

Costa Rica

POLITICAL PARTIES

- Concordia Costarricense:** San José; Pres. EMILIO PIEDRA JIMÉNEZ; Sec. RAFAEL ANGEL VALLADARES MORA.
- Frente Popular Costarricense (FPC):** San José; Pres. RODOLFO CERDAS CRUZ; Sec. WILBERT EZEQUIEL SOLANO ROJAS.
- Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores:** San José; socialist workers' party; Pres. ALEJANDRA CALDERÓN FOURNIER; Sec. MARTA TREJOS MONTERO.
- Partido Demócrata:** San José; Pres. ALVARO GONZÁLEZ ESPINOZA; Sec. ARNOLDO CAMPOS BRIZUELA.
- Partido Democrática del Pueblo:** San José; Pres. JAVIER SOLÍS HERRERA; Sec. ROLANDO ARIAS BOLAÑOS.
- Partido Independiente:** San José; Pres. EUGENIO JIMÉNEZ SANCHO; Sec. FLORINDA CHAVARRÍA RUÍZ.
- Partido Laborista Nacional:** San José; socialist; Pres. MARCO TULIO GONZÁLEZ MORA; Sec. OLMAN LEANDRO GARCÍA.
- Partido de Liberación Nacional (PLN):** Apdo. 2244, San José; f. 1948; socialist party; affiliated to the Socialist International; Pres. JOSÉ FIGUERES FERRER; Sec. Gen. OSCAR ARIAS SÁNCHEZ.
- Partido Liberalismo Nacional Republicano Progresista:** San José; Pres. OSSMAN VARGAS BOLAÑOS; Sec. ELISEO ALBERTO VARGAS GARCÍA.
- Partido Progreso Nacional:** San José; Pres. MIGUEL BARZUNA SAUMA; Sec. CARLOS MANUEL BRENES MÉNDEZ.
- Partido Socialista Costarricense:** San José; socialist; Pres. ALVARO MONTERO MEJÍA; Sec. ALBERTO SALOM ECHEVERRÍA.
- Partido de los Trabajadores:** San José; Maoist; SERGIO ERICK ARDON RAMÍREZ; Sec. JOSÉ FABIO ARAYA MONGE.
- Partido Unidad Opositora (PUO):** San José; conservative coalition comprising:

- Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC):** Apdo. 4241, San José; f. 1962; Christian Democrat; Pres. RAFAEL A. GRILLO RIVERA; Sec. CLAUDIO GUEVARA BARRAHONA.
 - Partido Renovación Democrática (PRD):** Avda. Central 3425, San José; f. 1947; Pres. JUAN ELÍAS LARA HERRERA; Sec. ROBERTO TOVAR FAJA.
 - Partido Republicano Calderonista (PRC):** San José; f. 1976; splinter group from the PUN; Pres. ALVARO CUBILLO AGUILAR; Sec. GERARDO BOLAÑOS ALFÁZAR.
 - Partido Unión Popular (PUP):** Calle Central, Avda. 2 San José; Pres. MANUEL JIMÉNEZ DE LA GUARDIA; Sec. CARLOS ALFREDO CASTRO CHARPENTIER.
 - Partido Unión Cívico Revolucionaria:** San José; Pres. FRANCISCO JOSÉ MARSHALL JIMÉNEZ; Sec. EDGAR SABORIO MEJÍA.
 - Partido Unión Nacional:** San José; Pres. MARIO ECHIANDI JIMÉNEZ; Sec. GONZALO SEGARES GARCÍA.
 - Partido Unión Republicana:** San José; Pres. SIGURD KOBERG VAN PATTEN; Sec. MARINO DONATO MAGURNO.
 - Partido Vanguardia Popular:** Calle 10, No. 1037, San José; f. 1943; communist; Pres. MANUEL MORA VALVERDE; Sec. ELÍAS VARGAS CARBONELL.
- The following parties are in suspension:
- Acción Socialista:** San José; Pres. MARCIAL AGUILUZ ORELLANA; Sec. ARNOLDO FERRETO SEGURA.
 - Partido Nacional Independiente (PNI):** Calles 18 y 20, Avda. Central, San José; Pres. JORGE GONZÁLEZ MARTEN; Sec. ALBERTO PINTO GUTIÉRREZ.
 - Partido Unificación Nacional (PUN):** Avda. 9, Calle 29, San José; Pres. GUILLERMO VILLALOBOS ARCE; Sec. ROGELIO RAMOS VALVERDE.

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the political scene since 1953, nominated as its candidate José Figueres, who had led the action against Rafael Guardia's attempted seizure of power in 1948 and had served previously as president from 1953 to 1958. Opposed to him was Murilo Lechandi, president from 1958 to 1962, who was backed by the National Unification party, a coalition of three smaller parties that had been prominent in the political forefront since the 1930's.

Since 1944 no political party has been able to succeed itself in office. The election of 1966 resulted in a victory for the National Unification coalition candidate, José Trejos, over that of the National Liberation Party. The operation of the TSE ensured stability, and the campaign was characterized by an atmosphere of free discussion by widely opposed factions. Despite high tension and frequent acrimony, the results were accepted without question.

The law provides elaborate precautions to ensure that the political process is conducted honestly, free from influence of incumbent government officials. Party organization is strictly regulated and must follow a prescribed hierarchical structure. Parties may propagate at any time, but public demonstrations may not be held until 2 months before an election. Two or more parties may not electioneer or hold rallies in the same town on the same day, and the headquarters of different parties may not be within 200 meters of each other. The TSE, which has direct supervision over all political activity, is respected and its authority is unquestioned. Campaigning is generally vigorous, with extensive press coverage, rallies and demonstrations, and wide public participation.

Political Forces and Interest Groups

The political forces are direct and relatively uncomplex, with few special interest or pressure groups. The various sectors of the society participate in but do not disrupt the body politic. Public opinion has been an influential factor; the electorate freely criticizes the government and discusses public issues. Opposition is rooted in differences of political opinion rather than any extraneous cohesion resulting from class, occupation, persuasion, or race.

The issues facing the electorate in 1970 reflect the fundamental differences in the political philosophies of the National Liberation Party (Partido Liberación Nacional—PLN) and the rival coalition, the National Unification (Unificación Nacional—UN). In general terms the PLN was looked on as liberal and left of center, and the National Unification as conservative and right of center.

Both sides agree that the country needs further social and economic development, but they disagree on methods of attaining it. The PLN

strongly urges a positive, activist government, whereas the coalition advocates more individual free initiative with limitations on the role of government. In general, PLN policies tend to be more clearly and definitely defined than those of the coalition, which must reconcile its views with those of its diverse components, in order to avoid internal conflict.

One of the principal national issues was the matter of how to resolve the fiscal problem of recurring budget deficits. Both sides had presented proposed programs, but these were couched in general terms reflecting their overall philosophies rather than specific projects. With a coalition president and a legislature dominated by the PLN opposition, each side blamed the other for the country's economic ills.

The economic issue affected many facets of national life. Despite much progress, economic growth had not been up to expectations, and there has been a burdensome internal and external debt as well as chronic trade deficits. There was continuing need for additional electrification projects, better roads, and improved communications, including the San José telephone system. Funds for government hospitals and social security services have not always been adequate, and agrarian reform programs have not been as effective as anticipated.

The basic party differences in the economic field carried over into the role of government. In addition, the coalition made much of what it termed one-party domination by the PLN, whereas the PLN pointed up its record of accomplishment during past incumbencies. Other differences were reflected in some aspects of foreign policy; the coalition questioned the PLN policy of withholding recognition from nondemocratic regimes, and there were other disagreements on approaches to foreign relations, particularly with the United States, and the application of the Alliance for Progress. The personal appeal of the individual candidates was an important factor.

The country's political life is influenced principally by three articulate political groups, generally characterized as conservatives, national reformers, and radicals. The conservatives are the older politicians and the wealthier landowners, whose principal aim is to maintain the status quo; the reformers comprise the students, the more liberal professors, and the middle-class businessmen; and the radicals are made up of the Communists and a fringe element of leftist independents. Laborers, students, persons of racial minorities, and similar groupings, though forming distinct elements of the society, have not organized into militant instruments of political upheaval or protest.

The absence of an army eliminates one potential source of dissidence or threat to the government, and the small police force has given no indication of any tendency to become involved in politics. The com-

paratively homogeneous nature of the society makes for a degree of harmony not usually found in cultures composed of more widely diverse elements; race is no problem, and the ethnic elements of the population are not sufficiently dissimilar to result in minorities with special aims and interests (see Population, Ethnic Groups, ch. 4). There are no marked contrasts of poverty and wealth and no significant class tension, and there has been no traditional ruling elite or oligarchy since the 19th century. Widespread landownership has imparted a sense of equality and individualism, resulting in a relatively open society with a high degree of social mobility.

Labor, while organized on a fairly wide basis, is not aggressive or militant. Total union membership is approximately 25,000. Latest government statistics, published in 1968 for the year 1966, indicated that there were 216 unions, a drop from 360 of the previous year. About one quarter of the unions are agricultural, with the strongest on the banana plantations. The national labor code, first adopted in 1943, is modern and comprehensive, and prescribes minimum wages and working conditions. It provides effective arbitration and conciliation procedures and, as a result, strikes and lockouts have normally been kept to a minimum.

Although the Communists have made a number of attempts in the past to dominate the labor movement, their efforts have been increasingly ineffectual. With a small number of notable exceptions the country's labor force has been tractable, cooperative, and orderly (see Agriculture, Industry, Labor, ch. 9). There was a high degree of cooperation between workers and employers. An increasing number of cooperatives was being formed, in contrast to the dissolution of a number of the smaller unions.

Around the turn of the century the activities of some student groups caused them to be looked on as centers of agitation and disorder; but with the stable development of the country in the first half of the 20th century, there was a steady decrease in student participation in politics. This trend is starting to be reversed, but it is reflected in a growing youthful interest that has generally taken on a cooperative and constructive cast. Interest in national affairs was pointed up at the Congress of Students held in the capital in early 1969. Older observers were particularly impressed by the intelligent discussion of national problems and the proposal of genuine solutions.

There has also been increased participation in the National Youth Movement, a domestic organization of several thousand young people that devotes itself to constructive projects furthering the social and economic development of the society. The organization celebrated its fourth anniversary in April 1969 at the University of Costa Rica. The conclave was attended by the president of the republic, who

praised the work of the group and their orderly and constructive efforts. Some disaffection, however, has begun to make itself felt. In mid-1969 the economics students at the university went on strike demanding the elimination of final examinations as a requirement for a degree.

The Roman Catholic Church as an institution is not a factor in the country's political life. The Constitution declares the apostolic Roman Catholic faith to be the nation's official state religion, but it also precludes the clergy from holding any high political office. An overwhelming majority of Costa Ricans are Catholics, but the Church itself has traditionally abstained from political activity. For the most part church-state relations have been harmonious, and what tensions have occurred over the years were the result of religious rather than secular activities. In general, the Church has tried to serve as a moderating and mediating influence in national affairs.

One uncharacteristic episode took place in 1969 when the curia in San José forbade clerics from marching in the May Day labor parade, allegedly fearing possible political involvement. The ban was decried in most quarters as unwarranted interference by the Church officials in what was considered a display of support for labor, which had no political connotations. Although the ban remained in effect, a number of liberal younger priests took part in the march (see Religion, ch. 5).

The Free Costa Rica Movement (Movimiento Costa Rica Libre—MCRL) was in 1969 an anti-Communist group, which had a membership of prominent citizens from all walks of life and all major political parties. It was organized along paramilitary lines and was known to be the most heavily armed group in the country.

The MCRL was outspoken in its denunciation of communism and had taken a strong stand against registration of an alleged Communist-front political party, threatening to adopt a "combative policy" if the Communists were permitted to participate in politics through a front organization. Conversely, the University Student Congress in early 1969 accused the MCRL of being a military group and recommended that it be dissolved by the government. Although the movement has always stayed within strictly legal bounds and has demonstrated no opposition to the government, it is considered by many to be a potential danger to the country's democratic institutions.

Whereas no distinct segment or element was particularly influential or disruptive and the general atmosphere was one of peace and stability, dissatisfaction with the status quo was demonstrated in widespread reform movements; and in 1969 the country was in the process of revising the Constitution, the penal code, and the electoral code. The stabilizing factor, however, was that differences were

brought out into the open, and solutions were sought through resort to the democratic process.

Political Parties

The Constitution grants all citizens the right to join political parties in Article 98. In order to participate in national politics, a party must be legally registered by submission of a petition signed by at least 3,000 registered voters, and its organization must be along legally prescribed lines. Its ideological programs, methods of action, and international connections must be such so as not to threaten the country's base of democratic organization.

In the summer of 1969 there were nine active parties preparing for the elections in February 1970. Three of the established parties had formed a coalition to challenge the dominant National Liberation Party, and one party's registration was still pending approval because of its alleged Communist cast. The contemporary party situation in the country dated from the 1948 revolution, which realigned political forces, eliminated some parties, and created others.

Parties may be registered on a national, provincial, or cantonal level. Since 1948 20 have received legal recognition; nine of these were on a subnational level, eight provincial and one cantonal. Their voting was restricted to the level at which they were registered. Although the country nominally had a multiparty system, the pattern of confrontation in recent elections had imparted many of the characteristics of a two-party system. In effect, each election finds the PLN pitted against all other parties, which have tended to combine, usually ignoring any constraints dictated by differences of aims or ideology.

The PLN was founded in 1949 by José Figueres, the liberal leader of the 1948 revolution. Rafael Calderón Guardia, who had been president from 1940 to 1944, was supported by the outgoing regime for a second term in 1948. Calderón was opposed by a reform-minded group that accused him of bureaucratic inclinations, dishonesty and inefficiency, and permitting growing Communist influence in the government.

Calderón was defeated in the election by Otilio Ulate, but an attempt by the Calderón-dominated assembly to annul the election led to a revolt headed by José Figueres. After several weeks of fighting the rebels defeated the government forces, which had been allied with the Communists, and Calderón was forced to flee the country. After a year of provisional government under the Founding Junta

of the Second Republic headed by Figueres, the presidency was turned over to the legally elected Ulate.

Over the next 4 years Figueres developed the PLN into an effective national party and went on to a sweeping victory to gain him the presidency in 1953. His government proved dynamic and productive, which strengthened the organizational unity and popular appeal of his party. Opposition began to crystallize almost immediately, however, and during this period the different political thinking of the country's leaders, also reflected in their personal followings, developed into political parties whose philosophies still characterized them in the early skirmishing for the 1970 elections.

A rift within the PLN ranks cost the party the election of 1958, when Mario Echandi became president; but the party came back in 1962 and succeeded in electing Francisco Orlich, a lifelong friend and collaborator of Figueres. In the 1966 election three of the principal opposition parties formed a coalition called the National Unification and elected José Trejos by a small margin over Daniel Oduber, the PLN candidate. This same pattern has been followed in preparation for the 1970 elections, even to the extent of retaining the same name for the coalition. In mid-1969 the coalition had put forward Echandi as its candidate to oppose Figueres, who was again the PLN standard bearer.

The PLN differs in numerous respects from its rival contenders. Its policy orientation is generally more liberal than that of its opponents, and it also presents a more detailed and comprehensive platform, especially in the matter of reform proposals. It considers itself to be the only ideological reformist party offering a well defined program, but it is strongly influenced by its creator, José Figueres.

The major opponent of the PLN is the National Unification, a coalition of three long-established political factions, the National Union Party, the Authentic Republican Union Party, and the Republican Party. All three date back to 1948 or earlier and are closely associated with their longtime chiefs, all former presidents who have remained active on the political scene. The three component parties differ little in their political philosophies, generally evidencing slight variations in their degree of liberalism or conservatism. Basically they reflect the views and outlook of their leaders.

In 1970 the National Unification was made up of the same parties that had united for the elections of 1966, but it technically constituted a new party requiring a new registration. Its formation was announced on May 3, 1969, and 12,000 signatures were presented to the Civil Registry. At first its approval ran into some technical difficulties, and it was rejected. There was a cantonal party already registered under the same name, and the identifying colors it had

selected were the same as those filed by another party. These problems were eventually resolved and the party was duly registered later in the year. Mario Echandi, president from 1958 to 1962, was selected as the coalition presidential candidate.

The National Union Party (Partido Unión Nacional—PUN) was founded by Otilio Ulate in 1940. It is basically a conservative party that began in opposition to the social reforms of President Calderón and his successor, Teodoro Picado. Ulate was elected president in 1948 but was unable to assume office until the following year.

The PUN did not run a candidate in 1953, but won the presidency in 1958 for its candidate Mario Echandi. Ulate tried again in 1962, but was badly defeated. His poor showing aroused considerable opposition within the party, and he was forced to step aside to make room for younger leaders. He still remains, nevertheless, as the party's influential elder statesman. The PUN tends to favor preserving the status quo and encourage private, rather than government, economic enterprise.

The Authentic Republican Union Party (Partido Unión Republicana Auténtica—PURRA) is the personal party of ex-president Echandi, without any clearly defined program other than opposition to the PLN. It was formed after the 1962 elections, and its membership is made up largely of his former followers in the PUN; the party has never attained any significant strength. PURRA joined the coalition in 1966 and backed the winning candidate, José Trejos. Again aligned with its 1966 associates for 1970, PURRA's leader Echandi was selected as the coalition's contender for the presidency.

The Republican Party (Partido Republicano—PR) is one of the country's oldest, having been active in the 1830's and 1940's as the National Republican Party. Its leader for many years has been Rafael Calderón, who has always had a large personal following. The party was in power from 1940 to 1948; but after the revolution in 1948 Calderón was forced into exile, and the party was outlawed. When he was permitted to return in 1958, he reorganized his old party as the PR and reentered the political arena. His return was just before the elections of that year, and he won a seat in the Legislative Assembly.

In 1962 Calderón again ran for president on the PR ticket. Although he lost the election to the PLN's Francisco Orlich, he was the ranking opposition contender, gaining 35 percent of the presidential vote. The party's strength has been based on Calderón's personal popularity. It is considered a center party, but Calderón has drawn supporters from a wide spectrum of the electorate, ranging from Communists to reactionary coffee planters.

Minor Parties

There are three small national parties that planned to run a candi-

data for the presidency in 1970. They were not significant, but they could affect the elections by drawing votes away from either or both of the main contenders, particularly in the legislative and municipal contests. The Communist Party of Costa Rica, which took the name of Popular Vanguard party in 1943, was outlawed in 1948 and is still illegal. It played a prominent role in the government during the latter part of Calderón's term (1940-44) but developed strong opposition, which forced it out of the political arena. It still continues a rather ineffectual, covert existence but, on several occasions, has used front parties in an attempt to establish itself as a political force. Using a new front group, it was anticipating making a show of strength in the 1970 elections.

The Bloc of Workers, Peasants, and Intellectuals (Bloque de Obreros, Campesinos e Intelectuales), commonly called the Bloque, was organized in December 1968. It is an avowedly leftist party, headed by Manuel Mora Valverde, the founder of the Costa Rican Communist party in 1929. He was the former Secretary General of the Popular Vanguard party.

The formation of this group aroused considerable opposition throughout the nation, and the press was loud in its denunciation, accusing it of being merely another front for the Communists. In a letter to the press, Mora acknowledged that the party's leadership was made up of oldtime Communists but claimed that the party had members of various persuasions and ideologies. He asserted that it was not in violation of Article 98 of the Constitution, which bans parties that might threaten the country's democratic structure.

The Bloque submitted its application for registration in January 1969 and the following month announced its nomination of Eduardo Mora, Manuel's brother, for president. The request for registration raised considerable controversy, and there were claims of fraud and violation of electoral laws. A number of groups actively opposed approval of the registration and filed appeals with the TSE to rule against it. In February it ruled that the Bloque was a Communist party, falling under the prohibition of Article 98, and passed the case to the Legislative Assembly for final disposition; but in June 1969 the Assembly returned the case to the TSE with no decision. The registration was still pending as the elections neared.

The Christian Democratic Party (Partido Demócrata Cristiano—PDC) was organized in 1967. It was designed to appeal to the youth of the nation, and its avowed aim was to become a third force in the country's politics. It has directed its principal efforts toward attracting the religious rural base of the PLN rather than the urban followers of Calderón, an emphasis that many observers feel has been a tactical error if it hopes to develop any real strength. The PDC

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has named Jorge Monge Zamora as its presidential candidate. A relative newcomer to the political scene, Monge had to resign his post as physician with the Social Security Fund, in accordance with the regulations of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.

The National Front (Frente Nacional—FN), another new party, was formally registered on May 6, 1969, after having been organized in March as the Third Front. It was formed by splinter groups of youths from all parties, who were dissatisfied with the choices offered by their parties and wanted a greater voice in the decisions on issues and candidates. They have been conducting an active and strenuous campaign, and reports indicated that they had been gaining adherents from the other parties. The FN's presidential candidate was Virgilio Calvo Sánchez, formerly a member of the Republican Party. Younger than the other candidates, he was 51 years of age. Calvo served as a deputy in the Legislative Assembly from 1962 to 1966 and was the first vice president under Trejos until he resigned to run as a candidate.

There is one additional small party that is active only at the provincial and municipal level and proposes no presidential candidates. The Revolutionary Civic Union Party (Partido Unión Cívica Revolucionaria—PUCR) was founded by Frank Marshall Jiménez to participate in the 1958 elections for assembly and municipal offices. Marshall was a former member of the PLN and had served as minister of public security under Figueres. He was elected deputy in 1958, at the age of 34, and his party captured 3.3 percent of the legislative vote.

The party did not take part in the 1962 elections but returned with an active slate in 1966 and was running several candidates for 1970. The PUCR is essentially a small, personalist party, leaning to the right, but with no clear program.

The Electoral Process

All citizens 20 years of age or older, with a few minor exceptions, are eligible to vote. Women were granted suffrage in 1949. Voting has been compulsory since 1959, and failure to go to the polls subjects a defaulter to a fine. It has been found difficult to enforce this requirement, and the penalty is not always uniformly applied. In addition to the presidency, all elected officers of the government come up for renewal at the same time every 4 years, including the 57-seat Legislative Assembly and some 1,200 municipal offices.

Two major legislative acts regulate the conduct of elections in accordance with the basic framework provided by the Constitution. Code of 1952 prescribes the mechanics of implementing

susceptibility to outside dissident pressures. Consequently, the maintenance of law and order has become more difficult. Much of the support for the security forces was provided by the United States through the Public Safety program of AID. During the early 1960's both AID and additional military assistance not only furnished substantial quantities of arms and equipment and trained personnel but also made financial grants that bolstered a number of police projects and programs. A sizable sum went into expansion of the communications network; aid vehicles increased the force's mobility; and advisory personnel assisted in setting up the National Police School. Since 1963 this facility has graduated over 2,000 students and instructed an equal number in a variety of courses in police methods and techniques.

Since 1965 the advances made through United States aid have been negated by obsolescence and attrition. Notwithstanding the obstacles and difficulties faced by the security forces, they have, over the years, established a most creditable record of performance—a record that compares favorably with that of any other police force in Latin America. They have demonstrated loyalty, reliability, and efficiency in fulfilling their obligations and have done so in a manner that reflected credit on the nation.

Internal Security

Danger from dissidence or revolt was less clearly defined, but in mid-1969 there was little evidence of any threat to the nation's internal security, either from without or from within the country itself. A long history of national unity, ethnic homogeneity, and a relatively high standard of living all served to counterbalance any disruptive forces that might be exploited or erupt into a threat to the established order. Other than a small, loosely organized Communist movement, which for a number of years has been largely ineffectual, there appeared to be no elements that presented any danger of significant proportions.

Although there were segments of the society that from time to time showed restive tendencies, they were not numerous enough or sufficiently strong to threaten serious dissidence. For the most part, the country's long history of relative prosperity and security had gone far in creating an environment of general satisfaction and stability and a climate basically unresponsive to dissidence or insurgency.

The government was aware of opposition elements and recognized the areas of possible dissidence. Although there was no elaborate mechanism for surveillance or control of opposition activity, the

small security forces gave every indication of being able to cope with existing opposition. They were mostly in the hands of the Treasury Police, which had a comparatively small number of its 660-man strength assigned to this duty. Government control activities were restrained and unobtrusive, and security measures rarely intruded into the daily life of the average citizen.

Relations with other Latin American republics were generally friendly, and the likelihood of overt aggression from any hemispheric source was remote. Although in the past there had been difficulties and border incidents with both contiguous neighbors, neither Nicaragua nor Panamá presented any real threat to the country's territorial integrity. Relations had sometimes been strained, but there were indications of improvement, and the satisfactory resolution of its international problems in the past served to encourage a resort to arbitration should further disputes arise in the future.

The Communists

Since the early 1930's, virtually all of the forces that have disrupted stability and created problems of security have been connected, either directly or indirectly, with the activities of the Communists. Most of these activities have been irritating rather than threatening, and the safety of the state has not seriously been in jeopardy. The local Communist Party is small and largely ineffectual. Although it has used every opportunity to exploit disturbing incidents and gain advantage from unrest, its activities in the country have been on a limited scale, reflecting a low priority in relation to the Communist effort in other Latin American areas.

The Communist Party of Costa Rica was organized in 1929 in San José by a group of students and workers, with the backing of some of the country's intellectuals. Although its actual membership has always been small, it has been highly vocal, militant, and persevering. It has been the center of radicalism in the country since its inception and has received a degree of backing and support from international communism. The party has been officially outlawed since 1948, but its activities continue either covertly or through other leftist-oriented parties.

In the early 1940's, following Moscow's dictum ordering cooperation with governments in power, the party changed its name to the Popular Vanguard Party and encouraged the impression that it had freed itself from foreign domination and control. It enjoyed considerable political influence during the administration of President Rafael Calderón (1940-44) and that of his handpicked successor, Teodoro Picado, who was elected in 1944. Figueres' candidate, Otilio

Ulate, won the 1948 election, but an effort by the Calderón-controlled Legislative Assembly to nullify the results led to the outbreak of a civil war that lasted 2 months.

At the start of the revolt, President Picado permitted Communist leaders to muster approximately 2,000 armed and disciplined followers to reinforce his government troops. The rebels, however, led by José Figueres, attracted a large popular following and ultimately were able to defeat the government and Communist forces. This violent episode, one of the few in Costa Rican history, led directly to the curtailment of Communist activities and the banning of the party. It was also a contributing factor in the eventual decision to abolish the army.

During their era of official recognition and acceptance, the Communists had provoked a series of disturbances and disorders that threatened to undermine the country's stability. In 1942, when the Germans sank a cargo ship in the harbor of Puerto Limón, the Communist leaders organized rallies and street demonstrations, and unruly mobs plundered both alien and national property for several days.

Communism in the country was arrested at the height of its influence, when it had come closest to achieving a dominant position on the political scene. Since 1948 Communist fortunes have remained at a low ebb. Indicative of their waning political strength were the results of the 1962 elections, the last in which a Communist-front party participated. The Popular Democratic Action Party, supported by the outlawed Popular Vanguard, ran an avowed leftist for president. He received less than 1 percent of the vote. The party's legislative slate captured a total of 2 percent of the vote and succeeded in sending only one deputy to the Legislative Assembly. In 1969 official estimates of the membership of the Popular Vanguard Party placed its strength at approximately 400.

At the same time, the possibility of some Communist successes could not be discounted. Pressures on youth groups and labor have been persistent and have required unrelenting vigilance. The banana industry on the Pacific Coast is considered particularly susceptible, having a work force of over 6,000, highly organized into strong trade unions. Nevertheless, although as in most societies there are some segments that are vulnerable to its appeal, communism has gained a negligible foothold in the country. Discounting a sharp deterioration in economic or social conditions, it seemed probable that the environment of the country would remain basically uncongenial to communism or other potentially subversive groups or factions.