(Dolan)
October 13, 1986
4:30 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE NATION
ICELAND MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1986

Good evening. As most of you know, I have just returned from meetings in Iceland with the leader of the Soviet Union, General Secretary Gorbachev. As I did last year when I returned from the summit conference in Geneva, I want to take a few moments tonight to share with you what took place in these discussions.

The implications of these talks are enormous and only just beginning to be understood. While we parted company with an American offer still on the table, we are closer than ever before to agreements that could lead to a safer world without nuclear weapons.

But first, let me tell you that from the start of my meetings with Mr. Gorbachev I have always regarded you, the American people, as full participants. Believe me, without your support, none of these talks could have been held, nor could the ultimate aims of American foreign policy -- world peace and freedom -- be pursued. And it is for these aims I went the extra mile to Iceland.

So, let me report to you, the talks with General Secretary Gorbachev -- lasting more than 11 hours -- were hard and tough but extremely useful. During long discussions on both Saturday and Sunday, he and I made considerable headway. We moved toward agreement on drastically reduced numbers of intermediate range nuclear missiles in both Europe and Asia. We approached

agreement on sharply reduced strategic arsenals for both our countries. We made progress in the area of nuclear testing.

So, at what was intended to be merely a preparatory meeting for a future summit conference, we had with the Soviets the most intense and far-reaching discussions to date, and we almost made an historic breakthrough. But there remained toward the end of our talks one area of disagreement. While both sides sought reduction in the number of nuclear missiles and warheads threatening the world, the Soviets insisted that we sign an agreement that would deny to me -- and to future Presidents for 10 years -- the right to develop, test, and deploy a defense against nuclear missiles for the people of the United States. This we would not and could not do.

That was the deadlock at Hofdi House late Sunday afternoon. Then, the American delegation recessed and caucused, and we returned to the table with the most sweeping and generous arms control proposal in history.

We offered the Soviets a 10-year program for the complete elimination of all ballistic missiles -- Soviet and American -- from the face of the Earth by 1996, plus at least a 10-year delay in American deployment of a strategic defense against nuclear weapons, during which time we would observe the terms of the current A.B.M. treaty. Astonishingly, Mr. Gorbachev rejected it.

Instead, he made a non-negotiable demand that the United States end at once all development of a strategic defense for the free world -- and insisted that we confine our program strictly to laboratory research. Unless we signed such a commitment, he

said, all the agreements of the previous 11-1/2 hours of negotiation were null and void, including our last proposal.

To give in to his demands would have meant giving up America's defensive program. That would have forfeited our children's opportunity to live in a world free of the fear of nuclear attack. That would have sacrificed the future security interests of the American people, in exchange for a Soviet promise. And this we could not do.

Again and again, we hit the same obstacle. The Soviets told us their demand was a single package. They said there would be no deals on any aspect of arms reduction unless we also agreed to their unacceptable terms on the Strategic Defense Initiative. They held other issues hostage while trying to kill our strategic defense.

So we ask -- and the world must ask: Why did Mr. Gorbachev reject our offer? Why are the Soviets afraid of a strategic defense against nuclear missiles?

Not a single Soviet citizen has anything to fear from such an American defensive system. We have even offered to share the benefits of such a system with the Soviets. That defensive system -- even if developed and deployed -- would harm not people, but only ballistic missiles, <u>after</u> they had been fired. It threatens no one and would harm nobody.

In refusing our offer and making his non-negotiable demand on the United States, Mr. Gorbachev refused an historic opportunity to rid the world of the threat of nuclear war. Nevertheless, we have come too far to turn back now. So tonight

I call on the Soviet Union to build on the agreements we reached, and not to tear down the nearly-complete structure we erected in Iceland because of our differences over the single issue of S.D.I.

We made progress in Iceland. And we will continue to make progress if we pursue a prudent, deliberate, and, above all, realistic approach with the Soviets. From the earliest days of our Administration, this has been our policy. We made it clear we had no illusions about the Soviets or their ultimate intentions. We were publicly candid about the critical moral distinctions between totalitarianism and democracy. We declared the principal objective of American foreign policy to be not just the prevention of war but the extension of freedom. And, we stressed our commitment to the growth of democratic government and democratic institutions around the world. That is why we assisted freedom fighters who are resisting the imposition of totalitarian rule in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola, Cambodia, and elsewhere. And, finally, we began work on what I believe most spurred the Soviets to negotiate seriously -- rebuilding our military strength, reconstructing our strategic deterrence, and, above all, beginning work on the Strategic Defense Initiative.

And yet at the same time we set out these foreign policy goals and began working toward them, we pursued another of our major objectives: that of seeking means to lessen tensions with the Soviets, and ways to prevent war and keep the peace.

This policy is now paying dividends -- one sign of this in Iceland was the progress on the issue of arms control. For the

first time in a long while, Soviet-American negotiations in the area of arms reductions are moving, and moving in the right direction: not just toward arms control, but toward arms reduction.

But for all the progress we made on arms reductions, we must remember there were other issues on the table in Iceland, issues that are fundamental.

One such issue is human rights. As President Kennedy once said, "And, is not peace, in the last analysis, basically a matter of human rights...?" Only last week, here in the Oval Office, a heroic champion of human rights, Yuri Orlov, described to me the persecution he suffered for leading an effort simply to get the Soviet government to live up to the solemn commitment on human rights it had signed at Helsinki in 1975. Mr. Orlov's suffering is like that of far too many other individuals in all walks of life inside the Soviet Union -- including those who wish to emigrate.

In Iceland, human rights was a critical part of our agenda. I made it plain that the United States would not seek to exploit improvement in these matters for purposes of propaganda. But I also made it plain, once again, that an improvement of the human condition within the Soviet Union is indispensable for an improvement in bilateral relations with the United States. For a government that will break faith with its own people cannot be trusted to keep faith with foreign powers. So, I told Mr. Gorbachev -- again in Reykjavik as I had in Geneva -- we Americans place far less weight upon the words that are spoken at

meetings such as these, than upon the deeds that follow. When it comes to human rights and judging Soviet intentions, we are all from Missouri: you have got to show us.

Another subject area we took up in Iceland also lies at the heart of the differences between the Soviet Union and America. This is the issue of regional conflicts. Summit meetings cannot make the American people forget what Soviet actions have meant for the peoples of Afghanistan, Central America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Until Soviet policies change, we will make sure that our friends in these areas -- those who fight for freedom and independence -- will have the support they need.

Finally, there was a fourth item. This area was that of bilateral relations, people-to-people contacts. In Geneva last year, we welcomed several cultural exchange accords; in Iceland, we saw indications of more movement in these areas. But let me say now the United States remains committed to people-to-people programs that could lead to exchanges between not just a few elite but thousands of everyday citizens from both our countries.

So I think then you can see that we did make progress in Iceland on a broad range of topics. We reaffirmed our 4-point agenda; we discovered major new grounds of agreement; we probed again some old areas of disagreement.

And I realize some Americans may be asking tonight: Why not accept Mr. Gorbachev's demand? Why not give up S.D.I. for this agreement?

The answer, my friends, is simple. S.D.I. is America's insurance policy that the Soviet Union would keep the commitments

made at Reykjavik. S.D.I. is America's security guarantee -- if the Soviets should -- as they have done too often in the past -- fail to comply with their solemn commitments. S.D.I. is what brought the Soviets back to arms control talks at Geneva and Iceland. S.D.I. is the key to a world without nuclear weapons.

The Soviets understand this. They have devoted far more resources for a lot longer time than we, to their own S.D.I. The world's only operational missile defense today surrounds Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union. What Mr. Gorbachev was demanding at Reykjavik was that the United States agree to a new version of a 14-year-old A.B.M. treaty that the Soviet Union has already violated. I told him we don't make those kinds of deals in the United States.

And the American people should reflect on these critical questions.

How does a defense of the United States threaten the Soviet Union or anyone else? Why are the Soviets so adamant that America remain forever vulnerable to Soviet rocket attack? As of today, all free nations are utterly defenseless against Soviet missiles -- fired either by accident or design. Why does the Soviet Union insist that we remain so -- forever?

So, my fellow Americans, I cannot promise, nor can any President promise, that the talks in Iceland or any future discussions with Mr. Gorbachev will lead inevitably to great breakthroughs or momentous treaty signings.

We will not abandon the guiding principle we took to Reykjavik. We prefer no agreement than to bring home a bad agreement to the United States.

And on this point, I know you are also interested in the question of whether there will be another summit. There was no indication by Mr. Gorbachev as to when or whether he plans to travel to the United States, as we agreed he would last year in Geneva. I repeat tonight that our invitation stands and that we continue to believe additional meetings would be useful. But that's a decision the Soviets must make.

But whatever the immediate prospects, I can tell you that I am ultimately hopeful about the prospects for progress at the summit and for world peace and freedom. You see, the current summit process is very different from that of previous decades; it is different because the world is different; and the world is different because of the hard work and sacrifice of the American people during the past 5-1/2 years. Your energy has restored and expanded our economic might; your support has restored our military strength. Your courage and sense of national unity in times of crisis have given pause to our adversaries, heartened our friends, and inspired the world. The Western democracies and the NATO alliance are revitalized and all across the world nations are turning to democratic ideas and the principles of the free market. So because the American people stood guard at the critical hour, freedom has gathered its forces, regained its strength, and is on the march.

So, if there is one impression I carry away with me from these October talks, it is that, unlike the past, we are dealing now from a position of strength, and for that reason we have it within our grasp to move speedily with the Soviets toward even more breakthroughs.

Our ideas are out there on the table. They won't go away. We are ready to pick up where we left off. Our negotiators are heading back to Geneva, and we are prepared to go forward whenever and wherever the Soviets are ready. So, there is reason -- good reason -- for hope.

I saw evidence of this in the progress we made in the talks with Mr. Gorbachev. And I saw evidence of it when we left Iceland yesterday, and I spoke to our young men and women at our Naval installation at Keflavik [KEF-la-VICK] -- a critically important base far closer to Soviet naval bases than to our own coastline. As always, I was proud to spend a few moments with them and thank them for their sacrifices and devotion to country. They represent America at her finest: committed to defend not only our own freedom but the freedom of others who would be living in a far more frightening world -- were it not for the strength and resolve of the United States.

"Whenever the standard of freedom and independence has been... unfurled, there will be America's heart, her benedictions, and her prayers," John Quincy Adams once said. He spoke well of our destiny as a Nation. My fellow Americans, we are honored by history, entrusted by destiny with the oldest

dream of humanity -- the dream of lasting peace and human freedom.

Another President, Harry Truman, noted that our century had seen two of the most frightful wars in history. And that "The supreme need of our time is for man to learn to live together in peace and harmony."

It is in pursuit of that ideal I went to Geneva a year ago and to Iceland last week. And it is in pursuit of that ideal that I thank you now for all the support you have given me, and I again ask for your help and your prayers as we continue our journey toward a world where peace reigns and freedom is enshrined.

Thank you and God bless you.

3RD STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

October 8, 1986, Wednesday, PM cycle

SECTION: Washington News

LENGTH: 512 words

HEADLINE: Orlov urges human rights issue at summit

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

KEYWORD: Orlov

BODY:

Soviet dissident Yuri Orlov, praised as a ''a hero of our time,'' says he is optimistic President Reagan will press human rights at his Iceland summit with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev this weekend.

Orlov, freed from Siberian exile last week as part of an exchange for journalist Nicholas Daniloff, arrived in New York Tuesday and later in the day traveled to Washington for a White House meeting with Reagan.

Orlov spent 20 minutes with Reagan, who escorted him into a meeting with American human rights activists, who applauded Orlov, and his wife, Irina.

Reagan praised the dissident as ''a man who has done more to inform the world of current Soviet human rights violations than any man on Earth ... a hero of our time.''

''I'll make it amply clear to Mr. Gorbachev that unless there is real Soviet movement on human rights, we cannot have the kind of political atmosphere necessary to make lasting progress on other issues,'' Reagan said.

At a news conference in New York, Orlov said, ''I am an optimist and I do have some hopes regarding Gorbachev,'' adding he hopes Gorbachev eventually will ease emigration policies.

''They (the talks) can have a meaning only if the United States can convince the Soviet Union to acknowledge there is a link between the issue of peace and security and the issue of human rights,'' he said.

The president stressed the Reykjavik summit ''is not to sign agreements. It is to prepare the way for a productive summit'' in the United States later this year or early next year.

''Real improvement in the Soviet human rights record is essential for such a summit,'' he said. ''Peace is not simply the absence of war. It's the presence of justice, and human rights and human freedom are its indispensable elements.''

Secretary of State George Shultz, appearing on ''ABC Good Morning America,'' said the United States cannot have a ''really decent and constructive relationship with the Soviet Union'' unless progress is made in the area of human rights.

''That doesn't mean telling them they have to change their system. They're not going to do that. We have no right to do that,'' said Shultz.

''But particularly since they signed the Helsinki accords, I think it's fair enough for us to say that we think people ought to have freedom to worship as they choose. That people, like Mr. Orlov who tried to hold the Soviet Union to account of the accords they signed, have the ability to go ahead and do that. And of course people who wish to leave are allowed to leave, to immigrate. There are dramatic cases of divided families and so on. So I think we can expect progress on that.''

The 62-year-old Orlov, who was exiled after founding a watchdog group to record Soviet violations of the 1975 Helsinki human rights agreements, said living conditions in the Soviet Union have improved and critics are able to raise their voices.

Orlov said he wants to resume his work as a research scientist, a job he lost when he founded the Helsinki Watch chapter in Moscow in 1976 and was subsequently jailed and exiled in Siberia.

In the field of world policy I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and because he does so, respects the rights of others—the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
The Good Neighbor Policy
1933

Totalitarian regimes imposed upon free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States . . . It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures . . . I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

Harry S. Truman
The Truman Doctrine
1947

Our concern for building a healthy world economy, . . . and . . . for the maintenance of a civilization of free men and institutions, all combine to give us . . . great interest in European recovery . . . These considerations led to the suggestion by Secretary of State George Marshall on June 5, 1947 that further help be given only after the countries of Europe had agreed upon their basic requirements and the steps which they would take in order to give proper effect to additional aid from us.

Harry S.Truman
The Marshall Plan
1947

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and success of liberty.

John F. Kennedy
1961

Neither the defense nor the development of other nations can be exclusively or primarily an American undertaking. The nations of each part of the world should assume the primary responsibility for their own well being and they themselves should determine the terms of that well being.

Richard M. Nixon
The Nixon Doctrine
1970

DEMOCRACY

Democracy is the assertion of the right of the individual to live and to be treated justly as against any attempt on the part of any combination of individuals to make laws which will overburden him or which will destroy his equality among his fellows in the matter of right or privilege.

Woodrow Wilson
1920

Democracy is more than a form of political organization; it is a human faith.

Herbert Hoover
1928

The deeper purpose of democratic government is to assist . . . its citizens . . . to improve their conditions of life.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
1937

Democracy, the practice of self-government, is a covenant among free men to respect the rights and liberties of their fellows.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
1939

Democracy alone, of all forms of government, enlists the full force of men's enlightened will.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
1941

In a democratic world, as in a democratic nation, power must be linked to responsibility and be aligned to defend and justify itself within the framework of the general good.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
1945

Democracy is based on the conviction that man has moral and intellectual capacity, as well as the inalienable right, to govern himself with reason and justice.

Harry S. Truman
1949

Democracy has proved that social justice can be achieved through peaceful change.

Harry S. Truman
1949

Democracy, in one word . . . is . . . cooperation.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
1945

DEMOCRACY

The dynamic of democracy is the power and purpose of the individual.

John F. Kennedy
1962

"I believe in democracy," said Woodrow Wilson, "because it releases the energy of every human being."

John F. Kennedy
1962

Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect, but we have never had to put up a wall to keep our people in, to prevent them from leaving us.

John F. Kennedy
"Ich bin ein Berliner" speech
1963

These echoes of history remind us of our roots and our strengths. They also remind us of that special genius of American democracy which at one critical point after another has led us to spot the new road to the future and given us the wisdom and courage to take it.

Richard M. Nixon
1970

FREEDOM

Freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of the person under the protection of the habeas corpus; and trial by juries impartially selected—these principles form the bright constellation which has . . . guided our steps through an age of revolution and transformation.

Thomas Jefferson
1801

Dissentions . . . [are] . . . perhaps inseparable from the enjoyment of freedom.

John Quincy Adams
1825

Our ideas of freedom came from many people. The greatest government of the world grew out of the inspiration, energy and ideas which were brought here by the English, the Scotch, the Irish, the Danes, the Swedes, the Germans, the Poles, the Jews, the Italians and others who came to these shores in search of freedom.

Harry S. Truman
1956

The most powerful single force in the world today is neither communism nor capitalism, neither the H-bomb nor the guided missile—it is man's eternal desire to be free and independent.

John F. Kennedy
1957

HUMAN RIGHTS

A bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth.

Thomas Jefferson
1787

No man has a natural right to commit aggression on the equal rights of another.

Thomas Jefferson
1816

There are certain rights possessed by each individual American citizen . . . He claims them because he is himself a man, fashioned by the same Almighty hand as the rest of his species.

William Henry Harrison
1841

There are certain individual rights possessed by each individual American citizen which in his compact with the others he has never surrendered.

William Henry Harrison
1841

The man who holds that every human right is secondary to his profit must now give way to the advocate of human welfare.

Theodore Roosevelt
1910

What I am interested in is having the Government of the United States more concerned about human rights than property rights. Property is an instrument of humanity; humanity isn't an instrument of property.

Woodrow Wilson
1912

It is not property but the right to hold property, both great and small, which our Constitution guaranteed.

Calvin Coolidge
1925

At the heart of our American system is . . . the ideal that there shall be an opportunity in life, an equal opportunity . . . It holds that . . . [all] . . . have the chance to rise to any position which their character and ability may entitle them.

Herbert Hoover
1936

The first half of the century has been marked by unprecedented and brutal attacks on the rights of man, and by the two most frightful wars in history. The supreme need of our time is for man to learn to live together in peace and harmony.

Harry S. Truman
1949

We believe that all men are created equal because they are created in the image of God.

Harry S. Truman
1949

I emphasize the . . . importance . . . of the point dealing with the declaration on human rights. I felt very strongly about the need for a world "bill of rights" something on the order of our own.

Harry S. Truman
1955

Our civil and social rights form a central part of the heritage we are striving to defend on all fronts and with all our strength.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
1953

Although our civil liberties also serve important private purposes—above all they were considered essential to the republican form of government. Such a government required that the consent of the governed be given freely, thoughtfully and intelligently. Without freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, equal protection of the laws, and other unalienable rights, men could not govern themselves intelligently.

John F. Kennedy
1959

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights guides our actions . . . to ease the plight of those whose basic rights have been denied.

Richard Nixon
1973

We became an independent nation in a struggle for human rights, and there have been many such struggles since then—for the abolition of slavery, for universal suffrage, for racial equality, for the rights of workers, for women's rights. Not all of these struggles have yet been won, but the freedom and vigor of our national public life is evidence of the rights and the liberties we have achieved.

Jimmy Carter
1977

Strengthened international machinery will help us to close the gap between promise and performance in protecting human rights . . . The solemn commitment of the United Nations Charter, of the United Nations Universal Declaration for Human Rights, of the Helsinki Accords . . . must be taken just as seriously as commercial or security commitments.

Jimmy Carter
1977

Our objective is to have a well-equipped, active defense force large enough—in concert with the forces of our allies—to deter aggression and to inflict punishing losses on the enemy immediately if we should be attacked.

Harry S. Truman
1952

Warfare, no matter what weapons it employs, is a means to an end, and if that end can be achieved by negotiated settlements, . . . there is no need for war.

Harry S. Truman
1955

This . . . [the Marshall Plan] . . . was something new in the history of nations. The traditional practice had always been for the conquerer to strip the defeated countries to make off with whatever spoils were available. Our idea has been to restore the conquered nations . . . to prosperity in the hope that they would understand the futility of aggression as a means of expansion and progress.

Harry S. Truman
1955

The prudent man will not delude himself that his hope for peace guarantees the realization of peace. Even with genuine goodwill, time and effort will be needed to correct the injustices that plague the earth today

Dwight D. Eisenhower
1956

We must never become so preoccupied with our desire for military strength that we neglect those areas of economic development, trade, diplomacy, education, ideas and principles where the foundation of real peace must be laid.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
1958

To achieve this peace we seek to prevent war at any place and in any dimension. If, despite our best efforts, a local dispute should flare into armed hostilities, the next problem would be to keep the conflict from spreading, and to compromising freedom. In support of these objectives, we maintain forces of great power and flexibility.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
1959

We look upon this shaken earth, and we declare our firm and fixed purpose—the building of a peace with justice in a world where moral law prevails.

John F. Kennedy
1961

Making peace is a tough, difficult, slow business—often much tougher and much slower than making war.

Lyndon B. Johnson
1968

In his last message on the State of the Union . . . President Roosevelt said: "This new year of 1945 can be the greatest year of human achievement in human history" . . . All these hopes and more were fulfilled in 1945 . . . The plain fact is that civilization was saved in 1945 by the United Nations.

Harry S. Truman
1946

We are convinced that the preservation of peace between nations requires a United Nations Organization composed of all the peace-loving nations of the world who are willing jointly to use force, if necessary, to insure peace.

Harry S. Truman
1946

We are persuaded by necessity and by belief that the strength of all free peoples lies in unity; their danger in discord.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
1953

We must use our skills and knowledge and, at times, our substance, to help others rise from misery, however far the scene of suffering may be from our shores.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
1957

With both sections of this divided world in possession of unbelievably destructive weapons, mankind approaches a state where mutual annihilation becomes a possibility. No other fact of today's world equals this in importance—it colors everything we say, plan and do.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
1960

As a nation, we think not of war but of peace; not of crusades but of covenants of cooperation; not of pageantry of imperialism but of pride of new states freshly risen to independence.

John F. Kennedy
1959

Already the United Nations has become both the measure and the vehicle of man's most generous impulses.

John F. Kennedy
1961

Our basic goal remains the same: A peaceful world community of free and independent states—free to choose their own system, so long as it does not threaten the freedom of others.

John F. Kennedy
1962

Social justice . . . has become a definite goal and ancient governments are beginning to heed the call. Thus, the American people do not stand alone in the world in their desire for change.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
1935

Throughout the world new ideas are challenging the old.

Harry S. Truman
1948

The Second World War radically changed the power relationships of the world. Nations once great were left shattered and weak; channels of communiction, routes of trade, political and economic ties of many kinds were ripped apart.

Harry S. Truman
1953

There was another question posed for us at the war's end, which . . . concerned the future course of democracy: Could the machinery of government and politics in this Republic be changed, improved, adapted rapidly enough . . . to carry . . . through . . . the vast new complicated undertakings called for in our time?

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We have answered this question . . . with . . . The reorganization of Congress in 1946; the unification of our armed services, beginning in 1947; the closer integration of foreign and military policy through the National Security Council created that same year; and the Executive reorganizations, before and after the Hoover-Acheson Commission report in 1949.

Harry S. Truman
1953

Change is the inexorable law of life.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
1953

We now stand in the vestibule of a vast new technological age.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
1959

Even now a rocket moves toward Mars. It reminds us the world will not be the same for our children, or even for ourselves in a short span of years.

Lyndon B. Johnson
1965

ICELAND

ICELAND'S Vatnajökull, a massive icefield extending through the southeast, feeds a number of glaciers.

State seal of Iceland

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INFORMATION HIGHLIGHTS

Official Name: Lýðveldið Ísland (Republic of Iceland).

Head of State: President.

Head of Government: Prime minister.

Legislature: Althing (General Assembly).

Area: 39,800 square miles (103,100 sq. km.).

Highest Point: Hvannadalshnjúkur, 6,952 feet (2,119 meters).

Population: 202,000 (1968 estimate).

Capital: Reykjavík.

Language: Icelandic.

Major Religious Group: Lutheran.

Monetary Unit: Króna (100 aurar).

Weights and Measures: Metric system.

Flag: Red cross, bordered in white, on a blue field. See also FLAG.

National Anthem: *Ó, guð vors lands (O God of Our Country).*

ICELAND is an independent republic in the middle of the North Atlantic, immediately south of the Arctic Circle. Although it is considered a part of Europe, geographically as well as politically, it is far from all continents. The land nearest to it is that of Greenland, some 180 miles (290 km) to the northwest.

Despite its location and the fact that it is partially covered by the world's most extensive ice field outside the polar regions, the name "Iceland" is a misnomer. The country is not nearly as cold as its name would indicate. In fact, the mean temperature for January, the coldest month, is just about the same in Reykjavík as it is in New York City. July in Iceland, however, is about 20°F cooler than in New York.

Iceland was first settled in the late 9th century. The colonists came chiefly from Norway, although there was a considerable admixture of people, both Scandinavian and Celtic, from the British Isles. Since then, immigration has been negligible, and the national stock is quite homogeneous.

For more than 300 years after the end of the settlement period and the founding of the Althing (parliament) in 930, Iceland enjoyed a relatively prosperous life as a republic—a constitutional anachronism at a time when the feudal system flourished elsewhere. During this period the Icelanders colonized Greenland and

de an abortive attempt to settle the continent North America. At about the same time, in year 1000, they adopted Christianity.

The era of independence ended in 1262–64, when Icelanders swore fealty to the king Norway. A little more than a century later, land with Norway passed to the Danish own. There followed centuries of decline, eco- ic exploitation, pestilence, and natural catas- hes. By the end of the 18th century the try had become impoverished and depopu-

The struggle for independence began in the th century under the leadership of Jón Sigurðs- In 1874, Iceland was given a constitution. was granted home rule in 1904 and indepen- in 1918, although it still retained a sover- in common with Denmark. Iceland was ly separated from the Danish crown and pro- d a republic on June 17, 1944.

With 1100 years of history behind them, the nders are an old nation, but they have also themselves to be a modern one. They a relatively stable form of constitutional ment, rooted in a long and ingrained tra- of democracy. They have achieved a cul- vel comparable to that of any other nation standard of living not far below that of the States. Icelanders today can expect to live than most other people; their rate of infant ity and their general death rate are among west in the world. Moreover, they claim tribution of wealth more equitable than anywhere else on earth.

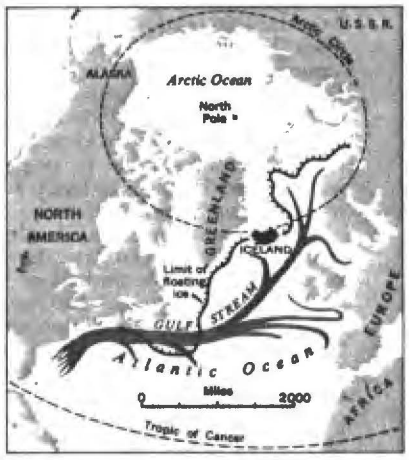
land's economy, however, is shaky. The modern prosperity is based primarily on commodity—fish. More than 90% of Ice- exports are made up of fish and fish prod- one of few natural resources the country in abundance. This is at once its strength weakness. It is a strength insofar as Ice- fishermen, on a per capita basis, are the productive in the world. But overreliance industry, especially one as unstable as can be disastrous, and Icelanders have recognize that as a weakness. Conse- economic planning has been directed and more toward industrialization based on the country's great hydroelectric potential. At the same time Iceland has sought participation in, or at least cooperation with, European economic organizations. It has long been an active member of several other international groups, such as the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Council of Europe.

1. The People

Some mystery still shrouds the origins of the Icelandic people, but the main events are well known. Icelanders possess a work, unique in world literature, that records in detail the first colonization of their country. Named *Landnámabók* (*Book of Settlements*), it lists some 400 immigrants, stating their genealogy, places of origin, and homesteads in the new country.

Ethnology. According to *Landnámabók*, the largest number of settlers hailed from southwestern Norway. But there was also a considerable infusion of Celtic blood, for many colonists came from Viking enclaves in Scotland and Ireland. The extent of this admixture is still debated, but it is worth noting that examination of blood groups among modern Icelanders reveals that they belong predominantly to the O-group, as do the Celts. Norwegians and other Scandinavians are most commonly found in the A-group. The fusion of the two ethnic elements was completed nearly a millennium ago, and immigration since has been on a very minor scale. The result is a thoroughly homogeneous stock that shares historical, linguistic, and cultural heritage with Scandinavia.

National Traits. It is tempting to attribute the dark hair, which is more common among Icelanders than their Nordic brothers, to Celtic influences, but there is no proof to justify that. Dark and blond hair are about equally distributed, and blue or gray eyes are predominant. Most often, Icelanders are of tall and slender stature, with relatively long faces. Temperamentally, they are ruggedly independent and individualistic, but quick to adopt innovations, especially those of a technical nature. In cultural matters, they tend to be more conservative. The key to their temperament is their strong emotional attachment to their country, their cul-



Location of Iceland with respect to Europe, North America, Arctic Circle, Gulf Stream, and limit of floating ice in the North Atlantic.

ture, and the language on which that culture is primarily based.

Language. Culture and language place the Icelanders among the Nordic peoples, and Icelandic might well be called the mother of all the Scandinavian tongues. A Germanic language—most akin to New Norse, although the two are not mutually intelligible—Icelandic has changed relatively little since the time of settlement some 1100 years ago. At that time there was no appreciable difference in language throughout Scandinavia and Iceland. But whereas Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish developed into their present forms, Icelandic, owing to the country's isolation and its abundance of written literature, stood practically still. Even today, Icelandic school children can read 13th century literature with little difficulty, provided only that the spelling is modernized.

Religion. The Icelanders have been nominally Christian since the year 1000, but the church is not a vital force in Icelandic life. The Evangelical Lutheran Church, imposed on them by the Danish king in 1550, remains the national church, and some 95% of the population are members. Constitutionally established, it is headed by a bishop and supported by a flat levy on every taxpayer unless he formally disassociates himself from it (in which case his tax goes to the university). There is, however, absolute freedom of worship, and many other religious groups exist. The largest of these are the Roman Catholics, the Pentecostals, and the Seventh-day Adventists.

Way of Life. In daily life Icelanders tend to be tolerant and quick to show their charity. Other people's conduct may generate curiosity, amusement, and gossip, but seldom indignation. Sexual mores, for example, are permissive, and premarital relations are accepted. There is no moral stigma attached to the status of an unwed mother or to her offspring, and such a child has the same legal rights as others. About 25% of all children are born out of wedlock, although many of these are born to parents who are engaged to be married and later do so. The same relaxed attitude may be observed toward other social behavior, such as the misuse of liquor. While per capita consumption of alcohol is less than that of many other nations, Icelanders tend to drink more at one time, and even public inebriation is benignly tolerated.

Relative newcomers to urban life, the Icelanders still retain their age-old hospitality. It is not uncommon for an Icelandic hostess to serve her guest up to ten different kinds of home-baked cakes and cookies. For a meal she may offer him traditional Icelandic dishes, such as *hangikjöt* (smoked mutton), *harðfisk* (dried fish), *svið* (singed heads and/or feet of sheep or cattle), *blóðmör* (a kind of sausage made of grain mixed with blood and suet), or *skyr* (a dairy product similar to yogurt). On the other hand, a meal is just as likely to include dishes of international cuisine.

In this respect there are slight differences between town and country. Rural people tend to be more hospitable and more traditional in their outlook and customs. But modern communications have tended to diminish the differences between rural and urban life. While 80% rural at the turn of the century, Iceland is now about 80% urbanized.

Owing perhaps to the historical necessity to "produce or perish," Icelanders are still a creative people. A relatively large portion of the populace practices the arts as a hobby, and dramatic societies number in the dozens. Writing, especially versemaking, is an old Icelandic pastime. In addition, handicrafts and small artistic industries flourish.

Social Conditions. Social and economic stratification in Iceland is minimal. Extreme poverty is practically unknown, and slums are nonexistent. People work hard and enjoy the fruits of their labor in a living standard that is among the highest in Europe. Iceland's sudden prosperity after 1940, coupled with a rapid migration from country to city, brought with it some problems of adjustment. The older generation deplores the demise of old virtues, as violent crimes, once practically unknown, have increased. But affluence has brought many more benefits than problems. Icelanders today are better fed, better dressed, and healthier than ever before. Their housing is modern and comfortable—more than half of all units have been built since World War II—and one out of every five persons owns a motor vehicle.

Life expectancy has risen by 40 years since a century ago. An Icelandic boy born in the late 1960's can expect to live more than 71 years, while his sister may look forward to her 76th birthday. While the birthrate is not much lower than in 1900, death and infant mortality rates have plummeted to become among the lowest in the world. As a result Iceland's population has doubled since the 1920's.

The modern Icelander has gained more time for leisure than his father ever dreamed of, and he is likely to spend it traveling. No other people in the world travel abroad as much as the Icelanders. Despite the distances involved, up to 20% of the population has been known to visit other countries in a single year. Many people enjoy sports, of which soccer is the most popular. Practically everyone can swim, and there are numerous pools utilizing hot-spring water. Skating and skiing are popular in the winter. *Glíma*, an Icelandic form of wrestling, is an old national sport, though it is not widely practiced anymore. Boxing is outlawed. There is also a widespread interest in chess.

2. Land and Natural Resources

Iceland, the second-largest island in Europe (after Great Britain), lies in the North Atlantic some 180 miles (290 km) east of Greenland, 600 miles (1,000 km) west of Norway, and 500 miles (800 km) northwest of Scotland. It is roughly oval in shape but deeply indented by fjords and bays, except along the southern shore.

A mountainous country, Iceland has an average elevation of about 1,650 feet (500 meters). It is, on the whole, highest in the center, where numerous massifs topped by perpetual snow rise above the plateau. Only about one fourth of the country is below 650 feet (200 meters). The lowlands are mainly in the south, southwest, and west and, to a lesser extent, in the valleys of the north. Most of the population is concentrated in these regions, the largest part of it in the Reykjavík metropolitan area. Including the towns of Kópavogur and Hafnarfjörður, this area contains more than half of Iceland's population. By contrast Akureyri, the largest city of the north, has only about 10,000 inhabitants.

Geology. Basically, Iceland is a huge block

REYKJAVÍK, Iceland's modern capital, viewed from the air. It is the nation's largest seaport, as well as its major commercial center and transportation hub.

...ltic rock, on which enor... ...anic materials were dump... ...ptions during the great Ice... ...glacial debris these mater... ...ified, make up a broad c... ...of the country's area—runn... ...southwest to northeast. ...the *móberg* zone, is flanked ...older basalt areas.

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Volcanoes and Hot Springs. ...ed Iceland, and the proc... ...plete; some 30 volcanoes ...ted since the country was ...ge, eruptions occur every ...noes are of varied shapes ...the Japanese Mt. Fuji, ...ian Mauna Kea type, exp... ...ally fissures, in which the ...he last-named variety is th... ...mile (30-km) cleft, strun... ...than 100 craters. One ...caused the death of a ...dic population in 1783. ...The most famous of Iceland's ...is Hekla, which in medi... ...ed to be the back d... ...on of March 1947 continu... ...in the central highlands, ...filled with water, erupte... ...explosions are still fairly ...cur, the volume of mol... ...he mountain slopes ma... ...azon River. Nor are su... ...wn. A new island, Surtse...

AVÍK, Iceland's modern cap- viewed from the air. It e nation's largest seaport, well as its major commercial ter and transportation hub.

BOB AND IRA SPRING

altic rock, on which enormous masses of anic materials were dumped by subglacial ptions during the great Ice Age. Combined h glacial debris these materials, pressed and lified, make up a broad center strip—about f of the country's area—running approximately southwest to northeast. This strip, known the *móberg* zone, is flanked on both sides by older basalt areas.

The difference in appearance between the geomorphic regions is quite distinct. In the alt areas jagged mountains rise steeply over ow fjords. This is characteristic of the fjords the great northeastern peninsula and in the me east, where the stratified aspect of the alt is clearly visible. In both regions the strata ine gently toward the center of the try, where they are weighed down by the erg formations.

Composed of softer materials, the *móberg* is more susceptible to erosion. Consetly, it has less of the sharp, angular look so minent in the basalt areas. The soil here is ker and the lowlands more extensive. All the ve volcanoes and largest rivers are located in region.

Volcanoes and Hot Springs. Volcanic activity ted Iceland, and the process is not nearly plete; some 30 volcanoes have repeatedly pted since the country was settled. On the rage, eruptions occur every five years. The anoes are of varied shapes and sizes: cones the Japanese Mt. Fuji, shields of the waiian Mauna Kea type, explosion craters, and cially fissures, in which the country abounds. the last-named variety is the infamous Laki, 0-mile (30-km) cleft, strung with a row of than 100 craters. One eruption of this re caused the death of about 20% of the ndic population in 1783.

The most famous of Icelandic volcanoes, how- is Hekla, which in medieval Europe was ved to be the back door of Hell; its tion of March 1947 continued for 13 months. , in the central highlands, a gigantic crater filled with water, erupted in 1961. Subal explosions are still fairly common. When occur, the volume of molten ice cascading the mountain slopes may exceed that of mazon River. Nor are submarine eruptions own. A new island, Surtsey, was created in this manner off the southern coast in 1963.

Related to the volcanoes are the solfataras —hot vents, or pools, of mud and clay that yield quantities of sulfur—and the thermal springs, in which Iceland is richer than any other country. Found throughout the island, except in the eastern fjords, such springs have been utilized by man since the earliest settlement. Reykjavík and some other towns are heated by natural hot water piped in from nearby springs.

Among the Icelandic hot springs are several gushers, or geysers, which at intervals eject columns of hot water into the air. The best known is the Great Geysir in the southern lowlands, whose name has become a generic term. It has been known to spit its bubbling contents up to a height of more than 200 feet (60 meters). Grýla, a tiny eye-in-the-ground some 30 miles (50 km) east of Reykjavík, gives a show regularly every two hours.

All told, there are about 800 thermal springs in Iceland, scattered in some 250 places. With a total output of 330 gallons (1,250 liters) per second and a mean temperature of 170° F (80° C), they constitute a valuable natural resource, which has only begun to be exploited for industrial use.

Glaciers, Rivers, and Lakes. Just as today's volcanic activity in Iceland is a continuation of the eruptive outbursts during the Ice Age, so too are the Icelandic glaciers a reminder of that time. They still cover more than 4,500 square miles (11,000 sq km), or nearly one eighth of the entire country. Vatnajökull alone, with its 3,250 square miles (8,420 sq km) equals the combined area of all other European glaciers. Others of considerable size are Langjökull, Hofsjökull, and Mýrdalsjökull, and there are dozens more of smaller dimensions.

Glaciers feed all the major streams in the country. Rivers are numerous, but few are large, and none is navigable. They are generally swift-flowing, at times forming deep ravines and impressive waterfalls. The largest is Thjórsá, more than 140 miles (220 km) long. It rises in the central highlands northeast of Hofsjökull and runs southwest through the southern lowlands. Parallel to it, some 15 miles (25 km) to the west, is Hvítá, which is shorter but nearly as voluminous. On it is Gullfoss, one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the world. The largest of Icelandic

THREE LIONS

COD is hung to dry in preparation for shipping. The fishing industry is Iceland's major economic resource.

waterfalls is Dettifoss on the country's second longest stream, Jökulsá á Fjöllum, which flows north from Vatnajökull. Skjálfandafljót, a river farther west, forms still another beautiful fall named Goðafoss.

Rivers and waterfalls are the most valuable of Iceland's natural resources. With an estimated hydroelectric power potential of 35 billion kilowatt-hours annually, they loom large in plans for the industrialization of the country. Only a small portion of their power has yet been harnessed.

Of the many lakes that dot the Icelandic countryside, the largest are Thingvallavatn in the southwest and Thórisvatn in the interior. Mývatn, a beautiful lake in the north, contains valuable deposits of diatomite, which are worked for export.

Plants and Animals. Only about one fourth of Iceland's land area is covered with continuous vegetation, and no more than one sixth is arable. Trees are almost totally absent. However, low-growing shrubs, such as heather, willow, dwarf birch, and various berry plants, are common in the moor and heathlands, which are found in most parts of the country. Bogs and grasslands are extensive in the lowlands.

The arctic fox is the only land mammal native to Iceland, and it is still common. Rats and mice, on the other hand, were accidental imports. Some reindeer were introduced in the 18th century, and a small, wild herd still roams the eastern heaths. Minks were imported for fur farming about 1930, but many escaped from the farms. Rapidly multiplying, they have since spread and become pests. Polar bears are infrequent visitors, but seals and whales are fairly common around the shores, although hunters have much reduced their numbers.

Birds are far more plentiful. Iceland is a major breeding ground for waterfowl, fostering no fewer than 16 species of duck. Among them, the eiderduck provides a good supplement to the income of many local farmers, who collect the valuable down. Seabirds, such as the razorbill, fulmar, gannet, and puffin, nest by the hundreds of thousands in cliffs around the coasts. The most common waders are the golden plover and the whimbrel, but several others are regular denizens. Common land birds include the raven, the snow bunting, and the ptarmigan, as well as such birds of prey as the gyrfalcon, the merlin, and two species of owls. The white-tailed eagle, once near extinction, is increasing again.

Fish, especially trout, char, and salmon, abound in most lakes and rivers. As for marine fish, the banks around Iceland are among the richest in the world and constitute the country's foremost economic resource. Cod, haddock, and others of that family, as well as the silver-scaled herring, are the most abundant.

Climate. A cold-tempered maritime climate, characterized by relatively cool summers and mild winters, prevails throughout the country. There are no sharp differences in temperature between regions. Thus, the annual average at Vík í Mýrdal, in the extreme south, is 42° F (5° C), while at Akureyri, in the north, it is 39° F (4° C). Precipitation, however, varies greatly. At Vík í Mýrdal it averages about 90 inches (230 cm) a year, whereas Akureyri gets only 19 inches (48 cm). On the whole, precipitation is heaviest in the winter. The worst aspect of Icelandic weather is neither cold nor snow, but extreme instability and constant winds.

3. Economy

Until the late 19th century, economic conditions in Iceland were practically medieval. During centuries of exploitation, nothing had been done to advance the economy. Subsistence agriculture with primitive tools and fishing in small, open boats were almost the only occupations. What little industry there was consisted of cottage production for home use. The only means of transportation was the Icelandic pony. There were no roads and few bridges. Harbors, other than natural ones, were nonexistent. Commerce was still mostly in the hands of foreigners. Reykjavík, with barely 1,000 inhabitants, was the only town of size.

Only when Iceland gained control of its own finances in 1874 did progress toward modernization begin. Since that time, a slow but steady change has taken place. As late as 1890 some 65% of the population was dependent upon agriculture; today only 15% live by farming. Fishing, which once was hardly considered a full-time occupation, now supports 10% of the nation, with another 10% earning their livelihood in related industries. Fish products account for more than 90% of all foreign exchange.

Cottage industry has disappeared; instead, numerous small manufacturing plants are in operation, and industrialization on a large scale has begun. Highways and bridges have been built all over the country, harbors and lighthouses have been constructed, and agriculture is highly developed. Aided by farmers' cooperatives, which began to sprout up after trade was almost entirely in Icelandic hands in the early 20th century, and small towns and growing villages had sprung up around the coast. Having changed from a nation of paupers to an affluent society in less than a century, Iceland plans a rapidly increasing industrialization to diversify and stabilize its economy.

Agriculture. Because of Iceland's location and limatic conditions, its agriculture has always en based on animal husbandry. The shortness f the growing season makes cultivation of ains too hazardous. However, grass can be own with ease, and hay is the principal crop. otatoes, turnips, and other edible root plants also cultivated. Otherwise, vegetable produc- n is on a very small scale, though hot-house rticulture, producing tomatoes, cucumbers, and ettuce for commercial purposes, has expanded eatly since World War II.

Iceland's livestock consists almost exclusively dairy cows and sheep. Dairy farms are located inly in the southern lowlands, the west, and e valleys of the north, where distances to ban markets are short. Some beef cattle have en kept on an experimental basis since mid- ntury, but the main source of meat for Ice- nders is a large stock of sheep, which are sed throughout the country; wool and skins important by-products. Poultry farms satisfy e country's need for eggs, and hogs are raised small numbers. Most agricultural products distributed by the farmers' own cooperatives.

Following a worldwide trend, the number of rms in Iceland has decreased rapidly since orld War II, while agricultural production has eatly increased through mechanization and im- oved methods of farming. Altogether there are little more than 5,000 farms left in the country, ost of them owner-operated. The average culti- ted area of each farmstead is less than 40 res (16 hectares).

Fisheries. The Icelandic fishing fleet is com- sed of some 760 vessels, with a total gross nage of about 80,000. The fisheries are sonal insofar as herring, which makes up out half of the catch, is taken mainly in the mmer and fall, whereas cod and haddock are ought in chiefly in winter and early spring. In od years the total catch may reach 1.2 million tric tons, ranking Iceland among the 10 to 15 gest fishing nations in the world. About 400 ales are caught each summer.

The catches are exported partly fresh (on) and partly processed. Herring is pickled or und into fishmeal and oil, although freezing gained importance since the late 1950's. nning, though a relatively old industry in land, has never developed to its full potential. out half of the cod is filleted and frozen; the is exported either directly from the trawlers in dried and salted form.

Manufacturing. In terms of employed labor, nufacturing is the principal occupation in Ice- d, employing nearly one third of the total rk force. A large number of these workers are ployed in fish- and other food-processing in- stries. But some 55% of all manufacturing ployees are engaged in a wide variety of light dustries producing for the domestic market, h articles as apparel and footwear, soaps, nts, furniture, confectionery, plastic goods, and ctric appliances. Printing and publishing are a relatively large industry.

On a somewhat larger scale are the cement tory at Akranes and the fertilizer plant near ykjavík, which now satisfy domestic needs. A nt at Lake Mývatn, powered by geothermal m, processes diatomite brought up from the tom of the lake. An aluminum smelter, with ultimate capacity of 60,000 metric tons a year, an operations at Straumsvík, south of Haf- narfjörður, in 1969. The biggest of all industrial enterprises in Iceland, it is powered by a large hydroelectric plant at Búrfell on the Thjórsá, also built in the late 1960's. With the Búrfell plant, power production took a big jump from about 700 million kilowatt-hours annually to more than 2 billion. Still, only a fraction of Iceland's power potential has been harnessed.

Labor. The Icelandic labor force, skilled and unskilled, is organized in nearly 150 local trade unions, which are amalgamated into one nation-wide federation. Wielding considerable political power, the federation has been the driving force behind numerous social improvements in Iceland during the 20th century. Legislation establishing safety standards, working hours, minimum vacation (21 working days), and other conditions of employment protects all workers.

Trade. The makeup of the Icelandic economy necessitates a relatively large foreign trade. All fuels, practically all machinery and transportation equipment, grains, timber, and a variety of manufactured articles have to be imported. To pay for these, Iceland exports large quantities of fish and fish products, some agricultural commodities, and manufactured goods on a very minor scale. The diatomite plant and the aluminum smelter also produce for export.

Most of the export trade is in the hands of sales corporations controlled by the producers themselves. The largest are those maintained by the Icelandic Freezing Plants and the Federation of Icelandic Cooperative Societies (FICS). Imports are handled in part by state monopolies, but mostly by private and cooperative wholesale firms, including FICS. Iceland's principal trading partners are the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany (East and West), followed by the Soviet Union and Norway. Because fluctuations in catches and in world market prices may seriously affect the foreign exchange situation of Iceland's small and one-sided economy, the balance of payments is generally very precarious.

Cooperatives are especially strong in the retail trade outside Reykjavík, but many private retail firms flourish besides. Some retail items, such as wines and spirits, are sold by state monopolies. Reykjavík is at once the largest port, transportation hub, and commercial center of the country.

Transportation. Iceland is one of few countries in the world that have no railroads. Overland freight moves exclusively by trucks on a network of highways with a total length of some 5,500 miles (8,900 km). Passenger service is maintained by bus lines. Most of the roads are gravel-surfaced and have only two lanes, but they are adequate for the country's needs. Road construction over the Icelandic terrain is extremely costly, as is maintenance. There are about 45,000 motor vehicles in the country, including trucks and buses.

Coastal shipping is supplied mainly by the State Shipping Service, while overseas transportation is in the hands of several private and cooperative companies, including FICS. The mercantile fleet comprises some 80 ships, with a total gross tonnage of 65,000.

Aviation is highly developed. Two Icelandic and one foreign airlines maintain regular service between Iceland and both sides of the Atlantic, and an intricate network of domestic air routes covers most parts of the country. There is also a regular air ambulance service. A jet airport is

located at Keflavík, some 25 miles (40 km) from the capital, and a smaller one is in Reykjavík proper. Numerous other airstrips are scattered around the country.

4. Education

Although primary schooling was not made compulsory in Iceland until 1907, literacy has been nearly universal since about 1800. Today illiteracy is unknown.

Practically all education is public and free. It is compulsory between the ages of 7 and 15, the last two years being spent in a lower secondary school. Middle schools, either academic or vocational, provide further education for one or two years. High schools, or gymnasiums, divided into science and arts departments, may be entered after the completion of primary education and an additional three years of academic training. Graduation from a gymnasium secures admission to the university, usually at about the age of 20.

The University of Iceland in Reykjavík, founded in 1911, has departments of philosophy, medicine, law and economics, theology, and engineering. For many specialized fields, however, graduate work must be continued outside the country.

In addition, Iceland has many special schools —teacher training, commercial, agricultural, and nautical colleges, and various others.

Libraries. The National Library in Reykjavík, established in 1818, is the largest in Iceland, containing more than 275,000 volumes. The university library has about 145,000 volumes. Some 30 district and municipal libraries, with which 200 smaller county libraries are closely connected, also receive support from the state.

5. Government

Iceland is a republic, governed under the constitution of June 17, 1944. Executive authority is vested jointly in the president and the cabinet, while legislative power rests with the president and the Althing (General Assembly). Presidential functions, however, are largely ceremonial. Judicial power is exercised by independent courts. There is universal suffrage, beginning at age 20, but presidential candidates may not be younger than 35. Freedom of speech and assembly is guaranteed.

Executive and Legislative Branches. The president, popularly elected for a term of four years, is the head of state. He signs legislation and nominates cabinet ministers as well as certain other state officials. But he is not responsible for acts of government; that responsibility lies with the prime minister and his cabinet, to whom the president delegates his executive power. The cabinet is answerable to the Althing; if it suffers a vote of no confidence, it must resign. Ministers attend legislative sessions and may participate in debates, but only those who are elected members of the Althing may vote. Governments are usually formed by coalitions, for no single party is able to muster a legislative majority.

The Althing, established in 930, is the oldest functioning legislature in the world. It consists of 60 members, elected to 4-year terms under a system of proportional representation. Each newly elected Althing divides itself by vote into Efri deild (Upper Chamber), comprising one third of the total membership, and Neðri deild (Lower Chamber), in which the remaining two thirds are seated.

Political Parties. Up to 1918, political parties represented mainly different attitudes toward the struggle for independence. After that the entire system was revamped according to ideologies, and since 1930 there have been four fairly stable parties. The largest is the Independence party, formed in 1929. Slightly right of center, it represents chiefly commercial interests but has attained a broad following and regularly polls about 40% of the vote. The middle-of-the-road Progressive party, founded in 1916, is mainly a farmers' party, although it has registered some gains in urban centers since mid-century. It usually captures less than 30% of the vote.

The People's party, also founded in 1916, was originally the political arm of labor. Social-democratic and somewhat left of center, it wields more influence than its polling strength of less than 15% would indicate. The youngest party is the People's Alliance, formally established in 1968. Its chameleonlike history, however, goes back to the Communist party of 1930, then formed by a splinter from the People's party. Made up of a hard, Communist core, around which revolve numerous undefined leftists, it regularly polls over 15% of the total vote. Other parties have arisen occasionally, but they have all been short-lived.

The Press. Political parties exercise a de facto control over most Icelandic newspapers. Thus, although the press is free from government intervention, it is less than totally independent. There are five daily newspapers in Reykjavík (besides four weeklies), most of them with a nationwide distribution. Many weekly and bi-weekly papers are published in other towns, and periodicals number in the dozens.

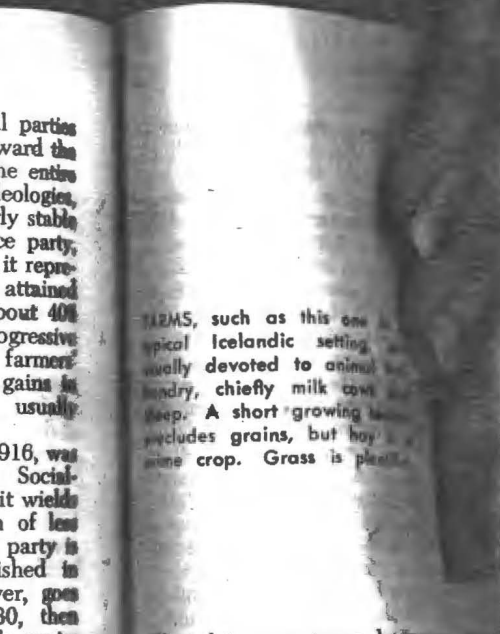
Broadcasting is in the hands of an autonomous state monopoly that maintains one radio station in Reykjavík and several relay stations around the country. Television broadcasting was begun over one channel in 1966.

The Judiciary. There are two kinds of lower courts in Iceland—ordinary and special. Ordinary courts, presided over by district or town magistrates, hear most complaints, but certain cases, such as those concerned with trade or maritime affairs, are referred to special courts. Appeals can be made to the Supreme Court, which is the country's highest tribunal. It is composed of five judges appointed for life by the president. There is no jury system.

Local Government. For administrative purposes Iceland is divided into 16 rural districts and 13 townships, besides Reykjavík. The districts are further divided into more than 200 counties. Each unit has its own council, elected for four years, which is responsible for local affairs. District magistrates are appointed by the president, but town councils elect mayors.

Social Security. Iceland is a welfare state. All its citizens are covered by pensions and health insurance, all wage and salary earners (as well as self-employed persons who so wish) by accident insurance, and most union members by unemployment insurance. Other benefits include old-age pensions, disability insurance, family allowances (payments to families with children), children's annuities (to the fatherless), mothers' allowances (to the widowed, unwed, or divorced), maternity grants, widow's compensation and pensions, medical care, and death benefits.

Public Finance. Not surprisingly, extensive insurance coverage has resulted in heavy taxation.



farms, such as this one ... typical Icelandic setting ... usually devoted to animal ... husbandry, chiefly milk cows ... sheep. A short growing ... precludes grains, but hay ... prime crop. Grass is ...

...neral income taxes, ho... ...%) of the total revenue; ... ...es from import duties and ... ...erprises also account for a ... ...ial security payments ma... ...gory of expenditures (25% ... ...e (15%) goes to support ... ...urch. An inordinately large ... ...nt to subsidize agricultural ... ...h export and domestic con... ...rampant inflation, which ha... ...rld War II, subsidies have ta... ...ressive share of public funds.

History

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THE OLD REPUBLIC

The state thus founded was ... its time. Essentially a republ... ...tive as well as judicial aut... ..., although division of pow... ...the fact that the legislato... ...es to pass sentences. But the ..., and executive power we... ...ough obviously flawed, this ...nt seems to have served a ... ...ning people at least as w... ...em then prevalent on the C... ... than 300 years.

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NATS WIDE LUND

...s, such as this one in a ...l Icelandic setting, are ...y devoted to animal hus...y, chiefly milk cows and ... A short growing season ...es grains, but hay is a ... crop. Grass is plentiful.

...ral income taxes, however, provide but little ... of the total revenue, most of which (70%) ...s from import duties and sales taxes. State ...rprises also account for a sizable share (15%). ...l security payments make up the largest ...gory of expenditures (25%). Another big ... (15%) goes to support education and the ...ch. An inordinately large portion (20%) is ...t to subsidize agricultural production, for ... export and domestic consumption. Because ...mpant inflation, which has persisted since ...ld War II, subsidies have long eaten up an ...sive share of public funds.

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Except for a few Irish hermits, who may have ...hed the country well before 800, Iceland re...ed uninhabited until about 870 (some set ... date more precisely at 874), when a Nor...ian Viking named Ingólfr Arnarson became ... first to settle it permanently. By an extra...nary stroke of fate, he made his home at ...kjavík, the site of the modern capital.

Old books reveal that Iceland was fully set...d in "sixty winters," by which time it had be...e populous enough to warrant general organi...on. The result was the establishment of the ...ing at Thingvellir and the adoption of a uni...n code of law in 930.

THE OLD REPUBLIC

The state thus founded was a remarkable one ...s time. Essentially a republic, it vested leg...ive as well as judicial authority in the Al...g, although division of powers was observed ...he fact that the legislators chose separate ...s to pass sentences. But there was no head of ..., and executive power was entirely lacking. ...ugh obviously flawed, this form of govern...t seems to have served a commonwealth of ...ing people at least as well as the feudal ...m then prevalent on the Continent. It lasted ... than 300 years.

A Golden Age. The republican era (930–1262) ... on the whole, a prosperous one for many ...ons. The settlers had come to a virgin land ... for the raising of livestock and rich as well ...h, seals, and waterfowl. By the end of the ...ement period few nations could boast a ...r or larger fleet. Icelandic merchants plied ...Atlantic every summer, selling textiles, wool, ..., falcons, and sulfur on the European market. In return they brought back grains, timber, linen, tar, and various manufactured goods.

About 985, Icelanders led by Eric the Red colonized Greenland, and shortly afterward Eric's son Leif explored the shores of North America (Vinland), then newly discovered by the Icelanders. However, an attempt around the year 1000 to settle the American continent proved abortive.

Culturally, the Icelanders were leaders among the Scandinavian peoples. Icelandic poets and saga tellers were coveted entertainers both at home and abroad. During this era the great bulk of Icelandic medieval literature was committed to writing.

Decline and Fall. Before the loss of independence in 1262 the seeds of dissolution, political and economic, had long been germinating. Evidence suggests that the climate began to cool in the 12th century, while indiscriminate clearing of wooded areas, coupled with excessive grazing, resulted in denudation of large tracts of land. All this made agriculture increasingly unprofitable. In addition, the nation's fleet was rapidly deteriorating, and declining exports made its renewal extremely difficult. Iceland itself did not have the timber resources from which to build oceangoing ships.

To these economic factors were added social and political ones. Christianity, adopted by the Althing in 1000, gradually undermined the foundations of the old society, whose local chieftains had also served the functions of pagan high priests. During the 12th century wealth and power began to accumulate in the hands of a few chiefs, and by 1220 six prominent families ruled the entire country. It was the internecine power struggle among these families, shrewdly exploited by King Haakon IV (the Old) of Norway, that finally brought the old republic to an end. Icelanders swore fealty to the Norwegian king in 1262–1264.

FOREIGN DOMINATION

The loss of independence was followed by more than five centuries of deterioration. Although the treaty negotiated with Norway at the time of union stipulated that the Icelanders should keep their own laws, a new code stressing the rights of the king over those of the populace was soon imposed. Regular shipping service from the mainland had been another condition of the treaty, but the task of supplying the country was

soon left more or less to the whim of the crown. The situation did not improve after Iceland, along with Norway, passed to the Danish realm in 1380.

Economic Changes. After the fall of the republic the Icelandic economy changed radically. Until the 13th century, homespun textiles had been the principal export, but soon after 1300 this traditional commodity was replaced by dried fish and fish oil. The change was precipitated partly by declining profits from animal husbandry and partly by the growth of European cities and the consequent demand for low-priced food for their proliferating masses. In time the demand for fish brought Englishmen to the Icelandic shores for fishing and trading, and in their wake came the Germans. Throughout the 15th century England and Germany vied for trade and accommodations for their fishing boats, and the situation was, on the whole, favorable to the Icelanders. But the Danish crown always looked askance at the foreign merchants. The commercial and shipping interests of the Danish crown were fast awakening, and before the mid-16th century the king virtually halted the English and German trade.

The Lutheran Reformation. Until the 16th century the royal power had not made itself keenly felt in administrative affairs. Although the king's agents in Iceland—as well as bishops sent there by the Church—were frequently foreigners, whose chief interest was the exploitation of the populace, the Icelanders had a way of ridding themselves of such people; one particularly contemptible bishop, for instance, was put in a sack and drowned. But around the mid-16th century the situation took a definite turn for the worse.

In 1537 the newly crowned Christian III issued a church ordinance in Denmark supporting Lutheranism, which several years later was enforced in Iceland. Resistance to the change was formidable, especially by Jón Arason, last Catholic bishop of Hólar, who took up arms against the Protestant royal agents. The authority of the crown, however, prevailed in the end. The bishop, along with two of his sons (the Icelandic clergy never took celibacy too seriously), was beheaded without trial in 1550. Their execution marked not only the triumph of Lutheranism in Iceland but also the last active resistance to Danish power for a long time to come.

Trade Monopoly. The centuries that followed constitute the darkest chapter in Icelandic history. The king immediately confiscated the vast possessions of the Icelandic monasteries, gaining control of about one sixth of all landed property in the country, and the result was an enormous increase in his revenues. But that only whetted the royal appetite.

In 1602, Denmark established a trade monopoly, under which commerce with Iceland was permitted only to those holding licenses, which were sold by the Danish crown for exorbitant sums. As a consequence the Icelanders suffered soaring prices and inferior merchandise, while payments for local products, fixed by the same merchants, remained unchanged at best. This state of affairs, which lasted without relief until 1787, reduced the people to poverty and sapped their strength more than the combined plagues and natural calamities of their history.

Absolutism. With economic decline came political losses. In 1662, under duress, the Icelanders accepted the absolute monarchy of the Danish king, a constitutional change already legalized in Denmark. The Althing was stripped of all its legislative functions; shortly thereafter, it was also denied the final word in judicial matters. Every vestige of political power was usurped by the crown.

The 18th century was a series of disasters. The first census taken in Iceland during the early 1700's showed a population of about 50,000, but a smallpox epidemic that ravaged the country in 1707–1709 reduced the number to less than 40,000. Serious famines in the mid-1700's again halted the budding regrowth of population. Finally the catastrophic eruption of Laki in 1783 killed fully 20% of the population as well as some 70% of all livestock. At this time Iceland's population reached its lowest ebb—about 35,000 people, most of whom were destitute.

Nevertheless, during the latter part of the 18th century Iceland's fortunes began to improve again, however slowly. A little after 1750 an Icelandic high official, Skúli Magnússon, founded several industrial establishments in Reykjavík. Although he ultimately failed in his enterprises because of the bitter opposition of Danish monopolists, the cumulative effect of his and others' efforts was a modification of the monopoly system in 1787. Trade became free to all Danish subjects.

National Resurgence. During the first half of the 19th century several developments combined to undermine the absolute power of the Danish monarchs. When, after the French July revolution of 1830, the Danish King was finally compelled to establish a consultative assembly in Denmark, the Icelanders also began to voice their demands. Led by the historian Jón Sigurðsson (1811–1879), they succeeded in having the Althing, which had been suspended since 1800, reconvened in Reykjavík in 1843, albeit only in a consultative capacity. Over stubborn Danish resistance the Icelanders gradually registered a series of further gains.

Trade with Iceland was opened to all nations in 1854. In 1874, at the millennial celebration of its settlement, Iceland was given a new constitution, under which the Althing recaptured partial legislative power as well as control over domestic finances. The latter gain was a signal for progress; despite some very hard years in the 1880's that resulted in large-scale emigration to America, the remainder of the century saw great improvements in the economy. The struggle for full independence, however, continued unabated, and in 1904 Iceland achieved home rule.

The Treaty of Union. Denmark recognized Iceland's full independence on Dec. 1, 1918, by the Treaty of Union. But Iceland still retained ties with Denmark; it became a separate kingdom under the Danish king, Christian X. The treaty was terminable by either party after 25 years, and there was never any doubt that the Icelanders would take advantage of the opportunity when the time came.

Denmark was occupied by German forces in April 1940 and could no longer fulfill its obligations under the Treaty of Union. The Icelandic government immediately took over the conduct of its foreign affairs, which until then had been discharged by the Danish government. In May British troops occupied Iceland in order to prevent a German invasion. On June 17, 1941, the Althing elected Sveinn Björnsson regent and temporary head of state.

THE MODERN STATE

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The "Codfish War." Troubled ov

THE MODERN STATE

By 1944, not knowing how long the war would last, the Icelanders decided to act unilaterally to terminate the Treaty of Union, and the issue was submitted to a plebiscite in May 1944. With 98.6% of the total electorate participating, 97.3% voted for abrogation of the treaty, and 95% indicated their desire for a republican form of government. Accordingly, a new republic was proclaimed at Thingvellir on the birthday of Jón Sigurðsson, June 17, 1944. Sveinn Björnsson was elected the first president.

U. S. "Occupation." World War II wrought changes of far-reaching consequences in the entire fabric of Icelandic life. Not only did it create material prosperity, which has since continued undiminished; it triggered a revaluation of some of the nation's basic attitudes and policies.

In 1941, when Allied strength in Europe was at an ebb, Iceland was prevailed upon by Britain and the United States to ask for U. S. protection in order to relieve the British garrison that had occupied the country since May 1940. A U. S.-Icelandic agreement, made at the time, called for the withdrawal of all U. S. forces at the end of the war. In 1944, however, the United States requested permission to construct and lease permanent military bases in Iceland. Faced with an Icelandic rejection in April 1946, the United States still refused to withdraw, arguing that no peace treaty had yet been concluded with Germany. A compromise was reached in October 1946, allowing U. S. civilian control of the airport at Keflavík for 6½ years. The U. S. troops forthwith changed to civilian clothes.

The 1946 agreement was Iceland's first step toward total reversal of its policy of permanent neutrality. This policy had been adopted in 1918 and confirmed in 1945 when the country refused to declare war on Germany in order to qualify as a founding member of the United Nations. The final negation of the neutrality policy came in 1949, when the Althing approved participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In the bitter controversy over that decision—which still lingers—the pro-NATO faction contended that neutrality had already proved useless, while opponents argued that since Iceland had no army, participation in a military alliance would lead to a permanent peacetime harboring of foreign troops in the country. That forecast soon came true. At the height of the Korean War, in May 1951, the United States, under the auspices of NATO, obtained the Icelandic government's permission (granted illegally, as it happened, since consent of the Althing was sought only after the fact) to restation troops in the country. U. S. personnel at Keflavík promptly donned military uniforms again, and the Defense Force (called the "Occupation Force" by its opponents) has remained ever since.

However unobtrusive, this presence of U. S. troops has profoundly influenced Icelandic life. Not only has it colored most political exchanges between the forces of left and right, but it has also left the nation with ambivalent feelings about its own future. To many Icelanders, the American "occupation," seemingly perpetual, merely portends one of two fates: if peace prevails, a destiny similar to that of the Hawaiian Islands; and, in case of war, Iceland's physical destruction by nuclear attack.

The "Codfish War." Troubled over the increasing exploitation of its offshore fishing waters by foreign trawlers, and particularly the excessive trawling of the spawning grounds, Iceland set a three-mile fishing limit after World War II. The limit was increased to 4 miles in 1952, to 12 miles in 1958, to 50 miles in 1972, and to 200 miles in 1975. The unilateral setting of these limits resulted in disputes with the countries concerned, particularly with Britain, which sent warships to protect its trawlers in Icelandic waters. Minor naval skirmishes between British and Icelandic vessels occurred over a seven-month period in 1975–1976 until an accord was signed by the two countries on June 1, 1976.

Industrialization. Icelanders have long been aware of the need for more and larger export industries to shore up their shaky, fish-based economy. A program to realize this goal was finally put into operation with the opening of the aluminum smelter at Straumsvík in 1969. That event may well prove to be a turning point in Icelandic economic history. At the same time the country applied for membership in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and was admitted to that organization in 1970.

Presidential Elections. In the first quarter century after establishment of the republic in 1944, Iceland had only two presidential elections: Ásgeir Ásgeirsson, elected in 1952 to succeed Sveinn Björnsson, who died; and Kristján Eldjárn, elected in 1968, when Ásgeirsson retired. In June 1980, Vigdis Finnbogadottir was elected Iceland's first woman president.

7. Culture

Unlike many other old countries, Iceland cannot boast eye-catching proofs of a past greatness; there are no impressive ruins, architectural jewels, or lasting monuments. To a unique degree, Icelandic culture has always been based on the written word. Otherwise, native creativity traditionally found its most satisfactory expression in folk arts and handicrafts—embroidery, wood carving, and metalwork, especially in silver. Today, there is hardly an art form that is not cultivated in Iceland, but painting is perhaps the best developed. New cultural currents are quick to reach the country, and their acceptance is now comparatively fast and painless. The state supports the arts by annual subsidies to writers and artists.

Literature. Old Icelandic literature reached its peak during the republican era. The colonists had brought with them their literary tradition, and in Iceland that heritage was cherished and expanded as nowhere else. For more than 300 years literature in Scandinavia was almost exclusively an Icelandic domain. Up to the early 12th century, when the first written books were produced, the tradition remained oral.

But the time from about 1120 to the end of the 13th century was one of those rare but happy periods in history that spawned literary genius. It was during this republican era that most of the celebrated Icelandic sagas, as well as a large body of heroic and court poetry, mythology, and history, were committed to vellum. (See EDDAS; SAGA.)

After Iceland's loss of independence, however, its literature soon entered a period of decline; by 1400 the writing of literary prose had all but ceased. Not so the composition of poetry, however. During the next few centuries, Icelandic literature was completely dominated by sacred

verse and *rímur*. The latter, a peculiarly Icelandic form of balladry emphasizing metrical ingenuity, was the backbone of literary tradition up to the 19th century.

Other cultural pursuits also continued. "Publishing" by copying and recopying old manuscripts flourished during the first centuries of foreign rule. Icelandic scribes were active long after a printing press was brought to the country by Bishop Jón Arason in the 1530's. Even during the darkest ages of degradation, reading was probably more common among Icelanders than most other nations, and the continuity of the Icelandic literary tradition was never really threatened. But few writers of eminence emerged during these centuries. Only the 17th-century Hallgrímur Pétursson towers over the plain of mediocrity; his *Passion Hymns* are among the treasures of all ages.

The national resurgence of the 19th century lifted Icelandic writers to new heights of achievement. Jónas Hallgrímsson, working mostly in the 1830's, completely rejuvenated Icelandic poetry, and it is doubtful whether his talent has ever been matched since. But he was followed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by a host of other distinguished poets, the most outstanding of whom were Matthías Jochumsson, Stephan G. Stephansson, and Einar Benediktsson.

Until 1918 most Icelandic poets were caught up in the struggle for independence, and a strong vein of nationalism runs through their works. During and after World War I a new kind of romantic lyricism was infused into poetry by Davíð Stefánsson and others. The new idiom was later perfected by Tómas Guðmundsson, an unsurpassed master of style and diction.

Before and during World War II Steinn Steinarr sparked a renewal of Icelandic verse. Since then, owing chiefly to his efforts, modern free-verse forms have flourished at the cost of the more traditional ones. As yet, however, few Icelanders have traveled the newly won ground with the ease and assurance of seasoned explorers. The best achievements have been registered by such mid-century poets as Snorri Hjartarson and Hannes Pétursson who have managed to straddle the chasm between the traditional and the modern.

The Icelandic novel was revived in the mid-19th century by Jón Thoroddsen, but it was not until the 20th century that the genre flourished. Outstanding among its proponents have been Gunnar Gunnarsson, a peerless creator of character; Thórbergur Thórðarson, a brilliant stylist and humorist; and Halldór Laxness, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1955. Ólafur Jóhann Sigurðsson and Indriði G. Thorsteinsson are also contemporary writers of polish and sensitivity. Guðbergur Bergsson has emerged as by far the most accomplished novelist of the younger generation.

Theater and Drama. In a country that had practically no urban life before the 20th century, there was little place for theater. Nevertheless, some notable plays were written before 1900, and the Dramatic Society, which is still very much alive, was founded in Reykjavík in the 1890's. Two expatriates, Jóhann Sigurjónsson and Guðmundur Kamban, wrote mature dramas and had considerable success in European theaters before and after World War I.

Since the opening of the National Theater in 1950 there have been two repertory companies in Reykjavík, and a new flurry of activity was seen during the 1960's, when several small stages, drama workshops, and experimental groups were added. While many novelists and poets have tried their hand at drama from time to time, a new breed of talented playwrights, using modern techniques, has emerged since mid-century. Of these, Agnar Thórðarson, Oddur Björnsson, and Jökull Jakobsson have been perhaps the most notable.

Visual Arts. The medieval wall paintings known to have been executed in Iceland's churches have perished because the buildings were not of durable material. Consequently, the only extant samples of early pictorial art are found in illuminated manuscripts. In modern times, Icelandic painting first flourished in the work of the early 20th-century Ásgrímur Jónsson, who was closely followed by two other masters, Jón Stefánsson and Jóhannes S. Kjarval. All three found inspiration in Icelandic scenery, though each had his own personal vision of it. On the whole, Icelandic painters were preoccupied with landscapes until World War II. Since then, abstract expression has been predominant. Thorvaldur Skúlason and Svavar Guðnason are accomplished artists in that vein.

Wood carving was a highly developed art in the past and still claims some practitioners. Modern Icelandic sculpture began in the early 20th century with Einar Jónsson, a neoclassic master of symbolic images, whose home—now a museum—looks more like a shrine than a gallery. Another highly regarded sculptor is Ásmundur Sveinsson, many of whose massive concrete works adorn the capital. Sigurjón Ólafsson has also achieved distinction with his sculptures.

An interest in art is very prevalent among Icelanders, and paintings decorate most private homes as well as many public offices. The National Gallery and other museums in Reykjavík have permanent exhibitions of the visual arts.

Music. Like most other aspects of modern Icelandic culture, music first began to develop in the 19th century. Since then, Icelandic composers have reflected a wide range of international influences, while some have also infused their works with elements from Icelandic folk music. Today, there are a conservatory (founded in 1930), a symphony orchestra, and many smaller musical ensembles in Reykjavík. Grand opera, with Icelandic artists, is presented at the National Theater.

HALLBERG HALLMUNDSSON
"An Anthology of Scandinavian Literature"

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I. Language

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8. Language

Icelandic is the official literary and spoken language of Iceland. It belongs to the Scandinavian branch of the Germanic languages.

Development. Icelandic, which began as a Norwegian dialect, was established during Iceland's settlement period (874 to about 900 A. D.). The first Icelanders, who were from various parts of Norway and its colonies, leveled out their linguistic differences and made of Icelandic a remarkably uniform language, with few and unimportant dialect variations. Compared with the other Scandinavian languages, Icelandic remained unusually close to the grammatical and lexical structure of old Norwegian. The reasons for this conservation include geographical isolation, the close-knit social and economic structure of the Icelandic people, and the extraordinary literary tradition established after the coming of Christianity (1000).

The classical period of the Icelandic language was 1150 to 1350. The language of this period is often referred to as Old Norse (ON), to mark the linguistic community of Iceland and Norway. In 1262–1264, Iceland came under the rule of the Norwegian king; however, there were already signs of a linguistic cleavage that must have begun as early as 1100. In 1380, Iceland (together with Norway) became a dependency of Denmark and remained so until independence was achieved again in 1918. Unlike Norway, however, Iceland preserved its literary tradition during its union with Denmark.

At the time of the Reformation, Iceland got its own translation of the New Testament (1540) and eventually of the whole Bible (1584), which was basic to the maintenance of the language. In the 18th century a conscious cultivation of puristic purity set in.

A decisive turn came with the enthusiastic attention given to old Icelandic language and literature by scholars of the romantic period in Denmark and Sweden, especially the linguist Rasmus K. Rask (q.v.). Rask published the first scientific grammar of Icelandic (1811), and in 1816 he helped found Hið Islenzka Bókmenntafélag (the Icelandic Literary Society) for the publication of old and new texts in Icelandic and the cultivation of the Icelandic language.

Orthography. The orthography that enjoyed official status after 1918 is a compromise between modern pronunciation and classical spelling and enables Icelanders to read their medieval literature without difficulty. The vowels illustrate the compromise, since their pronunciation has changed greatly, though systematically. Accents are placed over the long vowels (as was done traditionally in ON manuscripts and now regularly in normalized ON texts), and they are given the modern pronunciation instead of the ON. For example, *á, é, í, ó, ú,* and *ý* had in ON the values of long *a, e, i, o, u,* and *ü* in modern German, but in Icelandic they are now pronounced almost like the English sounds *ow, ye, ee, oh, oo,* and *ee* and are long or short depending on their position in the syllable.

While this creates some spelling problems, it has the advantage of showing the grammatical relationships of native words. The consistent distinction of *ý* from *í*, which are now pronounced alike (*ee*), makes it possible to identify the relationship of words with *ý* to the base forms containing *ú* from which they derived. For example, the singular of "mouse" is *mús,* and the plural is *mýs;* the noun "house" is *hús,* and the verb "to house" is *hýsa.*

The consonant system has changed much less from ON times than has the vowel system. Icelandic is the only Scandinavian language that, like English, has preserved the voiced and voiceless *th* sounds (written *ð* and *þ* respectively); it has also kept clusters of *h* and following consonants (*hj, hl, hn, hr, hv*), and of nasal plus following voiced consonants (*mb, nd, ng*). The stop consonants are conspicuously unvoiced, so that the distinction of fortis (*p, t, k*) and lenis (*b, d, g*) is usually one of aspiration, or in the case of *pp, tt,* or *kk,* even of a preaspiration reminiscent of a preceding *h*. Clusters like *ll* and *nn* (as well as *rl* and *rn*) have developed initial occlusion (becoming like *dl* and *dn*). A major consonantal change reflected in the orthography is the spirantization of final unstressed *t* and *k*: *húsið* ("the house") for *húsit, að* ("to") for *at, eg* ("I") for *ek*.

Grammar. Icelandic grammar has remained virtually unchanged since ON times. Where the other Scandinavian languages have eliminated many distinctions in the inflectional system, Icelandic has preserved in full the Old Scandinavian (and Germanic) three genders, four cases, and two numbers in the nouns, pronouns, and adjectives; and three persons and two numbers in the verbs. Icelandic has both a separate and a suffixed definite article, but it has not developed an indefinite article. The old plural pronouns *vér* and *þér,* which became honorifics (used of singular persons), were replaced by the old duals *við* ("we") and *þið* ("you"). Continuous action may be expressed by a form of *vera* ("be") plus infinitive with *að,* as in *hann er að skrifa* ("he is writing"); completed action by a form of *vera búinn* plus infinitive with *að,* as in *hann er búinn að skrifa* ("he has written").

Vocabulary. Since the puristic revival in the 18th century, Icelanders have succeeded in doing what the other Scandinavians generally speaking have not—building up a complete modern vocabulary from mostly native elements. Early well-assimilated loanwords such as *kirkja* ("church") and *prestur* ("priest") have not been rejected, and in some cases even modern loans have been accepted if they fit well into the phonemic and morphemic structure of the language; for example, *bíll* ("automobile"), *berkill* ("tubercle"), *kaffi* ("coffee"). But it is a basic rule that words of the type of Danish *telefon* and *biologi* (from Greek) shall be avoided by the substitution of native words, either extended in meaning or newly created. Thus *telefon* is replaced by *sími* (a native word for "wire"), and *biologi* by *líffræði* ("life science"), translating the Greek.

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