapping is a very small-scale operation in Brazil nowadays. Brazil's first export was wood, and lumber still is harvested. Although the Amazon jungle might be expected to be the obvious source, most of the lumber comes from the forests in the far South of Brazil. Any clearing done in the Amazon seems to be of the destructive slash-and-burn variety.

One of the more romantic and colorful occupations is that of the *gaúchos*, the cowboys of Brazil. These free-spirited nomads once tended herds of half-wild cattle that ranged freely over the pampas of Southern Brazil. Now, most of the grasslands are fenced, the cattle are branded, and the gaúchos are employees of ranchers and beef companies. They continue to maintain a proud tradition of excellent

horsemanship and cultivate a spirit of self-reliance. They still spend days at a time on the trail, sleeping under the stars and using their ponchos and saddles as beds.

Brazil has never really developed a big commercial fishing industry, in spite of so much coastline. In the Northeast, fishermen head far out to sea in frail boats and rafts known as jangadas; thus, they are called jangadeiros, men of daring. Farther south, the Japanese immigrants have become the most active commercial fishermen, setting out to sea with their trawlers in search of tuna and lobster. An abundance of fish and shellfish thrives, and fishing is becoming a more important industry.

As the country experiences urbanization, it is gradually changing from a predominantly agricultural to an industrial society. In families where the grandfather was a farmer, the sons might drive trucks and the grandsons might have jobs in a factory.

Most families do whatever they can to keep food on the table. Throughout the country, very small family businesses that operate in the home without licenses or credit are producing a great variety of goods such as bread, pasta, shoes, clothing, furniture and craft items. These microenterprises are vital to the neighborhoods where they operate; traditional markets often charge more than the poor can afford.

One third of the women employed in Brazil are in domestic service as nannies, cooks and cleaning maids. They are often paid less than the meager legal minimum wage. Some live in the house in a small bedroom close to the kitchen. The domestics often have a close relationship with the families they serve, particularly the children.

The descendants of the slave-owning aristocrats still live in their spacious colonial houses on the plantations. They own the land and they hold the power. They tell their tenants how to vote. They own the newspapers, and often the police and the judiciary as well. Their children go to private schools and foreign universities, coming home to high-powered jobs in industry, government or the professions. Women have servants and spend their days on the beach and at beauty salons and shopping centers.

The middle class accounts for less than a quarter of the population. Most Brazilians are poor, living in conditions that range from basic to destitute. Many still depend on casual labor on plantations at pitiful wages. Most homes do not have electricity or running water. The rural poor are flocking to the cities in search of a better life. Some find it in a job at a car factory or building site. Others cannot find jobs. But they keep looking and doing what they can.

BRAZIL

THE PEOPLE

INDIANS WERE THE FIRST people of Brazil. Their way of life was adapted to fit the contours and rhythms of nature. They were hunters and gatherers, using the plants of the forest to make what they needed. No one knows how many Indians existed before the Portuguese explorers began arriving in the 16th century; estimates vary between two and five million. They were scattered in small tribes throughout the land.

From the very beginning, there was an intermixture of Indian and Portuguese blood. Most of the early settlers were men, and many took Indian wives. Indian and Portuguese blood also literally mingled as they proceeded to slaughter each other. Brazilian history is filled with accounts of massacres. The Indians were understandably hostile when the white explorers suddenly appeared in their territory armed with guns and swords. Invariably, when natives attacked and killed intruders, the European survivors retaliated by killing Indians, often by the thousands. Thousands of Indians also died when they were captured and made slaves on settlers' sugar plantations. But the biggest killers of all were the European diseases such as influenza, smallpox and measles, against which the Indians had no natural resistance.

In spite of all this hostility, Indian customs and cultures have always been accepted and assimilated into the lives of Brazilians. Indian culture has exerted a strong influence on Brazilian society. Many of the early writers described the Indians as "noble savages"; this attitude became widely accepted and helped in the blending of these disparate heritages.

The reduction in the number of Indians was more or less equaled by the number of slaves that the Portuguese brought in from their West African colonies. The Indians did not really make very good slaves—they kept dying or slipping off into the jungle. Starting in the mid-1600s, slave shipments arrived regularly for sale to sugar plantation owners. It was not long before these unwilling immigrants from Africa began outnumbering the Indians. By the time the slave trade was outlawed in 1850, almost half of Brazil's population was black.

The black racial strain began blending with the Portuguese, Indian and mixed strains. The Portuguese, in contrast to other European colonial powers, showed a willingness to mingle with other races. Many of the plantation owners took black mistresses, and there were few taboos on mixed marriages. (Brazil has never had any laws against racial intermarriage.) As a result, the African influence is very palpable in Brazilian society. As with Indians,

intermarriage retained, rather than rejected, many of the religious beliefs and customs of the former slaves.

For over 400 years, Africans, Indians and Europeans have blended together in Brazil, creating a wide spectrum of ethnic traits and skin colors. Now, aside from some isolated Indians in the Amazon and recent immigrants from Europe or Asia, few Brazilians have ethnically pure blood. There are terms used to describe the mixed races. People with both African and Portuguese blood are called *mulattos*. European and Indian parents produce *caboclo* children, and *cafuso* offspring have African and Indian blood. Of course, many Brazilians are a mixture of all three. These distinctions are becoming too blurred to have much significance.

Throughout Brazil's history, wave after wave of immigrants have helped populate, settle and energize the country. Especially large numbers arrived when Brazil was opened to immigration in the early 20th century and after both world wars. Workers were needed and the new arrivals worked hard. Germans and Italians came to the south, attracted by the climate and the soil. These farmers helped develop agriculture in the nation. More than 300,000 Japanese emigrated to Brazil in the first half of the 20th century, forming Japan's largest overseas community. The Japanese developed a fishing industry and began producing vegetable crops near large cities. Arabs settled in the cities and helped advance trade and commerce. Immigrants came to Brazil from all over the world—North America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Some ethnic groups were less enthusiastic about racial mixing and clung to their original heritage, but most have been completely assimilated into the Brazilian culture and way of life. In the thriving Middle-Eastern shopping district of São Paulo, Muslims, Jews and Christians live peacefully side by side. These descendants of immigrants from Lebanon, Syria and Turkey did not bring the hostility of their homelands with them. Newly arriving immigrants continue be absorbed into the national culture and will soon become almost unrecognizable as anything but Brazilians.

Brazil's constitution prohibits racial discrimination, and Brazilians are proud of their reputation as a multiracial society with a high degree of tolerance. The census does not even ask for racial origins. However, the absence of racial strife does not mean there is racial equality. Few blacks are found in Congress or the diplomatic service. There are not many dark-skinned army generals or corporate presidents. The poor and undereducated portion of society contains a disproportionate number of dark-skinned people. Most Brazilians insist that the experience of blacks and whites in their country only differs to the extent that the blacks are poorer—there is persistent economic inequality—and that every person has an equal chance of

advancement. Regardless, there is a friendliness among the races that is unique. People of all different hues socialize happily on the beaches and the streets. And all races continue to intermarry.

Despite being a racial melting pot, Brazil is still marked by regional differences. In general, the African culture dominates in the Northeast, the European influence is stronger in the South, and Indian traditions have affected the North and Central-West. The different areas have rather prominent differences in lifestyles and attitudes.

For example, the nordestinos of the Northeast coastal region are noted for being romantic, talkative and blessed with lively imaginations. They are just the opposite of the sertanejos, who live to the west in the bleak *sertão* and by contrast are considered unsentimental, unimaginative and untalkative. The cowboys of the *sertão*, the vaqueiros, stoically struggle to survive in a hostile environment. They are cautious and unemotional as they patiently carry on with the monotony of their work. The cowboys of the South, the gaúchos, tend to look down on their poorer colleagues to the Northeast. They are not mere survivors—they are fighters, proudly and loudly living up to their colorful legend.

Other regional differences are specific to certain cities. A good case in point contrasts the carioca, who lives in Rio de Janeiro, with the *paulista*, who lives in São Paulo. In the eyes of the carioca, the citizens of São Paulo are humorless materialists and workaholics, focusing too much on money and career. The paulistas see the people of Rio as lazy and unenterprising, living from day to day only for pleasure.

In spite of these differences, Brazilians of all racial, national and economic backgrounds share the deep-seated belief that they are a single people. There is a unity of language, religion, customs, goals and outlook that contradicts the fact that this vast country was settled by diverse groups from the beginning. The flexibility of Brazil's traditions has allowed the country to absorb those cultures that come to it from outside. Tolerance that allowed the different races to mix and the different religions to dissolve into each other has brought the people of the country together.

Brazilians have created their own distinctive art, music, literature and architecture. They share certain traits of behavior, social values, and even a kind of national sense of humor. The Brazilian way of life includes a great interest in sports and an ingrained enjoyment of music. There is a cultural unity that exists in no other major nation on earth; this culture is lively and varied because of the blending of traditions. The blending is far from uniform, yet it continues to approach uniformity because Brazilians are constantly migrating from one region of the country to another, making egional differences are less noticeable from one generation to the next.

Those generations are growing larger and larger. Brazil has one of the fastest growing populations on earth. There may be no such thing as a typical Brazilian, but one thing for certain is that the average Brazilian is young. At least half of the population is aged less than 20 and only one-fifth are over 40.

Despite the size of the population, Brazil is one of the more sparsely settled countries of the world. The country is huge, so there is room for many people, but the population is very unevenly distributed, with more than 90 percent of it concentrated along the coast. One of the most striking phenomena of Brazil is the rapid growth of the cities. In 1940 only 31 percent of the population lived in the cities, but by 1980 more than two-thirds of Brazilians were urban dwellers.

Industrialization, urbanization and massive population growth have profoundly altered the shape of Brazilian society in the 20th century. Yet, the quintessential Brazilian features are still unmistakable. Brazil continues to absorb outside influences and make them its own. Brazil's varied heritages have been woven together so intricately and transformed so radically by the shared geography and social history, that something entirely new has emerged. Brazil's people are vitally and defiantly unique.

PROBLEMS

MANY OF BRAZIL'S problems are caused by poverty. A great gap exists between rich and poor. Over half of Brazil's workers earn less than $170 a month; many earn much less. If you took the total collective salary of this entire half of the population, you would have less than what the richest one percent of society makes. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that about five percent of the population owns 80 percent of the land. Few Brazilian farmers till their own soil.

Not only do peasants not own land, many of them also do not have jobs. Every year hundreds of thousands of people leave the crushing poverty of the rural areas, seeking better opportunities in the cities. Often they find a life as deprived as that which they tried to escape; they are only exchanging one kind of poverty for another. Struggling to survive in the squalor of the favelas, many end up roaming the streets, searching for bottles or scrap metal to resell, and rummaging through the garbage heaps for food.

Perhaps the most tragic outcome of this poverty is that many families simply fall apart. The parents are so desperately poor they can no longer support their children. Millions of children, nearly

one in five in the cities, have been abandoned. They must fend for themselves, begging and stealing to survive and sleeping in doorways at night.

Crime is a severe problem in the cities. Each year there are thousands of murders. About one quarter of all homes in the large cities are burglarized in the course of a year. Hold-ups are practically commonplace on the bus route between Rio and São Paulo. The middle class is barracaded behind armed security guards. Drug wars have taken over the streets of the favelas.

Other results of this poverty include malnutrition, inadequate health care and the spread of disease. Many children never go to school. They must work to help support their families. By age 13 most children of the favelas are on the streets shining shoes, selling candy, begging or stealing.

Largely, because of the rapid movement of people from the country to the cities, Brazil has a serious population problem. The country is huge, so there is plenty of room for all the people, but 90 percent of them live along the Atlantic coast. The cities are extremely overcrowded.

Just as there is great contrast between the rich and the poor, there is contrast between the different regions of Brazil. Sometimes it seems as if there are two Brazils: a modern land of opportunity and a backward country struggling to survive. Northeast Brazil, where slaves once worked on sugar plantations, has been left far behind in the nation's industrialization with widespread poverty as a result. In the northeast people have a life expectancy of 55, while those in the south live up to 67. In the Northeast eight out of ten children suffer from malnutrition.

Brazil has serious economic problems, most notably high inflation and a massive foreign debt. Inflation has caused difficulties for many years; at one point it was 1000 percent per year, with prices rising every day. Every once in a while the president must take three zeroes off the value of the money and give it a different name. One of the main causes of this inflation is a mounting foreign debt. Over the years Brazil has borrowed huge sums of money from abroad to pay for projects like hydroelectric dams, highways and industrial ventures. Now the country has a $120 billion debt that it has not been able to pay back.

Brazil is rich in natural resources, and exploiting them is one way to create growth and help the economy. This has created pressure to develop the Amazon for farming, hydroelectric power and minerals. While many people see this as progress, others see it as destruction. Intense national and international debate has focused on whether taming the rainforest might permanently damage global eco-systems.

Many are worried that land-hungry peasants, ranchers and developers will rush in and destroy the rainforest before a way can be found to build settlements that will not destroy the environment.

In 1985, after years of military rule, Brazil began a controlled return to democracy by electing a civilian president. The new leaders face an imposing task. In spite of the seemingly overwhelming problems, Brazilians have a bright outlook. They are confident great things lie ahead. Brazil has plenty of land, huge natural resources and a good climate. That, coupled with the prodigious optimism of its people, leaves Brazil on balance as full of promise and potential.

RECREATION

BRAZILIANS EMBRACE the idea of recreation wholeheartedly. These people enthusiastically pursue all types of relaxation, but perhaps those held most dear begin with the letter "S": soccer, sand and *samba*.

Soccer (or *futebol*, the Portuguese pronunciation of the English word "football") is more than just the national sport. It is Brazil's national passion. It is an obsession. Brazilian's joke that on Sunday they honor two religious ceremonies: they go to church, and then they go to a soccer game.

Soccer came to Brazil from England about 100 years ago, but Brazil has made soccer its own. Its national teams have won the World Cup four times. Brazilian players have brought new heights of skill to the game, developing an unrivalled repertoire of superb dribbling, flamboyant showmanship and graceful playmaking. The most famous soccer player of them all, Pelé, is revered around the world. Under military rule, soccer players began replacing political leaders as national heroes. Now every child dreams of becoming the next Pelé and playing on a professional team.

Children begin kicking a soccer ball almost as soon as they can walk. Any open patch of ground is sure to have a soccer game going on it. Even the beaches have soccer goal posts. Privileged children practice their head shots on the manicured soccer fields of their private schools; children of the favelas kick the ball around on the narrow dirt roads that wind around their shacks. There are countless amateur leagues for children, teenagers and adults, and amateur games are played with the same intensity and enthusiasm as professional matches. Brazilians love to play soccer as much as they love to watch it.

Every city worth its salt has an immense soccer stadium. These stadiums are among the country's largest and most impressive buildings (Maracanã in Rio is the largest soccer stadium in the world), and

they are usually filled during games. At matches the fans go wild. They cheer, yell at the referees, sing their team's anthem and set off fireworks. They wave huge flags, dance and play samba music on drums and trumpets. And you should hear the noise when a goal is scored! Although the soccer matches are tense with the excitement, the mood is one of good humor. While soccer fans in some countries can get nasty, Brazilian fans are amiable. If a player executes a spectacular piece of footwork, all the fans—supporters and opposition—will cry together "Olé!" Soccer is regarded as an art form more than an act of aggression. The crowds judge the action with the appreciation of connoisseurs.

If Brazilians are not playing soccer or watching it at a stadium, they are probably watching it on television. Almost everyone supports one of the country's 20,000 soccer teams. And the entire country is absolutely devoted to the national team. When Brazil's national team plays, the country comes to a halt. Work stops. There is no traffic. The beaches are deserted. Every television and radio station broadcasts the match. When the team wins a game, people pour into the streets, dancing and cheering. Fans ride around in their cars, honking their horns, hanging out of the windows, and waving pennants. Brazilians have soccer fever, and do not want a cure!

But there is more to life than soccer; Brazilians participate in many other sports as well. They love to play and watch basketball, volleyball and tennis. Other favorite specator sports include auto racing, horse racing and boxing.

A sport unique to Brazil is *capoeira*, a sort of martial arts dance. It was developed in the Northeast by slaves, whose masters would not allow them to fight. The slaves disguised this foot-fighting technique by presenting it as a dance. It looks like combat, but the two participants never actually touch each other. Players thrust at one another using only their legs, feet, heels and heads. It requires great agility and dexterity. And nerve.

Brazilians participate in many water sports at the beach. They swim, surf, wind-surf, sail and dive in the water. They ride bicycles, jog and play soccer and volleyball on the beach. Even so, most people crowded on the beach are not exercising; they are simply relaxing in the sand, watching the world go by.

Most of Brazil's population lives close to the beach. With 4,500 miles of white sand and temperatures that rarely fall below 70°F, the beaches of Brazil are an irresistible magnet and a part of people's daily life. Office workers spend their lunch breaks at the beach. Children sprawl on the sand, doing their homework.

For many Brazilians, a town is only as good as its proximity to the beach. The most famous beaches in Brazil are probably Ipanema

and Copacabana in Rio de Janiero. On weekends and holidays the popular beaches around the big cities are crowded with Brazilians of all ages and social classes splashing, playing, sunbathing, dancing and gossiping.

Pulsing with life, the beaches are a meeting place for all races, ages and social classes. Brazilians take pride in the fact that their beaches are open to all. In their tiny bikinis, young girls from the favelas can sunbathe as equals with the privileged heiresses. When a man is in his bathing suit, it cannot be determined if he is upper class or lower class. There is democracy on the beach. Everyone can enjoy the shore equally.

Actually, however, people with different interests tend to congregate together in their own little stretches of the beach. Families with young children tend to go to one patch and teenagers hang out someplace else. Surfers stake out their favorite place and those who are looking for a game of volleyball go to another. The regulars in the different areas get to know one another and look forward to visiting with each other during their trips to the beach.

In the early morning, joggers run along the water's edge. As the sun gets higher, sunbathers begin to arrive. Vendors walk up and down selling ice cream, juice, hot dogs and balloons. Wherever sunworshippers are not stretched out, the sand is crowded with people playing games of all sorts—soccer and volleyball especially—and children flying kites. Gradually the afternoon crowd gives way to the night crowd. Couples stoll along, holding hands. The boardwalk becomes an outdoor arts fair, with artisans selling everything from jewelry and lace to woodcarvings and hammocks. The open-air cafes are full of people seeking music and conversation. The sands become a dance floor. The beach remains busy long after sunset.

Brazilians love to dance. Music seems to flow through their veins. Just as most Brazilians have the blood of Europe, Africa and America flowing through their veins, their musical heritage is also a blend of many different influences.

Brazil has always enjoyed music. The first Jesuit missionaries to Brazil found the native Indians performing ritual chants, accompanied by rattles and pan pipes, in their religious ceremonies. So the missionaries taught the Indians Gregorian chants. This tradition of call and response survives in some folk dances.

The Portuguese contributed many different string instruments to Brazil's music. The guitar is the most popular, but several others are still used. The accordian and many percussion instruments also came to Brazil from Europe. Settlers from Portugal brought several folk dances to Brazil. These folguedos tell stories of battles or jousting matches or bull fights, and are often performed by folk groups around the country.

BRAZIL

Music and dance also played an essential role in the ceremonies of the African slaves. The colonists considered the slave dances obscene, but they recognized their slaves' musical skills and taught them to play European instruments. Gradually, African rhythms and instruments worked their way into the music. It was not too long before the barons and ladies were dancing those wild dances as well.

The music of Europe merged with the Indian music and then with the songs of Africa; this blending of musical cultures continues, resulting in an incredible array of styles of music and dance. Popular music has become Brazil's best known art form internationally.

The most famous is the *samba*. The *samba* is basically a dance with two beats per measure; what matters is what happens to those two beats. The syncopation is complex and hypnotic, and the unexpected deviations in rhythm keep your attention. A *samba* will rarely be heard the same way twice; the music and dances are constantly being updated. There are countless variations of the samba, which are usually named for their character (samba de chaula—a very sexy version), instrumentation (samba do morro—samba played by a large group using only percussion instruments), or place of origin (urban samba, rural samba, samba de salao—parlor samba sung by small groups in nightclubs). The most famous offshoot of the samba is probably the jazz-like *bossa nova,* which puts less emphasis on the tune and even more on the rhythm.

Other types of music and dance are also popular. Forro music is a favorite in the Northeast. The accordion is the main instrument for forro, which is considered Brazil's version of country-and-western music. Lambada, the music craze that hit Brazil (and the United States, too) in the 1980s, is still danced at many clubs. String bands play choro music, and gafieira is Brazilian-style ballroom dancing. Brazilians also love imported music. They have taken rock music and given it their own special style.

In Brazil, music and dancing are ubiquitous. In every bar and restaurant, someone is singing or playing. On the beach, a sun-worshipper will pick out a rhythm on the drum or guitar and soon it is echoed up and down the shore. In the soccer stadium or even on a bus, the fans or passengers are likely to start up a samba tune and start swaying to the beat. Throughout Brazil, in the cities and in the small farming communities, there is always somewhere to dance on any given night. In Rio there are even special children's discos where they can learn the steps while they are young. Brazilians love music, and samba is never far from their thoughts.

During Carnaval, samba is the only thing they think about. In late February or early March, for four days and five nights before Lent, everyone in Brazil celebrates Carnaval. They forget their

problems, pull on their costumes, and begin to dance; nothing exists except the samba beat and the desire to be part of unrestrained joy. Carnaval is the highlight of the year in Brazil, a wild celebration of processions, parties, music and dancing. Brazilians adore parties, and Carnaval is the biggest party of them all.

Dating back to early Christian times, this event began as a last chance to feast and frolic before Lent. In Brazil, the early Portuguese settlers would let off steam before Lent with horseplay such as throwing flour at their neighbors. These pranks were gradually replaced by religious pageants and fancy mask balls. The African slaves entered the celebration with music and dancing. This has all fused together into the special event to end all special events. Other countries have carnivals, but none match the excitement of Carnaval in Brazil, especially the celebrations in Rio de Janiero. People from around the world visit Rio during Carnaval, making it Brazil's biggest tourist attraction.

Businesses and stores are closed for the four days of Carnaval. Only the street vendors continue to work, selling food and drink to those who need sustenance in order to keep dancing. During the day, exotically costumed revellers cavort about the streets, singing and dancing. At night the nightclubs are jammed with merrymakers in fancy dress, dancing the night away to bands playing samba. Private clubs throw glamorous and extravagant parties attended by as many as 10,000 people. Impromptu combos play on street corners, so the dancing can continue in the streets, which are decorated with colored lights and streamers. Many people celebrate at friends' homes, but spontaneous street parties might erupt anywhere.

The biggest event of Carnaval is Rio's parade of the best escolas de samba (samba schools). The samba schools are social clubs, usually from poor neighborhoods. For months before Carnaval, these groups plan samba music, original lyrics, dance steps, floats and elaborate costumes around a theme chosen by their school. The costumes often take months to make and cost a large chunk of the salaries of these people from the favelas. They rehearse on the weekends for the competition that takes place during Carnaval.

On Sunday and Monday of Carnaval, more than 200,000 onlookers sitting in bleachers along the mile-long Sambódromo watch the samba schools dance and sing their way down the parade route to the incessant rhythm of the samba. Since a samba school can have between 2,000 and 4,000 dancers, it can take over an hour for a group to pass by. The official jury sits in the reviewing stand and judges each group. There are prizes in many categories, such as dancing, costumes, floats and music. The top prize is the title of Champion of the Avenue. With big cash prizes at stake, the schools aim to create the

most inspiring pageant of dancing and music. Every city and village has its samba schools, but Rio's parade is the mose amazing.

The streets are filled with trash when Carnaval ends on Ash Wednesday. But by noon the streets are clean again. Then begins the quiet period of Lent.

There are plenty of other holidays, celebrations and festivals. Catholic holy days make up about half of Brazil's national holidays. It seems as if every Sunday, at least one of the local churches is celebrating a special saint's day, and so, of course, there has to be a big barbecue or parade. People love to celebrate.

Television has joined soccer, sand and samba as a cornerstone of Brazilian recreation. In most houses the television is usually on. TV Globo is the largest television network in Brazil, but there are several smaller ones. Most of the shows on the air are made in Brazil. The most popular are the telenovelas, soap opera-type serials that run every night. TV Globo's feature telenovela, with the brightest stars, is shown at 8:30 each weeknight. Many Brazilians will not schedule anything else during this time. The telenovelas introduce new slang into the language as well as new fashions and styles.

Brazilians spend much of their time in pursuit of the good life. They enthusiastically embrace music, dance, sports and other forms of relaxation. Brazilians have much to enjoy in their lives. And they do enjoy their lives.

RELIGION

BRAZIL IS A CATHOLIC country. With more than 90 percent of its huge population professing to be Roman Catholic, there are more Catholics in Brazil than in any other country in the world.

The Portuguese brought Catholicism to Brazil. The explorer Pedro Cabral named his newly discovered country Terra da Vera Cruz—the Land of the True Cross—and one of the first things he did after landing in Brazil was hold a Christian service and persuade the Indians to kneel before a big wooden cross. As the adventurers and colonists began arriving to settle the land, they were accompanied by Jesuit missionaries determined to evangelize the Indians and look after the religious life of the colonies.

From the beginning, Brazilian Catholicism was comparatively tolerant and malleable. The early explorers did not try to convince the Indians they encountered that their simple faith was wrong, that the jungle was not full of spirits in the shapes of animals and plants. The Portuguese explorers rarely forced their

Christian doctrines on the Indians; rather they accepted their right to their religious culture. As a result, some aspects of the native traditions were incorporated into the colonists' beliefs.

The missionaries were another story. The Jesuits treated the Indians as if they had no culture whatsoever, and the priests immediately began to the business of imposing Catholic authority on the natives.

The African slaves were given the same kind of treatment. As the slaves were forced onto the ships that would take them to work on the sugar plantations, priests performed mass baptisms in the African ports. The slaves were forced to follow Christian practices after they arrived in Brazil. But they did not forget their own traditions. Although they dutifully said their Hail Mary's during the day, at night in the slave quarters they played their drums, performed the old rituals, and worshipped their old gods of thunder and war and hunters.

These practices were officially denounced by the Catholic Church. However, there has never been any outright suppression of faith or beliefs in Brazil. The different traditions have mingled for the most part without rancor throughout its history. The initial attempts to suppress the African religions gave way to toleration and then assimilation.

Throughout Brazil's history, many Catholic priests have played an important role in working for the rights of the masses. They provided education, fought against slavery and established hospitals, orphanages and churches. This tradition continues today as many activist priests stand up for the landless peasants and the vanishing Indian tribes.

Even though Catholicism is the official state religion, Brazilians are guaranteed freedom of religion. They mostly exercise this legal right within Catholicism itself; they are very free, indeed, with their religion. From the beginning, orthodoxy was left in the dust.

This freewheeling attitude toward things religious can be attributed, in part, to the strong influence of the imported African religions and the indigenous Indian beliefs. The Portuguese colonists seemed to possess an amiable nonchalance toward religion and were willing to absorb any outside influences. The Indian and slave converts became Catholics in name, but molded their new religion to fit their old practices. The different groups moved closer and closer together and after awhile it looked like one big melting pot. This synthesis of religions has become Brazil's true national religion.

But this tolerant perspective also has its roots in a chronic shortage of priests. First of all, the priests were not able to do anything much about this freespirited embrace of unorthodox beliefs. There were not enough of them. Some plantations had their very own padres, but among the poor, the scarcity of priests has always been a serious problem; it still is. Left to their own devices, the poor developed their own form of folk Catholicism.

They adopted some elements of the native Indian religion, such as regard for the power of the spirits, and they consulted with the native medicine men when they were sick. The African religions had an even greater impact on working class Brazilians and the culture as a whole. Today, it is easy to see the distinctive flavor the African religions have given to the Mass and other liturgies as celebrated by Brazilian Catholics. The colonists adopted the African gods and goddesses into its family of saints and gave them Christian names. The slaves accepted the Christian God, His Son, the Virgin Mary, and all the saints and syncretized them with their African gods, worshipping them under both names.

These saints are a very important component of the folk religion. The people look to the saints to help them survive in this world. They believe the saints can bestow favors on those who revere them. To win a saint's favor, the supplicants make promises; for example, they pledge to climb the church steps on their knees or to make a pilgrimage to that saint's shrine.

Every town has a patron saint, who is honored with a feast day, celebration and procession each year. But other saints are also feted regularly and frequently. In some cities it seems as if there is a religious procession and celebration every 10 days or so throughout the year until December; after that they are just about nonstop through Carnaval. These festivals involve a lot of enthusiastic eating, drinking and making merry. There are bonfires, fireworks, processions, gifts and special foods. Some people even go to church.

The devout who join in the processions can be quite fervent. They may be participating to request a favor from the saint, to atone for their sins, or to show gratitude for a favor that has been granted. Some cities' procession have unique traditions. In Belem, a procession of thousands leads a statue of Our Lady of Nazereth through the city streets. They hold a thick rope, several blocks long, pulling the carriage conveying the statue. Those who help her pass along the streets believe she will answer their prayers. Missionaries started this annual procession in 1763 as a way of attracting the Indians to Christianity. Each year there are tens of thousands of religious processions throughout Brazil.

Millions of Brazilians make pilgrimages to the country's holy places each year. This remains a powerful tradition in rural Brazil as people make pilgrimages to fulfil a vow or pray for divine help. One famous mecca is the city of Bom Jesus da Lapa. People travel there to gaze on its miracle-working image of Christ and visit the underground shrines. The village of Juázeiro do Norte is one of Brazil's principal places of pilgrimage. In 1889 a woman receiving communion from Padre Cicero fell to the ground; the wafer dropped from

her lips, covered in blood. The priest believed this was a miracle, but the Church would not confirm it. There were reports of more miracles and thousands of believers journeyed to Juázeiro. Padre Cicero was ordered to leave by his superiors, but he refused. Troops were sent to evict him, but they were repulsed by his supporters. He made peace with the Church authorities before he died. Thousands still make pilgrimages to the area to visit his birthplace, his memorial and his church.

The faithful also make pilgrimages to thank a saint for being healed. It is common for someone who has been cured of an affliction to journey to a saint's shrine to offer a wax model of their healed limb or organ. Some churches and shrines have a miracle room, where hundreds of wax models of human body parts are left behind as tokens of thanks by those who believe they have been healed by that particular saint.

Side by side with the Catholic traditions, the African cults thrive. Millions of Brazilians belong to spiritist cults, and many more participate in the major spiritist festivals. These adherents of the gods and spirits of African cults are not limited to the descendents of slaves; they come from every class and color, though most are poor and of lower social status. *Candomblé* and *macumba* are the two main cults practiced in Brazil.

Candomblé is followed mainly in the region of Salvador da Bahia. The rituals are often secretive, presided over by a pai de santo (father of the saint) or mai de santo (mother of the saint). The main ritual involves giving a meal to a god. During candomblé ceremonies, a special talisman is prepared for a particular god. Devotees crowd into the terreiros, or houses of worship, to sing invocations to the different gods, accompanied by drums. Hours pass as they dance hypnotically to the specific drumbeat of each African god in turn. The climax comes when the god being invoked suddenly descends into the body of a devotee, triggering spasms of uncontrollable shaking. The ceremonies often last all night.

Macumba is practiced mainly in the Rio de Janiero region. Like Catholicism, the African religions have blended with others. Macumba, similar to voodoo, blends beliefs from West and South Africa with the European philosophy of spiritism, holding that it is possible to communicate with the souls of the dead. Devotees of macumba follow a wide array of spirits, and their rites are designed to appease evil spirits and encourage good ones. Mediums, called cavalos (which means "horse") moan and groan, roll around, and enter a trance. The adherents line up to speak to the spirit guide from whom they need assistance. There are also cleansing rituals, animal sacrifices, elaborate chants and dances. Everyone wears white.

The most important festival celebrated by the followers of macumba is the Festa de Iemanjá. It takes place on New Year's Eve, the special day of Iemanjá, who is also called the Virgin Mary. Millions of people dress in white and gather at the beach to offer gifts of fruit, flowers, ribbons or perfume to the sea goddess. These gifts are launched in miniature boats at midnight. If the gift is accepted it is carried out to sea. If it is washed back to shore it has been rejected. Drums beat out rhythms and people dance by candlelight until dawn.

The spiritist religions include Catholic elements. Followers of candomblé identify Jesus Christ with Oxalá, their supreme god. Many Brazilians see no contradiction in believing in the power of spirits and going regularly to church and praying to the Christian God. Many adherents of the mystic spiritist rites also attend Mass on Sundays. The good Catholics who join in the spiritist rites do not see it as an abandonment of Catholicism so much as a supplement to it.

Frankly, most Brazilians do not go to church except on special occasions. Though this may suggest that Brazilians do not care much about religion, they consider themselves to be religious people. One of the strong features of Brazil's cultural solidarity is religion. Historically, the Catholic Church has been a crucial unifying factor for Brazil and its people. Brazil has a hybrid culture which, nonetheless, has an unmistakable unity. Brazilian religion, like the general culture, mingles many elements. It is so uniquely Brazilian that there is a popular saying that claims "God is a Brazilian."

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

BRAZILIANS ENJOY being around other people. They love visiting late into the night with family and friends. Brazilians have two types of friends: social friends, with whom they get together to eat, dance and gossip; and close friends, with whom they can discuss personal subjects and who can be counted on in a crisis. Only after many years will a social friendship evolve into a close friendship. A close friend, often called a compadre, is accepted as family.

Family responsibilities are taken very seriously. Relatives are bound to help each other when the need arises. If a distant cousin from the country needs a place to stay, one must provide lodging for as long as necessary.

Brazilians embrace any chance to have a party, which nearly always includes food, music and dancing. Because the home is a private place, many parties are held in clubs or community halls. Brazilians habitually show up late—if you are a mere half hour late to a party, you probably will arrive even before the hosts. Dinner

party guests often linger so long over drinks and conversation that the meal does not get started until 11 at night. Even parties for teenagers do not really get started until around 10 p.m., continuing to the early morning hours. A child's birthday is not celebrated with just one party: usually, there is a small family gathering followed by a larger party for friends and acquaintances.

A girl's 15th birthday is celebrated with a big debutante ball. The girl and her close friends dress in white gowns and their escorts wear tuxedos. The evening begins with a Mass, then there is a reception with a live band and a lavish buffet. At midnight the birthday girl formally enters society by dancing with her father.

A wedding involves many parties. The groom and his friends celebrate with a bachelor party. The bridesmaids give a shower in the kitchen of the bride's best friend. The immediate family attends a small civil ceremony. Then comes the big event—the church wedding and the reception that follows.

It is perfectly acceptable to bring visiting relatives or friends with you to a party, even if they have not been invited. But they will not be introduced—that would bring too much formality to the festive, friendly setting. Brazilians do not feel they need to know your name in order to have a good conversation and a good time.

Most Brazilians are known by either their first or last name, but not both. A teacher may be known as Professor André to his students, Senhor André to his colleagues, and simply André to his friends. Most people, even his friends, will not know his last name. Brazilians are also big on nicknames. You may have never heard of the soccer player Edson Arantes de Nascimento, but you probably recognize his nickname: Pelé.

Brazilians love a good conversation and they are uninhibited when they talk. A loud voice and lots of hand movement indicate conviction. Anyone speaking in a low voice with folded hands cannot possibly mean what they are saying. Brazilians stand close to each other when they talk, touching to emphasize a point. Hand gestures and body language are an imporant part of social communication. When women meet they exchange beijinhos, kisses on the cheek. Men shake hands, accompanied by a slap on the back, and close friends exchange an abraço, a firm hug.

Brazil is still very much a man's country. The husband traditionally earns and manages the money, and the wife takes care of the house and children. The Brazilian man takes the initiative in courting and is supposed to follow a strict code of chivalry. This machismo involves upholding honor and playing the leading role, but men do not feel the need to act tough or hide their emotions. They do not hesitate to show affection or cry over dying relatives.

BRAZIL

Marriage is deemed essential for a woman's self-fulfillment. Single women in their 30s are looked upon with pity. Brazilian women let their husbands feel they are in control, but often they are experts at manipulating male egos. Women quietly tolerate their husbands extramarital affairs, even accepting them as being inevitable. However, a woman may be beaten or even killed if her jealous husband became suspicious. Men are rarely punished for these crimes of passion. Such attitudes are gradually being overturned, but Brazilian society still has a long way to go in loosening male dominance.

Brazilians invest a lot of time and effort in enjoying life. The people of Sao Paulo seem to be driven by a rather intense work ethic, but most others do not see the point of it. Most Brazilians feel that powers greater than humans control destiny and that the hard work and good intentions of any individual are not enough to change things. So, why bother? Most declarations end with the phrase, "if God wishes."

Yet, Brazilians are not fatalistic; they are able to look on the bright side of life. This is because they believe that these higher authorities are flexible. With enough patience, respect and cleverness, any command can be eased, from that of the local police captain to the highest authority of all. No matter what they have done, Brazilians believe God will forgive them through proper repentance and prayer. In fact, conventional wisdom holds that God is a Brazilian.

Flexibility is the key to survival in Brazil. It is how things get done. Brazilians have a word for it—jeito. It literally translates as "way," but it means much more. Jeito is the ability to accomplish something no matter the obstacles. There is a tricky, inexact science of knowing when to bend the rules. If the authority behind the rules is strong enough to force compliance, then it makes good sense to obey the rules. But other times, the rules are seen as pointless obstacles to be avoided. Traffic signs are a good example of this. A red light does not necessarily mean "stop"; it means "stop if there is likely to be traffic."

This flexibility involves compromise as a part of daily life. Taxi drivers haggle with their riders over fares. Customers bargain with merchants over prices. Brazilians take great pride in their ability to negotiate. Some situations require outside help from a middleman. It is the custom for Catholics to pray to their patron saints to intercede with God on their behalf. The political version of the saint is the "colonel." The colonel is the most influential citizen in a rural community. The peasants support whichever candidate the colonel supports, because they know he can ask favors from that elected person on their behalf. The business version of the saint is the despachante, or "fixer." The despachante might ask a relative who works at a ministry to speed up an application for a license or an influential friend to make a phone call on behalf of his client. He

helps businessmen deal with Brazil's relaxed attitude toward deadlines and takes care of other routine, everyday jobs.

Brazilians really live their lives. They love being with people, and they love being alive. In spite of all their problems and hardships, Brazilians are determined to enjoy life. Their society supports this determination.

WEATHER

BRAZIL IS a very big country. It covers a wide range of latitudes—from just north of the equator down through the tropic zone and well into the temperate zone. Therefore, it is not surprising that Brazil has a wide variety of climates.

The Amazon Basin receives heavy rainfall year round, accumulating more than 80 inches annually. In Manaus, deep in the rainforest on the Amazon River, the average annual rainfall is about three times that of San Francisco or London. Because all this, rain tends to cool things down, it does not really get that hot—usually in the 80s—but (this probably will come as no surprise) it is humid.

In the Northeast there is a large inland desert region called the *sertão*. It is blistering hot all year, with temperatures of 100° F not uncommon. It is a giant dust bowl of arid savannah, cactus, scrub and thorn bushes. These backlands are stricken by drought every few years; when the droughts finally end in sudden torrential rains, the country is vulnerable to devastation by floods. However, the rains never last for long in the sertão.

Along the Atlantic coast, it is hot (but not as hot as in the sertão) and humid (but not as humid as in the rainforest). In the summer the average temperature hovers around 80° F, and in the winter it rarely drops below 65°F. Just as it starts to get uncomfortably hot, there is often a sudden downpour to alleviate the heat and freshen the air. The sea breezes also moderate the climate, sweeping in to cool things down nicely in the evenings.

The plains and plateaus of Central Brazil are in the tropics, but the altitude keeps the temperatures down a bit. It is generally hot, with daytime temperatures from 75° to 85° F, depending on the altitude. There is a dry season and a rainy season—most of the rain falls from December to April. Annual rainfall varies significantly in this region, with some areas getting as much as 60 to 80 inches a year and other areas getting as little as 10 to 20 inches.

The Southern boundry of the tropics, the Tropic of Capricorn, runs through the city of Sao Paulo. The Southern region of Brazil is in the temperate zone. In this moderate, subtropical climate the

seasons change—at least, compared to the rest of the country. Summers are warm, with average temperatures of 70° to 85°F, and winters are cool, with average temperatures below 60°F. Sometimes there is frost, and it has even been known to snow a little. There is regular rainfall throughout the year, but the annual total is below 40 inches.

The equator passes through the far Northern region of Brazil, so most of the country lies in the southern hemisphere. Summer is in December and winter is in July. For most of the country there is little difference between summer and winter; the tropical climate does not involve big seasonal changes. There is usually heavier rain in the summer, and it is generally drier and cooler in the winter.

Although drought is a problem in the Northeast, and rainstorms can be extremely fierce in the interior, Brazil does not suffer from disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes or earthquakes. All in all, the climate is pleasant and comfortable in most regions of the country, which, considering its size, is fairly remarkable.

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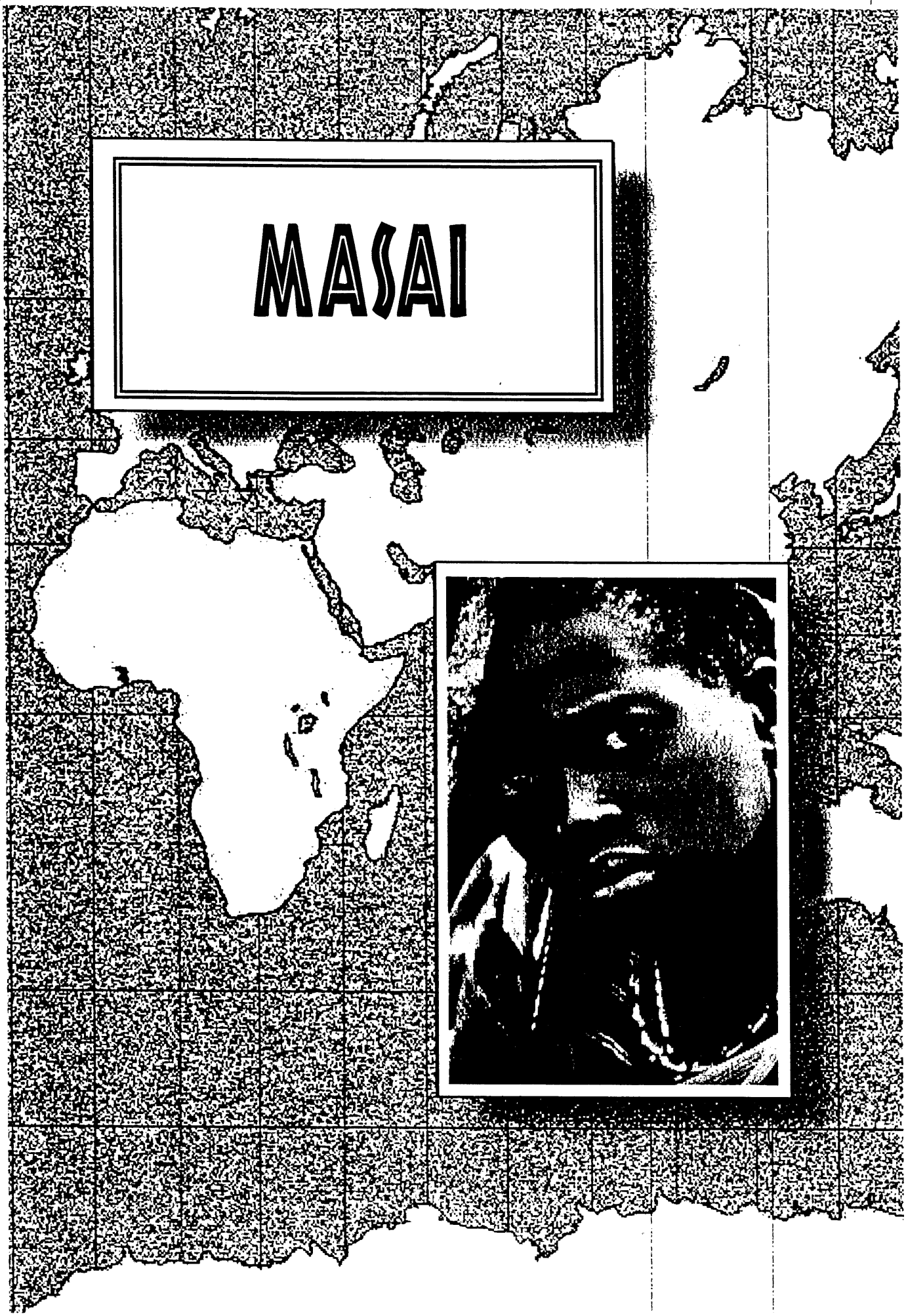
BRAZIL

MASAI



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GLOSSARY

Boma— a mud hut

Enkang— a Masai homestead or camp; a group of huts

Harambee— a Swahili word meaning "pulling together." The Kenyan government uses it as a motto in an attempt to build national unity and defuse tribal rivalry

Kraal— a thornbush enclosure for the herds, placed in the center of the camp

Laibon— a medicine man, diviner or fortune-teller

Layoni— a young boy

Manyatta— the warrior camp

Moran— a male Masai warrior

Ndito— a young girl

Nkokua— the season of the long rains

Savanna— grassy plains with scattered trees

MASAI

THE LAND

THE MASAI LIVE in the grasslands along the Kenya-Tanzania border in the southern area of the great Rift Valley of Africa. They are nomadic herdsmen. They do not establish permanent homes; instead they drive their herds pasture to pasture. Tending large herds of cattle makes them dependent on rain, grass and movement.

The Masai lands are the *savanna*—rolling, high plains of sun-baked grass. During the rainy season, turns into a thick green carpet. During the dry season, the Masai move their cattle to higher ground to find grass. This gives the grass in the savannah a chance to recover from overgrazing until the rains come. When it is dry, the Masai congregate around permanent water sources, but they scatter when the rainy season begins.

The Masai tend to stay in one general area unless they are forced to move by drought or an outbreak of disease. When they live near farming people, they usually will develop a trading relationship and exchange products from their cattle for vegetables or grain, spears or jewelry.

If the permanent water sources have dried up, the Masai will travel with their cattle to water holes that have been dug by non-Masai. The Masai will not dig up the earth for any purpose. They believe that grass is a sacred gift and must not be plowed. Therefore, they do not grow any food or cultivate any trees or other plants. Neither do they bury their dead. The dead are left out in the open, outside of the camp, to be eaten by hyenas and vultures. The Masai believe that if the dead are buried, the earth will be poisoned and grass will not grow there.

The Masai share their grazing land with wild game such as gazelles, zebras, lions, rhinos, giraffes and elephants. Many different kinds of animals can live in the same area because of their different eating habits. Zebras nibble the tops of the grasses. Gazelles prefer the shoots closer to the ground. Elephants and giraffes can eat from the tallest trees that no other animal can reach. The predators eat the grazing animals, and the scavengers clean up anything that is left.

The Masai have great respect for the lion. Custom once required the *morani* (warriors) to prove their courage by killing a lion with a spear. This is illegal now. Sometimes during a drought, a lion will try to kill a Masai cow for food. The Masai are always on guard to protect their cattle from wild animals.

For most citizens of Kenya, owning a piece of land is the ultimate goal. Even those who have moved to the cities long for a plot of land

in the country. At one time, a farmer divided his land and gave it to his sons. With the population exploding as it has, this is often not possible, since not enough land remains to go around. Yet, in a country where people are hungry for land, the Masai have no desire to own any. They do not want to put up fences and build permanent homes. Their way of life depends on being able to move freely over large areas. Their traditional lands are coveted by farmers, and there is danger that their land will gradually be taken over.

CATTLE

THE LIVES OF THE MASAI revolve around their cattle, the source of all that they need. Their cattle supply them with skins for leather, dung for building huts, milk and blood—and occasionally meat—for food. Their additional needs (vegetables, grains, spears) are minor and are obtained by trading cattle, milk, blood or meat with other tribes.

Yet the cattle are more than a source for food and other needs. A family's wealth is measured by the number of cattle it owns. A man with a large herd commands great respect and can support many wives and children.

Therefore, even more than an economic resource, cattle are a social asset, which allow a man to acquire more wives and more children. Each wife gets a portion of the herd to care for. Her children grow up with the herd.

The Masai are pastoralists. While that word may bring up visions of quiet hillsides and peaceful shepherds, the Masai have a reputation for being anything but peaceful. Every Masai male is a professional warrior for about 15 years of his life. The warrior is the protector of the cattle. The Masai are pastoralists in that their occupation is herding.

Cattle figure in all of the Masai ceremonies. At a birth or an initiation or a marriage, great honor is shown for the occasion when a bullock is roasted. The Masai give cattle an almost religious importance. They firmly believe that when the world was created, all of the world's cattle were given to them. Because of this belief, the warriors once ventured nighttime crusades to retrieve what they believed to be their rightful property. These raids are now against the law.

The Masai also have herds of sheep and goats, but the cattle are their first love. Tending to the herds involves the entire family. The cattle receive excellent care. The herd is separated into two parts. The cows needed for milk and the suckling calves are kept near or even inside the huts. They are cared for by the women and children. The older boys care for the main herd, taking it daily to pasture.

Each day the girls check the animals for parasites and pick off the ticks. The cows are routinely examined for signs of disease by the fathers, who know all there is to know about their cattle.

Even though milk is the mainstay of the Masai diet, the cows are allowed to give ample milk to their calves. The wives know that they must not take too much away for their own children. They understand that their husbands are as concerned about the welfare of their cattle as they are about their children.

A few bulls are selected for breeding. The other male calves are castrated and, as bullocks, are bled periodically when their owners want something special to drink. The bullocks are occasionally butchered when an owner decides, with great reluctance, to reduce his wealth by eating some meat.

Because of their cattle, the Masai are nomads. A family will relocate to wherever conditions are best for the cattle. Good grass for the cattle is of great importance. The entire settlement will pack up and move in search of it.

The Masai language is rich in words relating to cattle. There are words that exactly detail the shape or length of horns, and words that describe height and sleekness and humps. There are numerous words for the colors and markings of hides. A man can describe his animals with the most precise detail. He knows their individual peculiarities. A boy who herds also knows each animal as a member of the family. He can recognize his cattle in the middle of any herd. He can tell if a cow is missing, not by counting the herd—for the Masai never count their animals for fear of bad luck—but by missing it. The Masai love their cattle. They know each one by name. They are proud of them.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

THE BIRTH CEREMONY

A **MASAI BABY** is born in its mother's hut. The mother is assisted by an old woman or by one of the father's other wives. No men are permitted near the hut. The father does not see the new baby until a few days after it is born.

The women of the camp perform the ceremony to honor the baby's birth. They gather at the new mother's home, each with a small gourd of milk for her to drink. They admire the baby, praise the new mother, and fill the hut with talk. A sheep is slaughtered and roasted outside the hut. When the meat is ready, each woman eats a piece and chants a prayer of thanksgiving.

The arrival of a new baby is something to celebrate. A baby girl brings the promise of future wealth, because a daughter will bring a bride price when she is married. A boy is seen as forming a link with the past, and sons are needed to be herders and warriors. The prestige of the new parents increases as well.

THE NAMING CEREMONY

WHEN IT IS TIME to name the new child, the father selects an unblemished black bullock to be slaughtered. Because the Masai love their cattle so immensely, there can be no higher honor given to the baby. While the meat is roasting, the men sit around, talking and gossiping and remembering past naming ceremonies. When the meat is ready, they take a piece and go home. Then the women will bring a gourd of milk for the mother, get a piece of meat, and take it home to eat.

That evening the mother carries the baby in a cloth on her back while she goes out to milk the cows. When she returns with a gourd of milk, three elders and the father follow her into the hut. The mother holds the child while the men speak the name that has been chosen.

THE AGE SET

RELATIONSHIPS based on age constitute the most important element of the social structure. Masai life is based on progression through a series of age groups. Age is the basis for an elaborate institution known as the age-set system, which defines a person's behavior and role in the society.

An age grouping might include all the boys or girls born during a period of three or four years. The members of an age set pass through initiation rites together and attain the status of adulthood together. A person's age is not determined by the calendar year, but rather by the age group.

The *laibon* or medicine man—the elder who is the expert on rituals—decides when it is time to open a new age set. He sorts out all the potential candidates from several *kraal* camps; some will prepare for initiation right away, while the smaller boys will wait until the next age set is formed. During the process of training and initiation, the boys are bound by solemn ties of loyalty to those who are initiated at the same time. Throughout their lives they will be ready to help each other because they belong to the same age set.

Males in Masai society are classified according to age-set affiliation. Members of each age set pass as a group through the age grades;

the uninitiated, junior warrior, senior warrior, junior elder, senior elder and retired elder. As they move through each grade, the rights and responsibilities of the members of the age set change. Different behavior is expected of different age sets.

BOYS' INITIATION

INITIATION MARKS the transition from boyhood to young adult. During adolescence a boy is initiated with his agemates by training and circumcision. This advancement ceremony is a time for the greatest celebration. People gather from many camps. At the ceremony, boys kindle the fire for their younger brothers, just as older boys will kindle the fire for them. This shows that every boy is linked to those older and younger than himself.

When it is time for an age set to be trained for initiation, the boys leave their homes and stay in huts near the medicine man. They paint white designs on their bodies with chalk. For two or three months, the medicine man and other elders teach the boys about the ways of their people and of their duties as future warriors. The boys choose a leader from among themselves who will serve as their spokesman. A bond of friendship develops among these boys that lasts throughout their lives.

After a boy returns home from this training, he is circumcised. The father pays for the operation with a bullock or a sheep. The boy's head is shaved and he washes himself in water in which a special herb has been soaked that lessens the pain. He lies down on a skin in front of the hut. One man holds the boy and another performs the circumcision. Bravery is more than merely an admired trait for the Masai—it is a sacred way of life. The boy knows that he must not make a sound or even wince during the process. If the boy cries out, the mother will be punished for raising a coward.

After the circumcision, the boy remains inside the hut for several days. When he is able to walk, he puts on a long garment. With these clothes and his shaved head he could be mistaken for a girl, so he paints his face with chalk to avoid this embarrassment. The men of the camp have made the boy a special bow with blunt arrows. The boy shoots these arrows at all the young girls he meets. This shows the beginning of his interest in girls.

After initiation, the boys let their hair grow so they will be able to plait it by the time they become junior warriors. Until the second initiation or advancement ceremony, when they become junior warriors, the boys are given total freedom from herding. They wander all over the country, living on their own as a group, becoming familiar with their lands and other Masai.

GIRLS' INITIATION

MASAI GIRLS are initiated when they are 14 or 15 years old. Before the initiation ceremony, the girls go off to live by themselves away from their mothers. There they are supervised by old women, who teach them about marriage, childbirth, caring for babies, and housekeeping. No men are allowed near the huts. Initiation involves circumcision for the girls, too. Soon after the initiation ceremony, a girl is ready for marriage; however, a boy must wait for a few years before he can marry.

COURTSHIP

MANY MASAI MARRIAGES are arranged by the families. A girl does not have to marry someone she does not like, and she does not have to get married unless she wants to. Masai girls usually are in no hurry to marry. They enjoy visiting with their friends and dancing and singing each night with the warriors at the *manyatta*. Most girls hope they will marry a warrior, not an elder. They also hope they will have the honor of being his first wife.

When a warrior is attracted to a girl and finds that she likes him too, he will go to her parents' camp with a small gift for her father. If the parents feel the girl is still too young, they will ask the suitor to wait a while. He will continue to visit periodically, each time bringing a small gift of honey or tobacco or vegetables. The girl looks forward to the visits and makes sure her head is shaved and that she is always wearing all of her jewelry. She keeps herself rubbed with an extra coat of grease to make her skin shine, and rubs herself with crushed sweet-smelling plants.

The hopeful husband-to-be enters into negotiations with the girl's father. The bride price—paid by the husband's family to the family of the bride—is arranged before a marriage can be planned. The bride price may be a gift of a certain amount of money, but is more likely a number of cattle. The bride price, sometimes called bride wealth, does not mean that the wife is purchased; it is a guarantee for the stability of the marriage and a compensation to the wife's family for the loss of their daughter.

MASAI

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

THE GROOM brings the bride price with him when he and his family come to get the bride and bring her to their camp. The assembled guests are given meat, provided by the bride's father. After the feast the couple is considered married. The bride and groom leave together for the new *boma,* which has been built for the new bride.

The marriage ceremony is usually held during the rainy season after the calves are born, because then the cows have plenty of milk. Honeymoon couples drink a great deal of milk.

The new bride receives jewelry befitting a married woman. She begins to wear the two-piece garment of a wife. When she arrives at her new husband's camp, she carefully observes the customs and becomes acquainted with everyone. However, she does not feel completely at home among her husband's people until her first child is born.

BECOMING AN ELDER

AS A FATHER'S sons reach the age of initiation, he must go through a ceremony as well. In this ceremony the father leaves the rank of warriors and becomes an elder. Even though the elders are respected, no man wants to leave the warrior group. This reminds him that his life is winding down. Besides, being a warrior is fun.

When a man becomes an elder, his entire attitude changes. A warrior is fierce, protective and suspicious. An elder becomes more kindly and friendly. The elders sit in front of their huts all day and smoke their pipes, while endlessly discussing everything under the sun. They tell stories to the children and give them advice from their wealth of experience. The elders hold councils and make decisions, to ensure the traditional ways are observed.

When it is time for a man to enter the rank of elders, he prepares some honey wine in a special hut. He stays there by himself for four days. Then he greases his body and puts on a warrior's dress, complete with ostrich feather headdress and vulture feather cape. He puts his war club and knife into a goatskin belt and picks up his spear and shield. The elders come to him, and carrying gourds of honey wine, they all go to his home. At the entrance, the elders say, "Go! Become an old man." The father shouts, "Ho! I shall not." This is repeated four times. After the elders say it the fifth time, the father replies, "Ho! I have gone then. I shall become an old man." They enter the hut. The

father takes off his warrior's clothes and dons the dress of the old people—an ankle-length piece of cloth or skin. From now on he will be addressed as the-father-of-(whatever his son's name is).

Women can become elders, as well, once they have borne four healthy children. But having four healthy children is not easily done. Many children die before they have even been named.

DROUGHT CEREMONY

WHEN THERE IS DROUGHT the people worry about their cattle. The *laibon*, or medicine men, who are the rain-makers, stop plucking their beards. The elders light fires of special wood, and the laibon throw charms into the fires. The women fasten grass to their clothes. Everyone circles the fires and chants prayers for the rains to begin.

ECLIPSE CEREMONY

THE MASAI believe the moon dies during an eclipse. They gather outside their huts. One man chants in a loud voice, mourning the loss of the moon. Everybody joins in, pleading with the moon to come to life again. They continue chanting until the moon reappears. Then, everyone goes back inside their huts and goes to sleep.

CUSTOMS

THE MASAI have customary greetings for each other, depending on each stage of life. A boy would never presume to take an elder or warrior's hand in greeting. Instead, when an elder greets a boy, the boy lowers his head and presses it against the elder's abdomen. When an older woman meets a child, the woman kisses the child; then, the child presses its face against the woman's chest.

All of a Maasai's activities are regulated by customs. The children learn the customs at home and by watching the adults of their camp. They know what to expect. They know how everyone will behave in every situation. They know what will be said in each circumstance and what they should reply. Because of this, the Masai, even the children, show perfect poise.

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CLOTHING

THE MASAI DRESS in the distinctive garments that they have worn for hundreds of years. Men wear a large cloth or colorful blanket around their shoulders which falls to their knees. They sometimes wear cotton capes and sandals made of buffalo hide. They have another piece of cloth they can tie around their heads for protection against the sun, wind or dust.

Married women wear a two-piece garment. One is a wrap-around skirt. The other is cut in the center, fitting over the head and hanging loosely to the waist. A woman always wears all the jewelry she owns. She never takes it off and would be embarrassed to be seen without it. Her jewelry makes her feel attractive. She wears circles of iron and copper that cover her neck and chest. Many earrings hang from her shoulder-length earlobes. Her arms and legs are covered with copper wire ornaments. All of this jewelry can weigh as much as 30 pounds; the women walk with a swaying, mincing step to make the weight easier to carry. Women rub their legs and arms with grease and insert certain leaves under the jewelry to soothe the skin.

The Masai mother wants her children to be beautiful. She mixes cow's or sheep's fat with red clay and rubs her children with it until they shine. She crushes sweet-smelling leaves to rub on her family so they smell nice. The mother also adds weights to her children's earlobes so they will stretch until they reach the shoulder.

An older girl may wear a garland of flowers to appear more attractive. Girls also gather leaves to wear in their earlobes. They enjoy bringing in aromatic plants to decorate the hut and place on their beds. They make toothbrushes out of the fibers of the hibiscus bush.

The warriers spend a great deal of time grooming themselves. They paint their bodies with white patterns and plait their hair with red ocher. They do this so they will appear fierce and scare their enemies. The Masai warriers might also wear a lion's mane headdress or a headdress made of ostrich feathers. The warriors wear a belt, which holds a curved sword. They wear a small square of kidskin over their shoulders, leaving their body free to move. The warrior's shield is excellent protection for his nearly naked body. It is oval in shape and made of tough hide. Each shield displays a distinctive design of white, red and black. The Masai know from these markings to which subclan and age set a warrior belongs.

Hairstyles are important. Women and girls shave their heads. It is considered unbecoming for a woman to have hair on her head. Men twist their hair into many long, thin plaits that they smear with fat and color red with ocher. Elders usually cut their own hair short.

DAILY LIFE

AT DAWN, while it is still dark, the cattle and goats can be heard moving about restlessly. The children leave their grass beds and crawl on hands and knees through the opening in the *boma* that leads outside. The day's work begins. Their bare feet make a squishing sound as the children walk through the cold cattle manure. The women and girls must milk the cows before they leave the thornbush enclosure. Milking is women's work. Men never milk cows. The men look over the cattle for signs of disease. They are very knowledgeable about their animals; after all, their cattle are their wealth.

Young boys, accompanied by the family dogs, herd their father's animals out of the thornbush enclosure's gate to the grazing area for that day. A layoni boy knows each of his father's animals by sight and could recognize one even if it were mixed in with another herd. He can tell at a glance if one is missing, although he would never count them. To do so would be boasting, and that would bring bad luck. A Masai is not willing to tell exactly how many animals are in his herd or even how many wives and children he has. (You can imagine how this would frustrate a government census taker.)

On a nearby hilltop, the morani are on the watch for wild animals that might threaten the herd. They stand tall and proud, their faces stained red with ocher, their hair intricately braided, and their long spears at their sides. During their warrior years, the young men are not required to work with the cattle. The duties of the warriors traditionally include defense, raiding and enforcement of the decisions of the elders. These young men are expected to be daring, hardy, manly and stoic. For the years they spend together in the manyatta, they devote a lot of time to sitting around on the ground with their knees up against their chins. They will hang around all day, talking, laughing, grooming each other, and playing the pebble game.

When the senior warrior age set advances to the grade of junior elder, they are expected to accept marital and parental responsibilites. They can no longer wander about the countryside whenever they feel like it. They must settle down. As they progress to senior elder status, they gain the responsibility and right to make decisions for the community and mediate disputes with wisdom and moderation. The retired elder, being retired, has no duties.

Much of the work is done by the Masai women. The men have traditionally saved their energy for defending the village and going on raids. A Masai wife cares for her children. She feeds them and

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also her husband when he comes to her hut. With the help of her children, she tends the herd and the cows that her husband has assigned to her. She keeps the huts in good repair, building new ones every six to eight months, or whenever they move to new pasture. There are myriad other chores, from tanning skins to making pots and scraping gourds.

Access to clean water is a never-ending problem. It is the job of the women and children to search for water. Sometimes they must walk long distances and carry the heavy water gourds back to the *boma*.

When she takes a break from her chores, a woman will visit with the other women in the camp. There is time for gossip, ceremonies and prayers.

The girls stay around the camp, helping their mothers with any tasks that arise. They help repair and clean the *bomas*. They care for their little brothers and sisters and collect firewood for cooking. As part of their daily work, girls also clean gourds with cattle urine and pick the ticks off the young animals. The girls talk and laugh together as they work and tell each other riddles.

The grazing area may be several hours' walk from the camp. The young boys run alongside the cattle, slapping the ground with sticks to keep the animals from straying too far from the path. Out in the grazing area, far from their parents, on guard against wild animals and cattle rustlers, the boys feel very responsible. They are in charge of their fathers' wealth. They have to know everything about their animals. If a calf or kid is born, the boys help the mother animal. Herding can be at times (as in the hot midday sun) both very difficult and very boring.

In the late afternoon, the layoni head home with the animals. Before the boys can have supper, the herd must be enclosed in the *kraal* for the night, safe from the lions.

Since the hut is so dark and crowded, the family stays outside, enjoying the cool evening breeze. They watch their cattle while they talk about the pasture, the weather, the children's help with the herd. The father looks over the young animals to see how they are growing. Later, the family may cluster around the fire and listen to a story told by an elder. The young people may gather at the manyatta for singing and dancing.

EDUCATION

IN KENYA, elementary education is provided free by the government, but attendance is not compulsary. Many schools require the students to wear uniforms or buy books; even these requirements prove to be too great a financial burden for some families to bear. Sometimes there is enough money to send only one child from the family to school. Then choices must be made.

For many reasons, but especially because of the tremendous increase in population, schools are impossibly crowded. Books must be shared. Even desks and chairs must be shared. The government has been scrambling to train enough teachers.

Most schools are in towns and cities. In remote rural areas, such as where the Masai live, schools are rare. Most Masai adults cannot read or write. There were no schools for them when they were young. In addition, they are comfortable with the traditional Masai way of life. They are satisfied with what they have and with who they are. Of all the African groups, the Masai have resisted change the most.

But the Masai can see that things around them are changing. Their way of life is threatened. The land wherein they live and graze their cattle is being encroached upon. They realize that they must prepare themselves for a new kind of fighting with new rules. The elders want their young men to learn Western language and law so they can defend their rights to the land.

The schools for Masai children have adopted some of the Masai customs. In school the children are divided into age sets. Each age set chooses a boy to represent them as their spokesman, as each age set has done throughout their history.

For the first few months of school, the children are taught in their native language. Then Swahili is introduced. This is the language the Masai speak with outsiders. In the third grade, the children begin to learn English.

Even the children who are unable to get a formal education receive a thorough education in the Masai ways of life. Every year, they observe the rituals and customs and ceremonies. At every advancement and initiation, they are taught their role, and their expected behavior is made clear. Every day they get plenty of hands-on practice in preparing for their future and learning new skills as they perform their chores and fulfill their responsibilities. Every night, they hear stories that inculcate them in the customs and values of their people.

The morani traditionally received their education by going off by themselves and learning to survive in the wilderness. They learned to become warriors, and how to fight and go on raids. They stood guard

as protectors of their families and their cattle. They took the traditional test of manhood by singlehandedly hunting down a lion with a spear. Most of this is illegal now. They must develop new responsibilities. The must search for new goals. They must find a new role in their society.

FAMILY

MASAI SOCIETY revolves around the family. The term "family" is used broadly and may stretch to include cousins, aunts and uncles and other relatives.

A Masai man usually has more than one wife. If he owns a large herd of cattle, he may have as many as five wives; several wives are needed to milk the cows and care for the cattle. The more wives a man has, the more wealthy he is perceived as being. Not only are many wives and children expensive to provide for, but several wives indicate that there is a very large herd of cattle to be cared for.

A man divides his herd among his wives; each wife and her children have a separate herd of cattle, sheep and goats to care for. This could be viewed as a form of insurance: if there is an outbreak of disease, this precaution sometimes prevents the loss of the entire herd.

In these polygamous marriages, there is a definite hierarchy among the wives. The first wife usually is given more authority and influence over the ones who come after her. Her son is the firstborn. He inherits the herds and will become the male head of the family.

A man's second wife builds her hut next door. All the wives and their children work outside together. If the family herd is small, the two women may combine them for grazing. Helping each other is a part of family life.

Naturally there are squabbles among the wives, but the system works surprisingly well, and they are satisfied with it. No woman needs to stay unmarried. There is never any trouble finding a babysitter or someone to help out. In the days when so many young men were killed in raids, the girls left behind married other warriors, often becoming a second or third wife.

The husband is required by custom to treat each wife with equal consideration. When a man has more than one wife, he takes turns where he eats and spends the night. On the days when the father is due, special preparations are made. The children are rubbed with fresh coats of grease to make them more beautiful. The mother may ask another woman in the camp to help her shave her head. The father is treated with great respect. His children go to him and bow, and they may not speak until he has touched them on the head.

A baby stays close to its mother for the first two years. The child is nursed whenever it cries. A Masai child is given anything it asks for. The mothers are not strict; they permit their children to train themselves over a few years.

Masai children have a carefree early childhood. They play in the open with few restrictions and little supervision. As they reach the age of five or six, a few responsibilities are added. Boys join their older brothers among the cattle. The little boys are expected to patrol the flanks of the herd, chasing back any cow that begins to wander. They feel free to come home for a drink of milk and blood, then return to their games with their playmates among the cattle. If they are thirsty and too far from home, they will get a drink by squirting milk into their mouths directly from the cow's udder.

Even older boys have the freedom to wander if they feel like it. They can leave home for days at a time unless they are needed to care for the animals. They learn self-reliance early and know their way along the paths of the savanna.

The *moran* do not live with their families in the village. They live in the manyatta, rough camps outside of the regular camp, with other young men of their age set. They spend some time with the rest of the camp, especially in the evening and for celebrations.

Most warriers become elders in a ceremony with the rest of their age set. But if a warrior's father dies, he becomes the head of the household right away, and his life changes overnight. He must give up his enjoyable life in the manyatta and take on great responsibilities. He must manage a large household, including old men and women, his father's widows, and all his brothers and sisters. He must see that the herds are cared for and increased, and he must keep his large family fed and at peace. Now that it is time for him to settle down, he will pick out a girl whom he wants to marry.

The new head of the household tries to be fair. He seeks advice from the elders. He respects his father's other wives, but it is only natural that he favor his own. Tradition dictates that a man should do all he can to please his mother. If the other wives feel he is not fair, they can protest to their fathers and brothers, who may come, painted and armed, to settle things. So the new head of the household tries to be fair and avoid a serious reprimand or a beating.

Old people hold honored positions and are cared for. Old women are treated with love and respect and are honored for their wisdom. The elders make the important decisions. They know everything about the Masai world. They know the legends, when to hold the ceremonies, and they predict the rain. The elders hold the power.

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FOOD

MASAI CUISINE has a limited amount of variety. Most of the time everyone just drinks milk. Sometimes for the evening meal there will also be some herbs or other plants.

The Masai are reluctant to lessen their wealth by butchering one of their beloved herd, so they do not eat meat very often. There has to be a good reason. Preparing and eating meat is an important part of most ceremonies. Sick and weak people are sometimes given meat to eat. Warriors also used to eat meat to build up their strength before they went on a raid, which, of course, they do not do anymore because of moving away from their warrior way of life. The Masai do not eat game animals; they are considered to be taboo.

The Masai will not drink milk and eat meat together. They make sure that a certain period of time has elapsed since they last drank milk before they will eat meat. Anyone who would eat meat and drink milk on the same day is considered a glutton, and the Masai believe that if you are a glutton your cows will stop giving milk.

After the cows are milked, the milk may be divided into three groups. The first group is for drinking fresh. The second is stored in gourds, where it will sour and turn solid. If the milk is mixed with a tiny amount of cow's urine, it curdles into a soft cheese. The third group might be saved to be mixed with blood for a special Masai drink.

Of course, they do not kill the cattle to get their blood. They tie a strip of leather around the animal's neck so a vein sticks out. One man holds the animal while another shoots a special arrow into its neck. The men are careful that the arrow does not penetrate too far. When the arrow is pulled out, they hold a gourd under the wound to catch the flow of blood. Then cattle dung is pressed over the wound to stop the bleeding. No more than a quart of blood is taken at one time, and the animal is not bled again for at least a month.

The Masai like to drink the blood while it is still fresh and warm. They have great faith in the restorative powers of this special mixture of cow's blood and milk. They also say it helps digestion.

Their cows do not produce much milk. A woman must make sure that the calves have had enough milk before she takes some for her family. Usually, each cow will give about a quart of milk. In the dry season there may only be a half pint.

If a cow or bullock dies, its blood is drained right away and drunk. The warm contents of the stomach are immediately eaten as well. Then the rest of the meat is cut up and roasted over the fire.

Eating is not a social occasion. The family does not eat together. The elders are served first, the children last. Women and men do not

eat together. People prefer to eat without being watched. Even at a celebration, people will eat their piece of meat quickly or even take it home to eat it. When there is fresh blood to drink, the father and sons will enjoy the drink first and the mother and daughters will have some when the men have finished.

One of the Maasai's favorite foods is honey. A special bird lives in their grasslands called the honey guide. It looks rather like a sparrow. The honey guide eats insects, mostly bees and wasps. It also eats honey and can digest the wax of the honeycomb. When the honey guide has found a beehive, it flies near a person and chatters to attract attention. When it sees that it is being followed, it leads the person to a beehive. After pointing out the hive, the little bird sits nearby and waits while the person digs up the bee's nest or knocks down the tree or smokes the bees out. The Masai always leave plenty of honey for the honey guide to show their gratitude.

Children especially love the honey and will drop everything to follow a honey guide. A head medicine man's diet is often restricted to milk and honey, so honey is important to him as well. The elders drink homemade honey wine, and it is served at all ceremonies and feasts.

On the whole, the Masai do not eat very much. Their average caloric intake is about 1,300 calories a day. For the most part they survive on milk.

HEALTH

WHEN THE YOUNG women are initiated, an old woman teaches them about childbirth and how to care for newborns. The girls have also spent plenty of time helping their mothers and other mothers in the camp to care for their babies. They are taught a few simple remedies using herbs and salves for stomach aches and rashes and other minor ailments. For more serious ailments, the husband will call the medicine man.

The Masai have a traditional remedy for flesh wounds, a mixture of raw meat, cattle blood and a root with antiseptic qualities. After application it is said to produce healing in a short time. Since fighting wars and raiding have been outlawed, life expectancy for Masai men has gone up.

Malaria is a danger. Worm infestation is common. Leprosy and sleeping sickness are still present. Too many babies still die before they have even been named.

The two front teeth in the lower jaw are pulled out of all Masai. A mother pulls out her child's soon after they develop, and the laibon

removes a boy's second set during initiation. This custom probably began because lockjaw used to be a big problem among the Masai. By having this permanent opening in their mouths, they could suck in food and drink milk and keep from starving. Now it is a tradition, and the Masai think that someone with all their teeth looks funny and chews like a donkey.

The tall, muscular Masai are capable of great athletic feats. Some have been Olympic running champions. They are renowned walkers and runners and have exceptionally long legs and arms. While hunting, they are able to run down wild animals and kill them with spears.

HISTORY

THE MASAI call themselves Il-Masai. They have no written history; however, they have many oral legends and stories of how their people came to be. The Masai have probably been herders in Masailand for about a thousand years. They were able to live off their cattle entirely and so could remain nomads, trading cattle products with other tribes for their few additional needs. Because of this, they have been able to resist assimilation. More than most tribes, the Masai have retained their traditional lifestyle, not adopting Western ways. Their way of life is nearly the same as it was a thousand years ago.

The Masai have long held a reputation as fierce fighters. When the white explorers first came to East Africa in the 1880s, they were warned that the lands of the Masai were the most dangerous. Most explorers avoided them.

All Masai men are professional warriors for a good portion of their lives. In the past, many wars were waged on neighboring tribes. Because they believed that all the cattle were given to the Masai at creation, they went on regular raids to recover what they felt were their rightful possessions. If a neighboring tribe stole cattle or made off with some women, the moran would become fierce and surprise their enemies. They would take back their property and more for good measure. Their neighbors were justifiably terrified of the Masai. Some tribes were so badly defeated by the Masai that they gave up herding and turned to farming.

Today laws have made the Masai peaceful, for the most part. There is no longer much fighting, but their demeanor and reputation for strength, ferocity and cunning still inspire respect in visitors to their territory.

The current borders of most African countries were not made by African people, but by Europeans. In the 19th century, European powers divided up Africa into colonies. No consideration was given to the tribal territories already established. Many who had been enemies for centuries found they were citizens of the same colony. When the Europeans finally relinquished their power over Africa, the newly independent nations inherited these borders. The Masai tend to ignore borders, living both in Kenya and Tanzania. They take their herds wherever there is pasture.

There are four main clans among the Masai, each with several subclans. The members of the different subclans differ in appearance, and other Masai can easily identify them. Each group dresses a little differently, marks its cattle with distinct ear and skin brands, and their warriors paint different marks on their shields.

HOUSING

THE MASAI HUT is called a *boma*. It is are usually dome-shaped, rather like an igloo, although sometimes it is long, low and flat. It is a tiny dwelling, usually with only one room and a low entrance area.

Building a boma is a woman's work. When she builds a hut, a wife places sticks into the ground. They are tied together at the top, so that it looks rather like a large, upside-down basket. The spaces between the sticks are filled with grass, boughs, or leaves, often a special kind of leaf that the termites will not eat. This is plastered with a mixture of mud and cow dung. Dung is preferred because it dries harder than mud and does not melt as readily in the rains. To the Masai, cow dung has an agreeable odor. They have smelled it since they were born. It reminds them of their beloved cattle. Besides, it is useful.

When it rains, the hut is protected with hides thrown over the roof. Hides help slow, but not prevent, deterioration. When the *boma* needs repair, the girls collect fresh dung from the middle of the enclosure where the cattle have spent the night. During the long rains, the huts may need to be patched up every day. After six to eight months, a hut no longer benefits from repair, and they build a new one.

The entrance sticks out, rather like a low, narrow porch. The very young calves or lambs might sometimes spend the night in this entrance hall. The doorway, often covered with a cowhide flap, is so low that a person just about has to crawl through it on hands and knees. This is a safety feature: if a wild animal or intruder tries to get in, it can be stopped with a club on the head as it crawls through the door.

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Inside the *boma*, the ceiling is so low a person cannot really stand up. This, too, is a safety precaution. The Masai men are known to have terrible tempers. The women, following sound architectural and physiological principles, build the ceilings low so the tall Masai warriors cannot raise their arms high enough to give a hard punch or throw a spear.

Inside the *boma* it is dark—there are no windows, only a few small holes in the walls to let out smoke from the fire. (The mothers sometimes warm milk over a tiny fire inside the hut. The main fire is outside.) The floor is dirt packed as hard as cement, so it is easy to sweep. Sometimes little cubby holes are molded into the plaster of the walls, and household items are stored in them. There is not much furniture, only a few low stools. Often the beds are just cowhides spread on the dirt floor over a base of dried grass. Some Masai use a wooden headrest that holds their heads off the ground away from any bugs that may want to crawl into their ears. These blocks also protect the elaborate hairdos of the warriors from being disturbed.

Other household items might include several gourds of different sizes used to store milk or water, extra hides and a handmade clay cooking pot.

The Masai usually only go inside to sleep, spending most of their waking hours outside. The huts are small and dark and it is always warm outdoors. The mother does most of her chores outside, her baby always at her side and her small children playing nearby.

The camp, or *enkang*, usually contains the bomas of from two to five families. The bomas are arranged in a circle around the kraal—a tall enclosure made of thornbushes for the animals. The kraal has only one entrance and keeps the herds safe from wild animals at night. The boma to the right of the entrance is usually the home of the senior wife.

The families in an *enkang* may or may not be related, and they are free to leave at any time and regroup with other families. The district might contain about 10 family kraal camps, as well as the camp for the warriors, the manyatta. The manyatta has no kraal or fence, so the warriors take turns guarding it. The people in the camps in the vicinity look to the warriors of the manyatta for protection.

The Masai are nomads; they live wherever conditions are best for their cattle. If there is a drought, if the pasture is overgrazed, if the cattle are at risk from disease, or if the elders say it is time to move, the entire settlement packs up and moves. The family usually has other bomas in different settlements, which can be many hours' walk apart. When the group arrives at the new site, the women can repair the old home within half a day. If there is no old boma, they build a new one. The tall grass is cut down around the camp, because if the

grass is high, poisonous snakes cannot be seen. If their destination is nearby, the women will carry fire with them. If it is a long journey, a man will start a new fire at the new camp by twirling a stick in a grooved piece of wood placed on a base of dried grass. It does not take long for life to resume to normal after a move.

A MASAI MYTH

THE MASAI BELIEVE that the sun and moon are husband and wife, following a way of life similar to their own. Once they got in an argument. The moon hit the sun on the head. The sun struck back. They beat each other up. The sun was embarrassed about his battered face. To hide it from humans, he turned on a bright light. Even now the sun dazzles human eyes, and they cannot see his damaged face.

But it is different for the moon. She is not embarrassed to let humans see that her mouth is swollen and crooked and that one of her eyes is missing.

Because they are married, the sun and moon travel together in the same direction. The moon leads, but when she gets tired, the sun catches up and carries her. When the sun is carrying the moon, humans cannot see her for two days. On the third day, the sun leaves the moon at his setting place. On the fourth day, the donkeys can see the sliver of the new moon, so they bray at her. Finally, on the fifth day, humans can see the moon again.

When a halo appears around the moon, a place in the sky has been attacked, and a lot of cattle have been captured. The halo is the *kraal*. The Milky Way is the road the warriors use to take their captured cattle home.

PROBLEMS

THE MASAI SUFFER from problems they share in common with many other African peoples. Their water supply is not clean or reliable. They must endure disease and sickness. Too many babies die. There is a great deal of tribal rivalry.

But what the Masai fear most is being forced to change their traditional ways. The Masai do not want to change. They do not want to work for anyone except their own families. They do not want to sell their cattle, no matter how high the price. They do not welcome interference. The Masai help each other. When someone has a difficult job, he can expect all his relatives and neighbors to help.

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The Masai must deal with several unique problems. Now that cattle raids are against the law, Masai warriors have lost their main role in their society. Taking these important functions away from the Masai created serious tensions, including increased alcohol abuse. The honey wine they make can be quite potent.

Probably the most serious and prevalent problem for the Masai throughout the ages has been drought. If there is no rain, or little rain, the grass does not grow. If there is no grass, there is no milk for calves or humans. Animals die. People die. It seems as though about every 10 years there is a severe drought, ravaging the herds of the Masai.

For centuries the Masai have used simple remedies and charms to cure animal sicknesses caused by hoof-and-mouth disease and the tsetse fly. Visits from veterinarians have helped fight disease among the cattle. Masai readily accept cures for their cattle, even though it is interference from outside.

The tsetse fly is not conquered yet. It kills Masai cattle and causes sleeping sickness in humans, but it is not fatal to game animals, which are often the carriers. To keep the tsetse from coming back to areas that have been cleared, it is best to cultivate the soil. But the Masai refuse to plow up their grasslands. Grass is sacred to them. Years ago, it was thought that the tsetse fly could be eradicated by getting rid of the host animals. Thousands of animals were killed before it was discovered that not all game animals acted as carriers.

In an attempt to save African wildlife, the government has made it illegal to kill a wild animal anywhere in Kenya—even though hunting safaris would bring in a tremendous amount of money. But most of the parks suffer from poaching. The wild animals of the savanna are tempting targets for many humans. Skins and hides and tusks are extremely valuable and can be sold overseas. Many poor and hungry Africans see the zebra as meat, not a national treasure.

The Masai do not eat wild animals. It is taboo. They do not trade in illegal skins or tusks. For the most part, the Masai coexist peacefully with the wild animals of the savanna. But they have a hard time understanding why they cannot graze their cattle in a national park when their own land has become crowded or overgrazed. The problem is how to preserve the wilderness and wild creatures and yet permit use of the land by the Masai.

When the pastures become overgrazed, the people sometimes drive their herds to the hills. Even though it is forbidden, they burn sections of forest to open it up to grazing. The fires thus started often destroy even larger areas, because fires burn for a long time in the heat and dry air, even burning up the roots underground. Without the shrubs that hold the topsoil, the hills erode in the wind and rain. In this way, the lands of the Masai are turning to desert.

An additional threat to Masai pastures comes from other tribes who need more land for farming. A farmer will get permission to plant a small field on the edge of the pasture by promising to share the grain or vegetables grown there. Once this agreement is made, farmers are there to stay. Usually the two groups can coexist without hostility. But occasionally, politicians stir up the tribal rivalries to suit their own agendas, even though they claim their motto is *harambee* (pulling together).

RECREATION

FOR MUCH OF THE YEAR the Masai are involved in a struggle to survive. Only after a good rainy season is there opportunity to enjoy leisure activities. This is the time when ceremonies are held, accompanied by dancing and feasts. A goat or bullock is slaughtered and roasted, and everyone celebrates together.

The most important social occasions are those that mark the advancement of an age set to another stage of life. A boy's initiation into manhood is cause for the greatest celebration.

Everyday recreations are simple. While women prepare supper, boys practice throwing spears at targets. Girls make necklaces and long earrings out of beads. The moran and older girls groom themselves or practice dances. Elders, warriors and boys all love to play a game with pebbles that they roll into shallow holes in the ground. It is exciting and challenging enough to engage their attention for quite a long time.

When it is dark, there is singing, stories and dancing. Around the fire, the Masai are all together. They talk of the weather and the work that needs to be done. They gossip, sharing news and experiences. The elders tell stories as well.

A storyteller is a respected person. The ability to speak well is highly regarded. A story might last for hours. To hold an audience's attention for so long, the storyteller needs wit, humor and stage presence. The main purpose of oral literature is entertainment, yet the stories also transfer values and culture to the next generation. Customs are described in the stories that inculcate the young listeners and reemphasize their value to the older ones. Moral concepts and traditional values are detailed in fables, which usually feature animal characters. Masai folktales often glorify bravery, love and beauty.

Children usually amuse themselves without toys. Much of their play consists of running, climbing and wrestling—games that are not that different from the outdoor games children play all over the world.

MASAI

Little boys collect pebbles and play at being herders. Each boy names his pebble-cattle and scratches marks on them for brands, so he can identify them. They use sticks as toy spears and clubs. They raid their playmates' pebble herds. They will put a berry on a pebble cow and pierce it with a stick, pretending they are drawing blood.

Boys spend a lot of their time watching the cattle. Most of the time there is nothing to do, so they pass their time throwing stones and spears. These are important skills for a warrior to have, so this practice is useful. If there are other boys around they may pretend they are raiding or defending their herd.

An extremely dangerous game is played with rhinos. When boys come across a sleeping rhinoceros, they stop and take turns placing small rocks on its back. Whoever sets the last rock on the rhino before it wakes up is the winner.

Little girls like to build huts in the sand, adding little thorn fences for the cattle. They have tiny toy gourds that they stack in these little huts. They may have dolls which their mothers have helped them make out of bundles of grass or the fruit of the sausage tree. But the girls do not really need dolls—there are always younger brothers and sisters to take care of.

RELIGION

THE MASAI BELIEVE they live in a world that is occupied by both evil and good spirits over which they have no control. The *laibon*—a medicine man, or diviner or fortune-teller—is believed to have the ability to peer into the spirit world, breaking through barriers that others cannot cross. Those who believe they are troubled by evil spirits consult the laibon as a force of good working against evil.

The *laibon* is held in the highest regard. His office is hereditary. A father passes his knowledge and charms to his oldest son. The charms are old and revered: an iron club, a medicine horn, a gourd and a kidskin bag in which sacred stones are kept. The charms are believed to be the laibon's connection with the supernatural world, giving him curing power and the ability to foretell the future.

The laibon may seek to learn the future by casting the sacred stones from the gourd and reading the message given in their configuration on the ground. The people may wish to know when it will rain or if a cattle raid will be successful. The laibon is also used to help settle family disputes, cure those who are ill, make rain, and lead out in initiations and other ceremonies.

As children, Masai learn the prayers, chants, ceremonies and dances by watching adults and the activities of the laibon. The Masai

men pray when there is a special occasion, or they need supernatural help in a raid or war, or if the rains are slow in coming. Women and children usually pray together twice a day. The Masai may pray at any time, but sunrise is a favorite time to offer prayer. At dawn the women pray to Venus, asking the morning star to take care of their families and keep their cows alive. Special prayers are offered for particular occasions such as ceremonies and droughts. There are also prayers for protection. New wives pray fervently for children. Once they are born, mothers pray often for their children's safety.

The Masai believe in one god, Enkai. Enkai is called the Black God when he answers prayers by sending rain and tall grass. When the rain is withheld and the grass is dry, Enkai is known as the Red God.

The Masai call the creator of the world Ngai. They believe Ngai gave the Masai their cattle to sustain them. In the past, they used this belief to justify their raids on other people's cattle, asserting they were only reclaiming what Ngai intended for them to have.

WEATHER

THE MASAI LIVE near the equator. There are basically 12 hours of daylight each day. The sun rises at 6 a.m. and sets at 6 p.m. Most of the time it is very hot, though it cools down at night.

In the morning the Masai sniff the air to try to learn what the weather will be like that day. They also watch the sky to predict the weather. If the sunrise is red, they say it will rain. When a rainbow appears, they know the rain will stop. The children's word for rainbow means "father's dress", because the elders wear capes of many colors.

The weather pattern is defined by two rainy seasons. The short rains occur from October to December; short rains usually fall in the morning only. The long rains last from March to June; the long rains are heavier, more regular and longer-lasting.

June is the first month of the dry season. In July, because of the drought, cows do not produce much milk. July is known as the month of quarrels; women are tense because their children are hungry. August is known as the dry-grass month. In August, the Masai move their cattle to lower valleys where there is still some grass. September is known as the month of hunger. October is called the last month of hunger because at the end of October the rains begin. November is the month of white clouds. December is called the month of showers. January is the month of lesser rain; February the month of still less rain. March is the month of plenty with heavy rain from black clouds. The rain continues in April and the cows are well fed. May is the end of the Masai year.

MASAI

When it rains, everything gets soaked. Paths in the camps become slippery. The ground is covered with little pools. Fog and mist shroud the grasslands; humidity is high. The huts start to "melt" in the rain, so the women cover them with hides. But even so, the huts leak. Clothing never gets dry. Bodies always feel damp. The damp air brings insects, which feast on beasts and humans. The insects attract birds, which perch on the cattle and gobble up bugs.

Even though this sounds very unpleasant and uncomfortable, the rainy season is a time of rejoicing for the Masai. They know the rain brings grass for their treasured cattle. The rain means the end of parched grass and hungry cows. The water holes have enough water for animals and humans to drink all they want.

The dry season is a time of hardship. During a bad drought the small, permanent water sources dry up. Pastures around larger water sources become overgrazed. Families may be forced to sell jewelry and household items. Calves are given less milk because people need it. People and animals suffer starvation.

The rainy season is the time for ceremonies and gatherings. The beginning of the long rains is the most important event of the year. The Masai celebrate with singing and feasting.

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MASAI

SLUMS

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CRIME

CRIME IS A SERIOUS problem in cities all over the world. It is especially severe in urban slums and depressed areas.

Urban crime has many causes. Probably most of them have their roots in poverty. The urban poor are often unskilled and unemployed. When they do have jobs they are invariably underemployed at low-income service occupations such as street vending or shoe shining. The struggle to survive is the motive behind crime in many cities.

Unemployment and underemployment lead to financial worries, marital tensions, depression, frustration and stress. Sometimes people react to this extreme stress by turning to alcohol or drugs for escape. Sometimes their bodies respond with serious health problems. Sometimes people resort to violence and crime.

The inhuman environment of slums and horrible housing conditions add to the insecurity people feel and contribute to social pathology, which is expressed in high crime rates.

Away from the traditions and support of the village, people can lose their way. Among the jostle and clash of many cultures in cities, families and values can disintegrate. Under the stress of poverty and the struggle to make ends meet, people can lose hope and do desperate things.

Slums are dangerous places. Most urban dwellers live in constant fear of street crime, especially after dark. Every day in cities all over the world there are thousands of burglaries and muggings. Every month there are thousands of murders.

There is no doubt that the use and sale of drugs is involved in a great deal of urban crime. Many frustrated and hopeless individuals seek relief in the use of drugs. Others desperate for employment become involved in the drug trade. In many ghettos and slums, drug wars have taken over the streets.

Many cities cower in the throes of a never-ending crime war. Youth gangs are a common phenomenon, a result of the juvenilization of poverty. Rival gangs, with their own separate identities and clearly defined territories, roam the streets, coldly casual about committing murder. Many young people who cannot find work join gangs, often finding there a family of sorts, a code to live by, and a trade—selling drugs.

Unemployed young people also often resort to vandalism. With nothing to do and few prospects, their behavior is affected by boredom, anxiety about money and frustration. Vandalism can range from graffiti, one of the less aggressive forms, to smashing telephone booths

and ripping up subway seats. It is greatest in inner-city areas of high unemployment, crowded conditions, cultural transitions and poor-quality housing. One of the saddest crimes involving children is child-selling. In many underdeveloped, third world countries, children are regarded as cheap labor. Extreme poverty forces some parents to sell their children into virtual slavery. In Thailand children are sold as slaves to work in the sex industry or in sweatshops. In some African countries it is possible to buy children for about $15. In the slums of Brazil, many abandoned children survive by becoming pickpockets.

Terrible living conditions—poverty, inferior housing, ethnic tensions and unemployment—all contribute to crime in the cities. And crime makes the terrible living conditions even worse.

FAMILY

IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, family attachments run deep and wide. The concept of family extends out to include grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and beyond. Third World families are much larger than those in developed countries because they include more relationships, and also because there are more children (and sometimes even more wives, which means even more children).

The idea of family can stretch even beyond distant relatives. The extended family is the inner core of a series of groups to which an individual belongs. Families are linked to a variety of larger communities, clans and ethnic groups. This allegiance may originate in descent from a distant ancestor, or because of a common language or tradition. The solidarity and cohesive nature of kinship is a fundamental aspect of everyday life for many people.

In rural life in most developing countries, family is all-important. The family provides social security. Orphaned children are looked after by other relatives. The elderly are taken care of by their children. The sick and handicapped are cared for by the family. Shelter and food are always available to those who need it. The family arranges personal, social, and communal life and often determines local government. Most economic activity is organized through the family.

An individual can rely on the members of his extended family in most circumstances of life. In turn, they will expect similar loyalty. Kinship obligations mean that once an individual has found a steady job with a good wage, his dependents increase. He is counted on to share his good fortune with the less fortunate members of his group. Sometimes he is even expected to help other members of the family find jobs as well. In many countries, jobs are parceled out along kinship networks.

People who move to the cities often try to send money home to support family in the village. If they have an apartment or house to live in, it can become a magnet for kinfolk. Most urban dwellers feel obligated to provide room and board for any relatives who come to try to make it in the city. As long as there is space to sleep, family cannot be turned away. Nor can they be asked to help pay rent or buy food. In the cities, the help and support shown to the family is often extended to anybody from the same village, or even the same tribe.

Amongst the inhabitants of rural communities, the ties of kinship are strong. And they continue to hold many of those who have left their rural family homes and moved to the city. Yet, as more and more people leave their villages and move to the cities in search of employment and a better life, sometimes family ties lose their grip.

In the cities, family ties are weaker than in the village. Recent migrants often keep up their ties with their families in the countryside; some return to their villages every weekend. Others are able to set up communal ties in the city and maintain many of the customs and traditions of the village. Urban ethnic associations and clan or family groups exist in many cities, serving as mutual aid networks and facilitating communication with home villages. They provide social security and welfare services similar to those found in rural communities.

But things are different in the city. It is harder to maintain customs and ties. As the new migrants meet people from other groups, their feelings towards their own group can change. These contacts with other ethnic groups can contribute to changing values and bring up questions that go beyond the reach of traditional wisdom. As their life in the city becomes more permanent, ties to traditional groups can weaken and their influence can wane. Many migrants do not merely move to the cities—they abandon the villages.

Often when the village is abandoned, so is its way of life. Young people see less value and authority in the advice and traditions of the village elders. Peasants join the wage economy, their children attend schools, modern customs and entertainments gain sway. Other relatives, especially elderly ones, are isolated back in the villages. Sometimes the father goes to the city to find work, leaving his wife and children behind in the village. Although they used to spend all their time together, the family is divided.

The pressures of city life can bring about a breakdown in the traditional pattern of family life. When the family falls apart, there often comes an increase in unemployment, drug use, and crime. In many Third World cities, abandoned children are everywhere, often as a result of rural-urban migration. Poverty-stricken parents are

unable to feed their children, much less clothe them or send them to school. The children drift into a precarious life of street vending, begging or thievery. Some find work in sweatshops or as servants. Abandoned children are the ultimate tragedy, a supreme irony in a society that prizes family above all else.

In countries where family is the foundation for everyday life, family life is no longer secure. The realities of urban life have weakened family ties and left nothing in their place. And yet, the idea of family is still alive. Even though it is changing, the sense of mutual obligation will continue for a long time to sustain kinship ties. The family will remain a significant force and a dominant concern.

HEALTH

CITIES ALL OVER the world are suffering many health problems caused by lack of sanitation, unclean water, pollution, crowding and poverty. Most cities are very unhealthy places.

Modern plumbing is more than a convenience. It can dramatically improve the health of a city. Where plumbing is insufficient or nonexistent, cities can be overwhelmed by the amount of sewage they generate. Squatter camps and shantytowns often have inadequate santitation; people must relieve themselves on the streets. The smell of the shantytowns can be overpowering—often the only way human waste and garbage are disposed of is by a heavy downpour. But even worse are the health risks. Human waste is a rich breeding ground for diseases. A major outbreak of cholera poses a constant threat in these conditions.

Most squatter camps, being illegally built on someone else's land, are not served by such niceties as trash collection. Garbage chokes the streets of many shantytowns. They are filthy places, nearly impossible to keep clean. Along with this, crowded conditions encourage the ready transmission of bacterial and viral infections.

Most cities have piped-in water, and sometimes it is fairly clean. However, many slums and shantytowns do not have running water and the inhabitants must carry water to their homes from fountains or fire hydrants. Sometimes they have to buy water. Sometimes they get it from filthy streams running nearby—streams where people wash their clothes and bathe and where animals trample. Many, many people get sick from unclean water.

Unsanitary living conditions lead to the spread of many diseases. Tuberculosis, cholera, malaria, measles, dysentery, diphtheria and AIDS claim thousands of lives each year. Where modern sanitation, pesticides and antibiotics are available, many of these diseases are under control. Where these benefits are lacking, the diseases persist.

Disinfectants and medicines are essential for survival, but are too expensive for the majority of the world's poor.

Crowding, inadequate housing and the stressful city lifestyle also contribute to health problems, including psychological problems, stress-related heart disease and digestive disorders. Poverty is usually responsible for the chronic malnutrition prevalent among slum dwellers. They do not get enough to eat.

Health care is often more acvailable in the cities than in the countryside, but that does not mean it is readily accessible. Shantytowns rarely have clinics, and many Third World city hospitals are so crowded that patients often have to share beds or sleep on the floor.

In many cities people are exposed to air pollution that causes health problems. Exposure to environmental toxins and pollutants is inescapable for many city residents because the air is not fit to breathe. Respiratory infections and diseases like bronchitis, emphysema and asthma are major causes of ill health in the cities. Pollution and pathogens are generally higher in Third World cities because of lax antipollution laws. Often shantytowns grow up around factories as people flock to them for work. These settlements are invariably located downwind of factory chimneys, and the people must breathe appallingly polluted air. Many times the water and soil are contaminated by the factories as well.

Living in a city can be bad for your health, especially if you are poor.

HISTORY

HISTORICALLY, the growth of many Third World cities was closely related to colonialism and the development of colonial trade. As commerce, industry, and export grew, so did the cities. But throughout the first few decades of the 20th century, the people of the world were still overwhelmingly rural.

In the 1940s more and more rural dwellers began leaving their villages for towns and cities in hope of finding a better life. The worldwide Great Depression of the 1930s and the strains of World War II had reduced many rural areas to desperate poverty. Villages were relentlessly poor and becoming poorer, and rural people began flooding the cities to escape this poverty. Many towns doubled in size during the Second World War, and the end of the war saw an even greater increase in movement of people into cities.

People came to the cities in search of jobs, food, better wages and a better life. They saw living in town as a way of getting into the modern world. They came in droves with great hopes, little planning and no resources.

SLUMS

There were some jobs and opportunities for the newcomers. Industrial development had created new factories and mills, more trade and commerce. But there were not nearly enough jobs for all the people who came. A few managed to get good jobs and make money, but the majority did not.

Most of the expanding cities and towns were unprepared for the phenomenal flood of people. The swell in population led to a severe lack of housing. Thousands of jobless, hungry people struggled to survive in shantytowns where they built primitive shelters of anything they could find on land they neither owned nor rented. They did not have access to clean water, sanitation or other social services. Sometimes governments tried to meet the crisis with more houses or jobs, but often they did little or nothing to provide houses and services for multitudes who were flocking into the cities.

As countries achieved independence, often the former colonists kept the nicest homes in the best areas. The nationals who were professionals or skilled workers also lived in decent housing. But most unskilled migrants lived in shantytowns. Even when new housing developments were built, shantytowns continued to grow because urban populations continued to grow.

People kept on coming, even though many failed to find jobs or a good life. They came because things were worse in the rural areas—they were unemployed and hungry in the villages too, and there was no opportunity to improve their situtation there.

This great migration is still under way. Rural areas are still desperately poor. Cities are still the centers for industrial and financial activity, the places with the best opportunities for employment and income. People come to the cities because of the chance that their lives might be better there.

THE HOMELESS

IN THE LATE 1970S people in the United States began to notice that there were more people sleeping in public places or pushing their belongings through the streets in shopping carts. Throughout the next 10 years people holding signs offering to work for food or hunting through garbage bins became more and more visible and harder to ignore.

We have a term for these destitute people in need of shelter: the homeless. Home is a refuge in a world of impermanence and confusion. People who have no home are living in a state of emergency. Each day of their makeshift existence is a struggle to survive.

HOW MANY ARE THERE?

DETERMINING the exact number of homeless people is impossible. The U.S. Census Bureau has always made lists of dwelling units and counted the number of people living in each unit. During the 1990 census, one night was set aside to try to conduct a systematic count of people in homeless shelters, but it was very difficult to count those who were not in shelters that night—those who were afraid to sleep in the shelters or who had been turned away. People who are sleeping under bridges or in abandoned buildings can be invisible to census takers.

Because an accurate total is not possible, different groups make estimates as to how many people are without homes. Sometimes these estimates depend more on politics than on hard evidence, and the numbers vary greatly. In 1984 the Department of Housing and Urban Development estimated that between 250,000 and 350,000 people were homeless. Advocates for the homeless say a more likely figure is at least three million.

Whatever the real numbers, almost everyone agrees that the homeless population is large and growing rapidly.

WHO ARE THEY?

THE HOMELESS consist of people of all ages, races and religions. It is a diversified and heterogeneous group of individuals, encompassing adults, teenagers and families with children. The homeless include a wide range of people, from those who desperately want work to those who have a hard time gathering enough energy to walk to a soup kitchen. The only thing they all have in common is the one thing they all lack—a place to live.

The stereotype of a homeless person used to be a white alcoholic male in his 50s—the wino, bum or drifter whose only ambition was to have another drink. The female version was the bag lady who carried all her belongings in plastic bags. Such individuals were considered eccentric vagrants who preferred to remain on their own rather than accept help. Whereas in the past, those whose homelessness was self-inflicted were the most prominent group of street people, today this group makes up a small percentage of the homeless population.

More recently, a perception has become widespread that the typical homeless person is a deinstitutionalized mental patient. It is estimated that about one third of the homeless population now living on the streets is made up of former mental patients. Through a

program of deinstitutionalization, thousands of mental patients have been released by hospitals and left to make their own way, with no group home to stay in and little follow-up care.

The newest members of the homeless population, and the ones now making up the largest group, are displaced persons—those who have worked most of their lives but have lost their jobs, and then their homes. Unlike those who are homeless by choice, these people were forced into the streets, victims of job layoffs, greedy landlords or cuts in government aid. Some are former factory workers whose jobs were terminated due to budget cuts and other economic changes. Some are the newly unemployed, who used their meager savings to move their families across the country in search of work, only to find none. Many have been evicted from their homes. This group of homeless is composed of families as well as individuals—families with children represent the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.

These people are willing to work and provide for their families, but many of them lack the technical skills and qualifications needed for today's job market. They are sometimes able to find work as day laborers, but that does not pay enough to rent a home, pay utilities, and so on. They live on the street out of their cars or trucks and frequent city shelters simply because they cannot afford the cost of housing. They are on the streets because of economic conditions created by unemployment, not because they want to be there.

As homelessness increases, so does the number of single-parent families without homes. Some are headed by displaced homemakers who have been abandoned or divorced by their spouses. Others are young women whose boyfriends have deserted them and their children. There are also victims of domestic abuse who seek protection and security at city shelters. Many are young mothers with few or no marketable skills, who fled with their children from intolerably abusive home situations, often taking little more with them than the clothes on their backs. Small children have become the fastest-growing sector of the homeless.

Some children are on their own. An estimated one million runaway children and teenagers live on the streets of the United States. Many have escaped dysfunctional families, unfit homes and physical or sexual abuse, seeking refuge on the streets. Some were neglected or unwanted—even abandoned or locked out of their homes. No one even bothers to report that these "throwaways" are missing.

Today's runaways are younger than those of the past; some are as young as nine years old, but most are about 16 when they leave home. They do not go to institutions or agencies for help because they are afraid they might be sent home and because they do not

trust institutions or authority figures. These street kids must provide their own food and shelter, but most do not have the skills or resources necessary to do so. Forced to live by their wits, and often unequipped to do so, many turn to substance abuse as a form of escape. They are easy targets for exploitation. Many runaway children end up stealing or working for drug dealers or pimps. As a group, they have a high mortality rate, suffering malnutrition, venereal disease, emotional difficulties and a high rate of suicide.

Another of society's most vulnerable homeless groups is the elderly. Many become victims of urban renewal when their tenement buildings are torn down to make way for luxury high-rise coops, and their incomes are insufficient for relocation. Even though they have worked productively all their lives, their social security checks are not enough to pay for rent and food. Their fixed income and savings can be eaten up quickly by inflation, rent increases or illness. Destitute, they are forced onto the streets through unemployment, legal and illegal evictions, scarcity of affordable housing, family stress and the lack of public assistance.

There are other groups in the homeless population. Among them are families who were forced from their homes as a result of floods, fires or other natural disasters, and who have been unable to afford another residence. The physically handicapped make up a small segment of the homeless population. Some who are infected with AIDS have joined the ranks of the homeless because of public rejection once they have been diagnosed as virus carriers.

Illegal aliens show up from time to time among the homeless population. Since they are in the U.S. illegally, it is difficult for them to obtain employment and housing. They are willing to work for low wages, but their income is insufficient for rent or to buy a decent house.

Other street people are there because they got tired of life in the fast lane and decided to drop out of society. Many feel totally alienated from civilization and its institutions. The Vietnam veteran is visibly present among the homeless population. Due to the pressure of overcrowded penal institutions, many ex-convicts are released from prison with inadequate preparation and have nowhere to live but the streets. There are also people who are victims of their own addictions or personality disorders, and people in hundreds of different kinds of trouble who live on the streets.

The face of homelessness is changing. An increasing number of minorities, women, children and elderly people have joined the ever-broadening ranks of homeless people. Most of the homeless today are ordinary people who have fallen upon hard times.

SLUMS

WHY ARE THEY HOMELESS?

THERE ARE NEARLY as many reasons for homelessness as there are homeless. Most of the people who are on the street involuntarily are there because they have suffered a series of misfortunes. They may have had more than their share of bad luck with their jobs, their families and their health. They probably grew up in families with many troubles and started out with too little education and skills. The accumulation of all these disadvantages finally pushes them over the edge and leaves them on the streets. For many of the homeless, just about everything that could go wrong has gone wrong for many years.

EVICTION

EVICTION is one of the main routes to homelessness. Most people who are evicted lose their homes because they failed to pay the rent. Landlords have the right to ask the court to evict someone who does not pay rent—they need the rent money to pay for the building and its maintenance.

The unfairness comes when landlords try to force their low-income tenants to move out so they can sell their building or remodel it and rent it to higher-paying tenants. Some unscrupulous landlords may try to pressure their tenants into leaving by harassing and intimidating them or turning off heat, hot water or other services to the building. This is not legal, but poor people cannot afford the legal services to stop it. Fire (often arson) also "evicts" many families.

Some people are forced to leave their homes because their buildings are going to be torn down to make way for urban renewal. City governments evict them, rarely bothering to find them another affordable place to live. At times these buildings are in such bad condition that they have become unfit places to live, posing a serious threat to the occupants. Some buildings are abandoned by landlords who can no longer pay the mortgage or taxes.

Sometimes living conditions are so unpleasant or dangerous that a family is evicted by the situation—they feel they must flee the violence or drugs of a neighborhood, even though they have nowhere to go. Sometimes they go to a friend or relative's place, only to be evicted again when the landlord discovers they have broken the rule prohibiting families doubling up in apartments.

Eviction causes homelessness when the evicted family cannot find another place to live. Too often there is no other low-income housing available.

SCARCITY OF AFFORTABLE HOUSING

IT USED TO BE that when people found they could no longer afford to pay rent in one place, they moved to a less expensive place. During the 1950s and '60s the government's large-scale housing program provided for the construction of thousands of public housing apartments for low-income families. Even the nearly destitute could usually find adequate shelter by moving into a boardinghouse or a hotel with single rooms to rent. But it has become increasingly difficult to find less expensive places. Low-income housing is disappearing; the supply has been attacked from both sides—thousands of units are being torn down and very few units are being built.

The 1970s began an era of urban renewal, gentrification and the revitalization of downtowns. In the process of improving and upgrading, much affordable housing was destroyed. Tenements and low-rent apartments in downtown areas of big cities were bulldozed to make areas more attractive to people with more money to spend on luxury apartments. Many single room occupancy hotels and traditional boardinghouses were demolished to make room for office buildings and expensive hotels. The economically marginal population, which had been living "on the edge" in this type of housing of last resort, was forced onto the streets.

At the same time, construction of low-income housing units was severely cut back. Nowhere near enough rental units were constructed to replace those that had been torn down. Federal funding for housing projects was reduced and large-scale housing programs were scaled back drastically. Economic recession had hurt the construction industry—costs were climbing, investors were pulling out, and government subsidies were disappearing. Instead, tax breaks were given to landlords to convert low-rent apartments to luxury condominiums.

The recession of the '70s brought economic stagnation, high interest rates, double-digit inflation, high unemployment and declining wages. The prices of homes soared, and most young families could not afford to buy a house—instead, they rented apartments. As a result, rent prices rose and the number of available rental units fell.

By the early 1980s affordable housing across the United States had declined, while the displaced population had grown dramatically. Affordable housing was becoming extremely scarce. The homeless could not find any type of affordable housing. Homeless people could no longer be hidden. They were no longer invisible.

SLUMS

Today the situation is not improving. The shortage of inexpensive housing is persistent and severe. Displacement from low-income housing continues to be one of the most widespread causes of homelessness. There is still virtually no low-income housing being built anywhere, despite the fact that the need is increasing.

Inexpensive housing is crucial for poor people. But in recent years the cost of housing has moved out of reach for many people. As rents go up and wages do not, many poor families are forced to pay up to 70 percent of their income for rent each month, sacrificing just about everything else in order to keep their homes. Eventually they might have to choose between buying food or paying a higher rent. At this point many families become homeless.

There are more poor families who need housing than there are places in which they can afford to live. Basically, homelessness is a housing problem.

UNEMPLOYMENT

LOSS OF JOBS is a major reason the homeless end up on the streets. Many of the homeless are victims of factory shutdowns and deindustrialization. Urban centers have lost manufacturing jobs to suburban and rural areas, even to overseas firms. When an automobile or steel factory is closed because of relocation or corporate merger, a substantial number of workers lose their jobs. However, unemployment is not caused only by urban factory shutdowns. There are unemployed people everywhere—in the cities, small towns and countryside.

The labor market has changed. Many traditional jobs have been eliminated due to automation and advanced technology. When factory workers try to find other jobs, they often find they do not have the skills to qualify for the new technological marketplace. Unskilled workers have the most difficult time finding new jobs.

Those who lose their jobs must find some other means of survival. Of course, they try to find other jobs, but often the jobs they qualify for no longer exist. They can apply for unemployment benefits, but these benefits eventually run out. Some are able to find other types of work, but usually they earn considerably less money than before. Some find part-time work. Of those who cannot find any work and remain unemployed, some keep looking and some give up hope and drop out of the labor market.

During the 1970s many middle-class families who were laid off migrated from the dying industrial areas of the East and Midwest to the Sunbelt where they heard there was work, but there was not any

work there either. Now, not only were they jobless, they were homeless in a new area where they did not know anyone and had no support system.

Too often, losing a job leads to losing a house. Conversely, getting and keeping a job while homeless is extremely difficult. Even though most homeless people want to work, survival takes up all their time and concentration.

UNDEREMPLOYMENT

LOW WAGES are also responsible for the increase in homeless Americans. Jobs alone cannot solve the problem of homelessness; many people with full-time jobs still live well below the poverty line. A minimum wage job cannot cover the basic necessities of rent, food, utilities, child care and car expenses. Sometimes it will not even stretch to cover both rent and food. The next step is often homelessness.

Some homeless people do have jobs, but they do not earn enough to put a roof over their family's heads. Once they are homeless, it is very difficult for them to get back into a home. Not only do they have to come up with rent each month, they also have to be able to pay the security deposit, cleaning deposit, and utility deposit up front before they can move into an apartment. Even if they eventually find housing they can afford, they are usually at risk of becoming homeless again.

Many people are living so close to the edge that even a small change can mean the difference between having a home and living on the street. The loss of a few days' wages can push them over the edge. An increase in rent can prove disastrous. An emergency can cause them to lose their precarious hold. A crisis that would be minor to someone with the means to deal with it (like the car breaking down) could be enough to force someone who is struggling to survive onto the street.

The extremely poor have no cushion to help them absorb the shocks of life. They have no savings, no credit cards, no safety net, no resources. Most low-paying jobs do not provide benefits such as health and disability insurance. If a family member gets sick or has an accident, they may have to choose between medical care and rent payments. Many Americans are just a paycheck or two from disaster. With a series of misfortunes, almost anyone can become homeless.

If the household has only one income, there often is not enough money for even a substandard living. When a family breaks up, members are sometimes no longer able to squeak by and they

become vulnerable to homelessness. Families with a single female parent are the poorest of all. Unskilled women have a harder time than men when it comes to staying out of poverty; their pay is generally much lower and they can seldom support themselves and their children on their earnings alone. Having a job is not itself the cure for poverty among women.

The working poor are perilously close to becoming homeless. The homeless are drawn from the pool of the extremely poor. Those on the edge could be on the street tomorrow. The line between having a home and being homeless is extremely thin.

LACK OF ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

YEARS AGO the federal government set up a safety net of financial assistance programs to help the poor. These welfare programs helped pay for food, housing and medical care. Over the years, however, things changed. Funds for these federal programs were cut back. Food stamp regulations were tightened. Unemployment benefits were shortened. Health assistance was rescinded. Aid for families with children was reduced. Eligibility was restricted. Even though the cost of living went up, welfare benefits were cut drastically.

Even when welfare programs are still in place, there are many barriers for homeless people who try to receive public assistance. Sometimes assistance is not accessible because the homeless are not able to find transportation to the health clinic or Social Security office. Some homeless people are illiterate and unable to complete application forms without assistance. Those who are mentally ill may not understand the questions—they are difficult enough to cope with for those who are of sound mind. Some homeless people, especially women who fled an abusive husband empty-handed, are unable to provide documents that are required to apply for benefits. The homeless frequently do not have the energy or the information they need to make the bureaucracy of the welfare system work for them.

When social services are cut or inaccessible, many people have to use the rent money to meet other needs. Soup kitchens and food pantries are busier toward the end of the month, when food money has run out and families are hungry. The cumulative effect of cuts in federal spending for social programs has caused many poor and disabled people to lose their housing and end up on the street.

BREAKDOWN OF FAMILY LIFE

WHEN FAMILIES break up, it can cause homelessness. And homelessness can cause families to break up.

Family dissolution has had a big impact on homelessness. Family ties have always been vital to the poor—a safety net that can ensure survival. But weakened family ties have left many people feeling they no longer are responsible for taking care of their own relatives. The breakdown of traditional social structures and responsibilities has left many people homeless. It is no longer rare for people to allow their parents or grandparents to live on the street. Most of the time they cannot afford to take them in; their financial struggles are so great they can no longer bear one another's burdens.

Divorce is far more disastrous when a family is poor. For many women, homelessness begins when the marriage ends. Left to fend for themselves, many female-headed households find it impossible to keep up with rent. They may find temporary refuge with friends or relatives, but often they are eventually turned out.

Most homeless women do not have husbands. Mothers and their children are now the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. Most do not have job skills because they have depended on men to take care of them. Many do not know how to get available assistance. Many are hiding from abusive husbands or boyfriends.

Violence within a family can also lead to homelessness. When a mother and her children are abused by her husband or boyfriend, it may get to the point that they flee, even if there is nowhere to go. Sometimes when a father cannot find another job, he may start drinking alcohol out of frustration. This can lead to abuse of the wife and children. The battered wife may have to seek refuge in a shelter, either taking the children with her or trying to find places for them to stay.

When a family becomes homeless, one of the things parents fear most is that their children will be taken from them. Sometimes families live in their cars rather than ask for help because they are afraid their homelessness may be grounds for social welfare agencies to put the kids in foster care. Those parents who have the option often send some or all of their children to stay with various relatives or friends until they can get back into a home and be reunited. If the situation does not improve, the family usually remains separated.

It is difficult for even the most devoted family to withstand the stress of homelessness. The strains and tensions affect each family member and how they get along. Occasionally this crisis brings a

family closer together, but usually homelessness undermines family unity—it is difficult for members to stay intact for long without some sort of a home.

DESTRUCTIVE LIFESTYLES

IN ANOTHER VICIOUS CYCLE, drug use can lead to homelessness and homelessness can lead to drug use. Heavy drug or alcohol use makes marginally employable individuals even less employable. It consumes money that should be used to pay rent. And friends and relatives of people who use drugs or drink too much are less willing to provide shelter.

Alcoholism has been a significant cause of homelessness for generations. The extremely poor relied on alcohol to help them forget their troubles because it was cheap and easily available. The arrival of crack cocaine in the mid-1980s changed the situation. Crack is much cheaper than other drugs—the price can be as low as $3 per use. Crack is available to people who are likely to spend the little cash they have on the first high they can afford. Crack is available almost everywhere the homeless gather. A decade ago the homeless might share a bottle of whiskey. Now sharing drugs has become a connection in their social life.

THE MENTALLY ILL

IN THE MID-1960S the mental health profession began to implement a policy of deinstitutionalization, aimed at returning institutionalized mental patients to the community. Mental institutions were encouraged to return their patients to mainstream life as soon as possible. The goal was to end hospitalization of the mentally ill through a gradual reintroduction to society and everyday life, with the help of community-based mental health centers. This new approach was made possible through the development of psychoactive drugs that could control many agitated patients.

Huge numbers of patients were released, but few community care centers ever materialized. Some patients went back to their families. Others went to the few available halfway houses. Many found a place to stay in a boarding-house or single room occupancy hotel. Most received none of the medical, social or psychiatric services they urgently needed.

Once the former patients were on their own, many stopped taking their medication. They became too confused or disorganized to

understand their situation. They lost touch with the government agencies that helped them meet their financial needs. Many drifted into homelessness and were left to fend for themselves. Dressed in rags and dragging shopping bags, these individuals now wander aimlessly through the streets. Even though they are clearly mentally ill, they cannot be forcibly hospitalized unless they pose a threat to themselves or to others.

Deinstitutionalization, which sought to help patients become productive members of society, instead had the effect of dumping thousands of incapacitated people into the streets. They may not need permanent hospitalization, but they obviously need help to survive in the real world.

Homelessness and mental illness contribute to each other. Many people who live on the street are mentally ill. And living on the street can be instrumental in aggravating mental health problems.

The mentally ill have certain characteristics that make them particularly susceptible to homelessness. If they stop taking their medication, their conditions can deteriorate until they are unable to function. They can no longer handle normal tenant-landlord relations, or they can no longer figure out how to pay the rent, and they are evicted. Once they are homeless, most are unable to pull themselves out of the situation. They may be too disorganized to seek medical help and are especially vulnerable to alcohol and drug abuse. Perhaps their only chance of escaping is by exhibiting bizarre or disruptive behavior that leads to their being taken to a hospital or jail.

On the other hand, not knowing where you are going to sleep tonight or where your next meal is coming from can provoke anxiety in even an extremely well-adjusted individual. Feelings of worthlessness and despair add to the anxieties of people without permanent shelter. Sleep deprivation, poor nutrition and violent neighbors are common problems of the homeless. Many of those who are homeless because of poverty might be prevented from becoming mentally disturbed if they could only get several nights of comfortable sleep and several days with of adequate food.

WHERE DO THE HOMELESS LIVE?

THERE IS NO PART of the country where homelessness is most likely to be. Homeless families live in every corner of the nation. Homelessness is visible in large cities, suburbs, small towns and rural areas across the United States, as well as in many countries of the world.

SLUMS

There are basically two different places where the homeless sleep: free shelters or places not intended for human habitation. Not every state requires local governments to provide shelters for the homeless.

The homeless who sleep outside the shelters are known as street people. Few stay in the same place for more than a few nights. They might sleep in a bus station one night, a doorway the next, and a subway train the night after that. Street people regularly sleep on heating grates, under bridges, in alleys and in parks. They seek shelter in cars, cardboard boxes, boxcars, even garbage dumpsters and telephone booths. Sometimes they go to jail just to keep warm.

During the day they spend time on street corners and in public places like shopping malls, libraries, and the waiting rooms of hospitals. They might build a little shack along the railroad tracks or set up temporary housekeeping in an abandoned building or in a boat that is in dry dock.

In California and some southern states, public and private campgrounds are full of families in tents who are not vacationing. They cannot afford traditional housing, but at least they have a roof over their heads, even if it is canvas. Often there is a limit to the number of days a family can stay at a campground.

Many people try to fend off homelessness for as long as possible by temporarily living with friends or relatives. Doubling up may be manageable for a short time, but friction nearly always arises due to overcrowding or financial pressures. When the tension becomes unbearable, the newcomers are usually asked to leave. They may then move in with other friends or relatives until they have run out of places where they are welcome.

When they are actually on the street—with no car to sleep in and no more relatives to stay with—desperate families usually go to city welfare offices to ask for placement in a shelter. The offices are crowded and the placement process is slow. Sometimes families must spend the night sleeping in the chairs of the welfare office, waiting for an opening at a shelter or hotel.

Local welfare departments sometimes send homeless families to welfare hotels when there is no shelter space available. Although they are private hotels, they are called welfare hotels because the rent is paid by the government. Each family usually has its own room. Sometimes they can only stay the night. Sometimes they are allowed to stay until they can get into someplace better. Usually there is a limit of a few days or weeks. Families are often bounced around from one shelter or hotel to another.

The welfare hotels are infamous for being overcrowded, rundown and dangerous. Health and safety are compromised by corroded plumbing, faulty electrical wiring, and sporadic heat and hot

water. The rooms are filthy and neglected, infested with rats and cockroaches, but there is a constant supply of homeless residents, so the management gets away with letting things slide.

Some rooms have their own bathroom; otherwise families share the bathroom down the hall. Most hotels have no kitchens, serve no meals, and do not allow cooking in the rooms. Families usually receive a restaurant allowance of a small amount per person per day. Many buy groceries and secretly cook on hot plates in their rooms.

Many welfare hotels are in dangerous neighborhoods. Along with the drug trade there is violence, crime, and prostitution. It is not safe for children to play outside; it is not safe for anyone to be outside after dark. Many residents of welfare hotels feel afraid all the time.

Increasing numbers of individuals and families take refuge in homeless shelters. There are several different kinds of shelters. Some are publicly run, some are private, and some are supported by a mixture of public and private funds.

Not many cities provide public shelters. Usually the city shelters are institutional buildings like armories or empty school gymnasiums that have been turned into huge shelters where dozens of men, women and children sleep in rows of cots lined up side by side in one large room. These barracks-style shelters provide the bare necessities that people need to survive: beds, meals and bathrooms.

Some "mission" shelters are run by church groups. They are sometimes more concerned with saving souls than with the social or political causes of homelessness.

Probably the most beneficial shelters are run by a nonprofit or church group on contract with a city, receiving grants or technical aid from the government. Some of these are family-style shelters where each family has a cubicle to sleep in. Nearly all shelters operate at full capacity year-round.

To families who have nothing and nowhere else to go, the public shelters are a blessing. But they are not exactly free—much is sacrificed. Privacy, for instance. People must carry out their most private activities in the constant company of strangers. Everyone must sleep with everyone else in the large, open room. Individual boundaries cease to exist. With so many people crowded into so few rooms, it is difficult to keep everyone safe and to keep things running smoothly, so most shelters have guards to maintain order. There is no escaping the constant gaze of the guards.

The public shelters have minimal budgets with which to provide services, so conditions in most of them are deplorable. The mattresses are often infested with lice. When there are blankets they are sometimes filthy. The bathrooms are large, with rows of sinks,

showers and toilets. Because they get so much use they are nearly impossible to keep clean and in working order. People eat in one large cafeteria, where usually three meals a day are served. It is noisy, chaotic and scary.

Shelters do offer protection from the cold, but there is protection from little else. Any possessions a family might still have tend to get lost or stolen. The threat of violence is pervasive, especially in public shelters. Unsanitary conditions serve as breeding grounds for a number of diseases. Treatment from the overworked staff can range from insensitive to brutal.

Some policymakers argue against improving conditions in public shelters. They feel that uncomfortable shelters will somehow deter people from becoming homeless. Actually, the squalid conditions and violence help explain why some homeless people will not stay in shelters. They feel safer on the street. Many turn to shelters only as a desperate last resort.

HEALTH PROBLEMS FOR THE HOMELESS

HOMELESSNESS and health are linked together in three ways. First, poor physical and mental health can be a factor in people becoming homeless. For instance, the high cost of health care has contributed to increasing homelessness among the elderly. And we have already discussed how a medical emergency or a mental illness can lead to homelessness.

Second, homelessness itself causes a great deal of physical illness and psychological stress. The barracks-style shelters have an unhealthful environment; it is impossible to prevent the spread of disease through the crowded sleeping areas and bathrooms. But even more than that, people cannot be physically, mentally or socially healthy without a stable, secure place to live. Sufficient rest and food are basic to good health.

And third, homelessness complicates the delivery of adequate health services. It perpetuates illness and complicates treatment. For most homeless people, health care has become a low priority. When they are preoccupied with looking for food and shelter, items like clinic visits become luxuries. Because they have left behind whatever doctors, clinics and records they may have had, basic health care is very difficult to maintain. In the chaos of homelessness, routine appointments, check-ups, immunizations and doctor visits for minor problems tend to be put off until the sitution has become an emergency.

Neglected illnesses quickly become more serious because of the conditions under which homeless people live. Visits to the hospital emergency room are the only health care many of the homeless receive. Most do not receive needed health care because they are afraid, uninsured or considered undesirable as patients.

Something that should be simple, like taking medicine, can become too complicated for someone without a home. The process of getting a prescription filled can be too expensive, too complex and take too much energy. Storage can be a problem—it is difficult to keep the medicine dry, or refrigerated, or to keep it from freezing in the winter. Many homeless people are robbed of their medication; the sterilized needles diabetics need are especially vulnerable. Sometimes it is even too hard to find a drink of water to go with the medicine at the proper time. Many people quit trying and do without.

Homeless people generally experience more chronic health problems than the rest of the population. They suffer from all the same health problems as the general population, as well as some particular problems that result from living on the street.

Hypothermia is a special threat to homeless people. A person can slowly lose body heat without realizing it, especially when they are asleep. Many people have frozen to death, even in moderate climates, while sleeping without shelter. Other health problems can be complicated by the cold and lack of protection from the elements.

Tuberculosis has recently recurred and is increasing at an alarming rate among the homeless. This highly contagious disease is easily spread in crowded, poorly ventilated shelters. Tuberculosis can be cured if medication is taken regularly over several months, but that is difficult for the homeless to do.

Lice are a common problem among the homeless, spreading among people who are huddled together on the streets or in shelters. Lice live in the clothing worn by infested people, and can cause severe skin eruptions. Laundry facilities and baths are not easily accessible to destitute people, making the lice problem nearly impossible to control.

The incidence of AIDS among the homeless is much higher than the national rate. Increasing numbers of people with the HIV virus become homeless because of the high cost of care, the shortage of supportive housing, and evictions based on their illness.

Homelessness is a factor in many other health problems, including pneumonia and other upper respiratory infections, diabetes, hypertension, scabies and other skin disorders, alcoholism and drug addiction. Many street people spend long hours on their feet, leading to phlebitis, inflammation, swelling, leg ulcers and circulation problems.

SLUMS

The violence of the streets leads to many cases of trauma, fractures, burns and other injuries caused by assaults, robberies or accidents.

Homelessness and hunger are a package deal. The homeless face hunger every day. They have little or no money to buy food. They do not have anyplace to store or prepare food. Their meals are sporadic. Sometimes they are able to obtain food from food pantries or soup kitchens, but that is not always possible. When they have a little money, they often must rely on cheap food that is not very nutritious.

When people are very hungry, they may do just about anything to find something to stay alive. Sometimes hungry people eat out of garbage dumpsters—a very dangerous way to eat. The homeless suffer from all sorts of gastrointestinal illnesses. Poor nutrition weakens immune systems, causing even more health problems.

Special diets are nearly impossible to maintain when food is scarce or the product of charity. But even those who do not have a condition that requires a special diet tend to suffer from malnutrition. Malnutrition is common among homeless people; they simply do not get enough to eat.

Malnutrition is espcially threatening for children. It stunts their physical and intellectual growth. Overall, the health of homeless children is very poor compared to that of other children. They have colds, runny noses, and the illnesses other children have, but their health problems are chronic, persistent and recurrent. They must endure the lack of regular meals, sanitation, sufficient sleep, medical attention and immunizations. Children really suffer from shelter overcrowding and the stress of displacement.

Homelessness is bad for one's health. And without good health, homeless people cannot resolve their other basic problems.

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND SCHOOL

MANY HOMELESS CHILDREN do not attend school on a regular basis. The process of becoming homeless, and the disruptive situations and chaotic conditions that follow, can temporarily make school a low priority. The interruption in schooling can be more than short-term if the school will not accept students without a permanent address.

Often school presents problems of logistics and transportation. Children can end up in a shelter or hotel far from the school they had been attending. If they are old enough to negotiate public transportation by themselves, and if there is money for it, they may be able to keep going to the same school. If they are too young to

travel alone, they either must be escorted to and from school or they must switch to a closer school. Sometimes they must change schools each time they move to a different shelter. Every move involves transfers of school and health records, new transportation arrangements and other obstacles.

Being homeless greatly affects how children do at school. Even if a child doesn't have to switch schools, being moved from shelter to shelter is bound to hurt his or her academic performance. It is hard to find a place to do homework, it is hard to pay attention when you are hungry, it is hard to simply get to school. The residential instability, poor nutrition and stigma of being homeless all impair the ability of many homeless children to attend school and concentrate on their studies.

Many homeless children suffer from developmental delays in language skills, motor skills and personal growth. There are many social, physical, psychological and emotional hazards for homeless children.

The homeless lifestyle can lead to social isolation for children. Home is the basic connection to family and friends. It is difficult for children to develop social skills without a home. They have no place they can entertain their friends. Shelters are usually located in dangerous neighborhoods, so parents are afraid to let their children play outside. Frequently they are labeled "shelter kids" and teased by the other children at school. They are embarrassed about their raggedy clothes, the place they live, their entire situation.

They often become withdrawn or hostile. They may begin to misbehave. They begin failing in school. They can suffer from bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, speech problems, nightmares, low self-esteem and mood swings.

Homelessness can make it so hard to get an education that some children drop out altogether. Without an education, the odds are that children will never escape the grip of poverty. Being a homeless kid is often just the beginning of other problems that may last a lifetime.

SOLUTIONS

HOMELESSNESS is an enormous, complex, serious problem with no easy solutions. Shelters, soup kitchens and other emergency relief measures are essential to alleviate the immediate crisis, but they are merely stopgap measures in terms of the larger problem. Temporary homes offer only a temporary solution.

Long-term solutions to the homeless problem include affordable low-income housing, assistance for the mentally ill, job training and

placement, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, primary health care, day-care and counseling. The homeless need services that will help them achieve self-reliance. Long-term solutions are expensive, but so is homelessness—in terms of the costs to run shelters, soup kitchens and emergency rooms, in terms of lost productivity now, and in terms of lost productivity in the future, because homeless children do not have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

JOBS

THE MAIN REASON people move from the country to the city is the hope for better employment opportunities. Cities are the symbols of prosperity and progress for millions of rural people. Cities are the commercial and industrial centers of the nation; naturally that is where jobs will be. This promise of jobs brings thousands of the rural unemployed to the cities.

And it is true that most Third World governments demonstrate an urban bias in their industrial and investment priorities; cities receive most of the available resources. Unfortunately, there are too few jobs for all the great hordes of people flocking to the cities. When the world was industrializing, the labor market welcomed masses of unskilled workers. However, because of advanced technology, the market is no longer as labor-intensive; instead, many people are losing their jobs, accelerating urban unemployment and making it difficult for anyone to find a job.

Nearly all migrants from the countryside are uneducated and unskilled. There just are not enough low-level jobs to employ them all. A few lucky newcomers might be able to get a job in a factory or in the building trade, but most do not. Overall, urban unemployment is massive.

Vast numbers of urban dwellers are either unemployed or underemployed, able to find only occasional work. Every day they join the competition for scarce jobs. Even those who find jobs get little money. Wages for unskilled workers are very low. Nor do they have job security; many who have jobs live under the constant fear that they will lose their jobs.

There are not very many choices or types of employment for unskilled workers. Most go to cities with the hope of getting jobs in factories. Some find work as servants in the homes of the wealthy. Others are self-employed and hustle their living shining shoes or pulling tricycle taxis. Lots of people go into sales. Some work in the market areas, selling combs or vegetables or handicrafts. Others are street vendors, selling candy, drinks or snacks. Most work very hard, from early morning until night.

There are those who turn to garbage in their struggle to survive. Many people eke out a living as scavengers. In many Third World cities, scavenging is encouraged to help solve the rubbish disposal problem. Their recycling system involves letting the extremely poor go through the garbage in the dumps. They are allowed to separate it into piles of paper, plastic, glass and metal, then sell it to be recycled. Children often do this dangerous work to help their families get by.

In the poorest Third World countries many children work—in factories, in agriculture, in service jobs in shops or hotels, as servants and as street vendors. Many work from dawn to dark in conditions that are dangerous, unhealthy and inhumane. The fact that they are working is often a major factor in the survival of their families.

Many people try hard to find a job, but cannot. Some are reduced to begging, while others turn to crime. Life in the city for people without work can be dismal. They live in absolute poverty, in squalid shantytowns without sanitation or water. Their families are always hungry and often sick. Cities do not always fulfill the promise of opportunity.

However, some people who move from the country to the city do succeed. Even if all they can find is a poorly paid job, they will probably earn more money than they would have if they had stayed in the village. Those who are able to find employment can, by their previous standards, live satisfactorily.

SHANTYTOWNS

MOST THIRD WORLD cities are surrounded by large slum areas. In these shantytowns thousands of people are crowded together in makeshift houses, struggling to survive among inconceivable squalor. These wretched slums have been created by the heavy migration of rural dwellers who flock to the cities in search of jobs and better lives.

Rapid urbanization has made housing one of the world's most acute social problems. The continuing influx of rural people to the cities, coupled with the ever-increasing natural population growth among city dwellers, has resulted in severe housing shortages. There are so many people streaming into Third World cities that housing cannot possibly keep up.

Compounding the problem, most cities suffer from a rate of housing construction that lags far behind the need. Building costs are high, and as a result most people cannot afford to buy or rent even the cheapest homes on the market. In cities all over the world, a considerable number of people are homeless and they sleep on the sidewalks.

SLUMS

Often the only way for people to get a roof over their heads is to build a shack in a shantytown. Shantytowns are where most newcomers to the city first set up housekeeping. Shantytowns can sprout up just about anywhere; they permeate most Third World cities. Sometimes shantytowns appear in city centers, on land that is vacant because it would be too difficult to develop. These areas are often dangerous and unfit for human habitation: steep hillsides, swamps, rubbish dumps, areas prone to flooding, or polluted land by contaminated streams. Shantytowns can spring up overnight, crowded along narrow back alleys, leaning up against other buildings, or set up beside railroad tracks. Squatters gravitate to city centers because they prefer to build their shanties as near as possible to their source of work as factory workers, street vendors or domestic servants.

Most major cities also have vast shantytowns on their fringes. The outskirts just keep spreading wider and wider, expanding outward as the pressure of numbers dictates. Shantytowns built on the urban periphery, far away from any employment, are the most desperately poor places because there are few chances for improvement.

These squatter settlements are nearly always built on land the squatters neither rent nor own. They are so desperately poor they cannot afford to pay anything for shelter; many are jobless and those who do have jobs are poorly paid. Neither the government, urban authorities nor private land owners wants them there; they can be driven off at any time, so their tenure is precarious. However, illegally occupying land in squatter settlements is for many recent arrivals the only option.

New squatter dwellings are made from any materials people can lay their hands on. Cardboard, plywood, plastic sheeting and flattened-out tin cans might be patched together with string, nails, tape and pieces of wood or bamboo. Discarded packing cases, parts of broken-down cars and street signs are scavenged from garbage dumps and recycled as housing materials. Sometimes these makeshift shelters are overlaid with paper, canvas or burlap; sometimes they are plastered with mud. The huts might have roofs of thatch or straw; some families are lucky enough to find old corrugated iron or sheet metal to make a roof. They rarely have glass windows. Floors are formed by the bare earth. The foundations are precarious at best.

Each ramshackle shanty leans against the next for support. Each is unique, depending on what materials its builders can find. And each is a work in progress. Their flimsy construction and inadequate materials make them vulnerable to bad weather, fire and other disasters. Most have serious structural defects; they are constantly being

repaired. Many are also constantly being improved. Slum dwellers are always on the lookout for ways to improve their homes, picking up bricks or concrete blocks to strengthen the walls, or adding a pen in the back for a chicken or goat.

Shantytowns are horribly overcrowded. The density of people living in each dwelling is very high; a family with seven children may live in two cramped rooms. Many shanties have only one room. When relatives from the countryside come to seek their fortune and show up on the doorstep, the family just pushes in a little closer. In extreme situations they employ the "hotbed" system, wherein people sleep in rotation, day and night. The shantytowns themselves are congested as well. Thousands of people cram themselves into the jumble of tiny shacks. Overcrowding makes shantytowns unhealthy (disease can spread quickly) and unsafe (violence is always a threat when things get too crowded). And yet, crowded conditions can also work to create close-knit mutual support networks.

The development of city services has seldom kept pace with the increase in population. Most squatter settlements lack the basic infrastructure of the city or even the most elementary services of water, sanitation and electricity. The lack of running water and sewage systems creates grave problems of sanitation in shantytowns. The inhabitants manage to get by—after all, they did not have running water, plumbing or electricity when they lived in the country either—but diseases spread rapidly and living conditions are deplorable.

Lack of adequate water supply is the most critical problem. Most shantytown dwellers do not have easy access to potable water. Sometimes a city will provide safe water, but often it amounts to only one water tap for several thousand people. In some slums the inhabitants use tin cans to carry home water they have taken from public fountains or fire hydrants. Some people buy clean drinking water. Others get their water from polluted streams running through the camp.

Shantytowns are almost universally without sanitation facilities and amenities are extremely primitive. Shacks do not have any plumbing, much less modern flush toilets. Most shantytowns have a complete lack of effective waste disposal, drainage and sewage systems. With no way to get rid of garbage and human waste, epidemics are a constant threat. The smell alone can be overwhelming.

Only a tiny proportion of shantytown households have electricity. Cities do not provide access to electricity, but occasionally slum dwellers manage to get it by hooking up illegally to the city grid. Sometimes neighboring houses allow shantytown residents to connect to their supplies—for a premium fee, of course.

SLUMS

Families who live in shantytowns do not enjoy the modern conveniences many city dwellers take for granted, like safe running water, plumbing or electricity. Efforts to solve housing problems must focus not only on construction, but also on providing these basic utilities.

In the world's major cities, the stark contrast between vast riches and grinding poverty is striking. There is a huge rift between the very rich and the very poor, and the disparity is most glaringly obvious in their living arrangements. Alongside palatial homes in exclusive enclaves and high-rise buildings with their luxury apartments, are grim, overcrowded, stinking slums crammed with rickety, homemade shacks. Ultramodern skyscrapers are surrounded by primitive shantytowns. High-priced automobiles and barefoot rickshaw drivers are caught in the same traffic jams. The well-dressed businessmen may look at the sidewalk as a place to walk; others see it as a place to live. The range of living conditions in cities is enormous.

Every country has its own terms for its shantytowns. Some are blunt; others are more ambiguous. In Argentina they are known as villas miserias, which can be translated as "townships of misery." In Indonesia they are simply another kampung, or "village." In Peru the huge slum areas that sprawl over the barren hillsides surrounding Lima are called barriadas, but they are also known by the term pueblos jovenos, which means "young communities." In São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, the shantytowns are known as favelas. In the Philippines and Nicaragua, as well as other countries, they are called barrios. In Morocco they are bidonvilles, in Tunisia they are gourbvilles, and in Pakistan they are katchi abadis. In developed countries they are called slums or ghettos.

Government agencies and sociologists have several more euphemistic terms for the shantytowns. They often prefer to call them informal settlements, improvised units, unconventional dwellings, squatter colonies, marginal arrangements or even self-help communities.

Providing housing and shelter for poor people is a serious challenge for cities all over the world, but different countries have housing problems exacerbated by different things. In nearly every Third World country the phenomenal migration to the cities has intensified the housing shortage, but in some countries the situation is aggravated further by other circumstances.

In some countries, such as El Salvador, Vietnam and Chad, housing problems have been intensified by civil war and factional strife. Thousands of homes have been destroyed by fighting, which also creates hundreds of thousands of refugees seeking safety in cities. In Lebanon, half the country's real estate was destroyed or severely damaged by war. Wars also divert any money that might have been spent on housing projects.

Natural disasters can also affect the housing situation. In many African cities, housing resources are strained further every time there is a drought. Practically every year hurricanes destroy thousands of homes throughout the Caribbean and South Pacific. Earthquakes also shatter homes, tremendously increasing the number of people without a place to live. Nicaragua's 1972 earthquake destroyed approximately 53,000 homes; the city has never recovered. Flimsy shacks in the shantytowns do not stand a chance against the devastation of a hurricane, earthquake, landslide or flash flood.

Special circumstances have placed formidable obstacles in the way of several countries' efforts to provide housing for their people. In Panama, housing in urban areas has been a permanent problem since construction in the Canal Zone brought in a great influx of laborers. Taiwan was already densely populated when more than two million refugees arrived from mainland China in 1949. In Seoul, South Korea, hundreds of thousands of people lost their homes to urban redevelopment projects connected with the 1988 Olympic Games.

Different governments have taken a variety of measures to cope with increasing urbanization as the gap between supply and demand for dwellings continues to grow wider. For most countries, housing is an issue of major concern, yet the explosive growth of shacks and shantytowns surrounding major urban areas continues unabated. Even though housing remains a pressing problem, it generally has not ranked high on the scale of priorities for many governments. As a result, efforts to improve the situation are often minimal.

Frequently the attempt to get rid of shantytowns has been literal and direct. Many governments feel the best way to eradicate the problem of squatter settlements is to demolish them. The settlements are illegal; the squatters do not own the land where they have built their shanties. Governments, authorities, and landlords have the right to clear them out. Shanty dwellers might be evicted because the land they are on has been earmarked for development, or because the affluent have complained that the shantytown is an eyesore, or because the government wants the people to live in better, more permanent housing. Whatever the reason, a typical response of urban authorities to this spontaneous urban development is to send in bulldozers. This slum clearance process may get rid of the shantytowns, but if it does not offer a viable alternative, they will spring up again.

Sometimes authorities just raze the shantytowns and more or less ignore the people they have displaced. Sometimes they force squatters out of their homes, load them on buses, deposit them in remote locations, and hope they will not drift back to town. (They usually do.) But most governments also make at least a token effort to build public housing for low-income families.

SLUMS

Most Third World governments recognize the importance of public housing and are engaged in some sort of low-cost housing program to reduce slum areas. Some governments build rows of small houses of a simple design. More often they focus on the construction of high-rise apartment buildings, using loans from aid agencies or development banks. Frequently these buildings are made from expensive imported materials and the construction cost is invariably higher than estimated. Thus, fewer housing projects are built than planned. And the housing deficit increases.

Private construction firms rarely build affordable housing; they want projects that offer quick capital returns. The shortage of houses and apartments has driven up rental prices. Therefore, only the emerging middle class can afford most new houses, even the government-built ones.

In most cases residents do not own these houses or apartments; they pay rent to the government. However, sometimes governments allow families to buy the dwellings at a reduced cost. Sometimes they even offer interest-free loans so families can build their own homes. All these efforts amount to only a drop in the bucket. There is a tremendous, endless backlog. Governments cannot possibly provide housing for all the millions who need it. But these efforts do make a difference for those who are able to obtain such support.

Most governments have departments of housing, urban planning committees and financial allocations. Most have initiated programs to eliminate shantytowns. Some even have laws designed to encourage low-income housing construction, to freeze rents, or to ban evictions. But despite all the major development projects and national housing programs, the shortage of low-income housing remain acute and living conditions for millions of people remain inadequate. Decent housing is out of reach for poor families. The majority of poor people still build their own homes out of junk in unhealthful, crowded shantytowns—without any government assistance.

A few governments are trying to solve the problem of urbanization by taking steps to curb the flow from rural areas. They are spending more in the countryside to cut down the exodus of peasants to the cities.

Some governments are discovering that simply bulldozing shantytowns is not a solution. Shantytowns are a problem that will not go away. Unable to control the spread of unauthorized construction (and facing the fact that they are unable to come up with an adequate alternative), some governments are finding they must tolerate what they cannot prevent. They are beginning to extend basic utilites to the shantytowns.

Providing water is cheaper than providing an apartment building. Allowing people to build their own homes and upgrade them gradually, and giving them access to the same water, sanitation and electricity that other city residents have, can prove to be money well-spent.

Squatters in shantytowns are a self-reliant and resourceful group; they are able to operate much more efficiently when they have the support of clean water, sewage systems, electricity and roads. When urban authorities offer these services, the squatters, who have already provided their own housing, are able to improve their living conditions. If they do not have to worry about the bulldozers, squatters will gradually upgrade their flimsy cardboard houses into ones made of wood, iron or bricks. As their financial situations improve, and with access to clean water and sewage systems, they will gradually turn their shantytown into a "respectable" neighborhood.

In some Third World cities, urban authorities are beginning to change their attitude about shantytowns and their inhabitants: rather than seeing them as a challenge to authority, they are finding they can represent a self-help solution to the housing crisis. With support, people can take care of themselves. With support, people can improve their circumstances. With support, shantytowns can provide a low-cost housing option where there is no other option. Upgrading squatter settlements may be a first step toward solving the urban housing problem.

SLUMS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

FOR DECADES, American and European cities flourished as centers of trade and manufacturing. As the cities and industries prospered, people thronged to them in search of jobs and a better standard of living.

Then economies faltered. Many of the industries that once provided abundant manufacturing jobs began to stumble. Some industries went under and many people lost their jobs. Other industries moved out of the cities, to the suburbs or rural areas, or even to Third World countries where labor costs were much cheaper. New industries did not emerge to take their place. Cities and their inhabitants suffered the loss of their economic base at the departure of industry and jobs.

People stopped flocking to cities and began fleeing them. Much of the middle class moved out of the cities to the suburbs. This

lowered the cities' tax base, leaving them struggling to survive. The poorer inner-city residents who stayed in the cities did not have access to the distant jobs that had moved far from the urban centers. In the U.S., economic hardship can also be traced to drastic reductions in federal aid, which cities once counted on to fund many services. These trends have worsened economic conditions in the cities and increased hopelessness among the poor and unemployed.

Economic stagnation, deindustrialization and depopulation also affected small neighborhood businesses, which began to disappear as more working families moved. All that remained in some economically depressed inner cities were abandoned homes and boarded-up storefronts. Crime and drug abuse began to thrive in these run-down neighborhoods, making them even more unattractive to new residents and businesses.

Poverty and crime are two of the most imposing crises threatening cities. They have laid waste to many inner-city areas, causing residents to live in turmoil in the midst of unemployment, gangs, vandalism, guns and drug-related crime and abuse. Many families have lost their unity and many residents have lost a sense of personal responsibility. Cities are experiencing decay, both social and physical.

Many cities in developed countries are afflicted with a decaying infrastructure. Their low-cost housing units, both public and private, were built cheaply of low-quality materials. They have become dilapidated and dangerous. Poorly insulated, poorly maintained and vermin-ridden, they are unhealthy places. And the fear of violence always plagues residents.

Developed countries have developed slums in their cities filled with poverty, unemployment, crime, drugs, violence and misery.

URBANIZATION

WHEN THE 20TH CENTURY BEGAN, humans were a rural species; only 14 percent of the population lived in cities. Sometime around the upcoming turn of the century, an urban baby will be born, tipping the scales so that the majority of human beings will be living in cities. This century has seen a breathtakingly rapid rush toward urbanization throughout the world. The way people live has been turned inside out, from rural to urban. It is very unlikely that this trend will be reversed.

Urban growth is occurring at a much faster rate than growth in rural areas. About half the urban growth can be attributed to high reproductive rates of people already living in cities. The rest is the result of urban migration. Increasing numbers of village dwellers are

leaving traditional rural life to work and live in towns and cities. Since 1940 the population of many major cities has doubled again and again.

People leave rural areas and move to cities for many reasons. They may leave the countryside because they are pushed out by various factors. They may move to cities because they are pulled in by various factors. Usually it is a combination of many factors.

Most of the factors pushing people out of rural communities are related to poverty. Most of the world's extremely poor people live in rural villages; their living standards are declining, and there are few opportunities to improve them. These immigrants are driven by widespread rural poverty to seek their livelihoods in cities.

Rural poverty has often been the offshoot of landlessness and unequal land distribution. In many countries most of the arable land is owned by a few great estates, usually granted during the colonial period. Under this prevailing system of land ownership, the majority of rural farmers either have very small plots of land that do not yield enough to support their families, or they are sharecroppers, squatters or day workers on large estates. Fairer distribution of the land and more efficient use of it continue to be key political issues in many countries. Lack of access to good land is a major cause of urban migration.

Things are made worse by environmental deterioration. Land degradation has been a main factor in the migration of poverty-stricken subsistence farmers into the cities. Unsustainable farming practices have impoverished soils and made them more vulnerable to erosion by wind and rain. Farmers must eke out a living on land that is depleted of nutrients, stripped of topsoil, and unable to withstand natural stresses such as drought or heavy rain. Agricultural land finally becomes depleted beyond restoration, forcing people to move.

Droughts and deforestation also force farming people to become environmental refugees. Desertification, the loss of land resilience in arid areas, is irretrievably claiming millions of acres a year, forcing people to abandon their agricultural way of life and join the overcrowded cities. Famines have driven hundreds of thousands of people from their villages into squatter camps in or near cities. A growing number of the people flocking to cities are fleeing depleted agricultural lands and ecological destruction.

In addition to these unnatural disasters, natural diasters can drive people off the land. Sometimes one more flood or storm is enough to push people over the edge and make them decide that life in the city could only be better. In the same way, the lack of necessary resources can push people out of rural areas. The ever-present quest for water and firewood can become overwhelming, consuming the greater portion of each day.

SLUMS

In many parts of the world, population growth is putting pressure on rural areas. Competition for land and natural resources is driving more and more people away from the countryside. The land holdings of each successive generation are shrinking; family plots of land that are already tiny must be divided up among several children. Pressure for housing and jobs is so intense for poor rural families that young villagers simply leave and head for the nearest city. Moving to a city is often the only option.

The industrialization of farming and the availability of modern labor-saving farm machinery has reduced rural employment opportunities. Farm jobs are scarce and pay very poor salaries. Urban migrants are not always farmers. Animal herdsmen who have lost their livestock to severe drought often move to urban centers. Rural craftsmen may have to close their workshops because of the growth of industries and competition from the cities. Local economic decline has pushed many people to the cities in search of an income.

Civil wars and armed conflicts between governments and guerrillas have led to large-scale dispossession of rural communities composed primarily of poor farmers and tribal people. Worn down by the constant threat of being caught in the crossfire, these displaced people often end up in cities.

Personal reasons also push people out of rural life. Teenagers and young adults around the world want to escape family pressures. They want freedom from traditional responsibilities and what they consider to be oppressive lifestyles in backward, boring villages. They want to live their own lives. So they head for the cities.

Most of the factors pulling people into cities are related to the search for a better way of life. Cities are irresistible magnets for people all over the world.

The hope of finding a job is the biggest reason for the migration of rural people to the cities. Employment opportunities are perceived to be much greater in the cities. However, factories and industries are not able to absorb the huge numbers of unskilled rural migrants. In the cities, there may be the hope, but there is never the certainty of finding a job.

These dreams of making good in the city are not completely implausible. Average earnings in the city can be much greater than in the country. Many people make the move to the city with great expectations of higher incomes. If employment or trading opportunities can be found, the pay will be better, but only a fortunate few find them.

Some villagers are pulled to the cities by the attraction of urban conveniences and better living conditions. The thought of having access to water, cooking fuel, electricity and roads is very compelling.

Some people move to cities to pursue an education for themselves or their children. Many rural areas can offer only one or two years of primary school. Health care is more accessible in cities; there are more doctors, nurses and hospitals. Worldwide infant mortality rates are lower in cities than in the countryside. But there is also more disease due to the squalid conditions of city life.

Some of the increase in the number of city dwellers occurs because people follow relatives or friends to the city. They gather the courage to go to the cities knowing that they will join other rural refugees from their village and that they will not be completely on their own.

Few people are drawn to cities merely for excitement and entertainment, but the thrill of city life and freedom from the constraints of village life are significant factors in pulling people to the city.

A few governments are trying to slow this rush to the cities. In China, no one can move to a city without permission. And the Chinese government is seeking to raise rural living standards through agricultural reforms so that people will not be pushed into leaving the countryside. In India, the government is trying to increase rural employment opportunities by encouraging development of manufacturing and other enterprises in rural areas. The Indonesian government has undertaken a program of transmigration—relocating citizens from thickly populated areas to islands with plentiful farmland and the need for more people to develop it.

Cities, despite their difficulties, seem to offer opportunity. Like magnets, this opportunity pulls people to rapidly expanding cities. Increasingly, however, urbanization is occurring without any significant opportunities for migrants.

The exodus from rural to urban areas has intensified the already dire urban problems in many developing countries, as well as creating problems never before encountered. Most refugees from rural poverty find overcrowded cities that are unable to provide jobs, housing and services they need.

Crowding is the general characteristic of most cities, and urban congestion has been aggravated by rural migration.

Cities are being flooded with rural immigrants in search of work and better lives. Half the population of many cities consists of low-income residents living in slums or depressed communities. And this squatter population is doubling in size every few years.

New city dwellers find they must compete for scarce jobs. Migrants are unskilled and untrained in most cases. Sometimes they do not even speak the language that is spoken in the city. Many are unable to find any job and have incomes far below the poverty threshold.

SLUMS

As urban centers swell with immigrants, a great strain is placed on already inadequate housing. Thousands of people are crowded into substandard dwellings in poverty-ridden slum areas. Shantytowns sprout up overnight. Other social services, especially water and sanitation, are also woefully inadequate, leaving people vulnerable to disease.

When people move from the countryside to the city, they are changed. They are transformed from village peasants and farmers into urban factory workers or peddlers. No longer self-sufficient, they depend on resources from the city. Their intimate daily contact with the natural world is replaced by a routine in a world of bricks and concrete, traffic and pollution. They experience culture shock. They now must live in a mixed population, among people who have come together from many different places. They must figure out how to live together with tolerance for all the disparate groups.

Cities are stressful places. This new way of life—the noise, congestion and rush—combined with unemployment anxieties, insecurity and desperation, can contribute to social problems, including crime and delinquency. Migrants can become aggressive and prone to violence, drug addiction and alcoholism.

On the surface, cities seem to offer a better life, but the harsh reality of urban life usually differs from the dream. For millions of new urban dwellers the reality is the squalor of a squatter camp, lack of sanitation, unclean water and poor job prospects. Rural people leave villages only to become low- paid workers in constant danger of losing their jobs, and slum-dwellers permanently threatened with eviction. Cities are overflowing with people who are both jobless and homeless. Many find they have exchanged their rural poverty for urban poverty.

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GLOSSARY

Abangan— persons who are nominally Muslim but are also influenced by Hindu, Buddhist and animist beliefs

Adat— customs, traditions and culture of a people

Angklung— an orchestra of instruments that are made of various lengths of bamboo tubes

Bahasa Indonesia— Indonesia's national language

Batik— a method of decorating fabric, using wax to resist dye

Becak— a three-wheeled bicycle taxi

Bhinneka tunggal ika— Unity in Diversity, the Indonesian motto

Dukun— folk doctor

Gamelan— an orchestra made up of gongs, percussion and string instruments

Gotong royong— mutual assistance

Ikat— a type of complicated weaving

Jamu— traditional herbal remedy

Kampong— an Indonesian village

Keris— dagger with a wavy blade

Madrassah— a Muslim religious school

Mufakat— discussion

Musyawarah— consultation

Pancasila— the five principles of Indonesia's democracy: belief in one God, humanitarianism, national unity, democracy and social justice

Sambal— spicy sauce made from ground chilies and served with rice

Santra— orthodox reformist Muslims, especially as contrasted to abangan

Sarong— a long skirt made from batik material, worn by both women and
men in Indonesia

Sate— skewers of barbecued meat

Selandang— a long, narrow piece of batik used for carrying a child

Suling— flute bands

INDONESIA

Wayang— drama in which puppets or human performers portray characters from literary epics, using dance and music

Wayang golek— marionette plays

Wayang kulit— shadow theater using leather puppets

THE LAND

INDONESIA IS A NATION OF ISLANDS. With 13,677 islands, it is the largest archipelago, or chain of islands, in the world. Indonesia stretches between Southeast Asia and Australia, through the South China Sea and the Pacific and Indian Oceans. This strategic position at one of the world's major crossroads has greatly influenced its cultural, political and economic life.

The island group curves down and back across the equator in an arc about 3,200 miles long. If a map of Indonesia were laid over a map of the United States, the island nation would extend considerably beyond Los Angeles and New York. If the water space between the scattered islands is included, Indonesia covers 1.9 million square miles, but more than three quarters of that is water. Total land area is about 735,000 square miles.

About 6,000 of the islands are inhabited. Many of the islands are quite small, some just rocky outcrops no bigger than a tennis court. However, Indonesia also contains portions of the world's second and third largest islands: Irian Jaya, the western half of New Guinea, belongs to Indonesia, as does Kalimantan, two-thirds of the island of Borneo. Sumatra, the sixth largest island in the world (slightly larger than California), lies entirely within Indonesia.

The islands of Indonesia can be divided in different ways. Politically, the country has been divided into 27 provinces. Geologically, the land and water can be divided into three regions—two shelves of land submerged under the ocean (the Sunda Shelf in the west and the Sahul Shelf in the east) with a very deep drop-off between (the Java Trench). Geographically, the country divides itself into four groups. The first of these is composed of the western islands of Sumatra, Kalimantan and Java. The second group, known as the Lesser Sunda Islands, is a chain of islands running from Bali to Timor. The eastern islands, including Sulawesi and the many Maluku islands, comprise the third group. The fourth group is Irian Jaya, the western part of the island of New Guinea.

THE WESTERN ISLANDS

SUMATRA is the westernmost island. Mountains run from north to south along the western side, with a narrow coastal plain. The eastern side slopes down to marshes and swamp lands. It is hard to know which is a more formidable barrier to communication and transportation, the mountains or the swamps. Sumatra is also the most volcanic region in the archipelago.

INDONESIA

Indonesia shares the island of Borneo with the countries of Malaysia and Brunei. Kalimantan, the Indonesian portion, is huge but sparsely populated, and it has proved difficult to settle. Many of its inhabitants follow a primitive lifestyle of hunting, fishing and shifting agriculture. The coastal people and those who live in the interior rarely communicate, impeded by mountains, jungles and swamps. Rivers serve as the transportation routes. Kalimantan is Indonesia's principal source of hardwoods and timber. This, in combination with a lack of reforestation and the slash-and-burn farming method, has led to soil erosion and loss of portions of the rain forest.

Java is the most urban of the islands and by far the most populous; four of Indonesia's five largest cities are on Java. It is also important agriculturally. The soil on Java, enriched by volcanic ash, is some of the most fertile soil in the world. Farmland is so valuable that even the sides of mountains are carved with the terraces of rice fields. A volcanic chain of mountains runs the length of the island, but the mountains have been eroded almost to base level. In spite of the danger of volcanic eruptions, the superior productivity of the soil makes any farming worth the risk.

THE LESSER SUNDA ISLANDS

BALI IS SEPARATED from Java by a shallow strait only five miles wide. A group of volcanoes rise in the northeast, giving way to rolling hills and a wide plain. Bali, with its beautiful scenery, delightful beaches and distinctive culture, is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Asia.

Some of the Lesser Sunda Islands—Lombok, Sumba and Timor, for example—are infertile and suffer a lack of water. Others have fertile soil and plenty of rain and are responsive to agriculture.

THE EASTERN ISLANDS

THE BIGGEST of the eastern islands is Sulawesi. Even though it is so large, every part of the island is within 70 miles of the sea. A map easily shows why this is so. Sulawesi has to be the most oddly shaped island in the world. Some people say it looks like a handful of peninsulas tied in the middle. Others liken its shape to that of an orchid. Still others think it looks more like a squashed octopus. Its arms give the island a very long coastline and a great deal of sheltered water; this is why the people of Sulawesi are famous sailors and shipbuilders. Sulawesi has no volcanoes, but it does suffer

from earthquakes that originate deep under the sea. The people are reluctant to build permanent homes and raise crops because of this. Instead, they depend on the sea for their livelihood.

The Maluku Islands are the Spice Islands of the past. Most of them are covered with volcanic mountains. Spices such as cloves, pepper and nutmeg still grow wild in the jungles. Some of the islands are the tops of undersea mountains poking out of the water. Others are the remains of a land mass broken off during a rift movement. (In fact, if you look at a map, the island of Northern Aurtalia fits exactly into New Guinea, like two pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.) But many of the Maluku Islands are made of coral, formed by the action of the sea on coral reefs. Most of the coral islands are uninhabited because they lack water and soil.

IRIAN JAYA

THE EASTERNMOST SECTION of Indonesia is Irian Jaya. Irian Jaya forms the west half of the island of New Guinea. The island contains nearly all the different types of land forms, from snow-covered peaks to swamp-covered lowlands. The environment is filled with obstacles to transportation, communication and agriculture. Irian Jaya is sparsely populated, and the tribes who live there are often isolated, resulting in a great many different languages and cultures.

The physical landscape of Indonesia is dramatic and diverse. The country is a kaleidoscope of violent volcanoes and peaceful rice paddies, snowcapped mountains and sizzling beaches, swampy wetlands and arid deserts, fertile plains and tropical rain forests.

Under the sea, the Australian plate is slowly drifting north into the Pacific plate, which is drifting south. Indonesia, caught between this continental drift, is one of the world's most volatile geographical regions. As a part of the Pacific "ring of fire," the country averages three tremors or earthquakes each day and about one volcanic eruption a year. The movements of the earth also cause occasional tidal waves, often more disastrous than the earthquakes themselves.

Indonesia is the most volcanic region of the world. The islands are dotted with hundreds of volcanoes; 128 of them are active, 70 of them have erupted in fairly recent times. The volcanoes dominate the landscape, spouting smoke into the air and causing the earth to tremble at irregular intervals. They have helped to form and occasionally alter the shape of the islands by spewing forth streams of lava. The eruptions leave behind tons of ash and debris, which is washed down the mountains by rains and rivers, creating new lowlands and plains.

INDONESIA

Chemically, there are two kinds of volcanic lava: acid or basic. Acid lava leaves a wasteland, but the basic, or alkaline, ash left behind from Indonesia's volcanoes enriches the soil with minerals and nutrients, making the land incredibly fertile. The soil is so rich it is said that a stick pushed into the ground will sprout leaves, a banana tree can grow in ten weeks, and two or three rice crops can be produced a year.

Despite providing this almost legendary productivity, volcanic eruptions have also caused a great deal of destruction. Halfway between Java and Sumatra is a tiny island, which is all that is left of Indonesia's most famous volcano, Krakatoa. In 1883, Krakatoa erupted in the largest and most violent explosion in history, a force greater than that of several hydrogen bombs. The island, a partly submerged section of the volcanic range that runs through the islands, was thought to be dormant and had never been considered dangerous. The eruption blew most of the island to pieces, leaving a gaping hole in the earth's crust. The sea rushed in and produced a catastrophic 98 foot tidal wave, destroying many villages and drowning over 36,000 people. It rocked boats in the English Channel. The explosion produced the loudest sound ever heard on earth; people nearly three thousand miles away heard the boom. The ash that was forced up through the crater spread around the world, causing spectacular sunsets for the next three years. In the Sunda Straits, everything was pitch black for two days. Rocks and debris were flung 17 miles into the sky; some of it landed on Madagascar, clear across the Indian Ocean. In 1928, a new eruption produced a little island known as Anak Krakatoa (child of Krakatoa). It is constantly monitored for signs of a repeat performance.

Most of Indonesia's islands are mountainous; a central range extends the length of the archipelago. High plains and alpine meadows connect the mountains to the lowlands along the coast. About 75 percent of the land is covered in evergreen equatorial rain forests. The abundant rainfall and high humidity have produced some of the most dense jungle in the world. The trees in these forests can reach more than 150 feet in height, forming a dense canopy that prevents the sun from penetrating to the forest floor. Ferns, flowers, vines, moss and other plants form a tangle below the trees. The jungles contain many kinds of trees, including valuable hardwoods such as teak, ebony and chestnut; spice trees such as nutmeg, pepper and clove; aromatic trees such as sandalwood and camphor; and commercially important trees such as coconut, rubber and bamboo. Swamp forests of mangrove and nipa palms grow along the coast.

Due to the rich soil and tropical climate, plant life in Indonesia is abundant, exotic and incredibly diverse. The three separate

geological areas have produced three fairly distinct natural areas with widely differing flora and fauna. These areas are further divided into hundreds of different islands, so the variety of plants is astounding. Thousands of different species of wild orchids grow on the trees in the jungle next to giant ferns as tall as trees. Exotic flowers, such as hibiscus and frangipani, bloom wildly. These wild flowers are often large—take, for instance, the rafflesia, the biggest flower in the world. Its huge blooms with five reddish and white petals can grow to be more than three feet across. However, it smells awful, rather like a dead animal. The smell is the feature that attracts pollinating insects, but it tends to keep the flower out of any indoor decorating schemes.

Indonesians call their country Tanah Air Kita, "Our Lands and Waters." Since the seas cover so much of the total area of this island nation, it is no wonder that the sea is recognized as being an integral part of the nation. The archipelago itself is the barrier that separates the Indian Ocean from the Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea. In between the islands are many other seas, including the Java Sea, Banda Sea and Flores Sea.

The seas between the islands are an important part of daily life. The seas supply the fish that provide the main share of protein in the Indonesian daily diet. The seas also serve as the roads between the islands. Most traveling in Indonesia is done by boat; the sea has provided the most feasible means for inter-island communication.

It is true that the sea has played a major role in keeping groups separate and maintaining ethnic diversity between the people on different islands, but at the same time, the seas have fostered the spread of cultural ideas and influences. In this country of high mountains, dense jungles and swampy wetlands, it is the sea that unites and the land that divides. The difficulty of communication and travel in the interior has led to social, cultural and economic isolation among different ethnic groups within an island. Often, the people who live along the coasts of adjoining islands have many similarities, while a group living in the interior and a group living on another coast of the same island will be vastly different.

The range of diversity among Indonesian people is just about as varied as can be imagined. It is only fitting that their land be just as diverse. This vast country of scattered islands blooms with the variety of life.

This beautiful, green, abundantly fruitful country is teeming with life in the jungles, on the plains and within the seas. Even the volcanoes seem to be alive.

ANIMALS

THE WILDS OF INDONESIA are graced with a wondrous and abundant variety of exotic mammals, birds, insects, reptiles and fish. The animals found in the western regions of Indonesia are similar to those found in Asia and India. In the east, the animals tend to be more like those of Australia. Some of the animals living on the middle islands are found nowhere else on earth.

In the jungles of the west, tigers, panthers and leopards can be found. Occasionally, a tiger will attack and eat a person. If someone vanishes without a trace, it is generally assumed that a tiger is responsible. You can find one-horned rhinoceroses on Java and two-horned rhinos on Sumatra. Herds of elephants still roam the jungles on a few islands.

The jungle treetops are home for many kinds of monkeys. The most famous are probably the orangutans, an Indonesian word meaning "people of the forest." There used to be hundreds of thousands of orangutans in Indonesia, but now they are endangered because their tropical rain forest habitat is disappearing. It is illegal to capture an orangutan, but they fetch a huge price on the black market. The government has set aside more than 300 nature reserves to help preserve wildlife. A rehabilitation center has been founded that teaches former captive orangutans how to live in the wild.

More than 500 types of mammals live in the forests of Indonesia, including tiny deer, wild boars and tapirs. The eastern islands are inhabited by several kinds of marsupials, like the bandicoot, cuscus and flying possum.

Indonesia is a bird watcher's paradise. There are about 1,500 species of birds, many of them very colorful and very noisy. The tropical birds, such as parrots, cockatoos, mynahs, peacocks and hornbills, also seem to be much larger than the birds that live in cooler climates. Take parrots, for instance, and cockatoos, mynahs, peacocks and hornbills. The cassowary is really big—it looks rather like an ostrich. There are more than 40 types of birds of paradise with gorgeous, brightly-colored, long, spreading plumage. Butterflies also thrive in the islands, making the rain forests a very colorful place indeed.

Snakes also live in the rain forest—big ones, such as the python. Crocodiles inhabit the rivers. They are big, too. But the most amazing big reptile in Indonesia has got to be the Komodo dragon. It is the world's largest lizard (a monitor, actually). It can grow to a length of 10 feet and weigh in at more than 300 pounds. It is only found one place on earth—the island of Komodo, where it stalks its prey through the grasslands. An unexpected encounter with a Komodo dragon is not easily forgotten.

Domestic animals are kept in Indonesia, too. They are chickens, mostly, and rather scrawny. Most Indonesian farmers have a lot of chickens, usually ranging free in and around the house. If meat is served for dinner, it will most likely be chicken. They are kept for their eggs, as well. The water buffalo is the farmer's primary work animal, the Indonesian living tractor. Most farmers cannot afford a water buffalo or ox, however. In many parts of the country, a farmer is considered to be wealthy if he owns just one.

Most of the livestock in the country is owned by small farmers. Cows, sheep and goats are raised, mostly to be sold to provide meat for people living in cities. Indonesians do not drink much milk. With their weather, they surely do not need much wool. Animals are also valued for their manure. Pigs are raised, mostly in the Hindu and Christian areas. Muslims are not supposed to eat pork, but some of them will raise pigs to sell. The livestock might be tethered near the house, left to run free or sent out to the communal pasture.

In between the islands of Indonesia flows a tremendous amount of water teeming with marine life. Besides the many kinds of ordinary fish that can be eaten, the waters are full of lovely and ornamental tropical fish, which are in great demand for aquariums around the world. Other treasures from the sea which are gathered for export include pearl oysters and large, edible sea slugs (the Chinese consider them to be a great delicacy, and they are willing to pay a high price for them). Scuba divers can see crustaceans, mollusks, shellfish and beautiful gardens of coral growing in the warm waters. These coral reefs provide home and food for many forms of marine life. The sea is also home to dolphins, giant sea turtles and sharks.

CLOTHING

THE DIVERSITY of Indonesian life extends to the clothing that Indonesians wear. A wide variety of clothing is worn by this wide variety of people.

Not long ago, Indonesians could tell the ethnic group to which someone belonged by the way he or she dressed. These days, many people only wear their traditionally styled clothing for festivals and special occasions. These gorgeous, brilliantly-colored costumes are usually valuable heirlooms that have been passed down through the generations.

These costumes may be created from silk, brocade or lace. They are often decorated with elaborate embroidery or gems, or the fabric may have threads of gold or silver woven into it. The fabric itself may have taken years to create. An extremely labor-intensive type of

weaving called *ikat* uses an intricate and sophisticated form of tie-dyeing involving individual threads. Another kind of fabric that calls for a great deal of patience to create is *batik,* in which complex patterns are created on the fabric using wax and dyes.

The traditional clothing for both men and women usually involves a *sarong,* a length of cloth that is wrapped around the waist and hangs sort of like a tight skirt. Women's sarongs are usually called a *kain* and are worn about ankle length; men's are shorter. Men also might wear a jacket or shirt. A woman's blouse may have long sleeves, or it may be a sort of elegant tube top with an additional piece of fabric (called a *slendang*) worn loose over the shoulder.

For everyday, many Indonesians wear Western-style clothing, especially those who live in cities and work in offices. Men with more informal jobs might wear jeans or shorts, and women often wear Western-style dresses and skirts and blouses. Schoolchildren wear uniforms—short-sleeved shirts with skirts for the girls and short pants for the boys. *Batik* is a favorite everyday fabric, as well.

Many Indonesians still wear traditional clothing all the time; even city people often wear sarongs when they are relaxing at home. The sarong and slendang are very useful items beyond their functions as clothing. They can be used as a sling for carrying a baby or other load. In their blanket mode, they can help ward off the chill when the temperature grows cooler at night. They are practical for wrapping around one's head to protect it from the fiercely burning sun.

The hot, humid climate is a big factor in the way the people of Indonesia dress. People wear lightweight fabrics such as cotton, and, for the most part, dress rather informally. (However, very casual dress, such as shorts or halter tops for women, is not considered proper.) Shoes are usually worn in the cities, but many rural people never wear them. It is cooler to go barefoot. Throughout Indonesia, it is the custom to never wear shoes inside the house. Often, a woman will wear her hair in a bun to keep it off her neck and stay cool. Many men wear a black cap called a *peci.* It is almost a symbol of national unity, worn by everyone from the highest government official to the poorest laborer.

Clothing varies greatly throughout the islands. In Irian Jaya, clothing may be made of bark, cloth, grass, leaves, feathers or gourds. Many Hindu-Javanese men wear a turban, folded in a specific way to indicate where they come from. Devout orthodox Muslim women cover themselves virtually from head to toe.

DAILY LIFE

MOST INDONESIANS rise at dawn. In many towns, they are awakened by the sound of a loudspeaker from the local mosque, calling them to prayer. After they say their prayers, the family eats a breakfast of rice with vegetables or salted fish. In the cities, people sometimes buy rice or bread for their breakfast from vendors, who push their carts up and down the street, calling out for customers.

Indonesians bathe at least twice a day. A typical city bathroom has a stone basin, or *mandi*, where the water is stored. People do not climb into the mandi; rather, they scoop out water with a pan, pour it over themselves, soap up, then rinse off. The icy cold water from the basin makes for a very invigorating bath. The more water splashed around, the cleaner and the better—everything in the bathroom gets soaking wet. In rural areas, baths are taken at the pump or the river.

Most village homes do not have toilets. Sometimes there is a squat toilet, which is a hole in the ground with footrests on either side. Usually, the rural people just eliminate beside a nearby stream. There is no toilet paper; water is considered to be more hygienic.

Village water comes from a river, a stream, or from a common well.

After breakfast, children walk to school, and parents leave for the rice fields. When children leave for school, they say goodbye to the older members of their family by kissing their hands in the proper order, starting with the oldest. Grandparents and older relatives often take care of babies and toddlers.

Children are usually home from school by early afternoon. After a lunch of fried rice or noodles, children help with the chores, such as tending the garden, cleaning the house, or watching the babies. They attend scout meetings, fly kites and play soccer and other games.

In villages, the traditional market, or *pasar*, is held once a week in an open area. Little stalls are set up to sell meat, produce, medicines and other items. Vendors expect their customers to bargain for the lowest price, and much arguing goes back and forth until a compromise is reached. Indonesian consumers in the towns also rely on the convenience of peddlers, who bring all kinds of items to their front gates.

Village life is peaceful and it follows traditional patterns. The village head keeps track of births, deaths and marriages. At village meetings, people make decisions and plans for the future. At weddings, funerals and other ceremonies there is music and dancing.

Rural families live on the rice, vegetables and fruit they grow for themselves. Surplus crops are taken to the market for sale.

Supper is similar to lunch but with more dishes. More vegetables, a dish made with chicken, fish or tempe, and of course, a lot of rice, may be served. Visitors are always invited to share the meal. Food is placed on a large mat in the center of the room with everyone sitting cross-legged around it. The father gestures with his thumb to indicate that the meal can begin. Everyone helps himself to rice and various side dishes. Some Indonesians use forks and spoons when they eat, but many prefer to keep the custom of eating with their hands. They believe the food tastes better that way.

After supper, children finish their homework. They take another bath—the cold water feels good after the hot, sticky day. After their bath, children often go for a walk around the village with their parents to talk to neighbors and visit friends. Young children often fall asleep to the sound of friendly voices.

The day is structured differently in Indonesia—it begins at sunset. Thus begins another day.

Although city people live differently than rural people, values are similar. Life is still centered in the neighborhood, the community. Most people feel relationships with family and friends are more important than having many possessions or earning a lot of money.

EDUCATION

WHEN INDONESIA was a Dutch colony, education was not accessible to Indonesians. A fortunate few were chosen for positions in colonial government or business; they were allowed to attend school, often in Europe. It could be argued that the colonists deliberately suppressed education to make the Indonesians easier to control. Or perhaps they felt that the nationals were uneducable. Whatever the reason, there were not very many schools. The culture was highly developed and complex, and there was a rich literary tradition, but the literacy level was low.

Before independence was granted in 1949, only a few hundred Indonesians had graduated from high school; there was only one (not very qualified) university in the nation, and only seven percent of the population could read or write. Few people had the training needed to lead the new country. As a result, the struggle for independence was a real struggle. Because they had been denied the chance for education for so long, Indonesians were determined that following generations would be literate and trained.

One of the first priorities of the new government was to provide education. They began building schools with a passion. Within five years, the number of schools increased from just 3,000 to over 35,000.

Primary schools, high schools, technical schools, teachers' colleges and universities were built. Adult education programs were developed and became very popular. During the first 25 years of independence, the literacy rate increased from seven percent to 65 percent.

Today, school is compulsory for children aged six to 12—this is the policy, but not yet reality. This ideal still faces many obstacles. Almost 90 percent of all children attend primary school, at least part time. Enormous progress has been made, but considering the vastness and diversity of Indonesia, and the hundreds of years of neglect, a quality education for all people will take some time to develop.

In earlier years, the biggest problems have involved teachers. Teachers' salaries are meager. University professors' salaries are so low that they must hold three or four jobs to support their families. Primarily because of this, not enough people are willing to enter the field. Even fewer are willing to leave family and friends behind to work in remote areas.

The government was able to build a great many modern school buildings, but staffing them with qualified, capable teachers proved to be quite a bit more difficult. Prospective teachers were rushed through hastily designed teacher-training programs, or were merely supplied with theoretical notes on teaching methods. For many teachers, these methods were limited to paraphrasing the textbook and dictating notes. Students memorized their notes and repeated them by rote. Most of the money budgeted for education was used up by the building program, so there was not much left to supply teaching aids and materials.

Similarly, the curriculum has been outdated and static. Work is being done to strengthen the educational base, improve its quality and make it more practical. Especially needed is vocational training to help supply this developing country with professional manpower. In many places, students may choose to attend a technical high school, but this is seen as less prestigious than a preparatory school. Education is an important avenue through which a family can obtain higher social status.

The Indonesian educational system consists of a six-year primary school, three-year junior high school, and three-year senior high school. The junior and senior high schools are not required. There is a difficult mandatory examination between levels. The comprehensive entrance exam for the government universities is notoriously strict and frustrating. It is held once a year. Only about 20 percent of those who take it pass; those who fail either take it again the next year, attend a private university, or give up. Those who attend government universities are thought to have a better chance at getting a government job.

INDONESIA

Most children attend government schools, but some attend private or Christian schools. They are more expensive, but they are generally considered to be higher in quality. Devout Muslim parents sometimes send their children to *madrassahs*, Muslim religious schools that emphasize the teaching of Islam with considerably less time spent on secular subjects. Even in the government schools, religion is a requisite subject. All students receive religious training in their own faith. Special teachers of the various religions come to the school to teach the children how to pray and to study their holy book.

In addition to religion, other required subjects include reading, writing, arithmetic and the study of *Pancasila*, the five principles of the Indonesian Republic. In most primary schools one teacher handles all the subjects except religion and physical education. First and second graders only go to school for about three hours a day, but even they have an hour or two of homework each evening. Beginning in third grade, more subjects are added and the school day gets longer. Usually, only a few subjects are studied each day, and every day the subjects are different. Scouting is a regularly scheduled class for all children from fourth grade on, with boys and girls meeting together and learning to tie knots.

One hundred years ago virtually no girls received an education. Now everyone has the right to an education. The logistics of educating Indonesia's huge, diverse, spread-out population are mind-boggling. Cultural diversity presents many different needs and interests. Yet, the government, in its goal to promote unity, is working to develop a single, nationwide educational policy.

One way in which all schools are uniform is in the study of language. In the first three grades, teaching may be done in the regional dialect with the national language as a subject of study. Starting with the fourth grade, all classes are taught in Bahasa Indonesia.

Six days a week children arrive at school before 7 a.m. dressed in their uniforms. Often, food vendors' stalls are set up by the school gate. Some students eat their breakfast here; others buy a snack at recess. Students line up outside the school for flag raising and singing of the national anthem. Then they march into their classrooms.

Most village schools only go to sixth grade, and most village children stop their education there. Their parents need help in the field, and it would be expensive to travel by bus to a junior high school in a larger town. About 15 percent of Indonesian children continue with junior high and only six percent go on to high school, because the education is no longer free.

Officially, school is free for children until age 12. In actuality, though, it is not that simple. Parents must buy their children

textbooks and uniforms. Even this expense is too much for many families, even though the government will help those who cannot afford these costs. Most parents want their children to go to school, but sometimes children must drop out and work to help their families survive. Those in the country leave school to help in the rice fields, and those in the city may become street vendors. In many cases, children help at home when needed and attend school whenever they can.

In spite of all the new schools that have been built, there still are not enough. It is not uncommon for the same building to be used by two different schools, one meeting in the morning and one in the afternoon. The students prefer to go in the morning because the tropical heat makes it hard to concentrate in the afternoon, so the two schools will trade morning and afternoon sessions weekly. Some of the smaller villages are still without a school. If these children want to go to school, they must walk to another village, often a mile or more each day. Many schools are overcrowded, stark and in disrepair. Usually, not enough textbooks are available.

But the supply of teachers, classrooms and supplies is beginning to catch up to the need. Education is a priority. Everyone is determined that things will get better. Many problems still persist, but the fact that the Indonesians have raised a national educational system from nothing is a tremendous accomplishment. The Indonesian people believe that education is the key to a better future.

FAMILY

THE FAMILY PROVIDES the central and most important social relationship in the lives of most Indonesians. The nuclear family extends beyond parents and children to grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles. This extended family receives a person's first allegiance.

Family members are expected to fulfill certain responsibilities and obligations. In return, they can rely on complete support from each other. When a family member needs help—whether it is paying a doctor's bill or finding a place for a teenager to live while attending school—he or she can count on the family to provide it. Relatives are required to conform to the rules of kinship; neglecting one's family duties is not tolerated.

These obligations are reciprocal: parents care for their children and expect to be taken care of in their old age. The responsibilities continue even after death; ancestor worship has not completely died out. Family members have the shared responsibility for taking care of the graves of their ancestors.

INDONESIA

Everyone in the family has a role and knows his proper place. This brings a stability and security that everyone wants to preserve. Children quickly adjust to their social realities and learn appropriate manners. Officially, the father is the head of the family, and the hierarchical order is ranked according to age. The father is not a buddy; his position is to be honored. The word for father, *Bapak*, is also used to address anyone of greater age or status.

Traditionally, grandparents are the children's caretakers, and strong bonds are often established. Sometimes grandparents will take complete responsibility for one grandchild; in return, the child runs errands for them and helps with the chores.

Perhaps because of the high infant mortality rate, children are treasured in Indonesia. During and after birth, a child is carefully guarded against any disruption from the spirits. Babies are carried, cozy and secure, in a selandang, a long piece of batik cloth slung on their mothers' hip. Wrapped in this way, a child can easily take a drink of milk whenever it is hungry. A child is usually carried in a *selandang* on its mother's hip until the next child is born.

Children are not considered to be adults until they are married. In Indonesia, everyone is expected to marry. Until they do, children live with their parents. Girls marry quite young, especially in rural areas; by age 19 a girl is usually married and is a mother as well. When someone marries, their childhood name is abandoned and an adult name is adopted. The groom's adult name usually becomes the surname for the new family.

A marriage is celebrated with a series of *slametan*, or celebrations. After the wedding, the new couple may stay with the groom's family or the bride's family until they can set up their own household. Muslim law allows a man to have up to four wives, but this is not encouraged by the Indonesian government.

It is firmly believed that a marriage without family blessing will be unhappy. Many ethnic groups insist that their children marry within the tribe. Inter-ethnic marriage was once considered to be entirely unacceptable, but it is beginning to occur more frequently as improved communication allows different ethnic groups to become acquainted.

Many Indonesians have moved to cities to look for work, but their roots are still in their villages. In the city, anyone from the same village is considered a relative. Through these family networks, new arrivals are helped in their search for jobs. Sometimes two or three people will share one position so that each will get at least a portion of a salary. This loyalty to kin also helps explain the prevalence of nepotism in public life.

Judged by Western standards, Indonesia could be considered a poor country. But there are no homeless people in Indonesia. A

beggar is almost never seen. It is said that an entire village might starve, but never an individual. This is because kinship and village ties are so strong, and personal welfare is a family matter. People take care of each other. They share what they have.

FOOD

BECAUSE INDONESIA has been at the crossroads of trade routes for thousands of years, the islands have experienced an extraordinary blending of foreign influence. Both the blending and the influence are undeniable when it comes to the stunning array of different foods and flavors found across the archipelago. In fact, food was the main reason traders came to the Spice Islands: they wanted spices to season and preserve their food. The traders left behind elements of their native cuisines, and because of this wide lending and borrowing of cooking and menus, Indonesia became a virtual United Nations of food. Curry came from India. Stir-frying and noodles came from China. The Arabs introduced kebabs. The *rijstafel* (literally, rice table), a sort of smorgasbord or buffet, came from the Netherlands, along with carrots, tomatoes and other vegetables.

Strangely enough, those spices the Europeans wanted so badly (cloves, nutmeg, pepper and mace) are not used much in Indonesian cooking. The fresh spices Indonesians use are only found as dried ground powders in Western kitchens. Fresh herbs, such as basil and lemon grass, are actually more prevalent. For less delicate seasoning, the Indonesians turn to chilies or red hot peppers.

Rice dominates Indonesian cuisine. It is the basis of every meal—breakfast, lunch and dinner. Other foods merely accompany the rice. To most Indonesians, rice is more than just the staple food; it is the symbol of life. Traditionally, the rice crop has been carefully nurtured so as to not frighten away Dewi Sri, the rice goddess. When the rice is gathered, the harvesters hide their knives in their hands and cut down only a few stalks at a time, murmuring apologies to the rice goddess. Rice is a part of every ceremony and celebration, presented as an offering or given to guests—often tinted, molded or decorated with flowers.

For a typical meal in Indonesia, each person starts with a plate of rice. Several side dishes are served in the center of the table or mat, and everybody can put whatever he wants on his rice. These accompaniments might include soup, *ayam* (chicken), *gado-gado* (a cooked vegetable salad with peanut sauce), *acar* (pickles), and other vegetables or meats. *Sambal*, a fiery chili sauce, is always available, so

everyone can spice up his meal just the way he likes it. A cook's culinary skills are often judged by how well his or her *sambal* measures up.

Probably, the most commonly eaten dish in Indonesia is *nasi goreng* (fried rice). Rice is stir-fried with some vegetables and spices and, perhaps, a little meat. *Nasi goreng* is eaten for any meal, including breakfast, and is often stirred up for a little snack. It is even a fixture at all the American-style fast food restaurants.

The Indonesians are inveterate snackers. In general, meals are rather informal and people eat whenever they are hungry. In the cities and towns, food vendors are everywhere. Vendors walk up and down the streets selling bread, ice cream, juices, fried bananas and other treats. To let their customers know they are near, the vendors each have their own characteristic call or sound; they may sing or ring bells or beat on a wooden block.

Some of these vendors operate traveling restaurants. In the evenings, they make their rounds in the neighborhood. When they are summoned, they stop their cart or lower the yoke they use to carry their supplies. The vendors take the order, bargain for a price, fan up the charcoal grill, and quickly prepare a meal on the spot. The customers stand around, watching and chatting; if they want their food spicier or without bean sprouts, they just let the cook know. The operators of these mobile kitchens usually have a specialty, such as nasi goreng, *mie goreng* (fried noodles), or *sate* (skewered bits of meat grilled over charcoal and served with spicy peanut sauce). Most vendors sell out before the night is over. It has been said that this is some of the best food in Indonesia.

Another popular eating place is the *warung*, a kind of roadside stall. Usually just a canvas canopy over a rough table and some benches, *warungs* line the streets of most cities and villages. The proprietors routinely serve rice and a specialty dish; some sell only drinks or desserts. The *warungs* are community gathering places. Customers come to sip a drink, nibble on snacks, gossip with friends and enjoy the evening.

Indonesians do not eat a lot of meat. It rarely dominates as the main course; little bits of it are stirred in with the rest of the meal. Because there is so much ocean, fish are a major source of protein. Other seafood such as shrimp and crab are important as well. When rice fields are flooded, families also raise fish and eels in the paddies. Chicken (ayam) shows up in many dishes and is a favorite, as are eggs. Bean curd and *tempe* (fermented soybean cake wrapped in banana leaf) are inexpensive and rich in protein. These are often eaten instead of meat, especially by poor people.

Some of the Hindus on Bali practice vegetarianism, but there are plenty of Balinese dishes made with meat, especially pork. The

Muslim majority regard pork as being unclean, and they will not eat it. Perhaps, more amazing than what people will not eat in Indonesia is what people will eat. Consider the eels and frogs that children merrily chase through rice paddies and capture for dinner. Goat is the most popular meat for sate, but the dish can also be made from chicken, beef, pork, turtle or dog. If one is unaccustomed to such exotic meats, it is advisable to ask about the protein source in the dish before placing an order. In some regions, people dine on dried chicken blood and fried animal skin and intestines. Other regional delicacies include mice, roasted lizards, dragonflies, and the partially digested grass from a cow's stomach. Indonesians also eat parts of plants that most people have not thought about eating. Leaves, flowers, seeds, stalks: not much goes to waste.

Of all the parts of a plant, the fruit is especially beloved. People the world over are delighted by the marvelous assortment of tropical fruit to be found in Indonesia. Fruit is plentiful, inexpensive, nutritious and delicious. Many fruits do not need to be cultivated; they just grow everywhere. Papayas grow like weeds; a seed can grow into a fruit-bearing tree within seven or eight months. In rural areas, people just step outside and gather mangoes and bananas. The bananas come in all shapes, flavors, textures and sizes.

Perhaps the most infamous tropical fruit of all is the durian, a large, spiky, green fruit that has inspired countless arguments as to its merits. Some people claim that its pockets of creamy white flesh are so wonderfully delicious that it deserves to be called the king of fruit. Others are not even willing to taste it because, frankly, it stinks. It smells rather like an open sewer. The smell of a ripe durian is so unpleasant that they are banned from many hotels and not allowed on airplanes.

Other, less controversial fruits include starfruit (crisp, slightly tart, with slices shaped like a star), rambutan (it looks rather like a hairy, red sea anemone), mangosteen (purple shell with heavenly white segments inside). Queen Victoria promised a reward to anyone who could bring her a mangosteen while it was still edible. Salak (crunchy and a little sour; sometimes it is called snake fruit because its brown peel resembles a snake skin). A jackfruit, which can weigh up to 40 pounds, can be eaten when it is ripe and sweet, but it is also picked before it is ripe and cooked with coconut milk as a vegetable dish.

Coconuts grow throughout Indonesia and are a vital ingredient in many dishes. Coconut milk is used for sauces and in curries and other meat and vegetable dishes. Coconut oil is used for stir-fry, fried rice and fried noodles. Fresh young coconut makes a refreshing beverage: the top is sliced off and the liquid inside is sipped through a straw. Then the shell is cracked open and the slippery white coconut meat is scraped off.

INDONESIA

Many other interesting beverages are to be found in Indonesia. Fresh fruit juices are delicious and exotic. Fresh avocado juice is a favorite. Some combinations can become quite elaborate—almost like desserts—with additions of condensed milk, syrup, shaved coconut and gelatin. Java is famous for its coffee. In fact, in most restaurants around the world, if someone orders a cup of java, his server will probably know that he is asking for coffee. Alcohol is forbidden to Muslims, but non-Muslim areas brew up some very strong potions made out of such ingredients as palm tree sap. Soft drinks are not difficult to find in Indonesia, as Coca-Cola marches on to its goal of global domination.

Indonesian cooking calls for some unique kitchen utensils. Rice requires a rice steamer—usually a cone-shaped container made from strips of split bamboo that fits over a pot of boiling water. Steam passes through the rice to cook it. Ladles are often fashioned from half a coconut shell with a bamboo handle. A distinctive wooden pestle and mortar used to quickly grind the chilies for the sambal. A number of dishes can be cooked, served and eaten in handy disposable containers. Bamboo joints are ideal places for letting yogurt set up and also are useful for cooking meats. The all-purpose banana leaf can be woven, cut, rolled or folded to hold everything from rice to entree. (Banana leaves also make a lovely impromptu umbrella.)

A traditional method of cooking in Irian Jaya involves digging a deep hole and lining it with very hot stones, special leaves and dried grass. The food is placed on the stones and the hole is covered. It takes quite a while for the food to cook this way.

It probably will not surprise you to hear that cooking styles vary from island to island. Different regions have different specialties, delicacies, and taboos. The Minangkabau like their food as spicy as it can get. Sumatran cooking often combines contrasting flavors and uses a large selection of fiery hot sauces and spices. Javanese cooking is milder and more delicate, using fresh spices. The chili in Javanese dishes has been mellowed with a lot of sugar; it is often quite sweet. Some primitive tribes in Irian Jaya are hunters and gatherers: supper is whatever they can chase down.

The biggest variance in the eastern islands is the use of sweet potatoes and sago as a staple instead of rice. Sweet potatoes come in a variety of colors and sizes and have a recurring role on the daily menu. Sago comes from the sago palm. The tree trunks are cut in half lengthwise and the pithy core is grated, washed and pounded for hours. Although sago is a mainstay in the diet of many Indonesians, it is low in protein and not especially nutritious. Sago leaves make really good thatch though.

The people of Indonesia usually have enough to eat because their land is so fertile. Overpopulation on some islands has sometimes caused shortages of rice. But on most islands, if you plant it, it will grow. This does not mean there is no malnutrition. Thousands of children still get sick because they do not have the right foods to eat. Many people do not know which foods they need to eat to stay healthy. Others cannot afford to buy a variety of foods. Programs to educate mothers about good nutrition are slowly making headway.

HEALTH

BEFORE INDEPENDENCE, the average Indonesian did not have much chance of ever receiving modern medical treatment. Since then, the government health service has established over 1,200 hospitals, 3,000 public health clinics, and 5,000 maternity centers. These institutions are equipped rather simply—inadequately, in many cases. They are understaffed with doctors and overstaffed with nonprofessional personnel. But Indonesians who get sick or hurt are now more likely to have medical facilities available; however, this does not mean they will use them. Most minor illnesses are treated at home. And most Indonesians would rather go to a traditional healer, or *dukun*, for help with health problems, especially in rural areas. People simply do not trust modern medicine; they usually only use it as a last resort. Or if they go to a doctor, they see a *dukun*, as well.

When someone feels sick, it is usually attributed to *masuk angin*, or the entrance of wind. To prevent this from happening, people will envelop themselves in warm clothes. Considering the heat and humidity, that is a real commitment to health. Any illness caused by masuk angin is treated by rubbing oil onto the sick person's back; then, the skin is scraped vigorously with a heavy metal coin.

More serious illnesses require the services of a dukun. The dukun practices traditional herbal medicine, supplemented with various appropriate spiritual rituals. The dukun's philosophy is based on the premise that illness occurs because the patient has done something to disturb the equilibrium and peace of the spirits. To restore order and health, certain rituals must be followed. For example, if a child is ill, the dukun may crack an egg over its head; it is thought that the egg will absorb the bad spirits causing the sickness. The *dukun's* repertoire may include exorcism, circumcision, fortune-telling and midwifery.

The herbal medicines the *dukun* uses are often real remedies. The tropical countryside is a botanical treasure chest. The majority of Indonesians take some sort of traditional herbal elixir, called *jamu*,

every day, much in the same way that Westerners take multivitamins. Usually drunk as a tonic, but also used in the form of creams, powders or pills, *jamu* is taken to cure or prevent everything from headache and fatigue to leprosy and kidney stones. Some formulas promote beauty and vigor, others relieve problems such as colds, hemorrhoids or complications in pregnancy. Each *jamu* concoction has a popular name and contains at least one indigenous plant thought to have a particular effect.

The use of *jamu* originated in the courts of central Java in the 17th century. The royal ladies whiled away the hours perfecting the science of using plants to retain their beauty, youth and health. The same ancient formulas are used today both at home and commercially. Rural dwellers simply go into the backyard and gather the leaves and roots they need, pound them into a pulp, mix it with water and drink it down. People who live in the city can buy packets of jamu powder at the jamu shop, or they can purchase a ready-made drink from the jamu girl. A jamu vendor mixes several types of jamu early each morning, pours them into bottles, and walks her route with her product in a basket on her back. She also carries a bucket of water to rinse out the glass between customers. She visits each of her regular clients, and other interested buyers stop her as she walks along.

The Department of Health understands that traditional medicine is firmly entrenched and cannot be prohibited. Guidelines for dukun services and herbal medicine have been established. However, the government feels that its best opportunity for improving the health of its citizens is to focus on education about hygiene.

The traditional attitude about hygiene and sanitation is that water, regardless of its condition, cleans everything. Indonesians wash everything frequently. They bathe at least once a day, often more. They feel that water is vital for cleanliness and essential to well-being. Yet, this water, especially in the cities, is often terribly polluted. The very water they are using to keep clean and stay healthy is most likely the principal carrier of disease.

Health education programs aim to improve sanitation and water supplies. Other goals include immunization and an increase in the understanding of personal hygiene, health maintenance and proper diet.

Malnutrition is a problem. For the most part, Indonesia is not a hungry country, but not everyone eats a healthy diet. In fertile areas, there is plenty of rice; where the soil is less fertile, cassava or sago may be substituted, and malnutrition is the result. Malnutrition is also a result of a lack of transportation in this nation of islands, mountains, jungles and swamps. The areas that are producing abundant supplies of food are unable to deliver any extra to areas that are experiencing shortages.

The tropical climate brings its own set of health problems. Something about the climate seems to reduce body resistance to disease. There are ongoing battles against such tropical diseases as malaria, dysentery, typhus and cholera. Some battles are being won. The average life expectancy has gone up to 56 years, and is still climbing.

HISTORY

THE ANCESTORS OF MOST OF TODAY'S Indonesians were the Malay people. They migrated in waves from the Southeast Asian mainland to the archipelago beginning more than 3,000 years ago. Lighter-skinned Mongols from Southern China also settled throughout the islands and assimilated with the Malays. Some of these early immigrants moved to the highland interior, while others settled along the shore. They brought with them the knowledge of how to make tools and utensils from metal. They lived in villages, organized systems for irrigating rice, wove cloth, made pottery and created ornaments to wear. They worshiped their ancestors, performed rituals to appease the spirits and began to develop the arts of music and puppetry. The early Indonesians built boats, following trade routes between the islands. This way of life remained unchanged for centuries.

Traders from China and India sailed into the ports, engaging the islanders in a flourishing commercial trade. The Indian impact on the archipelago was profound. As more and more Indian traders and missionaries visited the islands, they began to have an influence on the local rulers of the small feudal kingdoms.

In the fifth century A.D., these rulers, impressed by the sophistication, culture and education of the Hindu priests, invited the Brahmin scholars to their courts. Many Indian customs and ways of thinking were adopted, including Hinduism and Buddhism. The Indonesian aristocracy found they liked the caste system and the concept of a divine ruler with limitless powers.

The Hindu scholars taught about navigation, architecture and medicine. They helped spread Indian methods of irrigation and animal husbandry. They controlled the sea trade. They began to take over the law, government and military. Eventually, a Hindu-Indonesian civilization arose; a series of Hindu and Buddhist empires competed for power over the next few centuries.

Two powerful kingdoms were established by the eighth century, both ruled by kings who considered themselves to be gods. In Sumatra, the Buddhist kingdom of Srivijaya ruled the seas for 600 years, holding control of the strategically vital Strait of Malacca

between Malaysia and Sumatra. In central Java, the Buddhist kingdom of Sailendra flourished during the eighth and ninth centuries. The kingdom was a commercial and naval power, but it is remembered for its cultural and artistic activity, especially in architecture. Borobudur, the world's largest Buddhist shrine, was built during this period. This temple, a major tourist attraction near the city of Yogyakarta, has been restored and still stands today, 12 centuries after its construction.

The kingdom of Sailendra was defeated by the Hindu kingdom of Mataram. The people of this kingdom built a large Hindu temple complex named Prambanan, also near Yogyakarta. Buddhism and Hinduism were able to exist side by side, evidently without conflict.

But the political scene was not without conflict. After 300 turbulent years of a succession of little kingdoms rising and falling, a powerful new Hindu empire emerged in Java. This was the Majapahit Kingdom, established in 1293 A.D., and its founding marked the golden age of Indonesian history. While earlier kingdoms had ruled only parts of one island, this mighty empire eventually controlled most of the coastal regions and united the archipelago for the first time. The Majapahits established the first great Indonesian commercial shipping empire, setting up diplomatic relations and economic ties with other countries of Southeast Asia. During this period, a true Indonesian identity emerged, and the unique art and culture of Java developed and thrived.

Arab traders first landed in Indonesia in the ninth century and began to establish trading centers along Sumatra's coast. By the time the Majapahit kingdom was forming, missionaries for the religion of Islam had arrived. By the 15th century, when the great Majapahit empire began to decline, the Islamic faith had gradually spread along the trade routes. Many local leaders began to convert to Islam and set up independent Muslim states, hoping to strengthen ties with Malacca, now an even stronger center of trade and the new center of Islam in the islands. This brought them into the growing Islamic trade network, giving them more power and wealth. The common people followed their leaders and became Muslim. This egalitarian religion was compatible with their ancient beliefs, and they found it to be very appealing. By 1600, Islam was the chief religion of Indonesia, but the country was again divided up into many small kingdoms.

As Islam spread throughout the islands, the Islamic kingdom of Demak attacked the Hindu kingdom in Central Java. The Hindu king refused to surrender and killed himself, but his son and a great many nobles, scholars and cultural leaders fled to Bali rather than give up Hinduism. Bali is Hindu to this day.

The Arab, Persian, and Indian traders followed a trade route from Asia across the Middle East to Europe. This was the world's most important trade route. Indonesia's Spice Islands supplied the traders with spices, which were highly prized by the people of Europe to preserve and flavor meat. Spices were rare and expensive, making them a very valuable commodity for the traders. For centuries, European traders met Asian traders at the Mediterranean Sea to buy and sell spices. But as Europeans entered the Age of Discovery, they began to search for their own route to the Spice Islands.

A Portuguese explorer named Vasco de Gama found the route to sail from Europe to Asia around the Cape of Good Hope in Africa. At the beginning of the 16th century the Portuguese arrived in Indonesia in search of cloves, nutmeg, pepper, gold, adventure and Christians. They found the spices, which took up very little space on board the ship in relation to their value, and proved to be extremely lucrative. The profits realized by the Portuguese encouraged other European traders to set out. The Spanish, French, English and Dutch all struggled for control in Indonesia; eventually, the Dutch won out.

The French gave up their fight for power over Indonesia after a few years. The Spanish retreated to the Philippines after the defeat of their Armada by the English. The English eventually withdrew to concentrate their efforts on Malaysia, Singapore and India.

From the start, the Portuguese made mistakes during their traffic with Indonesia. They hated Islam (they evidently had not forgotten about the Crusades), and they behaved like pirates. They were able to set up a chain of 40 trading posts in the region, and they achieved a dominant position over trade for much of the 16th century. However, they treated the Indonesians with contempt and were so brutal and treacherous that the Indonesians allied with the Dutch when they came looking for a spice-trade monopoly. The Portuguese were expelled from the islands, except for eastern Timor, by the combined military forces of the Indonesian rulers.

In 1596, four Dutch ships arrived in Indonesia after a disastrous 14-month journey, during which more than half the crew died. Their arrival was a fiasco. The sailors were so unruly that the local prince drove them back to their ship and refused to trade with them. The captain made the crew stay on board while they visited several other ports to try to obtain spices. But when they arrived in Bali, the entire crew deserted. It took the captain a long time to find a crew to get the ship home, but the few spices he was able to bring home caused a lot of excitement. Speculators and investment groups began sending ship after ship to the Indies.

A large group of Dutch traders combined to form the Dutch East India Company in 1602. They soon became the dominant force in

trade on the islands, and worked to establish a complete monopoly. They sank the ships of any other country found in Indonesian seas. They negotiated treaties and raised armies and waged wars. They built a new capital city and named it Batavia. They gained greater and greater trading privileges and took control of more and more land.

The small kingdoms of Indonesia were too divided and too weak to resist. The Dutch East India Company—not the Dutch government—gained power over the entire archipelago by the end of the 17th century, controlling not only the spices, but also the production of coffee, sugar, indigo and tea. By introducing these new agricultural products, the company was able to increase its profits even more. However, none of the profits went to the workers who made those profits possible. Many Indonesians were made to work in forced-labor camps. The farmers were little more than slaves; they were overworked and cruelly punished, and the company army made sure the rules were obeyed without resistance.

Yet, some Indonesians did resist. This constant resistance and the great expense involved in combating it was combined with a lessened demand for spices in Europe and the company's mismanagement and corruption. It all proved too costly, and the company went bankrupt in 1799. This was complicated by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars in Europe. For a while, the Dutch government was controlled by France; recognizing an opportunity, the British moved in and took over the Indonesian colony in 1811. Sir Thomas Raffles supervised the Indies during this time. He abolished the slave trade and did away with forced agricultural labor. Five years later, the British gave the colony back to the Dutch, and that put an end to any reforms.

The new Dutch government assumed administration of Indonesia. It had a huge national debt, and it intended to use the colonies to defray the amount owed. The Dutch set up what was known as the culture system. The peasants were required to grow specific crops for export, leaving little land and time left to grow food for themselves. For all practical purposes, the country became a giant Dutch plantation. The Dutch chose the crops, such as sugar, coffee and rubber, and dictated how they should be raised. The farmers were paid for their crops, but not much. The peasants lived a very difficult life and really had to struggle to feed their families. In some places, the people literally starved. But the culture system was incredibly profitable for the Dutch government.

This repressive system of exploitation instilled a great deal of resentment among the Indonesian people. They lost control of their lands, their village governments and their destiny. Rebellions broke out, but they were scattered and very costly in terms of Indonesian

lives, mostly lost to starvation and cholera. Frankly, the peasants worked so hard and had so little food they did not have the energy to start any revolts.

During the second half of the 19th century, Dutch reformers in Holland began to agitate against the brutal treatment of the Indonesians. Those Indonesians who had been able to receive an education also opposed the colonial regime. In 1877, the Dutch finally abandoned the culture system. They replaced this government exploitation with private exploitation. The rebellions increased. The anticolonial movement and independence organizations grew, mostly made up of students and intellectuals. These groups realized their only hope was a single, unified movement working toward one self-governing Indonesian nation.

The independence movement grew rapidly after World War I. The Dutch resisted these efforts and maintained strict control, jailing or exiling the leaders, restricting civil liberties and crushing any rebellions. The Dutch rejected any efforts at negotiation.

In 1942, Indonesia was invaded and occupied by the Japanese for the duration of World War II. The Dutch were driven out. At first the Indonesians viewed the Japanese as liberators from the Dutch. But the Japanese soon began an even more ruthless mistreatment of the islands. They forced many Indonesians to work as slaves in Burma and Malaysia. They exported Java's entire rice crop to Japan, resulting in widespread starvation. They jailed and tortured anyone they felt threatened their power. This served to draw the Indonesian people closer together, developing a sense of national unity. This was further strengthened when the Japanese encouraged the spread of Bahasa Indonesia as the everyday language used throughout the islands.

Two days after the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, Indonesia proclaimed its independence as a republic. Sukarno, a young civil engineer and the best known nationalist, became Indonesia's first president after independence was achieved. A constitution was adopted and a cabinet was formed. However, the Dutch refused to accept the proclamation and give up their prized colony. In order to regain control over the islands, they sent in armed forces. Bitter fighting took place between the Dutch and the Indonesian freedom fighters, along with occasional negotiations. International condemnation prompted the United Nations to intercede and call for a cease-fire. In December 1949, the Dutch finally recognized Indonesian independence.

However, winning independence was only the first step in a continuous struggle to keep that freedom. The years following independence were stormy. The freedom fighters identified with their own particular groups; they often were not united in either intent or

organization. There were over 169 parties struggling for power, and in the first 10 years, Indonesia went through several island rebellions.

In 1959, President Sukarno decided that parliamentary democracy was not working and that the executive branch should have supreme power. He declared martial law and established his policy of "Guided Democracy." This increasingly authoritarian regime initiated a period of intense nationalism. Sukarno worked hard to unite the different peoples of Indonesia into one nation, and today, he is a hero to the Indonesian people. However, his foreign and domestic policies made him a controversial leader. Sukarno took Irian Jaya from the Dutch and sent troops into Malaysia. The West was blamed for all of Indonesia's problems. Foreign business dealings were severely restricted. Sukarno gave speeches reviling imperialist capitalism and encouraged the political role of the Indonesian Communist Party. Horrendous inflation developed, there was an atmosphere of economic uncertainty, and the country nearly went bankrupt. Indonesia withdrew from membership in the United Nations. Sukarno declared himself President for Life. Political unrest grew.

In a coup attempt in late 1965, gangs of young communists captured and murdered six generals who held high positions in the government. The country went through a period of chaos in this "Year of Living Dangerously." The communists were blamed; their ranks were decimated as massive retaliations were carried out against any communist sympathizers. It is estimated that as many as 500,000 killed and several hundred thousand others imprisoned. There were riots and demonstrations; many people were gunned down in the street by angry mobs. The impact of this purge and the shock at its violence are still felt in Indonesia today.

The army, led by General Suharto, eventually restored order. Sukarno attempted to return things to the way that they had been, but strong suspicions about his complicity in the coup attempt shadowed his efforts. He was still popular enough that his opponents were hesitant to depose him. Thus, he was gradually eased out of office and put into involuntary retirement. General Suharto was named acting president, and in 1968, he became Indonesia's first (and only, so far) *elected* president. Replacing themes of revolution and nationalism, his primary goal has been Indonesia's economic development. His programs helped to reduce the inflation rate from 600 percent in 1966 to nine percent by 1972, and the economy slowly stabilized. The Communist party was banned, the parliamentary democracy was reinstated, Indonesia rejoined the United Nations, and foreign investors were welcomed.

In the villages, at the bottom level of government, traditional processes of village democracy are still alive. *Musyawarah*, the process

of deliberation, is used by village councils to make decisions, as well as by higher levels of government. Suharto calls his government *Pancasila* democracy, consisting of five principles: belief in God, nationalism, democracy, humanitarianism and justice. It can only be hoped that these ideals will continue to guide this diverse nation as it searches for ways to improve the lives of its people.

HOUSES

MANY DIFFERENT KINDS of houses are found in Indonesia; just about every group of people builds a different type of house. Yet, there are similarities among most houses, whether they are rural or urban, modern or primitive, old or new.

One common characteristic is that side walls are not very important. In fact, some houses do not have walls at all. Bamboo screens or woven palm mats are kept handy to provide shade or keep out hard rain. The weather is always warm, and families like to catch any passing breeze. Even houses with solid, heavy walls will have large windows and doors to provide an open feeling.

Much more important is the roof. In a country where it rains nearly every day, a good roof truly matters. Building materials used for roofs include wooden shingles, tile, tin and thatched palm leaves. The prominence accorded to the roof is reflected in the many varieties of styles, from roofs that swoop up into points at the end to those shaped like boat hulls.

A sturdy floor is also vital, especially in stilt houses. It must be strong enough to support the entire family so that no one need worry about crashing through. In many rural areas, houses are raised off the ground on poles. This serves many purposes. Being up on stilts helps keep the houses cool and dry, providing better circulation of air and protection from floods. Stilts lift the houses out of the mud and make it easier to keep them clean. Because of the height, unwelcome animals are not as likely to slither or crawl in. The space under the house is often used to shelter livestock and poultry.

Originally the stilt houses were built to provide protection from other people. In the past, headhunters were a real nuisance. If there was a feud or trouble from another tribe, the family could pull up the ladder or notched log steps to discourage the invaders.

Some stilt houses are single-family dwellings, usually consisting of just one room with a veranda out front. Other stilt houses are communal, with the entire village living under one roof in one large apartment building. These longhouses are divided into as many as 50 family units. Each apartment may have only one room,

or it may have a small kitchen at the back. When there is a wedding, the new family simply builds another apartment onto the end of the longhouse.

A veranda runs along the front of the entire longhouse. The house is generally only used for sleeping and for shelter from the rain or blazing sun. Most activities are performed outside or on the veranda.

Longhouses are traditionally found in rural areas. The cities do not have very many apartment buildings. However, communal living is another characteristic common to all Indonesians. All the different types of houses are adapted to the extended family. Even city houses always have room to spare for another cousin, niece or nephew on the living room floor or on the veranda.

In Bali, the extended family of parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins live together in a walled compound. The buildings include several bedrooms and a common kitchen, bathroom and shrine. Usually the compounds have no dining room or living room because the family eats and relaxes together in the courtyard or on the veranda.

In Sumatra, the Minangkabau people live in richly decorated wooden houses with gracefully sloping roofs. These very large houses can serve as home to over 50 people, all of whom are related to the oldest woman in the family. The Minangkabau tribe is matriarchal. When a daughter gets married, the house gains a new wing.

Many people live in fishing villages along the coast or beside the rivers. Some live in houseboats, and some build their homes on stilts over the water. Legend has it that the Trojans came to Sulawesi by boat, sailing upriver into the interior. They pulled their boats ashore and converted them into houses. Today, they are rice farmers, still living in boat-shaped houses that rest on stilts.

The Batak people live in villages made up entirely of members of the same clan. When the village becomes overcrowded, members get together and work out a way to split the clan and establish a new village. The rice fields are owned by the whole village; individuals have the right to work the land and gather the harvest.

Most farmers do not live on their fields. They prefer to live in a village and walk to their fields each day. The village, or *kampong*, generally has a mosque or church and a meeting house. Larger villages may also include a primary school and a place to hold a market.

Nearly all the different kinds of houses are decorated with some kind of wood carving. Carving is a traditional Indonesian art and can be found on pillars, walls, roofs and ceilings, often brightly painted. Houses usually do not have much furniture, but often what there is is beautifully carved. In Bali, carvings of Hindu gods and goddesses are plentiful. In some areas, carved wooden figures are placed at the

entrance of the house to scare away demons. If a headhunter were in the family tree, a longhouse might be decorated with the skulls of former victims.

Housing is not without problems in Indonesia. In the cities housing problems are particularly bad for poor people. Most cannot afford to buy a house; instead they rent a room or put up a shack in the slums. The density of people living in each dwelling is very high. Sanitation facilities are scarce, leading to the spread of disease. Most rural areas do not have running water either. A river or pond is the main source of water, where people and animals go to wash, use the bathroom, and gather water for cooking and drinking.

LANGUAGE

GREAT ETHNIC diversity also means great diversity in languages. More than 300 languages are spoken in Indonesia, not counting the many different dialects within each language. Most of the languages belong to the Malayo-Polynesian language family, but many others are unique and bear no resemblance to each other. These languages and dialects are spoken by families and in villages; they are alive and vital.

People on different islands might be expected to speak different languages, but even within each island, several different main language groups may be spoken. At least seven languages can be found on the tiny island of Alor. Sulawesi has at least six distinct language groups, 62 documented languages and a myriad of dialects.

The island of Java has three main languages. The most widely spoken of these, Javanese, is used by 40 percent of the entire population of Indonesia. Javanese is an incredibly complex language, reflecting the hierarchical nature of Javanese society. There are four levels—different words are used depending on whether you are speaking to an inferior, an equal, a superior or royalty. Other factors that help you decide which level to use include age and the setting. These levels do not mean merely differentiating between formal usage and everyday speech; different grammar and entirely different words are used in the different levels. The Sundanese and Balinese languages have similar levels.

However, the linguistic landscape is not as fragmented as these statistics suggest. Indonesia has a national language: *Bahasa Indonesia*. (Bahasa means language.) This national language, indispensable for interethnic communication, has played a large role in bringing the country together and helping it toward its goal of "Unity in Diversity."

INDONESIA

The story of *Bahasa Indonesia* is fascinating. Throughout the centuries, islanders needed to communicate with the traders who sailed into their ports. Malay, a relatively easy language to master, became the accepted language of trade throughout the archipelago and Southeast Asia. This commercial language absorbed many elements from various sources, resulting in a dialect sometimes called "port Malay."

By the time the Dutch arrived in Indonesia, this language of trade was used on most of the islands. The Dutch spoke Dutch and preferred to be spoken to in Dutch, but they did not mingle with the Indonesians; aside from an occasional banning of the growing national language, the Dutch allowed Indonesians to talk to each other in whichever tongue they desired. Very few schools operated at the turn of the 20th century in Indonesia, and they were only for the upper class. The language of education was Dutch, and the books used in the schools were written in Dutch.

Those who first gathered together to discuss and agitate for freedom from foreign rule were educated people. Therefore, they spoke Dutch, the language of their oppressors. They saw the irony of this and soon took as their motto this pledge: One people, one nation, one language. They began using the Malay trade language, which was now known as Bahasa Indonesia. The use of one common language became a symbol of unity among the diverse peoples of the nation—one way to bind together the many different parts.

When the Japanese invaded Indonesia, they forbade the use of the Dutch language and encouraged the spread of Bahasa Indonesia. After independence, little question remained of whether to change the national language. Much of the population already spoke Javanese, which seemed the natural choice for a national language, but such a choice would have caused the non-Javanese to feel as though they were being discriminated against. The nationalists forming the new country could see that they needed a neutral language that did not belong to any particular ethnic group. Besides, they needed a democratic language without any of the aristocratic or hierarchical words found in Javanese. Another objection to Javanese is the level of complexity involved in learning the language.

Bahasa Indonesia is not complicated. Rated one of the simplest languages in the world, its conversational form can be learned quickly and easily. It has no tenses, genders, articles, conjugations, declensions, case-endings or subjunctives. In English, one would say "The room is dirty." In Indonesian, one would express the same idea by simply saying *kamar kotor*—"room dirty." It is a logical language. Verbs and adjectives do not need to agree with nouns. To indicate plurals when no specific number is mentioned, it is only necessary to say the word twice: child is *anak*, and children is *anak anak*.

In addition to the simple grammar, *Bahasa Indonesia* is easy to pronounce. The rules of pronunciation are similar to English, except that they are more consistent. Nearly all syllables have equal emphasis, so you do not have to worry about stress or accent. For the most part, what you see is what you say. The words are written in the Roman alphabet.

Another factor adding to the ease of learning is the large number of recognizable words taken from other languages. *Bahasa Indonesia* reflects the long history of contact the islands have had with foreign cultures. Many words derive from Sanskrit, Arabic, Polynesian, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, English and Dutch. Other words are easy to figure out or remember: ice cream is es krim; photograph is portret.

Bahasa Indonesia is a musical, poetic language. Many words and phrases paint evocative word pictures. For example, the word for sun is *mata hari*—*mata* means eye and *hari* means day—therefore, the sun is the eye of the day.

Bahasa Indonesia has been accepted throughout the islands as the national language. At home, most Indonesians speak the dialect of their particular ethnic group. The local language can be used in schools for the first two years, while the children are taught *Bahasa Indonesia;* but thereafter, only the national language is spoken in teaching. Many Indonesians are bilingual, and trilingualism is common, as well. Those who move to the cities often have to learn a new regional language; Dutch is still used by some people over age 40; and English is often taught in high schools, since it is used for foreign business and in the tourist industry.

Bahasa Indonesia is the language used in government, business and education. It circumvents many of the problems that could be caused by the great number of different ethnic languages and dialects. *Bahasa Indonesia* provides the means by which Indonesians of different ethnic groups communicate with each other, work together, tell each other jokes and become friends.

AN INDONESIAN MYTH

A HUGE GRAY ROCK JUTS OUT of the water near the mouth of the Bahtang Arau River on the coast of Sumatra. It is said this rock was once a ship commanded by a man named Malin Kundang, who had grown up in a local fishing village. Malin's family was very poor, but he was their only son and they spoiled him terribly.

One day, Malin ran off and joined the crew of a ship that had docked nearby. No one heard anything about him for years. His father died, and his mother's only hope was that she would see her son again before she died.

Malin worked his way to the top and became a successful captain. One day, a very grand ship sailed up to the village. The people of the village recognized the captain as Malin. They hurried to tell his mother and, overjoyed, she ran to embrace her only son. Malin was embarrassed by his poor mother. He told his crew not to let her on his ship, and he ordered the ship back out to sea.

Shortly after the ship left the village, it sailed into a typhoon and was badly battered. The remains of the ship washed ashore near the village and turned into a large rock.

Parents show their children the rock and tell them this story to remind them to love and respect their parents.

OCCUPATIONS

IN THE CITIES, some people work in offices. Many work in government, for Indonesia has a many-layered bureaucratic system. There are artisans—woodcarvers, silversmiths, weavers, dancers, actors and musicians—but most of them must support themselves with additional jobs. Many people work at jobs which the government classifies as "informal." For example, the occupation of the ubiquitous vendors, selling everything from fried noodles to mattresses, is considered informal. The *becak* drivers, who pull three-wheeled bicycle taxis, often do not live past their 30s; it is brutally hard work. Some people work in the growing tourist industry in hotels and resorts. Others are servants, oil workers, engineers or teachers. Two out of three Indonesians, however, earn their living from the land.

Indonesia is predominantly an agricultural country. Agriculture may be falling behind oil and other industries as far as its contribution to the national income is concerned, but it is still vital to the welfare of most Indonesians. Several hundred plantations produce such export crops as rubber, sugar, palm oil and tea, but most farms are small and belong to families. These families are sustenance farmers, growing enough rice, vegetables and fruit to feed themselves. Many also produce a crop for cash, like nutmeg or coffee. Most farmers keep chickens for eggs and a goat for milk, as well as animals which are raised to sell in local markets.

Indonesia is the world's third largest producer of rice. Rice is the staple food for most of the country. Rice is cultivated on both wet fields and dry fields.

On the inner islands, such as Java, Bali and Madura, most of the rice is grown on terraced, wet rice fields, or *sawah*. There is abundant rain and a tropical climate, but the real secret to the success of

growing rice is the rich soil. Brought down from the mountains by rivers and enriched by volcanic ash, the soil is so fertile that it can produce two or three rice crops a year. These inner islands are densely populated, so the intensive crop production is essential to meeting the demand for rice.

The wet rice method is marvelously productive, but it requires a lot of hard work and cooperation. It has been practiced for over 2,000 years. In ancient times, the villagers banded together to clear and terrace the land, to level and dike the terraces, and to devise and maintain irrigation systems. Today, the picturesque terraces marching up the hillsides may be supplied with water pumped by hydroelectricity, but for generations the farmers relied on elaborate systems of dams, ditches, bamboo aqueducts and water elevators.

On the outer islands, the soil is not as rich and there is not as much pressure from overpopulation to produce multiple crops each year. Here, rice is grown in dry fields, such as wheat or other grains. If rainfall is sufficient and timely, it is not necessary for rice fields to be flooded, but there is definitely a much poorer yield.

Dry rice farmers often use slash-and-burn techniques, or *ladang*, to clear a plot in the jungle. If underbrush is cleared and trees burned just before the rainy season, the ash and debris help to fertilize the soil. Crops are planted on this land for a few years; once the soil is completely depleted, the farmer clears another plot. This shifting cultivation does not allow the soil to regain its fertility. Environmentalists, both in Indonesia and the rest of the world, are concerned by the disappearance and destruction of precious rain forest. Ten percent of the world's rain forest is found in Indonesia. The government is trying to limit the slash-and-burn method of cultivation and encourage more permanent settlement.

Other crops are grown besides rice, of course. In the highlands, farmers grow corn and sweet potatoes. Cassava is a root that grows well in soil that is too poor for rice; unfortunately, it is not terribly nutritious. In the eastern islands people eat the spongy center of the sago palm tree. Other important crops are soybeans, peanuts, fruits and vegetables.

Fishing is a way of life for many people living in this land of abundant coastlines. Some families live full-time on their boats. The fishing industry is important to the country and is struggling to keep up with demand. Fish is the main source of protein for Indonesians. Fish are harvested from the ocean, as well as inland from rivers, lakes, ponds and even the flooded rice paddies.

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PROBLEMS

INDONESIA'S MOST URGENT problem is probably overpopulation. It is the fifth most populous country in the world, and the population is growing at the alarming rate of 2.1 percent every year. If it continues at this rate, the population of 175 million will double in 30 years.

The government has developed a strong family planning policy. The program offers education in family planning and medical services at family planning clinics. Local communities are in charge of promoting family planning. It is an open topic. Family planning matters are discussed at village meetings; it is deemed perfectly proper to ask strangers which contraception methods they use, and King and Queen of Contraception contests are not uncommon.

The motto of the family planning board is "Two is Enough," but most Indonesian families would probably prefer to have four children. Children are needed to help in the fields and around the house. Children are their parents' insurance policy for support and care in their old age. Too many children die as well.

The family planning programs are successful in that 60 percent of couples are using contraception. It helps that religious convictions do not present many obstacles to acceptance of contraception. Another factor that supports cooperation is that the preference for boys is not as prominent as in some countries.

The population dilemma is more complicated than just too many people. The real pressure comes from the uneven distribution of the people. Overcrowding is actually only a problem on the islands of Bali and Java, one of the most densely populated areas in the world. More than 60 percent of the entire Indonesian population lives on Java, which contains only seven percent of the total land area of the country. In contrast, Kalimantan accounts for 25 percent of the land but only four percent of the population.

Plenty of room is available. The problem of overcrowding is spreading the people around to less densely populated areas. The government has undertaken a program of transmigration—relocating Indonesian citizens from thickly populated areas to islands with a lot of empty space and with the need for more people to develop the land.

To those families who agree to resettle, the government offers transportation to the new island, five acres of land, a house, tools, seeds and food until the first harvest. The thinking behind resettlement stems from the idea that unused land can be turned into productive farms, and people who are unemployed and hungry in Java can have a chance to create a more comfortable life.

These goals are optimistic. Indonesians feel very strong ties to their homes. Even with offers of free land, few people want to leave their villages, families, friends and culture. Those who do decide to relocate are usually the poorest and most desperate.

Fresh arrivals often have difficulty adapting to the new physical and social surroundings. The environment is often harsh and less fertile than that to which they are accustomed. It is hard for communities to establish an infrastructure blending the different customs and values. Occasionally, friction occurs between the indigenous villages and the new arrivals. The transmigration program has not been uncontroversial or inexpensive, but it has had some successes. Many remote areas have been opened up.

The government-sponsored transmigration program is swimming upstream against the spontaneous movement to the cities that has been taking place in Indonesia. Java is so overcrowded because it appears to be an island of opportunity. In spite of the close ties that rural villagers feel to their homes, many move to the cities in search of jobs and a better life. They hope to earn enough money to send some back to their extended families in the country. Yet, few are able to find adequate employment. They often end up eking out a living driving tricycle taxis, called *becaks*, or working as servants in the homes of the wealthy.

Indonesia's problems seem to be intensified in the cities. Most city dwellers are very poor, and many are unemployed. The vast, congested slums of ramshackle bamboo and cardboard huts have poor sanitation and a high risk of disease. A huge rift divides the very rich and the very poor, leading to such problems as prostitution, crime and juvenile delinquency.

The population is young: more than half are under the age of 20. They need housing, food, education, and most importantly, employment. Most children do not continue with school after sixth grade. Those who do often cannot find work in their field of study and are not interested in working in agriculture.

Even though the labor force is steadily increasing, full-time employment opportunities are not. Many persons will accept any part-time work available; others work long hours for a pittance. Wages are very low. Indonesian workers often earn less for a whole year's work than Americans earn in a week.

Fortunately, food is inexpensive, so people are able to get enough to eat. Indonesia is right on the edge of being able to produce enough rice to feed its people. The biggest problem with food is related to the overpopulation on Java. Java's soil is incredibly fertile, producing two or even three crops of rice a year. But even with every available square inch devoted to growing rice, sometimes it is just not enough to feed over

100 million people. The other islands cannot help; they do not have enough labor to produce more than what they need for themselves.

Even when there is extra food, moving it around is hard. Transportation is a severe problem for this mountainous island nation covered with jungles and swamps. There are not a great many roads or railroad tracks. Boats are the most important vehicle, both on the sea, to travel between islands, and on the rivers, to cross through the jungles. Away from the water, people usually walk.

Government efforts to develop a unified national culture have worked to produce change in society, as have economic development and foreign influence. People are working longer hours, with less time to spend on family and community needs. Families who once housed and found work for distant relatives are beginning to think of themselves before offering to help. Young adults sometimes look for work in the cities, leaving their children in the village to be taken care of by an older relative. Older people, fearful for their security, are worried that the extended family system, based on mutual reliance, is breaking down. The traditional methods for maintaining stability in the community are weakening, but are not yet being replaced. The government is struggling to offer social services that the family traditionally provided.

Perhaps the government's biggest failure has been its inability to do anything about the corruption that flourishes in its midst. Some government officials steal money from the state or demand bribes before they will help anyone. Indonesia has so many levels of bureaucracy that this has proved to be a very troublesome problem indeed. Student protesters agitate for reform, but corruption still exists in almost all areas of public life.

Protest demonstrations are not always allowed to take place. Sometimes the government determines that a protest is endangering national stability; these demonstrations are broken up and the protesters arrested. Newspapers and magazines also experience occasional shutdowns.

Political unrest has beenfrequent in the republic. In addition to student protesters, Islamic groups have demonstrated when they felt the government was undermining Muslim law. Riots have broken out, caused by resentment over the relative prosperity of the ethnic Chinese minority. Uprisings by guerrillas in Kalimantan have had to be put down. In 1976, Indonesia took over the eastern half of the island of Timor from Portugal, resulting in fighting between government soldiers and local guerrillas. Irian Jaya is another trouble spot; a separatist movement is trying to gain independence.

Indonesia has survived many troubles—colonialism, military occupation, war, revolution, mismanagement, corruption and power

threats. Through it all, two principles have aided the country in its struggles. One is *gotong royong,* or mutual assistance. People help each other. It is a part of their nature. They help their families acquire what they need; they help their neighbors in times of trouble; they help a stranger whose car has broken down. The other principle is *musyawarah,* the process of deliberation. Consideration is given to all points of view. Before a decision can be made, all must agree on a solution. This patience for negotiation has helped Indonesia pull through many difficulties.

It faces many more. But the Indonesian people are resilient and courageous. They are the country's most abundant and valuable natural resource. They will continue to work to create a better future.

RECREATION

ART IS AN INTEGRAL PART of traditional Indonesian life. Music, dance, drama and craft occupy a meaningful position in the culture. The culture flourishes with a great variety of folk and classical arts; each ethnic group has its own unique form. Most of the performing arts were heavily influenced by the ancient Hindu civilization, yet each reflects the values and traditions of its region.

Music can be heard wherever one goes on the islands. The most widespread and popular traditional music in Indonesia is *gamelan.* The *gamelan* orchestra consists primarily of percussion instruments; the Javanese word *gamel* means hammer, and most of the instruments are beaten or struck. But the sound is not harshly percussive; the music is sweet, delicate and fluid. It is often described as the sound of moonlight.

A gamelan group can have anywhere from five to 50 instruments, all tuned to a unique scale. The basic instruments are gongs, drums and xylophone-like metal bars. They come in all sizes from large to small to provide the various notes from low to high. The higher tones tend to predominate. The instruments are made of brass and other metals, animal skins, wood, bamboo and buffalo horn. Some gamelan orchestras also have string instruments.

Two distinct types of gamelan are performed in Indonesia. The Javanese version is majestic, slow and stately. Balinese gamelan is vibrant, exploding with energy. The music has no written score. It is quite complex and sophisticated, almost like a cross between jazz and rippling water. Understanding of gamelan is passed from generation to generation. Boys sit on their fathers' laps during rehearsals to watch and to learn.

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Gamelan music is an integral accompaniment to dances and dramas. The audience knows from the music what is about to happen on the stage. *Gamelan* is also an essential part of the frequent festivals and celebrations. It even appears in mosques, transgressing Islamic law but in keeping with Javanese custom. The music may also be played alone, often in outdoor concerts. Many villages have music clubs that own the instruments collectively and perform at community events. Often, in the quiet nights, the bronze gongs and drums can be heard for miles, as they have been heard for thousands of years.

Other popular instrumental groups include *suling*, or flute bands, and *angklung*, orchestras. An *angklung* is an instrument fashioned from two rows of bamboo tubes of various lengths hung loosely in a wooden frame. Each *angklung* is tuned to a fixed tone; the player holding that instrument shakes it whenever the music calls for that note. In the olden days, they were played as the soldiers marched into battle. Now, they are very popular at school assemblies. The *angklung* orchestra is valued for its music, but also for the way it teaches teamwork.

Historically, Indonesian folk dances are ritualistic, performed by a priest or healer to exorcise evil spirits, prepare for battle or celebrate victory. These traditional tribal dances have a purpose and tell a story. They are performed to mark rites of passage such as births, circumcisions, marriages and deaths. They are also performed at religious ceremonies or at festivals celebrating various agricultural events, such as planting time or harvest.

The traditional dances of the various ethnic groups differ in purpose and style. In one Balinese dance drama, the dancers fall into a trance as they act out a story to the accompaniment of a hypnotic rhythm of drums and a monotone chant. Another dance from Bali tells the story of Prince Rama's quest to rescue his kidnapped wife. Dancers portraying an army of monkeys perform precise monkeylike movements and repeat a syncopated chant to create the chatter of monkeys. In the Javanese hobbyhorse dance, the dancers ride on bamboo or leather hobbyhorses. They fall into a trance and take on the mannerisms of a horse, racing around and eating straw.

Folk dances are performed by the general population and do not call for formal training. But the classical court dances, originally choreographed and performed for royalty, require years of practice. Children begin their training as young as the age of five to learn to perform the many difficult and complex gestures and steps. It can take years to learn to perform a gesture perfectly, such as arching the fingers back to touch the forearm, or developing the strength necessary to hold one intricate pose for many minutes.

Each gesture has a particular meaning for the audience and must be done precisely and with simple grace. The dance forms are highly stylized, telling legends of love and adventure. The onlookers know the plot and are able to anticipate each movement.

The performances are elegant, glittering spectacles. The dancers wear ornate, lavish costumes. The dancer's face remains expressionless; it is covered by elaborate makeup or sometimes a mask. It can take hours for the dancer to get ready for a performance.

The classical dances of Java and Bali are probably the most well known. They are similar in many ways—the dancers' knees are bent, the body is straight, the head is tilted to one side, rather like a Hindu sculpture. However, they vary in pace and motion. Javanese classical dance is slow, deliberate, serene. The dancers keep their eyes downcast, their movements are subtle, and they elongate their gestures in long, silent pauses. Balinese dances are more dramatic and energetic. The dancers burst onto the stage and dart around with sharp stops and turns in a more improvisational manner.

Indonesian drama takes several forms; all are called *wayang*, which means shadow. Some plays actually are shadow plays, but it has been explained that all drama is called wayang because drama is a shadow of life.

In the shadow plays, *wayang kulit*, puppet silhouettes are held up to a white cotton screen lighted from behind. The audience in front sees the shadows of the flat puppets moving behind the screen. The puppets are caricatures of people, rather grotesque actually. It is against Islamic law to create anything resembling humans; when the people converted to Islam, the puppets were redesigned so that they were no longer a representation of men or women. The two-dimensional puppets are made of buffalo leather, cut in fine detail, and sometimes exquisitely painted. The arms, legs and torsos of the puppets are mounted on long, slender sticks that the puppet master, or *dalang*, manipulates from beneath.

The *dalang* must control the puppets, narrate the story, create each of the voices and sound effects, and conduct the gamelan orchestra that is providing the background music, all at the same time. During a performance, a *dalang* is very busy. Members of the audience often gather behind the screen to watch him bring the puppets to life. The *dalang* must be very skillful to carry the show; most have studied the art for at least eight years and must practice every day. It can take that long just to learn all the legends upon which the shows are based, the two or three languages used in performance, and the more than 300 characters, as well as their gestures, movements and voices.

The shows are based on both the ancient legends of the islands and Hindu mythology. Portraying the conflict between good and evil,

the stories indirectly give object lessons about life, impart moral values and provide heroic role models. There are heroes (smaller, with smooth gestures) and villains (bigger, clumsy, with booming voices), but all must struggle inwardly with wrong and right. Everyone in the audience knows the stories by heart, but they enjoy hearing them over and over.

Wayang kulit plays are performed as part of special celebrations, such as weddings or birthdays. Troupes also travel around, providing entertainment for the villages. A traditional wayang can last for hours, often starting in the evening and continuing until dawn. The entire community gathers to watch in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. Families rest on mats and only half-watch the show. They already know the story. People come and go as they please, gossip and socialize, and doze off during the slow passages. They count on the gongs to wake them up when the exciting parts arrive.

Different regions have specialized in different types of drama. *Wayang golek* uses three-dimensional wooden puppets to tell its stories. These marionettes are even finer examples of artistry than are the flat puppets. They have been carved, molded, decorated and dressed in gorgeous, richly embroidered costumes. They also are moved about on long, slender sticks. Wayang golek does not use shadows, so it can be performed during the day.

Wayang topek is masked drama, usually depicting the very same legends as the puppet shows. Live actors mimic the movements of the puppets. The roles are all played by men wearing masks that look like the golek puppet heads. The dalang even speaks their lines for them. In *wayang orang*, dance drama, the actors say their own lines while the dalang provides sound effects and keeps things moving. Orang dancers usually do not wear masks unless they are supposed to be an animal or monster, but they do wear ornate costumes, which look like those the golek puppets wear. Productions can be quite simple, with three or four actors playing all the parts, or very elaborate, with scenery, costumes and all kinds of props.

The original function of wayang was as a religious ritual to ask for blessings from the ancestors. Even today, wayang is more than just an entertaining spectacle on the stage. It is probably the most powerful cultural force in the country. Puppets are such an integral part of the Indonesian experience that the government uses them in many of its programs as a teaching aid and as a medium for presenting public service announcements on television.

With so many different ethnic groups, Indonesia has a great many festivals and ceremonies. On any given day, someone is bound to be celebrating something somewhere on the islands. Each group has its own festivals, but all Indonesians commemorate

every possible occasion in life with a party. Religious holidays are especially well-celebrated.

Most Indonesians are Muslim, so Muslim holidays are significant. The country's most important festival, *Lebaran*, celebrates the end of Ramadan. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims do not eat from dawn to sunset. At Lebaran people honor this accomplishment by feasting for two days. They wear their finest clothes and jewelry, set off firecrackers, prepare elaborate feasts and visit friends and relatives with gifts of cakes and cookies. The streets are filled with noisy festivity.

But the festivals of Lebaran seem small when compared to the Hindu and Buddhist celebrations on Bali. Few places have more festivals than Bali—hardly a week goes by without a ceremony somewhere on the island. The Balinese spend much of their time celebrating and preparing to celebrate; almost any excuse will do. The most important celebrations are the *odalan*, the birthdays of the temples. Each temple celebrates its particular anniversary every 210 days. The Hindus believe the spirits of their ancestors return to earth for this festival, which lasts for three days. The temple is decorated and vast feasts are prepared, to which the gods are invited. It is a very busy time; the streets are filled with people on their way to visit friends or to pray at the temple.

Another Hindu festival is Nyepi, the Hindu New Year. On New Year's Eve people lay offerings at the crossroads to appease the evil spirits that live there. At nightfall, they chase away any remaining spirits with gongs and torches. New Year's Day is spent in prayer and meditation in total silence. No one leaves home. This is done to trick the spirits into thinking Bali is deserted so that they might as well go away.

Every year on Buddha's birthday the Tenggerese people celebrate the Kesodo Festival at the Mount Bromo volcano. At midnight, the mountain-dwelling villagers climb to the smoking crater, sacrifice chickens, goats and cows, and throw them into the rumbling fire below. This is to persuade the volcano god to remain inactive and to give the villagers good harvests in the coming year. The god of Bromo evidently is placated by this ceremony; there has not been an eruption for over 50 years.

On Kalimantan, the Iban tribe celebrates the yearly Hornbill Feast in honor of the big-billed jungle birds. Large hornbilled sculptures are paraded up and down the veranda of the longhouse, then placed on tall poles where they can observe the festivities. Pigs are killed so that their spirits can carry messages to the village ancestors. Fortune tellers examine the pig livers to determine if the family will have good luck in the next year. The feasting lasts for three days with plenty of special dishes and *tuak*, a wine made from the palm tree.

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Scores of festivals, such as this one, are celebrated by hundreds of different ethnic groups. Several holidays are commonly celebrated by all Indonesians, such as Independence Day. Each area honors Independence Day in its own way. In the cities, people hold parades, listen to speeches and go to sporting events and to art performances. On some islands, villagers perform the dances they once took part in after victory in battle. Other areas hold boat races, marathons or other sports contests.

Many festivals are connected with the harvest, especially the rice harvest. They involve a mixture of local traditions and religious beliefs, and they are often attended by government officials. Various ceremonies are held before planting, during the growing period and at the harvest. In addition to harvest festivals, there are thanksgiving celebrations, ceremonies to honor the gods, and ritual village cleansing ceremonies, all accompanied by music, dancing and feasting.

Throughout Indonesia, people gather to celebrate the significant events in their lives. These rites of passage celebrations are called *selamantan*, and they are an indispensable part of the life of the community. Ceremonies mark every stage of the human life cycle from birth to death, and even after that. Dramatic and elaborate rituals are held for circumcisions, for weddings, for the start of or the completion of a project, and a very unusual one is held for coming of age on Bali. When a child is around 15 years old, the family holds a tooth-filing ceremony. The youth's teeth are filed so that they are not sharp like a demon's fangs; as the tooth is filed away, so is the evil. A religious leader directs the ceremony. A feast, of course, follows.

Indonesians enjoy a wide variety of sports. One of the government's mottoes is "sports for all," and there are many programs to encourage participation in sports. All schools teach physical education, and every year there is a National Sports Day with competitions that actually last for a week.

Team sports, such as volleyball and basketball, are particularly popular. But no sport is more popular than soccer. Indonesia has the world's largest indoor soccer stadium, with room for 100,000 fans. Everyone plays and watches soccer. Children do not allow the fact that they do not have any equipment stop them. They kick homemade balls on dirt fields with their bare feet. Local amateur soccer teams play each other; regional and national teams also compete.

Another favorite sport is badminton. Indonesians are proud to be among the best badminton players in the world. Children in even the most remote villages set up a clothesline for the net and use their rubber slippers as rackets.

Before such Western sports were introduced, the islanders played games they developed. Many of these games are still played

regionally. In Java, people play *benjang*. Two opponents hit each other's legs with long sticks until one falls down. In Sumatra, teams playing *sepak tekrau* use their heads, legs and feet to try to keep a rattan ball in the air, keeping it moving back and forth over a net. In Sulawesi, men play *sisemba*, a type of team kickboxing. Everyone fights until one team has been kicked to the ground. In Nias, young men jump over five-foot-high stone walls with swords in their hands. This game was originally used to train warriors to jump enemy walls. *Pencak silat* is a popular martial art, whose discipline is said to help its users develop their minds and spirits. More relaxing pastimes include kite flying and *congkak*, a game involving placing pebbles in a certain order into hollows of a wooden board.

Indonesians enjoy competitions. Canoe races are popular and are a regular occurrence throughout the islands. On the island of Sumba, men fight an annual ritual battle on horseback. The fighting goes on until one person is killed. It is an ancient tradition dating from the days of human sacrifice. Cockfighting is a very important part of the Indonesian male lifestyle; a village cockfight can draw up to 100 men. A fighting rooster is many a man's most valuable possession. The roosters are released into the ring with a razor tied to one leg. A cockfight usually only lasts a few seconds, and the betting is fast and furious. Gambling is illegal now, and the villagers must get permission from local authorities to hold a cockfight, but it is easy to get permission if the fight is part of a ceremony. Plenty of ceremonies are always under way.

Probably the most famous competition is the annual bull race on the island of Madura. Trial races are held to choose the fastest bulls, which are fed a diet of chili peppers, honey, beer and raw eggs. On the morning of the final race, the competing bulls are decorated and paraded through the town. As they draw near the stadium, the gamelan orchestra begins to play. The bulls race in pairs with a young jockey riding on a type of wooden sled with no wheels that is dragged between them. The winning bulls proudly trot home to their new career as a stud.

The Indonesian people enjoy recreation and entertainment that is social in nature. Over the centuries, many folktales have been created; they tell of spirits and magical beings, explain how a tribe began, or teach a moral lesson. Storytellers repeat these legends over and over and always find a willing audience.

When radio, television or movies are available, people like to watch (or listen) in groups. Radios are fairly inexpensive and a signal can be pulled in almost everywhere. Television has only recently become common. Only one channel broadcasts programming and it is government run. The government wants people to watch TV and

has given many villages that have electricity a television. The villagers can gather after work, supper and evening prayers to watch the news and other programs on topics such as health, nutrition and family planning. Movies travel from village to village, set up in portable open-air theaters in the fields. People bring blankets on which to sit, and vendors sell snacks and drinks for everyone to enjoy during the show.

Many Indonesians entertain themselves by creating traditional arts and crafts. The arts are accessible in Indonesia; they are a big part of everyday life. Art is not thought of as a special talent given to only a select few. It is something in which everyone can take part. Because of this attitude, Indonesians are a very artistic people. It is said that every Indonesian is an artist, even if his or her job is as a bus driver or a maid. Probably more people in Indonesia have arts and crafts as a hobby than anywhere else in the world.

Indonesia has a long tradition of fine craftsmanship and distinctive style. Artists through the ages have blended influences from India, Arabia and the West with native techniques and themes. Skills are passed down through generations as children learn to create art naturally by watching family members and becoming apprentices.

Artists throughout the islands are involved in music, dancing, making puppets and performing shows. Out of wood they carve elegant figures and ornate furniture with inlay designs. Metalwork is a highly developed craft, and silversmiths create marvelously delicate silver filigree. People make jewelry and pottery, they sculpt, paint and embroider.

The most well-known of all Indonesian handicrafts are textiles. Indonesia makes more kinds of textiles than any other country. Each ethnic group has its own style of textiles, some dating back more than 2,000 years.

Weaving is an integral part of the culture and is done in most homes. Some primitive artisans employ materials beyond cotton and silk, weaving bark, grass and leaves. These extremely natural fiber textiles are then painted or dyed with geometric patterns.

A painstaking type of weaving called *ikat* is so complicated that it can take several years to create one piece. *Ikat* involves a method of designing the cloth in the weaving process. Certain threads are tied off while others are dyed, rather like tie-dyeing on a very intimate scale. *Ikat* weavers must be extremely patient.

Batik is the most familiar type of textile made in Indonesia. *Batik* is made by sketching a pattern on a piece of white cotton or silk. Portions of the design are painted with a *canting*, a penlike instrument used to distribute molten wax over the cloth. The fabric is dipped in a dye; the wax resists the dye so that only the unwaxed portions are

colored. When the cloth is dry, the wax is scraped off. Then, the parts of the design not to be dyed by the second color are waxed, and the fabric is dipped into another dye. The waxing, dyeing, and rewaxing are repeated for as many colors as are needed for the design. A printing-block method for stamping the cloth with hot wax is also used. This takes less time and has made batik more affordable.

Batik patterns are intricately detailed and brilliantly colored, most often in blue, brown and white. A thousand traditional designs are woven, usually of geometric patterns, flowers, or stylized birds, animals, and humans. At one time, batik was the traditional clothing, worn by everyone. It is still widely worn throughout the islands.

Indonesian textiles are used for clothing, but they have more than just a practical role. Spinning, dyeing and weaving the yarn symbolize creation and birth. The designs of these handcrafted textiles often are based in traditional and religious symbolism. Traditional textiles are frequently treated as sacred ritualistic objects. The assiduously woven ikat cloth is used to shroud the dead. Batik cloth is wrapped around a bridal couple to symbolize unity.

Indonesian art is like Indonesia itself: diverse. Artistic expression is found in all things in all places. A danger exists that mass production, tourist demand for souvenirs, and the modern, busy lifestyle may cheapen or drive out traditional arts and crafts. But in the past, Indonesians have been able to absorb influences from the rest of the world and still retain their unique artistry. Their arts have a good chance of surviving.

RELIGION

RELIGION IS AN IMPORTANT part of Indonesian life. When the constitution was enacted after independence, it encompassed five broad principles known as *Pancasila*. The first of these principles is "Belief in the One and Only God." Everyone in Indonesia is expected to believe in the existence of a god.

Within this requirement, complete freedom is granted as to which god is worshiped and how that worship is expressed. The constitution guarantees the right of every person to worship according to his or her conscience. But religion is more than a personal matter; it is an important part of Indonesian political belief, a fundamental component of citizenship. Religion, cultural beliefs and social customs have a very complex relationship that defines the everyday conduct of the people and permeates the political and social doctrine of the country. This religious freedom does not involve the idea of separation of church and state.

INDONESIA

Religion is taken seriously. It is studied in all the schools, but not with the generality typical of an introductory class on the philosophy of religions. In many cases, special religion teachers are brought in—true believers—to instruct the students in their chosen religious faith.

Everyone must belong to a religion, at least nominally. All Indonesians carry identity cards that state their religion. Five official choices for religion include the Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Catholic, and Protestant faiths, but all religions are accepted and even encouraged. The government gives financial aid to all faiths to help build places of worship.

This open-mindedness exhibited by the government is also found within the various religions. They accept other religions' right to exist and even tolerate the blending and intermingling of different religious ideas.

This receptiveness toward new religious thought is not a recent concept; new religions have been appearing in Indonesia for thousands of years. Each new religion is laid down on top of the stack of previous religions and settles in, and none ever seems to completely disappear. The result is a kind of historical layer cake of religions when you take a slice of Indonesian life. When a new religion appeared, the people incorporated what they liked about it into their lives, hanging on to what they cherished from the old religion. It has been said that it is easier to figure out when a religion started in Indonesia than when it ended.

Religion appears to have started with animism. Early Indonesians worshiped the spirits of natural objects, such as the sun, the mountains, rain and rice. They believed that everything around them possessed a spirit, which could hear prayers and had the power to do good or evil. Therefore, everything, whether animate or inanimate, should be treated with respect. In addition, they practiced ancestor worship, believing that the souls of their ancestors continued to exist and deserved honor.

None of the religions that have come after have managed to erase these animistic beliefs. Most Indonesians today believe in spirits. Stories of spirits and demons are abundant everywhere. Hundreds of holy places stand wherein spiritual energy is said to be concentrated, and where people go to meditate and absorb the spiritual force. The island of Bali is apparently overrun with spirits; it gives a whole new meaning to those travel posters inviting tourists to The Enchanted Isle.

To appease the spirits, modern construction companies still place a buffalo head in the foundations of new buildings. When making major decisions, the leaders of the country beseech the spirit that provides guidance to enter their bodies. And witch doctors are called on to exorcise evil spirits from new swimming pools and cars.

Whatever their religion, many ethnic groups throughout Indonesia continue to practice ancestor worship. They visit carefully tended gravesites to offer thanks after a success and to ask for help before a new endeavor. In some isolated communities, animism survives intact, and the ancient traditions, ceremonies and sacrifices aimed at placating the spirits of nature are meticulously observed. But when Hinduism came to Indonesia during the second century A.D., many of the islanders converted—most likely, because their rulers converted, but also because the religion is considerably more thoughtful and sophisticated than animism, which personally appealed to them.

Hinduism and Buddhism were introduced by traders and immigrants from India. Islanders were fascinated by the highly developed Indian culture and welcomed the new concepts. As that culture began to dominate the island political scene, more and more people turned toward Hinduism or Buddhism. The coexistence of Hinduism and Buddhism in Indonesia produced so much blending, adapting and entanglement that it is hard to distinguish between them. Indonesians created their own version, added it to their old native beliefs, and a unique tradition sometimes called Balinese Hinduism evolved. It bears only a vague resemblance to the Hinduism practiced in India.

Balinese Hinduism encompasses all aspects of daily life. Homes and offices have tiny temples where prayers can be offered. Worshipers often go into trances as they become possessed by the spirits. Nearly every day, there is some ceremony aimed at keeping peace with the gods and demons surrounding them. The faithful leave daily offerings at the feet of ornate stone sculptures of the Hindu gods; they drape them with flowers on the frequent holidays. Many gods and goddesses are found in the Hindu religion, but the government says that Indonesians must worship only one. This is reconciled by the explanation that the many different gods are merely different attributes of one supreme being.

Central to Hindu tradition is the belief that everyone goes through a series of reincarnations. Eventual freedom from this cycle depends on behavior—those who are good will be reincarnated at a higher level. People are separated into four castes; they are born into a caste and are stuck with it for that entire life.

Another important idea is the concept of the superiority of those who have attained spiritual enlightenment. Hindus see a correlation between inner spiritual strength and the external universe. Most Indonesians, whether Hindu or not, seek tranquillity and balance in their lives through meditation and contemplation. They strive for peaceful and harmonious living and shun any disruption.

INDONESIA

In 1478, a large number of Hindus escaped from Java to Bali rather than convert to Islam. Today, the Hindus of Indonesia are concentrated on the island of Bali. However, the Hindu-Buddhist tradition has permeated the entire archipelago and provides the foundation for much of Indonesian tradition, values and world view. The national emblem is the garuda, a mythical bird, that comes from the mount of Vishnu, who is a Hindu god. The Indonesian motto, Unity in Diversity, is taken from an Indian Sanskrit verse. The stories told in the classical dances and *wayang* dramas are based on ancient Hindu epics. The influence of the Hindu religion can be seen throughout Indonesia.

Arab Muslims began trading with Indonesia before the eigth century, but Islam did not truly take root in the islands until the 13th century. As the Arab traders became more powerful, they set up bases in India, spreading the Islamic religion in the process. Muslims from Arabia, Persia and India then established bases in Indonesia and introduced Islam there. Islam spread through the islands, relatively peacefully, along the trade routes.

The Indonesian people were ready for a change, and the Muslim faith held great appeal for them. The average Indonesian was not all that thrilled about being at the bottom of the hierarchy involved in Hinduism. Islam offered equality and preached the brotherhood of man. By 1600, 90 percent of the islanders were Muslim.

Islam did not completely replace either the existing animistic beliefs or the Hindu-Buddhist tradition. Rather, Islam was assimilated and absorbed by the operating religions. The Muslim missionaries adopted many practices and beliefs from the indigenous religions. This had the effect of diluting the austerity and fervor of orthodox Islam.

Indonesia has more Muslims than any other country in the world, but Indonesian Islam is not as militant or confining as the religion found in some Middle Eastern countries. Most women do not stay in their houses or cover themselves completely with veils. They are free to run businesses, to participate in government, and even to initiate divorce. They are not complete heretics, however: a husband is still considered to be superior to his wife and women are not always allowed in the mosques. Polygamy is allowed, but a man must get permission from his first wife before marrying again.

A wide variety of doctrines and degrees of the Islamic faith preside in Indonesia. The majority of the people are nominal Muslims, called *abangan*, with only a vague understanding of religious doctrine. However, zealous Muslims, known as *santra*, are part of an effort to bring Indonesian Islam into the orthodox fold. This movement began during the latter half of the 19th century, primarily as a result of the invention of the steamship and the com-

pletion of the Suez Canal. Greater numbers of Indonesians were now able to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, returning with stronger devotion and commitment. These days most pilgrims fly to Mecca on government-subsidized charters, returning to increased social status within their community. Other ways to increase prestige include praying five times a day, sending one's children to religious school and reciting knowledgeably from the Koran.

Islam is a practical, rather than theoretical, religion. It is a way of life, and it pervades Indonesian life, thinking and behavior. Five times each day, in most cities, chants are broadcast over loudspeakers, calling the faithful to prayer. People stop what they are doing to pray, facing in the direction of Mecca. On Fridays, the Islamic holy day, devout Muslims roll up their prayer rugs, purify themselves with ritual washing and go to the nearest mosque. Many businesses close early on Fridays so that people can go to the mosque. During the ninth month, Ramadan is observed. Nothing is eaten during daylight hours. Families eat before sunrise and again after sunset. In keeping with practicing Muslims everywhere, Indonesian Muslims do not drink alcohol or eat pork.

Unlike Muslims everywhere, Indonesian *abangan* practice an eclectic religion, which has been significantly influenced by traditional beliefs. They exhibit a high acceptance of outside concepts and influences. They are not terribly concerned with religious doctrine, stressing instead rituals and mysticism.

Rituals and ceremonies are held on occasions related to a person's life cycle or to village activities. They are seen as a way to preserve the harmony of the cosmic order and to prevent the spirits from causing harm, such as flooding or drought or volcanic eruptions. Religious practice involves offering sacrifices to the spirits of nature in an effort to keep peace. The goal is to achieve a state in which events unfold calmly and smoothly, with nothing unexpected or unwelcome occurring.

Magic and sorcery are also a component of *abangan* life. For example, when someone gets sick, the dukun, or folk doctor, writes Islamic prayers on pieces of paper. The papers are placed in a glass of water, which is drunk by the patient. The prayers thus enter the patient and start to fight the demon that is causing the illness.

Christianity is the most recent layer to be added to Indonesian religious life. In the early 16th century, Portuguese traders brought along Roman Catholic missionaries to the archipelago. The Portuguese wanted spices, so they based their operations in the Spice Islands, or Malukus. Today, most Indonesian Christians are concentrated in that area, although pockets of Christianity can be found throughout the islands. Less than 10 percent of the population is Christian, whether Catholic or Protestant. The Dutch colonists were

Protestant, but their religion did not make much of an impression on the Indonesians, despite three and a half centuries of colonial rule. They built churches, but only a few Indonesians converted. Christian missionaries ran schools, hospitals, and orphanages, but they were regarded with a certain amount of resentment by orthodox Muslims and by the people who remembered the colonial era. Christians were seen as being supported by the West and as being promoters of Western cultural values.

Like Hinduism and Islam, the Christianity practiced in Indonesia has been blended and intermingled with mysticism, animism and local beliefs. Christian converts continue to practice their old religious beliefs simultaneously. This syncretism has produced some interesting customs, such as bull sacrifices, Masses with gamelan music and a barefoot, midnight Easter procession.

Religion in Indonesia is extremely important in both personal and public ways. The Indonesians are masters at drawing from many sources, absorbing, adapting and creating something uniquely Indonesian. Their religion connects the Indonesian people with their ancestors and with history, with their present situation and with society, and with their future and, not least of all, with hope.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

THE SOCIAL CUSTOMS of Indonesia have been refined over thousands of years and filtered through many influences. The social and religious customs of the ancient communities slowly developed into a code of behavior known as *adat*, or customary law. *Adat* plays a very important role in family and community life. More often than not, the traditional customs of *adat* supersede any other law, even today. *Adat* has the weight and the wisdom of the centuries; even religion seems as though it is a newcomer in comparison.

For some Indonesians, adat is the basis for their identity. For example, among the Javanese, a child who does not yet understand the values of the group may be called *durung Jawa*—not yet Javanese. Similarly, a Balinese who converts from Hinduism to Christianity or Islam may be said to be no longer Balinese.

One of the most important goals of adat is cooperation. The ancient families built communal dwellings. They lived together, shared common work on common land, and took part in religious and ritual ceremonies as a unit. They worked hard and helped each other so everyone could benefit. This system of mutual cooperation to fulfill goals is known as *gotong royong*.

This culture of cooperation may have developed, in part, as a result of the irrigated method of growing rice. Wet-rice cultivation brings a much higher yield than the dry-rice method. An individual could never build an entire irrigation system just for his small plot. But with teamwork, fair play and tolerance, a group of neighbors could build one and keep it going.

Gotong royong is still very much alive today. If a family needs a new house, the neighbors will help build it. If a new road must be constructed, the government may give the local people the necessary materials and let them build it. People pull together and take care of each other. They work hard at getting along and letting everyone have his say. When major decisions and plans need to be made, the village elder allows everyone to deliberate until they can all come to an agreement. This process of deliberation is known as *musyawarah*.

Another important concept is the quest for harmony and balance in life. Most customs and rules of etiquette support this goal of a calm and unruffled life. People do all they can to maintain peace and avoid disturbances. Any disruption or loss of control—including spontaneity, exuberance or forthrightness—is avoided.

Respectful courtesy and tactful language are fundamental rules of behavior. Indonesians do not gesture wildly or talk loudly; they cope with stress by smiling and quietly withdrawing. Body movements are reserved and facial expressions are subtle. Everyone is very friendly, and they smile all the time; but people do not greet each other with hugging and kissing, just a handshake. Public displays of affection are taboo, and so is using the left hand for giving or for receiving. The left hand is seen as unclean.

Direct eye contact may be seen as a challenge, so people speak to superiors with downcast eyes and with head slightly bowed. Anyone who is older or superior in rank is treated with utmost respect. Every effort is made to please any father figure, like the boss. He is told whatever he wants to hear; true feelings or facts are pushed aside.

The head is the most esteemed part of the body. Indonesians show respect by keeping their heads lower than the head of the person whom they are honoring, and they never pat a child on the head. The head is believed to contain the life force and is, therefore, sacred. That is why headhunters used to hunt heads. An enemy's head brought power and good luck.

Indonesians may be very polite people, but they cannot be accused of being overly punctual. Most have a very relaxed attitude toward time. Ask an Indonesian what time it is, and chances are he will round it off to the nearest quarter, or even half, hour. A guest

might arrive one to three hours late and not cause any offense. In fact, even if he knows he cannot come to a party, an Indonesian will not refuse an invitation and risk upsetting a host.

The constitution guarantees that women receive equal rights with men in education and work opportunities, but this ideal has not been reached. The adat system is often quite restrictive in its rules concerning women, and these customs do not give way quickly.

Indonesians hold several folk beliefs. Many natural objects are thought to contain a life force called *semangat*. The semangat of mountains, lakes, and old trees are given particular respect. A human's *semangat* is found in the head, heart, blood, hair and nails. During a wedding, a few strands of the bride's and groom's hair are woven together to symbolize their union. A child's first haircut is a significant rite of passage. Hair and nail clippings must be disposed of carefully, for they can be used for sorcery. Even clothes and jewelry retain the soul of the previous owner and must be handled with care.

A *keris* is a traditional handcrafted, wavy-bladed dagger. This magical weapon also is said to possess the vital energy of *semangat*, which is given to it by its maker. A *keris* is believed to possess secret powers that increase each time it draws blood: it can talk, walk, fly, warn of danger and bring both good or bad luck. A *keris* is a sign of deep friendship and is a part of most wedding ceremonies. In fact, if a groom cannot be at his marriage ceremony, he can be represented by his *keris*.

Several superstitions involve animals. A snake is bad luck. If travelers see one, they may turn around and go home. If a cat crosses the path, however, it brings good luck. Some tribes will not go hunting until a bird flies in front of them from right to left.

Many people carry amulets or talismans to protect them from evil spirits and bad luck. Sometimes the amulets are papers with Arabic writing on them. Usually, the amulet is chosen by the traditional healer, or *dukun*, who knows which kind of amulet will be effective for a particular person. Indonesians of all different religions carry amulets and consult with a *dukun*.

Rituals celebrating various rites of passage are an integral part of Indonesian life. The parties families throw to celebrate these occasions are called *selamatan*. These community celebrations also are an indication of a person's wealth and status. Entertainment may include a gamelan orchestra or a wayang play, and a lot of special ceremonial food is always served.

When a mother-to-be is seven months pregnant, the event is celebrated with a ritual bath. In some places, the pregnant woman makes a spicy fruit salad for her guests. If the guests decide the salad

tastes sour, the baby will be a boy. If it is sweet, it will be a girl. Gifts are not given for an unborn child; this presumption is thought to invite misfortune.

Once it is born, a baby is carefully protected from both natural and supernatural forces. Tiny amulets are tied around its arms and it is given a daily dose of *jamu*, or herbal medicine. The birth of a baby is celebrated with a welcoming ceremony.

When boys reach age 11, a circumcision ceremony is held to mark their passage into manhood. Icy cold water was once the only anesthetic, but now modern medical procedures are employed. The boys are paraded triumphantly through town and treated as king for a day. Then, a huge party follows the ceremonial parade.

Weddings are even more extravagant. The bride and groom wear gorgeous traditional costumes. They sit on thrones and accept gifts of flowers, fruit and money as guests, file past to congratulate them. The wedding feasts may have hundreds or even thousands of guests.

Funerals can prove to be very expensive as well. A proper and prestigious ceremonial cremation can be a very elaborate affair and involve extensive preparation. Poor families sometimes bury their dead temporarily until enough money is saved for a cremation ceremony. Or they might wait until several deaths have occurred and they can pool their resources for a group cremation.

Funeral customs vary throughout Indonesia, but the dead are always honored with a proper funeral so that the soul can travel to the land of the ancestors. It is thought that after a person dies the spirit must be properly handled lest it wreak havoc in the living world. Some rituals are meant to confuse the spirit so that it cannot find its way home to bother the living relatives. In Bali, a procession of family, friends and musicians carries the body high on a wooden tower, which is jolted and jarred to disorient the spirit. In Sumatra, the body is taken from the house through a hole in the floor, which is then sealed up.

In Bali, cremations are joyful occasions, celebrating the release of the soul to be reincarnated. A happy atmosphere pervades amid the gamelan music, ceremonial dances and friendly gossip as the participants wait for the tower to be set on fire.

In Sulawesi, it can take months or even years to prepare for a funeral. The funeral can last for up to a week and put the family in debt for generations. A mini village of temporary houses is set up to accommodate the hundreds of guests, who gather from all over. During the ceremony much moaning and wailing can be heard, but much feasting and dancing occurs as well. The dead are buried in caves on high cliffs. In front of each cave is a platform, holding wooden figures carved to look like the dearly departed.

The dead are never forgotten in Indonesia. Graves are carefully tended because they are believed to contain the benevolent spirits of ancestors.

Indonesia's many different social customs serve to illustrate the principle of "Unity in Diversity." Although each community may follow its own unique adat, the various customs are similar in many ways. The concept of musyawarah has served the country well in the past and will no doubt continue to help Indonesians pull together.

THE PEOPLE

IF ONE WORD WERE CHOSEN above all others to describe Indonesia and its people, that word would have to be diverse. There is a very good reason that the national motto is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika,* meaning Unity in Diversity. This motto evokes a persistent theme in the history of the islands, a history filled with a multiplicity of both indigenous ethnic traditions and foreign influences.

For thousands of years, Indonesia has been a meeting ground of cultural forces. Ideas and philosophies from India, Arabia, China and the West were imported, adapted, assimilated and embraced; however, Indonesia was able to absorb outside influences without being absorbed by them. The *adat,* or customs, of the ancient people provided a foundation for the foreign influences, allowing them to shape society but not to consume it. This has resulted in an incredibly complex modern society, a mosaic of ethnic groups and their various values, traditions, religious beliefs, languages and lifestyles.

Indonesia has always been a heterogeneous society, made up of approximately 300 ethnic groups, most of which are of Malaysian stock. Some ethnic groups total in the hundreds of thousands, while others have only a small number. The people of Indonesia vary greatly in physical type. Indonesians can look completely different from each other. In some groups people are short, in others they are tall. Some have straight hair, others have kinky. In the west most Indonesians are light skinned; moving eastward from island to island, skin colors get darker and darker.

Indonesians can live completely different lifestyles as well. Few countries possess such an extraordinary collection of people and cultures. The dreaded (former) headhunters, whose primitive lifestyles have not changed much in thousands of years, are Indonesians. So are the sophisticated Javanese with their intricate rules of etiquette and refined social behavior. The tattooed tribesman, who hunts in the jungle with his bow and arrow, and his wife, who slowly paddles her canoe in search of fish for dinner, are Indonesians, as are the

computer scientist who works in the city and the classical dancer who performs in the palace. The Muslims, who are awakened each morning by the call to prayer, are Indonesian, and so is the young girl who arranges an offering of flowers for the Hindu gods before leaving for school. This potpourri of peoples, religions, languages and cultures intermingle, coexisting more or less peacefully.

Indonesia is nothing if not diverse, but the key word in the national motto is unity: Unity in Diversity. United in their quest for independence, many different groups came together to form one country. The government is still working toward uniting the many ethnic groups scattered throughout the islands; its ideal is to build a homogenous society. However, identification with an ethnic group is in no way considered to be incompatible with loyalty to the Indonesian nation. All Indonesians identify strongly with their own group and maintain their special language, culture and customs.

Certain forces draw all Indonesians together despite their differences. First of all, the diversity of the nation is not considered to be a liability. It is celebrated as an asset. Throughout the centuries, diversity has made Indonesia what it is today. Helping bring people together is the national language, Bahasa Indonesia. It is spoken throughout the country, in addition to the local languages. Another unifying factor is Pancasila, the five-point statement of national ideology, which teaches respect for differences. Of vital importance to the continued success of this unity is the attitude of tolerance and harmony, age-old concepts that run deep within the national consciousness. Indonesians have a saying, "Lain padang, lain belalang," which means "in another field, another butterfly." It is a lovely way for them to remind themselves that in every place there are different customs.

Even though the different groups may have different lifestyles, the Indonesian people share some common characteristics. They have a long history of interaction and cooperation. Almost all Indonesians are friendly and open, happy to start up conversations with complete strangers. Indonesians practice *gotong royong*, or mutual assistance, in their everyday lives. They help each other, and will go out of their way to help anyone in need or in trouble. Indonesian people feel what is best for the group is more important than what is best for an individual. Following the basic principle of *musyawarah*, or the process of deliberation, the group tries to make sure that everyone is content. Rather than settling for a majority vote, debate will continue until there is unanimous agreement. These practices and beliefs are also observed by government officials and have helped unify the nation in the face of multiple, and often conflicting, cultural traditions.

INDONESIA

Nearly 80 percent of Indonesians are rural inhabitants, following the traditional cultural values of the ethnic groups to which they belong. Indonesia is a nation of villages. The village is a closely knit social unit, linked by family ties and by sharing such tasks as irrigation and harvesting. Leadership is provided by an older, respected headman who is the mediator in local disputes and decides things such as the time when the planting season begins.

Many tribal villages are isolated from outside influences because of their remote location. They are self-governing and like to manage their own affairs without interference. The government has not attempted to break up this traditional way of life. It encourages rural communities to handle their own affairs. It provides the money needed to build and maintain roads, schools, and irrigation systems. The villagers are expected to contribute time and effort on various village projects.

Many rural poor leave their villages to seek better opportunities in the cities. Urban centers are becoming more and more congested as people flock to the cities in search of jobs and money. Urban society is segmented by ethnic identity. People of the same ethnic background group together in a *kampung*, a village-like quarter in the city. Each *kampung* follows its traditional ethnic customs and lifestyle as far as possible. The residents maintain their ethnic language, speaking Bahasa Indonesian with outsiders. As in rural villages, the members of the *kampung* choose a leader, but unlike rural areas, they must deal with crime, prostitution and drugs. Many kampung dwellers consider their dilapidated shacks only temporary quarters, even though they stay for many years. Most return to their villages once a year to celebrate the end of Ramadan.

Rather than furthering homogeneity, urban centers seem to heighten ethnic awareness. Ethnic identity is how most individuals define themselves and develop relationships.

The Javanese are the dominant ethnic group, making up more than half of the population. Because of this, many aspects of Javanese culture are associated with Indonesia in general. The Javanese culture is rich and complex, dating back more than a thousand years. In the past, Java was divided into many different kingdoms; two royal courts remain today. These palaces keep the dance, drama and music of the ancient Javanese culture alive. Javanese society is stratified in many ways. Peasants are differentiated from the aristocrats. Devout Muslims are distinct from nominal Muslims. Even those who have fine manners are distinguished from those whose manners are rough.

Etiquette is highly valued by the Javanese. An individual has fine manners if he is able to practice appropriate etiquette in every

interaction, including behavior toward others, eloquent speech, style of clothing, physical fitness and preoccupation with cultural heritage. The Javanese seek a calm and peaceful existence, avoiding confrontation and hiding any negative feelings. Careful attention is given to correct form, politeness and respect for elders and those of higher status.

The Javanese and Sundanese share many cultural similarities. Most Sundanese are wet-rice farmers, also growing vegetables and fruits. A Sundanese community is more religiously oriented than a Javanese one. The village headman is a devout Muslim, chosen for his knowledge of adat.

The Balinese are unusual in that they have been able to resist Islamic and Christian influences and maintain their ancient traditions and culture. As this might suggest, they are not as quick to adopt innovations or new ideas, and they keep to themselves more than most groups. The Balinese lifestyle is centered around religious ceremonies and oriented toward life hereafter. An individual is likely to belong to several organizations, including a temple, the village community, the irrigation system group and a community organization known as *seka*. Each *seka* performs special tasks for the community, usually for ceremonial purposes.

The Minangkabua live in western Sumatra. In their matriarchal society, women own everything; when they die, their daughters inherit the property. Traditionally, the men do not even live with their wives. After they are married, they stay with their mothers and just visit their wives. Perhaps not surprisingly, quite a few of the men migrate temporarily to the cities to earn extra money.

More than 200 different tribes live in the jungles of Kalimantan, all practicing different customs. The Dayak people mostly live in the interior along the rivers. They slash and burn the jungle to grow rice in dry fields. The village chief is held in such high esteem that he is not required to work beyond enforcing adat and making decisions. Long earlobes are considered to be an indication of great beauty, but people do not stretch their lobes by weighing them down with heavy earrings as much as in the past.

The Amonese live on the Maluku Islands. Their staple diet consists of cassava and sago, which grow wild. They also fish and hunt for food, but they only catch enough to eat for that day. Many Amonese see life as being too precious to waste on work; the focus of their lives is to gather together and talk to each other. Materialism and capitalism are totally foreign to their way of living.

The Toraja people can be found in the highlands of Sulawesi. Once feared as headhunters, the Toraja are now passive rice farmers, living in boat-shaped houses that rest on stilts among the rice fields. The land is owned communally by the village, and the headman is

chosen based on his merits. Most villagers profess to be Muslims, but the doctrines are only followed if they do not come into conflict with adat and traditional religious customs, such as ancestor worship. After a burial ceremony, the body is exhumed and taken to a hilltop or to a cliffside cave near the village.

Timorese families on the Lesser Sunda Islands live in single-family dwellings in communities made up of the extended family. Unlike most Indonesians, the Timorese do not practice gotong royong. The soil is poor and living conditions are harsh; each family works alone in its struggle to survive. Newcomers are often suspected of being criminals or outcasts from another village. Officially, the people of Timor are Christian, but they still follow many ancient religious practices and beliefs.

In the inhospitable interior of Irian Jaya, there are tribes that are largely unknown to the outside world. These tribal people are the most different of all the different Indonesian ethnic groups. The dietary staple is sago, and each family has exclusive rights to a certain area of sago trees. Village and even family ties are not particularly binding. Often life is dominated by outsiders, such as missionaries or government officials.

Several Indonesian ethnic minorities have never been fully assimilated under the wide umbrella of Indonesian society. Among these groups, perceived as having a separate nonnative cultural identity, are the Chinese, Arabs and Indians. The largest of these minority groups is the Chinese. They live in the towns and cities as shopkeepers and traders, keeping to their own areas and observing traditional Chinese customs. Because they are more prosperous than many Indonesians, the ethnic Chinese have been subject to political resentment and riots.

Indonesia has a great many rich natural resources, but the most valuable of all are the human resources. The unity in diversity of all Indonesians is an asset of great worth.

PANCASILA IS THE OFFICIAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF INDONESIA. IT CONTAINS FIVE PRINCIPLES.

1. Belief in the Supreme God. Most Indonesians are Muslim, but the Pancasila guarantees freedom of religion for all.

2. Just and civilized humanity. Oppression of any human being will not be tolerated.

3. The unity of Indonesia. No group, tribe, ancestry or skin color is superior to any other.

4. Representative democracy. Pancasila democracy arises out of musyawarah, deliberation to arrive at consensus.

5. Social justice for all the people of Indonesia. Protection is given to those who are weaker by those who are stronger. The country's resources are to be used to further the greatest possible good for all the people.

WEATHER

BECAUSE INDONESIA straddles the equator, it has a tropical climate. The weather is virtually the same year-round. It is either hot and humid or very hot and very humid.

Indonesia has two seasons: wet and dry. But these terms are relative. The word "wet" really does not do justice to how truly drenched it can become. Likewise, the word "dry" can only be considered dry if you compare it to the Indonesian wet. The differences between the two seasons are not extreme. In many parts of Indonesia, it probably would be difficult to distinguish between the wet and dry seasons.

Generally, the dry season lasts from June to September, and the wet season takes up the rest of the year. The seasons are brought in by the two monsoon winds: East and West. The East Monsoon blows in toward the equator from the south and brings relatively dry air from Australia. The West Monsoon blows in from the north across a great expanse of ocean and brings a lot of rain. Why are these winds called East and West when they come from the south and the north? Primarily, because the winds that hit the equator are deflected by the rotation of the earth, which causes them to turn in a different direction.

Indonesia is a country of islands, which are surrounded by a lot of water. All this water evaporates quickly in the hot equatorial sun, turning into huge clouds that blow over the islands, hang over the mountains and let loose with the rain. Most islands get between 120 and 240 inches of rain a year.

Rain is an unavoidable subject when discussing the weather in Indonesia. The rainfall is abundant, even in the dry season—often more than some countries get in their wet season. During the rainy season, it does not just rain, it pours—almost nonstop. It rains so completely that it gives the sensation of standing underan enormous

waterfall. Some rainy days, people do not even try to leave their houses. In the cities, the streets turn into rivers. The countryside turns into a giant swamp.

All this rain makes it very humid. The average humidity level is 75 to 85 percent, but many days it rises to 100 percent. The air is constantly damp, always leaving the skin with a sticky feel. Many people take several showers a day.

Indonesia's position on the equator keeps temperatures fairly constant throughout the year. In many places, the average temperature for the warmest month and for the coolest month are only three degrees different. Temperatures change with the altitude rather than with the season. On the coast, sea breezes keep the temperature averaging around 80°F. As you go into the highlands, the temperature drops to about 70°F. At night in the mountains, it can grow bitterly cold. Mountains right on the equator keep a snow cover year round.

Days and nights in Indonesia are very nearly the same length, once again, because of the equator. Only a 48-minute difference lies between the longest and the shortest day of the year. The sun comes up at around 6 a.m. and goes down at around 6 p.m. Dawn and twilight do not linger, either. When the sun comes up, it rises quickly. When the sun goes down, it dives into the horizon, and it is night.

The islands of Indonesia are spread out over a huge area, so it should not be surprising that there are variations in the weather among the different islands. Most islands receive a lot of rain, but a few islands are dry. Rainfall depends on the location of the island in relation to the winds and also on the altitude of its mountains.

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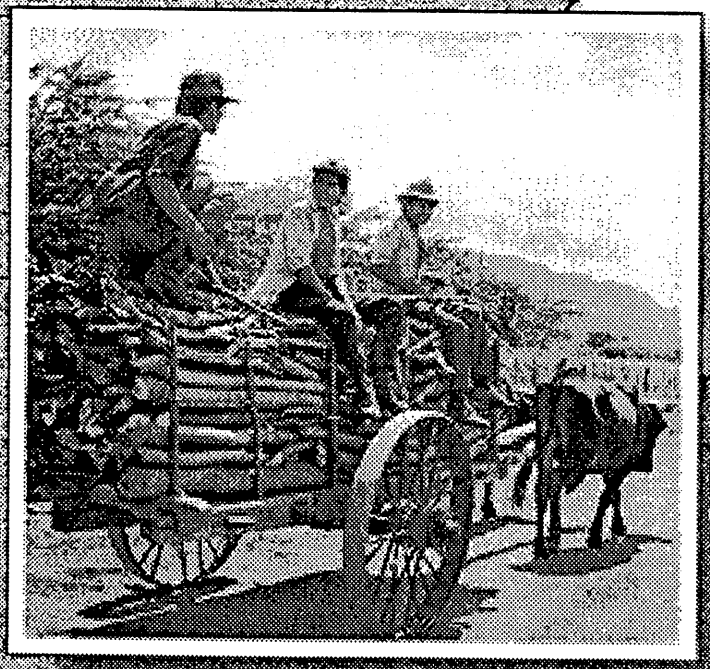
INDONESIA

NICARAGUA



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GLOSSARY

Artesanías— handicrafts

Barrio— neighborhood

Brigadistas— "brigade members," young volunteers for government-sponsored literacy and health programs

Campesinos— people of the countryside

Contras— counter-revolutionaries, from the Spanish contra-revolucionarios

Córdoba— unit of Nicaraguan currency, named for the early explorer

Costeños— residents of the Atlantic coast region

Creoles— English-speaking, predominantly black population of the Atlantic coast region

Criollos— people of Spanish ancestry who were born in the colonies

Curandero— traditional healer

Fiestas patronales— patron-saint festivals

Finca— ranch

Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional— (FSLN) Sandinista National Liberation Front, also known as the Sandinistas

Gallo pinto— "spotted rooster," a typical dish made with beans and rice

Haciendas— large estates where mestizo slaves were forced to work under Spanish rule

Invierno— "winter," the rainy season

Ladino— person of mixed descent who speaks Spanish; sometimes termed mestizo

Lago— lake

Machismo— societal viewpoint in which men come first and women are in the background

Mestizo— person of mixed Indian and Spanish descent

Río— river

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Tiempo muerto— "dead season" between harvests when there is no work for farm laborers

Tierra caliente— "hot land," the hot and humid land at sea level

Tierra fria— "cold land" in the mountains

Tierra templada— "temperate land" at an altitude of about 2,000 to 6,000 feet

Verano— "summer," the dry season

Zambo— person of mixed Indian and black ancestry

THE LAND

NICARAGUA IS THE LARGEST country in Central America, but that is not saying it is a large country. With about 57,000 square miles of territory, it is about the size of Wisconsin. Even though it has the largest area, it has the smallest population of all the Central American countries.

In terms of location, Nicaragua is right in the center of Central America, an isthmus that connects the southern part of North America to the northern part of South America. To Nicaragua's west is the Pacific Ocean. To the east is the Atlantic Ocean (or to be more precise, the Caribbean Sea). To the north is a rugged mountain border with the country of Honduras. To the south, the border with Costa Rica is low and swampy.

Nicaragua contains a tremendous diversity of climate, vegetation and terrain, which can be divided into three distinct geographical regions: the Pacific Lowlands, the Central Highlands and the Caribbean Lowlands.

THE PACIFIC LOWLANDS

THE PACIFIC COASTAL region is a broad, rolling plain. Most Nicaraguans live on this strip of lowlands that is only about 40 miles wide—three quarters of the country's population live on one quarter of the country's land. They do not choose to live here because of the climate; it is always either hot and wet, or hot and dry. They live here because the land is highly fertile. The volcanoes that dot the landscape enrich the soil with volcanic ash. The fertile soil, the hot climate, and the rainy and dry seasons combine to make this the most cultivated and productive agricultural area in the country. The bulk of what Nicaraguans produce from the land comes from this area, particularly corn, rice, beans, vegetables, cattle, and dairy products.

Nicaragua's major cities and towns are in this part of the country, including the capital, Managua. Managua is the chief commercial center of Nicaragua and by far the largest city—over a quarter of Nicaragua's people live in Managua and more are migrating all the time from the countryside. It sits on the southern shore of Lake Managua and also, unfortunately, on a number of geological faults. The city has been destroyed several times by earthquakes.

The Pacific Lowlands surround Nicaragua's two huge and unusual lakes. Scientists speculate that both Lake Managua and Lake

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Nicaragua were originally part of a large Pacific bay. They were cut off from the ocean by the lava flows created by volcanic eruptions and the uplift of the earth's crust caused by earthquakes. One of the arguments supporting this hypothesis is the presence of many kinds of saltwater fish that have adapted to life in a freshwater lake. Theoretically, as the salt water of the lakes slowly changed character over the years and became fresh, the marine life trapped in the new lakes adapted to living in it. This is the only place in the world where you can find sharks, tarpon, swordfish and other typically saltwater creatures living in fresh water.

Lake Managua is big: 38 miles long and 15 miles wide. Eight rivers flow into it, but only one, *Rio* Tipitapa, flows out. *Rio* Tipitapa drains Lake Managua into Lake Nicaragua.

Lake Nicaragua is much bigger: 100 miles longs and 47 miles wide. It is the largest body of water between Canada and Lake Titicaca. Lake Nicaragua is so large it has its own little archipelago of over 300 islands. These small islands, known as *Las Isletas,* were formed by volcanic activity. Most are covered with luxuriant vegetation, and some are inhabited by families who make their living fishing and growing mangoes.

The largest island in the lake, the Isla de Ometepe, was formed when lava flowed between its twin volcanoes. The larger volcano, Conceptión, is still active; it erupted most recently in 1983. Ometepe's soil is very fertile, and the plant life is green and lush. There are forests filled with wildlife, most notably monkeys and birds. People live there too, fishing and growing crops. But they built their villages right along the edge of the shoreline, as if to get as far away from the volcanoes as possible.

Forty-five rivers flow into Lake Nicaragua, and only one, *Rio* San Juan, flows out. *Rio* San Juan forms the boundary between Nicaragua and Costa Rica as it flows east toward the Caribbean Sea. It is full of turtles and alligators, and its banks are home to many kinds of monkeys and birds. The San Juan is broad and navigable and has played an important role in the history of the country. During the 17th century, British and French pirates used to sail up *Rio* San Juan and raid the city of Granada on the northwestern shore of Lake Nicaragua. The river made Nicaragua a strong contender in the search for a canal joining the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. It is possible to travel by ship from the Atlantic Ocean, up the *Rio* San Juan, and across lake Nicaragua. From there, it is just 12 miles to the Pacific Ocean.

THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

A **TRIANGULAR WEDGE** known as the Central Highlands lies northeast of the lakes, dividing Western Nicaragua from the East. This region is composed of rugged mountains, which average about 3,000 to 6,000 feet.

Nicaragua contains the only sizable break in the extensive mountain system that runs along the Pacific coast from Alaska to the southern tip of South America. In Northwest Nicaragua this mountain chain takes a sharp turn to the east and disappears into the Caribbean Sea, reappearing now and again to form the Caribbean islands. The continental mountain chain resumes its march to the south in Costa Rica. This break in the mountains was another compelling reason for building a canal across Nicaragua to connect the two oceans.

The Central Highlands region is cooler than the Pacific Lowlands. It rains more, too—between 70 and 100 inches a year.

The western slopes are drier, protected by the ridges of the highlands from the moist trade winds of the Caribbean. The rolling terrain is mostly covered by scrub brush and a mixed forest of oak and pine. The mountains are less fertile than the Pacific Lowlands and not as heavily populated. Between the ridge lines, small farms and towns dot the valleys. People raise what they need to live.

The eastern slopes are wet and humid. Any leftover rain from the clouds gets dumped here. These mountains are mostly covered with a dense rain forest. The high ridges alternate with deep valleys that drain toward the Caribbean Sea. The streams are often laden with silt, consequently the soil is leached and infertile. This side of the highlands is sparsely populated with hardy farming pioneers and small communities of Indians. This region is where the mining district known as Nueva Segovia is located. People have been willing to put up with the rough life and humid climate in order to mine silver and gold.

The vast, lightly populated Central Highlands provided a hideout for both the Sandinistas and the contras that followed them. This was the scene of many skirmishes and much destruction during the wars. The highlands divide the country, east from west, ethnically, linguistically, in religion, politics, economics and more.

THE CARIBBEAN LOWLANDS

THE CARIBBEAN Lowlands region has many descriptive names: the Miskito coast (named for a local tribe of Indians), the Mosquito coast (named for the prevalent insect),

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La Mosquitia, the Atlantic coast and the Caribbean coast. This region occupies a little over half of Nicaragua's area. It is part of the larger Mosquitia region that extends well into Honduras.

The Caribbean Lowlands include a long, wide coastal plain, the eastern spurs of the Central Highlands and the San Juan River basin. The coastal plains, nearly 100 miles wide in the north, are a vast, flat savanna with scattered stands of pine. The interior is covered with a tropical rain forest that is so thick it is practically impenetrable. Huge trees provide a leafy canopy sheltering an abundance of exotic wildlife. Rain forests also grow along the many rivers.

Near the coast, there are inhospitable swamps, mangrove islands and forests of coconut palms. The shore itself is a complex of shallow bays, large lagoons, deltas and salt marshes. There are a few small islands off the Caribbean coast; some were once a haven for pirates. The best known are the Islas del Maiz, or Corn Islands. Typical idyllic Caribbean islands, they are surrounded by coral reefs, clear turquoise water and white sandy beaches fringed with coconut palms.

The lowlands soil is composed of gravel and sandy clay; it is thin, eroded and unproductive. The only fertile soil is found beside the many rivers and streams that cross the plain from the mountains to the sea. The Rio Coco, Nicaragua's longest river, forms the border between Nicaragua and Honduras in the north. The Rio San Juan, flowing from Lake Nicaragua, forms the border with Costa Rica in the south.

As hot and humid as the rest of Nicaragua is, it is dry compared to the Caribbean Lowlands. This is the wettest area of all of Central America. Annual rainfall averages 150 inches and can be as high as 250 inches. Even during the short dry season it can rain at any time.

The Caribbean Lowlands region is very sparsely populated. It is a rather inhospitable and unhealthful place, with all the swamps and rain. The soil is not fertile, for the most part, and crops frequently get washed away when the rivers overflow their banks. Unless you can go by boat, it is not easy to travel—many roads can only be used during the short, dry-weather season.

For the most part, the inhabitants are Creoles, descendants of black slaves brought from other parts of the Caribbean by the British and Indian tribes, principally the Miskito Indians. La Mosquitia was never colonized by Spain. It was a British protectorate for over a century; Miskito kings were crowned in the Protestant church. The region was signed over to Nicaragua in 1860, but it has retained its autonomy and independence to a great extent. The English language and Protestant religion also serve to keep this part of the country distinct.

There is what is called a "circle of fire" that extends from the Aleutian islands in the Northern Pacific all the way around through

Japan and New Zealand. This circle, a chain of active volcanoes and fault lines, passes through the Americas directly beneath Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua, geology is imminent. Nicaragua is said to be the most seismically active spot on earth. Its location on a geological rift makes it an area of intense volcanic activity. There are eight active volcanoes in Nicaragua; some of them actually smolder. The mountain range that stretches from the Gulf of Fonseca to Lake Nicaragua is really a chain of more than 20 volcanoes. Thus, it receives more attention than a regular mountain range. Every once in a while, one of the volcanoes explodes, violently spewing hot lava from the depths of the earth and sending clouds of ash high into the atmosphere. The volcanoes are likely to erupt again at any moment.

One wonders why an area so terrorized by volcanic eruptions would be so densely populated. It is because the scattering of volcanic ash has made the land here extremely fertile. The land is so rich, even though it is potentially dangerous, living here is worth it.

The geological rift that is responsible for the volcanoes can also be blamed for the frequent earthquakes below the ground that have been very destructive to Nicaragua over the years. Along the rift the earth's surface is fragile and shifting.

Hundreds of shocks occur each year, some of which cause severe damage. The capital city of Managua is not built on solid rock; it is built on old volcanic rock that has been pressed together. Thus, Managua is especially prone to earthquake damage. The city was virtually leveled in 1931 by an earthquake, but was rebuilt. In 1972, Managua was directly on the epicenter of an earthquake that occurred nine miles below the surface. The shaking toppled buildings, disconnected water lines, started fires and killed thousands of people. After the earthquake of 1972, the city center was not rebuilt. Instead, it sort of reorganized along the city's outskirts.

Earthquakes occur very frequently in Nicaragua. Even when the ground is still, tremors flutter through layers of rocks below. A quake may be a mild trembling, detectable only on a seismograph. It may only be noticed by people in the upper story of a house. Or it may be a violent upheaval of the earth. The turmoil underground is very unsettling. Sometimes it seems to mirror the turmoil of the people who live above it.

ANIMALS

NICARAGUA IS SITUATED right in the middle of Central America, and this unique location has made its inventory of wildlife exceptionally rich and varied. Animals typical of

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North America can be found there, as can some from South America, as well as all the customary Central American creatures. There are thousands of species of mammals, insects, reptiles, amphibians, fishes and birds.

There are deer, coyote and rattlesnakes, just like in North America, and there are a lot of cows, but there are also exotic tropical animals. The rain forests in the East are teeming with wildlife. Mammals include monkeys of many types, sloths, anteaters, armadillos, capybaras, tapirs, wild boars, jaguars, pumas, ocelots and other cats. Crocodiles lurk in lowland waters. Swamps abound with turtles and frogs. There are many species of snakes and lizards. Long boa constrictors wait concealed in the murky water for their prey. Of course, there are a few poisonous serpents, notably, the tiny coral snake, the large fer-de-lance and the infamous pit viper.

The oceans are full of fish and other sea creatures, as are the lakes and rivers. Sharks, swordfish, sawfish and other fish normally only found in salt water live in Lake Nicaragua, the only place in the world where this occurs.

Bird life is extraordinarily diverse. Winged visitors migrate south for the winter from North America and migrate north from South America. Chickadees, swallows, wrens, thrushes, blackbirds and jays noisily compete for territory with brilliantly colored parrots, toucans and macaws. Practically all the different categories of birds can be found here. Birds of prey such as the hawk, falcon and osprey sail the skies, hunting for rodents. Scavengers such as the buzzard are common throughout the country, and they do their job well. Wading birds, like the heron and ibis, search for good things to eat beside the shore, along with other water birds like gulls, terns and pelicans. Ducks and quail reside in the country. As far as birds are concerned, Nicaragua is an ideal place to spend the winter or even settle down and raise a family.

The quetzal is a small, lovely bird with a scarlet breast and a very long emerald green tail. It was the holy bird of the Maya Indians. It is very rare now, perhaps even extinct. It lives, or used to live, in the high forests. It can only survive in the wild; a quetzal will die in captivity. The quetzal became endangered because the forests are endangered. Other forest animals face extinction as the rain forests are destroyed.

DAILY LIFE

IN THE CAPITAL CITY of Managua, government officials bustle and business people hustle. But in the rest of Nicaragua, life moves at a slower pace. Even the smaller cities have a relaxed atmosphere.

The Nicaraguan lifestyle is typically Latin American. People eat a hearty lunch of rice and beans and maybe some chicken or meat, and then they take a siesta before once again beginning the day's work. Throughout Nicaragua, in deference to the tropical climate, almost everyone dresses casually most of the time in light, cool, cotton clothing. Neckties in that climate are rightly seen as inhumane.

For the people of rural Nicaragua, the *campesinos*, life is hard—a hand-to-mouth struggle to survive. It always has been. Most people work as farm laborers or are subsistence farmers, raising beans, corn and rice.

Children sometimes go to school, usually only for a few years and only during the rainy season, when they can be spared from their work in the fields. When they have any free time, they like to play games or, perhaps, ride the family burro. For a treat, they sometimes hack off a piece of sugarcane with a machete and suck it for the juice.

Rural life is simple. There is not much in the way of entertainment, and work routines are often monotonous. The campesinos' faces are wary and resigned; they have learned they must be able to adapt to any changes, and they expect nothing in return. But they keep working and hoping the next round of changes will be for the better.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION FOR THE MASSES did not seem to be a priority for the Somoza regime. In 1979, when the Somoza era ended, over half the population was illiterate. The literacy rate in some rural areas was less than 25 percent. In many villages women could not read at all. Most village children either never learned to read or did not retain what little reading and writing skills they had learned. Although nearly 40 percent of the children countrywide had enrolled at some point, most never completed the six years of primary school. The statistics for 1964 show the average level of education for urban children was two and one-half grades, and for rural children, just over one and one-half grades.

Poverty stood in the way. Tuition was free, but parents had to pay for books and supplies. Even that expense was too much of a burden for many families. In addition, if a child went to school, that meant he could not work in the fields, another hardship for the family. Parents wanted their children to learn to read, write and understand arithmetic, but sometimes they could not see how it could be relevant to the practical skills they would need as rural farm workers. The dropout rate in rural areas was nearly 80 percent. Some villages did not have schools at all, and those that did generally had only one or two grades.

Malnutrition played a part in the lack of education. Children did not get enough to eat, either in quantity or quality. Food deficiencies in early childhood hindered physical and mental development. It was hard for children to concentrate. They did not have the energy or enthusiasm to do well in school.

Education was a priority for the Sandinistas. Shortly after the revolution, 1980 was declared the Year of Literacy. The entire country was caught up in a highly publicized literacy campaign with the goal of bringing functional literacy to the population. Nearly 60,000 teachers, most of them teenagers, were enlisted to go to the countryside, live with the campesinos, work with them in the fields by day, and teach the basics of reading and writing in the evenings. These young volunteers were called *brigadistas*, and the campaign had a distinctly revolutionary approach, with illiteracy as the enemy. The textbook was unapologetically political and the brigadistas' role included raising the political consciousness of their students. In the cities, the brigadistas were professionals, factory and government workers, and housewives, who went to their regular jobs during the day but taught in the *barrios* after work. At the end of the five-month campaign, the literacy rate was officially raised from 48 percent to 87 percent.

The campaign for literacy did not end there. It was adapted for the people of the Atlantic coast who did not speak Spanish, particularly the Miskito Indians and the English-speaking Creoles. Classes continued to be held throughout Nicaragua to improve the skills of those who had learned the basics. Education was to be free and open to everyone, and many new schools were built.

Many of the Sandinista leaders were well-educated, and they realized the importance of education to their nation. The Catholic church was at the forefront of the literacy campaign, which was organized under the direction of a priest. As part of the effort to create a new society, students were taught to be good socialists and scorn imperialism. It was an ambitious plan. It helped push Nicaragua in the direction of education.

Now, all children must attend six years of primary school, although this is not strictly enforced. About half the students go on to high school, up from about 10 percent. Many children still drop out and many still underperform because they are hungry. Many parents still must sacrifice to find the money for books, and they could still really use their children's help in the fields. School is in session from May through September, during *invierno*, the rainy season. During *verano*, the dry season, rural children are able to help their families with farm work because school is not in session.

Perhaps, with an education, these children can help pull their families out of crushing poverty and build a better life.

FAMILY

IN NICARAGUA the family is the basic unit of society. It is the most important thing in the lives of most Nicaraguans, who seek few friends outside of the family circle. Family friends are often called *tío* or *tía* (uncle or aunt) by the children to show how close the family feels to them, even though they are not actually relatives.

Families are very close. Children usually live at home until they get married. The average Nicaraguan girl gets married at age 14. The average boy waits until he is 15. When a son gets married, he often brings his wife home with him. The family builds a house or hut for him and his wife on the family land, if there is any, or they build onto the same house, so there is a place for everyone.

This large extended family includes aunt and uncles, cousins and grandparents, who are especially respected and loved. Everyone is involved in raising all the children, and the kids always have someone with whom to play. The average family has six children. The infant mortality rate is high, so people feel they need to have large families to survive. Often the family provides the only social and psychological support system.

The father is the head of the family. In Nicaragua, women have long been considered second-class citizens. *Machismo* is alive and thriving. Most women stay home to cook, clean and care for the children. They have few rights or economic opportunities. There have been some changes in the past few years, and women are playing an increasingly important role, especially in government.

Traditionally, Nicaraguans tend to stay in the same towns where their families have lived for generations. Many families, both rich and poor, have lived in the same area for three or four hundred years. It is not unusual for there to be hundreds of people in town with the same family name. Family is very important; people do not like to

move too far from their relatives. Recent social and political events are beginning to change this tradition. More and more, people are leaving the farms and small towns and moving to the cities to seek an education, more job opportunities, a better life. But it is difficult for many to adjust to life in the city so far away from the support and loyalty of the family.

Nicaraguan names can be confusing to people who are not from Central America. Men put their mother's family name at the end of their names. The U.S. press referred to the former Sandinista president as Daniel Ortega, and today in Nicaragua he is known as Señor Ortega, but his full name is Daniel Ortega Saavedra. Daniel is his first name, Ortega is his father's family name, and Saavedra was his mother's last name before she married. Women organize their names differently. When a woman marries, she drops her mother's name and adds her husband's father's name with the word "de" in front of it. If a girl named Luisa Pérez Gómez married a man named Carlos Aguirre González, she would change her name to Luisa Pérez de Aguirre.

FOOD

FOR THE MOST PART, Nicaraguans share a common diet, one that has not changed much in generations. The food of Nicaragua is similar to the type of food eaten throughout Central America.

Corn is probably the most important staple food in Nicaragua, as it has been for hundreds of years. Corn is an ingredient in many typical dishes and is served at most meals in some form or another. Cornmeal is wrapped as a dough around meat or cheese to make *tamales*. It is baked into thin round cakes called *tortillas* and eaten like bread at every meal. Tortillas are also used as a sort of container to hold different meat and bean dishes.

Beyond corn, the most significant staples are beans and rice. *Gallo pinto*, literally "spotted rooster," is a very common dish that blends rice and beans; the cooking water from the beans is used to color the rice. Beans are a necessary ingredient in the Nicaraguan diet in that they provide protein.

Most Nicaraguans do not eat much meat. It is not that there is a scarcity of cattle; the herds keep expanding. But most beef that is produced is for export. Poor people cannot afford it. Beef, pork and chicken are usually eaten in small amounts in a stew or in tamales.

One typical dish is *nacatamales*, a mixture of tomatoes, chiles and, perhaps, rice, potatoes or pork in a cornmeal dough, all rolled in a corn husk or large leaf and steamed. On weekends, many

households put out a sign advertising homemade nacatamales within. Other popular dishes include *rosquillas,* made with corn and cheese, and *baho,* a tomato and beef stew.

One of Nicaragua's major crops is coffee, and coffee seems to be the national beverage. It is drunk with milk at breakfast, but at all other times it is taken black and very sweet. Soft drinks, such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi, are found everywhere in Nicaragua, and there are many fresh fruit drinks too, made from a variety of exotic tropical fruits. A cold chocolate beverage is made of ground cacao and corn, often served in wooden gourds. Corn is used to make a powerfully stimulating alcoholic drink called *chicha*. Nicaragua also produces several beers and a very sweet, strong rum called *Flor de Caña* (flower of the cane).

A typical meal in Nicaragua consists of eggs or meat, rice and beans, a small salad of cabbage and tomatoes, and a cold drink. Most people like to add a fiery *salsa de chile* (chile sauce) or *salsa de cebolla* (onion sauce) or a dollop of cream. To say this menu is typical is to not quite state it strongly enough. Not only is it typical, quite often it is all there is—for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Not much else is available in many cases.

A lack of variety and malnutrition often go hand in hand, and that is the case in Nicaragua. Malnutrition is a big problem in Nicaragua. Not only is there not enough variety of good things to eat, there often is simply not enough to eat.

HEALTH

IN SURVEYS that compare living standards in Latin America, Nicaragua has always ranked at or near the bottom, often tied with Haiti for last place. Life expectancy is low and child mortality is high. In the 1980s things improved somewhat—women had a life expectancy of 57 and men 54. Yet, over half of those who died each year were still children under five years of age. Thousands of young men died in the revolution, which also brought the numbers down on the life expectancy charts.

The principal causes of death in Nicaragua have always been preventable diseases such as diarrhea, tuberculosis and tetanus. Infectious diseases, malaria, and parasites are all too common. Most campesinos do not have access to safe water or sanitation systems; this is the cause of many illnesses and deaths.

The standard of living is higher in the city than in the country for a number of reasons. Unlike the country, there is generally potable water and at least rudimentary sanitation in the cities. There is very

little in the way of health care in the countryside. Hospitals, clinics, health programs and other medical services are concentrated in the urban centers. Rugged travel conditions make some rural regions virtually inaccessible, and doctors and nurses prefer to practice in the cities. (In fact, some of them decide to leave Nicaragua altogether.) And the people in the country are, for the most part, uneducated, with only a year or two of schooling. They do not know how to stay healthy, and they do not trust modern medicine.

When campesinos get sick, they are likely to seek advice from a *curandero*, or curer, rather than travel to a clinic, which is usually a considerable distance away and expensive, as well. Curanderos use medicines from drug stores as well as herbs and special secret remedies. Some curanderos specialize—for example, in snake bites, broken bones or massage for pregnant women. Many of the beliefs, superstitions and folklore concerning health come from Indian traditions and customs. The campesinos trust these familiar traditional healers because they associate disease with natural things such as food or the weather, or perhaps a curse from the local witch or sorcerer. To some degree, chronic illness is simply accepted as an inevitable part of life.

Lack of health care is particularly serious for women and children. Many children are not immunized. Most rural women do not have access to prenatal or postnatal care. When a baby is born in a rural village, often an untrained midwife is the only person available to attend the birth. Unsanitary conditions and unsterile methods are likely reasons for the high death rate among newborns as well as maternal mortality.

Ignorance presents a huge roadblock to health, but even larger looms the problem of malnutrition. Most of the people of Nicaragua do not have enough to eat, either in quantity or quality. The campesinos get less than the minimum daily requirement of calories. Their consumption of protein is inadequate—most protein is provided by beans. Their diet is chronically deficient in vitamins and minerals; they do not eat many fruits or vegetables. People do not know about the relationship of food to nutrition; they just eat a traditional diet or, when times are bad, whatever they can.

Compounding this problem are parasites, diarrhea and some infectious diseases. These illnesses interfere with the digestive system and create the need for a higher than average caloric intake—a need which cannot be met. Little children especially suffer; more than 90 percent of diarrhea deaths occur in children under five. Over half of Nicaragua's children under five experience some degree of malnutrition.

Malnutrition has many causes. The large plantations growing coffee, cotton and sugar have reduced the amount of land that can be used for basic subsistence foods. Nicaragua must import food,

which means rising prices for even fundamental necessities such as beans, and wages do not keep up with costs. Foods often spoil before they can get to market because of inadequate transportation, ineffective distribution systems, mishandling and lack of refrigeration. Foods sold in the open-air markets are often exposed to filth, flies, rodents and unsanitary handling. This spoiled and contaminated food increases the risk of food-borne illness.

Not only does malnutrition cause illness and poor health, it also contributes substantially to low productivity. This cycle begins before birth. If a pregnant women is inadequately nourished, her children are likely to have low birth weights and show signs of physical and mental retardation. Continued food deficiencies leave children and adults with lethargy, apathy, low resistance to disease and reduced productivity.

One topic that has been widely ignored is family planning. The country is predominantly Roman Catholic. Another convention standing in the way has been the tradition of machismo, which promotes the production of a large number of children as a measure of masculinity. In addition, people want to have large families. Children can help pull the family away from poverty; they can make more than they cost, many people believe. When half of a mother's babies die, she needs to have twice as many.

Nicaragua has historically been the least densely populated country in Central America. There has always been a high birth rate, but the population did not grow because it was matched by a high death rate, especially among infants. Recent efforts to improve health have resulted in a dramatic rise in population. Everyone hopes that the birth rate will slow down automatically as health improves and fewer children die.

The Sandinistas were determined to do something to improve the nation's health. Just as they had attacked illiteracy, they developed a campaign to bring health to the people using health *brigadistas*. This brigade of health workers received basic training in water management, sanitation, health education, disease recognition, parasite control and malaria treatment. Local midwives were given better training. Health centers were built in the towns, and clinics were set up in the countryside. The brigadistas traveled through the countryside building clinics, digging latrines, giving vaccinations, draining swamps, and campaigning against the infestation of mosquitos. They persuaded those who needed additional care to visit a clinic. Women were encouraged to breastfeed their babies instead of giving them powdered milk, which frequently had to be mixed with contaminated water. They were taught how to give oral rehydration to their children when they suffered from diarrhea.

These efforts made a difference, but the battle for improved health is still being waged. Behind Nicaragua's critical health problems lies the massive, unyielding force of poverty. Inadequate medical facilities, poor sanitation, unsafe water, overcrowding, malnutrition: all are a result of poverty. The miserable standard of living makes people sick. Their poor diet makes them weak. But their passion for making things better makes them determined.

The people of Nicaragua are exhausted by years of war and deprivation. They are sick of suffering and death. They want to recover, to get back their strength, to live normal lives. They want their country to be healthy. They want to find health.

HISTORY

BEFORE THE SPANISH CAME, the area now known as Nicaragua was populated by several Indian tribes. Some were nomadic, others were farmers. The Nicarao Indians (from whom Nicaragua gets its name) were an agricultural people living in the Pacific Lowlands because of the fertile soil.

The conquistadors came to Nicaragua in 1522 during the height of the era of conquests. Setting out from the Spanish settlement in Panama, Gil González de Avila led the first expedition to Nicaragua. By Lake Nicaragua, he met with the Indian chief Nicarao. According to González, Nicarao consented to be baptized a Catholic and ordered his tribe to do likewise.

The next group of explorers came from the north. Hernán Cortes, the conqueror of Mexico, sent Pedro de Alvarado to claim the area. Meanwhile Francisco Hernández de Córdoba was sent from Panama to do the same thing. He and his army began founding cities and defeating and subjugating Indians, but even before the defeat was complete, the conquistadors began fighting among themselves over who would get to control the territory.

The governor of Panama determined that Córdoba had been disloyal and ordered his head to be chopped off. But this was the height of civility compared to the way in which the Spanish treated the Indians. Through warfare, disease and slavery, Nicaragua's original Indian population of about a million was reduced to just tens of thousands. The Indians put up a fierce resistance to their conquerors and many died in the battles, but much more disastrous was the effect of the diseases brought to the New World by the Spaniards. Influenza and measles decimated the indigenous population, which had never come in contact with them before. Hundreds of thousands of those who survived were enslaved; many were shipped south to work in the gold

and silver mines of Peru. About half of them died on the slave ships; those who arrived were worked to death in a matter of a few years.

The Spaniards had come to Nicaragua in the hope of finding gold (and to save souls, of course), and they did find a little. But it soon gave out, and the whole business of conquering the country turned into a real headache. Some Indians were unfriendly and did not want to be "saved". The mountains, jungles and swamps (to say nothing of the Miskito Indians) of the Atlantic coast were simply too hostile and impenetrable; they were never controlled by the Spanish.

When the gold ran out and there were no more people to take into slavery, Spain lost interest in Nicaragua. It became a poor colonial backwater of the great Spanish Empire, existing only for the benefit of the rich colonial landowners and merchants who lived there. The Spanish crown largely neglected Nicaragua, other than to appoint governors, and the colonists were allowed to pretty much live as they chose.

The Spanish established León as the capital of the colonial province. Everyone had expected that the wealthier city of Granada would be the future seat of government, and the more aristocratic Spaniards had settled there. Soldiers and those of the lower classes were sent to León. When León became the capital, the people of Granada had to accept their rule; the friction and rivalry that resulted have persisted for centuries.

The British, who were becoming a major power in the Caribbean and who noticed that the Spanish were not paying attention, began to set up bases along Nicaragua's Atlantic coast. They tried to stir up revolt by arming the Miskito Indians and encouraging them to raid Spanish settlements. British, French and Dutch pirates holed up in the protected bays of the Miskito coast. From there, the buccaneers prowled the Caribbean, smuggling and attacking trading ships. They also made forays up the San Juan River and across Lake Nicaragua, repeatedly plundering the city of Granada. The Spanish attempted to dislodge the British, but they were still there when the colonial government came to an end.

Three centuries of Spanish rule brought the Roman Catholic faith to Nicaragua (which took deep root among the inhabitants), and the Spanish language and culture (except among the people living along the Atlantic coast), but not much else. Nicaragua and its people benefited little from their ties to Spain. The Spanish colonists settled in the Pacific Lowlands on large haciendas, using Indians and imported black slaves to produce cattle and food for local use and cacao for export.

As the 18th century drew to a close, the Spanish Empire experienced political and economic decline. Sparks from the revolutions that were sweeping through the United States and France caught fire

in Latin America. The *criollos*, people of Spanish ancestry who had been born in the colonies, were used to running their own affairs with little interference from the mother country. When King Charles III of Spain began tightening administration of the colonies, restricting trade and raising taxes, the *criollos* resented it and began harboring thoughts of independence.

When Napoleon invaded Spain and deposed the Spanish king in 1808, the criollos saw the opportunity to gain power for themselves. In 1811, the town of Rivas declared its independence from Spain and set up its own criollo-led government. Royalist forces quickly regained control, but the revolt had started the ball rolling. Similar uprisings began breaking out throughout Nicaragua. Each time they were crushed, and each time the determination of the colonists to break free from Spain grew stronger.

Nicaragua gained its independence in stages. Independence from Spain finally came in 1821. With the Spaniards gone, the feud between León and Granada escalated. The Liberals of León advocated a union with Mexico; the Conservatives of Granada favored independence for Central America. Although Mexican control was established over most of the region, Granada continued to resist. Then, suddenly the Mexican Empire collapsed.

Independence from Mexico came in 1823. Though the two rival camps in León and Granada continued to fight for control, Nicaragua ultimately agreed to join with Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica to form the Federation of Central America. Divided internally, Nicaragua played a secondary role in the stormy history of the federation. The Conservatives wanted a strong central government and the Liberals wanted a weak one. There was a civil war because of this disagreement and then a revolt; finally, the union fell apart.

Independence from the Federation of Central America came in 1838. Nicaragua was the first nation to withdraw from the federation. From time to time, a few countries would reunite in feeble federations, but they never lasted long.

Finally, Nicaragua was completely independent, but freedom did not come easily. There were so many wars that, at one point, women outnumbered men by as much as five to one. Politics continued to be dominated by the struggle between the Liberals of León and the Conservatives of Granada. Presidents came and went. The government was very unstable, and bandits moved freely through the country.

Even more worrisome was the interest that foreign nations began showing in Nicaragua. Britain wanted to keep control over Nicaragua's Atlantic coast, and both Britain and the United States

wanted to build a canal. The U.S. dusted off the Monroe Doctrine and stuck it under the noses of the British, warning them that they would not tolerate any further colonization in Latin America. They both backed off and signed a treaty promising not to use force in order to build a canal.

Then, gold was discovered in California. Thousands of hopeful prospectors wanted to get there as quickly as possible. United States tycoon Cornelius Vanderbilt secured an agreement with Nicaragua, gaining control over the transit route through the country. On his Accessory Transit Company, passengers traveled by steamship across the Caribbean Sea, up the San Juan River, across Lake Nicaragua, then twelve miles by stagecoach to the Pacific, and on to California.

The growing interference of the United States in Nicaraguan affairs took a bizarre twist in the person of William Walker. Walker, a lawyer and doctor from Tennessee, fell in with a group of adventurers in California. Believing the United States should expand until it controlled all of Latin America, he led a small party to attack Mexico, where he declared himself president of Baja and the state of Sonora before he was ignominiously ejected.

In 1855, he learned about the civil war between the Conservatives and Liberals in Nicaragua, and somehow, the Liberals learned about him. The Liberals enlisted Walker's help, offering money and generous land grants if he would bring a force of Americans to their aid. Recruiting a band of 56 mercenaries from the taverns and boardinghouses of San Francisco, Walker sailed to Nicaragua, gathered a few more Liberal recruits, and marched on Granada, eventually taking it. The Liberals were finally in power, but they got more than they bargained for in Walker.

News of his victories spread, and he became an international figure. Within a year, he decided to take the reins of power himself. He proceeded to hold a presidential election, counting the votes in a manner that ensured his victory. The United States recognized his government almost immediately. Walker then declared English the official language, borrowed money from foreign banks, instituted slavery in order to gain favor with the Southern states of the U.S., and seized Vanderbilt's transportation company.

His ambition soon got the best of him. He adopted the slogan "five or none," for he had dreams of taking over the remaining Central American countries. The five countries had had enough of his interference, however. They raised up a multinational force supported by Vanderbilt, and Walker was finally forced to surrender. Before he fled to the United States, he set fire to the city of Granada, leaving behind a flag with the inscription *Aquí Fue Granada*—Here Was Granada. He possessed a real sense of the dramatic.

But he did not know when to quit. Six months later he sailed to Nicaragua's Atlantic coast, only to be arrested and returned again to the U.S. In his final attempt to conquer Central America, he landed on the coast of Honduras. He was captured by the British Navy, which handed him over to the Honduran government. Their firing squad put a permanent end to his adventures.

A period of reconstruction followed the National War, as the struggle against Walker is known. The Conservatives regained power and ruled for 40 years, with the presidency rotating among the heads of wealthy Granada families. In an attempt to extinguish the feud between Granada and León, the capital was transferred to Managua, which was chosen largely because it lay between the two cities. Some development and moderization took place during this period. American industries were encouraged to invest in Nicaragua. The plantation system was introduced and coffee production was greatly expanded. Britain finally signed a treaty handing over the Mosquito coast. The country's consuming dream during this time was one that the great canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans would be built in Nicaragua. The Conservatives provided Nicaragua with relative peace and stability, regularly naming presidents and quelling uprisings.

This era of tranquillity ended when Roberto Sacasa, a Conservative who was elected president in 1889, tried to give government positions to people from León, as well as people from Granada. In the revolt that followed, a Liberal leader, José Santos Zelaya, deposed Sacasa and became dictator. He was a tyrant who punished his enemies harshly, yet, during his 16 years in power, he also initiated many reforms and brought new prosperity. He built schools, roads and public buildings. He extended telegraph lines and railroads. He encouraged foreign trade and poured resources into public education.

But Zelaya's downfall came about because he was a nationalist. He apparently felt that Central America should settle its own affairs without instructions from Washington. When negotiations over the canal began to sour, the United States indicated it would like a new president to replace him. A revolt broke out, and to maintain order the U.S. landed Marines. Zelaya resigned and accepted exile.

The Marines stayed on intermittently through the next 20 years, and the United States controlled politics in Nicaragua, installing and ousting presidents at will. U.S. financial advisers managed the nation's fiscal policies, dividing revenues among the Nicaraguan government and foreign creditors. The Liberals were outraged by American intervention, and one patriot, Zeledón, led a revolt was doomed to failure. Nicaragua remained poor, underdeveloped and

thinly populated. Most of the people were subsistence farmers, totally uninvolved in the political process.

In 1925, when New York bankers had recovered their loans, President Coolidge decided that the Marines could be safely withdrawn. However, as soon as they left, the Liberals and Conservatives began clashing, and in 1927 the Marines returned. They made everyone stop fighting, restored the Conservative president, and promised they would withdraw after overseeing one last election. The Marines also began training a local National Guard, which the Nicaraguan president could use to keep peace (and that the United States could use as their watchdog) after they left.

However, the Marines encountered fierce resistance from a guerrilla army led by Augusto César Sandino. Enraged by U.S. domination, Sandino fought to restore the Liberals to power, believing they would ensure Nicaragua's independence. When the Liberals made peace, Sandino and his army of peasants were left to fight the occupation alone. He vowed to continue fighting until the last American soldier had left Nicaragua, and he did. The campesinos supported his resistance and he became their hero. He kept the Marines off balance, developing hit-and-run tactics and strategies of guerrilla warfare, resulting in a war that the Marines were unable to win, even with aerial bombing. They finally withdrew in 1933.

With the Marines gone, Sandino agreed to talk peace. Refusing offers of high office from the government, he began helping peasants set up cooperative farms. General Anastasio "Tacho" Somoza Garcia, head of the National Guard, saw Sandino as a political threat and decided that Nicaragua was not big enough for both of them. He invited Sandino to a dinner at the presidential palace, ostensibly to discuss the future of Nicaragua. As Sandino was on his way home after the dinner, Somoza's men assassinated him.

Somoza became president, ruling the country either directly or through puppet presidents for the next 28 years and initiating a 42-year family dictatorship.

Tacho Somoza had been educated in the United States; he understood how North Americans thought, and he could converse colloquially in English. These skills served him well. As a loyal ally of the United States and a strong guarantor of stability, he enjoyed unwavering support from successive U.S. administrations. He kept himself in power through his control of the National Guard, keeping them loyal to him by encouraging them to be as corrupt as he was himself.

Somoza used his power to amass huge personal wealth. He liked to say *"Nicaragua es mi finca,"* which means "Nicaragua is my ranch." It was almost literally true. He became Nicaragua's largest land owner, appropriating for himself and his family most of the country's prime

property and commercial interests. Nicaragua was virtually the personal possession of the Somozas and their friends.

Ordinary people saw little improvement in the condition of their lives under Somoza. He built a few hydroelectric plants and roads (critics claimed that all the roads led to one or another Somoza family farm), but he did not make much effort to provide the people with health care, clean water or education. He did not seem to care much about them one way or another. However, he provoked strong resentment among many of them.

In 1956, the day after Somoza had been nominated for yet another presidential term by his party, a celebration was held in León. Rigoberto López Pérez, a radical young poet, disguised himself as a waiter and shot the dictator before he himself died in a hail of bullets.

This was not the end of Somoza rule. Somoza had groomed his two legitimate sons to succeed him. The older son, Luis, became president. Anastasio "Tachito," the younger son, was commander of the National Guard. President Luis made a few gestures toward liberalizing the more repressive aspects of the regime. He instituted a few social reforms, such as allowing trade unions to organize and allowing more freedom of speech. He announced he would serve only one term and that no relative would be allowed to succeed. But the reforms were mostly for show—the lives of the poor did not improve—and even though he kept his promise and stepped down at the end of his first term, he used his influence to set up a puppet president.

Tachito, the younger brother of Luis, then became president. He inherited the family dictatorship and his father's tendency toward harsh methods of rule. Civil liberties disappeared. The National Guard became more prominent, enthusiastical-ly pursuing law and order. The government became increasingly corrupt and inefficient. The Somoza family business empire expanded even further to include banks, hotels, gold mines, newspapers and an airline, as well as plantations, ranches and factories.

The repressive and corrupt Somoza dynasty continued to provoke widespread discontent. In 1961, a small group of Nicaraguan students founded the *Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN),* named in honor of Sandino. Members of the FSLN, known as *Sandinistas,* had to operate in secret because of continual suppression from the National Guard, but their message spread.

Tachito obeyed the ban against successive terms, but he passed his power to a three-man military junta instead of an elected president. The junta was going to oversee the country until elections could take place, but nature intervened.

On December 23, 1972, at around midnight, a violent earthquake devastated Managua, killing 10,000 people, injuring several

times that number, leveling over 250 city blocks, and leaving 300,000 people homeless. Tachito took this opportunity to seize power, declaring martial law and naming himself head of a national emergency committee. International relief aid poured into Nicaragua, but the Somozas and National Guard officers diverted it for their own use.

This was the last straw for many businessmen and other prominent citizens who had once been neutral. They began calling for Somoza's resignation. Strikes and demonstrations against Somoza became common. The Catholic church began to publicly question Somoza's rule. More and more young people joined the FSLN, which mounted a serious guerrilla insurgency.

Somoza responded by rewriting the constitution, holding another rigged election, and becoming president once more. To stifle growing dissent, he imposed a state of siege, suspending the constitutionally guaranteed rights of Nicaragua's citizens. He increased his campaign of repression against a populace he viewed with greater and greater suspicion. Hundreds of Nicaraguans were killed or disappeared from the streets. The United States government, under President Jimmy Carter, began to put distance between itself and the Somoza regime.

The press increasingly reported the worst of Somoza's regime. Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, respected publisher of Nicaragua's most popular newspaper, openly attacked the president in his newspaper and called for his resignation. In 1978, Chamorro was assassinated on his way to work. His death set off a national revolt and nearly the entire country began supporting the Sandinista insurgency.

The FSLN became more daring. In August 1978, Sandinista guerrillas stormed the National Palace in Managua, where congress was in session, taking over 1,500 hostages. Somoza was forced to grant them a huge ransom, broadcast their political program, and provide 58 FSLN political prisoners safe passage out of the country. As a bus carried the victorious commandos and released prisoners to the airport, thousands of cheering Managuans lined the way to show their support.

Throughout Nicaragua, people reacted by staging crippling strikes, by standing up to the National Guard, by taking command of their own towns. Somoza refused to step down; instead he attacked any resistance by ordering aerial bombing of towns held by the rebels, sending his troops in to finish the job.

The FSLN staged its final offensive in June 1979. Rebel forces won city after city with the support of thousands of civilian fighters. On July 17, as the FSLN prepared to march on Managua, Somoza resigned the presidency and fled the country.

It is estimated that 50,000 people were killed in the war, 100,000 were wounded and 40,000 orphaned. A fifth of the population was

homeless. Half of the work force was without work. The treasury was deeply in debt and nearly bankrupt—most of the money had gone to Miami with Somoza. The economy and infrastructure were in ruins—destroyed by air raids and street fighting. Three quarters of the land had not been planted because of war. Vengeance stalked the streets—hundreds of Somoza followers were murdered. Somoza himself was assassinated in Paraguay in 1980.

The new government had an overwhelming task ahead of it, but idealism ran high. They set up a five-member junta to administer the country, promising to hold elections in 1984. Determined to build a new and just society out of the ashes of the troubled past, they decided to first attack problems such as illiteracy, poor health care, housing conditions and unemployment. Hundreds of *brigadistas,* or community volunteers, fanned through the country, teaching reading and vaccinating children.

The Sandinistas began to reorganize the state and economy to serve the needs of the poor majority rather than the powerful elite. They nationalized the lands of the Somozas and established farming cooperatives.

Global response to the new government was generous. Foreign assistance came from many quarters: Cuba sent teachers and military advisors, the Soviet Union sent technical experts to help develop the battered economy, the U.S. Congress voted millions of dollars in economic aid.

But in 1981, the United States cut off aid to Nicaragua, because the Sandinistas were allegedly supplying arms to rebels in El Salvador. President Reagan was hostile to the Sandinistas' leftist ideology, worried that it would spread communism throughout the Western Hemisphere. The U.S. allocated millions of dollars for the organization of the counterrevolutionary military groups known as *contras.* Contra camps were established along both Nicaraguan borders as bases from which guerrilla attacks were launched.

More and more, Nicaraguans began to feel the Sandinistas were not keeping their promises. They became disenchanted with the nation's deepening socialism. The Catholic church began to publicly criticize the regime. The Sandinistas responded by clamping down on dissent, censoring the news media, and even forbidding the publication of U.S. baseball scores. Like the Somozas before them, the Sandinistas grew increasingly repressive. They were drawn into an even closer alliance with the Soviet Union.

In the 1984 elections, Daniel Ortega was elected president by about a two-thirds majority. The major opposition parties had refused to participate in the elections, but international observers deemed them to be fair and just. The contra war raged on through

the 1980s, consuming Nicaragua's resources and distracting the Sandinistas. The war also cost thousands of lives.

Nicaragua complained to the World Court that the United States had mined Nicaraguan harbors and was illegally interfering in their affairs. The court agreed. The U.S. replied that the World Court had no jurisdiction over it and boycotted the proceedings. As revelations of CIA involvement surfaced, the U.S. Congress grew uneasy with their Nicaraguan policy and cut off funds to the contras. President Reagan found ways to secretly continue to support the contras; publicly, he implemented an embargo on trade with Nicaragua and pressured other countries to do the same. The Nicaraguan economy began to collapse.

Life became difficult. Food was rationed. There were shortages of everything. Buses could not be fixed because there were no spare parts. People could not afford to buy anything, even if there had been anything to buy. Inflation was up to 30,000 percent. The government could not always tell who was a contra and who was not; many people were detained. The draft kept calling for more and more young people to fight in the war.

Elections were set for 1990. The country's conservative elite, with support from the United States and Nicaragua's Catholic church, joined together to form the Unión Nicaragüense Opositora (UNO), a broad coalition of 14 parties opposing the Sandinista government. Their candidate was Violeta Chamorro, widow of the martyred Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the newspaper editor who had been killed by Somoza's government in 1978. U.S. President George Bush promised to lift the trade embargo and give hundreds of millions of dollars in economic aid to Nicaragua if UNO won. Their win would stop contra war.

The people voted to rebuild the economy and stop the war. Chamorro won 55 percent of the vote in an election monitored by an unprecedented number of international observers. The Sandinistas were stunned by this resounding vote of no confidence; they had seemed assured of victory. But they followed through with an orderly transition of government. They still control a minority of seats in the National Assembly and remain a potent political and social force. Chamorro retained Daniel Ortega as army chief, reassuring the Sandinistas that she was willing to work with them.

Chamorro has faced crisis after crisis. There are confrontations from without (with the Sandinistas, the labor unions, former contras who have refused to stop fighting) and from within (her own coalition, united only in its opposition to the Sandinistas, has fallen into bitter infighting). In order to receive U.S. economic aid, Chamorro instituted an economic policy of severe austerity that has hit the poor majority with devastating effect. Unemployment has reached crisis

levels, wages have fallen, inflation is still very high, and health care has been rolled back. It would be hard enough to try to solve these problems if everybody worked together, but they do not.

Nicaraguan history has been dominated by exploitation, rivalry and conflict. Nicaraguans have never been able to remove a leader other than by armed rebellion. When Violeta Chamorro was elected in 1990, it was the first time there had been an election in Nicaragua where the person already in power lost. Now she must try to do something else that has never been done before in Nicaragua: she must try to unify the country.

HOUSES

IN THE CITIES OF NICARAGUA, the older homes of the wealthy are very similar to the traditional houses of Spain. They are often built right to the edge of the sidewalk or street. They usually are quite plain on the outside with nothing more than some ornate wrought iron across the windows and doors as decoration. Inside the large, heavy doors there is a vestibule with a brightly patterned ceramic tile floor. Often, the house is built around a garden, or *patio*. This garden is surrounded by a *corredor*, or covered walk, onto which all the rooms open. The inhabitants do not look out of the house at the street or the neighbors. They look inward to the garden, which they prefer to have where the family can enjoy it. Some homes have more than one story, other have more than one garden, sometimes complete with a fountain or a lily pond.

But only the wealthy have homes of this kind. Many city homes are small, simple wooden structures. The majority of the people live in shabby, ramshackle huts.

At the fringes of the cities are shantytowns, where the poorest people live. People in the country are constantly moving to the city, looking for work, for education for their children and for a better life. Often, the shantytowns are located where people first set up housekeeping. Shantytowns spring up overnight, wherever there is a vacant lot. People build informal hovels from pieces of wood, tin, plastic and cardboard and try to fit into big city life. There is no running water, no sanitation system, no electricity—but these people did not have those things in the country, either. In the countryside, the homes are dreadfully inadequate.

Country homes commonly have one room. Sometimes they are square, sometimes they are round. Usually they have a dirt floor and a thatched roof. Near the coast, the roofs may be thatched with palm fronds. In the drier climate of the Central Highlands, homes are

sometimes built of adobe or brick. Throughout Latin America, these homes are called *chozas*, but in the Caribbean they are known as bohíos. Because Eastern Nicaragua identifies strongly with Caribbean culture, these one-room huts along the Atlantic coast are also called *bohíos*.

The huts are multipurpose dwellings. Besides living quarters, they are used for storage. Any tools, rice, beans, fertilizer or animal feed is stored right along with the family. The family's animals are always nearby as well, either underneath the house or in a pen right beside it.

Most of the land belongs to the rich, therefore, many campesinos live as squatters. They put up a small house almost anywhere they can and live there until the owner drives them off.

The housing shortage in Nicaragua is a critical problem. Cities are horribly overcrowded and housing conditions are deplorable, particularly in the lower class barrios of earthquake-shattered Managua. Managua never recovered from the 1972 earthquake. The disaster was particularly severe for those living in the slums, where housing was totally destroyed. International relief money that poured in to help rebuild the city, instead went into the pockets of the Somoza clan. What was once Central Managua is a surreal landscape of vacant, overgrown lots and crumbling ruins which house homeless families.

Toward the end of the revolution, Somoza systematically bombed his own country, destroying neighborhood after neighborhood, night after night. The political unrest following the revolution also destroyed a great number of homes throughout the nation, making it even harder to recover from the housing shortage.

LANGUAGE

SPANISH is the official language of Nicaragua. When the Spanish conquistadors arrived, they felt they should choose which language to use. However, over on the Atlantic coast, the British were setting up housekeeping, and they transacted their business (pirating, buccaneering, slave trading), for the most part, in English. The British influence in this region persisted for more than a century, and by that time the English language was fairly entrenched.

Even though Spanish is the official language of Nicaragua, people on the Caribbean coast might speak Coastal English. Or they might speak an Indian language that has survived colonization. Many English and Indian words are used in everyday conversation by all Nicaraguans.

Still, Spanish is the official language of Nicaragua and the predominant one. Government operates in Spanish. Schools are taught in Spanish. In the West and in the Central Highlands, almost everyone speaks Spanish.

NICARAGUA

Most of the *Creoles*, or blacks, of Nicaragua live on the Atlantic coast and speak an old-fashioned, Caribbean-accented English. Their ancestors learned English when, as slaves, they were brought from Africa and Jamaica to work on British plantations. After the British finally ceded the region to the Nicaraguan government in the late 19th century, American big business arrived. This, in combination with years of occupation by the U.S. Marines, ensured that the English language continued to be important.

Of the various Indian languages still spoken, the most widely used is Miskito. Most Miskito men are bilingual, and many are trilingual, speaking Miskito, English and Spanish. (Women usually stay home in remote villages and only speak Miskito.) In return, they expect foreigners to at least make an effort to learn rudimentary Miskito and tolerate their customs. Many of the English and Americans who traded with and hired the Miskito were willing to attempt the language, as were most Protestant missionaries. However, throughout history the Spanish have not been so tolerant. Consequently, the Miskito do not trust people from Western Nicaragua, the Spanish speakers. The Miskito resent the perceived attitude that Spanish language and culture are superior. This, among other things, has led to quite a bit of friction with the government. In the 1980s, the Sandinistas finally quit trying to interfere and granted the region far-reaching autonomy.

MYTH

ORIGINS

An ancient Indian story tells of how the Chorotega and Nahua peoples arrived in what is now Nicaragua. They had been overpowered by the war-making Olmecs in Mexico and fled in a massive migration south. They were guided by a message from their oracles, telling them they would find a place to settle next to a freshwater sea. The sea would have an island with two tall mountains. When they arrived at the lake, they named it Cocibolca, which means "sweet sea" in their language.

The Spanish realized the lake's strategic value; they settled there, as well, calling the lake "Mar Dulce." Now it is known as Lago de Nicaragua, or Lake Nicaragua.

THE MOUTH OF HELL

Rising majestically up from the plain near Lake Nicaragua, the Masaya volcano, also known as Volcán Santiago, is classic in its symmetry. Steam and smoke drift from its cone and fill the air with the nasty smell of sulfur. The crater rumbles ominously and the earth is hot; it is still classified as active. The volcano's eruptions have terrorized nearby inhabitants for centuries.

To appease Chaciutique, the goddess of fire, ancient tribes developed elaborate rituals of human sacrifice. According to legend, they gathered around the edge of the crater and threw maidens into the lava boiling at the bottom. Skeletons, possibly resulting from these human sacrifices, have been found in lava tunnels near the volcano.

The Spaniards were superstitious, as well, and they also feared the volcano, which they called *Boca de Inferno*, or Mouth of Hell. There is a cross at the summit. Some say the Spanish placed it there to deter the Indians from their heathen religious practices. Others think they put it there to keep the devil in his hole.

The Spanish did not worship the goddess of fire; they followed another god: gold. Several unlucky Spaniards were killed in expeditions in which they were lowered into the crater in order to bring up some of the brightly burning lava they thought was boiling gold.

Rumor says that President Somoza occasionally dumped bodies of executed rivals into the steaming crater.

The volcano is still active, and so are the legends.

OCCUPATIONS

JOBS IN NICARAGUA are scarce. Under the Somoza regime, the official unemployment level hovered around 20 percent. In July 1979, when Somoza finally left the country, the unemployment rate, seriously affected by the insurrection, reached 60 percent. The task of rebuilding the country generated thousands of jobs building roads, marketplaces, schools and the like, and the situation improved. But unemployment and underemployment are still very serious problems, with estimates ranging from 25 percent to 40 percent of the work force.

Nicaragua is predominantly an agricultural country. Nearly half of the people who are employed work on farms. Agriculture is the basis of the economy, and many industry and service jobs are directly linked to agriculture; for instance, food processing and textiles.

Agriculture in Nicaragua has changed over the years. Until the 1950s, the only commercial crops were coffee and bananas.

NICARAGUA

Nicaragua was a "banana republic"—a monoculture, or one-crop country, with an unstable government. Most small farmers raised subsistence crops of rice, beans and corn; if they had any extra, they sold it in town. Then the large plantations began to take over. Large sugar and rice plantations were developed, coffee expanded, and there was enormous growth in the production of cotton and beef. Many small farms were absorbed by the large estates. The previously independent farmers became tenants, day laborers or sharecroppers.

The problem with agricultural work when a farmer does not own his own land is that farming is seasonal. In rural Nicaragua, the demand for farm workers has a marked seasonal pattern. There is work when the grain must be cultivated and when the cotton, coffee and sugarcane need to be harvested. Other times there is nothing. Many agricultural workers migrate to the cities during the *tiempo muerto*, or dead season, hoping to find work there.

Toward the end of the revolution, agriculture suffered badly. The planting season occurred during the worst of the fighting. Some areas were planted too late, others not at all. Machinery was damaged and livestock herds were reduced. After the Sandinista victory, lands belonging to the Somoza family were confiscated and turned into state farms and cooperatives. The Sandinistas were shocked to discover that the peasants, even though they were newly liberated from oppression, did not want to work hard on state farms. The farms were not managed well, machinery broke down and productivity fell dramatically.

Socialism did not quite catch on in Nicaragua, probably because of the persistent underdevelopment and resulting massive unemployment. Peasants did not want to starve for the ideals of the government. Over the years Nicaragua evolved into a country populated with small vendors, microenterprises, as well as bartering and hustling entrepreneurs; in short, capitalists. If a farmer's tree had oranges, he took them to the village market and traded them for a pair of sandals. If someone had an extra minute, she spent it making a hammock, a basket, a piece of jewelry, or some other *artesanías* to sell at the outdoor market.

Most rural men tend small subsistence plots near their huts and labor on the large haciendas, picking cotton or cutting sugarcane, traveling from crop to crop (or to the city) in their never-ending search for work. One bright spot is the fact that people no longer have to worry about being drafted into the army.

Rural women do not have many occupational choices. Domestic life as a wife and mother does not leave much time to waste. If they can find agricultural work, such as picking coffee, they are very poorly paid. Many young women move to the cities, seeking work as domestics or other positions.

Children begin working very young, as soon as they can, often beginning their work history between the ages of six and 10 years.

Nicaragua has tremendous natural resources. The soil is fertile—the richest in Central America. The forests are full of trees; the oceans are full of fish. The people are hardworking and passionate about improving their lives and fulfilling their country's promise. Perhaps the greatest crime committed against the country is the waste of all this potential—not ignored, but trampled, suffocated, squandered.

THE PEOPLE

THE POPULATION of Nicaragua is not homogeneous. It is rife with factionalism. There is polarization of every possible type. It is not a cohesive society and never has been. There is a saying that Nicaragua is two countries—one faces the Pacific and the other the Atlantic. The two regions are separated by much more than the mountains of the Central Highlands.

Western Nicaragua contains the vast majority of the population, nearly all of them *mestizos* of mixed Indian and Spanish descent. This is where the government is and the politics and any power or wealth that exist in the country. This sector is traditionally oriented toward other Hispanic population centers in Central America. The people speak Spanish and are predominantly Catholic. This is the culture of which outsiders think when they think of Nicaragua.

Eastern Nicaragua is a world apart. It seems like a completely different country and in many ways it has been, literally. It was a British protectorate until near the end of the 19th century when Britain was finally pried loose, relinquishing the region to the Nicaraguan government. Since then, the various Nicaraguan regimes have attempted to impose their authority over the region, usually with disastrous results. Then the governments would revise their policies, grant the region autonomy, and leave the East alone. The *costeños*, as the people of the Atlantic coast are known, traditionally have not identified with or participated in national life.

The Atlantic side of Nicaragua contains just over half the country's land mass but is very sparsely populated, with less than 10 percent of the population. It is a hinterland, an isolated backwater that has been largely ignored by the governments. The Spanish wanted to conquer the territory but finally surrendered to the jungles and mosquitos. The British took what they could from the area in a series of boom-and-bust enterprises, such as banana plantations, gold mines and rubber gathering. When they left, they were replaced by big

business from the United States, which also exploited the region's resources but did not do much to develop it or settle it.

Foreigners influenced the region in many ways. Their legacy is still heard among the people of the Eastern coast—most of them speak English, even though Spanish is the official language. Religion was also affected. European Protestant missionaries have been very successful in Eastern Nicaragua; the population is predominantly Protestant.

The East and West are two distinct societies with few links between them. Many *costeños* feel they have nothing in common with their fellow citizens to the West. Eastern society is resolutely non-Hispanic. The culture has looked to the Caribbean for its identity, holding in disdain the customs of the Spanish-speaking West. For the Hispanic Nicaraguans in the West, the feeling is mutual. They view the Indian and Creole population of the Atlantic coast as inferior to themselves.

The *costeños* have never trusted those from the Pacific coast and have generally regarded the Spanish as enemies since the beginning of the colonial era. Because of this, they never really rallied to the Sandinista cause. Somoza basically ignored them, which was fine with them, and when he did acknowledge them, he spoke English, which they appreciated. When the Sandinistas, in their zeal, tried to promote the revolution's policies, they ended up driving many costeños to the ranks of the contras, who recognized and developed the potential for counter-revolutionary activities in the thinly populated region.

The costeños are racially diverse, another difference from the Hispanic West. There are blacks, Indians, Europeans, American missionaries, some mestizos, and even a few Chinese. Many of these groups have intermixed with each other.

Many of Nicaragua's blacks live in towns along the Caribbean coast. Most of the blacks, known as *Creoles* or Black Caribs, are descendants of slaves brought by the British to work on the plantations. They remained after slavery was abolished in 1824. Some of them intermarried with the indigenous Indian population; their children are known as *Zambos*.

The native Indian tribes include the remnants of the Sumus, who live inland along the rivers and among the slopes, and the Ramas, who live farther south. By far the largest indigenous ethnic group are the Miskito Indians, who live in small villages along the major rivers and the coast of Northern Nicaragua.

The Miskito have survived nearly 400 years of contact with foreigners, never having been forced into slavery or political oppression. They still speak their native language and have retained their

traditional kinship systems and customs. Their population has steadily grown and they have expanded their settlements. The Miskito adapted to European contact, taking from it whatever could help them. The men worked for the foreigners—mining gold, raising bananas or cutting lumber. When the enterprises failed, the Miskitos returned to their villages and resumed farming, fishing and hunting until the next opportunity to earn wages arose. The Miskito women stayed in the villages, tending the gardens, raising the children and keeping the traditions and customs alive.

The greatest threat to their way of life occurred during forced resettlements by the Sandinistas, who relocated many villages to prevent them from becoming entangled in the contra war. The fiercely independent Miskito people wanted nothing to do with any of it and deeply resented Managua's interference. Today most tribes have returned to their homes and have reconstructed their lives.

The society and culture of Western Nicaragua is not as diverse as that of the East, but it is still far from cohesive. Probably the biggest division lies between the wealthy, powerful, elite minority and the impoverished, powerless masses of the lower class. This traditionally two-class society has its roots in the time when Spanish colonists owned most of the land. This elite group (about one percent of the population) kept the wealth and power within their small sphere, controlling political and economic power. The peasants worked for them on their *haciendas*, effectively barred from access to either power or wealth.

The Nicaraguan elite have never been a homogeneous unit of families with common interests, however. This small group has always contained several distinct and rival subgroups. Beginning in the colonial era, the wealthy aristocratic families, favoring traditional Spanish values of monarchy and Catholic authority, became associated with the Conservative Party and the city of Granada. A strong and occasionally violent rivalry has existed between this Conservative group and the elite families associated with the city of León, the site of the university and the country's intellectual center, which became identified with the Liberal Party. This rivalry continued for hundreds of years, with power veering back and forth between the cities, never peacefully.

This set the stage for the way in which political power ricocheted around Nicaragua. Other elite subgroups emerged as commercial agriculture increased, producing new wealth. Political leaders divided into hostile factions, with those out of power constantly plotting rebellion. This lack of solidarity prevented the development of strong political institutions and provided a climate for the emergence of political strongmen.

The Somoza dynasty emerged as a distinct subgroup within the Liberal Party and the newly elite; they kept their power by rewarding supporters with opportunities to acquire wealth and influence. The Somozas gradually amassed a tremendous family fortune involving agriculture, livestock, business and industry. Considerable discord existed within this subgroup as well, but it was kept in check, for the most part, by greed and corruption. Greed and discord finally combined to topple the regime.

The Sandinista government also suffered from factionalization. Junta members and cabinet ministers regularly resigned or were forced out. Ideologies and perspectives collided. The coalition was always shaky, as is the present government.

Social polarization is not the exclusive domain of the elite. Major factions and subgroups also exist within Nicaragua's lower classes. Differences have developed based largely on degree of access to land or opportunities for employment. Other divisions exist between the rural peasants and the growing numbers of unskilled and underemployed urban dwellers. The typical campesino has virtually no chance to improve his lot in agriculture, so more and more are leaving farm work for city life and better opportunities. Few members of the lower class get the education or jobs that will help them achieve upward mobility. But if parents have begun the process, perhaps their children may actually have a shot at it.

The people of Nicaragua do share some common traits. Most important is the emphasis on family. Just as members of the elite families stick together (within their subgroups anyway), peasant families share a family organization in which an individual can count on his extended family for help and support. For all Nicaraguans, the family is the primary obligation.

Another shared characteristic is the fact that most are young. Nicaragua has the youngest population of any Central American country. Nearly half the population is under 15 years of age. The birth rate is high, and many adults were killed in recent conflicts.

Most Nicaraguans are impatient for all the political differences to be resolved. Most of them want peace and stability. They have shown that they are willing to fight for it.

PROBLEMS

NICARAGUA HAS so many problems it is hard to know where to begin solving them—probably the most pressing is the economy. If the problem of poverty could be solved, it would go a long way toward solving the other difficulties.

When the Sandinista government was voted out of office in 1990, the economy was in shambles. Of course, when the Sandinistas took over in 1979, the economy was in shambles. It is a chronic condition. Nicaragua's economy has never flourished. It is not that the country does not have resources or potential—the tragedy is that it does, but the resources have been squandered, first by greed, then by mismanagement.

Somoza treated Nicaragua as his own private property, taking whatever he wanted without the slightest regard for the people and using the country as collateral to rack up billions of dollars in debt. When he fled the country, his suitcases stuffed with cash, Nicaragua was near bankruptcy, its factories closed by the war, its land unplanted, its people homeless, starving and unemployed.

The Sandinistas may have been good guerrilla fighters, patriots and idealists, but most of them did not have the background or preparation they needed to be good governors or administrators. They set up central planning bodies that were to act on behalf of the poor, regulating prices and wages. Salaries were set so low that many people did not bother to come to work. Engineers quit their jobs because they could make more selling peanuts at the baseball stadium. Farmers, fearful of being forced to work on cooperative farms or sick of the government trying to regulate their lives and their work, gave up farming altogether and moved to the cities. The regulations were so complex and restrictive that many Nicaraguans abandoned traditional productive labor and joined the rapidly growing class of free-lance, small-scale entrepreneurs, who could maneuver outside the rules.

Take beef, for example. Nicaragua always had plenty of cattle. If a villager slaughtered a cow, he would usually give part of the meat to friends and relatives and sell any that was left to neighbors or exchange it for other goods or services. This system worked well for generations, but its informality offended the Sandinista sense of order. Under Sandinista rules, no one was allowed to kill a cow without written permission from a government agent. The cow had to be brought to approved slaughterhouses and sold for a price fixed by the government. The beef was then to be placed on sale at local butcher shops at low prices, so everyone could afford to buy. But it did not work out the way it was planned. The price the government set for cattle was so low the farmers could not afford to sell. Instead, they smuggled their cattle into Honduras, where they could be sold at high prices, or they engaged in a new crime called *matanza clandestina*, or clandestine slaughtering. There was rarely any beef for sale in butcher shops, and in many poor households beef disappeared entirely from the diet.

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This kind of micromanagement affected most enterprises and nearly all aspects of life under the Sandinistas. It resulted in lower production and less efficient distribution of goods, which resulted in shortages of food and most other products. Restaurants closed when the government began setting their menu prices and rationing meat and produce, forbidding owners to buy from private distributors. In the cities water was rationed—turned off for two days a week. Electricity was often cut off—dependent on petroleum supplies from the Soviet Union. Telephone service was completely unreliable. Public transportation fell apart as buses broke down and stayed broken—there were no spare parts and no money to fix anything.

The Sandinistas nationalized all Nicaragua's banks, mining enterprises and many formerly privately owned industries. The private sector, already weakened when many of the well-to-do took their money and fled the country, could not hope to compete against industries operated by the government. Many private companies closed. When the United States instigated a trade embargo against Nicaragua, the economy slowly strangled, becoming an economic cripple, propped up precariously by a crutch of foreign aid from the Soviet bloc.

The Sandinistas blamed these economic woes on the contra war—because of the fighting, they were forced to channel a large percentage of the national budget into defense. The Sandinista government was dedicated to help the common people—a complete about-face from the attitudes of previous governments—and, at first, they did make some progress, especially in fighting illiteracy and lack of health care. But eventually the people could not even afford to feed and clothe themselves.

Thus, the new government elected in 1990 inherited an economy in shambles. The contra war is more or less over, so a lot less money has to be spent on defense. The international trade embargo implemented by the United States has been lifted, so the Nicaraguan economy is able to breathe. International aid has also resumed. But damage is so extensive that economic recovery is still a long way off.

Unemployment is still at crisis levels. Wages are still low. Inflation is still high. Industry and agriculture are struggling to get back on their feet. Many people live in such extreme poverty that they cannot afford to purchase such basic needs as food, shelter and clothing. The economic situation has created a palpable tension in the country.

Health care has not recovered. Infant mortality is still high. Malnutrition is still prevalent. Cholera, measles and other devastating health problems are spreading. There are not enough doctors or clinics. Many people still do not have clean water or sanitation, leading to even further health problems.

Many people still cannot read or write. Many children still only get a year or two of education. Many villages still do not have schools.

Campesinos, still without sufficient land, or landless, continue to abandon the country and move to the city. Life in the country remains very hard, with few opportunities to improve it. Housing for both rural and urban populations is, for the most part, deplorable.

The transportation system is still barely adequate. Many roads are washed away each rainy season. Buses and trucks are the main means of getting around. Taxis often are without doors or fenders and are crumbling with rust. Electrical blackouts still occur occasionally, but many people do not have electricity anyway. Communications systems have improved somewhat, and there is now more to watch on TV than propaganda and "Mr. Ed".

With so much else to occupy time and resources, conservation and environmental concerns must wait. Each year, hundreds of tons of fertile soil are washed into the ocean by the rains. The jungles are losing their valuable tropical hardwoods, and they are not always replanted.

The land still shakes with earthquakes. The volcanoes still tremble and explode.

There is still tremendous division within the country about the right way to run things. The government is under intense international scrutiny as it struggles to reorganize itself from top to bottom, and it is still at risk of foreign interference. Nicaraguans have been at war for so many years. It will take all Nicaraguans working together to solve these seemingly overwhelming problems and make a better future for their country and its people. The more people want peace, the more elusive it seems. The people face a present and future that looks no brighter than the past. But hope is still alive in the Nicaraguan people.

RECREATION

IT CANNOT BE DENIED that life is hard in Nicaragua. The present generation is still struggling to recover from 15 years of war and chaos. However, the generations before them did not have it much easier. The Nicaraguan experience has nearly always featured invasions, civil wars, crushing poverty and natural disasters.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, their hard existence, Nicaraguans grab hold of life and live it with an intense passion. When they play, dance or celebrate, they do it fiercely, with all their heart.

NICARAGUA

Because so many Nicaraguans are Catholic, saints' days are important holidays. Some saints' days are celebrated by almost everyone. Others are local. Nearly every town and village celebrates at least one *fiesta patronales*, or patron-saint festival, each year. These church-related celebrations involve religious ceremonies, but also include parades, rodeos, dances, beauty contests, fireworks. People gather to watch sports such as bullfights, cockfights and horse racing. There is plenty of music and colorful pageantry and almost all the men get very drunk.

The patron saint of Managua, Santo Domingo, is honored during the first 10 days of August. This festival features a carnival, spectator sports, and a religious procession with music and dancing that winds through the streets, taking the statue of the saint to its shrine. It all culminates with fireworks. In spite of the fact that it is a religious holiday, things can get very raucous. The drunks get rowdy, the thieves get violent and usually several people end up dead as a result.

The saints' day celebrations, being a Catholic phenomenon, are not as prevalent on the East coast, where many people distrust anything representing the Spanish culture and, furthermore, are Protestant. The people of the Caribbean have their own unique and rich culture. They especially enjoy music and dancing and are highly skilled artisans.

Freedom is joyfully celebrated on July 19, Revolution Day, which commemorates the fall of Somoza. Everyone has the day off. All the towns have huge rallies, and tens of thousands of people gather in Managua's Plaza de la Revolución to hear speeches and music.

During the revolution, huge outdoor rallies were very common. Leaders of the national struggle for liberation addressed the people, rallying them to the cause and articulating revolutionary goals and programs.

Another holiday honoring the revolution is El Repliegue, which takes place on the last Saturday in June in Managua. This decidedly nonreligious celebration is a re-creation of an audacious feat in the Sandinistas' fight against Somoza. During the last weeks of the revolution, the Sandinista guerrillas who had barricaded themselves in the barrios of Managua, were being bombed by the National Guards. All the escape routes had supposedly been sealed off; however, during the night of June 27, the guerrilla commandantes led several thousand people through back streets and out of Managua to the liberated city of Masaya. The guard woke up to find their intended targets had disappeared overnight. The commemoration of this remarkable operation begins with a rally in Managua. Then the crowd hits the road to Masaya, fortified with rum and banners. They retrace the steps of the guerrillas, more or less, and spend the rest of the night drinking and partying. At dawn, everyone gets on a bus and goes

home. Nicaragua's politics have never been boring.

Amazing as it may seem, Nicaraguans are not soccer-crazy. Even though the rest of Latin America is obsessed with soccer, Nicaraguans prefer, incredibly enough, baseball. Even though Spanish culture dominates the country and has influenced many of Nicaragua's customs and pastimes, baseball—a game that undeniably comes from the United States—has captured the imagination of Nicaraguans. Even though the Sandinista regime forbade the publication of U.S. baseball scores, they were unable to dampen popular interest in U.S. major league teams. Baseball is the national game of preference. On Sundays, many campesino men and boys put down their machetes, pick up their baseball gloves, put on their cherished Dodgers or Yankees baseball caps, and play ball. No celebration is complete without a baseball game; almost everyone likes to play. People all over the country follow their favorite teams in their efforts to become national champions. Nicaraguans still play soccer and basketball and other sports. But their passion is baseball.

The Indian influence can be seen in the music and dances of Nicaragua. While the Sandinistas were in power, they were very serious about preserving this heritage. They sent out cultural brigadistas to perform, and collect and record the songs and dances of the different regions. Under the present austerity budget, there is no money for this. But people still dance and sing, and the rich cultural tradition of the Indian people of Nicaragua is being maintained by the people themselves every time they dance.

In the towns and cities, people tend to listen to contemporary popular music and dance modern dances. But in the country, the campesinos still dance the traditional dances to the old music. Stringed instruments like guitars, mandolins and bandoleons are still handcrafted and provide much of the music. Many dances are performed for certain occasions. The Dance to the Sun and Hymns to the Sons of the Moon are traditionally presented at weddings, births, deaths and harvests. Some cities are known for their particular traditional dances. In Granada, the *Baile de los Diabolitos,* or Dance of the Devils, is performed in October. In this dance, which combines both Indian and Spanish styles of music, an old couple leads a line of "devils" through the streets. The dancers, decked out in brilliant costumes, wear devil masks and Indian headdresses.

Poetry is one of Nicaragua's most beloved arts. Rubén Darío is Nicaragua's most famous poet. Known as the "Prince of Spanish-American Literature," his name commands instant respect in Spain and throughout Latin America as one of the great literary figures of the Spanish-speaking world. Using informal language and unconventional structures, Darío created an original form of poetry called *mod-*

poetry of the time, setting off a dynamic movement of literature, poetry, music and theater among the common people, as well as the intellectuals. Born in 1867, Darío was sent by the Nicaraguan government as an ambassador to Spain and France, and he lived much of his life abroad. Much of his poetry celebrated his homeland, and he wrote movingly of his resentment of the U.S. Marines' occupation of Nicaragua.

It has been said that half of Nicaragua's population are poets. Priests write poetry. Government workers write poetry. Sandinista President Daniel Ortega's poetry was published. Even the police have a regular poetry contest. Perhaps the people are poets because of the pain of their country; such agony can either destroy all hope or inspire creative defiance. Nicaraguans write poetry in creative defiance.

RELIGION

ROMAN CATHOLICISM is the dominant religion in Nicaragua. Almost 90 percent of the population professes to be Catholic. In spite of everything that has happened in their country, Nicaraguans are quite devout. Churches are well attended and church leaders are widely respected.

The country does offer freedom of religion, however, and several Protestant denominations also exist. This is especially true along the Caribbean coast, which has always seemed to be a world apart from the western half of the country. The Spanish (strictly Catholic) gave up fighting the impenetrable jungles and clouds of mosquitos of the Eastern coast and left it to the British (strictly Protestant). The *costeños*, people of the Caribbean coast, have never trusted the Spanish or anything remotely related to them (like Catholicism).

Most of the descendants of the black slaves brought over by the British belong to Protestant denominations, including a number of fundamentalist congregations. The Miskito Indians of the region have been significantly influenced by missionaries from the Moravian church. The missionaries developed a written version of the Miskito language in order to translate the Bible and hymns. They built schools and organized community activities and introduced a conservative political ideology that was strongly anticommunist and antirevolutionary.

Not all of Nicaragua's Indian populations have converted to Christianity (either Catholic or Protestant), and many of those who are Christians have retained some of their traditional practices, blending them with the religious customs of their church. For instance, some Indians still worship their ancestors. They visit

shamans who go into trances to receive messages from those who have died. Other Indian traditions are carried out through dance and music. Historians surmise that Indians may have adopted the religion of their Spanish conquerors so readily because the Nicarao symbol for their god of rain was very similar to the Christian cross.

Religious holidays are times of great celebration in Nicaragua. Christmas and Easter are important, of course, but just as momentous is the week-long festival of La Purisma, unique to Latin America. During the first week of December, altars to the Virgin Mary are erected in each home. Children go from altar to altar, saying prayers and singing hymns. They are rewarded with good things to eat, such as sugarcane. La Purisma is so significant it was even celebrated during the war against Somoza.

Each city, town and village has a patron saint, whose special day is honored with feasts and parades, dancing and merrymaking. Every city's *fiesta patronales,* or patron-saint festival, is enthusiastically celebrated with its own special assortment of traditions. Usually the festivities involve a procession in which a statue of the saint is carried through the streets, accompanied by music and dancing.

For many years in the long, violent history of Nicaragua, the leaders of the Catholic church avoided politics and generally went along with whichever government was in power. There were exceptions. For example, in the 16th century, the government's enslavement of Indians was hampered by opposition from the church. Archbishop Antonio Valdivieso was so outspoken on this matter that he was murdered by the son of the governor, becoming Nicaragua's first Catholic martyr.

In the 1970s, as liberation theology began to spread, many priests and church workers decided they could no longer ignore the situation. Rather than counseling the poor to accept their lot, they began working to correct the social sins of poverty, exploitation and political repression. Some started cooperatives for the poor, making it possible for them to sell their farm products as a group or buy things as a group. Some began seeking land reform. Some spoke out against human rights violations. Some became Sandinista sympathizers and collaborators.

Many Catholic priests and bishops were loud in their condemnation of the Somoza regime. They were particularly angered by the lack of compassion shown by the government for the victims of the 1972 earthquake and the misuse of relief assistance, which the church had intended to distribute among the needy. For many people, the church became the only refuge from the forces shaking Nicaragua.

Several priests held study groups for young people, searching for meaning in life and discussing ways to respond to life's ethical

imperatives. Many students came away believing that the way to live a Christian life in Nicaragua during this time was to become a Sandinista guerrilla. People in power—landowners, businessmen, members of the National Guard—were not happy about this new role the priests were assuming or the movements they were developing.

The Roman Catholic church played an active role in the overthrow of the Somoza dynasty. Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo's role in orchestrating the movement against Somoza was so prominent that Somoza was reported to have said that if he had to flee Nicaragua his last act would be to shoot "Comandante Miguelito."

When Somoza was overthrown, the bishops welcomed the new regime in a pastoral letter. The Sandinista comandantes officially acknowledged the role Catholic leaders had played. Despite disapproval by the pope, several clergymen accepted important government positions in the new Sandinista government, putting the church in the forefront for a change.

But things did not work out the way they had planned. Church leaders had expected that more moderate elements would assume political power after Somoza left the country. The new government's increasingly leftist ideology caused many Catholic officials to become as critical of the Sandinistas as they were of the Somozas. The Vatican ordered all priests holding government positions to resign. Faced with the choice, some chose to work for the government.

The church began to see the Sandinistas as godless communists, who were hostile to the church's power and position in society. The Sandinistas attempted to suppress leading spokespersons of the church and Catholic publications that were critical of the government. When the pope visited Nicaragua in 1983, the Sandinista leaders, outraged because he did not want to refer to political matters and therefore would not denounce the contras, orchestrated the disruption of a papal mass, heckling the pope and chanting revolutionary slogans.

The church was not about to ignore the offense. Among the people, the church still exerted tremendous influence. The Catholic church hierarchy began to present a serious opposition to the revolution. Some priests sheltered draft-dodgers or helped them cross illegally into Honduras or Costa Rica. Some leaders lent considerable moral support to the violent counterrevolution, turning a deaf ear to reports of contra atrocities. Priests were even accused of trafficking in arms and explosives in collaboration with the contras. The bishops published a pastoral letter urging the government to open talks with contra leaders.

The church/state debate was tempestuous and fierce. The Sandinistas' hold on power was not seriously threatened, but the religious conflict had caused large numbers of Nicaraguans to lose confidence in the Sandinistas, and was also making the Sandinistas look

bad in the court of world opinion. The leaders decided to hold elections to show how democratic they were. They lost.

Managua's Roman Catholic cathedral was destroyed in the 1972 earthquake. Now the spire and four outside walls are all that remain. There are no pews, and bushes grow through cracks in the floor and surround the shattered altar. Statues of the saints are headless and armless. Nicaragua's cathedral is a ruin. But Nicaragua's church is not.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

CUSTOMS AND HABITS do not change quickly in Nicaragua, in contrast to the nearly constant change that takes place in politics and government. Many isolated villages have remained almost unchanged since colonial times. Nicaraguans tend to stay put; most live in the same towns where their families have lived for generations. All this is beginning to change as more and more people migrate to the cities and as new highways have opened isolated communities to the rest of the country.

Family is by far the most important social unit, taking precedence over any other relationship. For example, a child's birthday party does not involve a party for school friends or neighborhood youngsters. It is an occasion for a family reunion, involving relatives of all ages from the oldest to the newest baby cousin.

Nicaraguan girls stay at home much more than girls in North America do. It is not considered good manners for them to go anywhere alone. Nor is it thought proper for teenagers to go out by themselves on a date. Like most countries of Central America, Nicaraguan social customs have been heavily influenced by Spanish culture. Machismo is standard operating procedure, at full strength.

Nicaraguans have a unique love/hate relationship with the United States. Due to extensive interference by the U.S. in Nicaraguan affairs for the past 150 years, nationalism is almost synonymous with anti-Americanism. At the same time, many Nicaraguans consciously seek to imitate American lifestyles and buy American consumer goods. They absolutely love baseball, as well.

Nicaraguans have a peculiar approach toward addresses. Only the major streets have names; ordinary roads have none. In place of a street address, locations are described as distances in relation to well-known (and not-so-well-known) landmarks. It gets even trickier when locations are given in relation to where landmarks used to be before they were destroyed by the earthquake. Sometimes people will say to go north or east, but they may say *al lago* (toward the lake) instead of north or *arriba* (up, as in where the sun comes up) instead of east.

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A typical address in Managua might be: de done fue el Cine Dorado, 1 c. al lago, 1/2 c. abajo. Translated this means: From where the Cine Dorado used to be, one block toward the lake (or north) and one-half block down (west).

WEATHER

NICARAGUA IS A TROPICAL country and, for the most part, it has a tropical climate. Warm winds blow inland from both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. In most places it is hot and humid at midday, warm in the morning and afternoon and pleasant at night.

However, even in the tropics, altitude makes a difference. Nicaragua has mountains, and in the highland areas the heat and humidity are moderated appreciably. The people have categorized their country into three zones according to temperature and altitude.

The region where the land is at sea level is called *tierra caliente*, or "hot land." The average temperature hovers in the 80s F yearround, and it is typically steamy and sticky. Thankfully, it cools down at night most of the year.

A more comfortable climate lies between 2,000 and 6,000 feet in the Central Highlands of Nicaragua. Here in the *tierra templada*, or "temperate land," temperatures are more moderate—mild in the daytime (in the 70s F) and cool at night. Even though the tierra templada offers the most attractive climate, most Nicaraguans live in the tierra caliente, because that is where the good farmland is located.

The *tierra fría*, or "cold lands," are found near the high peaks of the Central Highlands. The temperatures are cool (it may get up into the 60s F) and the air is thin. There is no permanent snow on any of Nicaragua's mountain peaks, but occasionally there is a light flurry of snow, causing a stir of excitement among the mountain villagers.

Rainfall throughout Nicaragua also varies substantially. The area along the Pacific coast receives about 40 to 60 inches of rain per year. Up in the Central Highlands they may get 100 inches. But the Atlantic coastal region of Nicaragua is the wettest area in all of Central America. It seems as though it never stops raining, with as much as 250 inches of rain a year. After blowing across the warm Caribbean Sea, the moisture-laden trade winds dump torrents of rain on the Mosquito coast almost year-round. The mountains block the winds and keep the rest of Nicaragua comparatively drier.

Nicaragua has two seasons, a dry season and a rainy season. The dry season is known as *verano,* the Spanish word for summer. During the dry season, the sun shines steadily, the plains become dry and

brown, and the wind blows clouds of dust. The rainy season is called *invierno*, or winter. During the rainy season, heavy rains pour down almost every afternoon, and the land is saturated and muddy. The countryside is green, and the air is humid. The rainy season varies in length from region to region. In the Pacific region, it rains from May to November. In the mountains the rainy season can last from May to January. In the Atlantic Lowlands, the rainy season lasts from May all the way to March, and even though the area has what they call a dry season, the term is relative. It can still rain heavily on the Mosquito coast during this brief dry season, and the land never really dries out.

The Atlantic coast region experiences a great deal of flooding due to all this rain. Rivers often spill over their banks, and large areas of the lowland go under water. In addition, like the rest of the Caribbean, this region is subject to destructive tropical hurricanes from July to October. In 1988, Hurricane Hugo caused extensive damage, destroying banana and coconut plantations and even some of the rain forest.

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