

A stylized map of the Americas, showing North and South America, rendered in a light beige color against a dark blue background.

**XXVI**

**Summit of the Americas**

**Cabinet of  
President Teodoro  
Picado Michalski,  
Costa Rica, 1948**

**Committee Bulletin**

**Fatima Shahbaz, Co-Chair  
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# Welcome to HACIA XXVI

Esteemed HACIA delegates,

It is my deepest honor to welcome you to HACIA XXVI, the very first of its kind. I am Emilia Cabrera, your Director of English Committees, and I am incredibly excited to be your first welcome to this unique conference. I can assure you that our team of English committee chairs has worked tirelessly to prepare these topics and ensure the best caliber of debate for HACIA.

To first tell you a bit about myself, I was born in Madrid, Spain but grew up in the United States. I became involved with Model United Nations in high school to further explore my growing interest in international relations. There, I found a space where I could seriously engage in some of the world's most difficult problems and meet other multicultural people who shared my values despite different backgrounds. I'm also passionate about the power of language as a tool for bridging differences, which brought me to my interest in Latin America. At Harvard, I am a senior studying Computer Science and Economics, and have dedicated my extracurricular time to International Relations through HACIA and Model UN.

At this year's HACIA, you will prepare, debate, write, and resolve topics that span not only different themes – economic, political, and social – but also time itself. In the OAS Permanent Council, you will get to explore two sides of a dangerous coin, drug trafficking and human rights violations in prisons. You may get to go back in time and witness – or tamper with – the writing of Mexico's Constitution, or ameliorate the dramatic effects of the 80s debt crisis. If instead you want to look into our future, you can help protect the Amazon rainforest as it gets further threatened into extinction by 2030. Whatever it is that ignites your passion, be that health, human rights, or economics, you will find your place in one of our topics, diligently fighting to make our region and world a better place.

As delegates you will be implored to practice empathy in taking on the views of the governments and people you're asked to represent. In adopting the roles of different countries and people, some of you may be faced with defending positions that go against your own opinions. Take this as an opportunity to deepen your own understanding of a topic and learn the rebuttals and defenses that may be employed by the other side. HACIA is an incredible opportunity to push yourself to grow as a writer and public speaker, but more importantly as a global citizen and future leader.

This year's HACIA will serve to challenge you to engage with some of the most pressing issues of the Americas, and the world beyond. All of this and more you will do in the face of potentially the most global problem we have ever faced: this international pandemic. Just as the diplomatic world has been forced to reckon with how international relations can be preserved and even strengthened without face to face relationships, we must too strive to do the same thing in HACIA. Despite the physical distance, we believe that a conference of listening and discussing international problems across a multitude of countries will allow us to feel just how interconnected these problems are. Thank you for inviting HACIA and its delegates into your countries and your homes.

I am looking forward to hearing your debates and reading your resolutions, as well as seeing all of you further develop into Latin America's leaders of tomorrow.

Sincerely,  
Emilia Cabrera  
Director of English Committees

Topic:

**Cabinet of President  
Teodoro Picado Michalski,  
Costa Rica, 1948**

# Introduction

## *Costa Rica at the crossroads*

The final months of the Picado cabinet are a turning point for Costa Rican democracy. Through the reformist presidencies of Rafael Calderón Guardia and Teodoro Picado Michalski, the Costa Rican society experienced major transformations economically, socially and politically. Since 1940, the Costa Rican government has implemented major social policies such as universal health care, social security and workers' rights protections.<sup>1</sup> By passing these laws, as well as by entering World War II, Calderón, and later Picado, restructured allegiances to the government — alienating a significant portion of the coffee growing elite, many of whom were of German descent, while attracting the support of working-class citizens, as well as left-wing groups supported by the Church.<sup>2</sup> Within a reshaped social antagonism, the election of 1948 was anticipated to be filled with violence and disorder. On the right, Picado and Calderón were accused of corruption, communism and fraud, whereas Calderón's supporters claimed that an electoral victory was integral to maintaining the pro-worker reforms.<sup>3</sup> In 1946, to ensure that these social rifts and complex webs of allegiance to class, religion and politics did not crush Costa Rican democracy, the Partido Republicano Nacional (PRN, Calderon and Picado's party) passed a major electoral reform law. The law created a National Electoral Tribunal (TNE), an institution to arbitrate the results of elections and to issue a provisional electoral result, shifting these fundamental responsibilities away from the government and the presidency, as well as putting in controls against voter fraud.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Patrick Bell "Crisis in Costa Rica: The 1948 Revolution". Institute of Latin American Studies - University of Texas Publishing, Copyright 1971 p. 27

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Rodríguez Vega, Eugenio. *Costa Rica en el siglo veinte*. [EUNED](#).

<sup>4</sup> Lehoucq, Fabrice Edouard, and Iván. Molina Jiménez. *Stuffing the Ballot Box: fraud, Electoral Reform, and Democratization in Costa Rica*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.



*Teodoro Picado Michalski, President of Costa Rica*

In the years preceding the election of 1948, the hardline opposition to President Picado increased the intensity and frequency of subversive acts, committing over 30 public acts of violence in 1947,<sup>5</sup> threatening the country with a prospect of civil war. So, as the nation went to the ballot box on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1948, tension was high, and the future of the country hinged on the results. And so, twenty days later, when the TNE declared Otilio Ulate Blanco, the candidate of the opposition party, Partido Unión Nacional (PUN), the provisional victor of the election, the decision was immediately contested by PRN, accusing the results to be fraudulent and incomplete. Calderón called for the elections to be cancelled by the nation's congress, raising the tensions even more.

This committee will begin on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1948, on the day of the announcement of preliminary results of the election. Each delegate will represent one of the cabinet ministers, who as a team will make decisions to steer President Picado through his last months in the presidency. The task at hand is a difficult one — you must continue to ensure your social programs' survival, while navigating the question of presidential succession.

The cabinet must do everything in its power to steer policy and negotiations so that Costa Rica avoids internal violence and maintains its fragile social cohesion. That means working to ensure the population's trust in democratic institutions, acting quickly and certainly to make the ballot trustworthy, and, if needed, negotiating with opposition leaders to control presidential succession. This is the central question that delegates

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

will work with to make sure the hardline opposition does not begin war. As such, the cabinet will be thrown into the difficult work of national and international coalition building, working with different stakeholders to fulfill their promises to the Costa Rican people and to rebuild the ailing democracy.



Map of Costa Rica



# Topic in Context

## *The Liberal State*

Costa Rica possesses a lengthy history of democratic reform. In 1870, General Tomás Guardia came into power, finishing the work of the Constituent Assembly called by previous president Bruno Carranza Ramirez. The Constitutional Assembly, influenced by the liberals of Costa Rica, wrote up a groundbreaking constitution for the time. The Costa Rican Constitution of 1871 established a republican government, separating the three branches of power and forming institutions for an independent judiciary, legislature and executive power.<sup>6</sup> It stipulated that the office of the president will be occupied for four years, with a possibility of a single, non-consecutive reelection.<sup>7</sup> The constitution also entrenched the separation of church and state. Guardia's rule, lasting until 1882, also heralded modernization for Costa Ricans, establishing free and mandatory education as well as creating new rail infrastructure serving the banana and coffee businesses.

The rise of coffee and banana businesses in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century fundamentally transformed the face of Costa Rican social relations. These major agricultural businesses concentrated land ownership in a few hands, creating a whole class of landless farmers, as well as a new aristocracy that dominated national politics.<sup>8</sup> The coffee aristocracy, in particular, had so much influence that it often handpicked officeholders, sometimes even presidents.<sup>9</sup> It also changed the demographics of Costa Rica. Facing a shortage of workers within Costa Rica, the owners of banana plantations turned to the Caribbean to replenish the labor force. The largest influx of workers came from Jamaica, creating a population of English speakers of African heritage, as

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<sup>6</sup> Arce Gómez, Celín. *El Abuso Interpretativo De La Sala Constitucional : [constitución Política De La República De Costa Rica]*. 1.st ed. San José, Costa Rica: Universidad Estatal a Distancia, 2008., p. 138

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> BOOTH, JOHN A. "Costa Rican Democracy." *World Affairs* 150, no. 1 (1987): 43-53. <http://www.jstor.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/stable/20672124>.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

well as linguistic and racial rifts within Costa Rican society.<sup>10</sup> However, the successors of President Tomás Guardia expanded the electorate in 1913 by establishing universal male suffrage, eliminating property or education requirements to vote. This dislodged the monopoly of power enjoyed by the coffee aristocracy and shifted the political center of gravity away from the extremely wealthy landowners, to the people. The electoral system was also reformed, making the office of president elected through direct elections.<sup>11</sup>

Social and political tensions between the coffee aristocracy and the new political leaders, elected by direct popular vote, came to a boiling point in 1917. After experiencing a rise in taxes, the coffee growing elite, joined by other major capital owners and bankers first organized a massive exodus of capital, reducing government funds, resulting in growing dissatisfaction with the government and mass layoffs of public sector workers.<sup>12</sup> The rise in public discontent



*Banana workers in Limón between 1910 and 1920*

provided support for a coup d'état by General Tinoco in 1917. However, his rule was short-lived, as pressure from the President of United States of America, Woodrow Wilson, as well as political tumult in Costa Rica resulted in Tinoco giving up power in 1919. However, the precedent for breaking the Constitution was set, as well as concrete relations with foreign powers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Watkins, Thayer. Political and Economic History of Costa Rica. San José State University Department of Economics. Accessed July 15, 2019. <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/costarica.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> Nohlen, D. *Elections in the Americas: A data handbook, Volume I*, 2005, p.151

<sup>12</sup> "Costa Rica." Britannica Online Academic Edition, 2019, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

The 1920s saw changes and tensions within the Liberal State restructured Costa Rican society and politics. The Central American nation experienced a sharp rise in nationalism after a brief war with Panama. The Coto War, named after a district on the border between Panama and Costa Rica was brewing for 7 years before it broke out in 1921, when Costa Rican troops occupied the Coto district.<sup>14</sup> The United States intervened in the conflict, mostly to defend the interests of their banana business in Costa Rica, repeating its role from several years earlier as a crucial political and international mediator in the Central American region. The United States established itself as an arbitrator of conflicts between Panama and Costa Rica in the White Award, which gave the Coto district to Costa Rica.<sup>15</sup>

The political atmosphere of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the Great Depression in Costa Rica was dominated by classical liberals, favoring big business and foreign investment. By the time of the late 1920s, the Great Depression created internal political pressures to alleviate the pain of the suffering electorate. The working class received political support in the form of minimum wage legislation as well as limited redistribution of land owned by United Fruit Company. This policy program established distinct political and ideological cleavages in Costa Rica, influenced by the demands of different stakeholders — the coffee planting elite, the working class etc. During the period of crisis — between the mid-1920s and 1940s — political parties representing different ideologies were formed, breaking the classical liberal consensus that dominated Costa Rican politics since the 1870s.<sup>16</sup> On the left, the rise in labor organizations as well as a strong urban left-wing intelligentsia gave rise to multiple political and trade union groups, which, led by Manuel Mora's Communist Party, bonded together to form the Costa Rican Workers' Confederation (CTCR).<sup>17</sup> CTCR's popularity was bolstered by an unpopular intervention by the United States of America in neighboring Nicaragua between

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<sup>14</sup> Colby, Elbridge. "The United States and the Coto Dispute between Panama and Costa Rica." *The Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 3 (1922): 372-78. doi:10.2307/29738499.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Watkins. *Political and Economic History*.

<sup>17</sup> Booth. *Costa Rican Democracy*

1927 and 1933. On the center and the right, the PRN (Partido Republicano Nacional) was founded by President Ricardo Jiménez Oreamuno, popularly known as Don Ricardo, representing the classic liberal wing, allying itself with landowners and coffee growers.<sup>18</sup>

In the 1930s, the tensions between the parties escalated greatly. One of the first cleavages to develop between parties centered around the question of how to treat the leaders of the business elite that were of German descent, in light of the rise of Nazism in Germany.<sup>19</sup> The political elite of Costa Rica grew concerned with the German Club's vote to demonstrate allegiance to the Nazi regime in Germany in 1938.<sup>20</sup> The classical liberal parties curried favor with the German business elite in the 1930s, supporting *laissez-faire* politics and less government control for the coffee and banana business. Meanwhile, the forces on the left — organized labor and Manuel Mora's Communists were organizing against the banana business especially, staging major strikes, such as the one in 1934, when workers shut down operations in the banana business for seven weeks.<sup>21</sup>

The importance of the period between 1871 and 1940, which came to be known as the Liberal State period, lies in its transformation of the social, economic and political condition of Costa Rica. Socially, it introduced a class stratification between the coffee and banana growing elite, often of German or American origin, and the poor working class tending to the plantations, with a small urban middle class in between, as well as an underclass of black Anglophone workers from Jamaica. Furthermore, because the inequality in Costa Rican society became a sharp issue only in the 1930s, it shocked the society and augmented the feelings of injustice, as only years before the global Great Depression, the class divide was minute.<sup>22</sup> Economically, it increased the country's ties to the United States and its dependence on agricultural exports, with the coffee and

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<sup>18</sup> Watkins. Political and Economic History

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Friedman, Max Paul. Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign against the Germans of Latin America in World War II. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

<sup>21</sup> Watkins. Political and Economic History

<sup>22</sup> Bell, "Crisis in Costa Rica", p.26

banana industry being the dominant economic powers. This social and economic structure, thus, informed the political dispositions within the country. The class stratification created a conflict between the workers and the business elite, which put the political establishment in opposition to the rising power of organized labor and communist political movements. The political sphere became embroiled in a conflict between big business and workers and between Costa Ricans and ethnic minorities. Internationally, Costa Rica became dependent on the United States on dispute arbitration as well as economically, as major fruit companies such as United Fruit Company<sup>23</sup> were from the States. Going into the 1940s, the social and political composition of the country was unstable and heading into conflict.

### *The Presidency of Rafael Calderón*

#### *Preceding Years*

In 1936, the candidate of the PRN, León Cortés Castro won the presidential election, running on the established classical liberal platform that dominated the politics of Costa Rica. His administration supported the big agricultural businesses in the banana and coffee industry, which were still reeling from the effects of strikes by the Costa Rican Workers' Confederation. During Cortés' presidency, the PRN grew to dominate the political sphere, based not on a political ideology, but rather on the popularity of the political leaders and the support from the coffee industry.<sup>24</sup> He continued the tradition of Costa Rican politicians, favoring progressive policies such as co-education, which resulted in the literacy rate among women to be at par with that of men, and the

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<sup>23</sup> Rankin, Monica A. *The History of Costa Rica*. Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations. 0. Greenwood, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Watkins. *Political and Economic History*.

overall rate being double than that in neighboring Nicaragua or Honduras, as well as higher than in Mexico or Spain by 1940.<sup>25</sup>

However, Cortés's presidency was criticized by the progressive forces in society. On the left, the Communists, led by lawyer, labor organizer and congressman Manuel Mora Valverde, mobilized rural farmers and urban workers to demand change through electoral measures as well as strikes. Cortés' administration began using the police to crush Communist actions and demonstrations.<sup>26</sup> On the center-left, the progressive urban bourgeoisie and intellectuals were opposed to PRN and coffee elites as unable to deal with problems arising from rising social stratification within Costa Rica.<sup>27</sup> The most prominent activists and lawyers from this social group established The Center for the Study of National Problems, which came to be known as El Centro. This group, dominated by young intellectuals saw the state as a tool for radical social reform and critiqued both the PRN for its conservatism and the communists for their revolutionary approach to social change.<sup>28</sup> By the election of 1940, Cortés was flanked with critics on all sides. Being unable to run for re-election, he was looking for a successor through whom he could continue to rule Costa Rica. Cortés reluctantly chose physician Rafael Calderón, who was serving as President of the Congress to succeed him as the PRN candidate, only after striking a deal that Calderón would support Cortés' reelection in 1944.<sup>29</sup> Calderón had supported Cortés' conservative agenda in his tenure as President of the Congress and was widely known as a conservative politician.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Alfabetismo y Analfabetismo en Costa Rica según el censo General de Población de 11 de Mayo de 1927," Publication No. 3 (San José, C.R., 1928), p. 21

<sup>26</sup> Watkins. Political and Economic History.

<sup>27</sup> Stone. Heritage. p. 117

<sup>28</sup> Charles Ameringer, Democracy in Costa Rica (New York, NY: Praeger; Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1982)

<sup>29</sup> Lehoucq. Stuffing the Ballot Box.

<sup>30</sup> Jorge Mario Salazar Mora, Calderón Guardia (San José, C. R.: Editorial Universidad Estatal a Distancia, 1980)

## *Election of 1940*

Costa Rica entered the election of 1940 in a difficult position. After the Great Depression, the country's growth stagnated, and poverty grew together with a spike in social stratification. Economically, the country relied on exporting cash crops, primarily coffee, and in times of low harvests or periods when the price of coffee fell, or demand fell, Costa Ricans grew poorer.<sup>31</sup> By 1940, because of the start of World War II, the global demand for coffee fell, resulting in growing rural and urban poverty. In urban areas, poverty was incredibly concentrated in slums, as the ailing Costa Rican economy failed to provide housing for the masses. The concentration of poverty often translated into epidemics of tuberculosis<sup>32</sup> as well as widespread malnutrition, both in urban and rural areas.<sup>33</sup> The country was hurting, and social reform was needed.



*Campaign Pictures, 1940 Presidential Election*

However, the candidate of the PRN, Rafael Ángel Calderón Guardia, did not immediately appear as a reformist. Calderón was a descendant of one of the first families to settle in Costa Rica during colonial times and his great-grandfather was General Tomás Guardia, the president who empowered the coffee growing elite

<sup>31</sup> Jaime Murillo Víquez, *Historia de Costa Rica en el Siglo XX* (San José, C.R.: Editorial Porvenir, 1989)

<sup>32</sup> *Diario de Costa Rica*, 28 May 1944

<sup>33</sup> *Acción Democrática*, 29 July 1944

to lead the country into its present situation.<sup>34</sup> The Calderón and Guardia families were known in Costa Rica as quite conservative, favoring the status quo and preserving the power of the wealthy coffee elites.<sup>35</sup> Calderón studied medicine in Belgium, in the University of Louvain and the Université Libre de Bruxelles, where he met Cardinal Mercier, who introduced him to the theory of Christian Socialism. This theory was developed as a way to retain the working classes within the Catholic Church and to prevent losing them to the Communists. The theory was based on Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. During his time in Europe, Calderón became a believer in this theory, which posited that the state must alleviate the pain of the poor through promoting Christianity. However, Calderón did not present these views publicly and, in Costa Rica, was just known as a Catholic politician.<sup>36</sup>

During the 1940 presidential election campaign, Calderón did not face much opposition. President Cortés suppressed the campaign of former president Ricardo Jiménez, utilizing the police to disperse manifestations and meetings of Jiménez supporters, and forcing him to withdraw his candidacy.<sup>37</sup> His other opponent was the Communist Party candidate, Manuel Mora. With the backing of powerful coffee elites, the PRN ran daily anti-communist advertisements in the papers, most notably *La Prensa Libre*, playing on nationalist sentiments with such slogans as *Costa Rica es Anticomunista* (Costa Rica is Anticommunist).<sup>38</sup> Calderón did not run on specific social reform plans or an ideological platform, rather just benefitting from the anti-communist sentiment in the campaign. At the end of February, Calderón was elected in a landslide, winning roughly 85%

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<sup>34</sup> Jeffery M. Paige, *Coffee and Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997)

<sup>35</sup> Salazar Mora, *Calderón Guardia*.

<sup>36</sup> Ameringer, *Democracy in Costa Rica*

<sup>37</sup> Alberto Quijano Quesada, *Costa Rica Ayer y Hoy* (San José, C.R.: Editorial Borrarsé Hermanos, 1939)

<sup>38</sup> *Prensa Libre*, 11 February 1940

of the vote.<sup>39</sup> His party, the PRN, controlled 89% of seats in the Congress, giving him the opportunity and ability to monopolize state power.<sup>40</sup>

If during the campaign Calderón seemed to be poised to continue the policies of Cortés, on the eve of his inauguration he posited himself as a reformer. The president-elect declared that the guiding framework for his administration would be provided by papal encyclicals such as *Rerum Novarum*, the cornerstones of Christian Socialism.<sup>41</sup> On his inauguration, he shocked the coffee planters by laying out plans for comprehensive social reform — Calderón promised a social security program, low-cost housing, land reform and subsidies for rural, less developed regions as well as a national university.<sup>42</sup> Calderón received support from Victor Manuel Sanabria Martínez, the newly appointed Archbishop of San José, who envisioned the relationship of church and state to be close in order to assist the impoverished.<sup>43</sup> The conservative history of the PRN seemed to be broken by that address alone.

#### *First Years in Office: Economic and Social Reforms of the 'Reform State'*

Calderón kept his reformist promises from the inaugural address. A year after his inauguration he presented a social security bill to Congress, largely inspired by the Chilean Social Security System. The bill guaranteed a retirement pension to workers as well as some old-age healthcare, funded by regular compulsory contributions to a government fund by the government, employers and employees.<sup>44</sup> The fund would be controlled by the *Caja Costarricense de Seguridad Social* (CCSS). In order to pass this controversial bill, Calderón

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<sup>39</sup> “Suman 104.127 los datos computados a las 2 de la tarde”, Prensa Libre, 12 February 1940

<sup>40</sup> Lehoucq. Stuffing the Ballot Box.

<sup>41</sup> Mark Rosenberg, “Social Reform in Costa Rica: Social Security and the Presidency of Rafael Angel Calderón,” (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1981)

<sup>42</sup> Kyle Longley, *The Sparrow and the Hawk: Costa Rica and the United States During the Rise of José Figueres* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1997)

<sup>43</sup> Víctor Manuel Sanabria Martínez, “Carta Pastoral del 25 de Abril de 1938,” p. 1973, from Santiago Arrieta Quesada, *El Pensamiento Político Social de Monseñor Sanabria* (San José, C.R.: EDUCA, 1982),

<sup>44</sup> Bell. “Crisis in Costa Rica” p.30

limited its appearance as redistributive by framing it as a paternalistic policy, not writing it with the working classes, rather maintaining the dominance of elites in legislation.<sup>45</sup> He also obtained crucial support from the church, as Archbishop Sanabria proclaimed that the state must intervene to rectify injustices and inequities in society.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, three months after the introduction of the bill, it was passed in Congress. In order to fully legitimate the newly found CCSS, Calderón put widely respected former President Julio Acosta in charge of it.<sup>47</sup>

However, Calderón's executive implementation of the social security bill went beyond the limitations imposed onto it by Congress. In its implementation, the CCSS began providing services such as free healthcare to everyone where it was accessible, including, but not limited to the urban centers of San José and Cartago. The bold program expanded its reach as Calderón authorized the building of new healthcare facilities in rural Costa Rica.<sup>48</sup>



*Dr. Calderon Guardia signs the law which established the University of Costa Rica (UCR)*

Through bypassing the law Calderón managed to ensure important services to the working classes, but also enraged the conservative coffee elites and intimidated the urban progressives who saw this move as dangerous.

Calderón worked to address other aforementioned issues stemming from poverty in Costa Rica. Regarding the housing crisis in both rural and urban parts of the country, he first introduced a land reform law

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<sup>45</sup> Rosenberg, "Social Reform in Costa Rica".

<sup>46</sup> Victor Manuel Sanabria Martínez, "Carta Pastoral Sobre el Justo Salario, 29 de junio de 1941"

<sup>47</sup> Rosenberg, "Crisis in Costa Rica"

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

in 1942, giving landless peasants ownership of plots of land under the condition that they cultivated them.<sup>49</sup> For the urban poor, Calderón initiated the construction of low-cost housing and housing co-operatives, as well as making it more difficult for a landlord to evict tenants.<sup>50</sup> Policies aimed at the poorest of Costa Rica together with Calderón's personal image as an approachable and folksy president made him very popular with the people, putting the power of mass support in his hands.



*First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt welcomes the President-elect of Costa Rica, Dr. Calderón Guardia*

### *New Friends, New Enemies*

Calderón entered the presidency with the backing of powerful conservatives in the coffee industry. However, his inaugural address and policies alienated his initial supporters quite quickly. During his first year in

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<sup>49</sup> Salazar Mora, Calderón Guardia.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

office, Calderón removed the family members and loyalists of former president Cortés from government positions and jobs.<sup>51</sup> While this conflict between two presidents was for the large part hidden from the public eye, it became public when Calderón backed the candidacy of Teodoro Picado Michalski for the president of Congress, replacing Cortés' brother. Picado was elected to the position in a landslide victory, which enraged Cortés and the coffee elites. Cortés left the PRN, becoming the leader of the Democratic Party, taking the conservative support with him, and leaving the PRN in the hands and control of Calderonistas.

Having lost the support of the demographic that made the PRN a hegemonic party in the late 1930s, Calderón was pressed in his search for new allies. He sought the backing of the urban bourgeois progressives of El Centro. Although they were in favour of his reformist policies, Calderón's religiosity and rising allegations of corruption<sup>52</sup> alienated the progressives from supporting the Calderonista-dominated PRN.



Manuel Mora Valverde, Monsignor Sanabria and Dr. Calderón Guardia; campaigning in favor of the "Social Guarantees" in 1943

Internationally, Calderón cemented alliances with the United States and its neighbours. Calderón managed to resolve the long-running border dispute between Costa Rica and Panama, signing the Treaty of Borders and establishing cordial relationships with this neighbouring nation. Regarding the United States, Costa Rica offered its support to the country, collaborating in building infrastructure connecting the United States to the Panama Canal and proposing United States

military bases to be built in Costa Rica.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, when the United States entered World War II, Costa

<sup>51</sup> Lehoucq, *Stuffing the Ballot Box*.

<sup>52</sup> Salazar Mora, *Calderón Guardia*.

<sup>53</sup> *New York Times*, 27 March 1940

Rica declared war on Japan and later Italy and Germany. Declaring war on Germany allowed Calderón to legitimize his corrupt actions under the guise of war action and being a good ally to the United States. He declared German immigrants and Costa Ricans of German ancestry to be an insidious threat of Nazism. By 1942, Calderón's administration stripped Costa Rican citizenship from many citizens of German ancestry, expropriating their land and jailing them in internment camps.<sup>54</sup> The ranks of the conservative coffee elites, who opposed Calderón, were full of German-Costa Ricans — they produced the majority of coffee for export.<sup>55</sup> Thus, Calderón was able to neutralize his enemies while currying favour and loans from the United States of America. He was also supported by the United States as the Roosevelt administration saw Calderón as a fellow reformer, willing to utilize government resources to solve issues of poverty. Generally, most international policymakers and diplomats perceived Calderón very positively, rewarding him with loans and financing Costa Rican infrastructure, such as the section of the Pan-American Highway connecting San José to Panama.<sup>56</sup>

Calderón's new alliances were put to the test during the congressional elections of 1942. His party, the PRN, was campaigning to retain its majority through advertising the success of the new social reforms enacted by Calderón.<sup>57</sup> While Calderón was criticized for stifling electoral freedom and violating personal rights, the opposition was not able to gain much traction, as the PRN's policies were very popular with Costa Ricans. However, the PRN received less votes in the election of 1942 than in 1940, placing the future of his government in question.<sup>58</sup> The Communist Party led by Manuel Mora performed extraordinarily well in this election, receiving more than 16% of the vote.<sup>59</sup> This result made Manuel Mora the kingmaker of Costa Rican politics. He was contacted by the conservative politician Leon Cortés and the director of the Bank of Costa Rica, Jorge

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<sup>54</sup> "Costa Rica Ousts 59 Nazis," *New York Times*, 6 April 1942

<sup>55</sup> Paige, *Coffee and Power*.

<sup>56</sup> Longley, *The Sparrow and the Hawk*.

<sup>57</sup> Lehoucq, *Stuffing the Ballot Box*.

<sup>58</sup> "Resumen de la Jornada Electoral de Ayer", *Prensa Libre*, 9 February 1942

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

Hine. They proposed constructing a coalition between the conservatives and the communists to stop Calderón's grip on power.<sup>60</sup> The proposal was not entirely nonsensical — while both the PRN and the Communist Party veered to the left, Mora was very critical of Calderón during the campaign, accusing him of electoral fraud and of jailing his comrades.<sup>61</sup> However, Mora refused to collaborate with the conservative forces, instead allying with Calderón and the PRN.

The Communist Party and the CTCR reorganized itself into the Partido Vanguardia Popular (PVP), the People's Vanguard Party. Rejecting the overt Marxism of the former Communist Party, Manuel Mora's new party took up the mantle of reformism instead of class warfare and revolution.<sup>62</sup> Archbishop Sanabria declared that any Catholic Costa Rican could join the PVP without compromising their standing as believers.<sup>63</sup> Calderón and Mora began making joint public appearances, the most notable of which was their side-by-side march in the International Workers' Day parade in 1942. Ultimately, the two political forces joined in a coalition popularly known as Victory Bloc.<sup>64</sup> That year, Calderón presented Congress with a proposal to create Social Guarantees to the Constitution, establishing basic rights to be protected. They included: the right to collective bargaining, a living wage, equal opportunities to rural and urban workers etc.<sup>65</sup> Altogether, the Social Guarantees functioned as a framework for a codified commitment to workers' rights. Beyond the Social Guarantees, Calderón proposed a new set of labor laws that emphasized the right to unionize and utilize collective bargaining to resolve employer-employee disputes.<sup>66</sup> By mobilizing workers with the help of Manuel Mora, Calderón was able to muster mass support for the two legislative projects despite the tremendous

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<sup>60</sup> Oscar Aguilar Bulgarelli, *Costa Rica y sus Hechos Políticos de 1948* (San José, C.R.: EDUCA, second edition, 1974)

<sup>61</sup> Lehoucq. *Stuffing the Ballot Box*

<sup>62</sup> Longley. *The Sparrow and the Hawk*

<sup>63</sup> Lehoucq. *Stuffing the Ballot Box*

<sup>64</sup> Longley. *The Sparrow and the Hawk*

<sup>65</sup> "Garantias Sociales: Texto Constitucional,"

<sup>66</sup> *Código de trabajo*, 26 de agosto de 1943"

pushback from businesspeople and the old coffee elites.<sup>67</sup> Both the Social Guarantees and the new labor laws were passed in 1943, cementing Calderón's role in Costa Rican political history as a social reformer.

In July 1942, Axis submarines attacked the port of Limón, sinking a United Fruit Company ship, *San Pablo*, and killing 23 workers.<sup>68</sup> Infuriated mobs began rioting against the already targeted German community of Costa Rica, looting houses of Germans, Italians and suspected fascist sympathizers. During the riots in San José, Calderón and Mora spoke to the mob, showing sympathy for them and not asking them to stop.<sup>69</sup> Continuing on the narrative that the German community of Costa Rica were insidious enemies of the state, Calderón effected the aforementioned expropriation of their property and jailed them in internment camps. This affected not only the German community, but also Costa Ricans connected with them via business links. One such Costa Rican was José Figueres Ferrer, also known as Don Pepe. Figueres was a prominent businessman and a progressive connected with El Centro, which had become an opponent of Calderón due to his corruption, ties to communist groups and purported corruption.<sup>70</sup> After his property was damaged in the anti-German riots, Figueres bought time on a radio station called "America Latina" to criticize the actions of the Calderón administration. Midway through his speech, Figueres was arrested and later pressured into a voluntary exile in Mexico.<sup>71</sup> This made Figueres into a staunch opponent of the PRN who became resolved to overthrow the government of Costa Rica to restructure it. When he came back from exile in 1944, he was instrumental in forming the Social Democratic Party, tied to the opposition and El Centro.<sup>72</sup>

### *The Presidency of Teodoro Picado Michalski*

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<sup>67</sup> Salazar Mora, Calderón Guardia.

<sup>68</sup> New York Times, 6 July 1942

<sup>69</sup> Ameringer, Democracy in Costa Rica.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Watkins, Economic and Political History

<sup>72</sup> Longley. The Sparrow and the Hawk

For the presidential election of 1944, the Victory Bloc chose the President of the Congress, Teodoro Picado Michalski as their candidate. Picado was chosen based on his progressive credentials in Congress, as well as his reputation for being less inflammatory than Calderón. The Calderón-Mora alliance used all the tools at their disposition as the party of power to win the presidency.<sup>73</sup> They used the connection with Archbishop Sanabria to sway the vote of religious voters in a heavily Catholic country, as well as their popularity among the working class which they gained with their labour reforms and Social Guarantees. Furthermore, the Victory Bloc utilized the ongoing World War II to posit that their opponents are pro-Nazi, riding the wave of anti-German sentiment in the country. Furthermore, Calderón utilized the police to break up opposition rallies, as well as employing communist functionaries to physically intimidate opposition supporters.<sup>74</sup>

The loosely united opposition bound together by their distaste of Calderón, his association with the communists and his corruption, and stood behind the recently formed Democratic Party. Their candidate was former president Cortés, a pro-coffee elite conservative. The opposition also included El Centro and progressive liberals as well as business owners and conservatives.<sup>75</sup> Opposition supporters and campaigners also resorted to political violence, resulting in clashes between Calderón and Cortés supporters in the streets of San José.<sup>76</sup>

In the end, Picado won the election in a landslide victory, with a 2:1 margin, prompting allegations of fraud from the opposition. While there are reports of significant electoral fraud, research indicates that Picado still would have won the 1944 election, albeit with a lower margin.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the presidency was shrouded by charges of fraud and corruption, chipping away at its legitimacy, creating the need to establish new electoral

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<sup>73</sup> Bell, “Crisis in Costa Rica”, p.112

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Paige, Coffee and Power.

<sup>76</sup> Bell, “Crisis in Costa Rica”, p.112

<sup>77</sup> Read: Lehoucq, Fabrice Edouard, and Iván. Molina Jiménez. *Stuffing the Ballot Box: fraud, Electoral Reform, and Democratization in Costa Rica, chapter 6.*

rules that could establish some transparency and provide a newly elected government with a source of stability. Thus, Picado endeavoured to achieve electoral reform.

The task revealed itself to be a particularly difficult one, as Picado discovered that the majority of the Victory Bloc remained loyal to Calderón more than to Picado (it is reported that roughly 41% of the legislature was loyal to the former president)<sup>78</sup> and had very little interest in reforming the electoral laws, as reform could have reduced their representation in Congress. Furthermore, the progressives in opposition distrusted the Victory Bloc government, reducing opportunities for cooperation. However, the Picado administration continued to pursue its goal to reform the voting process. In 1945, the reform bill was introduced — it sought to take away the power of electoral adjudication away from the president and to transfer it to a to-be-created National Electoral Tribunal (TNE), with representatives from the legislative, judicial and executive branches of government.<sup>79</sup> This new body was to be responsible for issuing a provisional result of the vote, leaving Congress with the ability to certify the result, making it official. The reform also involved drafting a new electoral registry, erasing the names of dead or non-existent citizens from current voter lists as well as providing photographic identification documents to current eligible voters.<sup>80</sup>

After an arduous process of debate and voting, during which Calderón loyalists tried to block the reform, in the beginning of 1946, the electoral reform passed in Congress. This created the opportunity to stabilize the electoral process by creating both the TNE as an independent vote-counting body and also by allowing members of each party to oversee the election council, thus creating more transparency. However, the process of voting also unearthed rifts within the PNR-PVP coalition and for the PRN itself, dividing the party between ‘independents,’ who leaned towards supporting Picado, and ‘calderonistas’, who dominated the Congress.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

Furthermore, in 1947, the PVP officially renounced the United States of America, one of Costa Rica's main allies, thus breaking the official coalition with PRN as well.<sup>82</sup>

On top of internal governing instability, the Picado administration faced attacks from a more aggravated opposition. In 1944, José Figueres returned from his exile in Mexico, and took up political action. He joined the liberal wing of Cortés' Democratic Party, "Acción Democrática." By breaking off the party and forming a coalition with El Centro, Figueres formed the Social Democratic Party.<sup>83</sup> In a speech, he declared that the government needed to be changed through revolutionary means, as it damaged the principles of democracy by committing electoral fraud.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, he refused to settle or negotiate with the governing party, claiming that they were irredeemable.<sup>85</sup> Figueres' political movement was also a risk to the government due to his connection to the armed Caribbean Legion, known for facilitating coups in neighbouring countries.<sup>86</sup> The threat of violence also intensified after a wealthy Costa Rican, Fernando Castro, financed a failed coup attempt in 1946.<sup>87</sup> However, the opposition became deeply fragmented after Leon Cortés' death in 1946, as multiple opposition politicians competed for the leadership of the opposition.<sup>88</sup>

Under Picado, the social reforms enacted during the presidency of Calderón were maintained, but stability in Costa Rica was jeopardized by political violence and the instabilities within the opposition and the Victory Bloc. Furthermore, the electoral reform, while establishing mechanisms for transparency, laid foundations for mass disenfranchisement of voters, as the identification document requirements posed the

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<sup>82</sup> Bell, "Crisis in Costa Rica" p. 59

<sup>83</sup> Ameringer, Charles. Don Pepe: A Political Biography of José Figueres of Costa Rica. 1978.

<sup>84</sup> José Figueres Ferrer, "La Primera Republica Falleció el 13 de Febrero de 1944," speech given 13 February, 1944, text printed in Alfonso Chase (editor), José Figueres, 1986

<sup>85</sup> Lehoucq. Stuffing the Ballot Box.

<sup>86</sup> Ameringer, Charles D. The Caribbean Legion : Patriots, Politicians, Soldiers of Fortune, 1946-1950. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.

<sup>87</sup> Ameringer, Don Pepe.

<sup>88</sup> Lehoucq. Stuffing the Ballot Box

logistic and administrative challenge of providing photo identification to thousands of voters in the peripheral areas of Costa Rica and the urban slums.<sup>89</sup> The opposition parties controlled the electoral registry, raising suspicions that they could purge PRN voters from the lists. Thus, in the run-up to the 1948 election, uncertainty was in the air, and different political groups were preparing for violence — Figueres' Social Democrats were armed, the PVP was creating worker militias and the PRN, which had tremendous influence over the army, was recruiting strong men.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, beyond acts of political violence, opposition groups were issuing threats of war if the election was fraudulent.<sup>91</sup>

### *The 1948 Election*

Rafael Calderón was eligible to run for president again in 1948, which agitated the opposition to unite and find a candidate to beat him in the general election. The opposition united itself around the candidate of the Partido Union Nacional (PUN), Otilio Ulate, a conservative aligned with the coffee elites.<sup>92</sup> He obtained the support of Figueres' Social Democrats, creating an unlikely alliance of conservatives and progressives against Calderonismo. The campaign was incredibly divisive and fraught with disorder. Calderón, Picado and Mora faced assassination attempts, while strikes and manifestations raged on in the streets.<sup>93</sup> Calderón was highly popular with socioeconomically disadvantaged voters, due to his track record as the president whose reforms did the most to alleviate poverty in the nation. Meanwhile, Ulate attacked him for his coalition with communists, also lambasting his corruption.<sup>94</sup> The country was fundamentally polarized, raising the tensions to a before unseen level.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

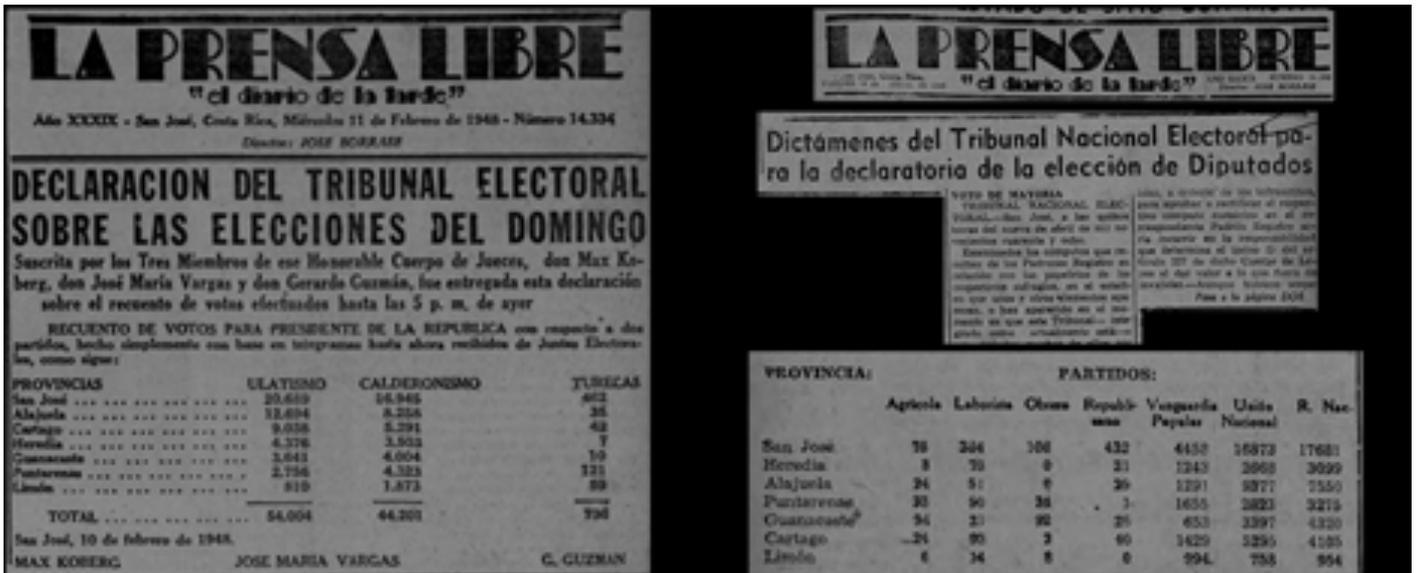
<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Høivik, Tord, and Solveig Aas. "Demilitarization in Costa Rica: A Farewell to Arms?" *Journal of Peace Research* 18, no. 4 (1981): 333-50.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

The result of the election is a contested question in Costa Rican historiography, and as such, the bulletin cannot provide you with a definitive narrative of what happened. That being said, it will try to present the facts as they occurred.



Results of the Presidential and Congress Elections as published in La Prensa Libre in February, 1948.

The Electoral Tribunal (TNE), by the decision of 2 judges against one, declared Ulate the provisional winner of the election, giving him 54% of the vote.<sup>95</sup> TNE also announced the PRN as the winner of the parliamentary election, with 55% of the vote.<sup>96</sup> This difference, given the country's polarisation and rareness of split-ticket voting, aroused suspicion among the PRN, which also claimed that many of its supporters in rural areas in the country's periphery did not receive proper photo identification to be eligible to vote.<sup>97</sup> They accused the Electoral Registry, controlled by the opposition parties, of fraud and called upon the parliament to annul the election.<sup>98</sup> The PRN-dominated parliament voted to annul the election on March 1<sup>st</sup>, giving the TNE a March

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Lehoucq, Stuffing the Ballot Box.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

25 deadline to inspect all votes and electoral documents for a later verdict.<sup>99</sup> This prompted Calderón and the opposition to enter into negotiations to ensure a peaceful transition of office, while Figueres and the Social Democrats prepared for violent change.<sup>100</sup>

March 1<sup>st</sup> is the point where this committee starts, tasking the crisis committee to resolve core issues tackled by Costa Rica in 1948 and its history. It has to ensure a peaceful transition of power, while maintaining the social reforms enacted by the Calderón and Picado administrations. It also has to deal with the divisions within the ruling coalition as well as the social and political polarization between Calderón supporters and the opposition.

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<sup>99</sup> Høivik, Tord, and Solveig Aas. "Demilitarization in Costa Rica: A Farewell to Arms?" *Journal of Peace Research* 18, no. 4 (1981): 333-50.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*



# Topics for Discussion

## *Social unrest*

Given that the country is facing a significant volume of political violence, an area of focus for the cabinet should be dealing with social unrest in order to achieve a peaceful transition of power. There are trained, and armed paramilitary groups associated with the PRN, PVP and Figueres' Social Democrats. It is up to the Picado administration, in its last days, to leverage its official (army, police) and unofficial (militia) powers to enforce order in the streets without provoking deeper political violence. For example, the Picado administration often utilized police to suppress political violence — perhaps the police could be utilized to secure key negotiation locations or to participate in popular public services to increase its standing socially. This task also involves building bridges with the opposition, to gain legitimacy to the political process. As delegates, you should consider issues or principles that you could build connections with the opposition on. An example of potential unifying factors could be the prevailing force of Catholicism in Costa Rica. The church could be brought in as a peacekeeping actor, mediating discussions between the government and the opposition, as well as urging people to stay calm. This mediation may assist the two competing political forces to build a deal that allows a transparent election to happen. The issue at stake is multifaceted, breaching the lines of political, religious and class loyalties, and the delegates are tasked with finding ways of unifying a polarized country to avoid war.

## *Preparing for the worst*

The delegates should keep in mind that the threat of a violent overthrow by Figueres is looming and very realistic. Figueres is in contact with the Caribbean Legion, a group aiming to overthrow dictatorial governments Central America armed by the president of Guatemala, so he is capable of utilizing violence to prevent a

Calderón presidency.<sup>101</sup> Given that the Costa Rican army is merely 300 men<sup>102</sup>, and the PRN and PVP militias are too amateur to securely stand their ground in conflict, you must search for ways to ensure the protection of this fragile country.

One avenue to prepare the country for war is diplomacy. The Calderón and Picado administrations established crucial connections within the Central and Northern American region. Calderón was personally allied with Nicaragua’s dictatorial leader, Anastasio Somoza, whose military was much stronger than Costa Rica’s.<sup>103</sup> This connection may be both promising and dangerous for the delegates, as connecting with the



*Jose Figueres Ferrer and the Caribbean Legion*

Nicaraguan military improves Costa Rican fighting power, yet provides far more power to the calderonistas, exacerbating the party fractures. Using a dictator’s army may also send a message that the government does not value democracy much, improving Figueres’ ability to recruit people to his legion of revolutionaries from different Central American states.

Another diplomatic tie that must be considered is to the United States of America. The United States is a key player in Costa Rica, as American capital dominates certain industries — the United Fruit Company is an American company with nearly total control of the agriculture in Costa Rica. As such, the United States has a stake in the stability of Costa Rica, to protect its business interests. The country is also interested in Costa Rica because of its proximity to the Panama Canal Zone, a strategically important U.S. military base. The Calderón

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<sup>101</sup> Bowman, Kirk, and Scott Baker. “Noisy Regimes, Causal Processes, and Democratic Consolidation: The Case of Costa Rica.” Wiley Online Library. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd (10.1111), June 28, 2008. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1557-203X.2007.tb00054.x>.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

administration enjoyed good relations with the U.S., mostly influenced by his decision to enter World War II, joining the fight against fascism. While Picado's administration had the cordial ties in the beginning of his term, the start of the Cold War and newfound American antagonism towards communism soured the relations with Costa Rica due to the PRN-PVP alliance. In the eyes of the U.S. State Department, Picado took missteps in diplomatic relations by not severing ties with the communists and not siding with the U.S. in regional disputes.<sup>104</sup> However, the relationship may be salvaged and prove to be useful for Picado, especially because the U.S. has been the biggest arms trader to Costa Rica, meaning that better relations with the U.S. could improve the country's security capabilities through improved technological capabilities.. Furthermore, the delegates could consider methods of making the U.S. turn against Costa Rican opposition, as the State Department of the U.S. does not have a definite policy regarding it, perhaps by demonstrating the risk posed by the Caribbean Legion to American interests in the region. The question of diplomacy opens possibilities to utilize crisis notes and discussion to open new potential international partners, either in Central America or beyond it.

### *Building for the future*

While the threat of war and revolution is looming in this committee, delegates should not forget the reforms their administration has fought for. Thus, an important task is to consider how to ensure the continuation of social reform going forward. It will not be easy to keep hospitals, schools and universities open and accessible in an environment of social division and violence. This will require the government to build new alliances and social coalitions to establish stability and support for the policies.

Mediating between organized labor and businesses as well as between the government and opposition is a central focus of this committee as well. The Picado cabinet, while diverse in political allegiances and thought, was nonetheless united in principles of reformism and egalitarianism. In the crisis committee, these principles

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<sup>104</sup> Longley, Sparrow and the Hawk.

should guide your action, while you work to maintain the progress you have achieved as well as create a political solution that is predicated on social uplift rather than regress into oligarchic control of the state.



# Guide to Crisis

The Cabinet of President Teodoro Picado Michalski will be operating as a continuous crisis committee in HACIA XXVI. This is to say that there will be no constant topic for debate, but rather you, as the delegates will be responding to crises happening continuously during the conference, tailored to your actions and debate. In real-time, you can expect a crisis to occur every hour, and throughout the conference you can expect to cover the entirety of 1948. To be fully familiar with the overarching topics of the committee as well as potential areas of discussion, please familiarize yourself with this guide of Costa Rican political, economic and social history from the late 19th century to the beginning of this committee, just after the 1948 presidential election.

In most situations, this committee will operate under standard parliamentary procedure, unless explicitly noted in certain instances of this guide. That being said, the nature of a continuous crisis committee calls for a degree of flexibility to the rules of the debate, thus I am open to consider a wide variety of procedural practices as the conference goes on. For example, the complexity of the debate and certain crises that you could anticipate within the committee may require all voices of the Cabinet to be heard in an inclusive “round-robin” format of debate, in which everyone speaks in a circle. In the nature of the presidentialist Costa Rican Constitution of 1871, the president (the committee director) may retain discretion to suspend debate in moments of crisis and direct it to a most useful direction.

Each delegate will be representing an individual member in the Cabinet of President Picado, and together the delegates will lead the policy of the final months of Picado’s presidency in an attempt to avoid violence in the state. Because each delegate is an equal member of the cabinet, all delegates will begin with voting powers. To be able to fulfill the role of a cabinet minister most effectively, each delegate will be able to send notes not only to each other, but also to ‘crisis,’ which will read the notes and respond to them in appropriate time. While sending notes to crisis may appear intimidating at first, you should not hesitate to do so.

Crisis is the mechanism that allows you to use the full power of your specific position as a cabinet minister to further your or the cabinet's broader agenda.

For example, a delegate representing the Costa Rican Minister of Public Security, René Picado, would have the powers to deploy police forces and regulate public manifestations. In a situation where a location of crucial negotiations about the election results is under risk of attack by protesters, the delegate could very well utilize their powers by writing this following note to crisis:

Dear Assistant Paola,

As we know, key negotiations surrounding a peaceful transition of power are happening between Calderón Guardia and Ulate Blanco on March 20th. There is a considerable risk of protest and violence coming from the supporters of Figueres. In order to allow the negotiations to proceed peacefully, relay the following message to the chief of the police of San José:

Deploy a squad of police officers surrounding the perimeter of the National Electoral Tribunal on the morning of March 20th. Avoid violence as much as possible — only utilize force in defense. Arrest the major troublemakers.

Best,

Minister of Public Security Picado

This note has the elements of a successful crisis note — one element is that it is written in the first person, with clear identification of the note's author (Minister of Public Security Picado), which is how you should write your notes. Furthermore, it has two actionable requests, which are fairly concrete. Making clear

requests or tasks to be executed allows crisis to respond to your note in the most appropriate manner. Writing precise notes is crucial for the committee's arc to advance, as well as each delegate's crisis arc to develop. Delegates should be aware that the requests made in their crisis notes will not always be fulfilled — they may be rejected or backfire, creating unintended consequences that can affect the delegate's crisis arc or the development of the crisis for the entire committee.

A crisis arc is a series of crisis actions that build up to each delegate's personal objectives out-of-committee, while also advancing the development of the committee. An example of a crisis arc could be a Minister of Labor working to build up labor unions, collaborating with other socialist governments or movements in order to ferment a workers' uprising that displaces the government with a socialist one. A potential series of crisis notes that could drive this crisis arc may look like this: in one note, the minister may provide more funding and government support for labor unions under the guise of increased support for the government. Then, in his next note, the minister reaches out to socialist governments such as the USSR to obtain financial support and other resources to arm the unions and assist their recruiting, and so on.

If this passage on crisis leaves you any questions or if anything remains unclear, please feel free to contact me and I will do my best to respond to in a timely manner.

# Position Papers

As a delegate, you are required to write a position paper for this committee. It is a way to demonstrate your approach to the issue at hand as well as to distinguish yourself as a delegate. To write the best position paper possible, it is recommended that you conduct additional research on the Picado cabinet and general history of Costa Rica in the 1940s, beyond what is provided in this bulletin.

Common practice to writing good position papers entails several components. You are expected to provide a short first-person introduction of your assigned position, your position's political allegiance and description of views regarding issues relevant to the committee. Do not feel bound to topics discussed in this bulletin and include whatever issues found in your research that you deem to be relevant. It is not advised to write on every discussion topic, as they will be fluid and changing due to the committee being a continuous crisis. You are expected to describe your view regarding the direction the Picado administration should take to deal with the electoral crisis.

As a delegate you are a cabinet member with a particular portfolio, therefore in the position paper you are also expected to describe actions you as a minister would take. For example, the interior minister has the police under their purview, thus in the position paper, a delegate assigned the position of the interior minister could describe their plans for deploying police forces in the country to maintain stability. Do describe your goals as a particular minister, however, you should recognize that due to the nature of the crisis committee, your goals may change.

# Closing Remarks and Research Recommendations

I hope that this bulletin was a useful introduction to the complicated situation Costa Rica was plunged into in 1948. Because this is a historical committee, I would urge delegates to perform a lot of individual research to obtain a grasp on the multitude of ways from which to analyze this situation. I would ask you to suspend your personal judgement while doing research, abstain from framing any stakeholder involved in the situation as 'good' or 'bad,' recognize the complexity of history and simulate it in a stimulating and educating manner. I hope that in doing so, you can gain more appreciation for understanding the development of Costa Rican democracy.

If I had to summarize the bulletin into a key lesson, it is that political decisions always involve trade-offs. Be it a choice of coalition partner or reform, the politician has lots to win and also to lose. I hope you will have this lesson in mind when you make decisions in this committee and think about your strategy. Strategically planned decisions will still entail loss, but it is up to you as to how large the wins will be.

Finally, I ask of all delegates to come to committee with a mind and heart full of enthusiasm, ambition and empathy. In HACIA, we hope that your experience will inspire you to grow as a leader, speaker and, above all, a human being. Thus, I encourage everyone to participate actively, so that all voices, all positions and backgrounds are heard. I also encourage delegates to be kind to each other and not allow your ambition to become arrogance towards your fellow delegates.

I am thrilled to be leading this committee and meeting all of you in March. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions, comments or concerns, by emailing me at [costarica@hacia-democracy.org](mailto:costarica@hacia-democracy.org).

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