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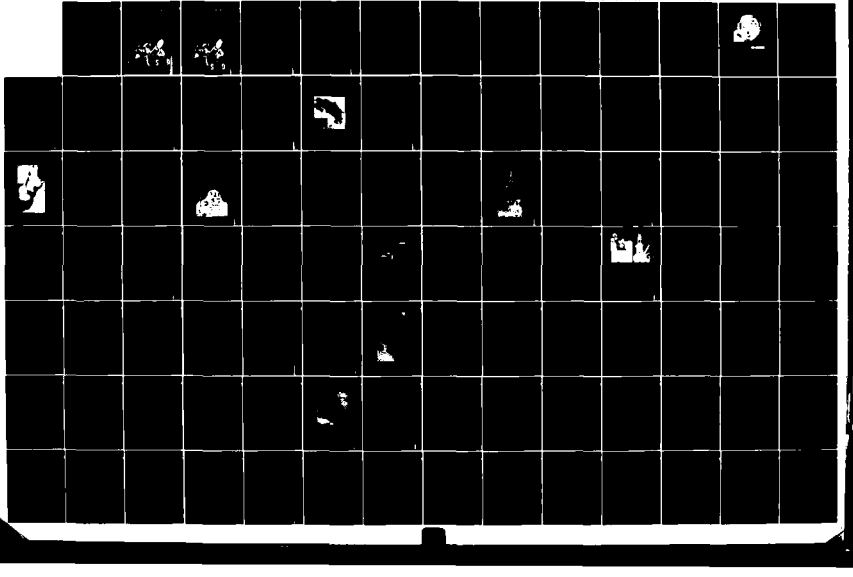

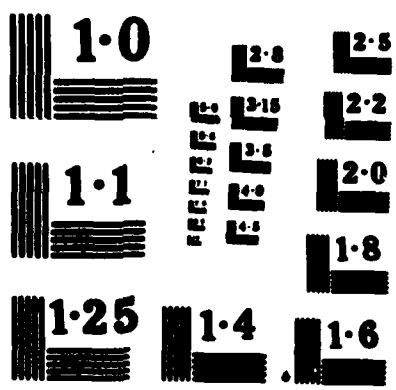
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Costa Rica
a country study

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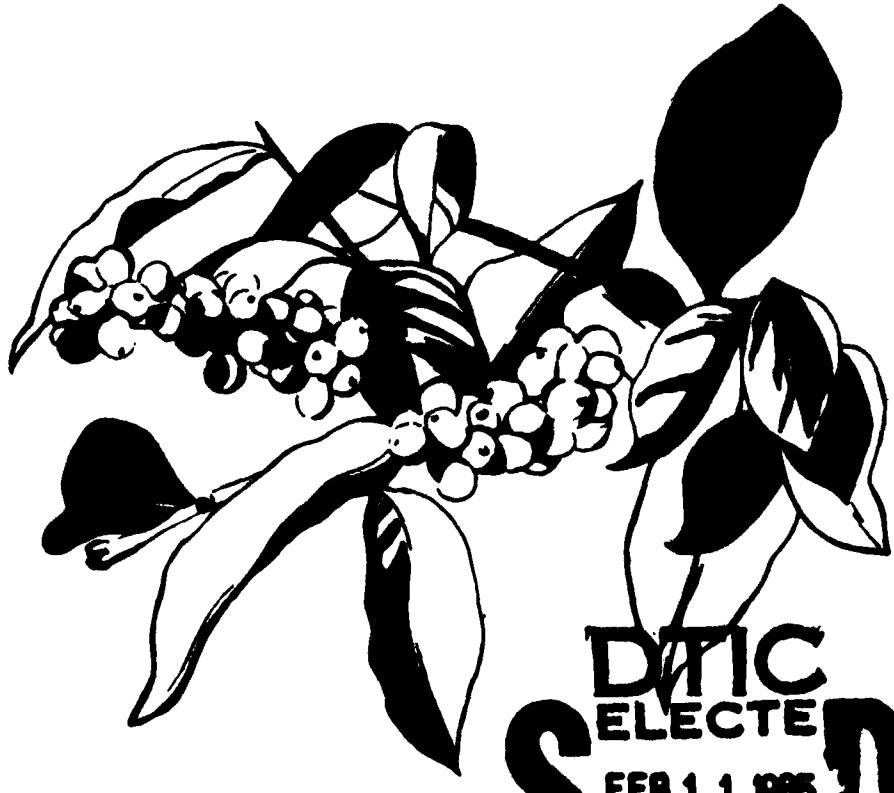
Costa Rica
a country study

Foreign Area Studies
The American University
Edited by
Harold D. Nelson
Research completed
November 1983



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On the cover: Coffee beans, traditional symbol of Costa Rica

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Foreword

This volume is one of a continuing series of books prepared by Foreign Area Studies, The American University, under the Country Studies/Area Handbook Program. The last page of this book provides a listing of other published studies. Each book in the series deals with a particular foreign country, describing and analyzing its economic, national security, political, and social systems and institutions and examining the interrelationships of those systems and institutions and the ways that they are shaped by cultural factors. Each study is written by a multidisciplinary team of social scientists. The authors seek to provide a basic insight and understanding of the society under observation, striving for a dynamic rather than a static portrayal of it. The study focuses on historical antecedents and on the cultural, political and socioeconomic characteristics that contribute to cohesion and cleavage within the society. Particular attention is given to the origins and traditions of the people who make up the society, their dominant beliefs and values, their community of interests and the issues on which they are divided, the nature and extent of their involvement with the national institutions, and their attitudes toward each other and toward the social system and political order within which they live.

The contents of the book represent the views, opinions, and findings of Foreign Area Studies and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy, or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation. The authors have sought to adhere to accepted standards of scholarly objectivity. Such corrections, additions, and suggestions for factual or other changes that readers may have will be welcomed for use in future new editions.

William Evans-Smith
Director, Foreign Area Studies
The American University
Washington, D.C. 20016

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The aesthetic touches that enhance the book's appearance are the work of Farah Ahannavard, whose illustrations appear on the book's cover and on the title pages of the chapters. The inclusion of photographs has been made possible in part by the generosity of various individuals and public and private agencies. The authors acknowledge their indebtedness especially to those persons who contributed original camera work not previously published.

Contents

Page

Foreword iii

Acknowledgments v

Preface xi

Country Profile xiii

Introduction xxi

Chapter 1. Historical Setting 1

Robert Rinehart

PRE-COLOMBIAN ERA—THE COLONIAL PERIOD—TheConquistadores—Colonial Government and Society—INDEPENDENCE AND THE YOUNG NATION—Transition of Power—The Central American Federation—Political Conflict—TheCoffee Barons—The War Against William Walker—The Montealegres—The Guardia Dictatorship—Minor Cooper Keith—Church-State Conflict—FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY—The Liberal Ascendancy—The Tinoco Dictatorship—Relations with Nicaragua and Panama—The Rise of Ideology—The Calderón Era—The 1948 Election—Civil War—THE SECOND REPUBLIC—The Junta and the 1949 Constitution—The Ulate Administration—Figueres and the National Liberation Party—Opposing the Dictators—The 1955 Invasion—The 1958 Election and the Echandi Administration—Politics in the 1960s—The Central American Common Market—The Return of Don Pepe—The Oduber Administration—The Nicaraguan Season—Crisis and Change

Chapter 2. The Society and Its Environment 71

Irving Kaplan

PHYSICAL SETTING—Terrain—Drainage—Climate—DEMOGRAPHY—Population Growth and the Age Structure—Population Distribution, Urbanization, and Migration—THE SOCIAL ORDER—Ethnic Relations—Social Stratification: Historical Development—Stratification: Modern Structure and Values—RELIGIOUS LIFE—Church and State—The Roman Catholic Church as an Institution—Catholic Faith and Observance—EDUCATION—HEALTH

Chapter 3. The Economy 131

Donald P. Whitaker

LAND RESOURCES, USE, AND TENURE—AGRICULTURE—Crops—Livestock—FORESTRY—FISH-

ING—MANUFACTURING—MINING—ENERGY SOURCES—Wood and Bagasse—Electric Power—Petroleum Products—TRANSPORTATION—Roads—Railroads—Civil Aviation—Ports—Inland Waterways—Pipelines—FOREIGN TRADE, BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, AND FOREIGN DEBT

Chapter 4. Government and Politics 183

Jean R. Tartter

CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK—Constitutional Development—Constitution of 1949—INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT—Executive Branch—Legislative Branch—Local Government—Autonomous Institutions and the Civil Service—Electoral System—Judicial System—POLITICAL DYNAMICS—National Liberation Party—Opposition Parties—Leftist Factions—Political Interest Groups—National Election of 1982—The Monge Administration, 1982-83—Politics and the Information Media—FOREIGN RELATIONS—Regional Problems—Nicaragua—United States—Communist Countries

Chapter 5. National Security 241

Frederick Ehrenreich

NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS—Costa Rica and the Conflict in Central America—Internal Security and Public Order—THE PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES—The Military in Costa Rican History—Civil War and the Abolition of the Army—Development and Place in the National Life—Mission, Organization, and Strength—Foreign Security Assistance—The Prison System

Appendix. Tables 277

Bibliography 295

Glossary 317

Index 321

List of Figures

1 Republic of Costa Rica xx
2 Central America and the Caribbean, 1983 xxix
3 The Conquest and Colonization of Costa Rica 7
4 Costa Rica and the Kingdom of Guatemala, 1568-1821 11
5 The Central American Federation, 1823-38 19
6 Border Disputes with Panama, 1900-41 33
7 The Civil War in Costa Rica, March-April 1948 46
8 Terrain and Drainage 75
9 Annual Rainfall and Rainy Seasons 80
10 Age and Sex Structure of the Population, 1973 84
11 Distribution of Population, 1973 86

12 Transportation System, 1983 168
13 Government Organization, 1983 190
14 Evolution of Principal Political Parties, 1953-82 215
15 Organizational Structure of Public Security Forces, 1982 265

Preface

This study replaces the *Area Handbook for Costa Rica*, which was completed in mid-1969 and published in 1970. Long recognized for its tradition of adherence to democratic principles and for its high degree of national stability, the small republic has found itself increasingly threatened in the early 1980s by growing economic problems and the spreading turmoil in Central America (see Glossary). In these circumstances a fresh look at the country is warranted.

Like its predecessor, *Costa Rica: A Country Study* seeks to provide a compact and objective exposition of dominant social, economic, political, and national security affairs and to give the reader some appreciation for the forces involved at this time in the country's history. In presenting this new study, the authors have relied primarily on official reports of governmental and international organizations, journals, newspapers, and materials reflecting recent field research by scholarly authorities. Detailed information on many aspects of the society was not always readily available, however, and gaps in the data as well as varied interpretations of certain matters existed among some of the sources consulted. Where appropriate, these gaps and differences have been noted in the text. Should readers require greater detail on core area topics, the authors have noted the availability of amplifying materials in final bibliographic statements at the end of each chapter. Full references to these and other sources used or considered are included in the detailed Bibliography.

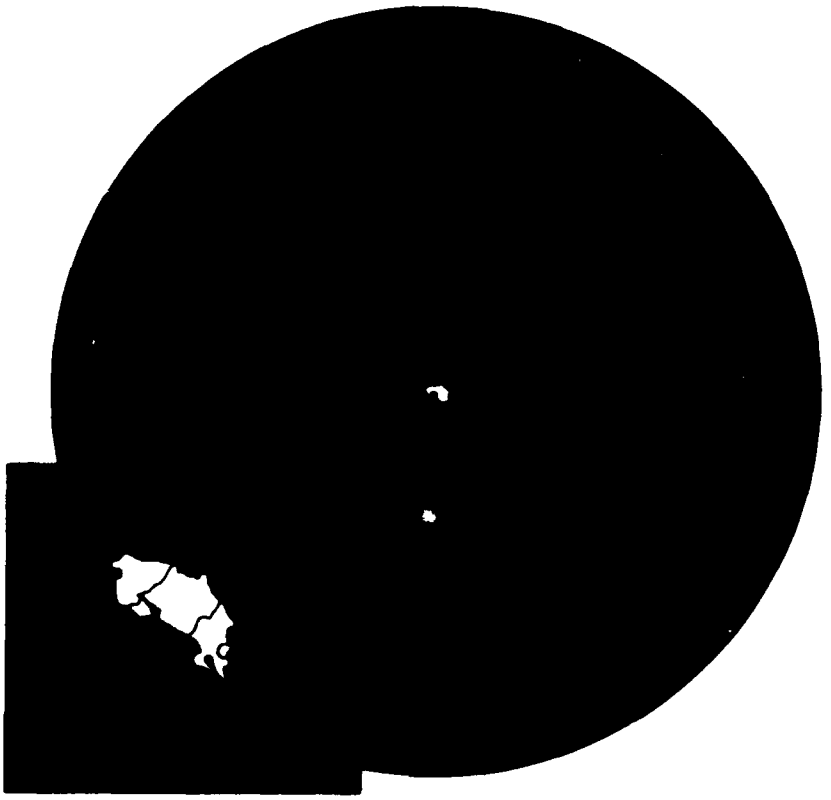
Place-names generally have been spelled in accordance with those established by the United States Board on Geographic Names in its current *Gazetteer of Costa Rica* of July 1983. Guidance for the use of personal names, however, was less reliable. Although there are numerous variations, Spanish surnames usually consist of two parts: the patronymic name followed by the matronymic. In the case of President Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez, for example, Monge is his father's name; Alvarez, his mother's name. In informal use, the matronymic is often dropped unless the individual prefers that it not be. Thus after the first mention, the authors of *Costa Rica: A Country Study* have referred simply to Monge. In certain instances, however, the matronymic has been retained to preclude confusion about which individual is being discussed, e.g., members of the Calderón and Somoza families. The patronymic has been used for indexing the book and for alphabetizing the Bibliography.

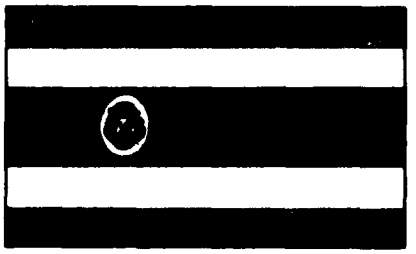
An effort has been made to limit the use of foreign and technical

words and phrases. When this has not been appropriate, such terms have been defined briefly where they first appear in any chapter or reference has been made to the Glossary, which is included at the back of the book for the reader's convenience.

All measurements are presented in the metric system. A conversion table will assist those readers who may not be familiar with metric equivalents (see table 1, Appendix).

Country Profile





Country

Formal Name: Republic of Costa Rica.
Short Form: Costa Rica.
Term for Nationals: Costa Ricans.
Capital: San José.
Independence Achieved: September 15, 1821.

Flag: Blue horizontal stripe top and bottom; two white inner stripes separated by wide, red center band; national coat of arms left of center on red band.

Geography

Size: Total area of 51,022 square kilometers, slightly smaller than West Virginia; Caribbean coastline of 212 kilometers; Pacific coastline of 1,016 kilometers.

Topography: Four mountain ranges (cordilleras) running northwest to southeast cover substantial portion of country and include a number of volcanoes, some occasionally active; lowlands extend on Caribbean side of highlands from Nicaraguan border to Panamanian border; Pacific side of highlands has varied topography, including two mountainous peninsulas and narrow coastal plain. Most cities and roughly half of population located in temperate highland valley called Meseta Central, which constitutes about 6 percent of total land area.

Climate: Tropical in Caribbean lowlands and on Pacific coast up to about 500 meters above sea level; temperate in Meseta Central from about 500 meters to about 1,500 meters; cool above 1,500 meters. Rainfall adequate or better in most of country; rainy season ranges from May to October in extreme northwest to all year in part of Caribbean lowlands; occasional droughts in northwest.

Society

Population: In mid-1983 population estimated at 2.4 million (1973 census revealed 1.87 million). Annual rate of natural increase dropped from nearly 4 percent in 1960 to 2.5 percent by 1973 but leveled off (with minor fluctuations) through early 1980s at 2.5 percent. Rate of growth lower than that of most Central American and South American countries but high enough to double population in 27 years.

Language and Ethnic Groups: Spanish-speaking people constitute about 97 percent of population; most largely of Spanish (or other European) descent but in early history, mixture with indigenous Indians. About 7 percent of total population (a little less than 7 percent of Spanish speakers) considered to be mestizos (of Spanish and Indian descent), most of whom live in Guanacaste Province in northwest. About 2 to 3 percent of population are blacks of West Indian (chiefly Jamaican) descent who speak English and Spanish, located primarily in Limón Province. Other

two minorities are Chinese and indigenous Indians; most Chinese speak some Spanish, younger generation almost exclusively. Spanish spoken by some members of Indian communities.

Religion: Roughly 95 percent of population adheres to Roman Catholic faith, formally recognized as official religion by 1949 Constitution. About 4 percent of population affiliated with various Protestant (including Anglican) groups; some Indians still adhere to indigenous systems of belief and practice.

Education: Since 1973 education through ninth grade compulsory (and free); previously, compulsory schooling ended after sixth grade; in early 1980s schooling in grades seven through nine not yet universal. Three universities (two state run, one private), one technical institute, and several regional colleges affiliated with state universities constituted system of higher education. Literacy rate among Costa Ricans over age of 10 years officially estimated at more than 90 percent, but functional literacy thought to be about 70 percent.

Health: Many tropical and infectious diseases, including malaria and childhood afflictions, have been erased or have sharply declined owing to provision of clean water and widespread effective practice of preventive medicine carried out by paramedics under Ministry of Health. Curative medicine fairly widely available and administered by social security system. Private practitioners, who may also work part time in public sector, used chiefly by upper and middle classes.

Economy

Salient Features: Economy operated primarily by well-entrenched private sector in open business climate favorable to private enterprise; autonomous government agencies active in some production and key service sectors; broad social security system attempts to uphold minimum working and living standards; foreign investment welcomed and subject to moderate regulation. Low world prices for major commodity exports, burden of large foreign debt, and major domestic structural problems threatened economic stability in early 1980s.

Agriculture: Largest source of employment for economically active labor force; in 1982 accounted for 30 percent of total. Agricultural land is country's largest natural resource. Sectoral commodity exports are major sources of foreign exchange, together bringing in about 60 percent of total annual earnings from merchandise

exports. Principal export crops in 1983 were coffee, bananas, sugarcane (sugar), and cacao. Chief domestic crops were maize, beans, sorghum, and rice; except for rice, production does not meet domestic needs.

Manufacturing: Wide range of manufactured goods produced on relatively small scale by light industries for local market and Central American Common Market (CACM); exports to other areas increasing somewhat in early 1980s. Much of manufacturing plant investment aimed at import substitution; production highly dependent on foreign inputs. In 1982 manufacturing employed 15 percent of economically active work force.

Mining: Considerable number of minerals reported, but mining production of little international significance.

Energy: Principal domestic sources were wood, hydroelectric power, and vegetable waste (bagasse). In 1981 wood and bagasse accounted for about 39 percent of total energy used; hydroelectric power for about 13 percent, gradually increasing its proportion. Large hydroelectric power potential available for development; remaining energy needs obtained from imported petroleum, accounting for 47 percent of energy consumption.

Foreign Trade: In 1983 main exports by value were coffee, bananas, beef and beef products, cattle, sugar, and fertilizer. Principal destinations: United States, countries of CACM, and European Economic Community (EEC)—more than one-half of EEC share to Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). Chief imports were raw materials (mainly for manufacturing), capital goods, consumer goods (more than one-half nondurables), and petroleum and petroleum products. United States largest source of Costa Rica's imports. Other significant import sources were CACM, EEC, and Japan; since 1980 large imports of petroleum from Mexico and Venezuela.

Currency: Colón (₡), consisting of 100 centimos. From mid-November 1983 a single unified rate (official interbank and free market rate) was established of ₡43.45 to US$1, or ₡1 equal to US$0.23.

Fiscal Year: Same as calendar year.

Transportation

Roads: Most important element of transportation system; in 1982 over 28,500 kilometers of roads; some 40 percent all-wea-

ther, remainder dirt and largely impassable during extended rainy season. Inter-American Highway, backbone of main road system, runs from Nicaraguan border through San José to Panamanian border.

Railroads: Two main, government-owned lines of 1.067-meter-gauge, single track connect San José and Meseta Central with ports of Puerto Limón and Puntarenas; line to latter electrified. In 1983 system had about 220 kilometers of main track and some 250 kilometers of branch lines, latter mostly serving banana-growing areas along Caribbean coast. Private line of almost 250 kilometers serviced banana plantations in southwestern part of country.

Civil Aviation: Nearly 175 airfields throughout country, 33 with paved runways. International airport at San José; airfields capable of taking Boeing 727-class airplanes at Liberia and Puerto Limón. International service by Costa Rican Airlines (private and government owned) and about 20 international carriers; domestic service by national line and private carriers.

Ports: Major general cargo ports at Puerto Limón on Caribbean Sea and Puntarenas on Pacific Ocean. Important facilities at Moín (including pier for unloading petroleum) and at Caldera; specialized ports at Golfito (bananas) and Punta Morales (sugar), both on Pacific coast. Almost all export-import trade through ports handled by foreign vessels.

Inland Waterways: Extensive use of rivers in northern plains region to transport both cargo and passengers. Tortuguero waterway (linked canals and lagoons) inside east coast north of Moín important cargo route.

Government and Politics

Government: Under Constitution, governmental authority shared by independent executive, legislative, and judicial branches. President and Council of Government (cabinet) hold executive power; unicameral Legislative Assembly consists of 57 elected deputies. Every four years autonomous Supreme Electoral Tribunal conducts elections of candidates for president, legislature, and local offices; president and assembly deputies barred from reelection.

Administrative Divisions: Seven provinces into which country divided of little significance except as basis for election of deputies under proportional representation system. Main administrative divisions are cantons (81 in 1982), subdivided into districts (415 in

1982). Cantonal municipal councils have limited powers; many local services provided by national authorities and autonomous bodies.

Judicial System: Supreme Court of Justice consisting of 17 magistrates rules on constitutional questions; three chambers of five to seven magistrates each hear criminal and civil appeals. Hierarchy of lesser courts headed by superior civil and criminal tribunals subordinate to supreme body.

Politics: Dominant National Liberation Party (Partido Liberación Nacional—PLN) of social democratic orientation has generally held majority in Legislative Assembly. Presidency has alternated between PLN and shifting combinations of parties, often having social Christian or conservative base. PLN candidate Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez elected president February 1982; PLN also prevailed in Legislative Assembly, winning 33 seats against 18 for Unity coalition; United People coalition of Marxist parties gained four seats; minor parties gained two seats. Overriding domestic problem for Monge administration: imposition of painful austerity measures to regain control of economic situation.

Foreign Relations: Costa Rica active in United Nations and hemispheric and regional agencies; government regards itself as nonaligned in spite of growing collaboration with United States in economic sphere. Preoccupation over strained relations with Nicaragua arising from Marxist drift of latter government and presence of Nicaraguan dissidents on Costa Rican territory.

National Security

Public Security Forces: In 1983 public security forces of approximately 7,300 personnel, composed of Civil Guard of some 4,300 and Rural Assistance Guard of about 3,000. Judicial Investigation Organization of about 200 members also performed investigative work having national security implications.

Major Tactical Units: Civil Guard included five company-size patrol units based in San José and three area commands; Civil Guard units stationed in each of other six provincial capitals. Rural Assistance Guard served primarily as local police in rural areas.

Foreign Security Assistance: In early 1980s foreign security assistance increased substantially. United States provided training and "nonlethal" equipment; Panama trained units of Civil Guard;

Venezuela, Republic of Korea (South Korea), Taiwan, and Israel furnished training, weapons, vehicles, and other equipment.

Security Expenditures: In 1980 approximately ₡265 million, or 2.6 percent of total government budget, devoted to security forces; security outlay about one-tenth of amount spent by central government on education.

Figure 1. Republic of Costa Rica

Introduction

IN MOST OF CENTRAL AMERICA—the winding isthmus that connects the North American continent with its South American counterpart—turmoil and instability have increasingly become the commodities of modern political life. Yet the Republic of Costa Rica, boasting long-term survival as the region's doyen of democracy, has gained an international reputation for its anomalous image in this arena of endemic unrest. Although much of the country's claim to uniqueness is attributable to its democratic traditions, careful examination reveals problems of disturbing magnitude in this most peaceful of Central American nations.

Situated between Nicaragua and Panama and bounded on two sides by the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, Costa Rica encompasses some 51,000 square kilometers, an area slightly smaller than the state of West Virginia (see fig. 1). Seldom in a country of this size are geographic extremes so pronounced. The terrain, nearly one-third forested, is highlighted by rugged mountains and hills dissected by many rivers and streams; in some areas elevations peak at 3,800 meters. Of the four mountain ranges that make up the interior highlands, two contain active volcanoes. In modern times volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occasionally have caused considerable damage. Despite its location at tropical latitudes, the country also contains in its interior a large upland valley called the Meseta Central, which experiences a temperate climate. This area has been the major locus of settlement since the dawn of the Spanish colonial era in the sixteenth century and still contains most of the urban centers and major concentrations of people. The favorable climate, the abundance of exotic wildlife and brilliant tropical flora, and the warm offshore waters that lap the bordering coastal plains have lured hundreds of thousands of international tourists as well as some 15,000 Americans seeking a peaceful and economical existence in their retirement years.

Discovered in 1502 by Christopher Columbus on his fourth and last voyage to the New World, the territory was designated Costa Rica (rich coast) by the Spanish explorers. Although visited soon after by greedy conquistadores, Costa Rica proved to be a misnomer because the virgin land lacked the wealth in gold and silver of the sort the Spaniards exploited in Mexico and other parts of Latin America. Consequently, a permanent Spanish settlement was not established in the territory for nearly 60 years. Discouraged by the difficult terrain beyond the Caribbean coastal plain

and the fierce resistance mounted by scattered bands of local Indians, relatively few Spanish immigrants came to Costa Rica during a colonial era that lasted for three centuries. Those who did settle as colonists confined themselves mainly to isolated farms in highland valleys where, lacking an exploitable native population, each family had to work in the fields to maintain itself. The colony's relative isolation from the Spanish colonial centers in Mexico and the Andean region, buttressed by the population's ethnic and linguistic homogeneity, contributed to the development of an autonomous and individualistic agrarian society. From these early experiences came traditions of democracy, egalitarianism, and a landholding system based on interdependency rather than patronage.

An independent nation since 1821, the diminutive Central American republic has gained international attention for its achievements in an area often referred to disparagingly as "Uncle Sam's backyard." Homeland of a population estimated in 1983 at 2.4 million, Costa Rica boasts the highest standard of living, the largest per capita income, and the highest literacy rate (90 percent) of all Central American countries.

Under the stimulus of profitable coffee and banana cultivation in the nineteenth century, the phenomenon of concentrated wealth arose. As some families accumulated fortunes, class differences began to emerge and became entrenched in the national character. According to popular perceptions, however, the society is still a relatively egalitarian one. Divisive cleavages of class and race, as well as glaring disparities of income and opportunity, are not as apparent as they are elsewhere in the region. Predominantly European in their origins, Costa Ricans have been spared the imposition of a ruling elite that is ethnically different from the bulk of the population.

One of the results of the high degree of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity is the relative lack of antagonism between social groups. A class structure does exist, and the middle class is predominant among the social categories. But relations between the highest income groups and the rest of the population are not apparently bitter, and factors such as education permit social mobility. The heritage from the colonial era, when everyone was poor but independent and facing equal hardships and opportunities, has created an atmosphere conducive to social progress. Personalism, exemplified in the individual and the family, is a social value central to life in Costa Rica; thus family honor and reputation are of great importance. Roman Catholicism is the country's official religion, a fact delineated in the Constitution. The church is particu-

larly strong, and its influence on secular matters is significant if indirect inasmuch as it refrains from overt political activity. In recent years the church has lost some of the traditional social control it exercised in earlier years. Although Roman Catholicism is still the country's predominant religion in terms of membership, a growing number of Costa Ricans are only nominal adherents.

Another prominent societal trait is the widespread concept of nationhood. The people take great pride in their status as Costa Ricans rather than as Central Americans or even Latin Americans. The concept is readily demonstrated in the common use of the term *Ticos*, the familiar self-appellation by which citizens of the country are known. The label derives from the people's frequent use of the diminutive Spanish ending *-ico* or *-tico*. (For example, where most Spanish speakers would say *momento*, Costa Ricans soften it to *momentico*.) The term is used affectionately and conveys a feeling of national pride.

Despite the poverty that has afflicted many of the country's inhabitants, fundamentally stable political institutions have contributed to maintaining internal accord in the modern era. Unlike the usual political pattern in a part of the world where governments change as the result of military coups d'etat or where strong armies effectively wield predominant power behind a façade of civilian authority, Costa Rica is a democratic republic in which a literate and politically active population chooses its public officials in regular competitive elections. The country has not had an army since 1949 and takes pride in its system of free and compulsory public education as its most significant national achievement. Teachers far outnumber the police.

Costa Rican history attests to an earlier era of political turbulence and power struggles, particularly in the nineteenth century when the wealth of the so-called coffee barons gave them a virtual monopoly on political power. The country has experienced the effects of dictatorships, wars, and divisive internal turmoil. But the swing to representative political institutions, which began in 1889, has persisted—except for brief detours—into the late twentieth century. The most notable of these exceptions were a 30-month period of dictatorial rule that began in 1917 and a short but bloody revolution that erupted after the disputed 1948 presidential election, a political event that temporarily divided the country as none had before it. The immediate cause of the latter conflict was an attempt by the government to prevent a legitimate presidential succession, but underlying the issue were personal animosities and conflicting political and economic philosophies. The armed struggle was quickly won by the adherents of con-

stitutionalism, led by farmer-philosopher José Figueres Ferrer. A junta, under the guidance of Figueres, subsequently ruled the country for 18 months while it hammered out the framework of democratic institutions that have remained the foundation of Costa Rican political life.

The Constitution of 1949, drafted during the junta's tenure, instituted a strong system of checks and balances for subsequent governments. This basic instrument of the republic's principles and laws, fine tuned by subsequent amendments, remained in effect in early 1984. Its provisions specify that the form of government will be unitary, popular, and representative. Executive authority rests with a president who, although somewhat more constrained than most other Latin American heads of government, is without question the locus of political power. Lawmaking is vested in a popularly elected body of representatives known as the Legislative Assembly. The president serves for four-year terms and (since a 1969 constitutional amendment was effected) cannot hold the office again. Although the system ensures a succession of "lame-duck" administrations (and legislators as well, because they cannot succeed themselves when their four-year terms expire), it provides built-in safeguards against the possibility of dynastic or repressive government and extends the opportunity for greater participation to a broader range of political candidates. At the same time, however, any particular administration is hard pressed to initiate complex, long-range programs and see them through to their desired conclusions.

Costa Rican politics operate within a multiparty system in which the National Liberation Party (Partido Liberación Nacional—PLN) has been dominant since the 1948 election. Essentially social democratic in its philosophy and goals, the party has generally managed to capture a majority of the seats in the Legislative Assembly. Never strong enough to oppose the PLN independently, the other parties have had to rely on coalition tactics in their bids for national office. Administrations thus have swung from moderately conservative to moderately progressive orientations, and control of the government's executive branch has, with one exception, alternated from election to election between the PLN and the expedient alliances. A third political force—an assortment of Marxist parties—has been tolerated within the system but has never achieved significant gains in the electoral process.

Over the long term the PLN has attracted a supportive following from the entire social spectrum. It emphasizes state-guided economic development working together with private initiative.

The social programs that the party has been able to enact when it has captured executive authority at the polls generally have not been eliminated or replaced when an opposition group has attained control of the government.

Although the country's economic history reflects an image of freedom and entrepreneurial achievement, underlying problems have alerted the country and the international community to a situation that challenges Costa Rica's economic stability. Throughout the 1960s the economy experienced a boom that promoted it as one of the fastest growing in Latin America, and the people enjoyed a rising standard of living throughout the decade. Agriculture and industry were the bases of the economy, industrial growth exceeding that of agriculture. Foreign trade and the inflow of foreign investment were at record levels. Coffee and bananas, which once had accounted for almost all of the country's exports, shared their place of importance with sugar, meat, shrimp, and miscellaneous other products as agriculture became diversified for export markets. But because some food staples, such as beans, corn, and wheat, were not grown in sufficient quantities, annual imports were required to meet the domestic demand. A wide range of manufactured goods was produced by light industries both for the local market and for export mainly to other members of the Central American Common Market (CACM), a developing economic union of the independent states of the region.

Paradoxically, the CACM's relative success during the 1960s contributed to the development of budgetary deficits that in the following decade became a worrisome feature of the Costa Rican economy. The major source of government revenue came from import duties, but goods from the regional common market entered duty free. Increased trade within the system did not add proportionately to government revenues, and Costa Rica's fiscal solvency began to erode. Soon the government was not receiving sufficient revenue to cover the rising cost of various social welfare programs that had been enacted over the years or the provision of services to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population. Most Costa Ricans enjoying a high growth in per capita income were unwilling to sacrifice social services or restrain their purchases of imported consumer goods. By 1974 emergency austerity measures to restrict luxury imports and cut public spending were imposed, but the efforts were inadequate to deal with the mounting economic problems.

During the three administrations that governed the country from 1970 to 1982, Costa Rica's economic difficulties grew inexor-

ably to crisis proportions. Increased government spending in the late 1970s and higher world prices for coffee and other important export commodities stimulated the local economy but also contributed to the rising pressure of inflation. As coffee prices declined sharply in 1978 and costs of importing petroleum doubled the following year, Costa Rica's balance of payments deficit escalated. Real growth in terms of gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary) fell sharply from 8.9 percent in 1977 to -3.6 percent in 1981 and was still declining. By the end of President Rodrigo Carazo Odio's term of office in 1982, the public foreign debt was the equivalent of US$3 billion. In per capita terms, the country's total indebtedness was the highest in the world. Unable even to service the staggering obligations, having exhausted its reserves, and ill prepared to institute the drastic austerity measures advocated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for emergency loans, Costa Rica faced the growing specter of national bankruptcy.

After four years of rule by the Unity (Unidad) coalition marked by economic mismanagement and instances of corruption, the voters were convinced that a change was in order. In the national elections of February 1982, the electorate turned to the PLN and in a landslide effort placed their confidence in Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez as president of the republic. Monge, who had served as the party's secretary general over the previous 12 years and who had been defeated by Unity in his bid for the presidency in 1978, was also given a solid working majority of PLN deputies in the Legislative Assembly

Aware that the country's financial crisis contained the seeds of political instability, Monge acted to meet conditions stipulated by the IMF, introducing a program of retrenchment shortly after he assumed office. To reduce government expenditures, he ordered a hiring freeze, curtailed unessential purchases, and restricted salary increases in the public sector to levels below the rate of inflation. Sales, consumption, and export taxes were raised, and a surcharge was added to the corporate income tax. Action was also taken with regard to the country's so-called autonomous agencies, which with government support provided services to the public; included were banks, schools, hospitals, cooperatives, the public utilities, and transportation facilities. Because many of these constitutionally authorized agencies had failed to adjust their prices to inflation and consequently had been operating at large losses, sharp rate increases were mandated for electricity, telephone, and other services; transportation rates were also raised.

For the most part, the citizens of Costa Rica have accepted with

resignation the austerity measures necessitated by the country's serious economic plight, although in some cases the increases in service rates have had to be scaled back in reaction to a public outcry. Among positive signs testifying to the administration's effectiveness, the public sector deficit declined in 1982 to the equivalent of 9.5 percent of GDP compared with 13.1 percent in 1981. Net revenues of the central government increased by 71 percent in 1982, owing mainly to receipts from indirect taxes. The rate of increase in expenditures was slowed to about half the inflation rate. Prices, which had climbed 37 percent in 1981 and had risen still further in early 1982 by 90 percent, had abated somewhat by the end of the year. Throughout 1983, the inflation rate ranged from a high of 11 percent to a low of 8 percent.

Despite the progress attained in restoring economic stability during his first two years in office, much remains to be accomplished before Monge's term as president ends in early 1986. The continued strain on foreign exchange reserves owing to low world prices for agricultural commodities that dominate the country's export markets, as well as a large budget deficit contemplated for 1984, have left Costa Rica's ascendancy over the crisis uncertain. Representatives of the IMF have urged that the government impose further reductions in spending by laying off some public employees and by additional tax measures.

The impressive initial effort by the Monge administration to regain control of the economy has already exacted a large toll in social terms. Because many citizens are so heavily dependent on the government for income, welfare benefits, and subsidized services, the austerity measures have had a marked effect on the standard of living. According to government estimates, the proportion of rural families living below the poverty line (those unable to satisfy basic needs of food, clothing, housing, health, and education) rose from 42 percent in 1980 to 71 percent in 1982. The official unemployment figure (persons actively seeking work) was 9.5 percent in mid-1983, historically a high one for Costa Rica. When the underemployed were included, the portion of the work force regarded as underutilized was estimated at more than 20 percent. Real wages in the industrial sector decreased by 16 percent between July 1981 and July 1982; agricultural wages during the same period fell by 25 percent. As of mid-1983 average wages for industrial workers were the equivalent of US$86 per month and US$53 for agricultural workers.

In early 1984 further declines in living standards, including curbs on certain benefit programs that Costa Ricans have come to regard as integral features of their society, appeared inevitable.

In these circumstances a continuing issue was whether the essential economic correctives could be invoked without disruptive political consequences. Costa Rica's recovery efforts and the future health of the economy will continue to be strongly influenced by a number of external factors over which little control can be directly exercised. Foremost among these are the country's great dependence on the international commodity markets and the effect of Central American political turbulence on the functioning of the regional common market. The CACM, an important outlet for Costa Rican manufactures, has contracted as a result of spreading wars in neighboring Nicaragua and nearby El Salvador, bringing about a protectionist spiral that has virtually paralyzed the economic union.

Costa Rica's economic plight is compounded by the fact that the weakened republic is not immune from the effects of leftist revolutionary and rightist counterrevolutionary disorder that threatens large areas of Central America and the Caribbean (see fig. 2). The touchy state of national security is accentuated by the close proximity of military activity along the border with Nicaragua, where a revolution in 1978-79 toppled the dictatorial regime of Anastasio Somoza Debayle and installed a government led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional—FSLN). Costa Rica gave economic support and weapons to the revolutionaries but reversed its stand when the Sandinistas moved steadily leftward toward the Soviet Union and its Cuban surrogates. Moderate elements within the broad coalition of forces that had participated in the anti-Somoza campaign became increasingly disaffected as they were excluded from positions of power in the FSLN-dominated government. A number of them sought refuge in Costa Rica, where they have grouped and trained for guerrilla attacks northward across the porous border.

The government in San José has been both hesitant and unable to control the cross-border guerrilla effort. Moreover, its attitude is affected by the mythical national image it has traditionally cultivated as the "Switzerland of Central America." Long a haven for political exiles, Costa Rica has become the home of an estimated 200,000 refugees from the region's war-torn countries.

Although political leaders in Costa Rica find it disquieting to share a common frontier with a neighbor aligned with the Soviet Union and Cuba, there is little sentiment for revoking their Constitution's prohibition against a domestic military establishment. For the maintenance of public order and internal security, the government has been content to rely on a 7,300-man nonprofes-

Figure 2. Central America and the Caribbean, 1983.

sional and decentralized national police force made up of two elements: the Civil Guard and the Rural Assistance Guard. Although training and equipment have improved in recent years with the assistance of sympathetic Western countries, the force's inherent weakness lies in the fact that most guardsmen—like the country's president and legislators—serve for only four years and then are replaced by new recruits. Awareness of the implicit threats to the stability of the democratic regime has led to plans for the formation of a new police reserve of some 10,000 personnel, which were announced in late 1982.

Costa Rica's precarious position has elicited growing concern from an increasing number of friendly governments, including the United States, which has provided carefully targeted economic assistance. Since the Monge administration assumed office in May 1982, Washington has furnished more than US$325 million in aid. Military assistance, in excess of modest amounts accepted occasionally for the Civil Guard, has been rejected by the government in San José. Underlying Costa Rica's policies is the view that solutions to the region's conflicts must come from greater social justice and economic development rather than through the application of military force.

In November 1983 the Costa Rican leader formally proclaimed for his country an official policy of "permanent active and unarmed neutrality," which he hoped would be observed by the international community. His government has indicated that, in the event the country is invaded by a foreign power, it will seek help from the Organization of American States and the signatories of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (also known as the Rio Treaty).

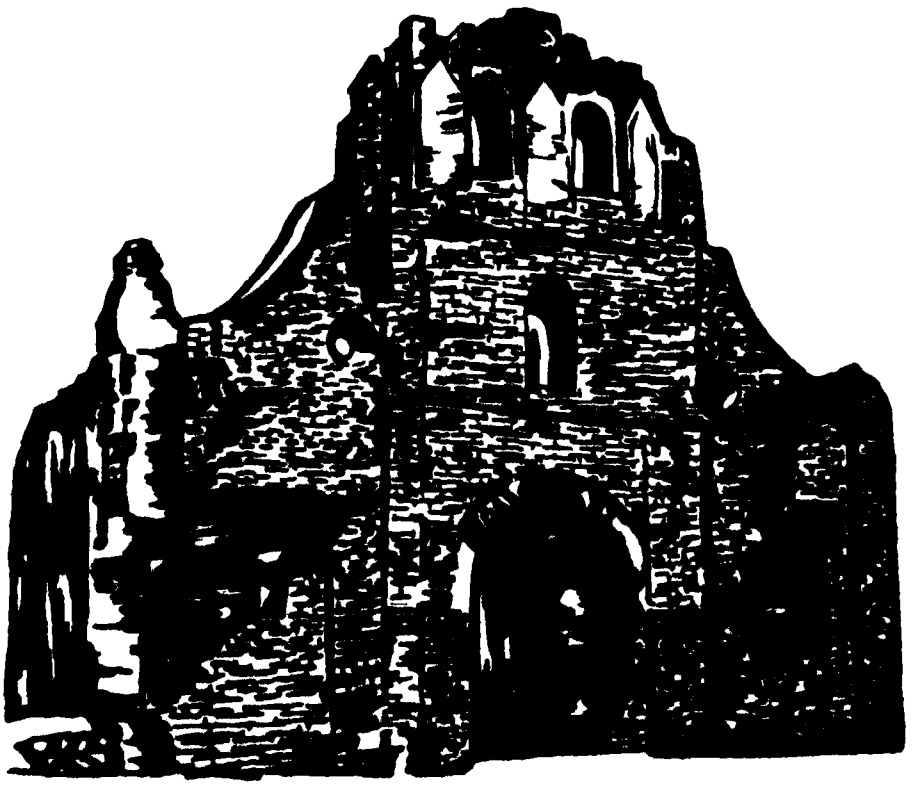
Alarmed by the deteriorating situation in Central America, President Ronald Reagan in mid-1983 assembled a distinguished group of Americans, designated the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, to conduct an exhaustive exploration of the region's problems and recommend assistance for their resolution. In January 1984, after six months of diligent on-site research that included thousands of interviews with all representative groups of nationals, the commission, headed by former secretary of state Henry Kissinger, delivered a 132-page report to the United States president. Foremost among the recommendations was a call for the United States to provide the region US$8 billion in economic aid throughout fiscal years 1985-89 Substantial amounts of military assistance (US$400 million) were also proposed. Favorably impressed by the democratic model it found in

Costa Rica, the commission advised that as much as US$5 billion (including aid from other international sources) over the next five years should be devoted to revitalizing the republic's ailing economy.

Of the general situation in Central America, the introduction to the commission's report warned that "the crisis will not wait. There is no time to lose." But before action on specific recommendations could be formulated by the Reagan administration and considered by the United States Congress, critics of the report were voicing concern over what they viewed as inappropriate military solutions to the problems in Central America. Many of them felt that a political settlement of the regional disorder would be necessary if concerted economic resuscitation were to have a chance for success.

February 1984 — Harold D. Nelson

Chapter 1. Historical Setting



CALLED THE "RICH COAST" by early explorers who were deceived by local Indians into believing that gold would be found in abundance there, Costa Rica was conquered and colonized by Spain in the late sixteenth century. Throughout the colonial era it remained one of the smallest of Spain's possessions in terms of size and population and one of its poorest. The subsequent history of the colony and, until the late nineteenth century, of the nation was largely confined to the fertile heartland, the Meseta Central, and to the interaction of the four principal towns. The small number of Indians who inhabited the area and stoutly defended it against the encroachment of Spanish settlers left little that would become a permanent part of Costa Rica's national traditions and customs. Finding neither gold nor a numerous Indian population whose labor could be exploited, the settlers were forced to work their own land to obtain a meager living. The absence of a wealthy ruling class and the colony's geographic remoteness from centers of government allowed settlers a considerable degree of freedom. The result was a proud and self-reliant but poor and often primitive colonial society, composed of small landholders who had common economic interests despite their differing social backgrounds. Even after differentiation on the basis of wealth became a factor, the tradition that Costa Rica was a community of yeoman farmers remained embedded in the national consciousness.

Costa Rica, almost by default, followed suit when the rest of Central America declared its independence from Spain in 1821, subsequently joining the short-lived federation of isthmian provinces. The country's early years as an independent state were marked by intense regional rivalries and competition among the principal towns. National unity was achieved only after the old antagonisms had been subordinated to the patriotic feeling that was kindled during involvement in Costa Rica's war against American adventurer William Walker in 1856. For much of the nineteenth century, the country's government was controlled by a liberal establishment led by the families of the so-called coffee barons, whose prosperity had given them a virtual monopoly on political power. It was a generally fair and benevolent oligarchy, however, which promoted the expansion of education as well as laissez-faire economics. The growth of democratic institutions and personal freedoms that would set Costa Rica apart from most of its neighbors followed from greater access to education and the improvement in economic well-being. The first genuinely competitive

elections were held in 1889. Despite periodic setbacks, the trend over the next 50 years was to extend democratic participation in public affairs, education, and social welfare.

Costa Rica's commitment to democracy was severely tested in 1948 when the government attempted to perpetuate itself in power by refusing to recognize the election of the opposition candidate to the presidency. The ruling group and its communist allies were defeated in an armed revolt by forces commanded by José Figueres Ferrer. Subsequently, Figueres founded the National Liberation Party (Partido Liberación Nacional—PLN), a moderate social democratic movement that advocated social and economic reform through government activism and the institution of a welfare state. In the nine presidential elections held since 1953, when Figueres won office, principal opposition to PLN candidates has come from nominees of conservative coalitions, and only once in that time has the candidate of the governing party been elected.

Most Costa Ricans take pride in pointing out the unique social and political factors that set their country apart and give it historical individuality and distinctive national characteristics. The self-image of Costa Rica they have projected is that of a politically progressive country possessing free institutions, a European ethnic composition, and an egalitarian social orientation and one able to conduct its affairs in a peaceful and orderly manner without resorting to repressive, authoritarian measures. The national myth of Costa Rica as the "Switzerland of Central America," a self-satisfied island of serenity and prosperity in a region filled with turmoil and inequity, pervades much of its historiography. A few Costa Rican scholars, however, have tried to emphasize that, in common with many other Latin American countries, their country has also experienced problems of class conflict and periods of authoritarian government. They have stressed that it has been by no means immune from disorder and have also questioned the assumption that the European character of Costa Rica's population was essentially responsible for its democratic social and political institutions. In their efforts to dispel the "myth," however, some historians may have overemphasized the degree to which these negative aspects have been present, especially in comparison with the record of Costa Rica's neighbors. Political partisanship and internal strife in Costa Rica have been less prolonged and bitter, for example, and the aftermath has been unquestionably less bloody than elsewhere in the region.

Pre-Columbian Era

The territory later encompassed by Costa Rica was sparsely settled in comparison with adjacent areas in Central America during the pre-Columbian era, but its mountain valleys served as a point of contact between the Mesoamerican cultures that flourished to the north and the Andean cultures to the south. Indian groups in Costa Rica, particularly those in the Península de Nicoya, came under a strong Mayan influence that was reflected in their rigidly stratified social structure, religious ceremonies, crafts, and the planning of the towns in which some of them lived. The tribes fought constantly among themselves for control of territory and to exact tribute in the form of gold and prisoners. Captives taken in war were regarded as human trophies conferring status on their captors, and they were used as slaves, as victims for ritual sacrifices to the sun and moon gods and, not uncommonly, as a source of food among those groups that practiced cannibalism. The Indians of Costa Rica were skilled in metallurgy, crafting ornaments and other objects from gold imported from outside the region. Women in the Indian communities cultivated subsistence crops of maize, squash, fruit, and tubers, as well as beans, which were also used as currency and trade goods, and cotton from which cloth for garments was woven.

When the Spanish conquistadores arrived in the sixteenth century, they estimated that the aboriginal population numbered somewhat more than 25,000 Indians, divided into five distinct groups. The Chorotegas, living in the Península de Nicoya, were the largest and most advanced tribe, accounting for almost one-half of the total. Coming originally from Chiapas in Mexico, they entered the region no earlier than the thirteenth century. Their towns, which housed autonomous communities that were federated for the practice of their religious cult, typically included a marketplace and a ritual center, but, although the Chorotegas were intensively militarized, they were unfortified.

Slightly smaller in numbers, the Caribs led a nomadic existence on the eastern coast, each clan wandering in a designated area, sustaining itself by warfare. They carried few material possessions with them but were proficient goldsmiths and had access to large quantities of the precious metal.

According to Spanish records, approximately 1,000 Borucas lived in well-fortified, strategically located settlements in the Talamanca region on the Pacific coast. Their fields and ceremonial plazas were joined to a fort, inside of which were built cone-

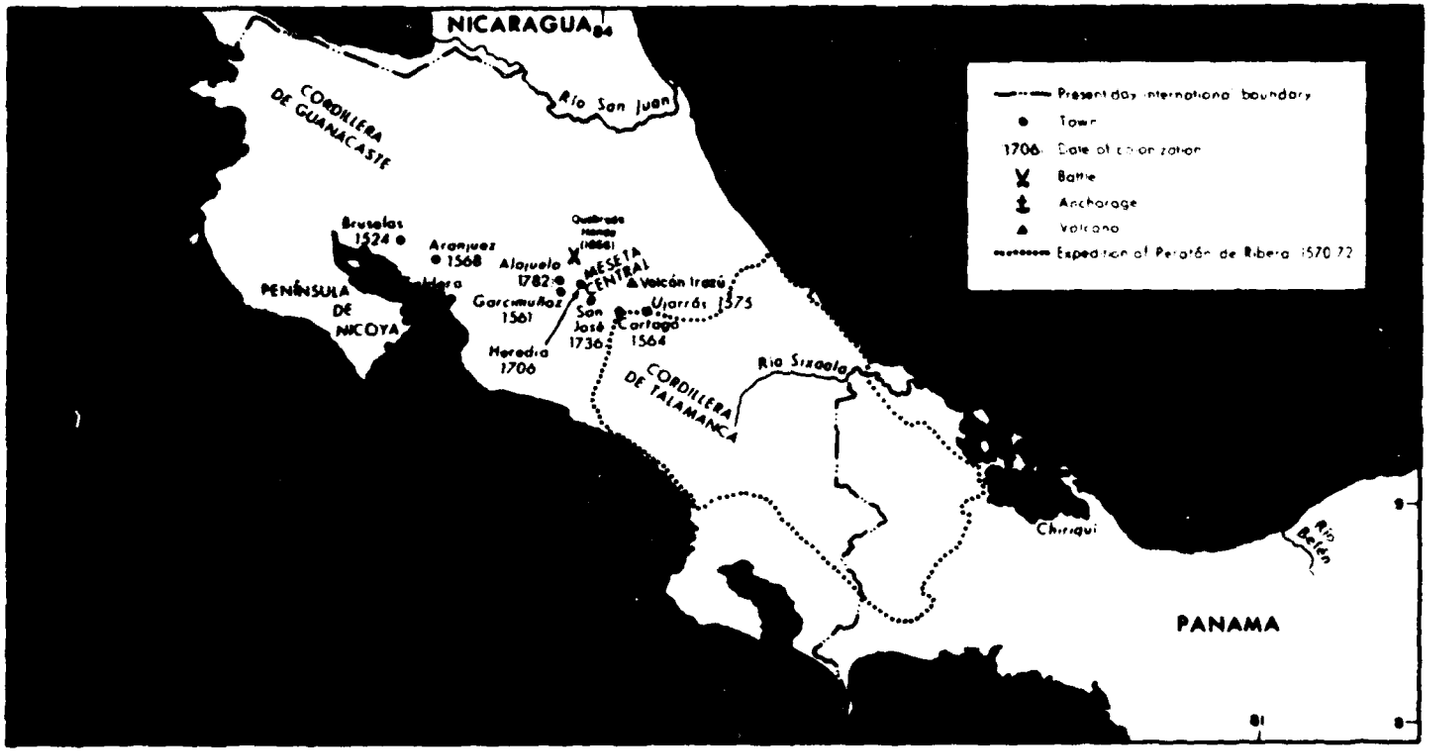
shaped structures of wood and grass large enough to contain several hundred people. The Borucas belonged to the Chibchan language group, common throughout Central America and the upper Andean region. Like the Chorotegas and Caribs, the Borucas were an extremely warlike tribe, among whom women reportedly joined in battle.

Very little is known of the Corobicís, the oldest indigenous tribe in the area, who numbered fewer than 1,000 members when the Spaniards arrived. In contrast to the other groups, their political and social organization was matriarchal, and their language did not resemble any other spoken in the area. By far the smallest tribe, amounting to only a few hundred members in two widely separated colonies, were the Nahuas, whose customs were closely related to those of the Aztecs. According to tradition, they had been sent to the region by the Aztec emperor to collect tribute from the Caribs but had remained in Costa Rica after receiving word of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. The Nahuas, who were a sedentary agricultural people, are credited with having introduced cacao into the region.

Unlike the powerful Aztec and Inca empires, these five small tribes refused initially to submit to Spanish rule, and many of their people continued to resist long after the highlands had been colonized. As testimony to the fierceness of their resistance, one conquistador was compelled to report to Spain, "Your Majesty may be assured that in Costa Rica there are no peaceful Indians."

The Colonial Period

Christopher Columbus, on his fourth and final voyage to the New World in 1502, skirted the coast of Central America. Seeking shelter from a violent storm, he anchored in a bay protected by a small island at a place called Cariay, the site of present-day Puerto Limón. The Spanish flotilla remained there for 18 days, during which time Columbus made contact with Carib Indians and traded with them for the heavy gold disks they wore as pendants. Believing that they had discovered a land endowed with great wealth, Columbus' brother Bartolomé stayed behind with a party to explore the hinterland but soon abandoned his outpost when it was attacked by hostile Indians. The impression that this part of the region was rich in gold remained firm in Spanish minds, however, and for many years conquistadores were attracted to the area in search of fortune and fame (see fig. 3).



Source: Based on information from Costa Rica. Dirección General de Estadística y Censos y Oficina de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica. *Atlas estadístico de Costa Rica. No. 2, San José, 1981.*

Figure 3. The Conquest and Colonization of Costa Rica

The Conquistadores

The first attempt to conquer the isthmian region was made by Diego de Nicuesa, who in 1508 was appointed by King Ferdinand as governor of an area named Veragua that included Panama and the unexplored territory of the isthmus, but the expedition was impeded by sickness and hunger and harassed by Indian raids. Nicuesa's settlement on Río Belén in Panama was shortly abandoned by the handful of Spaniards who survived the venture.

The hardships that Nicuesa suffered were encountered by every Spaniard who entered the region. The reasons for their repeated failure to conquer and colonize it lay not in the men, however, but in the nature of the country itself. There was no centralized Indian empire that could be subdued as in Mexico and Peru; instead the conquistadores were confronted by hundreds of fiercely independent chiefdoms, each of which had to be dealt with separately. The Indians burned their crops rather than allow them to feed the invaders. The climate and terrain also hindered exploration and discouraged settlement. Although little gold was actually found, the legend of Veragua's wealth persisted and grew; and despite the hardships they faced, the conquistadores competed for rights to the area. In fact, the rivalries between various expeditions were so great that the Spaniards often expended more energy fighting one another than in conquering the territory.

The first successful expedition to the area of present-day Costa Rica was led by Gil González Dávila, who in 1519 was granted a royal license to explore the Pacific coast north of Panama. In 1522 González landed on the Península de Nicoya and established friendly relations with the Chorotega Indians. He was accompanied by the Franciscan missionary Diego de Agüero who, according to accounts, baptized several thousand of the Chorotegas during his brief stay among them. Enduring storm, shipwreck, disease, and attacks by hostile Indians, González and his men went on to explore farther up the coast in Nicaragua and Honduras, returning the following year with a valuable cargo of gold to Panama where the conquistador was promptly arrested by the governor of Veragua, Pedrarias Dávila (Pedro Arias de Avila), for having trespassed on his jurisdiction.

Encouraged by reports of González' voyage, Francisco Fernándo de Córdova in 1524 founded a settlement that he called Bruselas on the Golfo de Nicoya near the site of the present-day town of Puntarenas. When his authority to colonize the region was challenged by Pedrarias, he rebelled and moved with his men and supplies into Nicaragua, not leaving any trace of Costa Rica's

first Spanish settlement.

During all the years of failure and false starts in extending the conquest to Costa Rica, the family of Christopher Columbus, who had died in 1506, had been petitioning the Spanish crown for title to a large part of the isthmian region. In 1534 the family was conceded the right of naming Felipe Gutiérrez the new governor of Veragua, with a commission to carry forward the exploration and colonization of the province. Gutiérrez' expedition, like the others before it, was a failure, however, and his party came so close to starvation that some men reportedly resorted to cannibalism. When word of this disaster reached Spain, the Columbus family decided to settle for a smaller grant that included part of what became Costa Rica. Even this did not prove profitable for the family, however. (In 1556 the area reverted to the crown.)

After the Gutiérrez debacle, no new expedition was mounted until 1540, when Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz was authorized to lead colonists to the region, which the year before had been separated from Veragua and officially named Costa Rica. He founded a settlement, called Badajoz, at the mouth of the Río Sixaola and built a fort above it in the Corotapa Hills. Because boundaries had not been defined separating their jurisdictions, the new governor of Nicaragua, Rodrigo de Contreras, objected to the colony and laid siege to the fort, eventually capturing Sánchez and imprisoning him. Contreras attempted to maintain Badajoz as a settlement, but the Indians, reacting to cruel treatment at his hands, drove out the colonists after only one year at the site. Other conquistadores followed, but none could establish a foothold in Costa Rica because of stout Indian resistance. As a consequence, no permanent Spanish settlement existed in Costa Rica nearly 60 years after its discovery by Columbus, and the Indians in the region had not been subdued.

Finally, in 1559 King Philip II ordered that the conquest and settlement of Costa Rica should proceed and issued a royal license for that purpose to Juan de Cavallón, who planned to colonize the Caribbean coast. This effort failed, but in 1561 Cavallón led an expedition consisting of 80 Spaniards, accompanied by several black slaves and a large number of livestock, to a point on the Río Ciruelas, on the Pacific side, where he founded the first permanent settlement in Costa Rica at Garcimuñoz. Within a year he had established tenuous control over a strip of territory extending from the Golfo de Nicoya to the east coast.

Like the conquistadores who had preceded him, however, Cavallón was primarily interested in gold. Discouraged when he failed to discover any sign of deposits, he left the colony in 1562

and was replaced by the veteran explorer Juan Vásquez de Coronado. In 1564 the new governor relocated in a new settlement farther inland in the fertile Meseta Central (see Glossary), to provide an agricultural base for sustaining further exploration, and it was with the founding of Cartago in the highlands that the real history of Costa Rica began. Coronado continued the pacification of the highlands but exhibited a more humane attitude toward the Indians who submitted to him. As a consequence, the tribes accepted his presence, and he and his men explored vast stretches of land without suffering casualties. Coronado also surveyed the boundaries of the province as a precaution against encroachments by the neighboring territories of Nicaragua and Panama. As governor, he had exhausted his own resources to support these expeditions. Seeking financial assistance from the crown, he sailed to Spain but was lost at sea on the return voyage to Costa Rica.

The next governor, Perafán (Pedro Afán) de Ribera, was 75 years old when he arrived in Cartago from Honduras in 1568 and set about the pacification of the Talamanca region, which was believed to contain rich gold deposits. The campaign (1570-72) was arduous and costly; the Indians of Talamanca were savage and unyielding. A settlement attempted in the region was soon abandoned and, like his predecessor, Perafán impoverished himself to pay for the expedition. When he left Costa Rica in 1573, the colony had only two towns: Cartago, where 40 families resided, and the new settlement at Aranjuez, founded by Perafán, which had 15 families. His administration, however, marked the end of the conquest and the beginning of the growth of permanent settlements in the small colony.

Colonial Government and Society

Costa Rica was separated from Veragua in 1539 and in 1542 was organized as a *gobernación* (territory) under its own governor and captain general, who combined civil and military authority in the province. In 1568 it was included in the newly established kingdom of Guatemala, which extended from Costa Rica northward to Mexico (see fig. 4). When permanent boundaries within the jurisdiction were fixed by royal decree five years later, Costa Rica was deprived of the Nicoya region (present-day province of Guanacaste). Disputes over the exact definition of the borders set at that time, however, continued to complicate Costa Rica's relations with its neighbors into the twentieth century.

The governor, who made his capital at Cartago, was subordi-

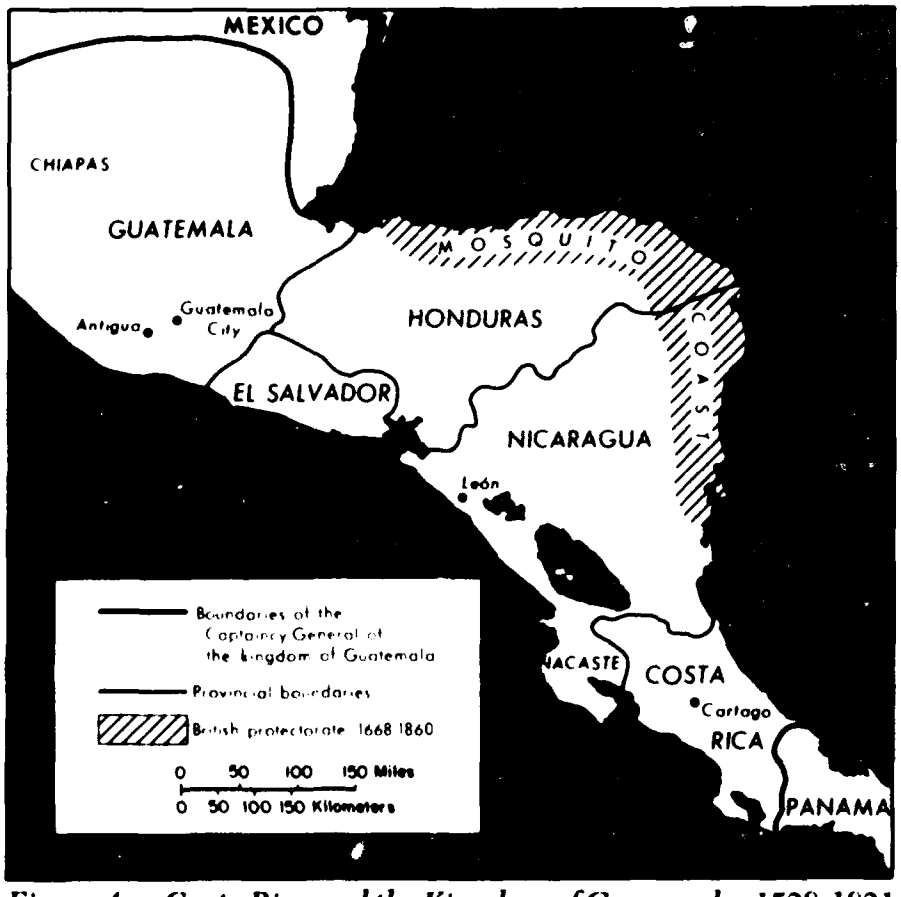


Figure 4. Costa Rica and the Kingdom of Guatemala, 1528-1821

nate to the governor and captain general of Guatemala. Costa Rica's financial affairs were handled by the *gobernación* of Nicaragua, which also paid the governor's salary. The governor of Costa Rica was appointed directly by the king, however, and exercised autonomous control over local matters. Each settlement of a certain size, as well as Indian villages that had submitted to Spanish rule, enjoyed a limited form of municipal self-government under an *alcalde* (mayor) nominated by the governor.

Under the Spanish colonial system, the status of *gobernación* was conferred on a colony in recognition of its size and importance. According to those criteria, the small, poverty-stricken settlements of Costa Rica would have been incorporated as part of a larger, wealthier province. Their isolation and remoteness from

neighboring colonies, however, made a separate administration necessary. Costa Rica's physical isolation and poverty also prevented its integration into the social, political, and economic life of the rest of Central America. Settlers in Costa Rica came to regard their association with the kingdom of Guatemala as the "source of poverty" because of the taxes imposed on them by authorities outside the colony. Except for the collection of taxes, however, government was lightly exercised there, and both colonists and their governor were left largely to their own devices, without either outside interference or assistance.

Costa Rica's Indian population—sparse even at the time the Spaniards first arrived—was decimated during the conquest and by continued tribal warfare. Indians were also struck down in great numbers by epidemic diseases introduced by the settlers and by starvation after they had been driven from their traditional lands. Many, however, particularly among the Chorotegas, had become Christians. As such, they were allowed to live peacefully in their villages under traditional leaders or to move into the settlements where they were absorbed through intermarriage with the colonists into a *mestizo* (see Glossary) population that by the end of the sixteenth century identified entirely with Spanish culture. Except in isolated pockets like the Talamanca region, a population distinctly Indian in character disappeared in Costa Rica. A very small number of blacks, who had been brought to the colony as slaves, were likewise integrated into the Hispanic community.

Colonial Costa Rica was lacking in the mineral resources that the early conquistadores had believed it possessed, and it contributed little to the economy of the Spanish empire. When it became evident that there was nothing of value to conquer in the colony, the conquistadores lost interest in it. Backward, neglected, remote, and unable to provide opportunities for prosperity, Costa Rica attracted few immigrants even of the more modest sort. The colonial population consisted of two categories: creoles, who included anyone born in the colony, and Spaniards, as people born in Spain—whether recent immigrants or government officials—were known. After a few generations a creole would also typically be a mestizo, although with the continuing dilution of the Indian element in the population the term itself generally went out of use. According to the census of 1700, Costa Rica's population stood at about 20,000, of whom only 2,500 were listed as Spaniards, a figure that indicated the slow pace of immigration to the colony.

Socially, members of both groups were differentiated as either

hidalgos (gentry), who bore the honorary title of *don* (sir), and *plebeyos* (commoners). Many of the former were younger sons of the impoverished gentry in Spain and their creole descendants, but social mobility also allowed other creoles to improve their station. As a class, the *hidalgos* enjoyed certain prerogatives, among them exclusive membership on municipal councils, but given Costa Rica's poverty, social and political position could seldom be translated into real economic advantage. Many proud *hidalgos* were in fact poor farmers and, although they provided leadership in the colony, they lacked the wealth to distinguish themselves as a class from the rest of their countrymen, as was the case in other parts of Central America. The social deference shown by *plebeyos* to *hidalgos* aside, the poverty that they shared made for greater equality in Costa Rica.

In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Indians were impressed into servitude by settlers under a system of *repartimientos* (allotments). The system, common throughout the Spanish colonies, failed in Costa Rica because estates were not large enough to make them profitable and because Indian manpower was scarce. As a result, the practice of forced labor was curtailed in Costa Rica long before the system was finally outlawed in Spanish domains in 1720, but altogether about 20,000 Indian workers were distributed among landholders there. A considerable portion of that number either perished from cruel treatment and disease or fled from their confinements. Others, however, were assimilated.

A large and subservient Indian working class did not develop in Costa Rica, therefore, as it did in the other Central American colonies. One result of this was that there was less of a basis for the sharp class divisions that prevailed elsewhere and another was that the settlers had no other choice but to work the land themselves. A pattern of small family farms emerged in which land was distributed fairly evenly among the settler yeomanry. Their homesteads, scattered in the countryside of the Meseta Central, were simple and often primitive in their accommodations. Farmers raised tobacco, hemp, cacao, and livestock for the colony's limited export trade and food crops for their own subsistence. Although food was plentiful, most manufactured goods had to be imported and were exceedingly scarce. Luxury items were virtually nonexistent.

Repeated efforts to colonize the Talamanca highlands after Perafán's indecisive campaign were foiled by internal dissension among the settlers, desertion, and Indian resistance. But the unsubdued tribes of this region were not the only Indians to menace

new Costa Rican settlements. In the early seventeenth century the Miskito Indians of eastern Nicaragua and the zambos (bands of mixed Indian and black background) began to harass the cacao plantations that were being developed in the Matina Valley. Encouraged by British agents, their raids grew more frequent and more extensive in scope in the eighteenth century, disrupting contact between the settlements in the Meseta Central and the Caribbean coast. In 1779 the Miskito king, whose authority over the Nicaraguan lowlands was recognized by Britain, agreed to halt the raids into Costa Rica in exchange for an annual tribute that was paid to him and his successors until 1841.

Pirate raids, which began soon after the first settlements were established, were another source of anxiety to the colonists and ultimately forced the closure of ports on both coasts after the corsairs had sacked and burned them. Access to the sea was thereby cut off, and whole areas were depopulated as a result of their incursions, against which no adequate defense could be devised by Spanish authorities. In 1666, however, when the notorious English pirate Henry Morgan marched overland to seize Cartago, he and his band of 700 men were turned at Quebrada Honda by an outnumbered contingent of colonial militia, according to tradition through the intercession of the Virgin of Ujarrás, whose image they had carried into battle.

The inadequacy of transportation and the lack of a stable market for Costa Rican goods were problems that stifled economic development throughout the colonial period. Commerce stagnated under a system of mercantilism that directed that all trade be carried on directly with Spain. A trail was opened in 1574 connecting Cartago with the port of Suerre, but Costa Rica's meager exports generated little income, and the colonists could afford few purchases of goods imported from Spain. As a result, the colony's economy was basically limited to subsistence agriculture well into the eighteenth century, and internal trade was usually conducted by barter. A significant part of external trade consisted of illicit traffic in tobacco and provisions exchanged with English, French, and Dutch ships for merchandise that was much cheaper than that available in legitimate shipments from Spain

Even direct trade with other Spanish colonies was restricted under the mercantilist system, but from the outset, efforts were made to establish overland trade routes to neighboring settlements. The most important of these was the mule track from Cartago to Chiriquí, which stimulated both trade with Panama and the raising of mules in Costa Rica. Commerce over this route became so important that in 1622 Costa Rica appealed to be united

with its southern neighbor, but even this vital link was impassable at certain times of the year. The Spanish government offered no financial aid in repairing or building roads, and the colonists themselves considered poor trails a partial defense against attacks by Indians and pirates.

After the ports were closed in the 1660s, external trade almost disappeared, and Costa Rica's legitimate exports amounted annually to only a few hundred pounds of cacao and tallow. By 1709 money was so scarce in the colony that cacao beans were designated as the official currency. During these years the colony sank to its lowest point, both economically and socially. Even the larger settlements were without doctors or schools. Inhabitants—including the colonial governor—were compelled to grow their own food when even the internal trade that had brought produce to the towns broke down. The scarcity of cloth forced many people to dress in fabrics made from tree bark, and even women of prominent families wore flannel mantillas and skirts of goat hair. For lack of proper equipment, the militia was not mustered.

Costa Rica's fortunes gradually began to improve during the administration of an energetic and enthusiastic governor, Diego de la Haya Fernández (1718-27), who supervised the reopening of the port of Caldera, fortified the Matina Valley against the Miskitos, and encouraged the expansion of the cacao plantations that were to form the base of the colony's exports. He lobbied incessantly for aid from the *audencia* (see Glossary) of Guatemala to improve roads and other public works in his underdeveloped province. When the eruption of Volcán Irazú in 1723 destroyed Cartago—which at the time consisted of only about 70 adobe residences and one church—de la Haya set about rebuilding the capital on a larger scale.

The Roman Catholic Church, like everything else in Costa Rica, was poor, but it was the most socially cohesive element in the colony, and it provided whatever education became available locally later in the eighteenth century. Costa Rica came under the ecclestiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of León in Nicaragua, but episcopal visitations were rare. Because there was not a resident bishop, the church did not have the same degree of political influence in Costa Rica that it exercised in some other colonies. Religious orders engaged in missionary work among isolated Indian communities, but owing to the dispersal of their farms in the countryside many settler families were unable to attend church over long periods of time. The clergy made repeated efforts to encourage settlement nearer established parishes, and new towns in the highlands usually grew up around rural churches.

The settlement north of Cartago that later became the town of Heredia was founded in this manner in 1706, as was San José in 1736. The towns prospered with the reopening of the ports and the abolition of restrictions on intercolonial trade. Heredia was the site of a number of small sugar mills, while San José, which was settled by tobacco smugglers exiled from Cartago, soon developed as the colony's commercial center, engaged in processing both cacao and tobacco, and by 1782 it boasted a population of nearly 5,000. That same year the settlement of Alajuela was organized.

Independence and the Young Nation

Despite the progress made in the late eighteenth century, Costa Rica remained a backward and unimportant colony that was invariably the last to receive news of events in Spain. Social and economic norms were relatively unchanged by the increased opportunities for trade. The political intrigues that characterized other Spanish American colonies were largely absent, and the inherent conflict found elsewhere between prosperous but politically powerless creoles on the one hand and Spanish officials on the other never applied in Costa Rica. But when in 1786 the other four provinces of the kingdom of Guatemala were elevated to the rank of *intendencias* (superior centralized jurisdictions in which the presiding official exercised greater control over financial and judicial affairs than governors previously had), Costa Rica was kept a *gobernación*, subject to the *intendencia* of Nicaragua.

In 1808 Napoleon invaded Spain and removed its Bourbon king, Charles IV, whom the French emperor replaced on the Spanish throne with his own brother, Joseph Bonaparte. When the news reached Costa Rica, the colonists there pledged their support to the Bourbon monarchy and swore allegiance to the legitimate successor, Ferdinand VII, who had gone into exile. Costa Ricans reaffirmed their loyalist allegiance in 1811 when volunteers joined Spanish troops in suppressing the revolution in Nicaragua.

Costa Rica was represented by a delegate at the Spanish Cortes (parliament) convened by loyalists at Cadiz the year before in the absence of the king. It adopted a liberal constitution for Spain and its empire in 1812 that provided for a limited monarchy and responsible parliamentary government and guaranteed individual liberties. In recognition of Costa Rica's contribution in putting down the Nicaraguan rebellion, the Cortes exempted the colony

from taxation and allowed the opening of a free port on its coast for trade with foreign vessels. On his return to Spain in 1814, however, Ferdinand VII abrogated the constitution and nullified legislation enacted by the Cortes, including those acts that had rewarded Costa Rica for its loyalty.

Transition of Power

Costa Rica's loyalty to Spain was still unimpaired, however, when in September 1821 the captain general of Guatemala proclaimed the independence of the Central American provinces. Costa Rica had not been consulted, but in response the municipal councils of the four principal towns—Cartago, San José, Heredia, and Alajuela—met separately to determine whether they should adhere to Guatemala or seek another solution. Even the colonial governor counseled a declaration of independence. In December a junta representing the four towns drafted a provisional constitution to serve while it observed how events transpired in the other colonies and decided on the course that Costa Rica would follow.

Meanwhile in Mexico a royalist general, Augustín de Iturbide, had forced the Spanish viceroy to surrender authority to him after a coup by liberal army officers in Spain had toppled the absolutist regime and restored the constitution. In August 1821 Spain recognized Mexico's independence, an act that inspired the captain general's declaration in Guatemala a few weeks later. The following May Iturbide was proclaimed emperor by the congress in Mexico City and demanded that the Central American provinces submit to the new Mexican empire. A majority of Costa Rica's communities led by Cartago and Heredia, registered their approval of union with imperial Mexico, but it was not clear that a consensus existed on the issue. San José and Alajuela, where liberal sentiment ran strong, favored either union with the other Central American states or a separate existence for Costa Rica under a republican form of government; they rejected submission to Iturbide.

A civil war between the imperialist and the republican towns was precipitated in December 1822 when imperialists from Cartago and Heredia seized weapons from the government armory and marched on San José to force the town's compliance with their decision to join Mexico. But they were met at Ochomogo by several hundred republicans from San José and Alajuela and were defeated after a day-long battle. The battle decided the issue against accepting Iturbide, and in March 1823 pro-republican delegates, meeting at a provincial congress in Cartago, formally

declared Costa Rica's independence from Spain and applied for union with Colombia to forestall an expected Mexican intervention. At almost the same time, however, Iturbide was overthrown in Mexico by revolution and subsequently was executed.

The Central American Federation

The threat from Mexico having passed, the Costa Rican congress voted in August 1823 to join the United Provinces of Central America (commonly referred to as the Central American Federation), which had been formed by Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador several months earlier (see fig. 5).

According to the federal constitution, each province was to elect its own chief executive, who would have free rein to deal with local matters but would defer to the head of the federation in external affairs and relations among the provinces. Juan Mora Fernández was elected by the provincial congress as head of state (*jefe supremo*) of the Free State of Costa Rica in 1824 and served in that capacity until 1833. These were relatively peaceful years for Costa Rica, although the rest of the isthmus was ravaged by civil war. Because of the turmoil there, the people of Guanacaste voted in 1824 to secede from Nicaragua and asked to join Costa Rica, an action ratified by the federal government the following year. Disturbed by the chaotic conditions elsewhere in the federation, Costa Rica withdrew its membership in 1829 but relented nine months later and applied for readmission. In 1828, however, the federation collapsed after a coup by conservatives in Guatemala that led to the overthrow of the liberal federal president, Francisco Morazán.

Opinion in Costa Rica had remained divided over membership in the federation, which was seen by conservatives as a measure imposed on the country by the San José liberals. Central American solidarity remained an ideal for some, but most Costa Ricans considered that they had little in common politically or socially with the unstable, mestizo-dominated provinces to the north. Nor had federation proved to be advantageous economically for Costa Rica, which was anxious to open up markets in Europe. Saddled after its dissolution with debts incurred by the federation, Costa Rica remained cool to further attempts at Central American unification.

Political Conflict

Costa Rica's apparent tranquillity was disrupted in the early

Figure 5. The Central American Federation, 1823-38

1830s by quarrels over the permanent location of the capital, which reflected deeper political and regional differences. Each of the four principal towns, led by their municipal councils, acted more like autonomous city-states than as part of a national entity. Each was jealous of its position in relation to the others, and each had specific political, social, and economic orientations. In 1834 an unusual agreement codified in the Law of Movement was reached by which the seat of government would be rotated every four years among the towns, but the compromise did not resolve the conflict. José Rafael de Gallegos, the head of state, resigned in despair and was replaced by Braulio Carrillo Colina, a strong and forceful liberal who firmly established the capital at San José.

In September 1835 the municipal councils of Cartago, Heredia, and San José's former ally, Alajuela, formed the League of Cities to oppose Carrillo and the dominance of San José. Electing Nicolás Ulloa as its president, the league raised an army of

4,000 men to unseat the government in San José, but at the head of loyal troops, Carrillo decisively defeated the league in three separate engagements in October and crushed the rebellion.

The political individualism of Costa Ricans and particularly the independence of the farmers in the countryside made the ideological labels of liberal and conservative meaningless during this period. In general, however, leaders of the liberal faction that had emerged victorious from the brief civil war were distinguished by their pronounced anticlericalism, advocacy of decentralized government, and by their identification with commercial interests, especially coffee growing. Political affiliation, however, had more to do with family (rather than class) traditions, regional associations, and the personality of candidates offering themselves for office than it did with a political agenda.

Carrillo ruled despotically with little regard for the existing constitution, and in 1838 he was defeated in his bid for reelection. Undeterred, he seized control of the state after a barracks revolt and ruled thereafter as dictator. During his regime the government was reorganized, and a new legal code was introduced. The debt left over from membership in the Central American Federation was paid in full, and public finance was handled efficiently and honestly. Carrillo fostered the coffee industry but also sought to increase the number of small landholders. In 1841 he issued a decree that gave commonly owned municipal lands to the farmers who worked them. In the same year, however, he abolished the constitution and declared himself dictator for life.

Tiring of his authoritarian methods, Carrillo's opponents outside San José sought out Morazán, the energetic and idealistic Honduran proponent of the now defunct Central American Federation, to come to Costa Rica and oust the dictator. Carrillo dispatched one of his generals, Vicente Villaseñor, and troops to arrest Morazán. But after meeting the charismatic leader, Villaseñor instead formed an alliance with him, sealed by the Pact of El Jocote in April 1842, and together they drove Carrillo into exile. At first Morazán was welcomed as a liberator, and as head of state he restored the personal freedoms that Costa Ricans had lost under Carrillo. But his popularity quickly waned when he imposed direct taxation and conscription for the purpose of building an army in Costa Rica to reestablish the federation by force. After only a few months in office, he was himself overthrown and taken to San José where he and Villaseñor were executed.

Stability was elusive for several years after this violent episode. A new constitution, adopted in 1844 and calling for direct election of the president, lasted less than three years. In 1847 the congress

named a 29-year-old publisher and educator, José María Castro Madriz, as Costa Rica's first chief executive to bear the title of president, signifying a new appreciation of the country's fully sovereign status. (The new president's wife, Doná Pacífica, was responsible for designing Costa Rica's national flag.) Castro Madriz, who earlier had been responsible for founding the University of Santo Tomás, continued in office to emphasize the development of education as his government's primary goal. In 1848 he formally declared Costa Rica an independent republic, ending the fiction that the country retained special ties with its northern neighbors in the nonfunctioning federation. In November of that year the young president approved a reform constitution that abolished the army, replacing it with a national guard, and confirmed basic freedoms of expression and association. Castro Madriz won many enemies through his headlong pursuit of reform and lost friends by his inability to cope with mounting unrest, and the following year he was forced to resign by a coalition that linked the coffee planters with disgruntled army officers. Juan Rafael Mora Porras, the scion of an important political family and himself a coffee planter, succeeded Castro Madriz as president, ended the conflicts between competing factions, and restored a measure of order to the country of 120,000 people.

The Coffee Barons

Mora Porras was a representative of the small group of prosperous liberal families who had wrested power from the conservative Cartago elite in the decade after independence. Behind their political influence lay wealth—modest by the standards of other Latin American elites—obtained from coffee growing and merchandising. Known collectively as the "coffee barons," they identified the well-being of the nation as a whole with their ability to pursue their commercial activities unimpeded by government interference.

Coffee growing, which had been introduced toward the end of the eighteenth century, soon surpassed cacao, tobacco, and sugar in importance and by 1829 had become Costa Rica's major source of foreign revenue. Recognizing its value to the economy, Carrillo had promoted the cultivation of coffee, offering free land to anyone who agreed to plant coffee trees, and had constructed roads to bring crops to market, policies that were followed by his successors. Harvests gathered from the *fincas* (farms) were hauled over primitive roads in brightly painted oxcarts from the highlands to ports on the Pacific coast for shipment to Europe, but production

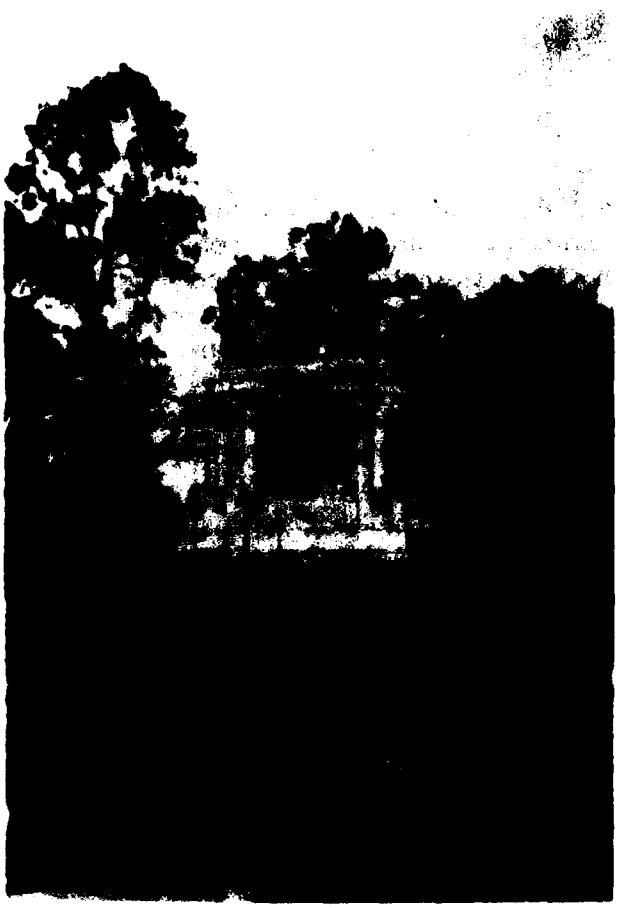
remained relatively small scale. The real breakthrough for the Costa Rican coffee industry occurred in 1843 when an English sea captain on his way to Liverpool with an empty hold took on bags of coffee for ballast, which was sold at a handsome profit to pleased customers in his home port. Orders for the commodity increased thereafter, and British investors, seeing the growing demand for the commodity, were encouraged to underwrite the development of the trade in Costa Rican coffee.

The coffee barons were wedded to the theories of economic liberalism then current in Europe. Many, like Mora Porras and his political rival, José María Montealegre Fernández, were warm admirers of what they interpreted as the laissez-faire brand of capitalism practiced in Britain. They used their influence in government to keep taxes low and to reinforce their own economic position through policies that encouraged the coffee trade. Successful planters enlarged their holdings at the expense of smaller growers to whom credit was unavailable, but coffee barons also acted as wholesalers, purchasing crops from smallholders for marketing abroad. By 1870 about two-thirds of the rural population were landless laborers on the larger *fincas*, usually earning wages that were higher than the incomes of small independent farmers.

There was also, however, a pervasive element of enlightened self-interest in the government policies promoted by the liberal establishment. Progress and greater prosperity were seen as conditioned by improved education and public works and more efficient public institutions. Improvements were financed by profits from Costa Rica's highly competitive position in the world coffee market. Politics consisted of competition among families—like the Moras and the Montealegres—and personalities within the liberal establishment. Suffrage was restricted by property and literacy qualifications to a small constituency generally favorable to its aims, but to the extent that successive administrations worked to extend education, they also encouraged the development of democratic institutions.

The War Against William Walker

In 1855 the Nicaraguan liberals employed an American adventurer from Tennessee, William Walker, at the head of a motley contingent of American and European *filibusteros* (mercenaries) dubbed the "Immortals," to assist them in overthrowing the country's conservative president, José María Estrada. Once the dictator had been deposed, however, Walker took the presidency for



Courtesy James Gilmartin

Courtesy Costa Rican Embassy, Washington

National Monument in San José (left) dedicated to the five Central American republics allied in the nineteenth century war against William Walker; statue in Alajuela (right) of the national hero, Juan Santamaría

himself, reintroduced slavery into Nicaragua, and at the instigation of business competitors of Cornelius Vanderbilt in New York confiscated Vanderbilt's transit company, which held the concession for carrying California-bound gold seekers across the isthmus over a route that ran through Nicaraguan territory.

Encouraged by Vanderbilt, Mora Porras declared war on the *filibustero* regime in February 1856 and raised an army of about 9,000 men to expel Walker from Nicaragua. Informed of Costa Rican intentions, Walker sent a detachment of several hundred mercenaries to invade Guanacaste, but in April the Costa Ricans attacked the town of Rivas across the border in order to dislodge the *filibusteros*. In the hard-fought battle that ensued, Walker's

men were flushed from their stronghold in the town and driven away when a drummer boy, Juan Santamaría, succeeded in setting it afire. (Santamaría, who lost his life in the action, is honored as one of Costa Rica's greatest national heroes.)

Costa Rican forces were soon joined by troops from other Central American countries, and in April 1857 they decisively defeated Walker at the second battle of Rivas. Walker sought refuge on an American warship, which carried him to Panama. After some months, he returned with followers to Central America but was captured in Honduras and executed. The war against Walker—referred to as the National Campaign—has been described as the "most transcendent event" in Costa Rica's history, from which a country of rival regional interests derived a sense of its own nationhood.

No sooner had the war ended, however, than a boundary dispute broke out between Costa Rica and Nicaragua concerning a claim made by the latter to the Río San Juan. If accepted, this would have given Nicaragua all rights to a proposed transisthmian canal in that area. Mediation by El Salvador prevented a new war, and the dispute was settled for the time being by the Cañas-Juarez Treaty, concluded in April 1858. Under its provisions, Nicaragua's claim to the river was recognized, but Costa Rica was awarded rights of navigation. Furthermore, Costa Rica's title to Guanacaste was confirmed.

The Montealegres

The government of Mora Porras had been on the verge of collapse when Costa Rica went to war in 1856, but opposition was diverted by the patriotic fervor generated by the fighting. The victory made the president a national hero, but his popularity was short-lived. Criticism of his administration was renewed when the public became aware of the cost of the government's mismanagement of the campaign. Nearly one-half of the army had died in battle or from disease and camp conditions. Supplies and equipment had been inadequate and poorly maintained. In August a coup was staged by army officers aligned with the Montealegre family, whose leader, José María, was named to replace Mora Porras. A year later the exiled former president attempted a countercoup but was captured after landing at Puntarenas and shot.

A new constitution was promulgated in 1859, retaining limited suffrage and indirect election of the president through the congress. Three successive presidential elections were peacefully

conducted, although in noncompetitive campaigns. Control of the government, however, actually rested with the Montealegres and the army clique that had brought them to power. In 1868 they deposed Castro Madriz, who had been elected again as president two years earlier, when his reformist policies displeased them. Jesús de Jiménez Zamora, another former president, was placed back in office. It was Jiménez Zamora who established the Costa Rican tradition of respecting the right of political asylum when he accepted an extremely unpopular deposed Salvadoran dictator into the country. A protégé of the Montealegres, he clamped down on opposing factions in the army, removing two leading generals and, in a new constitution promulgated in 1869, placed the military under civilian control. But Jiménez Zamora was never free from army intereference in his government. In 1870 he was ousted in a coup by General Tomás Guardia Gutiérrez, a populist who pledged to end the dominance of the coffee barons and their political families.

The Guardia Dictatorship

Guardia initially controlled the government through a puppet administration but soon called a plebiscite that confirmed him as president. In 1871 a new constitution (which was to remain in force until 1949) was promulgated under his direction, and the following year he was formally elected president under provisions that introduced a college of electors whose members had in turn been selected by popular vote. The 1871 constitution barred him from succeeding himself when his term ended in 1876, but Guardia dismissed the legitimately elected president after a few months and resumed the office himself in 1877.

Until his death in 1882, Guardia ruled Costa Rica with the iron hand of a dictator. Political associations were banned, and open political debate was silenced. Land from large holdings was confiscated for distribution to landless farm workers, and heavy taxes were levied on personal wealth. He achieved his aim of breaking the political power of the coffee barons and forced many of the old liberal establishment into exile. In their place, however, he substituted the influence of his own family and its retainers.

Guardia saw himself as a modernizer, and his designs for the material progress and social advancement of Costa Rica were ambitious. He fostered the growth of public education, improved sanitation in urban areas, abolished capital punishment, and provided liberal incentives for trade, thereby increasing coffee and sugar production. His greatest contribution, however, was to in-

itiate the building of a railroad from the Meseta Central to the Caribbean coast along a rugged route that connected Alajuela and Puerto Limón. Guardia's projects drew attention to the small republic, but his expenditures for development saddled Costa Rica with a large debt. To finance the railroad, more than £1 million was borrowed from British banks. Repayment of the loans was suspended or renegotiated several times, and the country's obligations to its creditors put a debilitating strain on its economy for 40 years.

Minor Cooper Keith

In 1871 Guardia approached Henry Meiggs, an American engineer who had experience building railroads in the rough terrain of Chile and Peru, and offered him the concession to construct the proposed line. Meiggs accepted, but the task eventually passed to his nephew, Minor Cooper Keith, who completed the railroad in 1890. Keith combined engineering skill with exceptional foresight in his business dealings, and more than any single individual, he was responsible for Costa Rica's economic growth in the late nineteenth century. During these years Keith, who married the daughter of former president Castro Madriz, also became influential in Costa Rican political and social circles. It was said of him that he had "the heart of a benevolent pirate."

The building of the Atlantic Coast Railroad cost US$8 million over a 20-year period and the lives of 4,000 workers. When Costa Ricans proved reluctant to work outside the highlands, Keith first recruited Chinese and Italian laborers for his crews and then blacks from Jamaica who were thought to be immune to the malaria and yellow fever that plagued the lowlands. Keith built a pier at Puerto Limón in exchange for a share of the wharfage fee. In order to make the port town habitable, he persuaded the government to sell bonds to pay for a water and sewer system and then bought up the entire issue himself.

In the process of building the railroad, Keith also laid the foundation for the banana industry by establishing plantations near the tracks. Some of the first freight that the railroad transported were crops from his holdings. In 1884 he agreed to lay down additional track and to fund the national debt in exchange for a 99-year lease on the existing railroad and more than 300,000 hectares of land along his right-of-way, which was also developed as banana plantations. In 1889 he merged his company with a competing group to form the United Fruit Company.

Keith's ventures added a new export crop to the economy and

opened Costa Rica to foreign enterprises and investment. This was particularly the case in the eastern part of the country, which had been neglected by governments in San José and left not only undeveloped but also virtually unpopulated. For the most part, domestic entrepreneurs were uninterested in the region, preferring to keep their investments in the Meseta Central. Whereas coffee production had been dominated by a small number of family enterprises, the banana industry, which began to rival coffee as the most important factor in the country's economy after 1890, and commercial activities in Puerto Limón were in the hands of foreign-owned, mainly North American, companies. The opening of a Caribbean port and the development of the banana industry likewise shifted the focus of Costa Rican trade from European markets to those in the United States.

The railroad also introduced a new element into the Costa Rican population. Many of the black, English-speaking Jamaicans brought in by Keith chose to stay in Costa Rica as railroad employees and dockworkers. Others went to work on the banana plantations, and some turned to small-scale cultivation of cacao. Although a very small minority nationally, they constituted a majority of the population in the eastern lowlands. In the liberal atmosphere provided by Costa Rica, the Jamaicans there freely retained their own social institutions, schools, and distinct identity. For some time, however, their employment outside the region was restricted, and it was not until 1952 that they were accepted as Costa Rican citizens (see The Social Order, ch. 2).

Church-State Conflict

The 1825 constitution recognized Roman Catholicism as the established religion of the country, although the practice of other beliefs was officially tolerated. As an institution the church did not exercise a considerable influence on Costa Rican politics, which was dominated almost from the beginning by anticlerical liberals. Individual members of the clergy, however, were politically active, and the anticlericalism of the secular elite was not reflected generally in the population as a whole. Five of the nine members of the original ruling junta, including its president, were priests, and others were regularly elected to congressional seats or to positions in local government.

Legislation in 1826 had cut in half the tithe that was collected for the church by civil authorities and had also prevented religious orders from communicating with their superiors in Spain. During his administration, Carrillo abolished the tithe al-

together, substituting a small government subsidy to the church. The concordat signed with Rome in 1852 transferred jurisdiction over church property to civil authorities, but in 1859 Mora Porras provoked serious conflict with the church when he attempted to tax the clergy as well. Anselmo Llorente Lafuente, who had been named the first bishop of San José in 1851, forbade the clergy to pay the tax. The bishop's subsequent exile was widely protested, and popular reaction to it was a crucial factor in Mora Porras' downfall. After Llorente's death in 1871, the Vatican refused to approve the nomination of the successor recommended by the Guardia government, and 10 years passed before Bernard August Thiel, a native of Germany, was consecrated as bishop.

Guardia's successor, Próspero Fernández Oreamuno, began the enactment of a body of legislation, known collectively as the Liberal Laws, that severely restricted the church's role as a social institution. A constitutional amendment proclaimed the separation of church and state. Civil marriage was instituted and divorce introduced. Church property was confiscated, a number of public religious observances were abolished, and religious instruction in public schools was prohibited. The Jesuits were expelled from the country, allegedly because they had interfered in political matters, and all church-operated schools, hospitals, and cemeteries were secularized.

When Thiel, with a significant measure of public support, protested the government's actions, he was exiled briefly. In 1891 he was instrumental in organizing the Catholic Union Party (Partido Unión Católica—PUC), considered Costa Rica's first genuine political party, to defend the interests of the church through the electoral process. Rather than confront the Liberal Laws directly, however, the PUC focused its criticism on the inequities fostered by Costa Rica's laissez-faire economic system.

Foundations of Democracy

After Guardia's death in 1882, Fernández Oreamuno, the dictator's brother-in-law and commander of the army, assumed the presidency. When he died in 1885, he was succeeded by his brother-in-law, Bernardo Soto Alfaro. The political dynasty founded by Guardia ruled despotically but instituted a number of important reforms. Soto, for example, created Costa Rica's free and compulsory public school system. In 1888 he closed down the University of Santo Tomás, in part because Jesuit influence there

was considered so strong, but also to concentrate public expenditures on developing primary and secondary education. He ensured constitutional transition of government when he stepped down as president in 1889 by sponsoring the first election characterized by full freedom of the press, frank debates by rival candidates, and an honest tabulation of the vote.

Before 1889 elections in Costa Rica had been indirect and largely noncompetitive. Initially the head of state had been chosen by the congress, and after 1871 the relatively small number of enfranchised citizens voted for local electors who, in turn, chose regional electors, who finally elected the president and members of congress. Up to 1889 there had been 24 presidents, 11 of whom had been indirectly elected and seven who had come to power through force. Six had been designated as "temporary" presidents, appointed for brief periods. Elections remained indirect for some years after 1889, but a much larger section of the population became politically active, and political leaders were compelled to take popular sentiment into account.

The Liberal Ascendancy

Soto's candidate was defeated in the 1889 election by José Joaquín Rodríguez Zeledón, and the first peaceful transition of power from a ruling group to the opposition took place. The passing of Guardia family rule also brought to prominence the group of young liberals—the so-called Generation of '89—who would govern Costa Rica and dominate its political life for all but a short time over the next 50 years.

Rodríguez' political lineage reached back to the old liberal establishment that had controlled the country before the Guardia regime. But he soon alienated public opinion by his dictatorial methods and his refusal to cooperate with the congress, which he dismissed in 1892. His handpicked successor, Rafael Yglesias Castro, was strongly challenged in the 1894 presidential campaign by a candidate nominated by the PUC, José Gregorio Trejos Gutiérrez. Despite voting fraud perpetrated by the government, Trejos Gutiérrez still won a plurality of the votes. Because no candidate had a majority, the election was thrown into the newly seated congress, which chose Yglesias as the next president. A revolt in the countryside against the decision compromised the PUC, whose leaders were arrested, and the party was subsequently dissolved.

Yglesias approved the construction of a rail line to the Pacific, encouraged agricultural and commercial development, and re-

formed the currency, placing it on the gold standard. Like Rodríguez, his predecessor and patron, he governed in an authoritarian manner and succeeded in having the constitution amended, allowing the president to succeed himself in 1898. When it became apparent that the 1902 election would be divisive, Yglesias and Soto, as the leader of the opposition, agreed on a comromise candidate, Ascensión Esquivel Ibarra.

The president initiated an era of democratic reforms and advancement in education that was carried on by his successor, Cleto González Víquez, who was elected in 1906 by the congress after a five-way race had failed to produce a majority candidate. González Víquez had received the highest number of votes, but his election was made possible only after Esquivel had exiled the three candidates with the lowest count to remove them as contenders. He was followed in office in 1910 by Ricardo Jiménez Oreamuno, who won a large popular majority in a multiparty contest. Jiménez was instrumental in winning approval of a constitutional amendment in 1913 that provided for direct presidential elections and an expanded franchise.

Between 1860 and 1910 Costa Rica's population had tripled to 360,000, immigration—principally from Spain, Germany, and Italy—accounting for about one-quarter of the increase. As opportunities for education and for participation in the political process increased, new names had begun to appear on congressional rolls, and a new rural elite composed of prosperous small farmers emerged as a force in local government. Even after the 1913 amendment, however, the percentage of eligible voters taking part in elections was not impressive. Personalistic politics remained the rule, parties being revived at election time as vehicles for the various candidates, all of whom wore the label of "liberal." Although Costa Rica had become a democratic country during the liberal ascendancy, the power of the political families, broken under Guardia, had also reasserted itself.

The Tinoco Dictatorship

When voters in the first direct election for president in 1914 failed to give any of the candidates a majority, the congress picked, as a compromise, Alfredo González Flores, who had not appeared on the original slate of candidates. His government, while attempting to introduce progressive social measures, was confronted immediately by a serious economic crisis. The decline in coffee prices after 1900 had signaled the end of the boom in the country's export trade, which had financed education and public

works, but previous governments had been slow to recognize the changed situation. The steady, profitable trade with Germany, which had become Costa Rica's best customer, continued, however, until the outbreak of World War I virtually closed the European markets. The sudden drop in revenues weakened the economy. Wealthy families withdrew their money from Costa Rica and deposited it in United States banks for safekeeping. To curb capital flight, González Flores raised taxes on coffee exports and proposed reforms that would have placed a much heavier tax burden on higher incomes. This undermined his backing among wealthy and powerful families. In addition, he drastically reduced government expenditures, including salaries of public employees. Established politicians were alarmed by these necessary but unpopular actions, and the president's support dwindled. He also lost favor among the population at large because of the corruption of his government. In January 1917 González Flores was displaced in a military coup led by Federico Tinoco Granados, a general who had served as secretary of war in his cabinet.

Tinoco seized power with wide popular support, but public sentiment soon turned against his despotic regime. Tinoco's coup had occurred shortly after United States president Woodrow Wilson had announced a policy of nonrecognition by which Washington refused to maintain relations with any government that had come to office in an unconstitutional manner. In addition to the withdrawal of diplomatic recognition, the action also affected Costa Rica's trade relations with the United States. Although Costa Rica had declared war on Germany and was a cobelligerent in World War I, Wilson prevented its delegates from signing the Versailles Treaty.

Repeated coup attempts, armed revolts, student-led demonstrations, and the threat of United States intervention all combined to bring about Tinoco's downfall. After the assassination of his brother, who served him as secretary of war, the dictator was persuaded by the diplomatic corps in San José to resign the presidency in order to spare the country more unrest and bloodshed. Tinoco turned over the government to his vice president, Juan Bautista Quirós Segura, in August 1919, but the United States insisted on new elections and a return to constitutional government. Convinced of the seriousness of American intentions by the arrival of the cruiser U.S.S. *Denver* off the Costa Rican coast, Quirós also tendered his resignation, allowing the presidency to pass to one of the vice presidents in the González Flores government, whom the United States accepted as the representative of a legal government. Julio Acosta García, who had been foreign

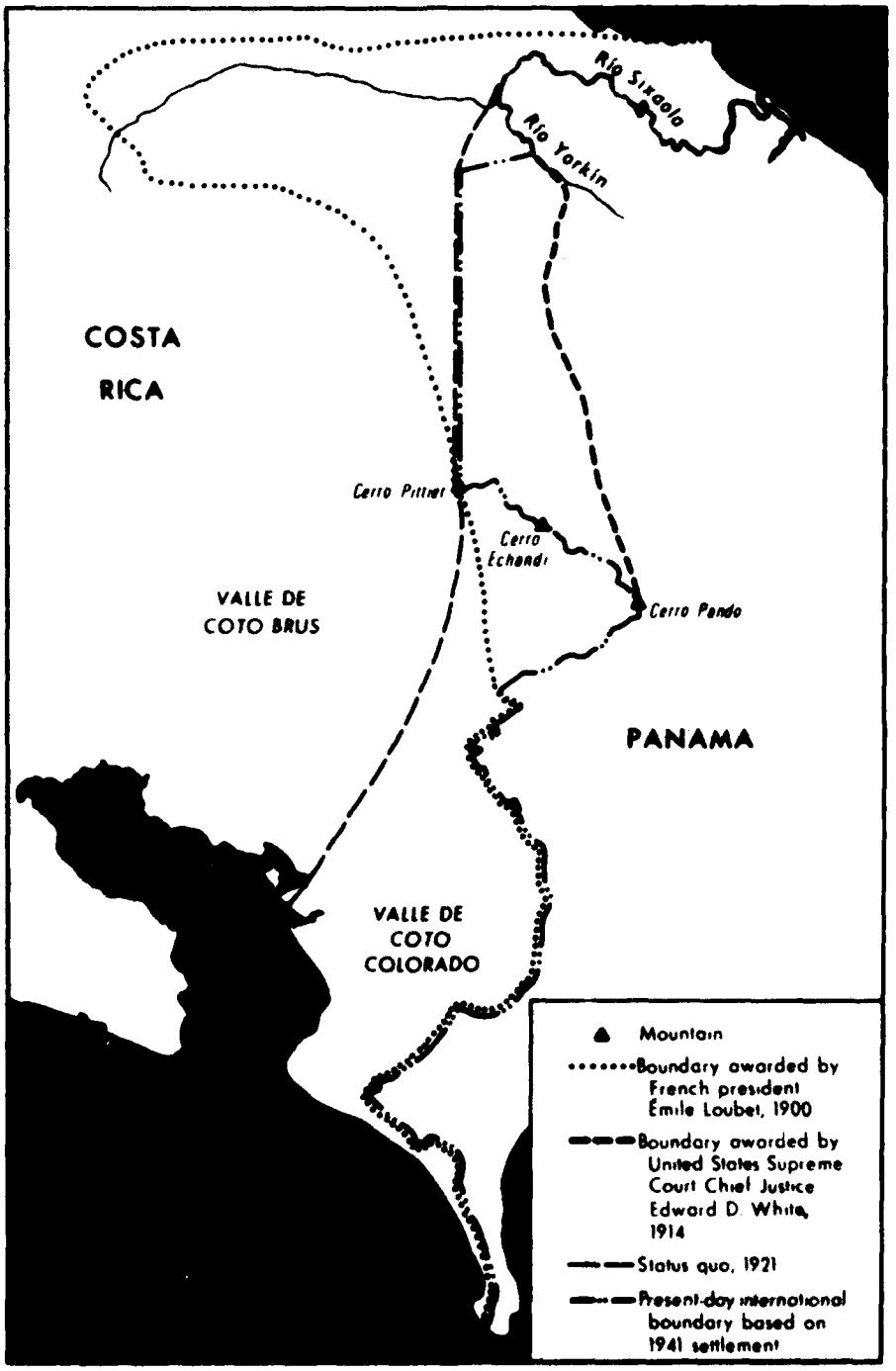
minister under González Flores, was elected to a four-year term as president in 1920.

Relations with Nicaragua and Panama

Despite the 1858 Cañas-Juarez Treaty and later agreements on the location of the border, use and navigation of the Río San Juan remained an unresolved issue between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The question was revived in 1916 when Costa Rica protested the Bryant-Chamorro Treaty, under which Nicaragua gave the United States perpetual right to build a transisthmian canal through its territory, using a portion of the Río San Juan. Costa Rica brought the case before the Central American Court, objecting that the treaty was an infringement of its rights to navigation on the river. The court, which sat at San José, was a panel of five jurists, one from each of the Central American countries, and had been established at the Washington Conference on Inter-American Affairs in 1907 to settle interregional legal disputes. It ruled in 1918 that, although it had no jurisdiction over the United States, the treaty clearly violated an 1896 agreement between Costa Rica and Nicaragua that had been confirmed by United States president Grover Cleveland.

The United States and Nicaragua ignored the decision. Washington's attitude was partly a reflection of United States opposition at that time to the Tinoco regime, against which Nicaragua was actively supporting Costa Rican rebels. American noncompliance with its decision discredited the court, however, and proved to be the main factor in its subsequent demise.

The definition of Costa Rica's southern border had also been unresolved, contributing to conflict with Colombia and, after it became independent in 1903, with Panama. Costa Rica rejected an award made in 1900 (as the result of arbitration by French president Émile Loubet) that favored Colombian claims in the Río Sixaola basin. The matter was subsequently referred to the chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, Edward D. White, whose award in 1914 proved unacceptable in turn to Panama. In 1921, Costa Rica attempted to expel Panamanians occupying the disputed Coto region on the Pacific coast. Further hostilities were averted when the United States intervened. Panama evacuated the area but broke relations with Costa Rica, and the dispute continued for 20 years. The Costa Rican congress failed to ratify a compromise settlement in 1938, and it was only in 1941 that an agreement was finally concluded between the two countries delimiting the border (see fig. 6).



Source: Based on information from United States, Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, *Costa Rica-Panama Boundary*, No. 156, Washington, July 2, 1976; and A. Curtis Wilgus, *Historical Atlas of Latin America*, New York, 1967, 288.

Figure 6. Border Disputes with Panama, 1900–41

The Rise of Ideology

Constitutional legitimacy was fully restored in 1919 when Julio Acosta García was elected overwhelmingly to a four-year term (1920-24) as president. (A distinguished public servant who had been in the forefront of the liberal opposition to the Tinoco regime, Acosta remained active as a diplomat after stepping down as president and, as Costa Rica's foreign minister, would be a signatory to the United Nations Charter in 1944.) In the 12 years following his term, the presidency alternated between two elder statesmen, Jiménez Oreamuno and González Víquez, both of whom had occupied that office previously. Despite their longtime personal rivalry, these last active survivors of the Generation of '89 both shared the political attitudes and instincts of the liberal establishment. Jiménez Oreamuno—Don Ricardo to his countrymen—was returned for two terms (1924-28 and 1932-36) as the candidate of the Republican Party (Partido Republicano—PR), renamed the National Republican Party (Partido Republicano Nacional—PRN) in 1932 after another faction had preempted the party's original label. González Víquez—Don Cleto—was elected again in 1928 as the standard-bearer of the National Union Party (Partido Unión Nacional—PUN). Both parties were personalist organizations and devoid of ideological content, except for a similar espousal of anticlericalism and other traditional liberal policies. They were of importance to their patrons only as vehicles for elections and were allowed to languish in the interim.

Despite the absence of significant issues dividing the leading contenders for the presidency, electoral campaigns in the 1920s and 1930s were hotly contested affairs, during which candidates invariably exchanged charges of fraud and vote manipulation. After the disputed election of 1923, Alberto Echandi Montero, who trailed Jiménez Oreamuno by only 4,000 votes out of 68,000 counted in a three-cornered race that failed to produce a majority for the front-running candidate, withdrew as a contender in order to avoid possible violence before the contest. Echandi Montero remarked that the presidency was "not worth a drop of blood of even one Costa Rican." His concession, considered to typify the Costa Rican spirit of political compromise, was remembered as an act of great patriotism.

Suffrage was broadened during the 1920s and the secret ballot introduced. Don Ricardo, in particular, encouraged the open debate of political alternatives, but the personal popularity that resulted from his affable manner failed to attach itself in 1928 to the Republican candidate, who was soundly defeated at the polls by González Víquez. Don Cleto, in turn, was unable to translate his

own considerable standing in the public's estimation into support for his party's candidate against Jiménez Oreamuno in 1932. In keeping with the prevailing liberal orthodoxy, the business of government remained for the most part limited to the conduct of foreign affairs, maintenance of law and order, protection of civil liberties, operation of schools, road building, and collection of the duties on imports and exports that constituted the principal source of public revenue.

Despite his liberal attachment to laissez-faire economics, Jiménez Oreamuno was compelled at the height of the Great Depression to intervene by regulating coffee production in an effort to stabilize plummeting prices. Under pressure from increasingly militant organized labor, his administration also enacted Costa Rica's first minimum-wage legislation. In 1935 he acquired more than 100,000 hectares of unused property from the United Fruit Company for distribution in 50-hectare plots to landless farmers. In an earlier departure from traditional attitudes, Jiménez Oreamuno had underwritten the establishment of a publicly owned insurance monopoly that offered subscribers low-cost, subsidized coverage.

Costa Rican liberalism became in a way a victim of its own success in providing an effective educational system, which over a period of four decades had produced political awareness among a relatively large middle class that now not only saw the possibility of social and economic change but also desired it. Beneath the apparently placid surface that seemed to prevail during the 1920s, there flowed an undercurrent of discontent with business-as-usual, and in the 1930s it swelled into waves of strikes and demonstrations. Workers became organized under competent and determined leadership, and farmers voiced loud demands for assistance. Members of the educated urban middle class openly expressed their uneasiness about disparities in the distribution of wealth and their frustration at the country's backwardness, poor health facilities, housing, and inadequate transportation. Each of these groups focused its disapproval on the concentration of political power in the hands of the liberal elite, dominated by landowning families, and the bureaucratic functionaries who held office through its patronage.

The first to exploit this restless urge for change was Jorge Volio Jiménez, a politician, soldier, scholar, and priest who was considered by some the most original thinker of the period. Returning to Costa Rica in 1912 from theological studies in Europe, Volio had published a journal in which he propounded the concept of "social Christianity" inspired by Pope Leo XIII's encyclical

Rerum Novarum and the teaching of the Belgian prelate Désiré Joseph Cardinal Mercier.

Volio founded the Reformist Party (Partido Reformista) to contest the 1923 presidential election. In its platform, he called for broad social reforms, legalization of unions, and a tax on large incomes. He also urged an end to monopolies and curtailing the influence of foreign-owned companies. Although he ran a poor third, his 15-percent share of the vote could have been crucial in determining the winner if Echandi Montero had not withdrawn. Despite assurances to his followers that he had not made a deal, many people believed that he had been bought off when he accepted the second vice presidency in the Jiménez Oreamuno administration. A terror to establishment politicians when he was in opposition, Volio in office exercised no influence on the government. His party soon disintegrated, but the social Christian philosophy he had preached was accepted as one alternative to traditional liberalism.

Volio was an enigmatic figure, brilliant but unstable, mercurial by temperament, often demagogic. A militant nationalist, he had twice been given the rank of "general," once in 1913 fighting alongside Nicaraguan insurgents against the United States Marines and again in 1919 leading an uprising against Tinoco. He was usually addressed by his military title during his political career. While still second vice president, he was implicated in an attempted coup against the government. The president explained that Volio had suffered a mental breakdown and sent him to Europe for lengthy treatment. Constantly in trouble with ecclesiastical superiors because of his political activities, he was eventually defrocked. Volio continued to be active in politics, and at the time of his death in 1952 he was a member of the legislature.

The Marxist left was far more successful than the social Christians in creating a political framework for its activities. In 1929 Manuel Mora Valverde, a 19-year-old student and member of a prominent family, began organizing a communist movement in Costa Rica, subservient to Soviet direction, which in the 1932 election fielded candidates from the Workers and Peasants Bloc (Bloque Obreros y Campesinos—BOC). The party made its initial appeal to middle- and upper class students and intellectuals, but the communists quickly made significant inroads in the labor movement, and by the late 1930s they exercised effective control over important sectors of the labor movement. They were particularly successful in organizing Spanish-speaking banana workers.

Wages paid to Jamaicans working on the banana plantations in

the eastern lowlands were considerably higher than those received by laborers on coffee plantations in the Meseta Central. In the 1920s Costa Ricans had begun to come down to Puerto Limón to take advantage of the better pay there. The less skilled Spanish-speaking workers resented that the better paying jobs were reserved for the more experienced Jamaicans, and they felt that the English-speaking work environment on the plantations put them at a practical disadvantage to foreign workers in their own country. Meanwhile, the appearance of a blight that seriously affected banana crops in the eastern lowlands had caused the fruit companies to begin shifting the major part of their operations to holdings on the Pacific coast. A strike by 10,000 communist-led workers in 1934 shut down plantations on both coasts for several months and, combined with urging from the government, forced United Fruit to agree to equalize wages paid to Costa Rican and Jamaican employees. The strike was also instrumental in compelling the government to introduce a minimum-wage law and persuaded Jiménez Oreamuno to refuse United Fruit permission to employ Jamaicans in the west.

Jiménez Oreamuno was followed in office in 1936 by León Cortés Castro, the PRN candidate. Cortés intervened, as his predecessor had, to stabilize prices and also encouraged the growth of the banana industry on the west coast by approving an extension of the Pacific railroad. Because of his association with wealthy German families in Costa Rica, Cortés was suspected of being a Nazi sympathizer, and some of his actions in office seemed to bear out the suspicion. For instance, an agency of his administration headed by a German-born official scrutinized immigration applications for the purpose of preventing entry by Jews. The civil liberties of political opponents were frequently abridged, and a crackdown was initiated on communist political and union-organizing activities. To challenge Cortés' nominee in the 1940 election, Jiménez Oreamuno formed the Democratic Alliance (Alianza Democrática), a broadly based coalition that included the BOC, but Don Ricardo was forced to retire from the presidential race because of government obstruction of his campaign. Cortés selected a 40-year-old physician, Rafael Angel Calderón Guardia, to represent the PRN in the 1940 election and to hold down the presidency until he could resume office four years later. Calderón, who won a landslide victory against token opposition, soon developed his own following, however, and adopted an entirely independent line.

Cortés and Calderón had not come out of the same mold as the traditional liberal politicians. For the first time since Guardia had

overthrown the old liberal oligarchy in the 1870s, there was no longer a monolithic elite. During the early 1940s there were four politically articulate groups in Costa Rica. The first comprised the politicians and bureaucrats who stayed in office through their connection with the PRN and were loyal to Calderón; the second was Mora Valverde's tough and disciplined communist organization. In 1940 Victor Sanabria Martínez, the newly appointed archbishop of San José, formed Catholic Action (Acción Católica), which promoted religious education, provided relief for the poor, and in general played a more activist role in public affairs than had any church-related organization since the time of Bishop Thiel. The fourth group was confined to a few hundred professionals, businessmen, and students, identifying themselves as "modern liberals"—as distinct from traditional liberals—who joined together in political clubs and discussion forums. Inspired in part by the New Deal in the United States, their common goal was to foster the reorganization and modernizarion of government institutions and the economy by democratic means. To achieve this aim, they envisioned the creation of modern political parties, based on distinctive ideologies, that would offer an expanded Costa Rican electorate a choice of policies rather than personalities.

The Calderón Era

Whereas his predecessors had stressed the expansion of education and the extension of civil liberties, Calderón was the first president to make genuine social and economic reform the primary goal of his administration. Like Volio, the new president claimed to base his political agenda on the teachings of the papal encyclicals concerning social justice and the rights of workers. In office, however, his constituency was based as much on traditional personalism and patterns of patronage as on the support of social Christian and radical elements attracted by his commitment to use the power of the state to effect change.

Calderón was also the first president in memory to have been openly devout in the practice of religion. Soon after his inauguration, he sought a rapprochement between the state and the church, forming a close working relationship with Archbishop Sanabria. The Liberal Laws from the 1880s and other anticlerical legislation restricting the activities of the church were repealed. Religious education was reintroduced in public schools, although on a voluntary basis, and the Jesuits were allowed to return to Costa Rica. The church, especially through the work of Catholic Action, entered more visibly into political matters, but Sanabria,

despite the personal backing he gave Calderón's policies, was careful not to endorse him or his party, nor to identify the church openly with the regime.

Unlike Jiménez Oreamuno, who during his administration had justified state activism on pragmatic grounds, Calderón was prepared to intervene in social and economic affairs as a matter of conviction. As under previous governments, funding to improve education was generously allocated, and in 1940 the new University of Costa Rica, several years in the planning, was opened. Enactment of reforms proposed by Calderón was blocked initially, however, by legal barriers to government action in those areas, which the administration sought to overcome by radically amending the constitution. Landowners and businessmen felt threatened by the reforms and by the manner in which Calderón intended to carry them out. Cortés broke with Calderón in 1941, forming the Democratic Party (Partido Demócrata—PD) to oppose the amendments put forward by the administration. Reform-minded modern liberals charged that official corruption and government inefficiency rather than constitutional restrictions were the real causes of Calderón's failure to move his program through the congress. Among the most vocal of these were members of Democratic Action (Acción Demócrata), a group organized by Francisco Orlich Bolmarcich and Alberto Martén initially to support Cortés' new party, and the academically oriented Center for the Study of National Problems (Centro para el Estudio de Problemas Nacionales—CEPN), which produced studies and reports generally critical of the government. From the Marxist left Mora Valverde ridiculed Calderón for his "reformist" approach and called for outright public control of the economy. Meanwhile, the president warned the Costa Rican middle class that amendment of the constitution and speedy enactment of proposed legislation was necessary to prevent the communists from preempting the reform issue and bringing class conflict to the country.

Costa Rica declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and hours before the official American declaration in Washington. Three days later, war was declared on Germany and Italy. Costa Rica had nothing to offer to the Allied war effort in terms of manpower or material resources, but its prompt entry into the war was considered an act of solidarity with the United States. The Central American country was also regarded as strategically important because of its geographic proximity to the Panama Canal, particularly in the early days of the Pacific war when that area was believed to be the

likely target of a follow-up Japanese strike.

In July the S.S. *San Pablo*, a merchant vessel owned by the United Fruit Company, was torpedoed by a German submarine in the harbor of Puerto Limón, and 27 lives were lost. The ship's sinking seriously curtailed exports from Costa Rican ports. Calderón used the incident as an excuse to seize property and assets belonging to wealthy resident German and Italian families under the hastily enacted Alien Property Act. Encouraged by Orlich and Martén, who had been his friends since boyhood, José Figueres Ferrer, a little-known landowner, purchased air time and delivered a radio speech in which, as part of a catalog of grievances against the government, he condemned Calderón for entering the war without having adequate means to defend the country's territory and denounced his expropriation of alien property as an illegal act. Figueres, who was a supporter of Cortés, went on to demand the president's immediate resignation. Before his speech was finished, however, the police had interrupted the broadcast, and Figueres was arrested and later sent into exile in Mexico.

Figueres had also cited the administration's inability to carry through its legislative program. Early in 1943 Calderón secured passage of a series of 15 amendments to the constitution, known collectively as the Social Guarantees. Although these amendments had no force in themselves, they enabled the congress to consider the wide range of interventionist legislation proposed by the administration. Calderón could not realize the full potential of the amendments during the year remaining in his term of office, but a comprehensive labor code was enacted guaranteeing a minimum wage for some categories of workers, ensuring job security, mandating collective bargaining, and legalizing the right to strike. Social security legislation, including health insurance, was also passed, as well as a law allowing squatters to acquire title to previously unused land that they had put into cultivation

The Social Guarantees were resisted by a faction within the PRN and only reluctantly accepted by others. More than that of any other individual, the influence of Archbishop Sanabria was crucial in winning the approval needed to carry these measures. When Cortés broke from the PRN in protest over the amendments, forming the PD to back his candicacy for the presidency in the next election, Calderón turned to Mora Valverde and the BOC for support in enacting subsequent reform legislation.

As Costa Rica's communist party, the BOC had since its founding been scrupulously obedient to directives from the Kremlin. Mora Valverde, like communist leaders in other countries at war

with Nazi Germany, had been instructed to cooperate with the government in power and to defer from pursuing revolutionary goals for the duration. As a result of a tacit agreement between Calderón's administration and the church, the communists were brought into a tactical alliance with the government, and increasingly party members and sympathizers were admitted to important positions in the government, civil service, and police. For many Costa Ricans, who were ideologically hostile to communism, this move was nonetheless a reasonable extension of their country's wartime alliance with the Soviet Union. Sanabria's condition for giving his sanction to the arrangement was that Mora Valverde's party play down its involvement in the international communist movement. Mora Valverde accepted, and in keeping with this understanding, the communists adopted a new, less provocative label, the Popular Vanguard Party (Partido Vanguardia Popular—PVP), under which they absorbed other leftist groups. In return, Sanabria allowed Catholics to follow their conscience in joining the communist front organization. At the same time, however, the archbishop instructed a young European-educated priest, Benjamín Núñez Vargas, who was on friendly terms with Figueres, to organize a Catholic labor union in direct competition with the communist-controlled unions. The resulting Costa Rican Confederation of Labor Rerum Novarum (Confederación Costarricense de Trabajo Rerum Novarum) took its name from the papal encyclical that had encouraged the formation of labor unions.

The PRN and PVP formed the Victory Bloc (Bloque de la Victoria) to back the candidacy of Teodoro Picado Michalski, Calderón's nominee to succeed him in the presidency. Picado, a conservative and an acknowledged anticommunist, accepted an active role by the PVP as necessary to beat Cortés, who had been campaigning for president since founding the PD, while members of the CEPN and other modern liberals backed the conservative antireformist Cortés in opposition to growing communist influence in the Calderón administration. In February 1944 Picado defeated Cortés decisively by nearly a two-to-one margin in an election that brought the largest turnout of voters (137,000) in Costa Rican history. Parties of the Victory Bloc amassed an equally impressive congressional majority.

Several months after the election, the Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Demócrata—PSD) was formed from a merger of Democratic Action and the CEPN. The new vigorously anticommunist, left-of-center opposition party produced a platform advocating a systematic approach to progressive reform on the

model of prewar European social democratic parties. Scoring the present and past regimes for their corruption and manipulation of elections, the PSD called for a complete overhaul of the political system as the prerequisite for achieving meaningful change in other areas. It drew many of its adherents from young, educated, and ambitious members of the middle class who saw career opportunities blocked by entrenched Calderón supporters as well as by foreign-owned companies and the old oligarchy. Figueres, who had been greeted as a hero on his return from exile in May 1944, assumed a leadership role in the PSD together with Orlich and Martén, but the party remained a marginal force in Costa Rican opposition politics.

The small PSD did not offer Figueres an adequate political base for his ambition. When Cortés died suddenly in 1946, Figueres bolted to the larger PD, in which he had earlier been active, and presented himself as a candidate to succeed to the party leadership. He was beaten out, however, by a conservative businessman, Fernando Castro Cervantes, and soon joined Cortés' son in a splinter party that sought to capture the support of the former president's personalist following. In 1947 another opposition group, reviving the name of PUN, was organized by a respected, conservative newspaper editor, Otilio Ulate Blanco. Like the PD, it was backed by a number of traditional politicians, business interests, and large landowners, who feared Calderón's return to power. Ulate was nominated by the PUN as its standard-bearer in the next year's presidential election.

The violence that had accompanied the 1944 electoral campaign continued through the first two years of the Picado administration. Antigovernment demonstrations and strikes erupted across the country, and a series of attempted coups left Picado insecure and increasingly dependent on the communist-led workers' militia to provide security for the regime. Under pressure, the government became more arbitrary in its actions. Acknowledged and suspected opponents of the regime were periodically rounded up by police and held for questioning in disregard of the law. Although most were soon released, some were forced into exile.

Unrest came to a head in 1946 when government forces fired into a crowd that was protesting irregularities in off-year congressional elections, killing two persons and wounding many more. Although Picado disclaimed all responsibility for the incident, the tide of opinion turned against the regime. A massive lockout—popularly known as the Huelga de Brazos Caídos (Strike of the Fallen Arms)—was staged by merchants and managers in major

cities to demonstrate their indignation and to express their concern that the 1948 presidential election would be similarly manipulated by the government. Offices and stores were closed, transportation was halted, and communications facilities fell silent, bringing the country to a virtual standstill. In an attempt to break the strike, the communist militia broke into shops and distributed goods taken from them. After two weeks, however, Picado gave in and signed an agreement putting security forces under tighter supervision and pledging that the next election would be free and honest. To confirm this guarantee, he appointed a three-man commission to monitor the voting.

Figueres, for his part, placed little confidence in an election to bring about a change of regime, believing that the incumbent government would never permit an opposition victory at the polls. While in exile, Figueres had actively plotted its overthrow, training insurgents from several countries (in what came to be known as the Caribbean Legion) with the support of sympathetic governments in Guatemala and Cuba. When he returned home, Figueres stockpiled arms at his farm, called Lucha Sin Fin (Struggle Without End) or La Lucha, south of Cartago, where he continued to train and equip foreign exiles in the Caribbean Legion and PSD volunteers. According to the Pact of the Caribbean, which he concluded in Guatemala in 1947 with various exile groups, Figueres pledged to use Costa Rica as a base for liberating countries in the region then under dictatorships—including Nicaragua, Honduras, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic—if they aided him and his followers to come to power there. Inexplicably, Picado made no move against him.

The 1948 Election

It had been accepted from the first that Picado was a stand-in for Calderón, who continued to pull the strings behind the scenes. Calderón was the obvious candidate of the PRN in 1948. The government apparatus was put at the disposal of his well-financed campaign, and the bureaucracy, for whom Calderón was the source of continued patronage, was mobilized in his behalf. His candidacy was also supported by the PVP, which had formally reestablished its ties with international communism. For many working-class voters, Calderón had been the first genuine social reformer to occupy the presidency and the first national leader, they believed, to be concerned primarily with their welfare.

Castro Cervantes threw the support of his party behind Ulate. The reformist PSD also found common cause with the conserva-

tive PUN against Calderón and endorsed Ulate rather than offer its own candidate. The PUN stressed Ulate's honesty and the fiscal integrity of his economic program. All opposition parties attacked the bureaucratic inefficiency and disregard for civil liberties associated with the Calderón-Picado regime, and all were alarmed by the growing presence of communists in the government.

The 1948 election campaign was stormy and divided the nation as none had before it. Police and militia, contrary to Picado's pledge to the leaders of the *huelga*, interfered with Ulate's campaign, disrupting meetings and attempting to intimidate voters. Strikes called to protest police actions were answered by counterdemonstrations, orchestrated in support of Calderón. Ulate, however, appeared to profit at the polls from adverse public reaction to the government's high-handed methods.

The preliminary results of balloting on February 8 showed that Ulate had won by over 10,000 votes of a total of more than 100,000 counted. Both sides claimed that irregularities at the polls had adversely affected their showing. When members of the election commission evaluated the results of the voting, however, two upheld their validity and one rejected them. The Picado government refused to abide by the committee's majority report, contending that the one dissenting member had disqualified its decision. Picado insisted that the final judgment be made by the holdover legislature, which was controlled by Calderón supporters. On March 1, the day after the committee report was submitted, the congress voted 27 to 18 to annul the election and Ulate's apparent victory, leaving the way open for it to name Calderón as president.

Predictably, a strenuous outcry arose from the pro-Ulate side. Ulate was placed under arrest and, although he was released the next day, it was clear to Calderón's opponents that the government intended to use force if necessary to thwart the will of Costa Rican voters. During the next several weeks, Archbishop Sanabria attempted to mediate between the contending parties in an effort to head off violence, while Figueres, who was convinced that there was no peaceful solution to the dispute, urged Ulate not to concede defeat.

Civil War

In the meantime Figueres was assembling the insurgent National Liberation Army at La Lucha. Volunteers, mostly students and the sons of farm owners attracted by his anticommunist ap-

peal, eventually numbered about 600 men, supplemented by foreigners from the Caribbean Legion. Except for several personal friends, officers picked by Figueres to command the newly formed insurgent units were either legionnaires or Costa Ricans of pronounced right-wing sympathies, some of whom had earlier engaged in antigovernment terrorist activities.

To deal with the insurgents, the government had at its disposal a poorly equipped army of only a few hundred men and a small police force. An additional source of manpower were the *calderonistas* (supporters of Calderón) armed by the PRN, but the brunt of the regime's defense fell on the 3,000 communist militiamen who followed Mora Valverde's orders.

The civil war commenced in earnest on March 12 when insurgents blocked the Inter-American Highway at Sierra, where an access road turned off to La Lucha (see fig. 7). Simultaneously, a small unit seized the airfield at San Isidro (full name is San Isidro de El General), about 40 kilometers south of La Lucha along the same highway, commandeering three DC-3 transports that belonged to the national airlines. Over the next month these aircraft were used to ferry supplies and reinforcements from Guatemala to Costa Rica.

Figueres turned back a company-sized loyalist unit, which was advancing on La Lucha from the rear, at Frailes on March 14, but the sudden approach of a mobile column along the Inter-American Highway persuaded him to abandon his headquarters and withdraw into the nearby mountains, leaving Martén, his second-in-command, to fight a rear guard action. La Lucha was taken by the loyalists and burned. From his new headquarters at Santa María de Dota, where Núñez soon joined the insurgents as chaplain, Figueres consolidated his growing army in preparation for a decisive engagement. With the troops at his disposal, Martén set up a defense line at Empalme to prevent government forces from moving down the highway to San Isidro and to cover Figueres at Santa María de Dota. Meanwhile, in Alajuela, Orlich with a small party used hit-and-run tactics to divert government attention from the south. In San José, the number-two man in the Rerum Novarum union, Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez, led an insurgent underground engaged in sabotaging public utilities.

On March 20 government forces launched a two-pronged offensive aimed at isolating Figueres and cutting off his source of supplies. To the north, an army column attacked the positions at Empalme, only to be driven off with heavy losses in a series of bit-

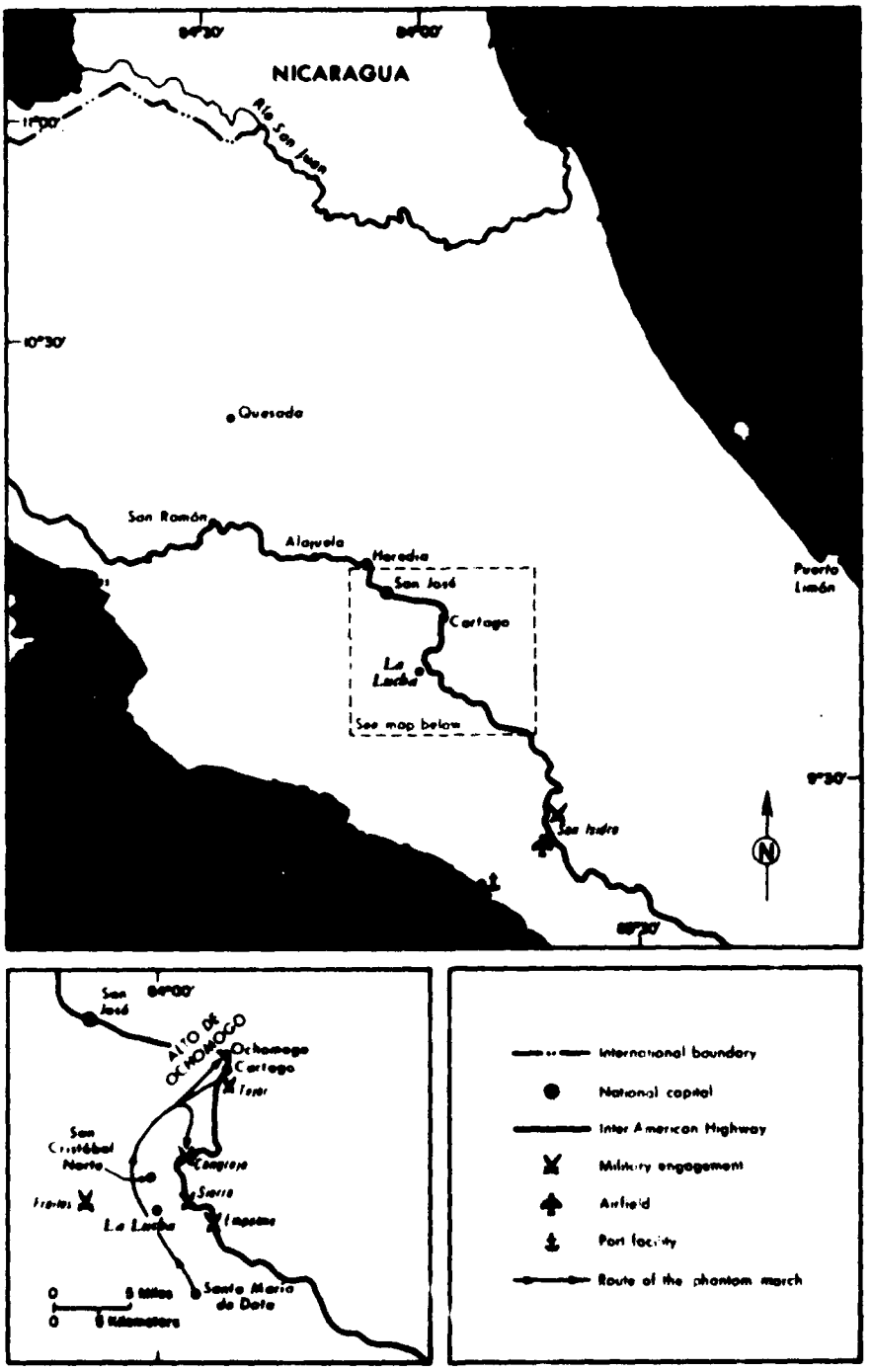


Figure 7. The Civil War in Costa Rica, March-April 1948.

terly fought engagements. In the south several hundred militiamen, recruited from banana workers on the west coast, were landed by sea at Dominical and advanced on San Isidro. Commanded by Carlos Luis Fallas, a noted author and communist labor leader, they succeeded in taking the town but could not capture the airfield, which was their objective. After three days of hard fighting, they were compelled to withdraw.

During the first week of April, Sanabria tried to arrange a truce. Ulate seemed ready to compromise with Calderón, agreeing to accept a neutral interim president until a new election could be held. But Figueres, whom the archbishop visited in the mountains, insisted on the Picado government's "unconditional surrender" and recognition of Ulate's election victory. On April 10, the negotiations having broken down, Figueres set out with his army on the "phantom march" toward San José, using old ox cart trails and mountain paths to skirt the loyalist concentration at San Cristóbal Norte. The next day insurgents airlifted from San Isidro descended on Puerto Limón and captured the town virtually unopposed.

Figueres divided his forces into three columns. With the first he entered Cartago on April 12, encountering only token resistance, while the second occupied the Alto de Ochomogo, from which the insurgents commanded the stretch of the highway leading into San José. Government troops that broke through the position established by the third column at Cangreja were defeated by Figueres at Tejar on April 13 after a 12-hour battle that was the bloodiest action of the civil war.

That same day Picado authorized a delegation to negotiate a cease-fire with Núñez, who represented the insurgents. But control of San José was effectively in the hands of the communist militia that defended it, and Mora Valverde refused to order his troops to abandon their positions until Figueres had agreed to conditions respecting their safety. Núñez arranged a meeting between the two antagonists in the Alto de Ochomogo, but Figueres was not prepared then to give Mora Valverde the written guarantee that he demanded.

It was not until April 19 that Picado and Núñez signed a pact at the Mexican embassy in San José, bringing an end to hostilities while allowing for the conditional surrender of the government. Núñez, acting on his own authority, appeared to have convinced Mora Valverde that Figueres would honor a verbal commitment

that would allow him to accept a cease-fire. An amnesty was granted to all those, including the militiamen, who had fought on the government side. It was agreed that no responsibility would be assessed for property damaged or lost during the conflict, that the PVP and the communist-led union would continue to function as legal organizations, and that their members would not be molested. Furthermore, Mora Valverde extracted a promise that the Social Guarantees would not be repealed Once the cease-fire was confirmed, Picado and Calderón were allowed to leave for exile in Nicaragua, and the government was turned over to a caretaker administration headed by 74-year-old Santos León Herrera, who was completing his term as third vice president.

The 1948 civil war—referred to as the War of National Liberation by the victors—lasted only a few weeks but was the bloodiest episode in Costa Rican history and left a residue of intense bitterness. Some 2,000 people died, mostly on the government side, and more were wounded in combat and in acts of reprisal committed by forces on both sides. Several hundred Nicaraguan troops, who crossed into Guanacaste in the final days to buttress the Picado regime, were too few and arrived too late to have had any effect on the outcome of the conflict.

The Second Republic

Figueres had been responsible for preventing Calderón from resuming the presidency, and, by the same token, victory by the National Liberation Army in the civil war had put him in a position to dictate the terms under which Ulate would assume the office to which he had been legitimately elected. Most parties to the insurrection agreed that, given the country's chaotic condition and the serious security problems that existed, an interim government was called for to prepare Costa Rica for a return to a democratically elected administration. Many also conceded that changes would have to be made not only in the way government operated but also in Costa Rican society as well, if the mistakes of the former regime were to be avoided and the country's democratic institutions made secure from further abuse.

Ulate understood the realities of the situation, and after the government's surrender he and Figueres had made a show of solidarity. The conservative president-elect, for instance, was photographed entering the capital riding on the rear of Figueres' motorbike. Despite profound differences in other matters, they

unquestionably shared a strong aversion to Calderón, a hatred of communism, and a commitment to democracy. Ulate therefore made a pact with Figueres in which he consented to allow power to pass to an interim government for an 18-month period, during which a constituent assembly would be elected to prepare a new constitution. On May 8, when the term of the outgoing administration legally ended, Figueres was installed as president of the Founding Junta of the Second Republic (Junta Fundadora de la Segunda República), whose members were Orlich, Martén, and Núñez.

The Junta and the 1949 Constitution

The slogan of the National Liberation Army had been "We Will Found the Second Republic." Figueres clearly believed that the old political order—the "First Republic"—was beyond repairing and that economic and social reform depended on institutional reform. He promised a revolution, anticipated in his coining the term *Second Republic*, that would "transform everything."

In 18 months the junta issued no less than 834 decree-laws, many of which were meant to deal with emergency situations or to address pressing economic and social needs. Others, however, contravened the suspended constitution, the established legal procedures, and agreements entered into at the time of the cease-fire. An excess-wealth tax in the form of a 10-percent surtax on bank deposits larger than ₡50,000 (about US$10,000 at the time) was imposed to pay for the repair of war damage. Banks were nationalized, placing credit and investment under public control. This move also enabled scrutiny of deposits to determine those liable for the surtax. Welfare measures enacted by the old regime under the Social Guarantees were respected, but the civil service was revamped in order to make their delivery more efficient. Voting rights were extended to women. The junta created autonomous public corporations and institutions (*autónomos*) that would administer the nationalized banking system, public utilities and works, reclamation and land management, railroads, health facilities, the social security system, insurance, higher education and vocational training, and public housing. Each was to be invested with a board of directors, appointed to staggered terms by the president.

The presence of hundreds of exiled *calderonistas* across the border in Nicaragua posed an obvious security threat. The discovery of a counterrevolutionary plot and a large weapons cache shortly after the junta assumed office gave Figueres an excuse for

unilaterally abrogating the pact of the Mexican embassy. More than 200 communists were arrested, the PVP was outlawed, and the communist-controlled unions were disbanded. Critics of the junta were purged from government and teaching positions. A special tribunal, the Court of Immediate Sanctions, was impaneled to prosecute retroactively acts of abuse of power and political crimes alleged to have been committed by members of the previous regime and during the civil war. It was outside the regular court system, and there were no appeals from its decisions.

The junta was slow in extending its authority in *calderonista* strongholds, and many militiamen had retained or hidden their arms. Defense of the Nicaraguan border was hampered by the lack of adequate security forces. The army and police had been disarmed at the end of the civil war, initially leaving the relatively small National Liberation Army and Caribbean Legion with primary responsibility for safeguarding the regime and protecting Costa Rican territory. Moreover, the effectiveness of the National Liberation Army had been weakened by the resignation of several top officers in protest over the independent activities of the Caribbean Legion which, they contended, had compromised the integrity of the national forces. In December 1948 Figueres formally abolished Costa Rica's politically and professionally unreliable army which, he explained, the country needed "like a hole in the head." To fill the security vacuum, reorganization of the police was begun by loyal officers assigned from the National Liberation Army and, redesignated as the Civil Guard (Guardia Civil), was placed under the control of the minister of public security with an approved force level of about 1,500 men.

Unable to ensure the country's defense from its own resources, Figueres determined to rely on collective security. Therefore, on December 3 Costa Rica ratified the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), a regional mutual defense pact that included the United States as a guarantor against aggression. The treaty was tested little more than a week later when on December 10 about 800 well-armed *calderonista* insurgents entered the country from Nicaragua. The general uprising that Calderón had counted on failed to materialize, however, and the insurgents pulled back across the border to their sanctuary. The Organization of American States (OAS) sharply rebuked Nicaragua for its part in assisting the insurgents, but Costa Rica was also cited for allowing Nicaraguan exiles to train on its territory, and Figueres was advised to disband the Caribbean Legion.

Another attempt to oust Figueres occurred in April 1949 when

a disgruntled member of the junta, Colonel Edgar Cardona Quirós, the minister of public security, seized an old army barracks as a demonstration of his lack of confidence in the junta president's leadership and, in particular, his opposition to the nationalization of the banks. The incident, in which six persons were killed, revealed serious differences within the ruling junta, but his action was considered anachronistic even by those who agreed with Cardona, and no one rallied to his support.

A committee composed of young PSD activists set to work in the weeks after the civil war to draw up proposals for a new constitution, which they expected would institute the Second Republic. The recommendations they put forward reflected their radical ideological views, particularly regarding the role of the public sector in the economy and the establishment of a welfare state. The constituent assembly that was elected later in the year to consider these proposals and recommendations from other sources consisted of 33 PUN representatives and only four from the PSD. The largely conservative assembly rejected most of the PSD committee proposals, even to the extent of omitting the term *Second Republic* from the final version of the new constitution.

As adopted, the 1949 constitution—Costa Rica's eighth since 1825—was similar to the much amended 1871 constitution that it replaced and embodied in another form the amendments included in the Social Guarantees. It established a unitary state and the separation of powers among the branches of government: an executive consisting of the president of the Council of Government (cabinet), the unicameral Legislative Assembly, and an independent judiciary. The president, who was elected to serve a four-year term, was obliged to wait eight years before being eligible to run again for the office. Article 12 stated that "the army as a permanent institution is proscribed" and that armed forces could only be mobilized to counter a direct threat to national sovereignty, such as a foreign invasion. Another article prohibited political parties belonging to international movements that were nondemocratic in nature, thereby making a Moscow-linked communist party illegal (see Constitution of 1949, ch. 4).

A unique feature of the new constitution—and one that could be credited to Figueres' influence—was the designation in Article 99 of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones—TSE), whose function was considered so important that it was commonly referred to as the "fourth branch" of the government. The tribunal was to be composed of impartial magistrates, nominated by the Legislative Assembly to staggered six-year

terms. It was responsible for administering the electoral process, granting recognition to applicant political parties, and evaluating results. During the election campaign, the tribunal possessed police powers. Its decisions were to be considered definitive. Subordinate tribunals similarly monitored elections in local jurisdictions.

After 18 months in office, the junta stepped down, and on November 8, 1949, Figueres handed over the government to Ulate and the Legislative Assembly. Even if he had not achieved recognition of the Second Republic in a formal sense, Figueres had set Costa Rica on a new course. The avenue to political office would now run through party organizations instead of through a personalist patronage system. Figueres had also won wider acceptance for the welfare state and for public participation in the economy. The main electoral competition would thereafter be between a left-of-center social democratic party, committed to state activism and a mixed economy, and a coalition of centrist and conservative groups generally more inclined to limit growth of the public sector and to encourage private enterprise. The most significant legacy left by the junta, however, was that these parties would thereafter compete in fair and honest elections and that the regular transfer of power between them would be conducted in a peaceful manner.

The Ulate Administration

Ulate made no move to cut back on the social welfare programs that Figueres and the junta had implemented. Some other measures, such as the 10-percent surtax, were largely ignored, however, and still others were tempered, as, for example, by authorizing private banks to compete with the public banking system. But Figueres' initiatives, including the *autónomos*, were left basically intact by the new conservative regime. Likewise, the prohibition against communist activities, on which both leaders agreed, was strictly enforced, and Ulate continued a foreign policy that stressed friendly relations with the United States and opposition to right-wing dictatorships in the region.

During the first two years of his administration, Ulate was particularly concerned to create financial stability. The large external debt left by the junta was cut by approximately US$30 million during that period, and the value of the Costa Rican colón was strengthened against the dollar. By 1951 Costa Rica's financial position was judged basically sound, and Ulate felt sufficiently confident to turn to economic development. Using a World Bank

(see Glossary) loan, the government began construction of a new and larger airport near San José and underwrote the purchase of industrial and agricultural equipment. Costa Rica received additional aid from the United States to finance the building of a dam and power plant on the Río Reventazón. By the end of Ulate's term, the country had acquired the beginnings of an up-to-date public works system. Ulate was reassured in introducing these programs by the high price of coffee on the world market and by the reopening of the Caribbean banana plantations.

Figueres and the National Liberation Party

The understanding between Figueres and Ulate was not intended to be indefinite. Although Figueres continued to back the president after the transition from the junta to an elected government, the two stood at opposite ends of the spectrum of democratic groupings in Costa Rica and, predictably, relations between them cooled. The break was made final in late 1951 when Figueres founded a new party, the National Liberation Party (Partido Liberación Nacional—PLN), and announced his candidacy for the presidency in the election scheduled for July 1953.

The PLN incorporated the PSD but was more broadly based than the old party, including other modern liberal and left-of-center groups along with business and agricultural interests. It closely identified with Figueres' victory in the civil war over Calderón and the communists and with the as yet unfulfilled promise of the Second Republic. Although its strength was founded on middle-class support, the party described itself as social democratic and became an affiliated member of the Socialist International. Figueres traced its ideological roots to Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre's Aprista movement in Peru (see National Liberation Party, ch. 4).

The PLN insisted that institutional reform and modernization of the economy to stimulate growth were the necessary prerequisites to any meaningful social reform. Greater efficiency, the application of advanced technology, and long-term planning, according to the PLN, were methods by which these goals could be achieved. It also called for an enlarged role for the public sector in a mixed economy to ensure a better distribution of income and services. Although Figueres was pro-American in outlook and recognized Costa Rica's need for American assistance, the PLN took a nationalistic line toward regulating foreign investment and the activities of foreign companies.

Figueres had always stressed the importance of wider and more

open participation in the democratic process. He therefore proposed that active party members contribute to decisionmaking and that authority be diffused through the party organization. Always opposed to personalism, he organized the PLN as a permanent party with ideological substance whose future would not be tied to the fortunes of a single personality or clique. Ironically, however, the PLN retained many of the characteristics of a personalist organization, with Don Pepe—as Figueres was popularly known—remaining its leading figure in and out of office.

Figueres, who at the age of 77 remained active in Costa Rican politics in 1983, would leave an indelible mark on the history of his country. He was always a controversial figure, however, regarded by his countrymen either in the guise of a hero or in that of a villain. Don Pepe was a successful farmer and rancher before he became involved in politics. The son of Catalan immigrants, he was a "new man"—typical of those to whom he appealed—who owed nothing to old and established family connections. He formed close personal ties with other leaders of the democratic left in the region, especially Rómulo Betancourt of Venezuela and Luis Muñoz Marín of Puerto Rico. Detractors on the right and the extreme left considered him an opportunist who used social democratic rhetoric only to further personalist ambitions. Latin American dictators, like Anastasio Somoza García in Nicaragua, regularly denounced him as a "communist."

The PUN lacked a prominent figure to put forward in 1953, but one of Ulate's cabinet ministers, Mario Echandi Jiménez, the son of Echandi Montero, was nominated by a large majority as its candidate at the party convention. Castro Cervantes, who had given way to Ulate in 1948, was the choice of the PD. To avoid splitting the conservative vote, Echandi Jiménez withdrew his candidacy, and the anti-Figueres groups united behind the stronger candidacy of Castro Cervantes.

During the campaign Figueres promised to work to improve the standard of living for all classes and to eliminate poverty during his term. Castro Cervantes, by contrast, had almost no program other than opposition to Figueres, whom he presented as a dangerous radical, and a return to a Costa Rica that was "peaceful, orderly, and democratic . . . free of dangerous experiments and deceitful illusions." In July 1953 Costa Rican voters elected Figueres to the presidency by a nearly two-to-one margin.

Like the man himself, the Figueres administration proved to be intensely controversial. Those who supported Figueres argued that it succeeded in laying the legislative foundation for the Second Republic. Opponents insisted that Figueres' expansive

and extremely expensive policies brought the country indebtedness, inflation, and economic instability. Early in his administration, Figueres renegotiated the contract with United Fruit, increasing the company's tax assessment from 15 percent of net profits to 35 percent. In addition, the company was obliged to turn over to the government all of its housing projects, schools, and medical facilities without compensation. Citing the new contract as a precedent, the administration likewise more than doubled personal taxes on higher incomes. The government, which was the only legal producer of alcohol, used revenue from the liquor monopoly to finance agricultural development and food-processing projects. Manufacturing was emphasized in an effort to diversify production, and tariffs were raised to protect developing industries. The administration raised the minimum wage and greatly increased public sector employment. Expenditures for education and housing were also increased, and a new *autónomo* to administer expanded public housing and urban development projects was established under the direction of Núñez. (Núñez served subsequently as his country's first ambassador to Israel and as representative to the United Nations; in 1973 he was named first rector of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma at Heredia.)

Coffee prices rose, especially during the latter half of Figueres' term, and on the face of it the country prospered. The president's social welfare programs were costly, however, and he reversed Ulate's policy of concentrating on reducing the national debt, a shift which Figueres argued was a necessary trade-off in implementing his many welfare and public works programs. The currency remained stable, and inflation, by Figueres' reckoning, was lower than in comparable developing economies.

Some critics of the administration pointed out that Figueres appeared to have mistaken rapid growth of the public sector for real economic growth and that policies like the high tariff on imports had in fact undermined prosperity. Indeed, from a strictly financial viewpoint, the balance sheet at the end of more than four years was not encouraging. Expansion of the public sector had put a heavy burden on traditional revenue-producing industries, especially coffee, and the increased level of public spending left the treasury with a mounting deficit. Large purchases of agricultural and industrial equipment had also added to the balance of payments deficit and to foreign indebtedness.

Figueres and the PLN paid a heavy political price for the administration's courage—or recklessness, depending on the point of view—in enacting its uncompromising legislative program.

Opposition to the tax increases in the Legislative Assembly from both the conservative opposition and the PLN had been particularly bitter. The *calderonistas* had been encouraged by the divisiveness their passage had caused, and a shift in middle-class opinion in their favor was duly noted.

Opposing the Dictators

Relations between Costa Rica and Nicaragua deteriorated steadily after Figueres was elected president. The enmity between him and Nicaragua's Somoza García was personal as well as political, and it ran deep in both men. Both received the other's exiles, gave material support to the other's opponents, and plotted the overthrow of the other's regime. Figueres also sheltered his friend Betancourt at whose urging Costa Rica boycotted an inter-American conference held in Caracas in March 1954 as a protest against violations of human rights by the regime of Venezuelan dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez. Active support was likewise given to opponents of the Dominican Republic's dictator, Rafael Trujillo Molina.

Figueres found himself compromised politically and diplomatically as a result of his eternal commitments, however, when members of a group of Nicaraguan conspirators, captured after an unsuccessful attempt to kill Somoza García in April 1954, confessed that they had been trained and equipped at La Lucha for their mission. Somoza García challenged Figueres to settle their differences with pistols. Figueres responded by advising the Nicaraguan dictator to "grow up."

Later the same month Nicaragua signed a mutual defense treaty with the United States, aimed at countering the allegedly pro-communist regime of Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán in Guatemala. Some of the American arms received by Nicaragua as part of the agreement were passed on to Carlos Castillo Armas, who in June overthrew the Arbenz government. Somoza García continued the military buildup in Nicaragua with the purchase of two dozen warplanes from Sweden and took delivery of additional arms supplied by Pérez Jiménez. Although he had expressed outrage at the American involvement in the Guatemalan coup, Figueres accepted Washington's offer of a security guarantee, similar to one the United States had given earlier to Nicaragua, including the immediate shipment of weapons to reequip Costa Rica's Civil Guard. By the end of 1954, however, Figueres had found it necessary to warn the country of the possibility of invasion from Nicaragua.

The 1955 Invasion

With aid from Pérez Jiménez and Trujillo, Somoza García provided Calderón and his fellow exiles with material assistance to overthrow "Figueres and the communists." On January 11, 1955, a well-organized, heavily armed force of several hundred *calderonistas*, members of the so-called Authentic Anti-Communist Revolutionary Army, invaded Costa Rica from bases in Nicaragua. Moving quickly, the rebels captured Quesada, about 50 kilometers northwest of San José, and occupied positions in Guanacaste. An insurgent aircraft, flown from an airfield in Nicaragua, strafed the capital, causing considerable alarm there. The OAS met in Washington later the same day in response to an urgent appeal from Figueres to invoke the Rio Treaty. At home Figueres proclaimed a state of emergency and called for volunteers to back up the Civil Guard in resisting what the president called "an act of aggression which has been in preparation for several years." Although Managua issued an official disclaimer of any involvement in the invasion, Costa Rica promptly broke diplomatic relations with Nicaragua.

An OAS fact-finding mission arrived in San José on January 13 and verified that the invasion force had come from Nicaragua, although most of the insurgents appeared to be Costa Ricans. As a result, the Nicaraguan government was requested to seek out and intern foreign personnel operating from its territory.

Acting to fulfill its obligations under the Rio Treaty, the United States answered Figueres' plea for military assistance by sending four P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft, which Costa Rica acquired for US$1 apiece. Somoza García protested the shipment of warplanes, complaining that the United States was "putting dangerous toys in the hands of a lunatic." The presence of the aircraft deterred further air attacks on San José while the Civil Guard and hastily assembled volunteers, now provided with air support, took Quesada and by January 21 had forced the last insurgents to retreat into their Nicaraguan sanctuary. A number of prisoners were taken, and it was later learned that Picado's son, who commanded the insurgents, had been killed in the fighting.

The OAS condemned Nicaragua for its part in the invasion. An OAS investigating committee subsequently reported that communications and transport had been coordinated with Nicaraguan assistance and, further, that a considerable number of insurgents interned in the west in compliance with the OAS request had in fact reappeared in combat a few days later in the central sector.

But Costa Rica was also ordered to disband remnants of the Caribbean Legion that were still in Costa Rica, and the United States officially cautioned Figueres against antagonizing neighboring governments. Betancourt accepted an American invitation to transfer his exile to Puerto Rico.

Costa Rica and Nicaragua agreed to an OAS-proposed demilitarized zone five kilometers wide and extending 30 kilometers from the Pacific to Lago de Nicaragua, patrolled by troops from other Latin American countries under OAS command, as a buffer between them. Overflights of the zone by military aircraft were banned. A formal treaty of friendship between the two countries, recommended by the OAS, was not signed until December 1956, three months after Somoza García had been assassinated.

The 1958 Election and the Echandi Administration

The presidential campaign began well in advance of the 1958 election. Ulate was still ineligible to run, and Echandi was again selected to lead the PUN. The choice of the PLN was Francisco Orlich Bolmarcich, Figueres' close friend who served as party leader in the Legislative Assembly. Orlich gradually took over control of the party organization from the president, but late in 1956 Jorge Rossi Chavarría, Figueres' finance minister, split from the government and the PLN in disagreement over financial policies, carrying many in the moderate wing of the party with him.

Echandi, campaigning in effect against Figueres rather than Orlich, attacked the growing dominance of the public sector in the economy, charging the administration with "statism" and "socialist collectivism." Orlich, meanwhile, pledged to continue Figueres' policies, while Rossi, who had formed the Independent Party (Partido Independiente—PI) to support his own candidacy, waged a campaign against the government's financial irresponsibility. Rossi was out of contention, but his presence as a candidate split the PLN vote and prevented Orlich from winning. When the results were tabulated, Echandi, winning 46 percent of the vote, was declared the next president.

The PLN remained the largest party in the Legislative Assembly, winning 20 seats against 11 held by the Republican Party (Partido Republicano—PR), which had inherited the *calderonista* constituency, and 10 won by the PUN. The balance of power rested with the three PI assemblymen. The strong showing of the PR in voting for the legislature, although it had lacked a presidential candidate, revealed that after 10 years in exile Calderón still

retained significant support.

Although the PLN had lost the presidency and its assembly majority because of Rossi's defection from the party, Figueres was proud of the manner in which the election had been conducted and saw it as a vindication of his commitment to improving the quality of the democratic process. United Nations observers, invited to monitor the polling, attested to the fairness of an election that Figueres, his party defeated, termed the "cleanest ever" in Costa Rica and one that "set an example to the Americans."

Echandi's administration was faced with the prospect of working with a legislature in which it could not depend on a majority and a bureaucracy where pro-Figueres loyalty was pronounced. Although he had run on a platform calling for support for free enterprise, Echandi was unable to reduce the public sector's role in the economy or to limit the expensive public works program that was under way. Gradually, however, his support in the Legislative Assembly improved, and he was able to exert more influence over the *autónomos* by making appointments to their governing boards, but he did not alter Figueres' basic program. At one point, Echandi even extended public involvement by creating an *autónomo* to manage power resources. The most important achievement of his administration was legislation authorizing improvement of the country's road system and encouraging foreign investment in industrial development.

Coffee prices dropped sharply in 1957, forcing Costa Rica to apply for large loans abroad. Echandi was plagued throughout his tenure by his inability to reduce the deficit piled up by Figueres. In fact, since the latter's programs remained in effect, the national debt greatly increased under Echandi. His failure to deal effectively with this situation badly undermined his party's standing with the electorate.

Politics in the 1960s

Two former presidents, Ulate for the PUN and Calderón, who had returned from exile, for the PR, were among the four contenders in the 1962 presidential election. The split in the PLN had been healed, and after lively competition Orlich was once again chosen as the party's standard-bearer. Campaigning as he had four years before on Figueres' record, Orlich received just over one-half the vote, Calderón running a distant second, and Ulate a poor third. A pro-Cuban Marxist party polled fewer than 3,000 votes.

The new PLN administration conducted an active foreign pol-

icy, aligning Costa Rica with the Central American Common Market (CACM) and eagerly joining in the American-sponsored Alliance for Progress. In May 1962 Costa Rica broke diplomatic relations with Cuba, advocating collective action against the communist regime there. Later in the year Orlich withdrew his country's representative from Lima in protest after a military coup had prevented Peru's president-elect, Haya de la Torre, from taking office.

The administration also expropriated unused portions of United Fruit plantations and large individually owned estates for redistribution to landless farmers, but economic setbacks eroded Orlich's popularity and led to a sharp drop in public support for the PLN and its expansionary economic policies. Criticism from the right was leveled at the costly growth of the public sector, which absorbed, by some estimates up to one-half of the country's gross national product. Banana workers went out on strike, blaming the administration for the industry's decline and the consequent loss of jobs. The eruption of Volcán Irazú in March 1963, which coincided with the visit of United States president John F. Kennedy to Costa Rica in connection with joint efforts through the Alliance for Progress, had a disastrous impact on the economy. Crops were ruined over an extensive area, large numbers of cattle died, transportation was impaired, and ash fall, which continued for many months over San José and Cartago, was seriously debilitating to the urban population.

Calderón and Ulate, opponents in the civil war, put aside their personal and political differences to bring the resources of their parties behind a little-known university professor, José Joaquín Trejos Fernández, as an anti-PLN candidate for president in 1966. They were joined by another former president, Echandi Jiménez, who had fallen out with Ulate in 1962, in forming a new conservative coalition, the National Unification (Unificación Nacional). Figueres, although eligible to run, refused to be considered for his party's nomination. Instead, the PLN picked Daniel Oduber Quirós, the aggressive leader of the party's left wing, who had unsuccessfully challenged Orlich for the nomination four years earlier.

Oduber fought a defensive campaign against Trejos, refuting charges of corruption in the Orlich administration; Trejos was a "clean hands" candidate who ran on a "neo-liberal" platform that promised to improve the position of the private sector in the economy. While Trejos conducted his elevated, issue-oriented personal campaign, his backers in the National Unification preyed on popular fears that two PLN administrators in a row would lead to

one-party domination. Oduber's troubled campaign, meanwhile, was not helped by the endorsement it received from the communist front Popular Socialist Alliance (Alianza Socialista Popular), which had been judged constitutionally ineligible to present a candidate of its own.

Despite the PLN's disadvantage going into the election, Trejos' margin of victory was slight: 222,800 votes to Oduber s 218,000. Although a political novice, Trejos led an administration that had clear objectives and worked toward them efficiently. Public spending was slashed as part of an austerity plan, and revenues were increased by the introduction of the country's first sales tax. An import duty was also levied in conjunction with other CACM members to curb consumption of nonessential goods. The loudest objections to the administration were voiced when Trejos granted a strip-mining concession to the Aluminum Corporation of America (ALCOA) in Pérez Zeledón canton (see Glossary).

The Central American Common Market

Successive Costa Rican governments had held aloof from joining in cooperative ventures with the country's Central American neighbors. The PLN favored regional cooperation, however, and in 1957 Figueres approved in principle recommendations for the creation of the CACM, which had been under discussion for several years. A conference of economic ministers from the five countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua), meeting in Guatemala City in February had drafted a 10-year multilateral trade treaty with the expectation that regional free trade and a customs union would follow "as soon as conditions allow." A second draft treaty called for an agreement to regulate industrial development in order to prevent duplication of effort. Costa Rica's acceptance of the treaties was postponed because of poor relations with Nicaragua, leaving them unratified when Figueres left office. Echandi's administration, less congenial to the idea than the PLN had been, refrained from signing either treaty on the grounds that membership in a common market and customs union at that time would be detrimental to Costa Rica's development opportunities. Costa Rica also refused to join in organizing the Central American Development Bank, agreed on by the other countries in 1960, and was not a party to the General Treaty of Central American Economic Integration that created the CACM that same year.

Soon after the PLN's return to power under Orlich in 1962, however, Costa Rica ratified the 1960 general treaty and was ad-

mitted to the CACM. In November, at a foreign ministers conference in San Salvador, it also concurred in setting up the Organization of Central American States (OCAS) to promote political integration. The San Salvador Charter provided for a council of Central American heads of state and a permanent secretariat. A legislative council was formed, including three representatives from each country whose task it was to standardize legislation, and an economic council composed of technical experts was established to coordinate the activities of the CACM and prepare for the gradual introduction of the common market and customs union. A Central American court of justice was impaneled, and a collective security arrangement was proposed.

For several years Costa Rica was active in all these regional bodies, and the Orlich administration attempted to extend to the rest of Central America progressive policies that reflected PLN thinking. In 1964, for example, Costa Rica suggested that a concerted effort be made to improve living standards and labor conditions throughout the region, arguing that social development should be carried out simultaneously in coordination with economic development.

The conservative parties in the National Unification were not convinced that regional economic integration was beneficial to Costa Rica's development, however, and participation was lukewarm during the Trejos administration. Honduras withdrew from the CACM in 1969 at the time of its war with El Salvador. Political animosities among member states, revolutionary turmoil, and domestic pressures that prompted unilateral actions combined to make the CACM an increasingly ineffective instrument for regional cooperation. In 1972, for instance, Costa Rica initiated a protectionist policy against its CACM partners in an effort to correct its trade imbalance. An attempt, backed by the second Figueres administration, to resuscitate the CACM met with a generally unenthusiastic response.

The Return of Don Pepe

Figueres easily defeated Echandi in the 1970 presidential election, winning 55 percent of the vote in a two-way race. Don Pepe represented himself as the candidate of the "democratic left" and nominated Rossi as one of his vice-presidential running mates to indicate that the feud within the PLN had been healed. Echandi, nominee of the National Unification, identified the coalition with conservative parties in Western Europe. Ulate, who had withdrawn his party from the coalition, entered a PUN slate only in

the legislative and local elections.

The new administration was concerned essentially with improving and extending programs enacted by earlier PLN administrations, rather than making further innovations. Public participation in the economy, particularly through the *autónomos*, was emphasized. Importance was attached to diversifying Costa Rica's economy, allowing the country to move away from dependence on coffee and bananas. Figueres' second term was marred, however, by the worst outbreaks of violence that Costa Rica had experienced since the Picado regime. In April 1970, just prior to his inauguration, 60 persons had been injured when demonstrators, mostly students, stormed the legislature buildings to protest approval of the mining agreement with ALCOA. The minister of public security had declared at the time that a plot by "communist elements" and "professional agitators" to overthrow the government had been uncovered. Subsequent acts of terrorism were laid to self-styled revolutionary commando organizations. Despite suspicions of communist subversion in Costa Rica, Figueres sought to build better relations with communist countries. Diplomatic ties were established for the first time with the Soviet Union, which opened an embassy in San José.

A cloud of suspicion of another sort also hung over Figueres' second administration after the president was implicated in questionable financial relations with American financier Robert Vesco, who had been indicted in a United States court for conspiracy and embezzlement. Vesco had settled in Costa Rica in 1972 at a time when he was under investigation by the United State Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). He subsequently invested heavily in the country and applied for Costa Rican citizenship. Early the next year he was indicted in New York for making an illegal contribution to President Richard M. Nixon's 1972 campaign fund in exchange, it was charged, for an understanding that the administration would call off the SEC investigation. Nixon campaign officials indicted with him were acquitted in court, but a Costa Rican judge refused to order Vesco's extradition to stand trial on the grounds that the extradition treaty with the United States did not cover the offenses for which he had been charged.

A follow-up investigation of the case in the United States brought allegations that Figueres had obtained from Vesco campaign contributions, personal gifts, and investment capital for a business that he owned. Figueres denied any wrongdoing in the affair, but the evidence presented convinced many that his financial relationship with Vesco had been improper. Some spoke of

Vesco's attempt to "buy" Costa Rica, and citizens' committees were formed to demand his expulsion.

The Oduber Administration

When the PLN nomination went again to Oduber in 1974, he admitted his misgivings that it had been a tradition of 25 years to vote against the party in power. "I always interpreted this," he said later, "as an expression of effective democracy in a country which blames its rulers for widespread poverty." But in 1974 Oduber, who had been narrowly defeated in his last try, broke the tradition, receiving 42 percent of the vote in a field of eight candidates. The National Unification candidate, Fernando Trejos Escalante, came in second with 30 percent. During the campaign he had expressed alarm at the extent of communist penetration of national life during the previous years, citing Figueres' recognition of the Soviet Union. The issue of communist subversion became so intense that the election tribunal banned the use of the words *Marxist* and *communist* from the campaign.

Oduber himself fueled the misgivings of the opposition, however, by announcing a program that called for land redistribution, nationalization, higher taxes, and strengthening of the public sector to create jobs and improve living standards. In office he also reaffirmed the policies of the previous administration in improving relations with communist countries. Trade relations with Cuba were reopened in 1975, and two years later Costa Rica reestablished diplomatic relations that had been broken in 1961.

Mora Valverde had entered the 1974 presidential race as the candidate of a communist front group, but in May 1975 the electoral tribunal recognized the PVP as a legal party in accordance with a constitutional amendment that had lifted the proscription against it. At the party congress the following year, the PVP's secretary general had responded by assuring that the party would struggle to transform Costa Rica into "Cuba's identical twin."

Oduber's radical legislative program was moved with support from a small leftist party through the Legislative Assembly, where the PLN, although the largest single party, lacked a majority. In May 1975 the tax on banana exports was raised more than one-third against strong protests from the opposition. The following September Oduber threatened foreign-owned fruit companies that had investments in Costa Rica totaling more than US$100 million with expropriation after accusing them of conspiring to prevent enforcement of the banana export tax. The same day, legislation was introduced to nationalize the distribution of

petroleum products. Rather than continue emergency austerity measures imposed in 1974 to restrict imports and cut public spending, Oduber used the increased liquidity brought in by the boom in coffee prices in 1976 to expand public investment, granting generous credit terms to stimulate agricultural production. Industrial development was correspondingly de-emphasized because of the drain on foreign exchange caused by the importation of expensive machinery. This change in direction in development plans cost the PLN support in the cities and drove a wedge between export-oriented agricultural interests and the industrial sector, which produced mostly for the domestic market.

A party crisis damaging to the administration occurred in mid-1976 when Figueres formed a splinter group within the PLN to press for a constitutional amendment that would permit an incumbent president to succeed himself. The majority of the PLN in the Legislative Assembly and party organization opposed the proposition, and Oduber and Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez, party secretary general and candidate designate for 1978, informed Figueres that he must submit it either to the party or to a special session of the legislature for approval before it could be formally introduced. In either case the measure was likely to be defeated. The crisis atmosphere was accentuated by a strike by publicly employed electrical workers over wage cuts and the discovery of a plot to overthrow the government that was laid to foreign extremists. Strict security measures were adopted, and the strike was declared illegal. A shadow was cast over the last months of the Oduber administration by Figueres' withdrawal from party activities, worsening economic conditions, and events in Nicaragua, where a rebellion against the government of dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle by Sandinista insurgents threatened to involve Costa Rica in interregional conflict.

Figueres refused to campaign for Monge. Sensing victory, the conservative Unity Opposition (Unidad Opositera), organized in 1977 by parties of the defunct National Unification and several other right-of-center groups, selected Rodrigo Carazo Odio as its candidate. Carazo, a businessman formerly active in the PLN, had won 10 percent of the vote in 1974 at the head of his own party. Profiting from the unrest in Nicaragua, the new conservative coalition took a firm anticommunist line, Carazo pledging to recall the Costa Rican ambassador in Moscow if elected. Carazo also promised to expel Vesco from Costa Rica.

Carazo received 49 percent of the vote in a five-candidate race, staging what some described as a "brilliant" election campaign. Monge, whose campaign was hurt by Figueres' absence, retained

the PLN's 42-percent share won in the previous election. On Carazo's taking office, the winning coalition became known formally as Unity (Unidad). It won 27 seats in the newly elected Legislative Assembly to 25 seats for the PLN but did not have a clear majority because three seats were won by United People (Pueblo Unido), a leftist coalition.

The Nicaraguan Season

A Costa Rican president once remarked that his country had three seasons: a dry season, a wet season, and a season of conflict with Nicaragua. After a series of border incidents in late 1977, Nicaragua closed its border with Costa Rica, which, its government claimed, was being crossed by Sandinista insurgents who had their bases in the neighboring country. Carazo expressed grave concern to other Central American heads of state that escalating violence in Nicaragua would spill over into his country. The Civil Guard was not equipped to control Sandinista activities in Costa Rica or to counter the Nicaraguan National Guard if Somoza Debayle carried out his threat to strike the rebels in their sanctuaries.

Relations between the two countries reached a critical stage in September 1978 when Sandinistas operating out of Costa Rica temporarily seized government positions along the border before being driven back by a National Guard counterattack. Nicaraguan forces with air support crossed into Costa Rica in hot pursuit of the retreating insurgents. When in response Venezuela sent four fighter aircraft to Costa Rica on what was termed a "goodwill visit," Somoza Debayle recalled his ambassador from San José, accusing both countries of materially aiding the Sandinistas. In November, after clashes between the Civil Guard and Nicaraguan government troops, Costa Rica severed diplomatic relations with Nicaragua and called for its expulsion from the OAS.

Over the next eight months, Costa Rica served as a conduit for arms and supplies to the 5,000 Sandinista troops of the "southern front"—commanded by Edén Pastora Gómez (Comandante Cero)—who were based there. In July 1979 when Somoza Debayle resigned and fled from Nicaragua, Costa Rica quickly recognized the Sandinistas' provisional junta, which had already been set up on its territory.

Costa Rica's tradition as a defender of human rights and refuge for exiles and its opposition to dictatorial regimes had unquestionably been significant elements in the support that it gave the Sandinistas. But some observers, more skeptical of the government's

intentions, suggested that Carazo had used the war in Nicaragua to divert public attention at home from Costa Rica's economic crisis. Still others pointed out that the traffic in contraband arms generated by the war had been extremely profitable to Costa Rican interests, including members of its own government.

In May 1981 a three-member committee of the Legislative Assembly that had been investigating alleged involvement by government officials in the illegal arms trade recommended an assembly reprimand of the administration. It noted that a large quantity of weapons, shown to have amounted to more than 450 tons, had entered the country from Cuba to be handed over to the Sandinistas. The arms were transported in vehicles belonging to the Costa Rican government and had been stored in government depots. Not all of the military hardware, however, had reached its intended destination. After the fall of the Somoza Debayle regime, many of the weapons in Costa Rican arsenals had been sold and delivered to leftist Salvadoran rebels. The committee cited Carazo and the former minister of public security and government, Juan José Echevarría Brealy, for "high responsibility" in abetting the illegal sales.

The summer of 1979 had been a season of labor unrest, and a wave of violence accompanying a strike by banana workers in Puerto Limón had shut down the plantations for a month. The government blamed "communist agitators" and expelled three Soviet diplomats who were suspected of being involved, but the finger of suspicion was also pointed toward agents of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Strikes recurred in the banana plantations during the summer of 1980, leaving them untended for seven weeks.

In November 1980 Costa Rica issued a formal protest to Nicaragua when militiamen fired on a boat carrying government officials up the Río San Juan. Nicaragua confirmed that the incident had occurred but blamed the inexperience of the soldiers involved. Subsequent talks between Carazo and Sergio Ramírez Mercado, head of the Sandinista junta, produced a joint communiqué giving assurances that steps would be taken to avoid future confrontations.

Crisis and Change

The mounting wave of terrorism in 1981 caused public alarm and indignation. In March, three United States Marine Corps guards from the American embassy in San José were wounded when a vehicle in which they were riding was attacked by a Costa

Rican "commando" group identifying itself with the Sandinista movement. In June, three Civil Guardsmen were killed in a shootout with terrorists in the capital. A number of foreigners, mainly Cubans and Argentinians, were deported, and a radio station having Sandinista links was closed, but public opinion saw the government as weak and ineffective in dealing with the violence. A rally in San José called to demonstrate public concern turned ugly when frustrated crowds demanded Carazo's resignation and stoned guardsmen when they attempted to intervene. In May Costa Rica once again broke relations with Cuba.

The coalition that had backed Carazo in the election lacked coherence after his victory. The parties that composed it pursued their own, often contradictory, policies. Support for the administration in the Legislative Assembly was undependable, and the response of particular party delegations on specific issues was unpredictable. The PLN consistently refused to cooperate with the government. After failing to receive legislative approval for a tax boost to pay the salary raises already approved for public employees, Carazo increasingly resorted to presidential decrees.

During the Carazo administration the public foreign debt climbed from the equivalent of US$800 million to US$3 billion. By its end, foreign reserves had been depleted, and it was not possible to service the public external debt. Cut off from domestic sources of credit because the public sector had also monopolized what was available from the national banking system, the private sector had borrowed heavily abroad. Costa Rica's total per capita indebtedness, according to one reckoning, was the highest in the world. Inflation exceeded 50 percent in 1981, and unemployment approached 10 percent. Political turbulence in the region and lack of confidence in a government unable to come to grips with the worst economic recession in the country's history spurred capital flight and checked foreign investment.

In September 1981 the government announced a moratorium on external debt payments—already unofficially suspended—and in November it halted bond repayments and requested rescheduling of debt payments. Officially administration sources blamed external factors—energy costs, high interest rates, and falling prices for coffee—but early in the year Carazo's finance minister resigned to protest the government's abandonment of its own austerity plan, and a month later his successor quit for the same reason. Outside observers—for example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—pointed to the government's unwillingness to devalue the colón and its willingness to incur further indebtedness in order to finance expenditures in the public sector.

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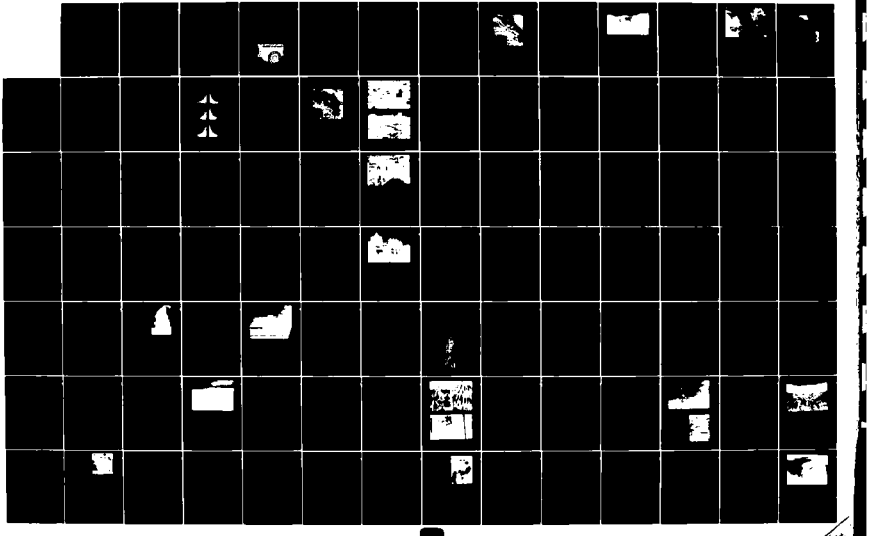

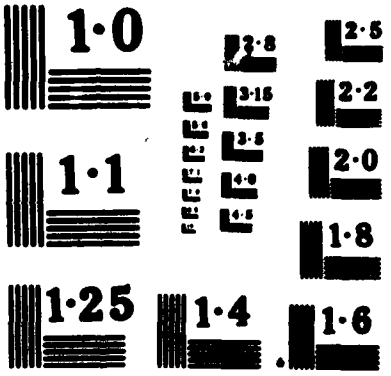
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Negotiations for an IMF bail-out loan began early in 1981. Under an agreement reached in June, Costa Rica was authorized to make purchases of over US$300 million over a three-year period in IMF special drawing rights to meet shortfalls caused by lower receipts from coffee exports. In a letter of intent in September, Costa Rica committed itself to limited devaluation, reduction of public spending (including public sector wages and subsidies), lifting of price controls—particularly on public utility charges and gasoline—and reform of the tax system to improve methods of collection.

Carazo's agreement to accept the IMF's conditions badly divided the administration. The first vice president, for instance, announced that he would no longer represent the president at public functions. Under pressure from opponents of the agreement, Carazo went back on the letter of intent, refusing to implement the measures promised. In October the IMF suspended indefinitely the release of the funds earmarked for Costa Rica and subsequently closed down its office in San José.

Entering the 1982 election campaign, the Unity coalition attempted to distance itself from the Carazo administration, nominating Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier, the 33-year-old son of the former president. Monge coasted to an easy victory, winning 57 percent of the vote against 33 percent for Calderón Fournier. The remaining 10 percent was scattered among candidates, including former president Echandi Jiménez, representing parties to the left and to the right of the main contenders. In the Legislative Assembly the PLN increased its seats to 33, giving the new administration a comfortable majority over Unity's 18 seats. The communist-led United People coalition picked up four seats.

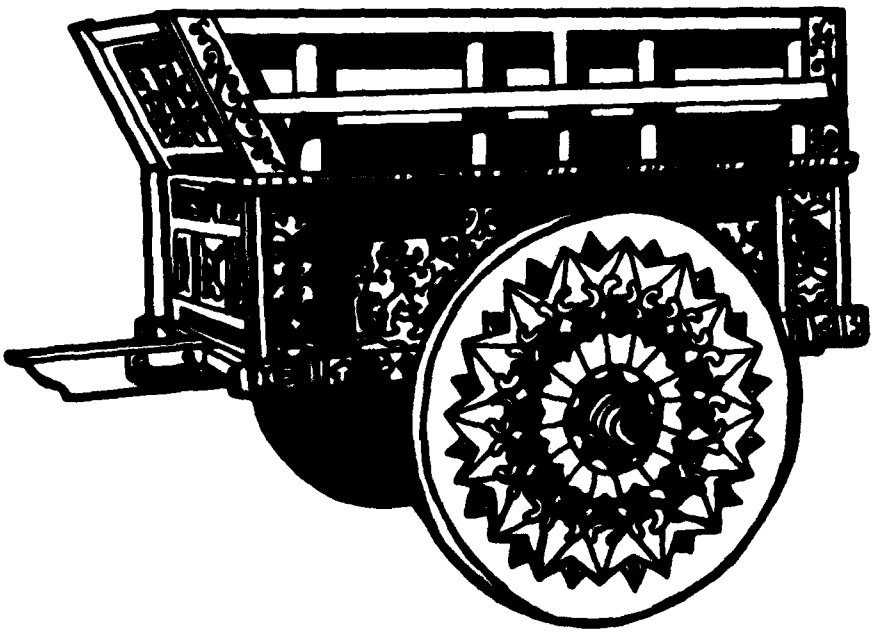
Monge was a professional politician who had been PLN secretary general for 12 years and who did not have the business or farming background typical of most of his predecessors. He ran on the slogan "Return to the Land," promising to stimulate agriculture and to give it priority in economic planning in order to reverse the flow of population from the countryside to the cities. Economic recovery, he said, would be the first order of business for the new administration, predicting that the democracy would be "swept away in a whirlwind of violence" if conditions continued. He would seek assistance in the task from other democratic countries and international bodies but, with obvious reference to the IMF, stated that the problem in Costa Rica was "above all political" and could not be analyzed solely "according to the cold criteria of bankers." During the campaign Monge had been critical of the material aid that Carazo had given to the Sandinistas,

saying that the PLN would have stopped at political support. He would seek normal relations with the regime in Nicaragua but blamed the high level of Costa Rican involvement in its civil war for creating a climate of uncertainty in the country and frightening away foreign investment (see The Monge Administration, 1982-83, ch. 4).

* * *

There is no comprehensive survey of the history of Costa Rica available to readers in English. The 1913 translation of Ricardo Fernández Guardia's *History of the Discovery and Conquest of Costa Rica* remains the standard treatment of the colonial period. Watt Stewart's *Keith and Costa Rica* is the biography of Minor Cooper Keith, who played a key role in the country's late nineteenth-century economic development. Important studies of contemporary history include John Patrick Bell's *Crisis in Costa Rica: The 1948 Revolution* and Charles D. Ameringer's *Don Pepe*, the biography of José Figueres Ferrer. Ameringer also provides valuable historical background for the country's modern political dynamics in his study, *Democracy in Costa Rica*. *La dinastía de los conquistadores: la crisis del poder en la Costa Rica contemporánea*, a controversial but frequently cited work by Samuel Stone, breaks new ground in its study of the country's political families. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 2. The Society and Its Environment



Brightly painted carreta (oxcart), traditional symbol of Costa Rican folklore

COSTA RICAN SOCIETY is ethnically and linguistically much more homogeneous than any other Central American society. At the same time, it is diverse with respect to the distribution of wealth, status, power, and ways of life—a diversity that is linked in part to differences between rural and urban populations. These differences, however, are somewhat less divisive than they might be, owing to the reasonably effective spread of education and health care into the countryside and the presence of other elements of a welfare state that, although a burden on the economy, mitigate some of the tensions that might otherwise arise. Further, Costa Rica's democratic politics have taken some account of the interests of various segments of the population.

Costa Ricans long held an image of themselves as yeoman farmers, based largely on their experience in the colonial era. That image has given way to a recognition of the diversity that marks the society, but it persists to some extent in the way the people sometimes refer to their social order as classless or egalitarian. There are, in fact, marked disparities in the distribution of income, power, and status. Moreover, yeoman farmers constituted a very small part of the population by the 1970s. A substantial part of the population—nearly one-third—was still dependent on agriculture for a livelihood in the early 1980s, but less than one-fourth of these owned land, and many who did owned very little.

The locus of power, wealth, and status lay in the towns, particularly in the capital, San José, and its environs. It was there that the families of the very small upper class lived, most of them descended from the aristocratic families of the colonial period, many of whom became the so-called coffee barons of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. No longer as dominant in the economy and in politics as they had been, they still played a prominent role in those domains. This very small elite had been joined by others who had made their fortunes in the twentieth century and have often been more active than the old elite in the industrial and commercial sectors of the economy.

The middle classes (upper and lower)—greatly expanded in the twentieth century, owing to the growth of industry, commerce, and government—were also concentrated in the capital. Both the upper and the lower middle class were heterogeneous in composition. The former, about one-fourth the size of the latter, disposed of much higher incomes, and in some cases interacted with the members of the upper class. Many of the members of the lower

middle class were distinguished from the upper levels of the urban working class not so much by differences in income as by the fact that they did not earn their livelihoods by manual labor and lived quite differently from manual workers.

The working class could be distinguished from a smaller but still fairly large group referred to as marginals. In the first category were the more or less steadily employed. The marginals included the many with low and uncertain incomes and those who gained a livelihood by illegal means.

Cutting across the social classes was a common affiliation, with some exceptions, to the Roman Catholic Church. Although church affiliation was widespread, commitment and faith varied considerably. The Roman Catholic Church has long been the "religion of the state," but its leaders and most active members have not necessarily been uncritical of the state and of the social and economic orders. Like the country's many social-democratic politicians, however, they have sought an alternative to the Marxist vision that some priests and laity elsewhere have embraced.

Costa Rica's ethnic homogeneity is breached by the presence of several other groups, together constituting no more than 3 percent of the population. The blacks, chiefly of Jamaican origin and until the 1970s and 1980s almost entirely English speaking, make up the largest of these groups. Until the latter half of the twentieth century, they were not citizens and for all practical purposes were restricted to the Caribbean lowlands. In some ways even more isolated are the remnants of several Indian groups. The Chinese, found in San José and in many small towns, make up the only other group of any size.

Physical Setting

Costa Rica's 51,022 square kilometers—an area slightly smaller than that of West Virginia—lies on a northwest-southeast axis between Nicaragua and Panama. Its most marked topographic feature is the series of mountain ranges (cordilleras), ridges, and valleys that runs the length of the country (see fig. 8). Costa Rica's most extensive lowland, a continuation of the great Nicaraguan lowland, stretches over much of the north and the Caribbean coast and hinterland. Rivers run from the interior highlands—precipitously to the Pacific Ocean, more gently to the Caribbean Sea. Several of these have been harnessed to furnish hydroelectric power (see Energy Sources, ch. 3).

The climate, tropical and subtropical, varies locally depending

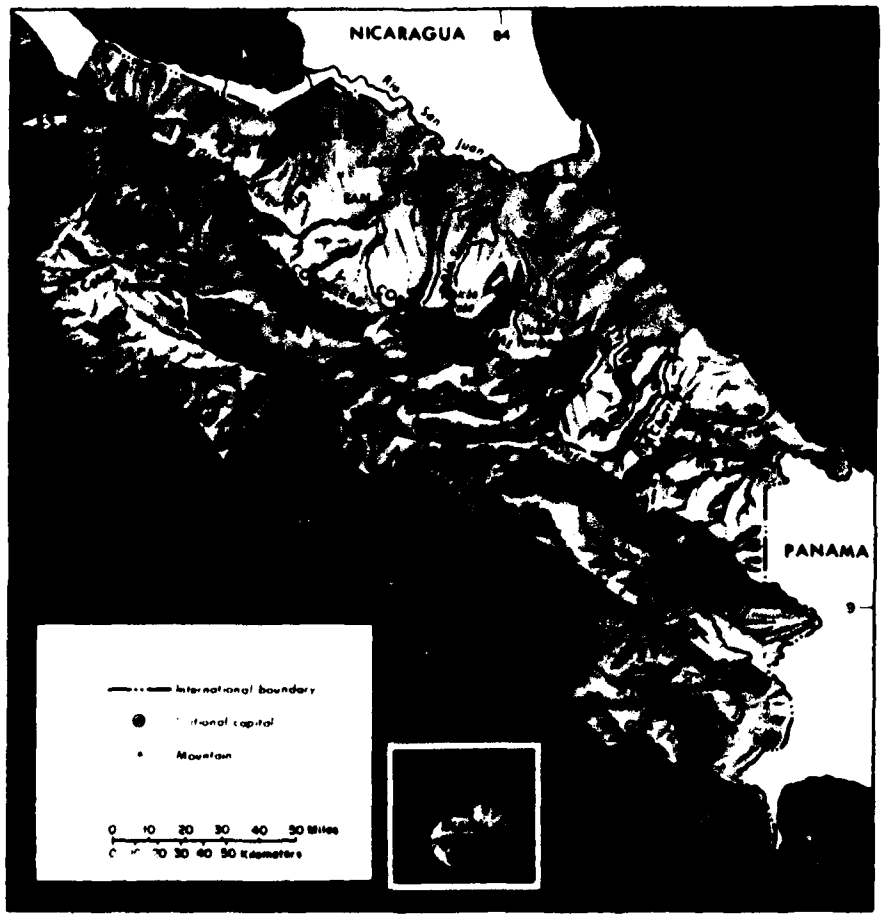


Figure 8. Terrain and Drainage

on altitude and proximity to the Pacific Ocean or the Caribbean Sea. Broadly, the Caribbean lowlands are wetter and slightly cooler than the Pacific coast and its hinterland. The highlands are generally temperate.

In 1940 more than three-fourths of Costa Rica's land area was covered with dense forest. In the early 1980s such forest covered less than one-third of the land area, largely as a consequence of clearing woodland for farms and ranches (see Forestry, ch. 3).

Terrain

A chain of four mountain ranges constitutes the interior high-

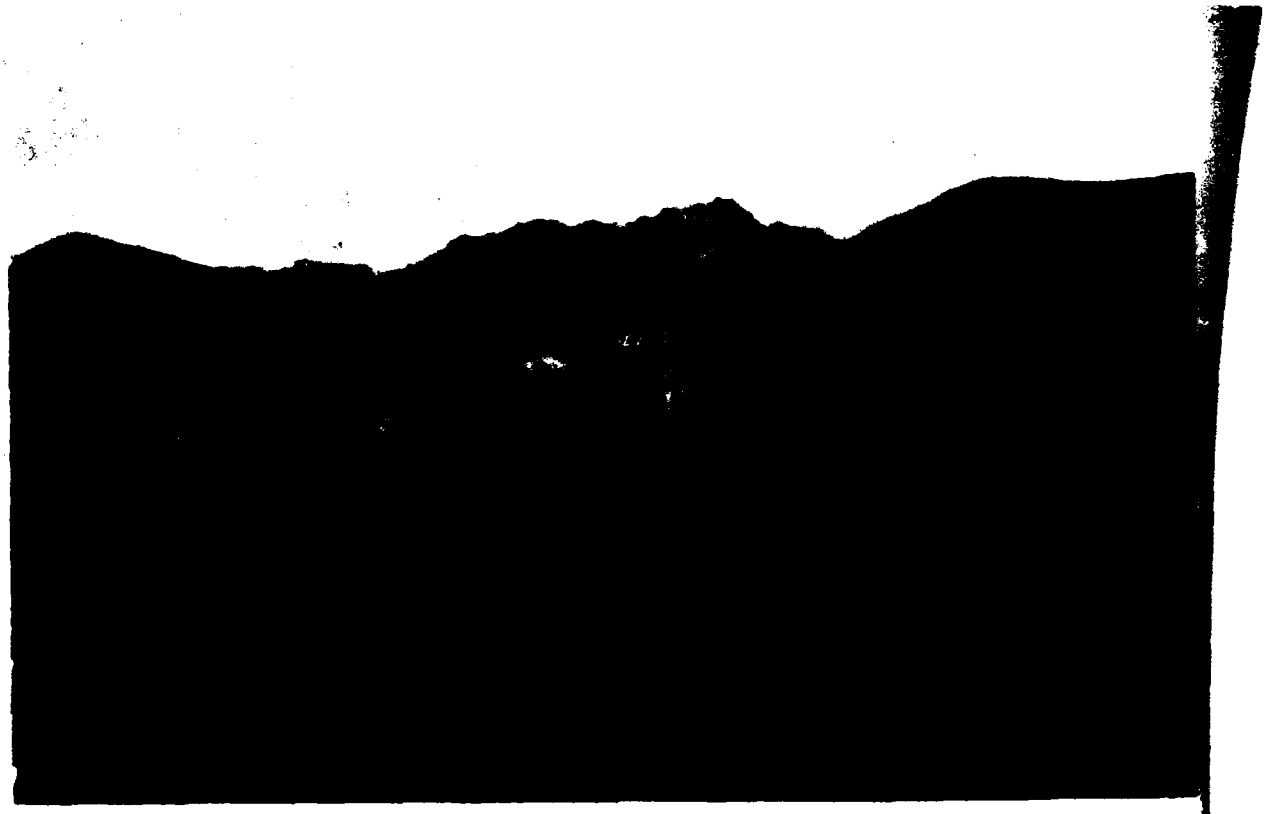
lands. In the far northwest lies the Cordillera de Guanacaste. South of it is the smaller and lower Cordillera de Tilarán. Next in the south-trending sequence is the Cordillera Central followed by the Cordillera de Talamanca. The cordilleras of Tilarán and Talamanca are nonvolcanic, but the other two ranges include several volcanoes, of which two—Poás and Irazú—in the Cordillera Central are active. Ten peaks in the Cordillera de Talamanca exceed 3,000 meters; Cerro Chirripó at 3,810 meters is the highest point in the country. Two volcanoes in the Cordillera Central—Irazú and Turrialba—are higher than 3,300 meters.

In addition to volcanic activity, Costa Rica is subjected to occasional earthquakes. In 1973 an earthquake affected Tilarán and adjacent areas between the cordilleras of Tilarán and Guanacaste. In mid-1983 an earthquake in San Isidro destroyed property and caused deaths and injuries, and tremors were felt in the Central Highlands basins (Meseta Central).

The Meseta Central, in which most major cities and towns are located and where a substantial proportion of the population lives, lies in a temperate area between 1,000 and 1,500 meters above sea level. It consists of two basins separated by low hills that together comprise an area of nearly 10,000 square kilometers, and it constitutes the major part of the Valle Central. The valley is formed at the point where the southeasternmost portion of the Cordillera Central parallels the northwestern portion of the Cordillera de Talamanca. The two intermittently active volcanoes of the Cordillera Central overlook the basins of the Meseta Central from the north and northeast.

The surface of the basins is generally level or gently rolling. Hills are few, small, and rounded. Of the two, the Cartago basins to the east is the smaller and higher (about 1,500 meters above sea level). The economic and cultural center of Costa Rica during the colonial era, it is the site of Cartago, the colonial capital and still an important town. Because it is more open to Caribbean influence, the Cartago basin is marked by heavier rainfall and greater humidity than the San José basin ranges from 1,000 meters upward. More comfortable than the Cartago basin, it is the site of the capital and its suburbs. Much of Costa Rica's coffee is produced in the San José basin (see Agriculture and Livestock, ch. 3).

The other upland valley of some importance is the Valle del General to the south, lying between the Cordillera de Talamanca and the mountains fringing the Pacific coast. The floor of the valley is comparatively low—between 200 and 1,000 meters above sea level. Because it was relatively isolated, settlement in the val-



Volcán Irazú, one of the few volcanoes in Costa Rica that can be viewed at close range
Photo by James D. Rudolph

ley, chiefly by small farmers, began only in the 1920s. The opening of the Inter-American Highway in the post-World War II era made the area more accessible, and an influx of farmers followed.

The Pacific coast is marked by steep cliffs and many narrow beaches. A narrow alluvial coastal plain extends from the Península de Osa in the south to the port of Puntarenas in the Golfo de Nicoya, although it is squeezed out in some places by the low coastal mountains. The plain widens north of Puntarenas and merges with the Valle de Tempisque, a fairly wide plain bordered by low hills. The Palmar lowland complex in the southwest resembles the lowland in the far northwest but has much heavier rainfall, enough to permit rain forest vegetation.

The major Pacific coast peninsulas, Nicoya and Osa, are hilly and sparsely populated. On both peninsulas the land facing the gulfs is relatively level. The peninsular area shared with Panama in the far southwest terminates in Punta Burica, and it too is hilly.

The extensive Caribbean lowland constitutes about one-fifth of Costa Rica's total land area. It is widest along the border with Nicaragua and narrows to the south where the foothills of the interior highlands approach the Caribbean coast. Although there

are scattered hills, particularly in the north, most of the area consists of flat plains dissected by streams flowing from the highlands.

In 1900 French arbitration in a boundary dispute between Costa Rica and Panama gave Isla del Coco to Costa Rica. The island, about 320 kilometers southwest of the Península de Osa, has an area of roughly 26 square kilometers and is uninhabited, but it is a national park.

Drainage

All of Costa Rica's streams rise in the interior highlands and flow either to the Pacific Ocean or to the Caribbean Sea. A umber of important streams in the northern lowlands reach the Caribbean via the Río San Juan, which lies within Nicaragua's borders. Near its mouth, the Río San Juan gives rise to the very short southeasterly flowing Río Colorado, and the two streams form a delta that lies almost enirely within Costa Rica. The other rivers, with one exception, flow directly to the Caribbean. The Río Tortuguero, however, flows to the Tortuguero waterway paralleling the Caribbean coast. The waterway begins near the mouth of the Río Colorado and continues to a point just north of Puerto Limón. The streams that flow either directly or indirectly (via the Río San Juan) to the Caribbean usually begin in deep valleys in the highlands, but by the time they reach the lowlands, most are moving through incised channels not much lower than the land surface.

The rivers that flow directly to the Pacific Ocean are fewer in number, generally shorter, and more precipitous than those that flow to the Caribbean. In the southern stretch of the Pacific coast and the highlands behind it, one stream, the Río Grande de Térraba, reaches the Pacific after having picked up the flow of a number of tributaries. Farther north along the coast (including the coast of the Península de Nicoya), rivers reach the Pacific Ocean at more frequent intervals.

Climate

Temperatures in Costa Rica vary primarily with elevation. A difference of 1,000 meters in altitude corresponds to a difference in mean annual temperature of about 5°C. But the incidence of rainfall, particularly the occurrence and length of a dry season, also affects mean annual temperatures. Thus, in the Caribbean lowlands and that part of the highlands subject to the effects of the rain-bearing northeast trade winds, temperatures are a little

The Caribbean coastline at Cahuita National Park near Puerto Limón
Photo by James D. Rudolph

cooler than at Pacific coast sites and highland locations that are protected from the northeast winds. For example, Esparta near the Pacific coast is 1°C to 3°C warmer than Siquirres, 100 meters lower in the Caribbean lowlands. San José, which gets its rain from the Pacific side, has a mean maximum temperature 3°C higher than that of Buena Vista de San Carlos on the Caribbean slope and 100 meters lower than San José.

No area in Costa Rica suffers from an acute lack of rainfall, but there is considerable variation from region to region in mean annual rainfall and in the duration of the wet and dry seasons. For the most part, quantities and the seasonal character of rainfall reflect the extent to which any area gets its rainfall from the northeastern trade winds coming across the Caribbean Sea or from the southwestern winds blowing across the Pacific Ocean. Rainy seasons on the Caribbean side tend to be longer, but local topography exercises a significant influence (see fig. 9).

Thus the region of the Golfo Dulce on the southwest (Pacific) coast gets seven months of rain each year and a high annual rainfall because it is influenced by the northeastern winds, and the

Source: Based on information from Costa Rica, Direccion General de Estadistica y Censos y Oficina de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica, *Atlas estadistico de Costa Rica, No 2*, San Jose, 1981

Figure 9. Annual Rainfall and Rainy Seasons

local low mountains are conducive to precipitation brought by onshore winds. By contrast, the region of the Valle de Tempisque in the northwest has only a six-month wet season and receives virtually no rain in the dry season. Despite its average annual rainfall of roughly 1,600 millimeters, the Valle de Tempisque has known occasional drought. From the eastern fourth of the border with Nicaragua to a point south of Puerto Limón on the Caribbean coast, the lowlands receive rainfall all year, but even in this area there is a good deal of variation in quantity from one zone to another.

Demography

In mid-1983 the population of Costa Rica was an estimated 2.4 million, about 28 percent greater than the 1.87 million enumerated in the census of 1973. Costa Rica's annual rate of natural increase in 1960 of nearly 4 percent (implying a possible doubling of the population in less than 20 years) decreased sharply to roughly 2.5 percent in 1973. There, with minor fluctuations, it leveled off at 2.5 percent during the following decade. Given the country's small population, the rate of growth was not yet considered a major problem; it remained lower than that of most countries of tropical Latin America. Nevertheless, if the rate were to persist, the population would double in about 27 years.

In addition to the effects of natural growth, Costa Rica's population has been slightly augmented by the arrival and more or less permanent residence of foreigners. Its democratic political order, the equable climate of the Central Highlands, and the fiscal concessions granted retired persons have made Costa Rica comfortable for many American citizens (see United States, ch. 4). But it has also been a haven for citizens from other Latin American countries who have been at odds with their home regimes. For example, both Sandinistas and anti-Sandinistas from adjacent Nicaragua have lived in and operated from Costa Rica. Salvadorans have also constituted a substantial proportion of the refugees in the country in the early 1980s (see Costa Rica and the Conflict in Central America, ch. 5).

More than one-half of all Costa Ricans live in the Valle Central, either in the four large towns of the valley or in the rural areas immediately adjoining them. Historically the population was even more concentrated, and a few areas were significantly populated only in the twentieth century.

Internal migration from one rural area to another and from rural to urban areas has been a feature of Costa Rican population dynamics, and the rate of growth of urban areas between 1973 and 1982 was nearly twice that of rural areas. According to local measures of urbanization, Costa Rica was a little more than 40 percent urban at the time of the 1973 census. In 1983 the urban population was estimated to be roughly 44 percent of the total.

Population Growth and the Age Structure

The sharp decline in the annual rate of natural increase from nearly 4 percent in 1960 to 2.5 percent in 1973 has been matched by only a few other countries in the world. The rate had risen to its

high point in 1960 chiefly in the two decades beginning in 1940, owing to a slight increase in the birth rate and a somewhat steeper decline in the death rate, particularly in the infant mortality rate. Beginning in 1960 the decline in the annual rate of growth reflected a marked decrease in the birth rate and specifically in the average number of children Costa Rican women would have borne by the end of their childbearing years. In 1960 such women had an average of 7.3 children. By 1973 that figure had diminished to nearly 4.1, still high compared with the rates in developed countries, including a few in Latin America. The mortality rate (including the infant mortality rate) also continued to decline, but the decline in the fertility rate (and the crude birth rate) was steeper.

The rate of natural increase continued to diminish through 1974, to 2.42 percent, but it rose to 2.44 in 1976 and continued to increase thereafter to 2.78 percent in 1978. It subsequently declined slightly but did not reach the low point achieved in 1974; in 1982 and 1983 it was estimated at 2.5 percent a year.

The reasons for the sharp drop in fertility rates from 1960 through the early 1970s are not clear, but the summary of sociologist-demographer J. Mayone Stycos indicates the significance of some of the relevant factors. Fertility declined earlier and at a more rapid rate in the cantons (see Glossary) marked by high literacy rates, by high or rapidly rising levels of nonagricultural occupations, and by a high incidence of birth in hospitals—characteristics lumped together as indicators of modernization. In the decade before 1960 fertility rates in these cantons were already lower than the rates in others, but improving health and economic conditions had nevertheless led to high population growth rates. By 1960, however, economic and demographic pressures coupled with the increasing level of education and later age of marriage of the women in these cantons apparently generated an interest in more effective modes of contraception. Younger women led the way in lowering the fertility rate. Shortly after the onset of the decline of fertility rates among younger, better educated women in urban areas, rates among less educated women in rural areas also began to diminish, but a little more slowly.

The beginning of the fertility decline in the early 1960s did not have the benefit of government-sponsored or government-supported family-planning facilities. A few private groups, accessible to the educated of the urban areas, did exist, but a national family-planning program was not instituted until 1968. This program was oriented in the first instance to maternal and child care rather

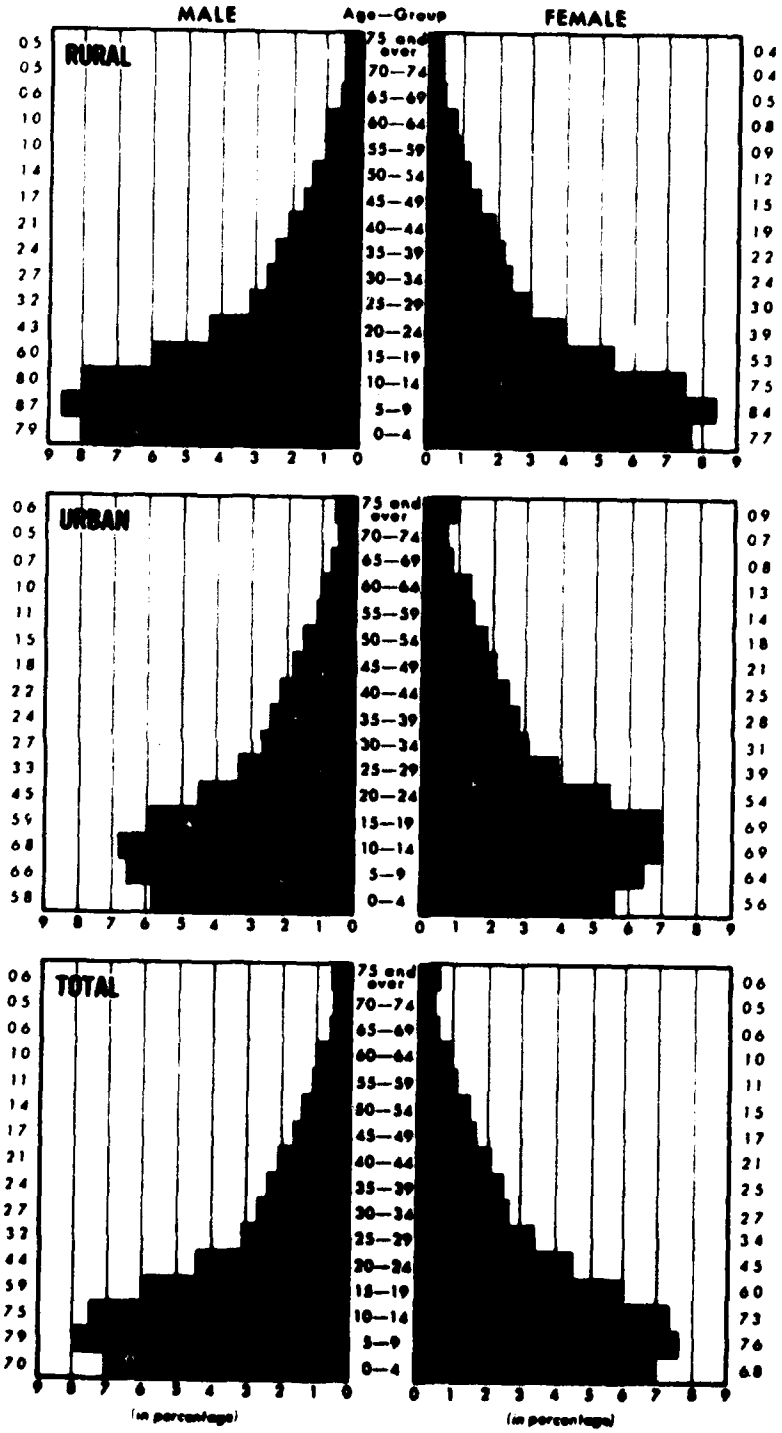
than to a determined effort to lower the birth rate. Nevertheless, it did make family-planning clinics available to women in the rural areas. Owing to widespread literacy and an effective system of communications unhampered by linguistic barriers, rural women, particularly young ones, quickly responded.

The fertility rate continued to fall slightly, from nearly 4.1 children per woman) between the ages of 15 and 49) in 1973 to 3.7 children in 1976, but then began to rise to nearly 3.9 in 1978. In good part the rise in the late 1970s reflected the age structure of the population; by that time many women born during the late 1950s and early 1960s had reached marrying and childbearing age. Nevertheless, there were indications that many Costa Rican women, including the young, although no longer prepared to have seven or eight children, considered three, four, or even five a reasonable number. According to 1982 and 1983 estimates, the fertility rate had again fallen slightly to 3.7.

Because of the absence of a sense of urgency about limiting the birth rate and the likelihood that the social and economic conditions that initially impelled the drop in the fertility rate will not change rapidly, it is probable that the fertility rate has reached a plateau of 3.5 to 3.75 that will persist until at least 1990. As the drop in fertility rates of the 1960s had its effects in smaller numbers of women in the childbearing ages, the rate of natural increase may decline slowly below 2.5 percent a year, but it is not likely to diminish significantly.

Despite the drop in the rate of natural increase between the censuses of 1963 and 1973, the average annual rate was 3.3 percent, high enough to generate an age structure heavily weighted toward the younger age-groups. In 1973 about 44 percent of the total population was under the age of 15, less than the 47.7 percent of 1963 but still high. The lower birth rate in urban areas was reflected in the age structure: only 38.1 percent of the urban population was under 15, whereas 48.2 percent of the rural population was less than that age (see fig. 10). By contrast, a greater proportion, 4.5 percent, of the urban population was 65 years of age or older; the proportion of the elderly in the total population was 3.4 percent, in the rural population only 2.9 percent.

The lower average rate of natural increase between 1973 and 1983 led to a somewhat different age structure. In 1982 the proportion of the population under 15 years was estimated at 38 percent and in 1983 at 37 percent, a decline of 7 percent since the 1973 census. In 1982 and 1983 the proportion of the population 65 years or older was estimated at 4 percent. Data on urban-rural dif-



Source: Based on information from *Demographic Yearbook, 1975*, New York, 1976, Table 7.

Figure 10. Age and Sex Structure of the Population, 1973

ferences were not available, but it is likely that differences, noted in the 1973 census persisted into the early 1980s.

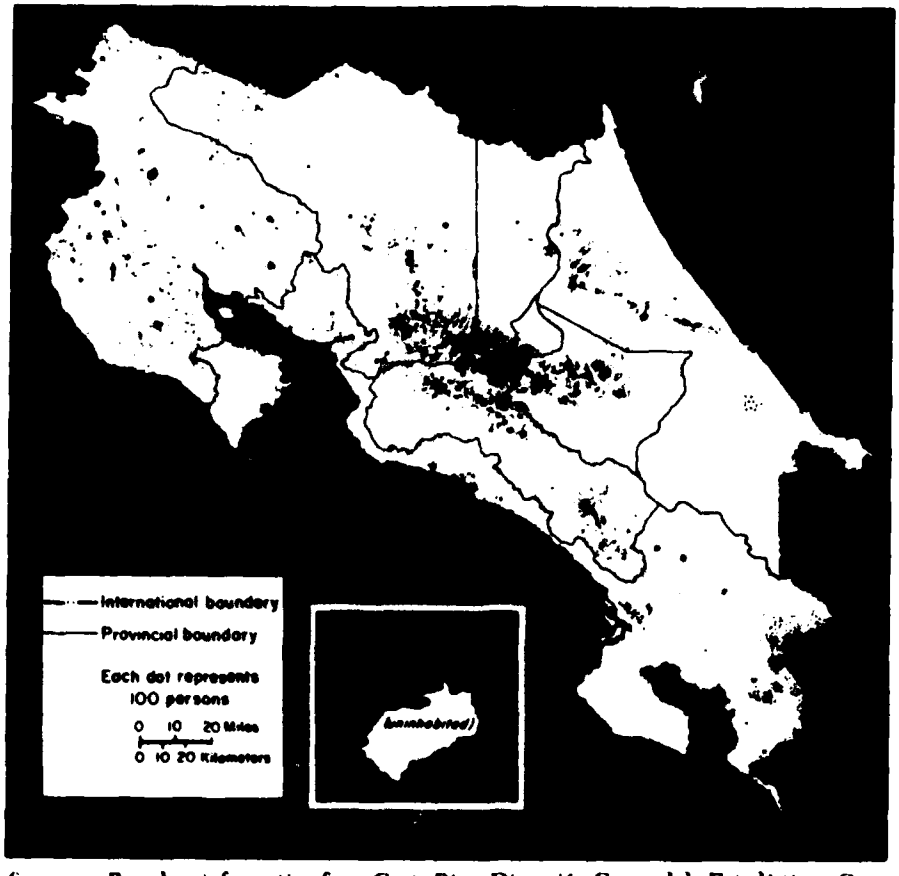
Population Distribution, Urbanization, and Migration

Costa Rica's population is very unevenly distributed. Roughly one-half of the people live in or immediately adjacent to the Valle Central, in an area embracing portions of four provinces (San José, Alajuela, Heredia, and Cartago) but constituting perhaps 5 percent of the country's surface. This area is roughly coterminous with the cantons included in what Costa Rican demographers have defined as the San José metropolitan region and includes several of Costa Rica's largest cities. In 1973 it also included more than 23 percent of the country's rural population.

The area west and south of the Valle Central is also well settled but not as densely populated as the valley. Beyond this central area and its immediate periphery—well under 10 percent of the country's terrain—density thins out considerably except for a few urban centers (chiefly ports) and their hinterlands. Sparse settlement, fewer than 12 persons per square kilometer, is particularly characteristic of much of the Caribbean lowlands, a good part of far southwestern Puntarenas Province, much of Guanacaste and Alajuela provinces in the far northwest, and the northern portion, extending into the lowlands, of Heredia Province (see fig. 11).

In the 1973 census the Costa Rican definition of an urban area yielded a population that was 40.6 percent urban. In 1983 that proportion was estimated at 44 percent. The census definition included those canton headquarters, whatever their size, that had some of the facilities of towns, e.g., sidewalks and electric lights. On the basis of these criteria, about 35 towns having populations under 5,000 (including some under 1,000) were considered urban. In 1973, however, of the enumerated urban population of 760,069, about 72 percent lived in the San José urban area (to be distinguished from the wider San José metropolitan region) and five other large towns. The population of San José proper (215,413) far exceeded that of any of the other towns, which ranged between 26,000 and 35,000 in 1973. Within the San José urban area, which had a population of 401,038, were several towns that had populations similar to those of independent urban areas, such as Cartago and Puerto Limón (see table 2, Appendix). In addition to these larger urban areas, there were Turrialba and Liberia, the populations of which exceeded 10,000, as well as 18 towns that had populations between 5,000 and 10,000.

Of the six largest urban areas, four—the San José urban area,



Source. Based on information from Costa Rica, Dirección General de Estadística y Censos y Oficina de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica, *Atlas estadístico de Costa Rica, No. 2*, San José, 1981.

Figure 11. Distribution of Population, 1973.

Cartago, Heredia, and Alajuela—are considered part of the San José metropolitan region in the Valle Central and the immediately adjacent Central Highlands. Only two urban areas are located elsewhere—Puntarenas, the major Pacific Ocean port on the Golfo de Nicoya, and Puerto Limón, the major port on the Caribbean Sea.

Between 1973 and 1982 the urban population grew 37.3 percent while the rural population increased only 19.5 percent and the total population 26.7 percent. San José proper and most of the other towns inside and outside the San José urban area that had

Aerial view of downtown San José

San José's new Culture Plaza, site of the National Theater (upper left) and the Gran Hotel Costa Rica

exceeded 10,000 persons in 1973 grew at a relatively moderate rate (roughly between 25 and 35 percent in nine years). The exception was Turrialba, a town in the highlands not far from the Meseta Central, the population of which increased by more than 90 percent., The San José urban area as a whole had a population of 614,000 in 1982, a little more than 53 percent greater than the 1973 population. The major growth, more than 150 percent, occurred in the smaller towns in the area, i.e., in towns that had fewer than 15,000 persons at the time of the 1973 census.

The average annual rate of urban population growth between 1973 and 1982 was roughly 3.6 percent, only a little greater than that of the entire population and a good deal less than the average annual urban growth of about 5 percent in the decade between the 1963 and 1973 censuses. These figures, however, obscure the fact, stressed by demographers Robert W. Fox and Jerrold W. Huguet, that the economically active population of Costa Rica has become increasingly nonagricultural and that many persons classified as rural in the censuses of 1963 and 1973 had urban occupations. Specifically, Fox and Huguet consider the entire population of the San José metropolitan area as essentially urban. Reckoned in these terms, the urban population of Costa Rica in 1973 would have constituted 54 percent of the total and would have been well over 60 percent by the early 1980s.

Inasmuch as lower rates of natural increase characterize the urban population, urban growth has been largely a consequence of migration from rural areas. There has been some migration between one rural area and another as persons lacking land have responded to the apparent availability of land elsewhere, but the data show net immigration to predominantly urban cantons and net emigration from rural cantons and moderately urban ones.

An analysis by demographers Manuel J. Carvajal and David T. Geithman, based on a sample of household heads from the 1963 census, attempts to outline the characteristics and motivations of migrants, particularly those from rural to urban areas. It is likely that the findings based on the earlier data also apply to migrants since that time. One obvious fact is that more women than men enter the highly urban cantons and leave the rural and moderatley urban cantons. The imbalance is reflected in the differences in the age and sex structures of urban and rural populations. There were many more women than men in the urban population and fewer women in the rural population in the labor force age bracket, i.e., between the ages of 15 and 59. Migrants to the cities and towns were, on the whole, younger than those who remained in the rural areas and were more likely to be unmarried, although

many were either legally married or involved in consensual unions. Most Costa Rican men and women are literate (see Education, this ch.). Nevertheless, many rural persons lack skills useful in urban areas and come to the towns initially seeking unskilled labor, although they may have hopes of acquiring training that will enable them to improve their occupational status.

Young women are more likely to enter the urban labor market without skills than are young men, but women have few options in the rural areas unless they marry early. Agriculture, whether as a landholder or a wage laborer, is seen as man's work. Some women work on the coffee haciendas as wage laborers. A woman married to a farmer usually contributes a good deal to the operation of the farm, but she is not formally considered as having an occupation other than that of housewife. Although female migrants to the towns are likely to be literate and a number find white-collar jobs, a great many become domestics. Others work in retail trade, and some become prostitutes. By the late 1970s, however, the National Apprenticeship Institute was providing training in skills such as wood processing, appliance repair, and gas station service. Whether this program will be sustained in the face of the unemployment of the early 1980s is not certain.

The range of education among the men leaving the rural areas has been fairly wide. Those who achieve a secondary education or better are likely to go to the urban areas, not only because they expect a better wage but also in order to move upward in the occupational scale—and many have. A good many men, however, like the young women, migrate because the rural area offers little and the urban areas seem to offer more. The concentration of landownership is such that many rural men lack land altogether or enough land to make a living as full-time farmers. Many work as agricultural wage laborers, but often even that work is not available, e.g., on the land devoted to cattle ranching.

The Social Order

Costa Ricans have often seen themselves as relatively classless, referring to a historical image of a majority of small landholders, all struggling to wrest a living from the soil. Even in the early colonial period, however, there were marked differences of power and status between the gentry (*hidalgos*) and other settlers even if Costa Rica's economy did not permit the great differences in wealth that characterized other Latin American colonies. By the mid-nineteenth century the development of coffee cultivation

and the accumulation of land by some and its loss by others changed the basis of power and status and linked them to significant differences in wealth. By the mid-twentieth century the emergence of new bases for prestige and power in an increasingly urbanized society made the system of stratification more complex. To the extent that strata could be demarcated, the original two-level system had given way to four or five strata.

Unlike the situation in other countries of Latin America that had large Indian, mestizo, and/or black populations, the differences in wealth, status, and power were not boldly underlined by their coincidence with ethnic stratification. The great bulk of Costa Ricans, who call themselves Ticos, are Spanish speakers; they share the same culture and think of themselves as belonging to a single (white) race (*raza*), although a small proportion are sometimes referred to as mestizos. There are minorities, the most important of which are blacks of West Indian origin, indigenous Indians, and Chinese, and the relations between the majority and these groups have not generally been those of status equals. Nevertheless, these minorities are so small that interethnic relations are not a dominant element in the ordering of social relations.

Ethnic Relations

The 1963 and 1973 censuses did not directly enumerate ethnic groups, but it has been estimated that 95 percent or more of the population claims to be of largely Spanish descent, speaks Spanish as a mother tongue, and partakes of the Costa Rican variant of Spanish American culture. There was a substantial Indian biological contribution to that majority at an early stage in the country's history, when most of the very few Spaniards in the area were males. All but a few of the small number of Indians who survived the conquest and gradual Spanish settlement were driven to or sought refuge in places where Spanish speakers did not pursue them, and the process of mixture did not persist except perhaps in Guanacaste. Because there were very few black slaves in Costa Rica in the early colonial period, the African contribution to the Costa Rican population was small. Mixture did take place, however, as the elaborate distinctions among varieties of white and black mixes in the colonial era suggest. In the end, however, this small group was essentially absorbed into the majority population.

Spaniards continued to arrive in Costa Rica in the nineteenth century and later, as did others of European stock—Germans,

French, British, and Italians. During World War II the property of Germans who had retained alien status was confiscated, but their numbers and wealth were such in the postwar years that they supported a German school and a Lutheran church. In general, however, Europeans who came in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century have been absorbed into the Costa Rican population.

A mestizo group is sometimes distinguished within the majority. In the 1950s mestizos were estimated to make up as much as 17 percent of the population. By the mid-1970s, however, they were thought to make up only 7 percent. The difference probably reflects the process of urbanization: mestizos who adopt the urban culture of the Meseta Central are simply perceived as part of the majority. Most mestizos live in Guanacaste Province and are descendants of unions between Spanish settlers and Chorotega Indians. The latter, the largest tribe in the area when the Spaniards first arrived, were in part converted to Christianity. Until well into the twentieth century when people from the Meseta Central migrated to Guanacaste, the mestizos were the dominant group in the province. Although they are Spanish in language and in culture, their dialect differs from that of other inhabitants of the Meseta Central, and some of their practices may be traced to Indian origins.

Three categories of persons make up most of the remaining 3 to 5 percent of Costa Rica's population: blacks, Indians, and Chinese. The largest group, perhaps 2 to 3 percent of the total population, are the blacks, chiefly of Jamaican origin. Most of them still live in Limón Province where, in 1973, they were estimated to constitute about one-third of the population. Some blacks had come to the Caribbean coast as early as 1825 as turtle fishermen and cultivators, but the great bulk of them arrived in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to help build the railroad, and they remained as railroad and dock workers and as laborers on the banana plantations (see Minor Cooper Keith, ch. 1). Prevented by law and practice from migrating to the Meseta Central and the southwestern banana plantations until after World War II, blacks outside the Caribbean coastal area are relatively few, but a number have moved to the cities of the Meseta Central, particularly San José. A Jamaican dialect of English remains the mother tongue of most blacks, but children who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s have been taught Spanish.

By the last half of the twentieth century, several categories of Indians were recognized, most of them living in isolated places. The largest category—called the Talamanca after the cordillera to

which they were forcibly removed or in which they found refuge—comprises perhaps two-thirds to three-fourths of the estimated 8,000 to 10,000 Indians in Costa Rica. The Talamanca are not a cohesive group. The term covers two peoples, the Bribri and the Cabécare, who, although speaking languages of the same group and having other similarities, think of themselves as different. Further, they live in scattered communities on the Caribbean and the Pacific sides of the Cordillera de Talamanca, thus limiting the possibility of cohesiveness even within each of the two peoples composing the category. The Indians living on the Pacific slope appear to have adapted to Costa Rican culture to a greater extent than those on the Caribbean slope. The Indians on the Pacific slope are more likely to be Roman Catholic (nominally at least), to have some acquaintance with Spanish, and to live in ways somewhat similar to those of rural Costa Ricans.

Aside from the Talamanca, the only other Indian group of any size—perhaps 1,500 to 2,000 persons—is the Boruca, most of whom live in three villages in the southwest, the largest of which is named after them. These people are almost entirely Roman Catholic, speak Spanish, and have sent some of their young people on to advanced schooling. Despite their acculturation, the Boruca retain aspects of their Indian culture, e.g., their land is ultimately owned by the community, and some of them still practice a traditional form of weaving.

The only Indian group that still lives in the north is the Guatuso, consisting of the descendants of two pre-Columbian tribes. In the early 1970s it was estimated that fewer than 200 of them lived in three communities in Alajuela Province, north of the Cordillera of Tilarán in the Llanura de los Guatusos. There they have maintained much of their Indian way of life, surviving by subsistence farming and hunting. Their numbers had been declining for some years before 1970, and it is not certain how many still survived in the early 1980s.

There is some debate whether the Chorotega (or the Chorotega-Mangues, as they have come to be called) may be classified as Indians. Most Chorotega in the north entered into unions with Spanish-speaking settlers to form the bulk of Costa Rica's mestizo population. The Chorotega-Mangues, living on the Península de Nicoya, did not, but their way of life is much like that of their mestizo neighbors except for certain religious practices. Some of these may be traced to Indian origins. Other institutions, such as the *cofradía* (religious brotherhood), are characteristic of the folk Catholicism of Indians in Latin American countries to the north.

The number of Chinese (Chinos in local terminology) in Costa Rica is not certain. Extimates for the mid-1970s range from 10,000 to as high as 30,000, or nearly 2 percent of the population. Until they were imported as laborers for railroad construction in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Asians had been forbidden to enter Costa Rica, and their immigration was again prohibited in 1897. In the decades after World War II, Chinese (and a few other Asians) have been able to enter without difficulty. Many have come to the San José urban area, but others are scattered in small towns in the lowlands where they play a substantial role in retail trade and in the provision of services.

In the mid-1970s there were in the San José urban area some 350 families of East European Jews (*polacos* to Costa Ricans). The first of them came in the later 1920s and others in the early 1930s and after World War II. The overt anti-Semitism of the government of León Cortés Castro (1936-40) led to restrictions on Jewish immigration in that period (see The Rise of Ideology, ch. 1). These Jews of East European origin have entered fully into the liberal professions, industry, and commerce since World War II and have become involved in government and politics. Nevertheless, unlike the Jews who came to Costa Rica from the Netherlands in the nineteenth century, they have maintained a tightly knit community.

Interethnic conflict has not been a major feature of Costa Rican life, nor have relations between members of different ethnic groups been a significant aspect of Costa Rican social relations. That is largely a consequence of the small size of all minorities and of the geographic isolation of most of them from all but a few representatives of the Costa Rican majority. Nevertheless, Costa Rican history has seen intergroup conflicts, some of which have flared to the point where they have become salient in Costa Rican consciousness.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the "whiteness" of the population had become part of the image the Costa Ricans held of themselves. That was possible because those few Indians who had survived the long, drawn-out process of Spanish conquest had been pushed into isolated districts where they could be ignored. Until the late nineteenth century there were few blacks, and when they did come, they remained largely isolated by geography and government policy through the early decades of the twentieth century.

Although the Costa Rican governments of the late nineteenth century permitted Minor Cooper Keith to bring in Jamaican blacks and Chinese to help build the railroad, they limited them

to the Caribbean lowlands. It has been suggested by some sources that blacks were prohibited by law from entering the Meseta Central for a good part of the first half of the twentieth century. No copy of the law has been found, but in fact blacks found it very difficult to come to the highlands. For example, when trains from the Caribbean lowlands reached Turrialba, their black railroad crews were required to disembark, and white crews took the train to San José.

Through the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries, there was no strong incentive for blacks to come to the Meseta Central. Work on the railroads, the docks of Puerto Limón, and the banana plantations was steady and reasonably remunerative. Moreover, in those earlier years Jamaicans still tended to think of themselves as sojourners who would eventually return to their native island. (Jamaicans did not become eligible for Costa Rican citizenship until after World War II.) Further, they wanted as little as possible to do with those they called "Spaniards." They cared little for the language and religion of the Costa Ricans and considered their work habits too casual.

Conflict between the Costa Rican majority and the Jamaican blacks grew in the mid-1920s, owing to the deterioration of the local and world economies and the onset and quick spread of banana diseases. Even before the mid-1920s many of the Spanish-speaking majority sought work in the lowlands, and their numbers had grown considerably by the 1920s as more and more Spanish-speaking peasants became landless and the coffee farms could not provide enough work for the growing population. In the Caribbean lowlands the men (there were very few women) found that many of the better jobs on the plantations and ancillary activities, including clerical positions and well-paying railroad work, fell to Jamaican blacks because they had been there first and were experienced and because the supervisory personnel were North Americans who found it easier to communicate with English speakers. A good deal of ethnic animosity ensued.

At roughly the same time that increasing numbers of Spanish-speaking Costa Ricans came to the lowlands, several kinds of banana disease struck the plantations. Not long afterward, the world depression substantially diminished the demand for bananas, and unemployment affected Costa Ricans and Jamaicans alike. Relations between members of the two groups worsened.

By 1930 the United Fruit Company, which then held the Caribbean plantations, considered abandoning them and transferring their operations to the Pacific lowlands. The company's 1930 contract with the government of Costa Rica, anticipating the

Pacific operations, stated that those of Costa Rican nationality were to be given job preference "when workers of similar aptitude and capability applied for the same job," a provision that clearly limited the opportunities of the Jamaicans. A clause from the 1934 contract explicitly states that "colored people be prohibited from being employed in the Pacific zone." There is some disagreement whether the United Fruit Company or the Costa Rican government was responsible for the clause, but a 1933 petition to the Costa Rican legislature by more than 500 Spanish-speaking Costa Ricans living in Puerto Limón suggests that the Costa Rican government was responding to a then widely held view of its white majority that blacks behaved in ways inimical to Costa Rican life. The petition went on to say that the entry and naturalization of blacks ought to be prohibited by law.

By the late 1930s the Caribbean plantations had been abandoned, and most Jamaican blacks who remained were either engaged in subsistence farming or were growing cacao. During World War II many emigrated to the Panama Canal Zone or the United States to work in war-related activities.

Significant changes in the status of blacks began to take place after the war, particularly in connection with the election and civil war of 1948 (see The 1948 Election; Civil War, ch. 1). José Figueres Ferrer was the first major figure to seek their support, visiting them and speaking to them in English, and they supported his side, although their involvement in the civil war was not significant. In 1948, too, a decree granting full rights of citizenship to anyone born in Costa Rica gave Jamaican blacks (and others) political status. From that point the involvement of blacks of West Indian origin in various facets of Costa Rican life began. Some moved to the Meseta Central. Their children began to attend public schools and to learn Spanish, and by the late 1950s blacks had earned degrees from Costa Rican universities. Their economic status also improved when, beginning in the mid-1950s, disease-resistant strains of bananas were introduced to the Caribbean lowlands by companies that had taken over the plantations from United Fruit.

The extent to which the Costa Rican majority held negative or condescending views of blacks in the 1980s was a matter of dispute. Some analysts thought that, although most Costa Ricans consider themselves tolerant, that tolerance is marked by a degree of condescension toward blacks and other minorities. It seems clear, however, that blacks have committed themselves to Costa Rica and no longer look forward to a return to Jamaica. Other observers think that the situation of blacks and the at-

titudes of the majority toward them have improved. In San José, where there were still relatively few blacks, their proficiency in English and Spanish permitted them to play a special role in the tourist trade and in other activities where relations with North Americans were important. In Puerto Limón, where many Costa Rican whites have come to live and work, relations between members of the majority and blacks appeared to be friendly in the early 1980s, a marked change from earlier conditions; residential housing, at least among the poor, was racially unsegregated.

Even further outside Costa Rican society than the blacks or the Chinese, the Indians were long ignored by the majority. In 1939, however, the government declared that certain zones would become the permanent and inalienable property of the Indian inhabitants. The law was extended in 1945 when the Council for the Protection of the Native Races was created to protect Indian territory and to provide health and educational facilities for Indian tribes. Despite the law and the council, many Indians lost their land through trickery or violence. By the 1960s Indian complaints led to a newspaper campaign to apprise the nation of their plight. The Indians themselves declared their pride in being Indian and their resentment of mistreatment by whites. They claimed rights as first-class citizens. A congressional inquiry ensued, and the National Commission on Indian Affairs was established to protect Indians. The congressional investigation established that most Indians lived in abject poverty and that many suffered from alcoholism.

The activity of the 1960s notwithstanding, President Daniel Oduber Quirós considered it necessary to declare the Indian areas under a state of national emergency in 1976 and to establish five zones (a total of nearly 110,000 hectares) in which non-Indians could not rent or buy land. Representatives of most of the Indian communities gathered to discuss their difficulties in 1978 and asserted that none of the laws intended to better their condition had been enforced. As of the early 1980s the laws and the official and private efforts to cope with Indian problems had accomplished little.

Observers of the relations of the Chinese minority and the Costa Rican majority reported a changing situation in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Most younger Chinese speak Spanish, and some have intermarried with members of the Costa Rican majority. Many have become Roman Catholics. Older Chinese, however, have tended to remain aloof from Costa Rican society. They are more likely to speak Chinese and to retain the practices of Chinese folk religion. Chinese have tended to stay out of politics

or to adopt a conservative position in political matters and have generally confined their activities to the economic domain. They have been fairly successful in small- to medium-sized enterprises, and their willingness to focus on business activities coupled with the tendency of older Chinese to maintain tight-knit communities have put off some Costa Ricans who have complained that the Chinese control all business in some regions.

The attitudes toward minorities attributed to Costa Ricans appear to extend to mestizos. Many in the Costa Rican majority do not differ physically from persons identified as mestizos, but physical indications of part-Indian ancestry coupled with cultural and dialectal differences have led those who consider themselves white, particularly in the Meseta Central, to act in ways that elicit mestizo resentment. A letter to the editor of *La Nación* from a Guanacaste mestizo reflects that resentment: "Simply because we have an accent and some words that are different, our skin is a little brown, and we have some Indian features, we are objects of ridicule." It appears, however, that persons of mixed white and Indian ancestry are readily absorbed into the Costa Rican mass once they have taken on the dialect of the Meseta Central and abandoned those aspects of their culture considered Indian.

Social Stratification: Historical Development

The early Spanish settlers were sharply divided between the commoners (*plebeyos*) and a minority of gentry (*hidalgos*) who originated mainly in Spain's indigent petty nobility. In early colonial times the gentry had social and political privileges that were withheld from commoners; although their wealth was limited, they had servants and owned the relatively few slaves in the territory.

There were few persons of Spanish origin in the early days, and most were males; there were many unions, licit and otherwise, between Spanish gentry and commoners and Indian women. Some Indian chiefs were declared gentry, and the offspring of their daughters and Spanish gentry were classified as *mestizo-hidalgos*. There were also children of unions between gentry and black slaves. The result was a complex system of ranking based on combinations of intra-Spanish distinctions and unions with Indians and blacks. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, two decades before independence, some of these distinctions had faded. Among both gentry and commoners were many persons of mixed origin, although they insisted on their whiteness. Moreover, differences in wealth had diminished. Very few were

wealthy, even in Costa Rican terms, and many of the roughly 20 percent of the population of the colonial capital, Cartago, who were considered gentry were not much better off than commoners. It was in this preindependence era, when many of gentry origin had to cultivate their own land and when it was easy for almost all to acquire land, that the image of Costa Ricans as yeoman farmers emerged.

Despite this leveling, the gentry families dominated Costa Rican political life when independence came. Of the 28 members of the elite who in 1821 signed the act establishing the country's independence, 21 were closely related. This group and its descendants continued to dominate Costa Rican political and social life into the twentieth century, although as time went on, others made their mark politically and economically even if they found it difficult to penetrate the tightly knot social networks of the aristocracy. Many descendants of the elite were able to retain their positions through their control of the coffee industry, which began to grow rapidly after independence and continued to do so for some years. Newcomers were gradually able to acquire a degree of power and status in the same manner.

During most of the nineteenth century much of the coffee produced in Costa Rica was grown by peasant smallholders, but land in the best coffee-growing areas of the highlands gradually fell into the hands of a comparatively small number of large landholders. Many of them were descendants of the old gentry families. Whether of the old elite or the new, the owners of haciendas did not limit themselves to growing coffee. Many owned *beneficios* (coffee-processing plants), which emerged in the mid-nineteenth century with the availability of new machinery. Initially, there were many small *beneficios*, but as transportation and machinery improved, the processing plants became fewer and larger, and many of them were controlled by a relatively small number of owners. The *beneficios*, moreover, were rural banks of a kind, advancing loans to peasants in anticipation of the coffee crop and lending money to them with the land as security. In bad years, failure of mortgage payments could lead to foreclosure. There were in addition other forces encouraging the acquisition of land by a few and the loss or decrease in size of peasant holdings. During much of the nineteenth century, for example, the government was forced to borrow from those who were already well-off and tended to pay its debts by granting state land to the lenders.

Inheritance strongly affected the size of peasant landholdings. Customarily, a peasant's holdings were equally divided among all the sons and daughters. A peasant coffee grower could handle a

reasonably large holding only if he had family labor, and a large family was therefore considered desirable; but even a fairly large holding divided among a half-dozen children left them with farms too small to support their own families. In one way or another peasant smallholders became a minority. The census of 1864 recorded nearly one-half of those in agriculture as wageworkers. Only two decades later more than 70 percent were landless laborers.

In the period of rapid growth of coffee cultivation, and particularly after the mechanization of the *beneficios*, which permitted rapid processing of large quantities of coffee, the large-scale haciendas provided many opportunities for stable employment at what were considered good wages. Many peasant growers who lacked enough land for a viable farm or found the risks imposed by climatic variations and shifting prices difficult to endure over a period of years went to work for the haciendas. As long as the demand for labor was high and the work steady, peasants were secure. For those who preferred to continue as smallholders, government land grants under certain circumstances and the availability of land made that choice feasible, if risky. In the long run, however, changes in the economy and in agricultural technology, the growth of the rural population, and the eventual disappearance of available land led to a substantial increase in the numbers of rural people who had neither land nor wagework.

From independence through roughly the first quarter of the twentieth century, Costa Rican society, economy, and politics were dominated by the wealthy coffee industrialists *(cafetaleros)*, whose interests ranged from coffee planting to processing to exporting. Power struggles did occur among them, but they were usually able to unite to advance their own interests through various forms of government action (see The Coffee Barons, ch. 1).

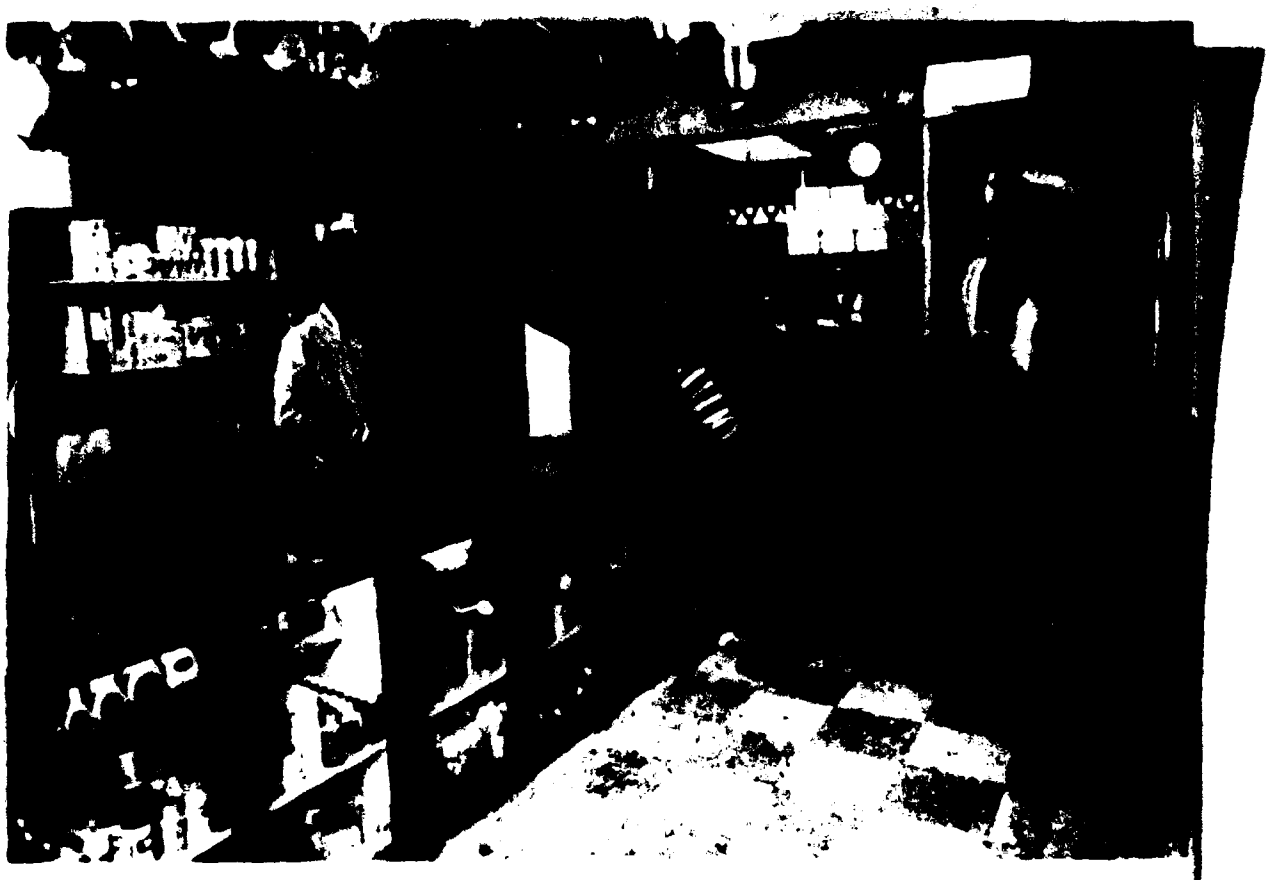
Most rich coffee industrialists, often called coffee barons, were direct descendants of the early elite and, despite Costa Rica's status as a republic and the disuse of the term *hidalgo*, they retained a strong sense of their aristocracy. Immigrants of German, English, Spanish, Italian, or French origin who were successful in business or in the professions could enter their social circle and intermarry with them. Many immigrants converted to Roman Catholicism. Costa Rican commoners who achieved great wealth found acceptance by the elite families more difficult. Such acceptance occurred after a generation or two when the children of the newly rich commoner had been educated, preferably in Europe. Not all of the offspring of a coffee baron inherited great wealth. Interested in conserving the wealth they had accumulated, coffee

barons saw to it that most of their financial holdings came under the control of an able son or, if one was lacking, a son-in-law. The fragmentation of property characteristic of peasant holdings did not occur. Sons and daughters who did not inherit often married well and were likely to have sufficient education to fill roles in government and the professions. Nevertheless, it was possible for later descendants of a coffee baron to live at a level much below that of the aristocracy and to lose social contact with it.

Between the coffee barons on the one hand and the poor peasants and rural wageworkers on the other lay several clusters of Costa Ricans, some of which were wholly rural in character and others essentially urban. Through the nineteenth century and until World War II, there were varying numbers of well-off peasant landholders, some of whom were also operators of small *beneficios*. Unlike the coffee barons, they were either not of elite origin or were several generations removed from it. Their style of life was Costa Rican rather than European. (Most elite families traveled, spoke French, and were oriented to their version of a cosmopolitan culture.) These well-off peasants (*gamonales*; sing., *gamonal*) exercised local influence and, in the twentieth century, had some impact on national politics to the extent that those who worked for them tended to follow their lead in voting. By the latter half of the twentieth century, however, few of them remained, and social and cultural change had greatly diminished their influence.

In the urban areas, particularly in San José, lived the rudiments of what were to become the middle- and working-class strata of the twentieth century. There had always been shopkeepers and small-scale merchants, but their numbers grew to serve the gradually growing urban population of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this era, too, the elite and the better-off segments of the middle class had servants, the beginnings of an urban working class.

The development of the coffee industry and other commercial interests brought with it a growth of government, and white-collar workers were required in both, leading to the emergence of a salaried middle class. The range of wealth and status in this heterogeneous middle stratum was considerable. At the highest levels were professionals (physicians and lawyers), some of whom had links with the elite. Well below them in income and status were teachers. The bureaucracy, then very small, also varied in composition and income. Ordinary shopkeepers, usually less educated than the salaried middle class, were also more remote from the elite.



Costa Ricans in a small general store in Fortuna, Guanacaste Province
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank/David Mangurian

Until just before World War II, the kind of industrial development that would provide the basis for the growth of a large urban working class did not exist. Of those who worked in San José and the other towns of the Meseta Central until that time, many were household workers or served commercial enterprises, including coffee warehousing. Like the agricultural wageworkers, they were called *peones* and, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, often stemmed directly from the peasantry.

Until the modern era (roughly after World War II), there was a two-class system in the provincial towns and the rural areas and a three-class system in San José. The upper stratum in the provincial towns was referred to as the *clase social*. The *clase social* comprised the small number of people who could lay claim to an education and a respectable occupation and income. Included were well-off coffee planters (but not those who maintained a peasant's way of life), businessmen of several kinds, the few professionals, teachers, and white-collar workers. The working class (*clase obrero*), often referred to as the people (*el pueblo*), included rural and urban manual workers who labored for wages, the poorer

landholding peasants (some of whom also worked for wages), artisans, smaller shopkeepers or vendors, and servants. Within this much larger class, the extent of interaction between rural and urban components varied with the sheer size of the group, as did the existence of subclasses.

The three-strata system of San José included the national elite, the growing middle class, and the urban working class. Most of the members of the elite lived in San José (although some also had homes elsewhere); a relatively small group, they were numerous enough to maintain a social life that did not include the growing middle class of the capital city. Some members of the middle class—usually high-income professionals whose positions reflected a university education or its equivalent—were linked by kinship to the elite, but most did not interact socially with elite families. A very large proportion of this heterogeneous middle class lived in San José, working in government and nonagricultural enterprises, which tended to be concentrated in the capital. The heterogeneity was marked. At the very least it was possible by the mid-twentieth century to speak of an upper and lower middle class distinguished by differences in income, education, and occupational prestige.

The urban working class, too, was heterogeneous, but it was usually separated from the middle class by income and way of life. Urban workers exerted little influence on the economy or politics until the 1930s when groups such as bakers and shoemakers went on strike. Their real impact on Costa Rican politics, however, did not begin until after World War II when communist organizers, on the one hand, and those encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, sought to organize Costa Rican workers.

Stratification: Modern Structure and Values

The structure of social stratification in Costa Rica after 1970 has not been well studied, but it is possible to present a broad outline of that structure and the values associated with it. In the mid-1970s roughly 1 percent of the families at the top of the system received about 10 percent of the income, and the next 4 percent received nearly 15 percent. Other sources suggest that this small group obtained most of its income through its ownership and control of various forms of wealth, e.g., income-producing property ranging from land to commercial and industrial enterprises. Some of them are also salaried as directors and managers of such enterprises; a small number derive much of their income as highly paid

professionals. It should be noted, however, that by the late 1970s many of the most important industrial enterprises (including some that had been previously owned by Costa Ricans) were owned and managed by foreign firms. This may in the long run affect the economic status of the families that have been at the top of Costa Rican society.

This Costa Rican upper class consists of two components. At the very top in both income and status are the "principal families," sometimes referred to as "society" (*la sociedad*). This portion of the descendants of the gentry who eventually became coffee barons and then branched out into other activities (but did not play a great role in industrialization) no longer dominates political life as it once did, but it continues to play a part in politics; members of this group may be found at the highest governmental levels. Some of the principal families are accepted as such by the others by virtue of their long-established status even if they are not as wealthy as they had once been. Other Costa Ricans may still be deferential to the old elite, but they are no longer as awed as they had once been, and they are more likely to be impressed by wealth than by family.

The other section of the upper class includes those who have made their fortunes more recently and cannot trace their ancestry to long-established principal families. Often they have been more entrepreneurial than members of the older families. Many are involved in politics, but they are not as likely as the old aristocracy to see it as both a right and a duty. The wealthiest of these newly rich families may interact socially with the old aristocratic families, particularly if they or their children have acquired the finish of a higher education, European travel, and the like.

The heterogeneity of the middle class has become even more pronounced in the modern era. Income alone distinguishes an upper middle stratum of perhaps 5 percent of the population from a much larger lower middle stratum consisting of roughly 20 percent of the population. The upper 5 percent receives about 10 percent of the income; the lower 20 percent gained between 25 and 30 percent. In terms of occupation, education, and way of life—if not of income—the lines between the lower segment of the really wealthy and the upper middle class are not sharply drawn. In terms of income, the lines are blurred between the less well-paid segments of the lower middle class and the better paid elements of the regularly employed working class.

The upper middle class consists of professionals, e.g., physicians, lawyers, and engineers, the highest levels of the bureaucracy, the less wealthy industrialists and merchants, and some of

the better-off landowners who are not at the same time involved in other enterprises. Most are well educated, and they often live in the same areas as those of the lower section of the upper class and mix with them socially in some contexts. (Some clubs, however, remain limited to the upper class and principally to the old families.)

Women in the ranks of professionals, university teachers, and members of the legislature (there were four elected in 1982) originate in the upper middle and upper classes. Most teachers at the primary-school level are women and, although they are not well paid, are likely to be socially part of the upper middle class owing to their family origin.

The lower middle class includes white-collar workers in the public and private sectors, those who operate small businesses, and low-salaried professionals, e.g., nurses. If teachers at primary levels were to rely wholly on their salaries to define their status, they would be in this segment of the middle class but many are women whose families are better-off, and their social connections may be with members of the upper middle class. Farmers considered fairly well-off in the rural context are placed here with respect to income, although their mode of life and interest differ from those of the largely urban remainder of the lower middle class.

Difference in income does not clearly distinguish the lower middle class from the working class. Skilled manual workers are often better paid than office clerks and other low-level white-collar workers. The line is drawn by mode of life and livelihood. For most of Costa Rica's history, even when most of the colonial population was forced by circumstances to do its own farming, manual labor has been disvalued, except perhaps by the peasantry. There are indications that this attitude is changing, but the older value is still significant for many Costa Ricans and has pervaded their approach to education (see Education, this ch.).

Within the upper and lower middle classes, one segment stands out—those who earn their living in the public sector. Included in that sector are those organizations that function under the usual government ministries and are supported in whole by expenditures in the government budget. It also comprises autonomous organizations carrying out functions ranging from the administration of social security (which includes the health services) to the production and distribution of electrical power. Taken together (and adding the manual workers employed by various ministries and autonomous organizations), public sector employees constitute a considerable portion of the economically

active population. Whatever the differences between high- and low-level bureaucrats, they appear to share an interest in the continuation of a strong public sector and to be numerous enough to make a political difference.

Costa Ricans of the upper and middle classes tend to lump all manual workers, rural and urban, as working or lower class, but two strata may be usefully distinguished. These may be called the working class and the marginals. The working class comprises skilled to semiskilled workers who have a reasonably steady income above a minimal level; they constitute about one-half of the population and earn about one-third of the income. The marginals, about 20 percent of the population, earn less than 5 percent of the income. The range of income in the working class is wide. Its uppermost segment may earn a fair income by the standards of the lower middle class and sometimes more than members of the latter class. The lowest segment may earn little more than marginals in a given year, but their work and their mode of life are likely to be steadier. The marginals include itinerant vendors, unskilled workers who are able to find work only irregularly, domestics (of which there are a great many, chiefly women), and persons who gain a livelihood by petty thievery and prostitution. The way of life of thieves and prostitutes, regardless of their income, puts them among the marginals.

The line between the working class and the marginals is a permeable one, movement between the two categories depending in large part on the state of the economy. When, in the mid-1970s, the marginals were estimated at 20 percent of the urban population, Costa Rica had experienced a fairly long period of urbanization and industrial growth and had greatly expanded its public sector. Whatever the ultimate costs of this pattern of growth, it had generated a good deal of employment. By the early 1980s, however, the breakdown of the economy had gone far enough to put a good many who formerly had been in the working class into the category of marginals, and it was very likely that by 1983 the members of that category exceeded the 20 percent estimated in the mid-1970s. On February 3, 1983, President Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez addressed the nation by radio on the economic problems facing it; he noted that whereas 25 percent of urban families had been considered below the poverty line in 1980, this proportion had doubled by 1982. The change reflected chiefly an inflation rate that made it difficult to subsist even for those who were regularly employed. There had also been a rise in the unemployment rate.

Monge proposed various measures that would alleviate the

condition of the urban poor, and the foreign aid that would allow these measures to be put into effect has been forthcoming from West European and official and unofficial United States sources. At the same time, it was considered necessary to introduce austerity measures to stabilize the economy, and these procedures contributed to further unemployment among the poor. The painful stabilization program was expected to halt the decline of the economy and eventually permit the resumption of real growth. Nevertheless, the basic problems of the economy were not likely to be resolved for some time, and it was probable that a substantial proportion of the urban population would remain in an economically and socially precarious situation.

The situation of those working in agriculture, whether as landholders, tenants, wage laborers, or squatters, continued to change in the 1970s and early 1980s. By 1973 nearly 37 percent of all landholders owned only 1 percent of the farm and range land, and a little less than 58 percent of all landholders owned slightly less than 4 percent of the total. Their farms ranged in size from less than 0.2 of a hectare to less than 10 hectares. At the top of the range, the 1 percent of landholders owning farms or ranches of 500 hectares to 2,500 hectares held nearly 36 percent of the land. Monge suggested that the distribution of land had become even more skewed. Although land quality and use varied, the very smallest landholders could not subsist on their holdings and were required to seek wage labor, whether on nearby large farms or elsewhere, to eke out a living. In addition to the skewed distribution of land among those who actually held it, in the early 1970s only 22 percent working in agriculture had any land at all. Most of the remainder were wageworkers, and some were tenants. There was also a group of varying size and anomalous status—the squatters.

In his research on Costa Rican peasants in the 1970s, political scientist Mitchell A. Seligson distinguished nine varieties of peasants: three had some control over land, two were tenants of some kind, and four were altogether landless and worked for wages. The most secure was the landholder who had title to his land. Although the mean income of the families of such landholders was somewhat larger than that of all other families relying on agriculture, few had a great deal of land: more than 80 percent held less than 10 hectares, and nearly 33 percent held no more than one hectare. Moreover, variation in the quality of land held and in the nature of the crops grown led to wide disparity of income.

A substantial proportion of those who putatively owned land did not in fact have title to it, and the lack of title makes for a fun-

damental insecurity and precludes their obtaining credit. Least secure of those occupying land and claiming a right to do so are squatters, i.e., persons living on and cultivating land held privately or by the state but not used by the owners. Typically, squatters have been landless agricultural workers lacking steady work who have decided to risk taking over land owned by others. The number of squatters has varied over the years depending on the availability of steady wage labor in agriculture and of unused land in specific areas. The status of squatters depends on the readiness of owners to take action to oust them and the extent to which law and custom have recognized or supported squatters' claims (see Land Resources, Use, and Tenure, ch. 3).

There are two kinds of steady agricultural wageworkers: those who work on foreign-owned banana plantations and those who work on the large coffee *fincas* (farms, also called haciendas) and in sugar. Until the late 1970s work on the banana plantations was both steady and remunerative. Employment on the coffee *fincas* and sugar plantations has also been steady but has not paid nearly as well. Moreover, the housing, medical, and other facilities provided by the foreign firms have been superior to those provided by the Costa Rican producers of coffee and sugar. The superiority of wages and facilities on the banana plantations has been a function of higher state-established minimum wages, the availability of overtime in banana production, the role of unions, and the higher after-tax profits of banana producers. In the late 1970s, however, the foreign firms controlling banana production responded to changes in the world market and the high labor cost of banana production by converting a good part of their land to the production of palm oil (for which there could be a large internal demand). Palm oil production and shipment required a smaller labor force, and many hitherto secure, comparatively well-paid workers were laid off. In general, agricultural wageworkers, whether in bananas or coffee, have been willing to forgo the risks of subsistence farming on a small holding as long as wage labor provided a steady livelihood.

Much less secure are the day laborers (*peones sueltos* or *ocasionales*) and the migrant laborers. The former work for several *fincas* in a limited area and live in rented housing or in the houses of their parents. A fair number of young, unmarried women may be found in this category. Men (but very rarely women) who cannot find enough work in a circumscribed area are forced to become migrant laborers. Their mean income in the early 1970s was low but exceeded that of many tenants and all farm workers except for steady plantation laborers.

Several forms of tenancy are found in Costa Rica. In one form, found in Guanacaste Province, the owner of farm property gives an employee or relative (rarely someone else) the right to cultivate a piece of land for a year, rent free. The land is to be cleared and planted in pasture at the time it is returned to the owner. Elsewhere, highly regarded employees may be granted a plot to cultivate as a special perquisite. Extension of tenancy is not guaranteed, but it apparently occurs frequently. The other form of tenancy usually requires that the sharecropper give the owner one-half of the crop. This too seems to be an insecure situation.

In his radio speech of early 1983, Monge, addressing the problems of the peasantry, remarked that the proportion of rural families classified as poor had risen from 58 percent in 1980 to 83 percent by the end of 1983. Referring to what he called the "unjust distribution of landownership," he suggested that its intensification was "responsible for the fact that thousands of peasant families are vulnerable to the opportunistic preachings of the extreme left and for the fact that once in a while they invade state and private estates." The matter of the distribution of landownership aside, a significant source of squatters in the late 1970s and early 1980s has been the banana plantation workers laid off after the decision of the companies to cut back banana cultivation in favor of the oil palm.

Monge proposed to "reduce the number of landless peasants as much as possible" and to provide credit, technical assistance, and organizational help to the newly placed landowners. This has suggested that land allocation would be accompanied by the granting of titles. Monge was careful to note that private property would be respected, which indicated that if privately held land were expropriated for allocation to landless peasants, compensation would be paid. The cost of the program was to be partly financed by the sale of agrarian bonds, already issued at the time of the speech. Additional financing was expected in the form of international loans.

Seligson sought to establish how those working in agriculture evaluated the several varieties of peasants. He discovered that income alone did not detemine their prestige ranking. At the top of the ranking by far were landholders with title. On average, they also had the highest incomes. Next came landholders without title, whose incomes were less than those of steady plantation laborers. Despite their lack of title, their control over land was thought good enough to warrant this status. Steady plantation laborers came next, followed by renters and steady nonplantation workers; the difference between the latter two was barely discer-

nible. Sharecroppers, day laborers, squatters, and migrant laborers came next, in that order. In Seligson's view, this rank order was in good part determined by the peasant's emphasis on security.

Almost all who work in agriculture, whatever their degree of security or the level of their incomes, have comparatively little education and are members of communities in which there are at least a few persons who have more education and are engaged in occupations that are essentially urban. Moreover, except in rare instances, these few have better incomes and modes of life different from even the better-off landholders with titles. Typically, such landholders have little more education than any other kind of peasant.

Among the persons whom a peasant must take into account are *finca* owners (resident owners were very rare by the early 1970s, however), managers, teachers, local administrators, priests, specialized workers, e.g., the head of a carpentry shop on a *finca*, and those who provide local health services. Usually such persons are given the deference due them, but their prestige has diminished.

San José and, to a lesser extent, other urban areas are the centers of wealth, power, and status. Most of the upper class and upper middle class live in the cities. It has been estimated that of the 20 percent of the population having the lowest incomes, about four-fifths are country dwellers. As urbanization proceeds, those at the lower end of the urban working class and most of the marginals are not much better-off than many poor peasants. But those born in the rural areas who acquire a secondary education or better do not remain in or return to the rural areas. Sons and daughters of such peasants also go to the city, leaving the rural areas largely populated by the poor and the uneducated.

Class consciousness in Costa Rica affects the incidence and quality of social interaction of members of different classes and the views they have of one another, but it has not been pervasively politicized, despite the efforts of some Marxist groups. The difficult situation of agricultural wageworkers thrown out of jobs and other peasants lacking land has resulted in their receptivity to the activity of organizations such as the National Peasant Federation. The federation helped organize peasants in 1983 to seize unused land owned by the United Brand Company; the Golfito Workers' Union cooperated. But these actions seem to be ad hoc ventures rather than elements of a systematic organization of peasants. As of the early 1980s peasant organizations or agricultural workers' unions had not been as successful in the coffee areas

as on the banana plantations. Communist-led unions have succeeded in organizing banana workers and railroad workers but apparently have not succeeded in converting their members into political activists. The noncommunist unions have been more successful in organizing civil service workers, and their orientation has tended to be business based rather than political, although there is a strong social democratic component in the leadership (see Political Interest Groups, ch. 4).

Costa Ricans' views of the traits of the several social classes and of what makes for membership in a given social stratum vary with the social location of the informant. The peasant sees hard, physical work as characteristic of his class and values it but does not necessarily believe that hard work ensures success. Luck (or for some, the will of God) also plays a part. Patronage may help. A peasant's view of the value of education is mixed. Deference to the educated simply because them have been to school has diminished, and some peasants do not regard what office workers do as work at all. But a peasant is happy to see a son or daughter receive more than an elementary education and leave the peasant world for the towns if only because the difficulty of making a living in agriculture, whether as landholder or wageworker, is so great. The urban middle classes acknowledge the capacity of peasants for hard work but may tend to regard them derogatorily as unsophisticated persons.

The urban working class is obliged to work hard but does not see labor as a path of social mobility. From the point of view of many urban manual workers, one has a head start if one already has money; with it education can be bought. The middle classes tend to see what they have achieved as a matter of hard work, particularly the work that went into acquiring an education. In turn, they may consider urban workers, particularly marginals, as lazy and deprecate their lack of education.

The elite does not publicly make a display of the ancestry of its members and may even play down the issue, a considerable change from the pre-World War II era. Nevertheless, pride in lineage remains important to them, differentiating the traditional elite from the newly rich.

Religious Life

About 95 percent of all Costa Ricans profess Roman Catholicism, and almost all who do are members of the church. Of those affiliated, perhaps 85 percent are practicing Catholics who attend

church at least occasionally. Nevertheless, the range of variation in belief, intensity of commitment, and practice is great.

The only other cluster of churches of any size is constituted by Protestant (sometimes called evangelical) churches ranging from Methodists and Baptists to Pentecostal groups, e.g., Assemblies of God, which together count about 3 percent of the population as adherents. Distinguished from these are disparate groups such as high church Anglicans (most of whom are blacks of Jamaican origin), Jehovah's Witnesses, and certain indigenous churches. No single non-Roman Catholic group had more than 3,000 to 4,000 members in the early 1980s. Even smaller are non-Christian groups of several kinds, including Chinese folk religionists (at least one-third of the Chinese are Roman Catholics), Jews, and tribal religionists (some elements of the small Indian population).

Church and State

Although Roman Catholicism has always been the religion of most Costa Ricans, many in the governing classes had become anticlerical even before independence and enacted anticlerical legislation soon thereafter. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century this anticlericalism, closely identified with nineteenth-century liberalism, culminated in the passage of the so-called Liberal Laws, which allowed divorce, secularized cemeteries, ended religious instruction in schools, and formally separated church and state. In 1884 the Jesuits were expelled from the country, and other religious orders were forbidden to enter it. Until the beginning of World War II most governments were headed by liberals of this kind, some anticlerical, some indifferent to the church, but direct conflict between church and secular authorities was rare (see Church-State Conflict, ch. 1). The distance between the governing elite and the church notwithstanding, the population remained firmly Roman Catholic.

In 1940 for the first time in many years an avowedly devout Roman Catholic, Rafael Angel Calderón Guardia, was elected to the presidency, not so much because of his religious position but because of his apparent commitment to social reform. Under his government the Liberal Laws of the 1880s were repealed. Religious instruction was reintroduced to the public schools, and members of religious orders, including Jesuits, were permitted to enter the country (see The Calderón Era, ch. 1).

In the post-World War II era, anticlericalism was no longer a major issue, in part because many of the significant political figures of the time, whether or not they were devout Roman Cath-

olics, had a background different from that of the old liberal oligarchy. Moreover, whatever the political differences among the newer politicians, they shared with some church leaders (particularly Victor Sanabria Martínez, archbishop of San José from 1940 to 1952) a concern with social reform and social welfare.

No effort was made, therefore, to revoke the steps taken by the Calderón government. Article 76 of the Constitution of 1949, still in force, recognizes Roman Catholicism as the religion of the state but guarantees freedom of conscience and practice to all other denominations. The only church marriages that automatically have civil validity are those performed by Roman Catholic priests. Catholicism continues to be taught in the primary and secondary public schools.

The state contributes to the support of the Catholic church, but the amount is small, covering the salaries of bishops, teachers in Catholic schools, and religious instructors (of whom many are priests) in the public schools. Moreover, church-owned property was not exempt from taxation.

The 1949 Constitution contains a provision that "neither clergymen nor laymen may make political propaganda of any sort invoking religious motives or taking advantage of religious belief." Nevertheless, from time to time the church, its bishops and priests, and institutions attached to it have taken positions on social and economic issues that have had political implications. One priest, Benjamín Núñez Vargas, was instrumental in promulgating the ideology of the National Liberation Party (Partido Liberación Nacional—PLN) and later held high appointive office in PLN governments. In general, the issue of clerical pronouncements on political questions has been raised by Costa Rican politicians and citizens only when they reject the substance of a priest's or a bishop's position.

In principle, the archbishop of San José has no greater authority in the Costa Rican church than any of the other four bishops. In practice, however, the archbishop has had a good deal of influence. The first activist archbishop of San José in many years was Sanabria, who was very interested in questions of social welfare and encouraged the formation of labor unions not only to counter the influence of communist-dominated unions but also because of his concern for the more equitable distribution of wealth (see The Rise of Ideology; The Calderón Era, ch. 1). From 1960 to 1979, however, the archbishop of San José was Carlos Humberto Rodríguez Quirós, a member of one of the old elite families, who had little sympathy for the social and political ferment that affected many of the Latin American clergy in the 1960s and 1970s. He

emphasized religious observance to the exclusion of social action.

Rodríguez' position led to a division in the Costa Rican church between priests who followed his lead and those, often younger, priests who adopted what has been called the theology of liberation. Liberation theology emphasizes social reform and social justice and rejects both communist doctrine and dependence on industrial countries.

One of the leaders of this group was Román Arrieta, bishop of Tilarán and in 1979 successor to Rodríguez as archbishop of San José. By the time he became archbishop, the differences that had marked the clergy in the early and mid-1970s had diminished. Under his leadership many of the clergy and lay activists have been directly concerned with social reform. In late 1979, after Arrieta's appointment as archbishop, the bishops collectively issued a pastoral letter titled "Evangelization and Social Reality." In it they rejected development restricted solely to the economy and argued that political and moral factors be considered an important part of development. Specifically, they advocated wider participation in political decisions and emphasized education.

The letter endorsed the right of workers to organize and to strike and supported cooperativism in agricultural communities. The bishops asserted that "in a society that values Christianity there must not be a single human being who lacks the necessary means to satisfy his fundamental needs." At the same time, Arrieta and the other bishops sought to minimize the influence of Marxist doctrine. Thus, in the same 1982 Christmas message in which the bishops urged Costa Rican capitalists to accept higher taxes to make for a more just distribution of income, they also encouraged the clergy to work with the poor as a safeguard against "ideological penetration" from other Central American countries.

The Roman Catholic Church as an Institution

In addition to the archdiocese of San José, there are three dioceses (Alajuela, Tilarán, and San Isidro) and one vicariate apostolic (Puerto Limón). Except for the archdiocese, all have largely rural congregations. The *1983 Catholic Almanac* states that there were 166 parishes in the early 1980s. In the mid-1970s about 40 to 45 percent were in the archdiocese of San José, corresponding roughly to the proportion of the Roman Catholic population in the area. At that time the diocese of Alajuela had about 20 percent of the parishes and 19 percent of the population; the diocese of Tilarán, however, which had nearly as many Roman Catholics, had far fewer parishes. This situation was probably a function of the very

rural character of the area.

In late 1983 there were 434 Roman Catholic priests in Costa Rica. Of these not quite three-fifths were diocesan priests, chiefly Costa Ricans. The remainder were members of seven religious orders. The great majority of religious clergy were foreigners, mainly from the United States, Spain, Italy, and the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). Although assigned to specific dioceses or to the vicariate, there were ultimately under the authority of their orders, all based outside the country.

The ratio of priests to population in Costa Rica was about one to 4,800 in the early 1980s, high for Latin America, but the distribution was somewhat askew. Some urban parishes had more than one priest, but many rural churches had to await the monthly visit of a priest who served several congregations. In the mid-1970s more than 60 percent of all priests were located in the archdiocese of San José, yielding a ratio of one priest to slightly more than 3,300 parishioners. In the much more rural diocese of Tilarán, the locus of large farms and ranches, the ratio was one priest to 8,900 parishioners, and it was even lower in the diocese of San Isidro.

Like other Latin American churches, although not to the same extent, the Costa Rican church has suffered from a shortage of candidates for the priesthood. Relatively few young men entered the seminary, and far fewer completed the seven years of study required for ordination. By the early 1980s, however, the number of seminarians had risen to 189 after more than a decade in which it had not exceeded 100 and was usually far lower than that. The reasons for the increase are not clear, but one factor may be that the social activism of the hierarchy has attracted some who, however devout, have not been prepared to devote themselves to an office lacking social impact.

The increase in seminarians notwithstanding, the outlying areas were not likely in the near future to have the number of priests that the church or the local population might consider desirable. Since 1979 the shortage has been in part alleviated by the appointment of lay deacons (married men over the age of 35) who could baptize, give communion to the sick, and preach sermons at local churches. They could not hear confessions or say mass.

Orders of nuns have played a significant part in Costa Rican religious and social life. In late 1983 their number (867) far exceeded that in Nicaragua, Panama, and Honduras. In the mid-1970s nearly three-fifths were Costa Rican women, a proportion not likely to have changed much by the mid-1980s. Nuns have engaged in work among the poor, teaching, and hospital activities. They also have run the prison for women and, in outlying areas,

Roman Catholic cathedral in Heredia
Photo by Kathryn R. Stafford

have done some of the religious tasks ordinarily performed by priests or, since 1979, by lay deacons.

The Catholic church has sponsored or supported a number of organizations and activities within its institutional framework and outside it. Created within the church in the early 1950s by Archbishop Sanabria, the Association of Educational Development and Social Action has taken the initiative in a number of enterprises, including the establishment of a vocational school system, subsequently taken over by the government. The church also publishes a weekly newspaper, *Eco Católico*, which had a circulation of more than 10,000 in 1983. Among the institutions sponsored by the church have been several private high schools run by priests and nuns. These private schools are attended largely by children of upper and upper middle-class families, some of whom

become Costa Rica s political and business leaders. The Theological Institute of Central America, outside of the Costa Rican church, was founded in 1971 at the time of a major division within the church between those who supported the conservative archbishop Rodríguez and the younger clergy and laity who espoused the theology of liberation. The institute has a link with the Ecumenical School of the Sciences of Religion of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma, where priests, nuns, and the laity attend courses stressing community service and the nature and solution of social problems, to which the clergy are expected to contribute.

Catholic Faith and Observance

A number of observers, either indigenous or foreign priests or devout laymen, have broadly characterized Costa Rican Catholicism as lacking ardor (measuring Costa Ricans by standards that only a minority in large Roman Catholic—or Protestant—populations meet). Despite the similarity of the characterizations, observers differ on what they find lacking.

One Costa Rican priest cited in a sociological source has said, "Ticos are good . . . Catholics. They observe religious practices. . . . But this does not mean the same thing as faith. There is a great lack of conviction and commitment, of living faith. In this sense Ticos are lukewarm Catholics." Others stress precisely the lack of observance, e.g., the few who regularly attend mass and the many whose children have never received their first communion, and they assume that the casual atttitude toward observance reflects a lack of genuine commitment. Some point to the significance of the cult of saints, in one form or another ubiquitous in Latin Catholicism, as indicative of a lack of orthodoxy.

This emphasis on the lax Catholicism of the average Costa Rican obscures the range of variation in commitment, intensity of faith, and observance. It also does not take into account the probability that Costa Ricans would resist any attempt to deprive them of the religion that serves even the less observant in times of crisis. Further, available materials do not deal with the fact that the perception of the church of the hitherto least responsive segments of the population may be affected by the institution's recent rededication to the welfare of the poor.

Those who stress the laxity of observance make the points that some portions of the population have paid little attention to the requirements of their professed Catholicism for as long as anyone has observed Costa Rican practice, and that others who may have been more observant have become less so. Thus it has been said

that peasants have generally been and continue to be more observant than urbanites, but it is also noted that peasants outside the Meseta Central, many of whom are *peones* working on the large holdings of others, have had least to do with the church. This may be ascribed in part to the scarcity of priests in the areas in which they live, but it may also reflect the rural workers' belief that the church has not been concerned with their problems. In the areas that have been more densely settled for some time, a combination of piety and social pressure seems to be conducive to more regular peasant attendance at mass. If a priest appears at the local chapel no more than once a month, local people will walk for miles to be present for the occasion.

The males of the urban working class have also been little attached to the church. Many of them think little of priests who, in turn, until recently have rarely been concerned with the values and problems of working-class males. The women of urban working-class families tend to be more observant.

This difference between men and women apparently cuts across all social classes, urban and rural. Even among relatively observant peasants, women are more active than men. Some men may appear in a church only on the occasion of rites of passage: baptisms, marriages, and funerals. Only in the educated middle stratum and in the upper class do some families attend church as a group and some of the men take an active interest.

Among the pieces of evidence offered in support of the generalization that religious observance has been declining in Costa Rica is the decrease in the incidence of family devotions—such devotions now occur only on special occasions rather than on a daily basis—and the change in the way Holy Week is observed. Less than a half-century ago, much was made of solemn processions. Businesses were closed in the latter half of the week, and cars and buses were not driven from midday Wednesday until Saturday morning. In the San José area in the 1970s, businesses might have closed, but more as a vacation than as a mark of respect for Holy Week. Spectators are fewer, as are participants; many urbanites leave the area. Processions and other activities still draw spectators in the smaller towns and villages, but the solemnity has been much diminished.

These changes in family devotions and in the observance of Holy Week may reflect the differences between a time when religious activities had few rivals for the attention of Costa Ricans and when the systems of transportation and communications were so rudimentary that it was difficult to leave one's local community. Whatever their other meanings, rites and ceremonies

have aesthetic and emotional significance for participants and spectators, and if there are few or no alternatives, the rites and ceremonies will be well attended even by those for whom the religious meaning is not salient. In Costa Rica in the early 1970s, the alternatives have been many, and access to them has been much easier.

What has been called the cult of the saints occurs throughout the Roman Catholic world, but its intensity and significance vary. It tends to be very important in Mediterranean and Latin American Catholicism. Interaction with the saints takes both individual and collective forms. In the collective form, each community or group, e.g., a government department, has a patron saint who is thought to protect the community and to intercede with God on its behalf. Although processions may be held in rural—and even urban—communities on the saint's day (and there are other activities marking the saint's importance), the elaborate social, political, and religious organization and activity connected with patron saints elsewhere are not so developed in Costa Rica. What once existed has declined as alternative demands on the time and energies of Costa Ricans have increased.

Still very important is the individual's relation to a saint or saints. When in a crisis, e.g., one's own illness or that of a child, or simply when a favor is wanted, Costa Ricans of all degrees of religious sophistication are likely to pray to a saint. The saint may have been one recommended by kin or friends or may be widely known as particularly effective in certain situations. Often the intercessor is Mary, the mother of Jesus; sometimes it is a popular, i.e., uncanonized, saint, a person now dead whose behavior in life has led people to think that he or she is possessed of extraordinary powers.

In Roman Catholic teaching all power lies with God, and the saint is an intercessor with God on behalf of the supplicant. In Costa Rican practice, however, God is rarely addressed directly, and the rhetoric of supplication, as well as ordinary discourse, suggests that many Costa Ricans think of the saints as having power in their own right. It is this aspect of the Costa Rican cult of the saints that priests and the more sophisticated criticize. It is the custom when praying to a saint to promise an act of devotion should the prayer be granted. It is also customary to acknowledge the granting of a favor in local newspapers, particularly in the *Eco Católico*. That newspaper makes a point of wording the notice so that it thanks God for favors granted through the intercession of the specific saint.

The intensification of Catholic faith and commitment in the

1970s and early 1980s has taken two forms, one of which may be termed intellectual, the other emotional. In the mid-1960s the church began to sponsor "Short Courses in Christianity" (Cursillos de Cristiandad) taught by the laity. These three-day programs have included prayer and meditation, instruction in doctrine, and religious discussion. Thousands have attended the courses since their inception, and many report a deeper faith and greater understanding of their religion. Although it has not been clear that the courses have attracted uncommitted Catholics, the program has appeared to provide support for that minority of the laity who have been, in turn, the pillars of the church and sometimes its critics.

The other form of intensification has been the charismatic movement. Sometimes referred to as Catholic Pentecostalism, the movement has been formally called Spiritual Renovation. At its services, usually dedicated to the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, prophesying, and emotional and rhythmic utterances and movements are common. Until 1976 Archbishop Rodríguez looked askance at the charismatic movement, but in that year he permitted priests to hold charismatic services. Archbishop Arrieta, his successor, appears to have accepted the movement as a legitimate mode of Catholicism. As many as 10,000 persons considered themselves charismatics in the mid-1970s, and the movement has continued to grow. Several parishes have become centers of such services.

Education

As early as 1869 the constitution declared the government responsible for free and compulsory education, but the institutionalization of the school system did not really begin until the 1880s. The income from coffee permitted a building program to be undertaken, and the anticlerical orientation of the political leaders of the time encouraged them to replace the church-sponsored schools with public, secular education. Church-run schools and other private institutions remained open, however, in part because Costa Ricans objected to an end to religious teaching. Despite this early and auspicious start, education remained rudimentary for most Costa Rican boys and rarely reached girls. There were improvements in organization and growth in the numbers of young people educated in the first four decades of the twentieth century, but real increases in the numbers of schools, teachers, and pupils did not take place until after World War II.

Throughout the earlier period and through most of the modern era, the conception of education that has guided the state, the educational leaders, and others has been of a system that turns out cultured, literate persons who would, among other things, constitute an informed electorate. The notion of educating a diverse population for a changing society and economy did not become significant until the 1960s. Even as some of the goals of education have been changing, the emphasis that Costa Ricans at all levels give to education has persisted. Political leaders and others point to the proportion of the budget expended on education—nearly one-fourth in the early 1980s. Of all the government ministries and autonomous agencies, none has more employees than the Ministry of Public Education. These expenditures notwithstanding, teachers in 1983 were not highly paid. Attempts to reduce expenditures, if they entailed real reductions in the availability of educational opportunity, would probably be strongly resisted.

It cannot be said that the goals of the early visionaries were achieved. Far too many students dropped out of school before completing the six years that, until the 1970s, constituted primary education. And many who did complete it were not very well educated, nor did they retain much of what they had learned, given the lack of textbooks and trained teachers and the emphasis on rote learning. Moreover, the benefits derived from a largely academic education by a peasant or an unskilled worker were limited.

Costa Rica's literacy rate was estimated in 1973 at a little less than 89 percent for those over 10 years of age and at more than 90 percent in the early 1980s. There was little difference between the sexes, but a considerable one between rural and urban dwellers. These estimates were based on minimal criteria, however; counted as literate were all who had ever gone to school or could sign their names. In the mid-1970s the minister of public education, emphasing functional literacy, suggested 30 percent of the population over age 10 was illiterate, rather than the 11 percent officially estimated. Even so, the illiteracy rate was lower than that of many comparable countries in the region.

Until the early 1970s only primary grades one through six were compulsory and free. Secondary education was nominally free but not compulsory. Beginning in 1973 compulsory education was extended through the ninth grade, in principle encompassing all children between the ages of six and 15. The extension was a response to the view of many Costa Ricans that even those students who completed the six-year primary school were not adequately educated and that some students, as well as Costa

Rican society, might be better served by vocational or technical training after a basic general education had been acquired. It was not expected that all of the institutions and teachers would be fully in place to cope with the influx of new students until the early 1980s.

Primary schooling, comprising two levels of three years each, continued to provide a general basic education to all students. Some Costa Rican observers seemed to think that distinctions in the curriculum ought to be made at these levels to take into account the different needs and experience of urban and rural students, but others thought that distinctions would amount to discrimination and would negate some of the goals of universal education—to give all Costa Ricans an all-around basic education in mathematics, science, language, and art, to provide moral and physical training, and to prepare them for citizenship.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s there were more pupils enrolled in the first two levels than there were children between the ages of six and 11, despite the continued, if much diminished, problem of dropouts. That seemed to be a consequence of the tendency of some pupils to begin schooling after the age of six and to complete primary school well after the age of 12.

The third level, the equivalent of what was formerly the lower level of a five-year secondary program, had two parts. One, the third level proper, continued the academic training begun in primary school. If it was completed and an examination passed, the student went on to another two years of academic education and, if further examinations were passed and other requirements met, eventually to higher education. The other part of the third level was termed diversified education and included a number of programs in crafts, agriculture, and technical subjects that led to a middle-level diploma. The diversified program presumably integrated the relatively small number of public vocational schools that have existed since 1956. Although many who were enrolled in one of the diversified programs did not go beyond this level, there were more advanced technical and agricultural courses for which some of them were eligible. In the late 1970s, when compulsory attendance in the academic or diversified programs had not yet been fully instituted, about 40 percent of the age-group between 12 and 15 was enrolled, a considerable increase over the pre-1973 era and likely to rise still further. Available data did not indicate the distribution of students between the academic and diversified programs.

The fourth level also contained several programs, one of which was academic. The remainder were technical schools of several

kinds. Among the most numerous and widespread were schools of agriculture and livestock, but there were also schools for industrial and craft skills, commercial training, and other specialized fields.

The oldest university dates from 1940 when the Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) was founded on a campus in San Pedro, a suburb of San José. The first university, Santo Tomás, established soon after independence, was closed in 1888. Its Faculty of Law remained in existence, however, and other separate entities were founded after 1888, e.g., faculties of fine arts, pharmacy, education, and agriculture. All of these and other newly established ones were incorporated in the UCR. The core of the university in late 1983 was the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, which provided an education to those who did not wish a professional degree and a common general education to those who went on to obtain degrees from the special faculties.

The demand for higher education in Costa Rica had been overwhelming. The UCR had fewer than 6,000 students in 1965; by the early 1970s there were more than 20,000, in part a consequence of the population growth of the 1950s, in part a product of the growth of the middle class and the urban population generally. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the student body of the university numbered between 29,000 and 30,000, despite the opening of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma (UNA) at Heredia in 1973. The UNA, which started with 1,000 students, had more than 5,000 in 1974 and over 11,000 by the early 1980s.

Subsequently, a number of regional university colleges were established, each of them attached to one of the two universities. Their founding was partly a response to local demand, but it was also an attempt to relieve the overcrowding at the two universities in the Meseta Central.

The Instituto Technológico de Costa Rica was established near Cartago in the early 1970s to provide technical training at a level below that of university-educated engineers but well above that of skilled workers. For example, it has trained construction engineers who have filled a role between that of a civil engineer and a foreman. There were also programs in industrial production and maintenance, electronics, and highway construction. A branch at San Carlos offered training in agriculture and forestry. The number of students at the institute has been far fewer than that at either of the universities, somewhat more than 2,000 in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The two state-supported universities, the UCR and the UNA, have incorporated the teacher-training institutions, formerly

called normal schools. There has been some criticism of the depth and quality of education in these sections of the universities.

In 1976 the Universidad Autónoma de Centra América (UACA), a private university, was opened. Despite its much higher tuition and its lack of a central campus, it attracted as many as 3,200 students in 1978. Its dependence on private sources of support may have been affected by the economic difficulties of Costa Rica beginning in the late 1970s and continuing into the 1980s. In 1982 it was said to have about 2,600 students.

The founding of the UNA and the UACA reflected not only the apparent need for more places for students but also dissatisfaction with the quality and content of education, first at the UCR and later at both the UCR and the UNA. The establishment of the UNA by the Figueres government was a response to what was perceived as the elitism of the UCR, its catering to the upper and upper middle classes, and its remoteness from the social problems that Figueres and his supporters thought a university ought to address.

The UCR emphasized lectures, set readings of textbooks, and memorization. Both the lack of funds and the orientation of the university limited the use of laboratories, field research, seminars, and the like, although some faculties, e.g., that of medicine, were considered the best in Central America. The UCR was also the locus of a good department of microbiology which, by arrangement with other Central American countries, served as the department in that field for all Central Americans wishing to specialize in it.

The UNA moved sharply in another direction, stressing group discussions, social research, and action in the field and focusing on what staff and students considered to be the socially significant issues. It was not clear, however, that the discussions and action in the field were grounded in a disciplined study of relevant bodies of knowledge.

The UACA took still another tack. Classes were small, and students were assigned to tutors on a long-term basis. Intellectual demands seemed to be greater than in either of the other two universities, and, in the mid- and late 1970s at least, the campus was even less agitated by student political activitity than were the other two universities (see Political Interest Groups, ch. 4).

The Universidad Estatal a Distancia, a special facility supported by the state, was established in 1978. It offered courses for credit through television. By 1981 there were more than 6,000 students enrolled, most of them presumably working full-time or unable to afford regular university costs.

Health

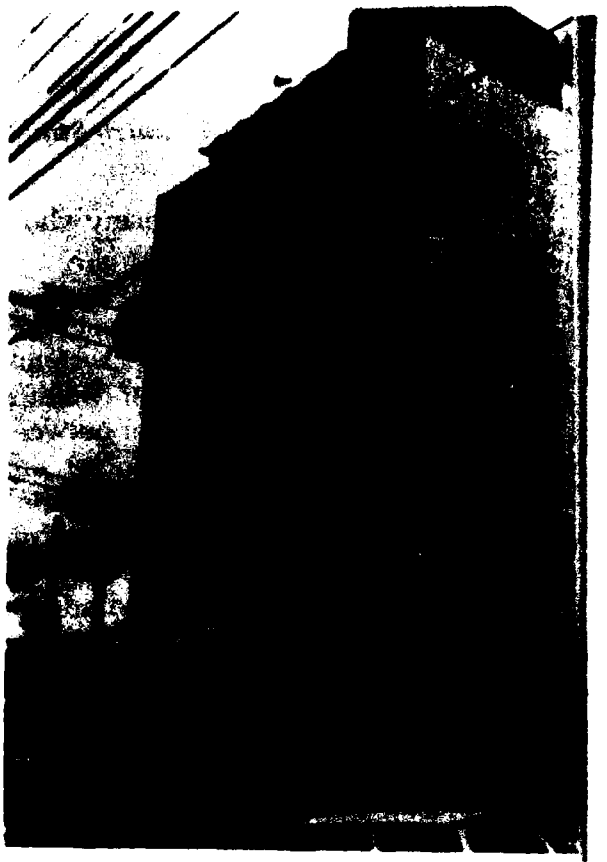
The incidence of illness and death caused by illness in the early 1980s was comparatively low, and the availability of medical care and preventive measures was fairly widespread. Rates of mortality and infant mortality and life expectancy reflected this situation. The mortality rate in the early 1980s, a little more than four deaths per 1,000 people, was among the lowest in the world. The infant mortality rate of a little more than 24 per 1,000 live births was slightly higher than the average for all developed countries but well below the rates of all lbut a few Latin American countries. Life expectancy at birth averaged more than 70 years of age; that for women was about four years higher than that for men.

The low general and infant mortality rates and the climbing life expectancy in turn reflected the success of Costa Ricans in combating the range of communicable and other diseases that commonly have afflicted the inhabitants, particularly young children, of underdeveloped countries in tropical and subtropical areas. The success in diminishing the impact of formerly common diseases and the increasing industrialization and urbanization of Costa Rica have led to a shift in the nature of the illnesses increasingly responsible for death and various forms of disability. In short, the incidence of illnesses of age, e.g., cancer and cardiovascular diseases, has risen.

Some of the successes, such as the virtual stamping out of malaria, occurred before the 1970s. It was in that decade, however, that the reorganization of the health services and a strong effort to institute preventive measures throughout Costa Rica led to relatively quick results.

Until 1973 the responsibility for health care was divided among several organizations, of which the Ministry of Public Health and the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social—CCSS) were the most important There were also private practitioners and hospital facilities, used chiefly by members of the upper and upper middle strata. The companies operating the great banana plantations in the Caribbean lowlands and the southwest provided medical care to their employees. The National Insurance Institute, an autonomous government agency, insured industrial workers and agricultural workers engaged in tasks using power machinery against work-related and other accidents and loss of pay.

The Ministry of Public Health was responsible for providing low-cost medical care (and when necessary, hospitalization) for Costa Ricans who were not covered by the social security system



Headquarters of the Costa Rican Social Security Fund in San José Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

or the National Insurance Institute. For those who could not afford any payment, such care was free. The ministry was also engaged in a preventive medicine program, but its scope and the numbers of people reached were limited. The CCSS, which ran its own outpatient clinics and hospitals, was intended to cover all employed persons in industry and agriculture, but until the early 1970s it chiefly covered employees in the Meseta Central.

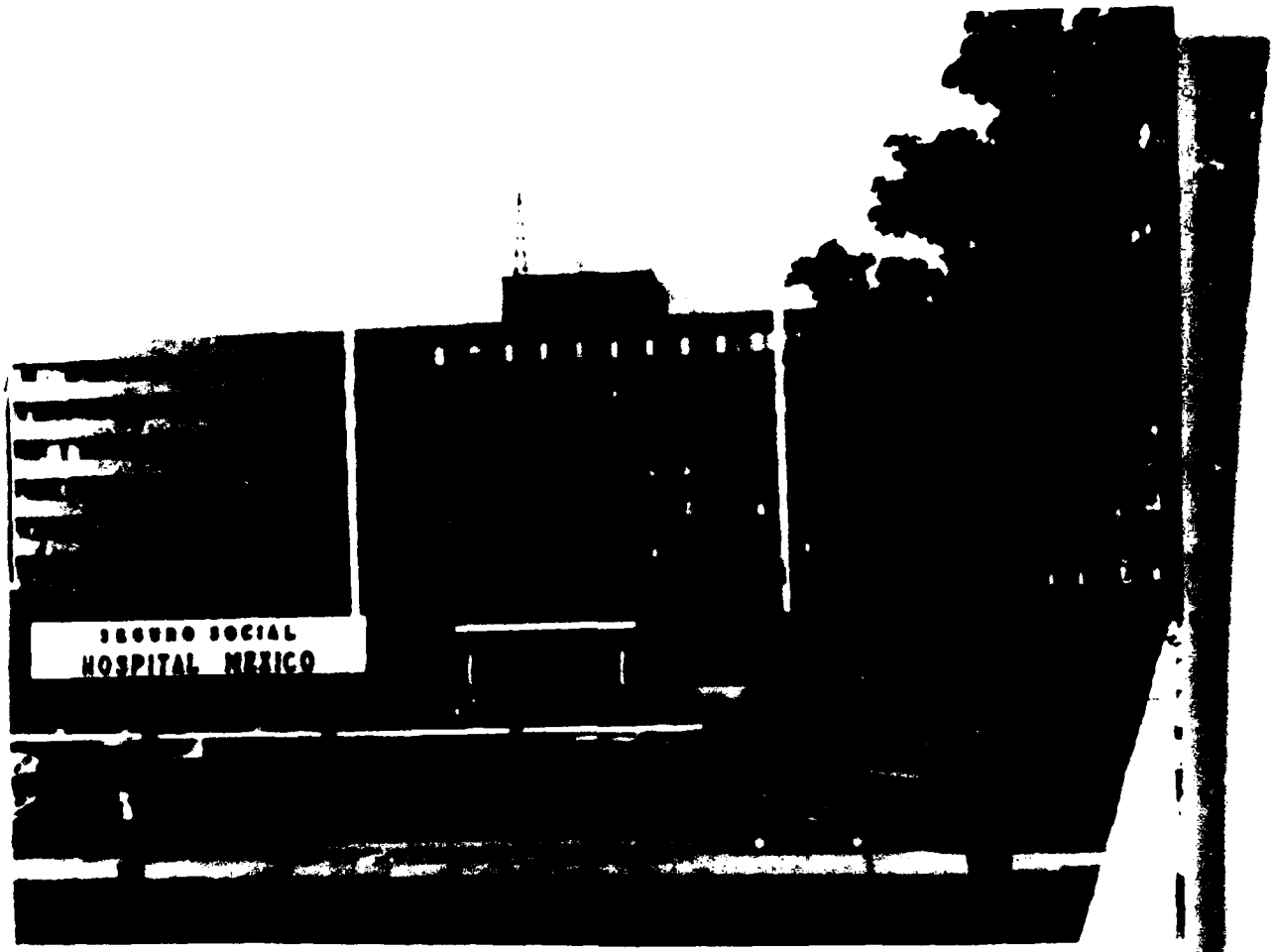
In 1973 the ministry was redesignated the Ministry of Health and was reorganized. Its responsibility for preventive medicine and other measures contributing to the health of the population was expanded. It has retained some jurisdiction over the provision of curative medicine, but that responsibility has been carried out in conjunction with its preventive work, chiefly in the rural areas and, beginning in 1974, in the areas inhabited by the poorer segments of the urban population. Its hospitals and most of its outpatient services were transferred to the social security system. The CCSS has incorporated a much larger segment of the population in its varied programs, e.g., old age, invalid, and death benefits, and under its new authority it has extended access to its

medical facilities to many who are not otherwise covered by social security.

Despite the growth in the number and availability of CCSS facilities, they had not yet reached the entire population, and, as in most health delivery systems of this kind, waiting and bureaucratic delays have been common. There has also been a frequent lack of communication between patients (usually of the working class and the peasantry) and medical personnel and their paramedical and bureaucratic assistants (of the upper or lower middle class). Despite the frustrations, the system has worked with some degree of effectiveness in delivering curative medicine to a population that had previously lacked it.

The decline in the incidence of communicable and other diseases has been largely the work of the institutions and programs run by the Ministry of Health in the rural areas and in the urban slums. It was in these areas that sanitary conditions, e.g.,, the lack of potable water, malnutrition, and the presence of diseases preventable by immunization, had generated or contributed to high incidences of illness and infant mortality.

The Program of Rural Health began even before the reorganization of the ministry, having taken over a structure that had managed to eradicate malaria by 1968. Beginning in 1973 the Ministry of Health established health posts, which have been responsible for the first level of health care and preventive practice, and health centers, which have provided support and supervision. A health post serves a population of from 1,000 to 2,000, some of whom may live as far as 10 miles away. It is staffed by two persons, one male and one female—a medical auxiliary, who is expected to have a year's training, and an assistant, who has four months' preparation. Each, however, spends one day a month on refresher courses. They are responsible for maintaining records on every household in the post's area; the records are transmitted to a central point so that medical personnel are aware when problems arise. These two persons also maintain systematic immunization of the population, including vaccinations for diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough and for other diseases, such as measles, poliomyelitis, and tuberculosis. Health post staff also vaccinate adults against tetanus and check them for tuberculosis and hypertension if they have reason to think the adults are suffering from these problems. In their visits to the homes, they ask a series of questions to elicit information that may point to the presence of other diseases. If symptoms suggest diseases such as leprosy, cancer, intestinal worms, or venereal disease, the patient is referred to the health center. Instruction is also given on the



Mexico Hospital at Uruca in San José Province, like all others in Costa Rica, operates under the national social security system. Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

maintenance of household sanitation and other matters. The staff can dispense a limited range of medicines for certain symptoms, give first aid, conduct oral rehydration for diarrhea victims, and provide powdered milk for expectant mothers who appear to lack adequate nutrition. A major focus for the health post workers is instruction of others both before and after childbirth on hygiene, nutrition, and psychological stimulation of the child.

An important adjunct to the health posts and centers are the preschool education and nutrition centers. These are not as numerous as health posts, but they are quite widespread. They take children from ages two to six, seek to educate them, provide them with two nutritionally balanced meals daily, and educate their mothers on matters of nutrition and child rearing. Although detailed information on the functioning of the community health programs in urban areas was not available in 1983, these programs, first instituted in 1974, appeared to have taken hold.

The success of rural health posts and the education and nutri-

tion centers is in good part attributable to their enlistment of the support of the local communities in which they exist. Although the government pays the salaries of the health personnel, provides the pharmaceuticals, and gives other support, the land and facilities for the health posts and the education centers are provided and built by the communities through their elected committees. The education and nutrition centers also have committees that organize the transportation of supplies, maintain the buildings, supply cooks, and the like.

In addition to the Ministry of Health, other agencies have played a role in the prevention of disease. For example, clean water has been brought to much of the population, thus helping to decrease the incidence of gastroenteritic diseases, hepatitis, and typhoid. The Ministry of Public Education has furnished shoes to those who could not afford them in order to diminish parasitic invasions.

The costs of providing curative and preventive health care to Costa Ricans are great, and there were considerable problems in meeting those costs in the late 1970s and early 1980s as shortfalls in government revenues reflected a decline in the economy. Thus, although the CCSS was, in principle, self-supporting, it did receive a government subsidy. Moreover, part of its income came from government contributions on behalf of its employees, and these were often paid late. Another threat to the continuing success of the health maintenance program was the decline in the living standard of the poorest segment of the population. Instruction in nutrition and even some help in providing food were undermined by the inability of some Costa Ricans to buy what they needed. Malnutrition, a significant contributing factor to ill health and infant mortality, had been sharply reduced through the 1970s, but there were indications in 1983 that its incidence might be climbing. Thus, the Institute for Health Research of the UCR reported that there had been an increase in infant mortality and in the number of babies having low birth weights, in part the consequence of malnourishment of expectant mothers.

* * *

A very useful, if sometimes debatable, description of Costa Rican society and culture is provided by Richard, Karen, and Mavis Biesanz in their book, *The Costa Ricans*. Mitchell Seligson's *Peasants of Costa Rica and the Development of Agrarian*

Capitalism furnishes a thorough exposition from an interesting perspective of the history and modern situation of the peasantry. In *Cannabis in Costa Rica*, William Carter and his American and Costa Rican associates deal with the social, psychological, and medical aspects of the widespread use of marijuana by working-class males in Costa Rica. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 3. The Economy

Bananas, a major Costa Rican export

THE COSTA RICAN ECONOMY operates under the general principles that characterize a largely private enterprise system. Since the civil war of 1948 and the Constitution of 1949, however, the government has taken an active role, not only through regulation but also through public sector corporations. Initially, this involved the takeover of such operations as banking, electric power generation and distribution, and telecommunications. In the 1970s, intervention was expanded to agriculture and industry; corporations were formed to implement projects that were considered desirable for economic development but were not undertaken by the private sector—either for lack of interest or because of the large investment required.

Since early times, the economy has been trade oriented, and economic development has been based largely on the agricultural and livestock sector, in particular on the export of coffee, bananas, and livestock products. Manufacturing has grown in importance—in employment provided, foreign exchange earned, and diversification of production—but its structural emphasis on use of imported materials has limited its contribution in overall development. The country's most valuable natural resources are its cultivable land—an area of large dimension and good soils—and its pastures that can support great numbers of cattle. Hydroelectric potential, which is still only partially utilized, offers the possibility for a substantial degree of energy self-sufficiency. The remaining major natural resource, the nation's forests, has not been used to full advantage; much of the forest wealth has been dissipated without much real return, although enough remained in 1983 that, with proper care, future national requirements could still largely be met. Minerals have contributed only in a small way to economic growth. The known resources in 1983 could not be counted on to aid future economic expansion significantly.

In 1983 the country was in the third year of a deep recession, after almost two decades of positive and generally steady growth. Between 1960 and the late 1970s the gross domestic product (GDP) had grown in real terms at an impressive average annual rate of 6 percent. The expansion of agriculture had been very satisfactory and well above the population growth rate, and manufacturing growth had proceeded at double the rate of agriculture. Throughout the period, inflation had remained low, except for a relatively brief period in the mid-1970s when the domestic situation had been adversely influenced by the worldwide in-

crease in oil prices.

Unemployment was moderate, and a gradual increase in real income had occurred. The gains from this economic growth were spread through the extension of educational and health facilities, especially in rural areas, the development of the country's economic infrastructure, and wider access to the conveniences of modern life. Per capita income in comparable values doubled during this time from the equivalent of US$838 in 1960 to US$1,630 in 1979; in the latter year it was well above that of the other Central American states.

In 1976 and 1977 unexpectedly high receipts from external trade had resulted in a boom psychology that was translated into greatly increased government expenditures on social services, large outlays for expansion of communications and transportation facilities, and wage increases. In the private sector spending escalated, including a sharp increase in the purchase of durables that involved substantial installment buying. However, almost overnight the country's terms of trade turned unfavorable, and certain negative factors that had been gradually developing had a cumulative effect on the economy. These included a slowing down of agricultural growth as virgin land disappeared, diminishing investment in import-substitution manufacturing as new markets shrank, and rising deficits of government corporations. In 1979 the GDP grew at only 4.9 percent, still good by comparison with other developing countries but down over 22 percent from the rate of 6.3 percent the year before. In 1980 the downward trend accelerated, and growth in total output of goods and services was under 1 percent. In 1981 the GDP dropped sharply by 4.6 percent, and in 1982 it registered a further decline of some 6 percent.

Corrective steps initiated by the administration of President Rodrigo Carazo Odio, who had been elected in 1978, were not pursued with the determination necessary. Foreign borrowing increased in a desperate attempt to bolster the rapidly deteriorating economy. By the end of Odio's term in early 1982 the country's foreign debt was approaching US$3 billion. In May 1982, a new government headed by Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez took office. Monge had promised quick action to resolve the crisis and proposed a program of strict austerity. Costa Rica has an open economy that functions in a democratic political setting. Characteristic of the latter, action is frequently slowed by the need to reach agreement on issues between the executive and the legislature. However, considerable progress was made within a

reasonable period, aided by the fact that Monge's party had secured a large majority in the Legislative Assembly. This included moves to reverse the highly inflationary fiscal and monetary policies of the preceding administration that included new revenue measures, increases in charges for government-provided services, and cutbacks or postponement of expenditures in order to reduce budgetary deficits. The administration also undertook to reduce the swollen public sector bureaucracy and the drain on credit by the autonomous government agencies that had seriously impeded private sector operations and expansion. Significantly, an important measure of control over the exchange rate of the colón, which had depreciated from 8.6 to the United States dollar in 1980 to more than 60 in mid-1982, was effected; by late 1983 a unified bank-free rate of about 43.5 had been established.

The steps taken had achieved a measure of stability. Major domestic problems remained, however, including large-scale unemployment, which ran over 9 percent, and underemployment in excess of that figure. The inflation rate, which had reached 90 percent in 1982, had dropped markedly in the first nine months of 1983 (averaging about 8 percent), although a a principal cause was a broad decline in purchasing power. There was an urgent need to stimulate production in both manufacturing and agriculture. A major reorientation of manufacturing from its overwhelming dependence on imported raw materials to the development of industries based on domestic agricultural production was required.

Land Resources, Use, and Tenure

Substantial variations exist in estimates of the use potential of Costa Rica's some 5.1 million hectares. A report assembled in 1980 for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) listed 2.2 million hectares (somewhat more than 42 percent) of the country's total area as usable for seasonal or permanent crops or pastureland. Land best suited for forestry purposes, including natural and plantation stands of trees, totaled another 1.5 million hectares (30 percent). Almost 7 percent of the country's area (352,000 hectares) consisted of swamps, lakes, and other inundated land. The remainder, 1.1 million hectares (21 percent), included land suited largely for environmental protective use: forests for watershed protection and erosion control, national park areas, animal and plant reserves, and others.

In 1973 the government conducted a major census that encompassed 3.1 million hectares (61.2 percent of Costa Rica's total

area) that were then devoted to various agricultural and livestock uses. The some 2 million hectares not included were areas exploited exclusively for forestry purposes, private land having an agricultural potential but not used for cultivation or herding, land occupied by man-made features, areas covered by water, and a few other minor land categories. Of the total area covered by the census, some 2 million hectares, or almost 66 percent, were exploited as cropland and pastureland—of which 24 percent was used for the former and 76 percent for the latter. A significant change in distribution between the two had taken place since a similar census was conducted in 1963, when the proportions were 38 percent and 62 percent, respectively. During the 1963-73 period, cropland declined from 587,000 hectares to 490,000 hectares, whereas pastureland expanded from 957,000 to 1.6 million hectares. Most of the latter had occurred largely at the expense of the forests (see Forestry, this ch.).

The picture presented by the two censuses remained generally valid in the early 1980s. Estimates in 1980 by the Executive Secretariat for Agriculture-Livestock Sectoral Planning (Secretaría Ejecutiva de Planificación Sectorial Agropecuaria—SEPSA), which comprehended just under 4.9 million hectares of the country considered to have usable soils, judged 69 percent (3.4 million hectares) to have potential use for agriculture and livestock raising. At that time, some 511,000 hectares were in actual use for agriculture and 2.4 million hectares for animal husbandry, or between them about 60 percent of the total usable area. The earlier trend toward increasing land use for livestock had intensified as evidenced by the estimated 82.5 percent share of agricultural-livestock land occupied by that industry. Notably, whereas according to SEPSA calculations only about one-quarter of the total of 4.9 million hectares of usable land was ideally suited for livestock, in 1980 almost one-half was actually being used for that purpose.

The history of land tenure development in Costa Rica differs substantially from that of other Latin American countries. The lands discovered by Christopher Columbus were by then-accepted rights of possession the property of the Spanish crown. Royal grants of large areas, including their populations, were made to the conquistadores who explored and colonized the new territories. In the case of Costa Rica, however, the indigenous population was small and the labor force inadequate for the development of a system of large haciendas. In the Meseta Central, where most colonization occurred, a few wealthy families owned estates under grants, but much of the land was initially held by

the early municipalities. Parts of this land were transferred to individual groups establishing new villages as communal holdings. Areas were then apportioned to families on the basis of their ability to cultivate them. The shortage of nonfamily labor effectively limited the size of the holding, and a general pattern of small, moderately equal farms emerged. In 1848 individual ownership of these farms became possible under a law that permitted purchase at a very low price of fenced-in and cultivated holdings. Subsequently, the central government sold uncultivated land, with few restrictions on amounts to any buyer. As the coffee export trade flourished after the mid-1800s, the government also gave land without cost to persons willing to expand coffee cultivation. Toward the end of the century, large estates (chiefly coffee, but also cattle raising) grew in number, both through land purchases from the state and from contiguous small coffee farms (whose owners, by preference, frequently became paid laborers on the estate). In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the acquisition of extremely large holdings by foreign banana interests substantially skewed the ratio statistically between small and large farm areas. But the banana plantations were in the Caribbean coastal region, and their size had no direct relationship to the situation in the Meseta Central, where the total area occupied by large estates remained relatively small; the latter region consisted still of small farms generally adequate in size to provide a livelihood for the family.

By the beginning of the 1900s the amount of virgin public land in the Meseta Central was greatly reduced, and size restrictions were placed on government sales. However, a considerable area of land in large estates had not been put to use, and in 1909, to encourage more productive use of still available public land, the government began giving 50 hectares without cost to any family head who would settle and cultivate it. But wealthy individuals and foreigners continued to buy properties in the decades before World War II, and during this same time many small plots were reduced in size by division among heirs to the point where they were too small to support a family. Nonetheless, public land, less desirable because of remoteness and poor or absent infrastructure, remained available outside the Meseta Central to those individuals who would work it, and at the outbreak of World War II, ownership of the country's farmland still was not highly concentrated. The economic problems that emerged from the war inspired an effort to develop an agrarian reform program. Nothing came of this, in large part because of opposition from large landowners. But, as political scientist Mitchell A. Seligson, a student

of agrarian development in Costa Rica, has pointed out, the landlords were not involved in a "death struggle with peasant masses; pressure for reform from below was minimal."

In the 1950s the increasing work force, mechanization that reduced the number of rural wage jobs, and other factors created growing demands for smallholder land. The shortage of free land, except in areas then considered very remote, resulted in squatting on some large private holdings (as well as on state land). In October 1961, apparently partly in response to the call for agrarian reform in the Charter of the Alliance for Progress adopted two months earlier by the United States and the Latin American countries, the Legislative Assembly enacted an agrarian reform law that had wide support from the large landowners. A principal factor in this support appears to have been inclusion of a provision that any land acquired from the landowners had to be compensated for before it was taken, at full value (based on the owner's declaration for tax purposes). A statement in the act, also apparently at the behest of the large landowners, reiterated the state's recognition of the existence and legitimacy of private ownership (which has never been seriously questioned in Costa Rica's modern history). It has been suggested that this declaration was included to discourage squatting by individuals hoping that their action would be approved under the new measure. Squatting, however, continued to be illegal after the passage of the 1961 law.

The legislation specified those lands that belonged to the state. They included all municipal lands and lands of autonomous institutions not recorded as private property; unrecorded occupied land not legally protected by possession for a period of 10 years; and generally all other land not privately owned and not used in the public service. Certain lands were declared to be inalienable, unless they were already in private hands. They included a zone 200 meters in width inland from the high-tide line on the coasts, specified zones along rivers and the borders of watersheds, forest reserves, national parklands, etc. A two-kilometer zone adjacent to the borders with Panama and Nicaragua was also inalienable.

Full ownership of land by noncitizens, resident or nonresident, was permitted, according to laws in effect in mid-1983. Exceptions included lands in indigenous Indian reserves, where ownership was restricted to the particular group. Certain other land held by the state for government land distribution programs, including that purchased from private owners, was available only to citizens but could be purchased from them by noncitizens after a stipulated period of time.

Among the principal purposes of the measure (and subsequent

amendments) were to promote a sound system of landownership (large numbers of small farmers did not hold legal title to their land, in many cases the consequence of the complex and somewhat expensive procedure needed to acquire a title); to contribute to the more equitable distribution of the nation's wealth; and to provide individuals and other persons who formed a cooperative, with land, or supplementary land, in an amount sufficient to exploit economically. The act authorized the establishment of the Institute of Lands and Colonization (Instituto de Tierras y Colonización—ITCO) to further these aims. ITCO's first efforts were directed mainly at founding settlements. These were located on remote virgin land, which could be purchased more cheaply and, based on the amount of funds available to ITCO, provided a greater number of settlers with farms. But a lack of infrastructure had an adverse effect on success, and some settlers left. This program ended in 1966: a total of 11 settlements having, initially, some 1,220 settlers had been established. In the early 1970s a new effort was based on locations already possessing some infrastructure and near major marketing facilities. Both individual ownership and self-managed communal property undertakings were sponsored.

Progress reports on this new program in the mid-1970s stated that more than 1,300 families had been or were being settled on communal and private holdings. But government funds provided during the decade for the purchase and redistribution of private lands were very modest. In the late 1970s thousands of families were reported seeking land, and the deteriorating economic situation in the early 1980s added to the total. In February 1983 President Monge announced a "land for the peasant" program, for which approximately ₡1.35 billion (for value of the colón—see Glossary) was being provided. He emphasized that the program would be carried out with due respect for private property and in accordance with the country's laws, noting that private estates had been invaded by squatters. These invasions had been reported from various parts of the country and apparently had risen in number, prompted mainly by economic conditions. In 1983 there was no evidence that such squatters had rights to the land they occupied arbitrarily, but it was necessary for the recognized owner of the land to request that eviction be carried out by the local authorities if such action was to be legal. Over time, both law and custom have accorded certain rights to squatters. Those who occupy land for more than three months cannot be evicted summarily but remain in possession of the sites pending court decisions on their claims. A squatter who remains on the land for one

year and is a bona fide settler may not be evicted arbitrarily. If a squatter and a titled owner agree that the former is to vacate the site, the titled owner must provide compensation for any improvements the squatter has made during the period of tenure.

Perhaps the most successful effort under the agrarian reform law has been the titling program. Titling procedures in Costa Rica consist of a complicated, lengthy series of steps that are expensive for the title seeker. Surveys have found that a lack of title affects productivity by generally denying to the landholder needed bank credit and by discouraging the cultivation of permanent crops (essentially coffee and bananas) because of the fear of eviction. At the time of the 1963 census, about one-half of the land recorded as farmland was held by individuals without titles. A sample survey made a decade later found that in the particular area covered, some 44 percent of the landholders did not have recorded titles. From the mid-1960s ITCO took a special interest in titling, in particular those cases dealing with disputes concerning squatting. By 1970 almost 2,500 titles had been granted under the program; some 46 percent covered squatting, mostly on public farmland. That year USAID furnished a substantial agricultural loan to Costa Rica, part of which went to ITCO for titling activities. Through 1978 almost 24,000 additional titles had been secured (among them 657 titles covering squatting on private land and 1,281 on public farmland). The extent of ITCO's activities in the early 1980s was unknown.

Agriculture

Agriculture, including livestock, underpins the Costa Rican economy. Although the sector's contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary) has declined proportionally relative to that of manufacturing, it has accounted regularly for over 60 percent of vital foreign exchange earnings and has remained the principal source of government revenue (see table 3, Appendix). In 1982 about 30 percent of the working population was engaged in some kind of agricultural pursuit, and the sector was the largest single employer of wage labor.

Cultivation is carried on both by smallholders and by large estates or plantations. Information on the distribution of holdings was not current in late 1983, however. Figures regularly cited were from a census taken in 1973, and comparisons related to a similar census taken 10 years earlier. In 1973 some 77,000 farms having landholdings that totaled over 3.1 million hectares were

Farmland in the Meseta Central
Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

enumerated. More than 14,400 had less than one hectare; this group accounted for 18.7 percent of total farms and held 0.2 percent of the farm area. More than 20,800 others had holdings between one and five hectares (27.1 percent of farms and 1.7 percent of the area). In all, farms under one hectare to 50 hectares in size, beyond which farms were considered large, numbered 65,551. They constituted over 85 percent of all farms and encompassed 20.3 percent of the total farm area. About 11,450 farms that were larger than 50 hectares, constituting 14.9 percent of all farms, held 79.7 percent of all farmland. A small number of farms (745), constituting a relatively minute 2 percent of all farms, owned 36 percent of the farm area. The number of farms increased between the 1963 and 1973 censuses. The percentage of very small (under one hectare) and of relatively large farms above 200 hectares rose at a much greater rate during that decade than farms of intermediate size. The splitting of holdings into small units and the emergence of more large estates was believed to have continued in the post-1973 period, but details await a new census sometime in the 1980s.

During the 1960s agriculture's contribution to GDP grew at an annual average rate of over 5 percent. To a considerable extent,

growth resulted from the opening up of new farm areas. But by the end of the decade most of the readily accessible new land had been occupied. During the first half of the 1970s, the rate of increase declined to an average of about 3.5 percent a year, and in the period 1976-81 it was only about 1.7 percent. The decline has also been attributed in part to other factors, including policies followed by the government with respect to producer prices, inadequate efforts to introduce new techniques, and shortage of credit. Depressed world prices from 1978 through 1983 for coffee (the major crop), from 1977 to 1979 and again from 1982 for sugar, and in 1981 and 1982 for meat have also affected production and growth.

In 1983 new agricultural lands still were available in the tropical lowlands in Limón Province and tropical areas in the northern part of the country. But infrastructure was almost nonexistent, particularly roads needed to open up the areas and provide market access. Also, little was known of land potentials. Any substantial increase in crop production in the near future appeared dependent largely on increased productivity. Efforts along this line were already well under way in the coffee industry, and the use of high-yield rice strains has markedly raised production of that grain. In 1982 the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a loan of US$26.6 million to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock for programs to raise productivity covering both export and domestic-use crops, as well as livestock raising. Other major possibilities were to increase land under irrigation—which would permit double or continuous cropping—and to expand the land area through drainage. Costa Rica has about 386,000 hectares considered suitable for irrigation, but water availability and climatic conditions limit the amount usable to approximately 212,000 hectares. In the early 1980s some 66,000 hectares were under irrigation, mostly by private sector interests; about 70 percent of this area was devoted to banana, coffee, rice, and sugar cultivation. Additionally, drainage systems have been developed on about 25,000 hectares (most of this land was used for bananas and oil palms).

Crops

Costa Rica's wide range of climates—tropical, subtropical, and temperate—permits cultivation of a variety of crops. Those produced mainly for export predominate over those grown primarily for domestic consumption. The principal so-called traditional export crops include bananas, coffee, cacao, and sugarcane (sugar).

In the early 1980s the government was also promoting increased production for export of various "nontraditional" crops, including coconuts, macadamia nuts, melons, pineapples, and a number of other tropical items grown in Costa Rica. The major crops cultivated for domestic consumption were beans, maize, plantains, potatoes, rice, sorghum, and onions. Others of less significance were cassava, cotton, and tobacco (see table 4, Appendix).

The banana, believed to be native to tropical Asia, was introduced into the Caribbean islands and then into Central America early in the Spanish period. It was not until after the mid-1860s, however, that the fruit became fairly widely known in the United States. By the 1870s a small but highly profitable American market had developed for bananas (mostly from Jamaica and some of the other islands). During that decade commercial production of the Gros Michel variety, which became the leading market fruit, was started in Costa Rica by American entrepreneur Minor Cooper Keith (see Minor Cooper Keith, ch. 1). Keith's first exports, made in 1880 to New Orleans, totaled 360 stems of bananas. (A century later Costa Rica was exporting over 50 million 40-pound boxes of the fruit.) Large profits resulted from this first shipment, and the plantation area was greatly expanded. Exports continued to increase, but in the late 1890s Keith's general financial difficulties and bankruptcy of the New Orleans importing firm that handled his production led to a merger of the Keith holdings and those of the Boston Fruit Company, which was then supplying bananas to the northeastern United States. The new enterprise, the United Fruit Company, subsequently maintained a virtual monopoly of Costa Rica's banana exports until the late 1950s; records for 1955 show that the company handled 99 percent of the total export that year.

In 1956 the Standard Fruit Company, a subsidiary of the American Castle and Cooke group, began production in the Caribbean coastal region; its first exports were in 1959. In the 1960s a third major transnational company, the Banana Development Corporation of Costa Rica (BANDECO), a subsidiary of the Del Monte Corporation, also commenced operations. At the end of that decade, the three multinationals accounted for 95 percent of banana exports (United Fruit, 45 percent; Standard Fruit, 40 percent; and Del Monte, 10 percent). In 1979 the share of United Brands (the successor company to United Fruit after a merger in 1970 with the American conglomerate AMK Corporation) stood at 36 percent, accounted for by two subsidiaries: the Banana Company of Costa Rica (29 percent) and the Atlantic Banana Company (Compañía Bananera Atlántica—COBAL) (7 percent). Standard

Fruit exported another 35 percent and Del Monte 28 percent.

United Fruit's original Costa Rican holdings were in the Caribbean coastal region, where soils, temperatures, the well-distributed rainfall, and the general absence of strong winds (which can easily knock down the herbaceous banana plant when it is weighted with ripe fruit) provided excellent growing conditions. In the early 1900s its plantations became infected with the fungal Panama disease, which destroys the banana's underground stem, and production declined steadily as plantations had to be abandoned. In the 1930s the company acquired large areas of land on the west coast in southern Puntarenas Province under an agreement with the government. Plantations were established around Puerto Quepos and the present-day port of Golfito, which the company constructed to handle the new trade. An extensive railroad system was also built inland from Golfito port to service the plantations (see Transportation, this ch.). Because of the region's distinct dry season (January to March), irrigation was installed. The plantations proved highly successful, but in the late 1940s Panama disease struck the Puerto Quepos area. The disease spread rapidly, and by 1956 production there had been ended.

In the mid-1960s United Fruit began planting in its Pacific coast holdings a new banana variety, the Valery, which was resistant to the disease. The success of the undertaking led to a return by the company to the Caribbean coast. Standard Fruit, which operated in the Caribbean zone, introduced a related variety, the Giant Cavendish. The success of the two varieties also brought the reemergence of independent growers. The total area in bananas rose from about 20,000 hectares at the beginning of the 1970s to over 27,400 hectares in 1976; the total in 1980 stood at almost 26,100 hectares (some 19,000 hectares in the Caribbean area and over 6,500 hectares in the Pacific zone). Of the 1980 total, almost 18,800 hectares belonged to the three multinationals, and about 7,300 hectares were cultivated by independent operators. However, the latter, located almost entirely in the Caribbean region, were under contract to the large companies, which handled the exporting of their fruit. The government since 1979 has provided assistance to small producers to increase output per unit of land and to enlarge holdings. The principal goal has been to increase export earnings, and a main requirement for such assistance has been a confirmed contract to deliver the fruit produced to an established exporter, in essence the three transnationals.

In the early 1980s, however, overall production and exports declined. The principal reasons for the drop included the detrimental effects of an infection by the black sigatoka disease (a leaf dis-

Costa Rican banana worker
Courtesy United Brands

Oil palm seedlings
Courtesy United Brands

ease) of which a less virulent form, yellow sigatoka disease, has been kept under control by spraying, which appeared in late 1979 in the Caribbean zone. A fungus spread by wind-borne spores, the disease had also reached the plantations on the Pacific coast by 1980. As the economic recession worsened after 1981, control of the disease was seriously hampered because of a shortage of government funds to support efforts by the independent growers. In 1982 production was reduced further as the result of a 63-day strike by workers on Standard Fruit plantations. Exports were also affected that year by lower world prices caused by a large increase in the output of bananas in Ecuador, the world's leading exporter (Costa Rica is second). Domestic production costs were also cited by the multinationals as a reason for smaller shipments, in particular the export tax of US$1 per box, which was substantially higher than that of other Central American countries. The main South American exporters, moreover, paid no tax in 1983. Negotiations had begun in mid- and late 1983 between the government and the three multinationals to develop a sliding scale for the tax to relate it to the world market price, but a resolution had not been achieved by the end of November.

A significant factor in the decline in exported bananas (from 53 million boxes in 1980 to 45 million in 1982) was the continued conversion of land—particularly by United Brands—from bananas to the African oil palm, a main source of edible oil. According to reports, the purpose of the shift was to reduce operating costs; considerably fewer workers were required to care for and harvest the oil palm. The oil palm tree was also resistant to the devastating winds experienced from time to time by the company's southern Puntarenas holdings; in July 1983 a hurricane in that area caused the loss of 200,000 stems of bananas. Domestic production of edible oils has regularly failed to meet demand; in 1982 edible oil worth US$25 million was imported. Increased output was expected to result in major foreign exchange savings and from about the mid-1980s to be sufficient to begin exports.

Early records indicate that coffee cultivation started in Costa Rica in 1779 in the Meseta Central, where soils and climate proved ideal for the coffee tree. Exports began in the late 1820s to Panama and early in the following decade to South American ports from which transshipments were made to Europe and New York. A major impetus was given to production when a cargo of coffee was picked up at Puntarenas in 1843 and carried around Cape Horn to Liverpool, initiating direct trade contacts with the British market. Subsequently, British capital furnished most of the investment to expand the industry, and Britain became the

principal buyer of Costa Rican coffee thereafter, a position that it held until World War II. The new trade and the great potential for profit in coffee growing were major factors in the spread of population outward from the urban centers of the Meseta Central in sharp contrast to the usually inward flow that characterizes developing agricultural economies. Until the beginning of the 1950s, parts of the San José, Alajuela, Heredia, and Cartago provinces in the Meseta Central remained almost the sole areas for coffee growing. In the 1950s new growing areas were opened in the valley of the Río General in southern San José Province and in southern Puntarenas Province, where suitable conditions for cultivation had been found. In 1983 the new areas encompassed all of Coto Brus canton in the latter province and much of the Río General valley.

In the 1980-81 coffee crop year (April-March), the traditional growing region of Alajuela, Cartago, Heredia, and San José (plus coffee from the southern part of the latter province) accounted for over 92 percent of the coffee crop. Puntarenas Province, which had produced only a negligible quantity 30 years earlier, provided more than 6 percent of the remainder. Almost 88,750 producers were registered with the state Coffee Office (Oficina del Café). This office, a semiautonomous entity composed of producers, processors, exporters, and government representatives, was established in 1933 in the wake of the Great Depression to control prices and other factors affecting the domestic coffee industry. It subsequently was charged with carrying out Costa Rica's obligations under the various International Coffee Organization (ICO) agreements first entered into in 1962 by the world's coffee-producing and major consuming nations.

There were about 82,500 hectares planted to coffee trees in 1980-81, compared with 75,500 hectares a decade earlier and some 68,000 hectares in 1965. Production increased from an annual average of 47,200 tons between 1961 and 1965 to 71,500 tons in the period 1965-70 and 88,700 tons between 1975 and 1980. Since 1979 the Coffee Office has emphasized an increase in productivity rather than expansion of plantation areas. This is being accomplished mainly by planting a greater number of trees in a given area and replacing old trees with improved strains; the greater use of modern technology, including proper fertilizing, use of pesticides, and the like, has also been encouraged.

The Costa Rican product is included in the international category of other mild coffees. It has a high caffeine content, is of high quality, and has been used to blend and improve less desirable varieties. In the late 1970s and early 1980s about 86 to 87 percent

of the registered coffee harvest was exported. About 13 to 14 per cent of the harvest was retained by the Coffee Office for the domestic market. This coffee, which increased gradually in amount from 10,140 tons in 1975 to 13,830 tons in 1981, was sold in the internal market at a considerably lower price than export coffee. To prevent diversion to the export market, coffee beans for domestic use were tinted with certified coloring for identification.

The cacao tree, the seeds of which provide cocoa, cocoa butter, and chocolate, is native to the humid tropical regions of the Western Hemisphere and was under regular cultivation by the Nahua Indians in the Caribbean coastal region of Costa Rica at the time of the Spanish conquest. Cacao became the country's first cash crop, and for a time in the early 1700s the beans were used as a medium of exchange. The industry began declining in the 1800s as coffee growing assumed major proportions; by the end of the century the harvesting of cacao beans had almost ceased. Growing world demand for cocoa and chocolate stimulated replanting in the mid-twentieth century in Limón Province; in 1983 the province was the principal center of Costa Rican production. Other smaller growing areas also existed in northern Alajuela and Cartago provinces and in southern Puntarenas Province.

An average of about 20,000 hectares of cacao trees was believed harvested each year, but the quality of cacao beans actually processed has been affected by world prices. In the late 1960s roughly 8,000 tons of cacao products were produced annually, most of which were exported. The total declined to 6,000 to 7,000 tons during most of the 1970s but rose sharply to over 10,000 tons in 1978 and 1979 (a period of high world prices). In the latter year, however, many plantations were seriously affected by a fungal disease (monilia), and output dropped to some 5,000 tons in 1980 and 1981. Costa Rica has been the main producer of cacao in Central America, but its production constitutes only a very small fraction of the total world output (0.3 to 0.4 percent in the early 1980s). Domestic consumption needs, which by law must be satisfied before exports are made, increased sharply in the late 1970s—from under 1,000 tons in 1970 to 4,500 tons in 1978 and over 6,000 tons in 1979—stimulated by improving economic conditions. The subsequent downturn in the economy in the early 1980s was accompanied by a decline in internal consumption to about 3,000 tons in 1981.

Sugarcane is grown in most parts of the country. Of the 36,000 to 38,000 hectares of cane harvested annually in the early 1980s, well over one-half was in the Meseta Central, about one-fifth in Guanacaste and naorthern Puntarenas provinces, and somewhat

Workers planting new coffee seedlings near Heredia
Courtesy James Gilmartin

Coffee worker loading beans on an oxcart before the drying process
Courtesy Embassy of Costa Rica, Washington

less in an area centered mainly in northern Alajuela Province. Most of the remainder was located in southern San José and Puntarenas provinces. During the 1970s and in the early 1980s, some 2 million to 2.3 million tons of cane were milled during the harvest period (October to March). In 1982-83 about 25 large mills were in operation, producing the whitish centrifugal sugar that is the raw sugar of international commerce, as well as refined granulated sugar; production of the latter first began domestically in 1968. The largest mill was the government-owned Tempisque Sugar Central (Central Azucarera El Tempisque—CATSA), located in Guanacaste Province. CATSA, a subsidiary of the government's Costa Rican Development Corporation (Corporación Costarricense de Desarrollo—CODESA), was inaugurated officially in October 1975. The mill had 4,000 hectares usable for cane growing; cane was purchased from private growers in the area as well. In January 1980 an associated alcohol distillery was opened. The distillery later closed because of high production costs but reopened in 1982 to produce alcohol for gasohol. According to reports, neither the mill nor the distillery has ever produced to project specification, and CATSA in mid-1983 appeared to be in serious financial difficulty. An unknown quantity of noncentrifugal sugar is also turned out by numerous small mills. The product, a brownish crude sugar, is molded into cakes that are mostly used locally.

Costa Rican sugar production had remained comparatively low until the United States embargo on Cuban sugar (subsequent to the takeover of the island by Fidel Castro) stimulated output. Imports had been necessary to meet domestic demand until 1956-57 when production had reached 32,000 tons, and imports were no longer required. By the mid-1960s exports of over 60,000 tons a year were going to the United States. In the first half of the 1970s, sugar production averaged about 174,000 tons annually but increased to over 190,000 tons thereafter as CATSA began operations. The amount constituted some 14 to 15 percent of the total output of the six Central American states but was only a small fraction (roughly 0.3 percent) of world cane sugar production. Since the early 1970s exports have ranged between 70,000 and 90,000 tons. The amount has been affected in part by world prices, local weather conditions, producer prices, and domestic demands that have grown at an estimated 3 percent annually.

A large number of small and medium-sized farms, as well as a number of large plantations, cultivate sugarcane. Little detailed information was available beyond that obtained in an agricultural census taken in 1973. Of a total of almost 9,500 separate farms

Harvesting sugarcane in Guanacaste Province
Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

raising sugarcane at that time, about 54 percent (5,140 farming units) were small (under 10 hectares each), another 40 percent (3,783 units) of medium size ranged between 10 and 100 hectares, and 6 percent (557) were plantations of more than 100 hectares. The more than 8,900 farms included in the small- to medium-sized categories then occupied 43 percent of the land used for sugarcane but accounted for only 36 percent of total sugar production. Many of the larger plantations, located in Guanacaste and Puntarenas provinces, used irrigation and modern machinery. Together with the more effective and greater use of fertilizers, they obtained a markedly higher yield of sugar per hectare; in 1973 their yields averaged 75 tons compared with 54 or 55 tons produced by the smaller farms.

The principal cultivated grains are maize, rice, and sorghum, the latter of importance mainly as animal feed. Maize, a main staple, is widely grown from sea level to over 2,500 meters, hybrid seeds being available for different elevations. Rice, for which there has been a steadily growing demand as the population increased, was regularly imported until the 1970s, when self-suffi-

ciency was attained; at that time average annual consumption was 50 kilograms. Subsequently, surpluses have been produced that are exported to other countries in the region. The main rice-growing areas are in Guanacaste and northern Puntarenas provinces, parts of southern Puntarenas, and in the plains areas of the northern tropical zone. Unlike maize, which is cultivated by smallholders, rice is grown by large-scale producers using modern methods. In 1983 wheat was not grown commercially. There has been a steady demand for wheat flour, however, for bread, biscuits, and pasta. Annual imports in the early 1980s were about 80,000 tons, almost entirely from the United States. Beans are grown on small farms all over the country and constitute one of the most important foods in the Costa Rican diet. Production of maize, beans, and sorghum does not meet the demand, and substantial quantities are also regularly imported.

Other food crops include potatoes, cultivation of which is limited to areas of Cartago and Alajuela provinces because of climatic and soil requirements not found elsewhere. Plantains, related to the banana but mostly cooked before eating, require growing conditions similar to those of the banana and are cultivated in the same regions. Cassava (*yuca*) cultivation is scattered throughout much of the country. Some cassava products are exported to the United States. Tobacco, grown and used before the arrival of the early conquistadores and later an important colonial export crop, is widely cultivated by smallholders for their own use. About 1,000 growers produce sun-dried burley and Virginia tobaccos under contract for Costa Rica's two cigarette factories. The growing of cotton started in the 1930s, and cotton is cultivated by a few plantations in Guanacaste and upper Puntarenas provinces. Total output is small and was of only minor economic significance in 1983.

Livestock

Cattle raising is the most important activity in the livestock sector. Since the 1960s it has accounted annually (in constant prices) for an average of 10 to 11 percent of total agricultural production, and beef (chilled and frozen) and live animals have regularly been the third largest earner of foreign exchange. Most of the exported beef goes to the United States, whereas live animals are shipped to surrounding countries and the Caribbean states. Beef production appeared to be about 65,000 to 75,000 tons annually in the early 1980s, of which roughly one-half was exported. The number of animals exported was estimated at over 100,000 head.

Improved strains of zebu cattle provide meat for Costa Rica's growing beef industry. Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

The first cattle were brought to Costa Rica in the 1500s. Genetic improvement was under way as early as the 1700s, and present-day Costa Rican cattle are said to compare favorably with those in the developed countries. Most beef animals are improved zebu strains; the regular dairy industry herd, however, consists mainly of breeds such as Jersey, Guernsey, and Holstein. Until the end of World War II, cattle had to be imported to satisfy domestic requirements for beef, which is overwhelmingly the favorite meat of Costa Ricans. By 1955 production had grown sufficiently to meet the local demand and to provide some exports. In 1961 the cattle population reached 1 million head and was about 1.5 million at the end of the decade. The number reached 2.5 million in the early 1980s. Consumption of beef during that period averaged about 15 to 16 kilograms a year per capita.

Guanacaste and northern Puntarenas provinces and the Llanura de San Carlos region in Alajuela Province are the largest cattle-raising areas. Pastures cover between 50 and 70 percent of those areas, and in the Península de Nicoya, southern Guanacaste, and northern Puntarenas they occupy more than 70 percent. Growth of the industry in Guanacaste and San Carlos has been largely attributed to the early lack of good transportation, which discouraged any wide cultivation of crops; poor communications still prevailed in 1983 in much of the San Carlos region. The Llanura de San Carlos has been a major center for fattening cattle. In 1963 the eruption of Volcán Irazú spread a heavy layer of ash over a significant part of the Meseta Central that was used for dairying. A shortage of pasture there led to the movement of herds to the San Carlos region as well as the development of a large local dairy industry; in 1983, however, the Meseta Central remained the most important dairy center. A cattle industry has developed in the southern part of Costa Rica, but there was little

information on its size in 1983.

The commercial pig-raising industry consists of only a few farms. Located chiefly in the Meseta Central, they have reportedly not been very profitable because of a dependence on imported feedstock. Most pigs are raised by small farmers who have one or two animals. In the early 1980s the estimated number of pigs averaged between 220,000 and 240,000. Local supplies of pork have not usually been adequate, and until the early 1980s about 30,000 to 40,000 animals were imported annually from Nicaragua. The number was drastically reduced in 1981 because of the appearance of hog cholera in that country; the situation in 1983 was unknown. Domestic consumption of pork averaged about 4.5 kilograms per person annually during the 1970s.

Of the other larger domestic livestock, horses and mules were the most valuable economically. Horses, particularly important in cattle herding, numbered roughly 110,000. About 60 percent of the horses were in Guanacaste and Alajuela provinces and more than 20 percent in southern Puntarenas Province, mostly in the cattle raising plains area of that part of the country. Mules, estimated at 5,000 to 6,000, were concentrated in Guanacaste but were also numerous in Alajuela, Limón, and southern Puntarenas, where they were important in local transportation. Sheep and goats totaled little more than 1,000 or 2,000 animals.

Poultry, almost entirely chickens, are raised by farm families throughout the country, to some extent by urban families, and commercially. Chickens, ducks, and geese (the latter two of little economic value in 1983) were introduced in Costa Rica by the early Spaniards. The commercial production of chicken meat began only in the mid-1950s, and although the industry has grown, it has remained relatively unimportant, constituting less than 1 percent of agricultural production. Growth of the industry is affected by the need to import feed and by competition from less expensive imports of meat from El Salvador and Nicaragua. Estimates at the beginning of the 1980s indicated that Costa Rica had 16 to 17 million chickens, about 5,000 ducks and geese, 3,000 turkeys, and 50,000 quail (quail eggs were an export item). Estimated egg production averaged between 350 million and 400 million annually.

Forestry

When Spanish explorers arrived in the early 1500s, the territory of present-day Costa Rica was virtually covered by virgin

forests, most of which were rain forests of broadleaf evergreen species. These covered almost the entire country except the northwest (mainly present-day Guanacaste Province), where the distinct rainy and dry seasons favored the growth of deciduous trees. Mangrove forests lined much of the coasts but were not well developed except in limited locations on the Pacific; these forests have been of little economic value. A generally dense palm growth occupied a swampy zone of varying width that stretched along the Caribbean from Puerto Limón northward to the Nicaraguan border.

The Indian inhabitants of the time practiced slash-and-burn agriculture, but the indigenous population was so small that its activities had little impact on the overall forest. Only as colonization of the Meseta Central proceeded in the 1800s did the gradual clearing of the land for crop and livestock raising begin noticeably to reduce the forest area. Introduction of banana culture in the late 1800s along the Caribbean resulted similarly in the clearing of extensive forested areas. In the latter case, the destruction of the banana plantations in the first decades of the twentieth century by a blight resulted in their abandonment, and much of the original cleared area was covered by secondary growth. The latter vegetation remained of little economic value in the early 1980s, however, because of the small average amount of timber per hectare. Additional clearing has taken place in the Caribbean area since the late 1960s, when the banana was reintroduced.

In the Meseta Central the clearing of land became extensive as the area population grew from the late 1800s, and, by about 1940 only scattered forest stands remained. There was also substantial removal of the more valuable tree species in Guanacaste Province, and the great expansion of livestock raising in the region resulted in widespread clearing of land for pasture use. Nevertheless, in 1942 an estimated 40,000 square kilomneters, or 78 percent of Costa Rica, were still covered by forest that consisted in large part of virgin growth. Construction of the Costa Rican section of the Inter-American Highway opened up new areas for agriculture and cattle, notably the valley of the Río General. Accelerated economic development after World War II also brought greatly increased cutting as agriculture—especially cattle ranching—expanded. Estimates vary, but between 1950 and 1960 approximately 44,000 hectares were cut annually, and the amount increased to over 55,000 hectares in the period 1961-77 (a total of about 1.5 million hectares, or 15,000 square kilometers). Estimates of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) published in 1979 indicated that some 5,000 to

10,000 hectares of trees were cut annually to meet the some 1.5-million-cubic meter commercial demands of the forest industries for timber. Overall, however, about 7 million cubic meters of timber were being cut. The remaining 5.5 million cubic meters represented trees cleared by agriculturists—at will, as both Costa Rican and foreign observers have pointed out—and then disposed of either by burning or being left to rot. The forests were in essence looked on simply as an impediment to economic progress, an obstacle to be removed without a second thought.

According to government figures, in 1977 roughly 20,000 square kilometers of Costa Rica were still wooded. At the time, this was about 39 percent of the country's total area. Of the total, some 9,000 square kilometers had virgin stands of particular value for timber production. Another 8,000 square kilometers were considered valuable primarily as protection for watersheds and to prevent erosion. The remaining 3,000 square kilometers were secondary growth. The government has designated certain forest areas as protected reserves. In 1983 these totaled some 410,550 hectares, of which the greater part was located on private lands. Forests were also included in some of the national parks. The government has attempted to control cutting by requiring permits, and some success in reducing deforestation in the late 1970s and early 1980s had been reported. But illegal cutting by individuals clearing new agricultural plots remained a serious problem. In 1983 efforts were under way to establish private forest development corporations involving loggers, owners of sawmills, and transport services. One such organization was established in the timber-rich San Carlos region in northern Costa Rica in May 1983. Its aim was to introduce more scientific utilization of local forest resources and included a reforestation program. The corporation planned to establish a nursery to produce some 600,000 to 700,000 seedlings a year and by the year 2000 to reforest a total of 7,000 hectares. Government efforts at reforestation have been on a small scale and as of 1980 totaled only some 4,400 hectares.

Fishing

Costa Rica has over 200 kilometers of coast on the Caribbean Sea and more than 1,000 kilometers on the Pacific Ocean. In June 1948 the government established an exclusive fishing zone consisting of the waters within 200 nautical miles of its coasts. This was broadened by legislation in February 1972 to the status of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Foreign vessels were required

to register with the government in order to fish within the EEZ, which totaled about 600,000 square kilometers. The country's considerable fishery potential included within that area has remained largely unexploited, however. Real growth did occur in the fishing industry between 1971 and 1979, during which time the catch increased significantly from 8,200 tons to 20,800 tons. It declined thereafter to 10,900 tons in 1982, primarily because of an embargo by the United States on tuna from Costa Rica after the latter seized an American tuna boat in 1979. The embargo was lifted in 1982, and in early 1983 the United States, Costa Rica, and Panama signed the Eastern Pacific Ocean Tuna Fishing Agreement. Overall, fishing accounted for only a small part of the total value of agricultural production (roughly 2 to 2.5 percent in most years) and only a fraction of the GDP (0.8 percent in 1979, the latest figure available). Domestic fish consumption increased only slightly in the 1970s from an estimated 4.6 kilograms per capita in 1971 to 6.9 kilograms in 1977. Some part of the low consumption was attributable to consumer experience with fresh fish, which spoils easily in the tropical climate. Frozen fish had never become popular. A major factor also seemed to be the low cost of meat.

Fishing was centered mostly along the Pacific coast and was commercial and artisanal. The latter was both for subsistence and for sale. Much of the fresh fish consumed in the country was supplied by artisanal fishers. Small-scale fishers used simple boats, some equipped with outboard motors, to fish estuaries, protected areas, and the like. Many of these subsistence fishers operated only part-time, supplementing their fishing activities with cultivation or other work. An unknown number were organized in cooperatives, but the latter seemed relatively ineffective. Commercial operations utilized vessels ranging from about 20 to 70 meters in length that were equipped with modern facilities, such as sonar and refrigeration. They fished primarily for shrimp, sardines, and tuna, and the greater part of their catch was exported. In 1979 the commercial fleet consisted of about 85 vessels: some 70 shrimp boats, about 10 others engaged in fishing for sardines, and five that fished for tuna; in 1979 there were also 49 tuna boats of foreign ownership reported to be registered in Costa Rica.

The main facilities for commercial vessels were at Puntarenas. A new fishing port at Cuajiniquil, in far northwestern Guanacaste Province, was expected to be in operation in late 1983. Built with IDB assistance, it had a 60-meter dock for fishing and shrimping boats, ice-making and cold storage facilities, and fuel supply provisions. The main goal of the new port was expansion of exports.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing using modern production methods started in the early twentieth century when factories to produce beer, cigarettes, textiles, and various other consumer nondurable goods were established. Development of the sector proceeded slowly, however. It was not until after enactment of the Industrial Development Law of 1959—and in particular the establishment in 1960 of the Central American Common Market (CACM) in which Costa Rica finally became an active participant three years later—that significant, rapid expansion of manufacturing took place (see The Central American Common Market, ch. 1). The advantages offered by the CACM, including free trade within the region and protection from outside competition by trade barriers, were strengthened by liberal fiscal incentives. Added to this were Costa Rica's open economy, which permitted unrestricted foreign investment, and the generally high educational level of its work force that made the country a preferred place for foreign risk capital outlays.

The incentives structure of the CACM—especially the free entry of capital goods and raw materials and the high tariffs on the import of finished goods—encouraged the development of import-substitution industries and a concentration on producing for the local market and the CACM. At the same time, the free importation of machinery and technology accompanied by liberal depreciation rates led to the development of capital-intensive operations and excessive capacity. A major result of the unrestricted importation of raw materials was the development of a high degree of dependence on foreign inputs and a corollary failure to develop agroindustries based on local resources. Exports of manufactures regularly failed to cover the cost of those inputs. Since the early 1970s the government has sought to increase sales to areas outside the CACM. Enactment of the Exports Promotion Law of December 1972 added a major new incentive for such exports in the form of tax credits. By 1980 fully processed manufactures exported to non-CACM countries had risen to 28 percent of exports of all manufactures compared with about 18 percent at the beginning of the 1970s, but these still constituted only a very small part of total exports. When the Monge government assumed office in 1982, it found government attitudes toward manufacturing development little changed; resources were still largely directed into development of import-substitution and capital-intensive industries. The new government voiced its desire to alter this bias, but what effect this had had on investment in new

This Costa Rican woman works in a plant that manufactures plastic-coated paper plates. Courtesy United Brands

plants or the expansion of older ones was not clear in late 1983.

Manufacturing production, including a relatively small contribution by mining and quarrying, grew at an annual average rate of about 10.6 percent (in constant 1966 prices) from 1961 to the early 1970s. In the period 1973-79, however, the rate declined to slightly over 7 percent, and in the 1977-79 period it was under 5 percent. Among the more significant reasons advanced for the decline has been the gradual satisfaction of most Costa Rican and CACM market demands. Another was the failure to expand exports outside the CACM sufficiently to utilize the built-in excess capacity of many plants, which was estimated at about 40 percent at the beginning of the 1970s. During the two decades, manufacturing production's share (in constant prices) of the GDP also grew from over 13 percent in 1961 to some 22 percent in 1979; it had stagnated thereafter at approximatelly that proportion at least through 1981.

Manufacturing expansion has provided the country with facilities producing a very wide variety of goods ranging from foods and beverages to items such as adhesives, cosmetics, bricks, cement, fertilizers, ink, office furniture, paints, plastics, petroleum products, refrigerators, solar energy collectors, textiles, tires, tubes, motor vehicle spare parts, and yachts. In 1982 approximately 1,000 manufactured items were exported. All manufacturing was in the light industry category and, by international standards, on a small scale. Food processing, including beverages

and tobacco, was the largest industry branch; throughout the 1970s it accounted for 50 percent or more of annual gross industrial production. About 35 percent of the remainder was produced by the chemical, metalworking, textile, and leatherworking branches.

Manufacturing is highly concentrated in the Meseta Central, chiefly in and around San José; smaller numbers of enterprises are found in Alajuela, Cartago, and Heredia. Small-scale operations of fewer than 30 workers, according to an industrial survey in 1975, employed about half of the industrial work force. Much of the investment in manufacturing development has been from foreign sources, and many foreign companies have subsidiaries in Costa Rica. It has been estimated that in the period 1960-75 only about one-third of the capital invested was from domestic sources. The remainder came from abroad in the form of loans or direct investment or was provided by surpluses of the operating units. In 1973 the government established CODESA to help provide financing for industrial (including agroindustrial) development. CODESA has been involved in assisting hard-pressed companies, but it also has invested heavily in the establishment of several large enteprises, including an aluminum-processing plant, two cement plants, and a sugar mill; in 1983 it had a total of 14 wholly or partially owned subsidiaries; CODESA's overall operations have reportedly been generally unprofitable, and in 1983 efforts were under way to sell various plants, including the major fully owned enterprises, to the private sector.

Mining

In 1983 the contribution of mining to GDP was well below 1 percent. The major proportion, moreover, came from nonmetals—limestone, sand, and clay. Limestone deposits were vast, estimated at some 13 billion tons. One such deposit was located at the upper end of the Golfo de Nicoya; it contained proved reserves of over 532 million tons and provided the raw materials for a major cement plant. Clays, including kaolin, occur in relatively small deposits but are found in numerous localities and are important to the domestic ceramics industry. The remaining minerals of significant value in the early 1980s were salt and gold. Silver and diatomite were also mined, but their value was small. Salt was produced by solar evaporation, mostly on the Península de Nicoya. The annual output of roughly 35,000 tons generally met domestic requirements.

The two principal areas of gold production were the western approaches of the Cordillera de Tilarán, where auriferous veins were worked, and the Península de Osa, where gold-bearing alluvial deposits were found and where most gold mining was carried on in 1983. Gold mining has gone on continuously since early colonial times, and gold bars long were an important export item. Only limited data on gold production were available; it was reported that almost 720 kilograms of gold were exported in 1944, but the total dropped precipitously to one-tenth that amount in 1946. Output appears to have risen substantially after the great increase in the world price of gold in the late 1970s. The United States Bureau of Mines estimated Costa Rican production at roughly 400 to 500 kilograms annually at the beginning of the 1980s. Mining on the Península de Osa was mainly by individual placer operators who did not report production, much of which was believed smuggled across the border into Panama.

The presence of a number of other minerals has been reported, but with few exceptions little was known in 1983 about their quantities or grades. Included were bauxite, chromite, copper, lead, manganese, magnetite, nickel, sulfur, titanium, and zinc. Low-grade bauxite ores are found in large quantities in the valley of the Río General and the Valle de Coto Brus. In 1964 the government initiated what became lengthy negotiations with the Aluminum Corporation of America (ALCOA) for development of a bauxite deposit near San Isidro in southern San José Province. Included in the project was construction by the Costa Rican government of a large hydroelectric plant to supply power for the proposed ALCOA processing facilities. The worldwide recession of the 1970s was accompanied by a major decline in the use of aluminum, and in 1975 ALCOA withdrew from the undertaking; in 1976 the company returned the mining concession it had been granted. The government subsequently expressed its intention to proceed with the project, but a relatively vast amount of foreign exchange would be required for the hydroelectric facility, and the undertaking remained in abeyance in 1983.

As of late 1983 only limited finds of hydrocarbons had been made. Lignite deposits existed in Limón, San José, and Alajuela provinces, and there were reports of coal deposits, although little was known of the extent or quality. There have long been hopes for the discovery of domestic sources of petroleum. The search for oil has gone on for over 100 years in the lower part of Talamanca canton, beginning in 1874 with the fruitless explorations of a German technician invited to Costa Rica by President Tomás Guardia Gutiérrez. In the mid-1950s Gulf Oil Corporation of California

found oil in two wells drilled in the Talamanca area but in uneconomic quantities. In late 1980 the governmental Costa Rican Petroleum Refinery (Refinadora Costarricense de Petróleo—RECOPE) signed an agreement with the Mexican state-owned Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX) for a long-term, low-interest loan of US$10 million (to which Costa Rica added counterpart funds equivalent to US$18 million). Under this agreement, equipment and technicians were furnished to drill two exploratory wells totaling 10,000 meters. Oil was found in the first of these, a deep well begun at the end of April 1982, but the quantity had still not been reported by late 1983. The local funds provided by Costa Rica had been exhausted in this first well, and the government announced that it would seek investment in further drilling and exploitation of any discoveries from transnational sources. Considerable opposition to this announced policy had arisen, and the Legislative Assembly had failed to pass the necessary implementing legislation as of November 1983.

Meanwhile, RECOPE carried out shallow drillings of the geologic structure of the area where Gulf Oil Corporation had earlier discovered oil. In August 1983 oil was found in one drilling site, but definite information on the potential was still awaited in late 1983.

In July 1982 the Legislative Assembly enacted a new mining code to promote mineral exploration and development. It replaced a similar 1953 code that had introduced controls on mining activities but had provided little incentive for development of the industry. The 1982 code contained a reaffirmation that all mineral resources were the property of the state. Under its provisions, concessions would be granted for exploration and exploitation equally to Costa Rican nationals and foreign individuals and companies. However, interested foreign state-owned agencies were required to enter into a joint operation with the government; such ventures had to have prior approval from the assembly. The right to exploit certain mineral resources—hydrocarbons and radioactive minerals—was reserved to the state.

Energy Sources

Costa Rica's principal domestic energy sources in 1983 were wood (and charcoal), bagasse (vegetable waste, mainly sugarcane), and hydroelectric power. There were a few lignite deposits that had contributed negligibly to energy requirements. Bituminous schists also existed but were still unevaluated. More

promising were the potentially large geothermal energy resources. Domestically produced alcohol (by the CODESA-owned Tempisque sugar factory and distillery in Guanacaste Province) has been used for a gasohol mixture. In late 1983, however, there were indications that any alcohol produced by the factory would be diverted in the future to other purposes, chiefly exports. These various domestic energy sources accounted for about 53 percent of the country's total energy consumption in 1981. The remainder was supplied by imported petroleum (crude oil and petroleum products).

The use of energy has expanded as economic activity and the population have increased. From 1950 to the end of the 1960s, consumption grew at an annual rate of well over 6 percent. During the 1970s the rate increased to almost 9 percent. A shift in the relative contributions of the principal energy sources—wood, hydroelectric power, and petroleum (including oil-generated electricity)—also occurred. In 1965 wood fuels and bagasse accounted for an estimated 65 percent of total energy consumption, electric power for over 6 percent, and petroleum for almost 28 percent. In 1981 petroleum's share had risen to about 47 percent and that of electric power to almost 13 percent, whereas energy derived from wood and vegetable waste fuels had declined to about 39 percent of the total.

Wood and Bagasse

Wood and charcoal have been the major fuels used in rural areas for cooking, even in places where electricity has been available. Surveys on the use of electricity by the rural population, conducted at the beginning of the 1980s, found that the preference for cooking with wood was based on the belief that food tasted better when prepared over wood stoves. Only in a few cases was the cost of electricity found to be a factor. Firewood was also used extensively in urban areas for the same reason, and a firm of American consultants estimated that in 1980 some two-thirds of all Costa Rican households cooked with wood fuels. Firewood was used by some industry as well. The estimated energy furnished by this source in the late 1970s was equivalent to roughly 1 million barrels of petroleum monthly. Bagasse was an important energy source in the production of sugar, meeting most or all of the energy requirements of the country's largest mills and a varying amount in moderate-sized mills. The degree of self-sufficiency appeared to depend in large part on the quantity of available cane residue. Bagasse was also important in processing coffee and some salt production.

Electric Power

Terrain and abundant rainfall have provided Costa Rica a hydroelectric potential having, theoretically, a usable capacity of about 9,000 megawatts. About 7 percent of this potential had been developed or was under development by late 1983, and hydroelectric power accounted for almost 98 percent of total kilowatt-hours generated. Diesel and gas turbine generation made up most of the remainder and a small amount was provided by thermal units. The provision of electricity started in 1884 in the present-day Aranjuez barrio (ward) of San José, generated by a 50-kilowatt unit. The first hydroelectric plant (600-kilowatt capacity) was constructed in 1889 on the Río Anonos, northwest of the capital. By the late 1920s three private power companies were serving the capital area, their combined capacity amounting to over 7,500 kilowatts. In 1941 the three merged into the National Power and Light Company (Compañía Nacional de Fuerza y Luz—CNFL), in which the government acquired a minority interest. In 1949, as the demand for power grew throughout the country, the government established the autonomous Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad—ICE), which was charged with the development and construction of a national power service. In 1967 the CNFL became part of the national system when ICE purchased all outstanding shares and converted it into a subsidiary public company.

At the beginning of the 1980s ICE was the major source of electric power for much of the country. The CNFL output was used locally in San José and its environs but was also substantially supplemented by ICE power. Major municipal hydroelectric plants had been established by Heredia and Cartago, but these towns also received additional power from ICE. Many isolated towns had diesel-fueled plants, and there were over 130 various private enterprises that generated electricity—mostly with diesel equipment—usually for their own use; the largest of these operations were those of the major banana companies. In southern Puntarenas Province the municipality of Golfito was supplied with power by the local facilities of the Banana Company of Costa Rica.

When ICE began operations in 1949, the country's total installed generating capacity was 36,673 kilowatts, and electricity was distributed only through local grids. In the ensuing three decades, gewnerating capacity expanded to over 608,000 kilowatts (in 1980), of which about three-quarters was hydroelectric and the remainder diesel, gas, and steam. Major hydroelectric installations during this time included the 30,000-kilowatt La Garita

Hydroelectric power facility on Laguna de Arenal in Guanacaste Province
Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

plant on the Río Grande de Tárcoles (which went into operation in 1958), the 120,000-kilowatt Río Macho plant (1963) situated on a tributary of the Río Reventazón, the 100,800-kilowatt Cachí station (1966), also on the latter river, and the 157,000-kilowatt Arenal plant (1979). Construction of the Arenal facility in Guanacaste Province (in the general area of the Volcán Arenal) involved diverting water to the Pacific Ocean from the Río Arenal, whose natural course is to the Caribbean Sea. This was accomplished by boring a tunnel 6.67 kilometers long through the intervening mountain divide. As part of the project, a major new dam was also built that substantially raised the level of Laguna de Arenal, the lake that feeds the river. This makes possible a supply of water for the plant during the dry season and for the development of irrigation on some 105,000 hectares of farmland in the area. Additionally, the water utilized by the Arenal plant farther down on its course to the Pacific also drives the generators of the Corobicí power station, a new plant that went into operation in 1982. When all units of the latter have been installed, they will provide a total of 174,000 kilowatts to the ICE system.

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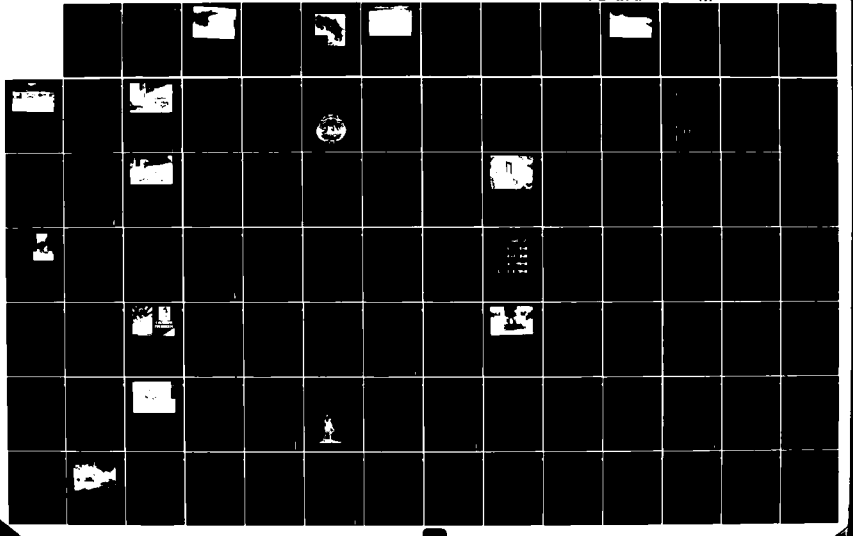

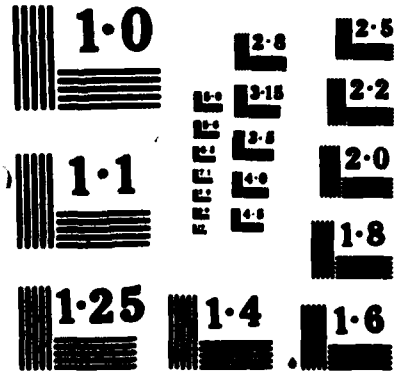
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One of ICE's major accomplishments has been the construction of a national power grid. This grid runs from the Nicaraguan border in northwestern Guanacaste Province southward to the lower part of San José Province. Branch lines on the west cover much of the Península de Nicoya, service the city of Puntarenas, and extend along the coast to Puerto Quepos. Other branches extend to localities north of San José, as well as eastward to the Moín-Puerto Limón area and northern Limón Province. Most district centers have electricity, and ICE has a made a major effort to extend supplies to the rural areas. But costs have limited extension into regions that have only scattered populations. Overall, power was available to some three-quarters of the country, but it was estimated in 1981 that only about half of all rural housing actually had electricity. In contrast, the highly populated Meseta Central, covering roughly a rectangular area extending from about San Ramón on the west through San José to near Turrialba in the east, was 90 percent electrified.

ICE has also had a longtime interest in the development of domestic geothermal resources to produce electric power. In 1983 a study was reported under way in the area of Volcán Miravalles, in the Cordillera de Guanacaste, to determine the feasibility of constructing an initial 50-megawatt generating plant powered by geothermal energy.

Petroleum Products

At the beginning of the 1970s, Costa Rica had been importing annually about 3.5 million barrels of crude oil and refined petroleum products. The crude oil imports, which accounted for roughly four-fifths of the total, were processed at the Costa Rican Petroleum Refinery (Refinadora Costarricense de Petróleo—RECOPE), situated at the port of Moín. The refinery, which started production in 1967 with a capacity of 8,000 barrels a day, was constructed and initially operated by the Allied Chemical Company of the United States but was nationalized in the early 1970s. Total imports increased steadily in that decade (except in 1974 when the first rise in world oil prices occurred), reaching a high of almost 6.5 million barrels in 1978. In 1981 total imports were some 4.7 million barrels. The decline appears to have been attributable almost entirely to the domestic slowdown in economic growth and industrial use rather than to the effects of the marked increase in oil prices that occurred at about that time. The oil import bill rose steadily from US$27 million in 1973 to US$107 million in 1978, US$156 million in 1979, and US$205 million in 1980. The

Hydroelectric power facility on Laguna de Arenal in Guanacaste Province
Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

plant on the Río Grande de Tárcoles (which went into operation in 1958), the 120,000-kilowatt Río Macho plant (1963) situated on a tributary of the Río Reventazón, the 100,800-kilowatt Cachí station (1966), also on the latter river, and the 157,000-kilowatt Arenal plant (1979). Construction of the Arenal facility in Guanacaste Province (in the general area of the Volcán Arenal) involved diverting water to the Pacific Ocean from the Río Arenal, whose natural course is to the Caribbean Sea. This was accomplished by boring a tunnel 6.67 kilometers long through the intervening mountain divide. As part of the project, a major new dam was also built that substantially raised the level of Laguna de Arenal, the lake that feeds the river. This makes possible a supply of water for the plant during the dry season and for the development of irrigation on some 105,000 hectares of farmland in the area. Additionally, the water utilized by the Arenal plant farther down on its course to the Pacific also drives the generators of the Corobicí power station, a new plant that went into operation in 1982. When all units of the latter have been installed, they will provide a total of 174,000 kilowatts to the ICE system.

significant drop in economic activity in 1981 and the resultant reduction in imports was accompanied by a decline in the cost of oil imports to some US$180 million.

The burden of oil import costs on the economy was apparent in the percentage of foreign exchange earnings from exports of goods that has been required to meet it. This rose from about 9 percent in 1973 to 21 percent in 1980 and, despite the marked drop in expenditures for oil in 1981, the latter amounted to 18 percent of merchandise export earnings; they were also estimated at 18 percent in 1982. Since 1980 the effects of this situation have been ameliorated considerably by the so-called Pact of San José, an agreement entered into that year between Costa Rica and eight other nations of the Caribbean Basin, Mexico, and Venezuela. The pact provided for the latter two countries to meet all oil requirements, for which payment was to be 70 percent in cash and 30 percent in credits extended in the form of five-year loans at 4 percent interest. Moreover, if the credits were used for energy development projects, the loans could be converted into 20-year obligations carrying a 2-percent interest rate. Some revisions in the terms of the pact were expected at its renewal in late 1983.

RECOPE, which had a daily refining capacity of about 10,000 barrels at the beginning of the 1980s, did not have the production mix best suited to actual domestic demands. Its original design emphasized production of fuel oil, which was expected to be needed by a developing industry. Government pricing policies until 1979, however, favored the use of diesel fuel, including that used for motor transport. Price adjustments thereafter had altered the situation, but prices established in 1982 again tended to increase diesel fuel use. RECOPE has had to import substantial quantities of diesel fuel, as well as gasoline, at high prices while exporting excess fuel oil at reduced rates. Reportedly, in 1983 restructuring of refinery processes was under way to produce greater quantities of both gasoline and diesel oil.

Transportation

The most important element in the domestic transportation system is the road network, which provides the greater part of the population adequate access to the principal centers and, with certain exceptions, to the outlying regions of the country (see fig. 2). The railroads, built originally to provide a connection between the Meseta Central and the country's ports and to facilitate external trade, still play a significant role in the economy. But their

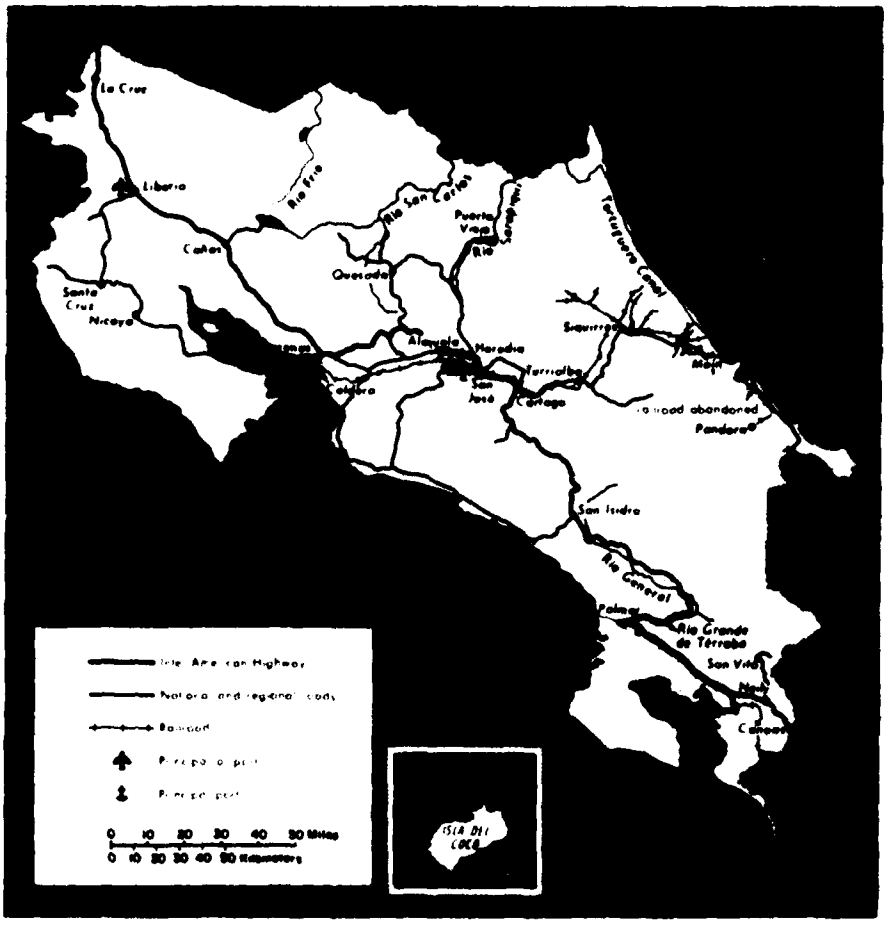


Figure 12. Transportation System, 1983

part has been greatly reduced by the loss of passenger traffic to motor transport and by the failure of bulk cargo, on which profitability depends, to grow materially. Domestic air service furnished by government and private flights cover many parts of the country. Their role, once mainly to connect outlying towns with the Meseta Central, has been greatly reduced by the emergence of modern road facilities. In contrast, the inland waterways that have long been routes of communication in the northern and northeastern parts of the country have experienced increased use as economic activity has grown in those regions and—for various reasons—access road development has lagged.

A section of the modern Inter-American Highway in Costa Rica's Meseta Central
Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

Roads

The road network accounted in the early 1980s for an estimated 90 percent of all freight ton-kilometers transported and for more than 98 percent of total passenger-kilometers. The government made substantial investments in road development during the 1970s in response to a rapid growth in motor transport. Overall road length increased from 20,575 kilometers in 1970 to 27,631 kilometers in 1980, and it reached 28,525 kilometers in 1982. All-weather roads, which in 1983 connected all principal towns, expanded in the 1970-80 period from 6,475 to 11,179 kilometers (of which 2,447 kilometers were paved and 8,732 kilometers were surfaced with either gravel or crushed stone). The remaining some 16,450 kilometers were dirt roads, which because of the extended rainy season in most of the country were impassable or passable only with great difficulty a majority of the time. The network was highly developed in the populous Meseta Central, where it included several superhighway toll roads. Roads were generally adequate in other parts of the country except in the

northern plains and the Caribbean regions, but improved feeder roads were still needed.

The system is divided into three main categories of roads: national, regional, and local. In 1983 maintenance of the national and regional net, which encompassed most of the all-weather roads, was the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. Local roads were generally the responsibility of cantonal authorities. The backbone of the national system is the Inter-American Highway, which runs from the Nicaraguan border in northwestern Guanacaste Province generally southeastward to San José and then southward, entering Panama from lower Puntarenas Province. Construction of this highway had a major impact on economic development along its route, opening up large new areas to agricultural exploitation.

Railroads

In 1983 regular passenger and freight services were furnished by two government-owned railroads: the National Atlantic Railroad (Ferrocarril Nacional al Atlántico—FNA), which operated between the Meseta Central and Puerto Limón, and the Pacific Electric Railroad (Ferrocarril Eléctrico al Pacifico—FEP), which connected San José and Puntarenas. Since 1977 both lines have operated under the central direction of Costa Rica Railroads (Ferrocarrilles de Costa Rica—FECOSA), a subsidiary of CODESA. A private industrial rail line, the Southern Railroad (Ferrocarril del Sur), provided some services to the public in the southern part of Puntarenas Province, and a similar line extended from Panama a short distance into southern Limón Province. The former, about 250 kilometers in overall length, belonged to a United Brand's subsidiary (the Banana Company of Costa Rica), and was used primarily in the operation of the company's plantations as well as to carry fruit to the port of Golfito for export. The latter line was of only minor significance to the Costa Rican economy. Until the mid-1960s the two main railroads had been the principal mode for commercial freight movement and the largest carrier of passengers. The great increase in motor vehicles that began about that time and expansion of the road system in the 1970s steadily reduced the railroads' position in the transport sector. Notably, although the railroads continued to carry substantial amounts of bulk cargo, they failed to share to any extent in the marked increase in the shipments of other goods that took place as the economy expanded.

After the 1820s, various proposals for the construction of rail-

roads in or across Costa Rica were made by European and American promoters and entrepreneurs. A major factor was coffee produced in the Meseta Central and shipped to the ports by mule and ox cart; by midcentury coffee exports had reached more than 10 million pounds a year. After the discovery of gold in California in 1848, a new incentive was the potential transit traffic of a coast-to-coast railroad. This idea persisted until the end of the 1860s, when a transcontinental rail line was completed across the United States. A further argument advanced for railroad construction was that rail facilities would attract immigrants to Costa Rica. The actual building of the main lines, however, did not begin until the 1870s, when construction was undertaken as part of the economic development concepts of Tomás Guardia Gutiérrez, who held political power from 1870 to 1882 (see The Guardia Dictatorship; Minor Cooper Keith, ch. 1).

In 1983 both the FNA and the FEP lines consisted of 1.067-meter-gauge single track. Until 1980 the FNA had had approximately 220 kilometers of main lines (from the Meseta Central to Puerto Limón) and some 250 kilometers of branch lines, which were situated along the coast in Limón Province in banana-growing regions. During 1980 about 150 kilometers of the coastal track—southward from Puerto Limón to Pandora—were abandoned in an economy move. In the early 1980s the FNA carried annually an average of some 1.2 million tons of freight, mostly bananas for export. Its operations have generally not been profitable. FECOSA has started electrification of the FNA and the first section—the main line from Moín to Siquirres and a branch from the latter to a major banana region—has been completed.

In contrast with the FNA, operations of the FEP, which had 144 kilometers of track in 1980, have usually shown a a profit. The line, built by the government, began regular service in October 1910 using wood-burning locomotives. The latter started fires on the line's wooden bridges and railroad ties, and some conversion to oil was soon made. Oil requirements proved too costly, however, and in the mid-1920s electrification began; it was completed in April 1930. Electric power for the line is provided by a hydroelectric plant belonging to the railroad. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the FEP carried an average of under 500,000 tons of freight annually, about 80 percent of which was shipped from Puntarenas eastward. The shipments included grains and fertilizers, steel tubing, and car and truck assembly kits. The line has lost some passenger traffic to road transportation.

Civil Aviation

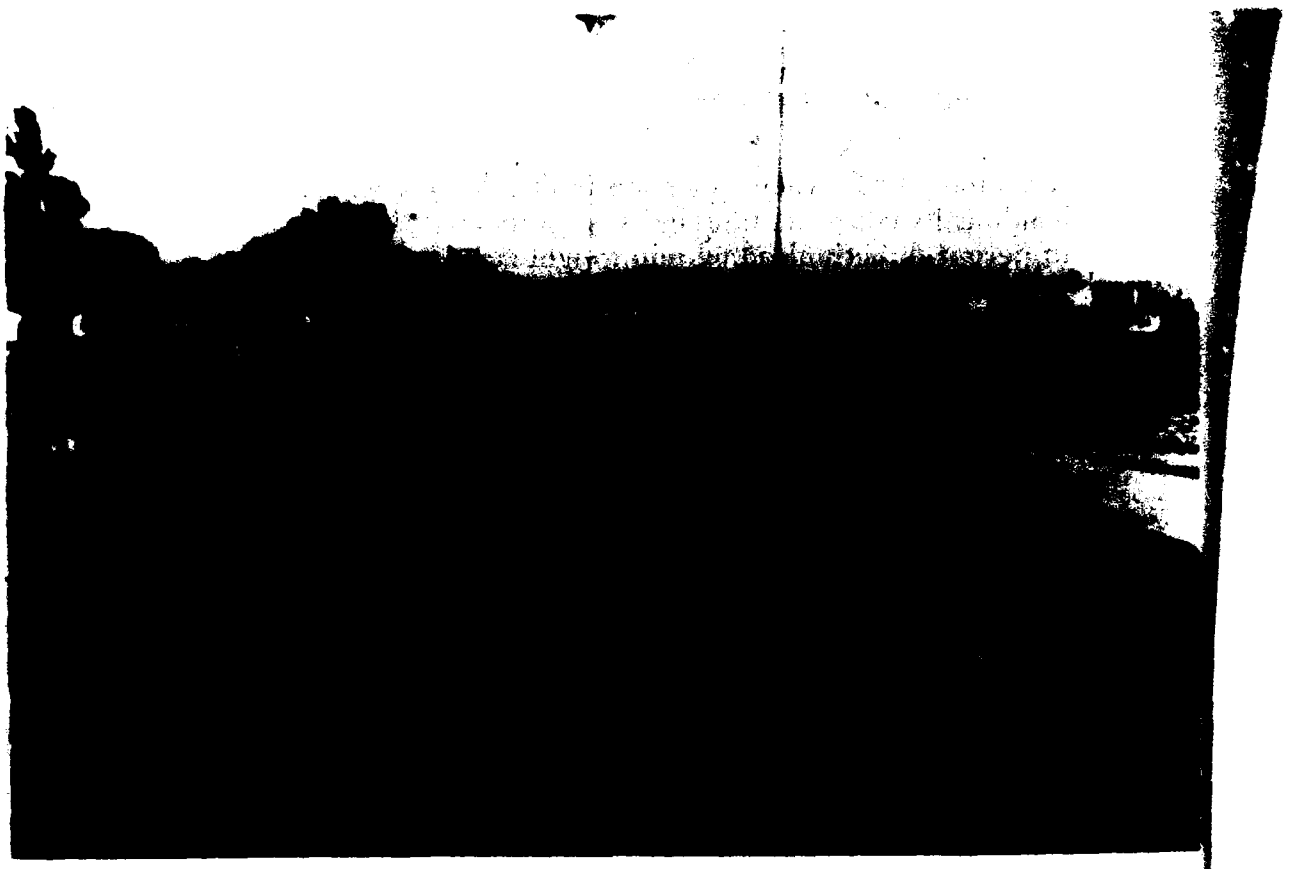
Domestic air services, from their start in 1939 through the 1960s and early 1970s, were important means of contact between the Meseta Central and outer towns and regions. Since then they have declined substantially in significance with respect to both cargo and passengers. Primary reasons for this decline have been the great expansion of all-weather roads throughout the country and the short distances between towns that have made movement of freight and people easy and cheaper by surface transportation. The high concentration of the population within a relatively compact area of the Meseta Central has also militated against any marked volume increase in domestic passenger travel by air.

In 1980 there were 173 airfields throughout the country. Twenty-seven had asphalt runways, six had concrete, and 140 were of gravel or crushed stone; many of the latter were small air strips. Ninety-four of the total were privately operated, and 47 were government owned; information on the remaining 32 was unavailable. San José was served by two airports, Juan Santamaría International Airport and Tobías Bolaño Airport, which is used by small planes. Liberia, capital of Guanacaste Province, and Puerto Limón had good facilities capable of accommodating airplanes of the Boeing 727 class, but neither had all-weather instrumentation in 1983. An improved airfield also existed at Golfito but was not equipped to handle jet aircraft. Domestic passenger and cargo service were furnished on regular schedules by the National Air Services (Servicios Aéreos Nacionales—SANSA) and by a number of private carriers. There were a considerable number of private planes, individually owned and belonging to private enterprises.

International service in late 1983 was furnished by Costa Rican Airlines (Líneas Aéreas Costarricenses—LACSA)—founded in 1952 by private investors and the government, which held a one-third interest—and some 20 international carriers. LACSA's fleet consisted of Boeing 727-200s, British Aerospace Corporation 111s, and a DC-8 used for cargo. In 1983 flights were available to the United States (Los Angeles, Miami, and New Orleans), Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and Venezuela.

Ports

In 1983 Costa Rica had two main general cargo ports: Puerto Limón on the Caribbean coast and Puntarenas on the Pacific. The development of facilities at Puerto Limón began in the late 1800s



Waterfront at Puntarenas, site of a major general-cargo port
Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

principally to serve the banana trade. After completion of the railroad from San José in late 1890, Puerto Limón also became a major outlet for coffee exports. Facilities in 1983 included three piers equipped with railroad sidings that were used for general cargo; one of the piers also contained a conveyer for loading bananas. A fourth pier provided berthing for roll-on-roll-off cargo vessels. Cranes were to be installed to handle containers as part of rehabilitation and expansion work undertaken in anticipation of a growth in foreign trade. During 1976-79 an average of roughly 850 cargo vessels entered Puerto Limón annually. The total tonnage unloaded and loaded increased in the period from about 1.8 to 2.1 million tons a year. In this time imports rose from slightly over half to about 56 percent of the total.

The port at Puntarenas had served as the principal outlet in the 1800s for the Meseta Central. Its importance was reduced by the opening of the rail line from that region to Puerto Limón but was regained when through rail service from Puntarenas to San José started in 1910. The railroad reduced travel time between San José and Puntarenas from as many as five days by mule or cart to a mere five hours. Lighterage was used for loading and unloading

cargo until 1929, when a pier was built. The pier was capable of handling two ships at a time and was equipped with railroad tracks to permit direct unloading into freight cars. In the early 1980s some 400 vessels used Puntarenas annually. Total tonnage through the port varied from about 600,000 to 800,000 tons a year; in 1979 imports accounted for over 80 percent of the total. The port's facilities were reported to be in a deteriorated state in the early 1980, and there was a lack of space to expand. As a result, new facilities were being added at the smaller port of Caldera, situated some 20 kilometers south of Puntarenas. This port, which had three piers handling general cargo, was also on the direct rail line to San José. The two ports were to be operated as a single complex.

In addition to the two major general cargo ports, there were more specialized ports at Moín, on the Caribbean coast a short distance north of Puerto Limón, and at Golfito, located on Golfo Dulce in southern Puntarenas Province. Moín, which was operated by RECOPE, had a wharf for unloading petroleum for the RECOPE refinery and one equipped for loading bananas. A third wharf was equipped to handle roll-on-roll-off cargo. Government plans had been developed to improve and expand Moín's nonpetroleum facilities; in late 1983 the major banana companies were pressing the government to expedite the upgrading of export facilities at the port. The port at Golfito was owned and operated by the Banana Company of Costa Rica. It had two piers, one for bananas, the other for general cargo. Golfito also had facilities for the discharge of petroleum products by tankers through a pipeline. A highly specialized port for sugar exports existed at Punta Morales on the eastern shore of the Golfo de Nicoya northwest of the port of Puntarenas. Almost all of the external trade that passed through Puerto Limón, Puntarenas, and other ports was handled by foreign vessels.

Inland Waterways

Extensive use is made of the rivers in the plains areas of northern Costa Rica for both cargo and passenger transport, especially where other means of transportation are minimal or absent. Of particular importance is service on the Río San Carlos, the Río Sarapiquí, and the Río Frío. All three rivers flow northward through the plains. The first two eventually empty into the Río San Juan on the Nicaraguan border and the third into Lago de Nicaragua. Cargo includes varying but relatively considerable amounts of bananas, beans, cacao, lumber, maize, rice, cattle for

local use and export,and foodstuffs shipped to local consumers. Along the Caribbean coast the Tortuguero Canal, a waterway consisting of a series of lagoons and canals extending some 112 kilometers northward from Moín, forms an inner coastal route that allows shipping to avoid the rough waters of the open sea. Completed in the 1970s, the waterway transports mostly cargo, including bananas, coconuts, cattle, and lumber inbound to Moín and foodstuffs outbound. The rivers on Costa Rica's west coast are used much less extensively and more irregularly. Many are navigable for short distances only, and service is affected by water levels at different times of the year. Among the more important as transport routes are the Río Grande de Térraba and its tributary Río General in southern San José and Puntarenas provinces, which accommodate local traffic between towns and villages along their courses.

Pipelines

A 120-kilometer pipeline, in operation since 1967, carries petroleum products (gasoline, diesel fuel, and kerosine) from the refinery at Moín to a tank farm at Ochomogo in Cartago Province. From there, distribution is made to the Meseta Central and some other areas. Construction of a cross-Costa Rica pipeline to transship oil from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic was proposed early in the Monge administration. The oil would then be sent to refineries on the Gulf of Mexico and the eastern coast of the United States. The proposal was strongly opposed by conservationist forces in Costa Rica, and considerable initial questioning occurred in the Legislative Assembly related to environmental dangers; oil spills from a similar line across Panama have on several occasions contaminated Costa Rican waters. In late 1983 bids on the projects were reportedly being sought by the government. If built, the line was expected to earn substantial foreign exchange.

Foreign Trade, Balance of Payments, and Foreign Debt

The agricultural base of the economy is reflected in the dominance of agricultural products in the country's exports and their share in foreign exchange earnings. At the beginning of the 1960s, such products accounted for well over 90 percent of merchandise export earnings, and two commodities—bananas and coffee—regularly constituted 85 to 90 percent of the total. The creation of the Central American Common Market (CACM) in 1960 and

Costa Rica's adherence as a full member in 1963 were followed by a gradual increase in the export of manufactured goods to the market. Between 1960 and 1970 total receipts from manufactures increased from about 6 percent to over 22 percent of total export earnings. The proportion rose to more than 33 percent in 1980 and was above 30 percent in 1981-82. During the 1970s other agricultural products, notably beef and sugar, also became important exports. The proportionate share in exchange earnings of bananas and coffee was altered, decreasing from over 60 percent in 1970 to roughly 50 percent during most of the decade. But agricultural products together continued to account for over two-thirds of all export receipts. During the period 1979-81, the value of banana and coffee exports was under 50 percent of total earnings, and in 1980 it dropped to about 43 percent. In 1982 preliminary data showed manufacturing's share in export earnings to be down as sales to the CACM were affected by the unsettled political situation in the market. The world prices for sugar and beef were in decline at the same time, and the two principal export commodities (coffee and bananas) recorded combined earnings amounting to almost 55 percent of total merchandise receipts (see table 5, Appendix).

The principal destinations for exports since the 1960s have been the United States, the European Economic Community (EEC—also known as the Common Market), and the CACM. Well over 50 other countries throughout the world also imported goods from Costa Rica. In the early 1980s the three main buyers accounted for about three-quarters of total merchandise exports (see table 6, Appendix). The CACM was the principal destination of manufactured goods; in the 1970s the market had usually taken over 70 percent annually. Throughout the decade, Costa Rica usually had an unfavorable balance of trade with the market. This situation was reversed between 1980 and 1982 as the civil war in Nicaragua adversely affected industrial as well as nonindustrial production and intramarket exports from that country and economic disruption in El Salvador altered the latter's trade pattern.

Agricultural and industrial raw materials (including crude petroleum and other oil products used by industry) accounted regularly for the largest share of imports. During most of the 1970s their value ranged from about 35 to 40 percent of total import values. Materials for the highly import-dependent manufacturing sector constituted well over 90 percent of the category. Capital goods—the larger share for the industrial and transport sectors—averaged about 27 percent through 1979 but declined thereafter

Tank farm for storage and distribution of gasoline, diesel fuel, and kerosine at Ochomogo in Cartago Province
Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

and in 1982 were only slightly over 14 percent. Mainly responsible for the drop were the recession, devaluation of the colón, and foreign exchange shortages and restrictions, all of which acted as disincentives to new investment. The major category of consumer nondurable goods imports declined during the 1970s—as domestic production assumed a greater role in the local market—from 22 percent in 1970 to less than 16 percent (see table 7, Appendix).

Imports came from more than 60 countries. As in the case of exports, the United States, the EEC, and the CACM were the principal trade partners. Together they usually furnished about 57 percent of total imports. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the United States provided roughly 33 percent, the CACM 13 percent, and the EEC 11 percent. Japan was also an important supplier, accounting for about 10 percent of imports. After 1980, as the result of increased petroleum deliveries under the Pact of San José signed that year, Mexico and Venezuela became significant suppliers, together accounting for over 13 percent of imports in 1980 and 16 percent in 1981. Trade relations were maintained with the Soviet Union, East European states, and other centrally

planned economies. Annual trade varied considerably but was routinely small; in 1981 the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (including Yugoslavia) took a combined 2.3 percent of Costa Rican exports and provided 0.3 percent of its imports.

The marked dependence on a few export commodities for the greater part of foreign exchange and the fluctuations in their world prices, which from time to time have been of substantial proportions, have resulted in periodic balance of payments difficulties. Until the unusual strains introduced by the rise in world oil prices in 1973, the crises were short-lived. Costa Rica's terms of trade (the ratio of export prices to import prices) deteriorated materially in 1974 as world inflationary pressures mounted. The government instituted measures—initially including credit expansion—to offset the impact of these external forces on the economy. Later, steps to discourage import growth were accompanied by increases in sales and consumption taxes and the institution of restrictions on installment buying of durable goods. To counteract the adverse effects on the rural poor, the Family Assistance Program was started in 1975 to improve their living conditions. This program was financed from the sales tax increase and income tax surcharges. The measures resulted in a reduction in the balance of payments current account deficit, but foreign borrowing and the use of foreign exchange reserves were required to cover overall shortfalls.

In 1976 major frost damage to the Brazilian coffee crop—an infrequent event—led to a rapid increase in world coffee prices. The price of the mild *arabica* varieties grown in Costa Rica rose dramatically; the 1975 price doubled in 1976 and quadrupled the following year. During 1977 and 1978 the terms of trade were quite favorable—the prices for bananas and cocoa also improved—greatly relieving the pressures on the economy. However, coffee prices turned downward during 1978, and in 1979 major new increases in oil prices occurred. The combined detrimental effect on the economy was pronounced and was further accentuated by poor harvests that year. To increase production and stem rising unemployment, expansionary measures were taken by the government of Rodrigo Carazo Odio, who had assumed the presidency in 1978. The large-scale increase in the money supply resulted in an excessive demand for goods that was further fueled by the large real growth in wages that had occurred in the period of prosperity between 1976 and 1978. Government receipts were well short of requirements, which were increased by growing deficits in the operation of the autonomous government agencies. Domestic credit resources were inadequate to cover government

Street scene near the coffee warehouse in San José. Sidewalk vendors in this district exchange Costa Rican colones for foreign currency. Courtesy Paul and Linda Spiegler

credit needs, and greater recourse was had to foreign loans to cover budgetary deficits and shortages of foreign exchange. The accompanying deterioration of the balance of payments position was further exacerbated by a greatly overvalued colón, which the government persistently refused to devalue (see table 8, Appendix). The situation continued to worsen, and in late 1980 the colón was allowed to float. In an effort to achieve currency control, foreign exchange reserves were run down.

A major element of the balance of payments deficit was the servicing requirement of the public foreign debt. In 1976 the debt amounted to US$1 billion, and service charges totaled US$91.2 million. By the end of 1978 the debt had risen to US$1.6 billion, and servicing requirements reached US$256.3 million. Three years later, at the end of 1981, the debt was US$2.7 billion, and servicing costs were US$356.1 million, an amount equal to almost 36 percent of the receipts from merchandise exports that year.

Roughly 20 percent of public sector loans were from multilateral agencies (including the World Bank [see Glossary], International Development Agency, International Finance Corporation,

and Inter-American Development Bank). Approximately the same amount had been furnished by governments (bilateral loans), of which major contributors were the United States, members of the EEC, and Canada. More than 40 percent of the debt consisted of loans from commercial banks at generally high interest rates, and about 20 percent of that total were short term. The government had found it increasingly difficult to meet forthcoming obligations and in early 1980 had undertaken negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF—see Glossary) for emergency aid. In March the IMF approved an arrangement for the equivalent of about US$78 million to be available over a two-year period. This was based on a government stabilization program of austerity measures aimed at a substantial reduction in the public sector deficit and limitation of the growth rate of domestic credit to the sector. By fall, the government's inability to achieve those aims was obvious, and the agreement lapsed (to that point the government had utilized about one-quarter of the funds). A second government effort in early 1981 resulted by midyear in a new approval for about US$330 million over a three-year span. But conformance with the agreed conditions, which included devaluation of the official rate for the colón, reduction in price controls and subsidies, and changes to the tax system, again did not occur; in November the arrangement was suspended. In August 1981 the government, unable to cover all debt service payments, had suspended both interest and principal on all loans from commercial banks. However, debt servicing was continued on loans from multilateral organizations.

Efforts were made to arrange refinancing or rescheduling of the commercial loans, but negotiations dragged on into early 1982 with no concrete results, influenced, at least at the end, by the presidential election scheduled for February 1982. The election was won by Monge, who had campaigned on a program calling for broad economic reforms and a restructuring of the economy (see National Election of 1982; The Monge Administration, 1982-83, ch. 4). After inauguration of the new government in May, extensive negotiations with the IMF resulted in the latter's making available in December the equivalent of approximately US$100 million to be usable over a one-year period.

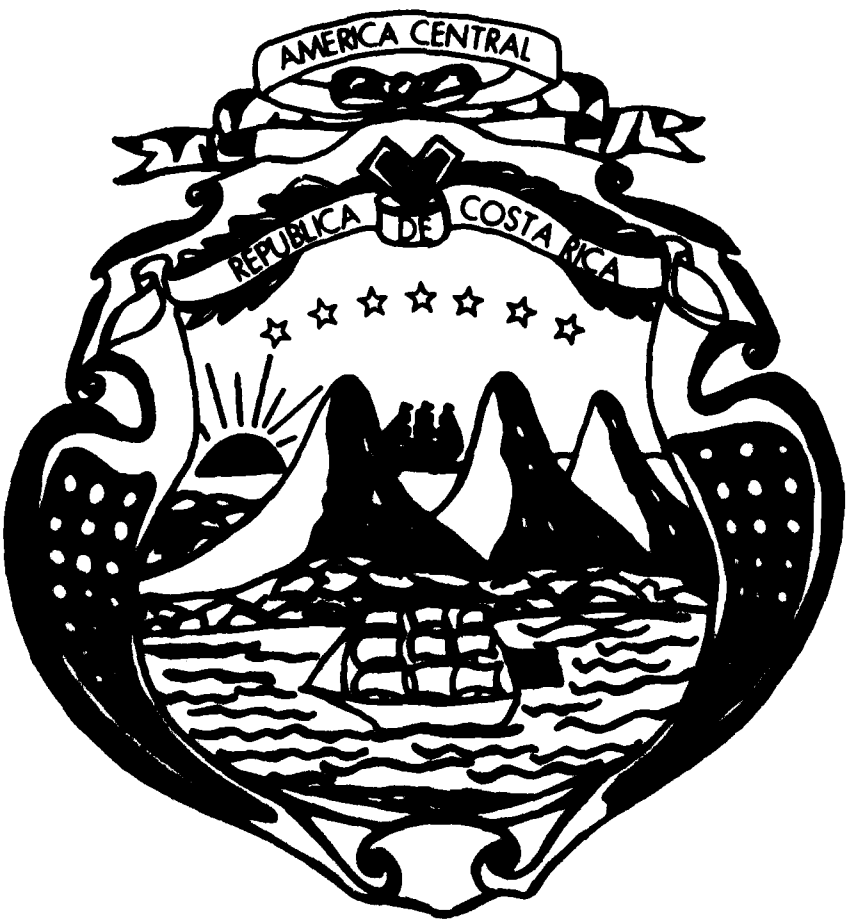
Negotiations with commercial creditors also began in mid-1982, and token payments of interest were made during the latter half of 1982. Finally, in September 1983, an agreement was signed with some 175 commercial banks to reschedule outstanding payments totaling US$655 million that consisted of principal past due for 1982, due in 1983, and coming due in 1984. A four-

year period of grace was granted. During 1983, payments were made on an overdue interest sum of US$240 million (which was to be paid off by the end of the year) and on US$120 million in interest current in 1983. Under the rescheduling agreement, the banks also made available credits of US$215 million for imports. Earlier, in January 1983, the so-called Club of Paris (a group of representatives of the Western industrialized nations and Japan) rescheduled 85 percent of the arrears on Costa Rica's bilateral debts together with the principal and interest due in 1983. The arrangement included a three-year grace period and a repayment period of seven years for the arrears. A four-year grace period and a five-year payment period were agreed to for principal and interest due between July 1, 1982, and December 31, 1983. (The Monge government had continued to make regular service payments on the multilateral debt.)

* * *

Detailed statistics on the economy are available in the regular reports on production and national accounts published by the Banco Central de Costa Rica. Generally, these reports cover only individual sectors. A useful handbook providing a more general coverage is *Costa Rica: Facts and Figures*, issued by the Exports and Investment Promotion Center of the Ministry of Economy, Industry, and Commerce. Regular annual reports on coffee are issued by the Costa Rican Oficina del Café, and extremely useful information on the agricultural-livestock sector is available in various reports prepared by the agricultural attaché at the United States embassy in San José. *Costa Rica: A Country Profile*, prepared for USAID, contains data compiled specifically as an aid in possible disaster relief operations. The Costa Rican government's *Atlas estadístico de Costa Rica, No. 2* includes background information, statistics, maps, and graphs on the country's physical, human, and economic aspects. Also recommended is *Crisis Económica en Costa Rica: un análisis económico de los últimos 20 años* by Helio Fallas. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 4. Government and Politics



SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1821, Costa Rica has had a remarkable history of regular and meaningful elections, peaceful transfer of power to lawfully elected governments, and civilian domination of the basic power structure. Despite infrequent lapses, the country has merited its reputation as a model democracy.

Its orderly government is one of the most stable in Latin America. Violence has been rare; serious outbreaks have occurred only twice—from 1917 to 1919 and during 1948. From the second period of turmoil and conflict emerged the Constitution of 1949, which was still in effect at the close of 1983. The form of government established by this document has been unitary, popular, and representative. Executive power is exercised by the president, his cabinet, and two vice presidents. Lawmaking authority rests with a unicameral body of 57 deputies called the Legislative Assembly. Its members are elected from provincial slates on the basis of proportional representation. Judicial authority is vested in an independent Supreme Court of Justice and over 100 subordinate courts throughout the nation. The country is divided into seven provinces, each composed of a number of cantons, which in turn are each made up of several districts. Local government is concentrated at the cantonal level, although agencies of the national government administer many important services.

The checks and balances built into the Constitution have prevented domination by either the president or the legislature and have reduced the danger of rule by a strongman or oligarchy. The executive branch has often been hindered in carrying out its full electoral mandate by an inability to enforce party discipline among its deputies in the Legislative Assembly and by a lack of control over the large state bureaucracy and the many autonomous institutions. Organized interest groups actively seek to influence decisions; the lobbying efforts of business and large-scale agriculture are highly effective, but labor, students, and peasants are less well organized. The Roman Catholic Church refrains from political activism. Communist and other leftist elements have few sympathizers but are an established political force and are represented in the assembly.

The National Liberation Party has been the predominant political group in Costa Rica for over three decades. Social democratic in orientation, it has succeeded in fulfilling its purposes by introducing a comprehensive social security system and a broad pro-

gram of education, health care, and public services. The party's candidate, Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez, was elected president in 1982 for a four-year term. His party also won a resounding victory in the Legislative Assembly elections over Unity, a coalition of parties and factions generally to the right of the government party.

The overriding task facing Monge at his inauguration was to stop Costa Rica's slide toward economic collapse. Debts to foreign banks and governments were rescheduled, and new credits and loans were negotiated with international financial agencies. These measures were accompanied by a plan of domestic austerity—reduction of budget deficits, removal of price subsidies, a hiring freeze, and a curb on government wage increases. In spite of strikes and protest demonstrations over the resulting downward pressure on incomes, there were indications by the end of 1983 that the painful program of retrenchment was having its desired stabilizing effect.

In its external relations, the country has generally avoided contention and has formally declared its neutrality. It has not, however, been able to insulate itself from the political turbulence enveloping Nicaragua, its northern neighbor. Costa Rica's sympathy for those resisting political oppression has inclined it first against the despotism of the Somoza dynasty and, after 1979, against the Sandinista government for its increasingly repressive, pro-Soviet course. In the latter part of 1983 the government was seeking to curb military activities by Nicaraguan insurgents based on Costa Rican territory to prevent its differences with Nicaragua from getting out of hand. Closer association with the United States had helped relieve the country's economic plight and had bolstered domestic security. Monge remained determined, however, not to be regarded as a surrogate for the United States in Central America. His administration advocated that foreign forces and arms be withdrawn and replaced by economic resources to help in overcoming backwardness and inequity. Negotiations to restore peace should, in the view of Costa Rica, be conducted by the countries of the region.

Constitutional Framework

Costa Rica had had nine constitutions since its founding as an independent nation. Most of these were introduced during the nineteenth century, reflecting the turbulence and uncertainties of the new country after the breakup of the Spanish colonial em-

pire. Only two were products of political developments of the twentieth century—those of 1917 and of 1949. The latter document continued to be applied in 1983, defining the norms of political life, allocating powers among the various institutions of government, and affirming the social and legal rights of citizens.

Constitutional Development

The first constitution, the Fundamental Law of the Free Nation of Costa Rica (1825), described the status of the country as an independent state within the United Provinces of Central America. There had been an earlier national charter, issued in 1821 after the separation from Spain. Called the Pacto de la Concordia, it formalized the country's independence and set up the provisional government of the Province of Costa Rica. Although Costa Rica withdrew from the Central American association in 1829, it later rejoined until the federation's effective dissolution in 1838. The Fundamental Law survived until it was replaced by the constitution of 1844.

In 1847 a new constitution was enacted to correct some of the deficiencies in applying the previous document and to introduce reforms in the electoral process. It did away with the direct vote for president and prescribed a system of secondary electors. It also assigned the executive considerably more power and, for the first time, made voting compulsory. When, in 1848, Costa Rica severed the nominal ties it had continued to retain with the federation, it became necessary to promulgate a new constitution conforming to the country's status as a completely separate and independent state.

The constitution of 1848, along with its successor constitutions of 1859 and 1869, were probing, experimental documents, denoting efforts by the new republic to introduce different approaches to its governmental structure and philosophies. The legislature was changed from bicameral to unicameral and back, the army was abolished and reinstated, and the authority of the executive was expanded or restricted, usually depending on the energy and aggressiveness of the incumbent president. All three constitutions contributed to the country's political evolution and maturity.

The next constitution, that of 1871, was drawn up during the dictatorship of the country's first military president, Tomás Guardia Gutiérrez. It was, nevertheless, a liberal democratic document that established the supremacy of civil authorities over the military (see The Guardia Dictatorship, ch. 1). Actually, the con-

stitution was not fully in force until after Guardia's death in 1882. This document effected significant strides in guaranteeing individual rights and in developing a system of checks and balances between the executive and legislative authorities. The bicameral congress was replaced by the Legislative Assembly, which has been retained. The form and character of Costa Rican democracy introduced by this constitution have been preserved except for a brief interruption between 1917 and 1919 when a streamlined constitution promulgated under the military dictatorship of Federico Tinoco Granados was in force.

Constitution of 1949

The provisional government led by José Figueres Ferrer, who was custodian of the reins of power after the revolution of 1948, appointed a constituent assembly to draw up a new national charter. Brought into effect on November 7, 1949, the Constitution did not depart radically from the outlines of the 1871 document it replaced but was remarkable for its inclusion of concrete social, economic, and educational guarantees and for the advanced political concepts it embodied. Although subjected to a series of modifying amendments over the years that followed, the underlying structure and principles of government had been fully maintained as of late 1983.

Among many significant innovations that it introduced were judicial review of the constitutionality of legislative acts, proscription of the army, political rights for women, an autonomous agency to conduct elections, and prohibitions against successive reelection of the president and of deputies to the Legislative Assembly. The restriction on presidential succession and the independent role framed for the legislature were designed to circumscribe the powers of the president in order to prevent the rise of another strongman. The placing of the portions of the Constitution dealing with powers of the legislature ahead of the sections dealing with the executive symbolized the relative emphasis intended for these two branches of government.

Separate chapters of the 1949 Constitution are devoted to individual and social rights. Every Costa Rican is guaranteed freedom of movement, inviolability of residence, freedom of communication and assembly, and the right of habeas corpus. Some of the more unusual provisions include the provision of asylum for those persecuted for political reasons, a prohibition of private monopolies, and the right to petition and receive prompt redress from public officials.

The right to a minimum wage is ordained by the Constitution, as are the length of the workday and workweek and the right to annual vacations. The rights of both employers and employees to organize are guaranteed. A system of social security, covering illness, disability, old age, and maternity benefits, is mandated. Persons not covered by unemployment insurance are granted the right to compensation if discharged without cause.

The Constitution stipulates that institutions of higher learning will enjoy independence in their functions and structure. The state is obligated to contribute at least 10 percent of the budget of the Ministry of Public Education to the University of Costa Rica and other institutions of higher learning. A general basic education is compulsory. Free education maintained by the state is prescribed from preschool through the secondary level. Indigent pupils are to be provided food and clothing by the state.

Citizenship is acquired by birth in Costa Rica or by birth abroad to either a Costa Rican mother or a Costa Rican father if the child is subsequently enrolled in the Civil Registry. Naturalization may be effected by nationals of other Central American countries after one year of residence in Costa Rica. Native-born Spaniards and Ibero-Americans may be naturalized after two years of residence and all other foreigners after five years of residence.

The Constitution may be amended by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the entire membership of the legislature in two successive annual sessions. Although the president is enjoined to submit his own views after the first affirmative vote, there is no provision for a presidential veto of a constitutional amendment. In 1983 the assembly was weighing a proposal to create a commission to draft a wholly new constitution embodying changes more fundamental than could be accommodated piecemeal by amendment. A constituent assembly would then have to be convened. Among the proposals that have been advocated are a longer presidential term or provision for reelection of presidents after a stipulated period out of office, reelection of deputies, stronger controls over decentralized institutions, and provision for expropriation of land for agricultural reform.

The amendments that have been enacted have not for the most part been of major consequence. The prohibition on presidential travel abroad without consent of the Legislative Assembly was modified in 1975 to permit visits of up to 10 days to the countries of Central America and Panama without such consent. A clause that in effect banned the Costa Rican communist party was modified in 1975 to permit the party to operate legally and offer candidates for election. Amendments in 1977 and 1981 provided for

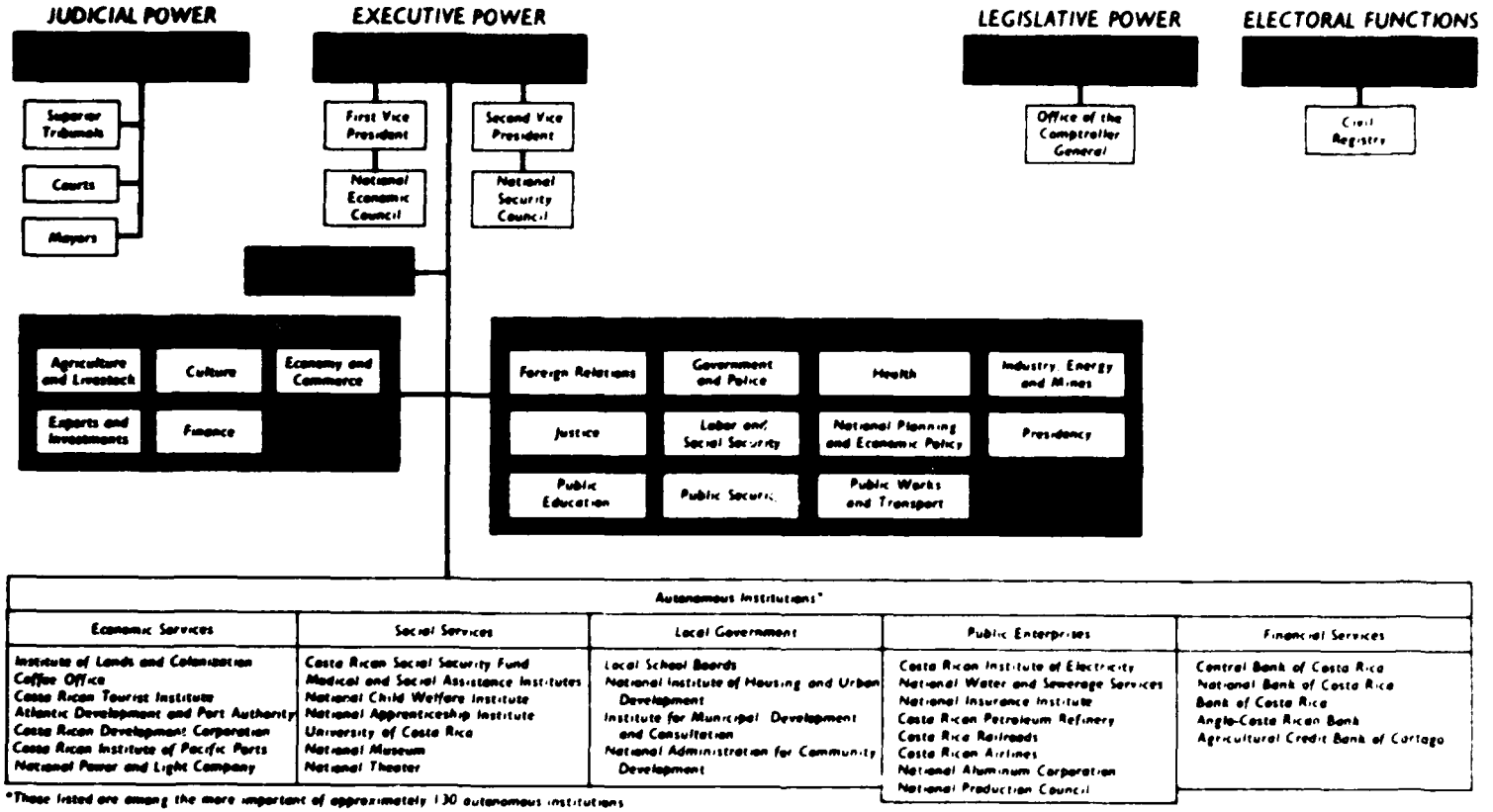


Figure 13. Government Organization, 1983

more flexible financing of the nation's institutions of higher education. The conditions under which political parties may be entitled to government contributions for their campaign expenses have been liberalized.

Institutions of Government

Under the centralized structure mandated by the Constitution of 1949, the sources of government authority are concentrated at the national level and divided among three distinct and independent branches, the legislative, executive, and judicial (see fig. 13). The Constitution's elaborate system of checks and balances embraces provision for presidential veto, interpellation (questioning of official actions or policies), impeachment procedures, and restrictions against reelection to legislative and executive offices. Provincial and local governments have limited administrative powers delegated by law. The creation of new provinces and cantons (see Glossary) must be approved by the Legislative Assembly. Their chief officers are appointed by the president. The Constitution also confers separate and independent status on the autonomous institutions of the state (*autónomos*), including the state banks, the state insurance companies, and other agencies that the Legislative Assembly may create. Two other bodies—the Office of the Comptroller General and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal—enjoy complete independence in carrying out their functions.

Executive Branch

The executive branch in Costa Rica consists of the president, two vice presidents, the cabinet ministers, and the Council of Government, which is composed of the president, the vice presidents, and the ministers acting as a body. Under the Constitution, executive powers are separately allocated to the president, to the president acting jointly with the appropriate cabinet ministers, and to the Council of Government.

The president is limited to a single term. (Former presidents at the time this provision was enacted in 1969 remained subject to the previous rule, which permitted reelection after eight years had elapsed. Figueres used his exemption when he was elected in 1970, making him ineligible thereafter.) The president and vice presidents must be citizens by birth, over 30 years of age, and cannot be members of the clergy. During the year preceding the

election, a presidential candidate must not have served as a cabinet minister, a supreme court justice, or in other designated high government posts.

The president's exclusive powers are narrowly defined. He appoints and removes cabinet ministers, represents the nation in official acts, and exercises supreme command of the public security forces. He must present an annual state of the union message to the legislature, in which he is expected to propose measures deemed important to the conduct of government and the nation's well-being.

The president may call on either of the two vice presidents to replace him during a temporary absence. If the office is vacated, the line of succession begins with the first vice president. No other duties for the vice presidents are prescribed by the Constitution. The second vice president does not even receive a salary. In practice, they have generally assisted the president in representational activities and have performed other duties assigned by him. In 1981, when differences with the president over adoption of a financial austerity program led to the resignation of the finance minister, the finance portfolio was assigned temporarily to the second vice president. The first vice president, who also disagreed with the financial policies of the president, announced that he would henceforth confine himself to fulfilling his constitutional role and resign from those duties assigned by the president.

Monge delegated authority extensively to the two vice presidents. His first vice president, Alberto Fait Lizano, was made coordinator of the National Economic Council, a body also including the six cabinet ministers primarily concerned with economic problems and the president of the Central Bank of Costa Rica. The second vice president, Armando Aráuz Aguilar, was assigned to social affairs and was coordinator of the National Security Council. The two vice presidents met every Monday with Monge and with the leadership of the government party in the Legislative Assembly later in the week. Monge presided over a meeting of the Council of Government every Wednesday morning.

The Constitution allocates jointly to the president and to the appropriate ministers certain functions comprising most aspects of the country's administration, its finances, maintenance of public order, collection of revenues, enforcement of court decisions, and submission of the national budget to the Legislative Assembly. The direction of the republic's foreign relations, including the negotiation of treaties, is among the jointly held responsibilities. The president and his respective ministers are enjoined to exercise initiative in the enactment of laws and to ensure the

prompt execution of laws passed by the assembly. To this end they are authorized to issue regulations and ordinances.

The president presides over the Council of Government, which is also accorded a specified range of responsibilities under the Constitution. These include requesting the Legislative Assembly to declare a "state of national defense" (state of emergency) and to authorize military recruitment and organization of an army. The council may also exercise the right of pardon, appoint and remove diplomatic representatives, and appoint the directors of autonomous institutions. The president may submit other matters to the council if the gravity of the subject matter warrants.

The number of ministries and the division of responsibilities have varied from one presidential administration to another. In 1969 there were 10 ministers in addition to the president and vice presidents; by 1983 the number had increased to 16 (see table 9, Appendix). To qualify for a ministerial post, an individual must be a layman and a citizen by birth or have 10 years' residence after naturalization. Cabinet members may not be elected as deputies to the assembly. They may attend sessions of the assembly and have the right to speak but not to vote, and they must attend if directed by the assembly. They must also submit annual reports to the legislative branch on matters within their ministries.

In comparison with other Latin American governments, the Costa Rican system has a notably weak executive structure. The explicit powers of the president as an individual are minimal, and remaining authority is dispersed among the executive branch. Decree-making power, an important instrument in the conduct of government elsewhere in the area, is confined to the execution of existing law. Nevertheless, even in Costa Rica there has been a tendency to resort to decrees to circumvent a balky Legislative Assembly. While the constraints of the Constitution have often frustrated the president in carrying out his full program, he has nevertheless remained the paramount factor determining the nation's political course. He retains wide discretionary power in implementing laws and shapes the government through his power to appoint and remove ministers. The right to select heads of autonomous institutions provides him some oversight, if not operational authority, over these bodies. The president, together with the appropriate ministers, defines political issues and priorities through his legislative program and the initiation of appropriations bills. He cannot, however, exercise a veto over changes in the budget approved by the assembly if that body also makes provision for necessary revenues. A leading observer of the Costa

Rican political system, Charles D. Ameringer, has concluded that "every president is a lame duck, with the prospect, depending on his will and personality, of either being ignored or being able to act boldly and above politics."

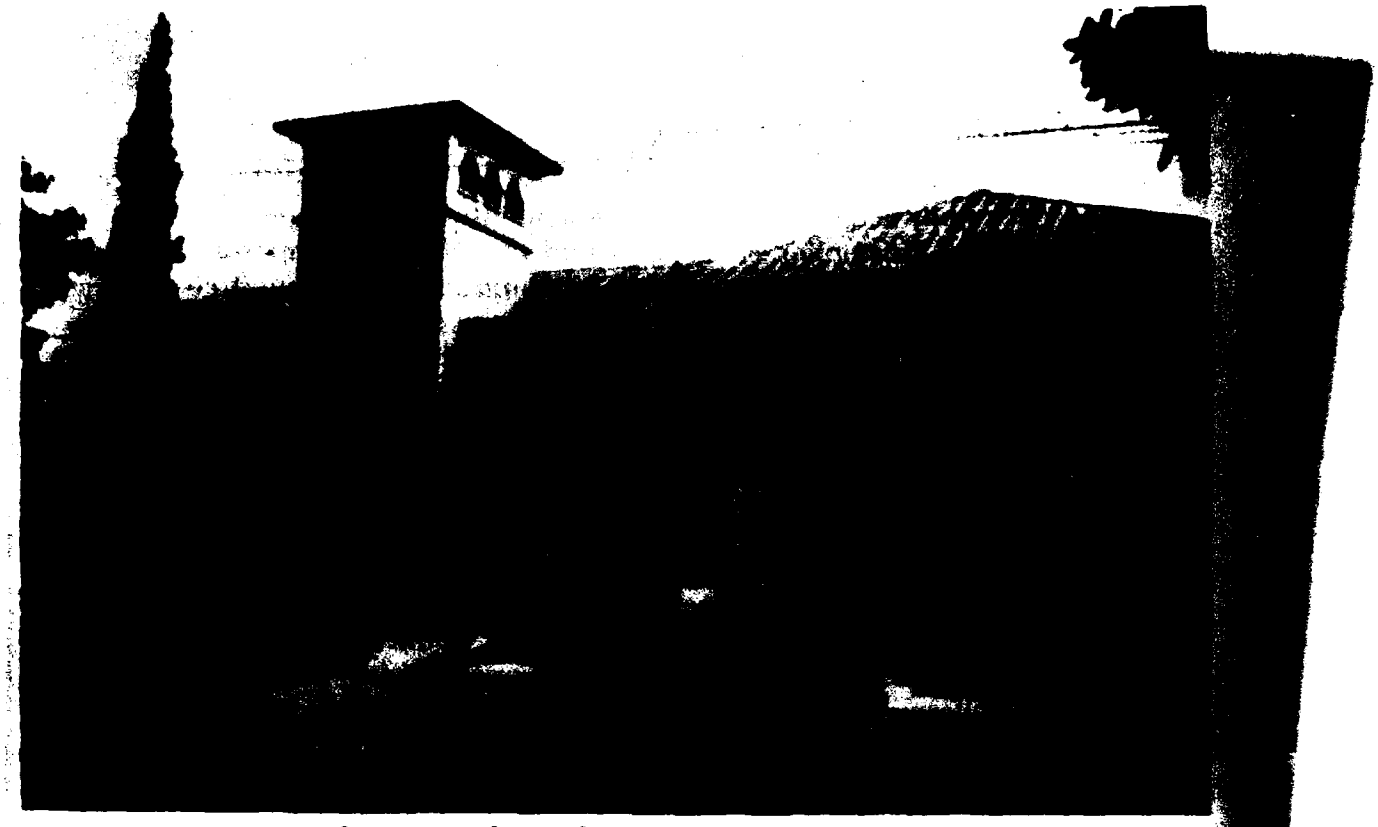
Legislative Branch

The unicameral Legislative Assembly was accorded a preponderant share of government authority under the 1949 Constitution. The number of seats was fixed permanently at 57 in 1961; these have been periodically reapportioned among the seven provinces in response to population shifts. Deputies are elected for four years and may not serve successive terms. The assembly meets each year beginning on the first of May for a regular session of six months. The session is divided into two periods, the first from May through July and the second from September through November. Extraordinary sessions, which the president has the power to convoke, are common. As a result the assembly may sit for up to 11 months a year. Because generous daily allowances are granted for attendance at extraordinary sessions, little complaint is heard that so much of the assembly's work is transacted in this fashion.

Among the exclusive powers allotted to the Legislative Assembly by the Constitution are enacting laws, approving the national budget, levying taxes, and authorizing the executive to declare a state of national emergency. It may also approve or reject international treaties, appoint magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice, and create new courts. Government loans are subject to authorization by the legislature, and loans negotiated abroad must be approved by a two-thirds vote. Consent of the assembly is necessary for the entry of foreign troops or for the stay of foreign warships in Costa Rican ports.

The assembly has the authority to suspend civil rights and guarantees for up to 30 days by a two-thirds vote of all its members. If the assembly is adjourned, the president may effect suspension by decree, but the assembly must then meet within 48 hours to ratify the president's action. Civil rights were briefly suspended in 1955 when an invasion force composed of followers of a former president was launched from the Nicaraguan border.

The Legislative Assembly may conduct interpellations of cabinet ministers and may, in addition, subject them to censure (by a two-thirds vote of those present) if the assembly deems them guilty of illegal or unconstitutional acts or serious errors injurious to the public interest. The assembly is empowered to settle ques-



The National Legislative Assembly building in San José
Photo by Kathryn R. Stafford

tions arising over the mental or physical capacities of the president and to decide whether to call for his replacement. The assembly may initiate impeachment proceedings against the president and the vice presidents and, by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the entire body, place them at the disposition of the Supreme Court of Justice for trial.

Bills may be introduced into the assembly by the executive branch or by individual deputies. Somewhat less than half of the bills are initiated by private members, but they have equal standing with those submitted by the executive. Far fewer private measures are passed, rejection usually coming in the assembly itself. Each new bill is transmitted by the president of the assembly to one of five major standing committees. The committee report is due within 15 days, although this deadline is not generally met. It is then subjected to three separate debates. In the first debate the substance is discussed and amendments may be introduced. The second debate permits discussion of the negative and positive features of the bill. If the bill is approved at all three stages, it is submitted to the executive to be approved or vetoed within 10 days. To prevent important measures from being mired in the legislative process, bills are sometimes packaged and given priority handling by mutual agreement of party leaders in the assembly.

In a study of the legislative function published in 1971, political scientist Christopher E. Baker found that the most important work on a bill was performed at the committee stage. Committee discussions were marked by a conscientious effort to weigh the consequences of a proposed measure, and partisanship was minimized. Floor debates normally had less impact on the final contents of a bill. Broadcasting of floor sessions presented an inducement to extended partisan exchanges but did little to clarify the issues under debate.

The five committees to which legislation was referred were those on economic affairs (industry, international commerce, and finance); budget affairs (expenditures and revenues); government and administration (security, foreign affairs, public works, and agriculture); social affairs (labor, social security, health, education, and welfare); and judicial affairs. Each committee was composed of 11 or 12 deputies, and membership was usually for one year. Thus, each deputy was likely to be assigned to four committees during a term of office. This rotation meant that most deputies would have an opportunity to sit on the Budget Affairs Committee, considered to be the most important.

Baker's study found that the major parties were organized into caucus groups of greater or lesser formality. The majority National Liberation Party (Partido Liberación Nacional—PLN) met monthly or more often to examine what strategy should be followed in supporting or opposing a given bill. By a two-thirds vote of the caucus, PLN deputies could decide on a party line position. Even so, individual deputies could present their personal arguments for failing to support the party line. Only a minority of bills were actually subjected to caucus discussion. In most cases a party line was not enforced, but individual deputies tended to follow the voting lead of influential party figures.

The Constitution requires that a deputy of the Legislative Assembly be a Costa Rican citizen and at least 21 years of age. Naturalized citizens must have had 10 years of residence in the country. Although they are elected at large in each of the seven provinces, attention is paid to the cantonal distribution of candidates within the provinces, with the result that individual deputies are looked upon as having cantonal affiliations. The purpose in prohibiting consecutive terms has been to introduce fresh talent and prevent entrenched interests from gaining control of the assembly. The result, however, according to some observers, has often been to facilitate the election of younger rural elites or lawyers with limited experience who are less interested in public service than in establishing themselves in remunerative careers

after their terms of political office. According to Ameringer, the prohibition on reelection precludes the development of necessary experience and specialized expertise. This magnifies the potency of organized interests and pressure groups, including the autonomous agencies and the bureaucrats, often leaving local needs unmet and the poor underrepresented.

The budget is prepared under the supervision of the president in a bureau of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy. This bureau has little authority to trim the budgets submitted by individual ministries, with the result that the overall budget submitted by the president to the assembly has generally been liberal, causing it to be subjected to intensive review and efforts by the opposition to scale it back. The president has no power to veto an item but must accept or reject the entire budget package.

The Office of the Comptroller General is described in the Constitution as an auxiliary organ of the Legislative Assembly for supervising the budget and the use of state revenues. The comptroller's office approves or rejects the budgets of the municipalities and autonomous institutions, audits the accounts of state bodies and public officials, and countersigns as valid orders for payment of state funds. The office has been compared to the Government Accounting Office of the United States Congress, although it enjoyed greater autonomy and has absolute functional and administrative independence mandated by the Constitution. Its highest officials, the comptroller and assistant comptroller, are appointed by the assembly for an eight-year term, and there are no limits on reappointment. These officials are selected at the midpoint of a presidential term, and removal is possible only by a two-thirds vote of the entire assembly on grounds of unfitness or improper conduct.

Local Government

For the purposes of public administration, the country is divided into provinces, cantons, and districts. New provinces may be created by the Legislative Assembly according to the same procedure as is called for in amending the Constitution. In addition, approval by plebiscite in the affected provinces is required. The number of provinces has remained at seven since the 1949 Constitution was introduced. New cantons have been created periodically following a two-thirds affirmative vote in the assembly. At the time of the 1982 elections, their number stood at 81, and the number of districts totaled 415. San José Province, the

most populous, was divided into 20 cantons; the least populous province, Limón, had six cantons. Most cantons were composed of three to six districts, although the central canton of San José was divided into 11 districts, as was the adjacent canton of Desamparados.

The provinces are subdivisions of the central authorities, having few administrative powers. The provincial governors, appointed by the president of the republic, previously acted as a link between cantons and the comptroller general in negotiating approval of their budgets. They also served as *jefes políticos* (political chiefs) of the central canton of the province. As a result of changes introduced in 1970, these duties were shifted away from the governors, reducing their already limited scope of responsibilities.

The canton is the primary unit of local government. Each canton administers a designated range of services, such as fire protection, trash collection, road maintenance, and street lighting. Police services are provided directly by the national government. Other important services are administered by semiautonomous local boards or by local offices of national agencies. Each school has its own board of education, which is allocated funds directly from the central government, supplemented by cantonal grants and certain earmarked taxes. Cantonal road boards are responsible for road construction; social protection boards manage public hospitals, mental institutions, and cemeteries. A nationally organized autonomous body, the National Institute of Housing and Urban Development, is responsible for slum clearance and low-cost housing. The National Water and Sewerage Services is responsible for drinking water and disposition of sewage, and the Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad—ICE) furnishes electricity either directly or through sale to private or government companies.

Authority in each canton is vested in a municipal council (*municipalidad*). The *regidores* (voting members of the councils) are elected at large, serving for a four-year term coinciding with that of the National Legislative Assembly. The *regidores* are joined on the council by *síndicos* (nonvoting members), who are selected from each of the cantonal districts. The number of *regidores* is set at five for cantons with populations under 50,000, seven for those of 50,000 to 100,000, and nine for those of more than 100,000. The councils form three standing committees—treasury and budget, public works, and miscellaneous—and have at least two *regidores* and one municipal employee as members of each. The council appoints a municipal executive for a term of

four years. In addition to functioning as ceremonial leader of the canton, the municipal executive oversees all municipal offices, reports to the council on conditions in the canton, carries out decisions of the council, prepares the annual budget, and enforces tax collections. He attends council sessions on a nonvoting basis but has veto power over its actions.

The new Municipal Code introduced in 1970 was intended to improve the quality of local government by broadening its responsibilities, reducing its subservience to the central authorities, and giving it additional funding sources. Before the 1970 reform, the functions of the municipal executive were entrusted to a *jefe político* appointed by the president and paid by the central government. The *jefe político* was simultaneously answerable to the central government and to the municipal council.

The 1970 code laid the foundation for a permanent personnel system for municipal employees based on merit that would introduce competitive examinations and protection against arbitrary dismissal. Each canton was required to have a municipal secretary, treasurer, bookkeeper, and auditor. The new code also established a system of five-member district councils whose chairman was to be the popularly elected *síndico*, and the other members were to be selected in a manner determined by the cantonal municipal council. (Neither salary nor allowances were to accompany service on the district council.) The council was to observe the effectiveness of municipal programs at the district level, prepare an annual list of urgently needed public works, raise money for district projects, and carry out other functions as delegated by the municipal council.

The 1970 Municipal Code attempted to consolidate and rationalize all statutes and regulations pertaining to municipal finances. It established standards for collecting taxes, charging fees for services, and issuing business and professional licenses. The Office of the Comptroller General continued to specify how the budget was to be prepared in order to ensure its conformity with various action programs that the municipality was required to draw up. Under the new system, the comptroller's office deals directly with municipal officials rather than through the governor. The main source of the municipality's revenues—estimated at 80 percent in 1982—has been derived from the real estate tax collected by the national government. Under the 1970 reform, the cantons other than San José were to receive 60 percent of the proceeds divided on the basis of population, San José was to receive 29.4 percent, the central government 8.6 percent, and the re-

maining 2 percent was earmarked for cantons adversely affected by the new formula.

Two additional autonomous bodies have been formed in an attempt to alleviate the widely recognized problem of the weakness of local authorities and their continued subservience to the central government. The Institute for Municipal Development and Consultation provides advice and credit to cantonal bodies in an effort to encourage rural industry, employment, and regional development. The National Administration for Community Development supervises activities of local development associations, based on local initiative, in undertakings such as construction of housing, roads, bridges, parks, and schools and in linking communities to electricity and water supplies.

The shortcomings of municipal government outside of the urbanized cantons were studied in 1970 by a United States-Costa Rican research group composed of Baker and others. The group found that municipal councils were generally regarded as being too restricted in their power and financial resources to deal with a broad range of local needs. The popular tendency was to look to the national government and the autonomous institutions for the solution of major problems. Council sessions concentrated largely on administrative and regulatory matters, and little attention was devoted to proposals for innovation or development. Many decisions taken by the councils were postponed or simply not carried out by the executive owing to lack of funds. The cantons were heavily dependent on an irregular supply of outside resources and were relatively ineffective in collecting fees and taxes.

The Baker group expressed hope that the reforms of 1970 would help overcome the inadequacies of the local government system, but subsequent reports have suggested that the results of the new Municipal Code have been limited and that the problems of overcentralization and insufficient municipal revenues have not been corrected. It has also been reported that many cantons continue to be dominated by a few rural elite families who have tended to neglect local needs and to view service on municipal councils as a springboard for entry into national politics.

Autonomous Institutions and the Civil Service

Featured prominently in the Costa Rican governmental system is the large number of bodies relatively independent of control by either the legislative or the executive arm. Justification for the creation of these bodies could be found in the 1949 Constitution,

The Central Bank of Costa Rica, a prominent autonomous institution in San José
Courtesy Costa Rican Tourist Board

which imposed on the state responsibility for the social and economic well-being of the people, as well as the educational and cultural development of the society. Although certain agencies of an autonomous nature already existed, their numbers increased rapidly after 1950, reaching about 130 by the late 1970s. Their activities ranged from those normally provided by departments of government in other countries to those viewed elsewhere as normal functions of the private sector.

Among the better known autonomous institutions in 1983 were the Central Bank of Costa Rica, Costa Rica Railroads, Costa Rican Airlines, University of Costa Rica, Costa Rican Social Security Fund, and Costa Rican Petroleum Refinery. Others were engaged in diverse pursuits, such as tourist promotion, vocational training, campaigning against alcoholism, scientific and technological research, housing and urban development, chemical distilling, agrarian reform, and community development. Of central economic importance were the ICE and the Costa Rican

Development Corporation (Corporación Costarricense de Desarrollo—CODESA).

Some efforts were made during the 1970s to curtail the freedom of action of the autonomous agencies and to make them more accountable to the central authorities. Subsequently, the incoming national president has appointed new executive presidents of some agencies who, in addition to presiding over their boards of directors, have served in a liaison capacity between the agency and the executive branch. Some effort has been made to ensure that plans for future operations are coordinated with the planning ministry and the Council of Government, but the autonomous agencies have continued to issue rules, adopt policies, and embark on new forms of activity without being obliged to secure executive and legislative sanction. New board members are appointed by the president, but once in office they have been virtually immune from political control and exempt from arbitrary dismissal.

The autonomous enterprises have made an acknowledged contribution to Costa Rica's social and economic advancement. The state of public health has been greatly improved; communications, power, and water resources have become much more widely available; land reform has been promoted; and industrial skills have been upgraded. The absence of competition and mounting subsidies have, however, resulted in distortion and inefficiency in economic growth patterns. Political rather than market factors have often been permitted to prevail in rate setting. Some agencies have become involved in a broad spectrum of business activities that were not foreseen under their original charters. The National Production Council, originally intended to promote agriculture through price supports, soon adopted regulatory functions without explicit legislative sanction and ultimately became a commercial enterprise and industrial processor marketing food products under its own brands.

When the autonomous institutions were included, the size of the Costa Rican bureaucracy in the early 1980s was said to be proportionately among the largest in the world. According to official statistics, the public sector employed 147,000 individuals (roughly 25 percent of all wage earners) as of January 1982. Salaries of public employees accounted for one-third of the government's 1982 budget request. The Ministry of Public Education was the largest government agency with over 26,000 employees, mainly teachers, and the office of social security was second with 22,600. The executive branch as a whole employed 56,000 people.

After the adoption of the 1949 Constitution a competitive civil service system was created that has been regarded as the most advanced in Latin America. The Constitution ordained that public employees were to be appointed on the basis of proven ability and given protection against arbitrary removal. Strongly unionized and able to punctuate their demands by strikes bringing important public services to a standstill, civil servants have become the most powerful and among the best paid workers in the country. In 1983 Monge's government withstood strike threats arising from the meager inflation adjustment he offered public employees. His efforts were impeded by the action of the Central Bank and other official financial institutions, which acceded to their employees' demands, claiming they were not bound by decisions of the budget authorities who set wages for civil servants.

Complaints have often been raised against bureaucratic regimentation in Costa Rica and the overlapping responsibilities of various government offices. The bureaucracy has become one of the most influential pressure groups in the country in spite of its reputation for inefficiency and lethargy. Successive governments have provided little resistance to its tendency to expand, since it has been a prime source of employment for high school and university graduates. Monge's economic austerity program had as one of its goals reducing public sector employment through attrition and halting the intake of teachers. Unlike most other Latin American countries, all but the highest officials were protected against changes in government. This has not prevented a new administration from creating appointive jobs or finding other ways to circumvent the merit system.

Electoral System

Elections in Costa Rica are held on the first Sunday in February every four years. Voters are provided three ballots; one lists the presidential candidates and their two vice-presidential running mates; one lists the provincial slates of candidates for the Legislative Assembly; and one lists candidates for the municipal council of the local canton. Male and female citizens over the age of 18 are eligible to vote. There is no literacy requirement. Until 1959 when voting was made compulsory, balloting was largely confined to the major towns and cities, resulting in as little as 20 percent of those eligible exercising their franchise. Although penalties are provided for failure to vote, in practice they are not imposed. In 1982 the level of voter participation was 77 percent.

Six presidential candidates contested the election of 1982. To

participate in a national election, a party must submit a petition bearing the signatures of 3,000 registered voters. Conditions were less stringent for registration of the many minor regional parties that entered slates of candidates for the assembly in certain provinces. A successful presidential candidate must secure a plurality of 40 percent of the votes cast. If no candidate achieves this, a runoff election is held two months later by the two contenders who received the most votes. The president assumes office on May 8, three months after the February election date.

Deputies to the Legislative Assembly and cantonal *regidores* are elected by a closed list system of proportional representation. *Síndicos* are chosen by a simple plurality. The number of Legislative Assembly seats to be apportioned to each province is determined in advance of the election according to population. Each party is entitled to representation in proportion to its percentage of the total vote cast in the province. In each province a "quotient" is determined by dividing the total number of votes cast in the province by the number of seats allotted. If the vote for a party attains the level of the quotient, the candidate at the top of its provincial slate is selected. If its total vote in the province reaches two, three, or more times the quotient, a corresponding number of additional candidates from its provincial slate are elected. The provinces having a low voting population tend to benefit from a proportionately greater number of seats in the Legislative Assembly. In 1982, for example, 46,532 votes were cast in Limón Province for four seats, giving a quotient of 11,633. In San José Province, 392,495 votes were cast for 21 seats, giving a quotient of 18,690.

The nomination of candidates for president and deputies is formalized at party conventions called national assemblies. In 1977 the two major parties held primaries in advance of their assemblies—the PLN in all 409 election districts and the opposition in 22 sample districts. Names of candidates must be submitted 75 days before the election. The presidential ballot bears the picture of each contender along with the party's identifying colors. Choices are indicated by thumbprint. The official campaign period begins six months before the election, but large rallies and parades must be confined to the final two months. Government employees and officials, including the incumbent president, are prohibited from active participation. Officials wishing to become presidential candidates must resign their posts a year in advance of the election.

A uniquely powerful role in the election process is played by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo de Elec-

ciones—TSE), a permanent independent body that controls and administers the election machinery. The TSE is made up of three magistrates and three alternates, who are selected at staggered intervals for six-year terms by a two-thirds vote of the Supreme Court of Justice. Appointees to the TSE must meet the same qualifications as supreme court justices, including a law degree and 10 years of legal experience. In 1975 an amendment to the Constitution accorded the TSE the rank and independence of the branches of government with exclusive responsibility for election matters. Proponents of the reform had sought to have the TSE designated explicitly as a fourth branch of government. This was opposed by the Supreme Court of Justice, the language finally adopted representing a compromise.

The Constitution assigns the TSE responsibility for calling elections, appointing members of local electoral boards, interpreting all legal and constitutional provisions relating to elections, investigating claims of illegal practices by officials, conducting free elections (the TSE to be assisted by the police in enforcing its authority, if necessary), determining the official vote count, and proclaiming the outcome of elections. The tribunal also approves and certifies political parties for registration.

Another function of the TSE is the supervision of the Civil Registry, which records births, deaths, marriages, and naturalization. The civil registrar decides on citizenship and expatriation matters, issues identity cards, and draws up voter lists.

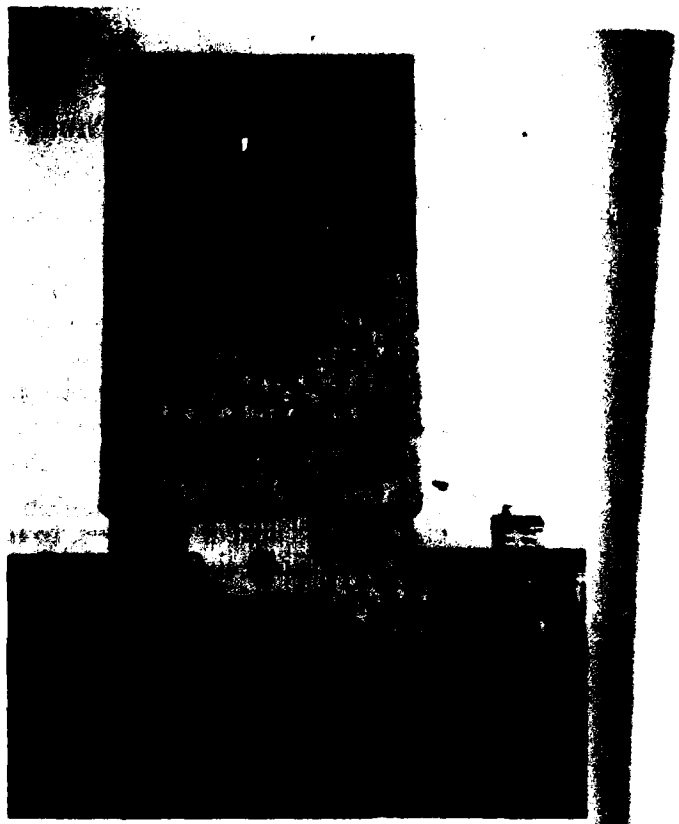
In an election year, two of the alternate members of the TSE are elevated to the tribunal, giving it a membership of five. In addition, a delegate corps of citizens is appointed to assist the TSE by representing it with at least one person in each canton. The delegates, who numbered 186 in the 1982 election, are unpaid, their work being regarded as a form of honorary public service. They attend all rallies and other campaign activities to ensure that the regulations of the TSE are observed.

In the past, election campaigns have been marked by hectic campaigning, boisterous demonstrations, and emotional sloganeering. There has been remarkably little violence, and breaches of TSE rules have been relatively minor. The TSE has banned the introduction of religion or accusations of communist affiliation in campaigns. In the 1982 election the TSE ordered the government to suspend all official propaganda and refrain from issuing public opinion polls on the presidential contest. The vice-presidential candidates were brought together by the TSE for a series of meetings to coordinate campaign plans and thereby forestall interference in the demonstrations and rallies of their respective parties.

The Constitution stipulates that the state will defray expenses of the political parties. Its total contribution must not exceed 2 percent of the republic's average budget for the three years preceding the election. The amount contributed by the state is distributed among the parties in proportion to their votes. A minimum of 5 percent of the vote cast in a national or provincial election is required to entitle a party to a contribution. Under a 1971 amendment, the state was committed to advance funds to campaigns based on the results of previous elections rather than assume debts accruing in the current election. If a party's share of the vote proves to be less than 5 percent, it is obligated to refund the state's advance contribution, although in practice this has not been enforced.

The state share of campaign funding, estimated at ₡30 million (for value of the colón—see Glossary) in 1982, has been an important factor in preserving the honesty of elections and guarding against manipulation by vested interests. Political observers have noted, however, that the rapid increase in the overall national budget has meant that the amounts earmarked for election purposes have multiplied, contributing to the extravagance of campaigns that seem to go on almost endlessly in spite of the restrictions imposed by the TSE.

The supervision of elections by the powerful and respected TSE has brought Costa Rica an electoral system that is among the most efficient and honest in the world. It is in major part due to the effectiveness of the TSE that the transfer of authority has been regularly and peacefully achieved. Several reservations have been raised, however, by political analysts. It has been pointed out that the campaign funding and party registration procedures tend to favor the established parties. The festive atmosphere and personalization of the presidential campaigns have been cited as imparting an illusory sense of political involvement. As a consequence, important issues are liable to become submerged. In spite of the fact that the nation faced perhaps the most serious economic crisis of its history, the campaign of 1982 was relatively restrained, testifying to the political maturity of the voting public. Political scientist Juan M. del Aguila has noted that the candidates constantly reminded the electorate of the need for retrenchment and sacrifice. Acknowledging the wastefulness of feverish campaigning, media overkill, and manipulation of voters by the elite, del Aguila nevertheless argued that the process was a productive one in 1982 in terms of educating the public to the problems looming before the country and establishing "anticipatory accountability" of the candidates. The campaign also provided



Supreme Court of Justice building in San José
Photo by James D. Rudolph

forums in which sharply contrasting views could be articulated and bonds between the candidates and their mass audiences either weakened or reinforced.

Judicial System

The judiciary forms a separate and independent branch of government. The Supreme Court of Justice is the highest court of the judicial arm, and all other courts are subordinate to it. A number of stipulations are embedded in the Constitution to ensure that the court system is not exposed to political influence. The supreme court justices are elected by the Legislative Assembly for terms of eight years, staggered so that not all are elected by the same assembly. They are automatically reelected for a second eight-year term unless the assembly decides otherwise by a vote of two-thirds of its entire membership, which has seldom occurred. The Legislative Assembly may not pass laws affecting the organization or function of the judiciary without conferring with the Supreme Court of Justice. A vote of two-thirds of the assembly's membership is required to override the recommendations of the court. The Constitution also mandates that at least 6 percent of the national budget be allocated to the judicial branch.

The Constitution assigns to the supreme court several specific functions: rulings (by a two-thirds vote) on the constitutionality

of measures taken by the legislative or executive branches; rulings on executive branch vetoes of bills passed by the Legislative Assembly; and rulings on writs of habeas corpus. The supreme court is also the final court of appeal on decisions referred to it by the lower courts. Other functions assigned by the Judicial Code and other laws cover a wide and comprehensive field. Among these are the power to exercise administrative and disciplinary supervision over the court system, to propose reforms for improving the administration of justice, to appoint and remove all judicial officials and employees, to try cases of impeachment or liability claims for acts committed by public officials, and to hear individual suits involving constitutional rights.

The Supreme Court of Justice consists of 17 magistrates and 25 alternate members. The court assigns its members to their respective positions after their election by the assembly. The court consists of three chambers. The first, composed of seven magistrates, deals with appeals against administrative, civil, and commercial judgments, except for cases under the Family Code and patent and copyright appeals. The second chamber, of five magistrates, considers appeals against judgments relating to family and succession questions, conflicts of jurisdiction between judicial and administrative authorities, and other matters. The third chamber, also composed of five magistrates, considers criminal appeals, claims of injury and libel under the Press Law, complaints against Superior Criminal Court judges, and other matters relating to the criminal justice system. The plenary court consists of all 17 magistrates, although a quorum is composed of 11 sitting members. Its main responsibility is to consider appeals based on the constitutionality of actions taken by the legislative and judicial branches.

The composition, jurisdiction, and venue of the country's lower courts are regulated by law. There are superior civil tribunals and superior criminal tribunals (each with three magistrates), penal judges, administrative judges, fiscal judges, arbitration judges, and civil judges (domestic, labor, and supervision of minors). Mayors having penal jurisdiction (*alcaldes penales*) deal with minor offenses at the canton or district levels. Judges of instruction have the power to order investigations by the Judicial Investigation Organization. An agrarian court was created in 1982 to rule on the applicability of laws dealing with the production, processing, and marketing of agricultural products.

The Constitution prohibits the imposition of cruel or degrading treatment. Capital punishment is forbidden, as are sentences of life imprisonment. All accused Costa Ricans are entitled to coun-

sel of their choice or to free public counsel if they are without means to hire an attorney. In addition to the right of habeas corpus, which is exclusively within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Justice, the right of *amparo* (appeals for the restoration of civil liberties conferred by the Constitution that have been withdrawn by any governmental power) is also protected. *Amparo* cases are heard by the first chamber of the supreme court.

Appeals from the findings of any inferior court may be referred to the Supreme Court of Justice, where they are heard by one of its appeals chambers. The court has frequently ruled against the government in power on matters of constitutionality and has been noteworthy in its defense of individual rights. In 1983 the president obeyed a judgment by the supreme court by making public a confidential study of failures in the government's agriculture program as a result of a suit entered by the minority leader in the Legislative Assembly.

The courts of Costa Rica have preserved their reputation for integrity and independence notwithstanding the mounting political turmoil of the region, which has been accompanied by an increasing level of terrorist activity within the country. Ameringer, however, has asserted that a distinction should be drawn between the respect for the Supreme Court of Justice and the lack of esteem for lower courts. He has noted a widespread belief, especially among the poor, that further down in the system Costa Ricans of elevated economic and social status received preferred treatment. In cases of white-collar crime, such as tax evasion, and in those involving the dealing in drugs and contraband, Ameringer has cited evidence of discrimination and unfairness.

Costa Rica has consistently taken positions affirming the importance of human rights questions coming before the United Nations (UN) and other international bodies. It has cooperated fully with the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, which conducts investigations on human rights conditions in the hemisphere. It was one of the earliest ratifiers of the American Convention on Human Rights, which sets forth basic human rights standards for members of the Organization of American States (OAS). The Inter-American Court of Human Rights, established in 1978 for the purpose of applying and interpreting the convention, sits in San José. The Institute for Human Rights, a research and educational center affiliated with the court, also has its headquarters in the Costa Rican capital.

Political Dynamics

Costa Rica has long been known for the stability of its governmental system, the political maturity of its citizens, and the integrity of its elections. It is one of the few Latin American countries that has firmly embedded democratic processes and a tradition of peaceful transition of power. Unlike other countries of Spanish America, Costa Rica's colonial legacy included few traces of an aristocratic elite and wealth based on large landed estates. Its spirit of egalitarianism and individual enterprise endowed it with a distinctive experience and political outlook (see Colonial Government and Society, ch. 1).

After the breakup of the Central American Federation in 1838, the country underwent a period of disorder marked by a series of dictatorships and seizures of power, interspersed by legitimate governments elected with varying degrees of democratic participation. The first unrestricted election, featuring freedom of expression, an active opposition, and respect for the outcome of the vote, was accomplished in 1889. Except for a military dictatorship in 1917 and an attempt to nullify the election results in 1948, the pattern of orderly presidential succession has persisted for nearly a century.

The generation of political reformers who contested the presidential elections of 1889 dominated Costa Rican politics for the next 50 years. The patriarchal and personalistic leaders who alternated in the presidency were identified with nineteenth-century liberalism, sharing a commitment to popular education, universal suffrage, and separation of church and state and perceiving the role of the state as largely limited to the defense of the free enterprise system and free expression. Their liberal doctrines, while popular and acceptable to agriculture and business elites, gradually came to stand for a status quo of conspicuous economic and social disparities (see The Liberal Ascendancy, ch. 1).

The modern era of Costa Rican politics is often regarded as having been ushered in with the presidential administration of Rafael Angel Calderón Guardia (1940-44). Although initially supported by the coffee barons, Calderón introduced a wide-ranging program of social reform in a singular collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church and the communist movement (see The Calderón Era, ch. 1). The new social democratic movement gave similar emphasis to social and economic change but was bitterly hostile to Calderón's alliance with the communists and to his autocratic tendencies. The social democratic and other opposition forces, under the leadership of Figueres, resorted to military action to

thwart Calderón's attempt to annul his defeat in the 1948 election (see Civil War, ch. 1). Figueres, a charismatic reformist politician, has been the preeminent figure of Costa Rican politics since World War II. He was instrumental in disbanding the military after the conflict of 1948 and in forging the Constitution of 1949. Along with his allies of the Social Democratic Party he founded the PLN in 1951, winning election twice as the PLN nominee (see Figueres and the National Liberation Party, ch. 1). He remained on the political scene in 1983 as an influential elder statesman and party president.

The PLN has continued to be the only party in Costa Rica with a fixed organization and doctrine, steadfastly maintaining its commitment to a comprehensive program of social welfare within a mixed economic system. Although the principal opposition parties and coalitions have generally been to the right of the PLN, they have been united mainly by a common desire to defeat the PLN and have not repudiated the main elements of the PLN's welfare state agenda. The PLN has controlled the Legislative Assembly from the time it first appeared on the ballot in 1953, with the exception of 1978-82. Its defeats in the presidential elections of 1966 and 1978 to right-wing coalitions and in 1958 to another party were essentially brought about by opposition groups combining their efforts behind a well-known political figure (see table 10, Appendix).

The country's proportional representation system has made it possible for fringe parties of the far left and far right to secure a small number of seats in the Legislative Assembly. The reasoning has been that, given a lawful forum to express themselves, groups at the political extremes would continue to function within the established political framework rather than turn to subversion or terrorism. After the election of 1978, however, Marxist groups that had gained four seats in the assembly held a balance of power between the almost evenly divided governing coalition and the opposition PLN. As a result, the president was forced to make concessions to the Marxists to secure adoption of his program.

In February 1982 Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez, the longtime secretary general of the PLN and its unsuccessful presidential candidate in 1978, was elected president. The PLN victory was convincing—Monge won 57 percent of the popular vote against five other candidates, and his party captured 33 of the 57 seats in the assembly. With this demonstration of popular support, Monge introduced unprecedented austerity measures to restore equilibrium in the economy. At the same time, the new administration was called upon to deal with rising political tensions and

conflict in Central America, underscored by its confrontation with neighboring Nicaragua. Monge's personal popularity remained high as the midpoint of his term approached in late 1983. Nonetheless, the unresolved economic troubles, combined with continuing regional instability, presented Costa Rica with a complex and dangerous challenge to its cherished democratic institutions.

National Liberation Party

The PLN was founded in 1951 by Figueres and the individuals who had joined him in resisting Calderón's attempt to recapture the presidential office by voiding the election of 1948. The party was to serve as the political organ for Figueres' coming presidential campaign and to synthesize the ideas of the liberation groups. The PLN's ideology was set out in a basic charter that identified the state as the chosen instrument to promote the general welfare of the society without interfering with the right of every individual to enjoy personal prosperity and without violating human dignity. A member of the League of Social Democratic Parties of Latin America, the PLN is affiliated with the Socialist International, although Monge has been at odds with some elements of the latter over their continued support for the Marxist-oriented government in Nicaragua.

The party's ideology has over the years become less doctrinaire and more pragmatic. It has remained essentially reformist in orientation, continuing the pursuit of its primary goal of a society attentive to the well-being of all its members, under a capitalist economic system within a framework of state regulation and selective state involvement. In the early 1980s the emphasis was more on maintaining than expanding the social democratic program of the party as austerity measures were introduced to deal with the economic crisis. Not all factions were prepared to accept a reduced commitment to the PLN's traditional goals. The PLN's main support came from the small- and medium-sized farming sector, industrial blue-collar and rural day laborers, civil servants and other white-collar workers, and small shopkeepers.

The PLN had a well-defined organizational structure, beginning at the barrio (ward) level in urban areas and at the district level in rural areas. The party machinery was active, however, only during election campaigns. Members of district executive committees sitting together formed cantonal assemblies, which nominated PLN candidates for municipal offices and designated delegates to provincial assemblies. The provincial assembly had

the tasks of selecting delegates to serve on the National Party Assembly and of recommending candidates for the Legislative Assembly.

Meeting every two years, the National Party Assembly selected the three highest party officials—president, treasurer, and secretary general—who constituted the National Executive Committee, as well as candidates for the Legislative Assembly, from names put forward by the provincial party bodies. it ratified party candidates for national president and for municipal offices. Administration of party affairs was superintended by the National Executive Directory, consisting of the National Executive Committee, the chief of the parliamentary faction, and the 10 national secretaries in charge of various party activities, such as planning, youth, municipal affairs, publicity, and finance. Auxiliary bodies included the party's youth wing, a women's section, and a security corps.

The PLN no longer convened a mass presidential nominating convention or National Congress. Instead, all active party members were entitled to vote in presidential primaries in their respective cantons. The selection was then ratified by the National Party Assembly. The primaries in which Monge was designated the PLN candidate were held in April 1980, nearly two years before the actual presidential election. Monge faced only one other contender and received nearly 4,000 votes of 6,000 cast. The primaries were carried out in 50 polling places throughout the country. By approving lists of PLN candidates for the Legislative Assembly prepared at the provincial level, the party assembly also decided the order in which names were to appear on the ballot, thus determining who were most likely to be elected under the proportional representation system.

At the National Party Assembly in June 1983, Figueres was reelected president of the PLN for a four-year term, and Oscar Arias Sánchez was reelected secretary general. The reelection of Arias Sánchez was opposed by the left wing of the party, headed by former president Daniel Oduber Quirós. Figueres continued to be influential in party matters, and Arias Sánchez was believed to have his backing as the next presidential candidate. Oduber, like Figueres, was ineligible to hold the presidential office again but was spearheading a move to amend the Constitution to remove this barrier to his candidacy.

Opposition Parties

The PLN's domination of Costa Rican politics has been facilitated by the inability of any other party to offer it sustained com-

petition with an alternative program having popular appeal. Opposition parties have been formed and have melted away or have been absorbed into new combinations after election defeats. The coalitions that brought about defeat of the PLN in 1966 and 1978, although not identical, included the same conservative elements of the political spectrum. Their main bases of support have been the large farmers and ranchers, the traditional elites, wealthy business executives, and entrepreneurs. Additional votes have been attracted in particular elections as a result of the personal appeal of a given candidate, a backlash against the PLN over corruption or other issues, and the frequent schisms within the PLN.

The winning coalition in 1966, called National Unification, consisted of Calderón's party under the revived label of Republican Party (Partido Republicano—PR) and the Naitonal Union Party (Partido Unión Nacional—PUN), the personal vehicle of ex-president Otilio Ulate Blanco. Without a cohesive program, other than a desire to overcome the PLN, National Unification suffered defeat in 1970 and 1974 and collapsed after the 1978 election, when it failed to join a new anti-PLN coalition and won only 2 percent of the vote. The new coalition group, Unity (Unidad), arose in 1978 to engineer the successful presidential candidacy of Rodrigo Carazo Odio. The founder of the Democratic Renovation Party (Partido Renovación Democrática) in 1974, Carazo had formerly been a prominent member of the PLN. In addition to the Carazo party, which combined various disaffected elements of the PLN, Unity embraced the Calderonist Republican Party (Partido Republicano Calderonista), as the Republican Party was renamed after Calderón's death in 1970. Two smaller parties also joined the coalition—the Christian Democratic Party (Partido Demócrata Cristiano), which nominated its own presidential candidates in 1970 and 1974, and the Popular Union Party (Partido Unión Popular), which was regarded as symbolizing the reemergence of the old coffee oligarchy in national politics (see fig. 14).

The main parties making up Unity contested the 1982 election with Calderón's son, Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier, as their presidential candidate. Mario Echandi Jiménez, a staunch conservative and the only former president eligible for reelection, ran again under his own party banner, the National Movement Party (Partido Movimiento Nacional). Echandi's program, consciously patterned after that of United States president Ronald Reagan, whom he admired, had as its centerpiece a sharp reduction in the national budget.

Unity campaigned in 1982 on a platform of reduced government spending and stimulation of the private sector, including

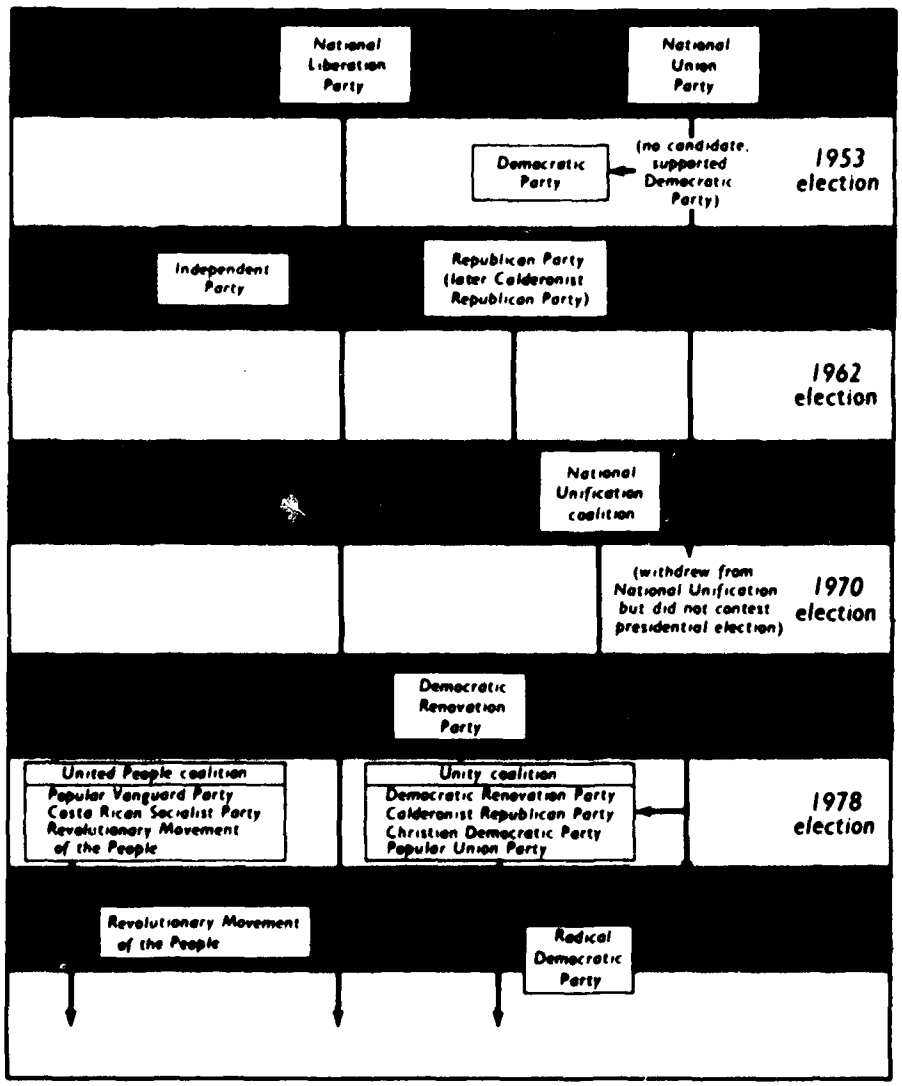


Figure 14. Evolution of Principal Political Parties, 1953-82

measures designed to develop industry based on local resources instead of imported materials. The poor would be helped by a ₡1 billion housing fund. Social programs would be financed by export taxes on windfall profits accruing from the shift in exchange rates. Unity's severe defeat was ascribed to the unpopularity of Carazo and the belief that the coalition was incapable of coping with the deteriorating economic situation.

In spite of the weakness reflected in the 1982 election, Unity presented the main opposition voice in the Legislative Assembly, with 18 seats against 33 for the PLN. The Unity membership

embraced several political tendencies, although it remained primarily social Christian in outlook, embracing a more conservative program than the PLN. In late 1983, Unity was transformed into a new coalition called Social Christian Unity (Unidad Social Cristiana), composed of the same four parties that had constituted Unity, with Calderón Fournier as its president. Carazo had left the coalition to form his own Radical Democratic Party (Partido Radical Democrático), which promised to revitalize the programs of the "worn out" traditional parties.

Leftist Factions

The Costa Rican communist movement has never been able to attract widespread support at the polls. Its significance has been its capacity for inspiring strikes and disorder through its influence over organized labor and its potential as a domestic base for subversion or terrorism directed from abroad.

The main communist party was organized in 1929 and has been known as the Popular Vanguard Party (Partido Vanguardia Popular—PVP) since 1943. The founder, Manuel Mora Valverde, remained at its head until 1983. Believed to have about 3,500 members, the party adhered closely to the Soviet line. In its organization it also followed the Soviet model, guided by a 35-member Central Committee and controlled operationally by an 11-member political bureau. The Central Committee was elected at a national congress held every four years.

As a consequence of the prominent role played by Mora Valverde and the PVP on the side of Calderón in the civil war of 1948, the Constitution of 1949 included a clause effectively outlawing the party. The ban had little practical effect, however. Recruitment continued, and national elections were contested under other names until the clause was repealed in 1975. Its legal status and name restored, the PVP participated in coalitions with other leftist parties in the 1978 and 1982 elections. By this time Mora Valverde was regarded more benignly as a fixture on the Costa Rican political scene who believed in furthering social revolution lawfully through political compromise. Denounced by more militant elements as having lapsed into bourgeois and revisionist attitudes, he was ousted in late 1983 after a half-century of leadership, to be replaced as secretary general by Humberto Vargas Carbonell. Mora Valverde was given the newly created figurehead post of party president. Previously, Mora Valverde had assailed the government for "serving the dark forces of U.S. imperialism" which, he charged, were preparing to invade

Nicaragua and set all of Central America aflame. Monge, in turn, accused the leftist parties of taking advantage of the country's unprecedented economic problems by fomenting strikes and demonstrations aimed at destabilizing the government.

In 1978 the PVP participated in the national election by joining with the Costa Rican Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Costarricense—PSC) and the Revolutionary Movement of the People (Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo—MRP) to form the coalition called United People (Pueblo Unido—PU). The PSC had been formed in 1962 as a pro-Castro party; it too had been declared illegal until the constitutional amendment of 1975. The MRP was a small group of leftists originally linked with the guerrilla movement of Nicaragua. A small national Marxist party, the Costa Rican Popular Front (Frente Popular Costarricense), remained outside the coalition. The National Patriotic Committee (Comité Patriotico Nacional—COPAN) led periodic street demonstrations, which often involved road barricades and violence in agitating for housing for the underprivileged. Deemed subversive by the government, it was said to have Trotskyite leanings.

The PU presidential candidate, Rodrigo Gutiérrez Sáenz of the PSC, attracted 62,740 votes in the 1978 election, or 7.3 percent of the total. The PU won three seats in the Legislative Assembly, and the Costa Rican Popular Front gained one. In 1982 the PU coalition again nominated Gutiérrez, but its support fell to 3.2 percent of the total presidential vote. It was nevertheless able to increase its representation in the assembly to four of the 57 seats. As part of an effort to portray itself as nonextremist, the PU highlighted its agrarian reform proposals, including limiting the size of crop farms to 100 hectares and cattle ranches to 500 hectares. It advocated that foreign industries producing nonessential goods be nationalized and that other foreign-owned firms be obliged to plow back 80 percent of their profits into Costa Rica. Three of the seats won by the coalition were held by PVP members and one by the secretary general of MRP, Sergio Erick Ardon Ramírez. Subsequently, in order to comply with a preelection agreement among the three leftist coalition partners, one PVP deputy resigned his seat in favor of Alvaro Montero Mejía of the PSC.

Internal disagreements in the PU led to divisions in the coalition after the 1982 election. The first stage was the resignation of 20 moderate members of the PSC in July after they complained that their own leadership was operating as a closed circle. In August, Ardon announced the withdrawal of the MRP, citing differences over efforts to attract middle-class voters from the mainstream parties and rejecting the PVP's opposition to foreign

loans. Having moderated its policies over the years, the MRP no longer defined itself as Marxist-Leninist and rejected the unswerving alignment of the PVP with the Soviet Union.

Political Interest Groups

A wide variety of groups in Costa Rican society have engaged in efforts to influence the direction of public policy, calling attention to their interests by openly promoting their views, by aggressive lobbying, and by quiet contacts with politicians. A distinctive feature of the political system, in comparison with other countries of Central America, has been the absence of an influential military component in the society. Virtually no sentiment has existed for revival of the military establishment abolished by Figueres in 1948. Additionally, the Civil Guard has not given rise to a permanent officer corps, as has occurred in other Latin American countries, because of its low priority in government funding and the frequent changes of personnel based on political patronage.

In 1983 it was generally acknowledged that the business community, organized into a variety of groups, had been most effective in communicating its goals and priorities to the government. Its pervasive lobbying efforts were said to be the reason that little legislation had been enacted containing provisons objectionable to industry or agriculture. The most influential interest group was the National Association for Economic Development (Asociación Nacional de Fomento Económico—ANFE), which had a small but elite membership of business leaders, politicians, civil servants, and educators. Its belief in the free operation of market forces and minimal government interference in the economy was well to the right in the modern-day spectrum. About 50 other business organizations were active, in most cases without pronounced political inclinations except the promotion of their own sectors of the economy. Among the more prominent ones were the Costa Rican Chamber of Commerce, the National Chamber of Agriculture, the National Chamber of Sugar Producers, the National Chamber of Banana Producers, the National Chamber of Livestock Producers, and the National Chamber of Coffee Growers.

A small but shrill rightist and anticommunist group, the Free Costa Rica Movement (Movimiento Costa Rica Libre—MCRL), endorsed individual candidates and financed an advertising campaign aimed at exposing all political activity it deemed to have a leftist taint. Although many of its members were prominent in various walks of life, the MCRL was not in the political

mainstream. Its immoderate use of the communist label in attacking its opponents was regarded as alien to the spirit of Costa Rican politics. The MCRL at one time operated training camps for antiguerrilla warfare and was accused of conducting military preparations for a coup against Figueres in 1971.

The nation's young people were not conspicuously active politically, although the major parties and the Marxist groups had youth wings. The PLN's Liberation Youth (Juventud Liberacionista) was an active force during the 1960s and early 1970s, striving to effect a leftward shift in the party's program. It subsequently lost much of its weight in party councils. Although still to the left of the national leadership on some issues, its activism has been reduced largely to organizing and mobilizing support for orthodox PLN policies.

Several Marxist-Leninist groups were active among university students. The best organized of these was the PVP's Costa Rican Vanguardist Youth (Juventud Vanguardista Costarricense). One of its public objectives was a higher education fund amounting to 12 percent of the national budget. The leading student organization, the Federation of Costa Rican Students (Federacíon de Estudiantes Costarricenses), was nonpartisan but had been successful in mobilizing students on questions of financing higher education and independence of the universities in curricula and administration. Radicalism over such issues as relations with Nicaragua and developments in El Salvador has not been widely manifested among the student population. A majority of students were said to be relatively passive, looking on higher education as the gateway to a public service career rather than as an opportunity for political agitation.

Organized labor in Costa Rica consists of about 260 active unions and claims to enroll 15 percent of the work force. It has not, however,been able to build a cohesive and powerful movement. Union activity is largely confined to the public sector and to the banana workers. Minimum wages, working hours, pension and disability rules, and medical benefits have been applied to the entire work force under the government's social guarantees and the provisions of the national labor code. One reason for the failure to organize the private sector has been the fact that the labor code has given no protection to union organizers against dismissal. The code further narrows the scope of union activity by establishing strict arbitration and conciliation procedures while imposing restrictions on the right to strike. Labor code reform has been a principal object of organized labor. Extensive revisions were presented to the Legislative Assembly in 1982, but pro-

tracted study and modification of the proposals were foreseen.

The leading democratically oriented labor confederation, enjoying a close relationship to the PLN, has been the Costa Rican Confederation of Democratic Workers (Confederación Costarricense de Trabajadores Democráticos—CCTD). In 1983, however, the CCTD suffered a major split. An estimated 21,000 of its members, comprising postal, telecommunications, refinery, and health workers, and some of the banana worker unions, came under a new National Confederation of Workers (Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores—CNT), leaving the original CCTD with fewer than 5,000 members.

The communist-led United Confederation of Workers (Confederación Unitaria de Trabajadores—CUT) was reported to be the fastest growing labor group, with an estimated 20,000 members in 1983. It was strong among manual workers on the railroads, in ports, and on banana plantations. One of its affiliates was the large and militant National Public Employees Association. The banana worker unions of CUT have been among the most volatile, calling strikes against the plantations operated by American corporations on almost an annual basis. In 1979 Cuban, Soviet, and East European trade union officials were expelled a few days after entering the country to make contact with the PVP and the communist-oriented unions during such a strike.

The largest employee group, although technically not a union, was the National Teachers Association, which had 25,000 members in 1982. Politically powerful and largely identified with the PLN, it has been successful in negotiating wage increases and generous benefits and pension plans with the government. Another strong democratic organization, the Ministry of Public Works Employees Union, with about 7,000 members in 1983, often aligned itself with the CCTD.

Efforts to organize rural workers and campesinos have made limited headway. One affiliate of the CCTD had about 1,000 farm workers enrolled as of 1983. The Confederation of Costa Rican Workers (Confederación de Trabajadores Costarricenses—CTC), formerly known as the Confederation of Christian Workers and Peasants, was believed to have only 3,000 to 3,500 members as of 1983, well below the peak of 6,600 claimed in 1981. Christian democratic in origin, the CTC nevertheless had a definite leftist slant. Otherwise, political activity on behalf of peasant interests has been channeled through the established PLN party structure. Some peasant leaders have been assisted in gaining office to promote the aims of their rural constituents, but the results have been meager. Ameringer has suggested that a strong peasant

movement has not sprung up because the peasants have had the option of working for wages or migrating to the cities. Other observers have argued that the relative lack of organization, leadership, and formal education combined with long-held feelings of impotence have reinforced one another in contributing to the powerlessness of the peasant group.

The Roman Catholic Church is a highly visible institution in Costa Rican life, but its periodic efforts to influence policy openly have been neither particularly successful nor well received. The Constitution declares the apostolic Roman Catholic faith to be the nation's official state religion, but it also bars the clergy from holding high political or judicial office. This prohibition does not extend to deputies of the Legislative Assembly. Church leaders are invariably in attendance at major public ceremonies. Blessings are given to new government projects, and officials attend mass on ceremonial occasions. Religious education is provided in public schools and has been extended to the high-school level by the PLN.

For the most part, church-state relations have been harmonious. Church involvement in issues of state has generally been limited to matters of direct religious concern. The government's acceptance of responsibility for social welfare has accorded with teachings of the church stressing social justice. Church support has been extended to nongovernment programs of local development, including direct involvement in community service, especially by some younger members of the clergy (see Church and State, ch. 2). Only token opposition has been mounted against state-run programs of family planning, but the failure to enact more lenient divorce laws has been attributed to objections by the church.

The clergy is expected to observe the constitutional proscription against introducing religion into political issues by avoiding open political partisanship. Figueres sharply reproved Catholic leaders who spoke out against the establishment of a Soviet embassy in 1972. Some of the more conservative church leaders are said to be opposed to the PLN for its anticlericalism, but their public statements have been confined to warnings against communist electoral candidates by appealing to patriotism and stressing the atheistic nature of communist ideology.

National Election of 1982

The impression that emerged during the final year of the Carazo administration was the government's irresolution in the

face of the deepening economic crisis. Confidence was further eroded by evidence that leading politicians had engaged in illicit arms traffic for profit. The economic crisis had been rooted in policies pursued for more than two decades of rising budget deficits and a swelling public sector. Successive governments had been able to balance their external accounts only by constant borrowings. By 1980 the foreign deficit became unmanageable owing to increases in the price of imported oil combined with a simultaneous drop in earnings from coffee, the principal export.

A moratorium on repayment of the external public debt of US$2.6 billion was declared in September 1981. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) had previously agreed to provide special drawing rights of about US$330 million over a three-year period but withheld the funds when Costa Rica failed to bring into force an austerity plan prescribed by the IMF. Carazo was faulted for having neglected to take earlier retrenchment measures and for his failure to resist pressures from special interests in 1981, although the lack of cooperation by the PLN majority in the assembly in passing needed legislation was also a factor (see Crisis and Change, ch. 1).

Calderón Fournier, the candidate of Unity in the 1982 election, faced the dilemma of trying to distance himself from the unpopular Carazo presidency without endangering his fragile coalition. His platform had conservative overtones; the need was acknowledged for placing the economic house in order through cutbacks in the public sector and for incentives to revive private industry. This resulted in an ambiguous image for Calderón Fournier, whose father had ushered the social reform movement into existence during the 1940s.

Monge, who was already well-known to the electorate through his long service to the PLN and his candidacy in 1978, was heavily favored in public opinion polls. His victory considered secure, he was under no pressure to promise immediate solutions to the difficult economic problems faced by the country. He contrasted his own qualifications and the long experience of the PLN in power with the mismanagement of the Carazo administration. Under the slogan "Return to the Land," Monge committed himself to according new emphasis on food production, to creating jobs in rural areas, and to inducing foreign capital to help in developing natural resources.

Six candidates appeared on the ballot for the presidential post: the PLN's Monge; Calderón Fournier of the Unity coalition; Echandi of the National Movement Party; Gutiérrez of the PU left-wing coalition; and little-known nominees of the fading

CALDERON PRESIDENTE

Campaign posters used in Costa Rica's 1982 presidential elections: National Liberation Party's candidate (and winner) Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez (left) and Unity coalition's candidate Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier Courtesy International Archives of Latin American Political Posters, Sam Houston State University

Democratic Party (Partido Demócrata—PD) and the Independent Party (Partido Independiente—PI). Monge's victory was substantial—58.7 percent of the total valid vote of 966,576, the highest margin since Figueres' first election in 1953. Calderón Fournier won 33.6 percent of the vote, but former president Echandi, the candidate farthest to the right, fared unexpectedly poorly, securing only 3.7 percent of the total vote. Support for the candidate of the far left, Gutiérrez, was even smaller and amounted to only one-half of the vote that he had gained in 1978.

The PLN won a decisive majority in the Legislative Assembly, securing 33 seats to 18 for the Unity coalition. Candidates of the PU coalition scored better than their presidential candidate, winning two seats in San José Province and one each in the two poorest provinces—Limón and Puntarenas (see table 11, Appendix). The overall abstention rate of 21.3 percent was higher than usual, possibly because Monge's easy victory had been widely foreseen or because of widespread skepticism over the power of any party to restore economic health.

Although the PLN secured a majority of the popular vote for president in every province, its support was highest in the two rural provinces of Cartago and Guanacaste. Analyses of provincial voting patterns between 1953 and 1966 also showed the PLN achieving better results in rural areas. The variations were no longer so distinct in 1982, probably owing in part to increasing urbanization of formerly rural provinces within commuting distance of the capital. In Puntarenas and Limón provinces, tropical lowland areas where the foreign-owned plantations were concentrated, the PLN margin was lower than average. This was interpreted as reflecting a sense of alienation and neglect by a portion of the electorate. The leftist PU did best in Limón Province, winning 7.8 percent of the presidential vote at the expense of PLN.

The Monge Admininstration, 1982-83

Entering office on May 8, 1982, Monge took charge of a country at the brink of bankruptcy. In an address a few days before his inauguration, he announced an emergency plan including cuts in the budgets of the autonomous agencies, a freeze on government spending, a revised tax system and larger collections, the gradual elimination of subsidies, and surcharges on nonessential imports. Private firms and agricultural enterprises were to be helped over the credit squeeze with emergency loans, and new export markets were to be promoted.

In December 1982 agreement was reached with the IMF on an

initial standby credit of US$80 million, on the understanding that a broad program of austerity would be enacted. Spending cuts and a hiring freeze were imposed. Prices of water, electricity, and telephone service were to be raised as revenue-producing measures, and the prices of gasoline and other fuels were to be more closely keyed to world prices and exchange rate variations. A new tax program, including increased property taxes on rural land and on incomes and consumption, was expected to reduce the budgetary deficit in 1983. Unprofitable government-owned firms were to be sold to privately run companies. Wage increases for government workers were to be far less than the inflation rate, which approached 100 percent in 1982.

Although most Costa Ricans were resigned to a period of contracted living standards, the strains of the structural adjustments necessitated by the lending conditions imposed by the IMF and the World Bank (see Glossary) induced a wave of unrest and protest actions. The sharp hike in utility rates was partially repealed, and stoppages by public sector employees threatened to force a relaxation of the ceilings on pay raises.

In several visits to Washington and in a meeting with President Reagan in San José, Monge urgently made the case that Costa Rica's financial crisis at a time of instability throughout Central America justified balance of payments support from the United States as well. Monge's success in mobilizing multilateral and bilateral aid sources contributed to the fact that, in spite of a continued decline in living standards and social services, his personal popularity remained high as reflected in public opinion polls in mid-1983. His efforts to meet commitments to the IMF through further limits on spending rather than additional taxes, however, were facing difficulties in the Legislative Assembly. The large PLN majority failed to guarantee the enactment of his program owing to a reluctance to eliminate unessential projects from the budget and to growing divisions within the party. One group, said to number 14 deputies and known as the *mongistas*, backed the centrist policies of Monge. They were led by the Speaker of the assembly, Hernán Garrón Salazar. The other group of 19 deputies, called *bernalistas* after their leader, Bernal Jiménez Monge, gave stronger emphasis to preserving the traditional social democratic objectives of the PLN. Another source of difference between the two factions was the support of the *bernalistas* for a constitutional change that would enable former president Oduber to run again.

A rift had also developed within the PLN over such foreign policy issues as the degree of firmness that should govern relations

with Nicaragua and the extent to which Costa Rica should cooperate with the United States on Central American issues. The foreign minister, Fernando Volio Jiménez, an outspoken opponent of the Marxist regime in Nicaragua, resigned in late 1983 over what he regarded as excessive accommodation to leftist tendencies in the region. His departure was precipitated by his disagreement with Costa Rica's UN vote against the United States over Grenada.

Politics and the Information Media

Journalism in Costa Rica has enjoyed a tradition of freedom from official control or influence that accorded with the generally open climate in public life. A study issued in Washington in 1983 found that Costa Rica was one of only six countries in Latin America where the press could operate without interference or fear of repression. The press has been notable for its vitality and professionalism, often vigorously criticizing government actions. Excessive partisanship has diminished, the main newspapers no longer being associated with political parties. In 1983 it was not unusual to see political advertisements that were diametrically opposed to the editorial viewpoint of the publication in which they appeared.

The dominant newspaper has been *La Nación*, which was founded in 1946 as a commercial venture. Although national in coverage, nearly two-thirds of its circulation of 98,000 (in 1982) was in San José Province. Its editorial policy has been conservative, reflecting the interests of the commercial and financial communities and particularly the views of the ANFE, the most important business group. It was strongly anticommunist, opposed to the leftist government of Nicaragua, and aligned with the Roman Catholic hierarchy on most issues. Its format in 1983 was tabloid, but the tone was serious and thorough. Its tendency was more to record accurately official pronouncements than to probe for wrongdoing and shortcomings. In late 1981 a quality weekly, *La Nación Internacional*, was introduced to provide news coverage and analysis for the entire Central American region.

The main competitor of *La Nación* for morning circulation, *La República*, was launched by Figueres and his supporters in 1950 to publicize their activities and ideas that were soon to be embodied in the PLN. It became independent in the late 1970s, and its circulation gradually increased, reaching 35,000 by 1982. The third daily, *La Prensa Libre*, Costa Rica's oldest newspaper, first appeared in 1885. Its circulation was 15,000 in 1982. Both the

morning *La República* and the evening *La Prensa Libre* were inclined toward support of the PLN.

A number of weekly periodicals appealed chiefly to selected readerships. *Libertad*, the organ of the PVP, had a circulation estimated at 5,000 in 1980. The *Tico Times*, an English-language weekly addressed to foreigners resident in Costa Rica (circulation of 8,000 in 1982), provided condensed interpretive reports on major domestic developments. *La Universidad* (circulation 30,000), a weekly linked to the University of Costa Rica's School of Journalism, contained columns by influential left-wing intellectuals. Several weeklies, but no dailies, were published outside the capital.

Costa Rica has not had a national news agency, although the leading newspapers cooperated in the Central American News Agency and received major international news services. In the latter part of 1982, the government announced plans for a national news service under joint public and private ownership. Shareholders would include domestic radio, television, and newspaper companies, government communications agencies, and employees of the news service. The objective was to produce a reliable source of day-to-day information and news, especially from more remote parts of the country. The plan was criticized by *La Nación*, which feared disproportionate official influence and a homogeneity in news presentation.

The print media form an important strand of Costa Rica's political fabric, contributing to an informed evaluation of issues and supplying a forum for the discussion of solutions to national problems. Adult literacy was high, and in the densely populated Meseta Central the public press was widely read. It was estimated that one copy of a newspaper was available for every eight inhabitants, whereas in the tropical lowlands the distribution was only one newspaper per 100 inhabitants. Although Costa Rica's national income was higher than the average for Latin America, poverty was said to be a factor preventing a significant sector of the population from seeing a newspaper regularly.

Costa Rica supported a flourishing commercial radio industry, consisting in 1983 of about 49 mediumwave, 48 frequency modulation (FM), and 10 shortwave stations. Regular newscasts were carried by many stations, but the print media remained the primary source of news. There were five commercial television channels, one of which was under the direction of the government. Over 250,000 homes were estimated to have radio receivers in 1982. It was estimated that the number of television receivers totaled 162,000; more than 90 percent of the homes in San

José and the provincial cities were equipped with them.

As the Nicaraguan information media adopted an increasingly propagandistic and Marxist tone under that country's leftist government, concern was expressed by the Costa Rican government about the fact that most of the northern one-third of its country was dependent to a large extent on radio and television transmissions from Nicaragua. At best, two Costa Rican radio stations, but no television signals, could be received in these areas. In September 1982 the government announced that two 50-kilowatt transmitters would operate in northern Guanacaste and the basin of the Río San Carlos, in northern Alajuela, providing news and cultural programs. A coast-to-coast chain of small 200-watt transmitters was also to be operated by the National Radio Service. The government of Liechtenstein was sponsoring a cluster of single-kilowatt rural stations emphasizing information and self-education. Four of these stations were launched in 1982,and it was expected that a total of 11 would be in operation during 1983.

The Constitution protects the people's right to express opinions, to communicate thoughts in writing, and to publish them without prior censorship. Exceptions are provided for writings that are harmful to public morals and public order, or that are found to contain political propaganda invoking religious motives or making use of religious beliefs. Other basic laws affecting the information media are the Press Law of 1902, as amended and expanded, and the Radio Law of 1954. The Press Law provides for a prison term of up to six months for defamation. Such cases are to be tried by a special section of the Supreme Court of Justice, and leniency is prescribed if the action has been taken with the public interest in mind. The intentional subversion of friendly relations with another country is also punishable.

An 11-member censorship board, having the right to prohibit any material that "transgresses legal, moral, or social norms, or anything that poses a threat to Costa Rican society," reviewed films, television and radio programs, journals, and public performances. The board's influence was felt primarily in the area of imported films. In 1981 about 15 percent of the 436 films reviewed were banned and 28 percent were subjected to restrictions, such as setting age minima or requiring that they be shown only after 9:00 p.m. The board has tended to draw criticism for being overly permissive in the area of live theatrical performances.

The most controversial provision affecting the press is the Guild of Journalists Law of 1969 requiring all persons serving as reporters on the domestic media to be graduates of the University of Costa Rica's School of Journalism. In a highly publicized case,

Ministry of Foreign Relations building in San José
Courtesy James Gilmartin

an American reporter was prosecuted for working illegally for the *Tico Times*. He was acquitted on the grounds that Costa Rica's adherence to the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, guaranteeing the right to receive and disseminate information and ideas, superseded domestic law; but in June 1983 this ruling was overturned on appeal to the Supreme Court of Justice, and a three-month suspended sentence was imposed.

Foreign Relations

Relatively insulated from the political turbulence that has periodically enveloped other countries of Central America, Costa Rica has during most of its history followed a course of nonintervention and minimum involvement in the affairs of the region. Its generally noncontentious policies have not presented a threat to its neighbors, and its isolation and lack of natural wealth have discouraged encroachment by external forces. By the late 1970s the passivity and restraint that had marked its foreign relations had gradually given way to more active participation in the affairs of the region as conflicts among neighbors imposed a danger to its own stability. Costa Rica's traditionally liberal refugee policy

added to the complexity of the situation, as groups of varying national and ideological ties used its territory as a base for propaganda, plotting, and subversion.

Costa Rica has historically refrained from formal alignments and commitments in foreign affairs. It has, nevertheless, been a staunch supporter of the Inter-American system and an active member of the UN and its specialized agencies. It has also been a participant in the major organs of the OAS and has employed the OAS machinery in the settlement of border incidents. Costa Rica participated in drafting the economic integration agreements of the Central American Common Market (CACM) in 1958-59 but did not ratify the agreements or join the group until 1963. Initially, CACM helped to stimulate the country's industry through an upsurge in export demand, but the organization's economic importance has since tapered off. The deterioration of political relations among its members has brought it into further disarray (see The Central American Common Market, ch. 1).

In September 1983, as strains with Nicaragua intensified because of attacks by Nicaraguan insurgents mounted from bases in remote frontier areas of Costa Rica, the Statute of Neutrality was issued by the government. This document reasserted Costa Rica's neutrality in all armed conflicts but emphasized that this did not imply impartiality in ideological and political struggles. It asserted that the political and social concepts shared with Western democracies would be maintained. The document reaffirmed Costa Rica's obligations under international treaties but requested that in the collective security systems to which the country adhered it be exempted from military obligations because it did not have an army. Costa Rica preferred instead to fulfill its duties through humanitarian actions. In its original form, the neutrality proclamation was only a statement of policy, not necessarily binding on successor administrations. Plans were under way to introduce it as a constitutional amendment, but objections were mounting over such questions as the compatibility of the Statute of Neutrality with Costa Rica's collective security commitments under the 1947 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty).

The country's outspoken dedication to Western democratic principles has been reflected in its policies of rejecting autocratic regimes that abuse human rights. It provided a haven for members of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista Liberación Nacional—FSLN) rebelling against the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza Debayle in Nicaragua and gave wholehearted support to the new Sandinista-led government

when Somoza was toppled in 1979. Its warmth gradually gave way to disillusionment as Marxist elements came to dominate the Nicaraguan government and political life.

The Constitution of 1949 declared that the territory should be an asylum for all who were persecuted for political reasons; extradition on political grounds was prohibited. Fighting and unrest in neighboring countries have resulted in an upsurge of undocumented refugees, the largest numbers coming from Nicaragua and El Salvador. Costa Rica was the initial destination of several thousand Cubans during the mass exodus of dissidents in 1980, and others followed thereafter, in most cases to await permission to take up permanent residence in the United States.

Costa Rica has maintained diplomatic relations—with little consideration for ideological or political orientation—with a wide range of foreign powers. It has, however, continued to recognize the Taiwan government and consequently has not established relations with China. As of 1982 a total of 31 foreign countries had resident diplomatic missions in San José. Costa Rica has been reducing its own diplomatic establishments abroad for budgetary reasons. It was announced in 1981 that the number of ambassadors would be cut back from 30 to 10, although diplomatic or consular services were to be continued in 10 of the countries at less than ambassadorial level.

Friendly relations with Israel, which had been emphasized by Figueres, were intensified under the Monge administration. Israeli technical aid dated from the opening of a Costa Rican mission in 1963 and has stressed vocational training and agricultural extension services. During a visit to San José by Israeli foreign minister Yitzhak Shamir in 1982, help in creating an institute of scientific and technical research was promised along with additional scholarships. In the same year Costa Rica became the first country to move its diplomatic mission from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a step interpreted by some Arab states as endorsing Israel's decision to make Jerusalem its capital. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia reacted by announcing a rupture in relations with Costa Rica.

Regional Problems

During most of its history, Costa Rica has succeeded in applying the broad principles of its international policies in its transactions with neighboring countries. It has generally adopted a neutral and reserved posture, avoiding binding alliances but inviting harmonious bilateral relations with other governments that follow

a noninterventionist course. It has been tolerant of ideological differences but has not hidden its sympathy for practicing democracies that have demonstrated respect for the civil rights of their citizens. The trend toward constitutional democratic governments in Honduras and Panama has been a source of encouragement to Costa Rica. A long-standing boundary dispute with Panama was resolved in the late 1930s, and since that time few differences have arisen between Costa Rica and its neighbor to the south. The government in San José strongly welcomed the conclusion of a treaty in 1977 on the transfer of sovereignty of the Panama Canal Zone. During a visit in July 1983, the Panamanian military leader, General Rubén Darío Paredes, pledged himself to the defense of Costa Rica in any attack by a neighboring country and suggested that the Central American states form a bloc to defend themselves against Nicaragua and Cuba. While reiterating his friendship with Panama, Monge refrained from endorsing Paredes' suggestion.

Rising regional instability has caused the country to shift away from its previous reluctance to accept obligations and associations. In February 1982 Costa Rica joined with Honduras and El Salvador in the Central American Democratic Community (Comunidad Democrática Centroamericana—CDC), dedicated to free elections, respect for human rights, and an end to the regional arms race. The countries pledged mutual solidarity in case of outside aggression and cooperation in economic development. Although Guatemala joined a month later, the CDC failed to evolve into a more meaningful grouping. It was, in effect, superseded by the "Forum for Peace and Democracy," which gathered at San José in October 1982. The participants—countries of Central America and the Caribbean, plus the United States—issued a declaration advocating truly democratic government institutions, respect for human rights, nonintervention, an end to the supply of arms and use of domestic territory for subversive acts against other states, and withdrawal of foreign military advisers. The Sandinistas attacked the forum as an initiative inspired by Washington to isolate Nicaragua. They refused to receive Costa Rican foreign minister Volio, who had been designated to discuss the proposal with Nicaragua.

Attention accordingly shifted to a new initiative by the four nations adjacent to Central America—Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela—to find a peaceful solution to tensions and conflict in the area. Known as the Contadora Group, after the Panamanian island where the four foreign ministers first met in January 1983, its approach was recognized by both the OAS and

the UN as a significant effort to resolve regional problems. The Contadora Group met several times with the states of Central America, including Nicaragua. The 21-point Document of Objectives, drawn up by the four Contadora nations, plus Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, in September 1983, set an agenda for further negotiations, although little progress had been made to convert these principles into concrete terms for ending the fighting.

Historically, Costa Rica and Mexico have not had many common areas of interest. Relations received a boost in 1980 when Mexico and Venezuela committed themselves to supplying crude oil to the countries of the area, 70 percent to be paid for at the world price and 30 percent to be on a concessional credit basis. The credit portion, some of which could be converted to long-term loans for Costa Rican energy development, amounted to about US$60 million annually. Initially, the two countries were not in complete accord over their approaches to Central American problems. Costa Rica regarded Mexico as uncritically backing Nicaragua, and Mexico found Costa Rica too closely aligned with United States foreign policy. The two countries seemed to have narrowed their differences over regional matters during Monge's visit to Mexico City in October 1983.

In spite of its disapproval of repressive features of the regime in El Salvador, Costa Rica's attitude has been one of encouraging positive tendencies in the lawful government as the best way to erode support for the guerrilla movement. Monge has expressed skepticism over the usefulness of negotiating with Marxist-controlled guerrilla groups but has offered to act as a channel of communications between the Salvadoran government and the insurgents. Costa Rica has counseled restraint by the United States in El Salvador, arguing against more American troops and an interventionist approach to the regional crisis. Monge has proposed instead the withdrawal of all foreign military from the region, including the 4,000 advisers from communist countries believed to be in Nicaragua. In December 1982 officials in San José met with leaders of the Marxist guerrillas, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional—FMLN), and obtained formal assurances from the FMLN that it had not used Costa Rican territory to mount any operations against El Salvador and was not sponsoring any kind of military organization on Costa Rican soil.

Nicaragua

Relations with Nicaragua have been a long-standing source of preoccupation to Costa Rican governments. On several occasions since World War II, one country has provoked the other by providing support to dissident factions and by permitting its territory to be used for launching armed incursions. Figueres' defeat of Calderón in 1948 was made possible with the assistance of exile groups from other countries of Central America and the Caribbean. Figueres helped to form some of these groups into the Caribbean Legion, which undertook preparations for the overthrow of the Nicaraguan strongman Anastasio Somoza García from a Costa Rican base. Somoza García retaliated by supporting *calderonistas* (supporters of Calderón) in their invasion of a northern corner of Costa Rica. Figueres asked the OAS to intervene, and a truce was successfully imposed. He continued to support some Nicaraguan exiles, giving Somoza García a pretext to assist the *calderonistas* in still another border attack in 1955. The Nicaraguan threat receded after the renewed intervention of the OAS and military aid from the United States (see The 1955 Invasion, ch. 1).

After Somoza García's assassination in 1956, relations with his son, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, were stabilized for a period lasting through Figueres' second presidential term (1970-74). Costa Ricans were openly sympathetic to the FSLN after the outbreak of civil war in Nicaragua in 1977. The Sandinistas were assisted with sanctuaries in Costa Rican border areas as well as Costa Rican cooperation in the supply of arms (see The Nicaraguan Season, ch. 1). The downfall of Somoza Debayle in 1979 was celebrated by Costa Rica, but as evidence mounted that the veteran Sandinistas in the FSLN coalition were intent on imposing a Marxist government in alignment with Cuba and the Soviet Union, a bitter sense of deception replaced the earlier rejoicing. Reluctant to concede that its confidence in the new government of Nicaragua had been misplaced, the Carazo administration sought to restrain its criticism and avoid an open break. After May 1982, however, the widespread feeling that the victory in Nicaragua had been usurped by the Marxist, pro-Soviet faction was reflected in the actions of the new Monge administration.

The presence of anti-Sandinista insurgents along Costa Rica's northern border precipitated a series of heated disputes with Nicaragua. Nicaraguan policing of traffic on the Río San Juan, which forms part of the boundary between the two countries, was protested as violating a century-old treaty. (The river itself was under Nicaraguan sovereignty, but the treaty guaranteed Costa

Rica's right to free navigation.) Nicaraguan incursions in search of rebel forces in remote northern border areas of Costa Rica also generated Costa Rican protests. A mixed commission of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cabinet ministers, formed in mid-1982, had only limited success in moderating tensions between the two countries.

The main anti-FSLN group operating from Costa Rica was the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (Alianza Revolucionaria Democrática—ARDE), headed by the former Sandinista leaders, Edén Pastora Gómez (known as Comandante Cero) and Alfonso Robelo Callejas. The ARDE had considerable popular support in Costa Rica as a moderate group pledged to preserve the gains of the revolution. Another group, the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense—FDN), operating from bases in Honduras with many former Somoza elements, was also reported to be recruiting anti-Sandinistas in San José.

In May 1983, after Pastora announced the opening of a "southern front" against Nicaragua, the San José government declared that it would not allow anyone to plan or execute military operations or supply insurgent forces in Nicaragua from Costa Rican territory. Several rebel leaders were arrested or expelled, although ARDE contingents were reported to be operating training camps and to be receiving arms shipments with the collusion of sympathetic officials. Relations with Nicaragua continued to deteriorate in spite of further warnings by Costa Rican leaders that rebel use of its territory for armed action would not be tolerated (see Costa Rica and the Conflict in Central America, ch. 5).

United States

Relations with the United States have traditionally been warm and cordial, founded on an affinity generated by shared respect for democratic traditions and processes. Except during the dictatorship of Federico Tinoco Granados, the two countries had never been engaged in a major dispute, and the maintenance of a healthy association with the United States had long been one of the pillars of Costa Rican foreign policy. The views of the two countries on the crisis in Central America were not identical, Costa Rica being inclined to give more precedence to the economic roots of the problems of the area rather than the role of international communism. Costa Rica aligned itself with other countries of Latin America against Washington's policies during the Falklands-Malvinas war in 1982 and in voting for UN censure of the United States over the military operation in Grenada in 1983.

Recognition of the common interest in safeguarding Costa Rican society against regional instability explained the positive United States response to the Monge administration's quest for international support in reestablishing economic equilibrium and in bolstering internal security. During 1982, the year of his election, Monge visited Washington twice and was Reagan's host in San José as well.

The growing reliance on the United States was endorsed by a majority of the Costa Rican people. Monge acknowledged that the relative harmony of outlook and the absence of anti-American feeling had often been misunderstood elsewhere in Latin America. Monge explained that, although Costa Rica respected the historical reasons for other countries' resentment of the United States, Costa Rica's own historical evolution had not included problems of occupation by United States Marines or a canal issue; nor had his country been faced with overly aggressive foreign investors.

Recognition by the United States of the severity of Costa Rica's economic plight was reflected by a steep rise in economic assistance during the early 1980s. In United States fiscal year (FY—see Glossary) 1980 and again in FY 1981, economic aid was slightly in excess of US$15 million, mostly in the form of loans. The economic aid package totaled US$213 million in FY 1983, comprising US$157 million in balance of payments support to finance the import of commodities needed to generate production and employment; US$28 million for development projects, including agricultural productivity in the northern region, population planning, and export-oriented industry; and US$28 million to finance food imports under Public Law 480, Title I. The Peace Corps had 137 volunteers in Costa Rica in 1983. A modest program to supply light equipment to the Civil Guard was launched in 1982 (see Foreign Security Assistance, ch. 5).

The ineffectiveness of the United States-Costa Rican extradition treaty of 1922 has been an irritant in relations over the years. It was estimated that in 1982 at least 60 American fugitives, most of them charged with narcotics offenses that were not included in the treaty, had found a haven in Costa Rica. The most notorious case, however, was that of Robert Vesco, who had settled there from 1972 to 1978 in defiance of a United States indictment charging him with embezzlement of US$224 million from the Swiss-based Investors Overseas Service (see The Return of Don Pepe, ch. 1). A new treaty, signed during Reagan's visit to San José in December 1982, made extradition applicable to all crimes punishable under the laws of both countries by prison terms in ex-

Costa Rica's President Monge welcoming President Ronald Reagan during a visit by the United States chief executive in 1982
Courtesy The White House/Bill Fitz-Patrick

cess of one year.

In 1983 Costa Rica had a large colony of resident American citizens, estimated at 15,000. Most were retirees attracted by the favorable climate and living conditions and by tax exemptions on the import of automobiles and household goods. It was feared that the inflow of pensioners would be curtailed by the imposition of new taxes on household goods and automobiles in December 1982 as part of the government's efforts to bring the budget deficit under control.

Although Costa Rica's imports have declined dramatically as a result of devaluation and foreign exchange shortage, the United States continued to be the major supplier of goods with 36 percent of the market in 1982. Major American exports were paper, grains, and agricultural chemicals. The leading Costa Rican exports to the United States in 1982 were bananas, followed by fresh meat and coffee. Of Costa Rica's traditional exports, the United States market accounted for 50 percent of its banana shipments and 20 percent of its sales of coffee. United States investment in

Costa Rica was valued at an estimated US$550 million. The leading American companies, United Brands, Standard Fruit, and Del Monte, were banana growers, although United Brands was in the process of converting much of its holdings to palm oil.

The Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) approved by the United States Congress in 1983 was expected to encourage Costa Rican exports to the United States. The centerpiece of the CBI was a proposed 12-year free entry for all imports from the Caribbean, except for goods such as textiles, wearing apparel, and footwear; sugar was to remain under existing United States quota limits.

Communist Countries

Costa Rica has maintained limited but normal contacts with the Soviet Union and the communist countries of Eastern Europe in conformity with its nonalignment policies. At the time diplomatic relations were established with Moscow in late 1970, Costa Rica was the only Central American country that had a resident Soviet ambassador. (A Soviet ambassador was sent to Nicaragua after Somoza's downfall, and nonresident ambassadors were accredited to Panama and Honduras.) Evidence of involvement by Soviet, Cuban, and East European trade union officials in strike actions by communist-dominated unions in the American-owned banana plantations has been a source of discord. In both 1979 and 1980, Soviet diplomats were expelled in connection with strikes by banana workers.

A technical and economic agreement negotiated with the Soviet Union in 1977 was not ratified until April 1981 and was almost immediately renounced by Costa Rica, reportedly because the agreement would have sanctioned training in labor organization by the Soviets. In November 1982 Moscow was asked to withdraw 17 of the 25 officials at its embassy in San José and to limit the future staff to eight diplomats as had been informally agreed to in 1970. When the new Soviet ambassador presented his credentials a month later, Monge told him that normal relations were being affected because Nicaragua, which was totally aligned with the Soviet Union, continued to act in a hostile and aggressive manner toward Costa Rica.

The Costa Rican-Soviet Cultural Institute was launched in 1973; the institute occupied a building that also housed a PVP bookstore and the office of the TASS news agency. Official cultural exchanges were, however, carried on through the Costa Rican Ministry of Culture rather than the institute. As of December 1981, 670 Costa Rican students were believed to be

studying in the Soviet Union and in the East European countries.

Trade contacts with Cuba were reestablished in 1975, and consular relations were reopened in 1977 after a lapse of 15 years. This renewal followed action by the OAS to relax its ban on diplomatic relations with Cuba. Relations were again suspended in 1981 in the wake of a Cuban statement in the UN accusing Costa Rica of "quite brazenly backing" a counterrevolutionary campaign mounted by the United States against Cuba. Costa Rica objected to Cuba's interference in Central American affairs and its failure to restrain Nicaragua from acting against Costa Rica in spite of its influence over Nicaragua's Marxist leaders. Costa Rica was especially conscious of Cuba's human rights violations because, in observance of its traditional hospitality toward political refugees, it had agreed to become a transit point for thousands of Cuban émigrés. As of late 1983 nearly 3,000 Cubans were still waiting in Costa Rica for an opportunity to resettle in the United States.

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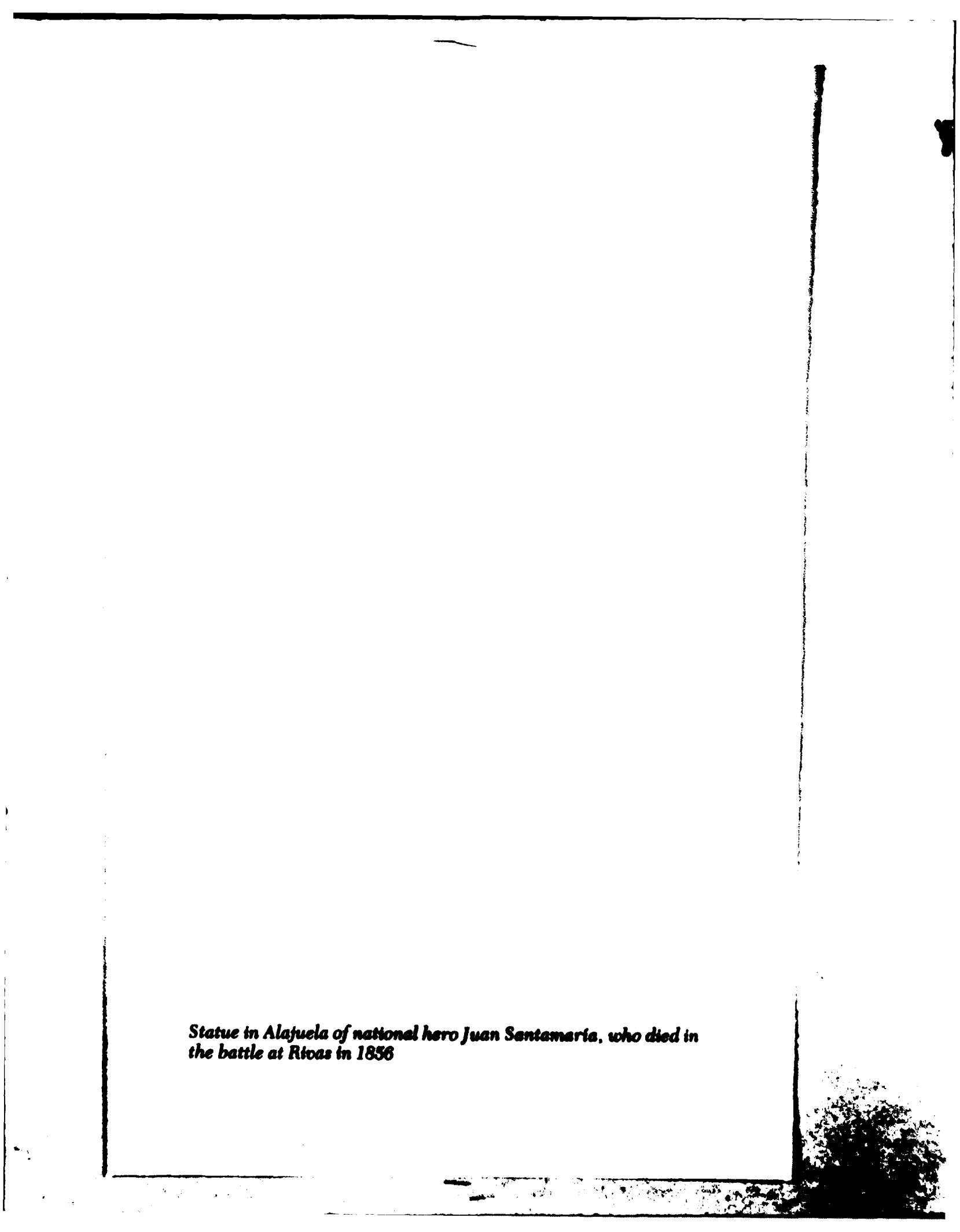
The Costa Rican political system, as of the early months of the Monge administration, is surveyed and its strengths and weaknesses weighed in Charles D. Ameringer's book, *Democracy in Costa Rica*. A somewhat broader treatment of Costa Rican society, containing an informative chapter on politics and government, is *The Costa Ricans* by sociologists Richard, Karen, and Mavis Biesanz. Both the Ameringer and Biesanz books present brief discussions of the country's foreign relations. An earlier but still relevant study of the Costa Rican system is Charles F. Denton's *Patterns of Costa Rican Politics*. Among several articles interpreting domestic political developments against the backdrop of economic distress and regional tensions are Samuel Stone's "Costa Rica's Political Turmoil" and Shirley Christian's "Careworn Costa Rica."

Reliable treatment of domestic political developments can be found in the pages of the country's largest daily newspaper, *La Nación* or, more selectively, in the weekly *La Nación Internacional*, which deals with all of Central America. The weekly *Tico Times* of San José also provides a useful synthesis of current events. Among several newsletters touching on the internal politics of Costa Rica, *Latin America Regional Reports: Mexico and Central America* is usually the most thorough. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 5. National Security



Statue in Alajuela of national hero Juan Santamaría, who died in the battle at Rivas in 1856

IN 1949, AFTER A BRIEF civil war that shook the nation's self-perception as a peaceful, stable democracy, Costa Rican lawmakers adopted a constitution that prohibited the establishment of a national army. Since that time Costa Rica's basic security forces, the Civil Guard (Guardia Civil, a small national constabulary) and the smaller Rural Assistance Guard (Guardia de Asistencia Rural, known generally as the Rural Guard), have been composed of nonprofessionals who are appointed after elections on the basis of political patronage. Because of its democratic political system and demilitarization policies, Costa Rica has stood out for more than 30 years as the most peaceful and stable country in the region.

By 1983, however, the country appeared to be overtaken by the political tumult that has embroiled Central America since the Nicaraguan revolution of 1978-79. Costa Rica experienced a ripple of political terrorism caused mostly by foreigners who had been granted a haven in the country or who opposed its sociopolitical order. Relations with Nicaragua's increasingly leftist revolutionary Sandinista government deteriorated sharply despite the fact that Costa Rica had provided the Sandinistas logistical support and sanctuary during their struggle against Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle. Tensions between the two countries were heightened by mutual ideological hostility, by Costa Ricans' fear that heavily armed Nicaragua was attempting to destabilize their government, and by the military activities of anti-Sandinista Nicaraguan insurgents who had established themselves in Costa Rica. With armed groups ranging on both sides of a porous international border, it appeared that many of Nicaragua's battles were being fought from or on Costa Rican soil.

Despite the mounting security concerns, "militarization" of the public security forces was strongly opposed by virtually all Costa Rican politicians and by the public at large. The government of President Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez prepared to increase the size and capabilities of the police forces—which in 1983 numbered some 4,300 Civil Guardsmen and 3,000 Rural Guardsmen—without changing their nonprofessional nature. Despite an ideological affinity for the democratically oriented insurgent forces opposing the Sandinista government, the Monge government began to use its police forces to locate the rebels, curtail their military activities, and confiscate their weapons. Monge attempted to separate Costa Rica from the conflict between the

Sandinistas and their enemies and declared his country's "active and perpetual neutrality." At the same time, his government sought assistance, primarily from the United States, to assist in restoring economic health and to help in training and reequipping the police.

National Security Concerns

For much of its history Costa Rica has managed, with the notable exception of the 1948 civil war, a degree of internal cohesion that has distinguished it from other countries in the region and has provided its best defense against foreign aggression. In the early 1980s Costa Rica appeared to have maintained its social cohesiveness, but it was seriously tested by regional and domestic security problems.

Costa Rica and the Conflict in Central America

Since independence most Costa Rican governments have generally not had close relations with nearby Central American states—Nicaragua in particular—and have attempted to insulate their country from often violent economic, social, and racial conflicts that frequently characterized politics beyond its borders. (According to political scientist Charles D. Ameringer, Costa Ricans joke that all the roads in their country are good except those leading to Nicaragua, and that is to keep the Nicaraguans out.) Costa Rica suspended its customary aloofness from the region's conflicts, however, during the 1940s and 1950s under the leadership of President José Figueres Ferrer, when the government gave assistance to groups attempting to overthrow dictatorships in Nicaragua, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and other countries. In return for its efforts, Costa Rica was invaded in 1948 and 1955 by insurgents sponsored by Nicaraguan strongman Anastasio Somoza García, but they were quickly repelled (see The Junta and the 1949 Constitution; The 1955 Invasion, ch. 1).

Lacking an army, Costa Rica has relied on collective security arrangements, including the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty) for protection from possible invaders. Close ties with the United States, whose military and economic strength has long given it a measure of power and influence throughout the region, also helped ensure the country's security against external enemies. This was demonstrated in 1955 by the rapid dispatch of American military equipment, including fighter

aircraft, that Costa Rica used to help thwart Nicaragua's military invasion that year. Costa Rica's defense against aggression has also been strengthened by its internal stability, relative social harmony, and a national pride deriving in part from the fact that these characteristics have made the country unique in Central America.

Costa Rica's peaceful distinctiveness, however, has been threatened in the aftermath of the Nicaraguan revolution. Most of the Costa Rican public had supported the struggle of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional—FSLN) against Somoza García's son, Somoza Debayle. The government of President Rodrigo Carazo Odio gave the guerrillas sanctuary and served as a conduit for significant numbers of Cuban- and European-supplied arms. Although relations with the new Sandinista government were initially excellent, Costa Ricans were soon disappointed by the results of the Nicaraguan revolution. From an ideological point of view, it became apparent during 1980 that Nicaraguan leaders were not seeking to establish a pluralist democracy. Policymaking was dominated by the Marxist-oriented FSLN National Directorate rather than the more broadly representative Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction, which theoretically held executive power in Nicaragua. Furthermore, elections were postponed, press censorship began to be imposed, and the government was increasingly accused of repression and human rights violations.

From a security point of view as well, the new Nicaraguan government heightened Costa Rican suspicions. After the revolution, instead of cutting back on its armed forces, the Sandinista regime undertook to expand greatly conventional military power and to mobilize the society as a whole. By 1983, according to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, Nicaragua's armed forces included 48,000 soldiers and reservists on active duty and were supplemented by the Sandinista People's Militia, numbering approximately 30,000. Costa Rica, by contrast, had no soldiers or professional policemen but only some 7,300 members of the public security forces (see The Public Security Forces, this ch.). Beginning in 1980, Nicaraguan troops challenged Costa Rica's right to operate vessels on the Río San Juan, which separates the two countries; in one instance in October of that year, they fired on a craft carrying Costa Rican government health officials. At the same time, the Carazo government began to question the Nicaraguan government about border crossings by armed Nicaraguan groups. Most seriously, Costa

Rican security concerns were heightened in the early 1980s by the country's first significant experience with terrorist violence.

Terrorism

The revolution in Nicaragua was accompanied by increased political instability throughout the region. Leftist insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala intensified, and popular dissatisfaction with the revolution grew among important segments of the Nicaraguan population. As a result of Costa Rica's long-established policy of granting refuge to political dissenters of all ideological persuasions, tens of thousands of refugees were drawn into the country in the early 1980s and joined tens of thousands who had arrived earlier. Estimates of the total number of exiles varied but ranged above 100,000, most of whom were Nicaraguans and Salvadorans. Most of the newcomers had come to Costa Rica to escape fighting and economic hardship in their own countries, but some were committed revolutionaries who continued their struggles—verbally and by force of arms—on Costa Rican soil.

Leftist groups having confirmed or suspected links to Cuba or Nicaragua were responsible for several terrorist acts that shook Costa Rica beginning in 1981. The most prominent of these was the so-called Carlos Agüero Echeverría Commando, which in March 1981 claimed responsibility for a bomb attack against a van that injured three United States Marine guards from the American embassy. An explosion that damaged the Honduran consulate the same day was also attributed to the command. Three months later, after a shoot-out in which three policemen, a taxi driver, and a suspect were killed, police arrested several persons, known as "the Family," who were linked to the command's bombing. (Another suspect in police custody was killed shortly afterward by a Civil Guardsman who sought to avenge the deaths of his comrades.) According to the Judicial Investigation Organization (Organismo de Investigación Judicial—OIJ), the group was originally formed by exiled South American leftists in 1978 and had close links to Cuba and Nicaragua, as well as to guerrilla groups in El Salvador and Guatemala

Other terrorist incidents in 1981 and 1982 were also linked to internationally oriented leftist organizations but were not necessarily aimed against the Costa Rican government. Police seized members of the FSLN and the Ché Guevara Commando group from Guatemala for plotting to take over Guatemala's embassy. An Iranian businessman's son was kidnapped in San José, al-

legedly by Salvadorans; an attempt to kidnap a Salvadoran businessman was unsuccessful, but three bystanders were killed. Several arms caches were discovered, at least one of which was intended for Salvadoran guerrillas. A group of Salvadorans attempted to kidnap a Japanese businessman in San José; two were killed in the process, including the intended victim. Three Nicaraguan diplomats were expelled from the country for their alleged involvement in bombing the offices of the Honduran national airline in San José.

Nor was the country immune from terrorist acts by rightists having connections outside Costa Rica. In December 1980 a group believed to be former members of Somoza's Nicaraguan National Guard bombed the leftist Radio Noticias del Continente on the outskirts of San José. Seven months later, another group of pro-Somoza Nicaraguans hijacked a Costa Rican aircraft to El Salvador in order to secure the release of several Nicaraguan rightists held in Costa Rican jails.

These terrorist incidents, along with more numerous but less spectacular activities, disturbed the sense of calm and security to which Costa Ricans had long been accustomed. According to one local commentator, "We are no longer seeing the violence around us. We are part of it." As a result of the prominence of left-oriented non-Costa Ricans in the violence, Carazo's government, which had earlier been an outspoken supporter of Nicaragua's revolution, began to temper its view of its northern neighbor. The president was blaming Cuba, however, as the source of violence in the region, even before Costa Rica had been seriously affected. "Cuba's penetration and its desires to penetrate in the region are undeniable," Carazo stated in November 1980. "Castro and Somoza are the same: both are tyrants regardless of the political sign they wave." In May 1981 Costa Rica suspended consular relations with Cuba.

Carazo had also closed Radio Noticias del Continente when an arms cache was discovered there in early 1981 and, to prevent the escape of terrorists, he ordered the borders with Panama and Nicaragua temporarily closed in June of that year. Carazo's actions, however, were not sufficient to assuage public opinion. An "antiterrorist" demonstration held in the wake of the Echeverría Commando bombings attracted 15,000 to 20,000 persons in San José, who turned it into a protest against Carazo's government.

Carazo, who had become widely unpopular as anxiety over the country's economy and security mounted, was succeeded in May 1982 by Monge. The new president had pledged to act firmly against terrorism, and his government believed, according to the

incoming minister of government and police, that "the fundamental [terrorist] threat here is external." The surge of urban terrorism seemed to have abated somewhat by early 1983, but political violence continued, especially in remote areas near the Nicaraguan border as fighting between Sandinistas and their opponents escalated on Costa Rican soil.

Sandinistas and Anti-Sandinistas

Costa Rica was drawn further into Central America's political turbulence by the activities of anti-Sandinista Nicaraguan exiles. In 1983 there were two major rebel groups based in Costa Rica that were led by individuals who had fought alongside the Sandinistas against Somoza but had become disenchanted by the new regime. The Nicaraguan Revolutionary Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas de la Resistencia Nacional—FARN) were led by Fernando (El Negro) Chamorro Rapaciolli, a Sandinista hero of the revolution. The FARN operated in alliance with anti-Sandinista groups based in Honduras, on Nicaragua's northern border, and by 1983 was thought to have shifted most of its operations there. The Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (Alianza Revolucionaria Democrática—ARDE) was more active in Costa Rica. It was an umbrella organization of anti-Sandinista groups that formerly included the FARN. In 1983 the ARDE was refusing to cooperate with the Honduras-based rebels because they were perceived as dominated by Somoza's allies and lieutenants.

The ARDE's San José-based political wing was led by Alfonso Robelo Callejas, a Nicaraguan industrialist who had represented business opposition to the Somoza regime. After the revolution he had been an original member of the Nicaraguan junta before leaving the government and the country in 1982. The ARDE's military wing, led by Edén Pastora Gómez, caused the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan governments more concern. During the Nicaraguan revolution, Pastora (also known as Comandante Cero) had commanded most of the Sandinista forces operating in southern Nicaragua and northern Costa Rica. He emerged as the Sandinistas' most visible and popular revolutionary leader in August 1978 when he led an attack on the Nicaraguan National Palace in Managua and took virtually the entire Nicaraguan Congress hostage. After the revolution he spent two years in the relatively unimportant position of vice minister of defense until he resigned from the government in July 1981. Nine months later in San José he denounced the "nine Nicaraguan commanders" of the National Directorate for establishing a dictatorship and indicated that he

would oppose them by force of arms.

The Costa Rican government has displayed considerable ambivalence toward the ARDE. On the one hand, the government and many Costa Ricans preferred the politics of Robelo and Pastora to those of the Sandinista leadership and did not object to being used as a base for the ARDE's political activities. On the other hand, Costa Rica was officially neutral and did not want to be closely identified with military efforts to overthrow the Sandinista government. Pastora was welcomed to Costa Rica and met with Carazo and Monge, but he was soon expelled for a period of several months after publicly greeting Sandinista defectors at the Nicaraguan border. In 1983 Pastora was again ordered to leave the country after he announced that "the time for words will be over come April 15." The political wing of the ARDE, led by Robelo, had offices in San José, however, as well as a radio station (the Voice of Sandino), a small fleet of aircraft, boats, and trucks, several storage depots, and a workshop for producing uniforms. Pastora's group also received logistical assistance from Costa Rican private citizens and the cooperation of several sympathetic Civil Guard and Rural Assistance Guard commanders. By mid-1983 Pastora claimed that some 3,000 men served in the ARDE's military wing in southern Nicaragua, but others thought this estimate was greatly exaggerated.

Skirmishes between pro-Sandinista forces and the ARDE in 1983 involved Costa Rica in Nicaragua's battles. Rebel aircraft belonging to the ARDE bombed Sandino Airport in Managua in September 1983 and evoked a strong protest from the Nicaraguan government, which said the airplanes had come from Costa Rica. On the ground, both Pastora's fighters and the Sandinistas were better armed, better trained, and more experienced than the Costa Rican security forces serving in the remote, underpopulated areas of the north, and neither could be controlled. In spite of official Costa Rican objections, the ARDE units were able to operate easily in Costa Rica, and on numerous occasions Sandinista patrols crossed the border unseen or unopposed in search of the rebels. Political violence in the north became an increasingly serious problem. Several political murders of Nicaraguans reported in 1983 were attributed to hostility between pro- and anti-Sandinistas residing in Costa Rica. Several schools were closed because of the agitation, and an entire city block of shops in Upala was burned by pro-Sandinistas. In downtown San José a bomb exploded in July 1983 killing two Nicaraguans who, police reported, had intended to use the device to assassinate the ARDE leadership.

Costa Rican politicians increasingly voiced their suspicions that the country was the victim of "an international plot . . . with connections to Managua." Numerous Nicaraguan border incursions disturbed Costa Ricans, but the Monge government professed particular concern about the potential effect of the Sandinista clandestine activities in the country. Foreign Minister Fernando Volio Jiménez, who was especially critical of the Sandinista government, in 1983 stated that "This [Nicaraguan] espionage network is here and we cannot locate it. It could promote destabilizing acts such as strikes and terrorism." The level of tension was indicated when in July 1983 the Costa Rican news media reported (and the government confirmed) that "communists" with Cuban and Nicaraguan assistance had planned a military takeover of Limón Province. According to Second Vice President Armando Aráuz Aguilar, the action, in coordination with infiltration of government offices, private businesses, and labor unions, was to facilitate the "destabilization of the government of Luis Alberto Monge." Suspicions of international involvement in Costa Rican domestic violence were further aggravated in September 1983 when police arrested a member of the Basque separatist organization known as Basque Fatherland and Liberty (Euzkadi ta Akatasuna—ETA) who confessed to being one of 12 people involved in another plot against the lives of Pastora and Robelo. OIJ spokesmen also reported that detectives had discovered numerous ETA safe houses and an extensive drug-trafficking network.

As a result of the tensions with Nicaragua and the fighting in border areas, the Monge government took a series of steps to reinforce the country's internal security. Initially, the government sought to increase its presence in the sparsely populated frontier with Nicaragua. By mid-1983 some 500 members of the Civil Guard—20 percent of the force's patrol units—had been assigned to the border regions to supplement a like number of Rural Assistance Guards who normally operated in the area. The government also began a program, paid for with a US$14.2 million loan from the United States Agency for International Development, to settle underpopulated and isolated parts of Alajuela Province. The area near the Nicaraguan border was a virtual no-man's-land where farmers had refused to settle because roads did not exist to link them to markets in Costa Rica, where decades of immigration had made many areas largely Nicaraguan in character and where anti-Sandinista guerrillas and Nicaraguan government troops regularly operated. In addition to increasing agricultural production, the program was designed to enhance Costa Rican control of the area because, according to the United States

Upala, near the Nicaraguan border, in Alajuela Province where acts of violence have occurred between pro-Sandinista forces and those of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance
Courtesy Inter-American Development Bank

ambassador present at the project's inauguration, "to populate is to govern." It was also reported in September 1983 that the United States had proposed that its military and national guard personnel build a network of roads and bridges to improve the country's transportation system.

The escalating border problems with Nicaragua made it increasingly difficult for Costa Rica to profess its neutrality and ignore the activities of the ARDE guerrillas. The government in mid-1983 began to act more forcefully to curb the ARDE's activities in Costa Rica and sent Civil Guardsmen on active searches for ARDE rebels and their supplies within the country. They

were able to uncover arms caches and training camps, and they arrested scores of ARDE guerrillas. The government also launched an investigation into the matter of the public security forces' cooperation with the rebels, which was seen to discourage further ARDE links with Costa Rican security forces. In September 1983 four Civil Guard officers were removed from their posts for their involvement in channeling arms, food, and equipment to the anti-Sandinista insurgents. The drive was apparently having an effect on the guerrillas' ability to operate. Brooklyn Rivera, leader of a major group within the ARDE based on the support of Nicaraguan Miskito Indians, stated, "There is a possibility that [the government] will throw us out of the country. . . . We respect Costa Rican neutrality, but there is no way we can supply ourselves from within Nicaragua. Unless we can supply ourselves through Costa Rica, we're lost." The ability of the Costa Rican Civil Guard to control the ARDE was still questionable, but according to Minister of Public Security Angel Edmundo Solano Calderón in September 1983, "However much I dislike the nine commanders [of Nicaragua], we do not want to play the role Costa Rica played five years ago during the Nicaraguan revolution. Costa Rica declared itself neutral then but let its territory be used. We can no longer permit this. As long as we find arms, we will continue to confiscate them."

Despite the regional tensions, there appeared to be little support within the government or among the population for significantly strengthening Costa Rica's public security forces. The Monge government actively sought foreign assistance from the United States and from other Latin American countries to reequip elements of the security forces with standardized weapons and uniforms. The nonmilitary character of the security forces, however, was not expected to change (see The Public Security Forces, this ch.). In May 1983 the government proposed that a multinational peacekeeping force composed of elements from the Contadora Group of nations (Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela) involved in seeking a peaceful solution to the Central American problem patrol the troubled Nicaraguan border area. The Costa Rican government also sought to avoid aligning the country with Central America's authoritarian regimes by refusing to cooperate with El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in reestablishing the Central American Defense Council (Consejo de Defensa Centroamericana—CONDECA) to oppose "extreme Marxist-Leninist aggression." Monge emphasized his country's neutral position in 1983 when he sought to have the Legislative Assembly officially and legally declare Costa

Rica's "active and perpetual neutrality" (see Foreign Relations, ch. 4).

Internal Security and Public Order

Public order and social unrest have been rare in Costa Rica and, with some justification, the people have normally blamed any occurrences on outsiders or outside influences. The society, however, was changing in the late twentieth century in ways that could generate social strains. Apart from the influx of political and economic refugees from neighboring countries, the long-term outcome of which could not be analyzed with certainty, Costa Rican society was experiencing the effects of modernization. Social patterns were altered by advances in transportation and communications that brought the country into closer contact with the changing societies of the outside world and brought cities and rural areas into closer contact. A population growth rate reported at 4 percent per annum in the 1960 census had declined subsequently but strained the country's economic resources and social services. In combination with the serious debt-aggravated economic crisis of the early 1980s, these factors led to tensions in a society that had been relatively free of conflict for three decades.

Terrorism, the most dramatic threat to the nation's security and self-confidence, generally involved outsiders as instigators and victims, but there was also a domestic element in the violence. The 19 members of "the Family" cell who were arrested after the Echeverría Commando bombings of 1981 were all Costa Ricans. Although the OIJ emphasized their links to foreign leftists, all those arrested were young, middle-class or well-to-do Costa Ricans who had become involved in organizing plantation workers before they opted to join a group dedicated to a "prolonged war" with the purpose of "establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat." It appeared, however, from the relative quiet of Costa Rican universities that indigenous middle-class leftist radicalism (and the potential for terrorist action) was not a major factor in the society in 1983.

The Costa Rican communist party, known since 1943 as the Popular Vanguard Party (Partido Vanguardia Popular—PVP), had close links to foreign counterparts, but the party leadership was not thought to have been directly involved in terrorist activities. The PVP had been heavily involved in agitation and armed combat during the 1948 civil war, after which it was banned. In the early 1970s the PVP was again allowed to participate in elections where it and related parties routinely garnered 1 to 3

percent of the popular vote and a like number of seats in the Legislative Assembly (see Leftist Factions, ch. 4). It was thought by some observers that the PVP, under the leadership of Manuel Mora Valverde since its formation, and its political allies had become too conservative to serve as the nucleus of a campaign of subversion against the established order. But at least one leftist candidate in the 1982 national elections was accused of having ties to the terrorists, and in March 1982 OIJ investigators found a number of weapons in Mora Valverde's home. The communist leader protested the invasion of his privacy to the court and claimed that the 17 firearms, dynamite, and fragmentation grenades found were for his own protection. He contended that the guns were either legally registered or belonged to his son, who had fought in the Nicaraguan revolution.

Although its involvement in terrorist activities was questionable at best, the PVP was closely linked to serious strikes among workers, in particular banana workers, and to land seizures by rural squatters. Costa Rican banana workers had been unionized since the 1930s in the communist-dominated National Federation of Agricultural and Plantation Workers, a part of the General Confederation of Workers (Confederación General de Trabajadores—CGT), and had played a major role in the 1948 civil war fighting on behalf of the government. In the early 1980s approximately 20,000 agricultural workers were members of the United Confederation of Workers (Confederación Unitaria de Trabajadores—CUT), which had succeeded the CGT. Crippling strikes in 1980 virtually halted the export of bananas and caused Carazo to denounce the PVP as "at the service of the Soviet Union . . . with the clear-cut object of carrying out national subversion." Major strikes on the banana plantations in the two succeeding years (including a 65-day strike in 1982) caused the Monge government as well to view the strikes and the PVP with suspicion.

Local labor groups with ties to the PVP had also become extremely active in organizing squatters to take possession of property in urban as well as rural areas. Squatting had long been a fact of rural life in Costa Rica where, the 1973 census reported; 1 percent of landowners owned more than 25 percent of available land while 78 percent of the economically active peasant population owned no land. Since the nineteenth century many landless peasants have been able to make a decent living on the coffee and banana plantations or as tenant farmers, but squatting on occupied land increased in the early 1980s along with unemployment. A fall in the prices of coffee and bananas and a trend among the large agricultural companies to shift from growing bananas to

raising African palm, the cultivation of which takes only half the labor of cultivating bananas, led to what the government called an "explosive" situation.

The Golfito Workers' Union and the National Peasant Federation, which both had close ties to the PVP, were centrally involved in a series of illegal land occupations. The government reported that 217 squatter occupations took place, mostly in the far south and on the Atlantic coast, between the beginning of 1982 and mid-1983. Minister of Government and Police Alfonso Carro Zúñiga viewed the property invasions as a "premeditated plan by the local left" to destabilize the country, whereas some press reports claimed the existence of a government document that indicated that non-Costa Ricans were involved in organizing the peasants. In several areas the government mobilized Civil and Rural Guardsmen to remove the squatters. The Monge government, which had come into power with the help of the slogan "Return to the Land," appeared to appreciate the underlying justice of peasant discontent and approved an "emergency agrarian program" to redistribute unused land and provide credits to peasants (see Land Resources, Use, and Tenure, ch. 3). The government hoped to defuse the situation by making peasants apply for their land legally rather than through squatting. It was not known whether the latest plan would be more successful than earlier attempts at land reform, which had not relieved the long-building pressure of population on the land.

Although the most obvious threats to Costa Rican democracy in the early 1980s stemmed from leftist opponents, Costa Rican rightists also constituted a potentially disruptive force. In the 1948 civil war, right-wing Costa Ricans had joined Figueres, a social democrat, because of their shared antipathy to the communist allies of the government. Because of their military experience, they played a decisive role in the conflict (see Civil War and the Abolition of the Army, this ch.; Civil War, ch. 1). Among the most prominent of these was Francisco José (Frank) Marshall Jiménez, who later led the Revolutionary Civic Union (Unión Cívica Revolucionaria), a small party most notable for its private army. By the 1970s Marshall's party and army had declined and been eclipsed by the advent of the Free Costa Rica Movement (Movimiento Costa Rica Libre—MCRL). Under the leadership of Guillermo Castro Echeverría, the MCRL was an armed group of perhaps 1,000 members whose sole stated purpose was to combat communism in Costa Rica. The MCRL achieved its greatest notoriety in the early 1970s when it organized demonstrations against the Figueres government policy to open diplomatic rela-

tions with the Soviet Union. The strength and activities of the MCRL—which reportedly had links with the Mano Blanca (literally, White Hand) vigilante organization responsible for numerous "disappearances" in Guatemala—could not easily be appraised in the early 1980s. In 1980 and 1981 rumors of a coup to topple Carazo heightened suspicions that the MCRL or other domestic rightists might be an active threat to the government. In 1983 the MCRL was involved in a public advertising campaign aimed at enlisting recruits for combat training and exposing communists, but because of their secretiveness the strength and strategies of Costa Rica's paramilitary rightists were not generally known.

The ability of the government to cope with domestic threats from both the political left and the political right was affected by the large number of privately held firearms in the country. The actual number of weapons held by Costa Ricans was not publicly known, but it was believed to have increased since the mid-1970s because of the influx of arms into the region since the beginning of the Nicaraguan revolution. (Controversy surrounding the Costa Rican government's involvement in profiteering from arms trafficking to the Sandinistas prompted political controversy and the 1980 resignation of Carazo's minister of public security and government, Juan José Echeverría Brealy.) Universal arms registration was thought to be neither practical or a politically feasible alternative, but permits were required if one wanted to carry or transport firearms. As a result of a large increase in applications for permits to carry weapons, the National Security Council in 1982 decided to cancel all such permits and demanded that everyone authorized to carry weapons reregister. The government sought to correct a situation where one who requested a weapons permit was not required to specify the type and caliber of his firearms. It was also thought that new, stricter regulations would give authorities a better idea of who owned what sort of weapons and how they were obtained.

Crime rates in Costa Rica have become an increasing concern, particularly since they accelerated in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1981 alone, according to the OIJ, reported crimes against property increased by 74.7 percent. The understaffed Civil Guard was seen as largely ineffective in controlling the problem, particularly in the poor areas of the cities. Recent statistics on urban crime were unavailable, but according to a 1977 survey of residents of poor neighborhoods in the San José urban area cited by sociologists Richard, Karen, and Mavis Biesanz, well over one-half of the residents were satisfied with their work,

schooling, housing, and food, but less than one-half were satisfied with "vigilance and security." Because of the inadequate security forces, most of the well-to-do areas in the San José area were patrolled by private police or vigilantes. Given the country's economic problems and the degree of political turmoil in Central America, there appeared to be little likelihood in the early 1980s that the situation would soon improve.

The Public Security Forces

Costa Rica's mounting security problems underlined the shortcomings of the country's public security forces. Since the national army was disbanded in 1949, the Civil Guard and the Rural Guard have served as the government's only significant paramilitary police forces. In mid-1983 the Civil Guard had a strength of about 4,300, while the Rural Assistance Guard numbered some 3,000. The Monge government had expanded the Civil Guard by about 10 percent, had made some organizational changes, and had sought to improve the forces' equipment through foreign assistance, but he emphasized that there were no moves afoot to "militarize" the police. Costa Ricans and their political leaders appeared to prefer the risks inherent in possessing weak (but politically controllable) security forces to the risks that having stronger forces might entail.

The Military in Costa Rican History

Although it was first explored by Spanish conquistadores and although military men played an important role in the national leadership at several points during the nineteenth century, Costa Rica never developed strong marital traditions and was able to abolish its tiny army with broad approval of the country's citizens. Costa Ricans' attitudes toward the military were shaped during the Spanish colonial period when the soldiers' role was relatively unimportant. Few soldiers were garrisoned in this backwater of Spain's overseas empire because there was no large indigenous Indian population to subjugate for labor, and there were no important Spanish interests to protect. During much of the colonial period, a rudimentary citizens' militia could be called up to oppose troublesome Indians or bandits, but this could not be characterized as a standing army. The settler population was characterized by a high proportion of yeoman farmers having local attitudes and interests and few links with the higher political, religi-

ous, and military authorities in Guatemala or Spain (see The Colonial Period, ch. 1).

As in other Central American countries, military men sometimes played an important role in Costa Rican political life in the first decades after independence. It is significant to note, however, that Costa Rica's first head of state, Juan Mora Fernández, was not a soldier but a judge who had at one time been a primary-school principal. Military authority rarely extended beyond the capital and was not easily imposed on the people. An effort to introduce compulsory military service by Francisco Morazán, who had become chief of state in 1842 and who sought to restore the Central American Federation, contributed to a popular uprising and his execution within five months of taking office (see Political Conflict, ch. 1). Costa Rican ambivalence toward the military was further displayed when the short-lived 1848 constitution abolished the army and replaced it with a national guard. The small army was reinstated the following year when officers supported a coup d'etat against the sitting president.

As a result of its contributions in the 1856-57 war against the North American filibuster, William Walker, the Costa Rican military became a widely popular institution for the only time in its history. An army of 9,000 was quickly raised from volunteers of all social classes and mounted an expedition into Nicaragua where it defeated Walker in April 1857 (see The War Against William Walker, ch. 1). After the war a generation of military heroes became prominent in Costa Rican political and social life. The most powerful of these was General Tomás Guardia Gutiérrez, who dominated Costa Rican politics in dictatorial fashion from 1870 to 1882, contributed to the modernization and centralization of the society, and undercut the political dominance of the so-called coffee barons. When Guardia and the other war heroes passed from the scene, however, the military's importance in the national life diminished. With the exception of Federicos Tinoco Granados' brief dictatorship in 1917-18, the military remained firmly under civilian control, and democratic processes became well established by the early twentieth century.

Civil War and the Abolition of the Army

Because it was an ally against Germany and Japan during World War II and was less than 400 kilometers from the strategic Panama Canal, Costa Rica received a limited amount of military equipment and some military training from the United States. Costa Rican forces saw no action, however, and by regional stan-

dards remained weak. At the time of the Costa Rican civil war in 1948, according to then-president Teodor Picado Michalski, "the army was ridiculously small, it did not surpass 300 men." Other accounts put the strength of the regular army as high as 1,000, but it was not a highly professional force. The officer corps was appointed by each presidential administration from among the ranks of its supporters, who were usually members of local elite groups with little or no military training or experience. When administrations changed, officers were formally promoted and then dismissed. Without a professional officer corps the army had little experience or institutional esprit de corps and was poorly organized and underdisciplined.

During the civil war and the election crisis that preceded it, the army, commanded by the president's brother, General Rene Picado Michalski, flagrantly displayed its partisanship and indiscipline. On numerous occasions during the election campaign, the army was accused of selectively enforcing the law in favor of supporters of former president Rafael Angel Calderón Guardia, who was again running for president with the support of the Picado government. Several officers who supported Calderón's opponent, Otilio Ulate Blanco, were dismissed from the army during the campaign, but the government could not rely completely on its army because of the overzealousness of some of its members. In August 1947 an army colonel and Calderón supporter, feeling that the president was too soft on the opposition, attempted to assassinate Picado.

Ulate gained a surprising victory in the elections of February 1948, but the military strength of the opposition was even more startling to the government. After the congress annulled the results of the election, the forces of José Figueres Ferrer and his Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Demócrata) launched what Figueres called the War of National Liberation from his farm south of Cartago. Figueres, who had been exiled to Mexico by Calderón from 1942 to 1944, had made the "Pact of the Caribbean" to gain the financial, material, and manpower support of insurgents from other Central American countries in his effort to overthrow Costa Rica's government (see The Calderón Era, ch. 1). Members of the so-called Caribbean Legion provided invaluable training and leadership to some 600 young men ("all persons of some culture," according to Figueres) who had trekked to his farm to volunteer. During the civil war this force, well trained by Costa Rican standards, was augmented by several hundred Caribbean Legionnaires and more Costa Rican volunteers. Supplied by air from Guatemala and Cuba and using guerrilla tactics,

Figueres' Army of National Liberation was quickly able to rout government forces sent to oppose them, surround San José, and obtain a settlement (see Civil War, ch. 1). In May 1948 the Founding Junta of the Second Republic was inaugurated as the interim national government with Figueres at its head.

The civil war had lasted only a few weeks but had cost some 2,000 Costa Rican lives, a tragedy for a small country that had prided itself on its peaceful, democratic traditions. Combatants had included, in addition to the national army and the Army of National Liberation, some 3,500 urban and rural workers loyal to the progovernment PVP, as well as 500 to 600 troops from neighboring Nicaragua sent by Somoza García to oppose Figueres' rebels. At the conclusion of hostilities, the functions of the regular army were taken over by members of the Army of National Liberation while its Caribbean Legion component was established at barracks in San José and a camp at one of Figueres' farms

There was some speculation that the military would be reestablished as a small, well-paid, highly trained professional force composed of veterans from the national liberation force. Without forewarning, however, in a speech on December 6, 1948, Figueres announced that the army was no longer needed and would be disbanded. "It is time," he stated, "for Costa Rica to return to her traditional position of having more teachers than soldiers." The army was to be replaced by a small national police force limited strictly to internal security functions and a small rural guard.

The Nicaraguan-supported invasion by several hundred *calderonistas* on December 10, 1948, immediately tested the country's commitment to demilitarization. Costa Rica, however, was still under arms; the liberation army was largely intact, and several hundred Caribbean Legionnaires were still encamped in the country. The government immediately appealed to the signatories of the Rio Treaty for assistance against the invaders. The *calderonistas* withdrew after Nicaragua cut off its assistance when it became clear that they could not muster popular support among Costa Ricans.

Various reasons have been cited by Figueres and others as to why Costa Rica's army was disbanded at a time when the government faced continued domestic threats as well as the hostility of well-armed Nicaragua. Figueres himself stated that the army was no longer needed and that it was abolished "in order to reaffirm the principle of civil government." On the one hand, Costa Rica's pre-civil war military had been notoriously ineffective; to perpetuate it would have been a waste of resources. On the other

hand, a better trained and equipped professional force could have constituted a potential threat to the government as coups in 1948 against fledgling democracies in Venezuela and Peru demonstrated. This was particularly true in Costa Rica because most of the leaders of the Army of National Liberation who would be expected to be prominent in a national army were political conservatives who had been more interested in fighting the civil war to rid the country of communist influences than to support Figueres' brand of democratic socialism. This danger was soon highlighted in April 1949 when Minister of Public Security Edgar Cardona Quirós, a disgruntled liberation army colonel and member of the junta, attempted a coup against Figueres that cost several lives. When the threat was extinguished, Figueres took personal command of the army and presided over its disbandment.

On November 7, 1949, a constitution was proclaimed that made the abolition of the armed forces the law of the land. Article 12 of the document states:— "The Army as a permanent institution is proscribed. For vigilance and the preservation of public order there will be the necessary police forces. Only through continental agreement for the national defense may military forces be organized; in either case they shall always be subordinate to the civil power; they may not deliberate or make manifestations or declarations in individual or collective form."

Development and Place in the National Life

The nature of the country's post-1949 security forces was defined during the 1950s by three successive presidents: Ulate (1949-53), Figueres (1953-58), and Mario Echandi Jiménez (1958-62). The wording of the Constitution allowed considerable leeway for interpretation in defining the scope of "the necessary police forces," which could entail any sort of paramilitary body. (Nicaragua, in theory, had no army at the time, only a "national guard" that was the most powerful armed force in the region.) Costa Rican presidents, however, chose to maintain police forces at the minimum size and cost necessary to perform internal security duties. Ulate kept the size of the Civil Guard, as the national police force was named, limited to 1,500 men, while the Rural Guard was limited to several hundred. The role of the force was also deemphasized when Ulate chose not to appoint a minister of public security to his cabinet.

Figueres in his first full term as president was unable to reduce the size of the security forces because of the January 1955 incur-

sion by 450 Nicaraguan-supported invaders equipped with five aircraft and led by former president Picado's son. Costa Rica again called on the members of the Rio Treaty for assistance and received (for US$1 each) four P-51 Mustang piston-engine fighter aircraft and associated training from the United States. Figueres also mobilized the security forces and was able to report two weeks after the start of hostilities that the Civil Guard had been expanded to 4,000 men and that a 10,000-man reserve force had been established. Some 9,800 Civil Guardsmen were sent to the front. Fighting with the rebels ensued before a cease-fire was negotiated with the aid of mediation by the Organization of American States, and the insurgents were sent back across the border. Although the Civil Guard had nearly tripled in size during the war, Figueres subsequently sought to reduce it to prewar levels. Training of reservists was also suspended, and the country's military capabilities soon returned to the status quo ante bellum.

Echandi, like Ulate a political rival of Figueres, also acted to maiantain the demilitarization of the public security forces. In 1958 he dramatically proposed a swap with the United States of American-made Costa Rican military equipment for North American farm equipment. The trade of some 2,000 small arms for six tractors was of little economic importance, but it demonstrated that Figueres' abolition of the army was not only accepted but expanded on by his political opponents.

The nature of the public security forces was defined when, during the 1950s, the custom was established to award positions in the Civil Guard and Rural Guard on the basis of political patronage, as had been the case with the pre-civil war national army. When one administration was replaced by another from an opposing party, most guardsmen submitted their resignations to the new authorities and were replaced by loyalists from the opposing political camp. It was estimated that the turnover between administrations ranged between 50 and 90 percent of the total guard personnel. Moreover, some of those who were retained were sometimes raised several grades or were promoted from the enlisted ranks to be relatively senior officers. As a result, the efficiency and professionalism of the force suffered. Training courses, including relatively expensive courses abroad, were wasted, and policemen often left the guard carrying their weapons and uniforms with them.

Civil and Rural Guardsmen were all volunteers who were generally recruited from among the poorer and less literate elements of Costa Rica's population. There was no contract or minimum term of duty to bind a guardsman to the service; one could leave

whenever one wished. For this reason and because of the low pay, the lack of a housing allowance or barracks, and the virtual impossibility of making a career as a guardsman, turnover within the forces was high. Reportedly, attrition was 10 percent a month in the late 1970s, but in the early 1980s, given the country's recent economic difficulties and high unemployment, it appeared that serving with the Civil Guard or the Rural Guard was becoming more appealing to Costa Ricans.

Since 1949 the public security forces have not constituted a significant burden to the economy. The approximately 7,500 members of the public security forces amounted to only 1.2 percent of the estimated 619,000 Costa Rican males aged 15 to 49. Because of the small size of the security forces, the relatively high level of literacy and technical competence throughout the economy, and the guardsmen's freedom to leave the force at anytime, the security forces were not considered to be a drain on the national pool of skilled manpower, even during times when there was a high demand for workers by the civilian economy. Nor did government spending on security absorb a significant proportion of the country's financial resources. In 1980, in a total government budget of ₡10.4 billion (for value of the colón—see Glossary), ₡265 million, or 2.6 percent, was devoted to the security forces, according to statistics made available by the International Monetary Fund. By contrast, Costa Rica devoted ₡2.5 billion of the total budget to education. Spending on the security forces in the 1970s generally had remained at about 3 percent of the total government budget, while about 10 times as much was devoted to public education.

Despite the obvious weakness of the security establishment, there has been no major political move since 1949 to reestablish the army or even to take moves that would significantly strengthen the existing forces. Even when faced by the security threats of the early 1980s, the Costa Rican public strongly opposed militarization. When United States ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick suggested on a trip to Costa Rica in 1981 that Costa Rican democracy was being undermined by communist subversion and offered aid to build up the police force, government and opposition leaders alike protested against the sharp tone of her remarks. Carazo criticized her "exaggeration and falsehood" and stated that "we do not want an army," and presidential candidate Monge emphasized the economic dimensions of his country's problems. According to a poll cited by Monge in 1983, some 83 percent of Costa Ricans opposed the creation of an army, 80 percent opposed a draft, and 77 percent were

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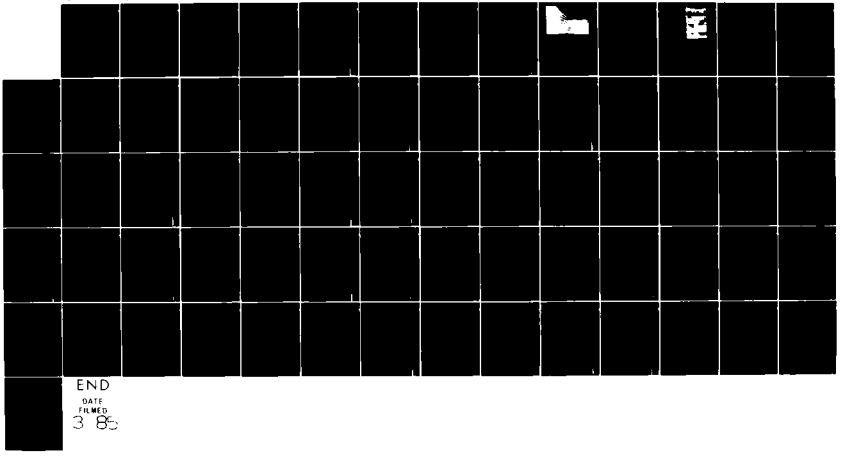

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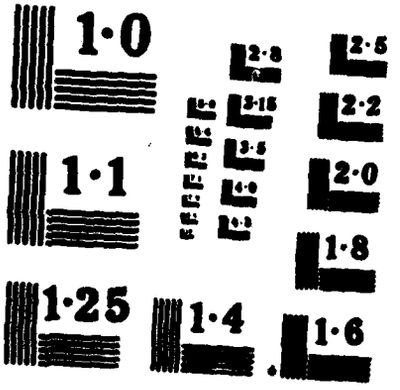
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against purchasing arms. Although Monge has aroused suspicion in some quarters by seeking modest improvements in the security forces, his government, like others before it, has not proposed to improve professionalism by changing the system of recruiting guardsmen on the basis of political patronage. Costa Rican governments have also consistently refused pay increases that would make service with the Civil Guard a more attractive job and draw better qualified personnel.

The weakness of the security forces has been a reflection of the public's aversion to building up sources of power that could be controlled exclusively by the central authorities. In the 1970s this attitude was particularly prevalent among members of Costa Rica's politically influential upper class who saw a concentration of power in the government as a potential threat to their interest. Without changes in basic social and political attitudes, the development of highly qualified police forces in Costa Rica did not seem likely in the early 1980s.

Mission, Organization, and Strength

The president of the republic is designated commander in chief of the public security forces, but the methods and bureaucratic mechanisms for directing and coordinating the various components of those forces have varied from president to president. In the early 1980s five separate ministries were charged with responsibilities for the different elements of the security establishment (see fig. 15). The Ministry of Public Security ran the Civil Guard and its component parts as it had since the end of the Ulate administration; the Rural Assistance Guard was under the control of the Ministry of Government and Police. The smaller Judicial Investigation Organization (Organismo de Investigación Judicial—OIJ), which performed criminal investigations at the behest of the courts, came under the purview of the Supreme Court of Justice in coordination with the Ministry of Justice. There were also small units of the Treasury Police and Customs Police that operated under the Ministry of Economy and Commerce to control contraband. Finally, the Ministry of the Presidency was technically responsible for the Francisco J. Orlich National Police School (which trained personnel from all of the forces), although Civil Guardsmen were in charge of its day-to-day operation.

The decentralized organization of the security forces has long been a handicap to their efficient operation. It has been suggested that all of the security forces—or at least the Civil Guard and the Rural Guard—should be placed under the authority of a single

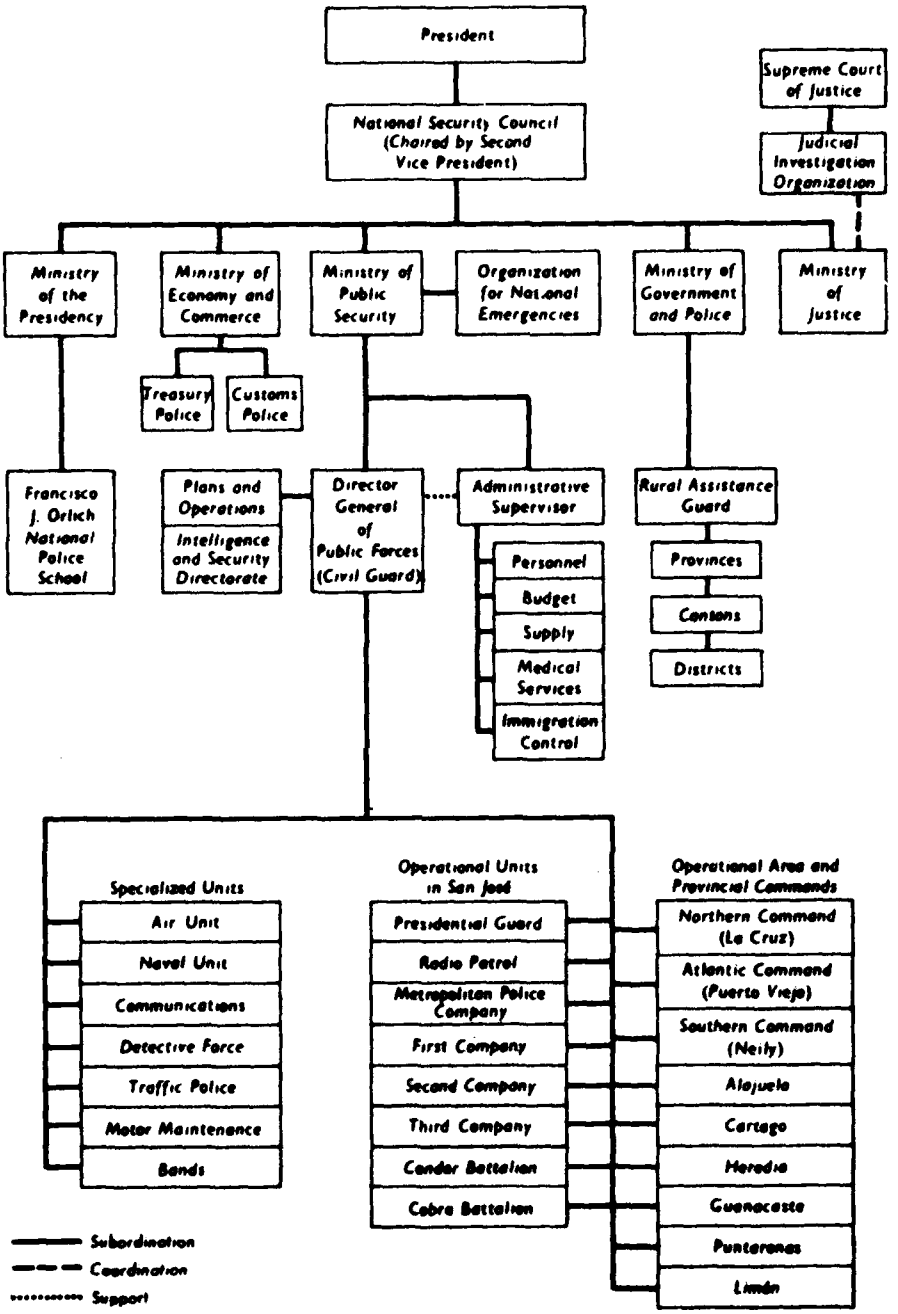


Figure 15. Organizational Structure of Costa Rican Public Security Forces, 1983

cabinet minister. The Monge government, however, decided to improve police coordination by emphasizing the role of the National Security Council. In 1983 Monge declared that body to be

the sole authority for national security policy, including that of internal security. At that time the council was chaired by the country's second vice president, Armando Aráuz Aguilar, and included the ministers of the presidency, justice, government and police, and public security. In the Monge government, operational coordination between the various security forces was vested in a committee of the National Security Council that included the deputy ministers of public security and of government and police, the Civil Guard and Rural Guard commanders, and the directors of the OIJ and the intelligence branch of the Civil Guard. Tactical cooperation was further refined after a Nicaraguan incursion in September 1983, when the Monge government directed that all the border authorities—including Rural Guardsmen and customs authorities—operate under the command of the local Civil Guard chief. In practice, the long-established institutional autonomy of each of the security forces militated against their close cooperation. In late 1982 the director general of the Rural Guard resigned, apparently because of problems his force had in working together with the Civil Guard. The moves to improve the forces' operations were viewed with suspicion in some quarters, although the Monge government stressed to the public that its activities in improving the security forces' coordination did not in any way imply that they were being "militarized."

Civil Guard

The Civil Guard, made up of some 4,300 personnel in 1983, is the country's largest and most effective national law enforcement agency. The organization is under the jurisdiction of the minister of public security through the director general of public forces. The minister is concerned primarily with policy, whereas day-to-day operations are controlled by the director general. In addition to direct supervision of the Civil Guard, the director general has a number of staff and operational responsibilities. The staff element of the guard is directly under the director general and is located in San José. It determines policy and directs operations, and its services are available not only to the Civil Guard but also to all police agencies throughout the nation. In the operational area the director general is in charge of the air and naval units, communications, the Detective Force, and the Traffic Police, among other elements. The minister has another principal assistant, designated administrative supervisor, who relieves the director general of certain support functions. His assigned responsibilities include personnel, budget, supply, medical services, and immigration control.

The main operational units of the Civil Guard are organized into the Metropolitan Police Company, stationed in San José Province, and the provincial commands, which operate from each of the country's other six provincial capitals. In addition, a force reorganization in 1982 created three new area commands to bring the Civil Guard into remote areas that had previously been the sole responsibility of the Rural Guard. The Northern Command has headquarters at La Cruz in Guanacaste Province near the Nicaraguan border; the Atlantic Command operates from Puerto Viejo in Heredia Province; and the Southern Command is based at Neily on the Panamanian border.

Normally about one-half of the guard's total strength is stationed in the capital. Two companies, numbering over 600 men, are combined into a group assigned to police duties in the city. They are augmented by the Radio Patrol unit, which is a permanent mobile striking force of over 100 men. The Presidential Guard, an elite formation of fewer than 50 men whose sole mission is protecting the president and guarding his residence, is also permanently stationed in San José.

A third guard company, stationed in the capital on a rotating basis, is engaged in full-time training and does not perform standard police duties. At the conclusion of a training cycle, its personnel are assigned to regular duty and are replaced by those of another company. The company in training serves as a ready reserve and is considered to be on call for use in case of emergency or for dispatch to any threatened area.

In 1981 and 1982 two new Civil Guard companies of slightly more than 200 men each were established. Designated the Condor Battalion and the Cobra Battalion, respectively, these units received two months of additional training from officers of the Panamanian National Guard. The companies were trained both in Panama and at the Francisco J. Orlich National Police School at San Antonio de Belén in the San José area. In 1983 they were considered the best trained units in the Civil Guard, and they were also the best armed, using newly acquired American-made M-16 and Israeli-made Galil automatic rifles. Elements of the two companies, operating under the newly established Northern Command, have been used to patrol areas near the Nicaraguan border in order to control anti-Sandinista activities and to prevent Nicaraguan government troops from crossing the border. Living conditions at their camps in the north were extremely difficult—"almost inhumane," according to the public security minister; potable water, sanitation, and shelter were inadequate or unavailable. Shortcomings of the guardsmen in the difficult conditons

were pointed out in June 1983 when Panamanian-trained Civil Guardsmen became involved in a shoot-out with local Rural Guardsmen at a dance in Los Chiles. After the incident, to preserve morale, Civil Guardsmen were sent from San José to the border areas on only two-week to 30-day rotations. Other elements from the Condor and Cobra battalions have also served with the 180-man Southern Command and the smaller Atlantic Command.

Although the establishment of the area commands and the new battalions was designed to give the Civil Guard an ability to operate in rural areas, it has remained basically an urban force. The six provincial companies constitute the police forces of the capitals of the respective provinces outside San José. The companies are loosely supervised on a national level by the director general of the Civil Guard in San José, but distance from the capital and a dearth of supervisory personnel result in a considerable degree of autonomy and independent action, particularly for units stationed in the coastal provinces. Companies are rotated periodically between mountain and coastal provinces, and each gets its turn to participate in the concerted training program. During their period of duty the units are occupied with law enforcement tasks and are able to devote little time to training.

The Civil Guard includes a small air force and naval force. The air force, which in 1983 had a strength of under 100, included several Piper light aircraft and three helicopters, one of which had been confiscated from Pastora's forces. The aircraft were believed to be based in the San José area most of the time, but they had access to many of the more than 170 airports and airstrips located throughout the country. The naval component of the Civil Guard was assigned approximately 50 officers and men. The coastal fleet was composed of four 20-meter patrol craft and one 32-meter patrol boat, all built in the United States by Swiftships and delivered in 1979. The service also operated a river patrol boat and a few outboard patrol boats. Thirteen more outboard patrol boats for surveillance on the country's rivers and inland waterways were on order in 1983. The larger patrol craft, which were reportedly plagued by mechanical problems, were based at Puerto Limón, Golfito, and Puntarenas.

The Intelligence and Security Directorate (Dirección de Inteligencia y Seguridad—DIS) is a component part of the Civil Guard that had been known as the National Security Agency until after Monge became president. The DIS and its predecessors have served as the country's internal intelligence-gathering operations since 1962. In the early 1980s the 100 personnel assigned to

the DIS were extremely active in investigating the numerous security incidents that had taken place in the country. Although the technical proficiency of the DIS has been questioned, the organization has reportedly met with some success in identifying criminals and threats to national security because Costa Rican citizens have been quick to report suspicious activities.

The Civil Guard operates a number of corollary activities on a nationwide basis that also serve the country's other police elements. The Department of Radio Communications operates all of the police radio networks. The relatively small Detective Force is a plainclothes unit that assists in prearrest criminal investigations. The task of regulating and controlling all the nation's road traffic falls to the Traffic Police, which operates from San José.

As part of the Monge government's plan to improve the capabilities of the security force, in November 1982 the public security minister announced the formation of a 10,000-strong police reserve. The force, called the Organization for National Emergencies (Organismo Popular de Emergencias Nacionales—OPEN), "is the backbone that will enable us to smash any attempt to destabilize the democratic regime," according to Public Security Minister Solano. The announcement of the establishment of the force, which is to come under the authority of the Ministry of Public Security and is to be composed of citizens "of proven democratic creed," caused some political protest. Former public security minister Echeverría charged that OPEN was a "paramilitary ideological organization," and some press reports linked it with attacks against strikers and leftist demonstrators. It was also charged that OPEN leaders included persons affiliated with the rightist MCRL. Apart from these allegations, little was known about OPEN's activities. Aráuz stated in 1983 that the government had a list of over 10,000 Costa Ricans who had offered their immediate services whenever the government needed them, but OPEN had no known organizational structure. There was no sign in 1983 that OPEN members were being trained or armed.

Little information was available on the scope and structure of Civil Guard training. The curriculum of the Francisco J. Orlich National Police School, established in 1963, was organized to train all Civil Guard companies on a rotating basis. The quality of training, which emphasized law enforcement rather than military skills, reportedly suffered because of a dearth of experienced instructors. In the early 1980s selected guardsmen and units also received training from United States and Panamanian instructors. The limitations of Civil Guard training were compounded by the

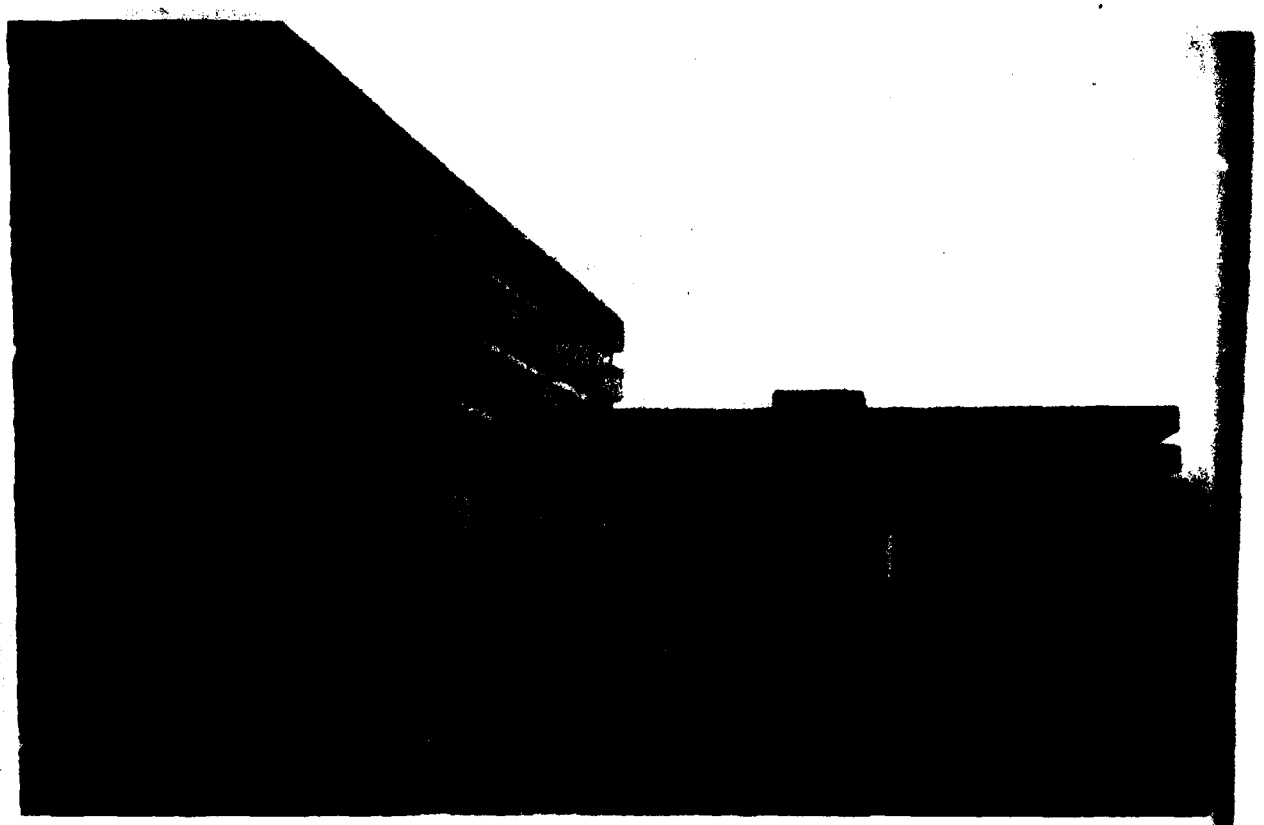
fact that the system of replacing most of the force every four years prevented men and units from gaining experience to supplement their training.

The Civil Guard was thought by observers in the early 1980s to be an effective but understaffed urban police force having high morale. As a military force, however, its capabilities remained limited, despite attempts to reorganize the force and improve training and equipment. The Civil Guard's limited transportation and motorized patrol abilities also hampered operations. In order to make its relatively large-scale troop movements to and from northern border areas, the Civil Guard was forced to borrow trucks, buses, and other vehicles operated by other ministries. The force lacked sufficient numbers of uniforms and boots to clothe its personnel, and it had too few tents to shelter guards in rural operations. Logistics problems were compounded because firearms (mostly World War II models) and ammunition (poorly stored and often deteriorated by the high humidity) were of diverse makes and calibers. Because of serious budgetary constraints, the government was forced to rely on foreign assistance to ameliorate these problems. Even if the hoped-for material improvements were made, however, the capabilities of the Civil Guard as a defense force would be marginal as long as personnel were replaced every four years

Rural Assistance Guard

The Rural Assistance Guard, Costa Rica's second largest security force, is responsible for enforcing law and order in all parts of the country except the national capital and the six provincial capital cities under the jurisdiction of the Civil Guard. Officially designated the Town and Village Police until 1970, the Rural Guard is organized along political administrative lines at the province, canton (see Glossary), and district levels. Overall police supervision is exercised by an inspector general, appointed by the minister of government and police, and six locally appointed provincial inspectors, but each governor has supreme authority over the force in his domain. It is noteworthy, however, that a governor has no police authority within his own capital, where the power rests with the Civil Guard under centralized control from San José. There are some 3,000 Rural Guardsmen who perform basic police duties in detachments at the canton or district level or as individuals in smaller villages or hamlets. According to the law, these agents should not have additional employment.

The duties of the Rural Guardsmen extend beyond ordinary



Judicial Police headquarters (left) and Tribunals of Justice building in San José
Photo by James D. Rudolph

police activities. Crime is low in most rural areas, except in territory near the Nicaraguan border, and the "public service" aspect of police work is emphasized. In many outlying communities the police are the only representatives of the government, and the people turn to them for public services of all kinds. In a majority of districts, Rural Guardsmen also serve as letter carriers. A police agent frequently becomes the local arbiter in answering questions and resolving disputes. Rural guardsmen also are active in local construction efforts, helping to build their own police stations as well as roads, schools, and clinics. They might, in some areas, distribute government information and school supplies. The Rural Guard is oriented exclusively to local communities. Guardsmen have been used in evicting squatters and controlling striking plantation workers, but the central government has never called on them to repel outside invaders.

Judicial Investigation Organization

The Judicial Investigation Organization (Organismo de Inves-

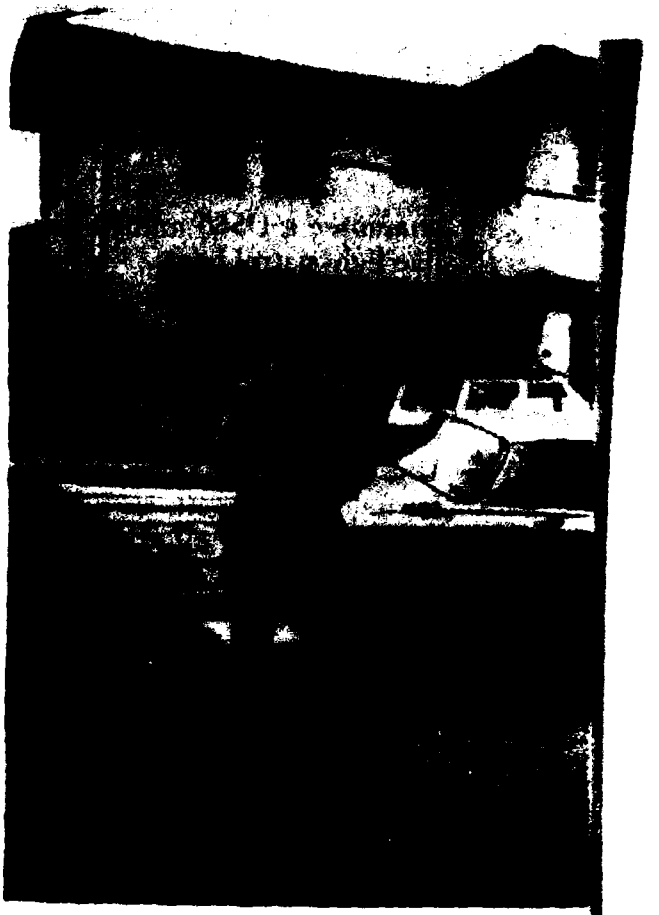
tigación Judicial—OIJ), also known as the Judicial Police, operates under the control of the Supreme Court of Justice rather than that of executive political authorities. Its 650 personnel include nearly 300 investigators mostly involved in gathering all available evidence in preparation for criminal trials. OIJ officers are appointed by members of the court and are periodically reviewed, but their tenure is not limited to four years, unlike the case with Civil and Rural Guardsmen. Members of the force are thought to be capable and fairly well trained. Many have received training in Europe, the United States (before 1968), Taiwan, and other Latin American countries.

Theoretically, the OIJ is only supposed to investigate criminal activity after the defendants are brought to trial. In practice, however, the activities of the OIJ and the DIS overlap somewhat, in part because of the relatively high proficiency of the OIJ and in part because of the nature of investigative work. For instance, by gathering evidence for the trial of defendants in the Echeverría Commando bombings, the OIJ found cause to arrest other suspects. When the OIJ's authority to enter communist party leader Mora's house (where it found firearms in 1982) was questioned in court, OIJ representatives replied that their investigation of another crime had led them to the Mora residence. In 1983 authorities were seeking to ameliorate the problem by having the OIJ pass its information on to other elements of the public security forces, who would then make arrests.

Foreign Security Assistance

Costa Rica has long depended on outsiders to provide what arms and other equipment its security forces have needed. After more than a decade when it had acquired few new weapons beyond some arms received at the time that Costa Rica had been involved in funneling weapons to the Sandinistas in 1978-79, the government sought foreign sources to strengthen the security forces in the early 1980s. Because of the inability of the struggling economy to pay for an arms buildup, the government sought, and for the most part received, military assistance on concessional terms from its foreign partners.

The United States has been the source of most of the weapons and equipment in the Costa Rican inventory. Much of this matériel—small arms and light weapons—had been delivered in the years before a 1974 ruling went into effect in the United States prohibiting assistance to foreign police forces. Significant United States military aid was given during World War II under the lend-



Civil Guardsman on duty in San José Photo by Kathryn R. Stafford

lease program. Between 1952 and 1968 the United States transferred US$930,000 worth of arms and equipment to Costa Rica under the Military Assistance Program (MAP); the terms did not require reimbursement in dollars. During the 1960s nonlethal equipment and training were also provided by the Office of Public Safety in the United States Agency for International Development, which specialized in training foreign police forces. The United States military was also heavily involved in training Costa Rican security personnel. Between 1952 and 1968 a total of 711 Costa Ricans were sent to the United States for training under the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. The United States Army School of the Americas at Fort Gulick, Panama, trained Costa Ricans between 1946 and 1968. Military assistance from the United States during this period was administered by a United States Army mission accredited to Costa Rica.

In 1968 the United States ceased providing military training and equipment to Costa Rica's police forces. A United States congressional ruling in 1978, however, defined the Civil Guard as having primarily military responsibilities and permitted selective programs to be instituted to improve the security forces. That year the United States Department of Defense was able to

guarantee a US$5 million loan to Costa Rica for the purchase of five light patrol boats.

North American assistance began to increase in the United States fiscal year (FY—see Glossary) 1981, when 37 students were trained under the IMET program, 20 of them at Fort Gulick. In FY 1982 the United States provided US$2 million in military assistance under MAP and trained 55 Costa Rican guardsmen. The US$3 million in MAP aid given in FY 1983 included US$750,000 for field equipment, such as tents and boots; US$850,000 for improving the country's police communications system; and US$280,000 for repairing one of the damaged Civil Guard helicopters. Other funds were devoted to supplying outboard patrol boats, 52 four-wheel-drive trucks and .30-caliber ammunition. Some 70 guards were also slated to be trained at Fort Gulick in 1983. In August of that year, a nine-man United States training team arrived in the country to teach a group of Civil Guardsmen who had been selected to be instructors. Other United States training teams were scheduled to go to Costa Rica to train other Civil Guard personnel in equipment maintenance and repair.

Other countries also provided Costa Rica with security assistance. Panama and Venezuela have been the most prominent, having supported Costa Rica in the late 1970s when Somoza was threatening reprisals for its assistance to the Sandinista rebels. In 1982 and 1983 Venezuela provided the Costa Rican Civil Guardsmen with M-14 rifles and uniforms. Panamanian security aid was more extensive, and the Panamanian National Guard trained over 400 Civil Guardsmen from the Condor and Cobra battalions. On a visit to Costa Rica in 1983, Panamanian National Guard leader General Rubén Darío Paredes offered his country's "unconditional help" to "defend [Costa Rica] from any attack from a neighboring country." More controversially, he stated "with all due respect for the Costa Ricans, the Panamanians consider that the current situation has extended Panama's borders up to the Costa Rican-Nicaraguan borderline." The general later declared that his statement had not been meant to imply that Panamanian troops would be sent into Costa Rican territory.

Costa Rica also received security assistance from countries outside the hemisphere in the early 1980s. Israel sent a shipment of Galil rifles as well as a group of experts who instructed Costa Ricans in combating terrorism. The country also received 40 to 50 police patrol cars from the Republic of Korea (South Korea), and the Taiwanese government sent riot gear and uniforms.

The Prison System

The prison system is composed of 31 so-called central penitentiaries and a number of prisons and detention facilities distributed throughout the country on a broad geographic basis. The central penitentiaries are the principal penal institutions and in 1978 included 2,083 inmates, the majority of the prison population. The Ministry of Justice is charged with the administration and operation of the central penitentiaries; the subordinate facilities are supervised by local authorities.

In 1978 over 60 percent of the inmate population of the central penitentiaries was housed in two prisons—La Penitencaría Central and La Reforma Prisión, both in the San José area. Other major facilities included La San Lucas Prisión on an island in the Golfo de Nicoya and the Tierra Blanca juvenile detention facilit in Cartago.

Except for the central penitentiaries, the prison system is loosely organized and receives little centralized guidance or direction. Few penal statistics are published, and local authorities have a free hand in methods and procedures. There are jails or detention facilities in most communities down to the canton level, and these range from simple enclosures with little security and few amenities to well-constructed prison buildings that provide sound protection and adequate accommodations.

The Civil Guard maintains a jail in each of the provincial capitals, and the political chief is responsible for providing confinement facilities at the canton level. The size and character of these facilities are largely determined by the size of the community and the area's crime rate, but few subordinate areas under Rural Assistance Guard jurisdiction have formal facilities that measure up to even the limited standards of the provincial prisons. A provision of the Penal Code requires penal magistrates to visit prisons in their jurisdictional area at least once a week in order to hear complaints and confer with the wardens.

Prison facilities were generally regarded as old, lacking proper sanitation, and being in very poor condition. In order to redress these problems, the government in 1978 announced that it would undertake a ₡100 million program of construction and improvements of the central prisons.

The Constitution (Article 40) states: "No one shall be submitted to cruel or degrading treatment nor to life imprisonment. . . . A declaration obtained through violence shall have no value." Despite poor physical facilities, Costa Rican treatment of prisoners in 1983 was regarded as one of the most progressive in the hemisphere. Inmates are classed and treated according to four main

categories: maximum security (closed)—the most severe—followed by maximum security (open); two classes of medium security; two classes of minimum security; and limited confidence, whose inmates are permitted to spend one night a week with their families. Those in the widened confidence and complete confidence categories are essentially on probation, but those in the former category must spend Saturday nights in detention. Throughout the course of their sentences, inmates are progressively moved into more lenient categories. As in most Latin American countries, prisoners—except those classed in the maximum security (closed) category—are allowed to receive periodic conjugal visits from their wives.

* * *

Despite (or perhaps because of) the uniqueness of Costa Rica's "demilitarized" public security forces, few comprehensive studies of these organizations have been published. Among the more informative works are "Demilitarization in Costa Rica: A Farewell to Arms?" by Tord Høivik and Solvieg Aas and a fairly thorough but dated master's thesis prepared by Jon D. Cozean of George Washington University in 1966, entitled "The Aboliton of the Costa Rican Army." Other sources helpful in understanding the disbanding of the former national army include John P. Bell's *Crisis in Costa Rica: The 1948 Revolution* and Charles Ameringer's *Don Pepe: A Political Biography of José Figueres of Costa Rica*.

Periodical literature has provided the most useful information on Costa Rica's security concerns in the 1980s and the structure of the police forces. In addition to the weekly newspapers, *La Nación Internacional* and the *Tico Times*, both published in San José, a variety of newsletters supply useful and current news and analysis of security issues. Articles in the London-based newsletter *Latin America Weekly Report*, the San José-based *Mesoamérica*, and the *Central America Report* printed in Guatemala City have been particularly helpful. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Appendix

Table

1 Metric Conversion Coefficients
2 Principal Cities and Towns, 1973 and 1982
3 Domestic Product by Industry at Factor Cost, Selected Years, 1971–80
4 Agricultural, Forestry, and Fisheries Production, Selected Years, 1972–81
5 Exports of Principal Products, Selected Years, 1970–82
6 Foreign Trade by Geographic Area and Selected Countries, 1978–81
7 Imports by Major Category, Selected Years, 1970–82
8 Balance of Payments, 1979–82
9 Council of Government, November 1983
10 Presidents of Costa Rica since 1940
11 Results of Legislative Assembly Elections, February 1982

Table 1. Metric Conversion Coefficients

When you know	Multiply by	To find
Millimeters	0.04	inches
Centimeters	0.39	inches
Meters	3.3	feet
Kilometers	0.62	miles
Hectares (10,000 m^2)	2.47	acres
Square kilometers	0.39	square miles
Cubic meters	35.3	cubic feet
Liters	0.26	gallons
Kilograms	2.2	pounds
Metric tons	0.98	long tons
	1.1	short tons
	2,204	pounds
Degrees Celsius (Centigrade)	9 divide by 5 and add 32	degrees Fahrenheit

Table 2. Principal Cities and Towns, 1973 and 1982

Cities and Towns	Population (in thousands)		Percentage of Increase
	1973	1982	1973-82
San José urban area[1]			
San José	215.4	268.8	24.8
Desamparados	30.7	39.5	28.7
Guadalupe	27.0	35.5	31.5
San Pedro	23.7	29.8	25.7
San Juan	18.7	23.7	26.7
Others[2]	85.5	216.7[3]	150.5
Total San José urban area	401.0	614.0	53.1
Cartago	34.6	48.0[4]	38.7
Alajuela	34.3	45.0[4]	31.1
Puerto Limón	29.6	39.0[4]	31.8
Puntarenas	26.3	34.8	32.3
Heredia	22.1	29.2	32.1
Turrialba	12.2	23.4	91.8
Liberia	10.8	12.0[4]	11.1

[1]The towns listed under San José urban area (and others not listed) are, with few exceptions, headquarters of different cantons.

[2]In 1973 the towns in the category "Other" were small urban areas in districts that were partly rural.

[3]By 1982 several of the towns grouped under "Other" in the San José urban area had populations between 10,000 and 20,000. The largest of these were Cinco Esquinas and Escazu.

[4]The 1982 estimates of the populations of these towns are based on canton and district population data that do not distinguish between urban and rural components of these units. If the cantons or districts were wholly urban in 1973, they were assumed to be so in 1982; if they were partly rural in 1973, estimates were based on the assumption that they were partly rural but less so in 1982.

Source: Based on information from Costa Rica, Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, *Censos nacionales de 1973: población total, urbana y rural por provincias, cantones y distritos*, San José, 1974; and Costa Rica, Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, *Población de la República de Costa Rica por provincias, cantones, y distritos, estimacional 1° de julio 1982*, San José, 1982.

Table 3. Gross Domestic Product by Industry at Factor Cost, Selected Years, 1971–80
(in millions of colones)[1]

Industry	1971	1973	1975	1977	1978	1979	1980[2]
Agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing	1,421.3	1,934.9	3,103.0	5,324.5	5,705.7	5,924.7	6,638.3
Manufacturing, mining, and quarrying	1,003.7	1,379.2	2,591.0	3,587.2	4,056.1	4,711.9	6,322.4
Electricity and gas	132.7	166.6	310.1	516.7	556.3	622.7	771.5
Construction	340.6	501.9	856.4	1,342.1	1,631.3	2,173.7	2,623.8
Wholesale and retail trade, restaurants, and hotels	1,096.7	1,467.5	2,349.3	3,784.0	4,265.3	5,174.5	6,018.2
Transport, storage, and communications	319.4	434.4	777.4	1,052.5	1,225.3	1,413.2	1,768.4
Financial establishments, insurance, and business services	321.2	515.2	806.0	1,278.2	1,553.3	1,704.2	1,987.1
Real estate	508.9	603.6	1,084.6	1,608.0	1,767.3	1,985.4	2,376.7
General government	813.6	1,196.6	2,093.7	3,402.2	4,222.6	5,200.4	6,312.7
Other personal services	364.3	484.3	725.7	1,025.9	1,210.8	1,448.5	1,805.6
Gross domestic product at factor cost	6,322.4	8,684.2	14,687.2	22,921.1[3]	26,194.0	30,369.2	36,624.7

[1] For value of the colón—see Glossary
[2] Preliminary
[3] Figures do not add to total because of rounding

Source: Based on information from Banco Central de Costa Rica, Departamento de Investigaciones y Estadística, Sección de Cuentas Nacionales, *Cuentas nacionales de Costa Rica, 1971–1980*, June 1981, Table 21.

Table 4. Agricultural, Forestry, and Fisheries Production, Selected Years, 1972–81
(in tons unless otherwise specified)

Product	1972	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Coffee	88,792	81,784	87,183	96,549	96,575	106,389	112,089
Bananas	1,186,094	1,187,147	1,124,691	1,182,962	1,154,325	1,107,518	1,141,646
Sugarcane	2,301,427	2,291,585	2,519,421	2,578,741	2,615,128	2,516,457	2,521,020
Cacao	7,055	5,855	7,694	10,381	10,365	5,266	5,049
Rice	100,350	169,376	175,942	197,824	219,579	230,628	208,995
Maize	75,910	114,010	84,703	62,284	72,888	75,314	83,694
Beans	14,203	16,212	14,059	14,010	11,321	11,504	12,289
Sorghum	0	30,855	40,986	52,587	33,650	41,622	30,118
Cotton	126	1,610	7,038	2,713	1,148	765	579
Tobacco	1,935	3,186	2,756	2,385	2,084	1,609	1,695
Potatoes	22,022	24,721	25,363	25,973	26,777	27,419	19,193
Cassava	8,836	13,452	14,103	13,805	14,520	13,053	18,974
Plantains	58,300	65,408	69,369	76,306	81,385	90,044	90,373
Onions	2,635	3,617	3,655	2,756	3,394	4,155	3,530
Cattle	115,705	124,998	134,144	145,959	137,254	118,461	140,918
Pigs	10,271	11,529	12,509	14,873	20,053	19,264	21,172
Poultry	2,856	5,415	5,427	5,589	5,590	4,897	5,774

Table 4. (continued).

Product	1972	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Milk[1]	221,979	271,750	290,299	300,808	306,132	308,263	307,320
Eggs[2]	316,352	359,349	368,718	376,114	370,881	430,223	344,178
Timber[3]	524	802	722	650	650	687	550
Fish	7,196	15,911	16,173	20,968	24,707	19,065	15,478

[1] In millions of liters.
[2] In millions.
[3] In millions of cubic meters.

Source: Based on information from Banco Central de Costa Rica, Departamento de Investigaciones y Estadística, Sección de Cuentas Nacionales, *Cifras sobre producción agropecuaria, 1972–1981*, San José, 1982, Table 13.

Table 5. Exports of Principal Products, Selected Years, 1970–82
(value in millions of United States dollars [f.o.b.]; quantity in tons)[1]

Product	1970	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982[2]
Coffee									
Value	73.1	96.9	153.9	319.2	313.7	315.4	247.9	240.0	236.7
Quantity	69.1	76.9	64.6	67.6	86.3	97.4	73.6	96.6	93.7
Bananas									
Value	66.8	144.1	148.7	150.3	169.9	190.5	207.5	224.8	238.7
Quantity	856.0	1,105.0	1,068.5	1,002.9	1,058.0	1,024.7	973.0	1,002.3	996.0
Cacao									
Value	1.9	5.3	6.9	17.1	15.1	9.7	4.2	2.7	2.4
Quantity	3.2	5.1	4.2	5.6	5.8	4.2	2.3	1.8	2.0
Sugar									
Value	10.1	48.2	24.7	15.6	15.9	17.5	40.7	43.1	14.7
Quantity	67.3	80.0	74.0	68.0	68.5	69.1	71.4	73.4	54.7
Beef									
Value	18.0	32.1	40.5	44.1	60.3	81.7	70.7	74.0	53.1
Quantity	17.5	29.8	30.3	31.9	34.5	31.6	26.0	33.2	24.3
Fertilizers									
Value	2.4	18.3	16.7	13.7	10.9	9.3	10.0	15.6	7.8
Quantity	32.4	67.5	104.3	108.0	83.1	61.1	55.2	80.9	48.7

Table 5. (continued).

Product	1970	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982[2]
Other products[3]									
Agricultural	7.8	30.1	33.4	51.9	65.9	67.1	86.7	86.9	50.3
Manufactured . .	51.0	118.3	167.6	215.9	212.2	250.9	334.0	325.9	267.8
Total other products	58.8	148.4	201.0	267.8	278.1	318.0	420.7	407.9[4]	318.1
TOTAL[3]	231.1	493.3	592.4	827.8	863.9	942.1	1,001.7	1,008.1	871.5

[1] f.o.b.—free on board.
[2] Preliminary.
[3] By value.
[4] Figures do not add to total because of rounding.

Table 6. Foreign Trade by Geographic Area and Selected Countries, 1978–81[1]
(in thousands of United States dollars)

Geographic Area and Country	1978		1979		1980		1981	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
North America								
United States	248,969	380,411	331,070	424,150	327,487	502,313	275,895	398,282
Canada	5,894	16,981	7,291	24,300	3,652	34,525	5,190	27,022
Mexico	1,108	40,431	378	44,432	1,065	96,874	22,234	110,396
Total North American	255,971	437,823	338,739	492,884	332,204	633,712	303,319	535,700
CACM[1]								
El Salvador	49,430	61,509	47,970	69,709	52,488	67,648	43,619	36,375
Guatemala	62,597	71,269	61,766	85,342	65,469	100,551	75,804	64,193
Honduras	22,128	12,767	26,119	14,839	28,257	18,787	34,863	16,287
Nicaragua	45,100	55,951	39,499	41,802	124,105	32,802	84,141	33,936
Total CACM	179,255	210,496	175,354	211,692	270,319	219,788	238,427	150,791
Panama and free zones	27,404	17,978	35,449	21,337	41,866	32,252	48,151	31,645
Caribbean region								
Puerto Rico	23,063	560	15,777	1,034	19,202	1,624	23,877	1,423
Dominican Republic	7,485	5	5,317	148	3,104	669	3,288	914
Curaçao	602	60,948	135	120,538	5,662	53,408	11,406	25,909
Cuba	5,695	10	4,305	179	4,352	72	28	81

Table 6. (continued).

Geographic Area and Country	1978		1979		1980		1981	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
Other	2,275	1,558	7,987	2,598	4,526	12,451	4,391	3,437
Total Caribbean region	39,120	63,081	33,521	124,349	36,876	68,224	42,990	31,764
South America								
Venezuela	2,022	40,233	1,315	53,034	2,445	108,156	3,131	64,518
Brazil	59	20,743	4,549	23,937	2,912	21,696	31	17,535
Other	6,977	16,376	8,826	19,625	11,807	27,792	31,180	19,175
Total South America	9,058	77,352	14,690	96,596	17,165	157,644	34,342	121,228
Europe								
Western Europe[1]								
EEC								
West Germany	118,454	63,041	110,080	69,137	116,294	70,892	111,561	54,426
Belgium and Luxembourg	34,382	10,917	33,139	9,231	22,398	7,008	20,954	7,505
Denmark	1,779	1,773	3,465	1,966	753	4,283	259	3,878
France	7,795	12,431	16,201	14,226	17,504	17,587	9,597	19,214
Britain	2,590	26,819	3,507	26,645	2,654	25,801	10,528	19,007
Ireland	418	2,534	2,266	3,857	513	2,751	303	3,837
Italy	18,204	19,299	31,386	36,477	42,395	23,394	23,720	25,009
Netherlands	45,069	7,702	40,922	12,962	29,155	11,094	25,284	6,972
Total EEC	228,711	144,516	240,966	174,501	231,666	162,810	202,206	139,848

Table 6. (continued).

Geographic Area and Country	1978		1979		1980		1981	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
Eastern Europe (including Yugoslavia)	15,185	5,835	10,697	6,515	6,306	7,817	24,298	3,441
Other	51,379	57,823	63,729	73,771	45,349	59,825	48,113	47,441
Total Europe	295,275	208,174	315,392	254,787	283,321	230,452	274,617	190,730
Africa	1,206	869	914	202	320	576	2,139	103
Asia								
Japan	7,254	158,075	10,122	172,934	8,049	171,265	5,403	115,406
Other	8,651	14,464	8,040	18,114	9,346	21,912	10,528	23,168
Total Asia	15,905	172,539	18,162	191,048	17,395	193,177	15,931	138,574
Oceania	873	3,607	1,163	3,912	1,457	4,565	854	471
TOTAL	825,545	1,184,716	934,306	1,396,812	1,001,742	1,540,445	962,334	1,211,224

Totals as published
Central American Common Market
European Economic Community

Source: Based on information from Costa Rica, Ministry of Economy, Industry, and Commerce, Export and Investment Promotion Center, *Costa Rica: Facts and Figures, 1982*, San José, 1982, 101–108.

Table 7. Imports by Major Category, Selected Years, 1970–82
(in millions of United States dollars)[1]

Category	1970	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982[2]
Raw materials									
Industrial and mining[3]	102.2	264.8	269.6	341.8	364.1	449.4	573.0	527.0	n.a.
Agricultural	9.2	20.9	22.8	29.2	34.2	36.0	50.7	46.4	n.a.
Total raw materials	111.4	285.7	292.4	371.0	398.3	485.4	623.7	573.4	478.6
Consumer goods									
Nondurable	69.7	97.6	112.8	151.2	178.3	205.4	244.6	164.9	143.8
Durable	33.3	46.4	56.1	94.3	117.5	144.7	143.4	91.5	13.3
Total consumer goods	103.0	144.0	168.9	396.7	295.8	350.1	388.0	256.4	157.1
Capital goods									
Industrial and mining	25.7	52.6	65.5	84.3	94.2	133.5	104.3	82.6	n.a.
Agricultural	6.2	19.7	22.0	28.4	27.1	29.2	23.5	13.4	n.a.
Construction	10.2	22.3	28.2	31.4	38.6	45.1	40.3	17.5	n.a.
Transport	23.2	51.9	59.4	93.6	109.2	109.7	84.7	65.5	n.a.
Other	13.4	31.0	48.2	51.1	54.2	63.5	71.8	84.9	n.a.
Total capital goods	78.7	177.5	223.3	288.8	323.3	381.0	324.6	263.9	125.3

Table 7. (continued).

Category	1970	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
Construction materials	17.3	35.8	33.0	42.3	70.6	58.7	72.4	48.4	30.3
Fuels and lubricants	6.3	47.0	48.1	62.5	67.7	121.7	95.5	69.1	89.0
Other	...	3.9	4.8	11.4	10.1	...	19.6	...	n.a.
TOTAL	316.7	693.9	770.5	1,021.5	1,165.8	1,396.9	1,523.8	1,211.2	880.3

...—means none
n.a.—not available
c.i.f.—cost, insurance, and freight
Preliminary
Includes crude petroleum and petroleum products

Table 8. Balance of Payments, 1979–82
(in millions of United States dollars)

	1979	1980	1981	1982[1]
Current account				
Merchandise trade[2]				
Exports	942.1	1,000.9	1,002.6	869.0
Imports	1,257.2	1,375.2	1,090.6	779.1
Net merchandise trade	-315.1	-374.3	-88.0	89.9
Nonfactor services				
Exports	173.5	197.1	198.1	209.7
Imports	276.7	254.6	242.3	189.0
Net nonfactor services	-109.2[3]	-58.5[3]	-44.2	20.7
Factor services				
External public debt	80.0	125.0	112.0	199.3
Other	49.4	75.2	178.1	137.6
Total interest payments	129.4	200.2	290.1	336.9
Remittance of profits (net)	16.6	16.0	13.8	7.7
Net factor services	-146.0	-216.2	-303.9	-344.6
Transfers (net)	12.1	14.6	27.0	35.5
Current account balance	-558.2	-663.9[3]	-409.1	-198.5
Capital account				
Medium and long-term capital	312.2	354.0	214.7	139.5
Direct private investment	42.3	48.1	66.3	32.5
Other capital and errors and omissions	103.3	63.7	81.4	171.1
Capital account balance	457.8	465.8	362.4	342.1
Balance of payments	-100.4	-198.1	-46.7	143.6
Change in reserves[4]	100.4	198.1	46.7	-143.6

[1] Preliminary
[2] Free on board
[3] As published
[4] Minus sign means increase

Table 9. Council of Government, November 1983

Office	Incumbent
President	Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez
First Vice President	Alberto Fait Lizano
Second Vice President	Armando Aráuz Aguilar
Ministers	
Agriculture and Livestock	Francisco Morales Fernández
Culture	Hernán González Gutiérrez
Economy and Commerce	Marco Antonio López Agüero
Exports and Investments	Mario Carvajal Herrera
Finance	Federico Vargas Peralta
Foreign Relations	Fernando Volio Jiménez*
Government and Police	Alfonso Carro Zúñiga
Health	Juan Jaramillo Antillon
Industry, Energy, and Mines	Calixto Chávez Zamora
Justice	Carlos José Gutiérrez Gutiérrez
Labor and Social Security	Guillermo Sandoval Alarcón
National Planning and Economic Policy	Claudio Antonio Volio Guardia
Presidency	Fernando Berrocal Soto
Public Education	Eugenio Rodríguez Vega
Public Security	Angel Edmundo Solano Calderón
Public Works and Transport	Rolando Araya Monge

*Resigned effective December 1, 1983

Table 10. Presidents of Costa Rica since 1940

Name	Incumbency	Party
Rafael Angel Calderón Guardia	1940–44	PRN[1]
Teodoro Picado Michalski	1944–48	-do-
José Figueres Ferrer	1948–49	Revolutionary junta[2]
Otilio Ulate Blanco	1949–53	PUN[3]
José Figueres Ferrer	1953–58	PLN[4]
Mario Echandi Jiménez	1958–62	PUN
Francisco Orlich Bolmarcich	1962–66	PLN
José Joaquin Trejos Fernández	1966–70	National Unification
José Figueres Ferrer	1970–74	PLN
Daniel Oduber Quirós	1974–78	-do-
Rodrigo Carazo Odio	1978–82	Unity Opposition[5]
Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez	1982–	PLN

[1]National Republican Party (Partido Republicano Nacional).
[2]President of the Founding Junta of the Second Republic.
[3]National Union Party (Partido Unión Nacional).
[4]National Liberation Party (Partido Liberación Nacional).
[5]Later renamed Unity.

Table 11. Results of Legislative Assembly Elections, February 1982

Province	PLN[1]		Unity[2]		United People		Other		Total Seats
	Seats	Percentage of Vote	Seats	Percentage of Vote	Seats	Percentage of Vote	Seats	Percentage of Vote	
San José	12	55	6	29	2	7	1[a]	8	21
Alajuela	6	55	3	30	0	3	1[b]	12	10
Cartago	4	57	2	25	0	4	0	14	6
Heredia	2	54	2	32	0	8	0	16	4
Guanacaste	2	59	2	33	0	4	0	4	5
Puntarenas	4	56	2	29	1	9	0	6	7
Limón	2	44	1	27	1	14	0	15	4
TOTAL	33		18		4		2		57

[1]National Liberation Party (Partido Liberación Nacional)
[a]Won by National Movement Party
[b]Won by Democratic Action of Alajuela

Source: Based on information from Costa Rica, Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones, *Computo de votos y declaratorias de elección, 1982*, San José, 1982, 133–34.

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Glossary

audencia—A Spanish governmental unit encompassing both judicial and legislative functions.

bahía—Bay.

canton—Second-order administrative area into which provinces are subdivided for the purpose of exercising local government.

Central America—The region between Mexico and Panama, including the independent countries of Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

colón (₡; pl., colones)—The colón is divided into 100 centimos. From December 1946 to September 3, 1961, the colón was pegged to the United States dollar, and the official rate of exchange was ₡5.635 to US$1. In September 1961 the colón was devalued to the rate of ₡6.635 to US$1, which was maintained until April 1974. From 1967 to 1969 a free-market rate averaging between ₡7 and ₡8 to US$1 was also recognized. In mid-1971, faced by foreign exchange shortages, the Costa Rican government again introduced a multiple-rate system that included a free-market rate of about ₡8.60 to US$1. Devaluations of the United States dollar in late 1971 and again in early 1973 resulted in devaluation of the colón as the official exchange rate remained unchanged; the devaluation was partially offset by a reduction in gold content of the colón. On April 25, 1974, a new official rate of ₡8.60 to US$1 was established (same as the existing free-market rate). From December 1980 the then highly overvalued colón was allowed to float under controlled conditions. The rate rose to ₡27 to US$1 but fell to about ₡20 to US$1 by mid-1981. On July 11, 1981, the former official rate of ₡8.60 was reinstated, but on December 10, 1981, a new official rate of ₡20 to US$1 was established. In mid-January 1982 the free rate rose to ₡41 and by July 1982 had reached a high of ₡63 to US$1. It declined to ₡45 by the end of 1982. Meanwhile, the interbank rate at which all export and most import transactions were carried out had been raised to ₡40 in October 1982. During 1983 the difference between the free and interbank rates was gradually narrowed, and a unified rate of ₡43.45 to US$1 (₡1 equaled US$0.023) was set in mid-November. The official rate of ₡20 to US$1, still in force in late 1983, was used primarily for remittances to students abroad and for the import of some pharmaceuticals.

cordillera—Mountain range; mountains.

fiscal year (FY)—The Costa Rican fiscal year is the same as the calendar year. The United States fiscal year extends from October 1 through the following September 30. (October 1, 1983, through September 30, 1984, is expressed as FY 1984.)

golfo—Gulf; bay.

gross domestic product (GDP)—The total value of goods and services produced within a country's borders during a fixed period, usually one year. Obtained by adding the value contributed by each sector of the economy in the form of compensation of employees, profits, and depreciation (consumption of capital). Subsistence production is included and consists of the imputed value of production by the farm family for its own use and the imputed rental value of owner-occupied dwellings.

gross national product (GNP)—Gross domestic product (*q.v.*) plus the income received from abroad by residents, less payments remitted abroad to nonresidents.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)—Established along with the World Bank (*q.v.*) in 1945, the IMF is a specialized agency affiliated with the United Nations and is responsible for stabilizing international exchange rates and payments. The main business of the IMF is the provision of loans to its members (including industrialized and developing countries) when they experience balance of payments difficulties. These loans frequently carry conditions that require substantial internal economic adjustments by the recipients, most of which are developing countries.

isla—Island.

lago—Lake.

laguna—Lagoon; intermittent lake; lake.

llanura—Plain.

meseta—Plateau.

Meseta Central—Two basins, separated by low hills, that constitute the major part of a valley (Valle Central) formed between the Cordillera (*q.v.*) Central and the Cordillera de Talamanca. Although comprising only about 6 percent of the country's land area, the Meseta Central in the early 1980s was the locus of about one-half of the population and most of the major cities and towns, including San José.

mestizo—A person recognized as being of mixed European and Indian ancestry.

puerto—Port.

punta—Point; cape.

río—River; stream; stream channel; intermittent stream.
valle—Valley; plain.
volcán—Volcano; mountain.
World Bank—Informal name used to designate a group of three affiliated international institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The IBRD, established in 1945, has the primary purpose of providing loans to developing countries for productive projects. The IDA, a legally separate loan fund but administered by the staff of the IBRD, was set up in 1960 to furnish credits to the poorest developing countries on much easier terms than those of conventional IBRD loans. The IFC, founded in 1956, supplements the activities of the IBRD through loans and assistance designed specifically to encourage the growth of productive private enterprises in the less developed countries. The president and certain senior officers of the IBRD hold the same positions in the IFC. The three institutions are owned by the governments of the countries that subscribe their capital. To participate in the World Bank group, member states must first belong to the International Monetary Fund (IMF—*q.v.*).

Index

Acosto García, Julio: 31, 34
agriculture (*see also* landownership): xv, 140–57; agrarian court, 206; economic base, 175, 176; labor force, 89, 220; political interest groups, 218; reform proposals, 217
Agüero, Diego de: 8
Aguila, Juan M. del: 207
air transport: xvii, 168, 172; Civil Guard, 269
airports and airstrips: 168,172,269
Alajuela (province and capital): xx, 7, 16, 17, 19, 113; agriculture, 147, 149, 150, 152, 153, 154; civil war, 45, 46; industry, 159; people, 86, 87, 93, 250, 280; radio, 228; railroad, 26, 168
alcalde: 11
alcohol: 55, 150, 163
Alien Property Act: 40
Alliance for Progress: 60, 138
Allied Chemical Company: 166
Alto de Ochomogo: 46, 47
Aluminum Corporation of America: 61, 63, 161
American Convention on Human Rights: 209
Ameringer, Charles D.: 194, 197, 209, 220, 244
amparo: 209
ANFE. *See* National Association for Economic Development
Aranjuez: 7, 10
Aráuz Aguilar, Armando: 192, 250, 265, 292
Araya Monge, Rolando: 292
Arbenz Guzmán, Jacobo: 56
Ardon Ramírez, Sergio Erick: 217
area: xiv, xxi, 74
Argentina: 68
Arias Sánchez, Oscar: 213
armed forces (*see also* Civil Guard; public security forces): army abolished, 50, 218, 230, 260; Constitutional prohibition, xxviii, 188; emergency mobilization, 51, 193;historical period, 17, 20, 21, 24, 45, 257, 258, 259
arms trade: 67,223,245,262
Army of National Liberation. *See* National Liberation Army
Arrieta, Román: 113, 119
Association of Educational Development and Social Action: 115
Atlantic Banana Company 143
Atlantic Coast Railroad: 26
Authentic Anti-Communist Revolutionary Army: 57
autonomous organizations (*autónomous*): xxvi, 49, 55, 59, 63, 105, 190, 191, 193, 200–03; deficits, 134, 135, 178
Avila, Pedro Arias de: 8
Aztec empire: 6

Badajoz: 7, 9
bagasse: xvi, 162, 163
Bahía de Coronado: 75
Baker, Christopher E.: 196, 200
balance of payments: xxvi, 178, 179, 236, 291
Banana Company of Costa Rica: 143, 164, 170, 174
Banana Development Corporation of Costa Rica: 143
bananas (*see also* United Fruit Company): 137, 142; diseases of, 94, 95; exports, 64, 175, 237; industry, 26, 27, 53 143, 173, 174; plantation workers, 36–37, 60, 95–96, 125, 146, 219, 220, 254; varieties, 143, 152
banking: 99, 180–81; state banks, 191
Basque Fatherland and Liberty: 250
beneficios: 99, 100, 101
Berrocal Soto, Fernando: 292
Betancourt, Rómulo: 54, 56, 58
Biesanz, Richard, Karen, and Mavis: 256
birth rate: 83, 84
black population: xiv, 12, 26, 27, 75, 91, 92, 94–95, 97; banana workers, 37, 96; religion, 112, 115; wages, 36–37
Bonaparte, Joseph: 16
Bonaparte, Napoleon: 16
Boruca Indians: 5, 92
Boston Fruit Company: 143
boundaries: xx, 7, 10, 23, 32, 33; inalienable border zones, 136
Bribri Indians: 92
Britain: trade, 22, 146-47, 172; immigrants, 91, 99
broadcasting: *See* radio and television

Bruselas: 7, 8
Bryant-Chamorro Treaty: 32
budget: xix, 192, 193, 194, 196, 197, 263; civil service, 202; education, 121, 189; judiciary, 207; provinces, 198
Buena Vista de San Carlos: 79

Cabécare Indians: 92
Cabo Santa Elena: 75
cacao: 6, 14, 27, 149; exports, 15, 16, 142
CACM. *See* Central American Common Market
Cahuita National Park: 78
Caldera: xxvii, 7, 15, 168, 174
Calderón Fournier, Rafael Angel: 69, 214, 216, 221, 223, 224
Calderón Guardia, Rafael Angel: 47, 48, 59, 60, 211; presidency, 37, 38–43, 44, 293; social reform, 112, 210; supporters, 45, 49, 50, 56, 57, 58, 234, 259
Calderonist Republican Party: 214, 215
Canada: 180
canal: transisthmus: 23, 32
Cañas: 168
Cañas-Juarez Treaty: 23, 32
Cangreja: 46, 47
Canoas: 168
cantons: xvii, 191, 197; government, 198–99
capital punishment: 25, 208
Carazo Odio, Rodrigo: xxvi, 216, 249, 254, 263; economy and, 68, 134, 223; foreign policy, 245, 247; presidency, 65, 66, 178, 214, 222, 293
Carbonell, Humberto Vargas: 216
Cardona Quirós, Edgar: 51, 261
Cariay: 6, 7
Carib Indians: 5, 6
Caribbean Basin Initiative: 238
Caribbean Legion: 43, 45, 50, 58, 234, 259, 260
Carlos Agüero Echeverría Commando. *See* Echeverría Commando
Carrillo Colina, Braulio: 19, 20, 21, 27
Carro Zúñiga, Alfonso: 255, 292
Cartago (province and capital): xx, 7, 10, 14, 17, 19, 76, 98, 122; agriculture, 147, 149, 152; civil war, 46, 47; elections, 224; industry, 159, 164; people, 85, 86, 280; transportation, 168
Carvajal, Manuel J.: 88
Carvajal Herrera, Mario: 292
cassava: 152
Castillo Armas, Carlos: 56
Castle and Cooke: 143
Castro Cervantes, Fernando: 42, 43, 54
Castro Echeverría, Guillermo: 255
Castro Madriz, José María: 21, 25; daughter, 26
Catholic Action: 38, 41
Catholic Almanac:113
cattle ranching: 133, 152, 154, 155; pastureland, 136; Zebu, 153
Cavallón, Juan de: 9
censuses: xiv, 12, 83, 90, 99; of agriculture, 135–36, 150; of 1973, 82, 86, 140
Center for the Study of National Problems (CEPN): 39, 41
Central American Common Market (CACM): xxv, xxviii, 60, 61–62, 158, 159, 176, 177, 230; effect on trade, xvi, 175
Central American Court: 32, 62
Central American Defense Council: 252
Central American Democratic Community: 232
Central American Development Bank: 61
Central American Federation: 18, 19, 20, 187, 210
Central Bank of Costa Rica: 190, 192, 201, 203
Cerro Chirripó: 75, 76
Cerro Echandi: 33
Cerro Pando: 33
Cerro Pittier: 33
Chamorro Rapaciolli, Fernando (El Negro): 248
Charles IV (king of Spain): 16
Chávez Zamora, Calixto: 292
Ché Guevara Commando group: 246
Chibchan language group: 5–6
chickens: 154
China: 231
Chinese (Chinos): xv, 75, 92, 94; place in society, 26, 90, 96–97; religion, 111
Chiriquí: 7, 14
Chorotega Indians: 5, 8, 12, 91
Chorotega-Mangues group: 92
Christian Democratic Party: 214, 215
church-state relations: 27–28, 112–114; church role, 38, 222
Cinco Esquinas: 281
citizenship: 27, 74, 95, 122, 205; blacks, 94; naturalization, 189

Civil Guard: xviii, 50, 57, 66, 243, 249, 255, 266–71; foreign aid for, 56, 236; organization, 265; prisons, 275; Sandinistas and, 250, 251, 252; size, 257, 261, 262; status, 218, 256, 263, 264
Civil Registry: 189, 190, 205
civil rights (*see also* freedom of the press; human rights issues): 21, 25, 37, 194, 209; lawbreakers, 275–76
civil service: 49, 104–05, 125, 202–03; municipal employees, 199; pay raises, 224, unions, 110, 203, 220
civil war (1948): xxiii, 44–48, 258–61
Cleveland, Grover: 32
climate: xiv, 74, 78–80
Club of Paris: 181
CODESA. *See* Costa Rican Development Corporation
coffee: cultivation, 21–22, 27, 76, 137, 146–49, 171; exports, 69, 175, 237; industry, 20, 98, 101, 163; prices, 53, 55, 59, 142
coffee barons: 3, 21–22, 25, 73, 100, 258
Coffee Office: 147, 149
Colombia: 32, 232
colonial period: xxii, 3, 6–16, 89, 257
Columbus, Bartolomé: 6
Columbus, Christopher: xxi, 6, 9, 136
communism: anticommunist sentiment, 44, 52, 64, 65; civil war militia, 43, 45, 47, 50; communist and leftist parties, xxiv, 36, 38, 40, 41, 51, 60, 189, 216–18; trade unions, 220, 254, 255
communist countries (*see also* Soviet Union): 233, 238–39
Confederation of Christian Workers and Peasants: 220
Confederation of Costa Rican Workers: 220
conquistadores: 8
Constitution of 1949: xxiv, 51, 113, 185, 186–91, 194, 200, 211, 231, 275; army and, 261; communist party and, 216; elections, 205, 206; judiciary, 207–08; press freedom, 228; religion, xv
constitutional amendments: 28, 30, 39, 40, 64, 65, 118, 205, 206, 213
constitutions: 16, 17, 18, 20, 24, 25, 27, 186, 187, 258
consumer goods and foods: xvi, xxv, 149, 156, 177
Contadora Group: 232–33, 252
Contreras, Rodrigo de: 9
Cordillera Central: 75, 76, 77
Cordillera de Guanacaste: 7, 75, 76, 166
Cordillera de Talamanca: 7, 75, 76, 78, 93
Cordillera de Tilarán: 75, 76, 161
Córdova, Francisco Fernándo de: 8
Corobicí Indians: 6
Corobicí power station: 165
Coronado, Juan Vásquez de: 10
Corotapa Hills: 9
Cortés Castro, León: 37, 39, 40, 42, 93
Costa Rica Railroads: 170, 171, 190, 201
Costa Rican Airlines: xvii, 172, 190, 201
Costa Rican Chamber of Commerce: 218
Costa Rican Confederation of Democratic Workers: 220
Costa Rican Confederation of Labor Rerum Novarum: 41, 45
Costa Rican Development Corporation (CODESA): 150, 159–60, 163, 170, 190, 201–02
Costa Rican Institute of Electricity: 164, 165, 166, 190, 198, 201
Costa Rican Petroleum Refinery (RECOPE): 162, 166, 167, 174, 190, 201
Costa Rican Popular Front: 217
Costa Rican Social Security Fund: 124, 125, 126, 127, 201, 202
Costa Rican Socialist Party: 215, 217
Coto region: 32
cotton: 143, 152
Council for the Protection of the Native Races: 97
Council of Government: 190, 191, 192, 193, 292
Court of Immediate Sanctions: 50
credit: 99, 180; installment buying, 134, 178
creoles: 12
crime: 25, 161, 208; rates, 256, 272, 275
criminal justice: 208, 264, 272
crops: xvi, 142–52
Cuajiniquil: 157
Cuba: xxviii, 43, 150, 232; diplomatic relations with, 60, 64, 68; refugees from, 231, 239; Sandinistas and, 67, 234; terrorists from, 246
cult of the saints: 14, 116, 118
currency: xvi, 15, 30; devaluation, 68, 69, 177, 179, 180; exchange rate, 135

Dávila, Pedrarias. *See* Avila, Pedro Arias de

Del Monte Corporation: 143, 144, 238
Democratic Action: 39
Democratic Alliance: 37
Democratic Party: 39, 40, 54, 215, 224; Figueres and, 42
Democratic Renovation Party: 215
Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE): 214, 235, 248, 249; guerrillas, 251, 252
Desamparados canton: 196, 280
development plans: 158, 166, 236
diet and nutrition: xvi, 127, 128, 143, 157, 159; food preferences, 149, 152, 153, 154; imports, 146
DIS. *See* Intelligence and Security Directorate
diseases: 26, 124, 125, 126, 127; Indian population, 12
divorce: 28, 222
Dominical: 46, 47
Don Cleto. *See* González Víquez, Cleto
Don Pepe. *See* Figueres Ferrer, José
Don Ricardo. *See* Jiménez Oreamuno, Ricardo

earthquakes: 77
Eastern Pacific Ocean Tuna Fishing Agreement: 157
Echandi Jiménez, Mario: 54, 69, 214, 223, 224, 261, 262, 293
Echandi Montero, Alberto: 34, 36, 58, 59, 60, 61
Echeverría Brealy, Juan José: 67, 256
Echeverría Commando: 246, 247, 253, 272
Eco Católico: 116, 119
Ecuador: 146
education (*see also* higher education; schools): xv, 15, 22, 35, 89, 119–23, 202; agricultural workers, 109, 110; budget, 263; constitution and, 189; effect on fertility rates, 82, 83; preschool children, 127; religious education, 222
El Negro: 248
El Salvador: 61, 247; diplomatic relations with, 23, 232, 233, 252; Federation, 18, 19; refugees from, 81, 231, 246; trade, 154, 176
elderly persons: 81, 83
election of 1982: 206, 215, 221, 223–24, 294
elections (*see also* Supreme Electoral Tribunal): 29, 187, 188, 203–07; political parties, 215; reelection, xvii, 188, 197; voting rights, 22, 24, 30, 34, 49
elite class: 73, 89, 98, 101, 103, 109, 110, 264; industrialists, 100
Empalme: 45, 46
energy (*see also* hydroelectric power; oil): xvi, 63; electricity, 164–66, 196; geothermal sources, 166
English language: 227; Jamaicans, 27, 92
Escazu: 281
Esparta: 80
Esquivel Ibarra, Ascensión: 30
Estrada, José María: 22
ethnic groups: xiv, 90, 91
European Economic Community: xvi, 176, 177, 190
Exclusive Economic Zone: 156
exclusive fishing zone: 156
Executive Secretariat for Agriculture-Livestock Sectoral Planning: 136
exports: xvi, 26–27, 142, 149, 152, 157, 176, 284–85; bananas, 143, 144–46; coffee, 133; gold bars, 161; manufactures, 158; quail eggs, 154; sugar, 150
Exports Promotion Law: 158

Fait Lizano, Alberto: 192, 292
Fallas, Carlos Luis: 47
Family Assistance Program: 178
family planning: 82, 83, 222
Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front: 233
Federation. *See* Central American Federation.
Federation of Costa Rican Students: 219
Ferdinand (king of Spain): 8
Ferdinand VII: 16, 17
Fernández Oreamuno, Próspero: 28
fertilizers: 151
Figueres Ferrer, José: xxiv, 4, 40; army and, 50, 261; civil war and, 43, 45, 47, 48–49, 255; diplomacy, 56, 57, 61, 222, 231, 234, 244; political leader, 42, 44, 53, 54, 58, 65, 191, 210–11, 213, 219, 259; presidency, 52, 62–63, 188, 260, 262, 293
filibusteros: 22
films: 228
firearms: Civil Guard: 56, 268, 270; privately held weapons, 50, 256; sources of supply, 67, 273, 274
fiscal year: xvi
fisheries: 156–57

flag: xiv; Doña Pacífica, 21
foreign aid (*see also* United States): 106, 231, 270, 274
foreign debt: xxvi, xxvii, 59, 68, 134, 178, 179, 186, 194, 236; moratorium, 223
foreign exchange: xv, xxvii, 140, 152, 167, 175
foreign investment: 53, 159, 237–38
foreign relations (*see also* neutrality): xviii, 192, 229–39
foreign ships: xvii, 174, 194
foreign trade (*see also* Central American Common Market; exports; imports; United States): 14–15, 175; ports, 17, 173; trading partners, xvi, 177–78, 239, 286–88
foreigners: 114, 229; Americans, xxi, 81, 236, 237, fishing rights, 157; landownership, 136; naturalization, 189
forestry: 75, 123, 133, 135, 136, 154–56; rain forest, 77, 155; wood fuels, 162, 163
Forum for Peace and Democracy: 232
Founding Junta of the Second Republic: 49, 50, 52, 280
Fox, Robert W.: 88
Frailes: 45, 46
Francisco J. Orlich National Police School: 264, 265, 268, 270
Free Costa Rica Movement: 218, 219, 255, 256
Free State of Costa Rica: 18
freedom of the press: 29, 226, 228
Fundamental Law of the Free Nation of Costa Rica: 187

Gallegos, José Rafael de: 19
gamonales: 100
Garcimuñoz: 7, 9
Garrón Salazar, Hernán: 225
gauchol: 150, 163
Geithman, David D.: 88
General Treaty of Central American Economic Integration: 61
Generation of '89: 29, 34
gentry (*hidalgos*): 13, 89, 97
geography: xiv, 74, 75–79
geothermal energy: 163, 166
Germans: 99, 91, 99; immigrants, 37, 40
Germany: 31, 39, 40
gobernación: 10, 11
gold: 5, 6; California, 23; gold standard, 30; production, 8, 9, 10, 160, 161
Golfito: xvii, 75, 80, 144, 164, 174, 269; airport, 172; railroad, 166, 170
Golfito Workers' Union: 109, 255
Golfo de Nicoya: 7, 8, 75, 77, 160
Golfo de Papagayo: xx, 75
Golfo Dulce: xx, 33, 75, 79, 80
González Dávila, Gil: 8
González Flores, Alfredo: 30, 31
González, Gutiérrez, Hernán: 292
González Víquez, Cleto: 30, 34
government (*see also* autonomous organizations; budget; civil service; laws; Legislative Assembly; presidency): xvii, xxiv, 190, 191
grains: 151, 152
Grenada issue: 226, 235
gross domestic product: 133, 134; agriculture, 140, 141–42, 157; industry, 159, 160
gross national product: 60
Guadalupe: 280
Guanacaste Province: xx, 10, 18, 23, 48; agriculture, 109, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155; elections, 224; electricity, 165; people, xiv, 85, 90, 91; radio, 228
Guardia Gutiérrez, Tomás: 25, 161, 171, 187, 258
Guatemala: 61; history, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19; relations with, 43, 45, 56, 232, 246, 252
Guatuso Indians: 92
Guild of Journalists Law: 228
Gulf Oil Corporation: 161, 162
Gutiérrez, Felipe: 9
Gutiérrez Gutiérrez, Carlos José: 292
Gutiérrez Sáenz, Rodrigo: 217, 223, 294

habeas corpus: 186, 206, 209
Haya de la Torre, Víctor Raúl: 53, 60
Haya Fernández, Diego de la: 15
health care: xv, 125–29; public health, 202
Heredia (province and capital): xx, 7, 16, 17, 19, 55; agriculture, 147; industry, 159, 164; population, 86, 87, 280; transportation, 168
higher education: xv, 121, 122–23; constitution and, 189, 191; financing, 219
Holy Week observance: 118–19
Honduras: 18, 19; Common Market, 61, 62; relations with, 232, 233, 235, 238, 246, 252

hospitals: 82, 124, 125
housing: 190, 196
Huelga de Brazos Caídos: 42, 44
Huguet, Jerrold W.: 88
human rights issues: 108, 230, 245
hydroelectric power: xvi, 74, 133, 161, 162, 164, 171

IDB. *See* Inter-American Development Bank
immigration (*see also* internal migration): 30, 37, 81, 91, 95, 99; Spanish settlers, 9, 12, 97
import substitution: xvi, 134, 158
imports: xvi, xxv, 153, 154, 174, 228, 289–90; food products, 146, 152, 236; nonessentials, 224; petroleum, 166–67, 176; raw materials for manufacturing, 135, 158
inalienable land zones: 138
income: 103–04; national, 227; per capita, xxv, 134
independence: 18, 21, 98
Independent Party: 58, 215, 224
Indians: 13, 97, 98, 155; indigenous groups, xv, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 74, 89, 91–92; religion, 14, 111; reserve land, 138
Industrial Development Law: 158
infant mortality: 124, 128
inflation: xxvi, 55, 66, 105, 133, 135, 203
inheritance: 98, 137
Institute for Human Rights: 209
Institute for Municipal Development and Consultation: 190, 200
Institute of Lands and Colonization: 139, 140
Instituto Technológico de Costa Rica: 122
Intelligence and Security Directorate (DIS): 265, 269, 272
Inter-American Convention on Human Rights: 229
Inter-American Court of Human Rights: 209
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB): 142, 157, 180
Inter-American Highway: xvii, 45, 46, 77, 155, 168, 169, 170
Inter-American Human Rights Commission: 209
Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty): xxix, 50, 57, 230, 244, 260, 268
internal migration: 81, 87, 108, 250
International Coffee Organization: 147
International Development Agency: 179
International Finance Corporation: 179
International Institute for Strategic Studies: 245
International Military Education and Training: 273, 274
International Monetary Fund (IMF): xxvi, xxvii, 67, 68, 190, 223, 224, 263
irrigation: 142, 144, 151, 165
Isla del Coco: 75, 78
Israel: xix, 55, 231, 274
Italians: 26, 40, 91, 100
Italy: 39
Iturbide, Augustín de: 17, 18

Jamaica: xxi
Jamaicans. *See* black population
Japan: 39, 177, 181
Jaramillo Antillon, Juan: 292
jefes políticos: 196, 199
Jesuits: 28
Jews (*polacos*): 37, 93, 111
Jiménez Monge, Bernal: 225
Jiménez Oreamuno, Ricardo: 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39
Jiménez Zamora, Jesús de: 25
Juan Santamaría International Airport: 172
Judicial Investigation Organization (*OIJ*): xviii, 246, 250, 253, 254, 256, 264, 265, 272–73
judiciary: xviii, 185, 190, 207–09

Keith, Minor Cooper: 26–27, 93, 143
Kennedy, John F.: 60
Kirkpatrick, Jeane: 263
Kissinger, Henry: xxix
Kuwait: 231

La Cruz: 168, 265, 267
La Lucha (farm): 43, 44, 45, 46, 56
La Nación: 226, 227
La Nación Internacional: 226
La Prensa Libre: 226, 227
La República: 226, 227
La Universidad: 227
labor force (*see also* civil service; landless farmers): xv, xvi, 159; blacks, 91, 94, 95, 97; Indians, 138
labor unions: 35, 109, 110, 219–20; Catholic labor union, 41, 45; civil service,

203; leftists and, 254, 255; peasants, 222; urban workers, 102
Lago de Nicaragua: 174
Laguna de Arenal: 165
Laguna de Caño Negro: 76
land use: 135–36, 140–41, 150–51, 153, 155
landless farmers: 22, 35, 60, 99, 106, 107, 108, 109, 254
landownership (*see also* large landholders; landless farmers): 20, 89, 136–37, 138, 217; expropriation, 189; land distribution, 142, 255; titles, 40, 106–07, 109, 139, 140
languages: xiv, 6, 27, 90, 91, 92
large landholders (*see also* coffee; United Fruit Company): 98, 138
laws: 20, 40; labor code, 219; land reform, 138; Law of Movement, 19; Liberal Laws, 28, 38, 111; mining code, 162; Municipal Code, 199, 200; penal code, 275; presidential decrees, 49, 68, 193, 194; Press and Radio Laws, 228
League of Cities: 19
League of Social Democratic Parties of Latin America: 212
Legislative Assembly: 185, 188, 190, 191; elections, 203, 204; members, 196, 213, 222; National Liberation Party and, 211, 225; powers, 191, 192, 193, 194–97, 207, 252
Leo XIII, Pope: 35–36
León Herrera, Santos: 48
Liberal Laws. *See* laws
liberation theology: 113, 116
Liberation Youth: 219
Liberia: xvii, 85, 168, 172, 280
Libertad: 227
Liechtenstein: 228
Limón Province: 198, 250; agriculture, 149, 154; elections, 204, 224; people, xiv, 91
literacy: xv, 90, 120, 227
livestock: 136, 142, 152–54
Llanura de los Guatusos: 75, 92
Llanura de San Carlos: 75, 153
Llanura de Tortuguero: 75
Llorente Lafuente, Anselmo: 28
lobbying. *See* political pressure groups
local government: xvii–xviii, 185, 190, 191, 197–200, 275; courts, 209
López Aguilera, Marco Antonio: 222
Los Chiles: 278
Loubet, Émile: 32, 33

malaria: 125, 126
Mano Blanco: 256
manufacturing: xvi, xxv, 133, 135, 158–60, 176
marginal class: 74, 89, 105
marriage: 28, 112; intermarriage, 96, 99
Marshall Jiménez, Francisco José: 255
Martén, Alberto: 39, 40, 42, 45, 49
Matina: 76; Valley, 14, 15
Mayan influence: 5
Meiggs, Henry: 26
Mercier, Désiré Joseph: 36
Meseta Central: xiv, xxi, 3, 7, 75, 76–77, 227; agriculture, 149, 153, 155; industry, 26, 159, 166; settlement, 10, 13, 136–37; transportation, 169, 172
mestizos: xiv, 12, 90, 91, 92, 97
metric conversion coefficients: 279
Mexico: 5, 17, 18; regional concerns, 167, 232, 233; trade, 177
microbiology: 124
middle classes: xxii, 35, 42, 73–74, 100, 101, 103–04, 122
migrant and day laborers: 107, 109
minerals and mining: xvi, 133, 160–62
minimum wages: 35, 37, 40, 55, 107; constitution and, 189
ministries: 190, 193; security, 264, 265
Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock: 142, 190
Ministry of Culture: 190, 238
Ministry of Economy and Commerce: 190, 264, 265
Ministry of Government and Police: 190, 264, 265
Ministry of Health: xvi, 124, 125, 190
Ministry of Justice: 190, 264, 265
Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy: 190, 197
Ministry of Public Education: 120, 128, 189, 190, 202
Ministry of Public Health. *See* Ministry of Health
Ministry of Public Security: 190, 264, 265, 270
Ministry of Public Works and Transport: 170, 190
Ministry of Public Works Employees Union: 220
Ministry of the Presidency: 190, 264, 265

Miskito Indians: 14, 15, 252
Moín: xvii, 166, 168, 171, 174, 175
Monge Alvarez, President Luis Alberto: xxvi, 65, 192, 211, 212, 221, 224–26, 249, 293; economy and, xxvii, 105, 108, 134, 158, 180, 181, 186, 203, 236; diplomacy, 231, 232, 233, 234, 236; election of, xviii, 213, 223; landownership system, 89; 107; 139; leftists and, 217, 247, 250, 254; security forces, 243, 252, 257, 263, 264, 265
Montealegre family: 24, 25
Montealegre Fernández, José María: 22, 24
Montero Mejía, Alvaro: 217
Mora Fernández, Juan; 18, 258
Mora Porras, Juan Rafael: 21, 23, 24, 28
Mora Valverde, Manuel: 36, 38, 39, 40, 45, 47, 48, 64, 216, 254, 272
Morales Fernández, Francisco: 292
Morazán, Francisco: 18, 20, 258
Morgan, Henry: 14
mortality rates: 82, 124
motor vehicles: 167, 168, 170; Civil Guard, 270, 274
mountains, xiv, xxi, 74, 75–76
mules: 14, 154, 171
Muñoz Marín, Luis: 54

Nahua Indians: 6, 149
names: xi
Napoleon. *See* Bonaparte, Napoleon
National Administration for Community Development: 190, 200
National Air Services: 172
National Apprenticeship Institute: 89
National Association for Economic Development: 218, 226
National Atlantic Railroad: 170, 171
National Bipartisan Commission on Central America: xxix
National Chamber of Agriculture: 218
National Chamber of Banana Producers: 218
National Chamber of Coffee Growers: 218
National Chamber of Livestock Producers: 218
National Chamber of Sugar Producers: 218
National Commission on Indian Affairs: 96
National Confederation of Workers: 220
National Economic Council: 190, 192
National Federation of Agricultural and Plantation Workers: 254
national heroes: 23
National Institute of Housing and Urban Development: 190, 196
National Insurance Institute: 124, 125, 190
National Liberation Army (*see also* civil war): 44, 48, 49, 50, 260, 261
National Liberation Party (PLN): xxiv, 60, 68, 113, 185, 196, 211, 212, 215; elections, 58, 59, 69, 224; Figueres and, 4, 53, 54, 61, 65; labor and, 220; Monge and, xviii, 213, 223
National Movement Party: 214, 223
national myth: 4
national parks: 135, 156
National Party Assembly: 213
National Patriotic Committee: 217
National Peasant Federation: 255
National Power and Light Company: 164, 190
National Production Council: 190, 202
National Public Employees Association: 220
National Radio Service: 228
National Republican Party (PRN): 34, 40, 41
national security. *See* police forces; public security forces
National Security Agency: 269
National Security Council: 190, 192, 256, 265
National Teachers Association: 220
National Unification coalition: 60, 62, 64, 65, 214, 215
National Union Party (PUN): 34, 42, 44, 51, 54, 58, 214, 215
National Water and Sewerage Services: 190, 196
nationalization: 49, 64–65, 133, 166
natural resources: 133
Neily: 168, 265, 267
neutrality: xxix, 230, 244, 252, 253
news media: 226, 227
Nicaragua: 18, 225; border problems, 23, 32, 50, 57, 58, 136, 194, 250, 268; history, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, 22; refugees from, 231, 246; relations with, 48, 56, 66–67, 225–26, 228, 234–35, 247, 250; trade, 61, 154; war in, 230, 233, 243, 245
Nicaraguan Democratic Force: 235
Nicaraguan Revolutionary Armed Force:

248
Nicaraguan season: 66
Nicoya: 10, 80, 168
Nicuesa, Diego de: 8
Nixon, Richard M.: 63
Núñez Vargas, Benjamín: 45, 47; junta member, 49; politics and, 41, 55, 112

OAS. *See* Organization of American States
Ochomongo: 17, 46, 175, 177
Oduber Quirós, Daniel: 60, 65, 213, 225; presidency, 61, 64, 97, 293
Office of the Comptroller General: 190, 191, 197, 199
OIJ. *See* Judicial Investigation Organization
oil: 161, 162, 167; imports, xvi, 163, 166, 174, 233; pipelines, 175; prices, 178
Organization for National Emergencies: 265, 269
Organization of American States (OAS): xxix, 50, 57, 58, 232, 234, 239, 262; human rights, 209; member, 230
Organization of Central American States: 62
Orlich Bolmarcich, Francisco: 39 40, 42, 45, 60; junta, 49; presidency, 58, 59, 61, 293

Pacific Electric Railroad: 170, 171
Pact of El Jocote: 20
Pact of San José: 167, 177
Pact of the Caribbean: 43, 259
Pacto de la Concordia: 187
palm oil production: 107, 142, 145, 146
Palmar: 77, 168
Panama: xxxi, 10, 14, 170, 238; borders, 32, 138, 247; fishing agreement, 157; relations with, 19, 232; security assistance, xviii, 268, 270, 274
Panama Canal: 39
Panamanian National Guard: 268, 270, 274
Pandora: 168, 171
Paredes, Rubén Darío: 232, 274
Pastora Gómez, Edén (Comandante Cero): 66, 235, 248, 249, 259, 269
Peace Corps: 236
peasants: 111, 118; landholdings, 88, 98, 99, 100, 101, 106, 138; social status, 97, 108
Peñas Blancas: 168
Península de Nicoya: 5, 7, 8, 75, 78, 98, 153, 160
Península de Osa: 76, 77, 161
Peralín de Ribera (Pedro Afán): 7, 10
Pérez Jiménez, Marcos: 56, 57
Pérez Zeledón canton: 61
Peru: 53, 60
Petróleos Mexicanos: 162
Philip II (king of Spain): 9
Picado Michalski, Rene: 259
Picado Michalski, Teodoro: 41, 42, 43, 44, table 10; civil war and, 47, 48, 259; son killed, 57
pirate raids: 14
plant diseases: 149; bananas, 144, 146, 155
PLN. *See* National Liberation Party
police forces (*see also* Civil Guard; Rural Assistance Guard): xxviii–xxix, 40, 42, 44, 243, 245, 265, 269; detective and traffic units, 266; local areas, 271; private police, 257; reorganization, 50; treasury and customs, 264
political exiles: 40, 42, 48, 59
political parties: xviii, 51, 196, 205; campaign funding, 191, 206
political patronage: Civil Guard, 243, 262, 264, 270–71
political pressure groups: 203; lobbying, 185, 218–22
Popular Social Alliance: 61
Popular Union Party: 214, 215
Popular Vanguard Party (PVP): 41, 43, 48, 64, 215, 216, 217, 218; activities, 253–54; Costa Rican Vanguardist Youth, 219; outlawed, 50
population (*see also* urban areas): xiv, 82–86; aboriginal, 5; distribution, 85–88, 89; principal cities, 280
ports (*see also* Puerto Limón): xvii, 14, 15, 16, 168, 172
postal service: 272
presidency: xviii, xxiv; election to, 20, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 36, 43, 187, 203, 204; executive powers, 190–91, 193, 194, 195, 197, 198, 264; reelection, 188, 192; travel abroad, 189
Presidential Guard: 265, 267
prison system: 275
private airplanes: 172
privatization of enterprises: 169
PRN. *See* National Republican Party
prostitutes: 89, 105
Protestant (evangelical) churches: xv, 111

provinces: xvii, 185, 191, 196; new ones, 197, police, 267, 268; population distribution, 85
public corporations. *See* autonomous organizations
public sector employees. *See* civil service
public security forces (*see also* Civil Guard): xviii, 50, 257, 265; air and naval units, 266, 269; length of service, 270, 271
Puerto González: 168
Puerto Limón: 6, 47, 75, 78, 113; Civil Guard, 269; people, 86, 96, 280; port, 27, 40, 172, 173; transportation, xvii, 26, 168, 170
Puerto Quepos: 144, 166, 168
Puerto Viejo: 168, 265, 267
PUN. *See* National Union Party
Punta Burica: 33, 77
Punta Mona: 33
Punta Morales: xvii, 174
Puntarenas (province and capital): xx, 75, 77, 80, 85, 86, 166, 280; agriculture, 144, 147, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154; elections, 224; port, xvii, 157, 172, 173, 174; transportation, 168, 170, 269
PVP. *See* Popular Vanguard Party

Quebrada Honda: 7, 14
Quesada: 168
Quirós Segura, Juan Bautista: 31

Radical Democratic Party: 215, 216
radio and television: 227, 228, 247, 249; Assembly sessions, 196; police networks, 269; television courses, 124
Radio Noticias del Continente: 247
railroads: xvii, 26, 37, 144, 167, 168, 170–71, 173; workers, 27, 94–95
rainfall: xiv, 76, 78, 80
Ramírez Mercado, Sergio: 67
Reagan, Ronald: xxix, 214, 225, 236
RECOPE. *See* Costa Rican Petroleum Refinery
Reformist Party: 36
refugees: xxviii, 229, 231, 234, 239, 253; right of asylum, 188, 246
religion (*see also* Roman Catholic Church): xv, 110–13; charismatic movement, 120; Chinese, 97; Indians, 5, 12, 14, 93
repartimientos system: 13
Republican Party: 34, 58, 214, 215
research: 128, 209
Revolutionary Civic Union: 255
Revolutionary Movement of the People: 215, 217, 218
rice: xvi, 142, 151, 152
Río Anonos: 164
Río Arenal: 165
Río Bebedero: 75
Río Belén: 8
Río Cañas: 75
Río Chirripó: 75
Río Chirripó del Atlántico: 75
Río Ciruelas: 9
Río Colorado: 75, 78, 79
Río Estrella: 75
Río Frío: 75, 168, 174
Río General: 75, 155, 161, 168, 175
Río Grande de Tárcoles: 75; La Garita plant, 164–65
Río Grande de Térraba: 75, 78, 168, 175
Río Macho: 165
Río Pirrís: 75
Río Reventazón: 53, 75, 165
Río San Carlos: 75, 168, 174
Río San Juan: 7, 67, 75, 78, 168, 174; boundary agreements on use of, 23, 32, 234, 245
Río Sarapiquí: 75, 168, 174
Río Sixaola: 7, 9, 32, 33, 75
Río Tempisque: 75
Río Tortuguero: 75, 78
Río Treaty. *See* Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance
Río Yorkín: 33
Rivas: 23
Rivera, Brooklyn: 252
rivers, 74, 75, 78–79
road network: xvi–xvii, 142, 167, 168, 169–70, 172
Robelo Callejas, Alfonso: 248, 250
Rodríguez Quirós, Carlos Humberto: 112, 113, 116, 119
Rodríguez Vega, Eugenio: 292
Rodríguez Zeledón, Jos é Joaquín: 29
Roman Catholic Church (*see also* church-state relations): xxii–xxiii, 8, 12, 14, 15, 27, 110, 113, 116; faith and practice, 117–19; immigrants, 99; religious orders, 28, 114, 115; state religion, 222
Rossi Chavarría, Jorge: 58, 62
rural areas: 115, 228; Civil Guard, 268; energy, 163, 166; health care, 196–98;

Rural Guard, 272, 275
Rural Assistance Guard: xviii, 243, 249, 255, 257, 267; jails, 275; organization, 264, 265; Sandinistas and, 250; size, 261; status, 263
rural society: elite, 30, 101, 200; poor, xxvii, 108, 178

salt: 160, 163
San Antonio de Belén: 268
San Cristóbal Norte: 46, 47
San Isidro de El General: 45, 46, 47, 80, 161, 168; diocese, 114, 116; earthquake, 77
San José (capital): 7, 16, 17, 19, 88, 199; airports, 168, 172, Aranjuez barrio, 164; archdiocese, 112, 114, 115; climate, 77, 79, 80; Civil Guard, 266, 267; civil war, 45, 46, 47, education, 122; industry, 159, 166, population, 91, 93, 96, 280; prisons, 275; public safety, 249, 256–57, 265; religious observance, 117; society, 73, 100, 102, 109
San José metropolitan region: 85, 86; transportation, 168, 170
San José province: xx, 85, 226; agriculture, 147, 150; districts, 197–98; elections, 204, 224, police, 266; television, 227–28
San José urban area: 85, 86, 88, 93, 280
San Juan: 280
San Pedro: 280
San Ramón: 166
San Salvador Charter: 62
San Vito: 168
Sanabria Martínez, Víctor: 38, 40, 41, 44, 47; social reform and, 112, 115
Sánchez de Badajoz, Hernán: 9
Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN): xxviii, 230, 234, 235, 245
Sandinistas: 66, 67, 70, 81, 232, 234, 244; anti-Sandinistas, xxviii, 248–53
Sandoval Alarcón, Guillermo: 292
sanitation: 125, 127, 275
Santa Cruz: 168
Santa María de Dota: 45, 46
Santamaría, Juan: 23, 24, 242
Santo Tomás University: 21, 28, 122
Saudi Arabia: 231
School of the Americas, Fort Gulick: 273, 274
schools: church-run, 115, 119; national police, 264, 273; preschool children, 127; public school system, 28
Second Republic: 48–52
Seligson, Mitchell A.: 106, 108, 109 137
Shamir, Yitzhak: 231
Siquirres: 79, 168, 171
Sixaola: 168
slavery: 5, 12, 23, 90, 97
Social Christian Unity: 216
Social Democratic Party (PSD): 41, 42, 43, 51, 53, 211, 259
Social Guarantees: 40, 48, 49, 51, 219
social security system (*see also* Costa Rican Social Security Fund): xv, 40, 126, 185, 189
social status: prestige and power, 90, 98, 100, 109; ranking, 97, 108; upward mobility, 13, 110; value of manual labor, 104
social welfare. *See* welfare state
Socialist International: 53
Solano Calderón, Angel Edmundo: 252, 269, 292
Somoza Debayle, Anastasio: xxviii, 65, 66, 230, 234, 245
Somoza García, Anastasio: 54, 56, 57, 234, 244, 260; assassination, 58
Soto Alfaro, Bernardo: 28, 29, 30
South Korea: xix, 274
Southern Railroad: 170
Soviet Union: 41; communist influence of, xxviii, 40, 216, 234, 238–39, 254; diplomatic relations with, 63, 67, 220, 255–56; trade, 177, 178
Spanish speakers: xxiii, 36, 37, 90
Spiritual Renovation: 119
squatters: 40, 106, 107, 108, 109, 138, 139–40, 254, 255, 272
S.S. *San Pablo*: 40
Standard Fruit Company: 143, 144, 146, 238
standard of living: xxii, xxvi, xxvii, 225
strikes: 37, 40, 42, 43, 60, 146, 203, 220, 238, 254
students: 219, 239; political activism, 123, 253
Stycos, J. Mayone: 82
Suerre: 14
sugar: 142, 149–50, 163; quota, 238
Supreme Court of Justice: xviii, 190, 194, 195, 205, 207, 208, 209, 228, 229, 264, 265

Supreme Electoral Tribunal: 51–52, 190, 191, 204-05, 206, 207
Swiftships: 269

Taiwan: xix, 231, 272, 274
Talamanca canton: 161, 162
Talamanca Indians: 5, 10, 12, 13–14, 91–92
tallow: 15
taxes: xxvi, 55, 61, 199, 225; Church and, 28, 112, 113; customs, 35, 61, 64, 146; early era, 12, 17, 20, 31; foreigners, 237; surtax, 49, 52
teachers: xxiii, 120, 122, 202; unions, 220
Tejar: 46, 47
Tempisque Sugar Central: 150, 163
tenant farmers and sharecroppers: 106, 108, 109
terrorism: 243, 246–48, 253, 274
Theological Institute of Central America: 116
Thiel, Bernard August: 28
Tico Times: 227, 229
Ticos: xxiii, 90
Tilarán: 113, 115
Tinoco Granados, Federico: 31, 32, 188, 235, 258
tobacco: 14, 16, 143, 152, 159
Tobías Bolaño Airport: 172
Tortuguero Canal: xvii, 168, 175
tourism: xxi, 201
transportation (*see also* motor vehicles; railroads): xvi, 23, 167–75; colonial era, 14–15, 21
treaties and agreements: 23, 31, 32, 194; extradition treaty, 236; Mexican embassy pact, 47, 50; Pact of El Jocote, 20; Pact of San José, 167, 177; Pact of the Caribbean, 43, 259; Pacto de la Concordia, 187
Trejos Escalante, Fernando: 64
Trejos Fernández, José Joaquín: 60, 61, 293
Trejos Gutiérrez, José Gregorio: 29
Trujillo Molina, Rafael: 56, 57
Turrialba: 80, 85, 88, 166, 280

Ujarrás: 7
Ulate Blanco, Otilio: 42, 43, 47, 58, 59, 60, 62, 214; presidency, 46–49, 52–53, 293; security forces and, 259, 261
Ulloa, Nicolás: 19
unemployment and underemployment: xxvii, 68, 89, 105, 106, 134, 135
United Brands: 109, 142, 146, 238
United Confederation of Workers: 220, 254
United Fruit Company: 26, 40, 55, 143, 144; employees, 37, 60, 94–95; unused land, 35, 60, 138
United Nations: 55, 59, 209, 230, 233; charter signed, 34
United People coalition (PU): xviii, 65, 69, 215, 217, 224
United Provinces of Central America. *See* Central American Federation
United States: 235–38; aid from, xxix, xxx, 53, 180, 186, 251, 252; embassy guards, 67, 246; mutual defense treaty, 56, 57–58; relations with, 31, 32, 39, 52, 226, 232, 233; retirees from, xxi, 82; security assistance from, xviii, 258, 270, 272, 273–74; trade, xvi, 27, 176, 177; tuna embargo, 157
United States Agency for International Development: 135, 140, 155, 250, 273
United States Bureau of Mines: 161
United States Military Assistance Program: 273, 274
United States Public Law 480: 236
Unity coalition: xviii, xxvi, 65, 69, 186, 214, 215, 216
Unity Opposition: 65
Universidad Autónoma de Centra América: 123
Universidad Estatal a Distancia: 123
Universidad Nacional Autónoma: 55, 116, 122, 123
universities. *See* higher education and under individual names
University of Costa Rica: 39, 122, 123, 128, 189, 201, 227, 228
Upala: 249, 251
urban areas: 85, 280; growth rate, 81, 83, 86–87
urban working class: 101, 106, 109, 110, 117; health care, 125, 127
U.S.S. *Denver*: 31

Valle Central: 76, 81, 85
Valle de Coto Brus: 33, 161
Valle de Coto Colorado: 33
Valle de Tempisque: 75, 77, 80
Valle del General: 75, 76
Vanderbilt, Cornelius: 23
Vargas Peralta, Federico: 298

Venezuela, 167, 232, 233; aid, xix, 66, 274, trade, 177
Veragua: 8, 9
Versailles Treaty: 31
Vesco, Robert: 63, 65, 236
vice presidents: 190, 192
Victory Bloc: 41
Villaseñor, Vicente: 20
Virgin of Ujarrás: 14
vocational and technical education: 115, 121–22
Volcán Arenal: 165
Volcán Irazú: 7, 15, 75, 76; eruption, 60, 153
Volcán Miravalles: 166
Volcán Poás: 75, 76
Volcán Turrialba: 75, 76
volcanoes: xxi, 60, 75, 76, 77
Volio Guardia, Claudio Antonio: 292
Volio Jiménez, Fernando: 226, 232, 250, 292
Volio Jiménez, Jorge: 35, 36
voting: *See* elections
wage workers: 37, 99, 101, 107, 140
wages (*see also* minimum wages): xxvii, 178
Walker, William: 3, 22–23, 24, 258
War of National Liberation (*see also* civil war): 48, 259
Washington Conference on Inter-American Affairs: 32
water supply: xv, 125, 127, 190, 198, 202
water transport: xvii, 168, 173, 174–75, Civil Guard patrol boats, 269, 274
weapons. *See* firearms
welfare state (*see also* Costa Rican Social Security Fund, Social Guarantees): xxv, 52, 55, 73, 188, 211, 215, 222; insurance, 35, 125, 126, 190
West Germany: xvi, 115
White, Edward D.: 32, 33
Wilson, Woodrow: 31
women: 6, 115, 117; constitutional rights, 49, 188; employment, 5, 88, 104, 105, 107; girls education, 119; health care, 127; nuns, 116
Workers and Peasants Bloc: 36, 40
working class (*el pueblo*): 100, 101, 105, 109, 110, 117; lower court treatment, 209
World Bank: 52–53, 179
yeoman farmers: 73, 98, 257
Yglesias Castro, Rafael: 29, 30

zambos: 14

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