

Brazil Holds Elections for Federal and State Posts

Elections for governors and legislative and congressional representatives were held throughout Brazil on October 3. Voter turnout was surprisingly light—estimated at 80% of the country's 83.8 million registered voters—despite the fact that voting is mandatory in Brazil. An estimated 60% of the successful candidates are supporters of Pres. Fernando Collor's administration, a distinct reversal of the strength of opposition parties that was evidenced in the 1989 Presidential elections. The trend in this current election seems to be that voters are choosing traditional or familiar candidates from the past, or are protesting by leaving their ballots blank. However in São Paulo state there were significant gains for the opposition candidates in the state congressional races.

Election results were considered final if one candidate obtained a clear majority of votes. Such was the case in the Rio de Janeiro gubernatorial contest, where Leonel Brizola, an opposition candidate and past governor,

won. The same occurred in São Paulo where Paulo Maluf, a strong Collor ally, was selected. Run-off elections will be held on November 25 to settle the races in other states, including Acre, the only state where a PT gubernatorial candidate, Jorge Viana, stands a strong chance of winning.

In other areas of the Amazon, mainstream candidates who favored status-quo or intensified timber- and mineral-harvesting had success, despite the Collor administration's highly publicized environmental protection stance. In Rondonia, gubernatorial front-runner Olavo Pires of the PTB was murdered outside his office on October 18. The killing is presumed to be political. Pires, the owner of major logging operations in Rondonia, had been investigated in 1988 on charges of drug trafficking. Now the 2nd and 3rd place winners will face off in the final elections.

*from Contacto, BrazNet,
Alternex, and Latinamerica
Press*



Torture in Brazil: Never Again?

A clandestine mass grave containing the bodies of an estimated 1500 people was uncovered in a secret burial pit outside the main Dom Bosco Cemetery in Perus, a community 35 miles from São Paulo, on September 4, 1990. Although cemetery records indicated that the bodies were those of indigents, there is evidence that a good many of the remains belong to former political prisoners who were tortured or "disappeared" at the hands of authorities in the 1970's. One clue was the gold and platinum dental work found in a number of the skulls; many of Brazil's political dissidents during the military regime were from the middle- and upper-class.

For many years, the Dom Bosco Cemetery has been the focus of suspicions and attempted investigations by human rights groups. It was there, in 1979, that the body of Luís Eurico Tejera Lisbôa, buried under a false name, was found. He was the first

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Friends of Brasil is an alumni organization for former Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Brazil; however, membership is open to all those interested in Brazil. FOB is affiliated with the National Council of RPCVs, based in Washington, DC.

We strive to keep our members informed about current events and issues in Brazil, to maintain ties with Brazil and the Brazilian people and with relevant organizations in the US. We aim to help increase awareness and understanding of Brazil here in the US and support grassroots development projects in Brazil.

Officers:

Co-Presidents	Tom Folan Joan Ramos
Treasurer	Karen Thielke
Secretary	Norm Graham
Advisor:	João Setubal

Board of Directors:

Ed Crotty	Marion Mendelsohn
Norm Graham	Scott Ramos
Lacey Gude	John Reeder
Paul Mack	Elizabeth Santos John Williams

Committees:

Education	vacant
Fundraising	Elizabeth Santos & Judy Cusack
Membership	Scott Ramos
Newsletter	Joan Ramos
Social	vacant

Send correspondence to:

Friends of Brasil
P.O. Box 92
West Newton, MA 02165
(617) 899-2703

FOB holds yearly reunions in conjunction with the National RPCV conference and publishes the quarterly newsletter **Jornal da Amizade**. Annual dues, which includes a subscription to **JA** and a member directory, are \$15.

Send material for newsletter to:

Jornal da Amizade
7303 23rd Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98115
(206) 525-1270

Friends of Brasil Membership Notes

Highlights of FOB 2nd Annual Meeting

At the Eugene Conference, the current FOB Board of Directors was re-elected to one year terms, with the addition of Lacey Gude (Brasília '64-'66) of Washington, D.C. We welcome Lacey to the Board!

In other business, yearly dues were increased to \$15.00 for regular memberships and \$10.00 for student or low-income members. These increases will enable us to cover expenses, and are in line with the dues structures of most of the other RPCV groups. As the National Council has also raised its dues, to \$20.00 per year, joint dues will now be \$35.00.

Mailing costs have risen greatly for FOB as we can no longer use the Federal franked mailers. Each issue of the **Jornal da Amizade** costs close to \$400.00 to print and mail.

Our fundraisers have enabled us to make several donations in the past year, principally to Ashoka to help support the work of Edson Hiroshi Seo with small farmers (see **JA** #6). A small donation was made to the Greater Boston Brazilian Alliance, to aid their work with low-income Brazilian immigrants. A donation will be sent to the Brazil Network.

Gatherings for FOB members were held on Friday and Saturday afternoons of the Conference. Authentic salgadinhos were provided by Barbara Pugh (RGN '66-'68). There was Brazilian music on tape, and sales of FOB T-shirts were brisk. FOB members staffed a table at the International Fair on Saturday, where a variety of craft and other Brazilian items were sold.

Many people present were able to renew old friendships from their Peace Corps days. The FOB members, about 50 in all, had the opportunity to share meals during the event. The general climate of celebration

was dampened, however, by the theft of our Brazilian flag, removed from the group's "Brasil" sign during the Friday social.

Those interested in receiving a copy of the complete 1989/90 FOB Annual Report should send a legal-sized, self-addressed, stamped (25¢) envelope to Joan Ramos.

The 1990 National RPCV Conference

The National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NCRPCV) held its annual Conference in Eugene, Oregon from July 20-22, 1990. Featured were workshops, keynote speakers, displays, festive meals, an international fair, and business meetings for the leaders of affiliated groups, including Friends of Brasil. The Presidents' Forum, composed of presidents of both the regional and country-of-service groups, approved an increase in dues from \$15.00 to \$20.00. The National Council is currently facing a deficit of \$32,000.00. Our new director, Lyn Gray has cut programs and administration to the absolute minimum necessary to keep the organization running. The current dues structure did not support the organization, hence the need for the increase.

Another proposal passed at the Eugene Presidents' Forum was the creation of a Group Affiliation Fee. This fee will be assessed at \$1.00 per person, for each member of a local or "Friends of..." group. The maximum amount that can be assessed any single group will be \$500.00. The Forum agreed that the priority of the NCRPCV must be to support the individual RPCV organizations. Lyn Gray outlined areas of emphasis for the National Council, which include technical assistance to member groups, publications, conferences, education, and outreach.

Friends of Brasil 1991 Reunion—Peace Corps 30th Anniversary

It's not too early to start thinking about the gala celebration to be held in Washington, D.C., August 3-4, 1991. Advance planning is needed for our FOB reunion! Some possibilities are a separate FOB gathering before the main Conference; coordinating an event with the Brazilian Embassy; booking rooms together; holding an informational meeting about Brazil today; planning for a feijoada at a Brazilian restaurant; and more. Your help is needed now to make our reunion a success! If you are interested in planning for this event, please contact:

Lacey Gude
1316 New Hampshire Ave. NW,
#501
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 833-3614

Brazil RPCV Wins Shriver Award for Humanitarian Service

Ken Dunn, who served in Brazil from 1964-66 in the community development program, was honored with the Shriver Award by the National Council of RPCVs, for his work with a nonprofit recycling center in the Chicago. The Resource Center, the agency Dunn established, offers curbside recycling in several communities, recycling some 200 tons of waste monthly. The project began in 1975, when recycling programs were unusual in the U.S., despite the awareness raised by the burgeoning environmental movement.

The Center also runs 4 buyback centers where the homeless can trade bottles and cans they have collected for cash, and has assisted in creating 100 more such programs. Dunn sees his efforts as part of a process of community self-empowerment. He also teaches philosophy part-time at the University of Chicago.

Cartas

Dear Joan,

I'm not very knowledgeable about what is going on here in Brazil regarding adoptions. We have our own personal experience, plus what we happen to see on TV or hear from local people. Most of our experience with the frequency of foreign adoptions has been through people we've known from our church. Most of the foreigners who've adopted Brazilian children are Christians; very few are with the American Embassy. Nevertheless, I have tried to put in writing some thoughts and observations I've had on adoption in Brazil, based on what we've seen here over the past 16 years in Manaus and Brasília.

There seems to be a battle raging here in Brazil over foreign adoptions of Brazilian children. Just recently, it came out on one of the TV stations that a foreign couple had adopted a Brazilian child to take back to their country (not stated) as a "slave;" the child was reportedly beaten to death by the adoptive parents. The reporter was revealing complaints by Brazilians who were saying that the rules for Brazilians to adopt were too rigid in contrast to how easy it is for foreigners to adopt Brazilian children and suggesting that the rules be changed. I personally believe that is a "cop-out" because we do not see Brazilians wanting to adopt their unwanted children. Another popular TV program tried to show a more objective view of foreigners adopting Brazilian children. The commentator went to the US and interviewed American parents and their adopted Brazilian children. The only negative point in the show was the fact (brought out by the interviewer) that some of the children could not speak Portuguese nor did they have much knowledge of their cultural heritage. Yet, this same program made it clear that these children were far better off in the US, than they

would be if left on the streets here in Brazil.

We feel that Brazilians are, on the whole, ashamed of the abandoned child problem here in Brazil and do not know how to correct it. Many are not willing to have any personal involvement in the problem because of superstition, prejudice, and fear due to the belief that these children inherit the despised lower-class mentality, habits, culture, etc, that cannot be altered. There is an underlying fear that these children will grow up to have the same mentality as their birth parents who may have been thieves or prostitutes, etc. Brazil could work to dispel this "bad blood" myth through the media, but we have yet to see it happen. To ease their conscience or fulfill *promessas*, some Brazilian families prefer to "raise" an unwanted child (called a *filho de criação*), rather than adopt. The child is denied the family name and privileges (inheritance) and is often raised as a housemaid or houseboy or is assigned the task of helping look after the family's biological children. Therefore, if the child turns out to be "bad," the family is not responsible.

Whether the reports of baby selling and kidnapping are true...there are isolated cases of this happening, but we do not feel that it is frequent. Of course, any case of baby-selling is blown out of proportion by the media because of the issue of national pride and embarrassment over the problem of abandoned children in this country. There do seem to be recent attempts to improve child welfare in Brazil, but so far it is just "talk" and political ploys to gain popular support. We have not seen any "action" that has made a difference. The problem is just too BIG for a solution in the immediate future.

Just after typing this up, I turned



Cartas

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on the TV just in time to see a report on "Fantástico" about baby trafficking in Salvador, Bahia. Apparently, a former Catholic priest from Italy who is now an attorney in Bahia, has been accused of illegally selling local babies to couples in Italy. The babies were taken from poor families who were willing to give up one or more of their many children for a fee. The mothers who were interviewed all regretted having sold their babies. Of course, the other mothers were not interviewed. It was estimated that some 300 babies had been sent to Italy from that one *bairro* where the ex-priest worked. The complaint on "Fantástico" was that it was done illegally; it was never said that there was anything wrong with these Italians adopting the babies. The point was just that it should not have been done illegally. In fact, the situation was brought to Brazil's attention by the Italian government! This made me think that perhaps baby trafficking is more common here than we are aware of. It's very hard to say. The government is supposed to be studying this problem and coming up with some decisions, at meetings to be held here in Brasília next month.

Abraços,

*Kathy Arias
Brasília*

August 22, 1990

Dear friends,

We have received the two last issues (5 and 6) of "Jornal da Amizade" and have found it very interesting.

We are interested in receiving the "jornal" on a regular basis. Also, it would be good if you could send us the back issues so that we can have a complete collection in our document department.

We are not in a condition to pay for the subscription since we cannot

send any dollars abroad. However, in exchange you can continue using our materials in the "Jornal."

With best wishes,

*Anivaldo Padilha
Communications Department
CEDI (Centro Ecumenico de
Documentação e Informação)
São Paulo*

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the February issue of **Jornal da Amizade** which you sent to our Executive Secretary, Suzanne Hodgman, at University of Wisconsin-Madison Library.

I reciprocate with the June 1990 **SALALM Newsletter** which we have just published. Our annual meeting will be held this year in Rio, from June 3-7.

We certainly would like to have an ongoing exchange of our two newsletters. Please send future copies to me at the above address. Our secretariat is now moving from Madison to the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, but as editor I will continue to handle exchange agreements. Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

*Laurence Hallewell
SALALM Newsletter Editor
Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin
American Library Materials*

Dear friends,

We are in receipt of a Friends of Brazil donation in the amount of \$50.

In the name of the Brazil Network, I thank your organization for your continued support of Brazil Network. The funds will be utilized in our activities promoting social justice and democracy in Brazil, and educating the U.S. public about relevant issues.

Thank you again. Sincerely,

*Karen L. Lombardi
Member, Board of Directors
Brazil Network
Washington, D.C.*

Nossa Gente

CINDY LOCKHART (RN '71-'74) is a nurse in Menlo Park, CA.

DAVID MICHAEL O'GRADY (PA '69-'74) lives in Bragança, Pará, where he is a rice farmer.

MELISSA FOWLER JAMES (PI '73-'75) is a nurse educator in Tulare, CA.

CYNTHIA S. HUSE (MT '69-'71) is a seminary student in St. Paul, MN.

H. ELIZABETH JONES (RJ '63-'65) works as a translator in Racine, WI.

CHARLES & VICKI WILLARD (BA & CE '65-'67) make their home in Fort Myers, FL, where they are, respectively, a school psychologist and a health coordinator with Headstart for children of migrant workers.

SONIA F. ENCINAS (AL '64-'66) teaches 4th grade in Porterville, CA.

MARGARET KLINGENSMITH (AL '74-'76) is a bilingual teacher in Stockton, CA.

ALF LANGLAND (CE '66-'68) is a university administrator in Boise, ID.

KEN & BEV KRUEMPEL (SP '63-'66) live in Ames, IA, where Ken is a university professor and Bev is a career development coordinator.

CHARLES MCKINNEY (MG '62-'64) is a veterinarian in Oakland, CA.

MERRILL WITTMAN (BA '62-'64) is an electrical engineer in Vancouver, British Columbia.

TOM & JARALENE SPRING (MG '67-'69) of Seattle, WA, are, respectively, a public utility administrator and a psychotherapist.

CAROLE JAMES (RJ '63-'65) works as a physical therapist in Middleton, WI.

DOUGLAS WADE (DF '64-'66) is a federal budget officer and is living in Arlington, VA.

Contributors to **JA 7**:

Rosemary Pedro Carvalho, Tom Folan, Lacey Gude, Margaret Marek Rohter, M. Silvia Vellutini Setúbal, João Carlos Setúbal, and Dan Zirker.

Tortura: Nunca Mais?

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disappeared political prisoner in Brazil whose whereabouts were discovered. Two years ago the skeletons of two former leftist militants were uncovered at the same cemetery.

Prior to the September 1990 discoveries, a total of 8 bodies of political prisoners had been uncovered there. In fact, the cemetery administrator Antonio Pires Eustáquio, had been trying for some years to solve the mystery of unaccounted-for burials and discrepancies in cemetery records, and only received permission to conduct this exhumation operation now, after final approval by the office of São Paulo Mayor Luiza Erundina.

It is thought that the victims' bodies were dumped in this out-of-the-way cemetery in attempt to cover the tracks of their torturers and murderers, among them members of the civil and military police, as recounted by the book **Brasil Nunca Mais** (English title: **Torture in Brazil**) published in 1985. A number of the skulls uncovered in Perus contained bullet holes. It appears that the victims were buried under false names, according to cemetery records. An international team of forensic specialists, including U.S. and Argentine scientists, is now trying to identify the remains with the help of family members of the disappeared.

The discovery of the mass grave at Perus came on the heels of two new Amnesty International reports: the first about violence in urban areas in Brazil, and the second about the decimation of street children in many Brazilian cities. (In 1988 Amnesty published reports about rural violence in Brazil.) The Amnesty reports cited many cases of violence, torture, and even murder directed against the disenfranchised sector of the Brazilian population by on- or off-duty members of various police forces or vigi-

lante groups. They also implicated the justice system of Brazil, noting that the perpetrators of most of these crimes were either never identified or went unprosecuted or unpunished by the judiciary across the country. In September President Collor responded with pronouncements that Brazil would not be a nation about which Amnesty International would make reports, and unveiled his administration's plans for a massive child welfare program.

In mid-October, the director of AI's London office publicly apologized to Pres. Collor and the people of Brazil for running a newspaper advertisement, that had appeared two weeks previously, which said "Brazil Resolves the Problem of Abandoned Children: It Kills Them." Ian Martin, the Amnesty official responsible for the ads, said that he hadn't been aware of some of the Collor' government's recent public statements on the matter when the ad went to press, nor had he taken into account recent dialogue between AI and Pres. Collor.

A month after the grisly discovery in Perus, another mass grave was found at Dom Bosco Cemetery. This one contained the remains of 560 children, thought to be the victims of police brutality. This discovery was made by members of a new commission established by São Paulo Mayor Luiza Erundina to investigate the records of the cemetery.

Also in September, *Veja* magazine revealed that soldiers at the Air Force Base in Anápolis, near Goiania, had been imprisoned and tortured by officials who were investigating the theft of some weapons, which the soldiers had been falsely accused of stealing. Pres. Collor reacted swiftly to this news, and demanded an explanation from the base Commander. The Commander then called a press

conference which was aired on national radio and television, and admitted that the allegations were true and that the soldiers had indeed been tortured. The officers responsible for mistreating the soldiers were punished, and the base commander and deputy commander were removed from office. This marked the first time in many years that a high-ranking Brazilian military official publicly acknowledged the occurrence of torture.

from BrazNet, Amnesty International, Alternex, Latinamerica Press, Veja, Latin America Weekly Report, and Torture in Brazil

An Interview with Regina Helena de Oliveira Pedroso of the *Frente Nacional em Defesa dos Direitos da Criança*

by Joan Ramos

[Editor's note: while in Brasília, I was able to meet Ms. Pedroso, who works by day at the state agency Fundação do Serviço Social. As a volunteer, she coordinates the campaign for children's rights legislation. Recently she became an Ashoka Fellow, to aid in this endeavor. Our meeting took place on May 15, 1990. I have translated the highlights for publication.]

Joan Ramos: What is the purpose of this organization, the *Frente Nacional*?

Regina Pedroso: We are working to draft, and promote passage of, specific legislation that will carry out the intent of Article 227 of our new Constitution, which establishes the basic rights of children. Strong and specific legislation is needed so that states and municipalities will begin to act. The biggest problem that we are facing is the lack of understanding nationwide that all children have rights. Up until now, our child welfare legislation (the *Código de Menores*) has only dealt with pathology, that is, with the child who was not in a "regular situation," in a family, or the child who was labelled as a juvenile delinquent. And of course, these laws were aimed only at the children of the poor. The underlying message was that the poor were incompetent to raise their children.

Our fundamental purpose is to develop a new philosophy of human rights, to develop a prevention program that will help to avoid that future generations of children become marginalized, as well as to protect the rights of those already here. We also would like to see child welfare issues and problems handled at the municipal level, so the state and federal bureaucracies could be circumvented,

and local solutions to local problems could be instituted.

JR: What rights of children are stated in the Constitution?

RP: Basically, the Constitutional rights are derived from those enumerated in the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child. These are rights to life, health, adequate diet, education, leisure activities, to learn a profession, to their own cultural heritage, to dignity and respect, to grow up in a family, not in an institution, and to be free from all forms of negligence, discrimination, violence, and other forms of oppression.

There are further provisions that the State has a responsibility to provide health care services, and that NGOs can be involved in developing necessary programs. Special attention is paid to requiring both prevention and treatment of childhood disabilities and drug abuse, and to requiring severe punishment of child abusers.

Child labor provisions state that only children over the age of 14, shall work, and that they shall have the same rights in the workplace as adults, and be guaranteed the right to continue their education.

Inheritance laws were changed so that all children, born in or outside of, a parent's marriage, adopted or biological, will have the same rights and privileges.

The federal government is also charged with setting up rules and regulations governing adoption of Brazilian children by foreigners.

JR: That's a very tall order, to try to effect change in all these areas, especially with limited resources.

RP: That's right. As you can see, we are faced with an enormous task to ensure that these rights are extended to all Brazilian children. The situation here is very, very difficult, as you know. Brazil is a surrealistic country, a country of tremendous contrasts. But we can't lose faith, because so much remains to be done.

I believe that it is possible to make small, incremental changes. I base this on my experience working in São José dos Campos. There we had a staff of 75 working with a group of 2000 children in an orphanage. We succeeded in placing most of them with family members, helping them to learn a profession and get a job. I spent a lot of time training my staff to change their views about these children, about their destiny.

One area in which this worked was in the selection of apprenticeship programs. In the past, the administrators of institutions felt that only they could choose the occupation of their charges; it was very paternalistic. For example, boys could be trained to be street sweepers or trash collectors, girls to be maids. Our idea was that each child had the right to choose an occupation based on his or her own aptitudes and abilities. Of course, currently, some girls and boys choose to become *garis*, as they can, increasingly, get worker's benefits, and so on.

In the area of education alone, we have tremendous obstacles to overcome. Our past Constitution mandated public education for all children between the ages of 7 and 14, but in many parts of the country, less than half the children go to school at all. Even in the cities of the South, where the situation is better, this is a serious problem. We don't have

enough schools to go around, and they function in precarious conditions, with 3 shifts a day.

The health care situation is even more acute: our infant mortality rate has increased in the past decade. The most basic services are not available to the majority of the population. The present rate of malnutrition in Brazil is shocking. And of course, it's the children who suffer the most.

JR: What about children in institutions, and homeless children, street children? How many such children are there in Brazil?

RP: There are no official statistics on how many children are living outside of a family, in any capacity. *[Editor's note: UNICEF figures from 1985 estimated that there were some 12 million abandoned children in Brazil.]* This is another whole area that has reached crisis proportions.

The tradition of orphanages contributes greatly to family break-up. It's gotten to the point that some institutions don't fulfill their objectives, to provide assistance to needy children, but instead need the children there to justify the existence of the institution. Some children are in institutions that actually prohibit contact with families. And others only accept children in specified age ranges, say 0-3, 4-12, and so on. This breaks up sibling groups. Other institutions turn children out once they reach the age of 12, 14, or so. Some of them end up in jail, or else on the streets, because there is no where else for them to go.

Many children are placed in orphanages in the first place because they are the children of single mothers who work as maids. The mothers' employers do not allow them to bring the child with them, there may not be any family members available to care for them, so they end up in institutions. We have a tremendous amount

of education to do with not just with families, with the middle- and upper-class employers, but with the whole government, the judicial system and the police, to solve this problem.

It is a great problem when those responsible for child welfare have an incarceration mentality. Most of the "street children" are not criminals, but they are treated as such. We have had a horrifying increase in the number of cases reported of abuse and murder of street kids *[82 cases in the first six months of 1989]*, often attributed to the police. In fact, Gilberto Dimenstein, a reporter who has been working with us on the campaign, has just published a book about this called **A Guerra dos Meninos: Assassinatos de Menores no Brasil.**

JR: Is there any national-level plan for street children? Last weekend I heard the Chief Juvenile Court Judge of Rio on TV announcing his solution for the problem of street children. He said that what was needed was to round them all up and put them in jail so they could not bother anyone.

RP: No, we have no national plan at the moment. Some of the children themselves, as well as the adults who work with them, have organized their own group. Have you heard of the *Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas da Rua* ?

Judge Libornio Siqueira is well known throughout Brazil for his reactionary ideas about juvenile justice. It's a case of out of sight, out of mind.

In many the large cities there are private programs for street children, run by both religious and secular organizations. Some include meals, housing, job training, health care, etc., but the demand is far greater than the availability of such programs.

We need to invest in prevention. For example, if we could give each

family an income supplement of one minimum salary, we could avoid spending the value of 10 salaries that it costs to keep a child in an institution. And the results for the child would be far different!

JR: You mentioned that the Constitution spoke of regulating the international adoption of Brazilian children. What is the actual situation?

RP: As in many other areas of Brazilian life, we see a situation with both positive and negative aspects. We need such a law to eliminate the traffic of children. In Paraná state, for example, there have been cases of children sold to European families, with the money usually going to the intermediaries here in Brazil.

We need to require that families travel here to receive their child, and that all the necessary legal steps are followed. The resolution of each case is now left up to individual judges. Some of the judges have more than a professional interest in arranging foreign adoptions, because they get free trips to Europe. Of course, in specific cases, foreign adoption can be a great benefit to the children involved, if it is well done. In São Paulo, I personally was involved with arranging a few adoptions to Italy.

This is a problem that needs a domestic solution. New legislation may prohibit international adoption, until the government solves this problem. It's an issue of national pride, a moral failing of our country.

JR: Were children's issues part of your recent presidential election campaign? Has the new President announced his administration's child welfare program?

RP: No, unfortunately. None of the political parties had child welfare issues as part of their platform.

We have also had a great deal of

Interview with Regina Helena de Oliveira

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difficulty in getting union leaders involved in this work. Even when the discussion has centered around child labor laws and protection of child workers, the union leaders have not come to the meetings.

It's too early to know what President Collor plans for child welfare reform. He has spoken about making sweeping improvements in both education and health care services.

JR: How many people are involved in this effort—the Frente Nacional—and what are they doing?

RP: There are only 20 of us in all of Brazil, and we are always trying to build new networks with NGOs, religious and community organizations. We aim to reach key people in the media across the country, as well as to work to educate our legislators. We have produced a number of position papers and video tapes that we send out all over Brazil. Right now, a major focus is to get candidates in the upcoming elections for state offices to include child welfare in their platforms.

We would like to see a Centro de Defesa dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente in every city in Brazil. We want to train attorneys to understand and defend children's rights. Another area we intend to work in, is to develop the concept of foster parents, who will be carefully selected and trained, to care for children in the place of institutions.

Our greatest challenge is develop the means for those of us who are with NGOs to work with the government. We have not had this opportunity in 3 decades, and it's a new area for many of us. But we need to work together to solve the problems of children in Brazil.

We would like to set up here in the Distrito Federal a child welfare pro-

gram that could serve as a model for the rest of Brazil.

JR: What do you see as the role of international organizations in child welfare work in Brazil?

RP: First, let me say that all that we've been able to accomplish currently has been due to the help of international organizations, because of our extreme lack of resources. We greatly value the collaboration of groups like UNICEF, and others. We would like people in other countries to better understand our reality. We need their help to get our work done, but we also feel that change in Brazil must come from within, through the Brazilian NGOs. We need to improve social work training in the field of child welfare, including group work and advocacy. I would be most grateful if you could share this message with social work professional groups in the U.S.

Thank you very much for taking the time to see me, and for your interest in our work. I was acquainted with Peace Corps Volunteers when I worked in Piauí in the 1970's, and was very impressed with that program.

Epilogue: Since this interview took place, Regina Pedroso has become a Special Assistant to the Director of the Centro de Serviços para a Criança e o Adolescente, the federal agency charged by the Collor government to replace the former FUNABEM. She continues to be involved in the efforts of the Frente Nacional.

The package of Children's Rights legislation was passed by Congress in June, and a cabinet-level advisory post, informally called the "Ministério da Criança" was created to coordinate all federally-funded programs that deliver services to children. A

major focus is on securing funding to be able to implement new programs, and to train child welfare workers throughout Brazil.

Regina Pedroso recently traveled to Washington, D.C., where she visited a number of child welfare agencies and training centers, and met with Dennis Hunt, a psychologist who is President of the Washington, DC-Brasília Partners of the Americas chapter. Mr. Hunt has supplied us with this update information, and also spoke of some recent developments planned to help raise funds for the desperately-needed child welfare programs in Brazil. Already operating is a special lottery with scratch-off cards (*raspadinha*) whose proceeds go to children's programs; under consideration is a plan to negotiate a debt-for-child-welfare-aid swap with the World Bank.

Resources: Children's Rights Organizations

Based in Geneva, **Defense for Children International** has branches in more than 20 countries. Carries out research on issues relating to abuse of children's rights, to promote awareness and advocacy around the globe. The Geneva office publishes the quarterly **International Children's Rights Monitor** and the U.S. office publishes **The Children's Tribune**. Also available are an annual report drawn from the group's database on children's rights, and information on legislation around the world.

Defense for Children
International
U.S. Office
210 Forsyth Street
New York, NY 1002
(212) 353-0951



Interview...*from previous page*

CHILDHOPE is a UNICEF program for street-children worldwide, with a major program in Brazil. An English-language newsletter, **Let Us Speak**, carries the stories and pictures of street children themselves, as well as articles on programs in various countries. Brazilian street children have been featured in the recent issues. The newsletter is available at no charge from the address below.

CHILDHOPE Foundation
331 East 38th Street
New York, NY 10016
(212) 938-1422.

The **Movimento Nacional dos Meninos e Meninas da Rua** is the national forum for the Brazilian street kids' movement. Nearly 1 million children and 3000 educators belong to this group, founded in 1985. MNMMR is increasingly becoming a voice for street children across the country, forming a strong special interest group seeking government help in addressing their concerns. Has organized 2 national congresses, as well as represented Brazil at a Latin American Street Kids' Meeting, held recently in Argentina. There are local groups in several Brazilian cities.

Movimento Nacional dos
Meninos e Meninas da Rua
Rua Floriano Peixoto, 85/341
Bairro Santo Antônio, Centro
50.020 Recife, PE
BRASIL

"Ninguém chama filho de rico de menor. Filho de gente abastada ou da classe média é criança..."

*Heloneida Studart
Deputada Federal do PT
2 de maio de 1990, em O Dia*

Meninos do Brasil

They are equal according to the law, but that's where the equality ends. Brazil's 58 million children can be divided into two groups: those who have a home, family, health and education, but who fear for their safety on the streets and then there are the 45 million who have almost nothing, and who many times, make the street their home. 75% of the assaults committed in the city of Rio are done by youngsters. In the state of Rio with a population of 15 million, there are two million needy youngsters, and of these, 200,000 are literally homeless.

Millions of families exist with less than two minimum monthly salaries of less than \$100. Only 30% of the Brazilian population is said to regularly have food, clothing, education, health, transportation, and a place to live. 75% of the population is malnourished and the housing deficit is about 10 million dwellings. At the end of 1988 in the state of Pernambuco alone, there were 500,000 families without roofs over their heads.

For the poor youngster, the only "status" he may ever attain is that of belonging to one of the bands of *trombadinhas*.

According to the January, 1990 IPEA/UNICEF publication "A Criança no Brasil: O que fazer?", the North-

east in 1987 had approximately 62.4% of its families below the poverty level, which meant that the Northeast held 47% of the country's total poverty.

The seriousness of the living conditions of Brazil's children can be seen in the high child mortality numbers. For every 1,000 children who are born, 65 die before the age of one. According to 1986 statistics from both UNICEF and the Brazilian government, in the Northeast's urban areas, the poorer population's infant mortality rate is around 125 per 1,000 while in the more favored areas (where the average income is above the equivalent of five minimum salaries), the infant mortality rate is 50 per 1,000. One of the principal reasons for the high infant mortality rate is the lack of basic sanitation. More than 60% of the children less than four years old live with inadequate conditions of sanitation and in the Northeast, that percentage reaches a high of 85%. Even in the more developed areas of the Southeast, the sanitation problems are alarming. In the São Paulo municipality, about 40% of the population does not have running water, 65% does not have access to sewers and only 4.5 % of the water consumed receives some type of treatment.

Expresso, 9/6/1990

Dom Helder Câmara to Visit U.S.

Dom Helder Câmara, the now 81 years old, retired Archbishop of Recife and Olinda, who is internationally known as champion of the poor in Brazil, will visit the Southwestern U.S. in the New Year. Dom Helder is slated to visit Albuquerque, New Mexico on January 17-22, 1991 after a stop in Houston. He will deliver a speech at the University of New Mexico, celebrate Mass with the St. Martin's Church Homeless Friends program,

and visit with organizers of the Children's Peace Statue project, which memorializes the link between Hiroshima and Los Alamos. In addition, Dom Helder plans to participate in the local Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration, and to read some of his poetry at a special fundraising dinner. Those interested in attending or helping with his visit should contact the New Mexico Conference of Churches at (505) 255-1509.

What is the Reality of the Adoption of Brazilian Children by Foreigners? A Look at Four RPCV Families

Joan Ramos

International adoption, with its potential benefits to children, has been surrounded by controversy in Brazil. The numbers of children who have been adopted from Brazil in the U.S. appear to be small, particularly as compared to those from nations like Colombia, who have chosen to utilize international placement to help solve their child welfare problem. National pride is at stake, as the existence of international adoption suggests that a nation is unable or unwilling to care for its most vulnerable members.

Some opponents may ascribe motives of cultural imperialism to the practice. Other "entrepreneurs," in the worst sense of the word, literally take advantage of the desperation of their fellow citizens, usually impoverished young women, and the converse desperation of infertile but well-off foreigners, to reap personal gain from the illegal transfer of children between nations.

The ethnic diversity of Brazil has sometimes led to a sordid situation where certain intermediaries arrange questionable adoptions of children of European heritage from the southern states, while children of color may languish in institutions or on the streets. Middle-class Brazilians, in general, follow the same adoption patterns prevalent in countries like the U.S., where most prefer to adopt same-race infants. Legitimate adoption programs, through both public and private agencies, exist across Brazil, and some of these programs do place children with parents in other countries as well as in Brazil, most notably in the U.S., Europe, and Scandinavia. The work of these programs, is often ignored or misunderstood because of the exaggerated media attention that goes to the headline-making abuses that unfortunately

occur. While Brazil has long had a national adoption law, there has not been any national policy. The federal government is beginning to address the issue by planning to regulate international adoptions, as mandated in the new Constitution, but specific plans remain in the future.

A number of former Peace Corps Volunteers who worked in Brazil are parents of some of the estimated 1000 children who been adopted by U.S. citizens in the the past decade. A look at our families can shed some light on the realities of international adoption.

The families who have shared their stories here all served in Brazil in the late 1960's to mid-1970's and have adopted children now ranging in age from 2 to 11. All of us adopted well after our Peace Corps service, for a variety of reasons, including the fact that the Brazilian adoption law required couples to be married for at least 5 years, and that one spouse be over the age of 30. While each family is different, all of us came to adopt Brazilian children as an indirect result of our experiences in the Peace Corps.

When Scott and I became volunteers in 1973, we had been married just a year, and were actively avoiding parenthood. At the favela school in Rio where I worked, I was asked to consider adopting a 5 year old boy who needed a new home. After much deliberation, we decided that we just weren't ready to parent, but kept alive the the notion of adopting a Brazilian child. When later years brought us a series of failed pregnancies, adoption was a natural choice.

In 1979, just as we were investigating adoption, Scott was invited to return to his Peace Corps site for a short-term position. Once there, friends of friends in a public welfare

agency arranged for us to adopt our daughter Lia Solana, as a newborn, in Fortaleza. A year later, we again returned to Brazil, this time to Manaus and INPA. The following year we adopted our month-old son Jesse Silvano, through the state child welfare agency. We remained in Brazil until the children were 4 and 2, respectively.

Because we valued a bilingual, multi-cultural lifestyle before we became parents, this has always been a natural part of our family life. We believe that it is very important for our children to have a strong ethnic identity and full knowledge of their Brazilian heritage, but we don't want them to feel that they are "ethnic artifacts" from a museum shelf. We live in an integrated urban area, where our children experience the U.S. as a multi-cultural nation, and know Brazilians as family friends. We maintain contact with their adoption workers and close friends in Brazil.

Jorge and Kathy Arias were volunteers in Manaus in 1974-75. They have remained in Latin America since their Peace Corps days, and have 4 children: 15-year old David, 13-year old Ana and 11-year old Sara, who were born to them, and 7-year old Tamara, who joined the family through adoption. All of the children were born in Manaus. The family now lives in Brasília.

While they had not made any advance plan to adopt, a set of special circumstances led to their adoption of Tamara as a newborn, arranged by members of their church and finalized by the Juizado de Menores in Manaus. Tamara's birthmother, faced with an untimely pregnancy, chose adoption and chose Jorge & Kathy to be her baby's par-

RPCV Families

from previous page

ents. All three believe that their Christian faith was an important element in this plan. They remain in contact with Tamara's birthmother, a fact which many outside the family cannot understand. Jorge and Kathy envision a move to the U.S. in the future, with an eye to expanded educational opportunities for their children. They will plan to live in a cosmopolitan community where multicultural families are not the exception.

They feel that it is very important for parents to help internationally adopted children develop an awareness of their original language, culture and roots. In the case of their own family, they have been fortunate to live in Brazil during most of Tamara's life, and their 3 biological children share this experience. They feel that foreigners should be allowed to legally adopt Brazilian children, as long as domestic adoption is not possible for all the children in need.

Kathy Kaharick Maneese and her husband Bill Maneese, of Pittsburgh, PA, had planned since their marriage to adopt and not to have biological children. Kathy had been a Peace Corps volunteer in Goiania from 1967-69, and it was on a return visit to Brazil that a friend from her PC days suggested that they adopt a Brazilian child. After much contemplation about raising Brazilian children in the U.S., Kathy and Bill decided to proceed. Kathy's friend's brother was a Juvenile Court Judge, and he helped arrange the adoption of their two daughters through the state child welfare agency. Liana, now 6, and Kayla, now 4, were each adopted at the age of 11 months.

When Kathy and Bill were notified of each child's availability for placement, they traveled to Brazil to complete the adoption proceedings, in Goiania and in Rio. Kathy feels that

her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement has been very important in determining her philosophy now as a parent. They have chosen to live in an integrated area of Pittsburgh, and have adult friends and neighbors of all races.

They are aware of both cultural and racial issues in raising their daughters, and feel that it is the parent's obligation to provide opportunities for their child to develop a strong sense of ethnic identity, including language. Kathy remarked that, while for her it was natural to adopt from Brazil, the principle would be the same if their daughters were from Poland, Mozambique, Korea or any other nation. She feels that it is especially important for Caucasian parents who adopt Brazilian children who are ethnically multiracial to help the children feel comfortable with their heritage, including acknowledgement of their African roots and the fact that many in the U.S. will see them as only African-American.

In view of the ongoing controversy over international adoptions from Brazil, Kathy hopes that people with positive, realistic intentions will continue to be permitted to adopt, because the need is so great. She'd like to see an expansion of domestic adoption in Brazil as well, and an elimination of the sordid marketeering aspects.

Chris and Alan Fitz were married in 1974, shortly before joining the Peace Corps, where they worked in Belo Horizonte. Their experiences, particularly those of Chris who worked in a childcare center, led them to adopt a son from Recife when they found themselves childless after 14 years of marriage.

In 1988 they adopted 9-month old Jason Aleshandre through the Juvenile Court in Recife, with the aid of a U.S. liaison to children's home there. They received the assignment of their son in the U.S., then traveled

to Recife to finalize his adoption, then to Rio to obtain a U.S. entry visa. The entire process, which took 5 weeks. During that time, their family was an object of curiosity to passersby, particularly because of Jason's Afro-Brazilian heritage, but all the attention they received was positive. At one point, they were filmed and interviewed by a reporter for a local TV station, who came to the Juvenile Court precisely to find a foreign family who was adopting a Brazilian child. They hoped that they played a small part in enhancing the media image of international adoption in Recife.

They hope to help Jason learn about his Brazilian heritage and language at home, and plan a return trip to Brazil when he is a pre-teen. The Fitzes live in Clinton, WA, a semi-rural island of Puget Sound where the population is rather homogeneous. So far, they have not encountered any problems of prejudice towards Jason, now age 2, or to their family unit.

Chris was impressed with the great care and professionalism exhibited by the Juvenile Court in Recife during the entire process. She also had heard of adoption scandals in that area, and felt that the officials they dealt with kept ethical principles at the forefront, and did not allow prospective parents to choose a child, nor to select one on the basis of race or sex.

Our experiences illustrate that child welfare programs, of which adoption is a component, do exist in Brazil, and that media attention to adoption abuses masks the real story of Brazilians who are working to help their children. Our families are an ordinary part of the increasingly multicultural fabric of U.S. society. While our past experiences in Brazil set us apart from the general public, we hope that by sharing our stories we can make a difference in promoting understanding about international adoption.

Adoption in Brazil

Informal adoptions have occurred in Brazil from time immemorial, and among all ethnic groups. These adoptions have taken many forms, ranging from fulfillment of *compadrio*, or godparenthood obligations; to raising a non-relative child as a servant or *filho de criação*; to raising the offspring of relatives or neighbors as children in the family; and many other variations in between. When the national adoption code was drawn up in the 20th century, it stipulated that, in the case of couples, prospective adoptive parents had to be married at least 5 years and that one spouse had to be over the age of 30. Single individuals had to be at least 25 (this was not so much because many singles in the contemporary sense wished to adopt, but was a mechanism to enable adoptions in pre-divorce Brazil). These regulations were out of sync with the realities of the age structure of the Brazilian population, which favors early marriages, so many prospective parents were barred from the legal adoption process.

Classes of adoption were also specified, and couples who already had biological children were not able to receive a decree of "complete adoption" for an adopted child, who also was not entitled to the same inheritance as any child born to the parents.

Thus, experienced parents who could be a resource for the many children in institutions could not qualify. A *jeito brasileiro* to circumvent the law developed, although it was technically illegal: adoptive parents simply registered the birth of the child, as they would for a biological child, at a notary's office, and received a birth certificate naming themselves as parents. No one knows how many adoptions were done in this manner.

The Constitution of 1988 ad-

ressed the issue of adoption, both domestic and international, as being in need of regulation, and the resulting *Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente* of 1990 is the result. The Constitution dropped the distinction between "classes" of adoption, and the new law, which went into effect on October 15, changed the requirements for adoptive parents. The age requirement was dropped to 21 years, and the length-of-marriage requirement dropped altogether. Special regulations were established for international adoption: foreigners adopting a child under the age of 2 will be required to undergo a 2-week observation period, when they will be caring for the child, supervised by Juvenile Court authorities, before their adoption process (of about one month) can begin. Foreign parents adopting a child over the age of 2 will be required to complete a 4-week observation period with the child before any adoption proceedings can begin.

At this time, it is unknown how these procedures will be implemented or adhered to across Brazil. According to Mike Noah, representative for Brazil, Guatemala, and Costa Rica for Holt International Children's Services of Eugene, OR, this new law clearly seems to be an attempt to discourage the international adoption of Brazilian children. In the past few years, Holt Services has worked with Brazilian Juvenile Courts to place children, or groups of siblings, with U.S. families. It is unknown if they will be able to continue to do so.



Statistically speaking, it is not known just how many Brazilian children have been adopted by overseas parents. The United States has stringent requirements for international adoptions, which include authorization by authorities in the parent's U.S. state of residence and by the State Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, before an entry visa for the child will be issued. From 1978-1988, approximately 1125 visas were issued for adopted Brazilian children to enter the U.S., out of an annual total of 5,000-10,000 (mostly from Asia) for this period. This contrasts to some 6400 visas issued to adopted Colombians for this same time period. It is not known how many Brazilian children have been adopted, by legal or other means, by European families, because most of the European countries do not require entry visas for children. It is thought that the incidence of the adoption of Brazilian children by Europeans, Scandinavians, and Israelis, is much greater than that by U.S. citizen families.

Friends of Brasil cannot provide information about the adoption of Brazilian children. Those interested can contact the following organizations:

International Concerns
Committee for Children (ICCC)
911 Cypress Drive
Boulder, CO 80303

Latin American Adoptive Families
(LAAF)
40 Upland Road
Duxbury, MA 02332

Please send them a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply.

Organizations of Interest to FOB Members

Christian Children's Fund

Since 1952 the Christian Children's Fund (founded in 1938) has worked in Brazil, sponsoring child and family welfare services in some of the poorest regions of Minas Gerais and Ceará states. Their projects are primarily funded by "sponsorships" wherein Brazilian and foreign sponsors direct donations to a specific project, and are "matched" with a child enrolled in the project. The individual child does not receive direct donations; these go to benefit all the children in a given project, but the child does exchange correspondence with the sponsor.

CCF is also involved with community development, health promotion, and income-generating projects with adults in the areas served and works with other NGO groups in Brazil on child welfare issues. It is a Christian nonsectarian organization, and has no religious requirements for donors or recipients.

In the Belo Horizonte region, health programs are carried out at CCF's child development/child care centers, and include health education for parents. Parents at these centers have been instrumental in promoting access to public education for older children and convinced authorities to re-open schools which had been closed. In March of 1990 a Family Agricultural School was opened with 60 5th-8th grade students, who spend alternate weeks in class and at home implementing the farming techniques they have learned. Another major project has been in the area of environmental conservation, ranging from educating residents of the Vale de Jequitinhonha about hazardous gold mining practices that have contaminated their water supply to involvement in urban cleanup. Other projects include support of micro-enterprises such as broom-making, com-

munity bakeries, and sewing shops, and the transfer of a Family Health Project formerly run by CCF to community control.

In the Fortaleza region, a new child development center (CDI) was opened in Lagamar, and a small land reform project realized in the past year. In São Luis do Curú, 665 hectares of land were purchased through a special fund and donated to the families of subsistence farmers, who are being assisted by CCF and the State. This marked the first time that a non-governmental entity has distributed land in Ceará.

Other projects located in the periphery of Fortaleza include peer tutoring and drop-out prevention, environmental education, maternal-child health work in the Verdes Mares favela, and a program for street children. The income-generating projects for adults were severely affected by the inflationary situation and the freeze on bank accounts by the Collor administration.

For complete information about CCF's programs in Brazil, contact:

J. Antonio Ramos, Latin America
Regional Coordinator
Christian Children's Fund
203 East Cary Street
Box 26227
Richmond, VA 2361-6227
(804) 644-4654

Meninas da Rua

Ana Maria Vasconcelos, a 34-year old feminist attorney, created the Meninas da Rua program to meet the needs of homeless girls in Recife who are dually victimized by street life. She found that they often fled abusive homes, sometimes as early as age 6 or 7, or were cast out for economic reasons. Then, while living on the streets, they not only had to fight for survival by techniques that led them to crime, particularly prosti-

tution, but also were subject to sexual abuse by the law enforcement officers who apprehended them. If arrested, they were sent to a prison-like detention center, then returned to the streets, in a seemingly-endless cycle of despair and degradation. There are estimated to be several hundred girls living on the streets of Recife. Statistics from UNICEF report that several million girls under the age of 15 are engaged in prostitution in Brazil.

Ms. Vasconcelos started a home for these girls both as a shelter and an education center. Other types of programs to aid "delinquent" or homeless children seemed to ignore the special needs and vulnerability of girls on the street, a factor, Ms. Vasconcelos believes, that stems from a macho cultural bias. She and the other workers offer the girls stability and care that many have not known before, and at the same time work with them to help them on the path to a more viable future, whether through formal education or vocational training. Other areas of focus are legal aid for girls who have been arrested, and prevention work with the mother, daughters, and granddaughters of prostitutes, with a goal of helping them learning other means of support. In 1988 she was selected as an Ashoka Fellow, to receive a grant for a period of 3 years to aid this work.

Those interested in learning more about the Meninas da Rua project, can contact :

Ana Maria Pacheco de
Vasconcelos
Rua do Paissandu, 200/301
Boa Vista
50.000 Recife, PE
(081) 221-1471

Novidades em Leitura

A Guerra dos Meninos: Assassinatos de Menores no Brasil by Gilberto Dimenstein, released May 1990 by Editora Brasiliense, is a chilling documentary about the lives, and deaths, of street children at the hands of public authorities and "death squads." Dimenstein a noted investigative reporter and author, traveled around Brazil to interview adults who work with street kids, and the children themselves. The first-hand accounts and commentary of the text, are accompanied by black and white photographs which depict the realities of life of street kids across Brazil. More than a documentary, this book represents a call to action for Brazilians with a social conscience.

The April 5, 1990 issue (vol.22, no.12) of **Latinamerica Press** was entitled **A Gamble with the Future: Children in Latin America**. Included are articles about the grave problems facing children in all the nations of the continent, including Brazil, and information about efforts to improve the situation.

Brazil's Thriving Environmental Movement, by Nira Broner Worcman appeared on pages 42-51 of **Technology Review** for October 1990. Worcman, a Brazilian journalist, was a Knight Science Journalism Fellow in the U.S. last year. Her article traces the history of environmentalism in Brazil, starting in response to the Brazilian military government's reactionary pronouncements at the first UN Conference on the Environment in 1972, and continuing to protest the destructive urban industrial development policies and mega-projects in the Amazon financed by international banks. Developments to the present are discussed, with emphasis on issues, organizations, and personali-

ties such as federal Representative Fábio Feldman and the appointment of activist José Lutzemberger as Secretary of Environmental Affairs by President Collor.

Rainforest Action Network has recently published **Amazonia: Voices from the Rainforest**, a resource and action guide to organizations, both overseas and in the Amazon, that are working to stop deforestation. Over 250 organizations are profiled, including indigenous groups, rubber tappers, environmental groups, and more. A data section includes maps, statistics, photographs and text about relevant issues. **Voices from the Rainforest** is available for \$10 (\$13 international airmail) from:

RAN
301 Broadway, Suite A
San Francisco, CA 94133
(415) 398-4404.

Brazil's Debt and Deforestation: A Global Warning by Sandra Steingraber and Judith Hurley is a new "Food First Action Alert". This 6-page paper discusses the environmental, land use, and human rights and political issues that confront Brazil today, with a focus on the tremendous inequalities for Brazil's people that bring matters to a head. Information about organizations in Brazil and in the U.S. working for change is included, along with a resource list. Copies of **Brazil's Debt and Deforestation...** (\$2 for 5 copies; bulk discounts) are available from:

Institute for Food & Development
Policy
145 Ninth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
(800) 888-3314
(415) 864-8555

New books about issues in the Amazon region are:

- **The Burning Season: The Murder of Chico Mendes and the Fight for the Amazon Rain Forest** (Houghton, Mifflin, 1990) by Andrew Revkin
- **The Decade of Destruction** (Henry Holt, 1990) by Adrian Cowell. A 4-part television series by the same name aired on Public Broadcasting Stations across the U.S. in the month of September.

Brady Tyson's article **Divided Nation, Divided Church** appeared in the Winter/Spring 1990 issue of **Hemisphere**. Discussed were the divisions between the progressive and conservative branches of the Catholic Church in Brazil, and how these divisions were played out in last year's Presidential election campaign.

The Emílio Goeldi Museum in Belém has produced an attractive and informative set of coloring books about Amazonian natural history and anthropology. Intended for children, the illustrations and text will be of interest to adults as well. The series is entitled "Para Você Colorir" and titles available include:

- Vol.1 Mamíferos da Amazônia
- Vol.2 Frutas da Amazônia
- Vol.3 Aves da Amazônia
- Vol.4 Brinquedos Indígenas na Amazônia
- Vol.5 Artefatos [dos] Índios Tukano

Inquiries should be sent to:

Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi
Parque Zoobotânico
Av. Magalhães Barata, 376
São Braz
66.040 Belém, Pará, BRASIL

Soul Food in the New World: Brazilian Blacks Preserve their West African Heritage in their Foods, by Raymond Sokolov, is the title of an article that appeared in the August 1990 issue of **Natural History**. The origin of the Bahian *acarajé* is traced to its predecessor, the *akara* fritter of Nigeria. General patterns of transfer of foodstuffs between continents across the centuries are also covered. Traditional recipes for both

Noticiário - News From the International Press

Chico Mendes Murder Trial Delayed Yet Again

The trial of the accused murderers of Chico Mendes in Xapuri, Acre, which had been set for June 1990, was scheduled to begin on October 25. Darli Alves da Silva and his son Darci Pereira da Silva are to stand trial for the murder of Mendes which occurred in December of 1988. However, by early October, the October 25th court date was cancelled by Judge Adair Longhini, who claimed that the demands of the elections now in progress would keep him from obtaining the necessary police reinforcements for the trial, and that the location would need to be changed to a gymnasium that is still under construction. Political observers speculate that Judge Longhini may be under pressure from those who do not want to see the assassins of Mendes brought to justice. Until now, Judge Longhini's actions relative to the case have been considered beyond reproach.

In a related development, a police official in Acre was murdered on October 14, shortly after he made public an escape attempt planned by the accused assassins of Chico Mendes. Antonio Gomes Campos, director of the Acre State Penitentiary where the father-and-son suspects are incarcerated, was watching television in his house when he was fatally shot by a gunman who escaped on the back of a motorcycle. Campos had received numerous death threats since Darli and Darci da Silva—who had also offered him money to arrange for their escape—were imprisoned. No arrests have been made in the assassination of Campos.

Contacto, 15 October 1990 and Alternex

Brazilians Abroad

When economic conditions in Brazil began to worsen as the decade of the 1980's came to a close, increasing numbers of Brazilians began seeking opportunities abroad. Two highly distinct groups are part of this trend: Japanese-Brazilians from Southern Brazil who take high-paying, temporary, manual labor jobs in Japan; and young people from Governador Valadares, Minas Gerais, who work in service-sector jobs, often for below minimum wage, in Boston, MA, and vicinity. While college-educated, upper and middle-class Brazilians often can make plans to emigrate to countries like the U.S., Canada, Australia, and in the European Community, others usually plan to return to Brazil once they have saved sufficient sums.

Before leaving Brazil, the mostly youthful Japanese-Brazilians often secure 2-year contracts to work in factories in Japan, where they can earn as much as \$2000 a month. However, they usually are considered to be outsiders by Japanese nationals, and take the dirty jobs that are usually relegated to guest-workers from other Asian countries. This trend represents a reversal of the pattern of the first half of this century when Japanese citizens immigrated to Brazil in large numbers in search of opportunities not available at home. Today there are some 1.2 million people of Japanese descent in Brazil, mostly



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from page 9

in the South. Some return to Brazil, using their savings to invest in small businesses.

Others stay on in Japan, where the high wages compensate for poor working conditions. Those without relatives in Japan tend to unite for mutual support, and there is now a Portuguese-language newspaper geared to this group, who may number close to 20,000 or more, based on visa figures from the Japanese Consulate in São Paulo.

Most of the young men who leave Governador Valadares have only an elementary school education and do not speak English, so their options are limited. Because many have stayed in the U.S. without authorization, they usually can only find jobs in cleaning and food-service and are sometimes paid less than the minimum wage by unscrupulous employers. Those who complain are threatened with deportation. Still, they earn much more than they did in Brazil, so for many the risk is worth it.

It is estimated that some 50,000 Valadarenses are living in the Boston-Danbury-Newark area, including some families. They apparently chose to move to these areas because of their long-established Portuguese-speaking communities; however, there is often little contact between permanent Portuguese-American residents and the more transient Brazilians. Businesses have sprung up in these areas both to offer Brazilian goods and to send dollars to families back home. An estimated 1-2 million dollars are dispatched to Gov. Valadares each month, and a real estate boom there has ensued. It appears that the economic recession and harsh winters in New England may now be encouraging some of the Valadarenses to return home. A Brazilian community newspaper and a social service agency are struggling to survive.

New York Times, Veja, Contacto, The Brazilians; personal communications with Tom Folan, and Ophelia Steadman of the Greater Boston Brazilian Alliance

New Species of Monkey Discovered

Biologists Vanessa Guerra Person and Maria Lúcia Lorini of the Natural History Museum of Curitiba announced the discovery of the existence of a previously unknown species of monkey, the black-faced tamarin (mico-leão). This species, a relative of the golden tamarin which is an endangered species found in Brazil's cloud forest areas, was seen on a small island off the coast of Paraná state.

Veja, 27 June 1990

Brazil Uses DDT to Combat Amazon Malaria Surge

The Brazilian government has begun a \$200 million effort to control the outbreak of malaria that has plagued the Amazon region in recent years. The causes of the surge in new cases of malaria are directly tied to the government's Amazon development policies, and the use of DDT, a chemical banned in more than 40 nations because of its toxic effects on the food chain, seems to be a stop-gap measure to confront a desperate situation. Malaria had been considered under control in Brazil in past decades, both in the south and along the coast, and the long-term inhabitants of Amazonia were considered to have

Cajú/Marañón/ Merrey/Acaiu/ Cashew

In northern Brazil, prior to Portuguese settlement, the Tupi Indians ordered their lives around the *acaiú*. The fruit's ripening was used to mark the passing of time. In the harvest month of December, it became the Tupi's main diet staple. Possession of the trees was always a source of prestige and power and a cause for wars among the tribes of the region.

The Portuguese modified the name to cajú, and by the early 1500's were exporting it to their maritime empire. By mid 1500's, cashew trees could be found in Goa, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Angola. The people of India and Africa used the nut in their diets in the preparation of sauces, drinks and sweets. Fishing nets were greased with the glue and juices from the rind and the fishermen also treated canoes, boats, floors, etc. with the oil derived from the nut's shell.

The Portuguese in Brazil cut down the cashew trees and planted sugarcane instead. In the Amazon, the cashew trees remained. Popular belief holds that chewing the leaves prevents tooth decay. The juice from the fruit is believed to stimulate the brain, improve memory, relieve fatigue, and is commonly used to treat dysentery.

60 years ago, the English and North Americans rediscovered the cajú and converted it into an important commercial product which today accounts for over 600,000 tons of nuts per year. Production is divided rather evenly between Brazil and Portugal's other former colonies in Africa and India. Major buyers of the cashew nut are the industrialized nations of the United States, England, Germany, Japan and Russia.

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become naturally immune to the disease. However, when the intensive Amazon development plans began in the early 1980's, a tremendous transmigration of people was coupled with creation of physical conditions (clearing of land, digging mining pits and building roads) which favored breeding conditions for the malaria-bearing mosquito. In addition, when large groups of former farmers, prospectors, ranch hands and others leave the region, they bring with them the malarial infection to other regions of the country where the disease had once been eradicated. Observers from the World Wildlife Fund see this situation as a further flaw in the World Bank-funded Amazonian development plans, while World Bank officials de-emphasize both their agency's responsibility for ill-conceived planning and the present problems of DDT use in Brazil.

While there is a health education component to the present anti-malaria campaign, as well as a one-time effort to eliminate mosquito breeding sites, there are no built-in incentives to for the residents of Amazonia to continue non-chemical efforts to eradicate the disease. In China, for example, labor-intensive community efforts wiped out the disease (the same approach was also used for schistosomiasis eradication) and in some areas of India (a country which once used DDT heavily, and is now paying the price in health impairment) potential breeding pools were turned into prawn ponds. No such planning is currently occurring in Brazil.

World Watch July/August 1990

On High

Architect Joel Ghivelder is overseeing the restoration of the statue Christ the Redeemer, a project that began last March. The statue, 92 feet tall with a 92 foot arm span, stands more than 2,300 feet above the Atlantic on Corcovado Mountain. The statue will be 59 years old in October when the work is scheduled for completion. Globo is underwriting the \$2 million project to celebrate its own 25th anniversary, along with Shell Brasil, the local affiliate of the oil company. Workers are removing the soapstone exterior from the damaged areas, replacing the misshapen iron mesh and rebuilding the exterior with newly quarried soapstone. Finally, a layer of water-repellent silicon will be applied to prevent any future damage.

N.Y. Times Magazine, July 22, 1990

Eris: O Homem que controla os bilhões congelados no Brasil

Ibrahim Eris, um turco naturalizado brasileiro, de 45 anos, é o homem que têm nas mãos a torneira capaz de irrigar a economia que o Plano Collor secou. Ele é o maior responsável pela actual reforma monetária e controla os cerca de 115 milhões de dólares sugados do mercado financeiro. Ele está no Brasil há 17 anos e já pode ser considerado um dos nomes mais importantes do novo governo. Ibrahim Eris é o presidente do Banco Central do Brasil.

Diário de Notícias, Lisboa

Plight of the Yanomami

In the 1970's the territory of the Yanomami people in Roraima began to be encroached by the construction of the Perimetral Norte highway. The situation became far worse in the '80's when huge reserves of gold and cassiterite were discovered in the area. As the decade opened, some 20,000-45,000 prospectors (*garimpeiros*) flocked to the area, invading traditional Yanomami lands, bringing with them a host of formerly unknown diseases and firearms for "resolving" conflicts. The effects on the Yanomami people have amounted to genocide.

The preliterate Yanomami people have been known to live in the area for at least 1000 years, where they have been able to survive by subsistence agriculture and tool-making. The tremendous influx of *garimpeiros* to their habitat, particularly in the Surucucus region on the border with Venezuela, has seriously comprised the Yanomamis' survival. In some locals, the Yanomami have abandoned their traditional fishing and agriculture, and now depend on the *garimpeiros* for food.

In 1988, the Sarney administration decreed that "national parks" be established in the area, with prospecting reserves demarcated within the Yanomami territory. This decree greatly increased the *garimpeiro* population in the region, and it was then that airstrips were built to allow access to mineral deposits.

When Pres. Collor took office in March of 1990, he promised to expel the *garimpeiros* from the Yanomami territory, and announced plans to dynamite their airstrips. This action was delayed several times due to heavy rains and lack of funding; many more clandestine airstrips were built during the interim. David Kopenawa, Yanomami leader who won the Glo-

bal 500 award and one of the few Portuguese-speaking representatives of his people, lamented that millions of cruzeiros were spent by the government to purchase dynamite, while his people continued to die. Approximately two Yanomami die every day. Even those involved in the government's "Operation Free Jungle," admit that merely exploding the airstrips will resolve nothing.

The government Indian affairs agency, FUNAI, maintains a health post in Rio Branco, where the sickest of the indigenous people can be taken for treatment. However, the FUNAI clinic is chronically short of medicines and food. When prospectors' planes are used to bring in medical supplies and food, they are often used to carry out cassiterite.

Recently, the federal government released 13 million cruzeiros to combat onchocerciasis, or river blindness, a malady that has affected some 75% of the Yanomami for decades. However, river blindness is not the cause of the rampant deaths presently occurring. These are caused by malaria, tuberculosis, chicken pox, and malnutrition, but no campaign has been mounted to combat them.

In late September, Cantido Guerreiro, the newly appointed president of FUNAI, revealed the Collor administration's new plan for the Yanomami territory: to demarcate 15 "islands" for use by the Yanomami within their present locale. These "islands" will vary in size from 2.4 million hectares to 9.4 million hectares each. Guerreiro commented that the sites "only seem small on paper, and that it is possible to maintain the Yanomami culture within each site." The area surrounding the Yanomami "islands" will be open for mineral extraction activity.

Three main Yanomami groups

can now be identified. They include:
1) 4000 who live in the central region of the present reserve, close to the Serra do Surucucu. This is the group that has become most dependent on the *garimpeiro* provisions, and who suffer when the *garimpeiros* leave the area;

2) 3000 people who live in the north region of the reserve, away from the *garimpeiro* settlements and from FUNAI contact;

3) Another 3000 live in the south zone of the reserve, close to the borders of Roraima and Amapá. This is the group that has had prolonged contact with FUNAI and with both Protestant and Catholic missionaries.

In Brazil, the human rights group Ação pela Cidadania, which unites religious, labor, scientific and anthropological organizations, has mounted a campaign to alert the public about the dire plight of the Yanomami, and to demand that immediate action be taken by the government. The Comissão pela Criação do Parque Yanomami was organized in 1978 to lead an international effort to help the Yanomami retain their lands. CCPY had been sending medical teams to Yanomami territory since that time, but the groups workers were expelled from the region in 1988 by the military. For more information, write:

CCPY

Rua Manoel da Nobrega, 111,

3rd floor, cj. 32

04.001 São Paulo, SP, BRASIL

(11) 289-1200 or 289-6997

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Amazon Study Trip

FOB member Bob Crites (MT & ES '64-'66) will be leading a 10-day study tour of the Brazilian Amazon from July 3-14, 1991. Participants will travel a 300-mile stretch of the Amazon and Rio Negro rivers, where they will learn about the natural history and social anthropology of the region. Academic credit is available. For complete information, contact Bob directly at:

4001 Potter St. #55
Eugene, OR 97405
(503) 686-1396.



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