

Savage Election Fight Boiling Up in Honduras

Editor's Note — At 77, former President Tiburcio Carías Andino of Honduras, still holds tight rein on his country. But his former protégé, President Jan Manuel Galvez, has pushed a reform program in the least developed of all the Central American republics too fast for the old strong man's liking. Here's the story of the subsequent split and what it portends for the future.

By PAUL SANDERS
TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — Honduras, the least-developed of the Central American republics, is working up to its hottest election fight in 20 years—if a coup doesn't prevent the balloting set for next October.

Charges of "dictatorship" and "communism" bounce back and forth dozens of times each day.

The big issue is whether the country is to continue in the grip of its strong man, 77-year-old former President Tiburcio Carías Andino, or whether it is to have New Deal reforms pushed by moderates, the Liberal party, and the left-wingers.

The conservative followers of Carías in his National party see the Liberals as heavily infiltrated with Communists. These charges bring angry denials from Liberal leaders, who say they want only the same type of social welfare and labor legislation in effect in the United States. The Liberals also want revision of the concession held by the United Fruit Co., the country's biggest concern.

The fruit company pays the company's highest wages for farm labor, but the Liberals contend that Honduras isn't getting enough financial return from the firm's operations.

In this situation the charge inevitably arose that the Liberals were influenced by Guatemala, whose Red-dominated government expropriated thousands of acres of fruit company land, and by Costa Rica, whose government has asked revision of the company concession in that country.

In answer to this, the Liberals reply "our program is 100 per cent Honduran."

Split with Carías on the reform issue is President Juan Manuel Galvez, a National who was the strong man's hand-picked candidate in the 1948 elections. Galvez has given the country its most progressive administration in 20 years. A high degree of press freedom has been established. The first labor legislation—covering compensation for accidents while at

work and working conditions for women and children—has been enacted.

Galvez also began a road-building program to open up new sections of the country, and carried on public health, education and agricultural improvement projects with U.S. aid.

When the Galvez backers—the reform wing of the National party—came out for further and sweeping advances, Carías split with them. The old strong man, robust and looking 20 years younger than his age, thought the Reformistas were moving too fast, and had allowed Communists to infiltrate the country.

Carías is one of Central America's outstanding foes of the left wing of all shades. Elected President in 1932, he put an end to a long period of turbulence and ruled the country with a firm hand from 1933 to 1948.

Without relinquishing his grip on the National party, he left the presidency in 1948 and has directed the campaign against constitutional reforms sponsored by both Galvez' Reformistas and the Liberals.

The Liberals went out of power in 1932, and haven't made much of a showing against the Carías machine since then. But this year they are well organized, ably led by young leaders, and hope to win the 1954 elections, either for themselves or teamed up with the Reformistas.

Poverty and backwardness not only background the political situation here, but make the country the target for underground Communist activity. Much of this activity centers on the fruit company workers, because they make up Honduras' only large labor force.

The country is slightly smaller than Pennsylvania, has a population of a little more than 1 1/2 million, about 40 per cent of it illiterate. Living standards are low and wages for farm workers run around a dollar a day in most of the country, and somewhat higher in the fruit company operations.

The way things stand now Carías or one of his close friends is likely to be the National candidate for President next year. Carías seems to have a strong grip on the one-house Congress, which would make a new constitution before the 1954 elections unlikely.

That would rule out Galvez as a candidate for re-election since the present constitution forbids re-election. Two possibilities have been mentioned for the Reformista nomina-

tion. They are Abraham Williams, a prominent cattle raiser, and Marcos A. Batres, the present minister of finance. Williams was vice president for a time under Carías.

Either Williams or Batres might get Liberal party support. And the Reformistas combined with the Liberals claim to outnumber the Carías forces. That was indicated in municipal elections Nov. 30 in the country's rural districts. The National party got a total of 44,334 votes, the Reformistas 37,022 and the Liberals 35,218. Tegucigalpa and the other cities did not vote in that election.

If the Liberals decide to go their own way, they have a long list of aspirants for the nomination. The two strongest possibilities at present include Dr. Ramon Villeda Morales, a surgeon, and Rafael Medina Raudales, president of the party executive council.

Polk County Group Awaiting Induction

DALLAS—Billy Allen Gill of Grand Ronde and Thomas Edward Strange of Dallas, will report to the Dallas armory at 3:30 p. m. Monday, Jan. 11, from where they will go to Portland to be inducted into the army on the following day and then report to Ft. Ord.

Paul Edwin Riha, Wallace Boyd Stone, and Dewey Dean Johnson all of Independence and Raymond Lester Jones of Dallas, will report to the Dallas armory Jan. 12, from where they will be sent to Portland the next day for physical examinations. They will return to Dallas the same day, according to Mrs. Nona Ford, secretary of the Selective Service board.

Randal Keith Brack Wins 1954 Baby Derby

WOODBURN — Randal Keith Brack, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Brack of Woodburn, route 1, was born at 3:15 p. m. January 1, 1954, at the Silverton hospital, weight 10 pounds, 1/4 ounce, and thereby becomes winner of the group of awards given by Woodburn merchants for the first baby born in 1954 in Woodburn No. 11 area.

No baby was reported in area 1 which includes the parents residing in the city limits of Woodburn served by the city mail service. The time limit for Area 1 has been moved up one week and in order to receive the awards the birth of a baby must be reported to the Independent office by Tuesday noon, Jan. 12.

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