The enclosed sample of tea is from the NuwaraEliya region of Sri Lanka, a grade known as BOP--broken orange pekoe. It may not prove to be exactly the tea we select for Samusala, but it is of the quality and orade we are considering most seriously.


Inhale the aroma. Brew it up. Let it steep for four minutes. Taste it first without milk or honey. Let us know what you think.

Regards, and thank you for your continued support.
The managers of Equal Exchange,
Rink Dickinson Jonathan Rosenthal Michael Rozyne

Drawings by Sue Niewiarowski
Typesetting by Xanadu Graphics
'"The happiest moment of my life was when they told us, 'We have land for you,'" Bonifacio Orosco Mendez smiles as he remembers. "We could work here, live here, and it won't belong to the state or any other boss. If there is a job to be done, we come to agreement among all of us how it will be done."

Bonifacio never expected to have land of his own. His father had owned a small farm in Nicaragua's coffee-growing central regioni of Matagalpa, where he grew up. But his father abandoned the family when Bonifacio was very young, married another woman, and left the farm to his new family in his will.

Bonifacio was ten and working as a shoeshine boy the year his mother died. That same year he met a man who offered him work if he would go to the Atlantic coast. "I said, 'Let's go,'" he recalls. "I didn't like life with my stepfather." So he traveled and worked in the coastal cities for seven years, carrying drinking water to places where there was none. Eventually the company he worked for left the coastal region, leaving Bonifacio with nothing but a letter of recommendation to help him find other work. He stayed on there for seven more years, scrubbing, sweeping, cleaning.

That's when he started thinking about a place of his own.
"One never forgets the place where one is born. I still had family in Matagalpa, uncles, aunts, brothers." And he had fond memories of the land-lush steep mountainsides that climbed to form rounded peaks. Blankets of mist spotted with cloudbursts that covered the peaks, keeping the air sweet and cool. Firey sunsets that burned into the western slopes, announcing the end of the day.

Bonifacio returned to his native Matagalpa a grown man. Although he was with family again, life continued to be very hard.

On the first anniversary of the revolution in 1980, the new government announced a proposal for widespread agrarian reform, a plan that was passed into law that same summer. Soon land titles to abandoned, idle, or underused füms were given to formerly landless peasants. When Bonifacio saw others getting land, his dream was rekindled. He and a friend went to the next village, San Ramon, to speak with the Ministry of Agrarian Reform and learn what they must do to qualify. They were told that preference was being given to farmers that formed cooperatives. So they returned to their village of Jacita Sul and got together a group of ten other farmworkers who also longed for their own land.
4. "At first we all wanted individual land," Bonifacio recalls. "We said, 'What's a cooperative? What do we do in a cooperative?' But we also said, 'We're not going backward. If it has to be a cooperative, we're going forward. We have such a great need for land; we'll take it any way we can.'"
(Notes from a visit to the cooperative La Verona, by Kimberly French, a journalist who traveled with Equal Exchange in Nicaragua, January 1987. La Verona is in the high-mountain region of Nicaragua from where beans.)


MORE ABOUT GROWTH, BREAKEVEN, AND GROSS MARGIN. Increasing gross margin 11 depends heavily on a successful move to Canada. The move requires a change in our coffee purchasing, quality control, processing, decaffeination, and transportation. In the summer of 1986 we interviewed and visited five Canadian roasters in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. We did a trial roast of 4,000 pounds in October with a roaster in Toronto. We recently completed a second roast in Montreal, and will continue to roast in Montreal in the forseeable future. By July 1 , we expect to be getting $67 \%$ of our coffee from Canada, the exception being decaffeinated. Because the Swiss water-process we employ to decaffeinate our Nicaraguan beans is centered in Europe, we will continue to purchase this coffee from Holland.

The move to Canada will increase gross margin by reducing the landed cost of the coffee we bring in. However, it also raises our working capital needs as we now must finance green unroasted coffee beans in addition to the finished ready-to-ship inventory.

Other important contributions to both sales and gross margin in 1987 will come from (a) a shift in the sales base to favor the higher-margin-earning category 'wholesale,' which includes grocery stores, coops, and restaurants; (b) expanded sales from new products; and (c) expanded sales in gift packs.

NETWORKING AND EDUCATION. The alternative trade organizations (ATOs) in Europe are older, more experienced, and more familiar to the general public than the ATOs in North America. Equal Exchange will take a leading role in 1987 networking ATOs in the United States through a trade association we will help organize. ATOs in North America need to strengthen their aggregate position in the marketplace by aggressively promot ing the concept of how consumers, by buying from an ATO, can help Third World producers avoid the stranglehold of multinationals and native elites.

ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT: THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 1987 3PM
On Thursday, April 16, 3 PM, at the 443 Albany Street, Boston office/ warehouse location, Equal Exchange will hold its annual meeting for 1987. All shareholders are invited to attend--please notify us in advance if you are planning to come.

The meeting will focus on the role of advisers and directors in Equal Exchange.










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Stores-- Minneapolis, and The Blue Goose--Flagstafr, Ariz. are on our prospective list.)

There were times when we (and those who advise us in the Corporate Trading Department of the Bank of New England) thought the dollar would stop falling. But it hasn't. The decline of the dollar from 3.25 Dutch guilders in September 1985 to 2.05 guilders this month had a significant impact on our financial performance in 1986--details below. Just as important, it prompted us to move our roast ing and packaging operation to Canada, the most important operational event for the company all year.

On the whole, 1986 was a strong year. Looking back in a decade, we are most likely to remember 1986 as the year we introduced controversial coffee in hightech bright yellow, red, and brown packages to food coops and natural food stores all over the country. And as the year we learned, the hard way, the power of foreign exchange markets.

In 1986 we felt the strong support of people who joined our efforts by investing their personal savings and professional time. The start-up capital invested in 1986 by twenty-one founding shareholders, and the literally hundreds of hours contributed by four Boston area artists, one attorney, and two print and graphic design companies, have enabled us to introduce Equal Exchange, with pizzazz to a growing market of socially concerned consumers. In 1987 we will reach an audience several times that size.

In 1986, true to our mission to "revitalize the food experience" by educating consumers about the people and processes behind the food they eat, we stirred up some controversy in a small, northern New England community.

A frustrated Abbey Lawrence, in a letter to the Evening Citizen of Laconia, New Hampshire writes, "And now, for everyone who applauds the Sandinistas...the coffee produced on these wonderful 'cooperative farms' is available locally. The accompanying (EE promotional floor) display refers to the dictator Somoza, though it doesn't tell us what Senor Ortega might be, in comparison to whom Somoza was a bumbling boyscout...And, we are reminded that the United States has been condemned for its trade embargo by that bastion of righteousness, the World Kangaroo Court...Fortunately, there is a loophole in the embargo just big enough to accommodate imported coffee, though not nearly as large as the holes in the heads of the people doing the importing." importation of top quality tea which was to be the initial product line of a new company already named Equal Exchange. Sarvodaya farmers did not produce the black tea themselves. It was grown and traded on the commercial markets like all "Ceylon tea." But the tea project was to be an apprenticeshio in international trade, manaqed Dy Sarvodava staif, leading to other products wilch Sarvodaya farmers would grow and handle from start all the way to export.

In March 1987, the third founding partner of Equal Exchange, Jonathan Rosenthal, departed for Sri Lanka to launch the Samusala Tea project--Samusala is the Sinhalese word for cooperation. On the morning of his departure, while Jonathan stood impatiently in line for his plane ticket, Michael and Rink met with Harsha Navaratne over whole wheat pancakes in Boston.

Harsha recounted how the civil war in Sri Lanka had diverted the focus of Sarvodaya's work away from economic development in the direction of humanitarian assistance for refugees. The ir centers in the war-torn north had taken in thousands of children left to be orphans or home less by the fighting. Harsha has found himself increasingly in the role of intermediary, trying to bridge the communication gap between the warring sides and advocate for nonviolent solutions to the conflict.

For Sarvodaya, a trade partnership with Equal Exchange is one way the movement will build income earning projects which lead toward economic self-sufficiency Equal Exchange will introduce Samusala Tea in September this year. We hope to identify other products we can begin to trade toward the end of 1988. Leading candidates: basmati rice, dried pineapple, dried coconut, spices, coconut soap, mangosteins.

In 1987, in addition to Samusala tea, we will add whole bean Nicaraguan coffee in a consumer $80 z$ size. The entire line of Cafe Nica coffee will be packaged in new printed vacuum bags which will provide information about Equal Exchange, a short story about the coffee producers and our high-quality coffee, and directions for proper brewing and.storage.
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Samusala Tea and the expanded Cafe Nica line will be supported by attractive and fun promotional materials which tell the stories of the producers at the point-of-purchase: pamphlets, counter displays, stand-up floor displays.



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1986 F I NANCIALSSTATEMENT

| SALES |  |
| :--- | ---: |
| Consumer level | 11,317 |
| Wholesale level | 22,160 |
| Distributor level | 79,771 |
| Total sales | 113,248 |
| COST OF GOODS | 92,289 |
| GROSS MARGIN (18.51\%) | 20,959 |
|  |  |
| Other income (1) | 1,348 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 22,307 |
|  |  |
| OPERATING EXPENSES |  |
| Salaries, benefits, payroll tax |  |
| Promotion/advertising | 28,759 |
| Product development | 4,219 |
| Other expenses (2) | 1,698 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | 19,409 |
|  |  |
| PROFIT/LOSS |  |

(1) Other income: interest and contributions;
(2) Other expenses: rent, utilities, phone, postage, insurance, supplies, travel, copying, interest, paid consultants.

The operating loss of $(\$ 31,777)$ in 1986 was $(\$ 13,000)$ more than we projected to lose our first year, a result of the dollar decline. In buying cof fee from the Dutch alternative trade organization Stichting Ideele Import, we first buy Dutch guilders. Under these trade conditions, a $35 \%$ increase in the price of Dutch guilders resulted in a comparable increase in the price of our roasted and packaged coffee.

When the cost of goods goes up a company can pass the increase along to customers, they can lower their gross margin, or they can do some of both. We did some of both.

In the summer of 1986 we passed a nearly $10 \%$ price increase along to customers, pushing the coffee to what we considered to be its ceiling price. Any further increase, we felt, would cause a serious decline in sales. Fortunately, that is, for First World coffee consumers--not for Third World producing countries, the world coffee price has dropped substantially. We have since lowered our prices to wholesale and distributor accounts, and plan a second price decline for early summer.

As a result of cost increases, we had months in 1986 during which gross margin fell below 12\%. By October, with the arrival of our first shipment of Canadian roasted coffee, and with initial sales of gift packs, we had brought the gross margin up to 19\%. In November and December it was 28\%.

The added losses in 1986 put more pressure on our working capital needs. In 1987 we plan to raise our equity base from $\$ 75,000$ (before losses) to $\$ 150,000$. We have commitments that bring us to $\$ 100,100$ at the time this report was issued. Furthermore, we plan to take on long-term loans of nearly $\$ 25,000$, bringing our debt load to more than $\$ 40,000$.

The primary new uses for working capital in 1987 will be for green (unroasted) coffee beans, inventory of new $80 z$ whole bean coffees, printed 4-color coffee bags, black tea from Sri Lanka, printed tea boxes, and promotional floor displays and pamphlets for Cafe Nica and Samusala Tea.

The management of Equal Exchange believes that the unforeseen losses accrued in 1986 are sustainable, and that the fundamental cause for them--the dramatic weakness of the U.S. dollar--has been addressed in our plan for 1987. The move. to Canada stabilizes the landed cost of our major product.

On May 1 (May Day) our first shipment cleared Customs and arrived in our warehouse, finally giving our $1200 \mathrm{ft}^{2}$ floorspace the appearance of a food business as opposed to a dance hall. The arrival was two months late, a combination of processing delays and unexplained Customs delays.

In the five months since May 1 we have opened 8 distributor accounts, 25 store accounts, and begun direct-mailing to individuals coast to coast. Serious coffee connoisseurs can now find Cafe Nica on the store shelves of the Rainbow Grocery in San Francisco, Balducci's in New York City, and at the Knoll Farm (Country) Inn in the Green Mountains of Vermont. Employees hard at work at Oxfam-America in Boston, at Food First in San Francisco, and at the Red Sun Press in Jamaica Plain, Mass. brew Cafe Nica from 9 to 5. But the majority of sales in 1986 will pass through food co-ops across the country who purchase Cafe Nica from one of our co-op distributors in Cambridge--Mass., Savannah--NY, Minneapolis, Madison--Wisc., Tucson, Iowa City--Iowa, and Columbus, Ohio.

In five months we have shipped all orders without delivering a single out-of-stock. And we have managed to fill most every directmail and store order within our stated turnaround time of 48 hours. Recognizing we won't be able to maintain a "perfect" service record forever, we are very proud of our $100 \%$ record to date. And we will maintain a fierce commitment to fast turnaround and minimal out-ofstocks.

Sales through september 26 are $\$ 49,590.34$. To make sense of this figure next to projected sales requires a bit of interpolation, since we began selling two months later than originally planned. Sales between March l-September 26 were originally projected to be $\$ 62,300$. However, our revised projections for May l-September 26 showed $\$ 45,000$. The importance of these numbers is that sales are close to where we expected them to be.

On the other hand, gross margin (the difference between our selling price and the actual cost of the goods to Equal Exchange) is below what we projected. The chart on the next page shows the dramatic decline of the U.S. dollar against the Dutch guilder. Because all of our products come from Holland (and are paid for in guilders) the weakening dollar has caused our costs to increase over $30 \%$ in less than a year. We anticipated the dollar would decline. But never to these extremes.

On August 18 we increased our selling prices by near $10 \%$. Nevertheless, we are unable to absorb the impact of the full $30+\%$ cost increase by passing it along to consumers--that would put Cafe Nica over $\$ 10.00$ per pound. (It's great coffee, but \$10./lb.?)

Our strategy to control costs is to move our roasting and packing operation to Canada. Since August we have interviewed and visited
P.0. Box 2652, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 02238
(617) 482-4945
five Canadian coffee roasters in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. We are currently test-roasting 5000 lbs . in Toronto, and we expect to select a co-packer during October to begin roasting the majority of our coffee no later than February 1987. Sadly, we forfeit the relationship with the Dutch alternative trade organization Stichting Ideele Import. However, in addition to bringing costs in line, the move to Canada should also expand our options for packaging, blending, and roasting.

In 1986, the dollar fiasco means that our losses will be larger than originally projected. How large will depend on sales, the future of the U.S. dollar, and on how fast we are able to move to Canada.


(from Wall Street J. 10/2/86)
The loss is manageable if we reach our capital goal and make a successful move to Canada. We have raised $\$ 75,000$. in equity to date, and are pursuing another $\$ 75,000$. to finance growth and new products in 1987. As for Canada we are optimistic. We have narrowed the field to two roasters who are submitting final bids to us next week.

More cause for optimism is the response from the marketplace. People love our coffee! And store managers really like our promotional materials. The attached "Display Ad Slick" is an example of how we are reaching out in some magazines, newsletters, and distributor catalogues.

We joined the merger \& acquisition madness in August when we "acquired" our first business. When Adelante Trading, a small alternative trade group in New York City, closed last month, they decided to turn over their customer list to Equal Exchange. The Adelante mailing became our first trial venture in the world of direct-mail.

On the new product scene, we recently introduced the Cafe Nica Gift Pack, designed especially for the busy holiday season. We continue to plan for the introduction of superb!!! black tea from Sri Lanka sometime in 1987. And we are pursuing leads in Peru, St. Croix, Haiti, and Puerto Rico. A staff visit to Nicaragua is planned for January 1987--coffee buying and research.

All three of us are working full-time now to turn America onto Nicaraguan coffee. You can help out by sharing these order forms with friends, by ordering our beautiful gift packs in November/ December, and by providing the names of potential investors who would consider an investment in Equal Exchange.

Regards! Rink Dickinson, Jonathan Rosenthal, Michael Rozyne


Cafe Nica Gift Pack

The Cafe Nica Gift Pack combines $1 / 2$ pound Nicaraguan vacuum-packaged drip-grind coffee (Regular, or waterprocessed Decaf); an attractive stoneware mug handcrafted by Bennington Potters; and a no. 4 size $100 \%$ cotton reusable "Eco-filter." Each pack includes a colorful gift card and an informative message about the Nicaraguan people, all packaged in a sturdy white gift box, ready for shipping.


PO Box 2652
Cambridge, MA 02238 617-482-4945

## Nicaraguan coffee <br> Cafe Nica Gift Pack

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Equal Exchange imports topquality food products from Third World cooperatives and governments that are helping their country's poor gain economic power: an Alternative Trade network you can be proud to join.


| ORDER | PRICE | GIFT PACK with | TOTAL |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | \$13.95 | Regular (2 lbs net wt) |  |
|  | \$14.75 | Decaf (2 lbs net wt) |  |
| SHIPPING ON 12 LBS OR LESS: (Over 12 contact Eq. Ex.) |  | Total for Gift Packs |  |
|  |  | Tax (MA residents 5\%) |  |
|  |  | Shipping (see chart) |  |
|  |  | TOTAL |  |
|  |  | SHIPPING ADDRESS: |  |
| West of <br> Mississippi |  |  |  |
| \$6.75 |  | 2.75 |  |

## Introducing (at last). a coffee that keeps Ronald Reagan awake <br> 

He knows Nicaraguan coffee is delicious and has mass appeal.

He knows the campesino farmers live better today than before 1979, the year the dictator Somoza was thrown out of power.

And he knows that Equal Exchange's work-keeping the spirit of the Nicaraguan people alive in the hearts of the North American public (despite the U.S. embargo against Nicaragua)-makes it harder to mobilize for war.

It's left a foul taste in his mouth.


It will leave a great taste in yours.
Nicaraguan coffee
Order Cafe Nica-regular, decaf, dark roast-from EQUAL EXCHANGE, PO Box 2652 Cambridge, MA 02238, 617-482-4945



#    coffee (Regular, or water-processed    рхеэ н! tnoqe asessam әмп̣ешхоји! ue pue   -Gulddus <br>  <br> of Nicaraguan coffee consumers. 




BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 52786


#    coffee (Regular, or water-processed       $\cdot$ bundd!ys <br> When you drink Cafe Nica you join a growing worldwide network  



BULK RATE U.S. POSTAGE PAID BOSTON, MA PERMIT NO. 52786


